



Scrutiny Overview Committee

6 February 2024 at 6:00PM

Meeting Venue: Council Chamber at the Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall

[Livestream Link](#)

Membership:

Councillor Murray (Chair)
Councillor Nawaz (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P Bott
Councillor Cooper
Councillor Follows
Councillor Hicken
Councillor K. Hussain
Councillor Latham
Councillor Sears
Councillor Singh Sohal
Councillor Waters

Portfolio Holder(s):

Councillor Bird – Leader of the Council

Quorum:

4 Members

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 1 – Public Session

1. **Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence from Members of the Committee.
2. **Substitutions**
To receive notice of any substitutions for a Member of the Committee for the duration of the meeting.
3. **Minutes of the previous meeting**
To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2023.
(Enclosed – Page 5 - 11)
4. **Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**
To receive declarations of interest or the party whip from Members in respect of items on the agenda.
5. **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.
6. **Walsall Borough Local Plan**
To provide an overview of the development of the Walsall Borough Local Plan and associated work.
(Enclosed – Page 12 – 17)
7. **Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2027/28**
To scrutinise the draft revenue and capital budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee following consideration by Cabinet on 13 December 2023.
(Enclosed – Page 18 - 24)
8. **Scrutiny Chairs Feedback**
To invite Scrutiny Chair's present to present their feedback in respect to matters raised at other Scrutiny Overview Committees since the previous meeting.
9. **Areas of focus – 2023/24**
To consider the areas of focus for the Committee during 2023/24
(Enclosed - Page 25)
10. **Forward Plans**
To receive the latest Forward Plans in respect of the following:
 - Executive Forward Plans.
 - Black Country Joint Executive Committee.
 - West Midlands Combined Authority Board.*(Enclosed - Page 26 to 41)*
11. **Recommendations Tracker**
To consider progress on recommendations from the previous meeting.
(Enclosed - Page 42 to 45)
12. **Date of next meeting** [Page 4 of 45](#)
To note the date of the next meeting will be 14 March 2024

Minutes of the Scrutiny Overview Committee held in the Council Chamber at Walsall Council House

Monday, 11 December 2023 at 6.00p.m.

Committee Members present: Councillor J Murray (Chair)
Councillor A Nawaz (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P Bott
Councillor S Ditta
Councillor A Hicken
Councillor K Sears
Councillor G Singh-Sohal
Councillor V Waters

Portfolio Holder present: Councillor Bird – Leader of the Council
Councillor Ali – Customer

Officers present: Judith Greenhalgh – Executive Director of Resources and Transformation.
Shaun Darcy – Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord, Assurance and Section 151
Stuart Wootton – Finance Planning Manager
Matt Powis – Senior Democratic Services Officer

39. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Follows and Hussain.

40. **Substitutions**

There were no substitutions.

41. **Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

42. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

There were no items to consider in private session.

43. **Minutes**

A copy of the Minutes of the meeting held on the 9 November 2023 was submitted [annexed].

Resolved

That, the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2023, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

44. **Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2027/28**

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and outlined that it was still a time of budgetary pressures. He highlighted that many Councils across the country were facing financial pressures. The Council was committed to balance the budget for 2024/25 and the Cabinet were due to consider revised proposals and provisional statement on 13 December 2023.

The Committee considered a supplementary paper, which provided an updated snapshot of the medium-term financial outlook. This paper identified that the financial gap had been reduced from £18.06m to 12.35m from the period between October 2023 and December 2023.

A question and answer session took place and following on, the principal points from the ensuing discussion:

A Member sought clarification of the capital development investment scheme. In response, the Leader of the Council confirmed that there were a number of capital pipeline schemes which were subject to business case approval. Majority of the schemes related to regeneration activity such as the Walsall Gateway project. The pipeline schemes enabled the Council to be ready and perceptive to Government funding allocations as and when announced.

Ref: OP36 – 50% mitigation of Bed and Breakfast costs – increase of temporary accommodation provision

There were concerns that the increase of bed and breakfast costs were a result of an increase of Section 21 notices. In response, the Director of Customer Engagement confirmed that the Council had seen an increase of demand of temporary homelessness. This was a national trend, and Walsall was not unique in this respect. She concluded that a breakdown of temporary accommodation numbers would be circulated to the Committee.

Ref: 40 - Increase in volume of Bank Charges for receiving online payments

The Chair sought clarification on the increases of bank charges. In response, the Director of Customer Engagement confirmed that the increase was a result of an expiration of a payment contract and had looked to renegotiate the

contract. Due to inflationary pressures, the new contract and cost associated had resulted in higher costs overall.

Ref: Other schemes carried forward from previous years requiring completion.

There was a discussion about prior year approval schemes in respect of Civic Centre and Council House heating works. In response, the Director of Finance confirmed that Council had received a significant grant from the Midland Energy Hub for works to improve energy efficiency across both sites. The Leader of the Council welcomed the scheme and stated that the buildings were inefficient and suffered from substantial heat loss especially over the winter period. It was noted that building consent had been given to majority of the works.

Ref: Low Carbon Heating Project – Civic Centre/Town Hall/Council House

A Member queried whether community organisations were eligible for funding in respect of Solar PV. In response, the Director of Finance confirmed that the Council was preparing a project assessment to maximise the effectiveness of Solar PV and renewable investment. Initial bid for funding had been prepared for the Council's total estate and subject to funding further analysis prior to approval.

Ref: Chip & Pin Devices

Concerns were raised about the reduction of cash payment options in respect of Council payments. In response, the Leader of the Council gave assurance that cash payments would always be available for Council service payments. In addition, the Director of Customer Engagement reiterated that the Council had cash payment options and worked with a number of local shops to offer 'PayPoint' to provide cash payment options locally for services such as Council Tax.

Ref: Information Governance – Shortfall in income from Schools.

A Member queried whether there had been a reduction in schools undertaking information governance training or whether schools were procuring training options from alternative providers. In response, it was confirmed that a number of academies had chosen to procure their own training packages which had resulted in a reduction of schools using Council services.

There was a lengthy discussion on the competitiveness of Council traded services. The Leader of the Council confirmed that Portfolio Holders had been requested to review statutory and non-statutory services to enable best use of Council funds. There was a view that circular funding could enable community organisations to run services more efficiently.

Ref: Council Tax

There was a discussion about incentives relating to Council Tax. Officers confirmed that a study would be carried out on whether it would be feasible for the Council to incentivise one-off annual Council Tax payments. This would be subject to whether the Council achieved better investment returns and cashflow as a result.

Ref: 58 – WM Combined Authority contribution for Metro

The Chair sought clarification on the Council's contribution to the metro and funding associated. The Leader of the Council confirmed that there were historical proposals for the metro to be extended to Walsall. Funding was included as part of the transport levy at the West Midlands Combined Authority.

Ref: OP48 – Early Payment Supplier Programme

A general point was raised in respect of supplier payments, the Council offered an incentive for suppliers by way of shortened payment terms if a discount was provided for services.

Ref: General Savings by directorate for 2024/25

There were concerns about the proposed savings of £4.59m in Adult Social Care, Public Health and Hub. A Member queried whether savings were as a result of a reduction of services or making services much more efficient. In response, the Leader of the Council confirmed that the Council was working to make services more efficient, such as keeping individuals in their own homes for care services and treatment. In addition, the Council had also reviewed care assessment procedures to optimise referral processes.

The Council had procured Impower to undertake a review of Children and Adult Social Care to review procedures to improve practices and identify best practice.

A Member welcomed and commended the investment of £28.61m and £14.09m into Adult Social Care and Children's Services.

Ref: 90, 91 and 96 – Increase of Community Protection Enforcement Officers, Town Centre Guardians and Reintroduce a youth team into the community

A Member sought clarification on the lack of investment into services for 2025/26 and onwards. In response, the Director of Finance confirmed that the investment in 2024/25 had been positioned and would be reoccurring in future years unless stated. The Leader of the Council committed to the provision of delivering youth services in the Borough for the current administration and should be invested in year on year.

A Member sought clarification on the number of recruited community enforcement officers. In response, it was confirmed that 3 officers would be recruited.

Resolved:

That:

- 1. The Committee considered and noted the draft revenue budget proposals 2024/25 –2027/28 to date that related to the remit of the Scrutiny Overview Committee and associated discussion actions.**
- 2. The Committee considered and noted the draft capital schemes 2024/25 – 2027/28 included in the draft capital programme that relate to the remit of the Scrutiny Overview Committee.**
- 3. The Committee noted that the revenue budget for 2024/25 was not balanced, with a gap of c£18m, and requested that a further report be considered by the Scrutiny Overview Committee if there any significant changes to draft proposals outlined relating to services within the committee’s remit.**
- 4. The Committee welcomed investment put forward in respect of youth service provision and request that consideration be given to any further investment needed in the base budget subject to satisfactory feedback data.**

45. Forecast Revenue and Capital Outturn for 2023/24 – 6 month position ended 30 September 2023

The Committee received a report which considered the forecast revenue and capital outturn for 2023/24 up to 30 September 2023.

Members noted that in relation to forecast capital, there was a £280k underspend after re-phasing of £7.14m into 2024/25. In respect of forecast revenue, it was noted that there was a predicted overspend of £680k with use of earmarked reserves.

A question and answer session took place and following on, the principal points from the ensuing discussion:

- ‘A41 Moxley Transforming Cities Fund’ and ‘One Palfrey Big Local’ were new grants as a part of the capital programme for 2023/24. Further information would be provided to Members in writing once further details are released.
- A Member sought clarification on the proposal for ‘Renovation Park Tennis Courts’. It was confirmed that further information would be provided to Members in writing.
- The terms ‘business as usual’ and ‘impact of service transformation plan’ in relation to Adult Social Care were categorisations of budgetary planning rather than unaccounted expenditure.
- Pipeline Development Fund was a programme to provide a number of significant investment schemes, which were principally approved and subject to further business case approval.

- In response to a question on Social Housing Carbonisation reduction, there was a view that savings had been identified as part of the programme of works rather than a reduction of services. Further details would be provided to Members in writing.
- Further information on the allocation of £20m of investment funding in relation to Darlaston would be provided to Members as and when announced by Government.

The Chair thanked the Leader of the Council and officers for their attendance.

Resolved:

1. **That, the forecast 2023/24 year-end financial position for the Council as a whole and remit of the Committee be noted.**
2. **That, information on the following items be circulated to Members of the Committee in writing:**
 - a. **A41 Moxley Transforming Cities Fund**
 - b. **One Palfrey Big Local**
 - c. **Renovation Park Tennis Courts**
 - d. **Social Housing Carbonisation reduction.**

46. **Areas of focus – 2023/24**

The Committee noted the proposed areas of focus for the remaining meetings of the municipal year. [Annexed]

The Senior Democratic Services Officer informed the Committee that a report on recommendation tracking in respect of the School Gate Parking Working Group would be delayed until 18 April 2024. In addition, following a lengthy discussion, the following changes were made to the areas of focus for 2024:

- Walsall Borough Local Plan – Moved to 14 March 2024 due to timescales in respect to the consultation.
- Final Budget and Capital Programme Report – Added to 6 February 2024
- Emergency Planning – An update on lessons learned from Covid-19 pandemic, Operation Freeway and an invitation to the operators of M6 Toll. Added to 6 February 2024.

The Committee received feedback from the Chairs of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees on meetings of their committees since 9 November 2023.

Resolved:

That, the areas of focus for 2023-24 as amended and forward plans be noted.

47. **Recommendations Tracker**

The Committee received the tracker of recommendations from previous meetings, including progress made and outstanding items. [Annexed].

Resolved:
That the recommendation tracker be noted.

48. **Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the date of the meeting would be 6 February 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.33p.m.

Signed:

Date:

6 February 2024

Walsall Borough Local Plan

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: Councillor Andrew - Regeneration & Economy

1. Aim

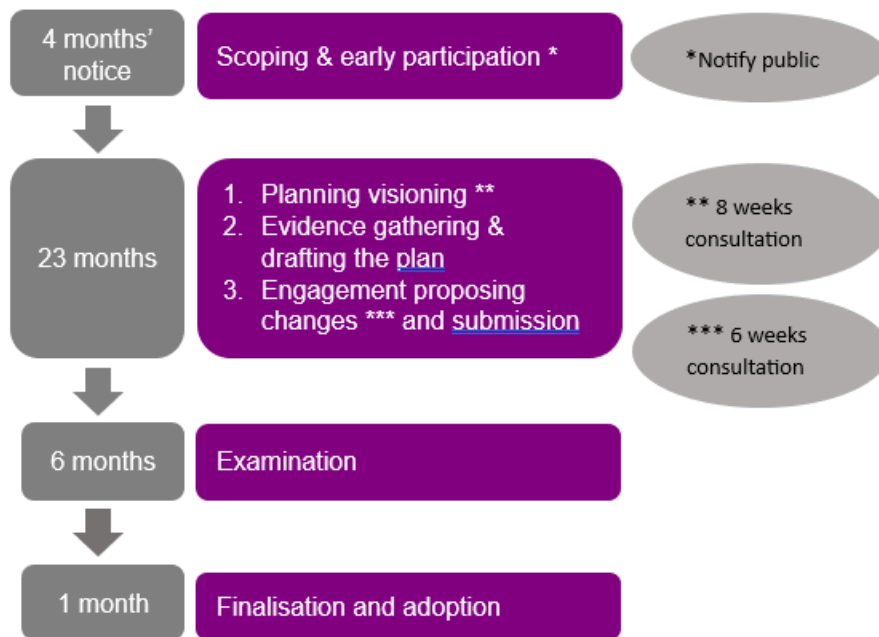
- 1.1 Walsall Borough Local Plan (WBLP) will be the development plan for Walsall and form the basis of decisions on planning applications and other matters relating to the use and development of land. It will set out the site allocations and strategic and local planning policies to ensure development is sustainable and locally distinctive and is in the right place and the right type, nature and design.
- 1.2 It provides a framework to guide investment and sustainable growth in the borough to align with Walsall's regeneration objectives, while also promoting and enhancing the health and wellbeing of communities, addressing the need to tackle climate change, and delivering a cleaner, greener borough. It will also provide certainty for future development sites and protection for sites and buildings that are of value for environmental, economic and social reasons.
- 1.3 The WBLP will replace the current development plan which comprises the Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) (adopted in 2011), the Site Allocation Document (SAD) and Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan (AAP) (adopted in 2019) and remaining 'saved' policies of the Walsall Unitary Development Plan (UDP) (adopted in 2005).

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note that longer timescales for the development of the Walsall Borough Local Plan are required, largely because of delays and uncertainties arising from changes to national planning legislation and guidance, particularly on reforms to the plan-making process through the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act.
- 2.2 To support the continued development of the Walsall Borough Local Plan, including progression of the compilation of evidence necessary to inform plan-making, including a call for sites exercise, and engaging with neighbouring authorities in the duty to co-operate process and on shared evidence gathering.
- 2.3 To support activity to raise the profile of the local plan and highlighting its importance in driving investment and growth in the borough and for providing homes, jobs and other infrastructure to cater for the needs of our future generations.

3. Report detail – know

- 3.1 At their meeting on 2 November 2022, cabinet agreed to begin work on a new WBLP with progression of this local plan replacing the work undertaken on the draft Black Country Plan (BCP). The BCP was being progressed jointly by Black Country authorities until 19 October 2022 when a formal statement was issued to confirm work had ceased on that plan.
- 3.2 A timetable for the progression of WBLP was also agreed at the cabinet meeting. This timetable is the local development scheme (LDS) with delegated authority granted to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Communities to make factual changes to the LDS. The report to cabinet is attached at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.3 The LDS stated that the council would be progressing the WBLP within the existing plan-making framework, with a programmed consultation on an issues and options report in September – October 2023 and with the plan submitted for examination in March 2026. The timetable set out in the LDS has been delayed due to planning reforms, particularly those affecting plan-making, and due to staff resources which are being addressed.
- 3.4 Government consultations on planning reforms affecting plan making first began in December 2022. The council submitted responses to these consultations but there was uncertainty over how the reforms would affect the progression of WBLP. The Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (LURA) received royal assent on 26 October 2023, and a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 19 December 2023. The LURA legislates for a new framework for the plan-making process. The NPPF makes some significant policy changes in respect of the possible need to release green belt land. Both of these are crucial to the progression of the WBLP. However relevant parts of the act are not yet in force, as it is subject to commencement and transitional arrangements.
- 3.5 As the reforms were being progressed, particularly on the plan-making process, it became clear that the programmed submission date for WBLP (March 2026) would be later than the submission date set out in the reforms (June 2025) by which a local plan could have proceeded under the existing planning regime.
- 3.6 The WBLP will therefore need to proceed under the new planning regime. Within this new regime, the earliest date by which work on a new local plan can formally commence is autumn 2024 when all regulations, policy and guidance for the new plan-making system are expected to be in place. An autumn 2024 start date would also be dependent on Walsall being selected as one of just 10 frontrunner authorities, which the council will seek to pursue. The likely process is set out below:



- 3.7 A key theme of the WBLP will be providing land to meet our needs for homes and employment over the plan period. Plans are expected to provide for land use requirements for 15 years from the date of adoption. Under the proposed new system, the earliest the WBLP could be adopted would be in 2027, 30 months from a starting date of autumn 2024. It is expected therefore that WBLP will now be extended to cover our needs up until 2042. This compares with an end date of 2039 which was proposed for the BCP. The longer time frame means that the total need is likely to be greater.
- 3.8 The existing Black Country Core Strategy (BCCS) was based on redeveloping surplus former employment land for housing. This land had become available as a result of the decline of traditional manufacturing from the 1980's onwards. It was anticipated that the decline would continue, and replacement jobs would be provided in offices and other sectors that had a lower land use requirement. The SAD and AAP have successfully identified sufficient land for housing and employment to meet our needs to 2026.
- 3.9 Some brownfield land remains available and there is scope to increase the density of new housing development, for example through re-purposing former shops and surplus office accommodation in centres. However, the remaining industry is resilient and indeed many manufacturers have invested to upgrade their premises. There is high demand for new premises for industry and warehousing.
- 3.10 The supply of brownfield land for housing and new industry is therefore running out and is unlikely to be sufficient to meet our needs over the WBLP period. Walsall is already struggling to deliver a sufficient number of new homes. It has failed the housing delivery test which means that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development. The call for sites exercise will seek to identify all possible sites to accommodate Walsall's needs.

- 3.11 The draft BCP expected that some need would be exported to neighbouring authorities through the duty to co-operate. Several authorities have made offers to the Black Country through their local plans, although Shropshire have signed a formal agreement. The LURA proposes to abolish the duty to co-operate however, and the revised NPPF states that green belt boundaries do not need to be reviewed unless there are exceptional circumstances. This applies both to the exporting authorities, such as Walsall, as well as to recipient authorities. Some of the neighbouring planning authorities are now proposing to revise their plans to remove green belt allocations which could increase the shortfall.
- 3.12 The revised NPPF still retains an expectation that local plans when they are examined by the planning inspectorate should be positively prepared in providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs.
- 3.13 Staff resources in the team were depleted during 2023 due to leavers in the team and delayed recruitment to posts. All posts have now been filled and the team fully resourced to enable effective plan-making to progress.
- 3.14 The team has been progressing various areas of work in preparation for formal commencement of the plan-making process for WBLP. This began with advice provided by the Planning Advisory Service (PAS) on how to proceed with, resource and project manage the plan-making process.
- 3.15 The Local Plan Advisory Board (LPAB), comprising officers and elected members, has also met on several occasions to give advice and steer the development of the plan. The LPAB supported pausing progression of WBLP until the planning reforms were confirmed but agreed that preparatory work should be undertaken, including a new call for sites exercise and continuing to engage with neighbouring planning authorities in the duty to co-operate process.
- 3.16 A report to cabinet on 13 December 2023 requested authority to commence a call for sites exercise in January 2024 and this was agreed. The report is attached at **Appendix 2**. This enables early engagement with landowners, developers and local communities and helps influence and inform our plan preparation. Rather than just focussing on potential sites for housing and employment uses, the call for sites will have a community focus. It also enables relatively small pieces of vacant land to be identified, including as potential land for local greenspaces and other community uses, as well as for nature conservation enhancement. This approach is important to support meaningful public engagement and participation in plan-making. It also raises the profile of WBLP and its alignment with the corporate strategy and We Are Walsall 2040.
- 3.17 Officers meet regularly with other planning authorities to discuss progress on shared evidence base documents, meeting regional housing and employment land needs and other cross-boundary issues such as transportation and infrastructure, minerals and waste and nature recovery.
- 3.18 Under the council's scheme of delegation, reports have been submitted to planning committee seeking delegated authority for the Executive Director to submit agreed responses to consultations on neighbouring local plans, particularly on the

potential of those plans to contribute towards meeting Walsall's housing needs. This has so far included Sandwell, Telford, Dudley and South Staffordshire.

- 3.19 The team are working to raise the profile of WBLP and the opportunities for wider communities to engage in the process. Presentations to senior managers group and MPs has been undertaken and future presentation to the Children and Young People Strategic Alliance is planned as well as other engagement and communication being planned as part of the call for sites exercise.

4. Financial information

- 4.1 There will be an ongoing financial commitment from existing budgets to support delivery of the programme of work to develop the plan, including that for gathering evidence and for consultation and publicity on the plan. The delivery of sites for new development through the plan will attract future business rates and council tax.

5. Reducing Inequalities

- 5.1 Preparation of WBLP includes carrying out a Sustainability Appraisal, Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and Health Impact Assessment. One of the objectives of WBLP will be to ensure that jobs, homes and services are provided for all communities. All Local Plans need to be produced in accordance with the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which sets out the council's commitment to engagement with all communities, including minority ethnic communities, faith-based communities, disabled groups and individuals, young people, people on low incomes and the business community. This approach is designed to ensure that those communities that traditionally have not had their say on planning decisions are able to influence the planning process.

6. Decide

- 6.1 The development of WBLP will allow the public and other stakeholders to influence the final version of the plan. This will inform future decisions, to be agreed by cabinet, about the version of the WBLP submitted for examination by the Secretary of State and ultimately adopted by the council.

7. Respond

- 7.1 The future stages of the emerging WBLP will be reported to cabinet for approval. Responses to the call for sites exercise will inform the site allocations in the draft versions of the plan.

8. Review

- 8.1 Further updates on progress of the WBLP are anticipated following the next key stages in preparation of the plan, to include feedback on call for sites and subsequent early-stage engagements with stakeholders. This will offer the opportunity for committee to review progress and input into the preparation of the plan.

Background papers

Appendix 1 - [Cabinet report: 2 November 2022 - Walsall Borough Local Plan](#)

Appendix 2 – [Cabinet report: 13 December 2023 - Call for Sites](#)

Author

Alison Ives
Head of Planning & Building Control
☎ 652604
✉ alison.ives@walsall.gov.uk

6 FEBRUARY 2024

Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2027/28

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr M Bird – Leader of the Council
Cllr A Andrew – Deputy Leader and Regeneration
Cllr G Perry – Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities
Cllr G Ali – Customer
Cllr K Fergusson – Internal Services

Executive Summary:

The committee on 11 December 2023 received a report on the draft revenue and capital proposals as reported to Cabinet on 18 October 2023, including those relating to services within the remit of this committee, and a supplementary note outlining the movements in the draft proposals given that the second draft budget report to Cabinet on 13 December 2023 was public on the council's Committee Management Information System (CMIS) at the time of the meeting.

The final 'Corporate Budget Plan 2024/25 to 2027/28' for reporting to Cabinet on 7 February 2024 is now available on CMIS, which includes feedback to date on draft proposals from all Overview and Scrutiny Committees at Section A Part 1 of the report.

This report is provided to explain the principal movements in the draft budget proposals since the position previously reported to Scrutiny Overview Committee on 11 December 2023.

Reason for scrutiny:

To enable consultation of the overall draft revenue and capital budget proposals for the council as a whole, and for services within the remit of this Committee.

Recommendations:

That:

1. The Committee are recommended to consider the changes to the draft revenue budget and capital programme, and for any further feedback to be tabled at Cabinet on 7 February 2024 for consideration, prior to recommending the final financial plan to Council on 22 February 2024.

Background papers:

Various financial working papers.

Resource and legal considerations:

Cabinet on 7 February 2024 are presented with the final 'Corporate Budget Plan 2024/25 to 2027/28', which includes a list of revenue savings proposals and a list of investment/cost pressures by outcome, along with a draft capital programme over the period 2024/25 to 2027/28.

The full Cabinet report can be accessed at the following link:

<https://cmispublic.walsall.gov.uk/cmis/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/3789/Committee/488/SelectedTab/Documents/Default.aspx> - 7 February 2024
– Cabinet

The following summarises the principal movements in the draft revenue and capital budget proposals since the position previously reported to Scrutiny Overview Committee on 11 December 2023.

Amendments to the Revenue Budget

Since the draft revenue budget was presented to Cabinet on 18 October 2023, with an update reported to Cabinet on 13 December 2023, there have been a number of funding announcements and technical and other changes to the budget; these can be summarised as follows:

- The provisional 2024/25 Settlement was received on 18 December 2023. This confirmed referendum principles for the increase in council tax of 2.99% along with a further 2% precept for social care authorities in 2024/25. A council tax increase of 4.99% is included in the proposed budget for 2024/25.
- The Settlement also confirmed changes to other specific grants. The net impact of the settlement was a £830k reduction in funding compared to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Outlook (MTFO) assumptions.
- Additional investment in services, including; additional investment to support demand within adult social care following a review of existing and future forecasts; investment to fund shortfalls in income projections, and new grant allocations.
- Identification of new savings in relation to third party spend and digital opportunities.
- Finalisation and approval by the S151 Officer, under delegations, of the council tax base and NNDR1 (business rates) return in January 2024;
- A number of transfers to/from reserves to smooth financing of one-off /short term costs.
- Details on the above are found within the Budget Plan.

The budget update report to Cabinet on 13 December 2023 outlined a number of changes to the original proposals, reducing the initial financial gap from £18.06m to £12.35m in 2024/25. The MTFO has been further reviewed and updated, resulting in a balanced budget for 2024/25, subject to the successful delivery of £20.10m of identified benefits for 2024/25 (full list provided at **Annex 6** of the Budget Plan). A further financial gap is forecast of £43.45m over the next three years to 2027/28. This is based on known assumptions and cost pressures forecast as part of the council's MTFO.

Table 1 summarises the changes made to the MTFO previously reported to Cabinet on 13 December 2023. *Those changes specifically relating to the services within the remit*

of this committee are highlighted grey for ease of reference.

Table 1: Movement in MTFO since draft budget update report to Cabinet on 13 December 2023

	2024/25 £m	2025/26 £m	2026/27 £m	2027/28 £m	Total £m
Gap as per report to Cabinet 13 December 2023	12.35	17.56	8.41	8.70	47.02
Changes to investments					
Inv. 6 - New posts within planning & land registry reduced	(0.05)	(0.05)	0.10	0.00	0.00
Inv. 8 - Charge developers for travel plans - reinstate removal of saving	(0.03)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(0.03)
<i>Inv. 9 - Crisis Support - reinstatement of reduction</i>	<i>0.20</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.20</i>
Inv. 10 - Social Care increases in demand based updated profile	(2.45)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(2.45)
Inv. 11 - Contract price uplifts based on updated profile	2.45	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.45
Inv. 12 - Adult Social Care affordability model - Housing 21	(0.11)	(0.00)	(0.00)	(0.02)	(0.14)
Inv. 38 - Coroners contractual inflation	(0.03)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(0.03)
Inv. 43 - Increase in bed and breakfast costs	0.19	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.22
<i>Inv. 54 - Capital financing / borrowing rescheduling</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>2.50</i>	<i>(2.50)</i>	<i>0.00</i>
<i>Inv. 58 - Transport Levy</i>	<i>0.06</i>	<i>0.12</i>	<i>0.13</i>	<i>0.13</i>	<i>0.43</i>
<i>Inv. 59 - Cost of living / demand</i>	<i>1.36</i>	<i>(1.36)</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>
Inv. 84 – Revised Agency for domestic and garden waste	(0.03)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(0.03)
Inv. 92 - Rewilding of urban grassed areas - reinstate part saving removal	(0.05)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(0.05)
Inv. 95 - Other contractual implications in Economy, Environment & Communities	(0.24)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(0.24)
Inv. 101 - Reduction in direct payment refunds - NEW	1.10	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.10
Inv. 102 - Local Stop Smoking Services & Support Grant - NEW	0.37	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.37
<i>Inv. 103 - Household Support Fund grant now ceasing – NEW</i>	<i>0.28</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.28</i>
Total changes to investments	3.02	(1.28)	2.73	(2.38)	2.08
Changes to savings proposals					
OP34 - Fees and charges reduced within Economy, Environment & Communities	(0.03)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(0.03)
<i>OP45 - Review of courier costs of equipment to new starters removed</i>	<i>0.05</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.05</i>
OP73 - Recovery of provider overpayment through payment audit - NEW	(1.10)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(1.10)
<i>OP74 - Additional income generation in Communications – NEW</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>(0.07)</i>	<i>(0.09)</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>(0.16)</i>
<i>OP76 - Additional Third Party spend (TPS) savings – NEW (council wide)</i>	<i>(3.00)</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>(3.00)</i>
<i>OP77 – Digital Opportunities – NEW (council wide)</i>	<i>(2.70)</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>0.00</i>	<i>(2.70)</i>
Total changes to savings proposals	(6.78)	(0.07)	(0.09)	0.00	(6.94)

	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Other changes / service adjustments					
Use of reserves - Crisis Support	(0.50)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(0.50)
Use of reserves – staffing in ASC and Children's (2 years transitional funding) *	(2.93)	0.00	2.93	0.00	0.00
Use of reserves - ASC demand (1 year transitional funding) *	(3.86)	3.86	0.00	0.00	0.00
Use of reserves - home to school transport (1 year transitional funding) *	(0.99)	0.99	0.00	0.00	0.00
Use of reserves - Public Health (1 year transitional funding) *	(0.30)	0.30	0.00	0.00	0.00
Use of reserves - Cost of living	(1.36)	1.36	0.00	0.00	0.00
Release of central budgets	(1.38)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(1.38)
Base budget adjustment - Local Stop Smoking Services & Support s31 grant income (Adult Social Care)	(0.37)	0.00	0.00	0.00	(0.37)
Removal of undeliverable saving (CAM)	1.54	0.00	0.00	0.00	1.54
Democratic Services increased provision	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.06
Changes in council tax base	0.37	0.01	0.01	0.01	0.40
Changes to Council tax surplus	0.30	(0.30)	0.00	0.00	0.00
Net movement in Provisional Settlement 18/12/23	0.83	0.76	(0.02)	(0.03)	1.54
Total other changes / service adjustments	(8.59)	6.98	2.92	(0.01)	1.29
Revised savings to be identified (Current gap)	(0.00)	23.19	13.97	6.30	43.45

Note:

1. * transitional funding through the use of earmarked reserves has been provided to allow time for development of revised demand management and transformation plans for adults and children's social care and public health and to agree next stages of this work.
2. Figures in brackets refers to a reduction in expenditure; increase in savings or grant; or use of reserves.

The Government announced a package of £600m of additional funding support to Local Authorities on 24 January 2024. This included –

- A further £500m allocated to the Social Care Grant, to support authorities with social care responsibilities, in view of the significant pressures in social care – particularly children’s social care.
- An increase in the funding guarantee so that all local authorities will see a minimum 4% in their Core Spending Power, before taking any local decisions on raising council tax.
- Providing an additional £15m for the Rural Services Delivery Grant.
- Providing £3m to councils with extreme Internal Drainage Board Levies.

It is expected that Walsall will receive a share of the £500m for increase in Social Care grant only, but we await confirmation as part of the final settlement to be announced early February 2024.

The Government are asking local authorities to produce productivity plans by July 2023 which will set out how they will improve service performance and ensure every area is making best use of taxpayers’ money. The Government will monitor these plans, and funding Settlements in future years will be informed by performance against these plans. They are also establishing an expert panel to advise the Government on financial sustainability in the sector which will include the Office for Local Government and the Local Government Association. Details of the full requirements is expected in the final settlement.

The Government also announced that they are committed to reforming the local government funding landscape in the next Parliament, and the Minister for Local Government will be engaging with the sector on this over the coming months, where they are keen to hear views and ideas regarding the future of local government finance.

At the time of despatch of the final Budget Plan to Cabinet, the final local government settlement for 2024/25 has not been received. Any changes arising from this, including the impact of the additional £600m of funding to Local Authorities announced on 24 January 2024, will be included within the final papers to Council on 22 February 2024.

Amendments to the Capital Programme

The draft capital programme set out in the report to Cabinet on 13 December 2023, was £121.99m in 2024/25, with a further £217.46m over the following three years to 2027/28.

The following table summarises the changes made to the draft programme, resulting in a revised draft capital programme of £166.57m in 2024/25, and a further £203.71m over the three years to 2027/28 in the final budget plan to Cabinet on 7 February 2024. This represents an increase of £44.58m in 2024/25 (£26.27m council funded from forecast carry forwards from 2023/24, and £18.30m externally funded from rephasing and forecast carry forwards from 2023/24).

Movement in Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 since Cabinet on 13 December 2023				
	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Council Funded Schemes - Cabinet 13 December 2023	67.89	56.18	32.45	8.64
Forecast carry forwards from 2023/24	26.27	0.00	0.00	0.00
Revised Council Funded Schemes	94.16	56.18	32.45	8.64
External Funded Schemes - Cabinet 13 December 2023	54.10	43.37	55.96	18.10
Forecast carry forwards from 2023/24	5.51	2.75	0.00	0.00
Rephasing - Walsall Towns Deal	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rephasing - Bloxwich Towns Deal	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rephasing - Basic Need	5.70	0.00	(5.00)	0.00
Rephasing - Future High Streets Fund	3.63	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rephasing - Willenhall Levelling Up Fund	0.50	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rephasing - Yorks Bridge	0.98	0.00	0.00	0.00
Rephasing - High Needs	0.00	0.79	(9.52)	0.00
Revised External Funded Schemes	72.40	46.91	41.44	18.10
Revised Draft Capital Programme	166.57	103.08	73.89	26.74

Shaun Darcy – S151 Officer, and Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord and Assurance, ☎ 07990 410814, ✉ Shaun.Darcy@walsall.gov.uk
Vicky Buckley, Head of Finance and Assurance, ☎ 01922 652326 / 07983 604698, ✉ Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk
Ross Hutchinson – Head of Finance – Finance Business Partnering & ESS Projects, ✉ Ross.Hutchinson@walsall.gov.uk

Scrutiny Overview Committee – Area of Focus – 2023-24

	28 th September 2023	9 th November 2023	11 th December 2023	6 th February 2024	14 th March 2024	18 th April 2024
<p>Economic Growth, Enable greater local opportunities for all people, communities and businesses.</p> <p><i>Lead OSC: Economy & Environment</i></p>		WMCA Annual report.		Walsall Borough Local Plan		WMCA – Update
<p>People Encourage our residents to lead more active fulfilling and independent lives. People maintain or improve their health and wellbeing.</p> <p><i>Lead OSC: Social Care & Health</i></p>						
<p>Internal focus, all Council services are customer focused, effective efficient and fair.</p> <p><i>Lead OSC: Scrutiny Overview Committee</i></p>	S106 monitoring	Recruitment and retention	Q2 financial monitoring Draft Budget & Capital Programme	Final report on Budget & Capital Programme	S106 monitoring Electoral Services report (impact of new legislation) Emergency Planning and Operation Freeway	Marketing and advertising
<p>Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well</p> <p><i>Lead OSCs: Children's & Education</i></p>						School Gate Working Group recommendation monitoring.
<p>Communities are empowered so that they feel connected and that they belong in Walsall. Create safe and healthy places whilst building a strong sense of community.</p> <p><i>Lead OSC: Scrutiny Overview Committee</i></p>	Violent crime – WM Police	Housing waiting list			Social Housing providers	



FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

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

8 JANUARY 2024

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
FEBRUARY 2024 TO MAY 2024 (08.01.2024)**

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
50/23 (2.10.23)	Corporate Financial Performance 2023/24: To report the financial position based on 9 months to December 2023.	Cabinet Non-key decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	7 February 2024
51/23 (2.10.23)	Corporate Budget Plan 2024/25 – 2027/28, incorporating the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management and investment Strategy 2024/25: To recommend the final budget and council tax for approval by Council.	Cabinet Council Key decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Council taxpayers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations. Internal Services	Cllr Bird	7 February 2024 (Council: 22 February 2024)
52/23 (2.10.23)	Council Plan 2022/25 – Q2 23/24: To note the Quarter 2 2023/24 (outturn) performance against the Markers of Success in the Council Plan 2022/25.	Cabinet Non-key decision	Elizabeth Connolly Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	7 February 2024
1/24 (8.1.24)	Walsall’s Regeneration Pipeline: To award a contract for the strategic partner framework.	Cabinet Key Decision	Joel Maybury Joel.Maybury@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	7 February 2024

2/24 (8.1.24)	<p>Acquisition of a Strategic Town Centre Development Site:</p> <p>To approve the acquisition of a strategic town centre development site.</p> <p><i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i></p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Nick Ford Nick.Ford@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	7 February 2024
3/24 (8.1.24)	<p>Investment and Leasing Proposals for Council Owned Community Buildings:</p> <p>To support the continued delivery of services by the voluntary and community sector, through the signing of lease agreements and the underwriting of capital investment gaps for those occupying Council-owned properties. <i>This is an updated item previously included in the forward plan as entry 60/23.</i></p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Nick Ford Nick.Ford@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	7 February 2024
65/23 (4.12.23)	<p>Materials Contract Awards:</p> <p>To award off-take and processing contracts for multiple recyclable materials.</p> <p><i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i></p>	Cabinet Key decision	Katie Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk Alan Bowley Alan.Bowley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Murphy	7 February 2024
4/24 (8.1.24)	<p>Walsall Balloon and Lantern Release Policy:</p>	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Jaki Brunton-Douglas Jaki.Brunton-Douglas@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Murphy	7 February 2024

	Decision to be made on adopting the policy which will treat any 'releases' as litter.					
5/24 (8.1.24)	Fee Uplift Approach for Adult Social Care: To outline a revised approach to fee setting, fee uplifts and the links to quality across Adult Social Care services	Cabinet Key Decision	Andrew Osborn Andrew.Osborn@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Pedley	7 February 2024
53/23 (2.10.23)	Determination of the Scheme for coordinated admissions, and the Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools for the 2025/26 academic year: To determine the scheme of admissions and admission arrangements for community and voluntary-controlled primary schools for 2025-26.	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services, Neighbouring Local Authorities, Schools, Faith Groups	Cllr M. Statham	7 February 2024
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 M. Statham	7 February 2024
6/24 (8.1.24)	Alternative Provision Contract: To approve the award contracts for the provision of Alternative Education.	Cabinet Key Decision	Laura Wood Laura.Wood@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	20 March 2024

58/23 (6.11.23)	High Needs Funding Formula 2024/25: 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 2024/25 financial year.	Cabinet Key Decision	Richard Walley Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk	Schools Forum, Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	20 March 2024
59/23 (6.11.23)	Early Years Funding Formula 2024/25: To Cabinet approve the Early Years Funding Formula, as agreed by Schools Forum, to be used as 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	20 March 2024
46/23 (4.9.23)	SEN Place Requirement: To approve finance for additional special educational needs school places.	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	20 March 2024
66/23 (4.12.23)	Waste Management Strategy Update - Fryers Road Household Waste Recycling Centre redevelopment (HWRC): That Cabinet approve the pre-tender budget for the redevelopment of a larger Fryers Road HWRC and agree to use the Pagabo framework (design and build stages) for the procurement of Fryers Road HWRC.	Cabinet Key Decision	Katie Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk Stephen Johnson Stephen.Johnson@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew Cllr Murphy	17 April 2024

67/23 (4.12.23)	Council Plan 2022/25 – Q3 23/24: To note the Quarter 3 2023/24 (outturn) performance against the Markers of Success in the Council Plan 2022/25	Cabinet Non-key decision	Elizabeth Connolly Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	17 April 2024
57/23 (6.11.23)	Walsall Net-Zero 2041 Climate Strategy: To approve the Walsall Net-Zero 2041 Strategy.	Cabinet Key Decision	Katie Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	July 2024

Black Country Executive Joint Committee Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Published up to May 2024

Date Created	Key Decision	Contact Officer	Main consultee	Date of meeting
	Black Country Executive Joint Committee Governance			
04/09/2023	<p>Change Control and Delegated Authority</p> <p>Approval of BCJC Delegated Authority to the Single Accountable Body Section 151 Officer (SAB s151 officer) and approval of the revised Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (BCLEP) Assurance Framework Change Control and Delegated Authority delegations, as detailed in the attachment of the report (BCLEP Assurance Framework Appendix 23).</p>	<p>David Moore David.Moore@walsall.gov.uk</p> <p>Mark Lavender Mark.Lavender@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Walsall Council	24/01/2024
	Land and Property Investment Fund			
04/12/2023	<p>Dudley Brownfield Land Programme</p> <p>Approval of the withdrawal of the Dudley Brownfield Land Programme project (Dudley Council) from within the Land and Property Investment Fund Programme.</p>	<p>Helen Martin Helen.Martin@dudley.gov.uk</p>	Dudley Council	24/01/2024

Date Created	Key Decision	Contact Officer	Main consultee	Date of meeting
04/12/2023	<p>Loxdale Residential Scheme</p> <p>Approval for the Accountable Body for the Land and Property Investment fund (Walsall Council) to proceed to enter into a Grant Agreement with Wolverhampton City Council to deliver the Land and Property Investment fund funded elements of the Loxdale Residential Scheme project with delivery to commence in the 2023/24 financial year.</p>	<p>Richard Lawrence Richard.Lawrence@wolverhampton.gov.uk</p>	<p>Wolverhampton City Council</p>	<p>24/01/2024</p>
04/12/2023	<p>Programme Management Costs</p> <p>Approval of the balance of Land and Property Investment Fund funds to be allocated to Accountable Body (Walsall Council) programme management costs, to cover additional due diligence and contracting costs associated with the replacement of a project.</p>	<p>David Moore David.Moore@walsall.gov.uk</p> <p>Mark Lavender Mark.Lavender@walsall.gov.uk</p>	<p>Walsall Council</p>	<p>24/01/2024</p>



West Midlands Combined Authority

Forward Plan

Forthcoming key decisions

Title of key decision:	Decision to be taken by and date:	Open or Exempt:	Portfolio Lead	Employee to contact:
Regional Activity & Delivery Update To receive an update on the latest activities of the WMCA.	WMCA Board 12 January 2024	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Laura Shoaf Chief Executive of the West Midlands Combined Authority
WMCA Draft Budget 2024/25	WMCA Board 12 January 2024	Open	Councillor Bob Sleigh Finance Portfolio Lead	Beverly Sullivan, Sally Truman Financial Planning and Coordination Manager, Lead Financial Planning Accountant
Financial Monitoring Report 2023/24 Financial Monitoring Report 2023/24 for January 2024 Board	WMCA Board 12 January 2024	Open	Councillor Bob Sleigh Finance Portfolio Lead	Beverly Sullivan, Sally Truman Financial Planning and Coordination Manager, Lead Financial Planning Accountant
European Athletics Championships To consider an update on the latest developments with this issue.	WMCA Board 12 January 2024	Open	Councillor Bob Sleigh Finance Portfolio Lead	
Constitution To seek delegated authority to update the constitution as a result of the transfer of Police & Crime Commissioner powers to the WMCA in May 2024.	WMCA Board 12 January 2024	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Helen Edwards Director of Law and Governance

<p>West Midlands Digital Roadmap 2024-2027 This is the update WMCA's initial Digital Roadmap that was developed in 2021. The SENZ directorate are producing an update to the Roadmap which reflects how the WMCA has heightened its ambitions for for digital and how it will work with partners to overcome regional challenges and take advantage of existing and emerging opportunities.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 12 January 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Patrick Harley Culture & Digital Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Mike Lewis Strategic Lead – West Midlands Digital Roadmap</p>
<p>WMCA Budget 2024/25 To present the proposed 2024/25 budget for approval</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 February 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Bob Sleigh Deputy Mayor</p>	<p>Beverly Sullivan, Sally Truman Financial Planning and Coordination Manager, Lead Financial Planning Accountant</p>
<p>Skills Bootcamps Change Request To seek approval of a business justification case for a change in the activity that would be delivered in respect of the Skills Bootcamp Provision from 1 April 2024.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 February 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor George Duggins Skills & Productivity Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Louise Phipps Senior Delivery Manager- Higher Level Skills</p>
<p>Employment & Skills Strategy for Deeper Devolution</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 February 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor George Duggins Skills & Productivity Portfolio Lead</p>	
<p>State of the Region State of the Region for the West Midlands in 2024</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 February 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Andy Street Mayor</p>	<p>Si Chun Lam Head of Research, Intelligence and Inclusive Growth</p>

<p>Homes for the Future Strategy To consider and approve the Homes for Future Strategy</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 February 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Ian Courts Housing & Land Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Mia Higgins, Tanya Patel, Leo Pollak Programme Support Officer, Governance Services Officer, Head of Policy</p>
<p>Faith Strategic Partnership Board - Faith Covenant To agree the proposed Faith Covenant.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 February 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Kerrie Carmichael Inclusive Communities Portfolio Lead</p>	
<p>Penalty Fare Bye-Laws for the Midland Metro To agree new bye-laws governing penalty fares on the Midland Metro.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 February 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead</p>	
<p>Arrangements for Mayoral Question Time with MPs To agree the arrangements for mayoral question time sessions with the region's MPs.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 February 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Andy Street Mayor of the West Midlands</p>	
<p>WMCA Financial Monitoring Report - March 2024 To update on the latest financial position</p>	<p>WMCA Board 15 March 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Bob Sleight Deputy Mayor</p>	<p>Beverly Sullivan, Sally Truman Financial Planning and Coordination Manager, Lead Financial Planning Accountant</p>
<p>Investment Zones and Levelling Up Zones To consider the latest position.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 15 March 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Stephen Simkins Economy & Innovation Portfolio Lead</p>	
<p>Skills Funding To consider the latest position regarding skills funding.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 15 March 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor George Duggins Skills & Productivity Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Dr. Fiona Aldridge Head of Insight & Intelligence</p>

Zero Emission Bus Regional Area (ZEBRA) Update To provide an update on the latest ZEBRA developments.	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	
Black Country Innovative Manufacturing Organisation To consider the latest BCIMO update.	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	
WMCA's Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Progress Update To provide a quarterly summary of the activity of work of the WMCA's overview and scrutiny function, as required by the Deeper Devolution Deal.	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Lyndsey Roberts Scrutiny Officer
Ring & Ride Update To provide an update on the latest activity.	WMCA Board 19 July 2024	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	Pete Bond Director of Integrated Transport Services
Bus Options Report To consider options for the future delivery of the region's bus network.	WMCA Board 19 July 2024	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	

The Forward Plan

This document sets out known 'key decisions' that will be taken by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) over the coming months.

Forthcoming key decisions are published online to meet the statutory 28 day notification rule for each meeting where a key decision will be taken. Where it has not been possible to meet the 28 day rule for publication of notice of a key decision or an intention to meet in private, the relevant notices will be published as required by legislation as soon as possible.

What is a key decision?

A 'key decision' means a decision of the Mayor, WMCA or officer which is likely:

- (a) to result in the WMCA incurring expenditure, making savings or generating income amounting to £1m or more; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the WMCA

The report relating to a decision, together with any other documents being considered, will be available five clear working days before the decision is to be taken (unless the documentation contains exempt information).

The forward plan also provides notice of when the WMCA may decide to exclude the press and public during consideration of a particular matter due to the potential for disclosure of confidential or exempt

information. The grounds upon which local authorities can exclude the press and public are specified by law and details of the exempt categories are available on request from the Governance Services team (governance.services@wmca.org.uk).

Councillors or members of the public wishing to:

- make a representation about why a matter should be heard in public, or
- submit information to the decision-making body about an item in the forward plan, or
- request details of relevant documents, or
- seek advice about the WMCA's decision-making arrangements,

should contact the Governance Services team: governance.services@wmca.org.uk

Scrutiny Overview Committee – Recommendation Tracker (23/24)

Committee Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Action/Recommendation	Officer responsible	Status	Target Completion Date	Notes
12 December 2022	Customer Engagement	<p>That data be shared with Members regarding:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">a. A detailed breakdown on the time it takes calls to be answered across the Council.</p>	Elise Hopkins	In progress	January 2024	This item has been delayed due to progress on a new customer demand dashboard
28 th September 2023	West Midlands Police – Update on Policing within Walsall	<p>That Cabinet are requested to:</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">a. Ensure Walsall Council works with West Midlands Police to improve road safety and reduce road harm in the Borough.</p> <p style="margin-left: 40px;">b. Consider the feasibility of co-locating the Council's community protection teams alongside West Midlands Police to increase co-operative working.</p>	Democratic Services	Completed	13 December 2023 – Cabinet	Awaiting response back to Scrutiny.

28 th September 2023	Areas of Focus 2023- 24	Democratic Services assess the feasibility of collating all items related to police and judicial matters which could be considered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.	Craig Goodall	In progress	April 2024	
9 November 2023	WMCA Annual Report	That those members appointed to the West Midlands Combined Authority, Transport for West Midlands, Fire Authority and the Police and Crime Panel provide an annual report to full Council.	Democratic Services	In progress	TBC	
9 November 2023	Recruitment and Retention	<p>A Member requested figures relating to internal promotions with a specific breakdown on ethnic backgrounds. Response would be provided in writing.</p> <p>Electronic exit interview forms were provided to those employees leaving the Council. In addition, face to face exit interviews could be requested on demand as appropriate. A breakdown of the reasons and figures on exit monitoring would be provided to the Committee in writing.</p>	Michele Leith Nicola Rickhuss	In progress	TBC	

9 November 2023	Local Authority Control of Housing Waiting List	A discussion ensued on the rights of tenants in respect of disrepair and notice of repossession. It was agreed for information on this matter to be disseminated to all Councillors.	Elise Hopkins	Completed	Circulated to Members of the Working Group on 23 January 2024	
11 December 2023	Budget and Capital Programme Feedback	<p>A number of questions were raised in respect of discussions from the Budget and Capital Programme (Forecast Revenue & Capital Outturn):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovation of Park Tennis Courts • One Palfrey Big Local • Social Housing Decarbonisation Scheme Reduction 	Stuart Wootton	Completed	Circulated on 20 December 2023	
	Budget and Capital Programme Feedback	A breakdown of temporary accommodation numbers would be circulated to the Committee.	Elise Hopkins	In progress	TBC	

	Budget and Capital Programme Feedback	Officers confirmed that a study would be carried out on whether it would be feasible for the Council to incentivise one-off annual Council Tax payments. This would be subject to whether the Council achieved better investment returns and cashflow as a result.	Shaun Darcy	In progress	TBC	
--	---------------------------------------	--	-------------	-------------	-----	--