



# Walsall Council

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall to be held on **MONDAY 7TH day of JANUARY, 2013 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House, Walsall.

Dated this 27th day of December, 2012.

Yours sincerely,

Chief Executive.

The business to be transacted is as follows:

1. To elect a person to preside if the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not present.
2. Apologies.
3. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 19th November, 2012.
4. Declarations of interest.
5. Mayor's announcements.
6. To receive any petitions.

7. To answer any questions in accordance with Council procedure rules:

(a) From the public - None

(b) From members of the Council

(1) **Councillor James – Taxi services**

“Does the Council agree that parity should be established between Private Taxi Operators and Hackney Taxi Operators in the rules on age of vehicle replacement, age of vehicle renewal and standard on Taxi Advertising?. This would improve the quality of Taxi Services for all and promote an equitable system across Taxi Operators in Walsall.”

(2) **Councillor Smith – Bloxwich Road, Leamore Lane and Harden Road junctions**

“Whilst welcoming your plan to bring much needed improvements to the Bloxwich Road/Leamore Lane/Harden Road junctions; a plan which will provide better pedestrian crossing facilities, remove the ineffective bus lane, increase traffic movement for all vehicle users travelling in all directions and replace the old signal equipment with new “intelligent” signal equipment which will mean less queuing traffic, will you nevertheless, address the genuine concerns of the shopkeepers from Furniture World to the Post Office (Bloxwich Road) by shortening the proposed length of double yellow lines and installing a single yellow line instead on the stretch of road outside the shops, where double yellow lines were proposed in the original plan, thus allowing more time restricted parking?”

(3) **Councillor Smith – The Friends around the Lea, Harden and Goscote**

“Since Council leaders and Whg, made the much welcomed decision in May 2012 to abandon plans to build on Harden and Goscote’s green belt land known as “The Lea” and following the setting up of a local residents group known as “The Friends Around the Lea”, would you outline some of the progress that has been made to date as well as plans for the future with regard to the assistance that the Council has given and will be giving to the Friends Around the Lea to help them achieve their aspirations?”

(4) **Councillor Smith - Beddows Road, Ryecroft - regeneration**

“Since most of the properties in Beddows Road, Ryecroft, Walsall were demolished some years ago, leaving empty swathes of land that have, on occasions, been a magnet for fly-tippers, could the Portfolio holder for Regeneration outline what progress has been made to date with regard to the regeneration of this land, as there is a great need locally for new homes, especially homes at affordable rents?”

(5) **Councillor Smith – Poets Estate and Goscote Estate – regeneration of brownfield sites**

“Since Council leaders and Whg, made the much locally welcomed decision in May 2012 to abandon plans to build on Harden and Goscote’s green belt land known as “The Lea”, is the Portfolio holder for Regeneration able to outline what progress has since been with regard to new regeneration plans for the brownfield sites where properties were demolished on Poets Estate and Goscote Estate, lands which have been and still are a constant source of nuisance and magnets for anti-social behaviour?”

8. **Mayoralty 2013/2014.** Pursuant to Council Procedure Rule 2(vi) to name the Mayor-Elect and Deputy Mayor-Elect for 2013/2014 in accordance with the powers contained in Sections 3 and 5 of the Local Government Act, 1972.

9. To confirm the following recommendations of **Cabinet**:

(1) **Localised Council tax support scheme 2013/14**

- (1) That, after considering the outcomes of the consultation and the equality impact assessment, option 1 (to continue with the current Council tax benefit scheme and fund reduction in grant from other sources) be adopted for the 2013/14 localised council tax reduction scheme, with amendments for the full disregard of all war disablement and war widows’ pensions.
- (2) That the Chief Finance officer be delegated authority to make amendments to the scheme to reflect any changes required by legislation and or government guidance, in consultation with the portfolio holder.

(Note: Report to Cabinet 12th December 2012 reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

(2) **Council tax discounts for empty properties**

- (1) That approval be given to change the level of discount from Council tax for an unoccupied and unfurnished property to 100% over a 3 month period (class C exemption).
- (2) That approval be given to change the level of discount from Council tax for uninhabitable properties requiring structural repairs to 50% over a 12 month period (class A exemption).
- (3) That approval be given to change the level of discount from Council tax for a property that is no one’s sole or main residence, but still furnished to 0% (second home).

- (4) That approval be given to introduce an additional 50% premium for properties that have remained unoccupied and unfurnished for greater than two years.
- (5) That the Chief Finance Officer be delegated authority to amend the discounts or premium being applied to reflect any changes required by legislation and/or government guidance, in consultation with the portfolio holder.

(Note: Report to Cabinet 12th December 2012 reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

10. To confirm the following recommendation of the **Audit Committee**:

**Treasury Management mid-year position statement 2012/13**

That the Treasury Management mid-year position statement April to September 2012 be noted.

(Note: Report to Audit Committee 12th November 2012 reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

11. To confirm the following recommendations of the **Licensing and Safety Committee**:

- (1) **Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 – Late night levy provision**

That Council be requested to consider whether the late night levy provision be progressed further following initial formal consultation with the Chief Officer of Police and Police and Crime Commissioner.

- (2) **Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 – Early morning alcohol restriction orders**

That the report relating to Early Morning Alcohol Restriction Orders be noted.

(Note: Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

12. **Pay and reward policy.** Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

13. **Council tax base 2013/14.** Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

14. **Safeguarding children update.** Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

15. **Members allowances 2013/14.** Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.

16. **Portfolio holder briefings.** To receive 5 minute presentations from the following portfolio holders:

- Leisure and culture (Councillor Harris)
- Public protection (Councillor Zahid Ali)

(Note: A member of the Council may ask the portfolio holder any question and another associate question without notice upon the each report. Questioning by members is limited to 10 minutes for each report presented.)

17. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by **Councillors Oliver, James, Burley, Cassidy and Sarohi:**

This Council notes:

- The significant concerns raised through a range of condition surveys of the need for major refurbishment and re-build of many of our school buildings across the borough, with the consequent impact on the quality and educational achievement of our young people – and the potential creation of significant regeneration and local employment opportunities.
- That six Walsall secondary schools were scheduled for re-build and/or major refurbishment under the Building Schools for the Future Wave 6a, which was controversially scrapped by the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, on coming into office (Alumwell BEC, Frank F. Harrison, Joseph Leckie, Pool Hayes Arts and Community School, Shire Oak, the Streetly School). Furthermore that the subsequent waves under both BSF and the Primary Capital Programme would also have continued to deliver major projects and benefit to Walsall schools.

- Walsall Council subsequently made a bid under the new government Priority School Building Programme PFI scheme, to a total of £60.2 million, which was turned down by the Secretary of State in April 2012 (Frank F. Harrison, Joseph Leckie, Pool Hayes Arts and Community School, Willenhall School, Hatherton Primary, Rushall JMI).
- The public statement by the Walsall cabinet portfolio holder, Councillor Rachel Walker in June 2012 that “We remain confident we can satisfy our ambition for making all Walsall school buildings the envy of the UK”.

The Council therefore requests an urgent statement from the portfolio holder as to the detail of plans to achieve this ambition, and further resolves to write to the Secretary of State for Education to outline our dismay at the impact of his decisions on the borough of Walsall.

(Note: Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

18. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by **Councillor I. Shires**:

Council recognises that young unemployed people are particularly disadvantaged by the current economic situation and that they deserve extra support to move onto the first steps to permanent employment.

Council notes and supports the £1 billion Youth Service Contract – launched by the coalition government as a result of Liberal Democrat intervention – that opens up various opportunities for young people.

Council further acknowledges that the cost of transport to job centres, job interviews, work experience and apprenticeships can be a tall order for young people.

Council, therefore, requests the Chief Executive to write to Centro to enquire the feasibility of extending the concessionary travel scheme to include 18-24 year olds in receipt of job seekers allowance or undertaking apprenticeships and to report back to Council in three months.

(Note: Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)