

Cabinet

Wednesday 22 March 2023 at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting venue: Conference Room 2, Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall.

Livestream <http://www.WalsallCouncilWebcasts.com>

Portfolios

Councillor M.A. Bird,
Leader of the Council



Councillor G. Perry,
Deputy Leader
Resilient Communities



Councillor A. Andrew
Deputy Leader and
Regeneration



Councillor Ken
Ferguson
Internal Services



Councillor K. Pedley
Adult Social Care



Councillor Gary Flint
Health and Wellbeing



Councillor S. Elson
Children's



Councillor M. Statham
Education and Skills



Councillor K. Murphy
Clean and Green



Councillor Gaz Ali
Customer



Quorum 3 members

Democratic Services, The Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW

Contact name: **Craig Goodall** ☎ (01922) 65 ☒ craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk

The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

Specified pecuniary interests

The pecuniary interests which are specified for the purposes of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 are the interests specified in the second column of the following:

Subject	Prescribed description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by a member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of a member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Regulations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority:</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to a member's knowledge):</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority;</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:</p> <p>(a) that body (to a member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either:</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
 - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
 - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel when considering flood risk management functions which:
 - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
 - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
 - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other person.

Part I – Public session

1. Apologies
2. Minutes – 8 February 2023
3. Declarations of interest
4. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended):**

To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.

5. **Petitions.**

(Note: For advice on how to submit petitions, contact Democratic Services. Contact details on the front page of the agenda).

6. **Questions**

(30 minutes will be allowed for pre-submitted questions from non-executive members and the public. All questions will have been submitted at least 7 clear days before the meeting. Answers will be provided at the meeting - no supplementary questions will be allowed.)

7. Forward plan **Enclosed**

Leader of the Council: Councillor Bird

Key Decisions

8. Renewal of the Council's Oracle Cloud licenses **Enclosed**
9. Approval of the Black Country Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement **Enclosed**

Non-key Decisions

10. LGA Corporate Peer Challenge: Action Plan **Enclosed**

Deputy Leader of the Council and Regeneration: Councillor Andrew

Key Decisions

11. West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2023/24 **Enclosed**
12. Response to Sandwell Local Plan Consultation **Enclosed**

Deputy Leader of the Council and Resilient Communities: Councillor Perry

Key Decisions

13. Letting Agent Enforcement Policy **Enclosed**

Non-key Decisions:

14. The use of Drones to deal with Off-Road Vehicles **Enclosed**

Portfolio Holder for Customer: Councillor Ali

Key Decisions

15. Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 to 2028 **Enclosed**

Portfolio Holder for Internal Services: Councillor Ferguson

Key Decisions

16. Walsall Civic Centre and Council House Improvement Works **Enclosed**

Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills: Councillor M. Statham

Key Decisions

17. Proposed High Needs Local Funding Formula 2023/24 – Including an Overview of the DSG Management Plan **Enclosed**

18. Proposed Early Years Funding Formula for two, three & four years olds - 2023/24 **Enclosed**

Recommendations from Overview and Scrutiny

19. Recommendations from the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the outstanding debt owed to the Council for Adult Social Care. **Enclosed**

Part II: Private Session

Deputy Leader of the Council and Regeneration: Councillor Andrew

Key Decisions

20. Town Deal Walsall Adult Learning Campus project **Enclosed**

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Cabinet

Wednesday 8 February 2023

Minutes of the meeting held in Conference Room 2 at the Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall at 6pm.

Present – in person

Councillor Bird (Chair)	Leader of the Council
Councillor Ali	Customer
Councillor Andrew	Deputy Leader and Regeneration
Councillor Elson	Children's
Councillor Ferguson	Internal Services
Councillor Flint	Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Murphy	Clean and Green
Councillor Pedley	Adult Social Care
Councillor Perry	Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities
Councillor M. Statham	Education and Skills

In attendance – in person

D. Hindson, Chief Executive
S. Darcy, Director - Finance Corporate Performance & Corporate Landlord
S. Portman, Head of Law
C. Goodall, Principal Democratic Services Officer
E. Cook, Assistant Democratic Services Officer

In attendance – remote

K. Allward, Executive Director - Adult Social Care and Hub
S. Neilson, Executive Director - Economy, Environment and Communities
S. Rowe, Executive Director – Children's Services

Part 1 – Public Session

4030 Welcome

Councillor Bird opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and explaining that the Cabinet was meeting that evening in person and that the agenda and reports for this meeting were available on the Council's website. He explained that voting would be by way of a show of hands which would be witnessed and recorded by the Democratic Services officer in attendance.

4031 Apologies

No apologies were received.

4032 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting of 14 December 2022 were submitted.

Resolved

That the minutes of 14 December 2022, a copy having been sent to each member of the Cabinet, be approved and signed as a correct record.

4033 **Declarations of interest**

No interests were declared.

4034 **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985**

Resolved

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items set out in the private part of the agenda for the reasons set out therein and Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972.

4035 **Petitions**

No petitions were submitted.

4036 **Questions**

No questions were received..

4037 **Forward plan**

The forward plan as at January 2023 was submitted:

(annexed)

Resolved (by assent)

That the forward plan be noted.

4038 **Corporate Budget Plan 2023/24 – 2026/27, incorporating the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management and investment Strategy 2023/24**

Councillor Bird introduced a report which set out the proposed budget plan for 2023/24 to 2026/27.

(annexed)

It was **Moved** by Councillor Bird and **Seconded** by Councillor Perry and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

1. That Cabinet noted:

- a) **That at the time of despatch of this report, the final local government settlement for 2023/24 has not been received. Any changes arising from this will be included within the final papers to Council.**

- b) That at the time of despatch of this report, the precepting authorities (fire and police) had not formally notified the authority of their final council tax precept levels for 2023/24. Draft figures have been included. Final figures will therefore be provided prior to or at the Council meeting of 23 February 2023 should they change.
- c) That at the time of despatch of this report, the levy authorities, (Environment Agency and West Midlands Combined Authority - Transport Levy) had not formally notified the authority of their final demand for 2023/24. Estimates have been used for the Transport Levy based on informal communication. (The final Transport Levy is expected to be approved early February and will be included within the final papers to Council).
- d) That the council tax base, set by the S151 Officer under officer delegations, is 72,608.66 for 2023/24.
- e) The feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the draft revenue budget and capital programme and responses to recommendations, as set out in Section A - Part 1 of this report, and general consultation feedback.
- f) The amendments to the revenue budget arising from the provisional settlement, including changes to the savings proposals identified since the December Cabinet report, as set out in section 4.27.
- g) That Members must have due regard to consultation feedback and the public sector equality duty (Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010) when making budget decisions.

2. That Cabinet approved:

- a) The attached report as set out in Section A - Part 2 and Part 3: The Findings from Budget Consultation: Financial Year 2023/24+ and Cabinet responses and that Members have had regard to their duties in relation to consultation, and in relation to the public sector equality duty, in forming their budget recommendations.
- b) That delegated authority be given to the S151 Officer to make any necessary amendments, after consultation with the Leader (Portfolio Holder for Finance), to take account of the final local government settlement, final levies and precepts, final grant allocations and final technical guidance or legislation on the budget; and to make any necessary amendments to the statutory determinations and council tax bands to take account of those changes and the resulting final analysis of the budget and for these amendments to be submitted and therefore recommended to Council at its meeting on 23 February 2023, after consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance (Leader of the Council).
- c) The policy service changes as set out in section 4.30, Table 1 of this covering report.

- d) That delegated authority be given to the S151 Officer, after consultation with the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive, to agree the council's final contribution to the West Midlands Combined Authority.
3. That Cabinet approved and recommended to Council, subject to receipt of the final local government settlement, final precepts and levies, receipt of final grant allocations, technical/legislative guidance and final specific grant allocations (*substitute figures and resolution to be provided to Council by the S151 Officer to take account of any changes arising from these*) the following:

Revenue

- a) The financial envelope of resources for 2023/24 as set out in Section B - Part 1 "The Revenue Corporate Budget Plan and Capital Programme".
- b) A Walsall Council net council tax requirement for 2023/24 of £144.16m and a 2.99% increase in council tax.
- c) That the recommendations of the S151 Officer in respect of the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the budget calculations and the adequacy of reserves be approved, including the levels of central contingency and an opening general reserve of not less than £16.12m, as set out in the S151 Officer Section 25 statement in Annex 11 of the Budget Plan.
- d) The (estimated) levies below for outside bodies and Cabinet approved that the final figures be substituted for these provisional ones once they are available at the Council meeting on 23 February 2023. (An estimate has been used within this report based on informal notification from the authorities).

LEVY	AMOUNT (£)
West Midlands Combined Authority Transport Levy	11,614,200
Environment Agency	85,178

- e) The following statutory determinations (references are to the Local Government Finance Act, 1992 as amended), and subject to any final changes arising from receipt of final precepts and levies, receipt of final grant allocations, technical/legislative guidance and final specific grant allocations, and Cabinet approved that these will be substituted at the Council meeting on 23 February 2023 for the final figures once received:

- I. £721,685,138 being the aggregate gross expenditure, which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) (a) to (f) of the Act.
- II. £577,522,096 being the aggregate income which the council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) (a) to (d) of the Act.
- III. £144,163,042 being the amount, by which the aggregate at (e) (I) above exceeds the aggregate at (e) (II), calculated by the council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act, as its council tax requirement for the year.
- IV. £1,985.48 being the amount at (e) (III) above, divided by the council tax base of 72,608.66, calculated by the council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year (average council tax at band D).
- V. Valuation bands

Being amounts given by multiplying the amount at (e) (IV) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Local Government Act 1992, is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the council in accordance with Section 30 and 36 of the Act as 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
1,323.65	1,544.26	1,764.87	1,985.48
E	F	G	H
2,426.70	2,867.92	3,309.13	3,970.96

- f) The draft precept from the Fire and Rescue Authority and the Police and Crime Commissioner, 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 and Cabinet approved that the final figures be substituted once they are available at the Council meeting on 23 February 2023.

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY	VALUATION BANDS			
	Police And Crime	A	B	C
135.0		157.5	180.0	202.55
E		F	G	H
	247.5	292.5	337.5	405.10
	A	B	C	D

Fire & Rescue	48.68	56.79	64.90	73.02
	E	F	G	H
	89.24	105.4	121.6	146.03

- g) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (e) (v) 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 2023/24 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below and Cabinet approved that the final figures be substituted once the final precepts are available at the Council meeting on 23 February 2023.

A	B	C	D
1,507.36	1,758.59	2,009.81	2,261.05
E	F	G	H
2,763.50	3,265.96	3,768.40	4,522.09

- 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 “Express and Star” newspaper circulating in the Authority’s area.
- i) That the S151 Officer 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, billing, the giving of notices and the taking of necessary steps to ensure collection thereof.
- j) That the S151 Officer be given delegated authority to make transfers to and from reserves in order to ensure that reserves are maintained as necessary and in particular, adjusted when reserves are no longer required, or need to be replenished.
- k) That, pursuant to Section 52ZB and 52ZC of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, the relevant basic amount of council tax for the Council is not excessive in relation to determining whether a referendum is required.

Capital

- a) The allocation of capital expenditure plans as set out in Section B - Part 1 “The Revenue Corporate Budget Plan and Capital Programme” and that the capital and leasing programme as set out in Annex 9 be approved bearing in mind the principle that unless affordable from within current resources, specific projects funded by borrowing will not be commenced until a payback agreement is in place. Schemes funded from grant will commence when final allocations are published.

- b) That the S151 Officer be given delegated authority to determine how each source of finance is used to fund the overall capital programme and to alter the overall mix of financing as necessary, to maximise the flexibility of capital resources used and minimise the ongoing costs of borrowing to the council.
- c) That the S151 Officer, after consultation with the Leader (Portfolio Holder for Finance), be given delegated authority to release capital resources held back for any contingent items that may arise (earmarked capital receipts for essential or emergency spend), and also for any match funding requirements that may be required of the council in order to secure additional external capital funding (e.g. bids for government or other funding).
- d) The Capital and Investment Strategy set out in Annex 8 of the Budget Plan be approved.
- e) The Flexible Use of Capital Receipts Strategy set out in Annex 10 of the Budget Plan be approved.

Treasury Management

1. Section B – Part 2A – The Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2023/24 onwards, including the council’s borrowing requirement, borrowing limits, and the adoption of prudential indicators, be approved.
2. That decisions to effect movements between conventional borrowing and other long term liabilities, such as leases, be delegated to the S151 Officer.
3. That decisions to use capital receipts or borrowing within the framework of approved prudential indicators be delegated to the S151 Officer.
4. Section B – Part 2B – Treasury Management Policies, be approved.

4039 Payments System Contract Award

Councillor Bird introduced a report which sought to ensure that the Council had a system in place to receive payments (Payment Service), which was fit for purpose and continued to offer secure, compliant payment services to its customers.

(annexed)

It was **Moved** by Councillor Bird and **Seconded** by Councillor Andrew and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet:

1. **Approved the award of a contract for the provision of a Payment Service for the seven-year period from 01 June 2023 to 31 May 2030 with an anticipated value in the region of £2,038,000 to Capita Plc as described in paragraphs 4,7, 7.2 and 7.3.**
2. **Delegated authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Transformation to enter into a contract and to subsequently authorise the signing of any associated contracts or other related documents.**
3. **Authorised the signing of this contract underhand as due to the nature of the services provided it is unlikely the Council would benefit from 12 years of protection under seal.**

Delegated authority to the Executive Director of Resources and Transformation, to authorise any variations to the contractual arrangements or other related documents for such services should this be required throughout the duration of the term of any contracts and provided they are in line with the Council's Contract Rules and any relevant legislation, including Public Contract Regulations 2015.

4040 **Corporate Financial Performance 2022/23**

Councillor Bird introduced a report which reported on the forecast corporate financial position for 2022/23 (based on December 2022 actual and forecasts) and actions being taken to address this to ensure the council out-turned on budget.

(annexed)

It was **Moved** by Councillor Bird and **Seconded** by Councillor Andrew and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet:

1. **Noted a forecast service revenue overspend of £7.92m after service mitigating actions offset by £7.98m underspend on central budgets (includes £4.79m of mitigating actions) resulting in a net £57k variance under budget, and progress against delivery of approved savings. The service overspend has reduced by £4.56m as detailed in sections 4.5 to 4.9.**
2. **Noted that there continues to be risk in terms of fluctuating demand and prices in Children's Social Services; data issues in Adult Social Care; and the increased cost of living demands, which require continued close management.**

3. **Approved the use of the Market Sustainability and Fair Cost of Care grant allocation of £966k from 2022/23 towards an ongoing uplift to home care services as outlined in section 4.5.**
4. **Approved amendments to the capital programme as detailed at Appendix 5.**
5. **Noted that the forecast for the capital programme is currently predicted to underspend by £652k after the expected carry forward of £121.06m into 2023/24, as set out in sections 4.16 and 4.17.**
6. **Noted financial health indicator performance as set out in section 4.19 and Appendix 6.**
7. **Noted the prudential indicators as set out in section 4.25 and Appendix 7.**

Approved the write off of debt as detailed in section 4.28.

4041 **Council Plan Markers of Success Q2 2022/23**

Councillor Bird introduced a report which reported on Quarter 2 of the 2022/23 Council Plan Markers of Success, highlighting achievements for that period and support requirements identified.

(annexed)

It was **Moved** by Councillor Bird and **Seconded** by Councillor Andrew and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

1. **That Cabinet noted the baseline measures set for 2022/23 and the performance in Q2 relating to the period July-September 2022.**
2. **That Cabinet noted any key achievements, identified interdependencies and support required to achieve the Outcomes, set out in this report.**

4042 **Derelict Sites Intervention**

Councillor Andrew introduced a report which sought to bring redundant sites and buildings back into active economic use to generate economic and environmental outputs for the area and contribute towards development targets, including new homes, employment floorspace and place making.

(annexed)

It was **Moved** by Councillor Andrew and **Seconded** by Councillor Bird and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

1. **That Cabinet supported the use of compulsory purchase powers in-principle where:**

- a) the land cannot be acquired by agreement within a reasonable timeframe; and
- b) the relevant statutory and Ministerial Circular tests for making a compulsory purchase order ('CPO') are met.

and either c) or d) applies:

- c) the use of CPO powers would help facilitate delivery of particular sites as part of a strategic regeneration scheme; and/or
- d) the site is a derelict and underutilised regeneration site, a long-term empty property and/or derelict land.

and noted that approval to make any compulsory purchase order would be subject to a future Cabinet report.

2. That Cabinet noted that reasonable attempts will be made to acquire the various land interests of owners, occupiers or others with a legal interest in any site by agreement, before consideration is given to compulsory purchase powers.
3. That Cabinet agreed the prioritisation process and criteria set out at paragraph 4.7 to be used to identify the most appropriate sites for compulsory purchase, and that a programme arising from this prioritisation should be endorsed by Cabinet in a further report, for inclusion in the capital programme.

4043 Private Hire Vehicles in Bus Lanes

Councillor Andrew introduced a report which responded to a motion passed by Council on 9 January 2023 to optimise the transport network for the benefit of the travelling public by allocating limited road space in the most appropriate way.

(annexed)

Councillor Bird reported feedback received from Councillor A. Hussain.

It was **Moved** by Councillor Andrew and **Seconded** by Councillor Bird and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

1. That Cabinet approved informal consultation with members of the Enhanced Partnership (EP) Reference Group to determine if the proposal to allow private hire vehicles in bus lanes is likely to be approved.
2. That Cabinet delegated authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Communities, in consultation with the Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to consider the outcome of the informal consultation and if the proposal is likely to be approved, make a formal application to vary the EP agreement to allow private hire vehicles in bus lanes where taxis are currently permitted.

4044 **We Are Walsall 2040 Strategy Consultation**

Councillor Perry introduced a report which sought to progress the We Are Walsall 2040 strategy.

(annexed)

It was **Moved** by Councillor Perry and **Seconded** by Councillor Bird and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

1. **That Cabinet approved the We Are Walsall 2040 strategy high level framework as appended to the report.**
2. **That Cabinet recommended the We Are Walsall 2040 framework to the Scrutiny Overview Committee for consideration as part of the consultation.**

4045 **Council Tax Premium**

Councillor Ali introduced a report which sought to encourage owners of long-term empty properties and those not being used as someone's sole or main residence, to bring those properties back into use.

(annexed)

It was **Moved** by Councillor Ali and **Seconded** by Councillor Bird and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

1. **That Cabinet recommended to Council that, from 1 April 2023, the length of time before being able to charge council tax premium, for properties that have been empty and unfurnished for more than 1 year, be reduced to one year rather than current two.**
2. **That Cabinet recommended to Council the introduction of a 100% council tax premium from 1 April 2024 for furnished properties that are no-ones sole or main residence.**
3. **That Cabinet delegated to the Executive Director for Children's and Customer Services, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, authority to amend the recommendations to Council in the event of any changes to the Bill during its passage through the legislative process.**

4046 **Healthy Lifestyle Service Contract Extension**

Councillor Flint introduced a report which sought to continue the Healthy Lifestyle Service and allow Walsall Council time to complete the competitive tendering process for a new Wellbeing Service.

(annexed)

It was **Moved** by Councillor Flint and **Seconded** by Councillor Bird and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

1. That Cabinet approved the extension of the Healthy Lifestyle Services contract from 1 April 2023 up to and including 31 March 2024 with MyTime Active at a cost of up to £717,798.
2. That Cabinet delegated authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing, to subsequently authorise the sealing or signing of any associated contracts, deeds or other related documents for such services.
3. That Cabinet delegated authority to the Director of Public Health, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing to authorise any variations to the contractual arrangements or other related documents for such services should this be required throughout the duration of the term of the further extended contract, providing they are in line with the Council's Contract Rules and any relevant legislation, including the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.

4047 **Determination of the Scheme for coordinated admissions, and the Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools for the 2022/23 academic year**

Councillor Statham introduced a report which sought to ensure that Walsall Council meets its statutory duty to offer a school place to all Walsall resident children, and to determine the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled schools in accordance with the requirements of Section 89 of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998 and the School Admissions Code 2021.

(annexed)

It was **Moved** by Councillor Statham and **Seconded** by Councillor Bird and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

1. That Cabinet approved the proposed schemes as set out in Appendix A for inter-authority coordinated admissions for 2024/25.
2. That Cabinet determined the admission arrangements for community and voluntary controlled primary schools for the academic year 2024/25, as set out in Appendix B of this report.
3. That Walsall Council informs all relevant stakeholders of the determination of its admission arrangements for the 2024/25. academic

year in accordance with the provisions of the School Admissions Code 2021.

4048 Feedback from the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding drone surveillance

Councillor Andrew introduced a report which received a recommendation from the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee made on 24 November 2022 regarding drone surveillance

(annexed)

Resolved (by assent)

That Cabinet noted the report and recommendations of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny

4049 Exclusion of public

Resolved

That during consideration of the remaining items on the agenda, the Cabinet considers that the items for consideration are exempt information by virtue of the appropriate paragraph(s) of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972, and accordingly resolves to consider the items in private.

Private Session: Whilst the following items were considered in the private session, the below is a full account of events and the decisions taken.

4050 TUPE transfer of Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership Economic Intelligence Team

Councillor Bird introduced a report which sought to retain the Economic Intelligence Unit (EIU) as a key service within the Black Country and its staff expertise, by transferring the function from Black Country Consortium (BCC) Ltd to Walsall Council.

(annexed)

It was **Moved** by Councillor Bird and **Seconded** by Councillor Flint and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet approved the TUPE transfer of the Black Country Consortium Ltd Economic Intelligence Team to Walsall Council on 1 April 2023

(Exempt Information under Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972)

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 6:57 p.m.

Chair:

Date:



FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

**Council House,
Lichfield Street,
Walsall, WS1 1TW**
www.walsall.gov.uk

6 March 2023

FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan sets out decisions that are termed as “key decisions” at least 28 calendar days before they are due to be taken by the Executive (Cabinet). Also included on the plan are other decisions to be taken by the Cabinet (“non-key decisions”). Preparation of the forward plan helps the Council to programme its work. The purpose of the forward plan is to give plenty of notice and an opportunity for consultation on the issues to be discussed. The plan is updated each month with the period of the plan being rolled forward by one month and republished. Copies of the plan can be obtained from Democratic Services, Walsall MBC, Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk and can also be accessed from the Council’s website at www.walsall.gov.uk. The Cabinet is allowed to make urgent decisions which do not appear in the forward plan, however, a notice will be included on the agenda for the relevant Cabinet meeting which explains the reasons why.

Please note that the decision dates are indicative and are subject to change. Please contact the above addressee if you wish to check the date for a particular item.

The Cabinet agenda and reports are available for inspection by the public 7 days prior to the meeting of the Cabinet on the Council’s website. Background papers are listed on each report submitted to the Cabinet and members of the public are entitled to see these documents unless they are confidential. The report also contains the name and telephone number of a contact officer. These details can also be found in the forward plan.

Meetings of the Cabinet are open to the public. Occasionally there are items included on the agenda which are confidential and for those items the public will be asked to leave the meeting. The forward plan will show where this is intended and the reason why the reports are confidential. Enquiries regarding these reasons should be directed to Democratic Services (craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk).

“Key decisions” are those decisions which have a significant effect within the community or which involve considerable expenditure or savings. With regard to key decisions the Council’s Constitution states:

- (1) A key decision is:
 - (i) any decision in relation to an executive function which results in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant, having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates or
 - (ii) any decision that is likely to have significant impact on two or more wards within the borough.
- (2) The threshold for “significant” expenditure/savings is £500,000.
- (3) A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

**FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS
APRIL 2023 TO JULY 2023 (06.03.23)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reference No./ Date first entered in Plan	Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside the Council)	Decision maker	Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer	Main consultees	Contact Member (All Members can be written to at Civic Centre, Walsall)	Date item to be considered
152/22 (7.11.22)	<p>Renewal of the Council's Oracle Cloud Licenses:</p> <p>To renew the Council's Oracle cloud Licenses required for the operation of the Council's One Source system for HR, Payroll, Finance and Procurement from May 2023</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Ian Tuft Ian.Tuft@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird Cllr Ferguson	22 March 2023
162/22 (5.12.22)	<p>Approval of the Black Country Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement:</p> <p>Delegate authority to the Executive Director for Resources and Transformation to enter into legal agreements with WMCA relating to the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership Legacy funds.</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Kelly Valente Kelly.Valente@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services	Cllr Bird	22 March 2023
10/23 (6.2.23)	<p>LGA Corporate Peer Challenge – Action Plan:</p> <p>To approve the Action Plan produced in response to the report by the Local Government Association following the January 2023 Corporate Peer Challenge.</p>	Cabinet Non-key decision	Karen Griffiths (Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk) Elizabeth Connolly (Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk)	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	22 March 2023

145/22 (7.11.22)	Town Centre Theatre Project: To agree next steps for the Town Deal Theatre project, setting out funding implications and options. <i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>	Cabinet Key Decision	Philippa Venables Philippa.Venables@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services	Cllr Andrew	22 March 2023
4/23 (9.1.23)	West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2023/24: To approve West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2023/24.	Cabinet Key Decision	Matt Crowton Matt.Crowton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	22 March 2023
5/23 (9.1.23)	Sandwell Local Plan – Issues and Options Consultation: To approve Walsall’s response to the Sandwell Local Plan consultation.	Cabinet Key Decision	Neville Ball neville.ball@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	22 March 2023
153/22 (7.11.22)	Walsall’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2022 to 2027: To approve Walsall’s Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, 2022 to 2027.	Cabinet Key Decision	Neil Hollyhead Neil.HollyHead@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services, service users, external stakeholders	Cllr Ali	22 March 2023
11/23 (6.2.23)	Walsall Civic Centre and Council House improvement works To approve Council House improvement works including heating and ventilation replacement; fire alarm replacement;	Cabinet Key Decision	Ian Lister Ian.Lister@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Ferguson	22 March 2023

	Civic Centre window replacement; Civic Centre ground floor refurbishment.					
12/23 (6.2.23)	Street Scene Strategy: To approve the councils 5-year plan for residential streets	Cabinet Key decision	Kathryn Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@Walsall.gov.uk	Internal services	Cllr Murphy	22 March 2023
13/23 (6.2.23)	Trading Standards Letting Agents Enforcement Policy To approve Walsall Council's Trading Standards policy on the enforcement and determination of financial penalties in circumstances where persons engaged in letting agency work and property management business fail to comply with legislative requirements.	Cabinet Key decision	David Elrington David.Elrington@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	22 March 2023
140/22 (10.10.22)	High Needs Funding Formula: To approve changes to the High Needs Funding Formula, as agreed by Schools Forum, to be used for the allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant – High Needs Block to schools in Walsall for the 2023/24 financial year	Cabinet Key Decision	Richard Walley Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services, Schools Forum	Cllr M. Statham	22 March 2023
154/22 (7.11.22)	Early Years Funding Formula: That Cabinet approves the Early Years Formula, as agreed by Schools Forum, to be used for the allocation of funding to early years providers in Walsall	Cabinet Key Decision	Richard Walley Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk	Schools Forum Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	22 March 2023

14/23 (6.2.23)	Growth Funding for Schools: To enable the Local Authority to fulfil its duty to secure sufficient primary and secondary school places, through the adoption of a policy for the application of revenue funding for school growth.	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services, Schools Forum	Cllr Statham	22 March 2023
155/22 (7.11.22)	Council Plan: Review of Achievements 2021/22: To note the Review of Achievements for 2021/22, highlighting successes and progress towards achieving our Council priorities.	Cabinet Non-key decision	Karen Griffiths Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	19 April 2023
15/23 (6.3.23)	Council Plan Markers of Success Q3: To note the Quarter 3 2022/23 (outturn) performance against the Markers of Success in the Council Plan 2022/25	Cabinet Non-key decision	Karen Griffiths Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	19 April 2023
6/23 (9.1.23)	Borough Playing Pitch Strategy: To adopt and publish the Walsall Playing pitches strategy and the Black Country strategic framework	Cabinet Key Decision	Liz Stuffins Liz.Stuffins@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	19 April 2023
129/22 (5.9.22)	Update on Resilient Communities Safer Streets Programme: To report back on Safer Streets activity and recommend any adjustments/additions to the programme.	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Paul Gordon Paul.Gordon@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	19 April 2023

Cabinet – 22 March 2023

Renewal of the Council's Oracle Cloud licences

Portfolio: Councillor Bird – Leader of the Council

Related portfolios: All

Service: Finance – Council-wide

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1 Aim

This report seeks to ensure that the council has adequate licences in place from 30 May 2023 to continue to be able to utilise its One Source (Oracle Cloud) system when its current licences expire, meaning that the system can continue to be used to manage the council's finance, HR, payroll and procurement processes.

2 Summary

- 2.1 The council's existing One Source (Oracle Cloud) licences expire on 30 May 2023, this being the end of the current 5-year contract period.
- 2.2 Following a review of the sourcing options available the council has concluded that using the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) Framework (reference RM6194) is the most appropriate solution available. The contract is proposed for a period of 5 years from 31 May 2023.
- 2.3 This is a key decision as the value of the contract will exceed £500,000.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet approve the award of the contract for provision of Oracle Cloud licences for a period of 5 years, commencing on 31 May 2023.
- 3.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Corporate Performance and Corporate Landlord (Section 151 Officer), in consultation with the Leader of the Council as the relevant Portfolio Holder, to subsequently sign contracts or other related documents for the services that have been procured.

- 3.3 That Cabinet authorise the signing of this contract under hand, as due to the nature of the services provided it is unlikely the Council would benefit from 12 years of protection under seal.
- 3.4 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Corporate Performance and Corporate Landlord (Section 151 Officer), to authorise any variations to the contractual arrangements or other related documents for such services should this be required throughout the duration of the term of any contracts and provided they are in line with the Council's Contracts Rules and any relevant legislation, including Public Contract Regulations 2015.

4 Report detail

- 4.1 Following a detailed review a programme to replace the council's legacy finance, HR, payroll and procurement systems with the integrated One Source (Oracle Cloud) system began during 2018. This required the purchase of associated licences for the build and subsequent operation, with a contract for those licences being issued to Oracle for a period of 5 years which is due to expire on 30 May 2023.
- 4.2 In preparation for this expiry an internal review of potential options available to the council has taken place. This identified that as there have been no material developments to competing integrated systems, and as the council has invested significantly in the development and implementation of the One Source system, to ensure value for money and return on that investment the One Source system is currently expected to continue to be used by the council over the medium (and longer) term.
- 4.3 Additionally, as the system has been live for some time now, a separate piece of work, the One Source health check, has been undertaken to identify existing weaknesses in the processes developed by Walsall. This has identified several changes that can be made to improve the use of the system and a project plan to take those changes forward is now being developed.
- 4.4 Given these findings the direction was clear that renewal of the licences for the One Source (Oracle Cloud) system would be required. Work was therefore undertaken with Procurement to identify the most suitable route to secure the renewal, with a recommendation to utilise the Crown Commercial Service (CCS) Framework (reference RM6194) which would ensure effective value for money given that the framework has already been subject to a best value exercise when developed.
- 4.5 Consultation with the core services utilising the system (finance, HR, payroll and procurement) then took place to confirm their licence requirements over the next 5 years – taking account of any potential changes to the system that may result from the recent One Source health check work, with the consolidated position from that provided to Oracle to issue a quote under the framework.
- 4.6 That quote has now been reviewed and approved internally within Oracle and issued to the council. The existing contract with Oracle does stipulate that if there are no changes to licence requirements that Oracle will minimise increases in the first 2 years of any extension to 2% per year, and whilst there

have been some changes in the licences being requested by the council within the renewal, Oracle have still abided by those terms and have limited increases in the first 2 years of the new contract to 2%, with then their normal inflationary increase utilised for years 3-5. The outcome of that process is then averaged over the 5 years to provide the council with a fixed charge each year.

4.7 Whilst that fixed charge does represent an increase on the current costs (given the change in requirements by the Council and also the inflationary increases that have been included) it is affordable within the budget for this service that has been included within the Council's Medium Term Financial Outlook.

4.8 As such this report seeks Cabinet's approval to enter into the new contract alongside delegation to the Director of Finance, Corporate Performance and Corporate Landlord (Section 151 Officer), in consultation with the Leader of the council as the relevant Portfolio Holder, to subsequently sign and / or authorise the sealing of any deeds, contracts or other related documents for the services that have been procured.

5 Council Plan priorities

5.1 The One Source (Oracle Cloud) system allows the council to provide effective back-office processes (finance, HR, payroll and procurement) that support the delivery of all Council Plan priorities, and specifically Internal Focus.

6 Risk management

6.1 The One Source system ensures that there are robust internal controls in place to manage the risk associated with key council processes, including both financial and payroll transactions and control of the overall organisational structure of the authority. Renewal of the One Source (Oracle Cloud) licences will ensure these processes continue to be available to the council.

7 Financial implications

7.1 The outcome of the renewal process has resulted in an annual cost for the provision of licences for the one Source (Oracle Cloud) system of £529k, with the contract value over the 5-year period totalling £2.647m.

7.2 Whilst this represents an increase on the current costs (given the change in requirements by the council and also the inflationary increases that have been included) it is affordable within the budget for this service that has been included within the council's Medium Term Financial Outlook.

8 Legal implications

8.1 As the proposed procurement from Oracle is via a compliant Framework Agreement which the Council is permitted to use and the legal implications associated with the proposed contract do not raise any significant issues. The risk of any legal challenge materialising is very low and the Council's Procurement Team have been fully involved in the procurement.

- 8.2 The contract which will be signed between the Council and Oracle contain fixed terms and conditions which have already been agreed under the terms of (CCS) Framework (reference RM6194); therefore both the Council and Oracle must accept these terms and conditions.
- 8.3 Given the likely value of the proposed contract, it is normally recommended that both parties seal the contract as a deed. This is consistent with the requirements of the Contract Rules in relation to Strategic Contracts with a value of over £500,000.
- 8.4 As a matter of law the sealing of a contract extends the ability of the Council to pursue an action through the courts in the event that the Council needed to take legal action against the supplier in relation to their failure to comply with the contract, to twelve years instead of the usual six years from the date on which the cause of the action accrued. However due to the nature of the services provided in this case, it is unlikely the Council would actually benefit from 12 years of protection under seal. Therefore it is proposed that the contracts be signed on behalf of the Council rather than being sealed. This will also simplify the completion of the contract.

9 Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 9.1 The commercial advantages of using a compliant framework agreement are flexibility and reduced timescales of procurement procedures.
- 9.2 The Crown Commercial Service (CCS) Framework (reference RM6194) was selected as being the most appropriate to meet our needs. The Public Sector is entitled to use this framework, which includes the option to make a Direct Award in the following circumstances:
- If the potential Buyer can determine that:
 - its Deliverables can be met by the Suppliers' catalogues and description of the Deliverables as set out in Framework Schedule 1 (Specification) and Framework Schedule 2 (Framework Tender); and
 - all of the terms of the proposed Call-Off Contract are laid down in this Contract and do not require amendment or any supplementary terms and conditions;
- 9.3 Advice and guidance has been given by the Corporate Procurement Team throughout this process. The award process which the Council has carried out has been undertaken in accordance with the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and gave consideration to social value in line with the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 and was in compliance with the Council's Contract Rules.

10 Property implications

- 10.1 None directly as a result of this report.

11 Health and wellbeing implications

11.1 None directly as a result of this report.

12 Reducing Inequalities

12.1 The purchase these licences have no equality implications and the corporate equalities team have confirmed that an equality impact assessment is therefore not required.

13 Staffing implications

13.1 None directly as a result of this report.

14 Climate Impact

14.1 None directly as a result of this report.

15 Consultation

15.1 Internal consultation has been undertaken with the council's Procurement team, Legal Services, Finance, Corporate Property and Public Health. Additionally as part of the data gathering exercise to support this renewal liaison with the core services utilising the system (finance, HR, payroll and procurement) took place to confirm their licence requirements over the next 5 years

16 Decide

16.1 Alternative options were considered prior to commencing the procurement exercise, however this identified that there have been no material developments to competing integrated systems during the past five years and that Oracle remains the market leader for such applications. Also, as the council has invested significantly in the development and implementation of the One Source system, to ensure value for money and return on that investment the One Source system is expected to continue to be used by the council over the medium (and longer) term.

16.2 A procurement exercise for the renewal of licences therefore took place and this report seeks Cabinet's approval to enter into a new contract alongside delegation to the Director of Finance, Corporate Performance and Corporate Landlord (Section 151 Officer), in consultation with the Leader of the council as the relevant Portfolio Holder, to subsequently sign and / or authorise the sealing of any deeds, contracts or other related documents for the services that have been procured.

17 Respond

17.1 Subject to Cabinet approval of the recommendations in this report, the procurement process will be finalised, and contracts awarded to allow continued access to the One Source system with effect from 31 May 2023.

18 Review

18.1 A further detailed review of future One Source (Oracle Cloud) licence requirements will take place before the end of the 5-year period to inform the direction regarding any further renewal that may be necessary.

Background papers

None

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Signed



Shaun Darcy
Director of Finance, Corporate Performance
and Corporate Landlord (Section 151 Officer)

22 March 2023

Signed



Councillor M Bird
Leader of the Council

22 March 2023

Cabinet – 22 March 2023

Approval of the Black Country Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement and Enterprise Zone Memorandum of Understanding

Portfolio: Councillor Bird – Leader of the Council

Related portfolios: Councillor Andrew – Deputy Leader and Regeneration

Service: Programme Management, Resources and Transformation

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 To set into place the arrangements agreed by the four Black Country Local Authorities (BCLA's), required to retain and continue the successful administration of legacy funding in the Black Country, following the abolition of the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership ("BCLEP") with effect from the 31 March 2023.
- 1.2 To facilitate this, to set into place the required arrangements between the BCLAs, to ensure this funding is retained for use across the Black Country. This will be done by updating the existing legal agreement underpinning the Black Country ways of working: The Black Country Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement ("Collaboration Agreement").
- 1.3 To update the Memorandum of Understanding for Enterprise Zones (EZ MOU) between the BCLAs and the relevant Government department.

2. Summary

- 2.1 In 2013 the four BCLAs (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton) approved the formation of the Black Country Executive Joint Committee (BCJC), granting it the functions and powers to administer the City Deal and Growth Deal programmes. Walsall's Cabinet approved these arrangements on 11 September 2013.
- 2.2 Since 2013, several amendments to the Collaboration Agreement have been made which have been approved and set out in previous Cabinet Reports, and

included the increasing of the BCJC's scope to administer all funds secured by the BC LEP.

- 2.3 The February 2022 Levelling Up White Paper signalled a shift in policy direction from Government, requiring the functions of Local Enterprise Partnerships to be transferred into Combined Authorities. Since this date, the BC LEP has been working with the WMCA to develop an integration plan, to transfer their functions by the end of this financial year.
- 2.4 The Collaboration Agreement has been updated to reflect the integration plan, and formalise arrangements for continued Black Country ways of working and the management of legacy funds, including the Enterprise Zone being the only significant uncommitted ongoing fund. BEIS have confirmed that management, reporting and decision making in relation to BC LEP Legacy Funds will remain the responsibility of the BCLAs, with these responsibilities not transferring to the WMCA.
- 2.5 From 1 April 2023 the continued management and monitoring of BC LEP legacy funds will be the responsibility of the BCLAs; it has been agreed that these will continue to be managed locally by Walsall Council, as the BC LEP's Single Accountable Body (SAB). Enterprise Zones are the only significant BC LEP Fund that is not fully committed, so government have specifically requested that a (non-legally binding) Memorandums of Understanding ("MOU") in relation to Enterprise Zones is agreed between them and the BCLAs. The relevant government department and signatory to this MOU, and timeframes for signing, are still to be confirmed as at the date of this report.
- 2.6 This is a Key Decision as the financial impact of some of the changes to the Collaboration Agreement, particularly in relation to Enterprise Zones, is in excess of £500,000.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet approve the revised Collaboration Agreement, attached as **Appendix A**, with significant changes set out in further detail in this report.
- 3.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord and Corporate Performance (s151) in consultation with the Leader, to make any final amendments and authorise the sealing by the Council of the Collaboration Agreement.
- 3.3 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord and Corporate Performance (s151) in consultation with the Leader, to negotiate, approve and sign the Memorandum of Understanding for Enterprise Zones.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 In 2013, the four BCLAs (Dudley, Sandwell, Walsall and Wolverhampton) approved the formation of the BCJC, granting it the functions and powers to administer the City Deal and Growth Deal programmes. Walsall's Cabinet approved these arrangements on 11 September 2013.
- 4.2 These roles, functions and powers, together with how the BCLAs and the Black Country Consortium Ltd (BCC Ltd) being the five partners, will work together were recorded in the Collaboration Agreement. This included an acceptance of delegated authority from each council's Cabinet for the BCJC to act as the decision making body for the identified programmes.
- 4.3 Since 2013, several amendments to the Collaboration Agreement have been made which were approved and set out in previous Cabinet Reports, the latest one being the October 2021 report "Approving amendments to the Black Country Executive Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement". The scope of the last updated Collaboration Agreement included all current and future funding opportunities secured or operated by or through the BC LEP.
- 4.4 The February 2022 Levelling Up White Paper signalled a shift in policy direction from Government, requiring the functions of Local Enterprise Partnerships to be transferred into Combined Authorities. Since this date, the BC LEP has been working with the WMCA to develop an integration plan, to transfer their functions by the end of this financial year, and on 14 December 2022 a report to Cabinet titled "Update On Streamlining Black Country Ways Of Working – Black Country Consortium Ltd" set out some detail in relation to this, including the voluntary winding down of BCC Ltd.
- 4.5 The Collaboration Agreement has been updated to reflect the integration plan, and formalise arrangements for continued Black Country ways of working. The Collaboration Agreement sets out how BC LEP legacy funds will be managed (paragraphs 4.7 to 4.13), including Enterprise Zones (paragraphs 4.14 to 4.20) being the only significant uncommitted fund remaining, and sets out revised governance arrangements (paragraphs 4.21 to 4.23). BEIS have confirmed that management, reporting and decision making in relation to BC LEP Legacy Funds will remain the responsibility of the BCLAs, with these responsibilities not transferring to the WMCA.
- 4.6 BCC Ltd was an original signatory to the Collaboration Agreement and will continue trading until the 31 March 2023, fulfilling its contractual obligations in its current financial year but seek to cease trading post that date, effectively closing its accounts by c30 June 2023. Therefore, BCC Ltd will no longer be a signatory to the Collaboration Agreement.

BC LEP Legacy funds

- 4.7 BC LEP Legacy Funds ("Legacy Funds") are as follows: the Local Growth Deal;

the Growing Places Fund; the Land and Property Investment Fund (“LPIF”); the Black Country Enterprise Zone (“BCEZ”); the Getting Building Fund; and the BCLEP Reinvestment Fund. Walsall Council are the Single Accountable Body (SAB) for the BC LEP.

4.8 The majority of BCLEP legacy funds are fully spent or committed to projects:

- The Local Growth Deal Fund (cumulative grant award of £211m) was fully spent by March 2021 on 116 projects. The programme is now in the output monitoring stage of its lifecycle. The Growing Places Fund was used to over-programme Local Growth Fund and is also fully spent.
- The £53m LPIF was awarded by the WMCA as part of its first Devolution Deal. Final indicative allocations to commit the remaining balance of the LPIF have been approved by the BCLEP and BCJC. This programme will then be fully committed with investment in 10 projects. The fund must be fully spend by March 2025, with a further year allocated for output monitoring, to March 2026.
- The Getting Building Fund (£27.7m), awarded via the WMCA, was fully spent by March 2022, and is now in the output monitoring stage of its lifecycle.

4.9 The LEP Reinvestment Fund was established by the BCLEP to capture recycled investments from other LEP grants, such as from overage and the BDUK Broadband project gainshare returns. The Collaboration Agreement sets out that any overage and returns to this fund will be shared equally by the four BCLAs.

4.10 The only uncommitted LEP Legacy Funds relate to the following:

Table 1: Uncommitted BCLEP funds

Fund	Unallocated value	Additional details
Growing Places Fund	£0 although further loan repayments from projects are expected in future years	Used to over-programme the Local Growth Fund. Future loan repayments to be shared equally between the 4 BCLAs
LEP Reinvestment Fund	c£0.149m overage collected with a further £0.778m invoiced as at the date of this report	Any unallocated remaining funds to be shared equally between the 4 BCLAs
Building Digital UK Gainshare (part of the LEP Reinvestment Fund)	£0.994m net accrued to date	Gainshare receipts are received annually including payments due in 2023 with a final report in summer 2024. Gainshares received

		will be shared equally amongst the 4 BCLAs
Enterprise Zones	See paragraphs 4.14 to 4.20	

- 4.11 Reporting to the department for Business, Energy and Industrial Strategy* (“BEIS”) and the BCJC will be the responsibility of the SAB with the last reporting date being to 31 March 2026, excluding the BCEZ. The SAB will continue to report to the BCJC and BCLAs on Contingent liabilities relating to BC LEP legacy funds (being the possible liabilities in relation to clawback risk) until such time as either the liabilities are realised, the possible liabilities are mitigated via output delivery, or it is deemed that the risk is remote. If any liabilities were to arise from BCLA projects, they would be settled in accordance with the Collaboration Agreement, according to respective geographical areas. **Note that the government department may change following government announcements on 7 February 2023.*
- 4.12 For some of the Legacy Funds received from the funding providers in advance (i.e. Local Growth Deal, Getting Building Fund), interest was accrued in the period between grant receipt and grants being distributed to applicants. The BC LEP approved that interest could be utilised to fund SAB and BCC Ltd programme management costs, where they could not be capitalised to projects. Any remaining interest, after accounting for costs incurred by the SAB in completing their roles and responsibilities to 31 March 2026 (or beyond should any programmes be extended), shall be shared equally between the four BCLAs.
- 4.13 Any re-investment of the Legacy Funds by the BCLAs must be spent in line with which the funds were originally intended when granted, or otherwise in order to promote economic growth and development in the respective administrative areas of each of the Parties.

Enterprise Zones

- 4.14 The BCEZ had to date been managed on a consolidated Black Country basis, with a shared financial model and a pre-agreed order of priority for costs claimed against collected business rates.
- 4.15 A Schedule to the Collaboration Agreement setting out these matters, and the principles and framework for managing the BCEZ, was approved by the Council on 16 December 2020 in the Cabinet report titled “Approving the Supplemental Deed of Variation to the Black Country Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement”.
- 4.16 BCLA Chief Executives and Leaders, through their Association of Black Country Authorities (“ABCA”) meetings, were consulted on the future of BCEZs throughout 2022/23. Several options were explored as to how BCEZ, as a Legacy Fund, would be managed. The preferred and agreed option is that the

SAB will continue to manage and administer BCEZs, collecting business rate surpluses until 31 March 2025 and paying out existing commitments from these consolidated surpluses, with the significance of this date being the point at which the majority of the shared commitments cease.

- 4.17 From 1 April 2025 (subject to a handover and settlement period to 31 August 2025), Enterprise Zones will revert back to their Local Authority of geographical origin for decision making, management and administration. Walsall Council will therefore cease to be the Accountable Body for the BCEZs, and only manage business rates and investment related to the Walsall borough Enterprise Zone.
- 4.18 The North BCEZ (“North EZ”), comprising the Wolverhampton and Walsall geographical areas) was originally submitted to government as a joint bid. Since its approval, the North EZ priority site for investment was i54, which is now generating a business rate surplus (after accounting for borrowing costs). Whilst Phoenix 10 was identified as the next priority site, the later timing has meant that there is a shorter period to ring-fence business rates and spread borrowing costs by the end of the North EZ (being 31 March 2038). As a result of this, and differing viability gaps for Walsall and Wolverhampton projects, the surpluses of Wolverhampton are forecast to be significantly greater at c£46m, than Walsall’s £3m by March 2038. Therefore, a straight forward reversion of the North EZ to respective Local Authorities was not in line with the original spirit and intention of the North EZ submission, being that surpluses generated from investment should support other deficit EZ sites.
- 4.19 As a result, it was agreed that a key strategic Walsall site within the BCEZ, the Gasholders site, should be funded from the Wolverhampton generated business rate surpluses up to a capped value and subject to a green book compliant business case. After Phoenix 10, where remediation works are currently on site, the Gasholders site is the next delivery priority in the BCEZ for the Council as landowner. The site has the potential to deliver high-quality industrial uses and is strategically important to Walsall’s employment land supply and is capable of delivering significant floor-space and local jobs. As a brownfield site, delivery and development is complex with abnormal constraints impacting on viability, and exacerbated by external economic influences. In December 2022, Cabinet approved the direction of travel for the Council to continue to assess and progress pre-development work towards the objective of developing a high-quality employment scheme at the Gasholders site, including preparation of an outline business case for future consideration by the WMCA and Cabinet. It is estimated that the grant funding requirement for the Gasholders site will likely exceed the capped value from the business rate surpluses and therefore require a blended funding solution by public sector partners.
- 4.20 The BCEZ Schedule (Schedule 6) to the Collaboration Agreement titled “BCEZ Governance Principles” has been amended to reflect these new arrangements for BCEZs post BC LEP.

Governance Arrangements

- 4.21 From 31 March 2022, the BC LEP, and its Funding Sub Group, will no longer exist. Therefore new arrangements will be required to approve new investments (such as the Gasholder investment as per paragraph 4.19 above), and to approve change requests (such as reductions on outputs). BEIS have confirmed that management, reporting and decision making in relation to BC LEP Legacy Funds will remain the responsibility of the BCLAs, with these responsibilities not transferring to the WMCA.
- 4.22 The Legacy Funds are still required to follow an Assurance Framework, compliant with the government's National Assurance Framework. The amended Collaboration Agreement is drafted on the basis that BCLAs and projects must comply with the existing BC LEP Assurance Framework "in so far as it is applicable". This approach has been discussed with BEIS who consider that this is reasonable – changes to National Frameworks are reducing meaning that the BCLEP Framework will still be compliant.
- 4.23 In practice, this will mean that change requests and investment decisions, if any, would need to be approved at the Heads of Regeneration Working Group and BCJC only. Investment decisions (relating to BCEZs only i.e. the Gasholder project) would still need a Green Book compliant business case, which would be appraised by the SABs independent technical advisors. This would not apply to funds shared equally between BCLAs in Table 1 above, and the BCEZ from 1 April 2025, which would follow Local Authority protocols and governance.

Enterprise Zone Memorandum of Understanding

- 4.24 Enterprise Zones are the only significant BC LEP Fund that is not fully committed, so government have specifically requested that a (non-legally binding) Memorandums of Understanding ("MOU") in relation to Enterprise Zones is agreed between them and the BCLAs. The relevant government department and signatory to this MOU is still to be confirmed as at the date of this report.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.25 The Council has committed to five key areas of focus in the Council Plan 2022-2025 which support the overall aim of reducing inequalities and maximising potential.
- 4.26 The updated legal agreements as set out in this report will help support delivery against the strategic priorities of:
- *Internal Focus: All Council services are efficient and effective.*
 - *Economic: Enable greater local opportunities for all people, communities and businesses*

Risk management

- 4.27 There is a risk that the revised Collaboration Agreement does not comply with National Government requirements. This has been mitigated by engaging with BEIS throughout the LEP integration to understand national changes and requirements. Given national requirements are reducing there is a remote risk that the Agreement is non-compliant.
- 4.28 There are various risks associated with the BC LEP legacy funds (i.e. non-achievement of outputs, risk of clawback etc) but these are existing and not additional risks resulting from the recommendations in this report. These are already being mitigated from existing processes as set out in the BC LEP Assurance Framework and the Collaboration Agreement. BEIS have confirmed that management and decision making in relation to BC LEP Legacy Funds will remain the responsibility of the BCLAs, and will not transfer to the WMCA, ensuring that uncommitted Legacy Funds will be invested within the Black Country. This ensures that uncommitted Legacy funds are reinvested in the Black Country.
- 4.29 Enterprise Zones: There is associated financial risk and reward with the new arrangements from 1 April 2025, as set out in paragraphs 4.30-4.35 in the financial implications section below.

Financial implications

- 4.30 There are no direct financial implications associated with the approval of the Collaboration Agreement and the EZ MOU. All costs associated with the delivery of SAB functions by Walsall Council, including making amendments to the Collaboration Agreement and EZ MOU, are covered from 'top-slicing' of the grants managed, or from the interest generated from funding held, or a mixture of both, as agreed by the BC LEP and the BCJC. SAB costs are budgeted and funded up to 31 March 2026 when output reporting for Legacy Funds are expected to cease.
- 4.31 Walsall Council will benefit from an equal (one quarter) share of the unallocated Legacy Funds, as set out in Table 1.
- 4.32 There are significant implications associated with the BCEZ reverting to their geographical Local Authority by 31 March 2025. All existing commitments referred to in the December 2020 Cabinet report will be honoured (i.e. SAB management costs, the £250,000 annual pipeline development grants and historic revenue costs being recovered).
- 4.33 From 31 March 2025 Walsall Council will take the risk and reward of its own EZ surpluses, forecast to be c£3m by 31 March 2038 – although note that this surplus is after taking into account borrowing costs of our approved schemes being Phoenix 10, Parallel 9-10 and Boxpool. If Walsall's business rates collected are less than modelled, and are insufficient to cover borrowing costs associated with Walsall EZ investments or historic revenue costs, then the Council will be left with a liability. This also applies in the reverse in that if

business rates collected are in excess of forecasts (noting that reasonable levels of contingency have been applied) then the Council will benefit from that surplus generated rather than it having to be returned to a consolidated BCEZ.

- 4.34 However, on a consolidated basis the Council had access to a higher level of buffer against business rates shortfalls i.e. the consolidated surplus forecast to the end of the BCEZ was c£60m whereas the Walsall generated surplus within that total is only forecast to be c£3m, albeit there was no guarantee that the consolidated surplus could be used to address our project specific forecasts.
- 4.35 Walsall Council will also benefit to a capped value of £14.898m to contribute to the Gasholder funding package, funded from Wolverhampton generated surpluses subject to a Green Book compliant business case being completed and the investment being approved at BCJC.

Legal implications

- 4.36 Under the Local Government Act 1972 and Local Government Act 2000 as amended by the Localism Act 2012 and regulations issued by the Secretary of State, the Council's Executive has the power to setup an Executive Joint Committee.
- 4.37 An Executive Joint Committee is effectively an extension of Cabinet, making decisions on behalf of Cabinet where it has delegated authority to do so. Delegation does not prevent Cabinet from choosing to excise the powers instead of the Executive Joint Committee, nor withdrawing at any time the delegation for a specific matter or item or in its entirety.
- 4.38 The Collaboration Agreement is a legal document that requires its signatories to adhere to the governance and protocols in managing the BC LEP Legacy funds.
- 4.39 The SAB and legal and finance officers of each BCLA have been consulted on the drafting of the Collaboration Agreement. Therefore these documents can be completed as soon as the BCLAs have each secured their own formal Cabinet approvals to these arrangements. The completion of the associated binding agreement will also be progress alongside this work to provide each of the parties with the protection and risk mitigation associated with a legally binding document.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.40 There are currently no procurement or social value implications arising directly from this report.

Property implications

- 4.41 There are currently no property implications arising directly from this report.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.42 There are currently no direct health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.43 There are no direct equality implications arising from this report.

Staffing implications

- 4.44 There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report. All costs associated with the delivery of the SAB functions by Walsall Council, including making amendments to the Collaboration Agreement and BCEZ MOU agreements are already funded, as set out in the Financial Implications sections of this report.

Climate Impact

- 4.45 There are no climate impact implications arising from this report.

Consultation

- 4.46 ABCA Chief Executives and ABCA Leaders have been consulted on throughout 2022/23 in relation to BCLEP Legacy funds and the integration plan.
- 4.47 Heads of Regeneration Working Group have been consulted throughout 2022/23 in relation to BCLEP Legacy funds and the integration plan, as well as being consulted on the Collaboration Agreement, and will be consulted on the draft EZ MOU.
- 4.48 The SAB and legal and finance officers of each BCLA have been consulted on the drafting of the replacement Collaboration Agreement, and will be consulted on the draft EZ MOU.

5. Decide

It is recommended:

- 5.1 That Cabinet approve the revised Collaboration Agreement, attached as **Appendix A**, with significant changes set out in further detail in this report.
- 5.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord and Corporate Performance (s151) in consultation with the Leader, to make any final amendments and authorise the sealing by the Council of the Collaboration Agreement.
- 5.3 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord and Corporate Performance (s151) in consultation with the Leader, to

negotiate, approve and sign the Memorandum of Understanding for Enterprise Zones.

6. Respond

6.1 Enter into the Collaboration Agreement.

6.2 Enter into the EZ MOU with the relevant government department.

7. Review

7.1 The Collaboration Agreement and the consequences of the proposals set out in this report will be reviewed from time to time as local and national policies and practises evolve.

Appendices

Appendix A: Black Country Executive Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement

Background papers

Cabinet – 16 December 2020: Approving the Supplemental Deed of Variation to the Black Country Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement

Cabinet – 20 October 2021: Approving amendments to the Black Country Executive Joint Committee Collaboration Agreement

Cabinet – 14 December 2022: Update On Streamlining Black Country Ways Of Working – Black Country Consortium Ltd

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Signed



Shaun Darcy
Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord
and Corporate Performance (s151)

22 March 2023



Councillor M Bird
Leader of the Council

22 March 2023

Cabinet – 22 March 2023

LGA Corporate Peer Challenge Findings and Action Plan

Portfolio:	Councillor Bird – Leader of the Council
Related portfolios:	All
Service:	Council Wide
Wards:	All
Key decision:	No
Forward plan:	Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 The report presents the findings of the recent Local Government Association (LGA) Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) undertaken by the Council in January 2023 and presents a high-level action plan for approval that responds to the recommendations made by the LGA.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The report outlines the findings from the review and presents a Council response to the 11 recommendations proposed by the LGA from their recent peer challenge of the organisation. The report highlighted some very positive areas of work in the Council; acknowledging the transformational impact of the Proud programme over the last 5 years, the effective relationship between officers and Members, the robust financial and governance arrangements in scrutiny and audit, the extensive engagement work undertaken for the We are Walsall 2040 Borough plan, the excellent performance in challenging areas of service delivery and the strong foundations now in place through the Hub for the Council to continue its improvement story.
- 2.2 The recommendations made by the Peer Challenge team are themes that the Council had/have in consideration prior to the visit of the team in January 2023, with work planned or already underway.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Cabinet note and celebrate the successes highlighted by the Corporate Peer Challenge report.
- 3.2. That Cabinet approve the Council's action plan, which responds to the Corporate Peer Challenge in January 2023.

4. Report detail - know

- 4.1 It is recommended that Councils undertake a Corporate Peer Challenge every 5 years to ensure a reflection, stocktake and consideration of the organisation. It gives Councils an opportunity to engage with peers with current or previous experience on specific areas or issues. The last peer challenge assessment was undertaken in 2017 and was the catalyst for the Proud transformation programme that has delivered a fundamental shift in Council services and delivery.
- 4.2 During the week of 16-19 January 2023, we welcomed a team of peers and one Member from leading Councils across the country. The assessment consists of 5 core elements:
- **Local priorities and outcomes:** Are the council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the council delivering effectively on its priorities and achieving improved outcomes for all its communities?
 - **Organisational and place leadership:** Does the council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
 - **Governance and culture:** Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of respect, challenge, and scrutiny?
 - **Financial planning and management:** Does the council have a clear understanding of its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a clear plan to address its financial challenges?
 - **Capacity for improvement:** Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the council have the capacity to improve?
- 4.3 In addition to the 5 core elements, we asked for the assessment to focus on the delivery of our Proud Promises:
- Improve outcomes and customer experience.
 - Improve employee satisfaction and engagement.
 - Improve service efficiency and performance.
- 4.4 The peer team spoke to 120 staff, Members, volunteers, and partners during their 4 days on site through group workshops and focus groups, 1-1 conversations and further examined Council strategies and plans. The report (appendix 1) was shared with the Council in February in draft form and finalised in early March. It includes 11 recommendations for further consideration towards the Council improvement journey.
- 4.5 Members were singled out for praise for their broad local knowledge of the communities they serve and the trusting and effective relationships that exist between officers and Members across the Council. The peer team also noted that there is strong political leadership of the Council and were impressed by the breadth and diversity of the Cabinet.
- 4.6 The findings have praised the excellent transformational approach of the Proud programme to bring new leadership, capacity, skills, and ways of thinking to the organisation. The report highlighted that Proud has enabled the Council to embed and consolidate an effective approach to transformation and change and the new expertise and knowledge available to the organisations through the Hub

(Policy & Strategy; Communications, Marketing and Brand; Business Insights; and Commissioning, Procurement, and contract management) ensure that the organisation has the right skills in place to move forward in the next phase of strategic transformation and delivery.

- 4.7 There are strong and robust controls in place within the Council. Finance was cited as highly effective with clear financial reporting, effective Council engagement with audit and robust and appropriate scrutiny in place. Audit Committee was singled out as “one of the strongest they have seen.” The team noted and commended the Council’s ‘Outcome based budgeting’ ambitions in integrating service transformation planning, budget setting processes and the use of policy, strategy, and data insight to ensure a coherent and strategic approach across the Council.
- 4.8 The peer team have noted the breadth and scale of the engagement programme undertaken for We are Walsall 2040 and noted that the Council should be extremely proud of its achievement in this space. The ongoing socialisation of the strategy is hugely important to ensure that fostering of a collective ambition for the borough and provides a strategic framework for our continued partnership working across the borough. The report commended the Council on its strong relationship with partners, particularly the community sector and the building blocks towards integrated working that are in place through the various partnership boards, Walsall Connected and Walsall Together. Partners involved in the Peer challenge process spoke highly of the Council- “Walsall approaches its partnerships collaboratively and positively” These arrangements will continue to be harnessed to ensure collective working to achieve effective delivery of outcomes.
- 4.9 The positive performance of the Council in some highly challenging areas was cited by the team within the report. This includes achieving positive outcomes in areas of Adult Social Care and Health through Walsall Together, the delivery of Children’s services and the work of the Council in developing integrated teams and enabling hospital discharge. The team also commended the Council on its clear and simple performance management against the Council plan through its Markers of Success.
- 4.10 There is a strong culture of improvement within the organisation as evidenced by the Council inviting the peer team to carry out the assessment highlighting our willingness to reflect and learn, the investment into the new insight and strategic skills through the Hub, Transformation and Change unit and recent investment into Human Resources. The report commends this culture of learning and encourages the Council to continue in pushing forward with learning, reflection and embracing ideas. The report also commends the Council on progress made on Equalities and Diversity across the workforce and in delivery against the Public Sector Equality Duty. Particularly noted are the introduction of staff networks to ensure diverse voices can be heard and the work done to close the gender pay gap.
- 4.11 The action plan (appendix 2) highlights the Council response to the 11 recommendations produced from the report. The commentary response and actions highlight that many programmes and specific activities that address the

recommendations were already planned before the Corporate Peer Challenge or are already underway. The review gave the Council the opportunity to reflect and now consider how we can continue and add to existing plans for the next stage of our transformation journey.

- 4.12 Staff have been engaged in the development of the response and actions for each recommendation through a variety of workshops, including a joint strategic session of Executive Directors and Directors, and at Senior Managers Group. Alongside the public action plan a detailed delivery plan will be produced with clear strategic alignment to our key strategies (Council plan, We are Walsall 2040, Proud promises) and with clear milestones and accountabilities for delivery.

Risk management

- 4.13 There are no significant risks associated with the action plan other than potential risk to the Council's reputation if it fails to deliver. Effective risk management practice is incorporated as standard into the planning of Council projects and initiatives that will support the delivery of the actions identified.

Financial implications

- 4.14 There are no direct financial implications related to the action plan itself but there may be financial implications regarding the delivery of suggested actions.

Legal implications

- 4.15 There are no direct legal implications from this report. There is no legal requirement to act following a LGA Corporate Peer Challenge however to do so does promote good governance and transparency.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.16 There are no direct procurement implications from this report, however there is a specific recommendation related to increasing social value across the Council that is addressed within the action plan.

Property implications

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

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.18 There are no direct implications in this report.

Staffing implications

- 4.19 There are no direct staffing implications from this report, however there is a potential impact on staffing resources from the delivery of some of the suggested actions in the plan.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.20 The action plan activities will strengthen the delivery of Our Council Plan and We are Walsall 2040 borough plan. Both strategies ensure we can reduce inequalities across the borough.

Climate Change

- 4.21 There are no direct implications.

Consultation

- 4.22 The report has been informed by evidence gathered and submitted during the LGA CPC process and via consultation with Cabinet members and senior managers.

5. Decide

The report presents a draft action plan for approval that responds to the recommendations for improvement identified and reported by the LGA following the CPC undertaken by the Council in January 2023. A review will be undertaken alongside the lead LGA officer in six months to check the Council progress in its action plan.

6. Respond

The Council is already undertaking programmes and activities that directly address the recommendations identified by the report. This existing and planned work will continue alongside some new actions to ensure that we continue to improve as an organisation. The delivery plan will be reported through to Corporate Management Team to ensure accountability and delivery.

7. Review

The CPC process includes a review from the LGA around six months from the initial visit. This will provide an opportunity to reflect and consider the delivery of the action plan.

Background papers

None

Annexes:

Appendix 1 LGA report
Appendix 2 Corporate Peer Challenge Action Plan

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Signed:



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22 March 2023

Signed:



Councillor M Bird
Leader of the Council
22 March 2023


Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Corporate Peer Challenge Report

16-19 January 2023

Feedback report





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1. Executive summary:

Walsall Council has undergone significant transformation and change in recent years. This has included the proactive design and delivery of the Council's "Proud Programme" but also the reactive response of the organisation to wider social changes and reforms. In this context, there is an exciting opportunity for the Council to build on this practice, utilise their strong governance and financial foundations, and apply the principles and learning of the Proud Programme to wider socio-economic challenges. This will enable the Council to continue their journey of improvement, addressing outcomes through a convening and enabling role with wider partners. Ultimately, this will support the ambitions set out in the "We are Walsall 2040" (WAW2040) Programme over the coming years.

The vision of WAW2040 has been shaped by extensive engagement, with more than 10,000 residents and businesses contributing towards the development of a shared ambition to create a borough "*that works for everyone*". The opportunity now exists for the Council to build on the discussions to date to deepen engagement and maximise the contribution of communities to these goals. The Peer Team appreciate that further work is ongoing on the development of a framework for this approach but hope that the recommendations and findings set out in this report support Walsall Council with this process.

Through the Peer Review process, the team were presented with evidence of strong governance arrangements and effective financial planning. This corporate core provides a strong foundation for services, engagement, ongoing transformation, and is underpinned by clear financial reporting, effective engagement with audit, and appropriate internal scrutiny. The Peer Team appreciates that there have been further corporate improvements made in recent years, including securing additional capacity for communications, a Programme Management Office, and the development of a Corporate Hub, bringing together Communications, Marketing and Brand (including consultation), Policy & Strategy (including performance and behavioural science), Commissioning (including procurement and contract management) as well as Business Insights. This creates exciting opportunities to create more community focused services and driving forward effective place-based leadership that builds on these foundations and applies their benefit beyond the Council.

Beyond these corporate functions, the Peer Team heard evidence of effective partnership working in a number of service areas, and a wider Council approach of working "*positively*" and "*collaboratively*" with others. This included notable practice in areas such as health

and social care, including the operation of seven integrated teams, OFSTED rating Children's services as 'good', and praise for the organisational focus and approach to addressing delayed transfers of care. As always with partnership working, there is opportunity to do more, and this report highlights some specific examples which the Council may wish to consider.

Similarly, the Team heard about the strong relationships that the Council developed with Voluntary and Community Sector through the leading role that they played in responding to the COVID 19 pandemic and in leading on development of Plans for 2040. Taking forward these relationships for the delivery of WAW2040 will require them to be strengthened to maximise the benefits of early intervention, prevention, and demand management and improve outcomes for residents and support financial improvement. This will require the Council to move towards a more strategic relationship with partners, which would benefit by being underpinned by longer-term approaches to investment with these groups.

The Council has a strong track record in financial management that has served the organisation well. The Council has a net revenue budget of approximately £226 million and has an allocated Capital Programme of £310 million for the next four years. The Council has a good record in delivering savings (£225 million from 2010/11 to 2021/22) and has plans in place to address £24 million saving requirement in 2022/23. It will be important that this financial rigour continues, to ensure that the organisation has appropriate resources, reserves, and plans to address national challenges of inflation, cost of care reform, as well as the delivery of the remaining £16 million of savings in 2023/24.

During our time on site in Walsall Town Hall, the Peer Team met with many committed, hard-working, and enthusiastic staff who are proud to work for Walsall Council. These staff are a valuable asset to the organisation, and this report sets out a number of considerations that will support the Council to develop and embed their approach to Organisational Development (OD), whilst also encouraging consistency of practice on a number of human resource processes across all directorates. A central strand to this work will be providing more clarity and consistency regarding the Council's approach to flexible and remote working, and this should be considered in the round, including the impact on workforce, community engagement, estate, ICT, regeneration, and the local economy. The Peer Team appreciate that the Council's new OD Strategy is nascent (2023-2026) but believe that further work is required to embed the "PLATE" principles of (Professionalism, Leadership, Accountability, Transparency and Ethical). Embedding these principles should be considered beyond annual performance conversations in to how these behaviours are

sponsored by senior leaders and experienced daily. Furthermore, it will be important that there is clear alignment of the PLATE principles, WAW2040 vision, and Proud Programme to avoid the risk of duplication or confusion.

This work on Organisational Development should be extended to include consideration of the Council's approach to issues of Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI) and the organisational benefits that could be achieved from improvement in this area. The Team appreciate that progress has been made on these issues in some services and would encourage the Council to consider the support and structures required to extend this across the organisation. An important asset that will support progress in these areas is the trusting relationships that exist across senior Officers and Members of the Council. From the conversations that the Peer Team had, it is clear that there is trust and respect across these roles, which has been supported through a conscious investment of time, capacity, and training for those in political and managerial leadership positions.

As context for this review, Walsall is one of 36 Metropolitan Authorities in England and is located in the West Midlands. The borough shares borders with Staffordshire County Council to the North, and to the South and West is bordered by Wolverhampton, Sandwell, and Birmingham. Walsall is one of seven Councils with full voting rights who comprise the West Midlands Combined Authority.

The borough covers approximately 40 square miles, and serves a population of 286,700 residents, with the largest settlements being in Walsall, Bloxwich and Willenhall. The borough is both economically and demographically diverse, and the Council has extensive information regarding the social challenges that exist in the borough. This includes approximately 50% of residents living in the most deprived 20% of neighbourhoods in England, with the Index of Multiple Deprivation ranking Walsall as 25 out of 317 for the most deprived local authorities, facing particular challenges on income, education, skills, and employment. The deprivation of the borough splits broadly on an east-west axis, with the more prosperous areas being in the East.

Politically, following a period of no-overall control (2011-2019) the Council is now led by a Conservative majority through a Leader and Cabinet model. The current distribution of seats across political groups is Conservative 38, Labour 20, with two members sitting as non-aligned or independent Councillors. The political make-up of the Council is decided on electoral thirds, with the next elections taking place in 2023, 2024, and 2026.

Finally, this Corporate Peer Challenge (CPC) took place in January 2023, during the notice period of the departing Chief Executive who had chosen to leave to take a role elsewhere in the Sector. This Chief Executive had been central to the content and delivery of the Proud Programme and had provided visible leadership to this work. The Council has appointed the Interim Executive Director (Resources & Transformation) as interim Chief Executive whilst they recruit a permanent replacement. This approach will provide important continuity to the Council over the coming months, supporting budget setting, elections, and continued delivery of services.

The appointment of a new permanent Chief Executive will naturally be a key juncture for the organisation, and it is hoped that this report will support them in taking this role and act as a bridging document to support continuity and ownership of improvement. However, making progress against the findings of this report and the recommendations included will require leadership permissions (both politically and managerially), and without this, there is a risk that momentum could be lost during transitions.

2. Key recommendations:

The main body of this report contains a range of findings and recommendations relevant to Walsall Council. Many of these may be easy to implement “quick wins” and practical actions. However, the key recommendations below focus on the issues which will be most critical to the Council’s improvement, and those which should be prioritised going forward include:

- **Recommendation One: Maximise the opportunities that are presented to the Council through partnership and convening arrangements:** The Council’s improvements through the Proud Programme have been largely internal to-date. The next phase of WAW2040 will require these priorities being shared and embedded across partner organisations. There is more work to be done to socialise this vision and support its recognition and understanding of partners contributions towards it. This will require regular and active engagement, investment in relationships, and clear communications.
- **Recommendation Two: Consider the Council’s approach to inclusive growth in delivering the 2022 Economic Strategy and maximising the impact of the “Walsall Pound”:** There is strong political appetite to support inclusive growth in Walsall. The Peer Team would encourage the Council to be ambitious in this space, this should include ambitions for better paid jobs in the borough, as well as an increase in the

number of roles, and could do more to benefit from the Council's role as a major employer and procurer of goods and services. There is learning available from within the sector on social value frameworks and good employment charters, and this will build on the good foundations that are already in place from the Council's approach through Walsall Works.

- **Recommendation Three: Define the content and deliverables that will be included in the “Proud” initiative going forward:** The Council's “Proud Programme” ran from 2018 to 2022 and identified significant savings within a specific business case. It is appreciated that the Council has now moved towards these principles as an ongoing way of working rather than an individual programme with specific milestones or end dates. However, there is still a need to set-out what this includes (and does not include) in order to support resourcing, reporting, and tracking benefits.

- **Recommendation Four: There is a framework of Plans and priorities that exist across the Council; however, consideration should be given to their alignment and support staff understanding:** The relationship between ‘Proud’ transformation, “EPICC” priorities, ‘PLATE’ values, and “WAW2040” vision is a language which is spoken fluently among senior Council officers. There is a need to make sure that these programmes are appropriately aligned, and that this understanding exists at all tiers of the organisation.

- **Recommendation Five: Provide a coordinated approach to issues of EDI to support the workforce to better represent local communities:** The Council has recognised that further work is needed to strengthen work on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion, this has included good progress to date on your gender pay gap, and the introduction of staff network groups to support staff voices. This should be built on with reporting, publishing, and monitoring progress against other “pay gaps” (such as ethnicity and disability) as well as wider public sector duties. This will support the workforce to better represent the communities of borough.

- **Recommendation Six: Review the Council's approach to flexible working in the round and communicate this clearly to staff:** Through COVID-19 Walsall Council has transitioned from a largely onsite corporate workforce to a largely remote corporate workforce and is now working to strike an appropriate middle ground built around “customer focused ways of working”. This needs to be considered in the round alongside the workforce implications for teams, engagement with elected members, Council assets, as well as the strategic approaches to supporting the local economy and being connected to local communities. This work will require engagement and communications to talk through these issues and their relationship to each other. The Peer Team would recommend that this includes Officers attending formal meetings in-

person as far as possible and appropriate, particularly Scrutiny Committees and Joint Consultation Committee meetings with Trade Unions

- **Recommendation Seven: Articulate and consider the contribution of Organisational Development to the next stage of the Council’s transformation:**
The importance of OD to the next stage of the Council’s journey cannot be understated, and the Council should consider the investment of time, capacity, and resource required to support this, as they move to embed proud ways of working. This should include how PLATE values are embedded beyond annual conversations, and how these principles are demonstrated at all tiers of the organisation. This will require regular two-way communication with staff.
- **Recommendation Eight: Maintain effective financial control and establish a sustainable and resilient financial future post-COVID.** In common with most councils, Walsall has experienced additional funding pressures and disruption to its financial strategy during the pandemic which, despite government funding, have had to be managed. The council now needs to ensure that it re-establishes a sustainable budget and maintain reserves to assure its future resilience.
- **Recommendation Nine: Consider the Management Responsibilities of Senior Officers at the Council:** The Council’s approach to giving Executive Directors additional responsibility for cross-cutting initiatives such as ‘customer experience’ is not a model which is used commonly elsewhere in the sector. It is appreciated that this supports senior accountability for corporate priorities and helps work across directorate silos. However, this model will require the Council to be live to implications such as capacity challenges and succession planning in the medium-term.
- **Recommendation 10: Consider the knowledge transfer required from the Council’s strategic partner to support the newly established Corporate Hub:** The Council has worked through a strategic partner model to deliver the Proud Programme. Going forward, the Council should consider the benefits that can be gained across the organisation through the knowledge transfer from the Council’s strategic partners over coming years to make sure that it maximises the value from this investment. Similarly, there is potential for the Council’s Community Hubs to consider the whole council offer beyond the current functions and improve the customer journey.
- **Recommendation 11: Ensure that internal processes are proportionate and consistently applied:** There is potential for the Council to free up capacity within the organisation by simplifying some processes, including report approvals and recruitment processes. This would support capacity to be best aligned to priorities. This should also consider the channels and processes used for sharing information with and

resolving issues raised by Elected Members. This would be welcomed by both officers and members and would free up capacity that is currently being spent resolving these matters elsewhere.

3. Summary of the peer challenge approach

3.1 Background and Overview:

From 2017-2020, the Local Government Association (LGA) delivered 447 Peer Challenges, including 182 Corporate Peer Challenges. This process involves Officer and Councillor Peers from across the sector reviewing Council services and functions through constructive and respectful challenge. This process enables experience and expertise to be shared across the sector collectively and is a central element of sector-led improvement.

These reviews are designed to be locally led, with Councils requesting that Peer Challenges are completed and volunteering to take part. This includes the LGA working with Councils in advance to jointly develop the scope of the review, and key areas of focus. In this spirit, the findings and recommendations from Peer Challenges are locally owned, with Councils responsible for the development of their own Action Plans in response to these reports, and updating staff, partners, and Councillors as appropriate.

The benefit of Peer Challenges has been independently validated, including an evaluation of the process which was completed in 2020 by Shared Intelligence. The feedback which has been received by Participating Councils has included 93% of respondents saying that this process has helped to provide an external view of the organisation, and 94% stating that the process had contributed a positive impact on their relationship with partners.

3.2 The Peer Challenge Team:

Peer Challenges are delivered by experienced Councillor and Officer Peers who are working elsewhere in the local government sector. The make-up of a Peer Team is carefully planned in line with the Council's requirements and the agreed scope. Ahead of this Peer Challenge, the Council supported the development of a scope document by asking for the Peer Team to consider corporate issues and provide constructive challenge to the next stage of the Council's transformation.

The Council requested that there was additional focus placed on issues of staff and customer experience through this review and requested that there was expertise on the team to support this work. It was also possible in this instance for one of the Peer Team members who supported the Council's previous CPC in 2017 to be on the team, enabling conversations to be informed of previous findings. The LGA would like to thank the following Peer Team members for supporting this review:

- Lead Peer: Alison McKenzie-Folan (Chief Executive, Wigan Council)
- Lead Political Peer: Cllr Rob Waltham (Leader, North Lincolnshire)
- Senior Officer Peer: James Binks (Assistant Chief Executive, Manchester City Council)
- Finance Peer: Alan Finch (LGA – Principal Advisor Finance)
- Senior Officer Peer: Jill Greenfield (Service Director, Communities and Customer, Kirklees Council)
- Senior Officer Peer: Tinu Olowe (Director of Human Resources and Organisational Development, Enfield Council)
- Shadow Peer: Ellen Vernon (Programme Director One Public Estate, LGA)
- Peer Challenge Manager: Matt Dodd (Local Government Association)

3.3 The Peer Challenge Methodology:

Peer challenges are improvement focused; and it is important to stress that this was not an inspection. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans, proposals, or specific services. Instead, the Peer Team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, documents they reviewed, and the culture which they saw.

The Peer Team prepared for this work by reviewing a range of documents and information to ensure that they were familiar with the Council, the Borough, the opportunities that exist, and the challenges that it is facing. This included a position statement that the Council produced specifically for the Peer Challenge, which is designed to encourage self-assessment, reflection, and dialogue across the organisation. Alongside this position statement, the Council also provided reference documents including (but not limited to) copies of key Plans and Strategies, the Medium-Term Financial Strategy, and service information.

Alongside the documents provided by the Council, the Peer Team also undertook an independent assessment of the performance of Council services and wider Council finance using publicly available information through L.G. Inform. The Team also commissioned a dedicated financial review of the Council's financial position. These assessments were shared with the Peer Team in advance of the review and provided to the Council to support discussion and dialogue on these issues. Prior to arriving with the Council, Peer Team Members contacted their equivalents working at Walsall. These meetings were completed to support the Teams' understanding of the Council, and to the development of appropriate

lines of enquiry. Beyond this, the Team also:

- Collectively spent c. 280 hours to determine and refine our findings (the equivalent of one person spending over seven weeks in Walsall).
- Spoken to over 120 Councillors, Staff, and Partners through a mixture of 1-2-1s and focus groups.
- Reviewed the press and watched online meetings.
- Attended your all staff event and visited your Community Hubs.
- Observed regular meetings.
- Spent time working, visiting, and being in Walsall.

Immediate feedback was delivered to the Council on the afternoon of Thursday 19 January, at a session which was attended by the Council's Senior Leadership Team, the Council Leader, and other Cabinet representatives. A copy of these slides was immediately provided to the Council to support communication with those who took part in the process. This final report was produced in February 2023, with agreement that the Peer Team will engage with the Council approximately six-months following publication to discuss progress against their Action Plan.

3.4 The Peer Challenge Scope:

The Peer Team considered the following five themes which form the core components looked at by all Corporate Peer Challenges that the LGA undertake. These are the areas that are critical to councils' performance and improvement:

- **Local priorities and outcomes:** Are the Council's priorities clear and informed by the local context? Is the Council delivering effectively on its priorities and achieving improved outcomes for all its communities?
- **Organisational and place leadership:** Does the Council provide effective local leadership? Are there good relationships with partner organisations and local communities?
- **Governance and culture:** Are there clear and robust governance arrangements? Is there a culture of respect, challenge, and scrutiny?
- **Financial planning and management:** Does the Council have a grip on its current financial position? Does the council have a strategy and a clear plan to address its financial challenges?
- **Capacity for improvement:** Is the organisation able to support delivery of local priorities? Does the Council have the capacity to improve?

It was requested that when considering these themes, that the Peer Team would consider the implications for the next phase of the Council's Transformation Programme, as well as wider issues of staff and customer experience. Rather than these issues being reported in isolation, this report tries to highlight these issues through the framework above.

4. Feedback:

4.1 Understanding the local place and priority setting:

Through the review process, the Peer Team met with a broad range of local Councillors who showed an impressive knowledge regarding the borough and the communities that they serve. Prior to spending time in Walsall, the Team was provided with access to a range of key documents regarding the borough. These documents demonstrate that the Council has a robust evidence base regarding the needs of the borough, and helped the team to better understand the local area and the associated social issues, including:

- Walsall being more ethnically diverse than the national average with 33% identifying themselves from minority (non-White British) backgrounds according to the 2021 census - up from 23% in 2011.
- There is a significant gap in life expectancy between the boroughs most and least deprived wards of 10.4 years and 8.8 years for men and women respectively, illustrating issues of health inequality.
- Walsall performs well-below the national average on skills and education outcomes, with 28% of residents having degrees (or higher) qualifications, and 70% having GCSE level, compared to respective 43% and 78% national averages.

This information has been used by the Council to inform key strategy documents setting out the organisation's priorities. Importantly, there is also a clear cross-party consensus on the prioritisation of addressing inequalities. This includes the recently refreshed Council Plan which runs from 2022-2025, as well as the wider "WAW2040". Beyond these cross-cutting documents, the Council also has clear plans and strategies, including (not a complete list): Customer Strategy, Digital Strategy, Safer Walsall Plan, Housing Strategy, and Strategic Economic Plan. This is an asset to the organisation that will support management grip, progress, and milestones in these areas. However, there is a continued need for the organisation to manage the interdependencies and relationships that exist across these documents. This includes a need to consider the other benefits which the Council can achieve through these measures that will address wider social challenges in the borough. In this context, there is also a need for clear communication regarding the relationship and prioritisation across their content.

The Peer Team appreciates that the structure of the Council Plan, and the identification of “*markers of success*” supports clear performance reporting. It is good practice that this performance information is presented to Cabinet on a regular basis alongside financial reporting to present these two issues in the round. There is opportunity for this information to be used more within the organisation, including supporting the identification of key issues for working groups to address. The Council will need to keep the measures which are reported under review, to ensure that this performance report reflects the organisation’s priorities.

To date, there has been excellent and extensive engagement on the development of the WAW2040 vision for the borough, with 8,000 residents and 2,000 businesses inputting to the process through a broad range of engagement methods. The next stage of the Council’s transformation in delivering these ambitions will require these priorities being shared and embedded across partner organisations. This will require further work to socialise the vision, and support recognition, understanding and ownership across local partners. This will require regular engagement, communication, and investment of time and resources into these relationships and a shared understanding of these goals. There is also an opportunity for the Council to build on the conversations that they have had with residents to inform this vision at a locality and neighbourhood level, to work with community groups to increase engagement, and co-produce approaches that support the Council’s journey.

The Council should also consider the ‘soft power’ and influence which they can exert to address outcomes in the borough. This includes political appetite to support inclusive growth and social value to address entrenched inequalities. This presents an important opportunity for the Council to be ambitious in the types of jobs and skills levels which they are looking to develop in the borough. The Council has made some progress in this area, including weighting within some contracts, but there is more that could be done, including considering this in more of the Council’s spend, as well as raising awareness of the Council’s Social Value Charter and embedding it across the whole organisation and consideration of good employment charters. This would require the Council to consider what can be done to maximise its influence as a major employer and procurer. This would be a timely issue to consider given the Council’s significant investment Plan, and the opportunity to maximise local approaches to regeneration through the Future High Street Fund, Town Deal, and Levelling-Up Funding.

The Council has made progress in delivering against some of these priorities. This includes progress through their approach to integrated health and social care services through the mature relationships developed through Walsall Together, which has supported the development of seven integrated teams at a locality level, as well as marked improvement in performance regarding delayed transfers of care. This good practice provides building blocks which will support opportunities for further examples of early intervention and

extending this offer, both through the incorporation of more internal services (e.g., leisure) as well as the contribution of wider partners (e.g., Voluntary and Community Sector). However, there is a need to ensure that the Councils governance and scrutiny arrangements are appropriately structured to support challenge and holding the programme to account, especially as interdependencies with partner agencies grow through the process.

4.2 Organisational and place leadership:

The Peer Team appreciates that there is strong political leadership of the Council and were impressed by the effective and coherent Cabinet which brings together a range of diverse views in developing policy. This is supported by trusted relationships across the senior political and managerial leadership of the Council, which models appropriate member and officer relations to other levels of the Organisation. However, the Peer Team did hear some frustration regarding issues of communication and member enquiries and would encourage the Council to review these processes in these areas. Whilst this may require additional resources, this investment would create clear challenges, but positively would free up capacity that is current being used reactively and be well received by officers and members.

The current structure of the Council's senior management roles has been designed to share good practice across directorates as well as joined-up approaches to cross-cutting issues. This includes Executive Directors leading on corporate priorities alongside their service responsibilities. Whilst this has value, we would encourage the Council to be mindful of the challenges this creates with regards to balancing improvement and accountability, and the potential challenges this could create for workloads and succession planning.

The Peer Team heard praise for the leading role of the Council in the borough's response to the Coronavirus pandemic. This leadership, and the development of new ways of working has improved engagement and interactions with local voluntary and community groups, and there is a potential to do more in this space, and an appetite from groups to work with the Council. To this end, the Council will need to consider the resources which will be required to support this work and the development of a consistent approach to working with community groups across the organisation. This work is currently being developed through the Council's "resilient communities" work, however, there were mixed definitions of this programme provided to the Peer Team and there is potential for this work to move beyond 'resilience' to incorporate issues of 'co-production' and 'co-creation' with groups. A significant development that would support progress in this area would be moving towards longer-term funding arrangements with Voluntary and Community Sector Groups, which would provide them stability of resources and would support the organisation

to move towards engagement on more strategic issues over the medium-term, rather than capacity being invested to support funding cycle discussions.

The Council was seen as a “pragmatic” and “positive” partner for other organisations to work with. However, the leadership of Place happens at a number of levels. There is huge potential for Walsall to consider the contribution that partnerships across these levels can make towards their priorities (Region, sub-region, borough, neighbourhood, and hyper-local). This approach will support alignment and ensure that these inter-twined and overlapping networks are working towards consistent outcomes and maximising the contribution of a broad range of partner organisations. This could be accompanied by a review of partnership governance arrangements to embed this alignment into formal structures, reduce duplication, and maximise collective efforts.

The Peer Team was provided with examples of Walsall’s contribution to the West Midlands Combined Authority and the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (as responsible body). Given the structural reforms which are taking place to LEPs, there is a need for the Council to align resources to new arrangements and contribute proactively to these forums. The team heard there were opportunities for Walsall to make stronger contributions to the West Midlands Combined Authority in order to help drive benefits for the borough. This will require some internal coordination so that the Council’s priorities on issues of Housing, infrastructure, and transport are clearly defined and supported with appropriate business cases to support their propositions when negotiating with partners over a larger geography. There is also an opportunity for the Council to establish a local business forum to enable the Council to highlight this context and emerging opportunities to the local business community.

4.3 Organisational Governance and Culture:

The Council operates through a Leader and Executive model, with nine portfolio holders sharing responsibility across the breadth of Council Services. This group works through a collective decision-making model and meets on six-weekly cycle. The Peer Team heard praise for the quality of reports that were presented at these meetings, however, it was recognised that there is a lengthy approval process for these reports being approved with multiple checkpoints. The Council is introducing an online portal to support improved efficiency in this area; however, this will also require consideration of cultural issues of permission.

The Council’s approach to Scrutiny is structured around five Committees with voting members drawn from beyond the Executive. This includes a Scrutiny Overview Committee

which provides oversight and supports coordination and planning, with four service specific Committees focusing on areas of Education, Children's, Social Care/ Health, and Economy/Environment. There is a mixed approach to appointment of Committee Chairs, with some Committees being Chaired by the ruling group, and others by the opposition (which is seen as good practice within the sector). The Council has introduced dedicated Scrutiny Training to support these Committees as well as a 'recommendation tracker' to support their oversight and grip.

Whilst it is a legal requirement for formal Committees (and voting members) to meet in person, this does not extend to the officers supporting the meeting, and that we heard there are occasions where officers from the Council and partners attend remotely. The Peer Team encourages the Council to ensure officers do consistently attend in-person meetings as appropriate, such as formal Committees as well as other key meetings, for example key engagement with Trade Unions.

There are good relationships across the organisation and a good understanding of the respective roles of officers and members which has been supported by a robust member development programme. This programme draws on internal officers of the Council, as well as external representatives and is underpinned by public commitments by Councillors to invest in their development.

These relationships underpin robust governance at the Council that has responded well to external change over recent years. During our time on site, the Team heard particular praise for the Council's Audit Committee, and recognition for the contribution of the Chair in taking this forward over a number of years. This includes the effective use of a risk strategy, clear reporting of corporate risks, and constructive engagement with external audit. This continuity of Chair has been important to the Committee as there has been a level of churn in other Committee Members.

The Peer Team appreciate that governance and culture are often set by the relationships that exist across the 'golden triangle' of statutory officers (Chief Executive, Section 151 Officer, and Monitoring Officer). We would suggest that these officers make dedicated and regular time to share information and support continuity of approach in managing risk as these transitions take place.

The Peer Team enjoyed attending the staff recognition awards event that was held during our time on site and gave an illustration of the Council's approach to engagement. This is accompanied by a clear increase in levels of employee engagement from 57% to 61% from 2017 to 2021 as shown through the Council's Employee Survey.

Through this event, and our wider time onsite, the Peer Team met with many talented and passionate staff, and we encourage the Council to consider how they can best support and develop these assets through Organisational Development, and the creation of a more permissible environment that will support their growth over coming years. Central to this work will be considering and communicating the Council's approach to flexible working. The Peer Team heard that this was interpreted and applied differently across directorates, this needs to be considered alongside issues of workforce, community engagement, the Council's physical assets, and regeneration ambitions and be applied consistently across the organisation.

Walsall's current People Strategy (2023-2026) is built on the PLATE values (which were introduced through the Proud Programme 2018), but further work is required to embed these principles within the organisation. Therefore, the Council needs to consider how these are communicated regularly to support staff understanding and recognition beyond employees' annual conversations with their manager. This work needs to include how values are communicated on a 'day-to-day' basis through the actions of Officers and Managers, to ensure that they become the lived experience of those who work for and with the Council. Beyond these issues of Organisational Development, there is also a need for more consistency on standard Human Resource processes, as reflected by only 49% of staff having had their annual conversation with their line-manager, as well as the need for increased awareness on offers of help and support available to the wider workforce and consistency of practice on training opportunities and long-term sickness. It was also presented to the team that the current processes of recruitment are complex and time consuming, and there was significant appetite for them to be simplified.

Importantly, the Council is aware that there is further work that is needed to strengthen their approach to equality, diversity, and inclusion (EDI). The recent introduction of value-based recruitment gives the opportunity to support the recruitment of under-represented groups and support the organisation's workforce to better reflect the communities it represents. This issue is particularly true in the senior roles of the organisation, and thought should be given to how the Council can improve progression rates. The Council's work to-date on EDI has included good progress through the introduction of the Corporate Equalities Group as well as staff network groups, but it is recognised that these are used differently in some Directorates and there would be a benefit to more corporate ownership of these issues and consistency of practice. The Council may wish to consider reporting against other 'pay gaps' as well as the gender pay-gap to support progress as well as wider public sector duties.

4.4 Financial planning and management:

The net revenue budget for Walsall Council is £226 million. The Council has demonstrated effective financial management over recent years, including the delivery of historic savings and efficiencies (£225m since 2010/2011). The Council manages their budget process strategically, and there is clear alignment between resources and the political priorities of the organisation. This includes the reporting of budgets at an Outcome level, setting out the total revenue budget spend against the priorities included in the Council Plan. This promotes clarity of spend on key areas and will support further conversations regarding outcome-based budgeting should the Council wish to continue to develop this. In particular, as the council moves towards a more data-driven approach, there is the opportunity to use this to inform resource allocation and thence budget setting and to bring together the reporting of budget and performance management information.

Throughout the review process, Peers were told of the “*credibility*” and “*capability*” of officers in the Council’s Finance Team to support work in this area. This included praise for the support that they provided to key finance committees, as well as the team’s role as a business partner in supporting directorates with their financial grip.

Like others, Walsall Council is working within the context of wider financial challenges. This is reflected in the savings which are required over coming years, with the Council needing to save £16.3 million in 2023/24 and having a further four-year budget gap of £52 million from 2024 onwards. These figures have been well developed and tested, and it is encouraging that the Council already has plans identified for the delivery of £20 million saving in this envelope. However, this naturally highlights the further work required over the coming months and years to develop budget proposals within the Council’s Medium-Term Financial Plan, in this context, there is a need to make sure that saving proposals are robust prior to their inclusion to mitigate the risk of slippage and non-delivery. In 2022/23 the Council identified savings of £24 million, but there is currently £7million which is highlighted as ‘at risk’ and increased preparatory work may reduce this issue in future years and support the Council to achieve full year benefits from reforms and changes.

The Council is also facing immediate cost pressure reflecting those across the wider sector, with issues of inflation, increased demand, cost-of-living crisis, and social care reforms all presenting short-term challenges. This has presented as significant pressures on the revenue budget, with the Council reporting a projected overspend of £11.3 million in the month before the Peer Review, with pressures emerging especially in Adult Social Care. In response, the Council has reviewed budgets and identified mitigating actions in 2022/23. This is not out of step with the experience of other authorities post-COVID, but it is

nevertheless important to maintain robust control over spending and investment, particularly in demand led areas, to plan a sustainable way forward and to ensure that budget reporting is supporting timely conversations on mitigating actions.

The Council is forecast to close 2022/23 with adequate levels of reserves, currently holding £16.6 million in general fund reserves, as well as earmarked reserves of £167 million (from £217 million at the start of 2022/23, largely from COVID grants). This level of reserves provides the council with some assurance as to its financial resilience, but the use of reserves underlines the message about ensuring a sustainable future.

The Council has a significant Capital Budget with £310 million identified over the coming four years (2022-2025). There has been significant re-phasing within this programme with £92.6 million (40%) being reprofiled from 2022/23 into 2023/24. Given the inflationary pressures facing the Council, further work may be needed to consider the affordability of some proposals, and to support prioritisation and decision making based on benefits and returns in this changing context.

The Council is currently in year 18 of 25 for a lighting PFI that they entered in 2005. It is good practice to review these arrangements as they enter into their final six-years. This is one of a number of PFI that the Council reported through their annual accounts, and these should be reviewed both individually and collectively.

4.5 Capacity for Improvement:

The Council's capacity for improvement has been demonstrated through the Proud Programme (initiated in 2018), which has had a positive impact for staff and customers (including a 4% increase in customer satisfaction). Moreover, this programme has supported the Council to develop these skills and experience which can now be applied to other issues and future transformation as this becomes the organisation's approach to change. To-date, this work has been supported through the commissioning of a strategic partner which has provided capacity and expertise to support this work. As this arrangement comes to an end, the Peer Team encourage the Council to maximise the knowledge transfer from these arrangements to support the organisation to be able to take forward the next phase with less external support and ensure that the remaining savings (£16m) associated with the original Proud Programme are monitored and managed through this transition.

The Council has added capacity to a number of key corporate areas, including the development of Programme Management Office and Corporate Hub (including increased communication capacity) which will be a valuable asset in taking forward this next phase. The challenge for the Council will be making sure that this capacity is best aligned to

support progress against key priorities and minimising the risk that it could be ‘spread too thinly’.

A further key area to support the next phase of transformation is Organisational Development, and, as with other key areas, the Council should consider the investment and capacity required to support this. The Council has a recently developed OD Strategy but there is more work to be done to share and socialise this document and move this work on to the next level. This could also include drawing on the ideas and innovations that exist within the workforce and more widely within the sector to support further improvement within the Council. This will naturally link to taking forward the findings from the ‘pulse’ surveys which the Council has completed and the dialogue which has begun through this process.


During our time with the Council, the Peer Team have been told of a number of internal processes which could be improved and made more efficient. This included specific examples regarding invoicing, recruitment processes and report approvals. Making improvements with these processes would be welcomed by staff, and more importantly would release capacity to further support organisational focus on priorities.

There is potential for the Council to work more closely with partner organisations and benefit from their capacity and contributions towards outcomes in the borough. This will require the Council to be able to understand the roles and contributions of partners at different levels, including regional, sub-regional, borough and community. Similarly, the progress and engagement through WAW2040 presents an opportunity to improve dialogue with local residents and community groups and utilise community capacity through co-designed solutions to issues.

Finally, Walsall Council has a clear appetite for continuous improvement, as shown by their appetite for external challenge through this peer challenge. Going forward, we would encourage the Council to continue and expand the use internal challenge and processes to further build and embed this appetite and support service improvement. This approach will support the Council to adapt to a changing operational context, as well as new ways of working. This challenge will need to be based on timely and accurate data and intelligence regarding finance, services, staff and customer experience. This will support prioritisation, the targeting of actions, as well as demonstrating progress and improvement over coming years.

5. Next steps

It is recognised that senior political and managerial leadership will want to consider, discuss, and reflect on these findings over the coming weeks. To support transparency, the



Council is expected to publish this report within six weeks of receiving a final draft. There is also an expectation that an action plan is publicly available within eight weeks of the report's publication.

Both the peer team and LGA are keen to build on the relationships formed through the Corporate Peer Challenge Revisit. This process includes a six-month check-in holding a structured conversation across Peers and the Council to consider progress made against these recommendations.

In the meantime, Helen Murray, Principal Advisor for the West Midlands, is the main contact between your authority and the Local Government Association. Helen is available to discuss any further support the Council requires and can be contacted by email Helen.Murray@local.gov.uk

Ref	Recommendation	Our consideration & response	Action(s)	Lead Director(s)
1	Maximise the opportunities that are presented to the Council through partnership and convening arrangements.	<p>We are reviewing and revitalising our partnerships in line with We are Walsall 2040 borough plan delivery.</p> <p>We recognise the key role for Cabinet in regional place shaping and influencing West Midlands Combined Authority.</p> <p>Our building community resilience programme is underway and will inform our approach to working/investing in the voluntary and community sector.</p>	<p>We will consult on the We are Walsall 2040 vision through the spring of 2023 and ensure regular engagement, investment in relationships, and clear communications. The final strategy will be published June 2023 and engagement will continue throughout the life of the strategy to 2040.</p> <p>We will strengthen Walsall partnerships locally and regionally throughout 2023 and 2024 and align to We are Walsall 2040 delivery.</p> <p>We will set out our strategic intentions on how the Council will work with and support the voluntary and community sector to ensure there is clarity, consistency and transparency in how we work together.</p>	<p>Director of Public Health, Policy & Strategy and Business Insights</p> <p>Director of Public Health, Policy & Strategy and Business Insights / ED for Economy, Environment and Communities</p> <p>ED for Adult Social Care & Hub / ED for Children & Customer / ED for Economy, Environment and Communities</p>
2	Consider the Council's approach to inclusive growth in delivering the 2022 Economic Strategy and maximising the impact of the "Walsall Pound".	<p>Inclusive growth ambitions will be incorporated in delivery plans for the newly agreed Economic Strategy – including establishing and/or refocusing relevant partnership arrangements</p>	<p>We will further promote our Social Value Policy (2020) to reduce inequalities in line with Our Council Plan – learning from good practice in other areas and partners and building on the good foundations already in place in some Council services.</p> <p>We will re-establish a Walsall economic partnership during 2023, with membership</p>	<p>Director of Public Health, Policy & Strategy and Business Insights / Director of Regeneration & Economy</p>

			and terms of reference aligned to our 2040 vision and place strategies.	Director of Regeneration & Economy
3	Define the content and deliverables that will be included in the “Proud” initiative going forward.	The Proud delivery plan for 2023/24 and beyond will be embedded in our continuous improvement programme for the Council.	We will implement an outcomes-based budget process to inform the next phase of Proud transformation and its deliverables.	Director of Transformation & Digital / Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord and Assurance/ ED Resources
4	There is a framework of Plans and priorities that exist across the Council; however, consideration should be given to their alignment and support staff understanding.	<p>We will continue the engagement of our workforce through the Enabling Communications & Culture workstream of Proud to support strong organisational development and understanding of our plans.</p> <p>The Hub will ensure there is a golden web clearly articulated to staff linking our 2040 ambitions through to individual objectives to support staff to understand their role and connection to the borough plan.</p>	<p>We will implement our culture workplan during 2023, aligned to the Proud workstream Enabling Communications & Culture.</p> <p>We will align Our Council Plan and Values, Proud promises, Key Areas of Focus and 2040 borough plan through staff engagement activities, performance conversations, service planning approaches, strategy and policy development and communications with staff.</p>	<p>Director of HR & OD</p> <p>Director of Public Health, Policy & Strategy and Business Insights / Director of HR & OD</p>
5	Provide a coordinated approach to issues of equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) to support the workforce to better represent local communities.	A Workforce Equalities Board has been established alongside an existing Corporate Equalities Group to	We will continue with planned Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion work across the organisation to meet workforce objectives, Public Sector Equalities Duty, celebrate and	Director of HR & OD/ Director of Public Health, Policy & Strategy and Business

		<p>strengthen our equality, diversity & inclusion approach.</p> <p>We are appointing a Senior equality, diversity & inclusion advisor to support equality, diversity & inclusion activities within the organisation. This includes strategic advice to the Workforce Equality Board, co-ordinating and developing the Equality Champion Network, promoting activities to celebrate/promote the events.</p> <p>A Coaching for Career Development Programme for underrepresented groups has been developed, the first cohort is currently underway with delegates from Black Asian Minority Ethnic Backgrounds being prioritised.</p> <p>Workforce strategy development is well underway and will be considered by the Enabling Communications and Culture Group.</p>	<p>promote equality, diversity & inclusion through events and community resilience, and reinforce the importance of Equality Impact Assessments in policy development.</p> <p>We will focus future activities such as the Coaching for Career Development programme on underrepresented groups.</p> <p>We will work with West Midlands Employers to deliver a bespoke Allyship programme for senior leaders at Walsall.</p> <p>We will develop and implement our new Workforce Strategy during 2023.</p>	<p>Insights / Director Resilient Communities</p> <p>Director of HR & OD</p> <p>Director of HR & OD</p> <p>Director of HR & OD</p>
6	Review the Council's approach to flexible working in the round and communicate this clearly to staff.	<p>The Customer Focused Ways of Working have been agreed by Personnel Committee and Cabinet. This sets out the principles of how we work: 'work is what we do not where we do it' and we will work in the best place to meet the</p>	<p>We will carry out engagement and communications activities with staff, to explore workforce issues and ensure consistency of message and management practice across all services.</p>	<p>Director of HR & OD / Director of Communications, Marketing and Brand</p>

		<p>customer need. This enables the Council to recruit from the widest possible pool of talent, support retention of staff, improve customer experience and ensure value for money service delivery.</p> <p>Managing performance and ensuring positive staff mental health and wellbeing in an agile environment can require different skill sets in both leadership and management. Our induction for managers, internal training offers, and connected working offer, are being reviewed and enhanced to include tools kits for managing differently.</p> <p>The Enabling Communications & Culture group is exploring organisational culture and how we work, with focus groups planned for Spring 2023</p>	<p>We are reviewing and enhancing our induction, training and coaching offer to staff to ensure effective management in relation to customer focussed ways of working.</p>	<p>Director of HR & OD</p>
7	<p>Articulate and consider the contribution of Organisational Development to the next stage of the Council's transformation.</p>	<p>We are reviewing how to embed PLATE values beyond Annual Performance Conversations, and how these principles can be demonstrated at all levels, all of the time. This includes trialling different improvement models and our Connected Working offer that</p>	<p>We will continue with planned activities to strengthen the Council's Organisational Development functions and align to our transformation plans.</p> <p>We are currently developing workshops to embed our PLATE values so that they are meaningful in day-to-day behaviours.</p>	<p>Director of HR & OD</p>

		<p>coaches staff to embed positive behaviours.</p> <p>The Organisation Development Strategy and the Workforce Strategy will be launched in early April 2023. These will support our ambition in respect of talent management and succession planning; developing our workforce through leadership programs, future leaders' programs, graduate development programs and apprenticeships.</p>		
8	<p>Maintain effective financial control and establish a sustainable and resilient financial future post-COVID.</p>	<p>Financial controls were noted to be very strong – with Audit Committee an exemplar. We will continue working towards ensuring a sustainable budget and maintaining reserves to assure future resilience.</p> <p>Additional government funding was made available to Local Authorities in relation to Covid-19. The LGA recommend that all Councils consider the implications that the end of this funding will have on budget-setting going forward. This is something we have already factored into our current balanced budget and our future processes.</p>	<p>We will maintain effective financial control and continue working towards implementing an outcome-based budgeting approach for 2024/25 budget, building on capacity and capability from the Hub (Policy & Strategy, Business Insights and Commissioning).</p> <p>We will consider continuity planning in Audit Committee – ensuring it remains an exemplar.</p>	<p>Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord and Assurance</p> <p>Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord and Assurance</p>

9	Consider the Management Responsibilities of Senior Officers at the Council.	Peer team noted this was a model they were unfamiliar with. However, the report overall was very positive so the senior management structure as it stands has supported the delivery of positive outcomes for the organisation. Challenges will be addressed as a matter of course with any staff changes at senior level.	We will continue to consider Management responsibilities and succession planning as part of our new Workforce strategy implementation.	Chief Executive / Director of HR & OD
10	Consider the knowledge transfer required from the Council's strategic partner to support the newly established Corporate Hub.	Built into the partnership agreement with PwC were the transfer of skills and approaches to maximise the value. This knowledge transfer was crucial to the thinking from the outset and built into the contract with PwC.	We will continue the knowledge transfer processes that are underway across the Council and develop the existing prioritisation processes and workplans that are in place for the Hub.	ED for Adult Social Care & Hub / Director of Transformation & Digital
11	Ensure that internal processes are proportionate and consistently applied	<p>We have already undertaken a review of internal processes and will continue to streamline and simplify these to free up capacity. Work is already underway or planned aligned to Proud transformation workstreams.</p> <p>We are currently reviewing the channels for officer/member communications and issue resolution to ensure consistency of our approach.</p>	<p>We will continue work aligned to Proud workstreams and conduct an officer governance review in Spring/Summer 2023</p> <p>We are developing and implementing tools to support governance processes and further strengthen officer Member communications.</p>	<p>Director of Transformation & Digital</p> <p>Director of Governance & Monitoring Officer / Director of Customer Engagement</p>

Cabinet – 22 March 2023

West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2023/24

Portfolio: Councillor Andrew - Deputy Leader & Regeneration

Related portfolios: None

Service: Place & Environment (Highways, Transport & Operations)

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1. The delivery of a programme of transport capital projects in 2023/24 that supports the implementation of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP) and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) objectives in various locations across Walsall.

2. Summary

- 2.1. The Department for Transport (DfT) awards transport capital grant funding to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) to help deliver the objectives of the LTP and the WMCA City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS). The WMCA then distributes this grant funding to the component metropolitan districts to be used to implement the LTP and CRSTS in their area.
- 2.2. Walsall Council utilises the grant funding it receives to deliver the highways maintenance programme and the Local Network Improvement Plan (LNIP) programme comprising three main sub-programmes: major scheme development; strategic transportation; and road safety and active travel. The WMCA holds Walsall Council to account for how this funding is utilised.
- 2.3. This report sets out the proposed LNIP capital programme for 2023/24 based on a Cabinet approved (12 December 2012) prioritisation process.
- 2.4. The highway maintenance programme is determined on an annual basis using a Cabinet approved (18 March 2015) scheme prioritisation matrix.

- 2.5. In accordance with the Council's approach to highway asset management framework, the programme aims to use a combination of preventative maintenance and structural repairs to maximise the lifespan of the highway network. The 2023/24 structural highway maintenance programme will be agreed with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration in March 2023, based on advice from the Head of Highways, Transport & Operations.
- 2.6. In view of the recommendations below, Cabinet is asked to note the West Midlands 2023/24 capital grant allocations for highways maintenance and LNIP programmes as set out at Table 1 in Section 4 of this report. Further, that the £120k Promotion of Community Health and Safety council-funded budget is part of the capital programme approved at a meeting of Full Council on 23 February 2023.
- 2.7. As the LNIP capital programme for 2023/24 will have a significant impact on two or more wards within the borough, the recommendations below constitute a key decision.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Cabinet approves the Walsall Council Transport Capital Programme 2023/24 funding of £5.252m as set out at Table 2 in Section 4 of this report.
- 3.2. That Cabinet approves the utilisation of the Local Network Improvement Plan element of the grant funding for 2023/24 (£1.563m) as described in paragraphs 4.40 and 4.41 of this report and **appendices A to G**, including the provisional allocation of carry forward from 2022/23 to the 2023/24 programme.
- 3.3. That Cabinet approves the utilisation of the Promotion of Community Health and Safety – Council capital funding for 2023/24 (£0.12m) as set out in **Appendix A**, including the provisional allocation of carry forward from 2022/23 to the 2023/24 programme.
- 3.4. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to manage any required changes to the 2023/24 Local Network Improvement Plan capital programme, including amending individual scheme budgets (within the overall programme budget); adding new projects (to replace or part-replace other projects that can no longer be delivered); and managing carry forward, to maximise the use of the grant.
- 3.5. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to negotiate on its behalf with the West Midlands Combined Authority and government departments to maximise the values of future financial resources allocated to the Council in pursuit of its transport priorities, including signing relevant agreements and contracts for schemes which are approved within the Walsall Transport Capital Programme 2023/24.

4. Report detail – know

Context

- 4.1. The West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP) sets out the transport strategy for the metropolitan area, together with an implementation plan. The exiting plan – known as ‘Movement for Growth’ – was approved by the West Midlands Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) in December 2015 and was subsequently adopted by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) in 2016. The LTP is currently being refreshed by Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) and the various components of the new plan (a core strategy, six ‘big moves’, area strategies and guidance) are all expected to be approved by WMCA Board in 2023.
- 4.2. The Walsall Transport Strategy ‘*Transport in Walsall*’ was approved by Cabinet in September 2017 and will help to deliver the LTP by focusing public and private funding towards areas/schemes which require it most. This local strategy will be updated to reflect the LTP area-based strategy for the Black Country once that document has been developed and approved later in 2023.
- 4.3. Combined authorities are designated as the ‘accountable bodies’ for local transport plans and the government funding allocated to deliver them.
- 4.4. For several years the Department for Transport (DfT) has awarded Integrated Transport Block (ITB) and Highways Maintenance Block (HMB) capital grant funding to the WMCA to help deliver against the LTP objectives. The WMCA then distributed this grant funding to the component metropolitan districts to be used to implement the LTP in their area. From 2015 an element of ITB was top-sliced nationally and pooled in the Local Growth Fund. In the Black Country, this pooled funding was administered by the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership from 2015 to 2023.
- 4.5. Further, in 2016 it was agreed at the WMCA Board that a 15% ‘ring fence’ of the ITB funding would establish development funding for local authorities to take forward key named schemes. Since that time this development funding has been allocated to support the delivery of major schemes in Walsall such as the M6 Junction 10 highway improvements scheme.
- 4.6. This process of allocating transport capital grant funding changed with the introduction of City Region Sustainable Transport Fund (CRSTS) funding from April 2022. CRSTS is a five-year capital settlement to March 2027 aimed at supporting the region in delivering a sustainable transport investment programme. The fund is overseen by DfT and provides an opportunity to plan transport investment over a longer time horizon than has previously been possible.
- 4.7. The headline allocation advised to WMCA in autumn 2021 was £1.050bn, resulting in £788m new money to the region. DfT confirmed this award in April 2022 and a five-year programme (2022-27) was subsequently confirmed in July 2022.

- 4.8. DfT have stated that CRSTS will be the only significant source of capital transport funding for the region until March 2027. Each named scheme that is brought forward through the CRSTS programme must demonstrate as appropriate: -
- Alignment with the (current and emerging) LTP and national CRSTS funding objectives
 - Direct benefits to cycling and active travel (including consideration of Local Transport Note 1/20)
 - Direct benefit to public transport and in particular bus travel
 - Support measures for behaviour change, road safety and network resilience
- 4.9. The CRSTS fund is operated through, and fully compliant with, the WMCA Single Assurance Framework (SAF). However, WMCA have also implemented a simplified en bloc approval process for HMB and LNIP funding.
- Highways maintenance block is a £120.4m (5-year) funding component of CRSTS, which will be delivered through the local highway authorities (LHAs). Each LHA will lead on any procurement in line with public sector procurement guidelines. An annual monitoring report will be required (as per DfT guidance) from each LHA setting out how the funding has been spent and how the condition of the network has improved. These will be compiled to form a regional view as part of the overall CRSTS monitoring and reporting. An annual allocation is confirmed by the WMCA Board in-line with the overall five-year programme allocation.
 - Local network improvement plan capital funding is used to develop and implement a variety of transport schemes by LHAs. WMCA monitoring reflects the typically low complexity/low risk projects and often reactive nature of the works undertaken with this funding. A single WMCA SAF application was processed by TfWM for the full £107.5m 5-year allocation, allowing it to be released in annual grants to each constituent LHA. A signed declaration is required by each local authority section 151 officer with a funding agreement setting out delivery reporting requirements. This includes basic quarterly financial returns and a short annual monitoring report against a standardised format. This sets out what has been delivered across the West Midlands, supported by a small number of case studies showing how delivery aligns to LTP and CRSTS funding objectives, as well as proposed delivery for the next period. These are compiled to form a regional view as part of the overall CRSTS monitoring and reporting. An annual allocation is confirmed by the WMCA Board in-line with the overall five year programme allocation.
- 4.10. The WMCA monitors each district's transport capital programme to ensure that they are using funds to deliver the aims and objectives of the West Midlands LTP and CRSTS, and that funding is used in line with government grant conditions. (Previously the BCLEP also monitored the programme to ensure alignment with the Black Country Growth Deal.) In response to this, the Council has prioritised its proposed 2023/24 LNIP programme against LTP objectives in line with its adopted appraisal and prioritisation process.

- 4.11. In addition to DfT funding, the Council directly fund a further £2.8m of Council capital in highway maintenance. Investment is prioritised in accordance with the Council's highway asset management framework, which is reviewed on an annual basis and due to be refreshed in 2023/24. Further ad hoc highways and transport investment is secured through the following mechanisms:
- Section 278 agreements, which allow third parties to fund works to the existing public highway, usually as part of a new development.
 - Section 38 agreements, which have been used more recently to secure funding from developers to complete outstanding highway works on unfinished developments.
 - Section 106 agreements, which can be used to secure developer contributions to improve highways and transport infrastructure.
 - One-off bids for grant funding such as the £3.2m secured from the DfT Challenge Fund in 2020/21.
- 4.12. Although rare, the Council also considers offers from third parties to fund or jointly fund highway improvements. These are assessed on case-by-case basis to ensure that there is no adverse impact on the road network and that the Council is not impacted financially or otherwise, such as costly maintenance liabilities.
- 4.13. Key achievements delivered through the current year's (2022/23) LNIP and highways maintenance capital programme, include: -
- Ongoing delivery of a congestion-busting scheme at M6 junction 10, including the construction of new bridges and retaining walls.
 - Further progress relating to the re-opening of the Walsall to Wolverhampton rail line, which includes two new stations at Darlaston (James Bridge) and Willenhall, with land acquisition and site clearance now evident.
 - Continued engagement with the West Midlands Rail Executive relating to the re-opening of the Walsall – Aldridge rail line, including the preparation of an updated strategic outline business case.
 - Walsall's HMB allocation, together with the DfT Incentive Fund and Council capital budget for highways maintenance has been used to deliver 4,500m² of footway resurfacing and reconstruct 68,700m² of carriageway, including Reedswood Way, Wolverhampton Road West and Stubbers Green Road. In addition to this, the Council will have delivered 7,800m² of micro-surfacing on footways and 71,500m² of preventative maintenance on carriageways, including works on A452 Chester Road and Livingstone Road.

Delivering a 2023/24 local network improvement plan programme

- 4.14. Table 1 in Section 4 of the report sets out the budget allocations for transport capital funding available to the West Midlands metropolitan districts and Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) in 2023/24.
- 4.15. Table 2 in Section 4 of the report sets out the budget allocations for transport capital funding available to the Council in 2023/24.
- 4.16. The proposed split of funding as per Table 3 in Section 4 of the report will allow the Council to support the development of future major scheme business cases to give the Council the best opportunity to attract implementation (delivery) resources; and allow the Council to continue to deliver a robust road safety and sustainable travel programme that addresses local transport needs and concerns.
- 4.17. The Strategic Transportation Team utilise their proportion of LNIP transport capital funding to develop and deliver 'major' and 'strategic'¹ schemes which meet the aims and objectives of the LTP and bring benefit to the Walsall transportation system.
- 4.18. Determining which strategic schemes are selected for development and delivery in Walsall is based on the output of a spreadsheet-based tool which scores potential schemes against the LTP aims and objectives, therefore making the selection non-subjective. This method of prioritisation was approved at Cabinet in December 2012.
- 4.19. **Appendix A** sets out the proposed LNIP transport capital programme for 2023/24, together with any confirmed complementary transport capital funding. **Appendix B** sets out the appraisal results for the strategic schemes proposed for inclusion in this programme.
- 4.20. The Road Safety and Sustainable Travel Team use an agreed appraisal methodology to rank and determine which schemes are delivered from their allocation of LNIP funds. This methodology relies upon the use of collision data records provided by West Midlands Police. This is supplemented with a range of additional locally determined data (e.g. road speeds) providing the Council with a strong basis to rationalise their decision-making and provide confidence to the WMCA and DfT that the capital funding resources are being used appropriately.
- 4.21. Funding for local safety schemes and sustainable travel schemes will be awarded on a priority basis as set out in **appendices C to G**. It will not be possible to fund all the schemes detailed during 2023/24. Schemes have been prioritised and the identified reserve schemes will be considered for any funding which becomes available during the year.

¹ 'Major schemes' have traditionally been defined as those schemes over £5m in value (although post-2015 this threshold was removed). In this context, 'strategic schemes' are significant schemes, but below the £5m threshold e.g. large junction improvement schemes.

- 4.22. The Council is progressing a major transport scheme at York's Bridge to construct a new single span concrete bridge and road alignment to be constructed immediately to the east of the existing bridge. Norton Road is classified as a district distributor road and the Council, as Highway Authority, has a duty to ensure it is accessible for local, commuter and commercial traffic. This means the road needs to be able to cater for traffic up to the national weight limit of 44 tonnes.
- 4.23. The proposed bridge to be constructed is 40m long and will carry two-way traffic on a 7.3m wide carriageway with a 2m wide footway on the west side. There will be 2m minimum headroom between the bridge and towpath and 3.1m minimum between the bridge and canal. (The existing bridge will be retained as an access route to the cottages on Pelsall Common Local Nature Reserve and the Fingerpost Public House.)
- 4.24. The scheme cost estimate is £4.7m but the actual cost will be subject to a framework contract mini-tendering process. To help meet the cost of the scheme, released funding of £500k that had been reserved for M6 junction 10 major transport scheme risk and contingency is proposed to be allocated to this bridge scheme and fully utilised in 2023/24.
- 4.25. Work is currently taking place for the preparation of the tender documents. It is envisaged that a mini tender will be undertaken through the Black Country Framework with the contractors on lot 3. Key programme dates are set out below.
- Publish mini tender on Intend: early-March 2023
 - Tender evaluations: mid-April 2023
 - Award contract: late-July 2023
 - Works commencement: late-August 2023
 - Project completion: late-spring 2025

Essential specialist services

- 4.26. As part of the development of major and strategic transport schemes, it has been identified that essential specialist services such as structural engineering, land acquisition, environmental impact assessment or traffic modelling services may be required, where there is no current availability in-house or via existing shared services with other local authorities.
- 4.27. At times it may be necessary to utilise appropriate authorised frameworks in line with the Council's contract rules. It is proposed that use of these framework contracts is an efficient way of procuring the necessary specialist support services to help the delivery of future major transport schemes.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.28. LNIP transport capital grant funding is allocated to the Council to deliver the LTP, which supports the Council's priority to 'minimise inequality and maximise potential for all' as set out in the Council Plan 2022/25. Further, it underpins delivery against the Council's priorities, including: -
- Economic – to enable greater local opportunities for all people, communities and businesses.
 - People – to encourage our residents to lead more active, fulfilling and independent lives to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing.
 - Communities – to 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.
- 4.29. Improving the safety of the transport network and the security of people using the network are important considerations in the development and delivery of transport schemes and the overall composition of the capital programme. To date the Council has performed well, when compared to others nationally, in reducing the numbers and severity of accidents on the borough's roads.
- 4.30. Environmental and safety factors are considered in the development and delivery of transport schemes. Care will be taken in the detailed design of schemes to minimise direct impacts on the local environment; where appropriate schemes will be subject to an environmental impact assessment. The LTP has been subject to a strategic environmental assessment.
- 4.31. As future schemes are progressed, the Council will be identifying good practice for adapting to, and mitigating the effects of, climate change and promoting environmental and economic sustainability.

Risk management

- 4.32. The principal risk to Council is that if the LNIP transport capital grant funding allocated from WMCA is not spent or committed within the financial year there is a risk that any under spend may be 'clawed back' or future year allocations reduced. Utilising the Cabinet-approved prioritisation process allows better management of the programme and provides accountability at a regional level for those schemes selected for development and delivery.
- 4.33. Paragraph 4.44 sets out the risk on staffing if grant is significantly reduced or removed in future years.
- 4.34. A further risk is that of the continued failure to increase revenue funding to support the maintenance and operating costs of capital investment. This has been a concern raised by the DfT in previous years and has not been addressed due to the severe financial pressures on Council revenue budgets. It is possible that DfT may reduce future capital settlements if it cannot be demonstrated that the Council has appropriate procedures and resources for future maintenance of transport assets.

- 4.35. There is a risk that if any spend on the projects within the proposed Walsall Transport Capital Programme 2023/24 become abortive and do not meet the criteria for capitalising spend, then that element of cost may have to be repaid to the programme by the Council from revenue funding, for which there is no existing budget. This is a risk associated with all multi-year capital funding programmes, but without taking such a risk there would be no ability to develop the necessary programme of transport projects. This risk is mitigated by the fact all schemes in the plan are aligned to the LTP and have been assessed as having a remote risk of becoming abortive, although Cabinet should note that this risk cannot be removed completely.
- 4.36. The way CRSTS and other transport funding is allocated by government and WMCA impacts on the Council's ability to deliver the priorities set by Cabinet. The Council risks losing out on resource allocations if it is not successful in lobbying and negotiating a favourable position. Officers of the Council will seek to secure the position of our agreed transport priorities within both the government's and the WMCA's programmes, together with the appropriate funding.

Financial implications

- 4.37. It is expected that the LNIP transport capital grant funding and highways maintenance grant funding is received in advance from WMCA i.e. annual payment to be made each April. This is a capital grant and all spend incurred must meet the eligibility criteria for capital accounting.
- 4.38. The capital grant funding settlement is a final determination confirmed by the DfT and WMCA Board acceptance and approval. This is shown in table 1.

Table 1 – West Midlands LNIP and Highways Maintenance Allocations 2022/23 and 2023/24

Block	Budget allocation 2022/23 (£000s)	Budget allocation 2023/24 (£000s)
Local Network Improvement Plan transport capital grant	21,500	21,500
Highways maintenance capital grant	24,080	24,080

- 4.39. Further to this, the WMCA confirmed the allocation per metropolitan district after 'top-slicing' for West Midlands joint initiatives. The Council's 2023/24 transport capital programme is set out at Table 2.

Table 2 – Walsall Transport Capital Programme 2022/23 and 2023/24

Project/Programme	Carry forward 2021-22 (£000s)	Budget allocation 2022/23 (£000s)	Total budget 2022/23 (£000s)	Spend to date 2022/23 (£000s)	Forecast carry forward* (£000s)	Budget allocation 2023/24 (£000s)
Integrated Transport Block	1,333	n/a	1,333	1,270	0	0
Local Network Improvement Plan transport capital grant	0	1,563	1,563	0	986	1,563
Promotion of Community Health and Safety - Council Capital Funding	11	120	131	6	55	120
Bridge strengthening	154	239	393	293	0	239
Highways maintenance	0	1,732	1,732	1,195	0	1,732
Pothole Action Fund	0	1,598	1,598	1,481	0	1,598
Total	1,498	5,252	6,750	4,245	1,041	5,252

*Final carry forward will not be confirmed until early in the 2023/24 financial year. Carry forward from 2022/23 is required to support the ongoing delivery and management of risks for multi-year, multi-funded schemes (e.g. York's Bridge).

Allocation of transport capital grant funding

4.40. Walsall's transport capital grant funding is split between three headline programmes: -

- Major scheme development and delivery programme (managed by the Strategic Transport Team in the Highways, Transport & Operations service)
- Strategic transportation programme (managed by the Strategic Transport Team in the Highways, Transport & Operations service)
- Road Safety and Sustainable Travel Programme (managed by the Road Safety Team in the Highways, Transport & Operations service)

Table 3 – Current and proposed capital allocations by programme (excluding carry forward)

	2021/22 (£000s)	2022/23 (£000s)	2023/24 (£000s)
Major Scheme Development & Delivery Programme	206	235	235
Strategic Transportation Programme	525	528	528
Road Safety & Sustainable Travel Programme	560	800	800
Total	1,291	1,563	1,563

- 4.41. **Appendix A** sets out the proposed overall LNIP transport capital programme for 2023/24, together with any confirmed complementary transport capital funding. **Appendix B** sets out the appraisal results for the strategic schemes proposed for inclusion in this programme. **Appendices C to G** provide detail of how the component local safety schemes and sustainable travel schemes have been appraised and prioritised for development and delivery within this programme.

West Midlands and Black Country transport programme

- 4.42. Since April 2015, government funding for major transport schemes and a proportion of other transport capital funding has been pooled in the Local Growth Fund, which in the Black Country is controlled by the BCLEP. This Local Growth Fund programme has elements that will continue to be delivered in 2023/24.
- 4.43. The Black Country Local Growth Fund programme includes an allocation of £37.79m (over a multi-year period, which is soon coming to an end) towards the £78.0m cost of scheme implementation at M6 J10, which is currently at its final stages of being delivered and due to complete in spring 2023 (local roads) and summer 2023 (motorway).
- 4.44. Whilst it is anticipated that LNIP transport capital funding resources and additional Local Growth Fund resources will be available to develop and implement capital transport schemes until 2026/27 (grant determination confirmed) and beyond, there is always a small risk that these resources will not be available e.g. should a government emergency budget rescind these commitments. This would impact on staff in the Strategic Transport Team; Road Safety Team; and Major Projects & Minor Improvements (all Economy, Environment & Communities Directorate), some of whose activities in developing and implementing projects is legitimately capitalised through engineer assistants' time (EAT). If sufficient grant funding were not made available to the Council by the DfT and WMCA, relevant Council services would need to be reorganised with the risk that a small number of redundancies may be necessary. This would require the Council to consider how it would deliver its statutory duties in the absence of this funding.
- 4.45. If government and/or WMCA increases or reduces future LNIP transport capital funding allocations beyond 2026/27 for the Council, the allocation of resources to programmes and projects will be reviewed accordingly. Financing major scheme implementation costs in line with agreed funding profiles will have priority.

Legal implications

- 4.46. The Council has various options by which to procure services, including calling off civil engineering frameworks, using the highways maintenance term contract or a Council-run procurement exercise to engage contractors to carry out work required in the implementation of the capital programme. All works will be evidenced by a written contract in a form approved by the Director of

Governance or by a call-off from a suitable framework and shall be made and executed in accordance with the Council's contract rules. This may require the Council to engage external legal support. Should any legal implications arise during any procurement process, they will be considered and reported to the Transport Capital Programme Delivery Board and managed in accordance with the agreed delegations to officers.

- 4.47. In its role as highway authority, the Council has a statutory duty to identify and implement measures to address congestion and road safety concerns on the local highway network and to maintain the network in a safe condition. LNIP and HMB grant funding is used in part to address these obligations.
- 4.48. Where any specific project requires the acquisition of land (by agreement or compulsorily) the Council's Legal Services Team will work with Highways, Transport & Operations officers and there may be a need to engage external legal support if compulsory acquisition of land is necessary.

Procurement implications/social value

- 4.49. Any contractual arrangements must be procured in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (if applicable) and the Council's contract rules. The Council's Procurement and Legal Services Teams will work with Highways, Transport & Operations officers to ensure that mini tenders and call-offs from any frameworks are conducted in compliant ways and that all contracts for schemes procured under this capital programme will be validly entered into before any services are provided to the Council.

Property implications

- 4.50. All projects contained within the programme will either be delivered on land and assets already owned and managed by the Council, or on land acquired (by agreement or compulsorily) for the purpose of project delivery. Where necessary, agreements will be in place for the use or enhancement of third party land.
- 4.51. Each project will assess the implications on land and assets and a view will be taken by either the highways authority or the asset management function of the Council as to how any proposed enhancements or scheme designs impact on the Council's land portfolio, and how any impacts can be mitigated or managed.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.52. The programme aims to make sustainable travel – cycling, walking and public transport – available to all residents and stakeholders, and ultimately seeks to align with the Walsall Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022 to 2025) and objectives. For example, a transport system that is accessible, reliable and affordable contributes to mental wellbeing. It provides access to work, friends and family, as well as health-promoting facilities such as schools, parks and greenspaces, libraries and health centres.

- 4.53. The programme also aligns with the aspirations of the town centre master plan to promote the town centre as a healthy location that can be enjoyed by all people across Walsall.
- 4.54. The Transport Capital Programme 2023/24 has also been tested against the 'Marmot Objectives'. These are:-
- Giving every child the best start in life – *the programme includes measures to support travel to school by sustainable modes, which is part of a rolling programme across the Borough;*
 - Enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives – *measures to promote sustainable modes help promote healthy and independent travel choices;*
 - Creating fair employment and good work for all – *improved transport networks help people access employment and training opportunities;*
 - Ensuring a healthy standard of living for all – *access to paid employment is facilitated by improved transport networks;*
 - Creating and developing sustainable places and communities – *the programme includes active travel, public transport and road safety measures, which all support sustainable places and communities;*
 - Strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention – *healthy travel choices, such as walking or cycling, can help prevent ill health.*

Reducing inequalities

- 4.55. As part of the delivery of the LTP consideration has been given to ensuring that the needs of all sections of the community are considered in transport projects. Further, the LTP was subject to an equalities impact assessment, which informed the final published document.
- 4.56. The transport capital programme will assist in improving facilities for all modes of transport; plans will focus on improving access to key services and facilities such as education, job opportunities and health care facilities.

Staffing implications

- 4.57. There are no intended implications on staffing by prioritising projects in the manner described in this report. However, it should be noted that LNIP transport capital funding helps support existing posts in the Highways, Transport & Operations service because work programmes are managed by the Strategic Transportation Team and Road Safety Team. A significant proportion of legitimate scheme development (e.g. design and business case work) and supervision costs (i.e. managing contractors delivering improvements on behalf of the Council) are also incurred by transport planners and engineers via a timesheet management system.
- 4.58. As set out in paragraph 4.44, if future grant funding is significantly reduced or removed altogether, it will be necessary to undertake a review of the service. This could result in a small number of staff that currently deliver statutory duties being potentially 'at risk' of redundancy. Delivery of statutory duties by the

Council are prescribed by legislation and must be delivered irrespective of any budgetary constraints.

Climate impact

- 4.59. Tackling and responding to climate change are at the heart of the LTP. To address the big social, economic and environmental issues we face, the objectives in the new LTP core strategy are framed around five 'motives for change' where changing transport could help better support inclusive growth by providing a transport system that is fair to everyone and minimises the impacts on the environment.
- **Sustaining economic success:** Support the building of an inclusive and green West Midlands economy, through better use of existing infrastructure, land, technology and sustainable transport options.
 - **Tackling the climate emergency:** Changes to where people travel to / from, reducing the frequency of travel and changing the vehicles we use to travel.
 - **Creating a fairer society:** How land is used, the availability and affordability of transport and the experience and usability of transport.
 - **Supporting local places and communities:** Re-imagining local neighbourhoods, reducing dominance of transport and providing quick and easy access to key local services.
 - **Becoming more active:** Enable safe, convenient and accessible walking and cycling opportunities and increase active travel for journeys.
- 4.60. The LTP states that there are three key changes needed in our transport system to make this happen: -
- Improve accessibility (particularly for those without access to a car)
 - Reduce traffic
 - Electrify the transport system
- 4.61. Efforts to reduce carbon dioxide emissions include encouraging the uptake of ultra-low emission vehicles through the provision of charging infrastructure (chargepoints and transit stations) and promoting sustainable transport modes (walking, cycling and public transport) with appropriate infrastructure, services and promotional activity.
- 4.62. The CRSTS from the DfT further incentivises local authorities to actively promote sustainable modes by only funding capital schemes that can demonstrate that they are placing the needs of pedestrians, cyclists and bus users ahead of other road users. Guidance to local authorities published in July 2021 highlights the importance of carbon reduction, the need to develop schemes in accord with Local Transport Note 1/20 - Cycle Infrastructure Design, and the importance of helping deliver against the objectives set out in the National Bus Strategy ('Bus Back Better').

Consultation

- 4.63. The LTP has been the subject of wide consultation with partners and stakeholders. Major public consultation was undertaken in summer 2015 on the existing strategy documents, further consultation was undertaken in 2022 on the new LTP core strategy, and consultation is also now underway on the LTP 'big moves' and the guidance for area based strategies. Partners and stakeholders are consulted with respect to individual transport projects.
- 4.64. The West Midlands authorities have been commended for the comprehensive nature of involvement in developing previous LTP strategies and when consulting on transport schemes.
- 4.65. Local consultation always takes place as part of individual scheme development.

5. Decide

- 5.1. The options for the make-up of the LNIP transport capital programme have been considered as part of the assessment of potential projects / programmes as set out in paragraphs 4.16 to 4.21 above. The output of the appraisal of the various project ideas and suggestions is reported in **appendices B to G**. The projects that are selected are those that have the best alignment with the (current and emerging) LTP objectives; are supported locally; are affordable (or have the potential to lever-in other implementation funding, such as government grants); and are deliverable.
- 5.2. The appraisal processes utilised in the development of the programme ensure that it is compiled objectively and maximises the impact of limited transport capital funding by seeking to attract implementation funding from various other sources.
- 5.3. The proposed programme has been consulted upon amongst Council officers who are responsible for various technical disciplines and has been developed in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration.

6. Respond

- 6.1. The delivery of the agreed programme will be taken forward by project and programme managers within the Council's Highways, Transport & Operations service in the Economy, Environment & Communities Directorate.
- 6.2. The LNIP transport capital programme is a rolling programme of activity that supports the delivery of the LTP within the borough of Walsall, and many projects and programmes operate across several financial years and have multiple funding arrangements. Some key projects span different local authority boundaries e.g. corridor-based programmes and are delivered in partnership with relevant stakeholders e.g. Transport for West Midlands, Network Rail,

West Midlands Rail Executive, National Highways, Canal & River Trust, West Midlands Trains, bus operating companies, and neighbouring local authorities.

- 6.3. Officers of the Council attend various regional meetings and technical groups to ensure that projects are delivered in a coherent and consistent manner across the West Midlands Metropolitan Area.

7. Review

- 7.1. The LNIP transport capital programme is monitored by a group of Council officers that meet at least every two months to review progress and consider any recommendations to be put forward to the Transport Capital Programme Delivery Board, which is made up of senior officers and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration.
- 7.2. The Transport Capital Programme Delivery Board meets at least every two months (aligned to the officer meetings) and considers performance against intended progress at regular intervals throughout the financial year. The board can make decisions about remedial action; budget virements; and project full or partial completion.
- 7.3. The effectiveness of projects and programmes is monitored on an ongoing basis and is reflected in key data e.g. traffic counts; public transport patronage figures; air quality monitoring. The Council's monitoring activity is also supported by regional monitoring and reporting undertaken by the WMCA.

Appendices

- Appendix A** – Walsall Council Local Network Improvement Plan Transport Capital Programme 2023/24
- Appendix B** – Strategic Scheme Appraisal Results 2023/24
- Appendix C** – Local Safety Scheme Ranking 2023/24
- Appendix D** – 20mph Zones & Scheme Monitoring 2023/24
- Appendix E** – Promotion of Community Health and Safety 2023/24
- Appendix F** – Safer Routes to School Scheme Ranking 2023/24
- Appendix G** – Measures to Encourage Walking 2023/24

Background papers

- West Midlands Local Transport Plan 'Movement for Growth' 2015
- Walsall Transport Strategy 'Transport in Walsall' 2017
- City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, West Midlands Combined Authority Board report, 18 March 2022
- West Midlands Local Transport Plan 'Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands'
 - Final Core Strategy and draft Big Moves and draft Area Strategy Guidance, West Midlands Combined Authority Board report, 10 February 2023

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Simon Neilson
Executive Director

10 March 2023



Councillor Adrian Andrew
Portfolio holder

10 March 2023

Walsall Council Local Network Improvement Plan Transport Capital Programme 2023/24

Baseline: DRAFT for Cabinet Approval 22/03/23

Scheme	DRAFT Carry Forward (2022/23 to 2023/24)	Budget Allocation 2023/24	Total Budget
Major Highway Scheme Development & Delivery Programme			
Significant Projects			
M6 Junction 10 - Post-Opening Monitoring & Evaluation	£ -	£ 11,000.00	£ 11,000.00
DSDA Access Project - Post-Opening Monitoring & Evaluation	£ -	£ 14,465.00	£ 14,465.00
A41 / A4038 Walk, Cycle & Bus Corridor	£ -	£ 45,000.00	£ 45,000.00
A454 Walk, Cycle & Bus Corridor	£ -	£ 120,000.00	£ 120,000.00
Future Major Scheme Development Programme	£ -	£ 44,000.00	£ 44,000.00
York's Bridge	£ 500,000.00	£ -	£ 500,000.00
TOTAL	£ 500,000.00	£ 234,465.00	£ 734,465.00
Strategic Transportation Programme			
Public Transport Programme			
Darlaston Rail Station - Walk, Cycle & Bus Access	£ -	£ 50,000.00	£ 50,000.00
Willenhall Rail Station - Walk, Cycle & Bus Access	£ -	£ 50,000.00	£ 50,000.00
Walsall Town Centre Interchange - Walk, Cycle & Bus Access	£ -	£ 80,000.00	£ 80,000.00
Aldridge Rail Station - Highways Infrastructure Development (deferred from 2022/23)	£ 157,299.90	£ 10,000.00	£ 167,299.90
Sub-Total	£ 157,299.90	£ 190,000.00	£ 347,299.90
Improvement Scheme Programme			
Sustainable Transport Package - Walsall Towns Fund	£ -	£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00
Anson Jct Access	£ -	£ 79,935.00	£ 79,935.00
Black Country Walk & Cycle Programme	£ -	£ 85,000.00	£ 85,000.00
A461 Walk, Cycle & Bus Corridor	£ 43,000.00	£ 5,000.00	£ 48,000.00
Commonwealth Way / A34 Cycle Route - Phase 3	£ -	£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00
Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Programme	£ 96,481.25	£ 10,000.00	£ 106,481.25
Broad Meadow / Leighswood School – verge parking and TROs (deferred from 2022/23)	£ 150,000.00	£ -	£ 150,000.00
Public Rights of Way Programme	£ -	£ 65,000.00	£ 65,000.00
Sub-Total	£ 289,481.25	£ 264,935.00	£ 554,416.25
Highway Efficiency Programme			
Highway Efficiency Measures Programme	£ 15,000.00	£ 65,000.00	£ 80,000.00
Sub-Total	£ 15,000.00	£ 65,000.00	£ 80,000.00
TOTAL	£ 461,781.15	£ 519,935.00	£ 981,716.15
Road Safety & Active Travel Programme			
Local Safety Programme			
Local Safety Scheme: A34 Green Lane - Somerfield Rd - High St	£ -	£ 105,000.00	£ 105,000.00
Local Safety Scheme: B4210 Bloxwich Rd / High St	£ -	£ 146,520.00	£ 146,520.00
Local Safety Scheme: B4152 Salters Rd, Northgate	£ -	£ 79,530.00	£ 79,530.00
Safer Routes to School: Support for A*STARS	£ -	£ 17,500.00	£ 17,500.00
Safer Routes to School: Short Heath Federation	£ -	£ 500.00	£ 500.00
Safer Routes to School: Blue Coat Infant	£ -	£ 500.00	£ 500.00
Safer Routes to School: Reedswood E-ACT Primary	£ -	£ 5,000.00	£ 5,000.00
Safer Routes to School: Alumwell Infant	£ -	£ 5,000.00	£ 5,000.00
Safer Routes to School: Bluecoat Secondary	£ -	£ 15,000.00	£ 15,000.00
Safer Routes to School: Blue Coat Junior	£ -	£ 500.00	£ 500.00
Safer Routes to School: Queen Marys Grammar School	£ -	£ 15,000.00	£ 15,000.00
Promotion of Community Health & Safety: Network performance	£ -	£ 115,000.00	£ 115,000.00
Promotion of Community Health & Safety: Safety related requests	£ -	£ 10,000.00	£ 10,000.00
Promotion of Community Health & Safety: Speed management	£ -	£ 63,650.00	£ 63,650.00
Sub-Total	£ -	£ 578,700.00	£ 578,700.00
Active Travel Programme			
Measures to Encourage Walking: Upgrade of pedestrian crossing routes	£ -	£ 100,000.00	£ 100,000.00
Measures to Encourage Walking: Chester Road (footpath Grosvenor Ave to Buxton Rd)	£ -	£ 30,000.00	£ 30,000.00
Measures to Encourage Walking: Pool Hayes Lane near Castle Drive	£ -	£ 25,000.00	£ 25,000.00
Measures to Encourage Walking: Birmingham Road near Tynings Lane junction	£ -	£ 75,000.00	£ 75,000.00
Sub-Total	£ -	£ 230,000.00	£ 230,000.00
TOTAL	£ -	£ 808,700.00	£ 808,700.00
LOCAL NETWORK IMPROVEMENT PLAN TOTAL	£ 961,781.15	£ 1,563,100.00	£ 2,524,881.15
Promotion of Community Health and Safety - Council Capital Funding			
Promotion of Community Health & Safety: Chantry Avenue / Blakenall Lane	£ 12,000.00	£ 18,000.00	£ 30,000.00
Promotion of Community Health & Safety: Aldridge Road, Streetly	£ 35,000.00	£ 53,000.00	£ 88,000.00
Promotion of Community Health & Safety: Bentley Road North	£ 32,000.00	£ 49,000.00	£ 81,000.00
COUNCIL CAPITAL TOTAL	£ 79,000.00	£ 120,000.00	£ 199,000.00
GRAND TOTAL	£ 1,040,781.15	£ 1,683,100.00	£ 2,723,881.15

Project Name	Project Overview	Overall Cost	Score	Score as %	Included	Comments
1 Darlaston Rail Station - Walk, Cycle & Bus Access	Development of highways infrastructure around station	£ 50,000.00	39	81%	Yes	
2 Willenhall Rail Station - Walk, Cycle & Bus Access	Development of highways infrastructure around station	£ 50,000.00	39	81%	Yes	
3 Aldridge Rail Station - GRIP3 and Highways Development	Design development for station and highways infrastructure	£ 10,000.00	39	81%	Yes	
4 Walsall Town Centre Interchange - Walk, Cycle & Bus Access	Development of public transport interchanges	£ 80,000.00	38	79%	Yes	
5 Sustainable Transport Package - Walsall Towns Fund	Development of measures to promote active travel	£ 10,000.00	37	77%	Yes	
6 Black Country Walk & Cycle Programme	Development of measures to promote active travel	£ 85,000.00	37	77%	Yes	
7 A461 Walk, Cycle & Bus Corridor	Multi-modal corridor improvements development	£ 5,000.00	36	75%	Yes	
8 Commonwealth Way / A34 Cycle Route - Phase 3	Development and delivery of measures to promote active travel	£ 10,000.00	34	71%	Yes	
9 Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Programme	Delivery of infrastructure to promote electric vehicle usage	£ 10,000.00	33	69%	Yes	
10 Public Rights of Way Programme	Improvements to public rights of way	£ 65,000.00	33	69%	Yes	
11 Highway Efficiency Measures Programme	Rolling programme of TRO and UTC improvements	£ 65,000.00	29	60%	Yes	
12 Anson Junction Access	Development of highway access to employment site	£ 79,935.00	27	56%	Yes	
13 Commonwealth Way / A34 Cycle Route (Deliver Works)	Delivery of cycle route improvements	£ 1,048,682.00	34	71%	No	Cost exceeds total budget
14 Aldridge Station - Highway Improvements (Deliver Works)	Delivery of highway improvements	£ 700,000.00	33	69%	No	Cost exceeds total budget
15 Eastern Opportunity Area 2: Lindon Road (Deliver works)	Delivery of highway improvements	£ 150,000.00	26	54%	No	Not affordable
16 Sutton Rd/Longwood Lane Junction (Deliver Works)	Delivery of highway improvements	£ 680,465.00	26	54%	No	Cost exceeds total budget
17 Southern Opportunity Area: A4031 Gateway (Design & Deliver Works)	Delivery of highway improvements	£ 450,000.00	21	44%	No	Not affordable
Total Cost of Proposals		£3,549,082.00				
2023/24 Budget		£ 519,935.00				
Balance (Unfunded)		-£3,029,147.00				

Walsall Route Assessment

Refer to RS12a - Procedure for assessing Local Safety Schemes and Walsall Road Safety Strategy

Schemes highlighted for delivery as part of LSS programme or other works

Delivered schemes

Future schemes

Rank	Route	Section	Overall Score	Star Rating	Economic cost of collisions	Key Issues	Scheme description	Scheme cost	FYRR (Calculated 40% reduction)	Comments	Status
1	A4148 Littleton Street (Various)	Lichfield St to Pleck Road	62.59	2 Star	£1,866,408	High vulnerable road user rates for P2W's, cyclists, pedestrians, child pedestrians, Drivers 20-29 and Passengers 15-24; RTC's at the following junctions: Pleck Rd, Birchills St, Green La, Hatherton St and The Arboretum;	Introduce pedestrian countdown timers; junction improvements; yellow boxes; increase capacity at Hatherton St jct;			NPIF2 route improvements completed 2019/20. Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) scheme in development March 2023 (Pleck to Arboretum)	Other development
2	Wednesbury Road, Caldmore	A4148 Bescot Road to Bridgeman Street	60.50	2 Star	£1,964,640	High collision rates, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates for P2W's, Cyclists, Child casualties, pedestrians and Drivers 20-29; RTC's at the following junctions: Corporation St, Tasker St, Vicarage Place and Bridgeman St	Narrow Wednesbury Road near Glebe centre, Upgrade Zebra near Vicarage PI, Upgrade Zebra on Vicarage PI, introduce table top junction with Vicarage Place, VASS, HFS, build out and lining; Review traffic signals at Corporation Street			Section Hillary Street to Milton Street treated as part of LSS Programme 2016/17. Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) scheme in development March 2023 (Pleck to Arboretum)	Scheme Completed LSS Programme 2022/23. Monitoring in early stages
3	A34 Green Lane - Somerfield Rd - High St	Whole	59.56	3 Star	£4,420,440	Medium collision rates, High vulnerable road user rates for All cyclists, child casualties, pedestrians, child pedestrians 5-19, and car passengers 15-24; Medium rates for Drivers 20-29; RTC's at the following junctions: Stephenson Ave, Leamore Lane, High St	Undertake Route Study to identify and improve overall safety along the route. Investigate traffic signal improvements to Stephenson Avenue junction and improvements to pedestrian safety on Bloxwich High Street	£105,000	561%	Bloxwich Towns Fund and Walsall Towns Fund active travel project in development March 2023	Approve
4	A4148 Bescot Road / Wallows Lane	Whole	57.32	3 Star	£785,856	High collision rates, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates for P2W's, children, pedestrians, young pedestrians, and Drivers 20-29; RTC's at Dickenson Ave & Bescot Rd Rdbt;	Warning VAS on each approach to roundabout; upgrade chevron signs; build-out kerb line on Wallows Lane approach; Review signal operation at Dickenson Ave jct; Targeted education campaign	£70,785	148%	Traffic Signal junction at Dickenson upgraded as part of NPIF2 2018	Working with DfT on post-opening monitoring and evaluation on previous roundabout scheme
5	B4210 Bloxwich Road / High Street	Day Street to A34	56.79	3 Star	£3,339,888	High collision rates, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates - all groups; Section Hall St to Day Street, Proffitt St, Forest La, Beeches Rd, Leamore La/Harden Rd, High St	Undertake Route Study to identify and improve overall safety along the route. Improve pedestrian facilities and junction improvement between Proffitt Street and John Street. Includes collision cluster at Marlow Street, John Street. Review traffic signals at Harden Road junction.	£146,520	304%	Review maintenance programme to link in with resurfacing programme Consider as phased implementation. Bloxwich Towns Fund active travel project in development March 2023	Approve
6	A4038 - Darlston Rd	Park Lane to Old Pleck Road	56.69	3 Star	£1,473,480	Medium collision rates, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates - All P2W, child casualties, and Pedestrians 5-19; RTC's at the following junctions: Old Heath Rd, east Cemetery Rd, Reservoir PI, Scarborough Rd and Wellington St	Centre hatching and pedestrian refuges, provide protected parking areas, junction treatment (build-outs), 2xVASS, review road marking and signage; (New signal junction Reservoir PI, new arm at Cemetery Rd jct and new signal junction near The Globe Inn)	£75,900	259%	Linked to several developments: Railway station, Boxpool, St Francis group, Gas holder site, and Phoenix 10; City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) A4038 corridor scheme in development as of February 2023	LSS Completed. New signal junctions Reservoir Place and near the Globe Inn as part of future development proposals.
7	Lower Rushall Street, Walsall	A4148 Broadway to Bridge Street	55.00	3 Star	£884,088	Medium collision rates, High KSI rate, Medium vulnerable road user rates for P2W's, Cyclists, Child casualties, pedestrians and Drivers 20-29;	Subject to Sprint consultation and development plan			Collision cluster at Bridge Street junction, to be addressed as part of Sprint Phase 1 delivery.	Other development
8	Wolverhampton Street	A4038 Pinfold Street to Borough boundary	54.62	3 Star	£491,160	High Collision Rate, High KSI, High vulnerable road user rates for All Casualties, All Car Passengers 15-24; Medium vulnerable road user rates for P2W's, children, All Pedestrians and Pedestrians 5-19	Speed gateway jct Hall St and Pinfold St Ext, speed cushions throughout, review on street parking, RS Education campaign targetting VRUs, Grace Academy	£47,000	259%	Linked to 20mph Zone	Approved 2022/23. Scheme currently under construction.
9	A454 Wolverhampton Road	M6 J10 to 100m west Pleck Road	53.79	3 Star	£982,320	High collision rates, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates - cyclists, child casualties, Pedestrians, Pedestrians 5-19, and Drivers 20-29; RTC's at the following junctions: Tempus Dr, Lane Ave, Alumwell Rd and Raleigh St;	Review pedestrian movements and guardrail provision at Lane Ave & Alumwell Rd, Upgrade pedestrian crossing at Raleigh Street, Signing and lining	£148,720	88%	Linked to Major Scheme development for M6 Jct 10 & Blox La/Tempus Dr; Crossing at Raleigh Street upgraded through NPIF2 (Feb 2020). Also City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) A454 corridor scheme in development 2023-27	Scheme Completed
10	Ingram Road/Walker Road	Harden Road to Field Road	52.41	3 Star	£1,375,248	High Collision Rate, High KSI, High vulnerable road user rates for All Casualties,	Review road markings and signs, consider VASS, kerb realignment at Valley Rd, priority build outs/ speed cushions	£59,100	338%	Linked to 20mph Zone: Blakenhall/ Goscote	Approved 2022/23. Scheme currently under construction.
11	B4152 Salters Road Northgate	Whole	51.77	3 Star	£1,277,016	Medium collision rates, Medium vulnerable road user rates for P2W's, Cyclists, Drivers 20-29, Passengers 15-24. Poor speed compliance. Cluster site close to Northgate, Sussex Avenue mini roundabout	Section 1 - Walsall Wood Road to Lichfield Road. Central hatching, HFS and VASS signs. Section 2 - Walsall Wood Road South to Aldridge By-Pass, includes Northgate mini roundabout.	£79,530	214%	Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 (ATF4) proposal submitted to WMCA and Active Travel England for development funding February 2023	Approve
12	A4124 - Lichfield Road / Near Academy	Bloxwich	49.61	3 Star	£1,178,784	Medium collision rates, High KSI rate, Medium vulnerable road user rates for P2W's, Child casualties	Localised footway widening at pedestrian crossing and bus stops near Academy entrance. Warning signs and lining	£130,680	120%		Reserve
13	A4148 Pleck Road	A4038 to A454	49.17	3 Star	£1,571,712	High collision rates, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates for P2W's, children, pedestrians and Drivers 20-29. Excessive speed and anti-social behaviour	2no. VASS, pedestrian refuges, buildouts, new roadmarking layout; Guide markings through Moat Rd/Pleck Rd junction with HFS on approach. Improved warning and directional signs. Review of operation jct with St Johns Rd	£201,650	104%	Treated as part of LSS programme 2018/19 & WMCA Congestion Management and Road Safety fund; Implemented October 2019	Completed Oct 2019
14	A41 High Street	Moxley junction to Borough Boundary	49.00	3 Star	£491,160	Medium collision rates, Medium vulnerable road user rates for P2W's.	Improve right turn facilities at side roads, provide uncontrolled pedestrian crossing facilities to local shops	£30,000	218%		Reserve
15	B4484 - Rose Hill	Whole	47.93	3 Star	£589,392	High collision rates, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates for cyclists and pedestrians; Longacre junction RTC cluster and junction with Walsall Road; Parking issues along route	Remark carriageway, introduce mini island at Longacre, VASS, formalise on street parking, review kerbing and guardrail at Walsall Road junction	£80,800	97%	Linked to Willenhall Station proposal, Willenhall Garden City Leveling Up Fund scheme and Active Travel Fund Tranche 4 (ATF4) proposals	Reserve
16	B4154 Norton Road(2)	Canal Bridge to Vicarage Road	47.80	3 Star	£589,392	Medium collision rates, High KSI rate, Medium vulnerable road user rates for P2W's, Cyclists, Child casualties, pedestrians and Drivers 20-29; RTC's at the following junctions: Vicarage Rd, High St	Investigate upgrading extg pedestrian refuge near Station St to controlled crossing, review highway layout near Station St, improve road markings and road signs	£102,630	77%	Linked to Yorks Bridge improvements; signal operation at Vicarage Rd jct changed to three stage off peak.	Future programme
17	Harden Road	B4210 High Street to A4124 Lichfield Road	46.00	3 Star	£1,178,784	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
18	B4154 Bosty Lane	A454 Walsall Road to Barr Common Road	46.00	3 Star	£196,464	High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates for Drivers 20-29. RTC's at the following junctions: Barr Common Rd; Excessive speed	Centre hatching, 2 x watchman, improve road markings and signs	£89,100	29%	None	Reserve
19	B4464 - Somerford PI / New Road	Whole	45.19	3 Star	£491,160	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
20	A452 Chester Road High Street	Coppcie Lane to A461 Lichfield Road	43.23	3 Star	£1,080,552	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme

21	A4148 Broadway west	Whole	43.00	3 Star	£1,080,552	Medium collision rates, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates for child casualties, pedestrians, and pedestrians 5-19.	Junction upgrade at Bescot Cres being implemented Mar 2020 as part of NPIF2	£250,000	58%	Bescot Crescent junction being redesigned as part of NPIF 2 - Mar 2020	Approved 2022/23 - Scheme currently under construction
22	A454 Little Aston Road Section 2	Branton Hill to A452	42.91	3 Star	£294,696	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
23	A4124 - Lichfield Road / Sneyd Lane	Borough Boundary to A34 High Street	42.81	3 Star	£1,178,784	High collision rate, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates for P2W, Child KSI, children casualties, child pedestrians 5-19, Drivers 20-29 and car passengers 15-24;	Undertake Route Study to identify improvements	£20,000	786%	None	Future programme
24	B4464 - Walsall Street / Walsall Road	Whole	42.00	3 Star	£1,375,248	High collision rates, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates for all casualties and Passengers 15-24; RTC's at the following junctions: Gypsy La, Bham St, Fletchers La and The Crescent	Upgrade zebra near St Giles, Upgrade zebra near Fisher Street, Junction improvement at Bham St, Junction improvement at Gypsy Lane, signing and lining, build outs, Review signals at The Crescent and usage of Walsall Rd near Guru Nanak	£98,670	186%	Linked to Major scheme for Sustainable Travel corridor linking Walsall to Wolverhampton. City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) A454 corridor scheme in development 2023-27	Future programme
25	A454 Little Aston Road Section 1	Leighswood Road to Branton Hill	41.75	3 Star	£294,696	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
26	B4210 Sandbank & Elmore Green	Whole	41.18	3 Star	£392,928	High collision rate, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates for P2W, child casualties, pedestrians, child pedestrians 5-19, Drivers 20-29 and car passengers 15-24; RTC's at the following junctions: Alfred St, Station St	Junction improvement at Station St, and Church Moat Way, route treatment measures incorporating centre hatch, traffic splitter islands	£45,210	116%	None	Future programme
27	B4464 - Wolverhampton Road west	Whole	41.11	3 Star	£1,178,784	High collision rates, High vulnerable road user rates for P2W, child casualties, and car passengers 15-24; RTC's at the following junctions: Churchill Rd, Wanwick Ave, The Crescent	Major scheme development			Linked to major sustainable transport corridor improvements CWC/Walsall. Also City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) A454 corridor scheme in development 2023-27	Other development
28	B4151 Foley Road east	Whole	41.05	3 Star	£392,928	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
29	A4038 - Moxley Rd	Moxley junction to A462 Darlaston Rd	40.91	3 Star	£589,392	High collision rates, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates for P2W's, cyclists, children, pedestrians, young pedestrians and Drivers 20-29. RTC's at Wolverhampton St and Dunsford La into signals, vehicles	Improved signing, lining, HFS, improved pedestrian facilities near Pinfold Primary School. Targeted education campaign	£144,200	54%		Scheme completed
30	A461 Lichfield Road Section 1	Broadway to Daw End Lane	40.65	3 Star	£884,088	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
31	A462 - Midland Rd	Bilston Lane to The Green	39.47	4 Star	£294,696	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
32	B4484 - Various (Fibbersley)	Moat Street to Borough Boundary	39.00	4 Star	£491,160	Excessive speed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
33	A4124 - Lichfield Road / Pelsall Road	B4154 Norton Road to Clayhanger Lane	38.71	4 Star	£687,624	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
34	A4148 Broadway	Whole	37.96	4 Star	£392,928	Medium collision rates, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates for	Improved pedestrian facilities across Broadway near Weston Rd widen central	£88,440	59%	None	Future programme
37	Leamore Lane, Leamore	B4210 Bloxwich Road to Willenhall Lane	37.58	4 Star	£884,088	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
38	A34 Birmingham Road	A4148 Broadway to Bell Road	37.13	4 Star	£491,160	Medium collision rates, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates for P2W's, children, pedestrians, young pedestrians Drivers 20-29, and	Average Speed Enforcement introduced Spring 2020	£33,691	194%		Scheme completed.
39	B4152 Brownhills Rd Lindon Road	Whole	36.73	4 Star	£589,392	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
40	A454 Mellish Road	A461 Lichfield Road to Fernleigh Road	36.34	4 Star	£294,696	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
41	A4041 Queslett Road	Whole - Walsall side only	36.14	4 Star	£687,624	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
42	A4031 West Bromwich Road	Broadway to Borough Boundary	36.00	4 Star	£589,392	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
43	A4038 - Walsall Rd	Darlaston Road to B4200 Park Lane	35.83	4 Star	£884,088	High collision rates, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates for P2W's, child casualties, pedestrians, pedestrians 5-19 and Drivers 20-29.	Introduce ghost right turns with traffic islands at Salisbury & Old Park Rd; review signal timings, signing and road markings	£76,560	154%	None	Scheme Completed
44	Bescot Road/Wednesbury Road	Traffic Signal Junction	35.79	4 Star	£1,080,552	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed	£84,480	171%		Future programme
47	B4155 Lichfield Road	High Street to Ogleway Road	35.22	4 Star	£392,928	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
48	B4154 Beacon Road(2)	Old Hall Lane to Queslett Road	34.87	4 Star	£392,928	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
49	B4154 Pelsall Lane	Whole	34.47	4 Star	£491,160	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
50	A452 Chester Road urban	50m north of Raglan Close to Borough Boundary	34.23	4 Star	£294,696	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
51	B4138 - Thornhill Road	Whole	34.00	4 Star	£196,464	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
52	B4154 Daw End Lane	A461 Lichfield Rd to A454 Walsall Rd	34.00	4 Star	£294,696	Excessive speed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
53	A4098 Great Bridge Road	Whole	34.00	4 Star	£0	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
54	B4151 Sutton Road	Daffodil Road to Skip Lane	33.83	4 Star	£491,160	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
55	B4210 Broad Lane	Whole	33.82	4 Star	£294,696	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
56	B4151 Sutton Road West	Broadway to Daffodil Road	33.75	4 Star	£294,696	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
57	B4484 Pinson Road / Field Street	Sommerford Place to Moat Street	33.00	4 Star	£98,232	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
58	A34 Birmingham Road	Bell Road to Borough Boundary	32.00	4 Star	£1,178,784	High vulnerable road user rates for Drivers 20-29.	Average Speed Enforcement introduced Spring 2020	£33,691	467%		Scheme completed.
59	B4154 Norton Road	Canal Bridge to Borough Boundary	31.69	4 Star	£196,464	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
60	A5 Watling Street	Whole	31.63	4 Star	£294,696	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
61	A461 Lichfield Road Section 2	Daw End Lane to Chester Road / High Street	31.34	4 Star	£2,455,800	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
62	B4154 Barr Common Road	Whole	30.00	4 Star	£98,232	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
63	B4154 Walsall Road	Whole	29.15	4 Star	£196,464	Excessive speed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
64	A4148 Broadway north	Whole	28.48	4 Star	£785,856	Medium collision rates, High KSI rate, High vulnerable road user rates for P2W's, children, pedestrians, young pedestrians Drivers 20-29, and Passengers 15-24;	Introduction of Average Speed Enforcement planned March 2019	£47,481	221%		Scheme completed.
65	B4154 Longwood Road	Whole	28.00	4 Star	£98,232	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
66	A462 - Sandbeds Rd / Clarkes Lane	Bentley Lane to B4464 Wolverhampton Road west	27.88	4 Star	£982,320	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
67	A462 - Bilston Lane	Wolverhampton Rd West to Owen Rd	27.54	4 Star	£491,160	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
68	B4155 Lichfield Road	Canal bridge to Boundary	27.32	4 Star	£98,232	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
69	A34 Stafford Road	Whole	27.25	4 Star	£392,928	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
70	A41 Black Country New Road	Moxley junction to Borough Boundary	26.50	4 Star	£392,928	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
71	A4124 - Lichfield Road / Wolverhampton Road	Whole	26.17	4 Star	£392,928	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
72	A461 Lichfield Road Section 3	100m east Chester Road to boundary	25.00	4 Star	£98,232	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
73	A462 - Cannock - Straight Rd	A4124 Lichfield Road to Bentley Lane	24.11	4 Star	£491,160	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
74	A462 - The Green	Midland Rd to Pinfold St	24.00	4 Star	£294,696	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
75	B4590 Bilston Lane	The Keyway to Owen Road	24.00	4 Star	£98,232	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
76	A454 Aldridge Road	Fernleigh Road to Longwood Lane	24.00	4 Star	£196,464	Excessive speed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
77	A462 - Darlaston Rd	Walsall Rd to Borough Boundary	24.00	4 Star	£0	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
78	B4151 Sutton Road East	Skip Lane to Beacon Road	21.77	4 Star	£294,696	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
79	A454 Walsall Road / Aldridge By Pass	B4154 Bosty Lane to Leighswood Road	21.30	4 Star	£491,160	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
80	A4124 - Pelsall Road	B4154 Clayhanger Lane to A452 High Street	21.00	4 Star	£196,464	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
81	A462 - Essington Road	Sneyd Lane to A4124 Lichfield Road	20.75	4 Star	£98,232	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
82	B4151 Foley Road west	Whole	20.00	4 Star	£0	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
83	A452 Chester Road (2)	Castlehill - Back Lane	18.53	5 Star	£687,624	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
84	A454 The Keyway	Portobello Island to BCR Island	17.67	5 Star	£294,696	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
85	B4151 Beacon Hill	Whole	17.00	5 Star	£294,696	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme

86	A463 Black Country Route - section 1	Borough Boundary - Midland Road	16.67	5 Star	£491,160	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
87	A452 Chester Road north	A5 Watling Street to Coppice Lane	15.00	5 Star	£0	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
88	A4444 Black Country New Road	Borough Boundary - Moxley junction	15.00	5 Star	£98,232	Excessive speed and anti-social behaviour	Average Speed Enforcement introduced in Spring 2020	£43,893	30%		Scheme completed.
89	A454 Black Country Route - section 2	Midland Road - M6 J10	14.88	5 Star	£785,856	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
90	B4154 Beacon Road	Beacon Hill to Old Hall Lane	12.43	5 Star	£294,696	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
91	B5011 Ogle Road / Chase Road	Whole	12.00	5 Star	£0	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
92	A452 Chester Road (1)	200m south east of A461 Lichfield Rd to Castlehill	11.00	5 Star	£98,232	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
93	A452 Chester Road (3)	Back Lane to 50m north of Raglan Close	10.53	5 Star	£491,160	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme
94	A454 Walsall Road	Longwood Lane to B4154 Bosty Lane	10.00	5 Star	£0	Programme to be developed	Scheme details to be confirmed				Future programme

Signed only 20mph Area wide speed limits

Scheme Location	Request - Route*see note1 /Cluster/Public	Monitoring Period 2020 - 2022			
		Fatal Collisions	Serious Collisions	Slight Collisions	Collision Total
Blakenhall/Goscote	Zo	1	10	26	37
Darlaston (Heathfield - Dorsett - Wolverhampton St - Stafford Rd)	Zo	0	3	9	12

Reserve schemes

Coalpool/ Rycroft	Zo	0	1	16	17
Beechdale	Zo	0	3	15	18
Park Hall	Zo	0	0	1	1
Whetstone, Aldridge	Zo	1	0	4	5
Moxley	Zo	0	0	1	1
Streetley	Zo	0	1	1	2
Chepstow Rd	Zo	0	0	0	0

Local Safety Scheme Monitoring

Increase
No change
Saving

Scheme Location	Request - Route*see note1 /Cluster/Public	Collisions at implementation				Date Implemented	Last 3 years (2020 - 2022)				Trend	Collision prevention saving	Last 3 years (2019 - 2021)				Trend	Collision prevention saving	Previous 3 years (2018 - 2020)				Trend	Collision prevention saving						
		Fatal Collisions	Serious Collisions	Slight Collisions	Collision Total		Fatal Collisions	Serious Collisions	Slight Collisions	Accident Total			Fatal Collisions	Serious Collisions	Slight Collisions	Accident Total			Fatal Collisions	Serious Collisions	Slight Collisions	Accident Total								
A4148 Pleck Road (Moat Road to Darlaston Road)	Ro*	1	3	16	20	Apr-19	0	2	6	8	-12	£-1,085,088	0	1	8	9	-11	£-994,664	0	2	9	11	-9	£-813,816						
Walsall Road / Hall Lane / Vicarage Road	Cl	1	0	6	7	Sep-19	0	2	2	4	-3	£-271,272	0	3	2	5	-2	£-180,848	0	3	3	6	-1	£-90,424						
A4124 Lichfield Rd (Field Road to Clockmill Rd)	Ro*	0	5	4	9	Sep-18	0	2	5	7	-2	£-180,848	0	2	7	9	0	£0	0	2	3	5	-4	£-361,696						
Old Pleck Road / Darlaston Rd / Bescot Rd	Cl	0	1	4	5	n/a	0	1	9	10	5	£452,120	0	0	10	10	5	£452,120	0	1	10	11	6	£542,544						
The Green / Bentley Road South / Richards Street	Cl	0	0	2	2		0	0	1	1	-1	£-90,424	0	0	0	0	-2	£-180,848	0	0	0	0	-2	£-180,848						
A4148 Wallows Lane - Bescot Road - Dickinson	Ro*	0	3	15	18	n/a	0	1	22	23	5	£452,120	0	0	26	26	8	£723,392	0	1	24	25	7	£632,968						
Broadway / Weston Street	Cl	0	1	2	3	n/a	0	1	4	5	2	£180,848	0	3	7	10	7	£632,968	0	5	5	10	7	£632,968						
Caldmore Rd (Caldmore Green to Bradford St)	Ro*	0	2	10	12		0	2	5	7	-5	£-2,260,600	0	1	5	6	-6	£-542,544	0	0	5	5	-7	£-632,968						
A462 The Green (Midland Rd - Pinfold Street)	Ro*	0	2	3	5		0	1	4	5	0	£0	0	2	3	5	0	£0	0	3	5	8	3	£271,272						
Primley Ave	Ro*	0	3	4	7	2017/18	0	1	4	5	-2	£-180,848	0	1	3	4	-3	£-271,272	0	1	2	3	-4	£-361,696						
Heath Rd, Darlaston (Midland Road to Kendricks Road)	Ro*	0	1	8	9	2017/18	0	0	1	1	-8	£-723,392	0	0	0	0	-9	£-813,816	0	0	0	0	-9	£-813,816						
West Bromwich Road (Greenside Way to Walstead Road)	Ro*	1	3	7	11	2017/18	0	0	2	2	-9	£-813,816	0	0	2	2	-9	£-813,816	0	1	6	7	-4	£-361,696						
Pleck Road / Bridgeman Street	Cl	0	0	6	6	2017/18	0	1	3	4	-2	£-180,848	0	1	5	6	0	£0	0	0	5	5	-1	£-90,424						
BCR/ Keyway Roundabout	Cl	0	0	9	9	2017/18	0	0	4	4	-5	£-452,120	0	0	3	3	-6	£-542,544	0	0	2	2	-7	£-632,968						
A34 Birmingham Road (Skip Lane to Walstead Road and approaches)	Ro*	1	3	9	13	2017/18	0	0	1	1	-12	£-1,085,088	0	0	0	0	-13	£-1,175,512	0	0	1	1	-12	£-1,085,088						
Wednesbury Road / Oxford Street	Cl	0	0	7	7	2016/17	0	0	2	2	-5	£-452,120	0	0	2	2	-5	£-452,120	0	0	2	2	-5	£-452,120						
Moxley Gyratory	Cl	1	0	4	5		0	0	3	3	-2	£-180,848	0	0	3	3	-2	£-180,848	0	0	3	3	-2	£-180,848						
Broadway North (Arboretum Road - Lincoln Road) Average Speed Enforcement implement along the route in 2020	Ro*	0	0	9	9	2016/17	0	0	0	0	-9	£-813,816	0	1	4	5	-4	£-361,696	0	1	9	10	1	£90,424						
Walsall Road (Bills Street to Cobden Street)	Ro*	0	5	0	5	2016/17	0	0	1	1	-4	£-361,696	0	0	2	2	-3	£-271,272	0	0	5	5	0	£0						
Wednesbury Road (Hilary Street to Milton Street)	Ro*	0	4	22	26	2016/17	0	0	6	6	-20	£-1,808,480	0	0	4	4	-22	£-1,989,328	0	0	3	3	-23	£-2,079,752						
Bloxwich Lane	Ro*	0	3	15	18	2016/17	0	1	1	2	-16	£-1,446,784	0	2	4	6	-12	£-1,085,088	0	2	6	8	-10	£-904,240						
A4124 Lichfield Road / A462 Essington Road	Cl	0	0	8	8	2015/16	0	1	3	4	-4	£-361,696	0	0	2	2	-6	£-542,544	0	0	2	2	-6	£-542,544						
A4124 (Sandringham Avenue to Bealeys Lane)	Ro*	0	5	23	28	2015/16	0	3	12	15	-13	£-1,175,512	0	2	15	17	-11	£-994,664	0	4	14	18	-10	£-904,240						
Coalpool Lane / Goscote Lane	Ro*	0	2	11	13	2015/16	0	0	11	11	-2	£-180,848	0	0	12	12	-1	£-90,424	0	0	9	9	-4	£-361,696						
Harden Road / Broadstone	Ro*	0	0	2	2	2014/15	0	1	1	2	0	£0	0	0	0	0	-2	£-180,848	0	0	0	0	-2	£-180,848						
Harden Road / Walker Road	Cl	0	0	3	3	2014/15	0	0	1	1	-2	£-180,848	0	1	1	2	-1	£-90,424	0	1	1	2	-1	£-90,424						
Coalpool Lane/ Mill Lane	Cl	0	0	4	4	2014/15	0	0	0	0	-4	£-361,696	0	0	0	0	-4	£-361,696	0	0	0	0	-4	£-361,696						
Broadway west - Broadway (Bescot Cres to Weston St)	Ro*	0	1	4	5	2014/15	0	0	8	8	3	£271,272	0	1	9	10	5	£452,120	1	2	7	10	5	£452,120						
Harden Road (Harden Close to Coalpool Lane)	Ro*	0	0	2	2	2014/15	0	0	7	7	5	£452,120	0	0	8	8	6	£542,544	0	0	6	6	4	£361,696						
Sutton Road / Beacon Road Junction	Cl	0	0	2	2	2014/15	0	0	3	3	1	£90,424	0	0	2	2	0	£0	0	0	3	3	1	£90,424						
Broadway / Birmingham Road	Cl	0	1	14	15	2013/14	0	0	2	2	-13	£-1,175,512	0	0	3	3	-12	£-1,085,088	0	0	2	2	-13	£-1,175,512						
Birmingham Road inc Jct Broadway	Ro*	0	3	15	18	2013/14	0	1	3	4	-14	£-1,265,936	0	0	6	6	-12	£-1,085,088	0	0	4	4	-14	£-1,265,936						
Walstead Road	Ro*	0	0	10	10	2013/14	0	1	6	7	-3	£-271,272	0	1	8	9	-1	£-90,424	0	0	7	7	-3	£-271,272						
Field Road, Bloxwich (Including A4124 signal junction)	Ro*	0	4	16	20	2019/20	0	2	5	7	-13	£-1,175,512	0	2	5	7	-13	£-1,175,512	n/a	n/a	n/a	0								
B4038 Walsall Road	Ro*	0	5	10	15	2020/21	0	0	1	1	-14	£-1,265,936	0	0	3	3	-12	£-1,085,088	n/a	n/a	n/a	0								
B4038 Darlaston Road (including Bescot Rd Junction)	Ro*	0	6	13	19	2020/21	0	3	9	12	-7	£-632,968	0	3	17	20	1	£90,424	n/a	n/a	n/a	0								
Cavendish Road and Beechdale estate	Ro*	1	3	8	12	2020/21	0	3	15	18	6	£542,544	1	4	16	21	9	£813,816	n/a	n/a	n/a	0								
Cavendish Road	Ro*	1	2	2	5	2020/21	0	0	1	1	-4	£-361,696	1	1	3	5	0	£0	n/a	n/a	n/a	0								
Corporation Street- West Bromwich Street - Weston Street	Ro*	1	3	21	25	2019/20	0	0	8	8	-17	£-1,537,208	0	1	12	13	-12	£-1,085,088	n/a	n/a	n/a	0								
Paifrey/Caldmore	Zo	2	5	48	55	2019/20	0	3	20	23	-32	£-2,893,568	0	4	25	29	-26	£-2,351,024	n/a	n/a	n/a	0								
Wednesbury Road (Section II - Corporation Street to Vicarage Place)	Ro*	1	3	14	18	2021/22	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0		n/a	n/a	n/a	0								
Walstead Road West (including W Bromwich Rd junction)	Cl	0	4	5	9	2021/22	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0		n/a	n/a	n/a	0								
Wolverhampton Street, Darlaston	Ro*	0	3	8	11	2022/23	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0		n/a	n/a	n/a	0								
Walker Road/Ingram Road, Bloxwich	Ro*	1	3	13	17	2022/23	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0		n/a	n/a	n/a	0								
Bescot Crescent	Ro*	1	2	9	12	2022/23	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0		n/a	n/a	n/a	0								
Broadway	Ro*	1	4	5	10	2022/23	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	0		n/a	n/a	n/a	0								
Total saving in terms of collision												£-13,925,296													Total saving in terms of	£-10,398,760			Total saving in terms of	£-9,856,216

Promotion of Community Health and Safety

Refer to R519 - Procedure for assessing sites of Community Health & Safety

Scheme Heading	Budget	Scheme Description	Comments
Safety related requests	£10,000.00	To address minor road safety concerns within the Borough	
Speed Management	£93,650.00	Review of 20mph speed limit areas: areas listed as part of LSS programme: Network Performance Management	Slippage from previous years; Implementation in line with Walsall Road Safety Strategy
Network Performance	£115,000.00	Implementation of route management systems	Links to delivery of Congestion Management Plan & Network Management Plan
Total budget to complete schemes	£188,650.00		

Scheme No	LOCATION	AREA	AREA			No of people who signed the petition	Request by resident and supported by council ward councillors	Date Received	ACCIDENTS (Jan 20 - Nov 22)			AMENITIES			ASSESSMENT			Request Description	Comments	FYRR		
			Length of road (m)	Average width of road (m)	Property frontages				No of properties directly affected	No of properties indirectly affected	Fatal	Major	Minor	Schools	Benches	Open Spaces	Property / £1000				Accident and Injuries Score	Public Amenity (Yes or No)
	Blakenhall Lane/ Chantry Ave	Blakenhall Heath	100	9.0	40	50	0	n/a		2	0	2	1	0	0	2.4	5	0.5	7.91	Scheme carried forward from 22-23	112%	
	Aldridge Road, Streety	Streety	2200	7.0	150	50	0	Safety Review 2022/23	Feb-23	5	1	2	0	0	1	0.4	10		10.38	Traffic calming		
	Bentley Road North	Bentley	494	7.0	36	306	0	Mr Martin	Jul-17	4	1	0	0	0	1	1.8	7	0.5	9.32	Traffic Calming to include warning signs ped. Vass Bend warning.	Excludes collisions at W'ton Road West Junction. New Signals installed 2021/22	58%

Reserve schemes

1	Northgate, Mini Rbt, Aldridge upto and including Walton Rd	Aldridge	366	7.0	29	20	0	Clr Wilson		7	0	1	0	0	0	0.5	8	0.5	9.01	Amendments to current layout of Mini Rbt agreed.	Clr Wilson - Addressed as part of LSS programme 23-24	137%
2	Birmingham Street	Willenhall	317	6.0	84	110	0	Ms Simone Jarvis	Oct-15	4	0	2	0	0	0	2.4	6	0.5	8.94	Speed Cushions		106%
3	Erdington Road	Aldridge	2485	7.2	140	80	0	Mrs Cartwright	Apr-15	6	0	0	1	1	0	0.3	8	0.5	8.84	Traffic Calming to reduce perceived speeding		17%
4	Marlow Street/John Street		200	2.5	30	20	0	Safety Review 2022/23	01/01/2023	6	0	0	0	0	0	2.7	6		8.67	Addressed as part of LSS programme 23-24		
5	A34 Green Lane/Stevenson Avenue - changes to traffic signal									6	0	1	0	0	1	0.0	8	0.5	8.50	Right turn collisions - traffic signal changes	Addressed as part of LSS programme 23-24	904%
6	Wimperis Way / Bonnington Way / Romney Way	Pheasey	1280	6.5	202	10	170	Mr Sader, Councilors: Andrew, Bailey	Nov-02	4	0	1	1	0	1	0.8	7	0.5	8.33	Traffic calming to slow motorists avoid Collingwood Road	Needs to be considered with Tyndale Crescent as an affected parallel route (Wimperis Way survey Sept 07 Mean 26.2mph 85th 30.9mph)	24%
7	Bewley Road, (Calstock Rd / Binbrook Rd / Darvel Rd)	Bentley	197	6.0	70	92	0	Clr Barker	Aug-17	3	0	1	0	0	1	3.3	5	0	8.27	Traffic Calming - Local Safety Scheme		128%
8	B4464 Walsall Rd, Shepwell Green	Bentley	150	8.5	1	0	0	Clr Coughlan	Sep-17	6	0	0	0	1	0	0.0	7	0.5	7.53	Cars ignoring restrictions / temple access		236%
9	Barns Lane & Westgate	Rushall	3020	6.0	270	115	0	Clr Worral	Aug-12	4	0	1	0	1	0	0.6	6	0.5	7.10	Request for speed reducing measures and night time HGV ban		11%
10	Somerfield Road	Bloxwich	740	11.8	136	0	71	Clr Jones	Nov-15	3	0	1	1	1	0	0.5	6	0.5	7.02	Strict traffic calming measures	Upgrade cycle lane facilities to be undertaken by strategic transport	17%
11	A4124 Lichfield Road, New Invention	Willenhall	670	6.0	50	0	0	MP Eddie Hughes	Jan-18	3	0	1	1	1	0	0.4	6	0.5	6.91	Speed Camera or traffic calming		37%
12	The Crescent, Willenhall	Willenhall	500	9.0	30	20	0	Eddie Hughes MP	Jan-18	4	0	1	0	0	1	0.3	6	0.5	6.80	Central hatching, slow markings.		45%
13	Guild Avenue	Walsall	580	5.5	101	0	330	Mr N. Baker	Nov-03	4	0	1	0	0	0	1.1	5	0.5	6.56	Request for traffic calming due to vehicle speeds		63%
14	Valley Road	Blakenhall	1460	7.3	147	0	143	Mrs Moorcroft	Oct-08	5	0	0	1	0	0	0.5	6		6.46	Request for traffic calming due to vehicle speeds		24%
15	Selmans Hill/Stoney Lane	Bloxwich East	441.9	6.9	167	0	0	N/A	Dec-13	3	0	0	0	1	0	1.8	4	0.5	6.32	Vehicle restraint system		49%
16	Hollyhedge La - Birchills St	Birchills	300	7.3	50	100	0	n/a	Feb-19	0	0	1	1	1	1	1.5	4	0.5	6.02			0%
17	Walsall Road, Aldridge	Aldridge	1285	6.7	232	62	0	Mr Robert Jones	Dec-08	4	0	0	1	0	0	1.0	5		6.02	Speeding traffic		23%
18	Station Street	Darlaston	922	7.0	97	0	0	Mr S Stuart via LMP	Jan-06	4	0	0	1	0	0	0.5	5	0.5	6.00	Transferred to LSS programme		31%
19	Chester Road/Lazy Hill Junction	Walsall Wood	300	4.0	20	20	0	Safety Review 2022/23	01/01/2023	4	0	0	0	0	1	0.8	5		5.83			
20	Whetstone Lane	Aldridge	980	6.3	151	116	0	Mr Martin	Mar-17	2	0	0	1	1	0	1.1	4	0.5	5.63	Speeding traffic along Whetstone Lane, inconsiderate parents	New request 2017/18	16%
21	Doe Bank Lane/Bridle Lane	Streety	2500	5.5	29	0	880	Mrs Bullock	08/09/2020	2	0	1	1	0	1	0.1	5	0.5	5.57	Traffic calming request following serious injury		7%
22	Walball Wood Road	Aldridge	1985	7.5	406	65	0	Miss Louise Connor	Mar-15	2	0	0	0	1	1	1.0	4	0.5	5.48	Traffic calming / safety camera request	Miss Louise Connor	7%
23	Parker Street Inc Sandhill Street	Bloxwich	500	7.4	108	0	0	Nicola Denny 01922 10987	Apr-10	1	0	1	1	1	0	1.0	4	0.5	5.47	Parking restrictions / junction imps / traffic calming		14%
24	Leamore Lane/ Fryer Rd	Leamore	300	9.3	50	60	0	n/a	Feb-19	1	0	0	1	1	1	1.0	4	0.5	5.46			18%
25	Highfield Road	Pelsall	360	6.0	26	61	0	M Page	Mar-11	1	0	1	1	0	1	0.9	4	0.5	5.37	Traffic calming to reduce vehicle speeds		23%
26	Old Park Road	Kinghill	396	7.3	68	180	0	Mohammed Peranger	Aug-13	1	0	0	1	0	1	1.8	3	0.5	5.32	Traffic calming to reduce speeds / improve safety for elderly		17%
27	Fleming Road	Walsall	340	5.1	63	24	47	Mr & Mrs Risoud, Councilors: Juan Barton	Oct-04	1	0	0	1	0	1	1.4	3	0.5	4.94	Closure to stop rat runnign following collisions involving a child		29%
28	Lichfield Rd, Sandhills	Brownhills	1010	7.3	76	0	0	Gareth Pulman	Sep-13	3	0	0	0	0	1	0.3	4	0.5	4.84	Cars parking on f/w creating obstruction for pedestrians	more recent complaints about speed (TFP602)	20%
29	Catshill Road / Fulllove Road	Brownhills	1280	5.1	231	16	132	J. Lewis, Councilors - Alan Paul, Diane Turner & J. BH	Dec-02	1	0	0	1	0	1	1.2	3	0.5	4.72	Traffic calming		8%
30	Coronation Road	Pelsall	650	6.9	139	22	0	Ms C Brennan	Jun-14	1	0	0	1	1	0	1.1	3	0.5	4.61	Speeding vehicles, parking, volume of traffic		11%
31	Greaves Avenue	Park Hall	690	6.9	69	172	0	Clr Martin	Oct-10	2	0	0	0	1	1	1.1	3	0.5	4.59	Request for traffic calming		21%
32	Green Lane Sheffield	Sheffield	845	6.8	138	80	0	Mrs Colton Mrs Carol Stone - Aug 16	May-14	1	0	0	1	1	0	1.0	3	0.5	4.53	Modification to traffic calming to reduce vehicle speeds		9%
33	Castleview Road	Monkley	420	5.1	66	0	0	Mr Bills	Jul-09	1	0	0	0	1	1	1.0	3	0.5	4.53	Speeding traffic: rat running on Castleview Road		23%
34	Copple Farm Way	Willenhall	1390	8.0	1121	0	0	Clr Shires	Dec-10	0	0	0	0	1	3.4	1		4.36	Traffic calming		0%	
35	Providence Lane	Leamore	270	7.6	114	0	44	Mr D. Coxy, Councilors: Oliver and Barton	Dec-02	1	0	0	0	1	0	1.9	2	0.5	4.35	Closure to prevent rat running		24%
36	Mill Road, Pelsall	Pelsall	627	6.0	200	0	0	n/a	Jul-13	0	0	0	1	1	0	1.8	2	0.5	4.27	Traffic calming		0%
37	Ravenscroft Road	Willenhall	371	5.0	117	66	0	MH Reeves	Apr-10	0	0	0	0	1	1	0.7	1	0.5	4.20	Modify existing traffic calming to enforce 20mph speed limit		0%
38	Slater Street / Victoria Road Bull Street junction	Darlaston	227	7.3	32	0	78	J. Walker, Councilor:- Madley	Apr-05	1	0	1	0	0	1	2.6	3	0.5	4.14	Request for mini island		30%
39	Hall Lane, Mouse Hill	Pelsall	500	6.0	50	0	0	Windy Morton MP	Apr-18	0	0	0	1	1	1	0.6	3	0.5	4.06	Bot down speed cushions or priority give ways		0%
40	Fordbrook Lane/Mill Lane	Pelsall	1000	6.3	100	0	0	Richard Harshill	Mar-18	2	0	1	0	0	0	0.5	3	0.5	4.03	Speed cushions to reduce speed. Central hatching and anti-skid.		16%
41	Station Road Aldridge	Aldridge	505	6.5	133	33	0	n/a	May-14	1	0	0	1	0	0	1.5	2	0.5	4.02	Road safety concerns relating to Sea Cadets building		15%
42	Franchise Street	Darlaston	840	7.2	195	157	0	Jamal Alzar via Clr Chambers	Mar-15	1	0	0	0	1	0	1.5	2	0.5	4.00	Traffic calming to reduce vehicle speeds following RTC	Clr Chambers; Previous Request from Mr Holland, Councilor:- S. Madley	8%
43	Bridgeman St/ Jerome Business Pk	Palfrey	100	7.3	0	0	0	n/a	Nov-19	2	0	0	0	1	1	0.0	4		4.00			138%
44	Thornhill Road	Streety	1967	6.8	107	176	0	Mrs David	Jun-07	2	0	0	0	0	1	0.5	3	0.5	3.99	Traffic calming to slow speeding motorists		8%
45	Spring Lane Estate	Willenhall	413	5.1	154	0	0	Clr Cook	Apr-12	1	0	0	0	0	0	2.4	1	0.5	3.94	Request for 20mph zone		24%
46	Four Crosses Road	Sheffield	221	6.2	17	0	0	Miss J O'Brien	May-14	1	0	0	1	0	1	0.4	3	0.5	3.91	Request for traffic calming		37%
47	Tumbery Road	Bloxwich	1137	7.3	17	1144	0	Jayne Price	Oct-13	0	0	0	0	1	0	2.4	1	0.5	3.86	Modification of traffic calming		0%
48	Well Lane/ Shakespeare Cresc	Leamore	100	6.5	50	30	0			0	0	0	0	0	3.3	0	0.5	3.83			0%	
49	St Annes Road	Willenhall	531.5	7.0	106	80	0	Mr Garbett	Dec-15	1	0	0	0	1	0	1.3	2	0.5	3.81	Road widening for visibility and safety.		14%
50	Old Town Lane	Pelsall	477	6.5	70	100	0	Clr Lee	10/06/2021	0	0	0	1	0	1	1.3	2	0.5	3.79	Traffic Calming, concerns regarding vehicle speed		0%
51	Bosty Lane/Barr Common Road		150	6.0	7	0	0	N/A		2	0	1	0	0	0	0.3	3	0.5	3.76	Closure of cut through	Mr Alan Middleton	112%
52	Millfield Avenue	Pelsall	200	7.3	30	50	0	Mr Cartwright	Aug-18	0	0	0	1	0	1	1.3	2	0.5	3.76	Priority build-outs, give way		0%
53	Delves Rd / Highgate Rd / Sandwell St	Palfrey	75	9.0	25	0	0	Clr Coughlan	Nov-17	0	0	0	1	1	0	1.2	2	0.5	3.73	Mini roundabout at give-way junction		

Safer Routes Scheme Ranking 2023/24

School	Requested by school	No of accidents within 500m radius (2020 - 22)	child accidents within 500m radius (2020-22)	Description	A* STARS school						Assessment					SCORE	Comments
					Completed previous year A* STARS Action Plan	Link to existing cycle network	Cycle storage at school	Pedestrian training 22/23	Bikeability training 22/23	estimated cost of scheme (£)	No of pupils on roll	No of pupils that walk / scooter	No of pupils that cycle	No of pupils / £1000			
Short Heath Federation	1	13	6	Inconsiderate parking by parents still an issue	5	0	0	1	1	1	500	237	117	10	254.0	150.0	Review TRO's
Blue Coat Infant	1	27	3	parents parking near school	5	1	0	1	1	N/A	500	320	90	1	182.0	111.0	Guardian camera installed - monitoring in progress - Review TRO's
Reedwood E-ACT Primary	1	16	4	Review of tactile paving outside of school	5	0	0	1	0	1	5,000	465	183	1	36.8	37.4	Revised crossing points at school entrance
Alumwell Infant	1	28	1	Cars still parking on street corners, footpaths,	5	0	0	1	0	N/A	5,000	360	171	0	34.2	31.1	Verge bollards
Bluecoat Secondary	1	27	3	Improvements to zebra crossing	5	0	0	1	N/A	0	15,000	843	412	2	27.6	29.8	Improvements to zebra crossing
Blue Coat Junior	1	27	3	safety outside school	5	0	0	1	0	1	500	358	7	0	14.0	25.0	Review TRO's
Queen Marys Grammer School	1	14	1	Improvements outside school	5	0	0	1	N/A	0	15,000	1137	143	10	10.2	19.1	Concerns over location of bus stops and pedestrian refuge
Total budget to complete identified schemes											£41,500						

* Support for Astars (minor works)

Kings Hill	1	6	0	School Keep Clear markings and signs	5	1	0	1	1	1	500	362	134	0	268.0	153.0	
All Saints National Academy	1	26	6	Main gate on Wolverhampton rd does not have guard railings	5	0	0	1	0	0	2,000	360	99	8	53.5	45.8	School warning signs to be installed on W'ton Road
Barcroft	1	10	0	Cycle Shelter Improvements	5	1	1	1	1	0	5,000	472	222	16	47.6	42.8	
Pool Hayes	1	3	1	School Keep Clear markings and signs	5	1	0	1	1	0	5,000	241	126	12	27.6	31.8	
St Giles	1	26	3	Cycle Parking	5	0	0	0	0	0	5,000	377	162	7	33.8	30.9	
Castlefort JMI School	1	3	0	cyle / scooter storage	5	1	0	1	1	1	5,000	263	85	6	18.2	28.1	
Total budget to complete identified schemes											£17,500						

Safer Routes Schemes - Reserve List

St James Primary School	1	13	3	School Keep Clear markings and signs	5	1	0	1	0	0	500	196	134	9	286.0	161.0	
West Walsall E-Act Academy & Alumwell Schools	0	33	2	Primley Avenue - Shared-use footway / cycleway	5	0	1	1	1	0	50,000	1502	868	15	17.7	26.8	
Leamore Lane / Reedwood	0	17	4	Pedestrian improvements along corridor	0	1	1	1	0	0	50,000	2106	1508	130	32.8	26.4	Ped collisions highlighted
St Giles	1	26	3	School Zone on Walsall Rd	5	0	0	0	1	1	12,000	377	162	7	14.1	25.0	
St Josephs Catholic School	1	10	3	Cycle storage	5	0	0	0	0	0	5,000	237	85	11	19.2	23.6	
Watling Street	1	1	0	The Parade - no passing places; congestion from parking on the parade	5	1	0	1	1	1	15,000	236	108	12	8.0	23.0	232 children surveyed Being looked at by TM
Fibbersley Park	1	6	1	20mph Speed Limit / Additional TC	0	0	1	1	0	0	7,000	572	224	5	32.7	22.4	Scheme transferred back into requests
Shire Oak Academy	1	9	3	Zebra crossing north of Friezeland Lane	5	0	0	1	n/a	1	40,000	1426	279	16	7.4	21.7	Petition following fatality
St Francis Catholic Primary	1	6	1	Four Crosses Staggered jcn improvements	5	0	0	1	1	1	10,000	209	69	1	7.0	21.5	
Shire Oak Academy	1	9	3	Chester Road - Toucan crossing & segregated footway / cycleway	5	0	0	1	n/a	1	90,000	1426	279	16	3.3	19.6	not engaging with ASTARS
Mirus Academy (now Bloxwich Academy)	0	7	3	Willenhall Lane / Leamore Lane - School safety zone & pedestrian improvements	0	0	1	1	0	0	25,000	678	557	45	24.1	19.0	Potential link to closure of level crossing at Willenhall Lane / Reeves Street
Sheffield Ormiston Academy	0	2	1	Footway along Slacky Lane Ped warning signs	5	0	1	1	n/a	0	100,000	1307	601	13	6.1	18.1	
Aldridge Academy	0	6	2	Tynings Lane (possible one-way system)	0	0	1	1	n/a	0	15,000	1504	295	20	21.0	16.5	
Whetstone Field Primary	0	3	1	20 mph speed limit zone	5	0	0	0	0	1	30,000	238	65	0	2.2	14.1	Request via local resident not engaged in ASTARS
Brownhills West Primary	1	2	0	Parents parking outside school gates and driving into school site	1	1	0	1	1	1	20,000	218	84	1	4.3	13.1	169 children surveyed
Manor Primary School	0	5	0	Parking Restrictions / junction protection on Thorney Rd	5	0	0	1	0	0	35,000	337	75	0	2.1	13.1	
Manor Primary	0	5	0	Foley Road East - Footpath link to Briar Avenue	5	0	0	0	0	0	30,000	337	75	0	2.5	11.3	
Total budget to complete identified schemes											£557,000						

Measures to encourage walking programme - Pedestrian Crossing Facilities

Refer to RS04 - Procedure for assessing Measures to Encourage Walking

Pos	Type of facility requested	Location	Estimated Cost (£)	Request by	Date request received	Date of survey	Vehicles (Average four peaks)	Pedestrians (Average four peaks)	% criteria	85th %ile	Road Width (m)	Public amenities	School	Open space	Existing facility	Collisions 2019 - Dec 2021 ALL RTC	Dec 2021 PEDS	Accident and Other Score	Comments
	N/A	Upgrade signalised crossings	£100,000.00	Improvements to pedestrian crossing to facilitate safer walking routes															
	Zebra	Birmingham Road/Tynings Lane	£75,000.00	Judith Butler	01/03/2022	23/03/2022	690	115	55	37	7.3	0	1	0	0	0	1	51.92	Petition
	Zebra crossing upgrade	Pool Hayes Lane near Castle Drive	£25,000.00	Clr Shires	01/02/2012	23/02/2012	528.8	179.25	50	33	7.6	1	1	0	1	1	1	46.78	Serious injury to school pupil May 2021
	Refuges	Chester Road (footpath link Grosvenor Avenue to Buxton Rd)	£30,000.00	Alicia Rose	14/11/2018	22/11/2018	1352	50	91	37	6.5	0	0	0	0	0	0	46.56	
Scheme Total			£230,000.00																

Pos	Type of facility requested	Location	Comparative Cost (£)	Request by	Date request received	Date of survey	Vehicles (Average four peaks)	Pedestrians (Average four peaks)	% criteria	85th %ile	Road Width (m)	Public amenities	School	Open space	Existing facility	Collisions 2019 - Dec 2021 ALL RTC	Dec 2021 PEDS	Accident and Other Score	Comments
1	Raised uncontrolled	Wisemore / St Pauls Street	£50,000.00	Clr Ansell/P Leighton	15/03/2011	07/04/2011	384.75	1031	153		8	1	1	1	0	0	0	70.00	Linked to Town Centre development
2	Puffin	Little Aston Road near The Green	£60,000.00	Councillor Rochelle	01/09/2005	17/01/2006	903.25	130.25	166		6.6	0	1	1	0	0	0	65.00	Linked to future development potential
3	Zebra	Bridge Street o/s HSBC (Town Centre)	£40,000.00	Clr Arif	27/07/2011	18/10/2011	148.5	1018.25	22		8.6	1	0	0	0	3	2	44.62	addressed as part of Sprint Phase 1 delivery
4	Zebra	Walsall Wood Road / High Street (Hall Lane to Coppice Road)	£40,000.00	Graham Miller	01/07/2015	15/07/2015	1745	26	79		7.3	1	0	0	1	2	1	44.49	Surgery / Canal bridge
5	Zebra	A461 Lichfield Road - School Street Junction	£20,000.00	Clr Worrall	20/10/2015	14/11/2015	1209.5	29.67	43		8	0	0	0	0	1	1	39.72	
6	Puffin	Norton Road north of Green Lane, Pelsall (Convert extg Zebra)	£60,000.00	Mr R. Peach, Councillor Perry	20/07/2004	14/10/2004	862.25	58	43		7.7	1	1	0	1	2	1	39.13	
7	Zebra	113 Pool Hayes Lane	£40,000.00	Clr Shires	25/07/2011	13/10/2011	714	34	17		7.5	1	1	0	0	0	1	34.75	
8	Zebra	Lichfield Road, Livingstone Avenue	£30,000.00	Ms Jennings	06/12/2019	21/01/2020	1120	23	29	29.7	9.2	1	1	0	1	4	1	30.30	Ped involved in RTC; LSS scheme delivered June 2019
9	Zebra	Dangerfield Lane near Stanley Road, Darlaston	£40,000.00	Mr G. Small	20/06/2005	18/10/2005	343.25	88	10		6.1	1	1	0	0	0	0	29.15	Combined survey
10	Zebra	Chester Road	£40,000.00	Patricia Hodgetts	11/04/2014	29/04/2014	1313	20	34	33.7	7.1	1	1	0	0	1	0	28.79	Near Friezland / Adams Rd
11	Zebra	Hundred Acre Road	£40,000.00	Lynne Wearing	01/05/2012	12/07/2012	177	81	3		7.3	0	1	0	0	1	1	28.63	
12	Puffin	Anchor Road, Aldridge	£60,000.00	Councillor Wilson	07/01/2013	16/01/2014	384.5	230.5	34	25	10.2	1	0	0	1	0	0	28.63	o/s Police Stn
13	Refuge	New Road, Willenhall	£20,000.00	Alison Yates	21/12/2019	17/01/2020	842	25	18	30.3	7.4	1	0	0	0	2	1	27.72	Crossing to Lidl; S106 funding link to district centre
14	Refuge	Foley Road East/Carlton Road, Streetly	£25,000.00	Dr Darley	25/03/2019	14/05/2019	420	36	6	36.8	7.3	1	1	1	0	0	0	27.54	
15	Refuge	Aldridge Road (nr Bridle La)	£20,000.00	Clr Hughes	04/12/2016	19/01/2016	1023	13	14			1	1	1	0	0	0	25.88	
16	Refuge	A462 St Lawrence Way , Nr Cramp Hill	£15,000.00	Clr Burley	15/10/2021	22/10/2021	690	15	7		7.5	0	1	0	0	1	1	25.37	
17	Zebra	Birmingham Road near Chumhill Road, Aldridge	£40,000.00	Mr J. O'Neil, Councillor Rochelle	20/09/2005	17/01/2006	663	28	12		7	1	1	1	0	1	0	24.92	Results combined from two surveys
18	Zebra	Brownhills Road near Coppice Road	£15,000.00	Resident	17/10/2002	17/10/2002	948.25	26.25	24		7.6	1	1	1	1	1	0	24.44	Delivered as part of Leisure centre development
19	Refuge	Aldridge Road (Local road widening required)	£20,000.00	Wendy Morton/Emma Hatters	30/10/2018	07/11/2018	692	48	23	41	7	0	0	1	0	0	0	24.19	
20	Zebra	Blackwood Road, streetly	£20,000.00	Simon Holler	06/11/2018	22/11/2018	274	100	8	27	6	0	1	0	0	0	0	23.00	
21	Zebra	Livingstone Rd	£40,000.00	Dawn Banks	14/09/2017	03/10/2017	315	1	0	32.1	7.4	0	1	1	0	3	1	22.86	
22	Refuge	Watery Lane/Noose Lane	£10,000.00	Ms Worton	25/05/2021	21/06/2021	808	30	20	31.6	8	0	1	0	0	0	0	22.83	
23	Refuge	Bloxwich Lane - OS Ambulance Station	£20,000.00	Tim Werrett	18/02/2014	18/02/2014	563	6	2	37.4	7.6	1	0	1	1	3	1	21.39	Jcn upgrade 2017/18 as part of J10 works
24	Refuge	The Green, Darlaston	£15,000.00	Clr Underhill	06/06/2021	21/06/2021	690	20	10	31.3	7.5	0	0	0	0	7	1	21.32	
25	Footway	Longwood Lane	£100,000.00	Mrs Carver	21/08/2014	rch 2012 /Sept 2	399.5	2	0	40.9	7.5	1	0	1	0	2	1	21.25	
26	Refuge	Somerfield Road	£20,000.00	Mrs L Lowe, 75 Somerfield Road	27/06/2012	09/07/2012	404	9	1	33.1	8.7	0	0	1	0	2	1	21.22	
27	Zebra	Allens Lane	£40,000.00	Clr Perry	20/02/2012	20/03/2012	252	44.3	3	34.4	5.6	0	1	1	0	0	0	21.13	
28	Ped Phase	Finger Post - Signal junction	£50,000.00	Ms. J. Edwards, Councillor Longhi	26/02/2004	16/12/2004	1024	14	15		6.7	0	1	1	0	4	0	20.87	Likely to cause considerable delay - Strong objection from Police
29	Zebra	Shannon Drive near Severn Road	£40,000.00	Councillor Cassidy	10/05/2006	25/05/2006	126.75	132.25	2		5.5	1	0	0	0	0	0	20.85	Results combined from two surveys
30	Zebra	Highfield Rd, Pelsall	£55,000.00	Clr Perry	05/10/2019	03/12/2019	238	34	2	24	6.9	1	1	1	1	2	0	20.77	Extensive footway work reqd. links to Pelsall Village Centre
31	Refuge	Well Lane	£20,000.00	N. Thomas	23/03/2013	25/04/2013	133	33	1		18	1	1	0	0	3	0	20.23	

Cabinet – 22 March 2023

Response to Sandwell Local Plan Consultation

Portfolio: Councillor Andrew - Deputy Leader and Regeneration

Related portfolios: Councillor Bird - Leader of the Council

Service: Planning and Building Control

Wards: None

Key decision: No

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 To endorse the consultation response submitted by Walsall Council to consultation on the Sandwell Local Plan Issues and Options Review.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Following the decisions of the four local authorities to cease work on the Black Country Plan (BCP), each authority is now beginning work on their own local plans. Sandwell Council is the first to progress work to a public consultation stage and has published an Issues and Options Review. Under the Council's scheme of delegations, Planning Committee is authorised to consider development plans prepared by neighbouring authorities and to make appropriate recommendations thereon to Cabinet.
- 2.2 The attached report was considered, and the response agreed, by Planning Committee on 9 March. The deadline for responding to the Review was 20 March, so it has been necessary for officers to send a response in advance of this Cabinet meeting, however this has been subject to endorsement by Cabinet.
- 2.3 The Issues and Options Review does not contain specific policies or proposals but instead asks what policies the future plan should contain. The Review document contains a total of 52 questions but many of these are about local issues that only affect Sandwell. For Walsall, the key issue is that Sandwell is tightly constrained with very little land available for development and only one area of Green Belt (Sandwell Valley). As a result, Sandwell is not able to meet its own needs for housing and employment land, so is reliant on supply from Walsall, Dudley and the wider area. It is therefore important that the Sandwell

Local Plan seeks to maximise the housing and employment land supply in its area to reduce the need to export to its neighbours.

- 2.4 It is also recommended that detailed comments are provided in relation to transport and renewable energy, green/ blue infrastructure (open space and water), biodiversity, waste and the historic environment.

3. Recommendation

- 3.1 Confirm approval of the response to the Sandwell Issues and Options Review, as agreed by Planning Committee and attached at **Appendix 1**, which has been submitted to the consultation which closed prior to the date of this Cabinet meeting.
- 3.2 Approve a delegation to the Executive Director, Economy Environment and Communities, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration, to submit future responses to neighbouring authority consultations, subject to Planning Committee approval.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 National Planning Policy requires councils to work with one another on strategic planning matters which affect them through a legal requirement called the Duty to Cooperate. A key part of this cooperation is for councils to consult one another on each stage of their local plan as it progresses. This provides an opportunity for councils to make formal comments on those local plans as they emerge so that their views can be considered.
- 4.2 As a local plan progresses there are several formal consultation stages which provide an opportunity for stakeholders, including other councils, to provide comments on the plan which the consulting authority will then need to consider.
- 4.3 Walsall Council has a long history of working with neighbouring authorities on local plans and strategic planning matters. In recent years formal responses to such consultations have been agreed jointly by the leaders of the four Black Country authorities meeting as the Association of Black County Authorities (ABCA). Following the decision to end work on the joint Black Country Plan (BCP) it will now be for Walsall Council to make its own comments on other local plans individually. This includes local plans being prepared by the other Black Country authorities that will take the place of the BCP.
- 4.4 Walsall Council has recently been consulted on the Sandwell Local Plan Issues and Options Review. This is the first stage of local plan preparation, known as the 'Regulation 18' stage.
- 4.5 The attached report and response was agreed by Planning Committee on 9th March. Due to the deadline for responding to the consultation it has been

necessary for officers to send a response in advance of Cabinet, however this has been subject to endorsement by Cabinet.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.5 The Council Plan 2022-25 sets out the council's aim of reducing inequalities and maximising potential. The outcomes of the Plan include:
- a) Supporting a dynamic, resilient and diverse economy where businesses invest and everyone has the right jobs and the right housing in the right place.
 - b) People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing and quality of life.
 - c) Children and young people have access to high quality education and training.
 - d) The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough.

Given that there is insufficient land available in Walsall to meet the needs for jobs and housing arising from residents currently within Walsall, neighbouring authorities should be encouraged to meet their own needs for these land uses within their own areas as far as possible.

Risk management

- 4.6 Failure to engage with neighbouring authorities could risk Walsall Council failing the Duty to Cooperate on its own local plan. National policy requires local plans to be positively prepared to meet local needs, including if necessary, through contributions made by neighbouring authorities in their plans. Such a failure of the duty at examination would mean that the local plan could not successfully progress through its examination to be adopted. This would leave the Council without an up-to-date local plan in place. Where a local plan not in place (or out of date) councils risk intervention from central government which may compromise our ability to make decisions locally. This applies both to progressing local plans and to the determination of planning applications.

Financial implications

- 4.7 None arising directly from this report.

Legal implications

- 4.8 Walsall Council is under a legal Duty to Cooperate with neighbouring planning authorities with regards to strategic cross boundary planning matters. The briefing of members in respect of neighbouring authorities' local plans will ensure members are aware of the ongoing dialogue and engagement between authorities on their respective local plans.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.9 None arising directly from this report for Walsall Council.

Property implications

- 4.10 None arising directly from this report for Walsall Council.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.11 None arising directly from this report for Walsall Council.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.12 None arising directly from this report for Walsall Council.

Staffing implications

- 4.13 None arising directly from this report. The Planning Policy Team is responsible in the Economy, Environment & Communities Directorate for coordinating responses to neighbouring authorities' local plan consultations but may require support from other service areas such as Highways.

Climate Impact

- 4.14 None arising directly from this report for Walsall Council. Neighbouring authorities should include policies to address climate change and locating development sustainably in their respective local plans.

Consultation

- 4.15 The preparation of a local plan includes several statutory consultation periods. Walsall Council will be consulted at all appropriate stages on the production of the local plan which is the subject of this report.
- 4.16 Planning Committee has been consulted on the proposed consultation responses noted in this report and has recommended these be approved by Cabinet.

5. Decide

- 5.1 Officers from the Planning Policy Team have reviewed the local plan consultation documents and prepared a response on behalf of Walsall Council to inform the future stages of the plan. It is recommended that the submitted response to the Sandwell Local Plan consultation is endorsed.

6. Respond

- 6.1 The consultation response will be confirmed which has been submitted to the consultation which closed prior to the date of this Cabinet meeting.

7. Review

- 7.1 Officers in the Planning Policy Team will continue to engage with neighbouring authorities in respect of their Local Plans. Any responses on behalf of Walsall Council to future stages of consultation on the Sandwell Local Plan that require cabinet approval will be reported at the appropriate time.

Appendix

Report to Planning Committee 9 March 2023.

Background papers

All published. Documents for the Sandwell Local Plan can be viewed at: https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200317/planning_policy/4990/sandwell_local_plan

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Simon Neilson
Executive Director

10 March 2023



Councillor Adrian Andrew
Portfolio Holder

10 March 2023

Report to Planning Committee 9th March 2023

Item No.



PLANNING COMMITTEE

9th March 2023

REPORT OF HEAD OF PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL

Response to Sandwell Local Plan Consultation

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To consider the Sandwell Local Plan Issues and Options Review, and to make appropriate recommendations to Cabinet.

2. RECOMMENDATION

a) Agree the response as set out in the appendix, and refer it to Cabinet for endorsement:

b) Authorise the Head of Planning and Building Control to add additional comments to the response as necessary, and to submit an initial officer response to the authorities in advance of endorsement by Cabinet.

3. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

None arising directly from this report.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Following the decisions of the four local authorities to cease work on the Black Country Plan (BCP), each authority is now beginning work on their own local plans. The nature of the Black Country is that the supply of land for housing, employment and other land use requirements overlap between the authorities. Sandwell is physically constrained with very little land available to meet its own needs. As a result, the BCP envisaged some of its supply being provided in neighbouring authority areas, notably Walsall and Dudley. The extent to which the proposed Sandwell Local Plan meets Sandwell's needs will therefore have implications for the need expected to be met in the Walsall Local Plan.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Walsall Council is under a legal Duty to Cooperate with neighbouring planning authorities with regards to strategic cross boundary planning matters. The extent of engagement with neighbouring authorities will be tested as part of the examination of both Walsall's and Sandwell's local plans.

6. EQUAL OPPORTUNITY IMPLICATIONS

The Sandwell Local Plan will be required to ensure the needs of all sections of the community are met.

7. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

The issues and options review is accompanied by a sustainability appraisal and Habitat Regulations assessment which will be updated as the plan is progressed.

8. WARD(S) AFFECTED

All.

9. CONSULTEES

Officers in Planning and Building Control have been consulted in the preparation of this report.

10. CONTACT OFFICER

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11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

All published. Documents for the Sandwell Local Plan can be viewed at:
https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200317/planning_policy/4990/sandwell_local_plan

Response to Sandwell Council Local Plan Consultation

1 Background

- 1.1 The council is frequently consulted about local plans that are being prepared by neighbouring authorities. In recent years, formal responses have been agreed jointly by the leaders of the four Black Country authorities meeting as the Association of Black Country Authorities (ABCA). The decision to end work on the Black Country Plan however means that there is no longer a joint planning framework in which to consider responses to such plans. It is therefore now necessary for each authority to provide its own response. Under the Council's scheme of delegations, Planning Committee is authorised to consider development plans prepared by neighbouring authorities, and other consultations on planning policies and proposals by outside bodies and persons to make appropriate recommendations thereon to the Executive (i.e. Cabinet).
- 1.2 Responses to consultations on development plans have to meet strict deadlines. It is therefore sometimes necessary for officers to submit draft responses prior to authorisation by Planning Committee and/or Cabinet, but these are subject to agreement by the two bodies.
- 1.3 It is becoming increasingly important that Walsall plays an active role in the production of plans by neighbouring authorities. Both Walsall and the other Black Country authorities, as well as Birmingham City Council, have large needs for homes and employment land. However, much of our area is already developed and we are heavily constrained by Green Belt. We are therefore reliant on neighbouring authorities, in particular those in Staffordshire and Shropshire, to help meet some of these needs.
- 1.4 Currently the legal mechanism for discussing local plans with neighbouring authorities is the Duty to Cooperate (DtC). Regular discussions take place at officer level between the authorities in the Greater Birmingham and Black Country Housing Market Area (GBBCHMA) as well as those further afield such as Shropshire. Authorities are expected to agree and sign Statements of Common Ground with their neighbours when plans are submitted for examination. The Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill that is currently being considered by Parliament proposes to abolish the DtC and replace it with a more flexible alignment test that is yet to be defined.
- 1.5 The end of the Black Country Plan (BCP) means that each of the four Black Country authorities now have to produce their own local plans. The nature of the issues facing each authority, and the status of their existing plans, means that each authority is approaching their new plans differently. In Sandwell's case, the Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) is supported by the Sandwell Site Allocations and Delivery Development Plan Document (SAD), the West Bromwich Area Action Plan (WBAAP), the Tipton Area Action Plan and the Smethwick Area Action Plan. The SAD only provides detailed land use allocations and designations up to 2021 so there is an urgent need for review.
- 1.6 The Sandwell Local Plan (SLP) will combine the strategic policies (such as the overall housing land requirement) which are currently contained in the BCCS with detailed policies such as site allocations. Rather than carrying

forward the Sandwell elements that were proposed to be in the BCP therefore, the current consultation goes back to the starting point by asking what the plan should contain and what issues it should address. This is known as the Regulation 18 stage. The consultation document does not contain any specific proposed policies but instead asks a series of questions. These questions and Walsall's recommended responses are set out below.

- 1.7 The consultation contains a total of 52 questions but policies in the future Sandwell plan that respond to many of these will not be directly relevant to Walsall (for example policies about particular areas in Sandwell), although similar issues will need to be addressed by the Walsall Local Plan. Suggested responses have therefore only provided in response to questions that could impact on Walsall.
- 1.8 The main issues for which a response is recommended concern housing and employment land. Detailed comments are also recommended in relation to transport and renewable energy, green/ blue infrastructure (open space and water), biodiversity, waste and the historic environment.
- 1.9 The Issues and Options Review can be seen in full on Sandwell's web site at https://www.sandwell.gov.uk/info/200317/planning_policy/4990/sandwell_local_plan

Appendix

Sandwell Local Plan – Proposed Walsall Response to Issues and Options Consultation

Part A, questions where a response from Walsall is recommended.

1) Questions – Vision and Objectives

What do you think are the main issues that the new SLP should address in Sandwell?

Walsall Response: The plan should aim to ensure that Sandwell is able to accommodate as much housing and employment (classes E(g)(ii)/(iii), B2 and B8 and related uses) as possible to meet its own needs and contribute to meeting the needs of neighbouring areas in Birmingham and the Black Country. This should be achieved by making effective use of land, including land that may be surplus to requirements for other purposes, and maximising densities.

Please indicate which option you think should be used as the basis for preparing the SLP Vision:

- **Option A: The Sandwell Vision 2030 should be used as the basis of preparing the Local Plan, bearing in mind that it will be for the Local Plan to establish a sustainable strategy for the scale and location for future growth and development.**
- **Option B: Create a new vision specifically for the Local Plan and the plan period it will cover along the lines of the suggested wording included above.**

If you think the SLP should include a new Vision (along the lines of the suggested wording above), do you think the Vision should cover any other issues?

Once you have had a look at the issues raised in this document, please let us know your thoughts on the following overall matters:

- **Are the topic areas and issues being covered the rights ones for Sandwell?**
- **Is there anything else we should be covering?**
- **Do you have any thoughts on the evidence base needed to support the Local Plan Review?**

Should the Sandwell Local Plan:

- **promote higher levels of development to support economic growth; or**
- **plan for the minimum necessary to help meet the needs of our population?**

Walsall Response: The plan should promote higher levels where this will contribute to meeting identified needs in the Black Country and Birmingham that cannot be accommodated in the neighbouring authority areas.

Do you think the SLP should be valid until 2041 or should it run for longer?

- **If you think the Plan should run for longer, what would be your reason for this?**

What are your thoughts on the draft objectives?

- **Do you think they are appropriate?**
- **Are there any other objectives we should be including?**
- **Do you disagree with them - if so, can you explain which ones and why?**

No Walsall response is required to this part of question 1.

2) Questions – Strategic Policies

Do you agree with the Council's decision to incorporate some of the former BCP policies into the SLP, to benefit from the work already done on them and to make it potentially easier for the four Black Country councils to address certain wider-than-local matters in a joined-up manner?

Walsall Response: Agree, as they deal with strategic cross-boundary issues

If so: -

- **Are there any of the BCP policies listed in the appendix that you think the Council should definitely include?**
- **Are there any of the BCP policies in the appendix that you think the Council does not need to include?**

No Walsall response is required to this part of question 2.

3) Questions – Climate Change

How should we address the climate crisis in the Local Plan Review – what should be our priority or priorities?

The following are examples only and you are invited to identify as many other ways as you feel are necessary:

- **Reducing the need to travel through promoting accessibility or traveling by more sustainable modes of transport than the car**
- **Promoting alternative and low-carbon means of travel**
- **Protecting open space**
- **Planting more trees**
- **Promoting climate change-focussed ways of building homes and businesses**
- **Requiring development to be carbon-neutral or low carbon**
- **Any other priorities**

Walsall Response: All these examples should be addressed in the plan, but from Walsall's perspective we would recommend giving priority to sustainable transport,

as this would have the most obvious cross-boundary impact.

How else can new development reduce greenhouse gas emissions and respond to the climate crisis?

Should the new plan leave the issue of carbon reduction in new buildings to other relevant legislation rather than making its own provision – i.e., should the plan not include policies on carbon reduction but instead wait for emerging Building Regulations legislation to become law?

How would you feel about building extensions and alterations to your property that were more climate-change adapted and low carbon? For example;

- choosing a design that maintained a more constant indoor temperature during extremes of both heat and cold;
- using a heat pump instead of a normal central heating boiler;
- only using certain building materials developed to be lower in carbon; or
- planting trees and other vegetation to shade parts of your property that would otherwise get too hot?

What potential sources of renewable energy should the Council be looking at supporting in its local plan policies – examples include, but are not limited to, the following: -

- heat pumps (ground, air, water)
- battery farms
- energy from waste
- solar photovoltaic panels / solar water heating
- energy from wind / water
- biomass crops
- other renewable sources

Walsall Response: 'Battery Storage Facilities' is a more accurate and appropriate term than 'battery farms', the latter is traditionally associated with intensive poultry farming and may create confusion or a negative connotation with the policy's wider aims. It is important to refer to such facilities directly in policy dealing with renewables, to ensure that renewable power sources and their related infrastructure, are subject to consistent policy approaches.4) Questions - Heat Networks

Do you agree that Sandwell Council should support the development and delivery of heat networks as part of its own building proposals, to help deliver Net Zero construction?

Walsall Response: Yes, as well as recognising that district heating systems can transcend borough boundaries and so potentially require policy alignment with neighbouring local authorities.

Do you think the Council should require private sector and other developers to make provision for heat networks, particularly on larger sites?

7) Questions – Future Development in Sandwell

What do you think are the main challenges we face in planning for housing and employment in Sandwell between now and 2041?

What are your views on the overall amount of new housing and employment that is needed in Sandwell?

Walsall Response: An appropriate balance between both land uses is required to ensure that an adequate supply of employment land is provided to meet the needs of the growing number of households and minimise the need for residents to travel outside the authority's area for employment, or for people working in the area to have to live outside it. At the same time, we recognise that the supply of land in Sandwell both for housing and employment is constrained.

What types of homes are needed in Sandwell?

Examples may include, but not be limited to:

- Detached or semi-detached family housing
- Bungalows
- Smaller houses such as maisonettes or terraced housing
- Higher density development such as flats and town houses
- Co-housing
- Self- and custom-build homes

Where do you think this new housing should be built?

- On brownfield or underused land
- On previously undeveloped or greenfield sites
- On underused or derelict open space
- On the sites of older or derelict / vacant buildings, including areas of older housing, flats, factories or other unused buildings?

What sort of new development (homes, workplaces, shops, leisure facilities etc) do you think would help make Sandwell a better place to live by 2041?

- Where do you think it should be built?

Do you think there are any sorts of new development that would make Sandwell a worse place to live by 2041?

- What harm do you think that sort of development might do to Sandwell?

Do you think we should be asking for higher density developments in centres and on sites near public transport hubs / links?

- If so, do you think we should use the densities identified in the draft BCP (Policy HOU2) and set out above?
- Should we ask for higher densities than this?

- Should we ask for lower densities than this?

What do you think a sustainable urban land use and an unsustainable urban land use would be, from a transport point of view?

Tell us about some modern developments or buildings that you know and like.

- Why do you like them?

Tell us about some modern developments or buildings that you know and don't like.

- Why don't you like them?
- How might they have been done better?

Which of the following issues are most important to you (they are not listed in any order)?

Please identify your preferred options in order if you can, as this will help us address what is most important to Sandwell's occupants.

- i. Building affordable housing.
- ii. Increasing the number of well-paid jobs in the area.
- iii. Creating new green spaces and nature networks
- iv. Protecting and improving existing green spaces and wildlife habitats.
- v. Attracting investment and new businesses to the area.
- vi. Reducing greenhouse gas emissions and tackling the climate crisis.
- vii. Making it easier to travel by bus, tram, train, walking and cycling.
- viii. Providing houses of a good size, with gardens and associated open spaces.
- ix. Developing a well-designed and attractive built environment, with new buildings and areas that make a positive contribution to their surroundings.
- x. Maintaining a safe and welcoming environment that minimises the likelihood of crime / antisocial behaviour taking place.
- xi. Promoting pleasant, clean and lively town centres that people want to visit and use.

Should there be a greater emphasis on: -

- allocating land for mixed-use development (where housing, employment / business development, community facilities etc. sit next to each other);
- allocating land for single end uses, such as just housing or just employment?

Do you have any other comments to make about what development options for housing, employment or other land uses you think we should consider as we draft the Sandwell Local Plan?

No other Walsall response to question 7 is required

15) Question – Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

Do you agree with the proposal to adapt the draft BCP policy on the needs of travelling communities for use in Sandwell?

Walsall Response: Agree. Whilst the nature of these communities is such that they may regularly move between local authority areas, current evidence indicates that the need from groups requiring accommodation in Sandwell is very low.

16) Questions – Houses in Multiple Occupation

We think that the Sandwell Plan could have a policy on HMOs that seeks to define areas where HMOs would be inappropriate / discouraged, e.g. where there are already a number of existing HMOs.

- **Do you agree and if so what criteria do you think should be used to evidence why they are inappropriate?**
- **If you do not think a policy would be appropriate, can you explain why you think that?**
- **Are there any alternative options we might look to use instead of or alongside a planning policy for HMOs?**

We think that the policy could look to identify aspects of HMO provision that have the potential to adversely affect the amenities of adjoining or neighbouring properties (e.g. noise, overlooking, general disturbance, or impact on visual amenity) and provide criteria to manage those issues;

- **Do you agree and if so, what sort of realistic criteria should we be looking to include?**

We think that the policy could introduce percentage thresholds and clustering criteria to ensure that HMOs are not concentrated in an area above a certain level and to control their numbers across a wider area;

- **Do you agree and if so what evidence is needed to identify and justify these criteria?**

To enable us to further control changes of use to small HMOs, the Council will need to impose an Article 4 direction, which, once adopted, will make such changes of use subject to the planning application process.

- **Do you agree with this approach?**
- **Do you disagree? If so, can you explain why?**

Do you think the Council should:

- **introduce a Sandwell-wide Article 4 Direction for HMOs (requires every proposal to develop an HMO to be subject to planning permission and will involve additional time and resources to manage)?**

- **impose an Article 4 Direction only on those parts of Sandwell where there are already a large number of HMOs and where there is robust evidence of the sorts of issues mentioned previously?**

Walsall Response: Any additional restrictions on HMO's in Sandwell should seek to ensure that they do not result in potential occupiers being displaced to neighbouring local authority areas.

20) Questions – Green and Blue Infrastructure

Should the SLP take a more positive approach to ensuring green and blue infrastructure and their benefits are maximised in new development?

- **Should new green / blue infrastructure always be required on sites?**
- **Should it be required even if it would mean losing the opportunity to provide more housing or employment development?**

Walsall Response: Given the limited supply of land in Sandwell to meet identified needs, and the consequential pressure on land in surrounding areas, including Walsall's Green Belt, we would not support the use of land in Sandwell to accommodate new green/blue infrastructure except where it is strictly necessary to support and mitigate the impact of development, for example SuDS to address off-site flood risks or to meet emerging legal requirements for biodiversity net gain.

The types of development that might be required to provide for green/ blue infrastructure would need to be defined. It is assumed that any requirement would only apply to major development.

We would however support the protection and enhancement of existing green/ blue infrastructure such as the canal network and existing areas of open space.

33) Questions – Alternative Uses in Industrial Areas

Do you agree that local employment estates / land / sites should be retained exclusively for local and small-scale employment uses?

Walsall Response: Yes, given the current shortfall in the supply of land for industry and the contribution that employment land in Sandwell makes to the wider needs of Birmingham and the Black Country. It is recognised however that some isolated and poor quality sites may no longer be suited to the needs of modern industry, and may conflict with existing nearby uses such as housing. It is also recognised that recent changes in permitted development rights and the Use Classes Order make it difficult to restrict changes from certain employment uses to other uses such as retail or residential.

Are there any circumstances where you feel non-employment uses would be appropriate in such areas?

If so, what sort of uses do you think would be appropriate?

- **Housing?**
- **Non-industrial employment uses (e.g. gyms, vets, children's play spaces, dog day-care)?**
- **Community spaces?**
- **Banqueting suites and venues?**
- **Any other use?**

Please identify which ones you think would be acceptable and why.

Where else do you think larger community and commercial activities like the examples given above should be located? The preference is for town centre locations in the first instance, as the most sustainable locations, but depending on circumstances this may not be achievable:

- **In vacant units on business parks or industrial estates (this would mean the loss of those units to potential occupiers with larger workforces / more job opportunities)**
- **In large buildings elsewhere in Sandwell (potential for noise, fumes, disturbance etc. may be greater)**
- **On new development sites in purpose-built premises (costs may be prohibitive for operators)**

How do we ensure that if such uses are allowed in employment locations, they do not proliferate / draw trade and activity away from town centres?

- **Sequential test (e.g. clear demonstration that no suitable site can be found within an existing centre or be more sustainably located)?**
- **Proliferation considerations (e.g. no more than X number of similar venues within a set radius)?**
- **Both?**
- **Any other criteria?**

No Walsall response is required to the above parts of question 33.

36) Question – Strategic Waste Management

Do you think that a Strategic Waste policy is still required for Sandwell, to help identify suitable locations for new waste sites?

Walsall Response Yes, waste management is a key land use in the Black Country, with waste imported and processed from many parts of the country.

The Black Country is a net importer of waste and is therefore essential to the wider function of the linear, and increasingly circular, resource economy. The Black Country Waste Study (2019) identified additional waste management capacity will need to be delivered in the Black Country between up to 2038 to maintain net self-sufficiency. Any updated waste evidence base is likely to identify greater

requirements capacity up until 2041.

Any policies for waste site allocation should also give consideration toward locations for non-hazardous landfill sites, drawing upon the latest available evidence and any landfill constraints studies undertaken at the West Midlands level by regional stakeholder groups.

Waste policy should also include targets for the off-setting of waste to landfill in-line with the National Planning Policy for Waste's (2014) Waste Hierarchy and in support of the principles of the Circular Economy, taking account of the West Midlands Circular Economy Route Map (2022). Waste policy should carry forward policy aims and targets in former Black Country Plan, in particular Policy EMP1, Policy W1, and waste management scenarios in Table 8 and capacity requirements in Table 9.

- **If you do, what do you think it should cover?**

37) Question – Protection and Location of Waste Facilities

Do you agree that the SLP should contain a policy protecting Waste Sites from non-conforming development such as residential development?

Should employment areas be identified as suitable locations for the location of new waste facilities?

Walsall Response: Yes, given our response to question 36, facilities that process waste from outside Sandwell should be protected against development on nearby land that might act as a constraint on continuing operations, as well as against development that might result in the loss of the facilities themselves. Some, but not all, existing employment areas will be suitable for new waste facilities: it will be helpful if these are identified and, if necessary, safeguarded for such use. It should however be noted that many modern forms of waste processing that operate inside a building will be suitable for almost any type of employment area.

38) Question – General Infrastructure

Are you aware of any other forms of infrastructure that you think may be required?

Walsall Response: Existing capacity and future provision for Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) is becoming regionally important, both in the emerging strategies of partner transport and infrastructure agencies as well as the subject of planning applications for dedicated facilities. A bespoke policy underpinned by relevant evidence would strengthen the LPAs ability to forecast, manage and so ensure appropriate provision and support wider aims toward pollution control, as well as climate and regional energy resilience.

46) Questions – Biodiversity Net Gain

Do you think the SLP should contain a policy on retaining offsite biodiversity net gain in Sandwell?

Walsall Response:

The emerging legal requirement for biodiversity net gain will result in developments potentially requiring off-site provision. In some cases it may be appropriate to make provision outside the local authority area, especially where development sites lie close to the border. At this time, Walsall Council has yet to confirm its practices and process for biodiversity net gain and are awaiting government guidelines, due to be released shortly. We would welcome discussions with Sandwell to discuss offsite Biodiversity Net Gain and any cross boundaries issues that may arise. This should also address related issues such as the Nature Recovery Network.

If so, how do you think the Council should achieve this?

Please identify which of the following options you prefer; you can pick as many as you like or suggest something different.

1. Identify privately-owned sites as receptors for BNG credits and allocate them in the SLP?
2. Identify Council-owned sites as receptors for BNG credits and allocate them in the SLP?
3. Support wider landscape-scale schemes such as the Natural England Purple Horizons project (restoring and connecting fragmented heathlands to create a mosaic of heathlands, wetlands, woodlands and grasslands between Cannock Chase and Sutton Park) that are nearby but not necessarily in Sandwell itself?
4. A combination of private and public approaches?
5. Something else (please specify)?

Are you the owner of any sites or land within Sandwell that you think may be suitable for allocation as a potential receptor site for biodiversity net gain (bearing in mind it would then be protected from further development or change for at least 30 years, through a covenant agreement)?

- **If so, would you be willing to have your site allocated for this purpose in the SLP (assuming it was considered suitable after an ecological assessment)?**

Do you think we should explore a requirement for additional biodiversity net gain credits (e.g. more than 10% minimum) should developers be proposing to purchase them for schemes outside Sandwell?

No Walsall response is recommended to this part of question 46.

49) Questions – Heritage Assets

Do we need to prepare a policy to support the adoption of a Sandwell Local List of buildings of historic / architectural merit?

Walsall Response: The four Black Country Authorities (Sandwell, Wolverhampton, Dudley and Walsall) were awarded funding for the Black Country Local List project by the then Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government.

The aim of the project was to update and enhance the local heritage lists for each of

the authorities, to help protect and promote the historic buildings, structures and other heritage assets that do not fulfil the criteria for inclusion on the National Heritage List for England, but nonetheless play a significant role in the local character and distinctiveness of our areas.

The four authorities have been working together along with TDR Heritage to update and review the current local lists in each authority (Sandwell, Wolverhampton, Dudley and Walsall). The 'working criteria' for assessing potential local list nominations were agreed by all four BC Local Authorities.

A policy to support the adoption of local buildings of historic and architectural merit should be considered to support this local list project work.

Do we need to prepare a new policy to address the safeguarding of heritage assets when mitigating against and adapting to the climate change emergency?

Do we need to consider the introduction of special controls that prevent the demolition of non-designated, locally important heritage assets⁴³¹?

Walsall Response: Agree, if there are current issues with retaining non designated locally important heritage assets. It could include a preference for the retention and re-use of non-designated heritage assets or locally important heritage assets, as opposed to demolition.

No question has been asked about designated heritage assets other than conservation areas. Whilst these are primarily a matter for Sandwell and Historic England, the Great Barr Hall Registered Park and Garden, and Great Barr Hall Estate, lies partly within Sandwell and partly within Walsall. Walsall will need to understand how Sandwell will be safeguarding the parts of these heritage assets that sit within the Sandwell boundary.

Page 85 of the Sandwell Consultation Plan document should state Great Barr Hall rather than Great Barr Park.

50) Questions - Conservation Areas

Some of the conservation areas in Sandwell are in centres where there is or has been a lot of pressure for development and growth. As a result, any

previous appraisals (undertaken when they were first designated) are likely to be out of date.

Other conservation areas are unlikely to have changed much since they were first adopted.

Do you think the Council should: -

- **undertake a review of all conservation areas whether they have been subject to any development pressure or not;**

Walsall Response: Whilst this is primarily a matter for Sandwell, it is understood that the area of Great Barr Hall Registered Park and Garden in Sandwell is a conservation area. Local planning authorities have a duty to review under Part II (sections 69 and 70) of the Town and Country Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990, and Historic England Advice Note 1: Conservation Area Appraisal, Designation and Appraisal (and other relevant HE guidance).

- **undertake comprehensive appraisals of those conservation areas where there has been a significant amount of development or other physical changes (such as new infrastructure or changes to road layouts, etc.), to ensure the appraisals remain relevant and up to date for use in making decisions on planning applications;**
- **leave the current conservation area appraisals as they are and accept that the contribution the appraisals can make to the determination of planning applications and appeals will be limited?**

Do you think the Council should also be exploring: -

- **whether there are any new conservation areas that could be designated; or**
- **whether any current conservation areas no longer carry sufficient interest and importance to be retained as a conservation area?**
- **Do you know of any areas of historic interest in your local area that you think could be made into a conservation area?**

- *Part B, questions where no response from Walsall is recommended.*

5) Questions – Resilient Landscapes

How should we ensure new development is able to withstand climate change and provide a comfortable living and working environment for people?

What should be our priorities when considering new design and landscaping to help us cope with climate change?

Apart from not building on or near them, how should we protect the open spaces, parks, countryside and ecology of Sandwell?

6) Questions – Sustainable Drainage

How should the Local Plan Review best manage flood risk whilst still achieving the growth that is needed to make Sandwell successful?

Do you think the SLP needs a policy to identify an acceptable rate of run-off for new developments, or is this covered in sufficient detail in the Black Country Local Standards for SuDS (BCP evidence base)?

Do you think the SLP: -

- **should include details of the type of SuDS that the Council would prefer to see delivered;**
- **should require SuDS schemes but leave details to developers to propose;**
- **should not require SuDS but allow for alternative drainage schemes to be implemented?**

8) Questions – Housing Windfall Sites

We think that a local windfall policy is needed to ensure that any proposals for residential development on sites that are not allocated are in the right place and do not have adverse impacts on current and neighbouring uses.

- **Do you agree?**
- **If so, what should it contain?**

Are there any specific local considerations that we should include when we are making decisions on windfall sites?

For example:

- **should housing development be allowed on current employment land?**

9) Questions – Sustainable Locations

Should most new development:

- **be concentrated in locations with the best levels of sustainable access to jobs, transport, services and facilities?**
- **be spread out between different towns and centres, to help support new growth and investment in those locations currently without a good supply of jobs, transport, services and facilities?**

Are there any locations in Sandwell you think we should look at in particular to find land for new development?

What else can the SLP do to support the sustainability of local communities?

How can the SLP help to increase the number of journeys made on foot, bicycle and public transport by people who want to access services and facilities?

10) Questions - Masterplanning

What sort of development do you think would benefit from having a masterplan? e.g.

- **housing developments over a certain number of dwellings;**
- **employment development over a certain area of floorspace / size of site;**
- **mixed use development (housing and other uses such as employment on the same site);**
- **regeneration schemes in centres?**

Please identify what sort of schemes you think would benefit or whether you think they should all have masterplans.

Should there be a type / size of proposal that would automatically require a masterplan to be produced?

- **If so, what would that be?**

11) Questions – Good Design

Do you think we should:

- **provide a local design policy / design guidance specifically for Sandwell; or**
- **use the national code and guidance instead?**

Instead of producing a new design code for Sandwell, should we review and update the existing guidance we already have instead?

We intend to reuse elements of the draft BCP design policies to support the local plan. Do you agree with this approach?

Do you agree with our intention to adopt the Nationally Described Space Standards for new houses?

- **If not, can you explain why?**

Do you think we should:

- **Incorporate current supplementary planning guidance into the draft Local Plan (with review and updates as necessary);**
- **Consider including some aspects of supplementary guidance in the SLP that can be used to shape policies and proposals;**

- Retain supplementary planning guidance as separate documents under the SLP and undertake a programme of reviews and updates to them (accepting that this will also require separate examinations) at a later stage; or
- Use another approach?

12) Question - Shopfront Design

Do you agree with this approach?

13) Questions – Self- and Custom-Build Housing

Do you think Sandwell's new local plan should include a policy on self- and custom-build?

If you do, how do you think the Council should deal with issues around self-build proposals on commercial housing sites?

- A design policy requiring self-build homes to reflect the design elements of the site on which they are located (e.g. height, scale, mass, materials, type and design of features such as doors, windows, etc.?)
- Requiring developers to allocate sections of commercial housing sites where people undertaking self-build can have a freer hand in the design of their house?

Do you think self-build should be supported in another way in Sandwell (e.g. not provided on commercial housing development sites; subject to a different policy approach)?

14) Questions – Specific Housing Requirements

Do you agree that the new SLP should contain a policy on housing suitable to meet the needs of people who have special needs or who require additional support?

What types of housing suitable to meet special needs do you think should be encouraged and delivered in Sandwell? E.g.

- bungalows;
- houses capable of easy adaptation for users of assistive technology such as wheelchairs;
- houses that can be easily altered as people age or their medical or physical condition changes;
- other types of dwellings.

The Council intends to incorporate the national minimum space standards for new housing as set out in the optional Building Regulations Requirement M4(2): Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings^[21].

- Do you agree with this approach?

17) Questions – Development for Health

What do you think are the key public health issues facing Sandwell?

How should we plan for our ageing population?

Do we need to include specific development allocations such as sites for retirement facilities or assisted living?

Where should such allocations be located?

What should the plan contain that would help you change your travel habits to more active modes of travel (such as cycling and walking)?

18) Question – Active Recreation

Should we require masterplans and new developments to refer to the Sport England Active Design Principles^[28]?

How best can we support the protection and enhancement of current sporting provision?

19) Questions – Community Facilities and Services

Which community facilities and services do you think we need more of in Sandwell as a whole?

Setting aside health-related uses (surgeries, health centres, dentists etc.), schools and shops for a moment, are there any other public facilities and services you would like to see more of in Sandwell?

Is there a shortage of community facilities and services in your area?

- **Which ones are lacking, in your view?**

(If you can give us an idea of what part of Sandwell you are referring to, that would be helpful)

If you think your area needs more community facilities and services, how and where would you want to see these uses provided?

- **We would be especially interested in locations where services can be easily accessed without people having to use a car.**

Where new community facilities are proposed, such as churches, mosques, community centres and other uses generating additional footfall / car journeys, should the SLP require those uses to be sited in town centres in most cases?

- **If you disagree with this, can you explain why?**

If so, do you have any suggestions how this might be done?

21) Questions – Open Space

How should new developments support the provision of high quality open space?

Do you think development proposals, especially big housing schemes, should always include dedicated open space for recreation and leisure on site?

- **If not, can you explain why?**

Do you think a combined approach (provision of open space on-site / new off-site provision / financial contributions for improvements to existing open space nearby) would be more appropriate?

- **Can you explain why?**

What scale of housing site do you think should be required to contribute towards providing open space? For example, should we be asking for new open space on

- **sites above ten houses in size**
- **sites above 20 houses in size**
- **sites above 40 houses in size?**

Would you rather:

- **see improvements to existing areas of open space in your area, or**
- **see new open spaces be created when development happens nearby?**

Can you explain a bit more about why you think this?

What amount of open space should be provided? For example, should new open space be provided covering: -

- **10%**
- **15%**
- **20%**
- **another percentage (please say how much)**

of the area of a housing site?

Should the amount of open space instead be calculated based on the number of bedrooms per property being provided?

- **For example, developments delivering larger accommodation (properties with three, four or more bedrooms) should provide more open space than those for one or two bedroomed properties.**

Should open space requirement be relaxed for types of housing that are less likely to generate high levels of active demand, such as accommodation for older people?

If large areas of open space are required, this might affect how many houses can be built on a site and / or the viability of development on the site – what is your view on that?

Should we: -

- **consider releasing existing open space sites for development that are**

demonstrated to be of poor quality and low value and that have no significant environmental benefits?

- **consider releasing existing open space sites for development that are demonstrated to be of poor quality and low value and that have no significant environmental benefits but only where replacement open space of a higher quality / quantity can be provided nearby?**
- **protect all current open space notwithstanding its condition or accessibility (on the basis that it has value in its own right and could be improved in future)?**

What type of open space should be provided? For example, informal open space such as fields for walking, dog walking etc., playgrounds / play areas for children, formal parks, allotments etc.?

Would you like to see more allotments / opportunities for growing food in your community provided as part of housing developments or in the wider area?

22) Questions – Hot Food Takeaways and Gambling Establishments

Do you think the Council should look more closely at where businesses such as hot food takeaways and gambling establishments are located?

Do you have a view on where they should be allowed in relation to sensitive uses such as schools, etc.?

Do you think that the SLP should try to control / regulate hot food takeaways or not (bearing in mind that there is no legislation that allows councils to refuse planning permission for these uses solely on the basis that people find them undesirable)?

This could be addressed by having a policy that looked at:

- **Clustering (only granting permission for a given number / percentage of similar uses within a certain radius, limiting the maximum number of consecutive takeaway food outlets, or capping the proportion of all retail space occupied by this use in an area)**
- **Location (refusing consent for new proposals within a given distance of a sensitive use e.g. schools, parks, leisure facilities including sport centres and youth clubs)**
- **The implementation of community infrastructure levies with funds allocated to obesity prevention initiatives;**
- **Mandatory sign-up to a healthy catering commitment scheme and requirements for submission of health impact assessments alongside planning applications.**
- **Impacts on the amenity of residential and other sensitive uses e.g. by creating excessive noise, litter, odours, traffic problems**

Do you think that the SLP should try to control / regulate betting shops, adult gaming centres, amusement arcades, pawnbrokers, pay day loan shops and shisha bars (bearing in mind that there is no legislation that allows councils to

refuse planning permission for these uses solely on the basis that some people find them undesirable)?

This could be addressed by having a policy that looked at:

- **Clustering (as for hot food takeaways);**
- **Location relative to sensitive uses (as for hot food takeaways);**
- **Providing an active frontage creating a positive visual impact on the street scene;**
- **Impacts on local community and residential amenity.**

23) Questions – Retailing in Town Centres

What are the main issues you think our town centres and high streets are facing?

What can the SLP do to help them adapt to changing shopping trends – for example, by managing or promoting certain sorts of development within them?

Do you think more people should be encouraged to live in centres?

How can we identify sites in our town centres for future shopping, leisure and commercial / employment needs?

- **Do you know of any suitable sites or premises in your local area that you think could be developed to provide modern town centre uses?**

Should Sandwell maintain a policy for controlling the balance of retail and non-retail uses in main town centre core frontages?

24) Question – Gateway Sites

Do we need to retain a policy referring to gateway sites?

- **If so, do we need to revise or update it in accordance with other potential policy areas of the SLP, such as those dealing with climate change mitigation or opportunities for increasing biodiversity and ecological value?**

25) Questions – Town Centres

Looking at the town centre boundary plans (Appendix B to this document), especially for the centre(s) you know best, do you think their current boundary:

- **Is about right (all the main areas of the centre are included and there is no need to expand or reduce it)**
- **Is too big (i.e. the centre in reality is more tightly focussed around certain roads or areas and / or the current boundary covers places that aren't really in the town centre)**

- Should be expanded (the town centre as you know and use it covers a wider area than shown and additional streets or locations could be included)?

Are there any additional centres that you think should be "upgraded" to a similar status as the major centres identified above, because of their degree of activity or size?

- If so, which ones and why?

Thinking about the centre(s) you know best (maybe because you live in them or close by, or work in them), what do you think their good points are – for example, they have a safe and pleasant environment, a good range of shops and services, are attractive or contain historic buildings etc.?

- Please indicate which centres you are referring to
- What aspects would you want to see kept and made even more of, if possible?

Thinking about the centre(s) you know best (maybe because you live in them or close by, or work in them), what do you think their bad points are – for example, they have too many empty shops, they are poorly laid out, they are not easy to get to, there isn't suitable car parking etc?

- Please indicate which centres you are referring to
- What would you like to see done to improve them?
- Do you think areas of denser residential development (e.g. flats above shops and office building conversions) in town centres should be located close to rail / metro links / public transport opportunities? Should the boundary of a town centre be altered to enable such changes to take place?

26) Questions – West Bromwich

Thinking about West Bromwich Town Centre, do you think the issues listed above are the right ones for the Council to consider in the SLP?

- Are there any additional issues in West Bromwich you think should be included for consideration?

Of the issues for West Bromwich listed above, which ones do you think the SLP should deal with first or more urgently? Please identify a "top three" if you can.

- Why do you think the issues you have identified are the most urgent ones?

27) Questions – West Bromwich Future Uses

What would you like to see vacant shops used for in West Bromwich? Please let us know what your preferred uses are in order, if you can.

- Retail (retain as shop units)
- Houses / residential accommodation

- Other employment uses e.g. offices, businesses, live / work units etc.
- Public facilities / services e.g. educational uses, healthcare facilities, community hubs / meeting places etc.
- Leisure uses e.g. gyms, fitness and wellbeing studios, amusement arcades etc.
- Cafes / restaurants / entertainment venues
- Other uses (please let us know what these uses are, in your view)

What other sorts of development or activity do you think West Bromwich lacks?

If you don't visit West Bromwich often, or as often as you might previously have done, what would encourage / attract you to start going there again?

28) Questions – Employment Land Need

How do you think the shortfall in the supply of employment land should be addressed?

29) Questions – Sandwell's Economy

Do you think that a local Economic Development Strategy policy is still required for Sandwell?

- If you do, what do you think it should cover?

Are there any sorts of new / emerging industries that we should be trying to attract into Sandwell?

30) Question - Regeneration

Do you think that the SLP needs a specific policy in relation to the regeneration of parts of Sandwell?

- If so, what should the policy contain?
- Do you know of any areas in particular that should be included?

Thinking about areas that need to be improved, what do you think would make Sandwell a more attractive prospect for potential homeowners, inward investment and new business occupiers?

- Improved infrastructure (e.g. roads, drainage, accessibility to public transport)?
- Areas of mixed use (i.e. where housing and employment uses are situated next to or near each other, for example in town centres or industrial areas)?
- The inclusion of more open space and landscaping (e.g. pocket parks, tree planting, open space and informal sitting areas)?
- Anything else?

31) Question – Demand for employment sites

Do you think we should focus on supporting the growth of existing smaller businesses and companies on sub-divided former industrial sites?

There is evidence of demand for large sites for new inward investment in Sandwell from big companies, but the sites available for new business tends to be smaller ones and very few large vacant sites are available.

**Do you have any ideas or suggestions on how we might address this issue?
Options might include (but not be limited to): -**

- **Concentrating on attracting smaller businesses into Sandwell until larger sites become available through natural churn (where businesses move into / out of an area as they grow or change);**
- **Identifying existing larger areas of current employment activity and explore opportunities for improving their attractiveness to the market (e.g. through renewing and improving infrastructure such as parking and access, supporting the improvement of existing buildings and premises, introducing new or additional landscaping);**
- **Identifying opportunities as a Council to actively create sites for large companies or industrial occupiers (e.g. through the council using compulsory purchase powers / buying sites on the open market, or using land they own), even if that means displacing / relocating smaller companies to do so;**
- **Any other suggestion?**

32) Questions – Non-conforming Employment Uses

Do you agree that these non-conforming employment uses should be addressed in the SLP?

If so, do you think the SLP should contain a policy addressing what ancillary uses might be appropriate and in what locations (e.g. where there are no suitable facilities within a short walk or where the ancillary use is not one that needs to be in a town centre)?

34) Question – Training and Recruitment

We intend to update the existing SAD policy on training and recruitment. Do you agree?

35) Questions – Industrial Legacy

Are you aware of any additional policy areas relating to Sandwell's industrial legacy that in your view should be addressed in a new land use policy?

If so, what are the main areas of concern for you, and if you can, how would you advise that the council should tackle them?

39) Question – Transport Infrastructure

Are you aware of any locations where you think new or improved transport infrastructure may be required?

- **This may include public transport, cycle facilities, pedestrian upgrades or highway alterations.**

40) Question – Greener Travel Networks

Given the constraints imposed by Sandwell's current highway network, how do you think we should address the need to reduce congestion and encourage

a change in travel behaviour towards sustainable and active modes of travel by: -

- **prioritising public transport, ensuring sites have access to reliable public transport infrastructure which may require road space reallocation; or**
- **prioritising active travel (cycling and walking), ensuring sites have access to high quality and safe pedestrian and cycle links and infrastructure which may require road space reallocation; or**
- **a combination of the above; or**
- **investigating opportunities for reallocating road space for all forms of sustainable transport where reasonable on a location by location basis with minimum impact to the current operation of the highway?**

41) Question – safe access and addressing transport impacts

Do you think we should explore the concept of 15-minute neighbourhoods in the SLP?

Should new developments focus on new innovative infrastructure and emerging technologies such as electric vehicle charging infrastructure, use of low emission vehicle technology and provision for cycles, micro-mobility and motorcycles as part of smart mobility and mobility as a service solution (such as Mobility Hubs for example) in supporting modal choice?

42) Question – Communications and Digital Infrastructure

Do you agree with this approach?

43) Question – Telephone Kiosks

Do you agree with this approach?

44) Question - Broadband

Do you agree with this approach?

45) Question – Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles

Do you agree with this approach?

47) Question – Green spaces (a green space hierarchy is proposed)

Do you agree with this proposal?

48) Questions - The Rowley Hills

The Rowley Hills have been protected to date from development that might have affected its visual, historic and ecological amenity. They are subject to a variety of policies / allocations that have prevented most inappropriate development from taking place.

- **Do you think the current level of protection is sufficient to continue safeguarding the distinctive character, environment and visual amenity of the Hills?**
- **Do you think the level of protection needs to be increased?**
- **Do you think there is scope for any residential or economic**

development in the area, assuming it did not have an impact on the Hills' ecology, historic character, geological importance^[42] or skyline?

- If so, what sort / level of development would be appropriate in your view and why?

Do you think the Rowley Hills should be allocated as Local Green Space in the SLP?

- Can you explain why you think it should be?
- If you disagree, can you explain why you think it doesn't need this designation?

Do you think the Rowley Hills should be designated as green belt?

- Can you explain why you think it should be?
- If you disagree, can you explain why you think it doesn't need this designation?

51) Question - Archaeology

Do you agree with the proposal to update the existing SAD policy on archaeology?

52) Questions – Black Country Geopark

Do you agree with the proposal to include a policy on the Black Country Global Geopark?

Are you aware of any features of geological interest in your area that you want to bring to our attention?

Cabinet – 22 March 2023

Lettings Agent Enforcement Policy

Portfolio: Councillor Perry – Deputy Leader & Resilient Communities

Related portfolios: Councillor Ali - Customer

Service: Resilient Communities

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 The Enforcement Policy sets out the council's approach to the enforcement and determination of financial penalties where persons engaged in letting agency and property management work fail to comply with legislative requirements.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Walsall Council, in its capacity as the enforcement authority and the local weights and measures authority, has a statutory responsibility to regulate specific aspects of the letting agency and property management market. This responsibility includes ensuring that tenants are only charged permitted fees, that letting agents are members of a redress scheme and a client money protection scheme and that letting agents' fees and charges are transparent and displayed/publicised appropriately.
- 2.2 Authorities are expected to develop and document a policy on the enforcement of letting agency and property management legislation and this report sets out a draft enforcement policy for approval.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the adoption of the enforcement policy in relation to relevant letting agency legislation as set out in **Appendix A** of the report be approved.
- 3.2 That the Executive Director Economy Environment and Communities is authorised to make amendments to the financial penalty charge matrices to reflect any changes necessary as a result of amendments to legislation, legal decisions, statutory and best practice guidance.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 The Tenant Fees Act 2019 was introduced to make renting fairer and more affordable for tenants by introducing a ban on certain fees payable by the tenant and also creating a 'permitted payment' regime.
- 4.2 Any fees not specifically permitted by the act are prohibited. The act allows the enforcement authority to impose a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000 for breaches in relation to permitted fees and repayment of holding deposits. Should further breaches occur within five years, the enforcement authority may prosecute or impose a financial penalty not exceeding £30,000.
- 4.3 The Consumer Rights Act 2015 has been amended by the Tenant Fees Act 2019 to ensure that letting agents publicise their fees. An enforcement authority may impose a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000 for failure to comply with the requirement to publicise fees.
- 4.4 The Redress Schemes for Letting Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc) (England) Order 2014, requires agents to belong to a redress scheme. The schemes can investigate disputes between tenants, agents and landlords and can order agents to reimburse fees or pay compensation for unfair practices. The order allows the enforcement authority to impose a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000 for failure to comply with the requirement to belong to a redress scheme.
- 4.5 The Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019, requires that any property agent holding client's money must be a member of a client money protection scheme. The regulations allow the enforcement authority to impose a financial penalty, not exceeding £30,000 for failing to be a member of a client money protection scheme, or not exceeding £5,000 for failing to provide the required information in relation to their membership.
- 4.6 Where the council wishes to utilise financial penalties for breaches for any of these infringements, statutory guidance accompanying the legislative controls clearly states that the Council is expected to develop, document and publish a policy, which sets out how it will determine the appropriate level of any financial penalty.

Statutory enforcement guidance:

[Tenant Fees Act 2019 - Statutory Guidance For Enforcement Authorities.](#)

[Statutory guidance - Mandatory client money protection: enforcement guidance for local authorities](#)

- 4.7 The lead enforcement authority, Bristol City Council, operating as the National Trading Standards Estate and Letting Agency Team (NTSELAT) has issued an exemplar enforcement policy document. It is proposed that this document is

adopted by Walsall Council and as such a draft policy setting out the council's approach to enforcement and the determination of any financial penalty has been produced and is set out in **Appendix A**.

Council Plan priorities

4.8 Housing is a key determinant of health and wellbeing, and this policy should ensure tenants are not subjected to unnecessary financial burdens such as overtly high deposit costs or front-loading rent. This should make it more affordable for tenants to rent or move between rental properties should circumstances change. This could be especially important for low-income vulnerable groups, such as young people, single parent families and people with disabilities, who already face challenges in finding affordable homes and have limited alternative housing available to them. Effective enforcement of the above legislation and adoption of the proposed enforcement policy will enable the trading standards team to support the corporate priorities, ensuring that:

- children are safe from harm and healthy. Vulnerable families at risk of exploitation from rogue letting agents will be deterred from engaging in detrimental practices.
- greater local economic opportunities for all people, communities and businesses. There will be a positive impact on legitimate compliant letting agents and also the wider community from a reduction in financial exploitation.
- communities are empowered so they feel they are well connected and belong in Walsall, creating safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of community. Consistency of enforcement with neighbouring authorities is vital so that Walsall tenants are not seen as an easy target for exploitation by rogue agents.

Risk management

4.9. The key risk relates to the possibility that failure to adopt an enforcement policy will prevent effective and consistent enforcement of letting agency legislation. The recommended adoption of the enforcement policy outlined in **Appendix A** will remediate this risk.

4.10 A further risk is the potential difficulty of recovering the financial penalties. The authority may recover the penalty or part on the order of the county court as if it were payable under an order of that court. Some recipients may be limited liability companies and/or have no financial assets from which monies can be recovered. However, the council will use appropriate legal processes in order to recover as much debt as possible.

Financial implications

- 4.11 The policy will be applied with existing staffing resources. The legislation provides that enforcement authorities are able to retain monies raised through financial penalties with the proceeds reserved for carrying out enforcement functions in relation to the private rented sector. The level of the financial penalties which can be imposed by the council varies depending on the infringement, however, they can be up to £30,000. It's for the council to determine the level of each penalty up to the maximums set in law. To ensure the penalties are used fairly and are set at an appropriate level, the policy sets out the factors that will be considered and the methods that will be used before a financial penalty is imposed. Factors are based on government statutory guidance, and the policy follows best practice, which has been set by England's lead enforcement authority (National Trading Standards Estate and Letting Agency Team - NTSELAT. Most other Black Country and Central England Trading Standards Authorities have also followed the NTSELAT guidelines ensuring consistency of enforcement and fine levels.

Legal implications

- 4.12 The adoption of an enforcement policy is crucial to allow the trading standards team to take formal legal action against letting agent and property management companies. The policy is in accordance with the NTSLEAT nationally agreed policy.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.13 There are no procurement implications to this report.

Property implications

- 4.14 There are no property implications to this report.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.15 By using the enforcement policy appropriately, services are able to investigate criminal offences. This ensures that the Marmot objectives are met by protecting people at all life stages and promoting a fair and safe environment in which business can thrive.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.16 Protecting the most vulnerable members of our communities is a priority for the council. Individuals and families may rely on the private rented sector for their accommodation and where unlawful practices are used by landlords this can exacerbate inequalities.

Staffing implications

- 4.17 The policy will be applied with existing staffing resources.

Climate Impact

4.18 There are no climate impact implications to this report.

Consultation

4.19 No public consultation is necessary. Statutory guidance states that enforcement authorities should consult with the lead enforcement authority to ensure policies on Tenant Fees Act penalties are in line with the national approach to promote consistency, alongside local priorities. In pursuance of this the lead authority has made their enforcement policy available for wider adoption. The policy in **Appendix A** adheres to this. Discussions have taken place with the housing standards and Improvement team to ensure the proposed policy does not conflict with the existing housing standards enforcement policy.

5. Decide

5.1 This report is to enable members of cabinet to formally adopt the policy thereby enabling Trading Standards to take part in the national lettings agency project and continue to carry out this work in future for the benefit of Walsall communities.

6. Respond

6.1 If cabinet accept the recommendations the Trading Standards service will implement the Lettings Agents project and use the policy to inform any enforcement action undertaken.

7. Review

7.1 The enforcement policy will be reviewed annually to ensure fees, charges and decision matrices adhere to current statute, guidance and best practice. It is proposed that the Executive Director Economy Environment and Communities is authorised to make appropriate amendments to reflect any changes.

Appendices

Appendix A - Enforcement Policy in Relation to Relevant Letting Agency Legislation

Background papers

There are no background papers for this report.

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10 March 2023



Councillor Garry Perry
Resilient Communities

10 March 2023

Walsall Council

Policy for the enforcement and determination of financial penalties for breaches of relevant letting agency requirements

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Walsall Council ('the Council') is committed to ensuring that any person operating as a letting agent or who is involved in property management complies with the legal requirements imposed upon them to ensure both an equitable and level marketplace and that the protections afforded to individuals are adhered to.
- 1.2 The Council has the power to authorise officers to act against non-compliant businesses in order to protect consumers and we recognise that often individuals seeking accommodation can be in a vulnerable position.
- 1.3 The legal framework governing letting agents and those involved in property management provides the Council with the opportunity to issue financial penalties (civil penalties) as an alternative to undertaking criminal prosecutions for breaches and requires the Council to publish a policy on how it will determine the level of any penalty.
- 1.4 The Council has developed this policy on determining the level of financial penalties and the appropriateness of prosecution (as an alternative to imposing financial penalties) under the relevant letting agency legislation.

Under this policy, "relevant letting agency legislation" means:

1. The Tenant Fees Act 2019,
2. An order under Section 83(1) or 84(1) of the Enterprise and Regulatory Reform Act 2013¹; and
3. Regulations under Sections 133 – 135 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016²;
4. Chapter 3 of Part 3 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015 as it applies in relation to dwelling houses in England.

2.0 Sanctions available under the relevant letting agency legislation

- 2.1 The Tenant Fees Act 2019 ('TFA 2019') provides that enforcement authorities may impose financial penalties of up to £30,000 depending on the breach as follows:
 - a. In respect of a first breach of s1 & s2, or a breach of Schedule 2 of the TFA 2019, a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000.
 - b. Under s12 of the TFA 2019 a second or subsequent breach of S.1 or S.2 within 5 years of the previous breach provides for a financial

¹ Pertaining to The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc) (England) Order 2014

² Pertaining to The Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019

penalty not exceeding £30,000.00 and there is alternative power to prosecute in the Magistrates Court where an unlimited fine may be imposed.

- 2.2 In respect of a failure by any person engaged in Letting Agency or Property Management work who fails to hold membership of a Redress Scheme as required by Article 3 of The Redress Schemes for Lettings Agency Work and Property Management Work (requirement to belong to a Scheme etc.) England) Order 2014

(in respect of Lettings Agency work) or Article 5 (in respect of property management work) to a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000. (Note that it is not sufficient to simply register for redress – the correct category of membership must be obtained depending on the work carried out.)

- 2.3 In respect of the Client Money Protection Schemes for Property Agents (Requirement to Belong to a Scheme etc.) Regulations 2019:

- a. a failure by a property agent, who holds client money, to belong to an approved or designated Client Money Protection (“CMP”) Scheme as required by Regulation 3, a financial penalty not exceeding £30,000 or
- b. a failure to display a certificate of membership; or publish a copy of that certificate on the relevant website (where one exists); or produce a copy of the certificate free of charge to any person reasonably requiring it as required; or notify any client in writing within 14 days of a change in the details of a underwriter to the CMP scheme or that the membership of the CMP scheme has been revoked, as required by Regulation 4, a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000.

- 2.4 In respect of a failure of Letting Agents to publicise their fees including information pertaining to their membership of a redress and/or CMP scheme as required by Section 83 of the Consumer Rights Act 2015, a financial penalty not exceeding £5,000.

- 2.5 In determining the most appropriate and effective sanction and whether it is appropriate to impose a financial penalty or prosecute the Council will have due regard to the Black Country Local Authorities Enforcement Policy in addition to this policy.

Other Types of Enforcement Action that may be taken

In appropriate circumstances consideration will be given to less formal action such as warning letters or advice, in an effort to secure compliance, and will be done so in accordance with the Black Country Local Authorities Enforcement Policy.

3.0 Statutory Guidance

- 3.1 The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (“MHCLG”) has published guidance for enforcement authorities in respect of the Tenant Fees Act 2019 - [“Tenant Fees Act 2019: Statutory Guidance for enforcement authorities”](#) and in respect of Client Money Protection Requirements – [“Mandatory Client money protection for property agents – enforcement guidance for local authorities”](#)
- 3.2 This is statutory guidance to which the Council must have regard to when considering imposing a financial penalty. This statutory guidance recommends certain factors that the Council should take into account when deciding on the level of financial penalty to impose and further recommends that the Council develops and documents its own policy on determining the appropriate level of financial penalty in a particular case.
- 3.3 The Council has utilised the approach taken by the Lead Enforcement Authority (LEA) for relevant letting agency legislation on how it will determine financial penalties. By utilising this mechanism in line with the LEA, the Council will ensure a consistent and fair approach.

4.0 Determining the level of the financial penalty

- 4.1 In accordance with the provisions of the TFA & CMP statutory guidance, the following factors should be considered by the Council when determining the level of penalty to impose for a breach of relevant letting agency legislation:
- a. Severity of the breach
 - b. Punishment of the landlord or agent
 - c. Aggravating and mitigating factors
 - d. Fairness and proportionality
- 4.2 Each of these factors are explained in more detail in the statutory guidance which should be referred to for each penalty considered. For ease, the same considerations will be applied in cases of redress membership and breaches of S.83 Consumer Rights Act 2015.
- 4.3 Although the Council has wide discretion in determining the appropriate level of financial penalty in any particular case, regard has been given to the statutory guidance when making this policy.
- 4.4 The appendices which follow provide the processes for assessment and levels of financial penalty that the Council will look to impose. It follows the model developed by the LEA, which is considered to be a fair, relevant and reasonable model to follow as the documents upon which it was based were widely consulted on with various stakeholders.

- 4.5 Appendix 1 of this policy contains the process that the Council will use in order to determine the level of financial penalty under the above-mentioned legislation in so far as they relate to letting agents. It provides the considerations for determining the culpability and harm category which will be used alongside other factors to increase and/or decrease the scale of any financial penalty. All stages subsequent to the issue of a Notice of Intent are subject to statutory time limits and the suspension of the process should an appeal be made to the First Tier Tribunal.
- 4.6 Appendices 2 and 3 of this policy provides clarity over who will be considered 'vulnerable' for the purposes of this policy and the types of other offences/convictions that are relevant when considering/determining a financial penalty.
- 4.7 Appendices 4-9 of this policy provide the starting points, minimum and maximum financial penalties for each harm category and level of culpability for each type of breach:
- Appendix 4 - First breach in respect of a Prohibited Payment
 - Appendix 5 - Second & subsequent breach in respect of a Prohibited Payment
 - Appendix 6 - Breach of Publication of Fees requirements
 - Appendix 7 - Breach in respect of membership of a Redress Scheme
 - Appendix 8 - Breach in respect of membership of a Client Money Protection Scheme
 - Appendix 9 - Breach of transparency requirements of membership of a Client Money Protection Scheme

Appendix 1 – The Council’s process for determining the level of penalty to set

STEP ONE – Determining the category

The Council will determine the ‘breach category’ using only the culpability and category of harm factors below. Where a breach does not fall squarely into a category, individual factors may require a degree of weighting to make an overall assessment. Other discretionary factors may also be applied in order to reflect consistency and may consider decisions in other UK jurisdictions where they contain some relevant and persuasive content.

Culpability

Very high: Where the Landlord or Agent intentionally breached, or flagrantly disregarded, the law or has/had a high public profile³ and knew their actions were unlawful

High: Actual foresight of, or wilful blindness to, risk of a breach but risk nevertheless taken

Medium: Breach committed through act or omission which a person exercising reasonable care would not commit

Low: Breach committed with little fault, for example, because:

- significant efforts were made to address the risk although they were inadequate on the relevant occasion
- there was no warning/circumstance indicating a risk
- failings were minor and occurred as an isolated incident

Harm

The following factors relate to both actual harm and risk of harm. Dealing with a risk of harm involves consideration of both the likelihood of harm occurring and the extent of it if it does.

Category 1 – High Likelihood of Harm

- Serious adverse effect(s) on individual(s) and/or having a widespread impact due to the nature and/or scale of the Landlord’s or Agent’s business
- High risk of an adverse effect on individual(s) – including where persons are vulnerable⁴

Category 2 – Medium Likelihood of Harm

- Adverse effect on individual(s) (not amounting to Category 1)
- Medium risk of an adverse effect on individual(s) or low risk of serious adverse effect.

³ Which may include any significant role in a trade or business representative organisation ⁴
A wide definition of vulnerability will be used. See Appendix 2 for a non-exhaustive list.

- Tenants and/or legitimate landlords or agents substantially undermined by the conduct.
- The Council's work as a regulator is inhibited
- Tenant or prospective tenant misled

Category 3- Low Likelihood of Harm

- Low risk of an adverse effect on actual or prospective tenants.
- Public misled but little or no risk of actual adverse effect on individual(s)

We will define harm widely and victims may suffer financial loss, damage to health or psychological distress (especially vulnerable cases). There are gradations of harm within all of these categories.

The nature of harm will depend on personal characteristics and circumstances of the victim and the assessment of harm will be an effective and important way of taking into consideration the impact of a particular breach on the victim.

In some cases no actual harm may have resulted and the Council will be concerned with assessing the severity of the misconduct; it will consider the likelihood of harm occurring and the gravity of the harm that could have resulted.

Community harm

Some breaches cause harm to the community at large (instead of or as well as to an individual victim) and may include economic loss, harm to public health, or interference with the administration of justice.

STEP TWO - Starting point and category range

Having determined the category that the breach falls into, the Council will refer to the following starting points to reach an appropriate level of financial penalty within the category range. The Council will then consider further adjustment within the category range for aggravating and mitigating features.

Obtaining financial information

The statutory guidance advises that the Council can use its powers to, as far as possible, make an assessment of a Landlord or Agent's assets and any income (not just rental or fee income) they receive when determining an appropriate penalty. The Council will use such lawful means as are at its disposal to identify where assets might be found.

In setting a financial penalty, the Council may conclude that the Landlord or Agent is able to pay any financial penalty imposed unless the Council has obtained, or the Landlord or Agent has supplied, any financial information to the contrary. The subject of a Final Notice, or a Notice of Intent where the subject does not challenge it, will be expected to disclose to the Council such data relevant to his/her financial position to facilitate an assessment of what that person can reasonably afford to pay.

Where the Council is not satisfied that it has been given sufficient reliable information, the Council will be entitled to draw reasonable inferences as to the person's means from evidence it has received, or obtained through its own enquiries, and from all the circumstances of the case which may include the inference that the person can pay any financial penalty.

Starting points and ranges

The tables in Appendices 4-9 below give the starting points, minimum and maximum financial penalties for each harm category and level of culpability for each type of breach:

- Appendix 4 First breach in respect of a Prohibited Payment
- Appendix 5 Second & subsequent breach in respect of a Prohibited Payment
- Appendix 6 Breach of Publication of Fees requirements
- Appendix 7 Breach in respect of membership of a Redress Scheme
- Appendix 8 Breach in respect of membership of a Client Money Protection Scheme
- Appendix 9 Breach of transparency requirements of membership of a Client Money Protection Scheme (Regulation 4).

Context

Below is a list of some, but not all factual elements that provide the context of the breach and factors relating to the Landlord or Agent. The Council will identify whether any combination of these, or other relevant factors, should result in an upward or downward adjustment from the starting point. In particular, relevant recent convictions⁴ are likely to result in a substantial upward adjustment. In some cases, having considered these factors, it may be appropriate to move outside the identified category range, which will not exceed the statutory maximum permitted in any case.

Factors increasing seriousness

Aggravating factors:

- Previous breaches of the TFA 2019 or relevant letting agency legislation
Previous convictions, having regard to:
 - the nature of the offence to which the conviction relates and its relevance to the current breach; and,
 - the time that has elapsed since the conviction.

Other aggravating factors may include:

- Motivated by financial gain
- Deliberate concealment of illegal nature of activity
- Established evidence of wider / community impact
- Obstruction of the investigation

⁴ See Appendix 3 for a list of relevant convictions

- Record of poor compliance
- Refusal of advice or training or to become a member of an Accreditation scheme

Factors reducing seriousness or reflecting personal mitigation

- No previous or no relevant/recent breaches
- No previous convictions or no relevant/recent convictions
- Steps voluntarily taken to remedy problem
- High level of co-operation with the investigation, beyond that which will always be expected
- Good record of relationship with tenants
- Self-reporting, co-operation and acceptance of responsibility
- Good character and/or exemplary conduct
- Mental disorder or learning disability, where linked to the commission of the breach
- Serious medical conditions requiring urgent, intensive or long-term treatment and supported by medical evidence

STEP THREE - General principles to consider in setting a penalty

The Council will finalise the appropriate level of penalty so that it reflects the seriousness of the offence and the Council must take into account the financial circumstances of the Landlord or Agent if representations are made by the Landlord or Agent following the issue of a Notice of Intent.

The level of financial penalty should reflect the extent to which the conduct fell below the required standard. The financial penalty should meet, in a fair and proportionate way, the objectives of punishment, deterrence and the removal of gain derived through the commission of the breach; it should not be cheaper to breach than to take the appropriate precautions and a fundamental principle involved is that there should be no financial gain to the perpetrator from the commission of the breaches.

If issuing a financial penalty for more than one breach, or where the offender has already been issued with a financial penalty, the Council will consider whether the total penalties are just and proportionate to the offending behaviour and will have regard to the factors in STEP EIGHT below.

STEP FOUR- Issue Notice of Intent

In respect of prohibited payments, publication of fees, etc., and client money protection membership and transparency requirements, the Council will issue a Notice of Intent before the end of the period of 6 months beginning with the first day on which the authority has sufficient evidence of the breach. In respect of redress membership, the notice of intent must be served within 6 months of the date on which the enforcement authority is first satisfied of the failure to comply with Article 3 or Article 5. If the breach is ongoing the 6month deadline continues until the breach ceases. A Notice of Intent can be served spontaneously.

While there are slight variations in the statutory requirements according to which breach is being addressed, a Notice of Intent will contain the amount of the proposed penalty, the reason for imposing the penalty and information about the right to make representations concerning the penalty. In respect of the TFA 2019, the date of service is also required on the Notice of Intent.

STEP FIVE – Consideration of representations and review of financial penalty where appropriate

The Council should review the penalty and, if necessary, adjust the initial amount reached at STEP FOUR, and represented in the Notice of Intent, to ensure that it fulfils the general principles set out below.

Any quantifiable economic benefit(s) derived from the breach, including through avoided costs or operating savings, should normally be added to the total financial penalty arrived at in step two, providing it doesn't increase the penalty over the prescribed maximum. Where this is not readily available, the Council may draw on information available from enforcing authorities and others about the general costs of operating within the law. Whether the penalty will have the effect of putting the offender out of business will be relevant but in some serious cases this might be an acceptable outcome.

STEP SIX – Reductions

The Council will consider any factors which indicate that a reduction in the penalty is appropriate and in so doing will have regard to the following factors relating to the wider impacts of the financial penalty on innocent third parties; such as (but not limited to):

- The impact of the financial penalty on the Landlord or Agent's ability to comply with the law or make restitution where appropriate
- The impact of the financial penalty on employment of staff, service users, customers and the local economy.

The following factors will be considered in setting the level of reduction. When deciding on any reduction in a financial penalty, consideration will be given to:

- The stage in the investigation or thereafter when the offender accepted liability
- The circumstances in which they admitted liability
- The degree of co-operation with the investigation

The maximum level of reduction in a penalty for an admission of liability will be one-third. In some circumstances there will be a reduced or no level of discount. This may occur, for example, where the evidence of the breach is overwhelming or there is a pattern of breaching conduct.

Any reduction should not result in a penalty which is less than the amount of gain from the commission of the breach itself.

STEP SEVEN - Additional actions

In all cases the Council must consider whether to take additional action. These may include further enforcement action itself or reference to other organisations where appropriate.

STEP EIGHT – Totality of breaching conduct

Where more than one financial penalty has been considered, the Council should consider the following guidance from the Sentencing Council’s definitive guideline on ‘Offences Taken into Consideration and Totality’, which appears to the Council to be an appropriate reference and guide.

As the total financial penalty is inevitably cumulative the Council should determine the financial penalty for each individual breach based on the seriousness of the breach and taking into account the circumstances of the case including the financial circumstances of the Landlord or Agent so far as they are known, or appear, to the Council.

The Council should add up the financial penalties for each offence and consider if they are just and proportionate. If the aggregate total is not just and proportionate the Council should consider how to reach a just and proportionate total financial penalty. There are a number of ways in which this can be achieved.

For example:

Where a Landlord or Agent is to be penalised for two or more breaches or where there are multiple breaches of a repetitive kind, especially when committed against the same person, it will often be appropriate to impose for the most serious breach a financial penalty, which reflects the totality of the conduct where this can be achieved within the maximum penalty for that breach. No separate penalty should be imposed for the other breaches. Where a Landlord or Agent is to be penalised for two or more breaches that arose out of different incidents, it will often be appropriate to impose separate financial penalties for each breach. The Council should add up the financial penalties for each breach and consider if they are just and proportionate. If the aggregate amount is not just and proportionate the Council should consider whether all of the financial penalties can be proportionately reduced. Separate financial penalties should then be imposed.

Where separate financial penalties are imposed, the Council must take care to ensure that there is no double-counting.

STEP NINE – Recording the decision

The officer making a decision about a financial penalty will record their decision giving reasons for coming to the amount of financial penalty that will be imposed.

Appendix 2 – Non exhaustive list of vulnerable people

- Young adults and children
- Persons vulnerable by virtue of age
- Persons vulnerable by virtue of disability or sensory impairment
- People on a low income
- Persons with a drug or alcohol addiction
- Victims of domestic abuse
- Children in care or otherwise vulnerable by virtue of age
- People with complex health conditions
- People exploited where English is not their first language
- Victims of Trafficking or sexual exploitation
- Refugees
- Asylum seekers
- People at risk of harassment or eviction
- People at risk of homelessness.

Appendix 3 – Non exhaustive list of relevant offences / breaches

Housing law or landlord and tenant related

Offences under:

- The Public Health Acts of 1936 and 1961
- The Building Act 1984
- The Environmental Protection Act 1990
- The Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- The Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949
- The Protection from Eviction Act 1977
- The Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Acts of 1982 and 1976
- The Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996
- The Local Government and Housing Act 1989
- The Housing Act 2004
- The Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008

Offences involving fraud

Offences in which the victim has been deprived of money, property or other benefit by misrepresentation/deception on the part of the offender including: -

- Theft
- Burglary
- Fraud
- Benefit fraud (particularly where tenants are in receipt of Housing Benefit)
- Conspiracy to defraud
- Obtaining money or property by deception
- People trafficking
- Being struck off as a company director

Offences involving violence

A conviction for the offence of:

- Murder
- Manslaughter
- Arson
- Malicious wounding or grievous bodily harm
- Grievous bodily harm with intent
- Actual bodily harm
- Grievous bodily harm
- Robbery

- Criminal damage where the intent was to intimidate or was racially aggravated
- Common assault
- Common assault which is racially aggravated
- Assault occasioning actual bodily harm
- Possession of an offensive weapon
- Possession of a firearm

Offences involving drugs

- Consideration should be given to the nature of the offence and what bearing it could have on the Landlord or Agents business activities. The nature, quantity, purity and class of drugs should be taken into account. In addition where an offence of possession with intent to supply is involved regard should be had to the role and importance of, the subject in the supply chain

Offences involving sexual offences

- An offence contained in schedule 3 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

Unlawful discrimination

- Unlawful discrimination can include findings of an Industrial Tribunal on unlawful employment practice such as discrimination under the Disability Discrimination Act. Consideration should be given to the nature of the unlawful discrimination and what bearing it could have on the management of a licensable property.

Other offences

- Modern Slavery / Human Trafficking Offences involving the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control of another person, for the purpose of exploitation.

Appendix 4 – Financial Penalty in the case of a first breach in respect of Prohibited Payments

The table below gives the starting points, minimum and maximum financial penalties for each harm category and level of culpability. Where exceptional circumstances apply, the Council may reduce the minimum penalties further but may not increase them above the maximum permitted of £5000.

		Range	
		Min (£)	Max (£)
Starting point (£)			
Low culpability			
Harm category 3	1250	250	2250
Harm Category 2	1500	500	2500
Harm Category 1	1750	750	2750
Medium culpability			
Harm category 3	2000	1000	3000
Harm Category 2	2250	1250	3250
Harm Category 1	2500	1500	3500
High culpability			
Harm category 3	2750	1750	3750
Harm Category 2	3000	2000	4000
Harm Category 1	3250	2250	4250
Very high culpability			
Harm category 3	3500	2500	4500
Harm Category 2	3750	2750	4750
Harm Category 1	4000	3000	5000

Appendix 5 – Financial Penalty in the case of a second or subsequent breach in respect of Prohibited Payments within 5 years of a previous breach

The table below gives the starting points, minimum and maximum financial penalties for each harm category and level of culpability. Where exceptional circumstances apply the Council may reduce the minimum penalties further but may not increase them above the maximum permitted of £30000.

		Range	
	Starting point (£)	Min (£)	Max (£)
Low culpability			
Harm category 3	3500	2000	8000
Harm Category 2	6500	4000	10000
Harm Category 1	8500	4500	15000
Medium culpability			
Harm category 3	6500	4750	17000
Harm Category 2	10500	5000	20000
Harm Category 1	12500	5500	22000
High culpability			
Harm category 3	10500	5500	20000
Harm Category 2	15000	6250	24000
Harm Category 1	18000	7000	26000
Very high culpability			
Harm category 3	15000	7000	24000
Harm Category 2	17500	7250	28000
Harm Category 1	20000	7500	30000

Appendix 6 – Financial Penalty in the case of a breach in respect of Publication of Fees

The table below gives the starting points, minimum and maximum financial penalties for each harm category and level of culpability. Where exceptional circumstances apply the Council may reduce the minimum penalties further but may not increase them above the maximum permitted of £5000.

		Range	
	Starting point (£)	Min (£)	Max (£)
Low culpability			
Harm category 3	1250	250	2250
Harm Category 2	1500	500	2500
Harm Category 1	1750	750	2750
Medium culpability			
Harm category 3	2000	1000	3000
Harm Category 2	2250	1250	3250
Harm Category 1	2500	1500	3500
High culpability			
Harm category 3	2750	1750	3750
Harm Category 2	3000	2000	4000
Harm Category 1	3250	2250	4250
Very high culpability			
Harm category 3	3500	2500	4500
Harm Category 2	3750	2750	4750
Harm Category 1	4000	3000	5000

Appendix 7 – Financial Penalty in the case of a breach in respect of Membership of a Redress Scheme

The table below gives the starting points, minimum and maximum financial penalties for each harm category and level of culpability. Where exceptional circumstances apply the Council may reduce the minimum penalties further but may not increase them above the maximum permitted of £5000.

		Range	
	Starting point (£)	Min (£)	Max (£)
Low culpability			
Harm category 3	1250	250	2250
Harm Category 2	1500	500	2500
Harm Category 1	1750	750	2750
Medium culpability			
Harm category 3	2000	1000	3000
Harm Category 2	2250	1250	3250
Harm Category 1	2500	1500	3500
High culpability			
Harm category 3	2750	1750	3750
Harm Category 2	3000	2000	4000
Harm Category 1	3250	2250	4250
Very high culpability			
Harm category 3	3500	2500	4500
Harm Category 2	3750	2750	4750
Harm Category 1	4000	3000	5000

Appendix 8 – Financial Penalty in the case of a breach in respect of a failure to obtain membership of a Client Money Protection Scheme

The table below gives the starting points, minimum and maximum financial penalties for each harm category and level of culpability. Where exceptional circumstances apply the Council may reduce the minimum penalties further but may not increase them above the maximum permitted of £30000.

		Range	
	Starting point (£)	Min (£)	Max (£)
Low culpability			
Harm category 3	3500	2000	8000
Harm Category 2	6500	4000	10000
Harm Category 1	8500	4500	15000
Medium culpability			
Harm category 3	6500	4750	17000
Harm Category 2	10500	5000	20000
Harm Category 1	12500	5500	22000
High culpability			
Harm category 3	10500	5500	20000
Harm Category 2	15000	6250	24000
Harm Category 1	18000	7000	26000
Very high culpability			
Harm category 3	15000	7000	24000
Harm Category 2	17500	7250	28000
Harm Category 1	20000	7500	30000

Appendix 9 – Financial Penalty in respect of a breach of transparency requirements of membership of a Client Money Protection Scheme

The table below gives the starting points, minimum and maximum financial penalties for each harm category and level of culpability. Where exceptional circumstances apply the Council may reduce the minimum penalties further but may not increase them above the maximum permitted of £5000.

		Range	
	Starting point (£)	Min (£)	Max (£)
Low culpability			
Harm category 3	1250	250	2250
Harm Category 2	1500	500	2500
Harm Category 1	1750	750	2750
Medium culpability			
Harm category 3	2000	1000	3000
Harm Category 2	2250	1250	3250
Harm Category 1	2500	1500	3500
High culpability			
Harm category 3	2750	1750	3750
Harm Category 2	3000	2000	4000
Harm Category 1	3250	2250	4250
Very high culpability			
Harm category 3	3500	2500	4500
Harm Category 2	3750	2750	4750
Harm Category 1	4000	3000	5000

Cabinet – 22 March 2023

The use of Drones to deal with Off-road Vehicles

Portfolio: Councillor Perry – Deputy Leader & Resilient Communities

Related portfolios:

Service: Resilient Communities

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 To tackle the major impact of off-road vehicles on the communities and environment of Walsall through intensive partnership efforts between Walsall Council and West Midlands Police.

2. Summary

- 2.1 Walsall Council is:

'committed to developing a healthier, cleaner and safer Borough and creating an environment that provides opportunities for all residents, communities and businesses to fulfil their potential and thrive'.

Our communities rely on the authority and police colleagues to respond to their concerns in relation to antisocial behaviour (ASB) and crime. Using traditional methods of intervention to respond to the scourge of off-road vehicles creates significant challenges and causes frustration to enforcers and the communities affected.

- 2.2 On the 24 November 2022 the Economy, Environment and Communities Scrutiny Committee received a report which stated that that off-road vehicles are a significant cause of anti-social behaviour in Walsall causing fear, alarm and distress to communities, noise nuisance and a risk of serious injury for pedestrians and the drivers themselves. As a consequence of the issues raised, the Leader of the council gave a commitment to working in partnership with the Police to ensure this issue was tackled using drone technology and other resources.

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee subsequently made the following recommendation:

“The Committee recommends Cabinet to investigate the acquisition of a drone or drone service for community protection to use in conjunction with West Midlands Police.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet note the content of the report and support the partnership approach to tackle this issue through enforcement, education and other security measures known as target hardening.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 Walsall Police and the councils Community Protection team received over 800 complaints during 2022 regarding the inappropriate use of off-road vehicles. The complaints peaked in March and then again in August and affected almost all areas of Walsall.
- 4.2 Legislation is available to deal with offences including vehicle insurance, road safety, noise nuisance and anti-social behaviour but reliable evidence is needed in order to apprehend the rider/owner. The outcomes when the individuals are caught include prosecution, injunctive action or eviction and the crushing of the vehicle itself. The speed, manoeuvrability and size of some of the vehicles mean they can evade capture, be hidden, and replaced with relative ease.
- 4.3 On 12 December 2022, a meeting of senior managers within the council and police met to discuss the practicalities of implementing this operation. It was a very positive meeting and agreement was reached about an appropriate way forward working as a partnership to implement innovative working.
- 4.4 On 28 December following several days of nuisance caused by off road bikes consideration was given to the use of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) or Injunctions similar to those used to restrict Unauthorised Encampments on certain council land to stop this ASB and nuisance. The evidence required to initiate such a course of action is being captured as part of the ongoing operations.

Matters considered as part of the partnership operation

- 4.5 This is not an issue that the police, council or other partners can work on in isolation but rather by working together, making the right investment, using the right tools and ensuring good communication, inroads can be made into preventing this dangerous behaviour.

- 4.6 Physical security of sites where the driving occurs can help reduce the access to sites but can have significant cost implications for the land owner. On public open spaces care needs to be taken not to over engineer solutions so as to prevent access to those with mobility difficulties or legitimate other users of sites.
- 4.7 Appropriately sited CCTV can identify times and dates that vehicles access sites and residents can act as eyes and ears for this intelligence also. Information ought to be made available to the public in order to inform them of the law around this matter, the best method to report incidents, the type of information needed and what the outcomes may be.
- 4.8 The use of drones is a complex matter and is controlled by the Civil Aviation Authority (<https://www.caa.co.uk/>) although misuse of drones is enforced by the Police. The Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2019/947 sets out three categories of flying:
- Open category is basic, low-risk flying and is the starting point for anyone flying a drone or model aircraft.
 - Specific category covers operations with a greater risk than those covered by the Open category, or where one or more elements of the operation fall outside the boundaries of the Open category.
 - Certified category covers operations that present an equivalent risk to that of manned aviation.

Drones used for the purposes of identifying and dealing with issues relating to Off-road Vehicles would fall into the Open Category or in certain circumstances the Specific Category. Training, risk assessment and in certain cases authorisation would be required from the CAA before the flying of drones would be able to commence.

- 4.9 The planned operations will involve collaborating with the West Midland Police Drones team and also the Transport for West Midlands Drone team but we will also include working with the National Police Air Service to use fixed wing aircraft on the operations.

Implementing the partnership operations

- 4.10 A police sergeant has been allocated to lead on this operation supported by the council's Community Safety and Healthy Spaces teams. Partner agencies such as Walsall Housing Group (WHG), Sustrans and the Canal and River Trust will also be involved to identify and target key hot spot locations or individuals who may be the source of the ASB and nuisance.
- 4.11 The first drone operation was conducted on Sunday, 29 January 2023. There were eight neighbourhood police from Blakenall, and Brownhills (two in plain clothes), two drone operators, two community safety staff and six Healthy Spaces staff.
- 4.12 The main sites tackled were in Pelsall, Goscote Valley and Bloxwich and Willenhall Memorial Park in the afternoon. The team viewed the excellent drone

footage from West Midlands Drone Unit and walked Goscote Valley to get an idea of the issue and the challenge of target hardening to stop access. No bikes were seen during the operation however, this was planned as a test exercise and will inform the next few operations that are planned so they are successful.

- 4.13 The value of the drone was clear to see the images were excellent and a site which would have taken staff a couple of hours to walk around and search was covered in a matter of minutes especially using the infrared capability on areas with canopy cover.
- 4.14 A further exercise was held on the 26 February 2023. The fixed wing (police plane) was used on this occasion and was pivotal for the success of the Operation providing the ability to track offenders over long distances or back to home addresses. Council staff fed live sightings from hot spot locations and with the fixed wing aircraft overhead police staff were able to direct their resources; approximately thirty staff in total, to precise locations. This methodology resulted in several arrests, five vehicle seizures, cannabis recovered and numerous other encounters and warnings issued. It also allowed significant amounts of intelligence to be gathered for use in further operations.
- 4.15 Similar exercises will be repeated during 2023 however the times and dates of these exercises will be kept discreet so that offenders do not deliberately avoid driving on the days in question leading to poor outcomes for the partnership.
- 4.16 Positive press and other media coverage will be organised following each operation.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.17 **People** - Encourage our residents to lead more active, fulfilling and independent lives to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing.

Many of the worst affected sites for off-road vehicle issues are on parks, open spaces, canal tow paths and similar areas. These are areas residents use for recreation and exercise. The proliferation of off-road vehicles stops people using these sites for the purposes intended.

- 4.18 **Internal focus** - Council services are customer focused effective, efficient and equitable.

Relying on traditional methods of dealing with matters such as Off-road Vehicles including writing letters, dropping off leaflets, foot patrols in targeted areas and erecting CCTV on lampposts has not proven to always be effective in reducing the problems being experienced. Embracing new technologies and utilising efficient and effective methods of working will improve the authority's response to concerns within its communities.

- 4.19 **Children** - Have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.

The types of vehicles used in this type of anti-social behaviour are attractive to children and young person's placing their lives and the lives of those around them at risk. Then vehicles can be used in all forms of anti-social behaviour and mean children can move from place to place quickly for example in order to deliver illicit substances and become involved in other aspects of exploitation that they may otherwise not be subjected to. Living in an area where the noise and nuisance from these vehicles can be disturbing to children as well as other residents disturbing their peace and quiet and disturbing sleep.

- 4.20 **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.

A major issue with anti-social behaviour is it creates feelings of fear, alarm and distress. It makes people feel unsafe in their own homes and neighbourhoods and encourages criminals and others to take greater risks and become more confident in exhibiting this type of behaviour. Where people stop using parks and open spaces due to the fear of crime or harm these places become hot spots for illegal activity and residents lose the benefit of using them. The combined effects of stress and inactivity lead to poorer health outcomes. The sense of community can be lost as older people become resentful of younger people, neighbours become confrontational with each other and tensions around race, sex, and other defined characteristics also escalate.

Risk Management

- 4.21 The issue of anti-social behaviour and off-road vehicles will not 'go away' if public authorities do not have a strategy, work together and invest to tackle it. The risks associated with community tension and cohesion, dissatisfaction with the local environment and facilities need to be managed to prevent unrest within communities. Public authorities should always take steps to ensure their communities have faith that they will protect communities and bring offenders to justice when necessary. The potential for a serious injury or death caused by or happening to individuals involved in this behaviour is high.

Financial Implications

- 4.22 The monthly partnership operations described in this report will be managed within existing capacity. The operations will require staff to move away from other activity they would ordinarily undertake however anti-social behaviour and increasing the use of and enjoyment of open spaces is an important part of the team's role and so is justifiable in this context.
- 4.23 West Midlands Police have an allotted number of hours available to them for using the National Police Air Service and are expecting to make use of these hours for this operation. Once these hours are used the Police will consider how successful the operation has been and how best deploy their resources in future.

- 4.24 The West Midlands Police Drone unit do not charge for their services unless they are asked to work overtime. At present it is expected the all-out days will be planned in advance and Drone Operators will be available to attend. Should a request be made for their attendance outside of their usual working the police will consider whether overtime can be paid to allow this to happen.
- 4.25 Where sites require security works to prevent access by off-road vehicles there is a limited amount of operational budget available to allow these security measures to be implemented within existing budgets. This will be funded from existing budgets within Clean & Green. If in the event, expenditure for works exceeds the budget held a prioritisation exercise will be undertaken to decide which sites will be completed to ensure that expenditure is within budgets. There are a number of companies who regularly undertake site security work for the authority which will mean efficient and cost-effective measures can be put into place upon request.

Legal Implications

- 4.26 West Midlands Police Drone Unit and the National Police Air Service are both fully qualified, licensed and insured to undertake this work which minimises any risk of any adverse attention from the Civil Aviation Authority.
- 4.27 The Operation is intended to be overt and not directed at any specific individual therefore will not fall under surveillance controls contained within the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.
- 4.28 Any enforcement taken as part of this Operation will be in line with Police Standing Operating Procedures and the Councils Enforcement Policy.
- 4.29 Public Space Protection orders or injunctions are also tools which can be used to tackle illegal use of land and anti-social behaviour. They do require a significant amount of evidence to be presented to Court and in the case of PSPOs public consultation prior to implementation. It is right to consider both these tools as part of this operation however they are not 'quick wins' and so consideration of their use ought to run alongside the interventions described earlier in this document.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.30 At present there are no procurement issues.

Property Implications

- 4.31 Consideration will need to be given to the appropriate security measures at some of the council's sites to prevent access to land by off-road vehicles.

Health and Wellbeing Implications

- 4.32 The mental health of residents blighted by noise, aggressive or anti-social behaviour and the fear of crime would be reduced if a more effective way of

dealing with the issue was embedded. Lack of access to green spaces and other communal areas because of the fear of these vehicles would improve if the matter was more effectively tackled increasing physical and mental health outcomes. Physical health would be improved by reduction in accident and injury caused by the riders of these dangerous machines.

Staffing Implications

- 4.33 Staff from within the local authority will contribute to the outcomes of the operation alongside Police colleagues. This will mean however diverting some staff away from their other day to day work to concentrate on this specific operation as required. Staff will receive time off in lieu for attendance at operations outside of their normal working hours.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.34 Not applicable.

Climate Change

- 4.35 Tackling these vehicles may have an impact on emissions from the vehicles and use of council or police vehicles to patrol/chase or otherwise deal with the offenders. Fixed wing aircraft and associated emissions will be used efficiently and only as required.

4.36 ***Consultation***

Not applicable.

5. Decide

- 5.1 This report intends to provide reassurance that the issue is being taken seriously and plans have been implemented to ensure an effective operation undertaken.
- 5.2 It is acknowledged that no one agency can solve this issue on its own and the partnership are therefore coming together to tackle this problem collectively.
- 5.3 The promotion of this initiative to reassure communities is essential so that Walsall is seen as an authority committed to tackle the problem and not look the other way - by not acting the problem can only get worse and potentially need greater levels of investment at a later date.
- 5.4 Whilst the report concentrates on the use of drones to combat off-road vehicles if successful this resource could be considered for other areas of enforcement or promotional activity.

6. Respond

- 6.1 The Community Safety Team will continue to work with partners to implement a plan of activity for 2023 around Off-road Vehicles.

7. Review

- 7.1 The success of the scheme can be monitored through the number of deployments, the changes in complaint levels and anecdotal information from elected members and community groups, reductions in expenditure for damage caused, the number of vehicles seized, tenancies challenged, investigations undertaken, and cases prosecuted can be used as effective measurements.

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Simon Neilson
Executive Director Economy

10 March 2023



Councillor Perry
Deputy Leader & Resilient Communities

10 March 2023

Cabinet – 22 March 2023

Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 to 2028

Portfolio: Councillor Ali – Customer

Related portfolios: Councillor Elson – Children’s Services
Councillor Flint – Health and Well-being
Councillor Pedley – Adult Social Care

Service: Children’s and Customer

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 To ensure that the Council meets its statutory requirement to have in place a strategy (reviewed on a maximum five-year cycle) setting out the authority’s plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support is available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires that all local authorities review and publish a revised Homelessness Strategy every five years. The last Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 21 March 2018. This report provides a revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy (“the Strategy”) for the period 2023 to 2028 at **Appendix A**. This is a key decision as the Strategy has a significant impact on homelessness service provision across all wards of the borough.

- 2.2 Endorsed by the Walsall Homelessness Steering Group, the Strategy enables the Council and its partners to deliver a coordinated approach to tackling homelessness in the borough for the next five years and sets out the strategic objectives and actions to be delivered to prevent homelessness and support those who are homeless. The Strategy has been produced, following the development of a Needs Review (**Appendix B**) together with substantial consultation with Council staff, local third sector partners and providers and service users. Underpinned by the action plan the five strategic drivers of the Strategy are;

1. Preventing homelessness
2. Meeting the needs of young people
3. Securing accommodation for people who are homeless
4. Supporting people who are, or have been, homeless
5. Ending rough sleeping

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That the Walsall Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 to 2028 (**Appendix A**) be approved.
- 3.2 That Cabinet delegates authority to make any future amendments to the Walsall Homelessness Strategy 2023 to 2028 to the Director of Customer Engagement in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Customer.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires local authorities to produce a Homelessness Strategy, which must then be reviewed and republished every five years. Walsall's strategy is now due for renewal. The Government's Rough Sleeping Strategy in 2018 placed a requirement on local authorities to retitle their strategies as a Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy and include relevant actions. The development of the Strategy must be underpinned by a comprehensive Homelessness Review (**Appendix B**) which must clearly identify current services, gaps in provision, and provide clear recommendations about any changes required to help reduce homelessness in the future. These recommendations must then be translated into a new strategy and associated action plan.
- 4.2 The Walsall Homelessness Review (**Appendix B**) covers a three-year data period from April 2019 to March 2022 and considers:
 - a. the levels and likely future levels of homelessness in the borough;
 - b. the activities which are carried out for the prevention of homelessness or securing accommodation for people who are homeless
 - c. the resources available to the housing authority
 - d. recommendations for future service provision
- 4.3 The headline findings from the Review were as follows:
 - Between April 2019 and March 2022, the Council assessed and accepted a statutory duty to assist 2,738 households. In the latter two years 827 and 824 applicants were supported by way of an accepted duty which for each year accounted for around half of those who approached the local authority where homelessness, or threat of, were the causal factor behind their approach. The vast majority found not to be owed a duty received advice;
 - The main causes of homelessness in Walsall are broadly similar as a percentage share to both the regional and national picture, with '*Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate*' and the *ending of a private rented tenancy* combining to take half the share at 29% and 20% respectively;
 - Applicants aged 18 to 34 years (head of household) represent nearly 60% of households owed a duty. In line with national trends the most common age

group in households owed a duty are also aged 25 to 34, however Walsall has an over representation of persons aged 18 to 24;

- Households from Black African/Caribbean/Black British households are overrepresented in homeless presentations at 9% of households compared to Census 2021 representation at 5%. However, comparing 2019/20 to 2021/22 the share of households from Black African/Caribbean/Black British households reduced by 2% (from 11% to 9%). Using the same comparison dates Asian/Asian British households increased in presentations by 4% (from 10% to 14%);
- Single person households make up around 55% of presentations in Walsall that are subsequently assessed as owed a duty, which is slightly above the regional share of 53%. Women are more likely to experience homelessness than men, largely because of their high prevalence of being the head of household as a single parent with dependent children;
- Comparing 2016 and 2017 when rough sleeper numbers identified in the annual count peaked in Walsall at 26 and 20 respectively, the Council has made significant and demonstrable impacts in tackling rough sleeping, although the latest 2022 annual rough sleeper count of 8 offers a degree of caution against counts of 4 for both 2020 and 2021;
- The number of households identified with support needs has increased over the last three years rising to 53% in the last financial year. Around two-thirds of the support needs were centred on the needs of mental health, support for young people and persons at risk or experiencing domestic abuse;
- From the focus groups held, overall service users were complimentary about the homelessness services provided by both the Council and its partners.

4.4 The findings and conclusions from the Review have fed directly into the revised Strategy and the Action Plan. Most notably two of the current strategic objectives have been replaced with two new objectives:

1. Meeting the needs of young people, and;
2. Ending rough sleeping

The five objectives are outlined below together with key actions underpinning the objectives as detailed in the Action Plan:

Objective One: *Preventing Homelessness.*

- Continue to improve joint working with other public bodies, for example promoting the use of Duty to Refer and developing specific client focussed protocols
- Build better relationships with PRS landlords to prevent homelessness prior to the point of crisis
- Continue to enhance housing and homelessness related information, for example supporting the development of the information hubs

Objective Two: *Meeting the needs of young people*

- Deliver upstream housing information targeted at young people.

- Enhance affordable housing options and housing access for young people
- Ensure care leavers have access to accommodation that meets their needs

Objective Three: *Securing accommodation for people who are homeless*

- Increase the housing offer for people who are homeless, for example by developing incentives to encourage private landlords to house people who are homeless and further developing incentives for tenants to downsize their home where they are severely under-occupying their current home
- Enhance temporary accommodation provision tailored to meet need, for example by expanding the dispersed temporary accommodation portfolio
- Ensure the Housing Nominations Agreement and Housing Allocations Policy are updated and fit for purpose

Objective Four: *Supporting people who are, or have been homeless*

- Ensure wherever possible people are supported to remain in their home, for example by reviewing tenancy support schemes and the impact of personal housing plans
- Make best use of national and local funding for tackling homelessness for example by expanding the local Change Into Action scheme
- Deliver Walsall's safe accommodation offer
- Deliver resettlement support services for refugee communities

Objective Five: *Ending rough sleeping*

- Maintain the impact legacy of Housing First and continue to deliver a like service going forward
- Embrace and utilise the opportunities outlined in the Government's *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good Strategy*

Homelessness Governance

- 4.5 The Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy Steering Group ("the Group") will oversee the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan. The Group is responsible for annually monitoring and suggesting changes to the Action Plan, to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose. The Group will be chaired by a senior representative either from a partner organisation or the Council. Membership will consist of senior council officers responsible for adult social care, Children's services, Public Health, Housing, representatives from the voluntary sector, and from the four largest housing associations operating within Walsall (WHG, GreensquareAccord, Watmos, and Longhurst). Additional members/organisations will be added at the Group's discretion.
- 4.6 In addition to the Group meetings, the Homelessness Forum will also provide an overview of progress made to the delivery of the Action Plan. The Forum meets every year to comment on the levels of homelessness, to promote activities being carried out to prevent homelessness, to secure accommodation and provide support, and to explain how resources are being used to tackle homelessness. The Forum will also be a vehicle for inviting interested parties to participate in Strategy delivery. Membership of the Forum will include all agencies represented at the Group, plus any other public authority, voluntary organisations and any other interested persons (including those with lived experience).

Council Plan priorities

4.7 The broad range of health, well-being and broader socio-economic inequalities brought about by people effected by homelessness are well documented. If the strategy is delivered successfully then in particular positive determinants will be achieved with regard to the following Council Priorities:

- *Economic - enable greater local opportunities for all people, communities and businesses.* Homelessness remains a key barrier to accessing employment, and so the proposed actions for prevention and relief of homelessness can help increase employment prospects
- *People - encourage our residents to lead more active, fulfilling and independent lives to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing.* Preventing homelessness and providing advice and support in maintaining a tenancy can promote independence and can improve mental and physical health and wellbeing
- *Children - have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.* Preventing homelessness for families with children and enabling those who are homeless to secure appropriate accommodation will provide a secure environment from which to grow up and build a stable life
- *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.* Ensuring that households have secure and affordable housing that meets their needs will empower and enable them to invest in their community and build a sense of community.

Risk management

4.8 If the strategy is not approved, the Council will not comply with the Homelessness Act 2002. Whilst unlikely, by not approving the Strategy the Council could be open to judicial review in respect of decisions made under 1996 Housing Act (as amended).

Financial implications

4.9 There are no specific financial implications directly associated with the Strategy. The priorities contained within the Strategy will be funded through existing budgets, grant income and future grant bids. It will also be supplemented by partners' resources committed to their own activities that contribute to the achievement of the Strategy objectives. The adoption of the Strategy is likely to maximise the amount of housing related external funding the Council may achieve. Where necessary any projects requiring additional funding will be reported to Cabinet in separate reports in compliance with the Procurement and Contract Regulations.

Legal implications

- 4.10 The Homelessness Act (2002) requires local authorities to produce a Homelessness Strategy and action plan, which then must be reviewed, revised and republished every five years. In full legislative compliance, the revised strategy has been informed by a comprehensive Homelessness Review. The review itself has incorporated the requirements as set out by the current Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities.

Procurement /Social Value

- 4.11 Any actions in the Strategy that may have procurement implications would be the subject of separate reports to Cabinet where necessary. Any future related procurement would look to maximise social value benefits.

Property implications

- 4.12 Any actions in the Strategy that may have property implications would be the subject of separate reports to Cabinet where necessary.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.13 The broad range of health, well-being and wider socio-economic inequalities brought about by people effected by homelessness are well documented. The prevention of homelessness and support to affected households provided by the strategy helps to ensure the Council meets its objective of a Marmot Council and provides a robust platform to galvanise resources to provide the security of a stable home and healthier environment from which to build a stable, inclusive and active life.

Staffing implications

- 4.14 Within the Action Plan there are no direct staffing implications.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.15 The implications for reducing inequalities have been taken into account and assessed as set out in a detailed Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) at **Appendix C**. This shows that there will be no adverse effects imposed by the Strategy on any of the Protected Characteristics. The EQIA records a positive impact on the Protected Characteristics of Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Race and Sex and a neutral impact for the Protected Characteristics of Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Religion or belief and Sexual Orientation.

Climate Change

- 4.16 There are no specific climate change implications contained within this report.

Consultation

4.17 It is fully recognised that the delivery of the strategy requires multi-agency cross working and in response to this the strategy has been formulated in conjunction with an extensive programme of consultation involving both service providers and service users. For the former the consultation has captured the views and input from housing providers, internal homeless services, Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Public Health together with regional providers. Officers have also engaged with an ongoing programme of consultation with a number of internal and external working groups including:

- Self-Neglect Group
- Walsall Insight Group
- Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership
- Walsall Housing Working Group
- Homelessness Steering Group
- Adult Safeguarding Board
- Resilient Communities Group
- A meeting of voluntary sector partners organised by One Walsall

In most cases these working groups contain a cross section of staff and third sector stakeholders including those from different ethnic, age, gender, and disability related groups.

4.18 The consultation has also involved extensive service user consultation through a series of focus groups, one to one interviews and the workshop held at the 2022 Walsall Homelessness Conference. The focus groups targeted young people (including care leavers), women impacted by domestic abuse, a more generic group of people who had experienced homelessness and one group centred on newcomers. One to one interviews were also undertaken with people who had previously experienced rough sleeping and had benefitted from the Housing First programme. A previous housing survey targeted at young people has also fed into the strategy review.

5. Decide

5.1 A 'do nothing' option is not viable as the Homelessness Act 2002 requires that all local authorities review and publish a revised Homelessness Strategy every five years. The last strategy was approved by Cabinet on 21 March 2018.

6. Respond

6.1 It is proposed that Cabinet approve the revised strategy (**Appendix A**) and that the strategy take effect from 01 April 2023. The Strategy will be implemented as outlined in sections 4.5 and 4.6.

7. Review

7.1 The outputs will be regularly monitored as part of the quarterly statutory returns as well as the governance structures as outlined in sections 4.5 and 4.6.

Appendices:

A: Revised Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

B: Homelessness Needs Review

C: Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers

None

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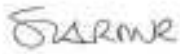
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03.02.2023



Councillor Ali

Portfolio holder - Customer

09.03.2023

APPENDIX A

Walsall Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 – 2028

1. Introduction

The Homelessness Act 2002 (HA2002) requires local authorities to take strategic responsibility for tackling and preventing homelessness in their area. The approach taken to formulating this Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy complies with obligations found in the HA2002 and part of this has included the completion of a comprehensive Homelessness Review to evaluate the current levels of homelessness, service provision and support in Walsall. The Review has enabled the formulation of a refreshed strategy that is currently fit for the next five years and should be read in conjunction with this document.

This Strategy provides a single plan for Walsall based agencies to concentrate their activities for tackling and preventing homelessness. In formulating this Strategy, the Council is very grateful for the input and assistance it has received from service users and agencies alike that have taken part in the review. In particular, this includes young people who have experienced homelessness, people who had experienced rough sleeping, people who had experienced domestic abuse, and newcomers who all took part in the focus groups and interviews. In addition, colleagues from Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Health, and those who work in the third sector such as local housing associations have all provided valuable support and input to make this a strategy that is robust and responsive in tackling homelessness in the borough.

The Strategy must be reviewed and refreshed every five years and is intended to be in place for a maximum of five years from 2023-2028. However, a new Strategy and Action Plan will be reviewed and published sooner if there are substantial changes to homelessness legislation or revisions to statutory guidance. In addition, the Action Plan may be reviewed and amended to reflect the need for new interventions or to reflect revised practice at any time with the authorisation of both the Cabinet Member and Director of Service.

As well as the review, when formulating this Strategy the objectives of the Council's Housing Allocation Scheme and Tenancy Strategy have been cross-referenced. The Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities was also considered. Both the Strategy and the Homelessness Review are available to download from the council's website and copies can also be viewed at the council offices during usual opening hours and are available free of charge.

2. Our Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy

2.1 Overview

The causes of homelessness are often connected to a wider set of more complex circumstances and socio-economic factors. Homelessness can affect physical and mental health wellbeing, educational achievement, the ability to gain and sustain employment, together with increased pressure on personal and family relationships. These effects, especially on children, can be life long and can cause repeated homelessness of a generational nature.

This Strategy sets out how we aim to prevent homelessness and to ensure that support and accommodation will be available for people who are either at risk of losing their home or have lost their home. We fully recognise that no single organisation can prevent homelessness alone and both the Homelessness Steering Group and Forum acknowledge that we must be proactive in working together to enable the greatest impact in both the prevention of homelessness and in securing homes for those who become homeless. As such the Strategy promotes working across organisations and policy boundaries to ensure successful delivery. We have adopted five objectives that will drive our strategy: namely,

- 1. Preventing homelessness**
- 2. Meeting the needs of young people**
- 3. Securing accommodation for people who are homeless**
- 4. Supporting people who are, or have been, homeless**
- 5. Ending rough sleeping**

For the avoidance of doubt, the Council regards anyone age 16 to 25 as a Young Person. Our five priorities are underpinned by our Action Plan which sets out a network of actions that will be completed during the time frame of this strategy.

2.2 National context

There is a national legislative framework setting out the rights of people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness and the responsibilities of local authorities, other public bodies and housing associations. Broadly speaking, a person is threatened with homelessness if they are likely to become homeless within 56 days. An applicant who has been served with a valid notice under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 to end their assured shorthold tenancy is also threatened with homelessness, if the notice has expired or will expire within 56 days and is served in respect of the only accommodation that is available for them to occupy. An applicant is to be considered homeless if they do not have accommodation that they have a legal right to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to them (and their household) and which it would be reasonable for them to continue to live in (Section 11 & 12 *Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities*).

The enactment of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 in April 2018 brought about significant change by improving the rights of people who are at risk of homelessness

with additional responsibilities for local housing authorities. During the term of the previous strategy these responsibilities have become firmly embedded within the Walsall homelessness service. More recently, the 2021 Domestic Abuse Act and accompanying statutory code came into force on 01 October 2021. The Act places duties on each relevant local authority in England to appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to perform certain specified functions including assessing and making arrangements for accommodation-based domestic abuse support for all victims and their children. The act also extends priority need for homeless assistance to persons who are homeless because of being a victim of domestic abuse (Section A4.4 of the statutory code).

Nationally, the levels and patterns of homelessness in England present a mixed picture over the past decade. Overall, the levels of presentations to local authorities have increased – homeless assessments have more than doubled comparing 2012/13 to 2020/21 (116,000 and 282,000 respectively) although the latter figure is post Homelessness Reduction Act. Based on annual rough sleeper counts/estimates the numbers of people experiencing street homelessness has declined from a high in 2017 (4,750) reducing to 1,500 in 2021. In September last year the Government published its *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* strategy¹ and offers a series of funding and support interventions that will underpin this strategy in tackling rough sleeping. The last decade has also however seen a steady rise in households entering temporary accommodation rising from 30k in 2011 to 95k in 2021². In addition, persons of minority ethnic origin are disproportionately more likely to become homeless, as are young people aged 16 to 25 years of age.

2.3 Local homelessness context

As referred to in section 2.1 to enable the formulation of this refreshed Strategy a Homeless Review has been completed that covers the levels of homelessness in the borough. Between April 2019 and March 2022, the Council assessed and accepted a statutory duty to assist 2,738 households. In the latter two years 827 and 824 were supported by way of an accepted duty which for each year accounted for around 45% of those who approached the local authority where homelessness or threat of were a causal factor behind their approach. The vast majority found not to be owed a duty received advice.

The main causes of homelessness in Walsall as recorded by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Homelessness Statistics are broadly similar as a percentage share to both the regional and national picture, with '*Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate*' and the *ending of a private rented tenancy* combining to take half the share at 29% and 20% respectively. Assessments relating to domestic abuse have reduced slightly between 2019/20 and 2021/22 but are still above regional and national comparisons. The Council has a strong track record in preventing homelessness with around 75% owed the Prevention Duty securing accommodation. However, there is a heavy reliance on securing alternative

¹ Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities, September 2022

² Crisis Homelessness Monitor (England) 2022.

accommodation for these households and **a key priority for this strategy will be that by 2025 to enable 50% of successful prevention outcomes through keeping people in their original home.**

Applicants aged 18 to 34 years represent nearly 60% of households owed a duty. In line with national trends the most common age group (of lead applicants) in Walsall owed a duty are persons aged 25 to 34, however Walsall has an over representation of persons aged 18 to 24 sitting at 26% compared to a regional and national average of 20% and 19%. 40% of households owed a duty contain dependent children. Particularly in the context of the new objective of *Meeting the Needs of Young People* **one of the key ambitions of this strategy is to reduce the disproportionate number of young people presenting as homeless in the borough.**

Last year, White British households made up 65% of presentations, Asian/Asian British 14%, Black African/Caribbean/Black British 9% and Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups 6%. This compares to like 2021 Census figures of 71%, 19%, 5% and 3% respectively implying a significant overrepresentation in Black African/Caribbean/Black British households and Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups. **A key ambition of this strategy is to reduce the disproportionate number of households from ethnic minority backgrounds presenting as homeless in the borough.**

Comparing 2016 and 2017 when rough sleeper numbers peaked at 26 and 20 respectively, the Council has made significant and demonstrable impacts in tackling rough sleeping in the borough, although the latest 2022 annual rough sleeper count of 8 offers a degree of caution against counts of 4 for both 2020 and 2021. **It remains an ambition of this strategy to ensure no one needs to sleep rough in Walsall by 2024.**

The number of households identified with support needs has increased over the last three years rising to 53% in the last financial year. Around two-thirds of the support needs identified last year were centred on the needs of mental health, support for young people and persons at risk or experiencing domestic abuse. Instances of repeat homelessness were recorded on 19 occasions last year (2021/22) although this only accounts for persons who were previously owed a duty.

External factors continue to contribute to homelessness, including affordability and the ability to sustain a tenancy. This includes taking into account both the direct costs (e.g. rent) but also the wider costs incurred of running the home and thereby preventing the threat of homelessness brought about for example by being unable to afford to heat and run a home. To this end the strategy will always support interventions and planning policies aimed at increasing the number of energy efficient homes in the borough.

In Walsall, the core statutory homelessness service is delivered by the Council's Housing and Welfare Team. Following a successful bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative funding the team is also supported by a dedicated rough sleeper team that includes an outreach service. In addition, the borough also benefits from the newly formed Walsall Connected hubs, which serve as new entry points for people to be able to

present as homeless. The Council also has 90 units of temporary accommodation located at four sites, and this is supplemented by further services commissioned through our partners and includes:

- 76 units of dispersed temporary accommodation for young people provided by Walsall Housing Group
- A Domestic Abuse refuge (8 units) and a portfolio of 19 dispersed units provided by GreenSquareAccord (GSA). Housing support is also provided by GSA to the remaining rough sleepers that were housed under the Housing First Programme
- Black Country YMCA provide 15 supported lodgings, and a day stop and night stop service for young people

Temporary Accommodation

Local housing authorities in England have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. Households can be placed in temporary accommodation (TA) pending the completion of inquiries into an application, or after an application is accepted until suitable secure accommodation becomes available. **A key priority of this Strategy is to have a modern fit for purpose temporary accommodation offer which provides the most positive outcomes for people requiring this service.** A full options appraisal (including a dispersed model) will be completed by the close of 2023 to establish the best model going forward. This will be informed by the lessons learnt from our pilot of procuring a small number of dispersed TA properties, and the work completed with Housing Associations to meet TA needs during the covid pandemic. It will also consider the impact of the current cost of living crisis on the type and quantum of TA required. Since 2020 the Council's Housing Strategy has included a target that at any given time a maximum of 0.9 households per 1,000 will be accommodated in Temporary Accommodation and to date this has been achieved.

Asylum Seeker dispersal and Refugee Resettlement programmes

The West Midlands Region like all regions of the UK forms part of the Government's asylum seeker dispersal scheme. Prior to their claim being determined the majority of households supported under this programme do not have access to public funds and therefore in law do not qualify for assistance from the Council other than in certain circumstances where the household includes a dependent child or a vulnerable adult and in these circumstances a referral may be made to Social Care. Currently the number of people entering the UK asylum seeker dispersal scheme is increasing and looking ahead it seems likely that the borough will receive an increasing number of presentations from former Asylum Seekers who have been given leave to remain and entitled to access public funds. These households will be assisted initially by the Housing and Welfare Team and there is a clear likelihood that increasing pressures

will be placed on services via this situation. Many of these households will have specific support needs and the role and engagement of the local voluntary sector will be key.

The Government have also put in place several Resettlement schemes which currently include the Afghan Relocation and Assistance Programme and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme, together with the UK Resettlement Scheme and Homes for Ukraine. As of 31 January 2023, 88 Ukrainian individuals had been housed under the *Homes for Ukraine* scheme and at the time of finalising this assessment 72 households were still housed through this scheme with only 6 (as at 18 November 2022) subsequently presenting as homeless to the Council following a breakdown of relationship with the host household. However, as the outcome of the war in the Ukraine remains uncertain the Council may be called to assist increasing numbers of households housed under this scheme, with the potential of further homeless applications where the relationship between host and guest has ended. The Council has commissioned the Refugee and Migrant Centre to provide support to households across these resettlement schemes, including sustaining host guest relationships, and offering assistance to those households choosing to seek alternative housing options.

3. Delivering this Homelessness Strategy

3.1 General principles

The delivery of this strategy requires multi-agency cross working including between housing services, adult social care services, children services and public health, all located within the local authority. These sections of the Council provide statutory functions and commit financial assistance which will support to deliver the strategy. Added to this, whilst the strategic authority for the West Midlands Metropolitan Authority has no devolved responsibility for homelessness policy (as this remains a matter for national and local government), the Elected Mayor of the West Midlands has established a taskforce to co-ordinate efforts across the region to tackle homelessness to which Walsall Council will continue to take an active role.

Housing associations are under a duty to assist local authorities with their homelessness functions, and it is essential that the strong partnership built up locally between the Council and housing associations is maintained. Housing associations can also significantly contribute to reducing homelessness by the way they manage their own stock, including services to help sustain tenancies, and reducing their own evictions. Walsall Housing Group for example in their Corporate Plan state that by March 2024 “Our ambition is not to evict anyone into homelessness”. In addition, throughout the duration of this strategy, the local authority will seek to build stronger relationships between departments and agencies, and to foster a multi-agency commitment to deliver the strategy. The Council will be especially keen to ensure involvement from the voluntary sector, along with co-operation with a wide range of public authorities and the private sector. The Council will also confer with people who have lived experience of homelessness, to get their views about what works and what does not, any barriers to service provision and any suggestions for improvements.

The objectives of this strategy will be delivered via the Strategy Action Plan detailed in Section 4 that in large parts has been put together from the findings of the Homelessness Review. The Action Plan shows clearly:

- the specifics of each action to be taken (What)
- the activities needed (How)
- the resources that will be needed to complete each action (Who),
- the deadline for when each action is expected to be completed (When)

3.2 Corporate commitment

Progress towards tackling homelessness and achieving the objectives of this strategy will be reported to the Council's Customer Engagement Directorate Management Team and will be discussed at meetings of the Corporate Management Team. Approval for specific actions will be reported to Cabinet if required. The Portfolio Holder for Customer will act to champion the issue of homelessness across all council business. The chairperson of the Homelessness Steering Group and the Homelessness Forum will provide a report when requested on the levels of homelessness, activities on preventing homelessness, securing accommodation, providing support and lastly the resources available for tackling homelessness.

Authority to make amendments to this Strategy, if and when required, are given to the Director of Customer Engagement in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Customer

3.3 Homelessness Steering Group

The Homelessness Steering Group will oversee the delivery of the Homelessness Strategy Action Plan. The Group meets every three months to review the levels of homelessness, to consider the activities for preventing homelessness, securing accommodation, providing support, and to coordinate the resources for tackling homelessness. The Group is responsible for annually updating the Plan, to ensure it remains relevant and fit for purpose. The Group will be chaired by a senior representative either from the Council or from a partner organisation. Membership will consist of senior officers responsible for Adult Social Care, Children's Services, Public Health, Housing plus representatives from the four largest housing associations being Walsall Housing Group, GreenSquareAccord, Watmos and Longhurst Group (Beechdale).

3.4 Homelessness Forum

In addition to the Homelessness Steering Group, the Homelessness Forum will also provide an overview of progress made to the delivery of the Action Plan. The Forum meets every year to comment on the levels of homelessness, to promote activities being carried out to prevent homelessness, secure accommodation and provide support, identify ways to work together, and to explain how resources are being used to tackle homelessness. The Forum will also be a vehicle for inviting interested parties to participate in strategy delivery. Membership of the Forum will include all agencies represented at the Steering Group, plus any other public authority, voluntary organisation and any other interested persons (including those with lived experience).

4.0 Homelessness Strategy Action Plan

1. PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS			
What	How	Who	When
Continue to improve joint working relationships with other public bodies and Council functions	Continue to review and promote the Duty to Refer arrangements, particularly in relation to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People leaving prison and youth detention centres • People about to be discharged from hospital • People referred via Teams in Health • People referred via Teams in Adult social Care • People referred via Teams in Employment and Skills 	Local authority Children's Services Adult Social Care Probation service DA Steering Grp	April 2024
	Explore and improve joint working arrangements with health partners, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Public Health • Walsall NHS Health Care Trust • Walsall Together • Primary Care Networks 	Local Authority Health agencies	September 2023
	Support the Domestic Abuse Board in the implementation of the new duties contained in the Domestic Abuse Act 2021	Local Authority Housing Associations	Ongoing
Build better relationships with private rented sector landlords to prevent homelessness prior to the point of crisis	Explore opportunities with landlords to identify at an early stage those at risk of losing their home and understand what can be done to prevent the end of assured shorthold tenancies.	Local Authority Private Rented Sector Landlords	December 2023
	Carry out an options appraisal on the benefits of introducing a social lettings agency	Local Authority Housing Associations PRS Landlords	March 2026
Continue to enhance housing related information	Integrate homeless services within the continued development of	Local Authority	June 2023

including access to the information	the Walsall Connected hubs	Voluntary Sector partners	
	Review homelessness processes and procedures and their interconnection with information technology	Local Authority	March 2024
	Ensure we monitor and take actions in compliance with the Armed Forces Covenant	Local Authority	On-going
Ensure the housing service has a clear understanding of the extent of repeat homelessness	Produce Strategy mid-term Homelessness Needs Review	Local Authority	September 2026
	Analyse the characteristics of all people seeking homeless advice and assistance to identify any levels or patterns of repeat presentations	Local Authority	March 2024

2. MEETING THE NEEDS OF YOUNG PEOPLE			
What	How	Who	When
Deliver upstream housing information targeted at young people.	Undertake research to identify the specific causes of homelessness attributed to young person's experiencing homelessness aged 16 and 17 and 18 to 25.	Local Authority	March 2024
	Explore opportunities to introduce housing options education in local schools and colleges	Local Authority Education Local Colleges	March 2025
Continue to develop prevention services targeted at young people	Analyse the usage, effect and impact of the Councils mediation facility specific to young people aged 18 to 25	Local Authority	March 2024
	Continue to implement the DLUHC and DfE Joint Guidance on preventing homelessness for 16/17-year-olds	Local Authority Education Local Colleges	Ongoing
Enhance affordable housing options and access for young people	Coordinate review of age restricted stock across the housing association sector	Local Authority Housing Associations	
	Develop young person's live & work unit following the St Basil's model <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Options Appraisal • Development (if feasible) 	Local Authority Housing Associations Developer Partner	March 2024 March 2028
	Plan successful transitions for young people leaving custody	Local Authority Probation Service	Ongoing
	Re-commission housing and support options for homeless young persons or young persons at risk of homelessness	Local authority	October 2024 and October 2026
Ensure care leavers and fostered children have access to accommodation that meets their needs	Review Care leavers protocol	Local Authority Children's Services	

	Review Housing Protocol for 16- and 17-year-olds	Local Authority Children's Services	
	Review priority for fostering in the Housing Allocations Policy	Local Authority Children's Services	December 2023

3. SECURING ACCOMMODATION FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE HOMELESS

What	How	Who	When
Increase the housing offer for people who are homeless	Develop PRS landlord incentives package	Local Authority	March 2023
	Implement incentives to encourage private landlords to house people who are homeless		Ongoing
	Review PRS landlord Incentives package		March 2025 and March 2027
	Review Policy to Discharge of Homelessness Duty in the PRS	Local Authority	December 2023 and December 2025
	Support where possible the provision of new affordable housing accommodation for larger households or stimulate the supply of such existing properties	Local Authority Housing Associations	ongoing
	Complete and Review pilot exploring incentives to encourage under-occupation households to downsize their home with a view to mainstreaming incentives	Local Authority Housing Associations	December 2023g
	Mainstream under occupation initiative (dependent on results of pilot scheme)		April 2024 onwards
	Implement the Supported Housing Improvement Programme initiative to improve the exempt accommodation offer in Walsall	Local Authority	January 2023 to March 2025
	Deliver Accommodation for Ex-Offenders programme	Local Authority Probation Service PRS Landlords	April 2023 to March 2025
	Review and update Discretionary Housing Payment Policy	Local Authority	March 2024 March 2027

Enhance temporary accommodation provision tailored to meet need	Commission and manage Temporary Accommodation Options Appraisal	Local Authority	June 2023
	Continue to develop policy of sourcing dispersed temporary accommodation	Local Authority Housing Associations	Ongoing
	Develop & introduce a temporary accommodation and procurement strategy	Local Authority	March 2024
	Continue to bring long term empty homes back into use through advice, mediation, and Compulsory Purchase Order where necessary	Local Authority	Ongoing
Ensure Housing Nominations Agreement and Housing Allocations Policy are updated and fit for purpose	In collaboration with local housing associations carry out a review of the Nominations Agreement for social housing in Walsall	Local Authority Housing Associations	December 2023 December 2026
	In collaboration with local housing associations carry out a review of the Housing Allocations Policy for social housing in Walsall	Local Authority Housing Associations	December 2023 December 2026

4. SUPPORTING PEOPLE WHO ARE, OR HAVE BEEN HOMELESS

What	How	Who	When
Ensure wherever possible people are supported to remain in their home	Review and maximise tenancy support schemes to prevent homelessness	Local Authority Housing Associations	Ongoing
	Review the current use and impact of Personal Housing Plans	Local Authority Housing Associations	March 2024
	Carry out research into the causes and experiences of homelessness for people of a black or other minority ethnic origin, to inform future service provision	Local Authority	March 2025
	Review Crisis Support Policy	Local Authority	March 2024 March 2027
Make best use of national and local funding for tackling homelessness	Maximise funding opportunities including working closely with WMCA partners	Local Authority	Ongoing
	Complete a Homelessness and Health Needs Assessment with Public Health Services	Local Authority Health agencies	June 2024
Continue to improve housing Independent Domestic Violence Advisor offer for victims of Domestic Abuse	Review current Independent Domestic Violence Advisor offer with customer feedback	Local Authority	June 2023
Deliver Walsall's Domestic Abuse safe accommodation offer	Review and recommission, or extend, Domestic Abuse safe accommodation service	Local Authority	December 2024
	Evaluate and review current Sanctuary Policy and associated target hardening works for victims of Domestic Abuse	Local Authority	April 2024 April 2027
Deliver resettlement support services for refugee communities	Review and evaluate service provision to support homelessness prevention	Local Authority	April 2024

5. ENDING ROUGH SLEEPING

What	How	Who	When
Maintain the impact legacy of Housing First	Continue HF legacy support service to 2025	Local Authority Housing Associations	March 2025
	Options appraisal on future service provision for Housing First legacy customers	Local Authority Housing Associations	December 2024
Deliver rough sleeper services	Maintain street outreach service to prevent any rough sleeping increase	Local Authority	Ongoing
	Continue to develop service level agreements with local Housing Associations to provide secure properties for rough sleepers	Local Authority Housing Associations	Ongoing
	Continue to build relationships with local hoteliers to provide self-contained night shelter accommodation	Local Authority Local hotels	Ongoing
	Improve and enhance access for rough sleepers to addiction treatment services	Local Authority Public Health Provider partners	Ongoing
	Promote Walsall's <i>Change into Action</i> , expand to local businesses and produce spend plan	Local Authority	Ongoing
Embrace and utilise the opportunities outlined in the Government's <i>Ending Rough Sleeping for Good Strategy</i>	Implement the outputs outlined in the strategy centred on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prevention • Intervention • Recovery • Transparent & Joined up System 	Local Authority	Ongoing
	Maximise access to funding outlined in Ending Rough Sleeper strategy	Local Authority	Ongoing

APPENDIX B:

2022 Homelessness Needs Review

01.12.22

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1. INTRODUCTION

Under section 2(1) of the Homelessness Act 2002 housing authorities are given the power to carry out a homelessness review for their district. The main purpose of this review is to evaluate the current levels of homelessness, related service provision and support in Walsall to enable the development of a refreshed Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy that is fit for the next five years. In law the Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy must set out the authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless.

Section 2 of this review sets the wider context and provides a socio-economic overview of the borough covering population, economy, and the borough's evolving housing market. Using statistical data largely sourced from government returns Section 3 provides an overview of homeless presentations to the Council whilst Section 4 reviews the activities for preventing homelessness. Section 5 reviews activities for securing accommodation. Section 6 focusses on the customer and stakeholder experience of homelessness services whilst Section 7 provides an analysis of the key findings.

1.1 Statutory overview

Broadly speaking, a person is threatened with homelessness if they are likely to become homeless within 56 days. An applicant who has been served with valid a notice under section 21 of the Housing Act 1988 to end their assured shorthold tenancy is also threatened with homelessness, if the notice has expired or will expire within 56 days and is served in respect of the only accommodation that is available for them to occupy. An applicant is to be considered homeless if they do not have accommodation that they have a legal right to occupy, which is accessible and physically available to them (and their household) and which it would be reasonable for them to continue to live in (Section 11 and 12 Statutory Code of Guidance).

Housing authorities have a duty to carry out an assessment in all cases where an eligible applicant is homeless or threatened with homelessness. This will identify what has caused the homelessness or threat of homelessness, the housing needs of the applicant and any support they need in order to be able to secure and retain accommodation. Following this assessment, the housing authority must work with the person to develop a personalised housing plan (PHP) which will include actions (or 'reasonable steps') to be taken by the authority and the applicant to try and prevent or relieve homelessness.

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and accompanying statutory code came into force on 01 October 2021. The Act places duties on each relevant local authority in England to appoint a multi-agency Domestic Abuse Local Partnership Board to perform certain specified functions including assessing and making arrangements for

accommodation-based domestic abuse support in their area for all victims and their children to reside in relevant safe accommodation. The act also extends priority need for homeless assistance to persons who are homeless as a result of being a victim of domestic abuse (Section A4.4 of the statutory code).

In June the government published the 'Fairer Private Rented Sector' white paper and re-affirmed its commitment to legislate to end 'no-fault' evictions by repealing section 21 of the Housing Act 1988. The paper also seeks to move away from assured shorthold and fixed term tenancies to assured tenancies. If these reforms proceed it will clearly have consequential impacts to current homelessness legislation in particular parts of the 1996 Housing Act. Government will shortly be instigating a formal consultation with the aim of seeking clarity and understanding on the impacts these changes will have on the sector.

The UK Government has defined street homelessness as:

“People sleeping, about to bed down (sitting on/in or standing next to their bedding) or actually bedded down in the open air (such as on the streets, in tents, doorways, parks, bus shelters or encampments). People in buildings or other places not designed for habitation (such as stairwells, barns, sheds, car parks, cars, derelict boats, stations, or “bashes”)”

1.2 Walsall Housing Strategy

Walsall's Housing Strategy, approved in 2020 is set to be reviewed in 2025. The strategy is underpinned by the vision that 'Communities are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion.' The Strategy is monitored quarterly by the Council's Money Home Job service and specific to homelessness it has four specific key performance indicators:

- Minimum 50% of successful prevention outcomes are through keeping people in the home by 2025
- Maximum 0.9 households in Temporary Accommodation per 1000 households
- Ensure no one needs to sleep rough in Walsall by 2024.
- 80 people rehoused and supported in Housing First by April 2021

1.3 Walsall's Homelessness Strategy

The current Homelessness Strategy was approved and took effect from 2018 and in line with legislation is due to be reviewed this year. The strategy has overseen a number of achievements since its inception and most notably these include:

- 101 Housing First tenancies – 2021 annual November Street Count found 4 rough sleepers
- New Domestic Abuse safe accommodation commissioned – more mixed and dispersed provision jointly commissioned
- New Homelessness Young Persons Temporary Accommodation – 76 units provided
- Enhanced offer for those in supported lodgings that are better catered for complex cases
- 116 Afghan households housed from a pledge of 120
- 92 Ukraine households housed under Homes for Ukraine. To date 72 households are still housed through this scheme (with only 5 subsequently presenting to the authority following a breakdown of relationship with the host household)
- Revised Allocations Policy introduced to comply with 2018 Homelessness Act
- Restructure of Homelessness Service in response to legislation leading to a new debt service, dedicated housing and welfare officers and a specialist Young Persons Team
- Duty to Refer system in place with increasing numerical uptake
- Successful pilot for dispersed temporary accommodation. Two long-term empty homes brought back into use. Ten 10 Covid Temporary Accommodation units piloted with Housing Associations
- Dedicated rough sleeper team developed and implemented

2. WALSALL OVERVIEW

2.1 Population, health and economy

Walsall is a metropolitan borough which was formed in 1974 and is one of seven authorities that makes up the West Midlands conurbation and one of four local authorities comprising the Black Country Region. Walsall contains six urban district centres: Walsall Town Centre, Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall. The Borough covers 40 square miles and is bisected by the M6 motorway. Socio-economically, there is a noticeable geographic divide between the East and more deprived West. The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation now ranks Walsall as the 25th most deprived English local authority (out of 317), placing Walsall within the most deprived 10% of districts in the country (33rd in 2015, 30th in 2010 and 45th in 2007). Added to this, this measure rises to the 14th most deprived when exclusively focussing on deprivation affecting children.

Population: Walsall's population has increased by 6% between 2011 and 2021 from a former figure of 269,300 rising to 284,100 (Census 2021) encompassing 112,200 households. Nearby areas like Sandwell and Birmingham have seen their populations increase by around 11% and 7% and Walsall's growth is more in line with England's overall increase. As of 2021, Walsall is the eighth most densely populated of the West Midlands' 30 local authority areas, with around 20 people living on each football pitch-sized area of land¹.

Ethnicity: Walsall is a culturally diverse town where people of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi background form the largest minority ethnic groups at around 19%². Persons from a White British background form 67% of the population³. One in seven residents have a non-UK country of birth (Census 2021) and Walsall now has a small Eastern European population. 37% of Children and young people (0-17) are from minority ethnic groups and 24% of Primary pupils have English as an additional language (School Census, January 2017)⁴.

Health: In absolute terms, the majority of health indicators around life expectancy and causes of death are described as *significantly worse than England* according to Public Health England 2019⁵. Life expectancy in the most deprived areas for both men and women is lower than the England average - 10.4 years lower for men and 8.8 years lower for women. Around 26% (15,070) of children live in low-income

¹ Office for National Statistics 2021

² Census 2021

³ Census 2021, White British includes "White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British"

⁴ *Walsall Insight, Trends and Intelligence*

⁵ fingertipsreports.phe.org.uk/health-profiles/2019/Walsall

households. The rate for alcohol-related harm hospital admissions is 688 per 100,000 of population.

Economy: 61% of the population is of working age, broadly in line with the national figure. 76% are classed as economically active, slightly below both the regional and national averages. Of the households that have at least one person aged 16 to 64, 14% (12,000) are classed as workless and as revealed elsewhere in this document lack of labour market access is a consistent factor affecting homeless households in the borough⁶. 27% of the working age population have an NVQ Level 4 or above, this compares to a regional figure of 39% and a national figure of 44%.

In terms of income and employment scales, the average wage in Walsall (£548 p/w gross) is 6% below the regional average and 12% below the national. 8% of persons aged 18 to 24 claim out of work benefits – this compares to 6% regionally but is almost twice the national equivalent. According to Department for Work and Pensions figures (02/22), Walsall is ranked fourth out of all West Midland authorities in the percentage of working age people (6%) receiving unemployment related benefits⁷.

2.2 Walsall's Housing Stock

Currently, Walsall has around 117,000 units of which 24% are Registered Provider owned and 76% privately owned⁸. Of the 76% privately owned, it is estimated that around 13,400 are privately rented which accounts for around 15% of privately owned stock. Overall housing growth (5.4%) has just about kept up with household growth (6.3%) between 2011 and 2021 (Office National Statistics population projections) and household size has shifted from 2.49 to 2.51 (Black Country Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2021).

In 2019 the Council commissioned a Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and the following headline findings are noted:

- 12% of dwellings (around 11,000) have category 1 Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) hazards.
- The highest concentrations of all HHSRS hazards in the private sector are found in the Pleck, Palfrey and Darlaston South wards
- The highest concentrations of fuel poverty (Low Income/High Costs definition) are found in the Pleck, Palfrey and Darlaston South wards
- 3.8% (3,300) of private sector dwellings and 4.3% (779) of private rented dwellings in Walsall are estimated to have an EPC rating below Band E
- There is an estimated total of 2,030 houses in multiple occupation in Walsall, of which approximately 304 would come under the mandatory licensing scheme

⁶ Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics 2022

⁷ ibid

⁸ [Live tables on dwelling stock \(including vacants\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/live-tables-on-dwelling-stock-including-vacants)

2.3 Walsall's Housing Market

Walsall's housing market has changed significantly over the last decade and continues to evolve. The private rental market has expanded, housing 7% more households in 2019 than in 2014, with a like increase of 3% in the social rented sector⁹. Walsall's most notable housing market characteristics are:

- Numerically, Walsall's affordable housing stock has remained static over the last decade. Owned exclusively by Registered Providers volumes of stock were 26,915 in 2011, 27,947 in 2016 and 27,813 in 2021 (accounting for around a quarter of the overall stock base)¹⁰. This static figure is likely accounted for by the low qualification for Right to Buy following stock transfer in 2003.
- At the end of March 2022 there were 13,728 applicants (excluding transfer applicants) on the Housing Register, up from 10,129 in March 2020 but lower than 14,327 in recorded in March 2021¹¹. The number of homeless households on the register has declined over the three years from 424 in 2019/20 to 358 in 2021/22 (as at 01 April for each year).
- Similar to the national picture, social housing lettings across Walsall have been decreasing year on year, and whilst data for 2021/22 is yet to be released, there were 34% less properties relet in 2020/21 (1,660) than there were 3 years ago in 2017/18 (2,530)¹².
- The overall average house price in Walsall in 2019 was 38% lower than the national figure, and 19% below the figure for the West Midlands (Black Country SHMA 2021). However, between April 2018 and 2022 average house prices continued to rise by 26%, with the average house price in April 2022 being recorded as £201,381. This percentage increase is not always mirrored within the typical entry market sector stock, with terraced houses matching the average rise (£163,303) but flats increased by a reduced 15% to average at £121,076¹³.
- Median rents in the private rented sector for all types of property have risen in recent times and suggest that households reliant on Local Housing Allowance (LHA) are increasingly being excluded from the Private Rental Market. In 2020 Local Housing Allowance Rates (LHA) were restored to the cheapest 30th percentile, however these rates have been refrozen since then meaning LHA has not kept pace with rental inflation. *Figure 2.1* below outlines lower quartile weekly rents in 2021/22 by bedroom number against corresponding Black Country LHA

⁹ Black Country Housing Market Assessment 2021

¹⁰ Live tables on dwelling stock (including vacants) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

¹¹ Local Authority Housing Statistics (LAHS)

¹² Table 1d: Social Housing Lettings 2017/8 to 2020/21, CORE Data

¹³ <http://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi/explore>

rates¹⁴ together with a snapshot of the number of properties listed by a local letting agent within the appropriate LHA rate w/c 05/09/22:

Figure 2.1: Lower Quartile rents 2021/22, Local Housing Allowance Rates and snapshot of property listings (by No.) w/c 05.09.22 within appropriate LHA rate:

Bedroom Number	Lower Quartile Rent	LHA	Property listing w/c 05.09.22*
One	104.00	91.82	3
Two	121.00	117.37	0
Three	155.00	136.93	0
Four	183.00	172.60	0

**Property listing sourced from local agent week commencing 05.09.22 based on a 3-mile radius from Walsall centre*

- The affordability gap outlined above is reinforced within the 2021 Black Country Housing Market Assessment that records that 28% of households in Walsall requiring an *entry level* one-bedroom property are, on account of affordability excluded from either the local owner occupied or private rental sectors. This same figure rises to 29% for two bed properties, 35% for three bed properties and 44% for four or more entry level properties.
- Properties remaining empty for more than 6 months peaked in 2009 at 1456 units with 1012 being recorded in October 2021.

¹⁴ [Private rental market summary statistics in England - Office for National Statistics \(ons.gov.uk\)](https://ons.gov.uk)

3. HOMELESSNESS IN WALSALL

3.1 Overview

Though not ideal the statistical analysis of this review will focus on both 2019/20 data (the last year not impacted by COVID and reflective of previous years) and 2021/22. Officially lifted on 24 February, the Government response to the Covid pandemic triggered a series of restrictions for the housing sector, perhaps in the context of this study most notably the restrictions imposed on qualification for the service of Section 21 eviction notices. In Walsall in 2019/20, 163 households were accepted as being owed a homeless duty as a result of Private Rented Sector eviction, this same figure fell by 67% to 54 in 2020/21.

In 2019 the Levelling up, Housing and Communities and Department for Work and Pensions published research on the causes of homelessness and rough sleeping. Of note it concluded that structural factors were more likely to cause homelessness for families; with domestic abuse, relationship breakdown, financial issues, poverty, and lack of social housing being primary causes. Individual personal factors were often more associated with causes of single person homelessness; with relationship breakdown, mental health, and substance misuse being primary causes. Individual health-related factors were more prevalent causes of street homelessness and are detailed elsewhere under the 'Rough Sleeper' part of this paper.

Records show that in 2019/20 and 2021/22 the number of households who progressed to a homeless assessment were 1,106 and 824 respectively meaning that in direct comparison assessments fell by 25%¹⁵. For both years, almost all (1,097 and 814) were subsequently assessed as owed a duty. At the same time a further 1,172 and 837 households were assessed as 'Advice Only/Early Closure' implying that roughly half of households who approach the authority in the context of homelessness go on to receive a duty.

Last year 425 of those assessed were owed the Prevention Duty, with 389 the Relief Duty. Nationally, Walsall applicants owed a duty are slightly more likely to be assessed as owed the Prevention Duty, comparing 52% locally to 48% nationally¹⁶.

In Walsall, the core statutory homelessness service is delivered by the Council's Housing and Welfare Team. Following a successful bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative funding the team is also supported by a dedicated rough sleeper team that includes an outreach service. In addition, the borough also benefits from the newly formed Walsall Connected hubs, which serve as new entry points for people to be able to present as homeless. The Council also has 90 units of temporary accommodation,

¹⁵ Total acceptances in 2020/21 were 827

¹⁶ England excluding London

and this is supplemented by further services commissioned through our partners and includes:

- 76 units of dispersed temporary accommodation for young people provided by Walsall Housing Group
- A Domestic Abuse refuge (8 units) and a portfolio of 19 dispersed units provided by GreenSquareAccord (GSA). Housing support is also provided by GSA to the remaining rough sleepers that were housed under the Housing First Programme
- Black Country YMCA provide 15 supported lodgings, and a day stop and night stop service for young people

There are also a significant number of other voluntary sector and housing association partners in the borough providing services that help prevent and relieve homelessness.

3.2 Causes of homelessness

Labour market activity appears to be heavily linked to homelessness in Walsall with over three quarters (620/824) of households owed a duty (2021/22) being economically inactive. Within this cohort 55% (339) were recorded as unemployed and a further 16% (101) recorded as 'Not working due to long-term illness/disability'.

Figure 3.1 below outlines the **causes of loss of last secure home** that led to the presentation, together with regional and national comparisons.

- Broadly speaking the main causes of homelessness as recorded by statistical returns are similar as a percentage share to both the regional and national equivalents.
- Assessments relating to domestic abuse have reduced slightly between 2019/20 and 2021/22 but are still above regional and national comparisons
- The recording of '*Other reasons / not known*' has reduced considerably and is now in line with regional and national comparisons and ensures more accurate data recording

Figure 3.1: Reason for Loss of Last Settled Home 2021/22 and 2019/20:

	2021/22	% share	2019/20	% share	% share W. Mids	% Share England
Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate	240	29	281	26	27	26
End of private rented tenancy - assured shorthold	164	20	163	15	20	25
Other reasons / not known	115	14	285	26	15	12
Domestic abuse	114	14	130	12	7	8
Non-violent relationship breakdown with partner	54	7	99	9	5	6
Required to leave accommodation provided by H. Office as asylum support	32	4	38	3	5	5
Other violence or harassment	28	3	15	1	4	4
End of social rented tenancy	27	3	43	4	3	3
Eviction from supported housing	18	2	20	2	2	4
Left institution with no accommodation available	15	2	11	1	1	1
End of private rented tenancy - not assured shorthold	7	1	12	1	11	8
TOTAL	814	100	1097	100	100	100

Note: % share of West Midlands and England (excluding London) sourced from last quarter of 2021/22.

3.3 Household profiles

Figure 3.2 looks at the **age profile** of the head of household accepted as owed a duty in both 2021/22 and 2019/20. It also outlines a regional and national comparison. The table clearly demonstrates that Walsall has an over representation of duty accepted towards persons aged 18 to 24 compared to both regional and national averages by 6 and 7 percentage points respectively¹⁷. This issue is compounded further by 2021 Census data, in that whilst not strictly aligned with the homeless age bands, regionally (Metropolitan Area) Walsall is under-represented by persons aged 20 to 24 at 5.7%

¹⁷ Data for 2021/22 is not yet available but in 2020/21 nearly half of households in this age group were owed on account of 'Friends/relatives no longer willing to accommodate'.

of its population compared to 7% of the former. This age group also declined in number by 7% between 2011 and 2021 in Walsall.

Figure 3.2: Persons owed a duty by age 2021/22 and 2019/20:

	2021/22	% share	2019/20	% share	% share W. Mids	% Share England
16-17	19	2	18	2	1	1
18-24	213	26	292	27	20	19
25-34	239	29	334	30	31	31
35-44	190	23	251	23	25	24
45-54	94	12	127	12	14	14
55-64	42	5	46	4	6	7
65-74	12	1	18	2	2	3
75+	4	0	10	1	1	1
Not known	1	0	1	0	0	0
Total	814		1097			

Note: % share of West Midlands and England (excluding London) sourced from last quarter of 2021/22.

Figures 3.3 and 3.4 overleaf focus on the **ethnicity of the main applicant** owed a duty during 2021/22 and 2019/20. Last year, White British households owed a duty made up 65% of presentations, Asian/Asian British 14%, Black African/Caribbean/Black British 9% and Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups 6%. This compares to like 2021 Census figures of 71%, 19%, 5% and 3% respectively implying a significant overrepresentation in Black African/Caribbean/Black British households and Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups. Comparing 2019/20 with 2021/22 there was a 4-point percentage increase in Asian/Asian British persons and a 2-point percentage decrease in Black African/Caribbean/Black British persons.

Figure 3.3: Ethnicity of main applicant owed a duty 2021/22 and 2019/20:

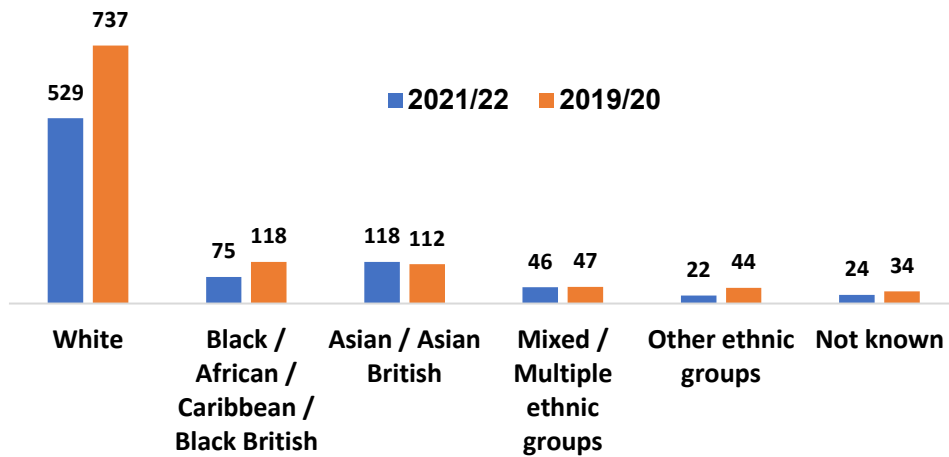


Figure 3.4: Ethnicity as a percentage share of main applicant owed a duty 2021/22 and 2019/20:

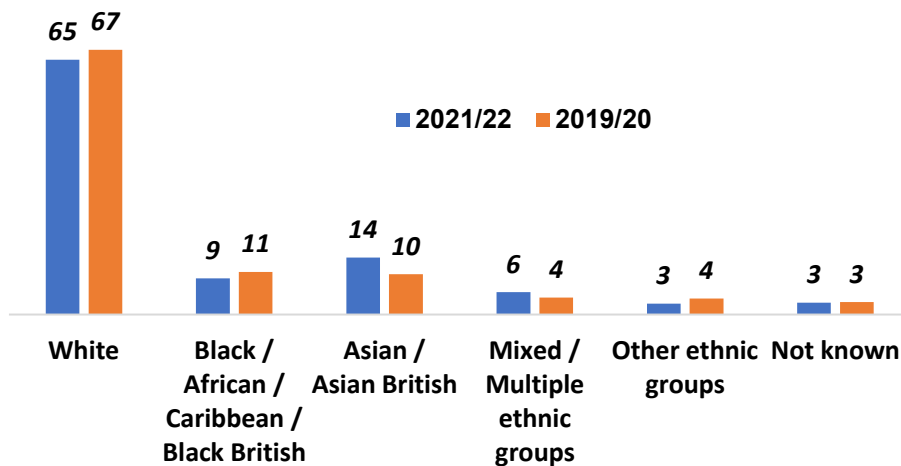


Figure 3.5 below focusses on the **household type to which a duty was owed** for 2021/22 and 2019/20 and using percentage shares offers a comparison with the region. Single person households make up around 55% of presentations in Walsall which is slightly above the regional share of 53% but such a margin is not significant. Women are more likely to experience homelessness than men, largely because of their very high prevalence of being the head of household as a single parent with dependent children (225 (female) and 16 households respectively 2021/22).

Figure 3.5: Household type where a duty owed 2021/22 and 2019/20:

	2021/22	% share	2019/20	% share	% share W. Mids
Single parent with dependent children - Male	16	2	26	2	3
Single parent with dependent children - Female	225	28	280	26	24
Single adult - Male	233	29	333	30	32
Single adult - Female	209	26	246	22	21
Single adult - Other / gender not known	1	0	0	0	0
Couple with dependent children	80	10	122	11	12
Couple / two adults without dependent children	25	3	67	6	5
Three or more adults with dependent children	14	2	14	1	2
Three or more adults without dependent children	10	1	7	1	1
Not known	1	0	2	0	0
Total	814		1097		

Figure 3.6 overleaf looks at the **support needs** of those households owed a duty covering both 2021/22 and 2019/20. In 2019/20, 40% (439) of households owed a duty were identified as having at least one support need with 601 individual support needs identified in total¹⁸. In 2021/22 it was 53% (433) and in total 567 support needs were identified. Around 68% of the support needs identified last year were centred on the needs of mental health (123), support for young people (152) and persons at risk or experiencing domestic abuse (98). 13% of needs were related to disability, this compares to 15% nationally¹⁹. The levels of repeat homelessness were low in number for both years (19), however only those who acquired a duty (roughly 50% of all presentations) are included in this calculation and exclude those who may have previously presented but were not assessed as owed a duty.

¹⁸ Households can have multiple support needs, so the total number of support needs is not equal to the number of households with support needs

¹⁹ 2022 Homelessness Monitor, CRISIS

Figure 3.6: support needs of those households owed a duty covering both 2021/22 and 2019/20:

<u>Support Need identified</u>	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2019/20</u>
History of mental health problems	123	100
At risk of / has experienced domestic abuse	98	71
Young person aged 18-25 years requiring support to manage independently	74	101
Physical ill health and disability	63	56
Care leaver aged 18-20 years	43	27
Drug dependency needs	22	31
Young person aged 16-17 years	20	35
History of repeat homelessness	19	19
Young parent requiring support to manage independently	15	38
Offending history	14	18
Care leaver aged 21+ years	12	12
History of rough sleeping	9	13
Learning disability	9	12
Access to education, employment or training	9	19
At risk of / has experienced abuse (non-domestic abuse)	9	9
At risk of / has experienced sexual abuse / exploitation	8	7
Alcohol dependency needs	7	14
Former asylum seeker	7	11
Old age	4	8
Served in HM Forces	2	0

4. PRE-CRISIS INTERVENTION - PREVENTION

4.1 Overview

Housing authorities have a duty to take reasonable steps to help prevent any eligible person who is threatened with homelessness from becoming homeless. This means either helping them to stay in their current accommodation or helping them to find a new place to live before they actually become homeless. The prevention duty continues for 56 days unless it is either brought to an end by an event such as accommodation being secured or if the household becomes homeless. In practical terms Prevention has been divided into three elements – Early Prevention, Crisis Prevention and Reoccurrence prevention²⁰.

Early prevention often starts with relevant signposting and/or housing advice/information to prevent homelessness or a threat of homelessness. The Council's website has a dedicated homeless page and as required by legislation²¹ the website gives specific homelessness information providing advice on prevention, securing accommodation, the rights of the individual and how to access help.

Crisis prevention can be divided into two broad practices. One is to help people threatened with homelessness to remain in their existing accommodation, and secondly where this is not possible or safe to do so, the other option is to help someone to obtain alternative accommodation – including the provision of temporary accommodation. Typical actions to help people remain in existing accommodation include resolving housing benefit problems, providing debt advice or offering mediation. Common actions to help people obtain alternative accommodation include securing an offer of social housing or securing private rented sector accommodation.

Nationally, Walsall applicants owed a duty are slightly more likely to be assessed as owed the Prevention Duty comparing 52% locally to 48% nationally²². Figure 4.1 looks at the **reason for loss of last settled home** for households owed a prevention duty comparing 2021/22 with 2019/20. The most notable change as a percentage share between the two years has been the reduction of the 'Other reasons/not known' classification²³. This recording has reduced from a share of 29% to 15%. This latter figure is still above the regional (12%) and national (8%) equivalents, but its adjustment has likely made the 2019/20 data more accurate. In addition, it has likely had the impact of bringing the percentage shares of the other causes more into line with both regional and national equivalents, with local share

²⁰ Hal Pawson, Gina Netto, Colin Jones, Fiona Wager, Cathie Fancy, Delia Lomax (2007), Evaluating Homelessness Prevention, London, Department for Communities and Local Government

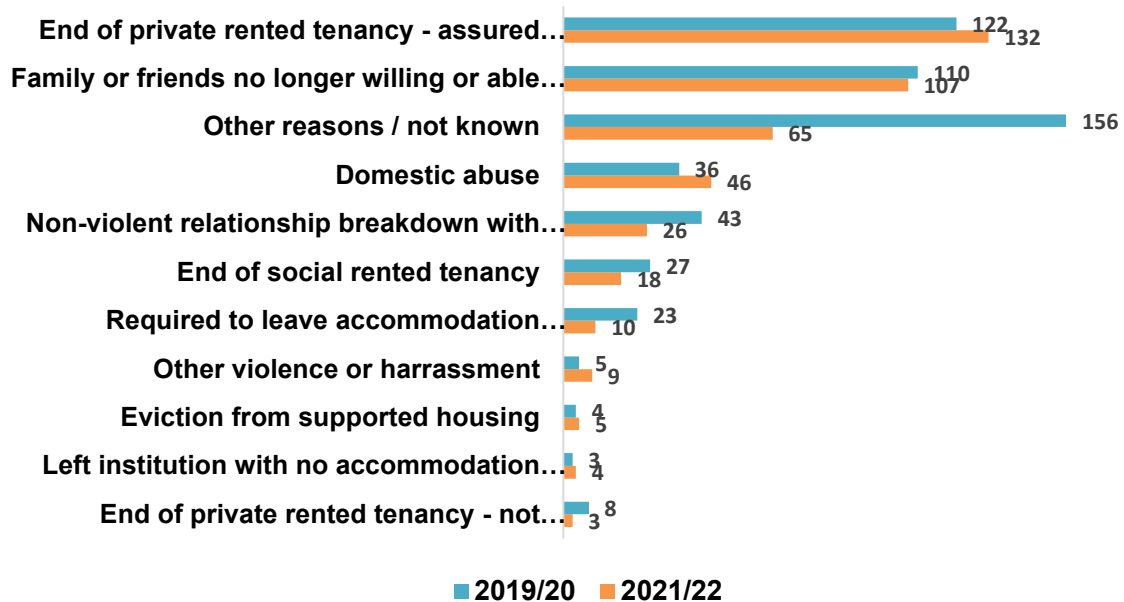
²¹ S.179(1) Housing Act 1996 as substituted by s. 2 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

²² England excluding London

²³ 6. Includes fire / flood / other emergency, left HM forces, mortgage repossession, property disrepair, other or not known

distributions never straying beyond four percentage points of the wider West Midlands region.

Figure 4.1: Reason for loss of last settled home for households owed Prevention Duty 2021/22 and 2019/20:



4.2 Prevention Duty outcomes

Last year a total of 406 households in Walsall had their Prevention Duty ended. Figure 4.2 overleaf provides an overview and comparison of the **reasons behind ending the Prevention Duty**. In 2021/22, 75% (304) of the 406 households where the duty ended secured accommodation, up by 11 points as a percentage share from 2019/20. Applicants in Walsall owed the Prevention Duty are more likely to have their duty ended by securing secure accommodation than their regional counterparts with the like figure sitting at 52%.

As stated elsewhere there are generally two options to securing accommodation in the discharge of a Prevention Duty and in Walsall there appears to be a heavy reliance on securing alternative accommodation as opposed to enabling the household to remain in their existing home, with 91% of the 304 households above moving to a new property and only 9% enabled to remain in their existing home. This latter figure compares to 27% regionally and 30% nationally (England, excluding London). This could imply that mediation is not at the forefront of service provision in this context.

Of note, there has also been a noticeable improvement with reduced occurrences of households having the duty ended through 'Contact Lost', down by ten percentage points. In addition, there was a three-percentage point reduction in households transitioning to becoming homeless during their Prevention Duty.

Figure 4.2: Reason behind ending the Prevention Duty 2021/22 and 2019/20:

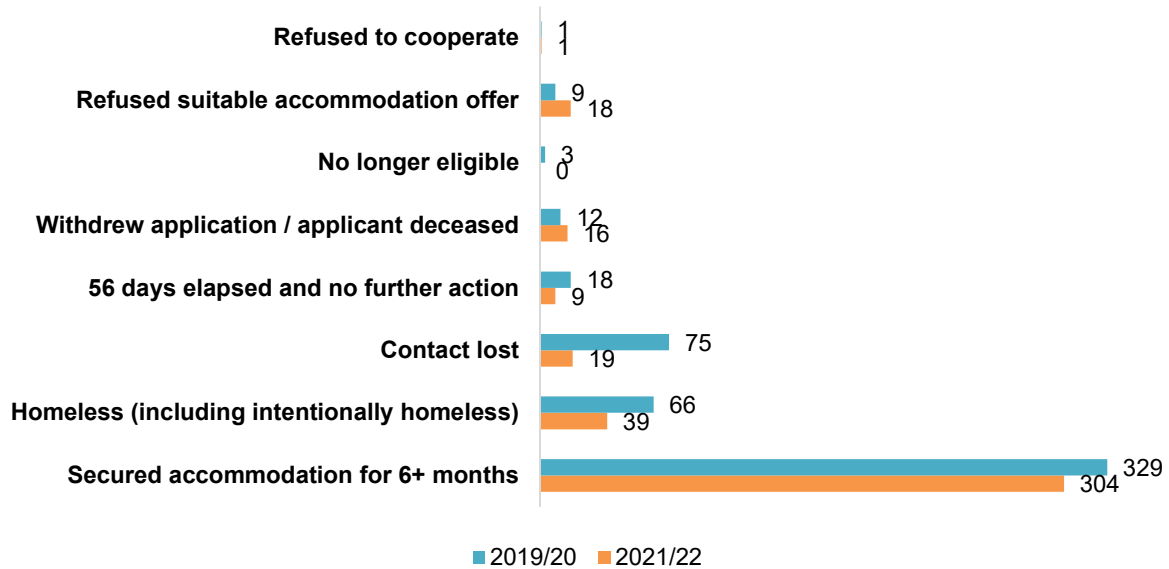


Figure 4.3 below outlines the tenure accessed to discharge a Prevention Duty for both those enabled to remain in their property and those securing alternative accommodation. Unfortunately, the data doesn't differentiate between those securing alternative accommodation and those enabled to remain in their existing home. However, given the low local share of households in the latter category, the table reveals a likely substantial increase in reliance on the social rented sector to secure alternative accommodation.

Figure 4.3: Source of accommodation used in discharging Prevention Duty 2021/22 and 2019/20:

	2021/22 No.	% Share	2019/20 No.	% Share
Social rented sector	239	79	185	56
Private rented sector	45	15	103	31
Staying with family	6	2	23	7
Staying with friends	3	1	2	1
Owner-occupier	1	0	1	0
Other	4	1	4	1
Not known	6	2	11	3

Figure 4.4 below identifies the **main activity that resulted in accommodation secured** for the 304 households securing accommodation last year with the local authority playing an increasing lead role in this activity. The table also records a reduction in the use of Discretionary Housing Payments (see also Section 4.5) securing accommodation together with a steep decline in persons being solely provided with advice and information. It also outlines a sharp decline in negotiation/mediation which may in part be linked to the low numbers enabled to remain in their own home.

Figure 4.4: Main activity that resulted in accommodation secured for households:

	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2019/20</u>
Accommodation secured by local authority or organisation delivering housing options service	202	127
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, with financial payment	18	32
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, without financial payment	44	8
Negotiation / mediation / advocacy work to prevent eviction / repossession	9	14
Negotiation / mediation work to secure return to family or friend	5	46
Supported housing provided	3	22
Discretionary Housing Payment to reduce shortfall	2	11
Other financial payments (e.g. to reduce arrears)	4	9
Other	10	9
No activity – advice and information provided	7	51
TOTALS	304	329

Figure 4.5 overleaf outlines those who were owed a Prevention Duty (425) together with those households who secured accommodation under the Prevention Duty (304) in 2021/22 **by household type**. The table reveals that of those owed a Prevention Duty last year, households with children provide the largest cohort at 49% with single person households making up 45%. Whilst not exclusively from the exact same cohort, the table also reveals broadly speaking that all of the household types achieve the same proportionate successes in acquiring secure accommodation when the duty is relieved.

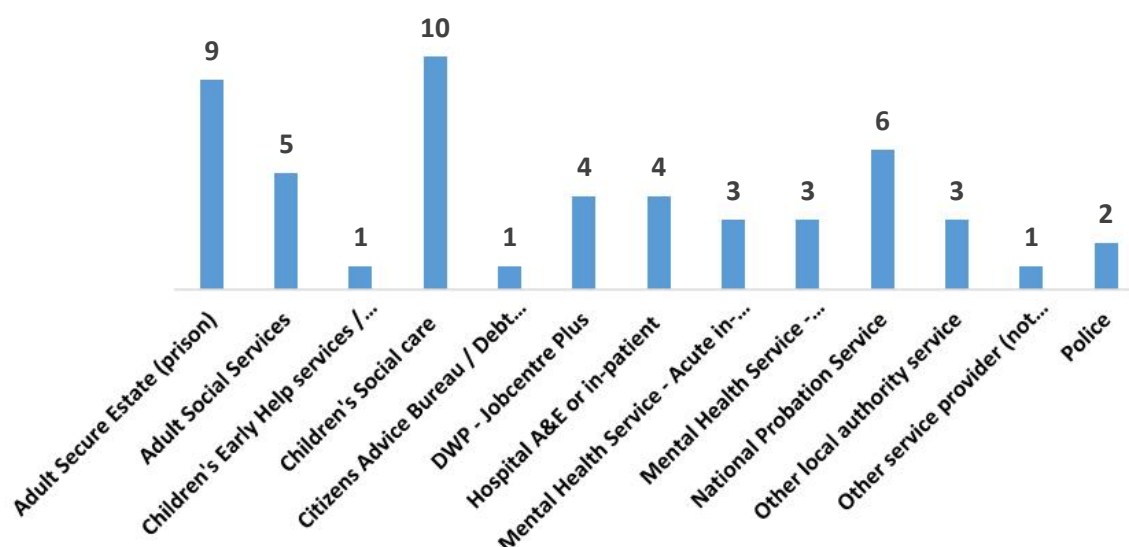
Figure 4.5: Household type of those owed Prevention Duty and those subsequently accessing secure accommodation at duty end 2021/22:

	HH Type OWED Duty 2021/22	% share	HH Type of those securing accommodation 2021/22	% share
Single parent with dependent children - Male	12	3	11	4
Single parent with dependent children - Female	129	30	98	32
Single parent with dependent children - Other / gender not known	0	0	0	0
Single adult - Male	79	19	63	21
Single adult - Female	110	26	67	22
Single adult - Other / gender not known	1	0	0	0
Couple / two adults with dependent children	60	14	41	13
Couple / two adults without dependent children	17	4	16	5
Three or more adults with dependent children	8	2	5	2
Three or more adults without dependent children	8	2	3	1
Not known	1	0	0	0

4.3 The Duty to Refer

The **Duty to Refer** came into force from October 2018. Specified public authorities are obliged to ask any person they believe might be homeless or threatened with homelessness if they wish to be referred to a local authority of their own choosing. Last year the authority received a total of 69 referrals, 52 (75%) of which were made via the Duty to Refer. The Council has a dedicated webpage for the Duty to Refer together with a referral form. Figure 4.6 overleaf outlines the Duty to Refer referral sources for 2021/22. Of note, from consultation some service providers identified a lack of feedback from Duty to Refer referrals.

Figure 4.6 Duty to Refer referral sources for 2021/22.



4.4 Temporary Accommodation

Local housing authorities in England have a duty to secure accommodation for unintentionally homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. Households can either be placed in temporary accommodation pending the completion of inquiries into an application, or after an application is accepted until suitable secure accommodation becomes available.

Specific to temporary accommodation the Homelessness Code of Guidance stresses the need for local authorities to be alert to the risks that may be associated with placing families with children, and young people, in mixed hostel settings and it clearly states that where hostel accommodation is used to accommodate vulnerable young people or families with children it would be inappropriate to accommodate these groups alongside vulnerable adults (Para. 16.35).

Furthermore, in *Birmingham City Council v Ali*, *Moran v Manchester City Council* [2009], the court observed that 'what is regarded as suitable for discharging the interim duty may be rather different from what is regarded as suitable for discharging the more open-ended duty in section 193(2).' This confirms the Code of Guidance's approach that, accommodation that would not be suitable in the long term may be suitable in the short term.

Case law (*Nzolameso v Westminster City Council* (2015)) also sets out the need for a local authority to have a formal temporary accommodation and procurement strategy in place. The Supreme Court Judgment included a set of requirements that local authorities need to consider when allocating temporary accommodation to homeless households which included that each local authority should have, and keep up to date, a policy for procuring and allocating temporary accommodation to homeless households.

The Council currently has 90 temporary accommodation units in four blocks and two dispersed units as detailed in *Figure 4.7* below (see also Section 3.1). Since 2020 the Council's Housing Strategy has included a target that at any given time a maximum of 0.9 households per 1,000 will be accommodated in temporary accommodation and to date this has been achieved.

Figure 4.7: Outline of Council temporary accommodation in Walsall:

Temporary accommodation site	Description with client groups	No. of units
Dolphin House, Goscote	17 x 2 bed flats 1 crash pad for single person 1x 1 bed adapted	19 units
206-213 Green Ln	9 x 1 bed flats 1 x 3 bed flat 1 x 1 bed adapted 2 flats converted to houses in multiple occupation with 5 bedrooms in each	13 units
222 - 233 Green Ln	12 X 3 bed Maisonettes	12 units
Sandwell House, Sandwell Street	28 x 2 Bed flats 2 x 1 bed wheelchair accessible 2 x 2 bed wheelchair accessible	32 units
Rivers House	14 flats all 1 bed for ages 16 -24	14 units
136 Broadway,	3-bedroom house	1 unit
43 Wenlock Gardens,	3-bedroom house	1 unit

Over the last three financial years a total of 778 households were placed into temporary accommodation by the Council. In the same period a total of 1,012 temporary accommodation placements occurred. This difference is almost exclusively accounted for by households entering bed and breakfast temporary accommodation and then moving into other more appropriate temporary accommodation facilities shortly afterwards. In 2019/20 there were 382 placements, 306 in 2020/21 and 324 in 2021/22. Figure 4.8 overleaf outlines the total number of temporary accommodation placements by accommodation. In 2019/20 bed and breakfast accommodation accounted for 47% of placements compared to 37% by the close of last year.

Figure 4.8: Temporary accommodation placements by type 2019/20 to 2021/22:

	2019/20 to 2021/22	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Local Authority Stock	476	161	152	163
Bed and Breakfast	401	179	101	121
Supp Housing	111	38	35	38
RP stock	17	-	16	1
Refuges	5	4	-	1
Hostels	1	-	1	-
Private Rented Sector	1	-	1	-
TOTAL	1,012	382	306	324

Figure 4.9 looks at the median length of stay by each temporary accommodation type covering each of the financial years.

Figure 4.9: Temporary accommodation placements by type and length of stay 2019/20 to 2021/22:

	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22	
	No.	Ave. Length of stay (days)	No.	Ave. Length of stay (days)	No.	Ave. Length of stay (days)
Local Authority Stock	161	124	152	101	141	102
Bed and Breakfast	179	10	101	5	125	7
Supported Housing	38	18	35	20	36	31
Housing Association stock	-	-	16	159	1	118
Refuges	4	174*	1	137	1	11
Hostels	-	-	1	75	-	-
Private Rented Sector	-	-	1	98	-	-
TOTAL	382	-	307	-	304	-

*mean average

Figure 4.9 above excludes tenancies created within the time frame that have not yet ended and are almost exclusively centred on tenancies within the local authority's own stock. The median average length of stay in bed and breakfast placements has

reduced by 3 days between 2019/20 and last year. Whilst this same figure is higher than the intervening year it is assumed this may be accounted for by the unprecedented conditions arising from the Covid pandemic.

From the 1,012 placements 823 (81%) were located within the Walsall boundary. Of the 189 that were not, 150 were bed and breakfast placements. A geographical breakdown of placements is outlined in Figure 4.10 below:

Figure 4.10: Out of borough placements by location/type 2019/20 to 2021/22:

Location	Number of Placements	Bed and Breakfast	Supported Housing
Wolverhampton	67	67	-
Birmingham	58	55	3
Dudley	26	8	18
Sandwell	15	3	12
South Staffs	11	11	-
Cannock Chase	7	6	1
TOTAL	184	150	34

Note: a further 5 placements were made outside of the above areas.

The authority has four concentrated facilities that provide TA in the borough namely; Sandwell House, Rivers House, Dolphin House, and Green Lane. Excluding households who are currently present at these facilities, Figure Three below outlines each of these facilities by the number of households using the block and length of stay.

Figure 4.11: Temporary accommodation facility by number of placements and length of stay 2019/20 to 2021/22:

	No. Units	No. completed placements	Length of Stay (days)		
			Shortest	Longest	Average (median)
Dolphin House	19	91	1	584	103
Green Lane	25	129	6	636	105
Rivers House	14	60	1	644	107
Sandwell House	32	172	1	628	113

Over the last three financial years a total of 778 households were involved in being placed into temporary accommodation by the Council. This involved 274 in 2019/20 and 252 in the latter two years. *Figure 4.12* overleaf outlines the main reason recorded for loss of settled home prior to entering temporary accommodation:

Figure 4.12: Main reason recorded for loss of settled home prior to entering temporary accommodation:

<u>Main reason recorded for loss of last settled home</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Bed and Breakfast placement % share</u>	
Family no longer willing to accommodate	187	72	39
Domestic abuse	93	53	57
Termination of private rented tenancy	80	51	64
Required to leave accommodation by Home Office	51	21	41
Non-violent relationship breakdown	47	31	66
Non racially motivated violence/harassment	41	24	59
Friends no longer willing to accommodate	38	11	29
Eviction from supported living	22	5	23
Termination of social rented tenancy	18	10	56
Property disrepair/emergency	11	8	73
Racially motivated violence	7	3	43
Left institution with no accommodation available	6	2	33
Property no longer suitable due to disability/health	3	1	33
Left prison with no accommodation available	2	1	50
Mortgage repossession	1	1	100
Other/not recorded	173	98	57

Figure 4.13 overleaf focusses on the households accessing temporary accommodation by age of head of household and number of children in the household. From the 778 households accepted into temporary accommodation, 45% (346) contained children, the majority containing one (142) or two children (89). Numerically, age profiles of 18-25, 26-35 and 36-45 are evenly spread with a fall off commencing at 46 plus. Unfortunately, economic activity is not recorded within the data, however 544 (70%) of the 779 households entering temporary accommodation were in receipt of benefits²⁴ with 433 in receipt of Universal Credit. Other recorded characteristics of the households accessing temporary accommodation include:

- 145 households had a dedicated social worker
- 97 households were recorded as having been homeless before of which 63 (65% of the cohort) had slept rough
- 95 households were recorded as having an outstanding debt
- 19 households had support from a dedicated probation officer

²⁴ Disability Benefits/Employment and Support Benefit/Income Support/JSA/State Pension/Tax Credits/Universal Credit

Figure 4.13: Households entering temporary accommodation 2019/20 to 2021/22 by age (head of household) and number of children

Age of head of household	No.		Number of children	No.
17	5		One	142
18-25	226		Two	89
26-35	216		Three	60
36-45	201		Four	33
46-55	94		Five	22
56 plus	36			

Specific to use of bed and breakfast accommodation, the following is noted:

- The number of households involved in bed and breakfast placements has reduced from 179 in 2019/20 to 121 in 2021/22. In addition, households placed in bed and breakfast are staying in the said accommodation for a shorter median length of time by 3 days. In 2021/22 54% (67) of placements stayed 7 days or less compared to 41% (74) in 2019/20.
- Over the three years 194 of the 400 households contained children. The numerical share involving children has declined from a 59% (104) share in 2019/20 to a 41% (49) like share in 2021/22.

Covering 2021/22, Figure 4.14 below looks at the previous location by three-digit postcode of those households who entered into temporary accommodation. From the 252 households, 156 (62%) originated from four central postcode areas of WS1, WS2, WS3 and WS10:

Figure 4.14: Three-digit address postcodes of households entering into temporary accommodation 2021/22:

WS2	62	Out of Bor.	17
WS3	36	WS9	13
WS1	35	Unknown	12
WS10	23	WV12	9
NFA	17	Other (all <9)	28

4.5 Discretionary Housing Payments

Involving 999 households, in 2021/22 the Council committed £998,000 to Discretionary Housing Payments. The year before it supported 1,266 households²⁵. Connectivity between the Housing Benefits Team and the Homelessness Team is strong, and a significant number of Discretionary Housing Payments are utilized to prevent homelessness. There is universal opinion that the Discretionary Housing

²⁵ [Discretionary Housing Payments statistics - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/discretionary-housing-payments-statistics)

Payment data recorded in Figure 4.4 is a significant underrepresentation of actual Discretionary Housing Payments utilized in the prevention of homelessness. The current Discretionary Housing Payment policy was published in 2016.

5. SECURING ACCOMMODATION

5.1 Overview

If an applicant is already homeless, or becomes homeless during the prevention stage, then support and interventions become focussed on helping the applicant to secure accommodation. Persons at this stage of homelessness qualify for the Relief Duty that lasts for 56 days unless ended in another way. If the housing authority has reason to believe a homeless applicant may be eligible for assistance and have a priority need, they must be provided with interim temporary accommodation at the Relief stage.

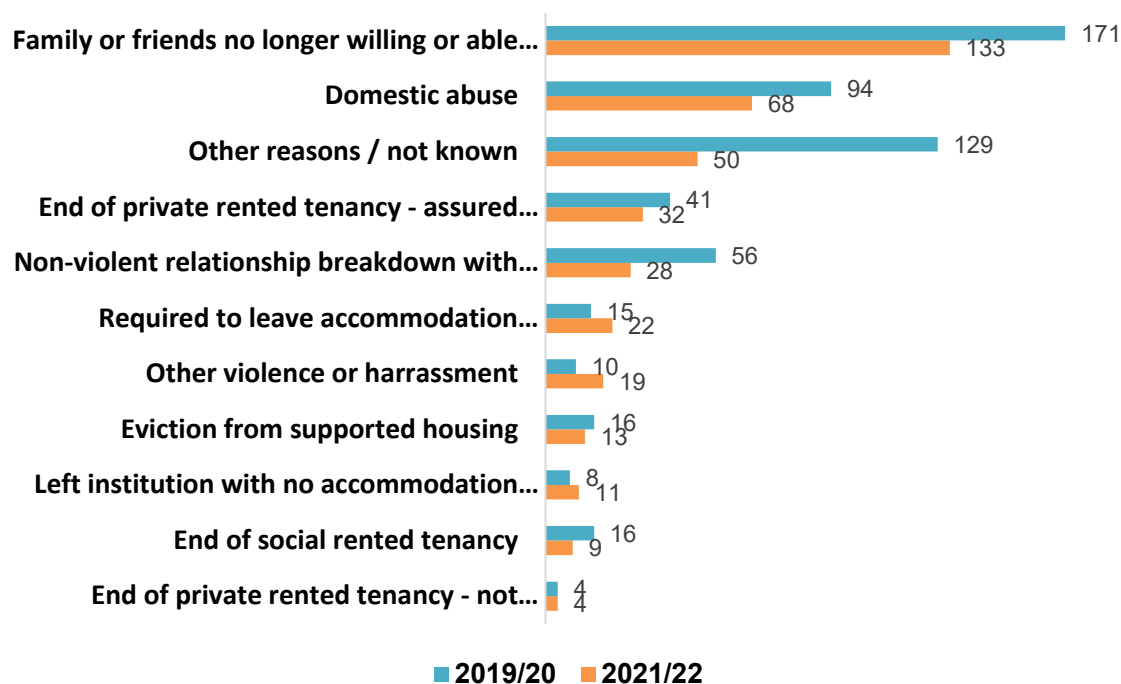
If a housing authority is unable to prevent an applicant from becoming homeless, or to help them to secure accommodation within the 'relief' stage, they are required to reach a decision as to whether the applicant has a priority need for accommodation

A housing authority will owe the 'main housing duty' to applicants where the Relief Duty ends and the authority is satisfied that the household is eligible, has a priority need for accommodation and are not homeless intentionally. Certain types of households qualify for Priority Need and these include families with children, pregnant women, victims of domestic abuse or those in an emergency situation such as a fire or flood. Other groups may be assessed as having priority need because they are vulnerable as a result of old age, mental ill health, physical disability, having been in prison or care or as a result of becoming homeless due to violence. Under the main housing duty, housing authorities must ensure that suitable accommodation is available for the applicant (and their household) until the duty is brought to an end, usually through the offer of a settled home.

Figure 5.1 overleaf looks at the **reason for loss of last settled home** for households assessed as owed a Relief Duty comparing 2021/22 with 2019/20. Comparing in percentage terms the 389 and 560 accepted duties owed in 2021/22 and 2019/20 respectively, none of the core reasons changed by more than three percentage points other than those recorded under 'Other reasons/not known' classification²⁶. This recording has reduced from a share of 23% to 13% and is now in line with the West Midlands regional equivalent figure of 14%.

²⁶ 6. Includes fire / flood / other emergency, left HM forces, mortgage repossession, property disrepair, other or not known

Figure 5.1: Reason for loss of last settled home for households owed Relief Duty 2021/22 and 2019/20:



5.2 Relief Duty outcomes

Last year a total of 430 households in Walsall had their Relief Duty ended. *Figure 5.2* overleaf provides an overview and comparison of the **reasons behind ending the Relief Duty**. In 2021/22, 60% (256) of the 430 households where the duty ended secured accommodation (up by 3 percentage points from 2019/20). Regionally, households in Walsall owed the Relief Duty are more likely to have their duty ended by securing secure accommodation by quite a margin with the equivalent figure sitting at 40%.

Similar to the national picture, social housing lettings across Walsall have been decreasing year on year. This in part is down to the proactive interventions from local social housing providers to reduce evictions and abandonments and clearly sustaining tenancies reduces homelessness. However, with a heavy reliance on the social housing sector to discharge homeless duty, the reduction in tenure turnover could have an impact on the Council's ability to maintain this strategy. Last year there was a notable shortfall in three and four bedroom property vacancies and to alleviate this the Council has recently entered into a down-sizing pilot with a local Registered Provider (Walsall Housing Group) to explore incentives to encourage and/or enable households who are under-occupying larger properties to downsize to more appropriate accommodation.

Figure 5.2: Reason behind ending the Relief Duty 2021/22 and 2019/20:

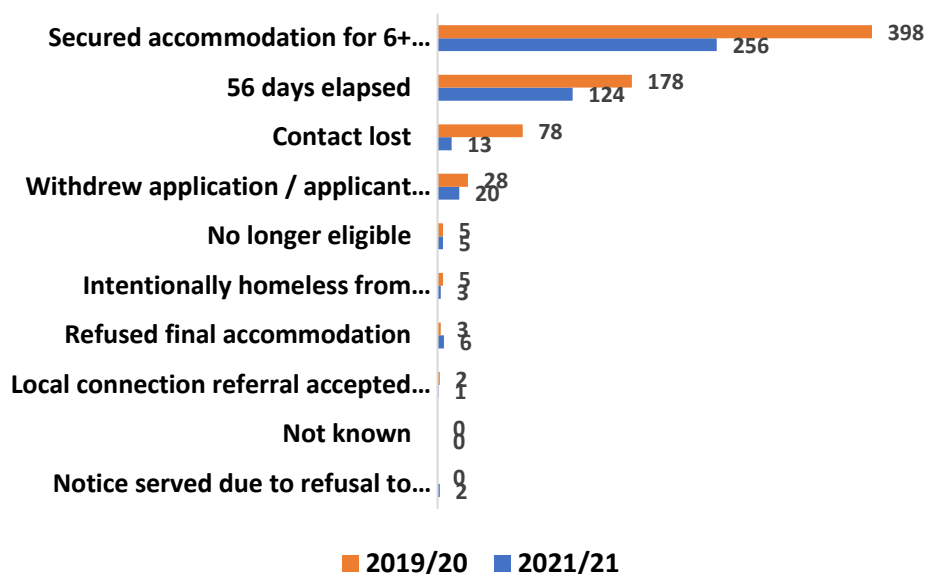


Figure 5.3 below focusses on the tenure of accommodation used in discharging Relief Duty. It points to a strong reliance on the social rented sector; however, it also shows a percentage increase in the use of the private rented sector.

Figure 5.3: Source of accommodation used in discharging Relief Duty 2021/22 and 2019/20:

	<u>2021/22</u> No.	% Share	<u>2019/20</u> No.	% Share
Social rented sector	134	52	234	59
Private rented sector	93	36	112	28
Staying with family	7	3	10	3
Staying with friends	3	1	6	2
Owner-occupier	0	0	0	0
Other	7	3	22	6
Not known	12	5	14	4

Figure 5.4 overleaf looks at the **main activity recorded that enabled the household to secure accommodation** resulting in the Relief Duty being relieved. The data indicates a shift by sixteen percentage points towards the local authority securing the accommodation with a reduction by six-percentage points in supported housing being provided. Over the two years under review accommodation found by the applicant remained static at around a 6% share.

Figure 5.4: Main activity that resulted in accommodation secured for households where Relief duty relieved:

	<u>2021/22</u>	<u>2019/20</u>
Accommodation secured by local authority or organisation delivering housing options service	169	198
Supported housing provided	34	77
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, with financial payment	21	29
Helped to secure accommodation found by applicant, without financial payment	16	29
Other activity through which accommodation secured	12	36
No activity	4	29
TOTALS	256	398

Figure 5.5 overleaf outlines those who were owed a Relief Duty (389) in 2020/21 together with those households who secured accommodation under the Relief Duty (256) in 2021/22 **by household type**. The table reveals that of those owed a Relief Duty last year, single person households provide the largest cohort at 65% with a further 33% containing dependent children.

Figure 5.5: Household type of those owed Relief Duty and those subsequently accessing secure accommodation at duty end 2021/22:

	HH Type OWED Duty 2021/22	% share	HH Type of those securing accommodation 2021/22	% share
Single parent with dependent children - Male	4	1	3	1
Single parent with dependent children - Female	96	25	31	12
Single parent with dependent children - Other / gender not known	0	0	0	0
Single adult - Male	154	40	125	49
Single adult - Female	99	25	76	30
Single adult - Other / gender not known	0	0	0	0
Couple / two adults with dependent children	20	5	11	4
Couple / two adults without dependent children	8	2	5	2
Three or more adults with dependent children	6	2	4	2
Three or more adults without dependent children	2	1	1	0
Not known	0	0	0	0
TOTAL	389		256	

Last year, following the end of their Relief Duty 108 households were assessed as being owed the 'Main Duty'. Compared to 2019/20 this represents a 35% reduction when 165 households were assessed as such. Of the 108 households where the main duty was accepted, 60% of priority need was based on dependent children. In 2021/22, 114 households had their Main Duty ended, with 94 of these being ended with the acceptance of a Part 6 social housing offer.

5.3 Rough Sleepers

In December 2020, the MHCLG published a detailed research paper on the causes, impacts and outcomes of persons experiencing rough sleeping²⁷. Taken from a sample of 563 participants it looked at vulnerabilities and wellbeing, childhood, employment and welfare, health, substance misuse services, criminal justice system and housing. Of note:

- 96% respondents had one vulnerability or support need
- 83% reported having at least one physical health need
- 82% reported a mental health vulnerability (82%).
- Two thirds of respondents had been a recent victim of crime
- 60% of respondents had a support need related to drug or alcohol.
- Half of respondents had a support need related to drug misuse
- a quarter had a support need related to alcohol misuse (23%).
- Half of respondents had spent time in prison (53%) and a third of respondents had been a victim of domestic abuse (35%) at some point in their lives.
- Almost three quarters (72%) of respondents had experienced one or more of the following: spent time in care as a child, been permanently excluded from school, regularly truanted from school

In September of this year the Government published its *Ending Rough Sleeping for Good* strategy²⁸. The strategy offers a series of funding and support interventions that will underpin Walsall's revised homelessness strategy in the context of tackling rough sleeping. These include:

- The Rough Sleeping Initiative - £500 million will help provide emergency beds, off-the-street accommodation, and wrap-around support (the Council has successfully secured £1.8 million of this programme covering 2022 to 2025).
- Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme - £433 million to provide up to 6,000 homes for rough sleepers including the provision of support from specialist staff
- Single Homelessness Accommodation Programme – a £200 million fund to deliver up to 2,400 homes by March 2025, including supported housing and Housing First accommodation, and accommodation for young people at risk of homelessness, including rough sleeping
- Streetlink – plans to revitalise this initiative to make it more user friendly

²⁷ Understanding the Multiple Vulnerabilities, Support Needs and Experiences of People who Sleep Rough in England

²⁸ Department for Levelling Up Homes and Communities, September 2022

The Council's annual rough sleeper count undertaken in November 2022 identified eight people. This represents a numerical rise to previous years as identified in *Figure 5.6* which records the annual snapshot count conducted in November of each year:

Figure 5.6: Walsall Rough Sleeper Counts by year/number 2016 to 2022:

YEAR:	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022
COUNT:	26	20	11	6	4	4	8

In November 2017 the Council set up the first West Midlands regional Housing First pilot – a scheme that places rough sleepers into long-term general needs accommodation with the necessary wrap around support to sustain the tenancy. In January 2019 the Walsall scheme became part of a wider regional pilot funded via the West Midlands Combined Authority. The latter scheme has now stopped accepting new rough sleepers.

As of September 2022, a total of 103 persons have either been housed or are currently housed since the West Midlands Combined Authority Housing First Scheme took effect - with 48 currently housed of which 32 are ex-offenders. A total of 26 people have 'graduated' from the scheme where there is mutual agreement that they no longer need support to maintain their tenancy. In part, the success of the programme has enabled the Council to meet its Housing Strategy Target of housing 80 persons under the scheme. Sadly, 13 people have died whilst part of the scheme. To date from those currently housed:

- 21 have been housed between 1 and 2 years
- 20 have been housed between 2 and 3 years
- 5 have been housed in excess of 3 years

Not surprisingly the health and support needs of the persons benefitting from the scheme are deep and complex. Of the 74 currently housed 84% have mental health needs and 89% have a substance misuse/alcohol dependency need. Nearly three quarters (54) of those currently housed are ex-offenders (at present a housing protocol for persons leaving prison is not in place).

Following the successful RSI bid and the cessation of Housing First pilot intake, the newly formed Rough Sleepers Initiative (RSI) Team are currently supporting a further 50 persons who are either rough sleeping or are at risk of rough sleeping. Still taking in referrals, the team currently operates to the Housing First ethos by providing an outreach service, and long-term general needs accommodation which will be further enhanced by a specific service level agreement currently being developed with local registered housing providers. This includes a 5-bed male House of Multiple Occupation, 2 dispersed flats through the Next Steps Accommodation Programme and a further 5 dispersed Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme units. These units are specifically for rough sleepers or those at risk of, and are often targeted at

those with a low to medium complexity (i.e. 'below' Housing First). Plans are also afoot to submit a bid to secure accommodation for ex-offenders via Accommodation For Ex-Offenders funding.

Walsall has also joined the West Midlands Combined Authority Change into Action model in 2020 (an approach to alternative giving to support rough sleepers) which brings together key partners in the borough. The model has been set up to receive donations from the public to be made available to people and organisations who can bid for funding to support people sleeping rough in Walsall.

6. THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

6.1 The service user experience

This section draws on a number of focus groups and surveys that have been undertaken to gather quantitative data on people's opinions and experiences of homeless services in Walsall. Those who took part in the collection of this quantitative data incorporated the views of young people, newcomers as well as those who had experienced domestic abuse, rough sleeping and other causal factors leading to homelessness.

Ten people took part in a focus group whose primary cause of homelessness had been related to **domestic abuse**. The majority in the group expressed that they felt they were in a safe place and felt supported by their homeless officer. Most acknowledged that the offer of alternative accommodation had come through quickly and efficiently, but some felt limited and frustrated by their options to access dispersed accommodation particularly in the context of being able to keep the family unit together.

Most felt they could be better informed of their move-on options at an earlier stage to enable a better understanding of their options and limitations in terms of both the process and likely length of waiting time etc. They felt drop-in sessions from the Homelessness Officer could help with this. Of note, the presence of a universal wifi system at the facility used for the focus group session would be welcomed so that residents can participate more readily in everyday life, for example residents would be more empowered to look for properties online.

Some in the group complained about the length of time they had been resident at their current residential facility. Some had been there for 10 months or more and wanted to move on but complained about the availability of properties. However, the vast majority did not want a flat and aspired for and would rather wait for a house whilst recognising that the availability of houses was very limited.

This year the Council conducted a survey with **young people** who had engaged with young person's services and ranged from people who had accessed the Nightstop, supported lodging schemes, and the Walsall Housing Group MHJ scheme. Thirty-two people responded and in terms of the overall satisfaction with the service received, none reported that they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Drilling down further from those who took part in the survey:

- Over a third expressed a degree of frustration over the time it had taken to access the various facilities
- 67% were positive about the help they had received from their respective service. Correspondingly three quarters were positive about the help they had received from staff

- 60% were positive about being given the options to make their own choices within their respective scheme
- 56% felt there was sufficient flexibility within the service

Suggestions for service improvement included making information on-line, having one keyworker and having a support worker emergency number. From a focus group involving five young persons, those who took part felt well supported particularly with regard to acquiring future independent living skills, e.g. cooking and budgeting. Some in the group expressed a preference that on acquiring an independent tenancy they would benefit from floating support in the initial few transitional months. One issue raised was the disincentive to acquire employment that could lead to the individual being required to pay a high rent to live in their current housing scheme and elsewhere in this paper it is noted that many experiencing homelessness are affected by unemployment. Of note, none of those present were aware of their Personal Housing Plan.

During September three persons who had experienced **rough sleeping** were interviewed on a one-to-one basis to identify their experiences from initial engagement with services through to their current settled status. In this instance, all three had been supported by the now discontinued Housing First (HF) programme but of note much of the HF output has been continued under the remit of the Council's Rough Sleeper Team.

All three persons that were interviewed recorded a very positive experience from the rough Sleeper Services. From the interviews the main issues raised were:

- One ex-rough sleeper in particular had identified a significant need for blue light services (up to twice a day and largely ambulances) when rough sleeping and suffering from alcoholic/drug dependency. Since being housed their need for these services had ceased.
- Early engagement and referral: from the interviews the experience of initial engagement was not always positive. One candidate had had a bad experience of a hostel placement that was outside of Walsall (and away from local connections) whilst another had been offered a property that they felt was not up to a decent habitable standard.
- All were very satisfied with their current property, feeling safe and secure from which to build a stable life. All felt they had been offered a degree of choice on the property they were currently living in. One noted that they felt they would have felt even more secure about their home had they had the terms of the tenancy explained to them in more detail.
- All were very complimentary about the current support they were receiving and felt this was pivotal to their current stability, albeit one had experienced an

unfortunate gap in support brought about by a planned staff absence. All were very complimentary about the long-term support they had received and continue to receive, and that support had enabled them to maintain their tenancy by alleviating isolation, providing help and support with mental health issues and ensuring household bills were paid on time.

In October a focus group was held made up of persons from the **new and emerging communities**. Exclusively from Ukranian and Afghanistan backgrounds, those who had previous contact with the council were generally pleased with the service and support they had received although only 2 had had contact with the housing teams. Whilst overall people were appreciative of their current temporary accommodation, all those present expressed concerns about their housing options and those particularly from the Afghan communities felt they still had little idea in terms of how they would be able to secure long-term secure accommodation.

Private rents were discussed together with perhaps assistance with deposits, however they felt that the private rents were more expensive, and the tenancies offered less stability. The support from the Refugee and Migrant Centre was very appreciated. Those present and who were in temporary accommodation were complimentary on both the support they had received from the Temporary Accommodation Team together with responses when any repairs have been required.

In October of this year a further focus group was held at Dolphin House involving 6 residents who were currently resident in the said temporary accommodation facility. From the 6 attendees the shortest stay had been 3 months and the maximum length of stay was 13 months. The following key points were made at the session:

- The group universally felt they had all been well supported by staff at Dolphin, both in the context of housing and wider personal issues. In addition, all were satisfied with facilities at Dolphin House. They all 'got on' and were very supportive of one another
- There was no internet available at the facility and residents are not permitted to have a router. It was felt the lack of internet prevents residents from performing many of life's tasks and activities (particularly related to inclusion) with working from home and the wider impacts on schooling being cited.
- On the whole the point of first contact with the council had been positive, supportive and effective, though at times it had proved difficult 'getting hold of people' later on in the process. None of the group were familiar with their Personal Housing Plans.
- Universally the group felt the choice of properties from which to move on to is too limited but fully acknowledged and understood the supply of vacant properties was very limited. The group felt they would benefit from greater support to enable them to bid for properties.

- In acknowledgement of the short supply of properties, the group were supportive of the need to explore wider housing options. When asked the majority of those present would favourably consider:
 - A Private Rented Sector tenancy if guaranteed for twelve months or more and still enabled to bid on properties without a reduced priority
 - The offer of a three or four-bedroom flat in the social rented sector
- The group felt, even if there was no change, they would benefit from being given more regular updates on:
 - Their likelihood of securing a property within the short to medium/long term even when nothing has changed
 - The state of the local housing market

6.2 The stakeholder experience

Locally Walsall enjoys a strong partnership built up between the Council and local social housing providers. By way of example, Chairs of the Homeless Steering Group have been from the Walsall Housing Group (WHG) and Green Square Accord. In addition, the largest provider (WHG) has a Corporate Plan which contains actions that directly contribute to homeless prevention in Walsall, for example the commitment to not evict anyone into homelessness which has been extremely successful in driving down the number of evictions from 96 in 2017/8 to just 3 so far in 2022/23.

At the Walsall Homelessness Forum held in July of last year a series of workshops were held to obtain the views from the wide spectrum of stakeholders present. The following key points were noted:

- Specific to the objectives, feedback included suggestions to:
 - 1) introduce separate objectives tailored toward Young People and Rough Sleepers
 - 2) enhance Objective 1 in terms of setting out how we will react to varying levels of homelessness as they change over time
 - 3) Question over retaining Objective 5
- There was strong support to introduce more 'up-stream' prevention (e.g. school education) and to introduce more 'lived experience' into service development and provision

- A general concern of the impact of the ‘cost of living crisis’
- A recognition of the need to increase the provision of affordable housing in particular:
 - larger ‘family stock’ and bungalows (the latter to free up existing larger family stock)
 - review age restricted stock with a view to making more stock available for younger people, particularly young single persons
- The need to develop a better understanding of roles of partnership organisations
- Those with No Recourse to Public Funds were seen as a major concern in the context of homelessness with a need to understand roles and responsibilities e.g. with Children’s Services and Public Health etc
- The need to develop a more person-centred approach – ‘help me to help myself’ and to maintain/ensure a single point of contact.
- More provision of long-term support with regular tenancy visits (floating support) aligned with risk assessments where required with a direct referral mechanism when it is apparent that a tenancy is at risk – introduction of Tenancy Sustainment Officers?
- A recognition of the need to develop more access to the Private Rented Sector – support service for landlords/incentive schemes/support for Private Rented Sector Tenants
- Tackle empty homes that could be linked to purchasing long term empty homes with a view to relieving homelessness
- Explore the option to make training/employment a condition of tenancy
- Ensuring service users/support agencies are sure of what’s on offer
- Consider introducing a social lettings agency
- Some concerns raised over the implementation and effectiveness of Personal Housing Plans
- People need to know much more upstream what’s realistic in terms of housing offer and what they’re entitled to so that expectations can be realistic

Over a two-week period in September over 200 **private sector landlords** (or their representative Agents) were contacted as part of a separate piece of research where

there had been a homeless presentation linked to a Private Rented Sector property. The analysis showed:

- Landlords expressed concerns around the planned changes in legislation (Renters Reform Bill) with proposals to:
 - remove section 21 'no fault' evictions
 - make it illegal for landlords and agents to refuse to rent properties to people who receive benefits
 - give local authorities more power to enforce and protect renters' rights
- Landlords were also impacted by changes in tax brackets and what they could now claim as part of their self-assessment which includes maintenance of properties only.
- The feedback from landlords overall demonstrated a negative perception of the council's homelessness roles, responsibilities and interactions with the homeless service. Landlords in the main felt the tenant were seen as the council's priority.
- Many landlords stated their interaction under this activity was the first interaction they had with the council and pointed to a general distrust and unwillingness to work with the Homelessness Service
- Some landlords stated they would be re-letting property but would be reluctant to work with the Council citing delays in rental payments and the perception that tenants sourced via the Council posed a greater risk when compared to the wider private market.

Much of the feedback above from Private Rented Sector Landlords is clearly a cause for concern and demonstrates the task ahead to build a greater confidence and working relationships with the local private rented sector. In part to deliver this, the Council has already appointed a Private Sector Officer whose remit will be to foster better relations and to develop positive incentives for the local market to engage with the Council.

7. KEY FINDINGS

7.1 Overview

The central purpose of this review has been to evaluate the current levels of homelessness, service provision and support in Walsall to enable the formulation of a refreshed Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Strategy for the next five years. In law the strategy must set out the authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming homeless. To enable this the following observations are made.

Between April 2019 and March 2022, the Council assessed and accepted a statutory duty to assist 2,738 households. In the latter two years 827 and 824 were supported by way of an accepted duty which for each year accounted for around half of those who approached the local authority where homelessness or threat of are the causal factor behind their approach. The vast majority found not to be owed a duty received advice.

The main causes of homelessness in Walsall recorded by statistical returns (i.e. those owed a duty) are broadly similar as a percentage share to both the regional and national picture, with '*Family or friends no longer willing or able to accommodate*' and the *ending of a private rented tenancy* combining to take half the share at 29% and 20% respectively. Assessments relating to domestic abuse have reduced slightly between 2019/20 and 2021/22 but are still above regional and national comparisons.

Applicants aged 18 to 34 years represent nearly 60% of households owed a duty. In line with national trends the most common age group (of lead applicants) in households owed a duty are aged 25 to 34, however Walsall has an over representation of persons aged 18 to 24 sitting at 26% compared to a regional and national average of 20% and 19%. This statistic would lend to consideration being given to adopting a specific objective in the revised strategy centred on the needs of younger people. 40% of households owed a duty contain dependent children.

Last year, White British households made up 65% of presentations, Asian/Asian British 14%, Black African/Caribbean/Black British 9% and Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups 6%. This compares to like 2021 Census figures of 71%, 19%, 5% and 3% respectively implying a significant overrepresentation in Black African/Caribbean/Black British households and Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups. Comparing 2019/20 with 2021/22 there was a 4-point percentage increase in Asian/Asian British persons and a 2-point percentage decrease in Black African/Caribbean/Black British persons.

Single person households make up around 55% of presentations in Walsall that are subsequently assessed as owed a duty, which is slightly above the regional share of 53% but such a margin is not significant. Women are more likely to experience

homelessness than men, largely because of their very high prevalence of being the head of household as a single parent with dependent children (225 and 16 households respectively 2021/22).

The number of households identified with support needs has increased over the last three years rising to 53% in the last financial year. Around two-thirds of the support needs identified last year were centred on the needs of mental health, support for young people and persons at risk or experiencing domestic abuse. Levels of repeat homelessness were recorded on 19 occasions last year although this only accounts for persons who were previously owed a duty.

Looking ahead

The current Homelessness Strategy took effect from 2018 and over its 5-year span and based on the findings of this review has overseen a number of positive interventions and achievements, most notably a reduction in usage of temporary accommodation, a reduction in levels of rough sleeping, an uplift in positive Prevention and Relief outcomes together with responsive service restructures, most notably the introduction of the new and dedicated Rough Sleeper Team. In addition, the Council has recently appointed a Private Sector Housing Officer whose remit in part will be to remedy the issues with the private rented sector noted elsewhere.

However, considering the above successes it seems plausible that future levels of homelessness and subsequent pressures on services are likely to increase. This prediction is based in part on the socio-economic profile of the borough outlined in Section 2.1 set against a backdrop of significant and growing housing market pressures outlined in Section 2.3, together with the wider projected pressures brought about by the 'cost of living crisis'.

The above projection is also underpinned by *The Homelessness Monitor: England 2022 (Crisis)*²⁹. Supported by its own projections analysis the paper predicts a likely increase in homelessness from 2022. Furthermore, and specific to Walsall, research published in 2017 identified households affected by childhood poverty as a specific group more exposed and vulnerable to homelessness³⁰. Section 2.1 outlines that Walsall is particularly vulnerable from this perspective with the borough being one of 20 local authorities with the highest proportions of children aged under 16 in Relative Low-Income families, effecting a third of its under 16 population (31.8%)³¹.

²⁹ [the-homelessness-monitor-england-2022_report.pdf \(crisis.org.uk\)](https://www.crisis.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/the-homelessness-monitor-england-2022_report.pdf)

³⁰ Professor Glen Bramley and Professor Suzanne Fitzpatrick (July 2017), 'Homelessness in the UK: who is most at risk', Housing Studies Journal, pp1-21

³¹ [Children in low income families: local area statistics: FYE 2015 to FYE 2020 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/children-in-low-income-families-local-area-statistics-fye-2015-to-fye-2020)

7.2 Activities centred on prevention

Early prevention often starts with relevant signposting and/or housing advice/information to prevent homelessness or a threat of homelessness. The Council's website has a dedicated homeless page and as required by legislation³² the website gives specific homelessness information providing advice on prevention, securing accommodation, the rights of the individual and how to access help.

In Walsall more than half of all households seeking homeless prevention assistance have a responsibility for dependent children, whereas households seeking homelessness relief assistance are much more likely to be a single adult, accounting 65% of presentations and the majority being male. Homelessness prevention cases typically arise as the result of either the termination of a private rented sector tenancy (31%) or family and friends no longer willing or able to accommodate them (25%). In contrast, homelessness relief cases predominately arise due to family or friends no longer being willing or able to accommodate (34%) or Domestic Abuse (17%).

In 2021/22, 75% (304) of the 406 households where the Prevention Duty ended secured accommodation, up by 11 points as a percentage share from 2019/20. Applicants in Walsall owed the Prevention Duty are more likely to have their duty ended by securing accommodation compared to their regional counterparts with the like figure sitting at 52%. As stated elsewhere there are generally two options to securing accommodation in the discharge of a Prevention Duty and in Walsall there appears to be a heavy reliance on securing alternative accommodation as opposed to enabling the household to remain in their existing home, with 91% of the 304 households above moving to a new property and only 9% enabled to remain in their existing home. This latter figure compares to 27% regionally and 30% nationally (England, excluding London). The 2020 target setting a minimum 50% of successful prevention outcomes through keeping people in their original home by 2025 is therefore welcomed. Comparing 2019/20 with 202/21, it appears that households securing accommodation with mediation declined and in any event as a preventative measure has a low profile in the borough. Mediation can often be a key component in preventing homelessness particularly when it is specialised toward young people.

Affecting both Prevention and Relief outcomes, both affordability and access to secure affordable accommodation remain a concern in the borough and will continue to impact on homelessness. Whilst the social housing stock base has remained static, the number of relets continue to decline year on year curtailing options for access. At the same time Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates have not kept up with rents in the private rental market meaning that two, three and four bedroom units in particular are nearly always out of reach affordability wise for households reliant on LHA payments.

³² S.179(1) Housing Act 1996 as substituted by s. 2 Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Added to the above recent local research with private landlords has pointed to a general sector distrust and unwillingness to work with the Council and this has clearly demonstrated the need to build greater confidence and working relationships within the local private rented sector both in the context of homeless prevention and enhancing housing options. In particular from a prevention angle, a greater understanding of the local causal factors behind the ending assured shorthold tenancies and the introduction of interventions to alleviate this would be beneficial.

Observed both in the consultation and through further analysis, there appears to be added scope for improving and developing joint working with other public bodies. This could include progressing with protocols and shared working arrangements, in particular with persons leaving prisons or youth detention centres, persons leaving hospital and care leavers.

7.3 Activities centred on securing accommodation

Given the current local housing market pressures outlined in the previous section and centred largely around affordability and supply, securing accommodation is likely to remain a challenge moving forward. In part to address the central issue of supply and making the best use of existing stock it would be beneficial to review both the Councils Nominations Agreement and Housing Allocations Policy as well as undertaking a review of any potential impact of age designated stock in the local social housing sector given the age profile of households who present as homeless locally.

Whilst the Council does interact with the local private rented sector there are issues of concern as noted elsewhere. Exploring incentives that could be offered to private sector landlords to encourage them to house households supported by the Council's housing service would be beneficial and the recently appointed Private Rented Sector Officer will have the remit to explore these incentives as well as building more positive relationships with the local sector. Building on this, perhaps the introduction of a social letting's agency could also be explored. Properties almost exclusively in the private sector and remaining empty for more than 6 months peaked in 2009 at 1456 units with 1012 being recorded in October 2021. Opportunities may still exist to bring these homes back into use with appropriate incentives and linked to relieving homelessness.

The Council currently has 92 temporary accommodation units in four blocks and two dispersed units. Over the last three financial years a total of 778 households were placed into temporary accommodation by the Council involving a total of 1,012 temporary accommodation placements. The difference between households and placements is almost exclusively accounted for by households entering bed and breakfast temporary accommodation in the first instance and then moving into other more settled and appropriate temporary accommodation. In 2019/20 there were 382 placements, 306 in 2020/21 and 324 in 2021/22. Of note the Council lacks a policy for procuring and allocating temporary accommodation to homeless households.

Countering the national trend bed and breakfast usage has declined over the course of the current strategy. In 2019/20 bed and breakfast accommodation accounted for 47% of temporary accommodation placements compared to 37% by the close of last year. In addition, households placed in bed and breakfast are staying in the said accommodation for a shorter median length of time (by 3 days). In 2021/22 54% (67) of placements stayed 7 days or less compared to 41% (74) in 2019/20. The numerical share involving children has also declined from a 59% (104) share in 2019/20 to a 41% (49) like share in 2021/22. Achieving the most positive outcomes for people entering temporary accommodation in Walsall should be a key priority and it is noted that a full options appraisal (including a dispersed model) will be completed by the close of 2023 to establish the best model going forward. Since 2020 it has also been a target of the authority that at any given time to have a maximum of 0.9 households per 1,000 households in Temporary Accommodation and to date this has been achieved

Comparing 2016 and 2017 when rough sleeper numbers peaked in Walsall, the Council has made significant and demonstrable impacts on tackling rough sleeping in the borough, although the latest 2022 annual rough sleeper count of 8 offers a degree of caution against counts of 4 for both 2020 and 2021. Following the cessation of new acceptances to the Housing First programme the Council successfully secured £1.8m Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding and created a dedicated Rough Sleeper Team (RST). The RST currently support 50 persons who are either rough sleeping or are at risk of rough sleeping. Enabled by the RSI funding, the RST currently operate to the Housing First ethos by providing outreach services and long-term general needs accommodation for rough sleepers which should be further enhanced by a specific service level agreement currently being developed with local Registered Providers. The Council also intends to promote the Change into Action project further by expanding it to local businesses and further utilizing the spending options attached to this funding.

Plans are now in place to submit a bid to secure accommodation for ex-offenders via Accommodation for Ex-Offenders funding and more broadly speaking will continue to utilize the funding opportunities emanating from the Government's *Ending rough sleeping for good* strategy. Given the recent release of the strategy together with wider government directives on Homelessness Strategies' outline structure consideration should be given to adopting a specific objective centred on ending rough sleeping.

To date 92 Ukraine households have been housed under the *Homes for Ukraine* scheme. At the time of finalizing this assessment 72 households were still housed through this scheme with only 5 subsequently presenting to the authority following a breakdown of relationship with the host household. However, as the outcome of the war in the Ukraine remains uncertain the authority maybe called to assist increasing numbers of households currently housed under this scheme.

The West Midlands Region like all regions of the UK forms part of the Government's dispersal and resettlement scheme. The vast majority of households supported under this programme do not have access to public funds and therefore in law do not qualify for assistance from the Council other than in certain circumstances where the household includes a dependent child or a vulnerable adult and in these circumstances a referral may be made to Social Care. Currently the number of people entering the UK dispersal and resettlement scheme is increasing and looking ahead it seems likely that the borough will receive an increasing number of presentations from former Asylum Seekers who have been given leave to remain and entitled to access public funds. These households will be assisted initially by the Housing and Welfare Team and there is a clear likelihood that increasing pressures will be placed on services via this situation. Many of these households will have specific support needs and the role and engagement of the local voluntary sector will be key.

7.4 Service user and stakeholder perspectives

This review was able to draw on a number of focus groups, surveys and stakeholder events to gather quantitative data on people's opinions and experiences of homeless services in Walsall. It was very clear from the majority who took part in the focus groups largely connected to temporary accommodation that there was a great deal of positivity around access to the service and the help and support subsequently received. The majority felt frustrated by their ability to move on to more settled secure accommodation which was largely reflective of the supply of suitable properties. Most who took part were not aware of their Personal Housing Plans. Of note there was a consistent request that all temporary accommodation facilities should have independent wifi to enable access to information and to enable better homeworking for school children.

Those who had experienced rough sleeping were also complimentary about the support they had received to enable them to maintain their tenancy. One had received a bad experience in their initial temporary accommodation placement, but all were now benefitting substantially from having a secure home of their own. The overall findings from these interviews fully justify the authority's forward-looking approach to supporting rough sleepers by continuing as far as possible with the Housing First (HF) ethos now that pilot is no longer accepting new intakes.

Like many service users', staff and wider stakeholder views and opinions were on the whole largely uniform. Looking ahead many held concerns about the impact of the current economic climate and 'cost of living crisis' and its impact on homelessness. Some were clear on the need to develop a better understanding of the roles and interactions of partnership organisations and there was also strong support to introduce more 'up-stream' prevention (e.g. school education) and to introduce more 'lived experience' into service development and provision. The support of those with No Recourse to Public Funds in need of support were also seen as a key concern

again with a need to understand roles and responsibilities e.g. with Children's Services and Public Health etc

Most also acknowledged the affordability strains combined with the need to increase the provision of affordable housing, in particular larger 'family stock' and bungalows (the latter to free up existing larger family stock) and supported the suggestion of a review of age designations applied to existing stock. In addition, a need to engage more with the private rented sector was also cited in the context of increasing supply and options with a support service for landlords/incentive schemes/support for Private Rented Sector Tenants being considered. Feedback received from private landlords is discussed elsewhere.

In line with observations made at the customer focus groups, concerns were raised over the implementation and effectiveness of Personal Housing Plans together with customers being better informed more upstream to understand what is realistic in terms of housing offer and entitled so that expectations become realistic. Some also expressed a need for more provision of long-term tenancy support and regular tenancy visits (floating support) aligned with risk assessments where required with a direct referral mechanism when it is apparent that a tenancy is at risk.

From a strategic perspective, it is clear that locally Walsall enjoys a strong partnership built up between the Council and local social housing providers. This includes by providing Chairpersons for the Homeless Steering Group, whilst the largest provider has a Corporate Plan which contains actions that directly contribute to homeless prevention in Walsall.

APPENDIX C: Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	Approval of Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023 to 2028		
Directorate	Childrens and Customer		
Service	Money Home Job		
Responsible Officer	Neville Rowe – Strategy Analyst		
Proposal planning start	07.07.22	Proposal start date (due or actual date)	01.04.23

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Show which category the proposal is and whether it is new or a revision.		
	Strategy	YES	Revision
	Procedure	No	
	Guidance	No	
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?		
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?		
	Other - give details		
2	What is the business case for this proposal? Please provide the main purpose of the service, intended outcomes and reasons for change? <p>Under the Homelessness Act 2002, all housing authorities must have in place a homelessness strategy based on a review of all forms of homelessness in their district. The strategy must be renewed at least every 5 years. The current strategy approved by cabinet in 2018 has now been reviewed and a new strategy and action plan has been formulated for approval by Cabinet to cover the next 5 years.</p> <p>The strategy sets out the authority's plans for the prevention of homelessness and for securing that sufficient accommodation and support are or will be available for people who become homeless or who are at risk of becoming so. The revised strategy provides a single plan for Walsall based agencies to concentrate their activities for tackling and preventing homelessness and following the review has five key objectives:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preventing homelessness 2. Meeting the needs of young people 3. Securing accommodation for people who are homeless 4. Supporting people who are, or have been, homeless 5. Ending rough sleeping <p>The five objectives are underpinned by an Action Plan contained within the strategy that set out a series of actions that will be completed during the time frame of the strategy.</p>		

3	Who is the proposal likely to affect?		
	People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail
	All	X	Homelessness can happen to anyone, caused for example as a result of fire, flood, job loss, financial difficulties, tenancy loss and relationship breakdowns. Walsall Council receives requests for assistance from approximately 1,900 households per annum and last year (2021/22) 814 households went on to receive a formal homeless duty having been formerly assessed.
	Specific group/s		
	Council employees		
	Other (identify)		
4	Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer's protected characteristics.		
<p>Introduction</p> <p>Walsall Key Demographic Data</p> <p>Walsall is a metropolitan borough which was formed in 1974 and is one of seven authorities that makes up the West Midlands conurbation and is one of four local authorities comprising the Black Country Region. Walsall contains six urban district centres: Walsall Town Centre, Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall. The Borough covers 40 square miles and is bisected by the M6 motorway. Socio-economically, there is a stark geographic divide between the West and the less deprived East. Nationally, Walsall has high levels of deprivation and among local authorities in England. The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation now ranks Walsall as the 25th most deprived English local authority (out of 317), placing Walsall within the most deprived 10% of districts in the country (33rd in 2015, 30th in 2010 and 45th in 2007).</p> <p>Census 2021 data demonstrates a Walsall population of 258,478, 49.2% of the population are male with 50.8% female. Currently, Walsall has around 117k units of which 24% are housing provider owned and 76% privately owned, (Source, Live tables on dwelling stock (including vacants) - GOV.UK)</p> <p>Of the 76% privately owned, it is estimated that around 13.4k are privately rented which accounts for around 15% of the privately owned stock. Overall housing growth (5.4%) has just about kept up with household growth (6.3%) between 2011 and 2021 (ONS population projections) and household size has shifted from 2.49 to 2.51 (Black Country SHMA 2021). 15.7% of households in Walsall, are single person households who have one person aged less than 66 years, in comparison 12.6% of single households are aged 66 years and over. (Source: Census 2021, ONS)</p> <p>The east of the Borough has an older population and a slower growth (<1% in 9 years). Conversely the centre, south & west of the borough continues to see rapid population growth and a much younger population, such as Blakenall wards with a median age of 31 and a growth of 7.8% compared to 2011. In comparison Aldridge Central and South has a median age of 48 and a growth rate compared to 2011 of 12%. (Source: Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Walsall).</p> <p>Under 16s now account for 22.4% of the Walsall population, and over 65s, 17.6%. Walsall's dependency ratio has continued to rise with 0.65 dependants: 1 working age adult in 2019 (England 0.57). There are estimated to be 9000 additional over 60s by</p>			

2031. (Source: Office for National Statistics).

85.2% of Walsall's population were born in the UK, whilst 14.8 were born in another country. The minority ethnic population (i.e. all those who identify as other than White British) has increased from fewer than 1 in 4 residents in 2011 to 1 in 3 in 2021 (Figure 1)

Figure 1: Ethnic Profile

Walsall	2021	2011
White	71.4%	78.8%
Asian	18.7%	15.2%
Black	4.6%	2.3%
Mixed	3.3%	2.7%
Other	2.1%	0.8%
White British	67.4%	76.9%
Minority Ethnic	32.6%	23.1%

Source: Census 2021 and Census 2011.

61% of the population is of working age, broadly in line with the national figure. 76% are classed as economically active, slightly below both the regional and national averages. Of the households that have at least one person aged 16 to 64, 14% are classed as workless (12k) and as revealed elsewhere in this document lack of labour market access is a regular component of homeless households in the borough^[1]. 27% of the working age population have an NVQ Level 4 or above, this compares to a regional figure of 39% and a national figure of 44%.

In terms of income and employment scales, the average wage in Walsall (£548 p/w gross) is 6% below the regional average and 12% below the national. Of note 8% of persons aged 18 to 24 claim out of work benefits – this compares to 6% regionally but is almost twice the national equivalent. According to DWP figures (02/22), Walsall is ranked fourth out of all West Midland authorities in the percentage of working age people (6%) receiving unemployment related benefits^[2].

^[1] Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics 2022

^[2] *ibid*

People affected by debt, low incomes, unemployment, insecure housing or people receiving out of work benefits covering all the protected characteristics are at greater risk of homelessness. Deprivation is deeply entrenched in Walsall and has worsened during the current economic downturn. Forty-four out of one-hundred and sixty-seven neighbourhoods (LSOAs) are now amongst the 10% most deprived in England compared to 34 in 2015. There are extremes of deprivation in Walsall, with central and western areas typically much more deprived than eastern areas, although pockets of deprivation exist even in the more affluent parts of the borough. The following data is provided in the context of the protected characteristics and the proposal to approve the revised homelessness strategy.

Age

Last year (2021/22) from 1,661 households presenting to the authority, 54% were aged 18 to 34 years. The same age group represented 55% of households assessed and subsequently owed a duty. In line with national trends, in Walsall the most common age group (of lead applicants) owed a duty are those aged 25 to 34, however Walsall has an over representation of persons aged 18 to 24 accounting for 26% of households compared to a regional and national average of 20% and 19%. In addition, last year this age group accounted for 24% of overall presentations prior to assessment. Those aged 55 years and older equate to around 6%.

Clearly, when compared to population data the age profile of homeless applicants implies that young people are disproportionately impacted by homelessness compared to other age groups. In Walsall, eight percent of persons aged 18 to 24 claim out of work benefits – this compares to 6% regionally but is almost twice the national equivalent. According to DWP figures (02/22), Walsall is ranked fourth out of all West Midlands authorities in the percentage of working age people (6%) receiving unemployment related benefits. Numerically, Walsall's affordable housing stock has remained static over the last decade but rents have steadily declined and housing affordability outside of this tenure is a key issue in Walsall.

Disability

Of the support needs identified from persons owed a duty last year, 13% were related to disability. This compares to 15% nationally¹. Health and support needs of persons who have experienced rough sleeping are often deep and complex and from the cohort of people who have experienced rough sleeping and who are currently housed and supported locally, 84% have mental health needs and 89% have a substance misuse/alcohol dependency needs.

The data outlined in the Needs Review strongly implies that disabled people are more likely to become homeless than non-disabled people. The proposals and actions within the revised Homelessness Strategy is likely to improve outcomes for disabled people.

Race, religion or belief

Walsall is a culturally diverse town where people of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi backgrounds form the largest minority ethnic groups at around 19%². Persons from a White British background form 67% of the population³. One in seven residents have a non-UK country of birth (Census 2021) and Walsall now has a small Eastern European population. 37% of children and young people (0-17) are from minority ethnic groups and 24% of primary pupils have English as an additional language (School Census, January 2017)⁴.

Based on a snapshot covering April 2018 to December 2022, where ethnicity is recorded and in alignment with the statutory data returns, White British households made up 71% of presentations, Asian/Asian British 11%, Black African/Caribbean/Black British 9% and Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups 4%. A like comparison of those progressing to being owed a duty in 2021/22 reads White British at a 65% share, Asian/Asian British 14%, Black

¹ 2022 Homelessness Monitor, CRISIS

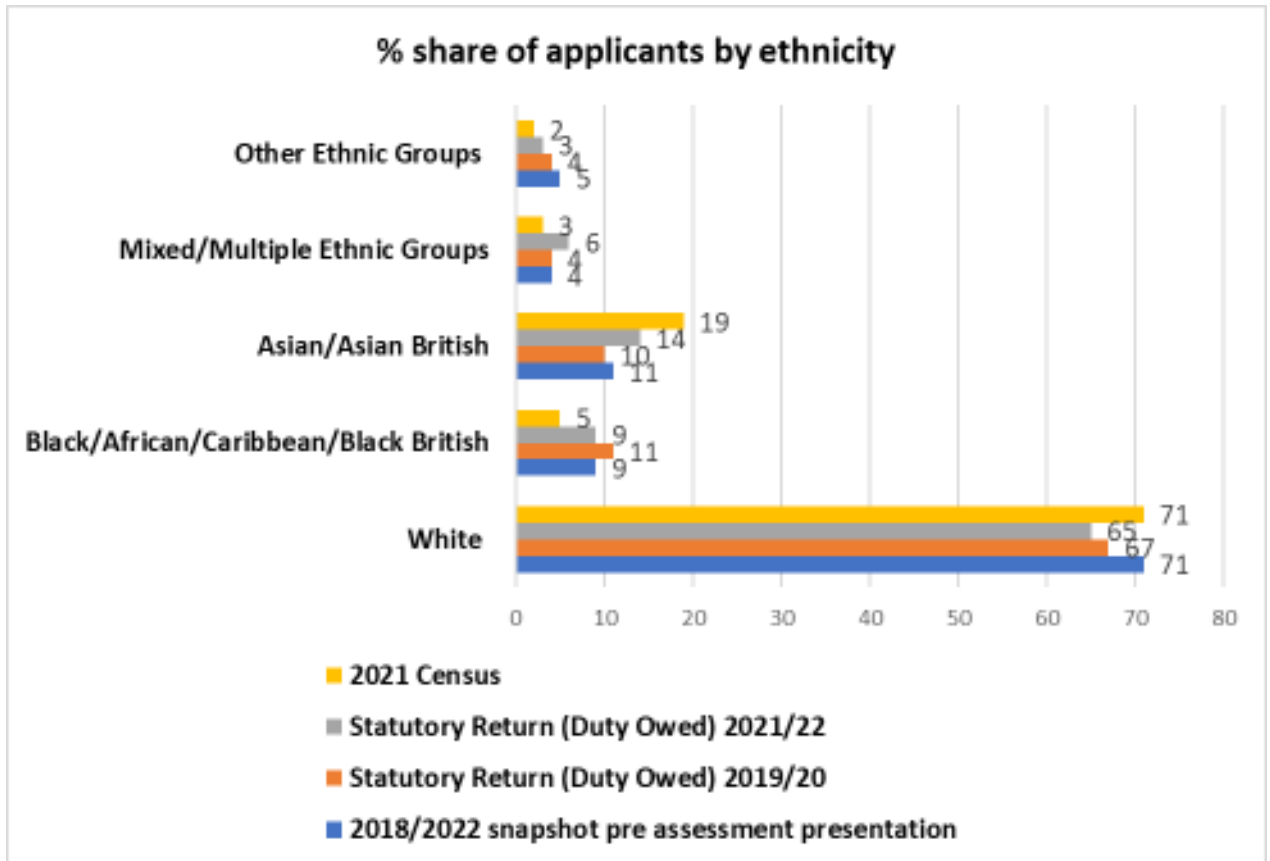
² Census 2021

³ Census 2021, White British includes "White: English, Welsh, Scottish, Northern Irish or British"

⁴ *Walsall Insight, Trends & Intelligence*

African/Caribbean/Black British 9% and Mixed/Multiple Ethnic Groups 6%.

As outlined in the table below, the above percentage shares compared to like 2021 Census figures of 71%, 19%, 5% and 3% respectively imply a significant overrepresentation in Black African/Caribbean/Black British households at both pre and post assessment stages. However, comparing 2019/20 with 2021/22 there was a 2-percentage point decrease. Using the same comparison, there was a 4-point increase in Asian/Asian British households though overall this increase still represents an under representation compared to the Census share of this ethnic group.



There is no specific data or information on whether religion or belief impacts upon prevalence of homelessness.

Sexual orientation and gender reassignment

In 2020/21 the Walsall statutory return recorded that 88.5% of persons (head of household) identified themselves as heterosexual, 1.2% as gay/lesbian, and 1.6% identified their sexual orientation as 'other'. Data was not provided for the remainder.

The National Alliance to End Homelessness (24.07.22) records that limited information exists about the number of transgender people experiencing homelessness and there are very few data sets relative to this population. However, it notes that from the data that is available, the number of adult transgender individuals experiencing homelessness has increased by 88 percent since 2016. The majority of those who become homeless are unsheltered and the health and safety challenges of this group are much greater than those of their sheltered counterparts. Studies also show that transgender people have difficulty accessing shelter, at least in part because of their gender identities. Based on a snapshot covering April 2018 to December 2022, in Walsall one person

identified as transgender.

Marriage, Civil Partnership, Sex, Pregnancy and Maternity

Last year (2021/22) from 1,661 households presenting to the authority, 58% were female headed. Sixty percent of households owed a statutory duty last year were female headed.

From those assessed as owed a duty, single person households make up around 55% of presentations in Walsall which is slightly above the regional share of 53%. Women are more likely to experience homelessness than men, largely because of their high prevalence of being the head of household as a single parent with dependent children (225 and 16 households respectively).

The findings of the Safer Walsall Partnership Strategic Assessment (2020) shows that 31.5% of all violent crime (with or without injury) was related to Domestic Abuse (DA). There were 3,692 DA offences reported to the Police in Walsall in 2019/20 and of these 79% involved female victims and 21% were male. Assessments related to domestic abuse and securing a duty have reduced slightly between 2019/20 and 2021/22 but are still above regional and national comparisons, where locally households affected by DA accounted for 14% of acceptances compared to 7% and 8% regionally and nationally.

The EqIA for the previous Homelessness Strategy approved by Cabinet on 21 March 2018 undertook actions to:

1. Collect equality data on the implementation of the proposed private rented sector Selective Licensing Scheme
2. Continue to collect equality data on protected characteristics to help to inform the development of future services designed to reduce inequality

The proposed private rented sector Selective Licensing Scheme was not adopted by the Council. For the second action, steady progress has been made in the collection of equality data most notably via the newly introduced H-CLIC data system that forms the basis for the quarterly statutory returns. Equality data is now detailed within the 2019/20/21 Homelessness Briefings, however it is recognised that further advances in data capture need to be achieved targeted particularly at households who approach the authority and do not progress to qualifying for a statutory duty, i.e. primarily those households who approach the authority and are given advice/assistance only. Often and based on the level of contact involved in these circumstances it should be recognised that it is often very challenging to acquire equality related data and in future it may be more advantageous to target specific equality strands for this particular type of service user.

Secondary Data

Homelessness can affect a large number of individuals, from those who are homeowners to private tenants. By definition homelessness means different things to different groups and explicitly has different meaning to customers in comparison to local authorities.

By definition homelessness can be grouped into 4 key areas, with those who are homeless, roofless, those without a home or those in either low quality or unstable

accommodation, Edgar et al (2002). In contrast the Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) provides a definition of homelessness which is set out in the legislation and supporting orders. The key focus of the definition is around eligibility, priority need (such as those with children) and not being intentionally homeless. The Homelessness Reduction Act (2017) is the core legislation which drives the MHJ service. It directly dictates how an application is assessed and what the results for customers should look like.

The causes and reasons for someone becoming homeless can vary for each customer. Buffington-Vollum (2012) state the vital factor of mental health as the main underlying cause for homelessness. However, in difference, Fang (2009); Greenberg and Rosenheck (2008); Kushel et al (2005); McNeil et al (2005), state the main cause of homelessness is more linked to offender behaviour and there's a core link between police arrests and homelessness. These indicators show a need to be inclusive in agencies which are engaged with and ensure early prevention work where possible. During the Covid pandemic, Peri et al (2020) study demonstrated the importance of agencies collaborating in order to respond to the environmental challenges being posed. This included a need for agencies to work in collaboration and pointed to a key area of advice and support for domestic abuse victims not being available. As a result the negative impact on communities was increased as the domestic abuse customers as a whole were unable to access the right help.

5 Please provide details of all engagement and consultation undertaken for this proposal. (Please use a separate box for each engagement/consultation).

Consultation Activity

Complete a copy of this table for each consultation activity you have undertaken.

Type of engagement/consultation	Workshop at Walsall Homelessness Conference	Date	07/07/22
Who attended/participated?	Service providers		
Protected characteristics of participants	A cross section of staff and third sector stakeholders including those from different ethnic, age, gender, disability related groups.		

Feedback

- Specific to the objectives, feedback included suggestions to:
 - 1) introduce separate objectives tailored toward Young People & Rough Sleepers
 - 2) enhance Objective 1 in terms of setting out how we will react to varying levels of homelessness as they change over time
 - 3) Question over retaining Objective 5
- There was strong support to introduce more ‘up-stream’ prevention (e.g. school education) and to introduce more ‘lived experience’ into service development and provision
- A general concern of the impact of the ‘cost of living crisis’
- A recognition of the need to increase the provision of affordable housing in particular:
 - larger ‘family stock’ and bungalows (the latter to free up existing larger family stock)
 - review age restricted stock with a view to making more stock available for younger people, particularly young single persons
- The need to develop a better understanding of roles of partnership organisations
- Those with No Recourse to Public Funds were seen as a major concern in the context of homelessness with a need to understand roles and responsibilities e.g. with Children’s Services and Public Health etc
- More provision of long-term support with regular tenancy visits (floating support) aligned with risk assessments where required with a direct referral mechanism when it is apparent that a tenancy is at risk – introduction of Tenancy Sustainment Officers?
- A recognition of the need to develop more access to the PRS – support service for landlords/incentive schemes/support for PRS Tenants
- Tackle empty homes that could be linked to purchasing long term empty homes with a view to relieving homelessness
- Explore the option to make training/employment a condition of tenancy
- Ensuring service users/support agencies are sure of what’s on offer
- Consider introducing a social lettings agency
- Some concerns raised over the implementation and effectiveness of Personal

Housing Plans

- People need to know much more upstream what's realistic in terms of housing offer and what they're entitled to so that expectations can be realistic

Type of engagement/consultation	Focus Group	Date	11/11/22
Who attended/participated?	Women who had experienced domestic abuse		
Protected characteristics of participants	Gender		
Feedback			
<p>Ten people took part in a focus group whose primary cause of homelessness had been related to domestic abuse. The majority in the group expressed that they felt they were in a safe place and felt supported by their homeless officer. Most acknowledged that the offer of alternative accommodation had come through quickly and efficiently, but some felt limited and frustrated by their options to access dispersed accommodation particularly in the context of being able to keep the family unit together.</p> <p>Most felt they could be better informed of their move-on options at an earlier stage to enable a better understanding of their options and limitations in terms of both the process and likely length of waiting time etc. They felt drop-in sessions from the Homelessness Officer could help with this. Of note, the presence of a universal wifi system at the facility used for the focus group session would be welcomed so that residents can participate more readily in everyday life, for example residents would be more empowered to look for properties online.</p> <p>Some in the group complained about the length of time they had been resident at their current residential facility. Some had been there for 10 months or more and wanted to move on but complained about the availability of properties. However, the vast majority did not want a flat and aspired for and would rather wait for a house whilst recognising that the availability of houses was very limited.</p>			

Type of engagement/consultation	One to one interviews of persons who had experienced rough sleeping	Date	13/11/22
Who attended/participated?	Persons who had slept rough in Walsall		
Protected characteristics of participants	Male and Female persons who had slept rough in Walsall		
Feedback			
<p>Key points identified from the interviews were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • From the interviews the experience of initial engagement was not always positive. One candidate had had a bad experience of a hostel placement that was outside of Walsall (and away from local connections) whilst another had been offered a property that they felt was not up to a decent habitable standard. • All were very satisfied with their current property, feeling safe and secure from which to build a stable life. All felt they had been offered a degree of choice 			

on the property they were currently living in. One noted that they felt they would have felt even more secure about their home had they had the terms of the tenancy explained to them in more detail.

- All were very complimentary about the current support they were receiving and felt this was pivotal to their current stability, albeit one had experienced an unfortunate gap in support brought about by a planned staff absence. All were very complimentary about the long-term support they had received and continue to receive and that support had enabled them to maintain their tenancy by alleviating isolation, providing help and support with mental health issues and ensuring household bills were paid on time

Type of engagement/consultation	Newcomers Focus Group	Date	14/10/22
Who attended/participated?	Households from Ukranian and Afghanistani backgrounds		
Protected characteristics of participants	Race, Gender, Age		
Feedback			
Key points identified from the interviews were:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Those who had previous contact with the council were generally pleased with the service and support they had received although only 2 had had contact with the housing teams. Whilst overall people were appreciative of their current temporary accommodation, all those present expressed concerns about their housing options and those particularly from the Afghan communities felt they still had little idea in terms of how they would be able to secure long-term secure accommodation. • Many felt that private rents were too expensive, and the tenancies offered less stability. The support from the Refugee and Migrant Centre was very appreciated. Those present and who were in temporary accommodation were complimentary on both the support they had received from the Temporary Accommodation Team together with responses when any repairs have been required. 			

Type of engagement/consultation	Focus Group/Survey	Date	18/10/22
Who attended/participated?	Young persons who were either accommodated in supported housing or who had accessed		
Protected characteristics of participants	A cross section of young people from different age, ethnic, and gender groups		
Feedback			
This year the Council conducted a survey with young people who had engaged with young person's services and ranged from people who had accessed the Nightstop, supported lodging schemes, and the Walsall Housing Group MHJ scheme. Thirty-two people responded and in terms of the overall satisfaction with the service received, none reported that they were either dissatisfied or very dissatisfied. Drilling down further from those who took part in the survey:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over a third expressed a degree of frustration over the time it had taken to 			

access the various facilities

- 67% were positive about the help they had received from their respective service. Correspondingly three quarters were positive about the help they had received from staff
- 60% were positive about being given the options to make their own choices within their respective scheme
- 56% felt there was sufficient flexibility within the service

Suggestions for service improvement included making information on-line, having one keyworker and having a support worker emergency number. From a focus group involving five young persons, those who took part felt well supported particularly with regard to acquiring future independent living skills, e.g. cooking and budgeting. Some in the group expressed a preference that on acquiring an independent tenancy they would benefit from floating support in the initial few transitional months. One issue raised was the disincentive to acquire employment that could lead to the individual being required to pay a high rent to live in their current housing scheme. Of note, none of those present were aware of their Personal Housing Plan.

6 Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation

In addition to the consultation programme outlined above officers have also engaged with an ongoing programme of consultation with a number of internal and external working groups including:

- Self-Neglect Group
- Walsall Insight Group
- Domestic Abuse Strategic Partnership
- Walsall Housing Working Group
- Homelessness Steering Group
- Adult Safeguarding Board
- Resilient Communities Group
- A one off meeting of voluntary sector partners organised by One Walsall

These working groups all contain a cross section of staff and third sector stakeholders including those from different ethnic, age, gender, and disability related groups

It is fully recognised that the delivery of the strategy requires multi-agency cross working and in response to this the strategy has been formulated in conjunction with an extensive programme of consultation involving both service providers and service users. For the former the consultation has captured the views and input from housing providers, internal homeless services, adult social care, children's services, public health together with regional providers. The consultation has also involved a series of focus groups, one to one interviews and a workshop held at the 2022 Walsall Homelessness Conference.

7	How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group? The effect may be positive, negative, neutral or not known. Give reasons and if action is needed.		
	Characteristic	Affect	Reason
	Age	<p>For the Protected Characteristic's of Marriage and Civil Partnership, Pregnancy and Maternity, Religion or belief and Sexual Orientation the evidence gathered in both the Homelessness Review and this document suggests a neutral impact. It is assessed that no further action is needed.</p> <p>The proposed strategy will have a positive impact on the Protected Characteristics of Age, Disability, Gender Reassignment, Race and Sex. No further action needed.</p> <p><u>Age</u> Young people aged 18 to 24 years are overrepresented in persons presenting to the authority as either homeless or at risk of despite the more inclusive benefits having been brought about by the 2017 Homelessness Reduction Act. The revised strategy will have a positive impact on this characteristic by the adoption of a new and specific objective 'Meeting the Needs of Young People' and its associated actions as outlined in the strategy.</p> <p><u>Disability</u> Of the support needs identified from persons owed a duty last year, 13% were related to disability. The data outlined in the Needs Review strongly implies that disabled people are more likely to become homeless than non-disabled people. The proposals and actions within the revised Homelessness Strategy are likely to improve outcomes for disabled people.</p> <p><u>Gender Reassignment</u> The National Alliance to End Homelessness (24.07.22) records that limited information exists about the number of transgender people experiencing homelessness and there are very few data sets relative to this population. Based on a snapshot covering April 2018 to December 2022, one person identified as transgender. The interventions contained within the action plan attached to the strategy will have a positive outcome for all households</p> <p><u>Race</u> As outlined elsewhere in this document, Census 2021 data implies a significant overrepresentation in Black</p>	Action needed No
	Disability		
	Gender reassignment		
	Marriage and civil partnership		
	Pregnancy and maternity		
	Race		
	Religion or belief		
	Sex		
	Sexual orientation		
Other (give detail)			
Further information			

		<p>African/Caribbean/Black British households at both pre and post assessment stages, with relative parity within other ethnic groups. The proposals and actions within the revised Homelessness Strategy are likely to improve outcomes for all households experiencing homelessness, however contained within the action plan is a specific action to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out research into the causes and experiences of homelessness for people of a black or other minority ethnic origin, to inform future service provision <p><u>Sex</u> Women are more likely to experience homelessness than men. Based on a snapshot covering April 2018 to December 2022, women accounted for 56% of presentations whilst accounting for 51% of the wider population (Census 2021). Sixty percent of households owed a statutory duty last year (2021.22) were female headed. The interventions contained within the action plan attached to the strategy will have a positive outcome for all households.</p>
8	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.	(Delete one) No
	<p>This EQIA has been formulated having had regard to the law and regulatory requirements, including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Housing Act 1996, Part 6 2. Homelessness Act 2002 3. Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 4. Localism Act 2011 5. Armed Forces Act 2006 6. Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 7. Immigration and Asylum Act 1999 8. Children Act 2004 9. Equality Act 2010 10. Domestic Abuse Act 2021 	
9	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?	
	A	No major change required
	B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality
	C	Continue despite possible adverse impact
	D	Stop and rethink your proposal

Action and monitoring plan				
Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome
April 2023	Continue to collect equality data on protected characteristics targeting those who do not and do qualify for a statutory duty to help to inform the development of future services designed to reduce inequality	Neil Hollyhead	April 2024	Equality data collected from those who do not and do qualify for a statutory duty
April 2023	Carry out research into the causes and experiences of homelessness for people of a black or other minority ethnic origin,	Neil Hollyhead	April 2024	To inform future service provision
April 2023	Build in customer feedback from more isolated communities	Neil Hollyhead	April 2024	To inform future service provision
Reports will be presented to and assessed by the Walsall Homelessness Steering Group.				

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail
Jan 2023	First Phase review and development, informed by Homelessness Review 2022.
Use this section for updates following the commencement of your proposal.	

Contact us

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Cabinet – 22 March 2023

Walsall Civic Centre and Council House Improvement Works

Portfolio: Councillor Ferguson – Internal Services

Related portfolios: All

Service: Corporate Landlord

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 To ensure that the Civic Centre and Council House are maintained to a satisfactory level and improve its energy efficiency and working environment for staff, members and visitors.
- 1.2 To ensure that the Civic Centre and Council House are fit for purpose for the new hybrid working methods and as future proofed as possible for the medium term.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Civic Centre was constructed in the early 1970's, and has undergone internal alterations to the open plan environment circa 2012. The Council House has mainly remained unaltered in recent years.
- 2.2 The strategic asset plan (SAP) was approved in December 2021 by Cabinet and resulted in the council reviewing the best utilisation of our corporate estate and maximising use of our assets, repurposing to service needs and disposing of high cost/low or no usage surplus assets. This has resulted in the disposal of 7 assets generating £2.6m of capital receipts and £1m of revenue benefits from reduced maintenance, utilities and security/staff management costs since the SAP was approved, with a further £1.5m expected ongoing benefits in 2023/24 and planned disposal of a further 12 assets forecast to generate £2.5m capital receipts by the end of 2024/25.
- 2.3 The council has also been successful in being awarded £3.7m towards our £4.2m of energy efficiency upgrades through the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) which will greatly contribute towards our overall improvement plans and net carbon zero ambitions and also drive reduced energy usage and costs.
- 2.4 To ensure that the Civic Centre and Council House remain suitable office and meeting spaces for the 21st century, and are in line with the new hybrid working

practices and energy efficiency requirements, a suite of building improvements have been agreed.

- 2.5 These improvements include:
Replacement of external doors and windows in the Civic Centre
New heating and ventilations systems for the Council House and Civic Centre
Replacement fire alarm systems for the Council House and Civic Centre
The Civic Centre ground floor office space will be refurbished for a new Registrars service offer including an enhanced Wedding Venue as well as an improved children's service delivery area.
- 2.6 The fore mentioned schemes will improve service provisions, improve energy efficiency and work towards the council commitment for de-carbonisation by 2041.
- 2.7 The tendering process for each element will vary, including mini competition through approved frameworks and open tenders to enable local SME's to bid, each of the procurement process will be undertaken by the procurement department to ensure compliance with all financial and council regulations.
- 2.8 The timeframe for all the works to be completed is estimated to be 31st March 2025, due to the nature of the works and interdependencies they will be managed by an external consultant to ensure timescales and co-ordination is achieved.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord & Assurance to award the contract to the successful tender applicant to undertake the supply and installation of the new replacement windows, frames and doors in the Civic Centre complex.
- 3.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord & Assurance to award the contract to the successful tender applicant to undertake the supply and installation of the new air source heating and ventilation systems in the Civic Centre and Council House.
- 3.3 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord & Assurance to award the contract to the successful tender applicant to undertake the supply and installation of the new replacement hybrid fire alarm detection system in the Civic Centre and Council House.
- 3.4 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord & Assurance to award the contract to the successful tender applicant to undertake the refurbishment of the Civic Centre ground floor.
- 3.5 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord & Assurance to subsequently authorise the sealing of Deeds and/or signing of contracts and any other related documents for the provision of such services as well as any variation of the contractual arrangements or other related documents should this be required throughout the duration of the contract.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 Both the Civic Centre and Council House have aged infrastructure and building elements which have come to the end of their economic life.
- Council House boilers circa 1980's
 - Council House radiators circa 1960's
 - Council House Fire Alarm circa 1980's
 - Civic Centre heating and ventilation 1972
 - Civic Centre fire alarm 2008
 - Civic Centre windows 1972

The age and condition of the above elements have increased the number of leaks and system failures.

- 4.2 The heating and ventilation replacement in the Civic Centre and Council House will improve the energy efficiency of both buildings with the implementation of an integrated building management system.
- 4.3 The heating and ventilation schemes have been to the market previously, but the tender returns exceed the available budgets assigned. It was agreed to combine the two buildings into a single scheme and modify the delivery model from night time installation to normal hour working to reduce costs.
- 4.4 A grant bid has recently been awarded by Central Government via the Salix funding stream for the sum of £3.7m, which has enabled a new approach for the heating and ventilation schemes to be adopted by utilising air source heat pumps. Using this technology will enable the disconnection of gas supplies to the Council House and Civic Centre, assisting the authority to reach its goal of the decarbonisation of the two buildings, in line with the council's targets as well as providing reduced energy requirements thus reducing our costs and carbon footprint.
- 4.5 The external window and door replacement in the Civic Centre are required due to the number of failed glazing units and water ingress through the frames. A new curtain wall system and energy efficient glazing will aid in the reduction of heat loss and make the building more energy efficient. Due to being in a conservation area there is a requirement to install a visually similar design and colour match.
- 4.6 The fire alarms in the Council House and Civic Centre are in need of replacement, this is due to the age and the non-serviceability of the radio system and changes to radio signal legislation. The new systems shall retain the two building functionality but will be able to be monitored from a single location, this will ensure safe evacuation processes for both buildings are managed efficiently. The fire alarm system will be a hybrid system using both wired and wireless technology, due to the signal limitations in the Council House basement areas. The new fire alarm system will meet all statutory requirements and will be compliant to the new Fire Safety Act requirements.

- 4.7 With the Council adopting the flexible working approach, and closing the First Stop Shop to customers, the area has been re-assigned to become a new improved births, deaths and marriage venue, with the former area to become a children's service delivery area. These improvements are part of a wider improvement and service delivery model for the Civic Centre as a whole.
- 4.8 The co-dependencies and scheduling of these works require all contracts to be delivered in the same time period, this will help reduce the duplication of works, minimise disruption to staff and service users and help efficiencies within the delivery of the schemes.
- 4.9 The key benefits of the four areas of work will be improved energy efficiency, reduced costs, better controllability of the work environment, improved work environment and a safe and compliant work space.
- 4.10 The procurement route for each element of works are varied dependant on specialisms and time scales to enable works to have a co-ordinated installation.
- Heating and Ventilation – 2 stage mini completion through framework provider, design and installation separated.
 - Civic Centre window replacement – open tender to enable local suppliers to bid.
 - Fire Alarm replacement – open tender to enable local suppliers to bid
 - Civic ground floor refurbishment - open tender to enable local suppliers to bid
- 4.11 The procurement process is being undertaken with a collaboration of Procurement and Corporate Landlord staff.
- 4.12 The condensed timeline between procurement and works delivery timeline is tight but achievable, but would not give adequate time for a report to be presented at Cabinet for approval of each contract. This would leave the council potentially at risk for the grant funding to be spent in the agreed timeline of 2 years.
- 13 The request for Delegated authority for the Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord & Assurance to appoint the successful tenderers would ensure the timeline for funding expenditure and co-ordination of the schemes to be delivered can be met.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.14 The Council House and Civic Centre improvement schemes link with the Council Plan 2022 - 2025, Economic Growth section by “creating an environment where business invests and everyone who wants a job can access one”. Achieved by allowing local Small and Medium Companies to tender for the contracts, this would enable Walsall pound to be kept within the local economy.
- 4.15 The internal focus – “internal services deliver quality and adapt to meet the needs of customer facing services”, the combining of the contracts will lead to more efficient buildings, and improved customer interaction through the new customer focused services in the Civic Centre ground floor.

Risk management

- 4.16 The risks in awarding these contracts are low, given that the contracts will have been procured in accordance the Council's financial and procurement rules. There is a reasonable expectation that the tender exercise will enable the council to enter into a viable contracts for the service delivery of the four contracts.
- 4.17 The risk of delivering all works in a combined manner are medium, the risks would be slippage in the programme and contractor overlap, these risks are mitigated through external project management, regular site meetings and pre agreed works schedules.
- 4.18 The financial risks are low, the form of contract and measured works for additional elements will be closely monitored through externally appointed quantity surveyors, therefore costs are envisaged to remain with the pre agreed capital funds

Financial implications

- 4.19 The delivery cost of each of the schemes are estimated to be delivered within the agreed capital programme funds. The figures are:
- Civic Centre and Council House Heat and ventilation - £3.2M council capital funds, £3.7M external grant funding
 - Fire Alarm Replacement - £300k Council capital funds, £150k Council Ways of working capital funds (combined £450k)
 - Civic Centre window replacement - £1.2M Council capital funding
 - Civic Centre ground floor refurbishment - £450k Council Ways of Working capital funding
- 4.20 There is an expectation that no additional funding is required, unless there are amendments to the Civic Centre ground floor design or external costs increase due to supply or inflationary pressures over and above the current known position.
- 4.21 These works will all contribute towards the Corporate Landlord 2023/24 savings requirement of £1.5m in achieving reduced energy and maintenance costs as well as improving the working environment for staff, members and customers and ensuring statutory compliance with health and safety and fire safety legislation.

Legal implications

- 4.22 The contracts will be tendered through the Procurement department and in line with the Council's Contract Rules. The services covered within the tenders are time constrained due to the grant funding and the interdependencies.
- 4.23 The form of contract for each of the schemes will be agreed with Legal services prior to commencement of the procurement process.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.24 The 4 contracts shall be procured as individual items, but shall be delivered in a co-ordinated programme.

- 4.25 The tendering exercise will be undertaken by the council's Procurement team using open plans tendering for the Fire alarm replacement, Civic Centre window replacement and Civic Centre ground floor refurbishment. The Heating and ventilation scheme will be tendered using a 2 stage mini competition through the approved framework as directed by the council's Procurement team.
- 4.26 Within the tender packages and mini competitions there is a Social Value question as part of the quality questions, this has a larger percentage of the scores of 10% being a third of the quality assessment scoring. This element of tender evaluation will focus on the services that the contractors can support in the local economy, environmental improvements and community pay back.
- 4.27 The evaluation criteria for the tenders is:
- Knowledge and Experience – 5%
 - Social Value – 10 %
 - Health and Safety Management – 10%
 - Planning and scheduling of works – 5%
- 4.28 Delegated authority is sought to enable the Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord & Assurance to enable the successful bidders for the four contracts to maximise the mobilisation time prior to services commencing. The timetable and service requirements would not enable a Cabinet report to be presented for each of the four contracts, this would leave the council exposed through the grant funding terms and conditions of expenditure.

Property implications

- 4.29 The property implications have been discussed throughout the report and the four contracts are deemed essential to ensure that the Civic Centre and Council House remain compliant and safe for staff and visitors. The current fire alarm and heating systems are at the end of their economic life and require increased repairs to failure of components, this has a direct impact to the work environment of staff and visitors.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.30 The heating and ventilation and window replacement contracts have a direct impact to the working conditions to staff and visitors, replacement is essential to ensure a warm and compliant work place.
- 4.31 The fire alarm contract is essential to ensure that staff and visitors to both building for safe and timely evacuation in the event of a fire. This is a statutory requirement.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.32 The Civic Centre ground floor refurbishment design has considered all persons who will utilise the service provided from the new design, this will include the revised heights for power and light outlets, adequate led lighting and dual height reception desks and counters.

- 4.33 The remaining contracts will ensure continued delivery of the service provision to staff, members and visitors as they replace the existing services and the building's exterior fabric.

Staffing implications

- 4.34 There are no HR implications.

Climate impact

- 4.35 The heating and ventilation replacement scheme will assist in the council's decarbonisation plans as the new scheme will be air source heating, this will enable for the disconnection of the existing gas supplies from the Civic Centre and Council House.
- 4.36 The replacement of the Civic Centre windows and doors will assist in the improvement of the building's heat and cooling retention, this will assist in the reduction of the required heating load required to keep the Civic Centre heated to the required level for comfort and maintain a healthy building environment.
- 4.37 The Civic Centre ground floor refurbishment will be designed with LED lighting with day light and occupancy sensors, this will ensure that the lighting environment will remain at the appropriate levels for the tasks, but also as external lighting or lack of occupancy the lighting will either reduce or switch off. This will lead to energy savings on the electricity usage and help towards the reduction of the council's carbon footprint.

Consultation

- 4.38 Consultation has been undertaken with the Procurement, Finance and Legal departments in the procurement of these contracts and comments have been included in this report. Various services have contributed towards the Civic Centre and Council House requirements through the Ways of Working group, surveys regarding service requirements and space usage and through the corporate landlord working group and board meetings.

5. Decide

5.1 Civic Centre and Council House Heating and Ventilation Replacement

Option 1 – Retain original equipment, this option would reduce the capital expenditure and reduce disruption to staff and visitors. Although due to the age and general availability of spares for the heating plant and general condition of the distribution pipework this would lead to increased levels of plant being inoperative and statutory working conditions for staff and visitors could not be assured. The maintenance costs to maintain the equipment and running cost are also increasing and the Salix funding would need to be returned due to not meeting the grant conditions in place.

Option 2 – Replace the heating and ventilation system utilising gas boilers. This solution would be more affordable to undertake. Although the Salix funding received would need to be returned as the funds are for replacing gas to non-

carbon options, thus, working towards the 2040 de-carbonisation goal would not be achieved.

Option 3 – Replace the current gas boilers in both the Civic Centre and Council house to environmentally friendly air source heating option, the awarded grant would offset over 50% of the installation costs, and as the two buildings are a prominent and large part of the Council portfolio the cost, efficiency and reputational benefits are advantageous.

5.2 Civic Centre and Council House Fire Alarm Replacement

Option 1 – Retain the existing system, this option would leave the council exposed potentially from a non-compliance to statutory regulations, as the current system in the Civic Centre is no longer supported and parts are not available. In the event of a system fault, failure or required alterations this could not be undertaken, and this would lead to a risk of life.

Option 2 – Replace the fire alarm systems with a wired solution in all areas. This option would increase the installation cost and time, it would also cause increased staff disruption. The Council House is a listed building, so cabling routes would need to be selected and all works agreed with the local conservation officer.

Option 3 – To replace both the Civic Centre and Council House fire alarms with a hybrid system, this would reduce the disruption and labour costs, the initial equipment cost is higher but this is offset by the reduced installation time. Additional benefits include more flexibility for further adaptations or alteration in the future within the wireless systems.

5.3 Civic Centre External Window Replacement

Option 1 – Retain the existing windows and undertake minor repair works only. This would be an ongoing programme, due to water leaks, broken glazing and failed double glazed units. The disadvantage to this approach would be ongoing disruption to staff and visitors, the energy efficiency of the building would not be improved and the Civic Centre appearance would be detrimental to the organisation. Additionally postponing the replacement would incur higher costs in the future.

Option 2 – Replace the glazing units only. The window frames and doors are 50 years plus in age, the frames and fixing beads are corroded and the sealing putting contains asbestos. The frames fitments are in a poor condition and leaking is causing internal damage to decorations and drafts are causing some areas of the Civic Centre to be unpleasant working environment.

Option 3 – The full replacement of windows and doors would in the long term to reduce disruption to the service delivery in the Civic Centre, improve the energy efficiency of the building. This would improve the heating requirements and the associated utility invoices. As part of the larger Civic Centre and Council House works this would enable all elements to be completed in a similar time frame, this would reduce service impact issues and reduce the ongoing maintenance for a longer period.

5.4 Civic Centre – Ground Floor Refurbishment

Option 1 – Leave unaltered

The current layout is not suitable for the envisaged area use, since the public no longer use the area as alternative arrangements have been implemented. The ground floor area was not included in the original Civic Centre refurbishment, and the services within are not in line with the energy efficient lighting across other areas. The heating and ventilation has failed and is in need of replacement. Therefore the area is currently unfit for use, remaining unused could cause poor publicity to the council in addition to wasted and costly space.

Option 2 – To refurbish the ground floor

To refurbish the Civic Centre ground floor would improve the service provision in the Registrars Service for improved weddings space and facilities, funerals and birth registrations. The current Registrars area is proposed to be converted into a Children's Service delivery area and a combined reception for the third floor, opening up additional options for the Civic Centre. Undertaking all four schemes in the same time line will reduce the staff and service disruption, and reduce external consultant costs as roles would be shared across all schemes.

6. Respond

The contracts will be awarded and confirmed as the procurement process for each tender comes to a close. All work contracts will be subject to monitoring through a range of key performance indicators and updates on progress will be provided through CMT.

7. Review

There will be monthly scheduled contract review meetings for each scheme, a combined quarterly review will also be undertaken. External project management and quantity surveying roles will be used to ensure a smooth and carefully recorded process is managed.

Background papers

None

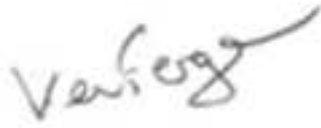
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Shaun Darcy
Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord
& Assurance

22 March 2023



Councillor Ferguson
Portfolio holder

22 March 2023

Cabinet – 22 March 2023

Proposed High Needs Local Funding Formula 2023/24 – Including an Overview of the DSG Management Plan

Portfolio: Councillor Statham - Education and Skills

Related portfolios: Councillor Bird - Leader of the Council

Service: Children's Services: Education

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 Cabinet approved the current Local High Needs Funding Formula on 16 February 2021. The formula provides a fair, needs led and child centred approach to allocating funding for school aged children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND) and was implemented from 1 April 2021.
- 1.2 This report provides Cabinet with an update for 2023/24, setting out the proposal is to increase top-up rates across all provisions i.e. mainstream primary, secondary and specialist provision (i.e. Special Schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRU's), Alternative Provision (AP) Free Schools).
- 1.3 This report also provides Cabinet with an overview of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Management Plan that has been developed to identify an estimate of future year high needs funding, anticipated costs against that and the direction of travel and actions that may be required to ensure that those costs can be supported within available funding whilst meeting the needs of Walsall children.

2. Summary

- 2.1 A revised High Needs Funding Formula was approved and implemented in 2021/22, which saw the introduction of a new bandings model to support all pupils with Education Health and Care Plans (EHCP's). This was in line with the Walsall Right 4 SEND guidance document, which was written following the formation of the High Needs Working Group working alongside SEND officers. The new bandings model is based on the different areas of primary need, which correlate to the SEND Code of Practice. The top-up rates are set out in detail in Appendix A of this report.

2.2 In line with the High Needs Operational Guidance for 2023/24, top-up rates across all provisions i.e. mainstream primary, secondary and specialist provision (i.e. Special Schools, Pupil Referral Units (PRU's), Alternative Provision (AP) Free Schools) have been increased to reflect the requirement for a Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) of 3%.

3. Recommendations

3.1 That Cabinet approves the Local High Needs Funding Formula for 2023/24 with the increased top-up rates for all provisions, as recommended by Schools Forum at their meeting on 7 March 2023.

3.2 That Cabinet notes the work that has been undertaken to develop the Dedicated Schools Grant Management Plan, the position that this identifies and direction of travel and actions that will be required, and that this plan will be subject to ongoing (at least annual) review and update and in-year reporting.

4. Report detail – know

4.1 Background

4.1.1 The High Needs Funding Formula is the local process that is utilised to allocate the High Needs Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding that the Council receives, to the providers of support to children with additional needs in the Borough of Walsall.

4.1.2 A full review of the High Needs Funding Formula, supporting financial data and guidance was undertaken during 2020/21 by a working group of Schools Forum (which also included full consultation with all schools affected). This led to the introduction of a new formula in April 2021 which included a new banding model and publication of a 'Walsall Rights 4 SEND' guidance document in support of that.

4.1.3 The High Needs Working Group continued its work during 2021/22, which focussed on supporting the implementation of the revised formula, and 2022/23 where it started work to look at other areas of SEND with a view to potentially recommending future changes, for example, Early Years High Needs Funding, Post 16 High Needs Funding and ARP / PRU funding, however this work is still ongoing and no formal recommendations have been identified for inclusion in the formula for 2023/24.

4.1.4 The only changes that are therefore proposed for 2023/24 are those formally required by the High Needs block regulations and guidance – which are set out below.

Minimum Funding Guarantee

High Needs guidance for 2023/24 requires that a Minimum Funding Guarantee (MFG) of +3% is applied to specialist provision (i.e. Special Schools, PRU's, AP Free Schools etc) using 2021/22 rates as the baseline. The revised rates, incorporating this requirement, are set out at Appendix A.

This requirement does not apply within the High Needs Funding Formula to mainstream schools, therefore rates set out in Appendix A for these schools for 2023/24 are at the same levels as 2022/23. However the Department for Education (DfE) have provided additional funding to mainstream schools for 2023/24 to support with inflationary pressures with both the core schools block funding within DSG seeing a significant increase and the provision of specific additional grant funding for these schools for both 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Passthrough of Additional Grant funding

A new one off Additional Grant for special schools, pupil referral units and AP free schools has also been provided to the authority for 2023/24. The conditions associated with this require the funding to be used to provide an allocation equivalent to 3.4% per place, based on place funding of £10,000 per place plus the average top-up funding for a pupil placement in financial year 2022/23.

The Additional Grant funding allocation is required to be paid as a separate allocation to place and top-up funding in 2023/24. There is also a requirement to consult on the proposed allocation with all schools affected, and this consultation has been carried out prior to reporting the proposal in this report. Final proposed Additional Grant allocations are set out at Appendix A.

4.2 DSG Management Plan

- 4.2.1 Nationally a significant number of authorities are experiencing difficulties managing the increasing demand for high needs support against the funding that is available within the High Needs block of DSG. This has resulted in financial pressures for those authorities and the need to develop DSG Management Plans to set out how a financially viable position will be achieved over the medium term.
- 4.2.2 Whilst Walsall has also seen an increase in demand for these services, it has to date been able to effectively manage those increases within the totality of High Needs funding that has been available to it.
- 4.2.3 However given the national position, the ongoing increase in demand expected in Walsall, and the fact that the DfE have confirmed that the statutory override (which differentiates DSG funding from other council funding, meaning at present any overspends on DSG do not need to be funded from other council resources) will be removed at the end of the 2025/26 financial year, there is now a requirement for Walsall to also develop and maintain a DSG Management plan. As such work has been undertaken during 2022/23 to develop the baseline for the plan which can then continue to be updated going forward.
- 4.2.4 In summary a DSG Management plan covers a rolling 5 year period (current financial year plus the next 4 financial years) and sets out the estimated High Needs funding that the authority will receive over that period, the likely demand for high needs support and estimated cost of providing that, and whether that is affordable within the funding that will be available. Where it is not affordable actions to mitigate this position need to be identified and implemented.

4.2.5 The approach used to develop a DSG Management plan for Walsall is set out below.

4.2.5i Estimated High Needs Funding

The actual allocation of funding for the current year, 2022/23, has already been confirmed by the DfE. Additionally the allocation for the next year, 2023/24, has now been confirmed by the DfE.

In relation to 2024/25 the potential funding available has been estimated based on the recent spending review announcement which identified additional investment in to high needs nationally for both 2023/24 and 2024/25.

Finally for the last 2 years of the plan, 2025/26 and 2026/27, an increase in funding of 3% per year has been assumed – this would represent a significant reduction in increases in funding seen in 2023/24 and 2024/25 (circa 50% lower), but the estimate is based on current direction from the DfE as no funding announcements have yet been made for these years.

4.2.5ii Review of expected demand

To understand potential demand on the High Needs block the SEN team and Children’s data team undertook a joint review of historic SEN data to seek to identify the expected level of Education Health & Care Plan (EHCP) assessments that are estimated to be requested each year, over the 5 year DSG Management Plan period, and of those (again based on historic performance) the amount that would then be formally issued an EHCP.

This exercise showed an estimated increase of 699 children with EHCP’s over the DSG Management Plan period, as summarised below:

Provision Type	Additional EHCP Numbers				
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	Total
Mainstream Schools	73	78	83	88	322
Specialist provision in Mainstream Schools (Additionally Resourced Provision – ARP, or Special Resource Provision - SRP)	30	38	50	66	184
Special Schools	53	40	36	26	155
Independent / Further Education / Out Of Borough	22	16	0	0	39
Total	178	172	169	181	699

Aligned to the council’s Walsall Right for Children strategy, where Walsall Council’s corporate vision is that ‘Inequalities are reduced, and all potential is maximised’, and that access to education for children and young people with special educational needs and / or disabilities (SEND) is provided in the setting that best meets those needs, and aligned to the SEND Code of Practice and general presumption in law that mainstream education is the assumed starting position for all children, including children with SEND, the largest areas of expected growth in EHCP demand over the DSG Management Plan period are concentrated in mainstream schools and / or specialist provision within mainstream schools (such as ARP’s and SRP’s), with lower demand for increases in places expected in special schools.

Whilst a number of ARP's (which are in summary stand alone facilities within mainstream schools to support children with additional needs) have been established in Walsall for some time SRPs (which is a model where children's time is blended between both the main educational provision of the school and also a stand alone facility) have not historically been utilised. However given the estimated increases in EHCP demand and expectation that this growth will be focussed in mainstream settings, work has started with Walsall schools during 2022/23 to begin to develop SRP's, with a small number of schools already piloting these.

In terms of special schools specifically the overall number of new children with EHCP's assumed to require a place in specialist provision between 2022/23 and 2026/27 was 782, however to identify the net number of additional places that will be required in special schools (the 155 set out above) the following areas were taken in to account:

Reconciliation of additional special school places	
Total number of new children with EHCP's requiring a specialist place – 2022/23 – 2026/27	782
Less new places already created from September 2022	(107)
Less expected special school leavers (children turning 16 or 18/19) – 2022/23 – 2026/27	(336)
Less assumed creation of Specialist provision in Mainstream Schools	(184)
Net additional special school places required – 2023/24-2026/27	155

4.2.5iii Review of Potential Wider Areas of Cost Increase

Whilst the authority already holds details of the average cost to support children with EHCP's in different settings, and these have been applied to the expected increase in demand to estimate likely costs each year, a further piece of work was also undertaken to understand any further potential areas of cost increase across the DSG Management Plan period. This identified the following:

a. Top Up Rates –

Top Up rates are units of funding paid to education providers to meet the needs of children with EHCP's. To take account of increases in costs for providers between years a proportion of any increase in total High Needs funding is normally required to be allocated to increase top up rates each year (rather than purely being available to support increases in demand).

The minimum increases in top up values required each year are set by the DfE (via the Minimum Funding Guarantee mechanism), and at present these have only been confirmed for 2023/24 (and the detail in relation to that is included in the first part of this report that focusses on the High Needs Funding Formula for 2023/24). As such an assumption has been included within the DSG Management Plan that there will be a requirement to increase top up rates by 3% per year for the period 2024/25 – 2026/27.

b. Looked After Children (LAC) Specialist Education Provision Costs -

Whilst it is a very small cohort, therefore more difficult to understand the potential growth in numbers going forward, there are a small number of

Looked After Children that require very high cost specialist education provision each year and the costs required by providers for that have continued to see an increase. As such a further increase in this area of £100k per year (based on review of historic increases in spend over the last 5 years), for each year within the DSG Management Plan, has also been included.

4.2.5iv Summary of Key Assumptions

For ease, as summary of the key assumptions included within the DSG Management Plan (in terms of expected funding and expected demand) is included at **Appendix B**.

4.3 **DSG Management Plan Summary Financial Position**

The DSG Management Plan guidelines require the preparation of both an unmitigated position summary (given the assumptions set out above what would the financial position each year be without any further action), and a mitigated position (which identifies a number of potential areas of action and summarises the revised financial position if those actions are implemented). A summary of both positions is set out below, with a more detailed overview provided at **Appendix C**.

DSG Management Plan Unmitigated Position				
Year	DSG High Needs Block Estimated Income (£m)	DSG High Needs Block Estimated Expenditure (£m)	DSG High Needs Block Variance	
			In Year (Surplus) / Deficit (£m)	Cumulative (Surplus) / Deficit (£m)
2022/23	(49.143)	49.143	0.000	0.000
2023/24	(55.826)	54.091	(1.735)	(1.735)
2024/25	(59.144)	56.953	(0.456)	(2.191)
2025/26	(60.918)	60.180	1.453	(0.738)
2026/27	(62.748)	65.593	3.583	2.845

In summary, there is no pressure currently forecast for the 2022/23 financial year, and as expected increases in high needs funding for 2023/24 and 2024/25 are at a higher level (based on October 2022 spending review announcements) these are able to keep pace with the expected increases in demand and costs against the high needs block, so there are also no pressures identified for those years – with in-year surpluses estimated which will be used to support later years in the plan.

However from 2025/26 onwards, where no funding announcements have yet been made for these years and the DfE have directed an assumed increase in funding of 3% per year (circa 50% lower than that expected for 2024/25) then the expected increases in demand and costs for those years are not manageable within the estimated funding, leading to an in year overspend of £1.453m during 2025/26 and a further £3.583m during 2026/27, and resulting in a cumulative overspend across the management plan period of £2.845m.

DSG Management Plan Mitigated Position				
Year	DSG High Needs Block Estimated Income (£m)	DSG High Needs Block Estimated Expenditure (£m)	DSG High Needs Block Variance	
			In Year (Surplus) / Deficit (£m)	Cumulative (Surplus) / Deficit (£m)
2022/23	(49.143)	49.143	0.000	0.000
2023/24	(55.826)	54.091	(1.735)	(1.735)
2024/25	(59.144)	56.953	(0.456)	(2.191)
2025/26	(60.918)	58.848	0.121	(2.070)
2026/27	(62.748)	62.611	1.932	(0.138)

Only one change has been incorporated in to the mitigated plan shown above at present, which is to amend the assumed increase to top up rates for 2025/26 and 2026/27 and for those years rather than estimating a 3% increase to top up rates for all areas the mitigated model assumes that the underlying funding formula that drives top up rates is reviewed (similar to the review that was carried out during 2021/22) and top ups are only increased for targeted areas (based on underlying costs of supporting children in different settings) – resulting in an average 1% increase in top up rate costs overall.

This model would require work in the period ahead of 2025/26 to review the underlying formula and identify, with a high needs working group of Schools Forum (supported by the SEN team and education finance officers), the areas where changes to rates should be targeted, alongside then a full consultation with all schools ahead of any decision to set the formula for 2025/26 onwards – and dependent on the outcome of that process may also require approval from the secretary of state.

However whilst the result of that one change (achieving average top up rates of 1% rather than 3% for 2025/26 and 2026/27) would achieve a cumulative balanced position across the management plan period it would still result in a large in year pressure in 2026/27, of £1.932m, that needs further action to address on an ongoing basis otherwise it will lead to a cumulative overspend on ongoing basis when the plan is rolled forward by another year at the next update.

The plan does show that there is time to consider and deliver further changes during 2023/24 and 2024/25, whilst no financial pressures are estimated, and to support this a range of other action plan areas have been identified and are set out in detail at **Appendix D**. These actions will be subject to further development and the relevant lead officer and initial timescale for development has also been identified in the appendix.

Updates to the Plan

Both the DSG Management Plan summary, and development and delivery of mitigating actions, will be subject to ongoing (at least annual) review and update of both the financial position and assumptions, with in-year reporting to Schools Forum and Cabinet also taking place.

5. Council Plan Priorities

- 5.1 This work relates to the Council Plan Priorities for Children (Ch2 - The gaps in educational attainment between the least and most deprived communities will be narrowed for all under achieving groups). Specifically, the allocation of High Needs Funding should ensure that children identified as having SEND have the right support at the right time to ensure they access their entitlement to a full time education and can make good academic progress and achieve their potential.

6. Risk management

- 6.1 The financial modelling in support of the DSG Management Plan is based on a number of assumptions from the Data and SEN Teams to model future needs. There is a risk that the actual outcome may be different to that modelled and a number of actions to manage the risk associated with this are set out in **Appendix D**.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 In terms of the proposed high needs funding formula for 2023/24, this is estimated to be affordable within the totality of funding that is available within the High Needs Block of DSG that is paid to the authority.
- 7.2 With regard to the DSG Management Plan the position that has been developed identifies that, due to estimated higher increases in funding in 2023/24 and 2024/25 that there will be underspends in these years that can be carried forward to support the later years of the plan. However without further action (as funding increases are currently assumed to reduce in 2025/26 and 2026/27) there will be both an in-year pressure of £3.583m and cumulative pressure of £2.845m by the end of 2026/27.
- 7.3 As such a range of mitigating actions has been identified to address this and development and delivery of these, alongside ongoing updates to the DSG Management Plan summary overall will be subject to ongoing (at least annual) review and update, with in-year reporting to Schools Forum and Cabinet also taking place.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The Department for Education (DfE) has prescribed the way in which schools should be financed for the 2023/24 financial year. These guidelines are set out in the Schools Revenue Funding 2023 to 2024 operational guide. The purpose of these arrangements is to help secure greater consistency in the way in which high needs funding is distributed to schools. The Council is bound to adhere to the rules issued by DfE

9. Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 9.1 There are no procurement/social value implications arising from the proposals in this report.

10. Property implications

10.1 There are no property implications arising from the proposals in this report.

11. Health and wellbeing implications

11.1 The expectation remains that the current model for High Needs Funding will support the Marmot objectives of:

- Give every child the best start in life
- Enable all children, young people and adults to maximise their capabilities and have control over their lives

11.2 This will be achieved by ensuring that the approach to funding ensure children have access to the right support at the right time to promote their development, educational outcomes and prepare them for adulthood.

12. Staffing implications

12.1 There are no staffing implications arising from the proposals in this report.

13. Reducing inequalities

13.1 A full Equality Impact Assessment was completed as part of the complete review and update of the High Needs Funding Formula in 2020/21 and the content has been reviewed in line with the changes proposed in this report which has confirmed that it remains current.

13.2 The overall aim of the model is to ensure a fair and equitable approach to the allocation of High Needs Funding. This will reduce inequalities and ensure that children with SEND have access to the provision required to meet their needs, ensure access to their entitlement to fulltime education and to address the gap in outcomes between those with SEND and those without.

14. Climate change

14.1 There are no climate change implications arising from proposals in this report.

15. Consultation

15.1 Consultation has been undertaken with both representatives of the ongoing School Forum led High Needs funding formula review sub group and also with Schools Forum themselves at their meeting on 7 March 2023, with them recommending the proposed local high needs funding formula to Cabinet. Additionally consultation was undertaken with all special schools, pupil referral units and AP free schools with regard to the allocation of the Additional Grant funding.

16. Decide

16.1 Cabinet are asked to review and approve the proposed Local High Needs Funding Formula for 2023/24, and associated DSG Management Plan.

17. Respond

17.1 Once approved by Cabinet the Local High Needs Funding Formula for 2023/24 will be communicated with schools, alongside the provision of indicative high needs budget allocations for special schools and Pupil Referral Units, which will be used to inform each school in setting their budget for the year.

18. Review

18.1 The approach to High Needs funding will be subject to an annual review by an identified sub group of Schools Forum. The allocation of funding will be reviewed alongside an analysis of the changing need reported through the SEN audit process and pupil place planning. The DSG Management Plan will be subject to ongoing (at least annual) review and update and in-year reporting.

Background papers

Walsall Right 4 SEND guidance document

Schools Forum report 7 March 2023

High Needs Funding 2023/24 Operational Guidance

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Sally Rowe
Executive Director Childrens and Customer
02.03.2023



Councillor Statham
Portfolio holder Education & Skills
09.03.2023

APPENDIX A

Proposed High Needs Top-up Rates 2023/24

SEND Band	Special Schools High Needs Top-up Rates 2023/24 £	Mainstream Schools High Needs Top-up Rates 2023/24 £
SEMH Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	n/a	n/a
SEMH Band 4	n/a	4,181
SEMH Band 5	n/a	6,847
SEMH Band 6	17,100	10,392
SEMH Band 7	22,217	17,075
C&L Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	n/a	n/a
C&L Band 4	n/a	3,095
C&L Band 5	n/a	4,611
C&L Band 6	6,373	11,800
C&L Band 7	14,935	15,312
C&L Band 8	25,853	20,388
SLCN Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	n/a	n/a
SLCN Band 4	n/a	3,326
SLCN Band 5	n/a	6,891
HI Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	n/a	n/a
HI Band 4	n/a	4,611
HI Band 5	n/a	6,847
HI Band 6	10,503	9,923
HI Band 7	14,936	14,471
VI Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	n/a	n/a
VI Band 4	n/a	5,375
VI Band 5	n/a	8,407
VI Band 6	n/a	15,006
VI Band 7	n/a	17,432
MSI Band 1,2 & 3 – funded by school budget	n/a	n/a
MSI Band 4	n/a	6,216
MSI Band 5	n/a	10,764
MSI Band 6	21,630	16,643
MSI Band 7	36,990	18,159
Physical Band 1,2&3 – funded by school budget	n/a	n/a
Physical Band 4	n/a	3,791
Physical Band 5	n/a	6,745
Physical Band 6	20,512	13,718

Physical Band 7	24,150	18,432
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Small Special School Top-up:

A top-up to be applied only to specials schools with less than 50 pupils to support fixed costs.

Small special school	£1,948 per pupil pro rata to week attending
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Top-Up Rate for Pupil Referral Units:

	PRU Top-up rate 2023/24 £ pa
New Leaf	10,255
Shepwell	8,933

Top-Up Rates for Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) / Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) in Mainstream Schools – 2023/24 for places filled on October 2022 census:

	ARP Top-up rates 2023/24 for Filled places £ pa
Speech & Language -primary	3,171
Speech & Language -secondary	1,441
Dyslexia - secondary	1,436
Visual Impaired - primary	14,380
Physical Disability - primary	10,022
Physical Disability - secondary	8,291
Autism - primary	9,832
Autism - secondary	8,102

Top-Up Rates for Additionally Resourced Provision (ARP) / Specialist Resource Provision (SRP) in Mainstream Schools – 2023/24 for places unfilled on October 2022 census:

	ARP Top-up rates 2023/24 for Un-Filled places £ pa
Speech & Language -primary	2,909
Speech & Language -secondary	2,909
Dyslexia - secondary	2,904
Visual Impaired - primary	14,118
Physical Disability - primary	9,760
Physical Disability - secondary	9,760

Autism - primary	9,570
Autism - secondary	9,570

Teachers' Pay & Pension historic costs – rates for Alternative Provision Free Schools

Funding	Period	Rate per place
Teachers' Pay	April to August	£72.91
	September to March	£102.08
Teachers' Pension	April to August	£202.06
	September to March	£282.89

Payments will be based on the actual published place number for the relevant period, less any places already being paid by the authority via top-up.

Additional Funding for Special Schools, Pupil Referrals Unit and AP Free Schools

School Name	Additional Grant Funding 2023/24 £
Specials:	
Castle	132,425
Elmwood	75,477
Jane Lane	107,730
Mary Elliot	140,889
Oakwood	130,619
Old Hall	101,113
Phoenix	41,341
PRU's:	
New Leaf	29,498
Shepwell	38,467
AP Free School:	
The Ladder School	30,302
Total	827,861

APPENDIX B

Summary of DSG Management Plan Key Assumptions

Plan Area	Assumption
Funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2022/23 – based on confirmed allocation• 2023/24 – based on confirmed allocation• 2024/25 – based on estimated allocation taking account of the October 2022 spending review and indicative increases in high needs funding nationally• 2025/26 and 2026/27 – based on an assumed 3% increase in funding per year (in line with direction from DfE for planning purposes)
Demand	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mainstream schools – increase in demand of 322 children with EHCPs between 2023/24 and 2026/27• Specialist provision in Mainstream Schools – increase in demand of 184 children with EHCPs between 2023/24 and 2026/27• Special Schools – Net increase in places required of 339 children with EHCPs between 2023/24 and 2026/27• Independent / Further Education / Out Of Borough - increase in demand of 39 children with EHCPs between 2023/24 and 2026/27
Costs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Top Up Increases – Assumed at 3% per year 2024/25 – 2026/27• LAC Specialist Education Provision Costs – Assumed increase of £100k per year

DSG Management Plan Detailed Summaries

DSG Management Plan Unmitigated Position														
Year	Place Numbers						Income			Expenditure			Variance	
	Mainstream	Special	ARP/SRP	PRU/AP	Independent FE College	Total	HNB Allocation before Deductions (£m)	HNB Deductions (£m)	HNB Allocation after Deductions (£m)	EHCP Led (£m)	Non EHCP (£m)	Total (£m)	In year (Surplus)/ Deficit (£m)	Cumulative (Surplus)/ Deficit (£m)
2022/23	1164	876	83	158	612	2892	(50.713)	1.570	(49.143)	42.775	6.368	49.143	0.000	0.000
2023/24	1236	928	113	158	634	3071	(57.398)	1.572	(55.826)	47.187	6.904	54.091	(1.735)	(1.735)
2024/25	1314	969	151	158	651	3242	(60.841)	1.698	(59.144)	51.659	5.293	56.953	(0.456)	(2.191)
2025/26	1397	1004	201	158	651	3411	(62.752)	1.834	(60.918)	55.219	4.961	60.180	1.453	(0.738)
2026/27	1485	1031	267	158	651	3592	(64.729)	1.980	(62.748)	59.053	6.540	65.593	3.583	2.845

DSG Management Plan Mitigated Position														
Year	Place Numbers						Income			Expenditure			Variance	
	Mainstream	Special	ARP/SRP	PRU/AP	Independent FE College	Total	HNB Allocation before Deductions (£m)	HNB Deductions (£m)	HNB Allocation after Deductions (£m)	EHCP Led (£m)	Non EHCP (£m)	Total (£m)	In year (Surplus)/ Deficit (£m)	Cumulative (Surplus)/ Deficit (£m)
2022/23	1164	876	83	158	612	2892	(50.713)	1.570	(49.143)	42.775	6.368	49.143	0.000	0.000
2023/24	1236	928	113	158	634	3071	(57.398)	1.572	(55.826)	47.187	6.904	54.091	(1.735)	(1.735)
2024/25	1314	969	151	158	651	3242	(60.841)	1.698	(59.144)	51.659	5.293	56.953	(0.456)	(2.191)
2025/26	1397	1004	201	158	651	3411	(62.752)	1.834	(60.918)	53.887	4.961	58.848	0.121	(2.070)
2026/27	1485	1031	267	158	651	3592	(64.729)	1.980	(62.748)	57.403	5.208	62.611	1.932	(0.138)

Summary of DSG Management Plan Mitigating Action Areas

DSG Management Plan Mitigating Action Areas				
Ref.	Action	Description	Lead	Initial Timescale
DMP1	Refresh and update of estimated increases in demand	Annual refresh of estimated future year demand for EHCP's.	SEN team and Childrens Data Team	Annually
DMP2	Lobby government for sustained increases to high needs funding	Liaison with Schools Forum and Cabinet / Council to seek support to formally lobby the government for sustained increases to high needs funding in 2025/26 and 2026/27 (and beyond).	Director Access & Inclusion	During 2024/25 (to inform next spending review)
DMP3	Review of High Needs Funding formula	Detailed review of high needs funding formula ahead of 2025/26 financial year to seek to identify and develop targeted increases to top up rates (rather than blanket 3% increase) – including formal consultation process.	High Needs working group of Schools Forum	During 2024/25
DMP4	Continued development of SRP's	Continued work with mainstream schools to establish further SRP places required to meet expected demand.	Head of Access	Ongoing as part of Capital Programme
DMP5	Creation of additional special school places	Continued work with special schools to establish further places required to meet expected demand.	Head of Access	Ongoing as part of Capital Programme
DMP6	Review of assumed increases in Independent / FE / OOB	Work to reduce current assumed increases in demand for Independent / Further Education / Out Of Borough places by seeking to support more of those children within the borough where possible.	Head of Access	Ongoing as part of DMP8
DMP7	Identify the qualitative impact of	There is currently a significant proportion of central high needs funding	Head of Inclusion and	During 2023/24 and 2024/25

	central inclusion and Early Years High Needs work	allocated to both early years high needs support and also inclusion support, in addition to top up funding paid directly to providers. However there is little qualitative information available at present to confirm the impact that this funding delivers (e.g. does it reduce the number of children who require ongoing EHCP support). Qualitative information will therefore be developed further to seek to understand if this spend delivers value for money or if there is a need to redirect this funding elsewhere within the high needs block.	Specialist Services Manager	
DMP8	Continued communication of direction of travel and vision of support for children with special educational needs and / or disabilities	Seek continued communication of the direction of travel and vision and increased buy in from schools and parents so that the expectation is that children are supported within Walsall in the setting that best meets their needs rather than an escalation to more expensive specialist provision or independent / out of borough placements.	Head of Access	During 2023/24 and 2024/25
DMP9	Review mechanism for independent place costs	The costs of supporting children in independent schools (whilst a small cohort of children) is on average higher than other settings and as it is not expected that children currently in these places will move, the authority needs to ensure it has a robust process in place to review existing costs on an ongoing basis to ensure it continues to receive value for money.	Children's Commissioning Team and Head of Inclusion	Starting in 2023/24 and ongoing across the management plan period
DMP10	Potential transfer of funding from other DSG areas	DSG guidance does allow the authority to seek to transfer up to 0.5% of the Schools Block funding of DSG (the funding that mainstream schools receive	Director Access & Inclusion	Not assumed to be required at present if other actions are delivered – will be

		<p>to provide support to all children in mainstream settings) to the High Needs block to support with pressures in that area.</p> <p>Based on the Schools Block allocation for 2023/24 this would equate to circa £1.324m per year, but to date the authority has not sought to use this flexibility, as it has not been needed and also as it would result in a financial impact (reduced funding) for mainstream schools.</p> <p>However if there is limited progress / support with the delivery of DMP4 and DMP8 then the authority may need to review the need to utilise a transfer of funding.</p>	<p>reviewed across the management plan period alongside delivery of wider actions</p>
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Cabinet – 22 March 2023

Proposed Early Years Funding Formula for two, three & four years olds - 2023/24

Portfolio: Councillor M. Statham - Education and Skills

Related portfolios: Councillor Bird - Leader of the Council

Service: Children's Services: Education

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

1.1 The Early Years funding formula is the local process that is utilised (informed by national early years funding guidance) to allocate the Early Years block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) funding that the Council receives to the early years providers in Walsall.

2. Summary

2.1 Central Government, in line with the commitment set out in its manifesto document, introduced an Early Years National Funding Formula (EYNFF) in April 2017 which was to deliver affordable, flexible and high quality childcare for all parents and children via a funding system which is fair for providers and local authorities.

2.2 Early Years Block of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) is paid to local authorities, who have a statutory duty to ensure sufficient early years places are available to meet the requirements in their area, and this funding is then paid by the local authority to providers based on the actual number of hours of funded childcare that is delivered.

2.3 In England all children aged 3 and 4 are currently entitled to 570 hours of funded childcare per year (normally provided as 15 hours per week over the 38 week school year). Additionally the 2017 funding reforms expanded provision for 3 and 4 year old to include a 30 hour entitlement for working parents.

2.4 A further element of the EYNFF is funding of free entitlement for disadvantaged 2 years olds. Unlike funding for 3 and 4 year olds, which must be allocated via a local early years funding formula, local authorities are encouraged to fund providers on the basis of a flat hourly rate.

2.5 Early Years Funding operational guidance sets out the funding factors permitted within the local funding formula for early years and the requirement of a 95% pass-

through of funding to early years providers, thereby limiting the amount of funding that can be retained by the local authority to fund central expenditure on early years entitlement to a maximum of 5%.

- 2.6 As the early years local funding formula will result in the Local Authority allocating funds to individual schools, and those schools utilising this for expenditure which will be significant (greater than £500,000), the approval of the formula is a key decision

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet approves the local Early Years Funding Formula (**Appendix A**) recommended by Walsall's Schools Forum at their meeting on 7th March 2023, with the exception of the Maintained Nursery Schools Supplementary funding that is subject to the recommendation in paragraph 3.2.
- 3.2 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills to agree the final allocation methodology within the totality of Maintained Nursery Schools Supplementary funding that will be available.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 For 2023/24 local authorities are required to set a local Early Years Funding Formula for mainstream schools, nursery schools and private/voluntary early years providers.
- 4.2 The agreed Early Years Funding Formula rates will be used to determine a budget share for all early years providers for 2023/24.

Proposed Early Years Funding Formula

- 4.3 Operational guidance sets out the funding factors that are permitted within the early years local funding formula, these include a universal hourly base rate, a mandatory deprivation factor, discretionary supplements and additional funding in respect of maintained nursery schools.
- 4.4 Table 1 therefore sets out the proposed areas of the local Early Years Funding Formula (EYFF), highlighting the estimated cost of each area to be funded from the indicative allocation of £22.774m of Early Years Block Funding of the DSG that will be received in 2023/24, with a narrative describing each area set out below the table.
- 4.5 It should be noted that Early Years allocations are revised throughout the year as they are in the main based on an estimate of hours that will be provided and final funding is then updated based on actual hours delivered in year.

Table 1 – Proposed Early Years Expenditure	
Provision	Estimated Cost against Early Years Block of DSG for 2023/24 (£m)
Universal and additional hours for 3 and 4 year olds	16.236
Deprivation Supplement	0.147
Entitlement hours for 2 year olds	3.734
Maintained Nursery Schools Supplement (MNSS)	1.632
Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)	0.295
Disability Access Fund (DAF)	0.140
SEN Inclusion Fund (SENIF) 3&4 years olds	0.070
SEN Inclusion Fund (SENIF) 2 years olds	0.020
Central expenditure on early years entitlement	0.500
Total	22.774

Universal and additional hours for 3 and 4 year olds

- 4.6 The operational guidance includes a requirement to pay a universal hourly base rate to all early years' providers for the provision of free entitlement hours for 3 & 4 year olds. The universal hourly base rate must, in all cases, be multiplied by the hours of attendance of children at each setting – up to a maximum of 570 hours of funded childcare per year (or a maximum of 1140 hours for those children eligible for the additional offer for working parents).
- 4.7 It should be noted that during 2022/23 a separate grant was paid to the local authority and passed on maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools for additional costs relating to teachers pay and pension changes (known as TPPG – Teachers Pay and Pension Grant). However from 2023/24 that funding has been rolled in to the general 3 and 4 year old funding within the Early Years block of DSG, and given the requirement to utilise a universal hourly rate which is payable to all providers it is no longer possible to direct this element of former TPPG funding just to certain settings (i.e. maintained nursery schools and nursery classes in primary schools), and there are no other allowable factors through which such funding could be distributed.
- 4.8 As such this required change will have a direct financial impact on those settings who previously received the separate TPPG funding in 2022/23, as the costs that the former grant were meant to fund will continue but the stand alone funding to support those costs has been removed and incorporated into the universal 3 and 4 year old hourly rate.
- 4.9 To therefore seek to reduce this impact as much as possible it is proposed that the full increase in 3 and 4 year old hourly rate funding that the authority receives is passported in totality within the universal hourly rate paid to 3 and 4 year old providers for 2023/24.

Deprivation Supplement

- 4.10 Deprivation is a mandatory supplement local authorities must use in their Early Years Funding Formula to recognise deprivation in their area. Operational guidance does not set out how funding for deprivation is to be allocated and this is determined locally.
- 4.11 The proposed Walsall local EYFF allocates deprivation funding on the number of children recorded on prior year January census and headcount, whose postcode falls within band A of the Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI).

Entitlement hours for 2 year olds

- 4.12 As with 3 & 4 year old funding, the funding for disadvantaged 2 year olds is paid on the basis of a flat hourly base rate.
- 4.13 Unlike the funding requirements for 3 & 4 year olds, there is no regulatory pass through rate in respect of early years block funding for 2 year olds and similarly there are no requirements in respect of mandatory or discretionary supplements.

Maintained Nursery Schools Supplement

- 4.14 This represents an element of additional funding for maintained nursery schools, known as the Maintained Nursery Schools Supplement (MNSS).
- 4.15 In previous years formulas a set funding value (which did not then move throughout the year) was paid to the local authority and was allocated to maintained nursery schools as a lump sum allocation, which increased in value based on the capacity of each maintained nursery school.
- 4.16 From 2023/24 the funding for this supplement that is paid to local authorities has changed to ensure that it is being shared more evenly across all local authorities with MNSS, and the DFE, following consultation, have now introduced a minimum value and a cap value on the hourly funding rate that local authorities can receive for their MNSS and which can then be allocated to maintained nursery schools. In 2023/24, the minimum hourly rate is £3.80 and the cap has been set at £10 per hour.
- 4.17 The allocated funding to local authorities will be based on an estimate of hours to be provided by maintained nursery schools, and unlike in previous years the final value paid to the local authority will vary based on the actual number of hours provided. As such the authority cannot continue to retain a static lump sum MNSS allocation (as funding will not be static) and the way in which MNSS funding is allocated has to change.
- 4.18 The local EYFF therefore originally proposed that for 2023/24 the full allocation that the authority receives for MNSS funding, of £3.80 per hour, is also utilised as the basis for allocating the MNSS funding i.e. the full value received will be passed on to maintained nursery schools based on the actual number of hours provided – if the number of hours increases the funding allocated to the local authority and then paid to the setting will also increase, and if the number of hours reduces so will the funding.

- 4.19 Whilst Schools Forum at their meeting on 7 March 2023 did support the early years funding formula as set out in Appendix A, that was with the exception of the original proposed methodology for distributing the Maintained Nursery Schools Supplementary funding (as set out in 4.18 above). Schools Forum recommended further work is undertaken with nursery school head teachers directly to model alternative options for the distribution of the Maintained Nursery Schools Supplementary funding in a different way to that proposed in paragraph 4.18 above, providing this remains within the totality of the funding that will be available, and recommended that Cabinet delegate authority to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills to agree the final allocation methodology.
- 4.20 Financial modelling of the original proposal set out in paragraph 4.18 indicated that there may be one maintained nursery school that would see a significant adverse impact from this change (of circa £35k per year), and that would not be offset by the increase in 3 and 4 year old universal funding proposed above (where that same school would potentially see a reduction compared to 2022/23 due to the fall out of TPPG funding of circa £20k i.e. a potential total adverse impact on that school for 2023/24 of circa £55k). However the additional work with nursery head teachers now being recommended will look at different models to allocate this funding which may alter the final allocation and the originally identified impact.
- 4.21 If the outcome of that further work does not materially change the originally modelled impact the authority will work with the nursery concerned to identify relevant actions that may now need to be implemented to ensure continued viability and provision of the places for Walsall children and families.

Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)

- 4.22 The Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP) gives early year providers additional funding to support disadvantaged 3 and 4 year old pupils who are in receipt of the universal 15 hours entitlement and are in receipt of any one of the benefits criteria detailed in Early Years Operational Guidance.

Disability Access Fund (DAF)

- 4.23 The Disability Access Funds (DAF) was introduced to support disabled 3 & 4 year old children accessing their early years free entitlement. DAF funds can be used, for example, to support providers in making reasonable adjustments to their settings.

Central Expenditure on Early Years Entitlement

- 4.24 As set out in 3.5, the maximum amount of funding that can be retained centrally is 5% of the early years block. The £500k retained budget, equating to 2.2% (a reduction from 2.4% in 2022/23) was approved by Schools Forum at their meeting on 17th January 2023 and reflects the cost of providing central services in support of the early years entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds.

Special Education Needs Inclusion Fund

- 4.25 In addition to the funding areas shown in table 1, there is a requirement for local authorities to operate a Special Educational Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) for 3 & 4 year olds with SEN who are taking up free entitlement.
- 4.26 SENIF for 2 year olds is not a funding requirement, however local authorities can choose to establish a fund as part of their provision should they wish to do so and an agreement to fund SENIF for eligible 2 year olds as part of Walsall's early years provision is in place.
- 4.27 SENIF is to be used to target children with lower or emerging SEN. Children with more complex needs and those in receipt of an education, health and care plan will continue to be funded via the high needs block of the DSG.

Detailed Funding Factor Values

- 4.28 Appendix A below confirms the proposed funding factors and their values for the 2023/24 Early Years Funding Formula.
- 4.29 It should be noted that the early years guidance also permits a number of additional discretionary supplements including rurality; quality; flexibility and English as a second language, however none of these permitted discretionary supplements feature in the proposed Early Years Funding Formula.

5. Council Plan priorities

- 5.1 The Council's Plan 2022-25 sets out the Council's purpose along with the priorities, with the aim of reducing inequalities and maximising potential. Ensuring that a local EYFF that is seen as equitable and is transparent to those who have been consulted with, such as Schools Forum, when setting the formula directly links to the Council's priorities for outcomes linked to education and enabling children to have the best possible start.

6. Risk management

- 6.1 Individual settings may see movements in the actual funds that are paid to them where the numbers of children taking up entitlement, have changed. Settings will, as they always have done, need to manage these changes within their overall funding. Where the impact of that is significant for any individual school the authority will work with the school concerned to provide support in managing that.

7. Financial implications

- 7.1 The exact financial impact on individual providers cannot be predicted at this time as this will be dependent on actual hours of funded childcare that are delivered during 2023/24. The original financial modelling indicated that there may be one maintained nursery school that will see a significant adverse impact from the changes proposed to the funding formula (mainly as a result of the proposed changes to the allocation of MNSS funding). Ongoing work with nursery head teachers is therefore recommended in this report to look at other allocation methodologies. If the outcome of that further work does not materially change the

originally modelled impact the authority will work with the nursery concerned to identify relevant actions that may now need to be implemented to ensure continued viability and provision of the places for Walsall children and families.

- 7.2 Current financial modelling indicates that the proposed financial arrangements set out in table 1 would be affordable within the Early Years Block funding provided within the Dedicated Schools Grant for 2023/24. It should be noted that, as the January 2023 census data is not yet available, prior year data has been used in the funding model to estimate affordability, however updated modelling will be undertaken once the January 2023 census data is available – but it should be noted that any risk associated with this is minimal as if the January census shows a significant increase in the number of hours provided then this would attract additional funding to the authority to then pass on to providers.
- 7.3 A universal base hourly rate of £4.86 per hour for 3 & 4 year olds would equate to an increase of 22 pence per hour to 2022/23 rates (passing on in full the hourly rate increase allocated to the authority within the national EYFF), and the flat base rate for disadvantaged 2 year olds of £5.51 per hour is an increase of 6 pence per hour from 2022/23 (again passing on in full the hourly rate increase allocated to the authority within the national EYFF).
- 7.4 Indicative budget shares are proposed to be issued to all providers in March 2023, the local authority will utilise the January census data to calculate the initial indicative budget. These will just be indicative summaries at this point, and any actual payments made to providers throughout the financial year of 2023/24 will however be made based upon actual hours delivered at settings.

8. Legal implications

- 8.1 The DfE has prescribed the way in which early years providers should be financed for the 2023/24 financial year. These guidelines are set out in the Early Years Entitlement 2023 to 2024 operational guide, and can be found at the following link:

[Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2023 to 2024 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/guidance/early-years-entitlements-local-authority-funding-operational-guide-2023-to-2024)

- 8.2 The purpose of these arrangements is to help secure greater consistency in the way in which funding is distributed to early years providers. The Council must follow the rules issued by DfE within The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations, and the proposed Walsall local early years funding formula sets out how funding will be allocated to early years providers in Walsall within the prescribed arrangements.

9. Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 9.1 Schools are required to comply with the Council's procurement rules and policies in conducting their business.

10. Property implications

- 10.1 Unless any schools in Walsall were to close, there will be no property implications associated with this report.

11. Health and wellbeing implications

- 11.1 The content of this report has taken into account the Marmot objectives and it is confirmed that the proposals have been tested against the relevant considerations in this respect. As such there has been no indication that the proposed school funding formula would have any adverse impact on the health and wellbeing of staff and pupils based at Walsall schools.

12. Staffing implications

- 12.1 If individual providers see movement in the actual funding paid to them, due to movements in pupil numbers or changes in need, there is a risk that staff posts may also need to be reduced.

13. Reducing Inequalities

- 13.1 As part of the consultation on the implementation of an early years national funding formula the government undertook a full equality impact assessment, taking into account the relevant protected characteristics identified in the Equality Act 2010. A copy of the equality impact assessment is attached to this report.

14. Climate Change

- 14.1 There are no direct Climate Change implications arising from this report.

15. Consultation

- 15.1 Consultation has been undertaken with Schools Forum which is made up of representatives of maintained schools and academies within Walsall and representatives from the private sector for early years providers. Further work with nursery school head teachers directly, in relation to the final allocation methodology for the Maintained Nursery Schools Supplement is recommended within this report.

16. Decide

- 16.1 That Cabinet approves the Early Years Funding Formula that was recommended by Walsall's Schools Forum at their meeting on 7 March 2023, with delegation to the Director of Children's Services in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills to agree the final allocation methodology for the Maintained Nursery Schools Supplement with the funding available.

17. Respond

- 17.1 Following the decision by Cabinet indicative budget shares for all early years providers for 2023/24 will be distributed according to the approved early years funding formula. Details of final Maintained Nursery Schools Supplement allocations will be provided once the further work in that area that is proposed has taken place.

18. Review

- 18.1 Schools will be expected to monitor and stay within their delegated budget. The local authority will continue to provide support to schools to ensure that robust financial monitoring is carried out. Walsall's Schools Forum will continue to receive financial performance reports to monitor usage of school's budgets
- 18.2 For private and voluntary providers regular support from the Early Years Team is provided to ensure continuity of provision.

Background papers

Schools forum Report 7 March 2023 – Proposed Early Years Funding Formula for two, three and four year olds 2023/24

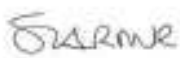
ESFA – Early years entitlements: local authority funding operational guide 2023/24

Cabinet 8 February 2017 – Early Years Funding Formula

Schools Forum report 5 December 2017 – Update on Early Years Funding Rates for 2018/19 and Progress of Special Schools Working Group

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Sally Rowe
Executive Director Childrens & Customer
02.03.2023



Councillor Statham
Portfolio holder Education & Skills
09.03.2023

Appendix A

Proposed Early Years Funding Formula 2023/24

Funding Factor	Unit / Description	2023/24 Rate / Value
Early Years Entitlement for Disadvantaged 2 year olds	Per Hour	£5.51
3 & 4 year olds - Universal Hourly Base rate	Per Hour	£4.86
Deprivation Supplement – mandatory	Fixed annual sum per notional disadvantaged child – derived from numbers recorded on January 2022 census & mapped by postcode to IDACI band A.	£1140 pa p/p
Maintained Nursery Schools Supplement for 3 & 4 YO provision	Per Hour	Original Proposal £3.80hr – subject further work to finalise

Other Early Years Funding

Funding	Description	2023/24 Prescribed Rate
Early Years Pupil Premium (EYPP)	Additional funding to support disadvantaged 3 & 4 year-old children who meet the prescribed criteria	£0.62 per hour of universal free entitlement
Disability Access Fund (DAF)	For children in receipt of disability living allowance – support access to free entitlement for 3 & 4 year-olds.	£828 pa lump sum

Special Education Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF)

Funding	Description	2023/24 Rate
Special Education Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) for 3 & 4 year olds - mandatory	SENIF is targeted funding for children with lower or emerging SEN needs who are attracting 3 & 4 year old free entitlement	£640 per term
Special Education Needs Inclusion Fund (SENIF) for 2 year olds – optional local factor	SENIF is targeted funding for children with lower or emerging SEN needs who are attracting 2 year old free entitlement	£640 per term

Cabinet – 22 March 2023

Recommendations from Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the outstanding debt owed to the Council for Adult Social Care.

Portfolio:	Councillor Pedley – Adult Social Care
Related Portfolios:	Health and Wellbeing
Service:	Adult Social Care
Wards:	All
Key decision:	No
Forward plan:	No

1. Aim

To receive a recommendation from the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee made on 19 January 2023 regarding outstanding debt owed to the Council for Adult Social Care.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet:-

1. Notes the concerns of the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee in relation to the budgetary overspend and the debt still owed by the Integrated Care Board.
2. Prioritise the recovery of the money from the Integrated Care Board.

3. Report detail – know

At its meeting of 19 January 2023, the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report setting out the Corporate Financial Performance 2022/23 (7-month position ended 31 October 2022).

Members raised concern at the level of debt between the ICB (Integrated Care Board) and the Council.

The Committee recommended that Cabinet be requested to prioritise reclaiming the debt from dispute with the ICB, especially in light of the current overspend within the Social Care and Public Health budget.

4. Decide

Cabinet could choose to:

1. undertake the recommendation as set out;
2. reject them;
3. choose to receive a report in more depth at a future Cabinet meeting.

5. Respond

Following the decision of Cabinet the Social Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be advised of the outcome of their recommendation.

6. Review

Subject to the decision of Cabinet further reports at Social Health and Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings or Cabinet meetings may be required.

Background papers

None

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