

ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
2 February 2023 at 6.00pm held at Walsall Council House, Lichfield Street,
Walsall, WS1 1TW.

Committee Members

Councillor M. Follows (Chair)
Councillor B. Allen
Councillor C. Creaney
Councillor A. Garcha
Councillor I. Hussain
Councillor P. Kaur
Councillor R. Larden
Councillor A. Nazir
Councillor J. Whitehouse
Councillor R. Worrall

Portfolio Holders
Regeneration

Councillor A. Andrew	Deputy Leader and
Councillor G. Perry	Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities
Councillor K. Murphy	Clean and Green
Councillor G. Flint	Health and Wellbeing

Officers Present:

Simon Neilson	Executive Director, Economy, Environment and Communities
Dave Brown	Director, Place and Environment
Fraz Hussain	Lead Accountant, Economy, Environment and Communities
Matt Crowton	Transportation Major Projects & Strategy Manager
Kathryn Moreton	Head of Highways, Transport & Operations
Jaki Brunton-Douglas	PHP Marketing and Funding Manager
Sian Lloyd	Democratic Services Officer

Invited Attendees:

Liam Brooker	West Midlands Rail Executive
Hayley Bradbury	West Midlands Rail Executive

40/22 **Apologies**

There were no apologies for absence.

41/22 **Substitutions**

There were no substitutions.

42/22 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

43/22 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

There were no items to consider in private session.

44/22 Minutes of the previous meeting

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 24 November 2022, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

45/22 Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge Railway Stations

Due to technical issues with remote attendees to the meeting it was agreed that this item should be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee to allow for a full discussion at that time.

Resolved:

That:

- 1. The report on Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge Railway Stations be deferred to a future meeting of the Committee.**

46/22 Corporate Financial Performance 2022/23 – 7-month position ended 31 October 2022

The Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities presented to the Committee a report which gave the updated forecast financial position for 2022/23 as reported to Cabinet on 14 December 2022. He highlighted that the services within the remit of the Committee were expected to return a £1.133m underspend which was helping to reduce the council's overall predicted overspend which was currently £11.33m for 2022/23 at year end.

Resolved:

That the Committee notes the forecast year-end position for the council as a whole and for the services that fall under the remit of the committee.

47/22 **Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2023/24 – 2026/27**

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration introduced the report and underlined that it was still a time of budgetary pressures but a balanced budget had been set.

The Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities highlighted amendments that had been made to the Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme since the papers for the meeting were distributed to the Committee which included an additional £207,000 in contractual inflation. He also advised of two policy changes due to consultation feedback and equality impact assessments with the removal of savings related to the outsourcing of the Mobile/Home Library service and removal of the introduction of charges for advisory disabled parking bays. The Capital Programme was also to be amended to reflect the monies to be received following the successful bid for Levelling Up funding for Willenhall.

Members of the Committee expressed their support for the retention of the Mobile/Home Library service following consultation responses and equalities assessments.

Questions were asked in relation to the commitment to tackle derelict sites, the investment in memorial safety in cemeteries and the pilot scheme for public toilets in Willenhall and Bloxwich. The Committee concluded that all these proposals were beneficial for the authority and for its residents.

Resolved:

That the Committee notes the draft revenue budget proposals and draft revenue capital programme.

48/22 **Evaluation of Walsall Council Bonfire and Fireworks Events 2022**

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing introduced a report relating to bonfire and fireworks events held across the borough in 2022, giving his thanks to the staff involved in the organisation and successful running of these events for the first time since the pandemic. He highlighted that for the first time in recent years the events had made a modest profit which demonstrated the appetite for such events within the borough.

Members of the Committee asked questions regarding the differences between this and previous years' events and the opportunity to engage with local businesses for sponsorship. The Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Communities advised that early purchasing of the fireworks and bonfire supplies and the switch to online only ticket sales had contributed to the reduction of overall costs and that efforts were made to engage local

businesses in the event but there had not been large take-up which was thought in part to be due to current cost pressures affecting all businesses.

Resolved:

That the Committee notes the report.

49/22 Areas of focus – 2022/23

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

Resolved:

That:

- 1. The areas of focus 2022/23 and forward plans be noted; and**
- 2. A report on public toilet provision be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.**

50/22 Recommendation Tracker

The Democratic Services Officer updated the Committee on the recommendations from previous meetings of the Committee. She advised that the one outstanding item was to be discussed at the next meeting of Cabinet which was to be held in the following week.

Resolved:

That the progress on recommendations from the previous meeting be noted.

51/22 Date of next meeting

It was noted that the next meeting would take place on 28 February 2023.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated 6.45pm.

Signed:

Date: