



Walsall Council

Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel

Meeting to be held on **THURSDAY 4 SEPTEMBER 2008, 6.00PM**

Your attendance is requested at the above meeting, which will be held at the Council house, Walsall. A list of the items of business to be considered at the meeting, together with any supporting papers is enclosed. Please bring the papers with you to the meeting.

MEMBERSHIP:

Councillor Towe (Chair)
Councillor Creaney (Vice Chair)
Councillor Beeley
Councillor Bott
Councillor R. Martin
Councillor Mushtaq
Councillor J. Phillips
Councillor D. Pitt
Councillor Woodruff

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Harrison – Leisure and Culture
Councillor Perry – Communities & Partnerships
Councillor Walker – Environment
Councillor Harris – Transport
Councillor Andrew – Deputy Leader

Walsall Council encourages the public to exercise their right to attend meetings of Council, Cabinet and Committees.

Agendas and reports are available for inspection from the Council's Scrutiny Team at the Council House, Walsall (Telephone 01922 653317) or on our website www.walsall.gov.uk.

Some items are discussed in private because of their confidential nature, and reports on these are not available for the public. A guide to the types of information which are available to the public can also be found on our website or at the Civic Centre.

ITEMS FOR BUSINESS

1.	Apologies To receive apologies for absence from Members of the Panel.	
2.	Substitutions To receive notice of any substitutions for a Member of the Panel for the duration of the meeting.	
3.	Declarations of interest and party whip To receive declarations of interest or the party whip from Members in respect of items on the agenda.	
4.	Minutes To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting that took place on 29 July 2008.	<u>Enclosed</u> 3 - 10
5.	Development Opportunities To consider the available training opportunities for Members. a) <i>Financing the Future of Local Government</i> b) <i>Building Successful and Responsive Overview and Scrutiny</i> Please contact Marie Davies on 01922 655669 if you are interested in attending either of the above courses.	<u>Enclosed</u> 11 - 16
6.	Forward Plan To consider the Forward Plan of Key Decisions that was issued on 8 August 2008.	<u>Enclosed</u> 17 - 31
7.	Community Cohesion Strategy To consider the outcome of the recent scrutiny workshop on the Strategy and make recommendations to Cabinet/Council as appropriate.	<u>Enclosed</u> 32 - 70
8.	Fly Tipping in Walsall	<u>To Follow</u>
9.	Budget Setting 2009/10 - 2011/12 To consider the resource planning document for the Neighbourhoods Directorate which includes details on service objectives, priorities and finance.	<u>Enclosed</u> 71 - 75
10.	Highways Repair and Maintenance Partnership To consider the selection of a contractor to deliver a highways repair and maintenance service for the Council for a period of up to 8 years.	<u>Verbal</u>
11.	Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group To receive an update on progress so far and planned next steps for the Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group.	<u>Enclosed</u>
12.	Date of next meeting To note that the date of the next meeting is 6.00pm on Thursday 16 October 2008.	

NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL

Tuesday 29 July 2008 at 6.00 p.m.

Panel Members present

Councillor C. Towe (Chair)
Councillor L. Beeley
Councillor P Bott
Councillor R. Martin
Councillor Mushtaq
Councillor J. Phillips
Councillor D. Pitt
Councillor V. Woodruff

Portfolio holders present

Councillor A. Andrew – Deputy Leader, Property
Services
Councillor R. Walker – Environment Portfolio

Officers present

Jamie Morris – Executive Director – Neighbourhood
Services
Keith Stone – Assistant Director - Built Environment
Tim Challans – Assistant Director – Leisure, Culture
and Lifelong Learning
Nozmul Hussain – Director, Safer Walsall Partnership
Alison Jarrett – Head of Service Finance
Vanessa Holding – Directorate Account Manager for
Corporate Performance
Craig Goodall – Acting Principal Scrutiny Officer

09/08 APOLOGIES

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillor Creaney.

10/08 SUBSTITUTIONS

There were no substitutions for the duration of this meeting.

11/08 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST AND PARTY WHIP

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

12/08 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 7 APRIL 2008

Jamie Morris explained that the Community Cohesion Strategy would be presented for comments at all Member event before being considered by the Panel. This approach had been agreed by the Scrutiny Working Group.

Keith Stone explained that any issues arising from the proposed refuse collection service for properties that do not currently have a brown bin would be considered on a case by case basis. Following questions it was agreed to consider fly tipping in the

borough and the cleaning of wheelie bins on the public highway at the Panels next meeting.

Resolved

That:

a) the minutes, of the meeting held on 27 March 2008, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record;

and;

b) fly tipping and the cleaning of wheelie bins on the public highway in Walsall be considered at the next meeting of the Panel.

13/08 TRAINING OPPORTUNITES

The Chair outlined a course on 'Financing the Future of Local Government'.

14/08 FORWARD PLAN

34/07 Outcome of street trading

Jamie Morris explained that as this was a Council decision Members would have the opportunity to comment on this before any decisions were made, however, the item could also be considered by the Panel if desired.

119/07 Decriminalised parking enforcement operational framework

Keith Stone reported that the implementation of this scheme had been delayed due to discussions with the Department of Transport. However it was anticipated that the scheme would be implemented in early-September.

104/07 Highways repair and maintenance partnership

The Panel noted that they were scheduled to consider the issue on 4 September 2008.

15/08 Sustainable travel to school policy

The Panel asked to consider this at their 16 October 2008 meeting.

Gating Orders Policy

This item was added to the Panels work programme for future consideration.

Resolved:

That:

a) the decriminalised parking enforcement operation framework be considered at the 4th September 2008 panel meeting;

b) the highways repair and maintenance partnership be considered at the 4th September 2008 panel meeting;

c) the sustainable travel to school policy be considered at the 16 October 2008 panel meeting;

and;

d) the gating orders policy be added to the panels work programme.

15/08 ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR WORKING GROUP

The Panel discussed the terms of reference for the anti-social behaviour (ASB) working group that was established at the last meeting of the Panel.

Nozmul Hussain took the Panel through the working groups proposed terms of reference and explained that the working group anticipated co-opted expert advisors to assist them. Members commented that it was important the Police were involved with the working group.

It was proposed that the working group broke their work down into four themes. Namely:

1. Education
2. Prevention
3. Enforcement
4. Rehabilitation

Nozmul Hussain continued to explain that the working group were proposing to hold a training event that would be open to all Members on ASB with a range of council partners. The Chair reported that he would forward an email on the proposed training event to all Members of the Panel. They were also proposing to hold a meeting with a range of community representatives to gain an understanding of ASB at the grass roots level. It was agreed that this meeting should not be held in the Council House.

The following are the principle points from the ensuing discussion:

- Members emphasised the importance of engaging the police in the working group.
- ASB was recognised as a large cross-cutting area. With this in mind it was important that the working group engaged with the range of agencies that had something to contribute. Due to the wide ranging of the topic it was also suggested that the working group selected a few key areas in order to maximise the outcomes that they achieved.
- The problem of discarded needles in the borough was noted.
- The exploration of good practice between agencies was considered an important area to investigate. Particularly between different policing areas.
- Nozmul Hussain agreed to email Councillor Martin about Tots and Teens.

The Panel agreed the terms of reference and that a core membership of four members would be appointed to the working group with meetings open to all Panel Members.

They also agreed the working groups Lead Member and the organisations to be invited to join the working group as co-opted advisors.

Resolved:

That:

- a) the terms of reference for the anti-social behaviour working group be approved;**
 - b) Councillors L. Beeley, P. Bott, D. Pitt and C. Towe be appointed as the working groups core members with meetings open to all Panel Members;**
 - c) Councillor C. Towe be appointed as the working groups Lead Member;**
 - d) the Police, Walsall Housing Group, Walsall Council Children's Services and the Health Service be approved as the organisations to seek the working groups co-opted advisors from;**
 - e) Councillor C. Towe to forward an email giving proposed details of the anti-social behaviour training event to all Panel Members;**
- and;**
- f) Nozmul Hussain to email Councillor Martin about Tots and Teens.**

16/08 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

Members considered the range of Local Area Agreement (LAA) indicators that were relevant to the Neighbourhoods Directorate at Walsall Council.

Vanessa Holding explained the indicators chosen to make up the LAA had been selected from a range of 198 that made up the new National Indicator Set (NIS) or performance measures.

Walsall's LAA was approved by the Government in June. It contains 25 performance indicators from the NIS and 5 local measures. The LAA is essentially the delivery plan of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

Appendix 1 to the report contained details of all LAA measures and the targets that needed to be met. Additional information regarding how data would be collected and who was responsible for it was provided on the indicators that were within the remit of the Neighbourhoods Directorate.

The following are the principal points from the ensuing discussion:

- NI's 1, 4, 5 and 17 were measured by a local 'place survey'. This was a strategic survey required by the Government that all local authorities completed. The place survey included questions that could be used to assess deprivation. The questionnaire was sent to 5,000 households in the borough which was 1 in 22 households. A 50% response rate was required, up to three copies of the questionnaire would be sent to each household. Members expressed concern about

the costs invoked sending questionnaires to people who would not reply and asked for the possibility of incentives for fast replies and sponsorship for the questionnaire to be investigated in the interests of saving on post and administrative costs. The Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) selected the households from a post office census of local postcodes. Geographical Information Systems were used to map which postcodes were in which local authority areas. Although the time frame for despatching and returning the place survey was short Members also asked for the potential for making savings by sending the questionnaire out second class to be investigated.

- Baseline figures for targets were set on past performance where this had been measured. A number of new indicators had been introduced by the NIS so baseline figures would be established in the year ahead.
- LAA indicators and their targets were negotiated between the council, its partners and Government Office for the West Midlands.

The Panel noted that their work programme reflected a number of the LAA priority areas.

Resolved:

That:

- a) the Local Area Agreement priorities for the Neighbourhoods Directorate and their measurement methods be noted;**
 - b) the Panel receive quarterly monitoring reports on progress to achieving the priorities set out in the Local Area Agreement;**
 - c) a copy of the place survey be sent to all Members of the Panel for information;**
 - d) the possibility of offering incentives, and gaining sponsorship for these incentives, to encourage a fast response to the place survey be investigated;**
- and;**
- e) clarification be sought on whether or not the place-survey timetable allows for it to be sent second class and the savings could be made by posting it second class.**

17/08 REVENUE MONITORING

The Panel were informed of the final outturn figure for the Neighbourhoods Directorate budget for 2007/08 and the forecast revenue outturn for 2008/09.

Alison Jarrett informed Members that the Neighbourhoods Directorate had under spent by £160,693 in 2007/08 after the use of earmarked reserves. She explained that earmarked reserves were not emergency funds but funds specifically set aside for predicated needs, for example, fuel increases. She noted that the under spend had been achieved by management action following a predicted under spend.

She highlighted table 2 of the report which explained the service areas where under or over spends had occurred along with reasons for them. She added that there were two

errors in the table. Firstly, the illuminations item was £3,000 lower than reported in the table so should have read: 231,373, and secondly, the First Stop Shop had its under spend applied twice so should have read: £34,778.

The Panel were also informed of budget carry forward items and the capital outturn. It was noted that the majority of the under spend in the capital programme had been to delays with the Town Centre Transport Package.

The following are the principle points from the ensuing discussion on 2007/08 outturn:

- Street Pride – Jamie Morris reassured Members that even though the service had under spent all planned street cleansing had taken place. Councillor Walker clarified that savings had been made due to reduced waste being sent to landfill due to recycling increases. Keith Stone added that increases in recycling across the country had seen incinerator capacity increase which had enabled the council to send much more waste for disposal in this way that had, been anticipated when the budget was prepared giving rise to savings in landfill and associated landfill tax costs.
- Property Services – Alison Jarrett reported that the under recovery of fees was due to school contractors. £300,000 had been spent on office accommodation which was a combination of planned maintenance and expenditure on refitting offices in Tameway Tower after office relocations. Councillor Andrew added that although this had been an additional expense this year relocating staff from Tameway Tower was saving the £220,000 a year.

Money had been saved from school crossing patrols due to difficulties in recruiting enough staff. No vacancies had been deleted and a recruitment campaign was underway. Agency staff were employed in urgent cases. It was suggested that specific campaigns should be targeted in the areas that were required. This could be through a leaflet through the door of houses in the immediate vicinity of the area in which vacancies existed. Members asked to be informed on the steps being taken to recruit school crossing patrol staff.

- Sports and Leisure Management – Tim Challans reported that leisure centre membership numbers were reducing and having a consequential impact on revenue. He noted that gym memberships were increasing and direct debt collection methods were being encouraged to provide a regular income stream. There were concerns that the current credit crunch could have a further impact on membership levels and the number of leisure centre uses. He noted that the council's leisure stock needed improving. Councillor Andrew reported that one option to help increase visitor numbers would be by providing free swimming for children with any accompanying parents having to pay. He added that the review of leisure centres should be reported to the Panel in early 2009. Jamie Morris added that details of the Governments scheme to provide free swimming to under 16's and over 60's were still awaited. It was noted that leisure services were being affected by rising utilities costs.
- Green spaces – in response to a question it was clarified the section 106 planning gain money was not used to pay for day-to-day costs.

- Creative Development – this overspend had been caused by relocating offices to the Art Gallery.

A report on the 2008/09 budget first quarter outturn was circulated. It was agreed that members should contact Alison Jarrett outside of the meeting if they had any questions on this report.

Resolved:

That:

a) a briefing note be sent to Panel Members on the strategy to recruit additional school crossing patrol staff;

and;

b) Members contact Alison Jarrett for additional information on the Neighbourhoods Directorate 2008/09 first quarter budget outturn.

18/08 BUDGET PROCESS 2009/10 TO 2011/12

Members were informed of the outline framework for the budget setting process for 2009/10 – 2011/12.

Alison Jarrett explained that following last years budget scrutiny a change of process was being suggested. It was proposed that all scrutiny panels would receive a completed version of the 'resource planning framework' attached at appendix 2 to the report during September and October. This would be followed up by a further meeting in either November or December. Each Panel would feedback to the Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Panel and report recommendations to Cabinet who would agree the draft budget in December. All Scrutiny and Performance Panels would review the draft budget in January before it was considered and agreed by Cabinet and Council respectively.

Members welcomed the change to the budget process.

Members raised the possibility of officers making time available for Members before budget scrutiny meetings so that items could be explained to them before the meeting to allow meetings to be more analytical as the more straightforward questions had been dealt with before the meeting. Officers noted the request and stated that they were available to answer Member queries at all times as required.

In response to a question Alison Jarrett explained that inflation was built into the councils budgets. Areas that were experiencing high levels of inflation, for example due to fuel price increases, had additional levels of inflationary rises built into their budgets. Jamie Morris added that the council re-negotiated its energy costs regularly and procured more efficient vehicles to make as many savings as possible.

The meeting terminated at 7.58 pm.

Chair:

Date:



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Overview and scrutiny is an integral aspect of local government accountability. This process represents democracy at its core. Recent developments give further powers to scrutiny within councils. Are you aware of these changes? Have you considered how they will affect your overview and scrutiny function?

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- The intended outcomes and potential implications of the revised scrutiny process
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CONFERENCE PROGRAMME

- 08.30 Registration and refreshments
- 09.30 **Chair's opening remarks**
Cllr Barrie Taylor, Children and Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee Member
Westminster City Council
- 09.40 **Understanding the latest developments to achieve successful and responsive overview and scrutiny**
- Establishing the intended outcomes and possible implications of the revised scrutiny process and the Community Call for Action (CCfA)
 - Providing timelines on guidance and implementation
 - Connecting Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships with overview and scrutiny committees
 - Exploring what issues will be covered by CCfA
 - Aligning overview and scrutiny committees with council, LAA and LSP priorities
- Jo Dungey**, Policy Analyst
Local Government Information Unit
- 10.10 **Measuring and managing the performance of overview and scrutiny committees**
- Turning theory into action: Going beyond recommendations to practical results
 - Establishing expected outcomes for your council and community
 - How can the impact of your overview and scrutiny committee be measured?
 - Exploring possible future links with Comprehensive Area Assessment
- Dr Colin Copus**, Senior Lecturer
Institute of Local Government Studies (INLOGOV)
University of Birmingham
- 10.40 Questions and answer session
- 10.55 Morning refreshments
- 11.25 **Engaging your community to ensure effective and responsive local government**
- Placing councillors at the forefront of community issues
 - Establishing a seamless and timely service from issue reporting to final action
 - Screening methods: Detecting valid issues and avoiding duplication
 - Developing a baseline to ensure equality of service from ward to ward
 - Setting guidelines to deal with vexatious and constant complainers
- Angela Taylor**, Overview and Scrutiny Manager
Maidstone Borough Council
- 11.55 **Building effective scrutiny with and for your partner organisations**
- Instituting external scrutiny committees to monitor the performance of your partners
 - Determining what a 'duty to cooperate' will demand of both you and your partners
 - Strengthening your LAA and LSP through a constructive overview and scrutiny process
- Gerry Batchelor**
Corporate Director – Policy and Performance
Buckinghamshire County Council

- 12.25 Questions and answer session
- 12.35 Lunch
- 13.35 **Experiences from a pilot authority: Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council and the CCfA**
- Revealing the benefits and processes of integrating CCfA into Kirklees' overview and scrutiny
 - Explaining the impact on capacity and time of officers and members
 - Responding to change: Developing clear rules and procedures whilst retaining flexibility
- John Heneghan**, Scrutiny Team Leader
Kirklees Metropolitan Borough Council
- 14.05 **Developing closer working relationships between the executive and members to enhance overview and scrutiny**
- Is CCfA just formalising what councillors do anyway?
 - Ensuring the involvement of all members through productive training and development
 - Ensuring close working between the executive and members to influence decision making
- Tom Bolton**, Senior Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Durham County Council
- 14.35 Question and answer session
- 14.45 Afternoon refreshments

INTERACTIVE ROUNDTABLE DISCUSSION & FEEDBACK

- 15.15 **Based on the presentations you've heard, this is your opportunity to discuss issues, report back and learn from each other's experiences. Return to the office with concrete strategies and solutions.**

Delegates will be split into four groups, each corresponding to the following topics:

- Performance management
- Community engagement
- Partnership working
- Building relationships between officers and members

Session objectives:

- Identify your three main issues and challenges in establishing successful scrutiny in your council within your topic area
- Determine three possible ways you and your council can overcome these challenges
- What guidance could aid you in achieving this?

- 16.00 **One nominated member of each group to feed findings back to the conference**

- 16.20 **Chair's closing remarks and conference ends**

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CONFERENCE LANGUAGE: English.

PLEASE NOTE

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4th Annual Conference

The Future of Cultural and Leisure Services

Thursday 18th September 2008, Barbican Centre, London EC2

Culture, leisure and sport remain in a perfect position to enable local services to meet targets and outcomes and drive positive change for society as a whole

This annual conference will explore how the sector can meet the challenges that lie ahead and promote its position in providing high quality public services responsive to the needs of communities. This year's event will discuss how to negotiate and deliver the critical role culture and sport can play in meeting the new indicators in Local Area Agreements. In the context of Comprehensive Area Assessments delegates will also examine how to realise the contribution of culture and sport to improve the quality of life and performance of services in local areas.

The event will explore the latest policy developments and opportunities for the sector such as the Empowerment White Paper and "Find Your Talent".

Register online today:

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Keynote speaker:

Rt Hon Margaret Hodge MBE MP

Minister for Culture,
Creative Industries and Tourism

Speakers include:

Dr Ann Gosse

Chair, Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers
Association (CLOA)

Jeremy Hunt MP

Shadow Secretary of State for Culture,
Media and Sport, Conservative Party

Cllr Chris White

Chair, Culture, Tourism and Sport Board,
Local Government Association (LGA)

Brian King

Principal Consultant,
Cultural Improvement Project, IDeA

Gill Alexander

Strategic Director for Children, Young People
and Learning, North Tyneside Metropolitan
Borough Council

Tricia Kilsby

National Policy Lead for Culture, Audit Commission

Mike Smith

Executive Producer, Channel 4's Big Art

Supported by:



AGENDA (Subject to change)

09:00 Registration, refreshments and exhibition

1 SESSION ONE: EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES

09:50 Welcome and introduction by conference chair
Dr Ann Gosse, Chair, Chief Cultural and Leisure Officers Association (CLOA)

10:00 Keynote address
Rt Hon Margaret Hodge MBE MP, Minister for Culture, Creative Industries and Tourism

10:15 Engaging communities through public art: Lessons from Channel 4's Big Art
Mike Smith, Executive Producer, Channel 4's Big Art
Jan Younghusband, Commissioning Editor, Art and Performance, Channel 4
Andrew Whyte, Executive Director, Advocacy and Communications, Arts Council England

10:45 Empowerment White Paper
Cllr Chris White, Chair, Culture, Tourism and Sport Board, Local Government Association (LGA)

11:00 Questions and discussion

11:20 Refreshments and exhibition

2 SESSION TWO: RAISING THE GAME

11:50 Comprehensive Area Assessments: Shaping places and delivering outcomes through culture and sport
Tricia Kilsby, National Policy Lead for Culture, Audit Commission

12:05 A passion for excellence: from theory to reality
Brian King, Principal Consultant, Cultural Services Improvement Project, IDeA

12:20 Improved participation and demonstrating Impact: soft outcomes Vs hard indicators
Cllr Christopher Naylor, Director, Cultural Regeneration, City University and Executive Member for Homes and Housing Strategy, London Borough of Camden

12:35 Supporting skills development in cultural industries
Tom Bewick, Chief Executive, Creative & Cultural Skills

12:50 Questions and discussion

13:00 Buffet lunch and exhibition

3 SESSION THREE: SEMINARS - LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

13:50 Featuring case study examples, the seminar sessions will focus on the most popular indicators in the new round of Local Area Agreements. The sessions are designed to be interactive and participatory

1. Safer and stronger communities
Led by **David Brownlee**, Director, Public Engagement, Arts Council England
2. Children and young people
Led by Representative, **Museums, Libraries and Archives Council**
3. Sport - delivering LAA outcomes
Led by **Maria Reader**, Policy Manager, Sport England
4. Heritage - shaping places
Led by **Dave Batchelor**, Head of Local Authority Liaison, English Heritage

14:40 Refreshments, networking and exhibition

4 SESSION FOUR: NEW CHALLENGES

15:10 Developing a world-leading community sport system
Mihir Warty, Director of Policy and Performance, Sport England

15:30 Inspiring children and young people to "Find Your Talent"
Gill Alexander, Strategic Director for Children, Young People and Learning, North Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Council

15:50 A new vision for culture and places
Jeremy Hunt MP, Shadow Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Conservative Party

16:10 Questions and discussion

16:30 Close of conference

Register online today: www.neilstewartassociates.com/se221





Walsall Council

FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

**Civic Centre,
Darwall Street,
Walsall, WS1 1TP
www.walsall.gov.uk**

8 August 2008

FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan sets out decisions that are termed as “key decisions” which the Executive (Cabinet) intend to take over the following 4 months. 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. The plan is available for public inspection at the Civic Centre Reception, Darwall Street, Walsall. Copies of the plan can be obtained from John Garner, Constitutional Services, Walsall MBC, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, WS1 1TP, 01922 653500 or e-mail cabinetoffice@walsall.gov.uk. The forward plan can also be accessed from the Council’s website at www.walsall.gov.uk. The Cabinet are allowed to make urgent decisions which do not appear in the forward plan.

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 Members and their responsibilities are as follows:

Leader of the Council	Councillor John O’Hare
Deputy Leader and Regeneration	Councillor Adrian Andrew
Children’s services	Councillor Zahid Ali
Communities and partnerships	Councillor Garry Perry
Environment	Councillor Rachel Walker
Finance and personnel	Councillor Al Griffiths
Leisure and culture	Councillor Louise Harrison
Procurement, transformation and performance management	Councillor Mohammed Arif
Social care, health and housing	Councillor Barbara McCracken
Transport	Councillor Anthony Harris

The Cabinet agenda and reports are available for inspection by the public 7 days prior to the meeting of the Cabinet. The papers can be seen at First Stop Shop at the Civic Centre, Walsall. The papers are also available on the Council's website referred to above shortly before the meeting. 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 and take place in Conference Room 2 at the Council House, Walsall on a monthly basis. 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 does not list all decisions which have to be taken by the Council only "key decisions" which are those decisions which have a significant effect within the community or which involve considerable expenditure or savings.

Dates of Cabinet meetings for 2008/2009

2008

18 June
16 July
17 September
22 October
19 November
17 December

2009

14 January
4 February
18 March
22 April

**FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS
SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 2008 (8.8.08)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reference No./ Date first entered in Plan	Key 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
39/07 (18.5.07)	Review of Licensing Act 2003 - Having undertaken consultation on the existing licensing policy, Council at its meeting on 7th July 2008 are being asked to approve changes to the Statement of Licensing Policy. It is proposed to present to Council the findings from a cumulative impact assessment undertaken with a view to specifying a saturation policy within a given area.	Council	John Beavon 652214	Regulatory authorities, emergency services, Licensed trade associations, Pubwatch, Chamber of Commerce, voluntary groups, health bodies, internal	Councillor Walker	8 September 2008
119/07 (10.12.07)	Decriminalised parking enforcement operational framework - Approval of broad framework for directing enforcement activity across the borough	Council	Paul Leighton 652458	PCT, Health Trust, Strategic Health Authority	Councillor Harris	8 September 2008
66/08 (8.8.08)	Amalgamation of Walsall College of Continuing Education and Walsall Community College – approval of the Constitution of the new body and governance arrangements.	Council	Tim Challans 650336		Councillor Harrison	8 September 2008

18/08 (11.2.08)	Land at Littleton Street/Hatherton Street. The Council has been requested to consider the disposal of its land to the east of the junction of Littleton Street and Hatherton Street Walsall as the preferred location for an office development. Negotiations are on-going for the disposal of the council's freehold interest in the land to facilitate the development, which is seen as a key component of the Office Corridor project. Cabinet approval for the sale on terms to be agreed is sought. .	Cabinet	Steve Law 652075 Paul Nicholson 652489	Urban Regeneration Company	Councillor Andrew	17 September 2008
59/06 (18.8.06)	Mellish Road Methodist Church. The report is intended to summarise the findings of a recent economic appraisal that assesses the viability of the retention and conversion of the existing building. Cabinet to approve the pursuance of a compulsory purchase order for the site based on the conclusions of the appraisal.	Cabinet	Simon Tranter 652543	English Heritage	Councillor Andrew	17 September 2008
56/08 (6.6.08)	Sale of former Kings Hill JMI off Old Park Road/Johnson Street, Wednesbury. The former school was vacated in 1991 and demolished in 1992 following a fire. The land is surplus to requirements and it is proposed to advertise this potential residential development site for sale by informal tender. Cabinet to be requested to approve the sale to the highest bidder provided that the figure can be certified as best consideration in accordance with Sec. 123, Local Government Act, 1972	Cabinet	John Kirwan 652033	Internal	Councillor Andrew	17 September 2008

68/08 (8.8.08)	Building schools for the future – To inform Cabinet of progress on the review of mainstream secondary schools and to seek permission to progress the review.	Cabinet	Avril Walton 686283	HR, finance, legal	Councillor Zahid Ali	17 September 2008
69/08 (8.8.08)	Education capital programme – further schemes – Approval of proposed schemes and approval of proposed bid for targeted capital to support the Lanehead/Rosedale/Short Heath federation	Cabinet	Susan Lupton 686231	Finance, property service	Councillor Zahid Ali	17 September 2008
65/08 (8.8.08)	Medium term financial strategy – This report seeks Cabinet endorsement of an updated corporate medium term financial strategy; the strategic framework and policy document within which the Council's finances are constructed and the Council's financial planning and management is undertaken. It is part of a suite of policy documents that together comprise the Council's approach to effecting sound governance and good practice. It aims to be the translation of our vision, aims and objectives into a financial plan, which thereby facilitates delivery of these through the service planning process.	Cabinet Council	Vicky Buckley 652349		Councillor Griffiths	17 September 2008

67/08 (8.8.08)	<p>Review of Council tax discounts on second homes and long term empty premises - Section 11a of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 provides that an authority may make a determination to reduce existing 50% discounts on second homes and long term empty premises to between 10% and 0%. Approximately 75% of authorities have reduced their second home discount to 10% and 45% of authorities have reduced their empty property discount to 0%. If this approach was adopted substantial additional Council tax could be generated. The decision to do this must be taken before the Council tax is set for the year and approved by Council.</p>	Cabinet Council	Sharon Tait 652039	Other local authorities and internal stakeholders	Councillor Griffiths	17 September 2008 3 November 2008
63/08 (7.7.08) (Replaces items 41/07, 41/08 & 42/08)	<p>Implementation of charging policies within Social Care and Inclusion – The fairer charging policy in place within social care and inclusion needs to be updated and amended. Officers will be required to undertake a formal 12 week consultation. Also there are no policies currently in place for transport, neighbourhood care officers or extra care charging. Cabinet to be requested to authorise officers to consult on the charging proposals and report back to Cabinet at the end of the consultation period.</p>	Cabinet	Steph Simcox 652703	Staff, partner organisations, users, carers	Councillor McCracken	17 September 2008

71/08 (8.8.08)	Hollybank House – Cabinet in September 2007 considered a report to end local authority provision for younger physically disabled adults and recommended that a further report be received outlining an action plan following formal consultation. Future commissioning decisions will be required from the PCT to progress the preferred future service option. The report will confirm the outcome of the formal consultation and provide an action plan for future services.	Cabinet	John Greensill	Staff, service users, carers, residents of Hollybank	Councillor McCracken	17 September 2008
104/07 (9.11.07)	Highways repair and maintenance partnership – approval of preferred bidder. Selection of a contractor to deliver a highways repair and maintenance service for the Council for a period of up to 8 years.	Cabinet	Keith Stone 653301	Internal and prospective partners	Councillor Harris	17 September 2008
67/06 (18.8.06)	Darlaston Strategic Development Area – authorisation to publish orders and processes	Cabinet	Steve Pretty 652598	Walsall Regeneration Co., Environment Agency, British Waterways, statutory undertakers, AWM	Councillor Harris	17 September 2008
92/07 (10.10.07)	Corporate Asset Management Plan - The Corporate Asset Management Plan outlines the council's approach to the strategic management of the property portfolio. The Plan identifies the emerging Corporate Property Strategy and how directorates and property teams work together to ensure the efficient and effective use of property resources.	Cabinet	Steve Law 652075		Councillor Andrew	22 October 2008

37/08 (9.5.08)	St. Matthews Quarter – The Council has been working with developers and landowners to bring forward the retail led regeneration of this part of the town centre. In order to deliver this aspiration the developers have approached the Council with a view to acquiring the Council’s land interests in the area. The scheme will require the temporary relocation of the market to the Bridge whilst a permanent location is developed. Cabinet approval is sought to agree the details of the temporary relocation of the market, its future management arrangements and details of the development agreement	Cabinet	Paul Nicholson 652489 Richard Chadwick 652576	Regeneration Scrutiny Panel and Markets Working Group, Market Traders Association, Town Centre Management Partnership, Walsall Regeneration Company	Councillor Andrew	22 October 2008
38/08 (9.5.08)	Police station – The West Midlands Police Authority has identified a preferred location for its new Walsall Police HQ. The Council is a considerable landowner in the preferred location and the Police Authority has approached the Council with a view to purchasing its interest and securing its support to assemble the remainder of the site. Cabinet approval is sought “in principle” for the pursuit of a compulsory purchase order to help deliver the police station relocation and for the sale of land to the Police Authority.	Cabinet	Paul Nicholson 652489 Richard Chadwick 652576	Walsall Regeneration Company	Councillor Andrew	22 October 2008

70/08 (8.8.08)	<p>Early years capital grant – Outline proposals for the investment of this capital allocation to improve the quality of learning environment, improve access to all children, including disabled children, and to enable the delivery of flexible 3 and 4 year old provision in early years settings in the private, voluntary and independent sector in addition to maintained settings. Cabinet will be asked to approve the investment approach.</p>	Cabinet	Susan Lupton 686231	HR, finance, legal	Councillor Zahid Ali	22 October 2008
73/08 (8.8.08)	<p>Building schools for the future (BSF) BSF is a long-term programme of investment and change in England that will help transform education for secondary age students by providing 21st century learning environments that engage and inspire young people, their teachers and the wider community. BSF was launched by the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) in February 2003. Walsall Council has been selected for an accelerated start to BSF as part of 7 other local authorities joining the programme in Interim Wave 6a and together will share funding of £625m. Cabinet to be requested to give approval to proceed with the Building Schools for the Future project.</p>	Cabinet	Karen Adderley 653303	Head teachers, LNPs, Children’s services, regeneration officers	Councillor Zahid Ali	22 October 2008

54/08 (6.6.08)	Housing Strategy 2008-11 – Endorsement of the Council' Housing Strategy 2008-11 which details the Council's priorities to increase housing choice and opportunity, improve the standard and sustainability of existing and future homes and address diverse needs and promote independent living.	Cabinet Council	Neil Hollyhead 655411	Key stakeholders	Councillor McCracken	22 October 2008 3 November 2008
72/08 (8.8.08)	Links to Work – Links to Work assumed responsibility for the transfer of the former Walsall Windows 3 years ago including time limited transitional funding. Cabinet to consider a range of options to address budget issues prior to the service being externalised as a social enterprise.	Cabinet	John Greensill 658383		Councillor McCracken	22 October 2008
34/07 (19.4.07)	Outcome of street trading review - Following consideration by Licensing & Safety and Development Control Committees of outline proposals to change the nature and location of street trading consents and regulate advertisements and obstructions on the highway, detailed proposals are out for consultation. A further opportunity will be provided for LNPs to make comments and final proposals presented to Licensing & Safety Committee and thereafter to Council to implement the proposals with effect from 1 April 2009.	Council	John Beavon 652214	Regulatory authorities, emergency services, Town centre partnerships, Chamber of Commerce, trade associations, stakeholders LNPs Internal	Councillor Walker	3 November 2008 23 February 2009

<p>9/08 (7.1.08)</p>	<p>The Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) Phase 2 - The RSS is now part of the development plan alongside the Council's UDP and is reviewed in 3 phases. Phase 1 concerning the Black Country came into effect in January 2008. The Phase 2 preferred option has been published dealing with the economy, housing, centres, transport and waste. Consultation on the preferred option has been extended to Dec. in order to take account of further technical work that the Government is preparing. This work is intended to show that there is capacity for more housing in the West Midlands that the RSS is currently proposing. Cabinet to approve the Council's response to the RSS Phase 2 and the Government's technical work. Phase 3 is at the planning stage and will be reported on in due course.</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>Sandy Urquhart 652477</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Councillor Andrew</p>	<p>19 November 2008</p>
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<p>15/08 (10.12.07)</p>	<p>Sustainable travel to school strategy The Sustainable travel to school strategy is being produced in response to both national and local initiatives. There is a general duty under for Local Authorities to promote sustainable modes of travel to school. The Education and Inspections Act 2006 places a further duty on Local Authorities to consider the travel needs of all pupils. There are 4 main requirements of the Education and Inspections Act: (1) An assessment of the travel and transport needs of children and young people within the authority's area. (2) An audit of the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority that may be used when travelling to and from, or between schools/institutions. (3) A strategy to develop the sustainable travel and transport infrastructure within the authority, so that the needs of children and young people are better catered for. (4) The promotion of sustainable travel and transport to, from and between schools and other institutions.</p>	<p>Cabinet</p>	<p>Kathryn Parr 652511 Kate Mann 686361</p>	<p>Walsall Schools working party, Serco, road safety</p>	<p>Councillor Harris</p>	<p>19 November 2008</p>
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**FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS
FROM JANUARY 2009**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reference No./ Date first entered in Plan	Key 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
(7.7.08)	Gating Orders Policy – gating orders were introduced under the Clean Neighbourhoods Act 2005. They can be used to gate highways where anti-social behaviour and crime is experienced. It is necessary to amend the existing situational crime interventions policy to allow implementation of this new legislation. Walsall Borough’s Rights of Way Improvement Plan became approved Council policy on 19 April 2008 highlighted that the policy review should be completed within 12 months	Cabinet Council	Joanne Sheeran 652445	LNPs, Local Access Forum, statutory consultees	Councillor Harris	14 January 2009
(8.8.08)	Learning disability short breaks – Short breaks are offered by the Council to give carers of people with a learning disability a break from 24/7 care and are allocated on an assessed number of nights per year basis. Cabinet to consider a range of options to ensure the equitable and affordable allocation of short breaks.	Cabinet	John Greensill 658383	Staff, partner organisations, users, carers	Councillor McCracken	14 January 2009

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL
DATE: 4 SEPTEMBER 2008

RE: COMMUNITY COHESION STRATEGY

Purpose

To consider and comment on the draft community cohesion strategy before it is considered by Cabinet in October 2008.

Report

Community cohesion is about how well people from different backgrounds get along with each other in local communities, schools and in the workplace. There is a history of good projects and initiatives in Walsall which have helped achieve this but we know there is much more to do. There has not been, until now, a strategy which brings this work together and focuses on our future priorities.

Over recent months the Council has been developing a community cohesion strategy for Walsall with a range of partner organisations. Optimum Interventions (Oi) was engaged to facilitate this. They arranged a number of consultative events with residents and stakeholders (one to one interviews, workshops). They also carried out a detailed analysis of the local communities in the Borough, their make up and current issues. This work led to the preparation of a draft strategy and action plan which is now the subject of more formal consultation.

Within the Council the strategy is in the process of being considered by each of the directorate equality boards, the corporate equality group and the corporate management team. Member involvement will be through scrutiny panels and the cabinet.

External consultation with partners is being carried out at the same time. The eventual strategy will be adopted by the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership and its headlines launched, in July, alongside the new Sustainable Communities Strategy and Local Area Agreement.

Formal approval of the strategy will be at the October meeting of Cabinet.

A copy of the draft strategy and its action plan are attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

The objectives and draft actions have been aligned to the Sustainable Community Strategy and grouped around people, places and prosperity. A snap shot of these is shown below:

- **People**

- Building mutual respect
- Developing community leadership
- Understanding communities and planning for change
- Communicating community cohesion
- Safeguarding communities against tensions and unrest

-
- **Places**
 - Developing a neighbourhood approach
 - Planning for where people live
 - Working with regional and national partners

- **Prosperity**
 - Maximising cohesion improvements through regeneration
 - Planning the workforce for the future

A workshop to consider the strategy is taking place on 2 September 2008. Any comments from this event will be reported to the Panel.

Recommended

That Members review and comment on the draft Community Cohesion Strategy and Action Plan prior to it being considered by Cabinet in October 2008.

Author

Julie Ball
Head of Neighbourhood Partnerships and Programmes
☎ 01922 654706
✉ BallJ@walsall.gov.uk

Oi Optimum Interventions

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Community Cohesion Strategy

March 2008



Prepared by:

Steve Loraine & Anna Whalen

Contact us at:

Optimum Interventions Ltd.

ointerventions@aol.com

01827 331331

Contents

Foreword – Councillor Garry Perry	3
What is community cohesion?	4
How we have developed this strategy & Vision for 2021	5
A picture of community cohesion in Walsall	7
Our priorities	9
1 PEOPLE	10
1.1 Building mutual respect by understanding what we have in common, as well as our differences	10
1.2 Developing community leadership	11
1.3 Understanding communities and planning for change	12
1.4 Communicating community cohesion	13
1.5 Safeguarding communities against tensions and unrest	13
2 PLACES	15
2.1 Developing a neighbourhood approach	15
2.2 Planning for where people live	15
2.3 Working with regional and national partners	16
3 PROSPERITY	17
3.1 Maximising cohesion improvements through regeneration in Walsall	17
3.2 Planning the workforce for the future	17
Delivering improvements in community cohesion	19
Our commitment to building community cohesion	22

Foreword – Councillor Garry Perry

Welcome to Walsall's first Community Cohesion Strategy. This strategy has been developed by Walsall Council working together with a wide range of other organisations on behalf of the Borough's Local Strategic Partnership. By building on community cohesion priorities in the Sustainable Communities Strategy, this cohesion strategy is closely aligned to that overarching plan for Walsall.

Community cohesion is not just about minority groups, it is about everyone; cohesion is in everyone's interest. This strategy has the power and potential to deepen the unity of people in Walsall, by recognising that the things we have in common are far greater than those things that seem to keep us apart.

Our diversity in Walsall can be seen in our different ages, upbringings, religions, ethnicities, sexual orientation, our health, where we live and what we do in our lives each day. Yet, for all of those differences, we all live in the communities of Walsall and all of us want to feel that we belong somehow: that we are part of a community; that we are accepted, treated fairly and with respect; we all expect to feel safe in our homes and the community.

The idea or concept of community cohesion can appear complicated yet at its heart is simple. It is about how people get along together. But when we get into the detail of what that means, what can influence or affect people getting along together, our consultation has shown us that there are no single or simple answers to improving community cohesion: engaging with people, listening to and appreciating the experiences and ideas that people have, is our starting point.

We recognise that many of the challenges we face are not unique to Walsall, they are being experienced by many other areas in the UK. We can and will learn from other areas, from our neighbours in the Black Country, in the West Midlands and beyond.

Although the Council has taken the lead in developing this strategy, it is a Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership strategy. This is because building and embedding community cohesion requires partnership working and ownership. The Partnership is the "we" mentioned often in this strategy; no single organisation has all the answers and by making community cohesion everyone's business, the successful implementation of the strategy is achievable.

This first strategy represents a starting point for us and we are keen to continue to develop our understanding of what supports community cohesion and the impact of changes in our Borough. The Government's new Community Cohesion Delivery Framework is due to be published later this year and will help us to reshape the strategy when we come to review it. We are committed to communicating the progress on community cohesion throughout each year and will publish an overall picture of progress annually.

Cllr Garry Perry

Portfolio Holder, Community Cohesion

Walsall Council

What is community cohesion?

We are using the definition of community cohesion, which the Commission for Integration and Cohesion drew up in 2007.

An integrated and cohesive community is one where:

- **There is a clearly defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and different communities to a future vision for a neighbourhood, city, region or country**
- **There is a strong sense of an individual's rights and responsibilities when living in a particular place – people know what everyone expects of them and what they can expect in turn**
- **Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities, access to services and treatment**
- **There is a strong sense of trust in institutions locally to act fairly in arbitrating between different interests and for their role and justifications to be subject to public scrutiny**
- **There is a strong recognition of the contribution of both those who have newly arrived and those who already have deep attachments to a particular place, with a focus on what they have in common**
- **There are strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and other institutions within neighbourhoods.**

Taken from "Our Shared Futures", 2007

How we have developed this strategy

We have:

- Looked at a wide range of statistical information about Walsall and the West Midlands region
- Developed a “baseline” position for community cohesion in Walsall. You can view this by clicking onto this link xxxxxx
- Conducted interviews with representatives from organisations and community groups in Walsall
- Held focus groups and a half day stakeholder consultation event
- Sought examples of innovation and good practice in work that supports community cohesion. There are lots of examples, and to see just a few, click on to this link xxxxxxx
- Taken into account the findings and recommendations from the Commission for Integration and Cohesion’s report, “Our Shared Futures” and national guidance, the work of the Institute for Community Cohesion and good practice elsewhere

From all of this information, we have undertaken analysis of where Walsall is now, and what the projected changes in population and other aspects of life might mean for the Borough. The priorities and actions that have been identified are intended to be preventative, to help Walsall deal with change and prevent negative impacts on community cohesion. The actions in the Action Plan document are based on our analysis, combined with people’s ideas, and what is working well already.

We have deliberately chosen not to develop a different vision for community cohesion, as we believe that the overarching 2021 vision for Walsall, as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy is, in essence, about positive community cohesion.

Vision for 2021

“Walsall will be a good place to live, work and invest, where:”

- **people get on well with each other**
- **growing up is as good as it can be and young people fulfil their potential**
- **people are our strength and have the skills and attitude required by employers**
- **we consider the impact of what we do now on future generations**
- **we feel proud to live, having high quality distinctive design of buildings and spaces**
- **there is a wide range of facilities for people to use and enjoy**
- **everyone has the chance to live in a home fit for their purpose and for the future**
- **people can get around easily and safely**
- **there are more and better jobs for local people**
- **we support and look after each other**

Taken from the Sustainable Community Strategy 2007

There are some significant challenges for Walsall to address and our overall analysis is that there is no room for complacency on the issue of community cohesion. If the vision in the Sustainable Community Strategy is to be realised in 2021 then thinking and considering community cohesion implications needs to become part of what all organisations do.

It is encouraging that there are so many ideas about what would help to improve community cohesion, and because there are so many we have had to prioritise. What we do know is that communication is really important. So, whilst this strategy is deliberately aimed at organisations, we are committed to communicating the main messages to different groups of people, using a wide range of communication methods.

We have set out what is needed and possible to achieve. We have looked at what some of the foundation stones are that we can build on, in order to make real and lasting differences to the quality of people's lives in Walsall. We can learn from all the work supporting community cohesion that already takes place in Walsall and beyond. We also need to make sure we plan for the future and build community cohesion considerations and actions into all the work we plan and deliver in Walsall Council and through the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership.

We have had dilemmas in producing this strategy. People have different, sometimes contradictory perspectives and contrasting views of what is needed. We have analysed our current position and looked to the future, to the 2021 vision for Walsall, to the changes we know are likely to happen and the possible impacts on community cohesion.

DRAFT

A picture of community cohesion in Walsall

Walsall is a Borough of contrasts, in terms of affluence and deprivation. There are particularly deprived areas in the West and central areas of Walsall, whilst generally, the East is more affluent.

Walsall has made significant steps in the last four years to address inequalities, through, for example the quality of housing, health improvements, education standards and crime reduction. Regeneration in neighbourhoods and the town centre has the potential to improve the quality of life of Walsall residents and to bring more skilled employment opportunities to the Borough.

The population and age structures will change significantly over the next 15 years and will present new challenges to services and communities. People are living longer, family structures continue to change and the population is increasingly diverse, with the impact of globalisation, for example, meaning migrant workers from A8 countries are now living in Walsall. Planning ahead for changing needs will be an essential feature for the local authority, health services, housing providers, West Midlands Police and other organisations.

There is a widely held, but not unanimous view amongst professionals who work in Walsall, that people in Walsall get along reasonably together well. These judgments are often made in relative terms, as people compare Walsall to other places they are familiar with, especially Birmingham and other areas of the Black Country.

This view however is contradicted by some of the data and anecdotal stories from professionals and people working and living in local communities, which together indicate that there are both some tensions which are not highly visible, but do exist and issues on the horizon which need to be addressed.

The general public's perception of cohesion varies considerably across Walsall. Perhaps paradoxically, people living in more affluent areas, with a relatively high concentration of white British residents, are more likely to believe cohesion to be weak, than those living in more diverse, but more deprived areas.

Many people identify and have a sense of belonging to the neighbourhood or town in which they live, rather than the Borough of Walsall. This is viewed by some as positive to internal cohesion within neighbourhoods, whilst others take the view that being too closed and inward looking can result in low aspirations, particularly for young people. High levels of inward cohesion in an area might also run the risk of hostility to potential in-comers. There is some evidence that there are areas in the Borough that do not welcome people from other backgrounds and cultures.

It is well understood by professionals and local people that different areas of Walsall have different issues to address and that a very localised approach to managing community cohesion is needed in order to pin point and deliver what will make the most positive difference. Schools for instance, as part of local communities, have the potential to play a pivotal role in promoting community cohesion.

Whilst there is much hard data available through the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, which gives an overall picture of community cohesion, some data needs to be disaggregated by age, local area and ethnicity more routinely. This will help with targeting the delivery of work.

It is well understood in Walsall that the local and particularly national media can fuel disquiet, by promoting perceptions of special or unequal treatment and thus increase tensions. Working purposefully with the media to communicate positive new stories, challenge myths and highlight the common and shared aspects of people's lives is an area which requires some focussed work.

The voluntary and community sectors, or Third Sector, have experience and a wealth of information relating to different aspects of community cohesion and can play a vital role in delivering objectives. However, overall, the Third Sector is fragmented, relationships with the local authority and other partners are variable and as a result the contribution it makes to current work and potential for the future is not fully understood or appreciated.

The potentially divisive nature of funding to the Third Sector and the possible negative impact on working relationships is a key concern. Improved communication between the public sector and Third Sector about the basis for commissioning for community cohesion is needed. This means better articulating the rationale for moving from the more traditional, often short term funding processes to a commissioning model that emphasises funding as an investment to secure the well being of the whole community, rather than single interest groups.

Children and young people are the future for Walsall and targeting of activity and any additional resources at this group is likely to be the most effective long term investment for the Borough. Negative views about young people, often perpetuated by national media, relate largely to anti social behaviour and risk. This is impacting negatively on the fear of crime in Walsall.

There is no simple answer to improving cohesion. The issues to address are far reaching and cross cutting. The challenge for Walsall is to have a community cohesion mind set and framework in the mainstream thinking and decision making of all organisations and groups. And in order to work together effectively, all partners will need to demonstrate behaviours that support community cohesion and show a real understanding of the increasing diversity, in its broadest sense. This requires a pro-active willingness to learn continually about diversity by really listening to the different communities and then having the drive and flexibility to develop services accordingly.

Our priorities

The areas identified for priority attention relate to the 3 areas of the Sustainable Community Strategy and within these areas, there are a series of the priorities:

- **People**
 - Building mutual respect by understanding what we have in common, as well as our differences
 - Developing community leadership
 - Understanding communities and planning for change
 - Communicating community cohesion
 - Planning for and coping with the unexpected

- **Places**
 - Developing a neighbourhood approach
 - Planning for where people live
 - Working with regional and national partners

- **Prosperity**
 - Maximising cohesion improvements through regeneration in Walsall
 - Long term workforce planning

1 PEOPLE

1.1 Building mutual respect by understanding what we have in common, as well as our differences

A view expressed in consultation was that it is more helpful to emphasise what we have in common, rather than focus on difference. In effect, there is a risk that by focussing on difference, we perpetuate separation and division. This will impact on the possibilities for interaction between people.

Any understanding and celebrating of diversity should therefore be set in a framework of human commonality, of what we share: in our values; in our family lives; our children; our work and leisure; our faith and our hopes for the future.

Promoting interaction between groups needs to become a mainstream activity within the work of different organisations and bodies. Learning from other areas of England is that coming together with a sense of purpose, in particular through sport, the arts or community celebration is highly successful in promoting interaction and learning, but explicitly labelling the activity as a piece of community cohesion work is not always necessary or helpful. There are some excellent examples of this sort of work happening in Walsall already and we have provided just a few examples in an associated paper; there are many more (see [hyperlink xxxx](#)),

It is at a neighbourhood level where most interaction takes place between people, which is good for community cohesion on one level, but if based purely on geography, will mean that some groups of people living Walsall do not ever mix with each other.

Schools can play a major role in local communities. There is a new legal duty to promote community cohesion and working actively with schools on this agenda will support them to fulfil their new responsibilities. This can link to the citizenship work that schools already undertake, but be more mainstreamed into projects and events that schools undertake within and across communities.

Single group funding can potentially have a negative impact on community cohesion, if there is no expectation from commissioners that interaction with others will be a part of the work. Umbrella organisations that are tasked with bringing together the many different community interest groups can help to promote interaction, as is the sharing of buildings and other facilities.

Actions are:

- **Engage with schools on community cohesion and the role they can play in promoting interaction through education, and test out with Education Walsall what is already happening and what more might be delivered**
- **Invest in long term activity which brings people together to work on shared interests and concerns:**
 - **Twinning work between different schools, schools from different faiths and youth groups**
 - **Multi Faith Forum activities which challenge the status quo and form a programme of directed activity rather than ad-hoc work**
 - **Inter generational work within geographical areas**

- **Review investment of resources into single group organisations and ensure commissioning requirements include interaction as a priority objective**
- **Plan a cross-Borough “We are Walsall” event, which is underpinned by a framework of common, shared values and lives**

1.2 Developing community leadership

Community leadership plays a significant role in promoting respect and understanding. Community leaders are not only the Elected Members in the local authority, but other people in key positions of representation and responsibility in local communities and organisations.

Community leadership of a different dimension is required for the future, one that encourages a sense of working together for real, sustainable, quality of life benefits to all citizens of Walsall.

Community leaders need to represent and reflect the population of the Borough. Leaders need to not only understand the needs and concerns of people they represent, but also see the bigger picture, and take part in promoting bridging activities between different groups.

At critical times, community leaders need to unite and stand together, giving clear and reassuring messages to local communities. A strong network of community leadership in Walsall is required, which includes Elected Members but also other community leaders.

In order to do this there needs to be a better understanding of those people who play a community leadership role and what that actually means. There is a view that some community leaders do not represent the people or communities they purport to serve. Some groups are under represented, in particular, young people and women from minority ethnic backgrounds.

The Third Sector can play a helpful role in advising, giving information to, and supporting community leaders. This requires that senior officers within the local authority and other public sector organisations invest time in visiting community-based organisations, listening and engaging in the spirit of genuine curiosity with a desire to learn. For community leaders and decision makers, this investment of time will enhance their understanding of the work undertaken, its value and contribution to community cohesion, as well as identifying opportunities for joining together and improvement.

Actions are:

- **Identify and develop known community leaders in Walsall, and reach into communities to identify other people who play leadership roles but are not currently recognised to work directly with them to create a stronger leadership network**
- **Highlight gaps in representation of the population and plan how to address these gaps**
- **Hold briefing events to outline the community cohesion strategy to community leaders**
- **Implement and support the Network of Trust in Walsall, creating young community leaders of the future through the Intercultural Communication and Leadership School**

- **Third Sector agencies and the public sector decision makers agree a series of listening and learning events, to enhance the knowledge of senior officers and other community leaders**

1.3 Understanding communities and planning for change

As communities change, so too do community dynamics and inequalities. and at the moment there are significant changes taking place in Walsall. Understanding these changes and their implications for the future will mean that potential inequalities and tensions can be prevented and addressed. In Walsall we need more detailed mapping of communities, using the analysis and projections of change to inform long term planning, and resource allocation.

It is important to take action where inequalities exist and a more sophisticated understanding of inequality helps promote community cohesion. For example, there are white British children, especially boys, living in areas of high deprivation in Walsall who are as much at risk of under-achieving as Pakistani and Bangladeshi boys. But only by digging underneath the overall data and analysing what is happening, can such issues come to light and be addressed.

A key issue for partners to address is the long term trajectory for households of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin, who are predominantly Muslim. Current indications suggest that these communities are more at risk of deprivation and inequality than any other group. They are also the communities in Walsall projected to increase most significantly in the next 12 years. However, there are other groups at high risk of deprivation as well and some analysis of current and projected inequalities will assist in determining the best use of targeted investment.

One of the most recent changes in Walsall is the arrival of migrant workers from A8 countries. Understanding their needs, barriers to integration and any impact on local, settled communities and services is currently a gap in our knowledge.

Actions are:

- **Ensure all data collection undertaken across the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership is able to be disaggregated by age, ward, gender, ethnicity, disability and where possible, faith and sexual orientation**
- **Undertake a piece of detailed work identifying with the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities their issues relating to matters such as health, employment and educational attainment**
- **Undertake a piece of mapping work on access to health services for hard to reach communities**
- **Forge improved links with region and community leaders on health issues**

1.4 Communicating community cohesion

In our consultation, the need for clear and straightforward communication was seen as vital. Information about what is happening in Walsall, in terms of community cohesion and changes in the community needs to be factual and clear. Without this, perceptions of unequal or special treatment for particular groups can develop unchallenged.

Communicating with different groups of people will mean thinking through the best ways to get key messages across. Leaflets and newsletters are just one method, and in consultation people urged that time and attention was given to reaching people using highly a creative and varied range of mediums.

Communicating with people who are newly arrived to the UK is also an area which a communications plan should address.

Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership will develop a communications plan that runs alongside this strategy. This will cover the follow areas:

- Engage with the local media to work as a stakeholder on community cohesion
- Develop myth busting campaigns on: young people; Muslim people; migrant workers
- Planning for communicating positive activities/events relating to community cohesion over the calendar year
- Planning how to respond as partners and with community leaders to any unexpected local, regional or national events that may impact negatively on community cohesion.
- Creating welcome packs of information for migrant workers, which give essential information on rights and responsibilities

Actions are:

- **Develop a Communications Plan for the Strategy and Action Plan, including reflecting what's happening in detail already, that has a forward programme of campaigns and set-pieces to keep our successes and cohesion issues to the fore**
- **Learn from other local areas in England regarding effective ways to communicate key messages on community cohesion**

1.5 Safeguarding communities against tensions and unrest

Walsall aims to prevent tensions and unrest within our communities. To this end, a community tension monitoring system is in place which is managed through West Midlands Police, as part of their work within the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership. Information is gathered on a monthly basis, analysed by West Midlands Police and the local authority then shared with the Government Office West Midlands.

Further work on developing community tensions reporting and monitoring is underway. Other organisations, particularly Third Sector and public sector agencies working in communities at a grass roots level are being asked to take part in reporting, as the Police recognise the current set of reporting systems do not pick up many early warning indicators of tension.

In addition, existing sets of data could be brought together for improved analysis on tensions, as this should give a better overall picture of tensions. The types of data are: racist incident reporting to the Police, tension monitoring, recording of racist incidents in schools and the information the local authority collects about racist incidents.

The numbers of racist incidents reported to West Midlands Police in Walsall have risen over the last three years. This may be positive, in that it could indicate more community confidence in the Police. Conversely, it could be that there are more numbers of incidents overall. Analysis of why levels of reporting have risen is needed.

There is always a risk of the unexpected happening in any area. Emergency planning is one way that local authorities and the emergency services prepare for such situations. Within Walsall's Emergency Plan several contingencies which could impact on community cohesion are covered, such as community or civil unrest and dealing with the threat of terrorism.

In times of anxiety and tension within communities, community leaders need to work together to provide shared messages, containing both information and reassurance. Having positive and strong networks between community leaders, including faith leaders, most effectively does this.

One area that may require some specific prevention work is with different peer groups of young men, where ethnicity is the determining factor of belonging. There are anecdotal reports that there is low-level animosity between groups of young men in some parts of the Borough, although the Police do not regard these as problematic. However, in order to minimise the risk of tensions developing, gangs forming and violence developing, early intervention is needed.

Actions are:

- **Enhance the current set of reporting arrangements for community tensions monitoring, to include the Third Sector and front line service delivery organisations**
- **Bring together relevant data routinely that can help to build a more detailed picture of tensions**
- **Work with schools on ensuring their racist incident monitoring and reporting is consistent**
- **Undertake analysis of racist incident reporting to West Midlands Police and explore the actions taken by the Police and all partner organisations to ensure they are cogent, cohesive and appropriate to the incidents reported**
- **Ensure the Communication Plan includes how community leaders will respond to unexpected local, regional or national events which may impact negatively on community cohesion**
- **Bring together schools, youth workers, community workers and other stakeholders to collectively gather evidence and discuss the need for and possibility of early intervention work with groups of young men**
- **Carry out a short survey to explore what race equality schemes are in place, how consistent they are with good practice and how they can be coordinated to ensure coherent, partnership-wide action**

2 PLACES

2.1 Developing a neighbourhood approach

Walsall is a borough of contrasts. Different neighbourhoods have different issues and needs. The Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNPs) are the vehicle for planning and overseeing the delivery of local actions to improve the quality of life of local residents, and community cohesion is one aspect of this.

Individual LNP boundaries do not always reflect natural communities. The diversity within an LNP area means that flexibility in planning and delivery must be built in.

LNPs are already working on community cohesion related activities. There are examples of school twinning projects, community celebration events and Skip Days, in which local communities work together with the local authority to clear up an area. LNP officers are well briefed on community cohesion issues. LNPs are central to improving community cohesion in their areas. The Neighbourhood Agreements, which outline overall plans for each LNP area, will be used to highlight the community cohesion actions needed for each area.

Actions are:

- **LNPs to continually consider the priority concerns for their areas and maintain a focus building cohesion actions into future Neighbourhood Agreements**
- **To build an ever more local focus via the LNPs to the partners' main programmes of housing management and refurbishment, economic regeneration, local governance and other place making activities**
- **Explore the potential for more cohesive and joined-up policy making at a local level relating to the creation and maintenance of community cohesion**
- **More effectively coordinate current and future local identity activities to ensure a cohesive approach to presenting the image of neighbourhoods, e.g. signage and 'branding'**
- **Celebrate community diversity in the local areas through community events.**

2.2 Planning for where people live

Walsall is already well underway regenerating areas through new housing developments. Within this, it is recognised that mixed tenure housing and a variety of types and sizes of property will support community cohesion. However, there is no standard process by which community cohesion implications are considered. Using community cohesion impact assessments on housing regeneration planning is an opportunity to apply considerations consistently across the Borough. The local authority on all housing developments should use the se at the early planning stage.

Some areas of Walsall are perceived to be unwelcoming to black and minority ethnic (BME) groups. Evidence of this is in part anecdotal, in terms of verbal reports of racist abuse and intimidation when BME people visit or work in some areas. These are areas

where there are low concentrations of BME people opting to live in social housing. Addressing this requires a number of actions, which together will give a better understanding of the actual and perceived barriers, as well as ways to work with people in communities around prejudices and myths.

Actions are:

- **To use cohesion impact assessments to assess the degree to which housing and other regeneration plans will have a positive impact on community cohesion**
- **Walsall Council and RSLs to conduct a piece of research into any perceived and real barriers of housing choice to BME and other special interest communities. This should link to LNP-led action research, so other aspects, such as access to community facilities, are also covered**
- **Explore ways of widening and deepening the current opportunities for all groups to participate in the design elements of changes to their communities, e.g. housing, economic and health**
- **Initiate a piece of research into how schools can provide greater prominence to social cohesion, bring young people together from different communities and to understand the part played by allocations policy in helping or hindering the diversity of annual intakes**

2.3 Working with regional and national partners

We recognise that Walsall is not an isolated borough and that people travel across boundaries to work and visit, as part of the Black Country and West Midlands.

Walsall is keen to learn from and work with other local authority areas around community cohesion. Due to the cross cutting nature of community cohesion, there are opportunities to engage with and address issues through consortia and forums that we are already part of. These cover housing, policing, economic regeneration and spatial planning on a regional basis. Within the Black Country we are playing our part in the Black Country study and the Joint Core Strategy. In addition, we are working on preventing violent extremism with other Black Country local authority authorities and working with Government Office West Midlands on tensions reporting and monitoring.

Walsall will seek to learn from local authorities in other parts of England and will seek a twinning opportunity when the Department for Communities and Local Government is in a position to facilitate this.

Actions are:

- **To seek a cohesion twinning opportunity with at least one other local authority area, once DCLG are able to facilitate this and to consider the international twinning dimensions of learning about cohesion.**
- **Create a broader base of understanding around the specific and successful work being carried out on tensions monitoring and capacity development underway in the Black Country, and the potential for greater across sub-regional and regional activity**

3.1 Maximising cohesion improvements through regeneration in Walsall

Walsall is at an exciting time, in terms of its regeneration. There are many opportunities to impact on the quality of life for citizens and the well being of communities. Regeneration can be seen in Walsall through for example, improved business opportunities; better job prospects; new housing developments; iconic buildings, upgraded transport infrastructure, the plans for a gigaport and better leisure choices in the town centre.

The rationale for decisions to regenerate a neighbourhood needs to be transparent and fair. Communicating such decisions openly and clearly will reduce the risk of perceptions of special treatment of one community over another.

However, we need to ensure there is no split between the “bricks and mortar” planning and the assessment of possible impacts on local, existing communities and groups.

The benefits of regeneration will only be fully realised if community cohesion implications are taken into account and the regeneration opportunities felt at the level of the individual as well as wider communities. The risk is that regeneration can undermine or marginalise existing communities. Regeneration work planned for the Birchills area is an opportunity to test out what works well and learn in real time how to manage and best deliver regeneration with associated community cohesion benefits.

Using cohesion impact assessments will help to assess regeneration planning and embed community cohesion considerations into decision-making.

Actions are:

- **To use cohesion impact assessments in order to assess the degree to which regeneration plans will have a positive impact on community cohesion**
- **Use the LNPs and other community structures to communicate plans for and progress on regeneration initiatives and to encourage maximum consultation at each stage, with the communities effected.**

3.2 Planning the workforce for the future

In Walsall we know that the root cause of deprivation and inequality is income. All other inequalities stem from this. Job creation and opportunity are essential to address these.

We have already determined the sorts of skills we need for the future. Much of the work to prepare young people and those returning to work is underway and the range of planning in this area can be seen in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Walsall Regeneration Company has led on some innovative ways to recruit, notably the Retail Academy experience in partnership with Asda. Lessons can be drawn from this, in terms of what worked well and what can be replicated more widely. In addition, the exciting approaches to opening up employment markets and equipping people to enter markets needs to be rapidly developed and given more profile.

In order to make sure that the workforce of the future represents and benefits from the broad diversity of the Borough, Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership needs to consider the long term opportunities of workforce planning, across employers, across sectors and across the Borough. By working together, it is more likely that we can reach those groups

who have traditionally not been part of the skilled labour market and open up access to the economy.

Actions are:

- To undertake some action research into workforce planning models which reach traditionally “hard to reach” groups
- Make strong connections between this Strategy and Action Plan and the innovative work of the Regeneration Company around opening up access to the SME market; differently skilling people through the virtual academy; identifying appropriate technologies; developing individual enterprise and social capital specifically
- Health

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Delivering improvements in community cohesion

The implementation of the action plan that accompanies this strategy will be monitored by the Board of Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership.

Delivering against priorities may require additional resources, although it is expected that the majority of the actions will be delivered through mainstream programme 'bending' and embedding community cohesion actions into mainstream planning and delivery mechanisms.

Commissioning will be on the basis of long term investment for sustainable change, rather than short term, one-off projects or pilots. We will undertake needs analysis prior to commissioning and commit to being transparent in decision-making.

In order to understand the progress being made and how effective the work on community cohesion is, Walsall is selecting some performance indicators and setting targets against these.

Walsall already has an integrated performance management framework in place for all the partner organisations to oversee and contribute to, through the Local Area Agreement (LAA). Some of the indicators in the table below are aligned to the LAA.

The performance framework for community cohesion has been developed through identifying national indicators that closely match the aspirations and priorities of the strategy and measure factors that contribute to community cohesion. Where needed, local indicators can be developed. Baseline positions are not available for some of the indicators and these will have to be established in the coming year.

Data for each indicator will be collected at least annually. Some of the data needed is already being collected systematically. Other data can be obtained through the annual Place Survey, which asks people in Walsall different questions about the quality of their lives.

All reporting of progress will be to the Board of the Local Strategic Partnership.

Description of indicator	Type of indicator	Baseline at 2007/08	Target for 2008/09	Target for 2009/10	Responsible agency/body for overseeing indicator
% of residents who feel their area is a place where people of different backgrounds get along together	National indicator set: Stronger Communities				
% of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood	National indicator set: Stronger Communities				
Civic participation in the local area	National indicator set: Stronger Communities				
% of people who feel they can influence decisions in their locality	National indicator set: Stronger Communities				
Participation in regular volunteering	National indicator set: Stronger Communities				
Perceptions of anti social behaviour	National indicator set: Safer Communities				
Building resilience to violent extremism	National indicator set: Safer Communities				
% of 15 year old pupils gaining 5 A*-C GCSEs	National indicator set: Children and young people, enjoy and achieve				
Proportion of children in poverty	National indicator set: Children and Young People, Economic well being				

Description of indicator	Type of indicator	Baseline at 2007/08	Target for 2008/09	Target for 2009/10	Responsible agency/body for overseeing indicator
16 – 18 year olds who are not in employment, education or training (NEET)	National indicator set: Children and Young People, Economic well being				
Number of hate crime incidents reported to the Police per 100,000 of the population	Local indicator				
Working age people on out of work benefits	National indicator set: Tackling exclusion and promoting equality				
Healthy life expectancy at age 65	National indicator set: Adult Health and Well being				

Our commitment to building community cohesion

We believe that 'Every place has its time and it's now Walsall's time.' As a Borough, we can see the changes around us and we are working hard to maximise all the opportunities which will improve the lives of everyone who lives here.

But we know that to achieve our collective potential, we need a shared commitment to community cohesion. This is no easy or straight forward commitment, because building and sustaining good community cohesion is complex. But without strong, inclusive and cohesive communities in our Borough, the gains we all want will not be realised.

There are some challenges ahead for us. We look to the future and see the possible impacts - both positive and negative - of our changing population and community dynamics. We know there are some underlying tensions; that some groups are marginalised and experience multiple deprivation. There are dangers of resentments building, of already highly disadvantaged groups of people becoming more marginalised. There is the real possibility that people start to believe extremist rhetoric, which is based on hate and prejudice.

All organisations who work together in partnership through Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership are committed to playing their part to improving community cohesion. Community leaders and people in influential positions play a significant role in bringing community cohesion to the forefront of what we consider essential for improving people's quality of life.

Doing nothing is not an option. This strategy is our starting point on a journey that involves everyone.

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Oi Optimum Interventions

Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council

Community Cohesion Action Plan

March 2008



Prepared by:

Steve Loraine & Anna Whalen

Contact us at:

Optimum Interventions Ltd.

ointerventions@aol.com

01827 331331

1. People...

1.1 Building mutual respect by understanding what we have in common, as well as our differences

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
1.1.1	Engage with schools on community cohesion and the role they can play in promoting interaction through education, and test out with Education Walsall what is already happening and what more might be delivered	All schools attend meeting with Education Walsall and LNP officers to discuss community cohesion objectives and planning November 2008	Education Walsall	Schools play pro active role in promoting community cohesion within and between local communities
1.1.2	Invest in long term activity which brings people together to work on shared interests and concerns: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Twining work between different schools, schools from different faiths and youth groups ○ Multi Faith Forum activities which challenge the status quo and form a programme of directed activity rather than ad-hoc work ○ Inter generational work within geographical areas 	Specifications will be drawn up based on local needs analysis. Evaluation of work is a key requirement July 2008 Work commissioned on 3 year basis from September 2008	WBSP	Increased interaction between groups enhances community cohesion Learning from work can be shared across the Borough
1.1.3	Review investment of resources into single group organisations and ensure commissioning requirements include interaction as a priority objective	Review undertaken and finding shared with stakeholders December 2008 Amended service specifications drawn up for April 2009	Walsall Council WBSP	Increased interaction between groups enhances community cohesion Improved value for money for commissioners

1.1.4	Plan a cross-Borough "We are Walsall" event, which is underpinned by a framework of common, shared values and lives	Event held by August 2009	WBSP	Improved sense of belonging and people getting on well together
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1. People...

1.2 Developing community leadership

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
1.2.1	Identify and develop known community leaders in Walsall, and reach into communities to identify other people who play leadership roles but are not currently recognised to work directly with them to create a stronger leadership network	Mapping work undertaken November 2008	WBSP Walsall Council CEN Walsall Voluntary Action	Understanding of range of community leaders and the interest groups/communities they represent
1.2.2	Highlight gaps in representation of the population and plan how to address these gaps	Analysis of mapping work undertaken January 2009	WBSP Walsall Council CEN Walsall Voluntary Action	Improved representation from marginalised groups
1.2.3	Hold briefing events to outline the community cohesion strategy to community leaders	A series of briefings held between July 2008 and February 2009	WBSP Walsall Council Walsall Voluntary Action	Community leaders begin to add to and /or form networks with each other to support community cohesion
1.2.4	Implement and support the Network of Trust in Walsall, creating young community leaders of the future through the Intercultural Communication and Leadership School	Review current work on Network of Trust and develop leadership recruitment and training plan with schools' involvement, for the next year July 2008	WBSP Education Walsall Council Youth Service Walsall Voluntary Action	Improved representation from young people

1.2.5	Third Sector agencies and the public sector decision makers hold a series of 'Listening and Learning' events, to enhance the knowledge of senior officers and other community leaders	Briefing to all senior officers and community leaders taking part re: the purpose of the programme and a programme of informal visits drawn up September 2008	Walsall Council WBSP Walsall Voluntary Action	Improved understanding of work in the Third Sector which promotes community cohesion Improved communication between the public and Third Sectors
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1. People...				
1.3 Understanding communities and planning for change				
Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
1.3.1	Ensure all data collection undertaken across the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership is able to be disaggregated by age, ward, gender, ethnicity, disability and where possible, faith and sexual orientation	Key data identified for disaggregating June 2008 Data needs fed into the Place Survey July 2008	WBSP West Midlands Police Walsall Council Walsall PCT WHG Education Walsall	Improved decision making, planning and targeting of resources to improve community cohesion
1.3.2	Undertake a piece of detailed work identifying with the Pakistani and Bangladeshi communities their issues relating to matters such as health, employment and educational attainment	Learn from methodology of similar studies September 2008 Mapping work finished by December 2008	WBSP Walsall Council	Improved understanding of communities will assist in decision making, planning and targeting of resources to improve community cohesion
1.3.3	Undertake a piece of mapping work on the location and needs of migrant workers, barriers to integration and their impact on local settled communities	Learn from methodology of similar studies July 2008 Commission study September 2008	WBSP	Improved understanding of communities will assist in decision making, planning and targeting of resources to improve community cohesion
1.3.4	Undertake a piece of mapping work on access to health services for hard to reach communities	Agree scope of review July 2008 Develop plans to feed into next planning round November 2008	tPCT	Improved understanding of barriers to access to services and action to address these
1.3.5	Forge improved links with region and community leaders on health issues	Produce plan for priority action and health issues to be tackled. June 2008	tPCT	Involvement of religious community leaders in improving access to services and better understanding by tPCT of needs of communities

1. People...				
1.4 Communicating community cohesion				
Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
1.4.1	Develop a Communications Plan for the Strategy and Action Plan, including reflecting what's happening in detail already, that has a forward programme of campaigns and set-pieces to keep our successes and cohesion issues to the fore	Plan in place by July 2008	WBSP Walsall Council	A framework for communicating systematically is in place Monitorable shifts in the understanding of cohesion in everyday terms
1.4.2	Learn from other local areas in England, and potentially internationally, regarding effective ways to communicate key messages on community cohesion	Examples obtained by July 2008	WBSP Walsall Council	Increased effectiveness of communication of the key cohesion messages

1. People...				
1.5 Safeguarding communities against tensions and unrest				
Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
1.5.1	Enhance the current set of reporting arrangements for community tensions monitoring, to include the Third Sector and front line service delivery organisations	New reporting system and training launched November 2008	Safer Walsall Borough Partnership	Improved likelihood of tensions being identified at early stages and resolved
1.5.2	Bring together relevant data routinely that can help to build a picture of tensions	Trial run of data analysis July 2008	Safer Walsall Borough Partnership	Improved likelihood of tensions being identified at early stages and resolved
1.5.3	Work with schools on ensuring their racist incident monitoring and reporting is consistent	Briefings with schools held on racist incident reporting – good practice examples shared October 2008	Education Walsall	Improved picture of community cohesion in schools will assist with planning and targeting of resources/actions
1.5.4	Undertake analysis of racist incident reporting to West Midlands Police and explore the actions taken by the Police and all partner organisations to ensure they are cogent, cohesive and appropriate to the incidents reported	Methodology agreed, and analysis undertaken by December 2008	West Midlands Police Walsall Council	Improved understanding of reasons why racist incident reporting has increased
1.5.5	Ensure the Communication Plan includes how community leaders will respond to unexpected local, regional or national events which may impact negatively on community cohesion	Communications plan drawn up by July 2008 (See action 1.4.1)	WBSP Walsall Council	Community leadership networks area able to respond effectively to any unexpected event
1.5.6	Bring together schools, youth workers, community workers and other stakeholders to collectively gather evidence and discuss the need for and	Fact finding undertaken following a meeting of stakeholders November 2008	Walsall Council Youth Service Walsall Voluntary Action	Early intervention and prevention work undertaken to improve interaction and understanding between

	possibility of early intervention work with groups of young men		Education Walsall LNP officers	different groups of young people
1.5.7	Carry out a short survey to explore what race equality schemes are in place, how consistent they are with good practice and how they can be coordinated to ensure coherent, partnership-wide action	Assess all Race Equality Schemes in public sector using community cohesion impact assessment tool and prepare report for LSP Board November 2008	WBSP with support from Diversity Team from Walsall Council	Ensure there is a shared understanding across partner agencies about race equality issues and priorities.

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2. Places...

2.1 Developing a neighbourhood approach

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
2.1.1	LNPs to continually consider the priority concerns for their areas and maintain a focus building cohesion actions into future Neighbourhood Agreements	All LNPs have tabled community cohesion on their agendas and agreed key priorities for their areas July 2008	Walsall Council	Local neighbourhoods are able to determine and take action on the specific cohesion issues in their areas
2.1.2	To build an ever more local focus via the LNPs to the partners' main programmes of housing management and refurbishment, economic regeneration, local governance and other place making activities	All LNPs to build local plans which evidence local needs and local aspirations. Community cohesion impact assessments are undertaken on all LNP plans. December 2008	WBSP and Walsall Council	Local neighbourhoods are shaped according to locally determined priorities and local needs
2.1.3	Explore the potential for more cohesive and joined-up policy making at a local level relating to the creation and maintenance of community cohesion	As series events held in each LNP to look at cohesion priorities and what works well. Events to draw together members of the public, community leaders, community activists, local service providers, schools and places of worship, and LNP officers. November 2008	WBSP and Walsall Council with support from WVA	Ownership and understanding in local neighbourhoods of the community cohesion issues which need addressing and the actions which will support cohesion
2.1.4	More effectively coordinate current and future local identity activities to ensure a cohesive approach to presenting the image of neighbourhoods, e.g. signage and 'branding'	All LNPs to create an annual rolling plan of local events and the ways in which these are to be communicated. Links between these and the overall communications plan for community cohesion to be established. November 2008	WBSP and Walsall Council	Improved profiling and communication of local events and activities increases local sense of pride and belonging

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2. Places...

2.2 Planning for where people live

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
2.2.1	To use cohesion impact assessments to assess the degree to which housing and other regeneration plans will have a positive impact on community cohesion	Examples of cohesion impact tests from other local authority areas are obtained and a bespoke tool created for Walsall July 2008	Walsall Council Walsall Regeneration Company WBSP	Improved quality of life for Walsall residents and increased community benefits from regeneration investment
2.2.2	Walsall Council and RSLs to conduct a piece of research into any perceived and real barriers of housing choice to BME and other special interest communities. This should link to LNP-led action research, so other aspects, such as access to community facilities, are also covered	Research proposal agreed July 2008 Research commissioned August 2008 Findings presented to stakeholders November 2008	Walsall Council whg other RSLs	Understanding of any barriers will result in specific actions to address any inequality or discrimination
2.2.3	Explore ways of widening and deepening the current opportunities for all groups to participate in the design elements of changes to their communities, e.g. housing, economic and health	Identify creative and innovative practice in other local authority areas, which seek to involve groups that are perceived to be hard to reach. October 2008	WBSP	Improved levels of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o sense of belonging o Ability to influence decision making in local areas.
2.2.4	Initiate a piece of research into how schools can provide greater prominence to social cohesion, bring young people together from different communities and to understand the part played by	Scope the research brief and commission research	Education Walsall	Schools supported to deliver community cohesion outcomes based on evidence of what works well

	allocations policy in helping or hindering the diversity of annual intakes	October 2008		
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2. Places...

2.3 Working with regional and national partners

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
2.3.1	To seek a cohesion twinning opportunity with at least one other local authority area, once DCLG are able to facilitate this and to consider the international twinning dimensions of learning about cohesion.	Twinning partner identified through CLG /Government Office West Midlands December 2008	Walsall Council on behalf of WBSP	Shared learning will assist Walsall in continually improving work on community cohesion
2.3.2	Create a broader base of understanding around the specific and successful work being carried out on tensions monitoring and capacity development underway in the Black Country, and the potential for greater across sub-regional and regional activity	Hold a series of briefings for stakeholders locally on tensions monitoring and prevention work , linking the work to the broader sub regional and regional activity October 2008	Safer Walsall Borough Partnership	Wider understanding of and participation in early tension reporting reduces risks of tensions escalating.

3. Prosperity...

3.1 Maximising cohesion improvements through regeneration in Walsall

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
3.1.1	To use cohesion impact assessments in order to assess the degree to which regeneration plans will have a positive impact on community cohesion	Undertake cohesion impact tests July 2008	Walsall Council Walsall Regeneration Company	Improved understanding of the impact of regeneration on community cohesion
	Julie Ball			

3. Prosperity....

3.2 Planning the workforce for the future

Ref No	Action	Milestone and date	Lead agency	Outcome
3.2.1	To undertake some action research into workforce planning models which reach traditionally "hard to reach" groups	Examples of workforce planning models obtained from other areas and a presentation given to the WBSP Board February 2009	WBSP Walsall PCT	Long term workforce planning includes considerations of the benefits of diversity in the workplace, reaching "hard to reach" groups and benefits to community cohesion
3.2.2	Make strong connections between this Strategy and Action Plan and the innovative work of the Regeneration Company around opening up access to the SME market; differently skilling people through the virtual academy; identifying appropriate technologies; developing individual enterprise and social capital specifically	Workshops that bring together role models, likely new entrants with interested investors September 2008	WBSP Walsall Regeneration Company	Wider appreciation of the entrepreneurial experience in Walsall and how individuals and loose networks of SME's can benefit

	Health			
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BRIEFING NOTE

TO: NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL
DATE: 4 SEPTEMBER 2008

RE: BUDGET SETTING 2009/10 – 2011/12

Purpose

To consider the resource planning document for the Neighbourhoods Directorate which includes details on service objectives, priorities and finance.

Report

At its meeting on 29 July 2008 the Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel noted the revised budget setting process for 2009/10 – 2011/12.

Members will recall that the first part of the budget process was to the completion of a 'resource planning document' which would include relevant information which would provide the 'story' for each of the services for previous and future years. This will provide Members with information on service objectives, pressures, challenges and cost versus performance information that will be used alongside the priority setting process for 2009/10 – 2011/12 and provide a focus for investment/disinvestment proposals and decisions that the Panel will consider later in the year.

The resource planning document for the Neighbourhoods Directorate is enclosed separately as an appendix to this report.

Recommendations

That, subject to any questions and comments Members may wish to make, the resource planning document for the Neighbourhoods Directorate be noted.

Author

Craig Goodall
Acting Principal Scrutiny Officer
☎ 01922 653317
goodallc@walsall.gov.uk

BRIEFING NOTE

TO: NEIGHBOURHOODS SCRUTINY AND PERFORMANCE PANEL
DATE: 4 SEPTEMBER 2008

RE: ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR WORKING GROUP

Purpose

To update Members on progress so far with the Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group.

Background

The Neighbourhoods Scrutiny and Performance Panel appointed an Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group (ASBWG) at its meeting on 10 June 2008 and approved terms of reference for the working group on 29 July 2008. Since then progress with the working group has continued.

The organisations to provide co-opted advisors to the working group have been approached and individuals to join the working group are currently being finalised.

The working group is holding a meeting with a range of community representatives on 28 August 2008 at Blakenall Village Centre to discuss ASB issues at grass roots level and gain evidence of the levels and types of ASB that take place in the borough. An update on the outcome of this meeting will be provided verbally on 4 September 2008.

The working will also be hosting a training event, open to all Members of the Council, on 18 September 2008. At this meeting representatives from the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership will discuss ASB policy and practice with Members.

Finally, a project plan for the working group has been produced. This is attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Recommended

That, subject to any comments Members may wish to make, progress with the Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group be noted.

Author

Councillor Chris Towe
Lead Member, Anti-Social Behaviour Working Group
towec@walsall.gov.uk

ASB WORKING GROUP ACTION PLAN

CHAIR: Cllr Chris Towe

LEAD OFFICER: Nozmul Hussain

PROJECT DELIVERY OFFICER: TBC

PROJECT TEAM: Craig Goodall, Michael Carey, Lynne Hughes

Activity	Action	Lead	Timescale
Establish ASB Working Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSP to agree TOR of ASB Working Group • Invite co-optees • Organise first meeting of full ASB Working Group • Agree Action Plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr CT • NH • CG • Cllr CT 	13 Aug
Organise initial meeting with front line service providers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify and invite key front line officers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CG 	28 Aug
ASB Training & Briefing for Members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with Corporate Performance to invite Working Group and other elected members to training event. • Consult with working group in order to ascertain current knowledge and understanding of ASB issues and practice. • Deliver training event as outlined in training plan 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CG • MC, LH, CG • MC,LH, NH 	18 Sept
Good practice compilation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and identify ASB good practice within borough • Organise out of borough visit to look at good practice on ASB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Delivery Officer, CG 	Sept -Nov
Mapping ASB policy, practice and programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Devise questionnaire to collate info from agencies listed in scoping doc to identify who does what 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Delivery Officer, CG 	Sept - Dec

	<p>around the four themes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct interviews to glean info from services • Undertake analysis of ASB using data from ASB unit covering location, victim/offender profile, case management, etc • Undertake assessment of multi agency case management • Analyse ASB complaints to WHG, police, ASB Unit & Council to look at type of ASB reported and outcome. 		
Stakeholder/community meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise meeting with young people • BME groups • Elderly • Small Businesses • Faith group • Women • Community/voluntary organisations et al. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CG, project Delivery Officer 	Sept onwards
ASB Working Group inter-active session with key stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify stakeholder to invite to ASB Working group inter active session • invite stakeholders to present their work to ASB working group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Delivery Officer, CG • Project Delivery Officer, CG,NH 	Nov
ASB working group assess draft borough wide multi agency ASB strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft strategy to be presented to Working Group following multi-agency input and consultation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • MC 	Oct./Nov
ASB working group meeting to consider findings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult with Working Group in order to ascertain their views and ensure their objectives have been 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Delivery Officer 	Jan 2009

	<p>met. Comparison with initial consultation to be made.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Detailed evaluation and analysis of project findings to be carried out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project Delivery Officer,CG,NH 	
Report to SSCP Board	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report and analysis of findings to be presented to SSCP Board 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NH 	Feb 2009
Report to Cabinet	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Report of project to be presented to Cabinet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr. CT, NH 	18 March 2009