

Economy and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

16 January 2024 at 6:00PM

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

[Livestream Link](#)

Membership:

Councillor M Follows (Chair)
Councillor B Allen (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P Bott
Councillor S Cheema
Councillor P Gill
Councillor F Hassan
Councillor A Hicken
Councillor P Kaur
Councillor R Larden
Councillor M Ward
Councillor J Whitehouse

Portfolio Holder(s):

Councillor A. Andrew – Deputy Leader and Regeneration
Councillor G. Perry – Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities
Councillor K. Murphy – Street Pride
Councillor M. Statham – Education and Skills
Councillor G. Flint – Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces

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>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="715 91 1406 203">(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or<li data-bbox="715 237 1406 488">(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.
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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.

- 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**
To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 23 November 2023.
- 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. Heritage Strategy – Reference to Highgate Brewery**
To provide an overview of the Council’s Heritage Strategy for 2021 – 2026.
(Pages 14 - 80 - Enclosed)
- 7. Climate Change Update**
To inform the Committee on the challenges to become a net-zero Borough by 2041 in respect of Climate Change.
(Pages 81 - 100 - Enclosed)
- 8. Off-Road Vehicles – Update**
To receive an update on the Council’s response to off-road vehicles.
(Pages 101 - 104 - Enclosed)
- 9. Areas of focus – 2023/24**
To consider the areas of focus for the Committee during 2023/24.
(Pages 105 -106 - Enclosed)
- 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.*(Pages 107 - 121 - Enclosed)*
- 11. Recommendations Tracker**
To consider progress on recommendations from the previous meeting.
(Pages 122 - 125 - Enclosed)
- 12. Date of next meeting**
To note the date of the next meeting will be 27 February 2024.

Minutes of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at Walsall Council House

Thursday, 23 November 2023 at 6.00p.m.

Committee Members present: Councillor M Follows (Chair)
Councillor S Cheema
Councillor P Gill
Councillor A Hicken
Councillor P Kaur
Councillor R Larden
Councillor M Ward

Portfolio Holder: Councillor K Murphy – Street Pride
Councillor G Flint – Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces
Councillor Bird – Leader of the Council

Officers Present: Dave Brown – Executive of Director, Economy, Environment and Communities
Kathryn Moreton – Director of Place and Environment
Fraz Hussain – Finance Planning Manager
Matt Crowton – Group Manager – Transportation and Strategy (Virtually)

Other attendees present: Ananth Murthy – Programme Sponsor– Package 1 and 2 – West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) (Virtually)
Liz Baker – Programme Sponsor – West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE) (Virtually)

28. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Allen (Vice-Chair), Hassan and Whitehouse.

29. **Substitutions**

There were no substitutions.

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

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

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

There were no items to consider in private session.

32. **Minutes**

A copy of the Minutes of the meeting held on the 23 October 2023 was submitted. [annexed]

Resolved

That, the minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2023, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

33. **Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge Train Stations**

The Committee received a presentation on the rail programme works in respect of Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge Stations. The Chair welcomed project leads, Ananth Murthy and Liz Baker from the West Midlands Rail Executive. [annexed]

Rail Package 1 was anticipated to provide connectivity in the Walsall to Wolverhampton corridor and to/from Birmingham New Street Station. Following, the collapse of the principal contractor for the projects, Kier Group was appointed as the lead contractor and commenced works in October 2023. As a result of the impact of the former contractor going into administration, Willenhall and Darlaston Stations completion dates had been delayed to Quarter 1 in 2026.

The delivery strategy for Aldridge Station was in development and initial discussion were taking place with Network Rail on scheme design. Further work on parking feasibility and timetabling was underway in order to complete project proposals by Quarter 1 in 2027.

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

- There were cost pressures with Package 1; cost estimates were projected to range from £81.27m to £85.27m.

- Final timetable for Package 1 would be finalised prior to official unveiling of Willenhall and Darlaston Stations.
- It was envisioned that there would be two trains per hour (tph) in both directions (likely 1tph between Walsall and Wolverhampton and 1tph to/from Birmingham New Street Station).
- Investigations were taking place at site locations to understand the impact and financial implications of mine shaft remediation.
- Leader of the Council confirmed that both Darlaston and Willenhall Stations were due to open in 2023. However, due to the previous contractor going into administration and further investigative works, project completion had been delayed until 2026.
- It was identified that there was a circa £15m funding gap for Package 1 with further discussions taking place with Government on addressing the funding shortfall.
- There was a view that congestion and inconsiderate parking would be pushed to neighbouring areas should pay and display parking at the new stations be introduced.
- It was hoped that there would be a relocation of funding to local transportation projects within the West Midlands due to the scaling back of HS2.
- WMRE had learned lessons from previous rail projects including a greater understanding of ground risks and carrying out intentional intrusive surveys.
- Technical schematics and design in respect of Aldridge Train Station were due to be completed in Quarter 1 in 2024.
- The Leader of the Council confirmed that Aldridge Councillors would be kept informed of construction stages on a quarterly basis.
- Resident consultations for Aldridge Station would be carried out as part of the development.

Councillor Kaur joined the meeting at this point at 6:12p.m.

Resolved:

That, the rail programme works update in respect of Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge Train Stations be noted.

34. Tree Planting Strategy

The Portfolio Holders for Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces and Street Pride presented an overview of the Council's Tree Planting Strategy. [annexed]

It was noted that the Borough was geologically and topographically diverse, thus comprising of leafier suburbs and patchwork of green spaces incorporated into the industrial landscape. The Urban Forestry Strategy for 2016 – 2026 was approved by Cabinet in 2017 and set out a strategic framework for tree management across the borough working in tandem with national policy.

It was noted the Council's intended to plant 19,754 trees working with a number of external funding agencies and local businesses.

- It was dictated in the Council's Planning Policy that removal of one tree would result in the site owner being obligated to plant three replacement trees. There was a desire to maintain and keep mature trees rather than plant younger trees.
- The Council considered an item at its meeting on 6 November 2023 on biodiversity net gain, which outlined the Council's commitment and policy on tree planting.
- Portfolio Holder (Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces) highlighted that tree officers had regular maintenance schedules across the Borough. It was stressed that any tree conservation or maintenance issues should be reported through the Member portal.
- There was a commitment to address historical highway trees and the issues occurred by matured trees on public highways.
- Tree mapping had occurred across the Borough to address suitable tree planting sites. Portfolio Holder (Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces) welcomed comments by Members and residents on suitability of tree planting in their localities.
- The Council welcomed engagement from local businesses to encourage further conservation work.
- Tree nuisance issues were not routinely dealt with by the Council.

Resolved:

That, the Council's Tree Planting Strategy be noted.

35. Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25-2027/28

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and underlined that it was still a time of budgetary pressures. He highlighted that many Councils across the country were facing financial pressures and Walsall was not unique in this respect. 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. [annexed]

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

A lengthy discussion occurred in relation to the breakdown of statutory and non-statutory services in respect of the budget. A Member sought clarification on whether the Council would have to cut back on free garden waste collection like many Councils across the country. The Leader of the Council responded that the Council was committed to free garden waste collections and was investigating proposals to turn garden waste into energy.

Ref:93 – Removal of 2023/24 saving – increase recycling rates and reduce contamination

A Member sought clarification on recycling rates and how to improve rates in the Borough. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Street Pride confirmed that the Council was committed to educating residents and businesses about the placement of refuse to avoid cross contamination of recycling objects. It was noted that only 7% of rubbish in Walsall proceeds to landfill sites with the remainder being recycled (including energy from waste).

Ref: P4 – Street lighting dimming and trimming during the evening

A Member sought clarification on whether street light dimming would make Walsall safer. In response, the Portfolio Holder for Street Pride confirmed that the Council was working with the contractor Amey on a pilot scheme. It was suggested that dimming street lighting by 50% would save the Council £160k during 2024/25 and would not result in a direct noticeable impact by the public. The Director of Place and Environment highlighted the Council was investigating the use of phased dimming which involved a gradual reduction of lighting as peak traffic reduces. She concluded that further investigation was required prior to finalisation of the scheme, and the saving proposed was based on a specific proportion of street lighting and not the entire Borough.

Ref: P5 – Crease provision of Christmas lights

There were concerns about proposed cessation of Christmas lights in the Borough. The Portfolio Holder for Street Pride confirmed the Council's contractor Amey had agreed to provide a social value contribution to the Borough's Christmas lights. Therefore, the Committee was assured that Christmas lighting would still go ahead as planned.

Ref: OP69 – Other waste disposal – (e.g., grey bin, plasterboard, textiles)

A Member queried whether the Council collected medical waste as the NHS provided a similar medical waste collection service. In response, the Portfolio for Street Pride confirmed the Council collected medical waste, which was paramount for individuals requiring long term medical intervention and treatment. In this respect, it was confirmed that Council's medical collections were a non-chargeable service.

Ref: 89 – Enforcement of fly tipping, litter dropping, cigarette dropping etc

There was a discussion about preventative measures and enforcement of fly tipping and littering. The Portfolio for Street Pride confirmed that penalties associated with fly tipping and littering were fixed and could only be adjusted by a Magistrates' Court.

In respect of CCTV enforcement, the Council utilised covert cameras and were consistently rotated around the Borough on a regular basis. In addition, there were several preventative signage to deter criminality. A Member

commented on whether there had been a cost benefit to the Council due to the implementation of preventative measure compared to 2022. It was confirmed that this information would be made available to the Committee at a future meeting.

A Member sought clarification on whether the Council could recover costs associated with fly tipping from a Magistrates' or Small Claims Court. In response, the Leader of the Council confirmed that this would be a responsibility for the Magistrates' Court. However, in respect of recovery from Small Claims' Court, he confirmed that officers would investigate, and a response would be provided.

Ref: OP10 – Libraries partnership with voluntary sector

A Member queried whether the Council was looking to make redundancies in library services or increase number of volunteers in the service. The Leader of the Council confirmed that whilst the Council could not guarantee there would not be any compulsory redundancies, there would be a commitment to ensure redeployment or early retirement opportunities were considered before any redundancy decisions.

Ref: Capital Scheme – Other schemes carried forward from previous years – car park resurfacing works

A Member requested that the Council examine the option for parent and child bays for Council owned car parks. In response, the Director for Place and Environment confirmed that parent and child spaces had an adverse impact on car parking capacity and were possibly unenforceable. There was a discussion about abuses of car parking spaces in particular, disabled bays. In this respect, it was confirmed that the Council enforces disabled bays and was looking to increase awareness of these types of spaces in communities.

Resolved:

- 1. That the draft revenue budget and capital programme for 2024/25 – 2027/28 and subsequent discussion actions be noted.**
- 2. The Committee noted that the revenue budget for 2024/25 was not balanced, with a gap of c£18m, and therefore a further report may be required to this committee if any changes to draft proposals outlined relate to services within the committee's remit.**

36. **Corporate Financial Performance – Quarter 2 (Financial Monitoring Position for 2023/24)**

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

Members noted that in relation to forecast capital, it was proposed that £10.4m would be carried forward. In respect of forecast revenue, there was a predicted overspend of £0.263m with use of earmarked reserves.

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

- A Member sought clarification on how the Council was addressing reductions in bereavement services income. In response, the Portfolio Holder (Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces) confirmed that a new Head of Bereavement Services had been appointed. The Council recognised that greater commercialisation was required in the service in order to compete with neighbouring crematorium services. Therefore, there were proposals to update Streetly Crematorium offer.
- The Council had increased booking capacity in Bereavement Services to offer smaller burial services at Streetly Crematorium.
- Bulky waste charges had achieved a shortfall due to issues in updating prices on the booking system.
- There were concerns in respect of rewilding areas and making areas look untidy, as well as issues regarding gnats. In response, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that rewilding process took many years to embed into areas and would improve visually in future years. The Council had made efforts to widen pathways in rewilding areas to alleviate gnats, ticks, and insect bites.
- There was a request for information on the Council's proposed and upcoming rewilding projects.
- It was stressed that rewilding projects required specific management to be successful. The Council had received concerns from residents about rewilding and further investigative work would be carried out to alleviate resident concerns.

Resolved:

- 1. That the revenue and capital forecast for the financial year-end 2023/24 for the services that fall under the remit of the Committee.**
- 2. That, information on the Council's proposed and upcoming rewilding projects be circulated to Members in writing.**

37. **Areas of focus – 2023/24**

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

There was a discussion on proposed future item in respect of enforcement. It was requested that this item include information on the Council's efforts to reduce fly tipping, enforcement notice figures and CCTV distribution across the Borough.

Resolved

That, forward plans be noted.

38. **Recommendations Tracker**

The Senior Democratic Services Officer updated Members on the recommendations from previous meetings of the Committee. [annexed]

Resolved:

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

39. **Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting is scheduled for 16 January 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.29p.m

Signed:

Date:

16 January 2024

Heritage Strategy – Reference to Highgate Brewery

Ward(s): All

Portfolios:

Councillor Adrian Andrew - Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration
Councillor Gary Flint - Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces.

1. Aim

- 1.1 Walsall Council developed its Heritage Strategy (2021-2026), funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund, to celebrate its past, and its vibrant and diverse communities and places, with the aim of creating opportunities for present and future generations. In line with the vision set out in our Corporate Plan 2021-2022, to ensure that 'Inequalities are reduced, and potential is maximised', this Heritage Strategy enables us to improve our heritage capacity and thereby our offer as a town and to stimulate heritage activity in its most diverse forms across the Borough. It helps us to reduce inequalities in health, wellbeing, the environment and the economy. Through our collective vision it contributes to making Walsall a better place to live, work and play.
- 1.2 This extends to addressing challenging heritage assets, which may have fallen into a state of disrepair or needing to identify new, viable uses to secure their future. Successes during the early stages of the delivery of the strategy have included the securing of funding towards a range of heritage assets within the borough - notably, assets remain requiring plans towards a sustainable future, including Highgate Brewery.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Committee members note the progress outlined in this report.
- 2.2 That Walsall Council officers continue to work towards the delivery of the Walsall Heritage Strategy (2021-2026) up to the end of its stated period, at which point future planning of iterative strategy will be considered by requisite senior officers and portfolio holders as appropriate to the evolved position.
- 2.3 As Walsall's period as a 2019-2024 Area of Focus for The National Lottery Heritage Fund concludes in April 2024, that Walsall Council continues to maintain this positive strategic relationship alongside the heritage workstream to carry forward programmes to deliver significant external funding to the Borough.
- 2.4 That Walsall Council officers continue to work constructively, across internal and external partners, to encourage the sustainable re-use of historic buildings where identified as at risk, in terms of sustainable economic use.

3. Report detail – know

- 3.1. Funded by The National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF), Walsall Council developed a new Heritage Strategy, for the period 2021-2026, to rebuild capacity and establish a vibrant heritage sector which is integrated into Walsall's overall vision and transformation. Setting direction to address identified sector needs over the next five years and beyond, heritage outcomes will be unlocked through co-creation with communities and the wider sector to play a greater role in the Council's work to tackle inequalities in health and wellbeing, improve environmental outputs and support economic growth.
- 3.2. In 2015, Cabinet approved Walsall's previous Heritage Strategy, designed to provide a framework for how Council services would continue to preserve, manage, interpret, and promote Walsall's heritage assets in the 21st century. The Strategy sought to address the pressures confronting the Council as a whole and its heritage services.
- 3.3. This new strategy delivers a broader, developed framework to be applied both within the Council and by external partners, including a substantive action plan, which establishes the basis of increased engagement and utilisation of heritage across the public, private and third sectors.
- 3.4. The commissioning of the Walsall Heritage Strategy (2021-2026) is a direct result of the receipt of £250k NLHF grant support obtained by the External Funding Team, following allocation of priority local authority area status within the Fund's Strategic Funding Framework 2019–2024. Funding has enabled the appointment of a Heritage Programme Officer (fully funded for three years) to increase internal capacity and drive the delivery of the Strategy, in conjunction with partial funding for a re-introduced Conservation Officer post.
- 3.5. Objectives were established as follows:
 - 3.5.1. Quality of life and wellbeing: Maximise the contribution that our heritage makes to the quality of life and wellbeing of our communities.
 - 3.5.2. Sense of place and celebration: Enhance the contribution that the historic environment makes to the character and identity of the Borough and ensure it is accessible for all.
 - 3.5.3. Climate change: Unlock and enhance the role that Walsall's historic environment can play in mitigating and adapting to climate change.
 - 3.5.4. Building resilience: Create and sustain a thriving and inclusive heritage sector founded on the principles of collaboration and partnership.
- 3.6. The Heritage Strategy is supported by an ambitious [Action Plan](#) covering the five year strategy period which aligns recommendations against objectives and timescales in addition to identifying viable external funding streams. The included action plan forms the first version, to be updated, and is structured as follows:

- 3.6.1. Early Walsall Council Actions – The first and the most detailed set of actions are designed to provide a firm foundation for future heritage projects. They are ordered by priority and would be delivered by the Council.
- 3.6.2. Catalyst Projects – So called as they will drive us forward and get the ball rolling on heritage activity in the Borough, providing an impetus to future heritage activity. They are organised under the primary objective they support and will involve a broad range of partner organisations and communities.
- 3.6.3. Pipeline Projects – A set of high-level, aspirational projects that could be taken forward in the early stages of the strategy and can be further developed as and when opportunities arise.
- 3.6.4. Ideas Board – Documentation of all project ideas that have risen out of consultation, to be used as inspiration, many of which have gone on to inform the following actions and project.
- 3.7 Significant progress has been made across a range of objectives and action Plan Categories, with some necessary adaptation of time frame. An amended action plan will be produced, considering timeframes, stakeholders etc. in due course.
- 3.8 Progress has been acknowledged by The National Lottery Heritage Fund: [How Walsall's heritage is thriving | The National Lottery Heritage Fund](#)
- 3.9 Significant external funding has been secured by Walsall Council in support of owned projects, including but not limited to:
 - 3.9.1 Notably the £3.7million towards its creative industries to enhance the Creative Industries Enterprise Centre project and deliver a capacity building Festival of Making programme. This complimented the allocated Towns Fund resource. In development of this, Walsall Council had secured funding allocated from an underspend on the Government's Cultural Development Fund (CDF) Round 2, administered by the WMCA.
 - 3.9.2 Non-capital funding has included £85,000 for the New Art Gallery Walsall, Changing Collections - Embedding Diversity Project developing the delivery of the successful LGBTQ+ Community Panel and HERE&QUEER programme to develop collections spaces to be equitable, and representative of local communities.
- 3.10 External organisations have been directly supported in securing funding, towards the delivery of the Strategy, including but not limited to:
 - 3.10.1 The National Lottery Heritage Fund's £249,708 grant towards Learning Through Landscape Trust's My School, My Planet project to build partnerships between schools and community groups to implement environmental improvements.

3.10.2 The Architectural Heritage Fund's £11,980 grant towards Kiondo CIC's Transforming Places Through Heritage Project Viability project for Brooks & Sons, 7-21 Leicester Street.

3.11 Funding distributed to the sector by Walsall Council has included:

3.11.1 Delivery of the £10,000 Walsall Community Heritage Fund via Crowdfund Walsall, across five community projects, contributing to projects including the £7,645 Walsall Memory Jar – Down the Arbo! By Bostin Creative and £15,938 We Are Bloxwich by One Love Community Music and Arts CIC.

3.11.2 UK Shared Prosperity Fund supported Heritage Spark Grants are supporting local organisations to explore new partnerships and project ideas. This includes:

3.11.2.1 Plasma of Hope and Rose Tinted Financial, awarded £3,370, will unite children and young adults for immersive arts and creativity workshops across multiple borough heritage sites, sharing local history. Plasma of Hope supports individuals living with Sickle Cell Disease or other related illness. Their collaborator, Rose Tinted Financial, a local community interest company, provides free professional advice, help and community support.

3.11.2.2 Lifegate Communities, working in partnership with The New Art Gallery Walsall, have been awarded £3,300. Collaboratively, groups will explore African links in Walsall's public collections, and share their knowledge and responses, reducing barriers to access.

3.11.2.3 Kiondo CIC awarded £3,950, with Boxout Community, will deliver community events blending music, education, and heritage to celebrate cultural diversity, fostering a sense of ownership and pride, revitalising the Grade II historic Hogs Head pub, in central Walsall.

3.12 The Council has always developed infrastructure with the sector, launching the new Heritage Forum, through a series of [Co-design Workshops in November 2022](#), attended by a broad range of local organisations, including individual artists and practitioners.

3.13 This structure enabled the delivery of UK Shared Prosperity Fund resource across both capacity training and funding direct to the local VCS sector. This included a new, online training programme, delivered as part of the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and delivering a new Matchmaking and Funding Opportunities Guide. 10 Walsall organisations were represented across the programme. When surveyed to rate the training session attended in comparison to previous training events in the Borough of the Walsall-based participants 87.5% said 'good' or 'very good'.

3.14 In support of externally owned heritage assets, Walsall Council has worked across teams inclusive of Regeneration, Planning, External Funding amongst others, to work constructively to identify viable opportunities to move challenging sites forwards, Highgate Brewery being one of these being considered by teams in terms of supporting the owners to identify the optimum outcome. With Council

guidance, early stage funding has been secured to undertake feasibility work, such as grant finance via The National Lottery Heritage Fund for St. Matthew's Church. Where plans are developed, Council staff have successfully negotiated suitable schemes for prominent sites, including the planning permission secured for Darlaston Police Station. Where suitable, the Council has taken the leading role through acquisition, notably the Grade II* Guildhall as part of the Towns Fund and Cultural Development Fund backed Creative Industries Enterprise Centre, now with the approval of the Walsall Council Planning Committee.

- 3.14 From a strategic policy perspective, Walsall's heritage and culture offer has subsequently been given prominence within the Walsall 2040 Strategy and the Walsall Economic Strategy and Action Plan (ESAP), in addition to regeneration frameworks including the Willenhall Framework Plan (2022).

4. Financial information

- 4.1 Ongoing delivery of the Walsall Heritage Strategy (2021-2026) is due to be supported through the adoption of the Heritage Programme Officer as a permanent post within Walsall Council, following the full funding of the post since January 2021 via The National Lottery Heritage Fund.
- 4.2 Externally funded projects supporting delivery of the Heritage Strategy are developed by Walsall Council are, and will continue to be, considered on a case-by-case basis through established reporting structures, including Strategic Investment Board, thus mitigating risk of taking on financial liabilities where identified.
- 4.3 To mitigate financial pressures, where external schemes are identified with scope for external funding as the viable enabler of schemes addressing local need, Walsall Council officers will work to identify opportunities. Example successes include the Grade II Globe House, in Bradford Place, securing West Midlands Combined Authority support through the brownfield regeneration and housing delivery programme.

5. Reducing Inequalities

- 5.1 Addressing inequalities is a core theme in the Heritage Strategy, running across all priorities.
- 5.2 In the development of the Strategy, meeting the legal requirements of the Public Sector Equality Duty under the Equality Act 2010, the Council carried out an Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) and produced an 'easy read' guide of key documents.
- 5.3 Heritage related aims of the Strategy include supporting the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sectors, supporting and empowering vulnerable children and young people to improve their physical and mental health, and supporting quality apprenticeships for all ages and improving conditions for the homeless

6. Decide

6.1 The committee is asked to note the work being carried out in delivery of the Heritage Strategy including external funding secured.

7. Respond

7.1 The NLHF programme is scheduled for completion by the end of March 2023 following this a project evaluation will be produced. Commitments in respect to future heritage delivery is set out in the Council's heritage strategy 2021-2026.

8. Review

8.1 The heritage strategy is scheduled for review in 2025 prior to expiry in 2026.

Background papers

- Walsall Heritage Strategy (2021-2026)
- Associated Cabinet sign-off papers, including EqIA

To be attached as appendix:

- [Walsall Heritage Strategy 2021-2026](#)
- [Walsall Heritage Strategy 2021-2016 Action Plan](#)
- [CMIS > Meetings \(walsall.gov.uk\)](#)

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Walsall Heritage Strategy

2021-2026





WALSALL COLLEGE



Gill Fizer Collette Mumford Joan Beck Margaret Rawe Ruth Boden Pat Turner Yvonne Thomas Jean Ash Rose Broadhurst



Ann Hezard Ann Grauden Chris Murphy Sue Stokes Francesca Cox Deb Kennessey Glenis Williams Julie Jones



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This Strategy was funded by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and should be read in conjunction with the **Walsall Heritage Strategy – Baseline Report 2021** and **Walsall Heritage Strategy 2021-2026 – Action Plan**.

All documents can be accessed via go.walsall.gov.uk
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Foreword

As Walsall Council, we have the privilege of working with our communities and stakeholders across the Borough where heritage represents both our collective past and how we look forward into the future.

It is an exciting time for the heritage sector in Walsall as, supported by the National Lottery Heritage Fund, we develop a new approach to unlocking the economic, environmental, health and wellbeing, and community benefits of heritage.

The diversity of our stories, and unlocking the potential of our unique heritage, can create a Walsall of which we are increasingly proud. Our residents live amongst historic buildings, parks and spaces, cultural sites and with countless stories to share, whether that be of migration or evolving trades.

This is the start of a journey, and whilst the Council will play a key role in the delivery of the strategy, the diversity of the Borough is its strength. Its history of growth, development and creativity will provide the foundations, and set the tone for, its delivery.

We are fortunate to work with, and support, organisations delivering services across diverse communities and have developed this strategy through engagement with stakeholders to ensure that it is relevant and inclusive. Through fostering local identity and promoting social cohesion, we hope our approach with co-creation at its heart will engage all with this Strategy and its future projects.

But, we recognise the challenges, from securing investment to identifying viable new uses for historic buildings, we are embarking on this project focussed on working with partners of all scales to facilitate creative initiatives to both preserve and prosper. To achieve this, the strategy must make heritage accessible to all, from the creative arts to green spaces, regeneration schemes to education and employment.

We are delighted that the National Lottery Heritage Fund has enabled this work, helping Walsall to unlock the potential of heritage to reduce inequalities and ensure potential is maximised across the Borough. Building on the already great work of organisations and communities, we encourage our residents, businesses, local organisations and wider stakeholders to respond to the strategy and get involved with the project in the years to come.



***Councillor Adrian Andrew
Deputy Leader and Portfolio
Holder for Regeneration
Walsall Council***

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Adrian Andrew', written in a cursive style.





PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

Introduction

Walsall has a rich heritage and a past we are all proud of. Historically, the Borough was home to industrial and farming communities, being known as the ‘*town of a hundred trades*’; the Borough’s creativity and industry continues to this day, being recognised, amongst other aspects, as a leather goods capital and as the home of an internationally significant art gallery.

Walsall Council has developed this Heritage Strategy to celebrate that past and our vibrant and diverse communities and places; with the aim of creating opportunities for present and future generations. In line with the vision set out in our **Corporate Plan 2021-2022**, to ensure that ‘*Inequalities are reduced and potential is maximised*’, this Heritage Strategy will enable us to improve our heritage capacity and stimulate heritage activity in its most diverse forms across the Borough. It will help us to reduce inequalities in health, wellbeing, the environment and the economy. Through our collective vision it will help us make Walsall a better place to live, work and play.

Partnership and involvement are key threads running through this Strategy. We will listen to our communities and work *with* them through a process of ‘co-creation’¹ to ensure that people are actively invited to engage with, develop and deliver meaningful projects and programmes across the Borough. We will partner and facilitate others – with Walsall Council acting as a catalyst for change, supporting the aspirations and abilities of our many communities.

¹ Co-creation refers to the research, design and production of projects in collaboration with people, communities and consumers. The aim is to develop ongoing dialogue between organisations and the community to engage more people and to produce relevant and engaging projects together, that are for everyone, opposed to traditional organisation-led approaches.

Through this Strategy we will:

Unleash Walsall’s creative spirit and industry to develop a resilient and distinctive heritage sector that drives a vibrant new future for the whole of our Borough and all of our communities.

Ensure that we can all celebrate our rich and diverse heritage by opening up access for everyone and bringing to life our shared and varied stories.

Make Walsall a place to be truly proud of and will create a positive and resilient legacy for the future.

Our Strategy sets out how heritage can be an important driver for change; how it can benefit the economy, health and wellbeing, and the environment; and how it can help to tackle inequalities. We set out where we are now, how we will get to where we want to be and the challenges we may face.

We have developed this Strategy with key stakeholders including local organisations and community groups; and national and regional bodies. We will work with these partners (as others) as well as the wider investment and private sector to deliver our ambitions for Walsall and its heritage.

Our shared vision, objectives and ‘Catalyst Projects’ will help make us all proud to be Walsall, now and into the future. A separate document **Walsall Heritage Strategy 2021-2026 Action Plan** outlines these projects and a set of initial actions.

PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

Defining Heritage

'Heritage' can mean many different things to many different people. It is often used to reference history, lineage and ancestry, property, livestock, plants, design and branding. It can reference the 'traditional', 'time-tested', 'vintage', 'classic' or can be emblematic of fine craftsmanship. In its broadest sense, 'heritage' refers to elements that somehow have a connection with the past and can represent something we have inherited from generations gone by that still holds historical importance.

In the context of our Heritage Strategy, we have taken a broad definition, encompassing our history, the natural environment, architecture, archaeology and built heritage, but most importantly, who we are and our place in the world; the context of our lives and where we come from; our future hopes and aspirations; and our pride in Walsall.

Heritage isn't solely defined by historic buildings, archaeology, museum collections or stories of past industry. People and communities also make up our heritage; our connections with the past and with each other, our shared interests and values, and our hopes for the future. This is what our Strategy is centred on.



PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

Heritage - A Driver for Change

Heritage forms a large part of the identity of any place. It adds distinctiveness and can be used as a catalyst for community engagement, helping us to share our stories and connect with one another. It can generate value by promoting economic growth, stimulating cultural activity and helping to create vibrant and exciting places for all. It can help us to be proud of our Borough, promote social cohesion and preserve our connection to the past. By understanding the contributions heritage can make to our long-term prosperity and wellbeing, we can explore ways in which to capitalise on these benefits.



Heritage makes a direct and tangible contribution to our wellbeing and our communities, supporting both physical and mental health.

The role of heritage as a catalyst for inclusive growth is an important part of the wellbeing economy. A growing body of evidence is demonstrating how heritage, and involvement with heritage, can benefit our wellbeing and build resilient communities. Heritage offers a sense of identity, belonging and an understanding of place. Heritage plays an essential role in society and can help to create social cohesion. Projects centred on inclusion, reducing inequalities and community engagement will stimulate regeneration, increase interest in heritage and in turn favour the sustainability of heritage assets.¹

Heritage creates civic pride.

It has the potential to empower communities to engage in social issues. When people and communities are invested in heritage they feel a sense of pride, local identity and are more likely to engage in social issues and support local services.²

PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE



© Nole Thanun

Heritage supports learning and education.

A recent study revealed that young people who are involved in the arts, visit heritage sites or libraries are more likely to go on to further education.³ The study also states that young people experience higher levels of happiness and self-esteem after engaging in arts activities.⁴ Exposure to heritage and culture can open doors to careers in the cultural and creative sectors and elsewhere, as well as generally improving quality of life for all ages. Whilst many children and adults participate in heritage learning and activities, there are still many barriers for those from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Heritage draws people to places.

Heritage forms an integral part of the economy with millions of tourists visiting England each year, some travelling primarily to visit heritage attractions. In the period 2000 to 2019 visits to heritage attractions in the West Midlands region nearly doubled⁵ well above the English average of a c.66% increase. A total of £18.4bn was spent on heritage related visits and trips in 2019 and 7 of the top ten visited attractions in England in 2019 were heritage attractions. These visits support jobs, contributing to economic growth.⁶

Heritage attracts new businesses.

The density of historic buildings strongly relates to the overall movement of business to an area. One in four businesses in England, surveyed in a recent poll, stated that the historic environment was a factor in deciding where to locate their business.⁷ Heritage also attracts the creative industries, an industry that performs better when located in areas of denser cultural and heritage assets. Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic the creative industries were growing at more than four times the rate of the UK economy as a whole.⁸

Heritage and the historic environment offers flexibility in space, adds to the identity, distinctiveness and sense of place.

Urban areas all over the country have a rich architectural history and heritage assets that provide homes, community spaces, visitor attractions and workspaces. Heritage-led regeneration puts the historic environment at the centre of regeneration proposals. Re-use and development of historic places also provides significant economic benefits and direct and indirect jobs.⁹ Our historic environment can help increase the sense of identity and belonging and can prevent decline.



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Heritage is inherently sustainable and is an integral part of a low carbon economy.

Investing in the reuse of historic buildings to extend life and durability adds value to the buildings themselves, increases their value to society and reduces the overall carbon footprint with a retrofitted building often omitting less carbon by 2050 than a new building.¹⁰ In addition, new uses in and around historic centres can contribute to carbon reduction through the reduced need for car-based travel to these centres compared with more dispersed and suburban development which may not be as easily accessible using public transport.

The natural environment can also support net zero aspirations by increasing planting on sites, especially woodlands, plus encouraging more sustainable forms of transport through the use of greenways, such as canal towpaths and disused railway lines, for walking and cycling.

Heritage contributes to our natural environment.

There are many green spaces, allotments, graveyards, historic parks, gardens and canals in the Borough that all form part of our history and are an essential part of our historic environment. Heritage in green spaces can be used as a tool to help increase knowledge on environmental issues. Green spaces are also an important part of our historic environment with some being heritage assets in themselves holding historical importance, such as Barr Beacon and Park Lime Pits Local Nature Reserves. Many of our green spaces are a representation of how human activity has shaped the landscape.

Heritage can help us recover from the impacts of Covid-19.

Heritage can play a vital role in the recovery from the Covid-19 pandemic in supporting the economy, helping to create jobs and promote activities, as well as utilising the increased appreciation and use of green spaces to promote health and wellbeing outcomes.



PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

Where we are now

The next few years will see Walsall grow, using its heritage as a catalyst to unleash its creative spirit and industry. This will be driven by public sector funding, community effort and private sector investment. Walsall is well placed to develop heritage and its cultural impact to fulfil our ambitions of making the Borough a better place for all. We already hold many assets which set us in good stead for the future, such as our location, good quality transport links, history of creativity and innovation, existing cultural programmes, and varied and vibrant communities.

There are many challenges to overcome too; such as community cohesion, limited levels of accessibility and inclusivity; high levels of inequality; socioeconomic divides; and limited resources, capacity and funding. There is a need for regeneration across the Borough to help us tackle the inequalities around health and economic outcomes and build resilient communities.¹¹

How we will get there

This Strategy shows how important engagement with heritage is to our collective success and to our future. Whilst there are a number of challenges, by working in partnership, by co-creating projects with our communities, by leveraging private sector investment and activity, and by actively encouraging people to take part, we will develop a resilient and distinctive heritage sector that drives a vibrant new future for the whole of our Borough and all of our communities. We will facilitate others, aid delivery, and be responsive and flexible. Ongoing consultation, knowledge, skills sharing and support will remain at the heart of our Strategy.

Walsall Council will facilitate and support monitoring and reporting of progress as well as ensuring initiatives align with other responsibilities and policies. Walsall Council will work in partnership with external organisations to secure adequate and well managed capacity and resources.



PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

Walsall Past and Present

Walsall Borough has a rich heritage. Our past is something to be proud of. Formerly known as the 'Town of 100 Trades', Walsall was recognised internationally as the British leather goods capital.

But there is far more in our past than industry. Our history is made up of a strong creative spirit, resilience, and diverse communities.

Only a fraction of our stories are told, with many more to uncover. This Strategy aims to unlock and celebrate these shared and varied stories, opening up access for all of us to discover and celebrate our heritage together, driving a bright new future that everyone can be part of. Heritage can be used as a catalyst for discovery and celebration, making use of our tangible and intangible assets, enabling us to be **'Proud of our Past, our Present and for our Future.'**

Walsall is made up of many historic and established localities across the Borough, ranging from villages to small towns, all with their own identities and their own stories to tell. Our growth has attracted people from across the world and continues to do so. There are over 140 languages currently spoken across the Borough.

Today, Walsall Borough covers an area of 104 square kilometres, much of which grew out of its agricultural and industrial heritage. The Borough, as a whole, is densely populated with large areas of continued heavy industry contrasting with comparatively greener and more open areas to the north and east of the Borough.

It is one of seven Metropolitan Boroughs in the West Midlands and one of four Black Country Authorities. Its estimated population of 285,500 (as of 2019) has increased significantly over the last 15 years and is predicted to rise further. Walsall has one of the highest rates of ethnic diversity in England and Wales.



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A critical aim of this Strategy is to reduce inequalities through heritage-related activity. To achieve this, activities need to be developed for all, accessible to all and created with all in mind. There are many programmes, services and projects across the Borough that have local communities at their heart and advocate this approach, such as **Walsall for All**, **One Walsall**, and **Walsall Community Network** among many others.



These programmes and services play a huge part in shaping Walsall, and working with this Strategy they will help tackle the deficit between areas and communities and their active engagement, invitation to, and benefits from community activity. There are always new opportunities to ensure that everyone in our communities have fair opportunities to get involved and benefit.

Whilst the diversity and vibrancy of our communities across the Borough are important intangible assets, there are also multiple tangible assets, such as visitor attractions; nature reserves; green spaces; museums, galleries, libraries; archaeological sites; conservation areas; and historic buildings and places (including places of worship). These help to shape Walsall and can all be used as platforms for heritage and community projects.

Walsall is on an upward trajectory, with regeneration and development being constant themes across the Borough. We are seeing continued investment in some of our urban centres, through the development of new homes and through improvements to transport links. Projects associated with the **Towns Fund** and **Future High Streets** are also helping to elevate the Borough and its offer to the commercial sector, local communities and visitors.

Walsall also forms part of the recently inscribed **Black Country UNESCO Global Geopark** in recognition of the area's international importance and how it played a major role in the creation of the modern world. This status helps highlight the geology under our feet with cultural and industrial heritage. Current Geopark sites in Walsall include the New Art Gallery Walsall, Walsall Arboretum, Brownhills Mining Heritage Monument, local nature reserves, and disused railway and quarry sites.



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Strengths, Opportunities and Challenges

The creative spirit and diversity of our Borough is one of our main strengths. We have been able to grow and thrive since the origins of the Borough as settlements in the Middle Ages. Walsall has the potential to continue adapting to the modern needs of the Borough and its people. There are a number of strengths we already possess, and many opportunities open to us. There are also many challenges to overcome to achieve our shared goals. By using heritage as a catalyst, we can deliver meaningful experiences and make our Borough a better place.

People

We are proud of our diverse communities and the existing community organisations already engaged in projects both within the Borough and across the region more widely. Research and consultation have revealed that there is a significant deficit in community cohesion, inclusion and community engagement with heritage in particular. There is a tendency for localities to be insular with a preference to 'stay local'. There is also a strong socio-economic divide between the east and the west of the Borough amongst other inequalities.



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Heritage-related projects can better connect with communities and individuals through new and existing partnerships. Existing community projects and programmes, such as Resilient Communities, Walsall for All and Creative Black Country have developed strong, direct relationships between organisations and multiple communities across the Borough. Projects such as these can be drawn upon to identify crossovers between community and heritage work to deliver our shared aims, such as enhancing quality of life, pride in where we live, and connecting with one another. This collaboration will reinforce the importance of both the community and the heritage sectors helping to secure the funding and resources to benefit both.

The existing volunteering community in Walsall is a hugely valuable asset in itself and demonstrates that there is a clear appetite for community involvement. There are opportunities to work with communities and co-create projects,

to develop and deliver meaningful and relevant experiences. Building on co-creation work such as The New Art Gallery's Critical Friends group,¹² all projects should have the community at their heart.

The social enterprise sector unlocks wider value among communities, such as Urban Hax CIC¹³ which facilitates and creates a community of makers, innovators and hobbyists who come together and share skills, knowledge and crafts with the wider community. Local communities develop and deliver dynamic arts and heritage projects through Walsall Creative Factory CIC.

Funded programmes such as Creative Black Country¹⁴ (through Arts Council England) co-create projects with community groups, arts organisations, artists and creatives. Co-creating and co-producing projects and programmes ensures that all work is relevant for all members of the community and there are many existing projects to inspire us.



Places

Walsall possesses many tangible assets such as historic buildings and parks. A number of these can be utilised to help deliver heritage projects and bring new life into the currently underused assets and areas, as well as contributing to carbon reduction through the re-use of historic buildings. Although Walsall has a number of these tangible assets, the Strategy does not rely on this alone. The real value lies in the connections between these assets and the people of Walsall. There are increasing ways in which communities can become involved in unlocking these key assets, delivering broad ranging social outputs as a result of the re-animation of neglected historic buildings and spaces. Support organisations such as the Heritage Trust Network and Locality provide support and peer-to-peer learning whilst funders such as the Architectural Heritage Fund (AHF) support project development via grants, loans and community share offers. In addition, a current AHF Heritage Development

Trust programme, which brings together local communities, local governments, businesses, charities and funders to repurpose and reimagine their built heritage provides contemporary learning for place-based approaches.

As a site of internationally important geology, the Black Country UNESCO Global Geopark status will help Walsall and the wider region become a tourist draw in its own right. There are opportunities to promote Walsall and its heritage alongside Geopark initiatives and in partnership with the Dudley, Sandwell and Wolverhampton Councils to reconnect local and regional communities with their natural landscapes through the study and conservation of the Geopark's landscapes. Projects could include public events including outreach, workshops, field trips, and guided walks and tours to develop strong ties with schools and community groups to develop a team of 'citizen scientists and historians'.



Access

Generally speaking, intellectual access to heritage is currently limited to those already engaged with and interested in heritage. One of the main challenges when speaking about heritage in its broadest sense is what the term 'heritage' means to different people. This is reflected in the promotion and awareness of heritage-related activity. In other words, the term 'heritage' can represent an opportunity to one person, and a barrier to another, or simply indifference to the term. It can mean historic buildings to one person, and family lineage to another. The fact that heritage can be a misunderstood term or a 'not for me' term, represents the lack of awareness and/or the irrelevance of heritage activity outwards to audiences. This reinforces the need for future heritage activity to be designed with, and for, individuals and communities through co-creation.

Co-creating/co-producing projects and programmes ensures that all work is relevant and for all members of the community. It helps to strengthen a sense of belonging, improve cohesion and drive heritage projects in the direction which may be more sustainable in the long-term given that they are rooted in the community.

Some historic buildings and visitor attractions present physical challenges for those with mobility and sensory restrictions. Some will likely need to undergo significant audits and modifications before reuse. There are also connectivity challenges particularly in relation to public transport links and the cost of transport services.

There are also some challenging sites and assets that may not be easily included in development in the near future. These sites may be derelict or damaged beyond practical reuse or they may be difficult to access physically. Examples identified to date include the derelict Great Barr Hall and the unoccupied Highgate Brewery, amongst others. In these cases, we will investigate these sites further, broaden our understanding, and begin to identify appropriate options for development.

An engaging online presence is essential to remain relevant and visible in the digital age. It can directly involve more people with more projects, particularly those less able to engage physically. Recent 'hybrid' events, where people can attend either in person or online, have demonstrated that a larger audience can be reached when given the option to either attend physically or digitally, broadening the reach and relevancy of projects. This approach should be considered in both the developmental and the delivery stages of projects and programmes, not only as a final outcome. This approach has excelled in recent months due to the Covid-19 pandemic restricting physical visits. One success story is the Black Country Living Museum. They created relatable and relevant content about life in lockdown. It was named in TikTok's top 100 UK accounts for 2020 and now has 1 million followers worldwide. Broader digitisation approaches include organisations partnering with Google Arts and Culture to display their collection through online exhibitions and 'stories'. Examples of this approach within the West Midlands are The Herbert Art Gallery and Museum in Coventry¹⁵ and The Space in Birmingham.¹⁶



PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

Capacity

Many projects require significant investments, both money and staffing, to support their delivery. There are, and have been for some time, significant capacity issues in the heritage sector and associated sectors in the Borough. Many of these issues stem from a sustained decline in public sector finances over the last c. 10-12 years, a prioritisation of funding for activities that are seen to have more direct impact on economic activity and community wellbeing, and a continued shift to project-based funding for organisations rather than providing long-term sustainable support. This is a common theme for many places, but one that has also arisen out of research and consultation with Walsall stakeholders. We aim to propose heritage-related projects that can take priority and receive the support they deserve.

In response, and with support from the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Walsall Council has appointed a Heritage Programme Officer (fully funded) to develop and deliver the Strategy, and appointed a Conservation Officer (part funded) to support the management, conservation and help to enhance the significance of the Borough's built heritage and its ability to accommodate people's engagement with it. Walsall Council's Public Health, Healthy Spaces Team, and Clean and Green Team have also been strengthened and are better placed to be able to support some initiatives under the aegis of the Strategy.

Externally, examples include the One Walsall initiative developing capacity in third sector organisations. West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust has received grant funding (via Historic England) which has enabled it to appoint core staff for the first time, creating capacity to potentially support built heritage projects in Walsall.

Further capacity and greater collaboration is likely to be required to drive the success of Heritage Strategy and meet the Council's Corporate Plan priorities. A flexible approach is required to have the best impact possible and to remain relevant and dynamic and to be manageable and adaptable.

Covid-19 had a huge impact on our lives, and on the heritage sector. It caused a sharp decline in revenues in digital, cultural, media and sports industries. The heritage sector is vulnerable to the pandemic and the future is unpredictable, so how it will unfold from now on remains uncertain. In the medium/long term, financial constraints are likely to limit conservation work, affecting the overall sustainability of heritage sites.¹⁷



PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

Funding

As well as issues relating to the capacity to deliver change, there are also potential and historic issues relating to capital and operational funding for projects. Many projects will require significant capital investments to support their delivery which is increasingly challenging in difficult economic circumstances as more organisations chase the same sources of finance to deliver their projects.

There are opportunities to work with organisations such as the Architectural Heritage Fund through their ‘Transforming Places Through Heritage’ programme for building specific funding¹⁸ as well as with the Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country and their “Nature Recovery Network” for broader partnership funding and activities. These and other initiatives provide opportunity to shape projects and deliver positive outcomes for the Borough’s heritage and communities.

Outside of ‘pure’ heritage funding, such as that provided by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and a vast array of other trusts and charities of varying sizes and scales, Walsall has also been successful in attracting, and is in the process of applying for, a range of national government funds including the Towns Fund, Future High Streets and the Levelling Up Fund. Many of the projects promoted through these funding routes have strong heritage, cultural, or urban regeneration elements and could support the delivery of the Strategy. The current ‘deprived’¹⁹ status of the Borough and the government’s levelling-up agenda would also indicate that the Borough is in a strong position to attract further funding and it will be critical to ensure that this can support and drive keynote heritage projects in the Borough.

Private sector investment and activity also has a key role to play in the future of the Borough, through its economy and its heritage. A strong private sector focussed on sustainable and sensitive development can bring our heritage assets back to life and create viable and vibrant communities. Walsall Council will work closely with the private sector to leverage and unlock this investment in a manner that safeguards and celebrates our shared history. There are also opportunities for third sector involvement and community-led investment. Community ownership (e.g. via Social Enterprises) can unlock assets unviable for the commercial market through access to broad ranging funding targeting both the asset itself and projects’ wider social outputs. This can include social finance, grants, crowdfunding or community share offers amongst other funding opportunities. However big or small, specialist support and expertise is needed to bring forward and deliver successful projects in the context of this Strategy, and help us all deliver.

Carbon Reduction

Walsall has a number of historic buildings that may be open to adaption and re-use where doing so may significantly reduce carbon emissions, a target of the Borough. The adaptive re-use of a historic building will emit less carbon by 2050 than a new building²⁰. It reduces waste from demolition and conserves the building materials whilst creating more jobs during its conversion period. Additionally, a programme of renovation and refit will help create sustainable jobs, drive economic activity and develop skills and learning opportunities, these are all Walsall Council priorities.



PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

SWOT Summary

The following analysis was undertaken to identify and organise the Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Such analysis is key to assess the current position and establish the new Heritage Strategy.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Passionate and knowledgeable local stakeholders. • Many key cultural and natural assets e.g. the canal network, local nature reserves, historic buildings and public art. • Strong cultural collections across museum, gallery, library and archive sites. • ‘Town of a hundred trades’ narrative to be explored. • Diverse communities with rich heritage and stories waiting to be told. • A willing third sector supported by existing initiatives. • Appetite for heritage related projects across sectors, from regeneration to public health. • Wider regeneration projects already underway with existing and developing strategies and masterplans. • Walsall Council’s previous successes with heritage related projects. • Status within the wider Black Country and West Midlands. • General readiness for investment through the Towns Fund, Future High Streets and transport projects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High levels of deprivation, disproportionate across the Borough, affecting equal opportunity, connectivity and cohesion. • Barriers to accessing heritage include physical, intellectual and cultural with the perception as exclusive or a barrier to progress. • Challenging sites and assets that may prove difficult to re-use. • Land and property values/development returns resulting in difficulty for developers to justify work to historic buildings and places that carry a conservation deficit. • Disproportionate physical heritage across areas of the Borough. • Insufficient capacity and resources to delivery heritage projects. • ‘Insular’ localities whether due to a historically recognised identity or a preference to ‘stay local’. • Lack of draw to Walsall town centre and other urban areas. • Sector weakened by Covid-19.



PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Lottery Heritage Fund Strategic Funding Framework 2019–2024 priority local authority area. • Partnerships with communities, groups and businesses to increase capacity, expand and support heritage initiatives. • Increase cross-sector heritage projects, including culture, sport, and healthcare. • Develop new developer partnerships to address challenging historic sites and areas. • Create new jobs and volunteering opportunities, using heritage to develop new skills. • Increase heritage engagement with children, young people and families. • Partnerships with schools, colleges and universities to engage young people and promote heritage. • Integrate Index of Multiple Deprivation measures, e.g. health, to evidence positive contribution of heritage. • Understand, recognise and promote heritage stories and assets to involve a wider range of people. • Utilise unoccupied built heritage assets for new use drawing upon the knowledge and resources of the Building Preservation Trust. • Work alongside community focused organisations such as Urban Hax, Kiondo, Creative Factory amongst other community associations. • Incorporate and promote carbon reduction in heritage initiatives. • Increase online presence/digital access to promote heritage and encourage participation. • Utilise location in wider Black Country and West Midlands to unlock collaboration in wider initiatives, plans and projects. • Leverage UNESCO Geopark status in initiatives for promotion and development of initiatives • Utilise heritage in the recovery from Covid-19 to create jobs and promote activities and green spaces to promote health and wellbeing • Project development around wider cultural events e.g. Commonwealth Games Birmingham 2022, British Art Show in Wolverhampton in 2022. • Project development aligned with external initiatives e.g. Big Local Palfrey and Mossley, Creative Black Country etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some built heritage in poor state which will continue to deteriorate if remaining unoccupied. • Lack of maintenance of historic buildings in private ownership. • Heritage can be seen as a barrier to regeneration and development. • Loss of appeal of some green spaces and urban areas for recreation and leisure. • Non-heritage projects can take precedence for investment, funding and resources. • Post Covid-19 uncertainty for the future of historic areas, e.g. high streets, and how people will want to engage with their environments. • Lack of clarity of the benefits of heritage projects, resulting in insufficient public support. • Current funding and resources are time limited. • Significant external funding and capacity requirements. • Potential loss of local heritage skills e.g. leather working. • Loss of social history record if projects not developed and funded.



PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

Policy Context

The Heritage Strategy forms part of a group of policy and guidance documents that together will shape the Borough over the coming years. **Walsall Council's Corporate Plan 2021-2022** highlights regeneration as the key to future prosperity tackling inequalities and building resilient communities. The vision is to see that *'inequalities are reduced and potential is maximised'*. The aims and values of the Plan will be used as a 'golden thread' throughout further strategies and key documents. Current knowledge and further consultation with communities will help to shape how the Council meets their needs to reduce inequality and maximise their potential. The Heritage Strategy and Action Plan will support delivery of the vision within the Corporate Plan 2021-2022 and future visions and objectives.

Reducing inequalities is at the heart of the **Walsall Plan: Our Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2017-2020** (and the **Walsall Plan Refresh 2019-21**). Heritage related aims of the Strategy include supporting the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise sectors, supporting and empowering vulnerable children and young people to improve their physical and mental health, and supporting quality apprenticeships for all ages and improving conditions for the homeless.

Since the declaration of the climate change emergency in 2019, Walsall Council have developed a **Climate Change Action Plan** to become greener and more energy efficient. A steering group has been formed and action plan developed to help Walsall become a net zero carbon authority by 2050.

Walsall Town Centre Masterplan 2019, supported by the **Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan 2019** provides a vision for investment and transformational change in the town centre over the next 15 to 20 years through the strengthening of the cultural offer, supporting businesses, increasing employment opportunities, conserving, enhancing and reusing heritage assets, and transforming the experience and perception of Walsall for all who live, work, shop, visit and invest in the town.

This extends across the Borough, with existing plans outlining the role of areas to meet current and future needs, such as the Site Allocation Document 2019. Visioning work for specific areas is currently underway, including the Love Willenhall Masterplan focussing on the future of the town aiming to become a more vibrant, healthy and prosperous community.

Heritage has the potential to make a significant and long-term contribution to the aims and objectives in these plans, among many others for the Borough and the wider region.



PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

Recent Research

‘ The most important finding is that there is no dispute about the positive social impact of participation in culture and sport. ’

Changing Lives: the social impact of participation in culture and sport. DCMS²¹

An inquiry in May 2019 by the Digital, Culture, Media and Sport Committee (DCMS) revealed and showcased evidence that the impact of culture and sport on positive outcomes in health, education, criminal justice and urban regeneration.



‘ Cultural participation can help to deliver formal educational outcomes, including raised attainment and greater likelihood of going on to further and higher education... Engagement in the arts can also help children to develop ‘ soft skills ’ including amongst children with special educational needs. On an individual level the impact can be transformative. Exposure to culture within the education system can also broaden children’s horizons and extend opportunities. ’

Changing Lives: the social impact of participation in culture and sport. DCMS²²

The same study also highlighted the social, educational and developmental benefits that engagement with cultural and heritage activity can have on children and young people.

‘ Art and culture contributes £10.6 billion to the UK economy... Arts and culture help tackle social injustice. Theatres, museums, galleries and libraries are the beating heart of our towns and cities. Not only do they bring prosperity, they bring communities together and make life worth living... Our creative industries are successful throughout the world. ’

Why Art and Culture Matters. Arts Council England²³

Based on extensive research, Arts Council England pulled together this ‘elevator pitch’ to show the value of art and culture to individuals, communities and society as a whole, and for the economy, environment, health and wellbeing.

PART ONE: SETTING THE SCENE

‘ The UK technology and cultural sectors make the ultimate power couple...Culture and technology can work together to drive audience engagement, boost the capability of cultural organisations and unleash the creative potential of technology.’

Culture is Digital Executive Summary. DCMS²⁴

Born out of the Government’s Culture White Paper, Culture is Digital reviews the digitisation of our public collections and enhances the online cultural presence. It showcases innovative projects, highlighting the extraordinary collaborations between cultural and digital pioneers and makes a case for our future alongside technology.

‘ Engaging with or living near heritage is associated with higher life satisfaction and quality of life. The research highlighted the therapeutic effects of historic landscapes and ‘ blue’ and ‘ green’ spaces (such as canals, rivers, and historic parks), and the importance of shared identity and connection’

Heritage, Health and Wellbeing. The Heritage Alliance²⁵

Published in September 2020, this report from the Heritage Alliance showcases over 30 case studies covering the breadth of the sector, from yoga to historic houses, to a group of disabled adults empowered to put on a club night at Alexandra Palace. Published during the Covid-19 pandemic, since which individuals have been more focused than ever on their health and wellbeing, the report came at a timely moment to demonstrate the possibilities for heritage organisations and projects to support wellbeing.

‘ Access to parks and greenspaces enhance physical health, mental wellbeing and life satisfaction...Parks can create important opportunities for social integration, community engagement, highlight inequalities in society, enable people to connect with nature, which enhances their sense of wellbeing...Parks and greenspaces have economic benefits’

Space to Thrive Report, NLHF²⁶

Conducted in January 2020, the Space to Thrive report is a rapid evidence review of the benefits parks and green spaces have for people and communities. It outlines the key benefits our natural spaces have on our health and wellbeing, and recommends how they should be seen as part of the social infrastructure, and managed to enhance our connections with nature.

‘ Human activity has shaped the landscape, forming the foundations of regional and local identity and helping to reflect the diversity that exists in shared culture and natural heritage.’

Heritage and the Environment, Historic England²⁷

Heritage and the Environment includes recent research findings and past pieces demonstrating the importance of our knowledge of England’s heritage and relationship with the natural and built environment as invaluable for future generations. It evidences how the reuse of historic buildings and re-establishment of historic landscapes can help mitigate climate change.





PART TWO: DELIVERING THE CHANGE

PART TWO: DELIVERING THE CHANGE

Vision and Ethos

Like many places, Walsall needs assistance in unlocking its currently underutilised potential. Heritage is a proven driver for change (see Part One) and has intrinsic value for people and place. Increased engagement with heritage can better connect communities and stimulate social and economic regeneration. Increased engagement with intangible heritage can better connect communities and stimulate social and economic regeneration. There is a clear opportunity for Walsall's diverse communities to support its future. Furthermore, appreciation of heritage assets increases sense of place and its value, resulting in safeguarded, environmentally sustainable assets.

The Walsall Heritage Strategy provides a vision for the next 5 years and beyond. It sets out a framework that all of us can use to ensure that heritage plays an active role in the regeneration of the Borough and empowers communities.



PART TWO: DELIVERING THE CHANGE

VISION

This Strategy will:

Unleash Walsall's creative spirit and industry to develop a resilient and distinctive heritage sector that drives a vibrant new future for the whole of our Borough and all of our communities.

Enable us all to celebrate our rich and diverse heritage by opening up access for everyone and bringing to life our shared and varied stories.

Make Walsall a place to be truly proud of and will create a positive and resilient legacy for the future.

ETHOS

In delivering this Vision and Strategy we will:

- 1. Work in partnership with communities, the third sector, and public and private sector partners within and outside of the Borough to deliver the Strategy by sharing knowledge, resources, skills and experience;***
- 2. Through a process of co-creation, pilot new ways of working with communities to identify, design and deliver projects and initiative that will contribute to a more sustainable future;***
- 3. Listen to and hear what our communities and places, across the Borough, want and aspire to;***
- 4. Actively invite and listen to people to encourage participation and spread the benefits of engagement with heritage, moving beyond traditional audiences;***
- 5. Facilitate others to develop and deliver their ideas and priorities; and***
- 6. Remain flexible and responsive to changing region, national and global agendas to ensure the Strategy remains relevant and realistic.***

PART TWO: DELIVERING THE CHANGE

OBJECTIVES

In achieving this vision, we will focus on four key objectives:

1. Quality of life and wellbeing

2. Sense of place and celebration

3. Climate change

4. Building resilience

These objectives and key supporting actions for Walsall Council are set out on the following pages:

Objective 1: QUALITY OF LIFE AND WELLBEING

Maximise the contribution that our heritage makes to the quality of life and wellbeing of our communities by:

a) Embedding health and wellbeing outcomes at the heart of all heritage and conservation projects and programmes.

b) Supporting and driving regeneration initiatives across the Borough to improve economic activity and outcomes.

c) Prioritising interventions in communities with the greatest needs.

d) Supporting in delivering skills, education and learning opportunities.

e) Enabling active and inclusive volunteering across the Borough.

Key Walsall Council actions to support this objective include:

- Supporting the creation of a volunteer programme and cohort to support all aspects of the Borough's built, natural, archaeological and intangible cultural heritage.
- Prioritising the delivery of public, private and third sector heritage opportunities in key disadvantaged or marginalised communities enhancing diversity and inclusion (see Heritage Opportunity Register in Objective 2).
- Strengthening support for the delivery of the Strategy by developing existing and investigating further opportunities for formalised coordination of volunteer, health and wellbeing, skills and life-long learning activities through heritage themes, sites and collections.

PART TWO: DELIVERING THE CHANGE

Objective 2: SENSE OF PLACE AND CELEBRATION

Enhance the contribution that the historic environment makes to the character and identity of the Borough and ensure it is accessible for all by:

- a) Safeguarding and prioritising all aspects of Walsall's diverse natural, built and archaeological heritage.
- b) Focussing on overcoming cultural, social and physical barriers to celebrating and accessing heritage, in all its forms.
- c) Actively using Walsall's heritage when promoting and celebrating Walsall as a place to live work and invest.
- d) Embedding heritage into the heart of Walsall's and the wider Back Country's tourism and day visitor offer.
- e) Working with a broad range of partners to reveal, explore and celebrate the many histories of Walsall's diverse communities.
- f) Attracting and engaging with a diverse range of audiences from within and outside the Borough in a ways that reflect its creative spirit.

Key Walsall Council actions to support this objective include:

- Undertaking an Accessibility Review of Walsall Council's heritage assets and services to identify and address cultural, social and physical barriers.
- Updating and maintaining all Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans and update and promote the Local List.
- Creating a "Heritage Opportunity Register" identifying assets at risk and those with opportunities to be enhanced, addressing all aspects of the Borough's heritage.
- Investigating opportunities to explore new ways of promoting heritage and activities as part of the new Walsall Proud Transformation programme, in partnership with organisations and by utilising community content sharing i.e. social media campaigns.
- Investigating and identifying opportunities to create an annual events calendar including a heritage celebration day and/or series of events.



PART TWO: DELIVERING THE CHANGE

Objective 3: CLIMATE CHANGE

Unlock and enhance the role that Walsall's historic environment can play in mitigating and adapting to climate change by:

- a) Improving knowledge and awareness of the inherent sustainability of historic buildings and assets and ensuring aspects such as embodied carbon are fully accounted for in assessing development opportunities.
- b) Promoting the sustainable adaptation and maintenance of historic buildings to address climate change and mitigate against predicted impacts.
- c) Improving the resilience of the Borough's green spaces and landscapes to the predicted impacts of climate change and supporting the Nature Recovery Network across the Black Country.

Key Walsall Council actions to support this objective include:

- Supporting the development of a guidance and support document on the adaptation and maintenance of historic buildings to inform commercial and residential property owners.
- Undertaking a Green Space Climate Review to identify opportunities to both address climate change and ensure resilience.



PART TWO: DELIVERING THE CHANGE

Objective 4: BUILDING RESILIENCE

Create and sustain a thriving and inclusive heritage sector founded on the principles of collaboration and partnership by:

- a) Providing the opportunity for all stakeholders to contribute to the future of the Borough's heritage including council services, commercial, third and private sectors.
- b) Publicising the value of heritage for people's health, wellbeing and economic future.
- c) Supporting heritage-focussed organisations, projects and initiatives.
- d) Promoting best practice and achievements in the heritage sector.

Key Walsall Council actions to support this objective include:

- Supporting the establishment and maintenance of a Heritage Forum bringing together a wide range of stakeholders and partners to support the delivery of the Strategy.
- Supporting, seeking funding and investigating possible resource in creating a 'Matchmaking and Funding Opportunities Guide' to provide connections between professionals and organisations that require support, conservation, funding, organisational and other technical support to communities and partners.
- Embedding the Heritage Strategy into future iterations of Walsall Council's Corporate Plan.
- Working with external partners such as the Association of Independent Museums, Historic England, Heritage Trust Network etc. to provide training, support and guidance to voluntary and charitable organisations supporting Walsall's heritage.
- Supporting local partners to develop projects, funding applications and capacity.



PART TWO: DELIVERING THE CHANGE

Governance and Delivery

Walsall Council has developed this Strategy through engagement with stakeholders and community representatives to ensure that it is as relevant and inclusive as possible. The Council will play a key role in supporting the delivery of many projects and support the day-to-day management and review of project progress. The Council will continue to work with communities, stakeholders and the private sector to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to share and take part in our heritage.

This Strategy is the foundation from which future projects will develop.

It does not seek to set out every project and programme that will be delivered over the coming years. It provides a framework for partners from the public, private, volunteer, charitable sectors, and of course, people and communities to work within and around. Future work to achieve our collective goals will be undertaken collaboratively with co-creation at its heart so we can all be involved in the identification, development, delivery and monitoring of the Strategy and future projects.

To ensure this happens, the appropriate infrastructure will be put in place, including:

Heritage Forum

A Heritage Forum, made up of a wide range of stakeholders and partners, helping to steer and support the delivery of the Strategy. It will provide a network of support and enable members to discuss, share information and skills. It will promote, support, develop and represent the interest of the forum members and encourage contribution and co-operation and develop partnerships between forum members. It will promote access to heritage for everyone in the Borough and identify funding opportunities to benefit heritage projects, as well as be a key facilitator in co-designing projects with the people of Walsall.

Oversight and Management

Walsall Council and the Heritage Forum will provide oversight and direction to projects and facilitate the widespread participation in the Strategy with the support of the Heritage Programmes Officer. The Heritage Forum will help to review progress on an annual basis and drive the overall momentum and direction of the Strategy. Skills and resources within the Heritage Forum, Walsall Council, external stakeholders, private sector and community members will be utilised in the delivery of the Strategy.



PART TWO: DELIVERING THE CHANGE

Capacity and Resourcing

Whilst Walsall has recently been seeing continued investment, we must continue to pool knowledge and resources in order to deliver the Strategy. This includes financial resources, staffing, volunteers and experience. Funding opportunities should continue to be sought and less experienced organisations should be supported by the more experienced. This will be facilitated by Walsall Council, supported by the Heritage Forum, and publicised through the Matchmaking and Funding Opportunities Guide.

There have been significant capacity issues right across the heritage sector including the reduction in core funding and limited dedicated roles to deliver heritage. In response to this, Walsall Council has appointed a Heritage Programme Officer to support in the delivery of heritage projects, and a Conservation Officer to support the management of our built heritage. Two years ago the Council created the Healthy Spaces team to combine Sports and Greenspaces development, leading to greater emphasis on the importance of Green spaces to the health agenda. This team continues to work closely with the voluntary sector to assist in the delivery of high quality green spaces whilst concentrating on improving physical activity and mental health. The Council's Programme Management service has been developed to provide expert external funding management, support and advice. Supported by Walsall Council, the One Walsall service is developing capacity across third sector organisations to support communities across the Borough.

Whilst not all initiatives will be strictly 'heritage', linking heritage projects to Walsall's economic, environmental and community projects will broaden the resources and will benefit multiple sectors, helping to deliver well rounded projects and a more sustainable future.

Private sector investment will be critical to Walsall's future and the future of its heritage. Current land values and returns from investment in development activity in the borough are not strong and consequently there is limited capacity to deliver sensitive, high-quality development for heritage assets. On the converse of this, it is recognised that a high-quality historic environment can drive up land values, rental levels and investment returns. To unlock this cycle, Walsall Council will work with public and private sector partners to leverage investment into the Borough, seeing opportunities to address the conservation deficit and ultimately deliver a high-quality environment that benefits all partners and communities.

We currently have an existing volunteer sector and a number of societies, interest groups and community groups working on many successful projects. Along with the benefits volunteering brings to the individuals themselves, this is a resource that can be expanded and drawn upon to share knowledge and experience and to help deliver future initiatives.

Further capacity and greater collaboration is required to drive the success of the Heritage Strategy and meet Walsall Council's Corporate Plan priorities. This reveals opportunities to work with local businesses, nature conservation organisations, community and arts organisations, and school and colleges, to increase our capacity whilst benefitting all involved.



PART TWO: DELIVERING THE CHANGE



Measuring Success

Over the next 5 years, to ensure the aims of our Strategy are achieved, a key part of the delivery will be the monitoring and measuring of its achievements. As the Action Plan is implemented and subsequently developed, project outcomes and the associated monitoring framework will be established to measure achievement. Due to the breadth of project type, scale and delivery agency, data types will be incorporated as appropriate to respective projects' Key Performance Indicators. The overall monitoring will be administered by the Walsall Council Heritage Programme Officer and Working Group, supported by the Heritage Forum, with output made available in accessible ways.

A brief annual publication will be produced to report on the overall progress of the Strategy and its programmes and to propose any modifications or adjustments to the Strategy. This will enable all stakeholders and the public to see how the Strategy is taking effect, measures of success, and to raise awareness of the developing heritage sector in Walsall to encourage and open up opportunities for people to become involved in upcoming projects.



Beverley Cooke Jas Dihal Aris Richardson Bimla Kaur Dalbir Kaur



Millers Hall

ENDNOTES

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Walsall Heritage Strategy was produced by **CBA** on behalf of Walsall Council in partnership with key stakeholders including individuals from local organisations and community groups.

This Strategy was funded by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and should be read in conjunction with the **Walsall Heritage Strategy – Baseline Report 2021** and **Walsall Heritage Strategy 2021-2026 – Action Plan**.

All documents can be accessed via [go.walsall.gov.uk](https://www.go.walsall.gov.uk)



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Walsall Heritage Strategy

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Action Plan



Walsall Council



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Introduction

This **Action Plan** supports and forms part of the **Walsall Heritage Strategy 2021-2026**. Both documents form the **foundation from which future projects will develop**. Together they provide a framework for partners from the public, private, voluntary, charitable sectors, and of course, people and communities to work within, across the Borough and beyond as they develop their ideas and projects in partnership with the Council.

As set out in the Strategy, co-creation and collaboration lies at the heart of everything we are seeking to achieve; consequently this Action Plan does not set out every project and programme that will be delivered over the coming years, as these projects and programmes remain to identified and developed with our many partners and communities.

This initial Action Plan is intended to start us on our way towards achieving the Vision, Ethos and Objectives set out in the Walsall Heritage Strategy 2021-2026. They are outlined below and expanded on in the main Strategy.

VISION

This Strategy will:

Unleash Walsall's creative spirit and industry to develop a resilient and distinctive heritage sector that drives a vibrant new future for the whole of our Borough and all of our communities.

Enable us all to celebrate our rich and diverse heritage by opening up access for everyone and bringing to life our shared and varied stories.

Make Walsall a place to be truly proud of and will create a positive and resilient legacy for the future.

ETHOS

In delivering this Vision and Strategy we will:

- 1. Work in partnership with communities, the third sector, and public and private sector partners within and outside of the Borough to deliver the Strategy by sharing knowledge, resources, skills and experience;***
- 2. Through a process of co-creation, pilot new ways of working with communities to identify, design and deliver projects and initiative that will contribute to a more sustainable future;***
- 3. Listen to and hear what our communities and places, across the Borough, want and aspire to;***
- 4. Actively invite and listen to people to encourage participation and spread the benefits of engagement with heritage, moving beyond traditional audiences;***
- 5. Facilitate others to develop and deliver their ideas and priorities; and***
- 6. Remain flexible and responsive to changing region, national and global agendas to ensure the Strategy remains relevant and realistic.***

Introduction

Objective 1: QUALITY OF LIFE AND WELLBEING

Maximise the contribution that our heritage makes to the quality of life and wellbeing of our communities by:

- a) Embedding health and wellbeing outcomes at the heart of all heritage and conservation projects and programmes.**
- b) Supporting and driving regeneration initiatives across the Borough to improve economic activity and outcomes.**
- c) Prioritising interventions in communities with the greatest needs.**
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- e) Enabling active and inclusive volunteering across the Borough.**

Objective 2: SENSE OF PLACE AND CELEBRATION

Enhance the contribution that the historic environment makes to the character and identity of the Borough and ensure it is accessible for all by:

- a) Safeguarding and prioritising all aspects of Walsall's diverse natural, built and archaeological heritage.**
- b) Focussing on overcoming cultural, social and physical barriers to celebrating and accessing heritage, in all its forms.**
- c) Actively using Walsall's heritage when promoting and celebrating Walsall as a place to live work and invest.**
- d) Embedding heritage into the heart of Walsall's and the wider Black Country's tourism and day visitor offer.**
- e) Working with a broad range of partners to reveal, explore and celebrate the many histories of Walsall's diverse communities.**
- f) Attracting and engaging with a diverse range of audiences from within and outside the Borough in a ways that reflect its creative spirit.**



Introduction

Objective 3: CLIMATE CHANGE

Unlock and enhance the role that Walsall's historic environment can play in mitigating and adapting to climate change by:

- a) Improving knowledge and awareness of the inherent sustainability of historic buildings and assets and ensuring aspects such as embodied carbon are fully accounted for in assessing development opportunities.**
- b) Promoting the sustainable adaptation and maintenance of historic buildings to address climate change and mitigate against predicted impacts.**
- c) Improving the resilience of the Borough's green spaces and landscapes to the predicted impacts of climate change and supporting the Nature Recovery Network across the Black Country.**

Objective 4: BUILDING RESILIENCE

Create and sustain a thriving and inclusive heritage sector founded on the principles of collaboration and partnership by:

- a) Providing the opportunity for all stakeholders to contribute to the future of the Borough's heritage including council services, commercial, third and private sectors.**
- b) Publicising the value of heritage for people's health, wellbeing and economic future.**
- c) Supporting heritage-focussed organisations, projects and initiatives.**
- d) Promoting best practice and achievements in the heritage sector.**





The Action plan has been structured as follows:

- **Early Walsall Council Actions** - The first, and the most detailed set of actions are designed to provide a firm foundation for future heritage projects. They are ordered by priority and would be delivered by Walsall Council.
- **Catalyst Projects** - So called as they will drive us forward and get the ball rolling on heritage activity in the Borough, providing an impetus to future heritage activity. They are organised under the primary objective they support and will involve a broad range of partner organisations and communities.
- **Pipeline Projects** - A set of high-level, aspirational projects that could be taken forward in the early stages of the Strategy and can be further developed as and when opportunities arise. These are organised under the primary objective they support.
- **Ideas Board** - Documentation of all project ideas that have risen out of consultation, to be used as inspiration, many of which have gone on to inform the following actions and projects. They are organised as general and more specific projects and may go on to inform future work.



Early Walsall Council Actions

These are a series of initial actions that will provide a firm foundation for the delivery of the Strategy. They will be led by Walsall Council and are essential in forming the basis for future heritage related activity. They are prioritised from High to Low in the order they appear, with the objective(s) they primarily contribute to also identified. It should be noted that many projects contribute to multiple objectives. Initial options for funding and support are also identified – these are continuing to be explored and developed.

Action/Project	Funding Avenues	Capacity	Timescale	Primary Objective(s)
<p>Support the establishment of a Heritage Forum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To steer and support the delivery of the Strategy and ensure broad engagement from across the community. Establish an annual calendar of heritage events to benefit community groups by giving a framework for activity to engage residents in activities. The group will help to identify heritage projects, partnerships and funding whilst raising awareness. A professional stakeholder base will provide necessary resources for the long-term continuation of the Strategy, growing the sector and strengthening relationships with businesses and the people of Walsall. Pilot new approaches to engage young people with the Forum. 	<p>Currently resourced through National Lottery Heritage Fund grant support, external funding may be sought as activity develops over time.</p>	<p>Heritage Programme Officer</p>	<p>Spring 2022</p>	<p>4: Building Resilience</p>
<p>Create Monitoring and Management Framework</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be used by Walsall Council, supported by the Heritage Forum, to ensure the continuation of successful and focused delivery of the Strategy. This will include periodic review of projects and engagement with communities to ensure relevancy and effectiveness of initiatives. Key performance indicators to be incorporated within all strategy actions' delivery and evaluation, accounting for and addressing inequality across the Borough e.g. health and wellbeing. 	<p>Currently resourced through National Lottery Heritage Fund grant support and wider Walsall Council.</p>	<p>Heritage Programme Officer/ Walsall Council Working Group</p>	<p>Spring 2022</p>	<p>4: Building Resilience</p>

Early Walsall Council Actions

Action/Project	Funding Avenues	Capacity	Timescale	Primary Objective(s)
<p>Produce a Matchmaking and Funding Opportunities Guide</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a simple 'where to start' resource for partners working in the Borough, as a signpost to online guidance, supporting organisations/ individuals and funding resources such as the Architectural Heritage Fund/Heritage Alliance managed Heritage Funding Directory and the Architectural Heritage Fund's Transforming Places through Heritage fund. The resource will advise users on their 'match' for both organisational support and possible funding resource. It will be updated annually. 	Currently resourced through National Lottery Heritage Fund grant support and wider Walsall Council.	Heritage Programme Officer	Summer 2022	2: Sense of Place and Celebration 4: Building Resilience
<p>Undertake Accessibility Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To review and assess heritage assets and services for cultural, social and physical barriers that may be compromising the access to organisations, sites and opportunities, affecting, people's perception of heritage. This will include reference to digital accessibility and improving access online. Ultimately, this will form proposals for addressing identified issues across the Borough. 	National Lottery Heritage Fund Arts Council England National Lottery Community Fund	Heritage Programme Officer/ Wider Walsall Council/External Consultants	Autumn 2022	1: Quality of Life and Wellbeing 2: Sense of Place and Celebration
<p>Integrate heritage activities within the new Council 'Proud' Transformation Programme and across services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To enable heritage to become a key Council priority demonstrating cohesion between initiatives, maximising the promotion of heritage, increasing awareness, understanding and access to heritage giving communities a sense of involvement in wider Council initiatives. 	Currently resourced through National Lottery Heritage Fund grant support and wider Walsall Council.	Heritage Programme Officer/ Walsall Council Working Group	Winter 2021 - Ongoing	1: Quality of Life and Wellbeing 2: Sense of Place and Celebration



Early Walsall Council Actions

Action/Project	Funding Avenues	Capacity	Timescale	Primary Objective(s)
<p>Create Heritage Opportunity Register</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify assets at risk including green spaces, historic buildings, living landscapes, canals, churchyards, archives and libraries, archaeology, and identify opportunities for enhancement, engagement, and/or reuse and evaluate their contribution to place, community and the economy. 	<p>National Lottery Heritage Fund Historic England Architectural Heritage Fund National Lottery Community Fund Arts Council England Wider Trusts and Foundations Wider Social Funders</p>	<p>Heritage Programme Officer/ Wider Walsall Council</p>	<p>Autumn 2022</p>	<p>2: Sense of Place and Celebration</p>
<p>Undertake Green Space Climate Review</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To identify opportunities to both address climate change and to ensure the resilience of greenspaces including parks, public spaces, living landscapes and canals and to maximise their role in the wider climate contribution. 	<p>Landfill funding e.g. Biffa Award Veolia Environmental Trust National Lottery Heritage Fund: Community Woodlands UK Community Renewal Fund Wider Trust and Foundations</p>	<p>Heritage Programme Officer/ Healthy Spaces/Clean and Green & Leisure teams</p>	<p>Winter 2022</p>	<p>3: Climate Change 4: Building Resilience</p>
<p>Update local data and plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To update the Conservation Area Appraisals, Management Plans and the Local List to ensure their correct identification, management, possible use/reuse and contribution to place, community and the economy. 	<p>Historic England Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government: Local Heritage List Campaign</p>	<p>Heritage Programme Officer/ Conservation Officer/Planning, Engineering & Transportation/ External Consultants</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>2: Sense of Place and Celebration</p>



Early Walsall Council Actions

Action/Project	Funding Avenues	Capacity	Timescale	Primary Objective(s)
<p>Embed Heritage Strategy into future Corporate Plans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure that heritage remains a priority in the growth of the Borough for people, businesses, communities and education, as part of Council services and to promote strategy cohesion. 	Currently resourced through National Lottery Heritage Fund grant support and wider Walsall Council	Heritage Programme Officer/ Wider Walsall Council	Ongoing	4: Building Resilience
<p>Develop Historic Building Guidance</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To ensure the appropriate adaption and maintenance of historic buildings and to provide property owners with maintenance and management advice and support, helping to safeguard and enhance heritage assets. To be updated periodically. 	Historic England	Heritage Programme Officer/ Conservation Officer/ Regeneration, Housing & Economy/External Consultants	Winter 2022	2: Sense of Place and Celebration 3: Climate Change



Catalyst Projects

A series of Catalyst Projects have been identified to propel us toward making Walsall a better place. They are intended to get the ball rolling, delivering the vision and meeting objectives after the foundation has been laid through the Early Walsall Council Actions. They will be the first step towards unleashing Walsall's creative spirit and industry and developing a resilient, thriving and inclusive heritage sector founded on the principles of collaboration and partnership.

Through these projects we will begin to unlock challenging sites, make the most of our green spaces and canals, uncover our individual and shared histories, diversify and expand our community organisations, share our skills, and open up access to our shared services.

Initially projects will be supported by Walsall Council giving further 'pipeline' projects and community led projects the chance to come to the fore over the coming years. Each project is organised under the primary objective it contributes to, with objectives that it supports also identified. Many projects contribute to multiple objectives and are all designed with resilience building and communities in mind.



Objective 1: QUALITY OF LIFE AND WELLBEING

1. Uncover our Heritage

A series of dedicated community engagement projects with the aim of proactively inviting communities and individuals to build on Walsall’s heritage together and develop a shared understanding of heritage. Projects will be fully inclusive, across a range of platforms and themes to encourage participation from a wide range of people from all backgrounds and of all ages, deepening our individual and collective understanding of our heritage and bringing people together.

Possible Partners	Key Outputs	Funding Avenues	Timescale	Priority	Supports Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Museums and galleries including The New Art Gallery Walsall, Walsall Leather Museum, Aldridge Transport Museum Social enterprises including Urban Hax, Kiondo, Walsall, Creative Factory and housing associations. Support bodies including Walsall for All, One Walsall, Creative Black Country, Walsall Cultural Compact, Groundwork WM Educational bodies including University of Wolverhampton, Walsall College. Wider community groups including Walsall Community Network, Walsall Green Spaces Forum, and local residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A series of community engagement projects resulting in a higher level of participation and increased knowledge of the wants and needs of the community. A developed network of organisations delivering heritage project, promoting future partnership working. Increased prominence of heritage opportunities for community focussed organisations across the Borough. 	Crowdfund Walsall Postcode Local Trust Tudor Trust Paul Hamlyn Foundation National Lottery Heritage Fund National Lottery Community Fund Arts Council England Wider Trusts and Foundations	2021-ongoing	High	2, 4

2. Develop capacity and representation of ‘Friends of’ and Community based organisations

Proactively reaching out through support organisations, education institutions and wider sectors to increase representation of currently under-represented groups across heritage-related groups. This may include ‘Friends of’ parks, historic buildings, archaeology sites, theatres etc. or wider community, arts, culture and sport. Activity will be monitored and developed to increase both digital and in-person opportunities to support new skills and enhance wellbeing.

Possible Partners	Key Outputs	Funding Avenues	Timescale	Priority	Supports Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support organisations including Walsall for All, Walsall Community Network, One Walsall, Locality Community organisations including ‘Friends of’ parks groups, Walsall Green Spaces Forum, Walsall Community Network, and Wider resident groups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased participation and memberships, with a particular increase in those from currently under-represented groups. Increased capacity and resilience of community organisations. Increased volunteering, training and skills sharing opportunities for young people. 	National Lottery Heritage Fund National Lottery Community Fund Tudor Trust Esmée Fairbairn Foundation Paul Hamlyn Foundations Wider Trusts and Foundations	2021-ongoing	High	4



Objective 2: SENSE OF PLACE AND CELEBRATION

3. Reimagining Walsall's Canals

A major project encompassing:

- Canal Area Action Plan to safeguard the network and to identify ways in which it can further contribute to Walsall's heritage, integrate with green spaces and contribute to the Nature Recovery Network.
- Community based projects to engage more people in the canal network resulting in a long term legacy of its heritage that is values, understanding and maintenance. It may include the 'adoption' of stretches of the canal by local neighbourhoods and communities.
- Promoting the canals as a destination rather than a route, through the promotion of leisure activities and canal-based learning activities.

Possible Partners	Key Outputs	Funding Avenues	Timescale	Priority	Supports Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional organisations including Canal and River Trust, Groundworks WM, The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country, West Midlands Combined Authority, Black Country LEP • Support organisations including One Walsall, Walsall for All, Walsall Community network • Wider community groups, 'Friends of' groups, local residents, local schools and colleges and universities • Wider community groups including Walsall Community Network Walsall Green Spaces Forum, and local residents. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Canal Area Action Plan • Series of community projects • Series of school learning programmes • Promotional material for canal leisure 	National Lottery Heritage Fund Sport England Arts Council England Landfill funding e.g. Biffa Award Veolia Environmental Trust Crowdfund Walsall Wider Trusts and Foundations	Winter 2021-ongoing	High	1, 3, 4

4. Walsall in Pictures

Digitise up to 10,200 unique images, chosen for their representation and celebration of Walsall's rich heritage, and their historical relevance to a fascinating period of UK history. The project will pioneer the digital preservation of Walsall's cultural heritage and will sit under the town's ambitious new vision for sustainable growth. New employment and volunteering opportunities will be created, staff will be upskilled and environmental benefits will contribute to the Council's 2050 carbon neutrality target.

Possible Partners	Key Outputs	Funding Avenues	Timescale	Priority	Supports Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educational bodies including University of Wolverhampton, Walsall College and local schools. • Community groups, history societies and 'Friends of' groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Digitisation and increased accessibility of the Walsall Council Archives collection. 	National Archives National Lottery Heritage Fund	Winter 2021-ongoing	High	1, 2



5. Options and Feasibility Studies

To identify ways of safeguarding and enhancing assets particularly Heritage at Risk potentially identifying options for reuse, regeneration and enhancement and understanding of their overall contribution to place and people.

Possible Partners	Key Outputs	Funding Avenues	Timeline	Priority	Supports Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Property owners and developers across commercial, public and third sectors e.g. West Midlands Historic Buildings Trust, West Midlands Urban Community Homes. Sector organisations including Historic England and Homes England. Representative/support organisations including British Property Federations, Heritage Trust Network, Lichfield Diocese. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Options and Feasibility Studies to provide increased understanding of appropriate and effective options for these sites. Redundant/under-utilised sites delivering against wider social, economic and environmental outputs. 	National Lottery Heritage Fund Sport England Arts Council England Landfill funding e.g. Biffa Award Veolia Environmental Trust Crowdfund Walsall Wider Trusts and Foundations	Winter 2021-ongoing	Medium	3, 4

6. Options Appraisal for the Leather Museum/100 Trades Museum

To determine the best possible approach to begin to plan and develop an enhanced visitor attraction in either the same or new location(s).

Possible Partners	Key Outputs	Funding Avenues	Timescale	Priority	Supports Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sector organisations including Museums Association, West Midlands Museum Development. Tourism sector bodies including West Midlands Growth Company. Regional museums including Black Country Living Museum. Educational bodies including University of Wolverhampton, Walsall College and local schools. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Leather Museum/100 Trades Museum Options Study 	National Lottery Heritage Fund Wolfson Foundation Esmée Fairbairn Foundation The Clore Duffield Foundation Arts Council England Wider Trusts and Foundations	2022-ongoing	Medium	1



Objective 3: CLIMATE CHANGE

7. Greenspace Audit and Options Studies

To identify what and where heritage projects can be delivered whilst supporting climate change initiatives, including parks, playing fields, churchyards, the canal network, nature reserves, green spaces and the built heritage within them to both safeguard and enhance their use for the community. This includes green space and natural assets across Walsall.

Possible Partners	Key Outputs	Funding Avenues	Timescale	Priority	Supports Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Canal and River Trust, The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham & the Black Country, Walsall Green Spaces Forum, green spaces Friends groups, UNESCO Geopark. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Audits and Options Studies and an increased understanding of appropriate and effective options for these sites Sites unlocked with increased, sustainable usage delivering against wide ranging economic, environmental and wellbeing outcomes. 	National Lottery Heritage Fund National Lottery Community Fund John Ellerman Foundation Landfill funding e.g. Biffa Award Veolia Environmental Trust UK Community Renewal Fund Sport England Wider Trusts and Foundations MHCLG Towns Fund	2021-2022	High	1, 2

Objective 4: BUILDING RESILIENCE

8. Skills Showcase

A platform and event(s) for creative industries, including current traders and makers, to market and grow their businesses and to encourage engagement in associated learning programmes and apprenticeships to help to keep alive Walsall's heritage and innovative spirit.

Possible Partners	Key Outputs	Funding Avenues	Timescale	Priority	Supports Objectives
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National bodies including Creative Industries Council, Princes Trust, Department for Work and Pensions/ Jobcentre Plus Walsall Borough. Regional bodies including Black Country Chamber of Commerce, Black Country LEP, West Midlands Combined Authority, Black Country Growth Hub. Educational bodies including University of Wolverhampton, Walsall College and local schools. Wider creative industries, local traders, craftsmen and makers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Event(s) that result in increased awareness of local trades and higher levels of participation. Increased profile for Walsall as place for new and existing industries to feel supported and grow sustainably. 	Trade Associations Union funding Arts Council England Corporate Sponsorship Black Country LEP Wider Trusts and Foundations	Summer 2022-ongoing	Medium	1, 2



Pipeline Projects

The following provides a set of high level, aspirational ‘pipeline’ projects that could be taken forward once the Catalyst Projects have gathered momentum and as and when funding opportunities arise.

Projects within each theme are ranked from **High** to **Low priority**, based on how essential and effective they are in delivering change across the Borough and how effectively they may contribute to the vision and objectives set out in Walsall Heritage Strategy Part Two: Delivering the Change.

A sense of cost has been identified on a scale of High (>£1m capital cost), Medium (sub £1m capital costs or low operational costs) and Low (sub £100k capital cost and/or minimal operational cost). This reflects in part the fact that more funding is available for capital rather than operational costs.

Each project is organised under the primary objective it contributes to, with objectives that it supports also identified. As with the Catalyst Project, the projects contribute to multiple objectives. They are associated with three themes **Built Heritage and the Environment; Green and Blue Infrastructure; and Archives, Museums and Intangible Cultural Heritage.**



Objective 1: QUALITY OF LIFE AND WELLBEING			
Project	Theme	Priority / Cost	Supports Objectives
<p>1. Active renewal of the ‘Uncover our Heritage’ Catalyst project Ongoing consultation, review and renewal of the series of community engagement projects proposed in the ‘Uncover our Heritage’ Catalyst project resulting in continued relevance and increased participation in projects including continued partnerships with community and educational organisations.</p>	Archives, Museums and Intangible Cultural Heritage	High Priority/Low Cost	2, 4
<p>2. Supporting a Heritage Skills Factory Support the delivery of programmes that support on the job training, apprenticeships and peer to peer learning from industry experts to promote up-skilling and to promote local businesses and traditional practices and trades. In partnership with schools, colleges, Black Country Skills Factory and the Black Country Careers Hub.</p>	Archives, Museums and Intangible Cultural Heritage	High Priority/Medium Cost	2, 4
<p>3. Creating Walsall Crafts and the Community Museum Based on options appraisal for the Leather Museum/Town of 100 Trades Museum, create a new museum/community space to boost tourism and celebrate the new and historic crafts of Walsall and the wider region and how people shaped the Borough through trade. Involve community and educational organisations throughout the process.</p>	Archives, Museums and Intangible Cultural Heritage	Medium Priority/High Cost	2
<p>4. Digital Access and Awareness Investigate options for the study of mobile data and internet usage in green and blue spaces to better understand visitation patterns and usage. Simultaneously, investigate the roll out of the Love Exploring App across green and blue spaces and develop the online presence of green and blue spaces to increase awareness. Actively engage with students to support design and delivery.</p>	Green and Blue Infrastructure	High Priority/Low Cost	2, 3



Objective 2: SENSE OF PLACE AND CELEBRATION			
Project	Theme	Priority / Cost	Supports Objectives
<p>5. Digitisation and Online Presence of Museums and Visitor Attractions Support the digitisation of collections and archives, investigating opportunities for free digital access engaging with students and communities to support design and delivery. In addition, utilising collections and archives to create stronger marketing campaigns on various platforms to boost tourism.</p>	Archives, Museums and Intangible Cultural Heritage	High Priority/Medium Cost	1, 4
<p>6. Conservation and Design Awards Support the establishments of a Conservation and Design Awards to raise the profile of conservation, heritage and design projects, highlighting positive development and engage the community in a 'People's Choice' award.</p>	Built Heritage and the Environment	Medium Priority/Low Cost	4
<p>7. Restoration and Reuse of Built Heritage and Publicly Owned Spaces in Town Centres Support options and feasibility studies and subsequent restoration/ reuse of built heritage assets and public spaces across the Borough to increase understanding of appropriate options for safe and sustainable units for social and commercial activity.</p>	Built Heritage and the Environment	High Priority/High Cost	1, 2, 4
<p>8. Restoration and Reuse of Built Heritage in Green and Blue Spaces Support options and feasibility studies and subsequent restoration/ reuse of built heritage assets in parks, along canals and greenspaces across the Borough. Re-use could facilitate community projects and small businesses particularly in relation to sports and outdoor leisure e.g. café, sports equipment hire, but also as new community hubs and exhibition spaces.</p>	Built Heritage and the Environment	High Priority/High Cost	1, 2, 4



Pipeline Projects

Objective 3: CLIMATE CHANGE			
Project	Theme	Priority / Cost	Supports Objectives
9. Green and Blue Infrastructure Improvements and Access Support the improvement and restoration of green and blue spaces across the Borough including opening up access to more of the canal network as a major focus and priority.	Green and Blue Infrastructure	High Priority/High Cost	1, 3
Objective 4: BUILDING RESILIENCE			
Project	Theme	Priority / Cost	Supports Objectives
10. Develop New Links Across Education and Young People In partnership with wider organisations, develop links with schools, colleges and universities to support in the design and delivery of projects. Providing valuable sector experience, students may be engaged from many fields of study including education, ecology, healthcare, architecture, archaeology, business studies, marketing and media production.	All Themes	High Priority/Low Cost	1, 2, 3



Ideas Board

Research and consultation captured a lot of great ideas which have either been taken forward and formed into the vision, objectives and action plan, or are ready and waiting to be developed. Presented below is a broad range of many of the ideas stakeholders and community representatives came up with. They are either specific to a place or topic or are more general and thematic. Elements of these have already come through into the Catalyst Projects and/or the Pipeline Projects but are documented here ready for future action.

Specific Ideas

- Study mobile data usage in greenspaces and town centres to better understand and tailor projects benefit from usage patterns.
- Roll out the Love Exploring app to more greenspaces to get more people exploring more places.
- Develop projects specifically with the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community to promote social cohesion.
- Develop a project around the 100th anniversary of Borneo Street Allotments in 2022 to celebrate community gardens and engage new people.
- Develop projects that can link up with the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham 2022 and the British Art Show in Wolverhampton in 2022 to expand our reach across the region.
- Develop projects that relate to the UNESCO Black Country Geopark status including workshops, field trips, and tours and develop partnership with schools and community groups.
- Develop public art trails engaging artists from Walsall and the wider region.
- Develop projects to map local war memorials.
- Develop a Conservation Advisory Panel to provide support for the promotion and management of heritage and the historic environment.
- Projects to utilise the wharf area and the reinstatement of canal boat trips.
- Projects around the landmarks of local areas and sense of place, particularly focused on children and young people.
- Develop projects to capture people's memories of prominent, *at risk* buildings.

General Ideas

- Work with communities, schools and colleges to develop and deliver more physical and digital heritage trails and to promote heritage to more people.
- Work with local businesses to establish workshops and retail units that promote a circular economy through repair, reuse, recycle enterprises to have a positive impact on climate change.
- Work with communities, schools and colleges to develop projects based on the vast range of languages spoken in Walsall to engage more people and enhance our understanding of the Borough's population.
- Improve the quality of, and access to green and blue spaces and make town centres more inviting and better for socialising.
- Work with local communities to develop cultural projects promoting local high streets as hubs of the community.
- Work with communities, schools, colleges, and galleries to develop arts and making projects with a heritage focus to develop our understanding of heritage and look at it in new ways.
- Develop community focused projects that 'give back' to residents, build trust and shift perceptions of heritage and the Borough.
- Work with schools and community groups to facilitate social mixing and promote social cohesion.
- Engage more with individuals, rather than broad surveys, to discover what is important to people. Have informal chats rather than preorganised large events to really connect and better understand people's wants and needs.
- Audit and review the use of community buildings and work with local communities to develop their full potential.
- Promote cultural development as critical to regeneration.
- Work with communities, developers and the council to deliver urban nature benefits across the Borough.
- Restore and create more natural sites and provide jobs and training in the sector, provide 'green skills' and training in carbon literacy.
- Support business sustainability to reduce costs, sustain jobs and expand into new markets.
- Work with communities, developers and the council to unlock the potential of publicly owned spaces.
- Repurpose town centre properties as hubs for volunteering and better social connections.
- Develop projects in partnerships with Palfrey Big Local and Mossley Big Local (part of One Walsall) to support the delivery of projects and services to voluntary, charitable and community organisations.



Acknowledgements and More Information

Walsall Heritage Strategy was produced by **CBA** on behalf of Walsall Council in partnership with key stakeholders including individuals from local organisations and community groups.

This Strategy was funded by a grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund (NLHF) and should be read in conjunction with the **Walsall Heritage Strategy – Baseline Report 2021** and **Walsall Heritage Strategy 2021-2026**.

All documents can be accessed via go.walsall.gov.uk



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Walsall Heritage Strategy

2021-2026



Action Plan



Walsall Council



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16 January 2024

Climate Emergency Action Plan Update

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: Councillor G Flint – Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces

1. Aim

Walsall has committed to become a net-zero borough by 2041.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 To note the contents of this report and the steps being taken by the Council to respond to the Climate Emergency declaration of September 2019 and the subsequent setting of a target for a net-zero borough by 2041 to align with West Midlands Combined Authority.
- 2.2 To review the progress or the current climate Change Emergency Action Plan.

3. Report detail – know

- 3.1 This report provides an update on the Council's Climate Emergency Action Plan, approved by Cabinet on 18 October 2022.
- 3.2 The Council declared a climate emergency in September 2019 with a target to become a net-zero authority by 2050 in line with the UK Government's Climate Change Act 2008 (2050 Target Amendment; Order 2019).
- 3.3 In October 2022 the Council updated the scope and target date to achieve carbon neutrality. The Council committed to work with all relevant partners and stakeholders to make the whole borough net-zero by 2041 in line with the regional target agreed by the West Midlands Combined Authority.
- 3.4 The adoption of the 2041 target and the wider scope has necessitated a review of our current Climate Emergency Action Plan (**Appendix 1**) to reflect the new borough-wide approach to tackling climate change. A full time Climate Change Programme Manager has been appointed (July 2023) to undertake this review, develop a net-zero 2041 strategy and revised action plan to reflect the council's updated climate change objectives.
- 3.5 The Council has also committed further funding for 2 new officers to deliver net-zero projects who will be recruited this year. The external funding team have been successful in developing a number of bids for funding net-zero projects.

- 3.6 An initial review of Council and borough greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions has been undertaken to establish the priorities for a revised net-zero 2041 strategy and action plan. The results of this review, along with background on the methodologies used, is given in **Appendix 2**. The headline findings are as follows:
- 3.6.1 According to the latest Department for Energy Security and Net-Zero (DESNEZ) current GHG emissions for Walsall are 1088 kt(CO₂e) [thousand tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent].
 - 3.6.2 Walsall's largest sources of GHG emissions are carbon dioxide emissions from domestic sources (34.9%) and fossil fuel powered vehicles (34.2%).
 - 3.6.3 The total carbon footprint of the Council when direct emissions from the fuel it burns and electricity it buys (scope 1 & 2 emissions), plus the emissions resulting from the goods and services it procures (scope 3 emissions), is 113kt(CO₂e). This is approximately 10% of Walsall's regional GHG emissions.
 - 3.6.4 To make a fair contribution to the global and national decarbonisation efforts, Walsall has a carbon budget deemed to be 6900kt(CO₂e). It is this 'carbon budget' that forms the scientific basis of the net-zero 2041 target.
 - 3.6.5 Pathways to net-zero 2041 will be extremely challenging.
- 3.7 To deliver net-zero 2041 the Council will need to show leadership and build on existing partnerships between the public, private, community and voluntary sector organisations. It will need to develop priorities for engaging and educating residents, communities and businesses and upskilling the workforce. It will need to take innovative approaches to working with partners, supporting innovation in technology, and new approaches to finance and funding.
- 3.8 A net-zero 2041 strategy and revised action plan focusing on the priorities highlighted in the GHG emissions analysis will be developed in the next six months. A consultation plan to establish how best to engage and mobilise relevant stakeholders and partners will also be developed.

4. Financial information

- 4.1 There are significant financial implications to pursuing a net-zero 2041 target for the borough. The actions required will represent a mix of committed and desired interventions by multiple partners.
- 4.2 Significant additional investment will be needed for the net-zero 2041 vision to be realised. There will be a need to explore potential sources of funding through existing avenues as well as develop innovative approaches to ensure projects can be delivered.
- 4.3 Some actions, such as retrofit programmes, already have funding committed while other programmes will require feasibility studies or business cases to be developed

to determine their viability and funding will need to be secured to make them happen. This is particularly relevant for some of the larger projects.

- 4.4 Partners will need to develop financial business cases which consider the whole-lifetime-costs of investments as decarbonisation projects often pay for themselves as a result of reduced energy costs. Partners will also need to appreciate the consequences and costs of delay in delivering the necessary changes which are likely to be greater on the economy and society in the long-term.

5. Reducing Inequalities

- 5.1 Climate change affects all sections of society, however both the consequences of climate change and the measures required to achieve net-zero disproportionately affect the less well-off. For example:

- **Cost of Inaction:** The potential economic, environmental, and health costs of not acting on climate change are substantial. Whilst the less well-off contribute the lowest carbon dioxide emissions they are likely to suffer most from the consequences of climate change.
- **Energy Costs:** net-zero policies often involve a shift to renewable energy sources, which can initially be more expensive. This could lead to increased energy costs, disproportionately affecting poorer households.
- **Health Benefits:** Achieving net-zero emissions can result in significant benefits to human health from better air quality, less noise, and more active travel. These benefits can be particularly significant for less well-off communities that are often disproportionately affected by pollution.
- **Job Opportunities:** The greening of the economy can result in the loss of well-paid jobs in traditional high carbon industries. However, the transition to a net-zero economy can create new job opportunities in green industries. This could potentially benefit the less well-off if they are able to access these opportunities. Developing 'green skills' and reskilling those workers leaving legacy industries need to be a key theme of a Net Zero 2041 action plan.

- 5.2 While there are challenges associated with the transition to a net-zero future, there are also significant opportunities. It's crucial that these opportunities are made accessible to all, and that the transition is managed in a way that is fair and equitable.

- 5.3 The potential of net-zero policies to exacerbate inequalities has long been recognised. Achieving a fair and equitable transition to a net-zero future is described as a 'just transition'. This means that the costs and benefits of the transition are shared equitably, and that support is provided to those who are most affected by the changes to ensure no one is left behind.

6. Decide

- 6.1 No decisions are required as this is a progress report for noting.

7. Respond

- 7.1 Over the next 6 months the Council will prepare a draft Net Zero 2041 Strategy for which Cabinet approval will be required.
- 7.2 Delivery of the Net Zero 2041 action plan will continue with a series of business cases will be brought forward for specific measures as required.

8. Review

- 8.1 The Council will monitor achievements against measures set out in the revised action plan. An annual review of the action plan will take place, with appropriate oversight provided through scrutiny committees and Cabinet.
- 8.2 The Council will use the Local Government Association GHG tool to assess council Scope 1 and 2 emissions. It will use the Oxygen Insights tool to assess Scope 3 emissions. It will use the data generated by these tools report performance via the widely used Carbon Disclosure Project to measure performance against other local authorities.

Background papers

Appendix 1: Summary of Walsall Council Climate Change Emergency Action Plan
Appendix 2: Regional and Council greenhouse gas emissions data
Climate Emergency Action Plan Update – Cabinet Report 18 October 2022 [Item 14]

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Appendix 1 – Climate Emergency Action Plan Progress (January 2024)

Action	Measure	Timeline	Progress
Theme 1. Strategy			
1.1 Establish effective governance for the Walsall Net Zero 2041 Programme & identify dedicated resource.	Formalised internal governance structure with the establishment of an internal Climate Action Taskforce meeting every 3 months with regular online communication via 'office Microsoft Teams'.	June 2024	Taskforce will continue to meet every three months. The membership of this group and ToR to be reviewed to ensure it includes all those services with significant influence over CO2 emissions.
	Climate Change Programme Manager (CCPM) recruited as a priority to 3-year fixed term post to lead on programme planning & monitoring & to populate carbon savings per action measure.	Complete Feb 2024	A permanent Climate Change programme manager (CCPM) has been recruited. Two Net Zero Project Officers are currently being recruited to enhance delivery of this action plan. Other Project officers will be recruited subject to outstanding funding bids being successful.
	Council to establish an internal project team identifying 'Officer Champions' within each service area for cross-departmental engagement & aligned to change management process.	June 2024	Identifying 'officer champions' will be a priority for the Net Zero Project Officer when appointed. Officer Champions are expected to be in place by June 2024.
	Consultant procured to support full assessment of impacts, risks; identify measures and opportunities against Council functions and to inform future actions.	March 2024	The need for the external consultant is currently being reviewed. A Net Zero 2041 Strategy is currently being drafted, after this has been consulted on it is proposed that a revised 5-year action plan is developed. It will be for the Climate Change Task Force to decide whether external consultants are required to assist developing this action plan for this or it would be better to develop in-house capacity.
	Annual performance review for Cabinet and full Council.	-	Current Climate Change Action Plan to go to the scrutiny committee 16th January. It is proposed that it will be presented as a formal annual performance review 20th July 2024 along with the draft 'Net Zero 2041 strategy'.
	Base line data and measuring our progress to Net Zero	June 2024 / Ongoing	The Council will use the Local Government Association GHG tool to assess council Scope 1 and 2 emissions. It will use the Oxygen Insights tool to assess Scope 3 emissions. It will use the data generated by these tools report performance via the widely used Carbon Disclosure Project to measure performance against other local authorities.
1.2. Climate Change embedded within decision-making.	Climate Change considered as part of the Corporate Plan refresh & future updates of relevant service plans and policies.	2024	Climate Change priorities will feature in the refresh of the Corporate Plan (expected 2024). The priorities will be inline with those stated in the 'We are Walsall 2040 borough plan'
	Climate Change reflected within committee reporting process i.e., sustainability appraisal.	2024	Working to enhance and embed to assessment of climate impact in the cabinet decision making process. An updated 'Climate Impact' toolkit will be rolled out to reflect our climate change strategy more concisely. 'Climate Impact' to be added to the list of consultees on the 'Cabinet Report Consultation Sheet'

Action	Measure	Timeline	Progress
	Climate Change integrated into immediate to longer-term financial strategy & external funding priorities.	Ongoing	<p>Successes:</p> <p>WMCA: Net Zero Neighbourhoods Plan Development Grant</p> <p>DESNZ: Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LADS) 3 extension.</p> <p>DESNZ: Local Energy Advice Demonstrator: Local In-person Energy Advice via Schools 2023-25 project.</p> <p>Defra: Coronation Living Heritage Fund, Walsall project.</p> <p>Defra: Species Survival Fund, Bee beaches project.</p> <p>Department for Education: Nature Park and Climate Action Grants.</p> <p>Partner bids benefitting Walsall:</p> <p>Ofgem via Innovate UK: Local Area Energy Plans – Walsall Council will get access to LEAP+ tool for Walsall by March 2024.</p> <p>DESNZ: Net Zero Accelerator Programme: CAMPOS Phase 2 – c£520k funding for NZN for Walsall from £6m bid.</p> <p>DfT: Local EV Infrastructure (LEVI) funding.</p> <p>Outstanding submission highlights:</p> <p>Sports England: £920k for solar panels at Oak Park and Bloxwich Active Living Centres.</p> <p>NLCF: Climate Action Fund: Energy and Climate Fund EOI success and £1.5m full application by 7 November.</p> <p>PSDS: Re-submitted on 7 November, due to portal issues, £558k for Bloxwich DAIC and New Art Gallery Walsall</p> <p>Midlands Net Zero Hub: Electrification of Depots competition, £25k for business case development.</p> <p>Other partners outstanding submissions:</p> <p>Foreign Commonwealth and Development officer: Sky and Straw: Innovate Ukraine. To help upskill Ukrainian women and build Transportable Accommodation Modules (TAMs) in Walsall.</p> <p>DfT: Transport Research and Innovation Grants 2023, with Aston Uni and AKTECK for Active Travel Resilient Infrastructure Planner, an AI-based tool that aims to assist town planners in the design and analysis of active travel infrastructure plans.</p> <p>DESNZ: Regional Net Zero Building Retrofit Skills Pilot, included in regional Uni project.</p> <p>Total: 25 applications submitted; 10 successful; 7 outstanding.</p> <p>Total: £38,666,262 applications submitted; £22,401,634 successful; £5,064,518 outstanding.</p> <p>Walsall benefit: £13,786,262 applications submitted; £3,421,634 successful; £3,664,518 outstanding.</p>
1.3. Raise awareness of Climate Change amongst Councillors & Staff.	a) Develop identifiable programme branding & communications programme, which promotes progress & celebrates success & positive changes in environmental practice.	March 2024	A comms plan is being developed as part of the draft Net Zero 2041 Strategy. It is proposed a dedicated web page on the council website will give updated on climate change actions and other climate change news.

Action	Measure	Timeline	Progress
	Identify appropriate carbon literacy training and determine best approach for Council roll out to raise awareness and encourage behaviour change	2024 / Ongoing	Climate Literacy Training is to be delivered at the Senior management group February 20 th . Specialist Climate literacy training for the comms and planning teams is also being assessed and will be delivered early in the new year if a suitable proposal is received. Two on-line pilot climate literacy training sessions have been scheduled for December and January. If these sessions are successful a rolling programme will be developed.
1.6 Promote Sustainable Procurement.	Review Procurement Policy & consider extent to which Social Value Act can be used to help achieve Council's Climate Change Strategy	2024	A Sustainable Procurement Policy is being written which has 3 pillars - Social Value, Net Zero and Local Economic Development. The expectation is that this will be approved in the Autumn. To ensure that this is fully embedded it will require a change to the Council's Contact Rules which is being discussed with Legal Services.
1.7 As part of a longer-term vision of a net zero carbon borough, to encourage environmental education and promote climate action amongst residents, schools, businesses, and communities.	Engage with residents, community groups and schools to promote environmental education and introduce longer term vision of a net zero borough.	2023/24	Local project initiative – Hillary School and local community. During 2023 and 2024 the energy team are seeking to secure a range of complementary funding to support energy efficiency, carbon reduction and sustainable energy education for a local community. The project is focussed on Hillary Street School. To date a range of funds have been secured to help with this initiative: a) £50,000 of UK Shared Prosperity Funding b) £184,000 Local Energy Advice Demonstrator (LEAD) project funding. It is proposed to use the new sustainable education project being delivered to pupils free of charge by Achieve your Goals CIC to act as a catalyst to encouraging parents and carers to take-up energy advice and heating and insulation upgrades and where possible micro-energy generation. The advice provided is expected to help households access funds such as HUGS 2 and ECO 4 and ECO Flex 4. In addition, households will be supported to access the collective fuel switching scheme to see whether they can reduce their energy bills via switching supplier. The scheme is also seeking to support school staff and volunteers become local energy champions and secure City and Guilds level 3 training in domestic energy awareness.

Action	Measure	Timeline	Progress
Theme 2. Energy			
2.1 Estates Strategy aligned with climate action plan.	Review usage of Council properties & consider removal (by disposal, sale, or demolition) of the most energy efficient buildings.	Ongoing	Assessment of buildings underway - majority of stock condition surveys are now complete, and priority Net Zero Carbon audits have been undertaken. Asset challenge process to be designed by Strategic Advisor - procurement process close to completion.
	Ongoing review of the Council's energy purchasing strategy and the potential for green supplies.	Ongoing	Consideration is being given to the Council's Energy procurement strategy for the new energy contracts which commence on 1 October 2024.
	New heating and ventilation system for the Civic Centre & Council House designed and more manageable heating controllers to improve efficiency (Estimate 2-year programme)	2025	A new Heating and Ventilation system has been designed utilising an air source heat pump and will be out to tender this summer to be installed by April 2025.
	Installation of LED lighting within buildings and light dimming technology expanded from Civic Centre to Council House (Estimate 19-month programme)	2025	Appointment of Strategic Advisor ongoing
	Replacement of windows to energy efficient units (A+) in the Civic Centre and Council House as part of a 2-year programme.	2025	To be delivered as part of the comprehensive HVAC upgrade.
	Review energy usage of Active Living Centres, Crematoria, and Streetly Cemetery and implement any cost-effective improvements as a matter of priority.		Solar Panel installations at Oak Park and Bloxwich ALCs included in bid for Sport England funding.
2.4 Replace streetlights with energy efficiency lighting systems by 2023.	22,856 LED street light lamps will be installed across Walsall by September 2023 (ERDF funded).	March 2024	Implementation on track for completion by March 2024 as per the programme
2.6 Tackle fuel poverty and improve home energy as part of the Council's long-term vision of a net zero borough.	a) Implementation of the Council's HECA Plan to tackle fuel poverty, excessive winter deaths, residential carbon emissions, and poor health resulting from cold / damp homes.	Ongoing	The HECA Action Plan was updated in July 2023 with a refresh of available data. As well as the plan being available online at: https://go.walsall.gov.uk/housing/saving-energy/walsall-heca-report-fuel-poverty key details from the plan are also available online on the councils Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (in the Housing Chapter). Key to the plan is seeking to secure as much external funding as possible to help households reduce their housing related carbon emissions.
	b) Continue promotion of the Council's home energy saving initiatives and collective energy switching schemes to residents (From autumn 2020 the fuel switches will require all bidding companies to use 100% renewable power).	Ongoing	A new national auction was run in June 2023 for which the council promoted the same to enable residents to partake. Latest figures show 498 residents have signed up. Switching energy providers Walsall Council

Action	Measure	Timeline	Progress
	c) Work with our partners (including energy companies, registered social landlords, NHS Walsall, private landlords) to reduce fuel poverty by targeting any discretionary assistance (capital investment, advice, and support) and seeking external funding /advice to help residents of these properties.	March 2025	<p>Update on projects – The Watmos (Social Housing Decarbonisation Funded) project of improving 858 homes is now due to complete in December 2023.</p> <p>The Council has completed Round 1 of Home Upgrade Grant Scheme (HUGS) in May 2023. The council has now secured full and final acceptance by government as to being a delivery agent for the second round of Home Upgrade Grant Scheme (HUGS 2) which lasts until March 2025.</p> <p>Specific tranches of properties are being developed for future bids to help more households with the HUGS funding. HUGS is a fund to help those households on low income in energy efficiency homes and who do not have gas as a source of home heating.</p> <p>A similar approval has been secured from the Midland Energy Hub (MEH) for a separate allocation of funding. Officers are continuing to work with obligated energy providers to secure ECO4 and ECO Flex 4 for households within the borough so that they can improve their insulation and reduce their carbon emissions.</p> <p>Local Authority Delivery scheme (LADs) Round 3 completed at end of October 2023.</p>
	d) Continue to ensure that landlords, agents, and those selling or letting their homes are aware of their legal obligation to provide and make available Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) and take appropriate action against those who fail in this obligation.	Ongoing	<p>160 new EPCs - Average rating 59 (D)</p> <p>New EPCs for previously F rated private rented dwellings -</p> <p>New EPCs for private rented dwellings where the EPC had expired:-</p> <p>272 New EPCs - Average rating 60 (D)</p> <p>New EPCs for private rented dwellings that previously had no EPC at all:</p> <p>160 new EPCs; Average rating 59 (D)</p> <p>New EPCs for previously F rated private rented dwellings:</p> <p>208 new EPCs; Average rating 60 (D)</p> <p>New EPCs for previously G rated private rented dwellings:</p> <p>124 new EPCs; Average rating 61 (D)</p> <p>New EPCs for private rented dwellings where the EPC had expired:</p> <p>272 New EPC's; Average rating 60 (D)</p> <p>Total: 764 new EPCs</p>
Theme 3. Waste & Consumption			
3.1 Reduce the total volume of waste and associated costs through technological and behavioural change.	Develop a Waste Strategy to determine how the borough's waste will be managed sustainably in-line with the council's We are Walsall 2040 vision.	2025	<p>An external consultant is to be commissioned develop a strategy to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minimise the quantity of household and business waste. • Improved recycling's rates • Zero to Landfill – including identifying alternatives. • Eliminate Greenhouse Gas emissions from collections and transportation. • Food waste options appraisal. • Ensure all council own and operated facilities segregate waste and recycle effectively.

Action	Measure	Timeline	Progress
	b) Develop a communication strategy which engages residents, schools, communities, and businesses with measures to reduce the volume of waste they produce and increase participation / quality of reuse & recycling. Explore incentive schemes via external funding.	Ongoing	Some external funding successful for litter programme through space hive. More work is needed to develop a communications strategy and develop incentive schemes.
	c) Continue to support and promote community initiatives to reduce waste & fly-tipping e.g., Walsall Litter Charter, Green CSR Programmes, ACT Initiative, and WASSUP 2022 Litter Challenge.	Ongoing	Litter/ recycling events/ campaigns and volunteer development. Litter and waste campaigns are being promoted via volunteer networks. Litter charter being developed.
3.4 New Household Waste and Recycling (HWRC) sites - Middlemore Lane & Fryers Road	a) Introduce reuse shops. - Residents can take unwanted items which can be upcycled or repaired. - Residents can buy pre-owned, repaired, and refurbished items cheaply. b) Introduce a facility for local small businesses. c) Generate renewable energy by installing solar panels on both sites. d) Reduce the amount of Walsall's waste going to landfill and improve Walsall recycling rates	2025	Middlemore Lane, 14.7 acres. Is with procurement, the design stage has been completed. The build is to start Summer 2024 (18 month build Winter 2025). Reuses shop – will take electrical items, furniture, and refurbish electrical and bikes. It is also intended that the reuse shop will promote behaviour change to promote the circular economy and help with the consequences of the cost-of-living crises. A solar PV array will be installed on the site. Electric Vehicle Charging (11kW AC) will be installed on the site. The Waste Transfer station will enable separation of waste streams (e.g., food waste).
	Fryers Road - new HWRC and Reuse Centre	2026	The existing site is being redeveloped to form a larger HWRC. Planning permission has been granted. 3 off 11kW EV AC charges will be installed on the site. Solar PV will be installed on the Reuse shop.
Theme 4. Transport			
4.1 Development and implementation of a Staff Green Travel Plan	Review of staff 'Rewards and Retention' policy to include EV salary sacrifice.	2024/25	Review of employee rewards and benefits has now been built into the corporate workforce strategy 23-26, action currently scheduled for delivery 24-25.
4.2 Develop public transport initiatives which enable a rapid shift towards active and sustainable travel modes.	a) Explore and develop digital wayfinding measures and provide real time travel updates via e-totems (ERDF funded).	2023	Totems were installed at Bradford Place and St. Paul's bus station just before Covid. A refresh of the information displayed on the totems has just begun.

Action	Measure	Timeline	Progress
	b) Implement the Emergency Active Travel Fund Grant to encourage more / safer cycling and walking in the borough including temporary traffic management measures, a new 'pedestrian and cyclist friendly zone' in Walsall Town Centre, installing additional cycle parking on council owned land, as well as remarking and resigning existing cycle routes/infrastructure.	Ongoing	Emergency Active Travel Tranche 1 (EATF T1) grant funding was implemented in Summer 2020. All the measures have remained in place apart from the pedestrian and cyclist friendly zone on Wolverhampton Street. Walsall Council then subsequently received Active Travel Funding Tranche 2 (ATF T2) to spend on developing a new cycle route on Wolverhampton Road West, in Bentley, as well as 5 School Streets. Both schemes are now also fully operational. The government has recently released Active Travel Tranche 3 and 4 funding.
	c) Implement LCWIP Cycling and Walking Measures to make significant improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure (subject to funding) including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LCWIP Corridor: Rushall to Brownhills via B4152 • LCWIP Corridor: Darlaston to Walsall town centre via A4038 • LCWIP Corridor: Wolverhampton City Centre to Walsall • LCWIP Corridor: A34 Perry Barr Extension through to Walsall • Core Walking Zone: Walsall to Willenhall. 	Ongoing	LCWIP priorities have recently changed in line with the publication of Black Country LCWIP. However, progress has still been made on developing the routes originally listed in the West Midlands LCWIP including: Rushall to Brownhills via B4152 (included in a bid for ATF 4 funding). LCWIP Corridor: Darlaston to Walsall Town Centre via A4038 (included within a bid for CRSTS funding). LCWIP Corridor: Wolverhampton City Centre to Walsall (included within a bid for CRSTS funding). LCWIP Corridor: A34 Perry Barr Extension through to Walsall (considered as part of the Sprint bus work).
	d) Review potential railway station developments,	Ongoing	Rail stations for Willenhall and Darlaston are currently in the process of being delivered. Active travel improvements have been developed in the surrounding areas. Willenhall Station - ATF 3, 4 and LUF funding in place to deliver active travel improvements. Darlaston Rail Station - concept designs complete for active travel improvements to Kendricks Rd, Bentley Mill Way and Darlaston Greenway. Preliminary design work to begin.
	e) Review Zero Emission bus feasibility options.	2027	The ZEBRA project is the vehicular element of the SPRINT rapid transit bus scheme (developing the zero-emission vehicles, which will operate the route). This scheme is being led by TfWM. There has been no public announcement by TfWM on the specification or tender for vehicles yet.

Action	Measure	Timeline	Progress
4.3 Promote and encourage ultra-low and low emission vehicles in Walsall and sustainable transport options in accordance with the Transport in Walsall Strategy 2017-22 and the West Midlands / Black Country Ultra Low Emission Vehicle Strategy.	To accelerate and amplifying the EV transition in anticipation of a 2035 ban on the sale of conventional vehicles, including coordinating with TfWM to support installation of additional rapid and ultra-rapid chargers.	Ongoing	<p>Strategic Transport commissioned the developed of a Walsall EV Strategy to set out the projected uptake in EVs in Walsall and set a series of targets for EV charge point installations up to 2030 for the Council and wider private sector support. The next steps are for this EV Strategy to go to Cabinet and public consultation - dates TBC.</p> <p>LEVI 22/23 Pilot for Pelsall Ward Councillors were previously briefed, and next stage is to issue a comms plan for consultation on these charge points for installation by March 2025 at the latest (assumed to be in 2024 more likely).</p> <p>LEVI Capability Funding - 2 FTE 2-year contract positions have been appointed at Black Country Transport; this will include support to the programme for Walsall Council. The Strategic Transportation Team are working with Black Country Transport on development and delivery.</p> <p>CRSTS funding is in the process of full business case development to release the funding from WMCA.</p> <p>LEVI Capital funding is also allocated to the West Midlands, the allocation to Walsall is TBC.</p>
4.4 Explore and deliver a transition of the council's own fleet to electric vehicles.	Development of a fully costed 'Green Fleet Proposal' to manage and reduce the environmental impact of Council fleet on emissions.	2024	<p>It is the long-term ambition to have an all-electric fleet by 2035. The timeline is determined by when suitable vehicles will be available on the market. This is particularly true for the heavier fleet (e.g., RCVs). The fleet electrification programme will therefore initially concentrate on the smaller vehicles in the fleet.</p> <p>A bid with for funding with the Midlands Energy Hub for to develop a business case for installing the changing infrastructure necessary to power a future all electric fleet.</p>
Theme 5. Nature			
5.1 Enhancing the borough's parks and green spaces to increase meadow, wetland, and green areas in Walsall.	a) Build on the Black Country's UNESCO Geopark status to attract investment into the area's geological heritage.	Ongoing	<p>BC Geopark revalidation took place 19-22nd July, Team impressed with delivery despite not having dedicated officers in post. More work needed on building visibility and work in schools.</p> <p>BC Geopark working on fund raising strategy with external consultant and developing new Tourism strategy as one of the UNESCO revalidation recommendations.</p>
	b) When new development is considered in areas with nature conservation value to ensure that risks can be managed through suitable adaptation measures.	2024	Biodiversity Net Gain training for planners and Councillors delivered, Other Green Finance ? Natural Capital initiatives being considered, in readiness for BNG being delivered on major development sites from Jan 2024 and smaller development sites from April 2024.
5.2 Investigate and cost opportunities to increase urban greening.	a) Develop Greening Strategy and identify land to offset carbon through increased tree planting and creating wildlife friendly corridors.	Ongoing	<p>Land for tree planting being identified through rewilding programme, more work required getting people engaged with programme.</p> <p>Two new officers recruited through Woodland accelerator programme to assist in finding areas for tree planting.</p> <p>New tree planting resources are proving very successful with increased funding being secured, will over exceed targets this planting season, with 19,500 trees due to be planted this winter.</p>

Action	Measure	Timeline	Progress
	b) Integrate the management of green spaces with town centre master planning and regeneration strategies to allow the mitigation and adaptation benefits to be realised.	2023	Green Bloxwich development of large-scale greening initiative as part of regeneration programme Levelling up for Parks funding delivered new planting in Reedswood Park, including a successful Green Flag award
	c) Alignment with WMCA Virtual Forest Campaign and carbon offsetting.	2024	Virtual Forest will be updated at the end of 23/24 season.
	d) To deliver the Conservative pledge of planting a tree for every resident in the borough over the next 10 years	2024/5	Developing new planting projects as part of rewilding programme. Tree planting for every household has been established as not enough space for over 300k trees. We will deliver 10k trees/ year as part of street scene strategy. New Woodland accelerator posts delivering 7 ha, roughly 20,000 trees in 23/24.
5.3 Conduct a viability study on parks and green spaces to integrate renewable energy such as solar thermal, PV or heat pumps and LED technology.	a) Conduct audit and costable options to introduce of lighting across parks building on installation of LED lighting in the Arboretum to increase efficiency savings.		Lighting proposals will be investigated when capital scheme developed. Solar lighting being investigated when new projects developed.
5.4 Renewal of the Green Space Strategy to raise additional parks to Green Flag standard.	a) Green Space Strategy renewal in 2022 to consider an increase of parks to Green Flag status.	Ongoing	Green Spaces strategy being procured through consultants, satisfaction survey being developed as part of this project. 10 parks currently awarded Green Flag, investigating Cemeteries and community managed spaces. Two new Green Flag parks being submitted annually as per current strategy, with community and cemetery submissions in Jan 24. Satisfaction survey results show that residents very keen to see Wildlife enhancement projects as a priority for park improvements.
Theme 6. Resilience & Adaptation			
6.1 Ensure all Council services and operations are adaptable to a changing climate.	a) Review of Walsall Resilience Strategy ensuring plans are updated to reflect the changing climate risk.	Ongoing	All service area BCP's have been reviewed, with each Directorate producing their Business Impact Analysis (BIA).
	b) Work with our partners to understand the current and future risks of flooding and review plans with West Midlands Local Resilience Forum & Black Country Local Resilience Forum.	Ongoing	The Walsall Multi Agency Flood Plan (MAFP) is in the process of being updated in conjunction with the Environment Agency and other key partners. This will be going out for consultation shortly.
	c) The development of Walsall Resilience Risk Register.	Ongoing	Production currently paused whilst the West Midlands Conurbation Local Resilience Forum (WMC LRF) Risk & Assessment Working Group finalise the Risk Register for the conurbation.

Action	Measure	Timeline	Progress
	d) We will ensure business continuity planning at the council is resilient to climate impacts - preparing and assessing business continuity plans.	Ongoing	All service area BCP's have been reviewed, with each Directorate producing their BIA.
6.2 Integrate climate change into regeneration and planning to enable economic prosperity and promotion of sustainability.	a) Review of the Black Country Plan with further regard to sustainable development and the government's emerging proposals in the Environment Bill and other planning regulations.	2024 / Ongoing	Environment Act published Nov 2021. Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill granted royal assent in October 2023. The Walsall Borough Local Plan will replace the Black Country Plan, however work on the local plan has been paused due to uncertainty over plan-making reforms, with a potential start date not until Autumn 2024
	c) Determine planning applications requiring approval for Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) systems.	Ongoing	ongoing throughout determination of applications requiring SuDS
	d) Promote sustainable modes of travel for new developments by securing Travel Plans as part of planning decisions	Ongoing	ongoing throughout determination of applications requiring Travel Plans
6.3 Reduce risk of flooding to estate, properties, and infrastructure.	b) Annual training and exercise (multi agency every 3 years)	Ongoing	This will form part of the WMC LRF training and Exercise schedule.
6.4 Plans in place for emergencies - Issuing alerts in the events of severe weather, increased temperatures, and flooding.	a) To review and update ' Warning & Informing Policy' to reflect climate change risk.	Ongoing	This will be in conjunction with the WMC LRF RAWG work.
	b) We will work with communities and businesses to increase resilience to future changes in climate including the development of an engagement programme (briefing events / toolkit) to support Walsall businesses and community groups with continuity planning.	Ongoing	This will form part of the WMC LRF work to ensure consistency across the conurbation

Appendix 1: Regional and council greenhouse gas emissions

The Council has conducted an initial review of the and borough and council greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions. This data will used to inform priorities for a revised Net Zero 2041 action plan.

The principle sources of data used in this assessment [UK local authority and regional GHG emissions national statistics](#), the Local Government Association [Greenhouse Gas Accounting](#) tool and the [Oxygen Insights Carbon Tracker](#) tool. These tools use differing methodologies to generate emissions data but together they give an overview of regional emissions, and those resulting from council activity, either directly, or via its procurement practices.

Regional GHG emissions refer to the total emissions of greenhouse gases within specific geographical area. These emissions can come from various sources, including transportation, industry, agriculture, residential energy use, and waste disposal. The UK local authority statistics collated by the Department of Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNEZ) follow this methodology. This methodology is also used to set national and regional decarbonisation targets (e.g. Walsall Net Zero 2041 target).

Scope 1, 2, and 3 emissions is a methodology for categorising the different kinds of emissions an organisation creates due to in its own operations and its wider 'value chain' (i.e., suppliers, customers). It forms the basis of mandatory reporting protocols and is widely used by business and investors. For Walsall Council scope 1, 2 and 3 emissions are as follows:

- **Scope 1:** These are the GHG emissions released directly by the council and arise primarily from the fossil fuels it burns in boilers and internal combustion engines.
- **Scope 2:** These are the indirect GHGs emissions that are released from the energy the council buys, primarily electricity.
- **Scope 3:** These are the GHG emissions embodied in the goods and services the council buys for its our own use, and on behalf of residents.

Chart 1 combines the Walsall's regional emissions data with the Scope 1, 2 & 3 emissions resulting from council activities and spending.

The latest available DESNEZ data (2021) indicates Walsall's total regional GHG emissions to be 1088 kt(CO₂e) [1000 tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent].

The council's scope 1 and 2 emissions calculated using the LGA GHG Accounting tool are estimated to be 13 kt(CO₂e).

The council's scope 3 emissions resulting from the goods and services it procures, estimated using the oxygen Insights Carbon tracker tool, are 103 kt(CO₂e).

The chart shows approximately 10% of Walsall's regional emission (scope 1, 2 and 3 combined) result from council activities.

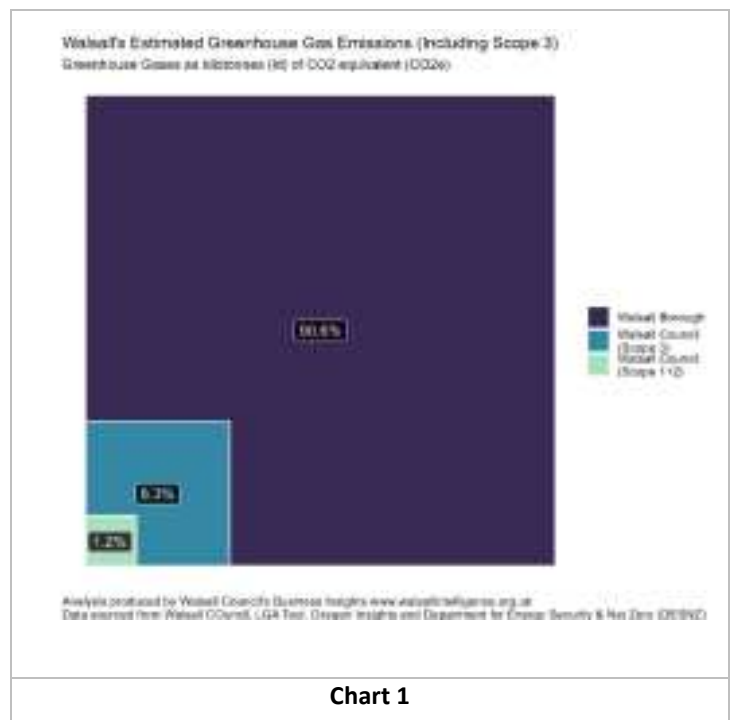


Chart 1

(It should be noted that not all scope 3 emissions will be included in the regional emissions figure).

Tables 1, 2, 3 and 4 below provide further information on the sources of regional and council GHG emissions.

Table 1 - Walsall regional greenhouse gas emissions by sector

The Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ) produces annual estimates for Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions in Walsall by sector. The latest available figures are for 2021 and indicate geographic emissions for Walsall are 1088 kt(CO₂e).

They show that Walsall’s largest emitters of GHG are domestic sources (34.9%) and transport (34.2%). Industry contributes 17.8% with the waste management industry, public sector and commercial operations contributing approximately 4% each. Agriculture and land use, land use changes and forestry (LULUCF) account for the smallest contributions (0.7% and 0.5%, respectively).

The Walsall Net Zero 2041 target will require the elimination of GHG emissions in all sectors.

The first step in a programme to reduced GHG emissions is to promote resource efficiency. This requires a transition to less carbon intensive businesses activities and lifestyles. All energy will need to come from zero carbon sources.

The UK government has committed to fully [decarbonise the country’s electricity system by 2035](#). This means the primary source of zero carbon energy that will be available will be electricity. Decarbonisation of the transport sector will require the replacement of internal combustion engines with electrically powered vehicles.

The domestic, commercial and the public sectors will need to insulate their buildings, apply other energy efficiency measures such as building management systems, and replace fossil fuel boilers with heat pumps or other zero carbon heat sources.

Industrial processes will also need to use electricity in preference to natural gas. In processes where this is not possible, other fuels such as hydrogen from zero carbon sources, will need to be considered.

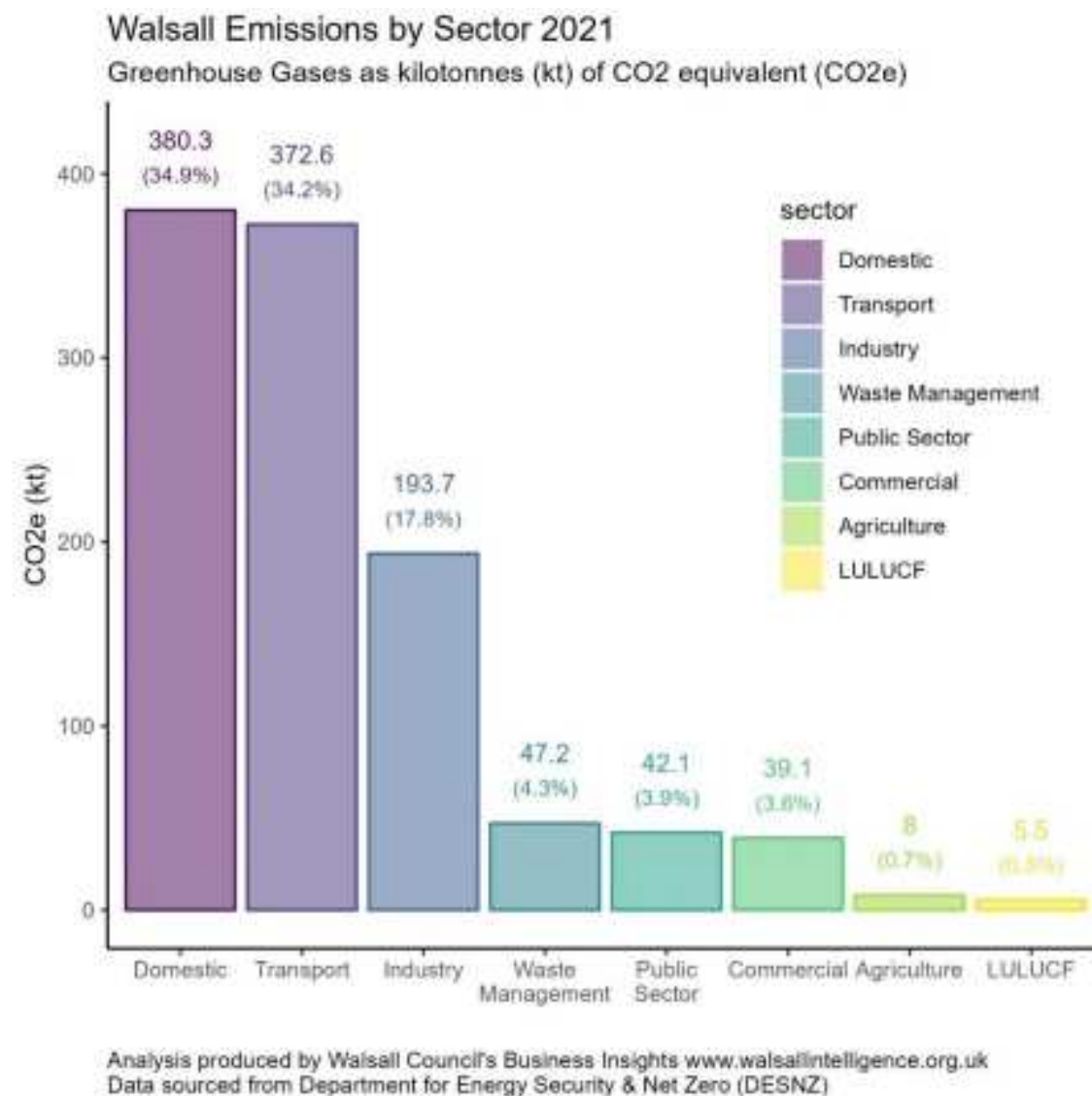


Table 2 - Walsall regional greenhouse gas emissions by sector and source

This chart breaks down the borough’s greenhouse gas (GHG) emission into sources. It highlights the principal sources of emissions within each sector.

Domestic gas use is the single largest source and contributes 76.5% of all domestic emissions, and 26.7% of the borough’s total emissions. In 2021 it was larger than the estimated contribution from industry, public and commercial sectors combined (approximately 25%).

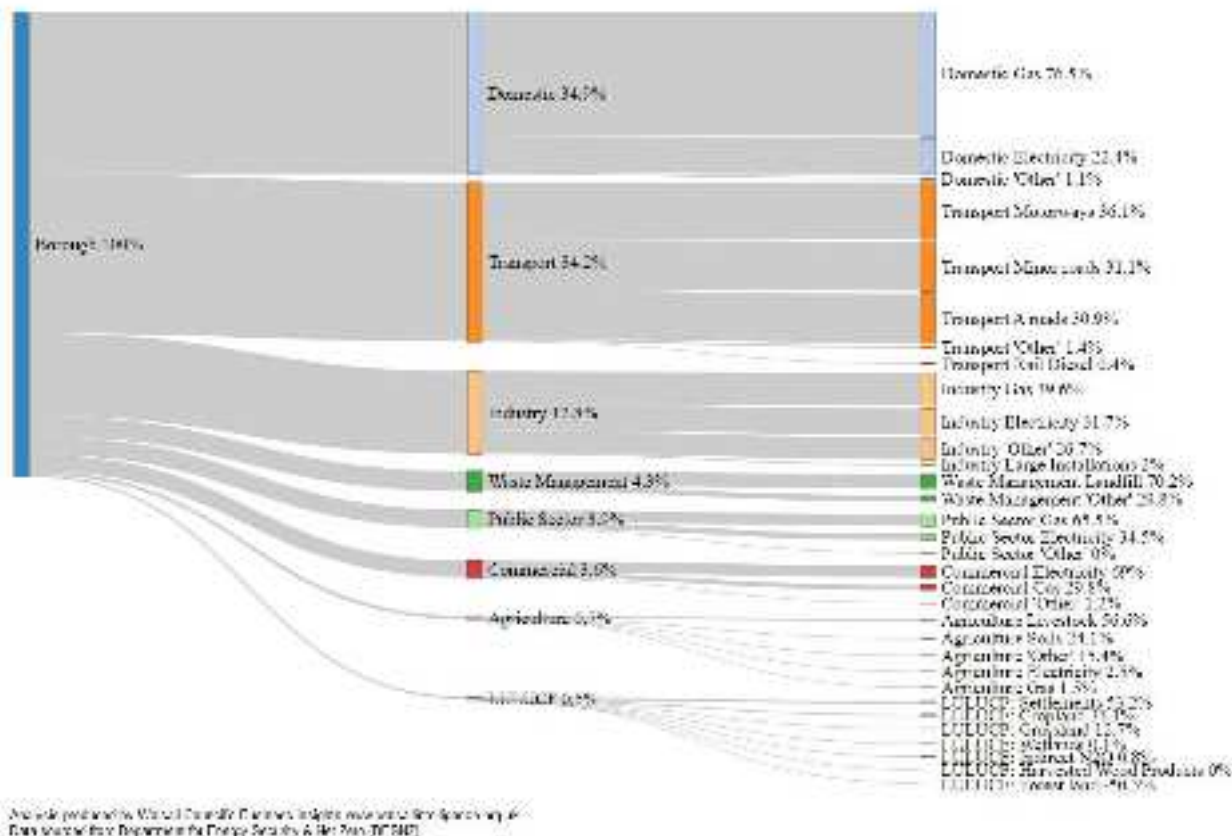
Transport is the second largest emitter of GHG by sector in Walsall. Over a third of these emissions come from traffic on the M6 with the remaining emissions coming from other ‘A’ roads and minor roads in the borough.

Emissions from road vehicles are expected to fall significantly as electric vehicles replace those with internal combustion engines. The UK government plans to end the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans by 2035 with new heavy goods vehicles planned to be phased out from 2040. The council can promote the adoption of electric vehicles by ensuring EV charging infrastructure is available to all residents.

The 3.9% figure for the public sector emissions (e.g., Walsall council, NHS, police etc.) are predominantly the emissions from public buildings. The emissions resulting from fleet operations of public sector organisations are included in the transport sector figure.

Walsall Council is responsible for approximately 10% of the regional emissions. This is made up of 13kt(CO₂e) direct emissions⁽¹⁾ and 103 kt(CO₂e) from the goods and services purchased on behalf of residents⁽²⁾.

Walsall Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Sector 2021
Proportion of estimated emissions by Sector and Sub-Sector



Data sourced from DESNZ

- (1) Estimate of scope 1 & 2 emissions generated using the [LGA Greenhouse Gas accounting tool](#)
- (2) Estimate of scope 3 emissions based on council procurement spending and generated using the [Oxygen Insights tool](#)

Table 3 - Net Zero pathway projections for Walsall

This chart shows historic, annual GHG emissions in Walsall and potential carbon reduction pathways.

The financial crash of 2008-2009 and the Covid-19 pandemic (2020 – 2022) both had significant impacts on carbon emissions due to the decline in economic activity. However, the effects were not lasting, and emissions rebounded quickly after the initial shocks.

Long-term emissions decreased by 40.9% over from 2005-2021. This was mainly due to the decarbonisation of the electricity grid, with improvement in household energy efficiency and improvement in vehicle fuel efficiency also contributing. Structural changes in the UK economy (e.g., the decline in heavy industry) have also reduced emissions.

The data clearly illustrates the need to decouple GHG emissions from economic activity.

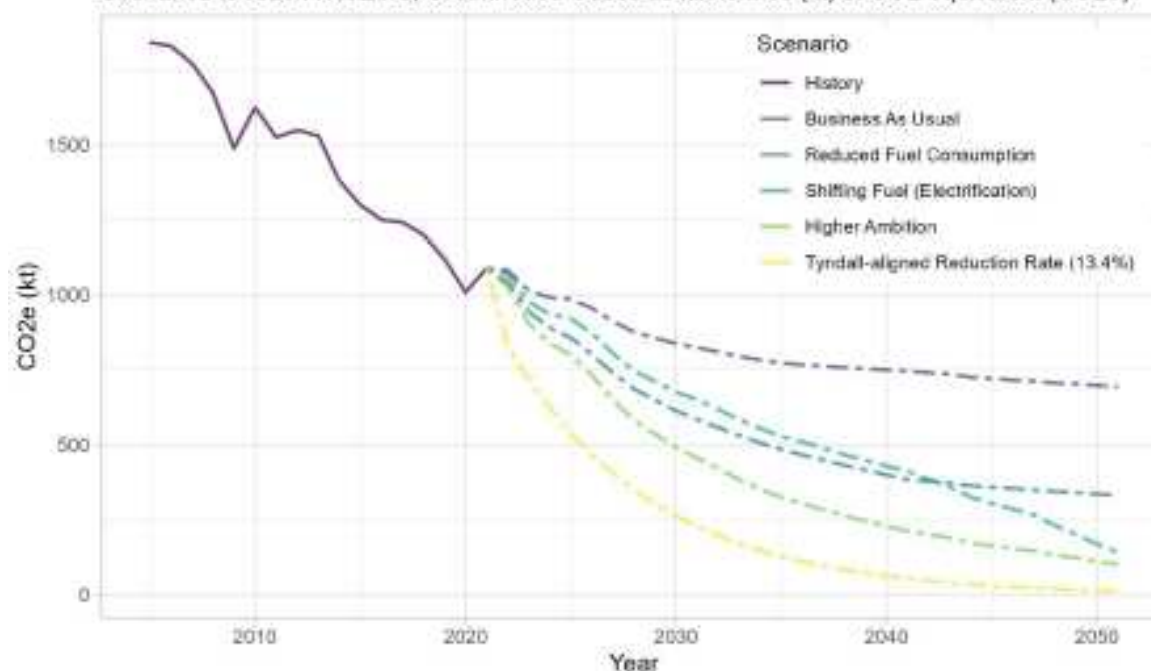
The Net Zero Pathways for Walsall have been generated using two methodologies. The [Scatter methodology](#) generates a projection of future emissions by assessing the effects of various possible interventions (e.g., technology adoption rates).

The [Tyndall Centre for Climate Change](#) assesses the maximum cumulative CO₂ emission allowable in Walsall if we are to make a fair contribution to the global and national decarbonisation effort. This 'carbon budget' is deemed to be 6900kt(CO₂e) for Walsall and forms the basis of the Net Zero 2041 target.

The chart clearly illustrates that achieving the Net Zero 2041 target will be extremely challenging. To get close, it will be necessary to pursue all the interventions in the 'higher ambition' scenario whilst accepting that innovation will also be required to accelerate future carbon emissions reduction.

Net Zero Pathway Projections for Walsall

Scenarios to reach Net Zero, Greenhouse Gases as kilotonnes (kt) of CO₂ equivalent (CO₂e)

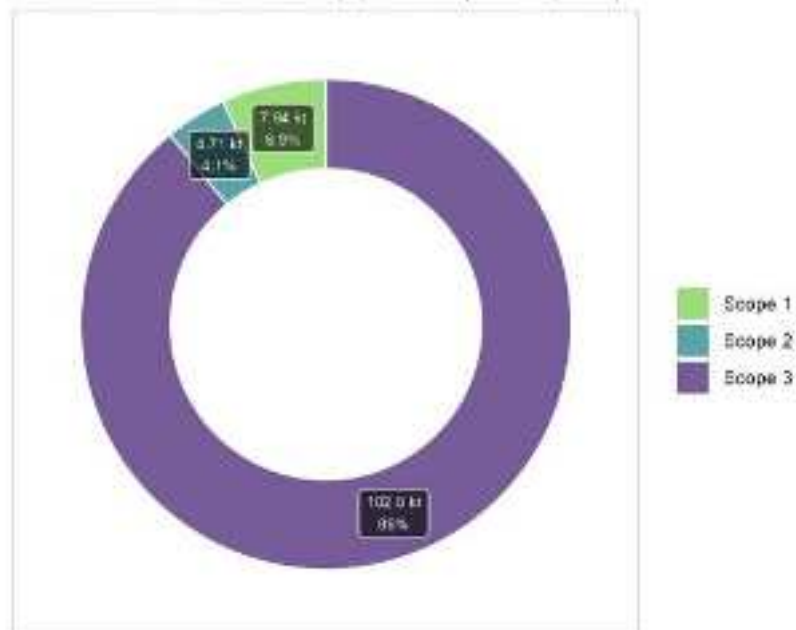


Analysis produced by Walsall Council's Business Insights www.walsallintelligence.org.uk
Data sourced from SCATTER cities and Tyndall Centre for Climate Change Research

- Business as Usual (BAU) - Interventions across all sectors stay at the minimum ambition level. This means emission reductions come about through some nationally led policies and continued electricity grid decarbonisation.
- Reduced Fuel Consumption - Interventions linked to reducing energy demand are set to their maximum ambition level. Examples of energy demand interventions include reducing distances travelled by car and retrofitting housing. All other interventions as per BAU.
- Shifting Fuel (Electrification) - Interventions linked to switching gas or oil for electricity are set to their maximum ambition level and electricity is supplied from renewable sources (e.g., electrification of heat in domestic and commercial buildings, and switching to electric vehicles). All other interventions as per BAU.
- Higher Ambition - All interventions are maximised to their highest ambition level including demand reduction interventions, electrification, and renewable energy supply. This is defined as the maximum level of climate action deemed technologically feasible, not accounting for any challenge due to capacity, skills, funding, or policy.
- Tyndall aligned reduction rate – The scenario shows the rate of decarbonisation required if Walsall is to contribute its fair share to principles in the [United Nations Paris Agreement](#) and the [UK carbon budget](#). It forms the basis of the Net Zero 2041 target for both Walsall and the WMCA.

Table 4 - Walsall Council Scope 1 and 2 greenhouse gas emissions

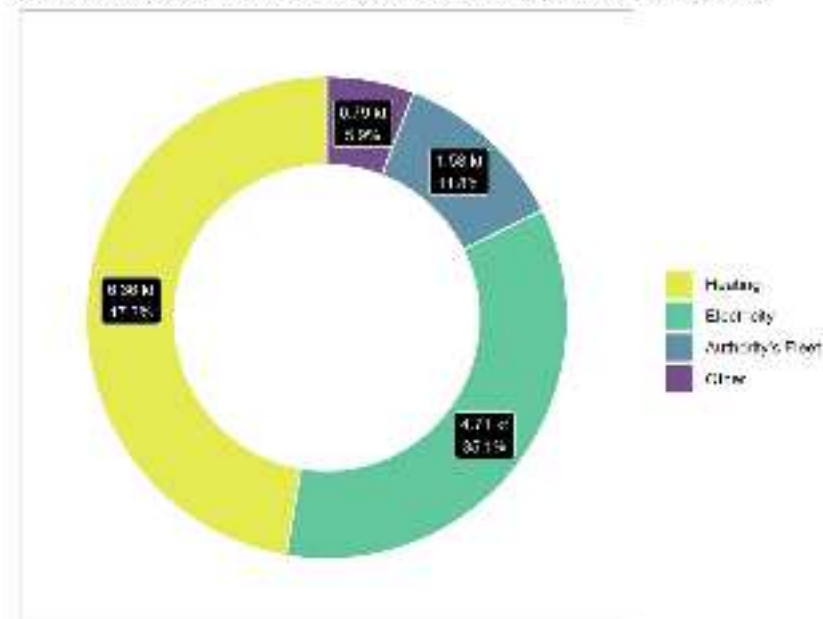
Walsall's Estimated Greenhouse Gas Emissions by Scope 2022-23
Greenhouse Gases as kilotonnes (kt) of CO2 equivalent (CO2e)



Analysis produced by Walsall Council's Business Insights www.walsallintelligence.org.uk
Data sourced from Walsall Council, Local Government Association GHG Tool and Oxygen Insights

- Scope 1 and 2 emissions have been calculated for 2022 -23 using the LGA GHG tool.
- The council's scope 1 and 2 emissions of 13 kt(CO2e) are approximately 11% of emissions resulting from council activities.
- Scope 3 emissions from the goods and services the council procures make up approximately 90% of emissions resulting from council activities.

Walsall's Estimated Greenhouse Gas Emissions 2022-23 (March-April)
Calculated in LGA GHG Tool, Greenhouse Gases as kilotonnes (kt) of CO2 equivalent (CO2e)



Please note: Some smaller contribution areas have not yet been collected. Impact to this chart is expected to be minimal.

Analysis produced by Walsall Council's Business Insights www.walsallintelligence.org.uk
Data sourced from Walsall Council, prepared within the Local Government Association's GHG Tool 2023.

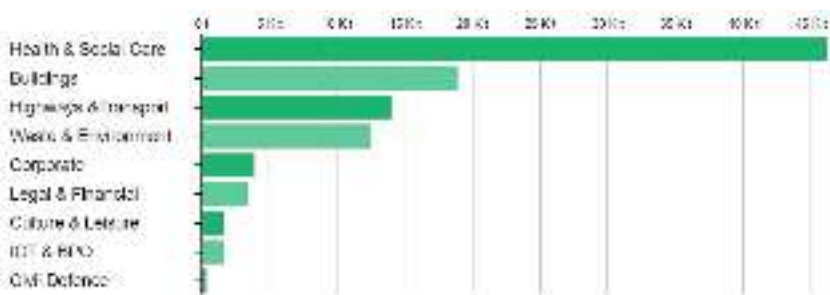
- The breakdown of council scope 1 and 2 emissions shows the majority of GHG emissions comes from heating council properties.
- The second largest source is from the electricity the council buys for its buildings and streetlights.
- The council fleet is the third largest source of emissions with the largest single contribution coming from the council's refuse collection vehicles.
- Other sources include staff business travel.

Table 5 - Walsall Council Scope 3 emissions

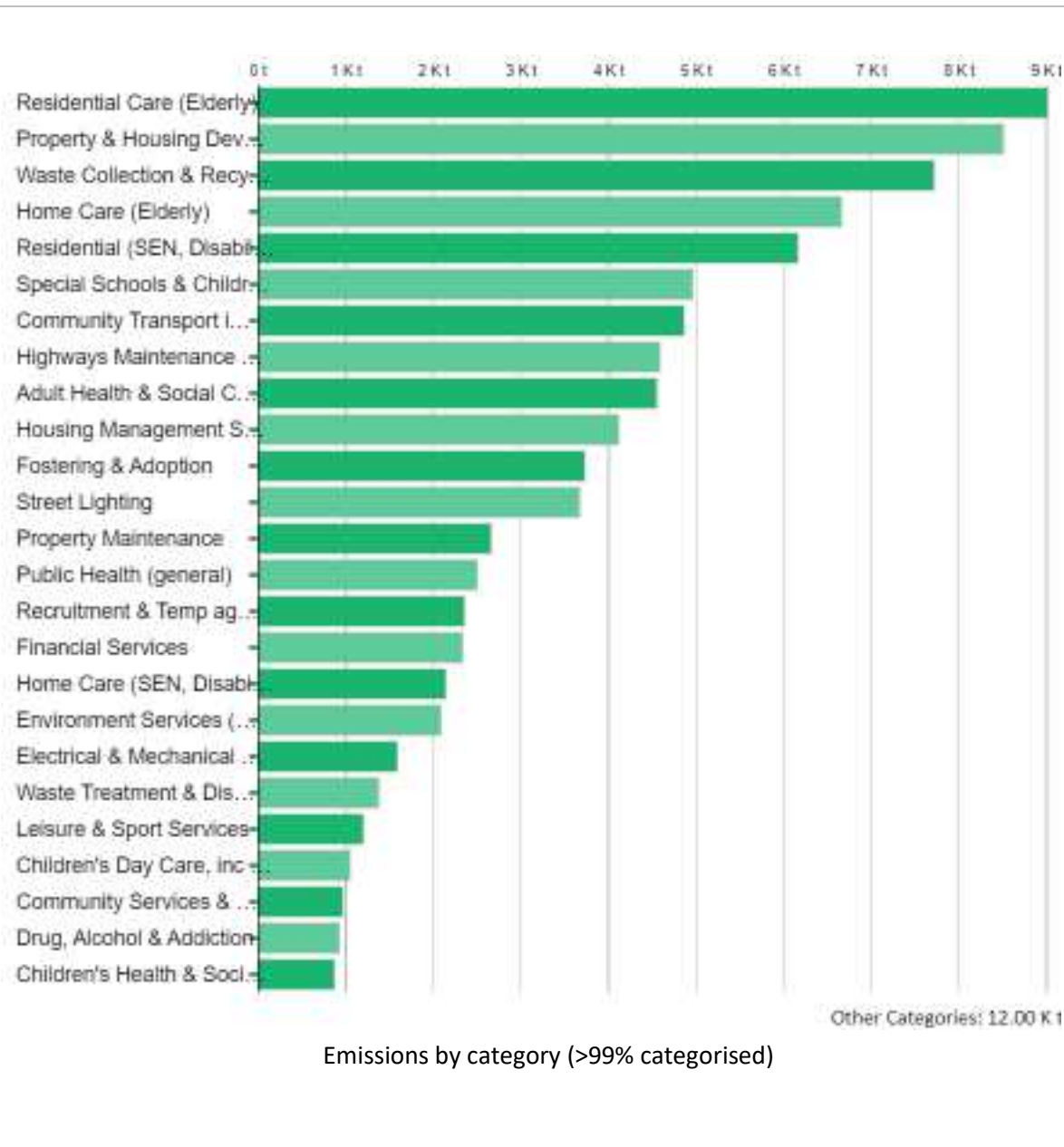
Walsall Council scope 3 emissions have been estimated for 2022 - 23 using the Oxygen Insights Carbon tool.

- This tool calculates GHG emissions using an algorithm which assigns a carbon content to every pound spent based on typical GHG content of a product or service.
- For 2022 -23 based on a council spend of £344.32m it estimated Walsall Councils' scope 3 emissions to be 102.6 kt(CO₂e).
- The figures clearly indicate that the majority (45%) of council scope 3 emissions are from Health and Social Care. Most emissions in this sector are from heating and operating residential buildings with a significant contribution also coming from the transportation of clients and carers.
- The scale of council scope 3 emissions means a sustainable procurement strategy offers a significant opportunity to reduce GHG emissions resulting for council activities and kick start the green economy in Walsall.

It should be noted that the tool excludes purchases of fossil fuels and electricity as these are captured in the scope 1 and scope 2 figures (e.g., the street lighting figure does not include the electricity used to operate the lamps)



Emissions by sector (>99% categorised)



Emissions by category (>99% categorised)

16 January 2024

Off Road Vehicles Update report

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: Resilient Communities

1. Aim

Dealing with illegal off-road bikes is a priority for the administration and they have given their full support to tackling the issue. On the 24th of November 2022, Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee held a discussion in relation to off-road biking and the issues associated with it. Chief Superintendent Dolby was present for the discussion and provided information regarding crime, damage, and anti-social behaviour (ASB) caused by or resulting from the use of off-road vehicles (ORVs) in Walsall. The Environment Overview and Scrutiny committee supported a commitment to partnership approaches to tackle this issue. Since that meeting the council, police and other partners have worked together on Operation Adhesion a series of multi-agency interventions which have made use of innovative techniques such as drones and fixed wing aircraft to apprehend and engage with those riding the vehicles.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 For the Committee to note the prioritisation of the Council, Police and other partners in tackling off-road vehicles scourges in the Borough.

3. Report detail – know

- 3.1 Operation Adhesion was launched in November 2022. The aim of the operation was to use key skills within the Safer Walsall Partnership and beyond to gather evidence, identify offenders and formulate an effective approach to deterring future ASB and/or criminal use of vehicles.
- 3.2 A series of ‘all out days’ were organised focused on areas where intelligence suggested the ORV issue was a serious and regular problem. The all-out days started primarily with the police neighbourhood teams, police drone team, community protection staff and healthy spaces staff. Council staff functioned as eyes and ears describing where the vehicles were being used thereby enabling the police to deploy drones and patrol hot spots to locate and apprehend the vehicle riders.
- 3.3 As the year progressed the ‘all out’ days and planning meetings widened in scope. In March 2023, the police were able to book the national fixed wing police aircraft to give an even greater view of the large areas of land covered by these ORVs and were supported by the police drones and traffic units. Sustrans and

the Canal and Rivers Trust became more involved due to the impact on their land and assets. The council distributed off road bike information posters to primary schools, secondary schools, and family hubs to reinforce the message about the dangers of these vehicles. Posters and signs informing of the law around riding ORVs and the consequences for failing to comply were erected at key points in various parks and open spaces around the Borough. The information leaflet was also included in the May/June edition of the Walsall Pioneer magazine the link to which is as follows <https://digital.magmgr.com/Preview/Index/2654316#page/90> .

- 3.4 The 'all out' days and subsequent follow up activity by neighbourhood police units resulted in the seizure of over 40 ORVs. Several arrests were also made including those seeking to obstruct the police in the course of their duties.
- 3.5 Press interest coupled with promotion on social media led to positive feedback on the work being undertaken by the partnership.

Express & Star

Three arrests and several bikes seized during police operation targeting illegal biking in Walsall.

Below is a link to an online press report relating to Operation Adhesion
<https://www.expressandstar.com/news/crime/2023/09/18/three-arrests-and-several-bikes-seized-during-police-operation-targetting-illegal-biking-in-walsall/>

Birmingham Mail

Off-road bikes in Walsall seized as lout riders cause havoc on estates.

Below is a link to an online press report relating to Operation Adhesion
[Off-road bikes in Walsall seized as lout riders cause havoc on estates - Birmingham Live \(birminghammail.co.uk\)](https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/crime/off-road-bikes-in-walsall-seized-as-lout-riders-cause-havoc-on-estates-2023-09-18)

- 3.6 Sadly on the 27th of July 2023 a seven-year-old girl Katnis Selezneva was killed in a collision with an off-road bike in Turnstone Road, Bloxwich. The rider of the bike a 14-year-old boy was subsequently arrested. The tragedy served to highlight the very real dangers of these vehicles and why the work of partner agencies is so important in tackling the issue.
- 3.7 On the 12th of October 2023 Chief Superintendent Dolby and Danielle Knowles the councils Locality Tasking Officer presented the work conducted as part of Operation Adhesion to a meeting with the OPCC and this was met with a favourable response.
- 3.8 On the 20th of October 2023 Operation Advance took place and saw staff and officers from every policing department both locally and from a force level working together to deliver 24 hours of intensive policing operations in Walsall. Partners including Walsall Council supported the police in this Operation and video footage was published showing Inspector Pete Poolton and Councillor Garry Perry crushing several bikes that had been seized in operations locally.

Below are two links to video footage posted on social media (X)

<https://twitter.com/WalsallCouncil/status/1715397467087438081>

- 3.9 In 23/24 funding was awarded to the borough by the Home Office (through the OPCC) to support targeted activity in ASB hot spots. It was determined that locally this would include supporting operations targeting ASB associated with ORVs in key locations. Funding was allocated centrally towards the purchase of a further police off road bike and equipment/training associated with it and to support specific off-road operations in the borough. This includes, where possible, support for operations which have successfully been undertaken using the fixed wing aircraft and which have led to the seizure of a number of ORVs used anti-socially in Walsall. The total allocation to support this work was £23,357.
- 3.10 In January 2024 partners will once again be meeting to discuss the programme of activity for the year ahead and assessing other ideas which could make the interventions more successful. This will include considering the use of smart water and liaison with Youth Justice and similar services to ensure that enforcement is not being conducted in isolation and a whole system approach is taken to dealing with those involved in this activity.

4. Financial information

This work involved in this project continues to be met from within current resource.

As stated in 3.8 external funding from the Home Office is being used wherever possible to supplement any additional work which may be required such as purchasing a new off-road bike for the police and additional hours for use of the Police fixed wing aircraft.

5. Reducing Inequalities

ORVs are an issue that was highlighted by 85% of respondents to a survey relating to off-road biking and took into consideration the fears raised by residents under We Are Walsall 2040 in relation to crime and disorder in their areas. The noise can affect whole communities and spoil their enjoyment of their locality and their own homes and have a negative impact on mental health. The physical danger of ORVs being used unlawfully on roads and open spaces, parks and canal towpaths can be significant and lead to severe injury and fear of using facilities which should be available to all members of the community. ORVs can sometimes be used in crime or are stolen vehicles themselves therefore creating fear and detriment to many of our communities.

6. Decide

The committee could choose to prioritise other areas of work following a year of positive success regarding ORVs. However, it should be noted that despite the

positive work undertaken there are still significant problems with ORVs in some parts of the borough.

In general partners still see massive benefit in tackling this issue and are keen to broaden the scope, add new partners to the working group and consider other avenues to reduce off road riding including diversionary activities to stop youths becoming involved in this activity.

7. Respond

Any recommendations made by the committee will be fed back to the working group who organise the interventions around ORVs. Feedback on the success of the operations conducted during 2024 can be fed back to committee at a future date to be determined if that is required.

8. Review

The issue of ORVs as with all crime and ASB is monitored through certain governance arrangements. At a strategic level, the Safer Walsall Partnership Board has prioritised ASB for 2024 and a working group has been set up to look at key issues across the Borough – this includes ORVs.

At an operational level there is both a working group who look at ORV issues specifically but also a North Walsall and a South Walsall Locality Tasking meeting where partners come together to discuss issues of concern. ORV nuisance can feature on their agenda for liaison or referral to the ORV working group too.

Background papers

None

Author

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Head of Community Safety and Enforcement
☎ 653023
✉ david.elrington@walsall.gov.uk

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Area of Focus – 2023/24

Committee responsible for all aspects and general services related to the economy and environment including:

Responsibility of scrutiny of flood risk management functions which may affect the Local Authority's area as required by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010

And the scrutinising of performance in relation to the relevant priority in the Council Plan: Enable greater local opportunities for all people, communities and businesses.

Agenda Items							
Theme	6 July 2023	12 September 2023	19 October 2023	23 November 2023	16 January 2024	27 February 2024	11 April 2024
Economy		Derelict Properties Taskforce	Regeneration focus – Towns Funds projects, Town Centre Masterplan, Willenhall Masterplan, M6 J10	Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge Train Stations	Heritage Strategy with reference to Highgate Brewery		
Environment		Streetworks permit scheme		Tree Planting Strategy	Climate change Off-road biking	Litter picking strategy and volunteers Grass cutting schedule and mapping of council assets	Partnership working with West Midlands Police – traffic speed enforcement
Cross cutting both Economy and Environment	Outturn 2022/23			Quarter 2 Monitoring Budget Setting		UNESCO Geopark Update	

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Area of Focus – 2023/24

*Quarter 1 and Quarter 3 Financial reports will be circulated via e-mail to Members of the Committee and will not form part of the Committee's Agenda unless specially requested by the Committee.

Items to be scheduled in work programme:

1. Public Toilets Pilot Update;
2. Private session discussion on derelict properties taskforce;
3. Cycling Infrastructure Programme;
4. Government Recycling Strategy.



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 April 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>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>Health of the Region To consider an update report reviewing the health of the region.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 February 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Izzi Seccombe Wellbeing Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Julia Cleary, Mubasshir Ajaz Head of Corporate Support & Governance, Head of Health and Communities • Strategy, Integration and Net Zero</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>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>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 Sleigh Deputy Mayor</p>	<p>Beverly Sullivan, Sally Truman Financial Planning and Coordination Manager, Lead Financial Planning Accountant</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>
<p>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.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 15 March 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Andy Street Mayor</p>	<p>Lyndsey Roberts Scrutiny Officer</p>
<p>Ring & Ride Update To provide an update on the latest activity.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 19 July 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Pete Bond Director of Integrated Transport Services</p>

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

Recommendation Tracker

Committee Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Action/Recommendation	Officer responsible	Status	Target Completion Date	Notes
7 July 2022	Response to petition: 'Pedestrian Crossing for Birmingham Road, Aldridge, enabling the safety of school children'	S106 funding schemes in Aldridge to be reviewed to see if any funding could be secured for the crossing in this way.	Katie Moreton	Completed		The Development Monitoring Officer who starts on 3 October will provide improved resource to review this matter. Unlikely that previous S106 funds can be used as each S106 specifies what works the obligations are to cover as it has to be related specifically to the development proposed.
20 October 2022	Urgent Item: Bus Matters – Bus Network Update	Presentation and report be circulated to all Members of the Council.	Sian Lloyd	Completed		Sent out by email 21/10/2022.
24 November 2022	Off-Road Bikes	The Committee recommends Cabinet to investigate the acquisition of a drone or drone service for community protection to use in conjunction with West Midlands Police.	Sian Lloyd/Simon Neilson	Completed		Report discussed at Cabinet on 8 February. Further fuller details to be discussed at next Cabinet meeting on 22 March.

Recommendation Tracker

2 February 2023	Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge Railway Stations	Report to be considered at a future meeting of the Committee.	Sian Lloyd	Completed		Discussed at the meeting of the Committee on April 13.
	Areas of Focus 22/23	Report on public toilet provision to be presented at the next meeting of the Committee.	Sian Lloyd	Completed		Report on public toilets brought to meeting on 28 February.
28 February 2023	Area of Focus 22/23	CCTV provision in housing estates be added to the list of items to be considered.	Sian Lloyd	Completed		Added to areas of focus document.
13 April 2023	Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge Railway Stations	A further written update to be considered by the Committee.	West Midlands Rail Executive	Completed		Added to areas of focus.
	Phoenix 10	A further report to be considered by the Committee in due course following the site remediation phase.	Simon Tranter	Completed		Added to areas of focus.
12 September 2023	Derelict Properties Taskforce	Discussions in relation to specific sites to be held at a future meeting in private session within six months.	Simon Tranter/David Moore	Completed		Added to areas of focus – to be scheduled for a specific date.
	Areas of Focus	Request an invitation to the Scrutiny Overview Committee meeting in relation to the Walsall Local Borough Plan.	Sian Lloyd	Completed		Invitation requested – at present this discussion is scheduled for February 2024.
23 October 2023	Regeneration Update	Request an update on the UNESCO Geopark and an update on Moorcroft Wood with the associated visitor centre at a future meeting of the Committee.	Liz Stuffins	Completed		Item scheduled for February 2024.

Recommendation Tracker

		Clarification of the number of electric vehicles charging points in the town centre	Dave Brown	Completed		Circulated to Members on 07 November 2023.
		A copy of the Transport Scheme to be forwarded to Willenhall Councillors	Matt Powis	Completed.		Circulated on 15 November 2023
		Highways England and SISK be invited to a special meeting of the Committee.	Matt Powis	Completed		Briefing to be held on 15 January 2024.
		<p>Committee recommends to Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That, the Cabinet and Council Officers should be radical in changes to the Borough's Town Centre plans as our town centres have radically changed post pandemic. 2. In connection with (1) above, the Council look to increase transport links by moving bus services closer to Walsall Train Station and Park Street, Walsall. 3. That, the Council explore a clearer vision of future housing potential in our town centres in future plans and reports. 	Matt Powis	In progress	7 February 2024	
	Areas of Focus	Cycling Infrastructure Programme and Government Recycling Strategy be added to the areas of focus.	Matt Powis	Completed		Added to Areas of Focus.

Recommendation Tracker

<p>23 November 2023</p>	<p>Draft Budget and Capital Programme</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cost benefit analysis in respect of preventative measures with fly tipping compared to 2022. 2. Clarification on whether the Council could recover costs associated with fly tipping from a Magistrates' or Small Claims Court. 	<p>Dave Brown</p>	<p>In progress</p>	<p>February 2024</p>	
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