



**Walsall Council**

## **Scrutiny Overview Committee**

Meeting to be held on: **13 December 2021 at 6.00 P.M.**

Meeting to be held via: **Council House and Microsoft Teams**

Public access to meeting via: <https://youtu.be/nxTlI1pUMq0>

**MEMBERSHIP:**

Chair: Councillor Murray

Vice Chair: Councillor Nawaz

Councillor Ali  
Councillor P. Bott  
Councillor Harrison  
Councillor Hicken  
Councillor K Hussain  
Councillor Jeavons  
Councillor Rasab  
Councillor Samra  
Councillor Singh-Sohal

**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL:**

Councillor Bird

**PORTFOLIO HOLDERS:**

All

## ITEMS FOR BUSINESS

<b>1.</b>	<b>Apologies</b> To receive apologies for absence from Members of the Committee.	
<b>2.</b>	<b>Substitutions</b> To receive notice of any substitutions for a Member of the Committee for the duration of the meeting.	
<b>3.</b>	<b>Declarations of interest and party whip</b> To receive declarations of interest or the party whip from Members in respect of items on the agenda.	
<b>4.</b>	<b>Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)</b> 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 (if applicable).	
<b>5.</b>	<b>Minutes</b> To approve and sign the minutes of the meetings held on 9 November 2021.	
<b>6.</b>	<b>Covid-19 Infection and Vaccination Rates Update</b> To consider the latest data on Covid-19 infection and vaccination rates.	<u>To Follow</u>
<b>7.</b>	<b>A34 Sprint – Walsall to Solihull – Update on Phase 1 &amp; 2</b> Sprint is a bus rapid transit project that will improve connectivity between Walsall, Birmingham and Solihull, providing improved quality, quicker and more reliable journeys, supporting regeneration and improved accessibility to economic opportunities for the residents and businesses of Walsall.	<u>Enclosed</u>
<b>8.</b>	<b>School Gate Parking</b> The council's approach to road safety, including outside schools, strives to provide a multifaceted methodology for reducing the number of people killed or injured as a result of road traffic collisions and to make our roads safer for all road users.	<u>Enclosed</u>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Scrutiny Survey Results</b> To present the results of the scrutiny survey 2021, and seek direction as to how the scrutiny process could be improved in the future.	<u>Enclosed</u>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Feedback from Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committees</b> To receive any feedback from meetings of Overview & Scrutiny Committees since the last meeting.	<u>Enclosed</u>
<b>11.</b>	<b>Areas of Focus</b> To review the Committees Work Programme and the Forward Plans for Walsall Council and the Black Country Executive Committee.	<u>Enclosed</u> & <u>To Follow</u>
<b>12.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b> To note that the date of the next meeting will be 7 February 2022.	

## 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 an Overview and Scrutiny Committee 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.

## **SCRUTINY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**09 November 2021 AT 6.00 P.M. AT THE COUNCIL HOUSE**

**Committee Members Present** Councillor Murray (Chair)  
Councillor Nawaz (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Ali  
Councillor Harrison  
Councillor Hicken  
Councillor K. Hussain  
Councillor Jeavons  
Councillor Rasab  
Councillor Samra  
Councillor Singh-Sohal

**Officers** Deborah Hindson – Interim Executive Director (Resources & Transformation)  
Stephen Gunther – Director – Public Health  
Dr. Uma Viswanathan – Consultant in Public Health Medicine  
Emma Thomas – Public Health Intelligence Manager  
Michael Brereton – Group Manager – Planning  
Neil Hollyhead – Senior Housing Strategy Officer  
Stuart Wootton – Finance Planning Manager  
Craig Goodall – Principal Democratic Services Officer  
Sian Lloyd – Assistant Democratic Services Officer

**Others in attendance** Geraint Griffiths-Dale – Clinical Commissioning Group

**Portfolio Holders** Councillor Bird – Leader  
Councillor Andrew – Deputy Leader and Regeneration  
Councillor M. Statham – Internal Services  
Councillor Butler – Clean and Green  
Councillor Towe – Education and Skills

### **341/21 APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were received on behalf of Councillor P. Bott.

### **342/21 SUBSTITUTIONS**

There were no substitutions.

### **343/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip identified at this meeting.

344/21 **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 (AS AMENDED)**

There were no items to be considered in private session.

345/21 **MINUTES**

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2021, a copy having previously been circulated, be approved.**

346/21 **SECTION 106 PLANNING OBLIGATIONS**

The Group Manager for Planning presented the Committee with the most up to date Council position regarding section 106 (s106) planning obligations. He explained that these were legal obligations entered into to mitigate the costs and impacts of a development proposal and form a reason for granting planning approval if the tests are met. It was noted that Planning Committee was provided with a report on 4 November detailing updates on the completion and processing of s106 in the financial year 2020/21 and that this report formed an update on the report presented to this Committee on 15 April 2021, particularly in regards to Member involvement.

The Group Manager for Planning explained that following the Scheme of Delegations all development proposals featuring s106 are referred to Planning Committee and officers seek delegation to carry out the negotiation of s106 contributions but any projects would still need to fall within the tests of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations to be permissible. He added that it was subsequent to this process that Members would become involved in the discussion and reassured the Committee that Officer training and consultation templates had been introduced to ensure consistency of Member consultation and that any input was recorded.

The current position showed that the Council had received £4.5 million in contributions and of this £1.8 million had been spent or allocated to be spent. It was highlighted that the Team Leader for Technical Support had recently been given responsibility for ensuring that paper and digital records of s106 funds were combined to give the most up to date version possible in subsequent reports.

Concerning the £28,000 allocated on Wards Keep the Group Manager for Planning advised that quotes for prospective work at George Rose Park Lodge were being assessed and the monies had not yet been spent but were allocated for key work which was to be completed as part of this project.

The Leader of the Council added that Members were concerned about their lack of involvement in the process and two requests had been made for the s106 process to be reviewed at Audit Committee. He noted that s106 planning obligations had previously been very well monitored.

Following questions the Group Manager for Planning clarified that the Council was responsible for procuring funds and consulting with Members. Following this the

relevant service area were then ultimately responsible for ensuring the funds were spent in the way proposed. He also advised that s106 agreements may include specific timescales by which time the money must have been spent or given back to the developer. Following this comment several Members reported that they could not recall ever being consulted on the spending of s106 planning obligations and requested that this be improved.

The Committee reviewed the appendices of projects and the s106 obligations noting projects in their wards that they were not aware of or where work recorded was not completed.

The Committee also discussed the purchasing of vacant properties to create additional temporary accommodation for homeless households which it was noted would be reviewed by Cabinet on 15 December. Following questions the Deputy Leader (Regeneration) explained that if the properties would be refurbished as required once purchased. The Committee were supportive of the proposal to use vacant properties to support homeless households.

### **Resolved:**

#### **That**

- 1. The Committee notes the report on infrastructure secured through s106 Planning Obligations during the financial year 2020/21 (April 2020 to March 2021) including details of committed/spent funding and infrastructure secured;**
- 2. The Committee endorses the procedure for securing necessary infrastructure through s106 Planning Obligations and the role of Members in the process;**
- 3. The Committee agrees with the principle of using section 106 money allocated for affordable housing in a strategic manner to use the Compulsory Purchase Order process in order to provide much needed housing for Walsall's homeless people and families.**

### **347/21 COVID-19 INFECTION AND VACCINATION RATES UPDATE**

The Public Health Intelligence Manager updated the Committee on current Covid-19 infection rates in Walsall and the vaccination uptake to date. She advised that case rates had begun to decrease across the borough which was a positive development and that nearly a quarter of all 12 – 15 years olds in the borough had received their first vaccination, rising to 51% in 16-17 year olds. She highlighted that at the time of reporting there were 50 confirmed Covid inpatients in Walsall hospitals and of those 8 were in critical care.

The Walsall Managing Director of the Black Country and West Birmingham Clinical Commissioning Group (the Managing Director) added that around 75% of people currently eligible for a booster vaccination had come forward and that this had mostly been facilitated through GP surgeries. He advised that vaccinations for 12 – 15 year olds were being offered at schools and at the Saddlers Centre and no capacity

issues had been reported. He stated that flu jabs and Covid boosters could be administered at the same time. The Managing Director reassured the Committee that there was a full winter plan in place and that anybody who wished to come forward for a vaccination would still be able to receive one.

Following questions the Managing Director confirmed that there were no current plans to close any test centres and that whilst the rate of vaccinations in 12 – 15 year olds appeared low in comparison to other age groups this was likely due to the fact that they had only recently been invited to come forward for a vaccination. He also noted that there were challenges receiving parental consent at short notice before vaccination teams visited schools. Therefore the Saddlers Centre was continuing to offer walk up appointments. Members requested more information on vaccination rates in 12-15 years olds and pregnant women at the next meeting.

**Resolved:**

**That:**

- 1. the report be noted;**
- 2. Figures relating to vaccination rates in pregnant women and 12 – 15 year olds be provided to the Committee at the next meeting.**

**348/21 FORECAST REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN FOR 2021/22 – 5 MONTH POSITION ENDED 31 AUGUST 2021**

The Leader of the Council presented the forecast revenue and capital outturn for 2021/22 based on the 5 month position as ended 31 August 2021. He highlighted that the reported council wide revenue overspend of circa £2.42 million had been reduced from £4.9 million and that this would need to be considered as part of the 2022/23 budget process if it was not addressed within the financial year. Services within the remit of the Committee were projected to have a net revenue underspend of £0.75 million. The Leader emphasised the impact of Covid on these figures.

Following questions the Interim Executive Director for Resources and Transformation advised that Directors would need to bring their service areas into balance by year end and that whilst the services within the remit of the Committee had achieved an underspend there were continuing cost pressures in other service areas.

**Resolved:**

**That:**

- 1. The Committee notes and the forecast 2021/22 year-end financial position for the council as a whole – a predicted net revenue overspend of c£2.42m, and net capital break even position after re-phasing of £91.19m into 2022/23.**



- 2. The Committee notes the forecast 2021/22 year-end financial position for services within the remit of this committee – a predicted net revenue underspend of (£0.75m) and net capital break even position after rephrasing of £7.35m into 2022/23, subject to ongoing review.**

349/21 **DRAFT REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET 2022-23 – 2025-26 – COUNCIL WIDE AND SERVICES WITHIN THE REMIT OF THE COMMITTEE**

The Leader of the Council presented a report on the draft revenue and capital budget 2022-23 – 2025-26 on both a Council wide level and on services within the remit of the Committee, noting that this was based on all known pressures and assumed that all savings for 2021/22 and 2022/23 were to be fully delivered and no further pressures would arise. He advised that a gap of £43.88 million over the next three years had been identified and that steps would need to be taken to rectify this.

Members sought to understand what the impact of the budget savings would have on services to residents. The Executive Director (Resources & Transformation) explained that by utilising different ways of working it was possible to generate operational efficiencies but maintain services. Members noted the importance of scrutiny in reviewing the budget proposals and asked about the delivery plans for the proposed savings.

Following questions about which Directorates were the most financially vulnerable the Executive Director (Resources & Transformation) explained that this was areas which operated demand led services, such as Adult Social Care and Children's Services. This was because they were always vulnerable to significant unexpected demands and were the main source of risk within the budget and MTFO

A Member asked how much Walsall Proud was due to save? The Executive Director (Resources & Transformation) explained that £20m of savings through Proud would come through implementing new ways of working and new approaches across third party spend, income generation, customer access and technology during 2022/23.

*OP saving 90 'Review of Older People existing long and new residential nursing and domiciliary placement costs support packages for learning disabilities including supported living and mental health'*

A Member expressed concern about the potential impact this saving could have on local residents and asked for reassurances that impact assessments had taken place? The Leader explained that no individual would be placed at risk and that the Council was making significant investment in mental health.

**Resolved:**

**That:**

- 1. Further details on OP saving 90 'Review of Older People existing long and new residential nursing and domiciliary placement costs support**

- packages for learning disabilities including supported living and mental health' be provided to Members;
2. Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2022/23 – 2025/26 be noted.

338/21 **FEEDBACK FROM OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEES**

The Chairs of the Overview & Scrutiny Committees each provided an update on meetings of their Committees this municipal year. It was noted that external participants may need additional support when attending Scrutiny Committees to ensure they are aware of the demands of the process.

**Resolved:**

**That the report be noted.**

339/21 **AREAS OF FOCUS**

The Committee considered its work programme and the Forward Plans of Walsall Council and the Black Country Joint Executive Committee.

Following a discussion Members agreed that due to the cross cutting nature of the topic the issue of school gate parking should be considered by the Scrutiny Overview Committee.

The following items were identified for the next meeting of the Committee:

- Update on Covid-19 infection and vaccination rates to include details of vaccination uptake in pregnant women and 12 -15 year olds;
- Scrutiny Survey results;
- Domestic Abuse Services Delivery Model
- School Gate Parking; and
- Feedback from Overview & Scrutiny Committees.

**Resolved:**

**That:**

1. the Areas of Focus and Forward Plan be noted;
2. The issue of school gate parking be considered by the Scrutiny Overview Committee.

350/21 **DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be 13 December 2021.

The meeting terminated at 8.30 p.m.

Chair: .....Date:.....

**13 December 2021**

**Sprint Walsall to Solihull via Birmingham – Update on Phases 1 and 2**

**Ward(s):** St. Matthews and Paddock

**Portfolios:** Councillor A. Andrew – Deputy Leader of the Council and Regeneration

**1. Aim**

- 1.1 Sprint is a bus rapid transit project that will improve connectivity between Walsall, Birmingham and Solihull, providing improved quality, quicker and more reliable journeys, supporting regeneration and improved accessibility to economic opportunities for the residents and businesses of Walsall.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Committee is recommended to: -

2.1.1 Note the progress being made on delivery of Sprint Phase 1, including engagement with businesses and residents during periods of disruption.

2.1.2 Consider the approach outlined for the development and delivery of Sprint Phase 2, including delivery timescales, plans for engagement and approvals.

2.1.3 Review the bus service changes noted in this report and comment on the overall impacts for Walsall residents and stakeholders.

**3. Infrastructure Development and Delivery**

**Phase 1 Delivery**

- 3.1 The West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) approved the Full Business Case for Sprint in February 2020, and allocated sufficient funding to deliver a first phase of full scheme interventions. Work commenced in early-2021 on the delivery of Sprint, and more noticeably in Walsall works commenced in May 2021. Contractors working in Walsall in Phase 1 include: -

- Doocey Group – utility and statutory undertaker diversions
- Colas – civils contractor
- HTM – traffic management
- BSL – bus shelter manufacturer and installer

- 3.2 The current forecast is for physical Phase 1 works to conclude in Walsall by April 2022.

- 3.3 The coordination of the works and management of contractors is the responsibility of Transport for West Midlands (TfWM) as both scheme promoter and sponsor. The scope of the works and the mechanism for works to commence on public highway are agreed under a section 8/278 agreement that both TfWM and Walsall Council have entered into. All works undertaken by TfWM and their contractors can be inspected by Walsall Council officers, where resources allow and will be transferred to the council on full inspection, completion and sign-off of the construction works.
- 3.4 A summary of the interventions in Phase 1 are noted here: -
- Upgraded bus boarding points with high quality Sprint shelters, featuring Real Time Information (RTI) displays, at key stops along the A34 route.
  - Dedicated inbound bus lane on Ablewell Street, giving more direct access to the town centre and signalised improvements to the Lower Rushall / Upper Rushall and Bridge Street junctions.
  - Increased bus priority with the introduction of extended bus lanes on the approach to / from Walstead Road junction and rationalisation of nearby central reserve crossing points.
- 3.5 All of the works undertaken are administered, reviewed and approved through Walsall Council's highway permitting arrangement and Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) consultation process, as is the requirement of any scheme undertaken on the public highway.
- 3.6 As part of delivery, it is TfWM responsibility and duty to communicate with residents and businesses affected by the work on what is to take place, and where, and to minimise the disruption and effect of these works on everyday life. TfWM have public engagement officers and liaison officers within both the contracting and delivery team, as well as a communication manager, who coordinates the overall message of Sprint, liaises with press and produces the regular communications put out into the community. TfWM and the contractors have been regularly visiting local businesses in the vicinity of the construction works to keep them updated on progress and to discuss any issues that the ongoing works may present.
- 3.7 There is a dedicated phone line that is promoted for any Sprint inquiries, and TfWM capture and coordinate all responses through a central customer relations team so that they can quickly pick up any recurring or prominent issues and address them.
- 3.8 TfWM accept that the works in Walsall town centre have been the subject of quite extensive traffic management and these measures have been discussed and agreed with WMBC officers. The primary purpose of the traffic management is to allow for safe methods of efficient working and to minimise any delays to road users, wherever possible.
- 3.9 Detail of traffic management and others matters associated with the effects of the Sprint works are relayed to stakeholders through the following means: -
- Residents and businesses receive timely notifications throughout the construction phase to explain specific work, how long it will last and detailing

how the work will affect them in terms of traffic management, possible noise and other disruptions.

- The Public Liaison Manager works closely with a contractor based Public Liaison Officer to keep residents and business holders routinely informed and to swiftly resolve any queries that may arise in person.
- Key stakeholders along the route (such as schools) are engaged with through the TfWM Travel Choices team.
- All questions, queries or complaints from the public are directed through the TfWM Customer Enquiry Team. All enquiries are logged with a response given within ten working days.
- The Sprint website is regularly updated with the latest information about construction works and the wider project.
- A monthly Sprint email newsletter is sent out to stakeholders giving the latest information about the project.

3.10 All information is sent to officers at Walsall Council in advance of going out to the public, which also enables local elected members in their regular dialogue with Walsall officers to have early sight of all Sprint communications.

3.11 TfWM also have almost daily dialogue with Walsall officers about progress on the ground and any issues as they occur, including the management of communication and engagement related matters.

## **Phase 2 Development and Delivery**

3.12 The intention is that Phase 2 will be included in the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme for the West Midlands. This programme is currently being prepared and will be presented to the WMCA Board for approval in January 2022.

3.13 TfWM are currently preparing the detail of the Phase 2 scheme with Walsall officers. The detail of a preferred scheme and options considered will be shared with Walsall Council's portfolio holder for regeneration in due course, at which time a plan for further wider engagement will also be agreed.

3.14 The detail of Phase 2 will require local Cabinet approval, and will also go back to the WMCA board for ratification and approval in due course. These approvals are expected to be sought late-spring/early-summer 2022.

3.15 Phase 2 will conclude the infrastructure provision required to support the delivery of a fully operational Sprint service between Walsall and Solihull via Birmingham.

## **Vehicles and service changes**

3.16 The infrastructure being rolled out in Phase 1 will benefit existing services and help future proof the corridor for the roll out of articulated multidoor buses similar to those used on the popular Glider service in Belfast (**see Figure 1**) on the network. This enables some of the benefits of the full service offer to be provided by existing services as they utilise new bus lanes and traffic signal arrangements.

## **Phase 1 Operation**

- 3.17 The infrastructure delivered as part of Phase 1 is expected to enable new a new service to be provided on the corridor. As revealed in January 2021, National Express plans to operate this direct service between Walsall and Solihull. This will replace the current Route 51 and X2 services providing new journey options from Walsall including direct services to the Bullring and the markets in Birmingham, the Digbeth creative quarter, the Jaguar Land Rover plant and logistics operations centre at Lode Lane and Solihull town centre. National Express and Nbus/Nnetwork tickets will be valid on this service. This new service will be operated by 20 zero emission hydrogen fuel cell buses.
- 3.18 The hydrogen to fuel these vehicles will be produced in the West Midlands and is 'green hydrogen' produced by electrolysis using electricity generated from renewable sources. Some of the new hydrogen double deck vehicles are now on test on the A34.
- 3.19 All other services on the corridor in Walsall, including the X51 are expected to remain operating as at present, although consideration is being given to introducing other cross-Birmingham services as part of the wider Bus Service Improvement Plan. These other services on the A34 / A45 corridor are expected to benefit from reduced journey times and enhanced passenger facilities as they will share the new infrastructure. Feedback received from the 2019 Sprint consultation supports this approach.
- 3.20 The Sprint Programme has also seen the implementation of an Enhanced Partnership Scheme on the corridor. This Scheme commits TfWM to installation of the Sprint infrastructure on the corridor and also mandates minimum vehicle standards for operators to adhere to. All buses operating normal public services on the corridor should now be low or zero emission (minimum Euro VI), with CCTV for passenger safety and security and should provide the opportunity for contactless payment. From May 2022, all double deck vehicles must additionally have next stop announcements on both decks, free Wi-Fi and should show onward connecting service information.

## **Phase 2 Operation**

- 3.21 WMCA are currently seeking DfT funding to support the cost of up to 231 zero emission vehicles from the Zero Emission Bus Regional Areas (ZEBRA) funding stream. This is made up of 200 hydrogen fuel cell zero emission double deck buses, 24 hydrogen fuel cell zero emission articulated single deck buses for Sprint and 7 battery electric vehicles with opportunity charging capability. National Express West Midlands were the only operator to bring forward firm proposals at Expression of Interest stage and continue to support our submission. If WMCA are successful in the ZEBRA funding request, then WMCA will run an open grant competition to fairly award funding to best deliver on the outcomes required. TfWM currently anticipate a decision from the DfT prior to the end of 2021.
- 3.22 Assuming the Sprint Phase 2 infrastructure is delivered, the intent is for the 24 hydrogen fuel cell articulated vehicles to operate on the Sprint corridor, with any displaced hydrogen double deck vehicles cascaded to other routes operated in the

West Midlands. Other service changes may be considered at this point including the introduction of an additional cross-Birmingham service from Walsall Borough providing further improvements to connections available.



**Figure 1 – Glider vehicle on service in Belfast**

#### **4. *Financial information***

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications for Walsall Council as a result of this report.
- 4.2 Phase 1 is being delivered within the budget agreed by the WMCA in February 2020 and financial risk is being managed by WMCA/TfWM. There are COVID associated costs which are being captured as part of the delivery programme reporting.
- 4.3 The budget for phase 2 is a matter to be discussed and agreed at the WMCA board in January 2022 and is captured within the overall ask for allocation within the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.

#### **5. *Reducing Inequalities***

- 5.1 The objective of Sprint is to support regeneration and inclusivity through the provision of accessible and affordable transport that can be reliably used by all in accessing opportunities across the West Midlands. Inclusivity is at the heart of the scheme, alongside a drive to support the low-carbon economy and attract zero emission alternatives.
- 5.2 SPRINT is being development and implemented in line with the 'Marmot Objectives'. These are: -

- Giving every child the best start in life – access to schools is supported through a high-quality public transport network, and Sprint is a key element of that network within Walsall and the West Midlands.
- Enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives – measures to promote public transport modes help promote healthy and independent travel choices;
- Creating fair employment and good work for all – improved public 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 public transport networks;
- Creating and developing sustainable places and communities – public transport networks help support sustainable places and communities;
- Strengthening the role and impact of ill-health prevention – healthy travel choices, such as combining walking, cycling and public transport, can help prevent ill health.

## **6. Decide**

- 6.1 The committee may wish to provide their views on the performance of Phase 1 project delivery and recommend to officers how lessons learned from this phase of delivery could be applied in future phases of delivery, or on other transport projects.

## **7. Respond**

- 7.1 Walsall Cabinet will be asked to consider the proposed design and delivery of Sprint Phase 2 in 2022, before the works commence, in order to obtain support for the completion of the Walsall elements of the A34/A45 scheme. The timing of this is to be determined, but expected in late-spring/early-summer 2022, at which time the details of the Phase 2 interventions will be better understood and contracting options in place based on the decision of the WMCA to allocate funds to Phase 2.

## **8. Review**

- 8.1 Officers will continue to engage with the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the development of Phase 2 (infrastructure, vehicles and bus service operation) progress.
- 8.2 The committee may wish to review Phase 2 plans ahead of the anticipated Cabinet approval in 2022 and provide input to inform the Cabinet decision.

## **9. Background papers**

- WMCA Board report, *Sprint - A34 Walsall to Birmingham and A45 Birmingham to Airport and Solihull Full Business Case Submission*, February 2020
- Walsall Cabinet report, *A34 Walsall to Birmingham SPRINT (Bus Rapid Transit) Scheme – Phase 1*, February 2021



## Author

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**13 December 2021**

**School Gate Parking**

**Ward(s): All**

**Portfolios: Regeneration**

**1. Aim**

- 1.1. "Road safety affects everyone in our region and improving the safety of our roads is a key factor in making the West Midlands an attractive place to live, work and visit."<sup>1</sup> The council's approach to road safety, including outside schools, strives to provide a multifaceted methodology for reducing the number of people killed or injured as a result of road traffic collisions and to make our roads safer for all road users.

**2. Recommendations**

- 2.1. That Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the formation of a members working group to consider the council's approach to the specific issue of school gate parking.

**3. Report detail – know**

- 3.1. The regional road safety strategy, developed by emergency services and local authorities across the West Midlands, sets out an ambition of a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on the West Midlands Roads by 2028. This ambitious target is founded on a 2015 - 2017 baseline of 1,021 incidents across the region.
- 3.2. Since 2017 both the number of killed or seriously injured [KSI] road casualties, and the number of slight casualties, have reduced year on year in Walsall. The total number of recorded incidents in 2020 was over 30% lower than in 2017.
- 3.3. At many locations across the borough, roads around schools experience a surge of traffic concentrated over a 50 minute period at school drop off and pick up times. This results in an increased risk of collisions with vulnerable road users and other motorists, unlawful parking, congestion and consequential impacts on air quality.
- 3.4. Statistics from the Department of Transport reveal that 14% of children killed on Great Britain's roads in 2018 were harmed during the morning school run between 7am and 9am and 23% after school between 3pm and 5pm. In Walsall, between 2017 and 2020, these figures were 10% and 18% respectively.
- 3.5. Additionally, a report from insurer Admiral shows a 43% fall of road collisions during the holidays at peak school times.

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<sup>1</sup> Andy Street, West Midlands Mayor – West Midlands Regional Road Safety Strategy

- 3.6. Work to improve road safety outside schools is carried out by a number of council departments who deliver a multi-faceted approach:

#### Road Safety Education

- 3.7. Road safety education is fundamental to achieving the regional ambition of a 40% reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on the West Midlands Roads by 2028. The education programme is delivered to a wide range of ages and road user groups including school aged children.
- 3.8. Much of the road safety education delivered to educational establishments from pre-schools through to colleges is delivered through the A\*STARS programme. There are currently 77 of a possible 86 primary schools and 13 out of 18 secondary schools on the A\*STARS programme, some of which have highlighted school gate parking as a cause for concern.
- 3.9. A\*STARS couples road safety education and the promotion of active and sustainable modes of travel in support of Public Health objectives and the Black Country Healthy Schools Programme. Just some of the initiatives delivered through this programme are pedestrian training for pupils in reception and year 3, transition training, scooterability, safety in the car sessions, smarter parking and 5 minute walk zones.
- 3.10. In addition to our transition work with students in year 6, 'Streetwise' is an interactive workshop for students in year 7 is delivered in secondary schools; focusing on distractions on the road. It is delivered in the first term when students have just started secondary school.

#### Enforcement

- 3.11. Traffic Regulation Orders [TROs] are legal documents that restrict or prohibit the use of the highway network, in line with The Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984. They help to manage the highway network for all road users, including pedestrians and they aim to improve road safety and access to facilities such as schools.
- 3.12. A mix of restrictions are in place across the borough and they are continually being evolved to take account of the longer operational hours of schools and the heightened demand for on street parking. Although not routinely reviewed, when concerns are raised, resource is dedicated to investigate the circumstances both adjacent to the school and in the surrounding roads so that a full understanding of the problem and the potential implications of different solutions can be assessed.
- 3.13. TROs follow a statutory process and key to that process is robust consultation. TRO consultations, combined with statutory processes can mean a typical and often simple TRO can take between 12 and 18 months to deliver. Complex or contentious TROs can take longer.
- 3.14. Once a TRO is in place, there are three ways in which the council can enforce against school gate parking:
- Fourteen civil enforcement officers carry out foot patrols on a daily basis including an average of five visits to schools per day.
  - Two CCTV vehicles are deployed across the borough during both the morning and afternoon peak school drop of times.
  - Four static CCTV cameras are used at locations that are able to accommodate the infrastructure

- 3.15. Based on the available resource, the council aim to carry out at least one visit per school per term. Additional enforcement is carried out across the borough during the first two weeks of September; at A\*STARS schools; known parking hotspots and; in response to specific requests.
- 3.16. In the past 12 months, 1,473 parking charge notices have been issued for parking offences on school keep clear lines with enforcement activity focused during school run times. Additional parking charge notices have been issued for offences on double yellow lines however the way that this data is reported does not differentiate between locations close to schools and other locations where double yellow lines are in place.

#### Road Safety Engineering

- 3.17. All scheme requests are recorded, assessed and categorised. In the case of local safety schemes, sites must have a minimum of six personal injury collisions in the previous three years to be considered as part of this programme. This is indicative of the number of injury collisions which occur on the highway in the borough on an annual basis and generates a list of schemes which exceeds the current level of funding available. The traffic engineering team undertake the annual review of injury collisions to prioritise those schemes where road safety interventions will be most effective in reducing casualties.
- 3.18. Schemes that have a lower number of injury collisions are transferred to the promotion of community health and safety programme (PCHS) for further review. In addition to road safety, the factors used to assessment schemes in this programme include the potential impact on access to schools, local shops and public open space. The schemes are then ranked in priority order and delivered based on the availability of funding.
- 3.19. The council co-ordinates a Safer Routes to School program which aims to improve the safety of journeys to and from school and encourage sustainable travel choices. Investment in engineering measures is prioritised based on a number of factors including collision information, the school travel plan, the proximity to other amenities such as shops and the contribution to walking and cycling objective. Additionally, all schemes go through a consultation process with young people and the local community.
- 3.20. The schemes are designed to have community wide benefits extending beyond the locality of the school, and where possible are linked with other pedestrian and cycling schemes forming part of a network. Successful Safer Routes projects involve more than just engineering measures, with education, training and publicity campaigns all playing an important part.
- 3.21. The 2021/22 Safe Routes to School programme comprised of 70 potential schemes ranging from school keep clear markings and cycle parking to more substantial crossing improvements. The programme value is c.£1.4m with 8 measures totalling just over £50k scheduled for delivery this financial year. Details of the criteria used to prioritise investment is outlined at **Appendix A**.
- 3.22. Details of all of the above mentioned road safety programmes of work are reported to Cabinet on an annual basis as part of the wider Highways & Transport Capital Programme.

#### School opening times

- 3.23. In England, local authority maintained schools must open for at least 380 sessions (190 days) during a school year. Term dates are determined by school employers. The local authority is the employer for community, voluntary-controlled, community special or maintained nursery schools. For foundation, voluntary-aided and foundation special schools, the employer is the governing body.
- 3.24. The head teacher of a maintained school will recommend the length of a school day, including session times and breaks. The governing body must agree the recommendation. This is not in the remit of the local authority. Academies, including free schools, set their own term dates and school day.
- 3.25. This issue of schools operating a shortened day was raised in Parliament after a number of schools shortened their working weeks, closing early on Fridays, citing funding issues. The Schools Minister has stated that it is “unacceptable for schools to shorten their working week when it is not a direct action to support and enhance their pupils’ education.” Any changes to the school week/day must be evidenced by positive impact to children’s education.
- 3.26. Children’s Services work closely with our schools to facilitate, support and influence through a variety of regular meetings, weekly bulletins, forums and visit from our School Improvement associates Challenge Education

#### ***Financial information***

- 3.27. In 2021/22, £560k of the council’s integrated transport block allocation from the Department for Transport [DfT] is being used to fund road safety engineering and associated assessments and design at locations with high number of injury collisions. Although future DfT funding is yet to be confirmed, there is an early indication that the council’s allocation will not be reduced over the next five years.
- 3.28. A further £120k of council capital is allocated for the promotion of community health and safety schemes. This funding stream is included in the Capital programme for the forthcoming financial year. This investment stream focus on locations with a lower number of injury collisions. In addition to road safety, the factors used to assessment schemes in this programme include the potential impact on access to schools, local shops and public open space. The schemes are then ranked in priority order and delivered based on the availability of funding.
- 3.29. As noted above, annual investment in the Safe Route to Schools programme is around £50k with investment prioritised using the criteria provided at Appendix A.
- 3.30. The income from parking enforcement is allocated to a parking account and the cost of operating the enforcement service is deducted. Any surplus parking enforcement income is ring fenced for traffic improvement projects as required by legislation.

#### ***Reducing Inequalities***

- 3.31. The road safety education programme strives to target a range for groups and seeks to identify those groups who may not be reached by existing messaging so that an alternative targeted approach can be taken.
- 3.32. Road Safety engineering forms part of the wider delivery of the West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan [STP]. Consideration has been given to ensuring that the

needs of all sections of the community are considered in transport projects. Further the West Midlands STP has been subject to an equalities impact assessment.

- 3.33. The road safety engineering 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 facilities.
- 3.34. TROs follow a statutory process and key to that process is robust consultation. This robust consultation seeks to understand the implications of the proposed order on all groups so that an informed and balanced decision can be made with respect to implementation. Equalities implications are a key consideration in this process. TROs generally seek to offer an overall improvement with respect to highway access by either improving safety or reducing congestion. Improved access to the highway reduces inequalities impacting older people; younger people; people with limited mobility and parents by improving access to amenities, work, education, leisure activities, friends and family.

#### **4. Decide**

- 4.1. School gate parking is a complex issues that demands a multifaceted response.
- 4.2. Overview and Scrutiny Committee could consider the approach set out in this report and endorse its ongoing implementation.
- 4.3. Alternatively, Overview and Scrutiny Committee could support the formation of a Member's working group to consider the council's approach to the specific issue of school gate parking.

#### **5. Respond**

- 5.1. If Overview and Scrutiny Committee support the recommendation set out in this report, a Members working group will be established in the first quarter of 2022. The work of the group will then be utilised to inform school engagement in the 2022/23 academic year and investment in road safety engineering in the 2023/24 financial year.

#### **6. Review**

- 6.1. The wider integrated 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 delivery board, which is made up of senior officers and the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration.
- 6.2. The transport capital 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.
- 6.3. The effectiveness of all road safety projects and programmes is monitored on an ongoing basis and is reflected in key data e.g. traffic counts; KSI monitoring; school active travel measures etc. The council's monitoring activity is also supported by regional monitoring and reporting.

#### **Background papers**

Regional Road Safety Strategy -

<https://www.tfwm.org.uk/media/blti33m5/wmca-regional-road-safety-strategy-version-1-updated.pdf>

Walsall Road Safety Strategy -

[https://go.walsall.gov.uk/roads\\_parking\\_and\\_travel/roadworks\\_and\\_road\\_maintenance/making\\_our\\_roads\\_safer#145821606-safer-routes-to-school-srts](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/roads_parking_and_travel/roadworks_and_road_maintenance/making_our_roads_safer#145821606-safer-routes-to-school-srts)

Further information about the A\*STARS programme -

<https://www.astarswalsall.co.uk>

West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan Settlement and Capital Programme Cabinet Approval –

<https://cmispublic.walsall.gov.uk/cmis/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/3113/Committee/406/Default.aspx>

RS03 - Procedure for the introduction of Traffic Calming Measures -

<https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importeddocuments/rs03l.pdf>

RS15 - Procedure for assessing Safer Routes to School schemes -

[https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importeddocuments/procedure\\_for\\_assessing\\_safer\\_routes\\_to\\_school\\_schemes\\_final.pdf](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/Portals/0/images/importeddocuments/procedure_for_assessing_safer_routes_to_school_schemes_final.pdf)

School admissions policies -

[https://go.walsall.gov.uk/schools\\_and\\_learning/schools\\_in\\_walsall/school\\_admissions/school\\_admissions\\_policies](https://go.walsall.gov.uk/schools_and_learning/schools_in_walsall/school_admissions/school_admissions_policies)

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## Appendix A

Extract from RS15 - Procedure for assessing Safer Routes to School schemes

### Our approach

Following the completion of the action plan contained as part of the School Travel Plan all scheme requests should be recorded on the Scheme Tracking System and then assessed and assigned to the appropriate category.

Where schemes meet the following criteria they should be considered under the Safer Routes to School programme. The Safer Routes to School programme is ranked using a scoring system.

The initial criteria is based around the schools need for a scheme. These criteria score 1pt each and are weighted at 50%.

- Requested by school;
- Contribution to Cycling Strategy;
- Contribution to Walking Strategy
- Identified in School Travel Plan
- No of collisions within 500m radius
- No. of child collisions within 500m radius
- STP completed
- STP reviewed

The second element of the criteria relates specifically to the scheme being promoted and the schools active involvement contributing towards modal shift. These elements score 1pt each while each collision will score 1pt.

- Collisions affected by the scheme;
- Nearby shop(s);
- Link to existing cycle network;
- Cycle storage at school;
- Site meets SCP criteria;
- Registered on STW;
- Undertake regular Pedestrian training;
- Undertake regular Bikeability training;

The final element of the score comprises the estimated cost of the scheme based on the number of affected pupils.

The calculation below should be used to calculate the score:

Cost points =	(No. pupils that cycle + no pupils that walk)	X 1,000
	Estimated Scheme Cost	

### Estimating scheme costs

The cost of schemes is estimated based on the area. A unit cost of £30 per square metre is used to estimate scheme costs. Experience has proven that this cost provides a realistic estimate for these type of traffic calming schemes. The cost points are then added to the other two areas to give an overall score for that request. The spreadsheet automatically



calculates the overall score for each request. Once the scores have been updated then the data should then be sorted by the overall score to give the new rankings.

### **Consultation**

It is recommended that the consultation process identified in RS03 - Procedure for the introduction of Traffic Calming Measures be followed in implementing this nature of work.

**13 December, 2021**

## **Scrutiny Survey**

**Ward(s):** All

**Portfolios:** All

### **1. Purpose of the report**

To present the results of the scrutiny survey 2021, and seek direction as to how the scrutiny process could be improved in the future.

### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 The Member learning and development programme is enhanced to include training for Members on financial scrutiny, scrutiny legislation, chairing meetings and asking questions.
- 2.2 Members be encouraged to request training on subject specific topics they would like training on.
- 2.2 Due to mixed comments in relation to the scrutiny of the council's budget setting process the Scrutiny Overview Committee review the existing approach and consider how it could be improved;
- 2.3 A recommendation tracker be developed to assist systematic follow up of recommendations made by overview and scrutiny committees;
- 2.4 The findings reflecting the importance of ensuring agendas for meetings are manageable and that prioritisation is given to reports that require scrutiny rather than reports 'for noting';
- 2.5 further development of the scrutiny report template to take place to include model recommendations which encourage outcomes and avoid requesting that reports are noted.

### **3. Aim**

- 1.1 The role of good governance and scrutiny is critical to public trust and confidence in decision-making. In times of uncertainty and significant change, it is important that decisions are made in a way that is transparent, involves others and holds to account those responsible for implementation.
- 1.2 The Council has continually reviewed its scrutiny process and sought to make improvements over recent years.
- 1.3 Further to previous work and to seek how to develop scrutiny recent research, benchmarking and a review of recent best practice has taken place to reflect on

the way that scrutiny could be further evolved in Walsall, identify good practice and opportunities for new ways of working.

- 1.4 In response to the report taken to the Scrutiny Overview Committee on 'Scrutiny Good Practice and Benchmarking' a Member survey was carried out to determine how the scrutiny process could be improved in the future. Information gathered from the survey will be used to help shape and develop the focus of the scrutiny committees for the future. A summary of the results is presented below to allow improvements to be planned and address any weaknesses.

#### **4. Know**

##### ***Context***

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Overview Committee are considering how to improve the scrutiny function, and in order to do so, wished to understand the views of Elected Members. A survey was sent to all 60 Elected Members, with 20 responses received and 1 response received in the form of feedback via an email. This was from a mix of scrutiny (16) and non-scrutiny members (5) who were asked to rate different aspects of scrutiny.

- 4.2 The majority of respondents rated the following aspects very good or good:

- Scrutiny structure.
- Work programme.
- Forward plan.
- Frequency of meetings  
*One comment received stated scrutiny committees were too far apart.*
- Effectiveness of working groups  
*One comment received stated that working groups were difficult to set up.*
- Number of committee members.
- Portfolio Holder involvement.
- Length of agendas.
- Scrutiny work programmes.
- Cabinet / Portfolio Holder involvement.
- Report satisfaction.

#### **4.3 Areas for improvement**

The scoring of some aspects suggested that these areas would benefit from further consideration in order to improve, these aspects were:

##### ***Effectiveness of Committees***

- 4.4 Feedback on this aspect suggested that this was due to ineffective Chairmanship (selection of chair is a political decision and not based on abilities or subject knowledge) and ineffective scrutiny members. A separate respondent stated that Elected Members did not have the experience, background or qualifications to make a difference at scrutiny committees. It was also suggested that the follow up on decisions at each committee is not adequately fed back to Members and each year has a repetitive agenda without measuring progress in an 'evidence

based and uniform way'. Another comment expressed frustration at being denied a seat on a scrutiny committee due to political alignment.

- 4.5 A comment was received detailing lack of input provided at Committee by Portfolio Holders, with a reliance on Officers. Although it was noted that there were exceptions to this.

### ***Cabinet forward plan***

- 4.6 Of the 20 responses received, 9 respondents rated the forward plan as very good or good, 4 rated it as poor and 3 stated that it did not apply (others did not respond).

### ***Budget scrutiny***

- 4.7 This aspect created the most commentary, with suggestions for half yearly budget consultation along with another comment that budget scrutiny does not feature heavily on agendas. The impact that scrutiny feedback to Cabinet had, was also questioned.

### ***Budget setting***

- 4.13 This was an aspect which seemed to create the most dissatisfaction with scrutiny with six respondents describing scrutiny in this aspect as 'poor', having said that 7 respondents responded 'good' or 'very good'. Feedback included that 'unsure Cabinet take any notice' and a suggestion that consultation should take place 'half yearly' and that 'not much is covered on the agenda to do with the budget of this area'. When asked how they thought scrutiny should consider the budget setting process the majority of respondents (9) stated that this should be considered by all scrutiny committees. Although due to the small number of respondents it is important to note that this was closely followed by a specialist working group (6).

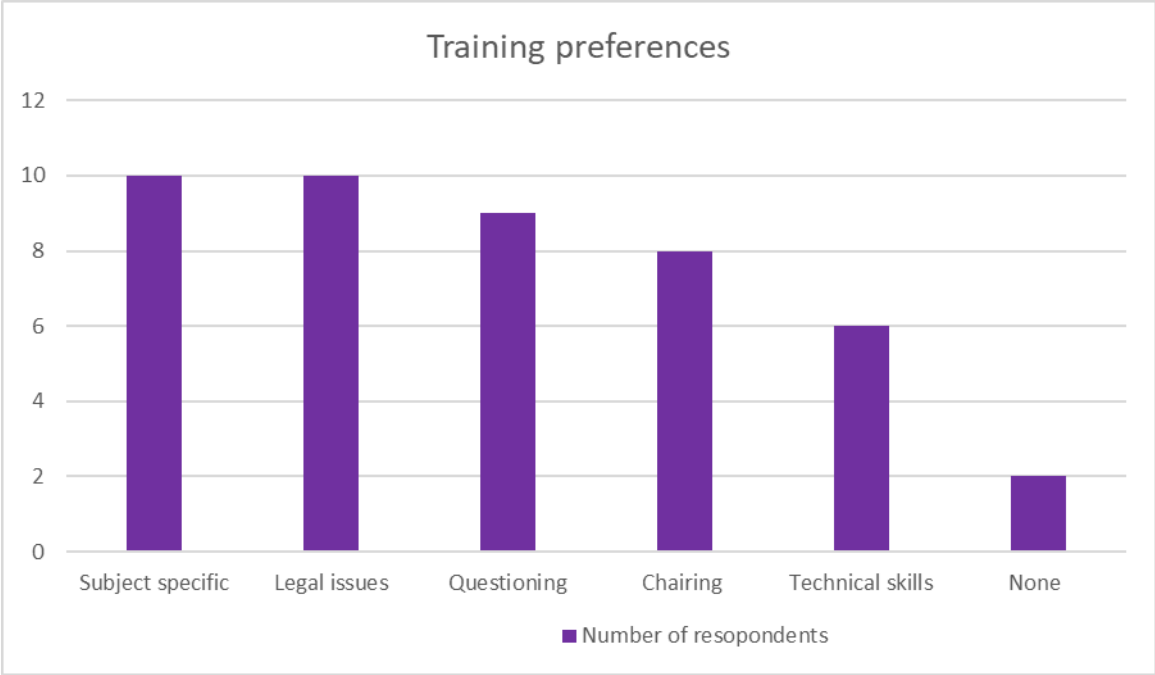
### ***Length of agendas***

- 4.8 Although this issue created a positive response in terms of satisfaction, comments for improvement were detailed and included a suggestion that items could take a long time to be debated, there needs to be a reasonable number of items on the agenda, and it was noted that officers did not need to talk through reports as they had already been circulated to Members.

### ***Training***

- 4.9 Elected Member training was recognised as a way to improve the scrutiny function. Quotes from respondents which were made throughout the survey included that '*training for scrutiny is critical*', '*Members should be aware of the parameters and functionality of the scrutiny process*', '*Training would be immensely helpful*' and '*Training for scrutiny is critical, members should be aware of the parameters and functionality of the scrutiny process*'.

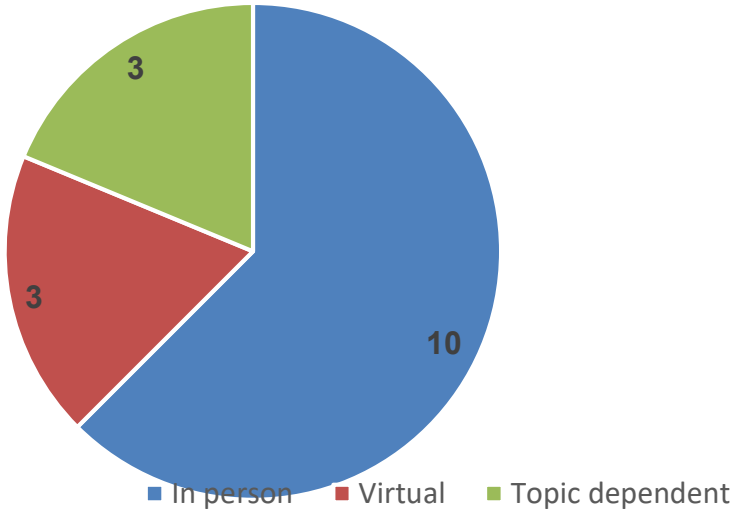
4.10 Respondents indicated their training preferences, with 'subject specific' and 'legislative' scoring high. 13 respondents stated that they would prefer face-to-face training, however respondents were able to select more than one method and a total of 13 indicated a preference for virtual/online self-guided (there is a potential to deliver sessions in both ways using the hybrid system). Responses specified a roughly equal preference for the delivery of training through in house or external training providers with a small number dependent on the topic.



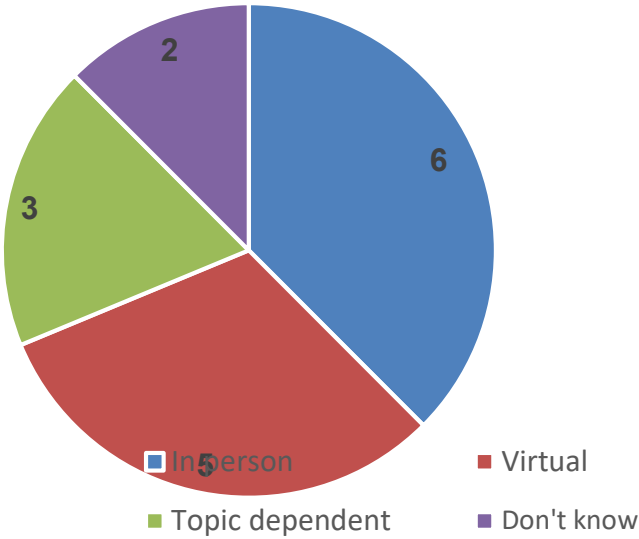
**Methods of meeting**

4.11 The Covid-19 pandemic provided emergency legislation to enable Council Committee meetings to operate virtually. This method of conducting meetings in Walsall was implemented swiftly and successfully allowing council business to continue. This legislation expired on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2021 and this provision was not extended – after this date elected members were required to attend committee meetings physically. A hybrid system has since been implemented to allow remote attendance by presenting officers and Portfolio Holders. Respondents were asked for their preferences in relation to the location of scrutiny committees and working groups.

Preference for location of committee meetings



Preference of location of working group meetings



4.12 For Committee meetings the main preference expressed was for in person meetings with only a small minority preferring virtual meetings. However, until such time that legislation makes it possible for Elected Members to attend

meetings in a hybrid/virtual way this question is more relevant to the organisation of working groups, which have more flexibility in operation. The survey outcome demonstrated that more members felt these could meet virtually but opinion was still split. Which suggests working group members should agree how they wish to meet when setting up meetings.

### ***Officer support***

- 4.14 Members were asked to detail how officer support to scrutiny could be improved, this question was split into Senior Officers, Non-senior Officers and Democratic services. Comments included that it would be beneficial for senior officers/non-senior officers to be more involved in the scrutiny process, that officers have advance notification of questions to ensure they can be answered at committee. One respondent stated that there was no need for improvement.

In terms of support from Democratic Services, feedback was positive, however, suggestions included that there should be more dedicated officers including a request for a dedicated scrutiny officer.

### ***Partners***

- 4.15 Respondents were asked to describe their satisfaction with the engagement of partners in the scrutiny process, 11 out of 20 were satisfied/very satisfied, with just 4 out of 20 dissatisfied. Comments suggested that it would be beneficial for partners to be provided with questions in advance of meetings to ensure responses could be provided at the committee meeting. The 'ability to address issues with the CCG and NHS', and 'face to face GP practices' noted as a successful examples of scrutiny.
- 4.16 Other successful examples of scrutiny quoted by respondents were 'how families were supported during Covid', and the way 'the council responded to the pandemic'.

### ***Priority issues for future consideration at scrutiny in 2021/22***

- 4.17 The issues below were identified by respondents as priority issues for 2021/22.

- Event management;
- S106 allocation and spend justification authorisation.
- Service provision and customer experience.
- Covid 19 steps forward.
- Dealing with mental health issues due to Covid
- To become more effective as a new member.
- All major areas of concern.
- Seeing genuine "SCRUTINY" rather than considering Reports followed by "move they be noted"...
- Reports often written by Officers whose departments may well be the subject of "scrutiny" on particular issues.
- Mental health spend and governance.

- Post Covid scrutiny.
- Rotation of the chair.
- Access to GP services,
- Adult health & social care funding.
- To make sure funding is used to full capability and that there's proven improvements when it's been highlighted as needing improvement.
- Health & Social Care transformation.
- To ensure that all prior issues are being addressed to be more effective and challenge to be more successful.
- Council finances.

### ***Council Corporate Plan Priorities***

- 4.18 It is important that the Councils Governance arrangements are robust, transparent and effective to ensure that decisions affecting residents across the borough are made in a lawful way. This contributes to the Councils 'Internal Focus' Priority and ensures that the service is efficient and effective.

### ***Risk Management***

- 4.19 None directly related to this report.

### ***Financial Implications***

- 4.20 None directly related to this report.

### ***Legal Implications***

- 4.21 None directly related to this report.

### ***Procurement Implications/Social Value***

- 4.22 None directly related to this report.

### ***Property Implications***

- 4.23 None directly related to this report.

### ***Health and Wellbeing implications***

- 4.24 None directly related to this report.

### ***Staffing implications***

- 4.25 None directly related to this report.

### ***Reducing Inequalities***

- 4.25 None directly related to this report.



## ***Consultation***

4.26 None directly related to this report.

### **5. Decide**

5.1 Members are asked to review the outcome of the survey and recommendations as set out in the report and consider whether or not they wish to take them, or alternative, suggestions forward.

### **6. Respond**

Subject to the views of elected members the recommendations will be implemented and further reports provided to the Committee for Member feedback will be submitted as required.

### **7. Review**

Subject to the agreement of the next steps regular reports will be provided as required.

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13 December 2021

**Feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees**

**Portfolios:** All

**Wards:** All

**1. Summary of report**

This report provides a short summary of the activity of the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

**2. Recommendation**

**That, subject to any comments Members may wish to make, the feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees be noted.**

**3. Report**

*Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

The Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on 23<sup>rd</sup> November, 2021 and considered the draft revenue budget and draft capital programme 2022/23 – 2025/26 alongside the Quarter 2 corporate financial monitoring position. Members sought further clarity on proposals and this feedback will be provided to Cabinet.

The Committee also received a report on Children's Services Performance and Benchmarking, which included information in relation a referral from Audit Committee Members which raised concerns around performance indicators rating as red. As part of this a separate report on youth justice – first time entrants was presented.

*Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

The Committee met on 25 November 2021 and considered:

- Draft revenue and capital budget
- Quarter 2 financial performance
- School Admission
- Education Welfare Service (Attendance)

*Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

The Committee met on 18 November 2021 and considered:

- Draft revenue and capital budget
- Quarter 2 financial performance

- Employment and Skills Support
- M6 Junction 10

*Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee*

The Committee is scheduled to meet on 9 December 2021. Items on the agenda include:

- Home care capacity and demand
- Adult Social Care Peer Review

A verbal update on the meeting will be provided at the meeting.

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## Scrutiny Overview Committee – Area of Focus – 2021-22

	28 September	9 November	13 December	7 February	15 March	28 April
<p>Economic Growth, for all people communities and businesses</p> <p><i>Lead OSC: Economy &amp; Environment</i></p>		S106	Sprint			
<p>People have increased independence, improved health and positively contribute to their communities</p> <p><i>Lead OSC: Social Care &amp; Health</i></p>	C19 Data	C19 Data	C19 Data	C19 Data	C19 Data	C19 Data
<p>Internal focus, all Council services are efficient</p> <p><i>Lead OSC: Scrutiny Overview Committee</i></p>	<p>Customer Experience Strategy</p> <p>Financial outturn and Q1 monitoring</p>	<p>Q2 financial monitoring</p> <p>Budget setting 2022-23</p>	Scrutiny survey results	Corporate Plan Monitoring (Q2)		
<p>Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well</p> <p><i>Lead OSCs: Children's &amp; Education</i></p>			School gate parking			
<p>Communities are prospering and resilient with all housing needs met in safe and healthy places that build a strong sense of belonging and cohesion</p> <p><i>Lead OSC: Scrutiny Overview Committee</i></p>	Domestic Abuse Strategy			Domestic Abuse Services Delivery Model		

### Items to be scheduled

Notes: Corporate Plan themes can be cross cutting for all Overview and Scrutiny Committees. Lead Overview and Scrutiny Committees identified for reference

## **Scrutiny Overview Committee – Area of Focus – 2021-22**

### **To be scheduled**

Equalities Working Group

Corporate Plan Performance Monitoring

Affordable Housing

Fly tipping enforcement

Organised and serious violent crime

West Midlands Combined Authority Scrutiny Committee

### **Via Email**

Quarter 3 Financial Monitoring