



## **Scrutiny Overview Committee**

**11 December 2023 at 6:00PM**

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

**[Livestream Link](#)**

**Membership:**

Councillor Murray (Chair)  
Councillor Nawaz (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor P Bott  
Councillor Cooper  
Councillor Ditta  
Councillor Follows  
Councillor Hicken  
Councillor K. Hussain  
Councillor Sears  
Councillor Singh Sohal  
Councillor Waters

**Portfolio Holder(s):**

Councillor Bird – Leader of the Council

**Quorum:**

4 Members

The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012  
Specified pecuniary interests

The pecuniary interests which are specified for the purposes of Chapter 7 of Part 1 of the Localism Act 2011 are the interests specified in the second column of the following:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Prescribed description</b>
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	<p>Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the relevant authority) made or provided within the relevant period in respect of any expenses incurred by a member in carrying out duties as a member, or towards the election expenses of a member.</p> <p>This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Regulations (Consolidation) Act 1992.</p>
Contracts	<p>Any contract which is made between the relevant person (or a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest) and the relevant authority:</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
Land	Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the relevant authority.
Licences	Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the relevant authority for a month or longer.
Corporate tenancies	<p>Any tenancy where (to a member's knowledge):</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the relevant authority;</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest.</p>
Securities	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities of a body where:</p> <p>(a) that body (to a member's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the relevant authority; and</p> <p>(b) either:</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>

Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

1. Information relating to any individual.
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual.
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations, in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the authority.
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings.
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes:
  - (a) to give any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or
  - (b) to make an order or direction under any enactment.
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime.
8. Information being disclosed during a meeting of a Scrutiny and Performance Panel when considering flood risk management functions which:
  - (a) Constitutes a trades secret;
  - (b) Its disclosure would, or would be likely to, prejudice the commercial interests of any person (including the risk management authority);
  - (c) It was obtained by a risk management authority from any other person and its disclosure to the public by the risk management authority would constitute a breach of confidence actionable by that other person.

## **Part 1 – Public Session**

- 1. Apologies**  
To receive apologies for absence from Members of the Committee.
- 2. Substitutions**  
To receive notice of any substitutions for a Member of the Committee for the duration of the meeting.
- 3. Minutes of the previous meeting**  
To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 9 November 2023.  
*(Enclosed - Page 5 to 11)*
- 4. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**  
To receive declarations of interest or the party whip from Members in respect of items on the agenda.
- 5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended):**  
To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.
- 6. Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2027/28**  
To provide an overview of the draft revenue and capital budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee.  
*(Enclosed - Page 12 to 25)*
- 7. Forecast Revenue and Capital Outturn for 2023/24 – 6 month position ended 30 September 2023**  
To provide an overview of the forecast financial position for 2023/24 in respect of services within the remit of this Committee.  
*(Enclosed - Page 26 to 46)*
- 8. Areas of focus – 2023/24**  
To consider the areas of focus for the Committee during 2023/24  
*(Enclosed - Page 47)*
- 9. Forward Plans**  
To receive the latest Forward Plans in respect of the following:
  - Executive Forward Plans.
  - Black Country Joint Executive Committee.
  - West Midlands Combined Authority Board.*(Enclosed - Page 48 to 63)*
- 10. Recommendations Tracker**  
To consider progress on recommendations from the previous meeting.  
*(Enclosed - Page 64 to 66)*
- 11. Date of next meeting**  
To note the date of the next meeting will be 6 February 2024

## **Scrutiny Overview Committee**

**Thursday 9 November 2023, 6:00pm**

**In the Council Chamber at the Council House, Walsall**

**Committee Members  
present:**

Councillor Murray (Chair)  
Councillor Nawaz (Vice Chair)  
Councillor Follows  
Councillor Hicken  
Councillor K. Hussain  
Councillor Sears  
Councillor Waters

**Portfolio Holders  
present:**

Councillor Bird – Leader of the Council  
Councillor Perry – Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resilient Communities  
Councillor Ferguson – Portfolio Holder for Internal Services

**Officers present:**

Judith Greenhalgh - Interim Executive Director Resources  
Michele Leith – Director of HR OD and Administration  
Elise Hopkins – Director of Customer Engagement  
Nicola Rickhuss – Head of Strategic HRM  
Craig Goodall – Principal Democratic Services Officer  
Matt Powis – Senior Democratic Services Officer

**Others in attendance:**

Councillor Bayton – Chair of West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee  
Councillor McNicholas - Chair of Transport Delivery OSC (WMCA)  
Lyndsey Roberts - Principal Scrutiny Officer (WMCA)  
James Hughes - Member Relationship Manager (WMCA)  
Billy Dunlop - Governance Services Officer (WMCA)

**27 Apologies**

An apology was submitted on behalf of Councillor Ditta.

**28 Substitutions**

There were no substitutions.

**29 Declarations of interest and party whip**

No declarations of interest or party whip were received.

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

There were no agenda items requiring the exclusion of the public.

31 **Minutes of the previous meeting**

(Annexed)

**Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2023, copies having previously been circulated, be approved and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.**

32 **West Midlands Combined Authority Overview & Scrutiny 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Report 2022/23**

The Chair invited Councillor Bayton as the Chair of the WMCA Overview and Scrutiny Committee to present the fifth scrutiny annual report. Councillor McNicholas, Chair of the Transport Delivery Committee was also in attendance to support the work of the WMCA Scrutiny Committee.

(Annexed)

Members were informed that the primary role of the WMCA Scrutiny Committee was to hold the Mayor of the WMCA and Portfolio Leads to account. The Committee successfully held a number of public Mayoral Q&A Sessions which were structured around two themes on accountability and investment.

It was highlighted that a governance review had taken place which resulted in the establishment of the Transport Delivery Scrutiny Committee. This Committee had engaged with all Members on aspects relating to transport including bus delivery and safer travel plans. This work was championed by the Chair of the Transport Delivery Committee, Councillor McNicholas.

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

- Proposed amendments to incorporate both Police and Crime Commissioner and Mayor of WMCA role, would not amend existing Scrutiny arrangements. Therefore, the Police and Crime Panel would remain active.
- There was awareness that the WMCA needed to improve communication with Councillors from all communities across the conurbation. There was a suggestion that the WMCA encourages the use of 'funded by WMCA' on promotional materials.
- The Government's commitment for devolution would increase focus on scrutiny arrangements and build good practice.
- WMCA was committed to engaging with local councils including Walsall to discuss local issues, crossover scrutiny work and upcoming projects. There was a suggestion that the WMCA Scrutiny Board engage with local scrutiny boards on issues that affect Walsall residents.

- WMCA regularly publish agendas and reports on it's website, which were available for public inspection. In addition, there were regular posts on social media on the work of scrutiny across the municipal year.
- There were a number of Boards at the WMCA which considered cross policy themes and Members from constituent and non-constituent authorities were able to participate in discussions and debate.
- WMCA reiterated their commitment to engaging with local Councils and encouraged a future invitation to present their work on projects or interventions affecting Walsall at a future meeting of the Committee.
- Leader of the Council confirmed that the WMCA needed to investigate an effective method of communicating with passengers using transport like real-time timetables.
- There was a view that transport in the West Midlands was categorically underfunded compared to areas such as Manchester and London.
- A Member recommended that representatives nominated by Council to the WMCA, Fire Authority, Transport for West Midlands and Police and Crime Panel be invited to present a report to Council on an annual basis for reasons of transparency and accountability.
- The Leader of the Council suggested that a standing item be added to each Council agenda to discuss a synopsis of the work of the WMCA and attendance record of Walsall Council representatives at each meeting of Council.

The Chair thanked representatives for their attendance and welcomed closer cooperation with the WMCA.

**Resolved:**

- 1. That the work of West Midlands Combined Authority representatives be noted.**
- 2. That those members appointed to the West Midlands Combined Authority, Transport for West Midlands, Fire Authority and the Police and Crime Panel provide an annual report to full Council.**

**33 Recruitment and Retention**

The Portfolio Holder for Internal Services presented the report on the Council's recruitment and retention proposals as part of the Council's Workforce Strategy.

(Annexed)

The Committee was informed that workforce and work relations were constantly evolving due to technological advancements, globalisation, competition and retention of talent and financial constraints. To address these challenges, the Council was required to design and implement a successful workforce strategy which was fit for purpose. The strategy focused on the following aspects:

- Create a positive and psychologically safe culture that encourages respect, trust, empathy, creativity, innovation and an engaged and supported workforce.

- Employer of choice, providing an inclusive working environment and attractive employment offer to support the recruitment and retention of our future workforce.
- Upskilling the workforce to meet future needs.
- Develop our future leaders.
- Promote equitable career progression for all employees.
- Embrace digital technology to aid automation and streamlining.
- Provide a positive work-life balance and flexibility.
- Provide coaching or mentoring and regular feedback to aid development, improve performance and encourage employees to feel valued.

It was hoped that the Workforce Strategy would improve customer and service user experiences through service efficiencies and quality improvements.

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

- The Council was reviewing the induction process for new starters including agency staff to ensure that the process was helpful and informative. There was a commitment for new starters to commence their induction prior to commencement of employment.
- All new internal and external vacancies including secondment opportunities were required to be advertised.
- Some of the hard to fill vacancies had been transformed into apprenticeships and graduates positions.
- The Council had successfully established staff networks for underrepresented groups which were crucial to encourage existing staff to fully realise their potential.
- A Member requested figures relating to internal promotions with a specific breakdown on ethnic backgrounds. In response, the Director of HR, OD and ABS confirmed that a response would be provided in writing.
- The Council used the West Midlands Jobs Board to locally advertise vacancies and tries to engage with local schools and Walsall College to sell career pathways in Local Government.
- There was a commitment to try and engage with local educational establishments to offer the right skills in order to target the right jobs.
- Electronic exit interview forms were provided to those employees leaving the Council. In addition, face to face exit interviews could be requested on demand as appropriate. A breakdown of the reasons and figures on exit monitoring would be provided to the Committee in writing.
- There was a view to strengthen contract management to ensure that contractors were procured at a statutory industry and good recruitment standard.

The Chair thanked representatives for their attendance and welcomed a future report on the implementation of the Council's Workforce Strategy.



**Resolved:**

**That, the Council's recruitment, and retention proposals be noted.**

**34 Local Authority Control of Housing Waiting List**

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Resilient Communities presented a report on the Council's control of administering the local housing waiting list.

(Annexed)

The Committee were informed that the Council had been notified in February 2023 by Walsall Housing Group (WHG) of their intention to close the waiting list to non WHG tenants, due to a significant number of applicants. As a result, the Council had the opportunity to undertake control of the waiting list. During this process, it became necessary for the Council to launch a new housing register to ensure individuals could still apply on the housing register. As part of transitional arrangements, WHG remained in control of the list whilst the Council worked to commence arrangements and in September 2023, the new housing register became operational. Transitional activities were due to end in January 2024.

As part of the nomination agreement, the Council reserved the right for 50% of nominations for all properties that become available for re-let each year.

The Director of Customer Engagement confirmed that the Council had worked diligently with WHG on transfer arrangements. As part of the review of the Housing Allocation Policy, the Council would look to introduce fairness, compassion and prioritisation of local connections. The breakdown of the housing nomination and customer demand were presented as follows:

- 1593 direct applications had been received to join the housing register;
- 3307 applications were waiting for transition arrangements from WHG to the Council's new register;
- 653 telephone calls had been received with 42 applications supported by Walsall Connected.

It was noted that whilst arrangements between WHG and Council had been executed effectively, there was a significant shortage of social housing in the Borough. Following the implementation of the new housing register, it was the intention of the directorate to review arrangements, consider any lessons learned and consult on the Council's new Housing Allocations Policy in 2024/25.

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

- Most Housing Associations and Social Landlords did not have their own waiting lists and relied upon the Council review arrangements via internal transfer lists. It was the intention of WHG to keep their own housing waiting list to prioritise their own tenants.

- Members thanked the Director of Customer Engagement for the work of the team on the consultation exercise with Members on the new arrangements.
- 50% of the nomination rights were guaranteed for the Council as a statutory minimum.
- Homelessness caused a significant demand for the Council and therefore the new housing register would enable the Council to work more efficiently on allocations in this respect.
- There had been significant work on engagement of the transfer process with customers. Follow up consultation with individuals had commenced including social media targeting.
- Mutual exchange routing which allowed residents to move within social housing required more publicity and education with residents.
- A Member raised concerns regarding the lack of social media engagement in respect of the transfer from WHG.
- Prioritisation of individuals was based on circumstances and health requirements at the time of application.
- There were concerns of WHG engagement with tenants and resolving maintenance issues.
- The Council had upskilled internal staff to be able to advise applicants on the application process for the housing waiting list and the associated criteria.
- There was a plea for private landlords to engage with the Council on respective available properties.
- Social housing and landlords were required to carry out maintenance work to a specific standard of workmanship. However, the Council had statutory powers to intervene with any problematic landlords in respect of unsatisfactory work and repairs.
- A discussion ensued on the rights of tenants in respect of disrepair and notice of possession. It was agreed for information on this matter to be disseminated to all Councillors.
- Portfolio Holder for Resilient Communities confirmed that the Council did not historically pay for WHG to maintain the housing register. However, the Council had invested £227k into a new team to maintain the register once transferred, which was welcomed by the Committee.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holder for their attendance and welcomed an opportunity to review the Housing Allocation Policy including costs and benefit of the service at a future meeting of the Committee.

**Resolved:**

**That, the Local Authority control of the housing waiting list be noted.**

**35 Feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

The Chair invited each Scrutiny Committee Chair to present their feedback since the last meeting of the Committee.

36 **Recommendation Tracker**

The Committee received the tracker of recommendations from previous meetings, including progress made and outstanding items. (Annexed)

A discussion ensued in respect of Section 106 funding and how monies were spent in different areas in the Borough. There was a consensus that specific breakdowns of funding, should be raised with the Head of Planning and Building Control or raised on the Member Enquiry App.

**Resolved:**

**That the recommendation tracker be noted.**

37 **Areas of Focus 2023-24**

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

The Chair informed the Committee that the last meeting of the calendar year would be focused on the Council's Draft Budget and Capital Programme as well as Q2 Financial Monitoring.

**Resolved:**

**That, the areas of focus for 2023-24 be noted.**

38 **Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be 11 December 2023.

There being no further business this meeting was terminated at 8:26pm.

Signed:

Date:

Scrutiny Overview Committee

11 DECEMBER 2023

**Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2027/28**

**Ward(s)** All

**Portfolios:** Cllr M Bird – Leader of the Council  
Cllr A Andrew – Deputy Leader and Regeneration  
Cllr G Perry – Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities  
Cllr G Ali – Customer  
Cllr K Ferguson – Internal Services

**Executive Summary:**

The draft budget, as reported to Cabinet on 18 October 2023, includes the latest medium term financial outlook (MTFO) for the four-year period from 2024/25 to 2027/28. It also outlines the draft revenue budget for 2024/25 to 2027/28 (including savings proposals identified to date for consultation), the draft capital programme for 2024/25 to 2027/28, and sets out the process and timescale for setting a legally balanced budget for 2024/25.

Our MTFO has been updated for all known pressures, including best professional assumptions around the cost-of-living impact, and that on rising demand on our services. Due to the size and breadth of cost pressures, this has had a significant impact on the assumptions in relation to the 2024/25 budget, with additional growth now required of c£57.69m, resulting in a budget gap of c£18.06m.

The Council is legally obliged to set a one-year balanced budget (2024/25), however a medium-term approach is beneficial to allow for sound financial planning and to support future financial stability. The proposals set out in this report do not yet balance the budget for 2024/25, so there will be a requirement to report back on changes and options to close the gap at the next meeting of Cabinet on 13 December 2023. All draft proposals are subject to changes arising from the Autumn Statement due on 22 November 2023, and a provisional settlement yet to be received (anticipated mid-December). A number of savings proposals are also included for 2025/26 to 2027/28, with further options being identified to allow for a balanced budget over the period 2025/26 to 2027/28 aligned to the Council Plan and Proud activity.

The 2024/25 draft budget assumes a 2.99% general council tax increase and a further 2% precept for Adult Social Care in line with current referendum assumptions, with a 1.99% per annum increase thereafter. This is expected to be confirmed when we receive our draft 2024/25 settlement in December 2023.

The draft capital programme for 2024/25 totals £132.08m. It sets out capital investment funded from the council's own resources of £75.23m (funded by capital receipts and borrowing) and externally funded schemes of £56.85m (funded by capital grants) and represents a balanced programme for 2024/25. In addition, the report sets out a further three years of indicative proposals to 2027/28. Despite reductions in capital funding in recent years and going forward, the draft capital programme contains significant investment into regeneration initiatives,

highways, education, and into adult and children's social care and housing to support vulnerable households through Health through Warmth and provision of aids and adaptations.

This report provides the link to the full draft budget report presented to Cabinet on 18 October 2023, and an extract of the Proud draft revenue savings proposals and investments / cost pressures for 2024/25 – 2027/28 by Proud Outcomes identified to date, which fall within the remit of the Scrutiny Overview Committee for consideration. It also provides a summary of the draft capital programme for schemes within the remit of this Committee.

Feedback from the Committee on the draft revenue and capital proposals to date will be reported back to Cabinet on 13 December 2023 for consideration.

The revenue proposals set out in the report to Cabinet on 18 October 2023 do not yet balance the budget for 2024/25, so there will be a requirement to report back on changes and options to close the remaining c£18m gap at the next meeting of Cabinet on 13 December 2023, and subsequent report to this committee with the link to the Cabinet report and any changes relating to services within the remit of this committee.

The final draft budget will be considered by Cabinet on 7 February 2024 for recommendation to Council on 22 February 2024. Any changes to draft revenue and capital budget proposals as a result of equality impact assessments and consultation will also be fed into the final budget report.

#### **Reason for scrutiny:**

To enable consultation of the overall draft revenue and capital budget proposals for the council as a whole, and for services within the remit of this Committee.

#### **Recommendations:**

##### **That:**

1. The Committee are recommended to consider the draft revenue budget and capital programme as presented to Cabinet on 18 October 2023 (link provided below), and that feedback will be presented to Cabinet on 13 December 2023.
2. The Committee are recommended to consider the draft revenue budget proposals to date as attached that relate to the remit of this committee as shown in **Appendices 1 and 2**, and that feedback will be presented to Cabinet on 13 December 2023.
3. The Committee note that the revenue budget for 2024/25 is currently not balanced, with a gap of c£18m, and therefore a further report will be required to this committee with the link to the next budget report to Cabinet in December, and any changes to draft proposals outlined relating to services within the committee's remit.
4. The Committee are recommended to consider the draft capital schemes included in the draft capital programme attached that relate to the remit of this committee as shown in **Appendices 3 and 4**, and that feedback will be presented to Cabinet on 13 December 2023.

#### **Background papers:**

Various financial working papers.

## Resource and legal considerations:

Cabinet on 18 October 2023 were presented with a list of draft Proud revenue savings proposals for consultation and a list of investment/cost pressures by Proud outcome, along with a draft capital programme over the period 2024/25 to 2027/28.

The full Cabinet report can be accessed at the following link:

[Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Cabinet 18 October 2023](#)

### Maximising Outcomes through Budgeting 2024/25 onwards

Our approach to budget setting was established in 2020 with overall financial savings expected to be delivered via Proud activity. For 2024/25 Proud work streams will continue to provide the 'enablers' to allow Directorates to deliver through Service Transformation Plans (STP's).

Directors reviewed their (STP's to identify how individual services can be transformed to generate further efficiencies, along with any short-term investment requirements to enable this to progress, linking their current and future service delivery with Council priority outcomes as per the Council Plan. This allows for identification of potential transformation activity and associated savings for future financial years. Those identified to date are outlined within the draft budget report to Cabinet on 18 October 2023, with further work in train to identify further opportunities to close the financial gap for 2024/25 and future years.

The Council Plan direction of travel approach sets out how the budget will be aligned to deliver the desired outcome i.e., through different amounts of delivery, coordination, influencing, signposting, or regulating. A review of the current delivery model will be undertaken alongside the direction of travel and re-prioritised where appropriate to maximise value for money and overall delivery of outcomes and ensuring the 2024/25 onwards budget is built and developed on this moving forward.

### Investment / cost pressures

Further to the changes in assumptions, the draft budget 2024/25 – 2027/28 includes provision for growth and investment of c£133m (£57.69m of this is in 2024/25). Those investments relating to the remit of this Committee are shown at **Appendix 1** and total £43.70m over 4 years.

### Savings proposals

The Proud service transformation plans have identified £13.58m of financial benefit for 2024/25 (including the review of the £8.10m identified in the budget report to Council in February 2023). There is also £9.37m identified for 2025/26, £7.91m for 2026/27 and £6.72m for 2027/28. Benefits / savings are classified into two categories:

1. Policy Proposals - which require an Executive decision to proceed, and which will be referred for public consultation and equality impact assessment. These total £333k in 2024/25 (£453k over the four years to 2027/28).
2. Operational Proposals – savings which officers have delegations to implement; examples include restructures, back-office savings, operational efficiencies. These total £13.25m in 2024/25 (£37.12m over the four years to 2027/28).

Some proposals require investment to support delivery. Such investment will only be allocated if the relevant saving proposal is included within Cabinet’s final budget report in February, once consultation and equality impact assessment has concluded.

Savings proposals outlined in the report to Cabinet on 18 October 2023 will assist in closing the gap over the four years to 2027/28. A gap of £18.06m remains after the delivery of the £13.58m saving identified for 2024/25, with a further £14.24m saving requirement for 2025/26, £8.57m for 2026/27 and £9.36m for 2027/28. Through budget week and beyond, a number of themes were identified for prioritisation to take forward to support the 2024/25 position and also form the foundations of the medium-term financial strategy, building on the work of the Proud programme. Directors continue to work on identifying additional options for Members consideration, and further reports will be presented to Cabinet outlining further options to balance the budget for 2024/25 onwards. A work stream review of the STP’s is taking place to ensure that they maximise opportunities from the Proud ways of working and capabilities, and therefore capture the full benefits; to ensure they capture innovative thinking; and to challenge any opportunities to accelerate identified savings.

Those savings proposals relating to the remit of this Committee are shown at **Appendix 2** and total £2.81m over 4 years.

#### Net investment / savings

The following summarises the net investment /(savings) by Directorate for 2024/25.

<b>Net Investment/savings by Directorate 2024/25</b>	<b>Investment £m</b>	<b>Savings £m</b>	<b>Net £m</b>
Adult Social Care, Public Health and Hub	28.61	(4.59)	24.02
Children's Services	14.09	(4.14)	9.95
Children's - Customer Engagement	1.30	(0.43)	0.87
Economy, Environment and Communities	3.73	(3.06)	0.68
Resources and Transformation	0.86	(1.35)	(0.49)
Central / Capital Financing*	9.09	0.00	9.09
<b>Total Net Investments by Directorate</b>	<b>57.69</b>	<b>(13.58)</b>	<b>44.11</b>

\*Central investment includes £8.09m of pay and pension costs which will be allocated to services following a detailed review of salary budget requirements.

Therefore, when central investments are taken into account, all Directorates will see a net increase in budgets.

#### Draft Capital Programme

The draft capital programme for 2024/25 is balanced and totals £132.08m. It sets out new capital investment funded from the council’s own resources of £75.23m (funded by capital receipts and borrowing) and externally funded schemes of £56.85m (funded by capital grants). In addition, the report sets out a further three years of indicative proposals to 2027/28.

Those council funded schemes relating to the remit of this Committee are shown at **Appendix 3** totalling £74.96m over 4 years, and external funded schemes of £17.05m at **Appendix 4**.



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**APPENDIX 1**

**Summary of New Growth and Investment 2024/25 to 2027/28 aligned to Proud Outcomes relating to the remit of this Committee.**

Directorate	Ref No	Details of Growth by outcome	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
<b>People can access support in their community to keep safe and well and remain independent at home</b>							
Children's, Education & Customer Engagement	9	Crisis support - to support Walsall residents in crisis	300,000	0	0	0	300,000
	<b>Total People can access support in their community to keep safe and well and remain independent at home</b>		<b>300,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>300,000</b>
<b>We get things right, first time and make all services accessible and easy to use</b>							
Children's, Education & Customer Engagement	39	Reduction in housing benefit administration grant	46,148	43,840	40,000	40,000	169,988
	40	Increase in volume of Bank Charges for receiving online payments	111,122	0	0	0	111,122
	41	Reduction in Housing Benefit administration grant	50,000	0	0	0	50,000
	42	Costs of Bringing the Housing Register in house	225,000	0	0	0	225,000
	43	Increase in Bed and Breakfast costs	568,620	17,059	17,571	18,549	621,799
<b>Total We get things right, first time and make all services accessible and easy to use</b>		<b>1,000,890</b>	<b>60,899</b>	<b>57,571</b>	<b>58,549</b>	<b>1,177,909</b>	
<b>The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring</b>							
Adult Social Care, Public Health & Hub	44	Policy & Strategy - Walsall 2040	10,000	0	0	0	10,000
	45	Policy & Strategy - running costs	36,000	0	0	0	36,000
Resources & Transformation	46	Cloud / Microsoft licences and infrastructure costs	55,000	750,400	31,520	0	836,920
	47	Additional capacity for Finance strategic partnering (linked to saving OP39)	276,039	0	0	0	276,039
	48	Digital and Technology - implement standardised addressing in two social care systems	30,000	0	0	0	30,000
	49	Human Resources - Organisational Leadership Development	100,000	(100,000)	0	0	0
	50	Payroll and Pensions - shortfall in income from schools	60,000	0	0	0	60,000
	51	Information Governance - shortfall in income from schools	62,000	0	0	0	62,000
	52	Digital and Technology - post within Operational Services to address increased demand in technology	0	120,780	0	0	120,780
	53	Human Resources Specialist Services - business administration support to Childrens	280,000	(280,000)	0	0	0

Directorate	Ref	Details of Growth by outcome	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Central / Capital Financing	54	Capital financing / Minimum Revenue Provision review	1,202,650	(133,042)	600,000	600,000	2,269,608
	55	Revenue implications of capital programme	160,750	250,000	250,000	250,000	910,750
	56	Energy – fall out of investment	(600,000)	0	0	0	(600,000)
	57	Pay / pension provision	8,091,911	9,176,333	8,047,828	6,547,828	31,863,900
	58	WM Combined Authority contribution for Metro	232,802	705,458	242,207	250,000	1,430,467
	59	Cost of living / demand provision	0	1,500,000	1,500,000	1,500,000	4,500,000
<b>Total The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring</b>			<b>9,997,152</b>	<b>11,989,929</b>	<b>10,671,555</b>	<b>9,147,828</b>	<b>41,806,464</b>
<b>The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough</b>							
Economy, Environment & Communities	90	Increase of Community Protection Enforcement Officers	197,872	0	0	0	197,872
	91	Town Centre Guardians x 4	114,043	0	0	0	114,043
	96	Reintroduce a youth team into the community	100,000	0	0	0	100,000
<b>Total The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough</b>			<b>411,915</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>411,915</b>
<b>Total Growth and investment relating to the remit of this Committee</b>			<b>11,709,957</b>	<b>12,050,828</b>	<b>10,729,126</b>	<b>9,206,377</b>	<b>43,696,288</b>

## APPENDIX 2

### Benefits Realisation (Savings) for Proud activity by Outcome 2024/25 to 2027/28 relating to the remit of this Committee.

#### A: Summary of Policy Proposals by Outcome 2024/25 – 2027/28

- None relating to the remit of this Committee

#### B: Summary of Operational Proposals by Outcome 2024/25 – 2027/28

Directorate	Ref No	Detail of Operational Proposals by Outcome	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
<b>People can access support in their community to keep safe and well and remain independent at home</b>							
Economy, Environment & Communities	OP12	Non-Statutory Training in Community and Partnerships	(34,238)	0	0	0	(34,238)
<b>Total People can access support in their community to keep safe and well and remain independent at home</b>			<b>(34,238)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(34,238)</b>
<b>We get things right, first time and make all services accessible and easy to use</b>							
Children's, Education & Customer Engagement	OP35	Explore full cost recovery for administration of Energy Company Obligation (ECO) by fee charging	(50,000)	0	0	0	(50,000)
Children's, Education & Customer Engagement	OP36	50% mitigation of Bed and Breakfast costs - increase Temporary Accommodation provision	(383,917)	(209,235)	(221,444)	(24,438)	(839,034)
<b>Total We get things right, first time and make all services accessible and easy to use</b>			<b>(433,917)</b>	<b>(209,235)</b>	<b>(221,444)</b>	<b>(24,438)</b>	<b>(889,034)</b>
<b>The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring</b>							
Adult Social Care, Public Health & Hubs	OP37	Removal of vacant posts within the Policy & Strategy Hub	(48,703)	0	0	0	(48,703)
Resources & Transformation	OP38	Service Desk 9-5	(25,000)	0	0	0	(25,000)
	OP39	Reduction in Finance Business Partner capacity aligned to further efficiencies to then fund new investment required at the strategic Finance Business Partner level as per Enabling Support Services blueprint - linked to investment 47	(276,039)	0	0	0	(276,039)
	OP40	Renegotiate Wide Area Network contract	(30,000)	0	0	0	(30,000)
	OP41	Replace Evolutive with in house system	(10,000)	0	0	0	(10,000)
	OP42	Stop using Microsoft Office	(15,000)	0	0	0	(15,000)
	OP43	Retire Mayrise system	0	(40,000)	0	0	(40,000)
	OP44	Replace ParkMap with Geospatial Product Suite	(2,149)	0	0	0	(2,149)

Directorate	Ref No	Detail of Operational Proposals by Outcome	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Resources & Transformation	OP45	Review of courier costs of equipment to new starters	(50,000)	0	0	0	(50,000)
	OP46	Digital and Technology - reduction in Supplies and Services (servers moving to cloud)	(100,000)	0	0	0	(100,000)
	OP47	Insurance renewal contract	(200,000)	0	0	0	(200,000)
	OP48	Early Payment Supplier Programme	(60,000)	0	0	0	(60,000)
	OP49	One public estate – income from partners	(250,000)	(250,000)	0	0	(500,000)
	OP50	Restructure of post room	(20,000)	0	0	0	(20,000)
	OP51	Council House / Town Hall events	(40,000)	0	0	0	(40,000)
	OP52	Potential further restructure of Corporate Landlord	(70,000)	0	0	0	(70,000)
	OP53	Energy reductions	(200,000)	(200,000)	0	0	(400,000)
<b>Total The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring</b>			<b>(1,396,891)</b>	<b>(490,000)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(1,886,891)</b>
<b>Total Operational Proposals relating to the remit of this Committee</b>			<b>(1,865,046)</b>	<b>(699,235)</b>	<b>(221,444)</b>	<b>(24,438)</b>	<b>(2,810,163)</b>

## Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 – Council Funded Schemes relating to the remit of this Committee.

## Rolling Programme Schemes

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
<b>People can access support in their community to keep safe and well and remain independent at home</b>							
Children's, Education & Customer Engagement	Aids and Adaptations / Preventative Adaptations/ Supporting Independence	This project directly supports the council's: 1. Statutory requirement to provide Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs) this includes enabling the council to provide a continuous service rather than as some councils do in terms of stock-piling enquiries till new grant allocations are made to them. 2. Provision of maintenance of lifts and hoists. 3. Minor adaptation works. 4. Domestic electrical safety.	412,000	412,000	412,000	412,000	1,648,000
	Health Through Warmth - Tackling Fuel Poverty	To help provide a safety net for those who cannot access other funding sources and is available as a loan charged on the individuals' property that is repaid upon sale or relevant transfer of their home. For this sum per year, it could offer 28 new boiler systems and 25 boiler repairs. Also helps secure continued investment from external agencies in tackling fuel poverty and excess winter deaths in the borough.	10,000	140,000	75,000	75,000	300,000
<b>Total People can access support in their community to keep safe and well and remain independent at home</b>			<b>422,000</b>	<b>552,000</b>	<b>487,000</b>	<b>487,000</b>	<b>1,948,000</b>
<b>People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life</b>							
Council Wide	Funding to support essential works including health and safety, and other projects that cannot be programmed at start of year	1: Asbestos removal - the authority is required by legislation to manage asbestos within its properties and to remove to comply with health & safety legislation. 2: Statutory testing of gas and electrical systems in buildings. 3: Control of Legionella - statutory requirement to test all water systems and undertake upgrades and improvements as required. 4: Fire Risk Assessment - statutory requirement to ensure compliance with health & safety. 5: Demolition of redundant buildings to provide saleable assets and increase market value of sites. 6: General repair & maintenance of buildings, historic buildings, aiding relocations. 7: Self-insured property damage – insurance excess. 8: Risk Management - unforeseeable events.	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	4,000,000
<b>Total People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life</b>			<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>1,000,000</b>	<b>4,000,000</b>
<b>Total Rolling Programme Schemes</b>			<b>1,422,000</b>	<b>1,552,000</b>	<b>1,487,000</b>	<b>1,487,000</b>	<b>5,948,000</b>

## Prior Year Approval Schemes

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
<b>The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring</b>							
Resources and Transformation	Replacement of 'tablet' technology	A 'tablet replacement rollout' programme. Allocation of £2.25m approved in 2022/23. Further allocation of £2.25m rephased from 2023/24 to 2024/25 & 2025/26	1,125,000	1,125,000	900,000	900,000	4,050,000
	Card payments, Digital Website	To ensure the council remains compliant and allows for citizens to pay for services online.	100,000	0	0	0	100,000
	Konica multi-functional device re-tender	Konica multi-functional device contract expires 23/24; options to extend the contract. Following the extension, a full tender will be required during 2025/26 and devices will need to be replaced in 2026/27. A resource will be required to manage the device replacement programme.	0	0	0	50,000	50,000
	Archiving of Systems moving to Customer Access Management being retired	Provision for archiving either systems or data within systems as and when they are retired where third party solutions are required.	100,000	100,000	100,000	100,000	400,000
	Capitalisation of Capital Finance Team	Capitalisation of the team to enhance capital planning, financing and strengthen programme delivery.	261,000	261,000	261,000	261,000	1,044,000
	Digital and Technology Service (DaTS) Staffing Capitalisation	DaTS will grow the internal team and knowledge to deliver capital projects which will reduce external consultants moving forward.	654,854	654,854	0	0	1,309,708
	Android Replacement programme	These devices will need to be replaced every 2-3 years as the versions of android become unsupported (an android replacement carried out in 2022/23).	200,000	0	0	0	200,000
	Data Back-up/Security replacement & Cloud Data back up	The current on-premise tape back-up solution will be end of life in 2024/25 - a replacement solution will be required to ensure that data is secured in line with the council's retention policy and to also ensure that it can be recovered should there be a disaster.	0	450,000	0	0	450,000
	WiFi Access Points and Licences	WiFi access points and associated licences have a 4-year lifespan in which they are compliant with PSN standards. In order to retain the council's PSN certification the Access Points and Licences will need to be replaced on a 3-4 yearly basis.	0	80,000	0	0	80,000

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Resources and Transformation	Chip & Pin Devices	Chip & Pin Devices and associated licences have a 4-year life span in which they are compliant with PCI standards. In order to retain the council's PCI Compliance, the Chip & Pin Devices and Licences will need to be replaced on a 3-4 yearly basis.	0	30,000	0	0	30,000
	Other schemes carried forward from previous years requiring completion	Civic Centre Heating	896,328	250,000	0	0	1,146,328
		Council House General Heating	1,923,560	250,000	0	0	2,173,560
Central	Minor capital schemes <£100k	To fund minor capital schemes.	500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,000,000
<b>Total The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring</b>			<b>5,760,742</b>	<b>3,700,854</b>	<b>1,761,000</b>	<b>1,811,000</b>	<b>13,033,596</b>
<b>Total Prior Year Approval Schemes</b>			<b>5,760,742</b>	<b>3,700,854</b>	<b>1,761,000</b>	<b>1,811,000</b>	<b>13,033,596</b>

## Development Investment

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
<b>Supporting a dynamic, resilient, and diverse economy where businesses invest, and everyone has the right jobs and the right housing in the right place</b>							
Council Wide	Development investment	Funding for development investment opportunities. This to include additional match funding costs if required to support projects in planning / development, subject to approval of a full business case by Cabinet to access these funds. Full list currently under review, which will be provided in the budget update report to Cabinet on 13 December 2023.	24,671,956	21,755,407	6,225,228	0	52,652,591
<b>Total Supporting a dynamic, resilient, and diverse economy where businesses invest, and everyone has the right jobs and the right housing in the right place</b>			<b>24,671,956</b>	<b>21,755,407</b>	<b>6,225,228</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>52,652,591</b>
<b>Total Development Investment</b>			<b>24,671,956</b>	<b>21,755,407</b>	<b>6,225,228</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>52,652,591</b>

## New Capital Schemes

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
<b>The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring</b>							
<b>Resources and Transformation</b>	Maintaining a Safe & Secure Environment (rolling programme)	Continuation of existing scheme Maintaining a Safe & Secure Environment. Not all hardware has a warranty/support & maintenance agreement in place - it is more cost effective to replace the equipment should it fail - some equipment will run for 10+ years without incident, therefore having a support/warranty agreement in place is not cost effective. This scheme also funds critical work that needs to take place within the Council's data centre environments for example additional cooling units, additional door security, unforeseen problems i.e. suppliers unexpectedly declaring components end of life or unforeseen incompatibilities between components i.e. something new won't work with something old without additional intervention/replacement.	150,000	150,000	200,000	200,000	700,000
	Digital and Technology Service (DaTS) Staffing Capitalisation	DaTS will grow the internal team and knowledge to deliver capital projects which will reduce external consultants moving forward.	642,144	642,144	1,342,144	0	2,626,432
<b>Total The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring</b>			<b>792,144</b>	<b>792,144</b>	<b>1,542,144</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>3,326,432</b>
<b>Total New Capital Programme requests</b>			<b>792,144</b>	<b>792,144</b>	<b>1,542,144</b>	<b>200,000</b>	<b>3,326,432</b>
<b>Total Draft Capital Programme – Council Funded Schemes within the remit of this Committee</b>			<b>32,646,842</b>	<b>27,800,405</b>	<b>11,015,372</b>	<b>3,498,000</b>	<b>74,960,619</b>



APPENDIX 4

Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 – External Funded Schemes relating to the remit of this Committee.

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
<b>People can access support in their community to keep safe and well and remain independent at home</b>							
Children's, Education & Customer Engagement	Disabled Facilities Grant	This project directly supports the council's statutory requirement to provide disabled facility grants (DFGs). The project has a direct positive impact on the number and subsequent varied costs to the council from the increasing level of demand for home adaptations.	3,314,771	3,314,771	3,314,771	3,314,771	13,259,084
	Other schemes carried forward from previous years requiring completion	Purchase of Dispersed Temporary Accommodation	523,670	0	0	0	523,670
<b>Total People can access support in their community to keep safe and well and remain independent at home</b>			<b>3,838,441</b>	<b>3,314,771</b>	<b>3,314,771</b>	<b>3,314,771</b>	<b>13,782,754</b>
<b>The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring</b>							
Resources and Transformation	Low Carbon Heating Project - Civic Centre / Town Hall / Council House	Low Carbon Heating Project funding (from BEIS -The Department for Business, Energy, and Industrial Strategy via Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme -Phase 3b) for Civic Centre/Town Hall/Council House for £3.6m for installation of the Air Source Heat pump and Solar PV.	3,271,750	0	0	0	3,271,750
<b>Total The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring</b>			<b>3,271,750</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3,271,750</b>
<b>Total Draft Capital Programme – External Funded within the remit of this Committee</b>			<b>7,110,191</b>	<b>3,314,771</b>	<b>3,314,771</b>	<b>3,314,771</b>	<b>17,054,504</b>

**Scrutiny Overview Committee**

**11 DECEMBER 2023**

**Forecast Revenue and Capital Outturn for 2023/24 – 6 month position ended 30 September 2023**

**Ward(s)** All

**Portfolios:** All - specifically in relation to services within the remit of this Committee -  
Cllr M Bird – Leader of the Council  
Cllr A Andrew – Deputy Leader and Regeneration (Housing Standards)  
Cllr G Perry – Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities (Partnerships)  
Cllr G Ali – Customer  
Cllr K Ferguson – Internal Services

**1. Aim**

1.1 To inform the Committee of the forecast financial position for 2023/24, to allow the scrutiny of the financial performance of the council and the services within the committee's remit.

**2. Recommendations:**

The Committee are requested to:

2.1 Note and comment on the forecast 2023/24 year-end financial position for the council as a whole – a predicted net revenue overspend of c£3.72m after identified mitigation, and net capital underspend of c£710k after re-phasing of £23.82m into 2024/25. Work is in hand to identify further actions to bring the revenue position in line with budget by the year end. Officers are reasonably confident at this stage based on known assumptions, that actions being taken will address this and outturn on budget.

2.2 Note and comment on the forecast 2023/24 year-end financial position for services within the remit of this committee – a predicted net revenue overspend of £680k and net capital (£280k) underspend position after re-phasing of £7.14m into 2024/25, subject to ongoing review.

**3. Report detail - Know**

3.1 This report summarises the forecast revenue and capital financial position for 2023/24, based on the position to September 2023, both for the council as a whole, and for services within the remit of the Scrutiny Overview Committee, as reported to Cabinet on 18 October 2023. The full Cabinet report can be accessed by the following link:

[Corporate Financial Performance 2023/24 - Cabinet 18 October 2023](#)

### *Council wide position*

- 3.2 A number of significant risks and pressures have emerged during 2023/24 that has required action to be taken to limit the council's exposure, mainly demand pressures within Adult Social Care and Children's Services, and the ongoing impact of cost of living on contracts/third party spend in particular, and where known and quantifiable, the financial impact of these are included within the forecast position. These are being further assessed in terms of impact and actions that may be required to manage these, including services taking action to address them, use of appropriate earmarked reserves, etc.
- 3.3 The current council wide forecast shows a number of pressures which would lead to a potential overspend of c£18.35m against budget, as detailed at Appendix 1. Total mitigating actions have been identified of £14.63m reducing the forecast overspend to £3.72m. The overall position has reduced by £10.07m on the June position of £13.80m reported to Cabinet on 19 July 2023. This includes additional Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund grant of £2.18m announced in July 2023, one off windfall income from business rates of £2.62m and a further underspend on capital financing of £2.08m. Work is in hand to identify further actions to bring the revenue position in line with budget by the year end.
- 3.4 In relation to the capital programme, the forecast for 2023/24 is a predicted underspend of £710k, after the expected carry forward of £23.82m into 2024/25, as at September 2023. The Cabinet report includes a number of in year amendment to the approved capital programme, mainly as a result of confirmed external funding allocations, including the request to increase highways maintenance by £700k in 2023/24, which are detailed at Appendix 1. Further requests for approval are made for the release of £2.89m from the development pool for the continuation of the Enabling Technology Programme, and the approval for borrowing of up to £6.50m to fund part of the Phoenix 10 funding package which is reimbursed from retained business rates.

### *Position for services within the remit of this committee*

- 3.5 The forecast revenue outturn for 2023/24 for services within the remit of this committee as at the end of September 2023, is a net overspend of £680k against budget, net of the use of earmarked reserves. Further details are shown in Appendix 2.
- 3.6 The forecast capital outturn for 2023/24 for services within the remit of this committee as at the end of September 2023, is expected to be (£280k) underspent after re-phasing of £7.14m into 2024/25. Further details of schemes are shown in Appendix 2.

### **Resource and legal considerations:**

- 3.7 This report represents the forecast revenue and capital outturn as reported to Cabinet on 18 October 2023.

### **Reducing inequalities:**

3.8 Services consider equality issues in setting budgets and delivering services. Irrespective of budgetary pressures the council must fulfil its equal opportunities obligations.

### **4. Decide**

4.1 This Committee is asked to note and comment on the forecast revenue and capital forecast for 2023/24 and consider the recommendations as set out.

### **5. Respond**

5.1 This report is for noting and comment by the Committee as above.

### **6. Review**

6.1 This report is for noting and comment by the Committee as above.

### **Background papers:**

- Various financial working papers.
- Corporate Budget Plan 2023/24 to 2026/27, incorporating the Capital Strategy; and the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2023/24, as reported to Council on 23 February 2023.
- Corporate Financial Performance 2023/24, as reported to Cabinet on 18 October 2023.

### **Contact Officers:**

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## Forecast September position 2023/24 – Walsall Council

### Revenue

The current council wide forecast shows a number of pressures which would lead to a potential overspend of c£18.35m against budget as summarised by directorate in Table 1, as at September 2023. Total mitigating actions have been identified of £14.63m (see table 2) reducing the forecast overspend to £3.72m.

**Table 1: Forecast revenue analysis 2023/24 by Directorate - September 2023**

Directorate	Net Budget	Year-end forecast prior to transfer to / (from) earmarked reserves	Year-end variance to budget prior to transfer / (From) earmarked reserves	Use of earmarked reserves	Transfer to earmarked reserves	Year-end forecast prior to mitigating actions	Mitigating Actions	Year-end forecast including all mitigating actions	Movement since reported to Cabinet 19.7.2023
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Adult Social Care and Public Health	73.67	91.92	18.25	(6.83)	2.74	14.16	(1.76)	12.40	4.95
Children's Services									
- Children's and Education	75.46	82.87	7.41	(4.01)	0.24	3.65	(0.37)	3.28	1.35
- Customer Engagement	3.17	5.52	2.35	(1.16)	0.00	1.19	0.00	1.19	0.00
Economy, Environment & Communities	36.70	44.38	7.68	(6.50)	0.69	1.88	(1.68)	0.20	(0.35)
Resources & Transformation	36.49	39.63	3.14	(5.55)	1.94	(0.46)	0.00	(0.46)	(0.21)
Capital Financing	24.66	17.45	(7.21)	(0.59)	5.72	(2.08)	0.00	(2.08)	(2.08)
<b>Services &amp; CF Position</b>	<b>250.14</b>	<b>281.80</b>	<b>31.65</b>	<b>(24.62)</b>	<b>11.34</b>	<b>18.33</b>	<b>(3.81)</b>	<b>14.52</b>	<b>3.66</b>
Central budgets	(105.98)	(98.80)	7.18	(12.45)	5.28	0.02	(10.82)	(10.80)	(13.73)
<b>Total council tax requirement</b>	<b>144.16</b>	<b>182.96</b>	<b>38.80</b>	<b>(37.07)</b>	<b>16.62</b>	<b>18.35</b>	<b>(14.63)</b>	<b>3.72</b>	<b>(10.07)</b>

The overall position has reduced by £10.07m on the June position of £13.80m reported to Cabinet on 19 July 2023. This includes additional Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund grant of £2.18m announced in July 2023, one off windfall income from business rates of £2.62m and a further underspend on capital financing of £2.08m.

The following sections provide more detail on directorate pressures and actions being taken to address these.

***Adults Social Care (£14.16m prior to mitigating actions, after use of and transfers to reserves)***

The potential forecast position after planned net use of reserves is £14.16m above budget prior to any mitigating actions. Mitigating actions of £1.76m have been identified reducing the overspend to £12.40m.

The main reasons for this £14.16m can be split into 'Business as usual' (BAU) of £10.90m and 'Impact of Service Transformation Plan' (STP) of £3.27m.

The reasons for the STP position of £3.27m are as follows:

- £2.21m - £1.76m carried forward from 2022/23 for cohorts 1 to 3 above the S75 amount, and £460k shortfall in new 2023/24 saving for cohort 4 under the Learning Disability Joint Funding arrangements. On-going discussions with the Integrated Care Board regarding the joint funding arrangement from 2020/21 remain in progress;
- £820k – delay in the 2022/23 saving relating to Better Care Finance due to futureproofing and integration with other systems;
- £240k - due to the STP relating to developing and delivering additional support to carers to be aligned to locality reviews.

The reasons for the BAU position of £10.90m are as follows:

- £3.55m – Reviews - net increase due to the impact of 'business as usual' reviews of client packages undertaken during the period of February to August 2023. Compared to last year, there has been a significant increase in the number of reviews carried out, with more of these reviews resulting in an increase in package costs;
- £3.77m – Inflow / Attrition / Backdating- increase due to net inflow of new, deceased and ended clients within the first five months of this financial year. This increase is a combined impact of new clients being placed at a higher average cost than originally budgeted and the number of expected deaths and ended placements being significantly lower than the budgeted trends. It should be noted the full year impact of any changes to client numbers and associated costs at the beginning of the financial year have a greater impact on the position;
- £3.97m – continuation of trends - based on 5 months of data and more informed intelligence, future projections now reflect current trends relating to 'business as usual' reviews and net inflow and outflow of service users continuing for the remainder of the financial year;
- (£2.18m) – Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund (MSIF) funding - Government have recently announced a further £570m of MSIF across financial years 2023/24 and 2024/25. This is to address issues such as discharge delays, social care waiting times, low fee rates, and workforce pressures. This is in addition to the £400m included in the February 2022 Cabinet report and equates to an additional £2.18m for Walsall in 2023/24 which will be used to support demand led services across Adult Social care in line with grant conditions;

- £1.84m – Overspend on intermediate care services. This is based on current demand and future projections. This position takes into account the use of Hospital Discharge Grant funding as announced by government and the use of uncommitted Better Care Fund inflation for 2023/24. Further detailed work is currently taking place on the cost modelling and discussions with health partners on funding allocations, alongside work to identify options to mitigate any remaining pressure. This also includes the impact of a recent £400k reduction in the ICB's Better Care fund inflation contribution to the position.
- £230k - increase in the general bad debt provision to reflect a 50% provision for current outstanding client debt of £8.45m as at the end of August 2023. Improvements in the financial assessment data capture processes and procedures should see a reduced number of credits/write offs.
- £580k - Contractual inflation on the Housing 21 unitary charge is higher than originally included in the budget for 2023/24 as based on February RPIx prior to the charge year. This is partially offset by use of the remaining Housing 21 reserve and additional client contribution income;
- (£560k) – additional client contribution and health income relating to care packages partly offset by a shortfall in the income budget associated with the Learning Disabilities joint funding arrangements when compared to the Section 75 agreement with Walsall ICB;
- (£310k) – due to a delay in recruiting to vacant posts across the directorate.

Mitigating actions of £1.76m have been identified to reduce the overall forecast and these are detailed in table 2.

*Risks* - there are also high risks of £7.80m which could impact the forecast position should they materialise, and these are detailed in Appendix 2 of the Cabinet report.

Performance data relating to Adult Social Care demand is attached at Appendix 10 of the Cabinet report.

### ***Public Health on budget after planned use of and transfer to reserves)***

The current net forecast position prior to the net use of/transfer to reserves is an overspend of £2.13m. After net use of reserves the service is forecast to be on budget. The £2.13m overspend covered by reserves relates to the following:

- (£120k) – underspend on staffing due to vacancies;
- £1.99m - projects planned to be funded from reserves including investment into mental health and young adults wellbeing service and sexual health;
- £0.26m - Partial delay in achieving the STP proposal relating to the 'review of existing transformation fund' (total saving £0.30m of which £0.04m has been delivered). This is mitigated on a one-off basis for 2023/24, plans to be identified for 2024/25 onwards.

### ***Communications, Branding & Marketing (on budget after planned use of and transfer to reserves)***

The current net forecast position after the net use of reserves is on budget. This includes one-off mitigation from underspends within the service to cover the delay in a £30k saving relating to the generation of additional income. A plan is being identified to achieve this in full for 2024/25 onwards.



### **Children's (£3.65m prior to mitigating actions, after planned use of and transfers to reserves)**

The potential forecast position after planned net use of reserves is £3.65m above budget prior to any mitigating actions, however mitigating actions of £370k have been identified reducing the overspend to £3.28m.

The main reasons for the currently reported position are:

- £2.08m due to increased demand and costs for children in care relating broken down as follows:
  - £311k full year impact for the increased demand over and above budget for the multiple sibling groups who entered care during January/ February;
  - £680k increased demand for remand placements following an extraordinary intake in January / February 2023;
  - £890k pressure relating to placement moves expected during 2023/24. This is fully offset by reserves;
  - £1.10m pressure if net inflow / outflow trends to date continue for the remainder of the financial year. This is fully offset by reserves;
  - £1.70m increased reliance on Independent Fostering Agency, external residential and mother and baby placements for those children and young people entering care this financial year, in comparison to budget and to the prior three year trend;
  - (£310k) additional government income to support the costs of unaccompanied asylum seeking children through the increased number of hotel transfer and national transfer scheme claims and the use of lower cost placements such as supported accommodation;
  - (£320k) underspend within internal residential services, primarily due to vacancies, as the two new homes are set to open part way through the financial year;

Performance data on children in care is attached at Appendix 11 of the Cabinet report.

- £690k use of agency within the Educational Psychologists team. This team currently has a large number of vacant posts therefore agency workers will be used in order to meet the authority's statutory requirement. Estimated agency costs forecast for the year are £1.19m offset by an underspend on vacant posts of (£0.50m). A business case has been completed to request investment into the service from 2024/25 to fund the costs associated with increasing the resources available within the team on an ongoing basis;
- £100k legal fees due to ongoing pressures linked to increases in demand on legal services and complexity of the cases involved. This is mitigated by reserves;
- £118k recruitment and retention unachieved benefit. A £634k saving for recruitment & retention of social workers was unachieved in 2022/23 and was carried forward to 2023/24. Based on current agency and staffing information, £118k of this is not expected to be achieved in this financial year. The service continue to work to embed plans to ensure this can be fully achieved in 2024/25.
- £130k additional costs linked to the introduction of Senior Social Worker posts. Investment was approved in 2022/23 to support the cost of changing a number of current Social Worker posts to Senior Social Worker posts in order to support the Recruitment and Retention (R&R) strategy. The cost impact of this to date has exceeded the approved investment following the conversion of a number of agency staff to permanent Senior Social Worker posts in the last 3 months of 2022/23 and in May 2023;



- £330k Home to School Transport overspend relating to the following:
  - Special Educational Needs home to school transport - demand growth for 2023/24 was previously expected to reduce to 10%. However, based on national statistics and actual growth seen to date, growth is now expected to be 14%. Costs are also based on current average costs including expected inflationary increases on routes due to be retendered in September 2023. These costs and growth increases have resulted in a shortfall in achievable savings of £130k;
  - Children in care transport £200k - although the number of pupils transported in 2023/24 has remained similar to that seen in 2021/22 and 2022/23, the average cost per child has increased due to more out of borough placements being made linked to the ongoing placement sufficiency issues.

There are also a number of small overspends across the directorate of c£200k relating to shortfalls in traded income within performance and information services £40k, agency costs within Therapeutic Family Time £90k and other minor movements within the directorate of £70k.

Mitigating actions of £370k have been identified to cover the pressures relating to placement moves as detailed at table 2.

*Risks* - there are also high risks of £2.35m which could impact the forecast position should they materialise, and these are detailed in Appendix 2 of the Cabinet report.

***Customer Engagement (overspend of £1.19m after use of and transfers to reserves)***

The forecast position is a £1.19m overspend after the net transfer of planned transfers of £1.16m. Work is on-going to identify mitigating actions to reduce the overspend. The main reasons for the variance are:

- £1.29m due to delayed delivery of saving of council wide efficiencies relating to Customer Access Management. The total saving is £4.47m of which £1.54m relates to CXC within Customer Engagement. The remainder of the saving is currently held centrally and included elsewhere within the report. Of the £1.54m relating to CXC £250k is expected to be achieved in 2023/24 with the remainder to be achieved in 2024/25 due to delays in moving posts to CXC and implementation of new technology;
- £110k due to reduction in housing benefit related central government grants;
- £110k due to increased volume of bank charges for online payments;
- £580k relating to increased demand for bed and breakfast services;
- (£230k) receipt of homelessness top up government grant;
- (£670k) underspend on salaries due to vacancies and maximising grant funding against existing spend.

*Risks* - there are risks of £2.53m which could impact the forecast position should they materialise, and these are detailed in Appendix 2 of the Cabinet report.

***Economy, Environment and Communities (£1.88m prior to mitigating actions, after use of and transfers to reserves)***

The forecast position is a potential overspend of £1.88m after planned transfers to and from reserves. Mitigating actions have been identified of £1.68m reducing the overspend to £200k.

The main variances are:

- Environment, Leisure and Commercial (£74k) – Over recovery of income from Active Living Centres (£275k) and registrars (£72k) due to increased demand, additional HAF income (£200k) and (£76k) due to vacant posts, offset by under recovery of markets income arising from reduced number of operating days and market stall erection contract increases £204k, under recovery of cremation and burial income due to increased competition and a fall in demand resulting in £177k not achieved, increased contract costs due to increased demand on the service £94k, consultancy costs for the Parks Strategy £20k and £67k of unachieved savings due to delayed delivery;
- Highways Transport & Operations £1.31m – Unachieved savings of £953k due to delayed delivery, HWRC contract pressure due to increased CPI inflation rates £244k, W2R contract pressure due to inflation increases £519k, additional costs of clothing, materials, vehicle hire and maintenance £121k, increased electricity costs of unmetered traffic signals £62k, increase in staffing costs £744k, part offset by a reduction in waste disposal costs (£767k), over recovery of trade income (£200k), Tarmac/Fleet income (£107k), additional Section 38 Income (£87k) and a reduction in fuel costs (£201k);
- Planning Services & Building Control - £607k pressure arising from additional staff and agency costs to support back log of cases and income reduction fully mitigated via an action plan;
- Regeneration & Development £260k – due to a delay in implementation of the restructure partly mitigated via use of EGP reserve as part of the action plan;
- Cultural Services (£161k) - Staffing underspends due to vacant posts and additional income from the Arena;
- Regulatory Services £72k – an overspend on legal fees for unauthorised encampments, under recovery of enforcement income part offset by staffing underspend due to delay in restructure;
- Library Services (£156k) – unachieved savings with no delivery plan £61k offset by underspend on staffing costs due to vacant posts;
- Communities and Partnerships (£48k) – arising from delay in project now to commence September 2023;
- Economy & Environment Management £111k - staffing pressure due to the cost of an interim Director post filled externally via agency partly offset by internal savings due to appointing to the Interim Executive Director and Director of Place posts internally.

Mitigating actions of £1.68m have been identified to reduce the overall forecast which are detailed at table 2.

*Risks* - there are also risks of £650k which could impact the forecast position should they materialise and these are detailed in Appendix 2 of the Cabinet report.

### ***Resources and Transformation (£460k underspend after use of and transfers to reserves)***

The forecast position after the net use of reserves of £3.61m is an underspend of £460k. The main areas of variance to budget are:

- Payroll (£43k) - (£85k) underspend on salaries and agency (£84k) partly offset by under recovery of traded income 48k;
- Finance (£222k) - due to vacant posts partly offset by agency and training costs;
- Democratic services £52k - overspend mainly due to under recovery of traded income £41k;

- Corporate assurance (£59k) - due to vacant posts (£76k) partly offset by increased contract costs;
- Human Resources (£106k) - underspend on salaries due to vacant posts (£308k) partly offset by agency costs £129k, a settlement payment £30k and £43k savings not achieved;
- Corporate Management Team (£80k) – increased staff costs / agency including recruitment costs offset by additional income;
- Information Governance £60k - £210k overspend due to under recovery of traded income partly offset by underspend on salaries (£72k) and computer equipment and licence fees of (£77k);
- DaTS (£271k) – (£378k) due to vacant posts, (£100k) additional grant income partly offset by agency costs of £214k;
- Corporate Procurement £191k - due to additional interim management and agency costs.

There are also high risks of £2.31m which could impact the forecast position should they materialise and these are detailed in Appendix 2 of the Cabinet report.

### ***Capital Financing on budget after use of and transfer to reserves)***

Prior to any transfer to reserves the position is an underspend of £7.80m. £5.70m of the underspend is in line with expectations when the budget was set due to a reduction in borrowing costs and an additional saving on new borrowing of £1.42m is forecast in year. An additional underspend of £680k is also forecasted due to higher investment returns than expected. From these savings £5.72m will be transferred to reserves to be used to smooth known increases in borrowing costs from 2025/26 onwards and to the CCLA property fund valuation reserve which has been set up to mitigate risk arising from the removal of the statutory override in relation to property fund valuations. The reserve was set up to smooth the impact of valuation changes on revenue. £2.08m is therefore shown as an underspend within this report.

### ***Central (£0.02m overspend after use of and transfer to reserves)***

There is currently a £2.93m overspend relating to a saving that is currently not expected to be achieved in year in relation to the CAM workstream due to delays in implementation of the enabling technology. This is being held centrally and will be allocated to services when actions have been identified as to how this will be achieved. This has been offset by a one-off windfall income from business rates following the Valuation Office amendment to the rateable value of the art gallery and a further £250k underspend against the in-year budget as this is no longer required.

### **Mitigating action**

Total mitigating actions have been identified of £14.63m reducing the forecast overspend down from £18.35m to £3.72m, as shown in table 1 above. Table 2 details the mitigation planned of £14.63m.

<b>Table 2 : Mitigating action identified to reduce the overspend</b>		
<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Detail of mitigating actions</b>	<b>£m</b>
Adult Social Care, Public Health & Hubs	Over achievement and full year impact of the 2022/23 savings predominantly relating to review of existing client placements.	1.14
	Release of one-off grant relating to the streamline of Adult Social Care assessments.	0.14
	Use of remaining Housing 21 reserve to partially mitigate the contractual inflation pressure.	0.48
<b>Total Mitigation included for Adult Social Care, Public Health and Hubs</b>		<b>1.76</b>
Children's Services - Children's and Education	One off reallocation of funding and reserves to support Children's pressures.	0.37
<b>Total Mitigation included for Children's Services and Education</b>		<b>0.37</b>
Economy, Environment & Communities	Use of legacy section 106 income held in reserve.	0.36
	Holding of vacant head of service post.	0.07
	Economic Growth Programme funding held in reserves.	0.46
	Use of corporate reserve to support planning.	0.25
	Use of parking reserve.	0.03
	Use of legacy commuted sums.	0.03
	Capitalisation of Velocity Patcher.	0.20
	Capitalisation of book fund.	0.15
Reduction of non-essential operational costs within Highways & Transport.	0.13	
<b>Total Mitigation included for Economy, Environment &amp; Communities</b>		<b>1.68</b>
Central	Use of Risk Reserve.	6.82
	Use of Cost of Living Reserve.	0.19
	Use of Mediation Reserve.	0.10
	Use of Social Care Demand / contingency reserve.	3.71
<b>Total Mitigation included for Central</b>		<b>10.82</b>
<b>Total Mitigation included in forecast outturn</b>		<b>14.63</b>

### Approved savings in 2023/24

The 2023/24 budget approved by Council on 23 February 2023 includes £15.71m of benefits realisation (savings) against Proud activity plus a further £7.55m of 2022/23 benefits approved to be carried forward for delivery in 2023/24, giving a total benefit figure of £23.26m to be achieved. Directors are required to ensure that service delivery plans are robustly implemented to fully deliver these in year.

There are currently £9.58m of benefits assessed as Red for delivery (at high risk of non-delivery), detailed at Appendix 5 of the Cabinet report, along with the reason and identified service mitigating actions to date totalling £2.77m. The remaining £6.82m are proposed to be mitigated from use of the corporate risk reserve as shown in Table 2 above.

Adult Social Care have reviewed the Red savings and propose to achieve the carers support saving of £240,934 by amalgamating it with saving OP90 which is currently overachieving. The two savings are linked to expenditure in the same area, therefore changes to carers support is likely to be one of the reasons for the overachievement. The

amendments would mean the saving is fully achieved on an on-going basis and would reduce the value of high-risk savings by £241k to that reported in this report. This is an operational change and does not require any consultation or a further quality impact assessment completing.

## **Capital**

The capital programme for 2023/24, as reported to Cabinet on 19 July 2023 was £134.75m. Table 3 summarises amendments made to date, resulting in a revised programme of £138.38m.

<b>Table 3: Amendments to Capital Programme 2023/24</b>	
<b>Project</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>Capital Programme 2023/24 per Cabinet 19 July 2023</b>	<b>134.75</b>
<b>Council Funded Resources</b>	
Highways maintenance – funded from Pipeline Development *	0.70
Oak Park Active Living Centre conversion of small office space for commercial reasons – funded from Pipeline Development	0.35
Old Square public realm – funded from Pipeline Development	0.22
Pipeline Development	(1.27)
Replacement street bins – funded from contingency	0.09
Christmas trees – funded from contingency	0.03
CCTV – funded from contingency	0.09
Darlaston Pool energy – funded from contingency	0.03
Use of contingency	(0.24)
<b>Externally Funded</b>	
A41 Moxley Transforming Cities Fund – new grant	0.23
Renovation Park tennis courts – new grant	0.33
One Palfrey Big Local – new grant	0.16
Larksmill Pelsall Wood flood alleviation – new grant	0.04
Additional Highways Maintenance pothole funding	0.54
Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership reinvestment digital fund realignment	2.23
Social Housing Decarbonisation Scheme reduction	(0.61)
Towns Deal realignment	0.82
Devolved Formula Capital – reduced grant allocation	(0.12)
<b>Revised capital programme 2023/24</b>	<b>138.38</b>

\*As Highway Authority, the Council has a statutory duty to maintain its highway network in a safe condition for road users. At a meeting of the council's Strategic Investment Board on 14th June 2023, a decision was taken, subject to approval from Cabinet, to increase capital investment for the maintenance of Walsall's highway network by £700,000. For 2023/2024 Walsall Council has allocated £2.8m of capital funding to maintain its highway network of 525 miles. The £2.8m annual budget has remained unchanged since 2017, whereas in contrast, the construction indices for inflation over this period have increased by 21.5%. This correlates closely with the published Bank of England inflation figure of 22.5% for the same period. On that basis the council would need to increase spend on highway maintenance by £700k to £3.5m during 2023/24 to resurface the same amount of its highway network that it was treating in 2017.

Table 4 summarises the 2023/24 capital programme and forecast outturn after the forecast re-phasing of £23.82m into 2024/25, with the forecast summary of the net £710k underspend shown at Table 5.

<b>Table 4: Forecast capital analysis 2023/24</b>					
<b>Directorate</b>	<b>Budget £m</b>	<b>Predicted year end forecast £m</b>	<b>Variance before Carry forward £m</b>	<b>Carry Forward £m</b>	<b>Variance Over / (Under) £m</b>
Council funded	57.94	41.31	(16.63)	15.92	(0.71)
Externally funded	80.44	72.54	(7.90)	7.90	0.00
<b>Total</b>	<b>138.38</b>	<b>113.85</b>	<b>(24.53)</b>	<b>23.82</b>	<b>(0.71)</b>

<b>Table 5: Summary of Forecast Underspend 2023/24</b>	
<b>Project</b>	<b>£m</b>
Workshop breakdown vehicle – project completed	(0.01)
Walsall Town Centre Public Realm Improvements – allocation not required	(0.36)
Social Housing Decarbonisation – allocation not required	(0.28)
Nottingham Drive Car Park – project completed	(0.06)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(0.71)</b>

The capital programme currently shows predicted re-phasing of £23.82m from 2023/24 to 2024/25 as shown in table 6. Re-phasing occurs for a number of reasons such as late confirmation of grant approvals, timing of projects that may fall over more than one financial year, contract delays out of our control due to waiting for funding confirmation or Government approval.

<b>Table 6 : Predicted re-phasing of capital funded schemes 2023/24 to 2024/25</b>	
<b>Project</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b><i>Council Funded</i></b>	
Capital Investment Earmarked Reserve	4.47
Capital Contingency	0.32
Looked After Children Out of Borough Placements	0.15
Council House Smoke & Heat Detection Fire Alarm	0.30
Operation Repair & Maintenance of Council Buildings	0.21
Walsall Council House-Modern Secure Reception	0.03
Council House Internal Decoration	0.03
Council House Plumbing	0.07
Council House Windows	0.99
Computer Aided Facilities Management System	0.05
New Homes Bonus	0.08
Regenerating Walsall	0.22
Enterprise Zones	0.67
Willenhall Masterplan	2.55
MyCMIS – asset management tracking system	0.01
ICT – Safe and Secure Environment	1.11



<b>Project</b>	<b>£m</b>
Enabling Technology	2.31
Maintaining a Safe and Secure Environment	0.28
Telephony Cloud Based System	0.46
Proud Card Payments Digital Website	0.83
Ways Of Working	0.25
Konica Multi-functional device re-tender	0.02
Archiving systems moving to customer access management retired	0.06
Changing Places toilets	0.12
Development Team capitalisation of posts	0.33
<b>External Funded</b>	
Bloxwich Town Deal	0.12
Walsall Town Deal	0.83
Land And Property Investment Fund	0.67
Growing Places Fund	0.66
Future High Street Fund	3.21
West Midlands Strategic Transport Plan (STP) 'Movement for Growth'	0.39
Limestone surveys	0.11
Family Hub Life Programme	0.01
Willenhall Masterplan	1.90
<b>Total</b>	<b>23.82</b>

The report to Cabinet on 18 October 2023 also asks Cabinet to –

- Approve the release of £2.89m from the development pool for the continuation of the Enabling Technology Programme.
- Agree to borrow up to £6.5m to fund part of the Phoenix 10 funding package on the basis this sum will be reimbursed via retained business rates as approved by the Black Country Joint Committee at its meeting on 24 June 2020.

**Forecast September position 2023/24**  
**Services within the remit of the Scrutiny Overview Committee**

**Revenue**

The forecast revenue outturn for 2023/24 for the services under the remit of the Scrutiny Overview Committee is an overspend of £680k, net of the use of earmarked reserves, as shown in Table 7. The forecast revenue outturn shown is based on actual information from the financial system as at the end of September 2023, and discussions with managers regarding year end forecast and achievement of approved savings:

<b>Table 7: Forecast revenue analysis 2023/24 by Service</b>			
<b>Service</b>	<b>Annual Budget</b>	<b>Draft Outturn after use of and transfer to Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>Variance to Budget</b>
	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b>£m</b>
<b>Economy, Environment &amp; Communities</b>			
Communities and Partnerships	2.59	2.54	(0.05)
<b>Children Services</b>			
Money Home Job / Housing Standards	3.17	4.36	1.19
<b>Adult Social Care</b>			
Communication, Marketing and Brand	1.31	1.31	(0.00)
Procurement	0.83	1.02	0.19
<b>Resources and Transformation</b>			
Democratic Services	1.78	1.84	0.06
Legal	2.49	2.49	(0.01)
Electoral Services	0.82	0.82	0.00
Finance	4.76	4.54	(0.22)
Corporate Assurance	0.57	0.51	(0.06)
Human Resources	7.35	7.25	(0.11)
Corporate Landlord	7.15	7.09	(0.06)
Payroll & Pensions	0.27	0.22	(0.04)
Transformation & Digital	11.12	10.91	(0.21)
<b>Total Services within remit of Committee</b>	<b>44.22</b>	<b>44.90</b>	<b>0.68</b>

Total earmarked reserves of £9.78m are available for use in 2023/24 (where approval has been given by Cabinet for additional funds for specific services). Within the reported outturn position a total of £6.79m of earmarked reserves are forecast to be used.



The main variances are summarised in Table 8 below.

<b>Table 8 – Reasons for revenue outturn variance</b>		
<b>Service</b>	<b>Variance £m</b>	<b>Explanation of Year End Forecast Outturn</b>
Communities & Partnership	(0.05)	Underspend due to delay in project commencement
Money Home Job / Housing Standards	1.19	£1.29m due to delay in delivery of CAM STP, £0.58m Bed and Breakfast and (£0.67m) salaries
Communication, Marketing and Brand	0	
Procurement	0.19	Due to interim management and agency costs
Democratic Services	0.06	Under recovery of income due to reduction in school admission appeals and internal recharges for services
Legal	(0.01)	Salary underspend offset by supplies
Electoral Services	0	
Finance	(0.22)	Salary underspend
Corporate Assurance	(0.06)	Salary underspend offset by supplies
Human Resources	(0.11)	Salary underspend
Corporate Landlord	(0.06)	Additional income from capital projects offset by staffing overspend
Payroll & Pensions	(0.04)	Salary underspend offset by income under recovery
Transformation & Digital	(0.21)	Salary underspend offset by income under recovery
<b>Total Services within remit of this Committee</b>	<b>0.68</b>	

Where overspends are predicted, managers are required to identify remedial action that can be made within the service, and to report this as part of an action plan. Work to identify mitigating actions is in progress. It is expected that the majority of the forecast overspends within services will be mitigated in year through efficiencies in the directorate as a whole.

Included within the budget for 2023/24 for services within the remit of this Committee are £7.86m of approved savings. Table 9 gives an update on progress towards implementing these benefits:

<b>Table 9: Delivery of 2023/24 approved savings – services within the remit of this Committee</b>					
<b>Saving</b>	<b>Total savings £m</b>	<b>Delivered (Blue) £m</b>	<b>To be delivered by 31/03/24 (Green) £m</b>	<b>Not fully guaranteed (Amber) £m</b>	<b>At High risk of non delivery (Red) £m</b>
<b>Economy, Environment and Communities</b>					
OP25 - Further efficiencies relating to Customer Access Management	(0.09)	(0.09)			
<b>Children's Serv – Customer Engagement</b>					
P2 - Expand the training and materials for the Walsall Connected network, so that digital assistance can be given to residents who need help to access on-line holistic advice tools and offer a reduced grant allocation of £156,800 per annum to Citizen's Advice Sandwell and Walsall, to deliver a face-to-face advice for residents in need of complex welfare benefits advice and tribunal support	(0.09)	(0.09)			
OP6 - Temporary Accommodation Rent Levels & Service Charges	(0.06)			(0.06)	
OP7 - Increased external contributions for key initiatives in Money Home Job	(0.05)	(0.05)			
OP8 - Housing benefits realignment of income	(0.20)	(0.20)			
OP9a - Income generation review of grants - Afghan Citizens grant	(0.05)	(0.05)			
OP9b - Income generation review of grants - Household Support grant	(0.28)	(0.28)			
<b>Resources and Transformation</b>					
OP26 - Council wide efficiencies relating to Customer Access Management	(4.47)			(0.25)	(4.22)
OP28 - Investment in strategic / higher level Financial Transactions management capacity - To be funded through increased recharges to external income	(0.07)		(0.07)		
OP30 - Rationalise corporate estate to generate capital receipts and reduce maintenance and utility bills on our under utilised assets to create opportunities for redevelopment of sites or repurposing of assets to support frontline delivery	(0.50)	(0.23)		(0.27)	
OP31 - Increase traded services within Cleaning, Caretaking and Catering	(0.10)		(0.10)		
OP32 - Renting out Civic Centre floor space to partners	(0.10)	(0.04)	(0.06)		
OP34 - Platinum Secure Storage	(0.01)			(0.01)	
OP35 - Restore Offsite Storage (hard copy documents)	(0.00)				

Saving	Total savings £m	Delivered (Blue) £m	To be delivered by 31/03/24 (Green) £m	Not fully guaranteed (Amber) £m	At High risk of non delivery (Red) £m
OP36 - Promotion of One Source system to Schools for sickness absence data entry	(0.03)				(0.03)
OP37 - Facilities Management staffing	(0.20)	(0.20)			
OP38 - Rental income review of assets	(0.17)		(0.17)		
OP39 - School crossing patrols - review of provision	(0.10)	(0.10)			
OP40 - Redundant buildings provision	(0.25)		(0.25)		
OP41 - Challenge buildings costs	(0.14)	(0.14)			
OP42 – Borrowing rescheduling	(0.90)		(0.90)		
<b>Total approved savings for services within remit of Committee</b>	<b>(7.86)</b>	<b>(1.47)</b>	<b>(1.55)</b>	<b>(0.59)</b>	<b>(4.25)</b>

Each benefit is “BRAG” categorised as follows:

- Blue (delivered);
- Green (on track to be delivered with no issues at year end of 2023/24);
- Amber (not guaranteed at this stage but no major issues expected, some management action needed to ensure delivery) or,
- Red - (at high risk of not being achieved either in part or in full and therefore either alternative actions are required or a plan to ensure delivery is put back on track);
- A WPP resource plan has been agreed to provide additional support towards delivery.

### Capital

The capital programme for services within the remit of this Committee, as at the end of September 2023, is £34.48m. It is currently expected to be (£280k) underspent after re-phasing of £7.14m into 2024/25. A list of schemes within the remit of this committee is shown in Table 10.

**Table 10 – Forecast Capital Outturn 2023/24 – Services within the remit of this Committee**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>2023/24 Budget £m</b>	<b>Estimated Outturn £m</b>	<b>Variance before carry fwd £m</b>	<b>Carry Forward £m</b>	<b>Variance Over / (Under) £m</b>
<b>Council Funded schemes</b>					
<b>Economies, Environment and Communities</b>					
Single Library Management System	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
Darlaston Library Integration	0.06	0.06	0.00	0.00	0.00
Expansion of Park Hall	0.58	0.58	0.00	0.00	0.00
Replacement PC's	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00
Radio Frequency Identification Self-Issue	0.09	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.00
Fly-tipping CCTV	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Resources and Transformation</b>					
Rushall Olympic Football Club	0.01	0.01	0.00	0.00	0.00
Bosty Lane Farm	0.30	0.30	0.00	0.00	0.00
Saddlers Centre Shopping Centre	0.46	0.46	0.00	0.00	0.00
Challenge Block	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00
Town Centre Strategic Acquisition for Third Sector Hub	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Procurement System for Human Resources and Finance	0.09	0.09	0.00	0.00	0.00
Finance Oracle Archive	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00
Enabling Support Services/One Source System	1.13	1.13	0.00	0.00	0.00
Asbestos Removal	0.07	0.07	0.00	0.00	0.00
Planned Property Maintenance	0.26	0.26	0.00	0.00	0.00
Safe Water Supplies	0.15	0.15	0.00	0.00	0.00
Statutory Testing	0.23	0.23	0.00	0.00	0.00
Civic Centre Heating	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Council House Rewiring	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Council House Smoke & Heat Detection Fire Alarm	0.33	0.03	(0.30)	0.30	0.00
Ways of Working	0.65	0.40	(0.25)	0.25	0.00
Changing Places Toilets	0.25	0.13	(0.12)	0.12	0.00
Operation Repair & Maintenance of Council Buildings	0.23	0.03	(0.20)	0.20	0.00

Scheme	2023/24 Budget £m	Estimated Outturn £m	Variance before carry fwd £m	Carry Forward £m	Variance Over / (Under) £m
Fire Risk Assessment	0.30	0.30	0.00	0.00	0.00
Schools Project	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00
Walsall Council House-Modern Secure Reception	0.03	0.00	(0.03)	0.03	0.00
Council House Internal Decoration	0.03	0.00	(0.03)	0.03	0.00
Willenhall Lane Travellers Site Pumping Station	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00
Security Arrangements for Corporate Buildings	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00
Civic Centre Plumbing	0.07	0.00	(0.07)	0.07	0.00
Council House Windows	1.29	0.30	(0.99)	0.99	0.00
Council House Roof Repairs	1.49	1.49	0.00	0.00	0.00
Computer Aided Facilities Management System	0.35	0.30	(0.05)	0.05	0.00
Council Chamber Refurbishment	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00
MyCMIS – asset management tracking system	0.02	0.00	(0.02)	0.02	0.00
Webcasting And Hybrid Council Meetings	0.02	0.02	0.00	0.00	0.00
Essential Microsoft Upgrades & Foundation for Office 365	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
ICT-Safe and Secure Environment	2.61	1.50	(1.11)	1.11	0.00
Proud – ICT	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00
Enabling Technology	4.70	2.38	(2.32)	2.32	0.00
Maintaining A Safe and Secure Environment	0.33	0.05	(0.28)	0.28	0.00
Telephony Cloud Based System	0.48	0.02	(0.46)	0.46	0.00
Proud Card Payments Digital Website	1.03	0.20	(0.83)	0.83	0.00
Konica Multi-Functional Device Re-Tender	0.05	0.03	(0.02)	0.02	0.00
Archiving Systems Moving to Customer Access Mngt Retired	0.10	0.04	(0.06)	0.06	0.00
Information Governance Service Improvements	0.03	0.03	0.00	0.00	0.00
Digital & Technology Service (Dats) Staffing Capitalisation	0.25	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00
Smartphones	0.28	0.28	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Customer Engagement</b>					
Aids And Adaptations (Statutory Element)	0.55	0.55	0.00	0.00	0.00
Health Through Warmth and Related Retro Fit Schemes	0.18	0.18	0.00	0.00	0.00
Social Housing Decarbonisation	0.28	0.00	(0.28)	0.00	(0.28)

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>2023/24 Budget £m</b>	<b>Estimated Outturn £m</b>	<b>Variance before carry fwd £m</b>	<b>Carry Forward £m</b>	<b>Variance Over / (Under) £m</b>
<b>Externally Funded schemes</b>					
<b>Economies, Environment and Communities</b>					
Library Improvements Fund	0.20	0.20	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Resources and Transformation</b>					
Civic/Council House Decarbonisation	0.40	0.40	0.00	0.00	0.00
Changing Places Toilets	0.24	0.24	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Customer Engagement</b>					
Local Authority Housing Fund	0.19	0.19	0.00	0.00	0.00
Purchase of Dispersed Temporary Accommodation	0.87	0.87	0.00	0.00	0.00
Disabled Facilities Grant	3.31	3.31	0.00	0.00	0.00
Off Gas Scheme	0.10	0.10	0.00	0.00	0.00
Social Housing Decarbonisation	2.36	2.36	0.00	0.00	0.00
Business Energy & Industrial Strategy – Local Authority Delivery Scheme / Home Upgrade Grant	5.66	5.66	0.00	0.00	0.00
Midland Energy Hub - Local Authority Delivery Scheme / Home Upgrade Grant	1.47	1.47	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>Total Capital – Services within the remit of this Committee</b>	<b>34.48</b>	<b>27.06</b>	<b>(7.42)</b>	<b>7.14</b>	<b>(0.28)</b>

## Scrutiny Overview Committee – Area of Focus – 2023-24

	28 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	9 <sup>th</sup> November 2023	11 <sup>th</sup> December 2023	6 <sup>th</sup> February 2024	14 <sup>th</sup> March 2024	18 <sup>th</sup> April 2024
<p>Economic Growth, Enable greater local opportunities for all people, communities and businesses.</p> <p><i>Lead OSC: Economy &amp; Environment</i></p>		WMCA Annual report.		Walsall Borough Local Plan		WMCA
<p>People Encourage our residents to lead more active fulfilling and independent lives. People maintain or improve their health and wellbeing.</p> <p><i>Lead OSC: Social Care &amp; Health</i></p>						
<p>Internal focus, all Council services are customer focused, effective efficient and fair.</p> <p><i>Lead OSC: Scrutiny Overview Committee</i></p>	S106 monitoring	Recruitment and retention	Q2 financial monitoring  Draft Budget & Capital Programme		S106 monitoring  Electoral Services report (impact of new legislation)	Marketing and advertising
<p>Children have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well</p> <p><i>Lead OSCs: Children's &amp; Education</i></p>				School Gate Working Group recommendation monitoring.		
<p>Communities are empowered so that they feel connected and that they belong in Walsall. Create safe and healthy places whilst building a strong sense of community.</p> <p><i>Lead OSC: Scrutiny Overview Committee</i></p>	Violent crime – WM Police	Housing waiting list		Enforcement	Social Housing providers	



## **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

**Council House,  
Lichfield Street,  
Walsall, WS1 1TW**  
[www.walsall.gov.uk](http://www.walsall.gov.uk)

**6 NOVEMBER 2023**



## FORWARD PLAN

The forward plan sets out decisions that are termed as “key decisions” at least 28 calendar days before they are due to be taken by the Executive (Cabinet). Also included on the plan are other decisions to be taken by the Cabinet (“non-key decisions”). Preparation of the forward plan helps the Council to programme its work. The purpose of the forward plan is to give plenty of notice and an opportunity for consultation on the issues to be discussed. The plan is updated each month with the period of the plan being rolled forward by one month and republished. Copies of the plan can be obtained from Democratic Services, Walsall MBC, Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW [craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk) and can also be accessed from the Council’s website at [www.walsall.gov.uk](http://www.walsall.gov.uk). The Cabinet is allowed to make urgent decisions which do not appear in the forward plan, however, a notice will be included on the agenda for the relevant Cabinet meeting which explains the reasons why.

Please note that the decision dates are indicative and are subject to change. Please contact the above addressee if you wish to check the date for a particular item.

The Cabinet agenda and reports are available for inspection by the public 7 days prior to the meeting of the Cabinet on the Council’s website. Background papers are listed on each report submitted to the Cabinet and members of the public are entitled to see these documents unless they are confidential. The report also contains the name and telephone number of a contact officer. These details can also be found in the forward plan.

Meetings of the Cabinet are open to the public. Occasionally there are items included on the agenda which are confidential and for those items the public will be asked to leave the meeting. The forward plan will show where this is intended and the reason why the reports are confidential. Enquiries regarding these reasons should be directed to Democratic Services ([craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk)).

“Key decisions” are those decisions which have a significant effect within the community or which involve considerable expenditure or savings. With regard to key decisions the Council’s Constitution states:

- (1) A key decision is:
  - (i) any decision in relation to an executive function which results in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant, having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates or
  - (ii) any decision that is likely to have significant impact on two or more wards within the borough.
- (2) The threshold for “significant” expenditure/savings is £500,000.

- (3) A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

**FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS  
DECEMBER 2023 TO MARCH 2024 (06.11.2023)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reference No./ Date first entered in Plan	Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside the Council)	Decision maker	Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer	Main consultees	Contact Member (All Members can be written to at Civic Centre, Walsall)	Date item to be considered
37/23 (7.8.23)	<p><b>Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 – Update:</b></p> <p>To provide an updated medium term financial outlook, draft revenue budget and capital programme for 2024/25 to 2027/28, including update to savings proposals, impact of Autumn Statement, and progress on budget consultation to date including feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the draft revenue and capital budget.</p>	Cabinet  Non-key Decision	Vicky Buckley  <a href="mailto:Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk">Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Council tax payers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations.  Internal services	Cllr Bird	13 December 2023
55/23 (6.11.23)	<p><b>Walsall Borough Local Plan - Call for Sites:</b></p> <p>To agree authorisation for the Council to publicise and implement a Call for</p>	Cabinet  Key Decision	David Holloway  <a href="mailto:David.Holloway@walsall.gov.uk">David.Holloway@walsall.gov.uk</a>  Page 50 of 66	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	13 December 2023

	Sites exercise for the Walsall Borough Local Plan.					
56/23 (6.11.23)	<b>Walsall Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2022-2025:</b>  To note and forward to Council for approval the Walsall Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2022-2025.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Phil Rutherford  <a href="mailto:Philip.Rutherford@walsall.gov.uk">Philip.Rutherford@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services  YJS Partnership Board	Cllr Elson	13 December 2023
38/23 (7.8.23)	<b>Treasury Management Mid Year Position Statement 2023/24:</b>  To note and forward to Council, for consideration and noting (and in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Code of Practice (2017), the mid year report for treasury management activities 2023/24 including prudential and local indicators.	Council  Non-key Decision	Treasury Management Code of Practice.  Richard Walley  <a href="mailto:Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk">Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services	Cllr Ferguson	13 December 2023
39/23 (7.8.23)	<b>Strategic Leisure Review:</b>  To update on the performance and impact of the four leisure facilities. To approve recommendations around the current and future facility stock.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Stuart Webb  <a href="mailto:Stuart.Webb@walsall.gov.uk">Stuart.Webb@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services	Cllr Flint	13 December 2023
36/23 (7.8.23)	<b>Healthy Eating for Children and Young People Programme:</b>  To seek approval to procure a new healthy eating and weight	Cabinet  Key Decision	Esther Higdon  <a href="mailto:Esther.Higdon@walsall.gov.uk">Esther.Higdon@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services  Walsall Healthcare Trust	Cllr Flint	13 December 2023

	management programme for children and young people in Walsall.					
61/23 (6.11.23)	<b>Walsall Tobacco Control Plan 2023-2027:</b> To approve the Tobacco Control Plan	Cabinet Non-key decision	Joe Holding <a href="mailto:Joe.Holding@walsall.gov.uk">Joe.Holding@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services SWPB	Cllr Flint	13 December 2023
60/23 (6.11.23)	<b>Community Grant – Bloxwich Community Partnership:</b> To agree funding and leasing arrangements in relation to Palace Play, Shop and Eat Blakenall Row, Walsall WS3 1LW	Cabinet Key Decision	Sarah Oakley <a href="mailto:Sarah.Oakley@walsall.gov.uk">Sarah.Oakley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Bloxwich Community Partnership	Cllr Perry	13 December 2023
62/23 (06.11.23)	<b>Adult Social Care Contributions Policy</b> To approve the continuation of an Adult Social Care Contributions Policy rather than a Charging Policy which encompasses a number of charging areas under the Care Act. The Contributions Policy will detail the framework as to how customers will be assessed for their adult social care contributions. The policy will however cover both residential and community assessments. The current policy is community assessments only.	Cabinet Key Decision	Kerrie Allward <a href="mailto:Kerrie.Allward@walsall.gov.uk">Kerrie.Allward@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Pedley	13 December 2023
14/23 (6.2.23)	<b>Growth Funding for Schools:</b> To enable the Local Authority to fulfil its duty to secure sufficient primary and	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom <a href="mailto:Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk">Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services, Schools Forum	Cllr M. Statham	13 December 2023

	secondary school places, through the adoption of a policy for the application of revenue funding for school growth.					
46/23 (4.9.23)	<b>SEN Place Requirement:</b>  To approve finance for additional special educational needs school places.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Alex Groom  <a href="mailto:Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk">Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal services	Cllr M. Statham	13 December 2023
50/23 (2.10.23)	<b>Corporate Financial Performance 2023/24:</b>  To report the financial position based on 9 months to December 2023.	Cabinet  Non-key decision	Vicky Buckley  <a href="mailto:Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk">Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Corporate Management Team and Internal Services	Cllr Bird	7 February 2024
51/23 (2.10.23)	<b>Corporate Budget Plan 2024/25 – 2027/28, incorporating the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management and investment Strategy 2024/25:</b>  To recommend the final budget and council tax for approval by Council.	Cabinet  Council  Key decision	Vicky Buckley  <a href="mailto:Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk">Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Council tax payers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations,  Corporate Management Team and Internal Services	Cllr Bird	Cabinet 7 February 2024  Council 22 February 2024
52/23 (2.10.23)	<b>Council Plan 2022/25 – Q2 23/24:</b>  To note the Quarter 2 2023/24 (outturn) performance against the Markers of Success in the Council Plan 2022/25.	Cabinet  Non-key decision	Elizabeth Connolly  <a href="mailto:elizabeth.connolly@walsall.gov.uk">elizabeth.connolly@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	7 February 2024
57/23 (6.11.23)	<b>Walsall Net-Zero 2041 Climate Strategy:</b>	Cabinet	Katie Moreton  <a href="#">Page 53 of 66</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	7 February 2023

	To approve the Walsall Net-Zero 2041 Strategy.	Key Decision	<a href="mailto:Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk">Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk</a>			
54/23 (2.10.23)	<b>Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2023 – 2026:</b>  To approve an interim commissioning strategy.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Nigel Imber – <a href="mailto:Nigel.Imber@Walsall.Gov.uk">Nigel.Imber@Walsall.Gov.uk</a>	Internal consultees  Local and regional partners	Cllr Pedley	7 February 2024
53/23 (2.10.23)	<b>Determination of the Scheme for coordinated admissions, and the Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools for the 2025/26 academic year:</b>  To determine the scheme of admissions and admission arrangements for community and voluntary-controlled primary schools for 2025-26.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Alex Groom  <a href="mailto:Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk">Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal consultees  Public  Local Authorities  Schools  Faith Groups	Cllr M. Statham	7 February 2024
58/23 (6.11.23)	<b>High Needs Funding Formula 2024/25:</b>  To approve changes to the High Needs Funding Formula, as agreed by Schools Forum, to be used for the allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant	Cabinet  Key Decision	Richard Walley  <a href="mailto:Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk">Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Schools Forum  Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	20 March 2024

	– High Needs Block to schools in Walsall for the 2024/25 financial year.					
59/23 (6.11.23)	<p><b>Early Years Funding Formula 2024/25:</b></p> <p>To Cabinet approve the Early Years Funding Formula, as agreed by Schools Forum, to be used as the allocation of funding to early years providers in Walsall.</p>	<p>Cabinet Key Decision</p>	<p>Richard Walley <a href="mailto:Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk">Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Schools Forum Internal Services</p>	<p>Cllr M. Statham</p>	<p>20 March 2024</p>

**Black Country Executive Joint Committee**  
**Forward Plan of Key Decisions**

**Published up to February 2024**

Date Created	Key Decision	Contact Officer	Main consultee	Date of meeting
	<b>Black Country Executive Joint Committee Governance</b>			
04/09/2023	<p><b>Change Control and Delegated Authority</b></p> <p>Approval of BCJC Delegated Authority to the Single Accountable Body Section 151 Officer (SAB s151 officer) and approval of the revised Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (BCLEP) Assurance Framework Change Control and Delegated Authority delegations, as detailed in the attachment of the report (BCLEP Assurance Framework Appendix 23).</p>	<p>David Moore  <a href="mailto:david.moore@walsall.gov.uk">david.moore@walsall.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Mark Lavender  <a href="mailto:mark.lavender@walsall.gov.uk">mark.lavender@walsall.gov.uk</a></p>	Walsall Council	01/11/2023





# West Midlands Combined Authority

## Forward Plan

## Forthcoming key decisions

Title of key decision:	Decision to be taken by and date:	Open or Exempt:	Portfolio Lead	Employee to contact:
<b>Regional Activity &amp; Delivery Update</b> To provide an update on recent activity of the WMCA.	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Laura Shoaf Chief Executive of the West Midlands Combined Authority
<b>WMCA Financial Monitoring Report - November 2023</b> to provide an update on the latest financial position	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Bob Sleight Finance Portfolio Lead	Beverly Sullivan, Sally Truman Financial Planning and Coordination Manager, Lead Financial Planning Accountant
<b>Investment Zone and Levelling Up Zone Governance</b> To consider governance arrangements supporting the region's Investment Zone and Levelling Up Zone proposals.	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Stephen Simkins Economy & Innovation Portfolio Lead	Jonathan Gibson Head of Policy & Public Affairs
<b>Air Quality Framework</b> To approve the draft framework that reviews all of the measures possible to accelerate improvements to regional air quality, following public consultation and consideration by the Environment & Energy Board.	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor John Cotton Environment, Energy & HS2 Portfolio Lead	Jacqueline Homan Head of Environment

<p><b>WMCA Homelessness Taskforce: Update and Key Priorities</b> The purpose of this paper is to update and engage WMCA Board members on the current work programme and priorities of the WMCA Homelessness Taskforce.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Kerrie Carmichael Inclusive Communities Portfolio Lead	Neelam Sunder Senior Programme Manager - Homelessness
<p><b>HS2 / 'Network North' Update and Implications</b> To consider further details on the economic implications of HS2 not going to Manchester, the package of proposed alternative transport projects and funding governance arrangements.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	Anne Shaw Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands
<p><b>Birmingham Eastside Extension</b> position paper on scheme and next steps</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	Marilyn Grazette Programme Sponsor
<p><b>New Stations Package 1 Update</b> Paper to update the Board on the impacts of the novation to a new contractor for the Package 1 New Stations contract.</p>	WMCA Board 17 November 2023	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead	Liz Baker Strategic Sponsor
<p><b>Regional Activity &amp; Delivery Update</b> To receive an update on the latest activities of the WMCA.</p>	WMCA Board 12 January 2024	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Laura Shoaf Chief Executive of the West Midlands Combined Authority
<p><b>Draft WMCA 2024/25 Budget</b> To consider the draft WMCA budget for 2024/25.</p>	WMCA Board 12 January 2024	Open	Councillor Bob Sleigh Deputy Mayor	
<p><b>State of the Region</b> State of the Region for the West Midlands in 2024</p>	WMCA Board 12 January 2024	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Si Chun Lam Head of Research, Intelligence and Inclusive Growth

<p><b>Health of the Region</b> To consider an update report reviewing the health of the region.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 12 January 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Izzi Seccombe Wellbeing Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Julia Cleary, Mubasshir Ajaz Head of Corporate Support &amp; Governance, Head of Health and Communities • Strategy, Integration and Net Zero</p>
<p><b>Contactless Ticketing System</b> To receive an update on the latest developments.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 12 January 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Mike Waters Director of Policy, Strategy and Innovation - TfWM</p>
<p><b>Ring &amp; Ride Update</b> To provide an update on the latest activity.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 12 January 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Mike Bird Transport Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Pete Bond Director of Integrated Transport Services</p>
<p><b>HS2 Update Report</b> Report provided to give an update following the Governments decision to cancel HS2 Phases 2a &amp; 2b</p>	<p>WMCA Board 12 January 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor John Cotton Environment, Energy &amp; HS2 Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Craig Wakeman Head of Transport Implementation</p>
<p><b>West Midlands Digital Roadmap 2024-2027</b> This is the update WMCA's initial Digital Roadmap that was developed in 2021. The SENZ directorate are producing an update to the Roadmap which reflects how the WMCA has heightened its ambitions for for digital and how it will work with partners to overcome regional challenges and take advantage of existing and emerging opportunities.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 February 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Patrick Harley Culture &amp; Digital Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Mike Lewis Strategic Lead – West Midlands Digital Roadmap</p>

<p><b>Constitution</b> To seek delegated authority to update the constitution as a result of the transfer of Police &amp; Crime Commissioner powers to the WMCA in May 2024.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 9 February 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Andy Street Mayor</p>	<p>Helen Edwards Director of Law and Governance</p>
<p><b>Skills Funding</b> To consider the latest position regarding skills funding.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 15 March 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor George Duggins Skills &amp; Productivity Portfolio Lead</p>	<p>Dr. Fiona Aldridge Head of Insight &amp; Intelligence</p>
<p><b>WMCA's Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee and Transport Delivery Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee - Progress Update</b> To provide a quarterly summary of the activity of work of the WMCA's overview and scrutiny function, as required by the Deeper Devolution Deal.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 15 March 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Andy Street Mayor</p>	<p>Lyndsey Roberts Scrutiny Officer</p>

## The Forward Plan

This document sets out known 'key decisions' that will be taken by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) over the coming months.

Forthcoming key decisions are published online to meet the statutory 28 day notification rule for each meeting where a key decision will be taken. Where it has not been possible to meet the 28 day rule for publication of notice of a key decision or an intention to meet in private, the relevant notices will be published as required by legislation as soon as possible.

### What is a key decision?

A 'key decision' means a decision of the Mayor, WMCA or officer which is likely:

- (a) to result in the WMCA incurring expenditure, making savings or generating income amounting to £1m or more; or
- (b) to be significant in terms of its effects on communities living or working in an area comprising two or more wards in the area of the WMCA

The report relating to a decision, together with any other documents being considered, will be available five clear working days before the decision is to be taken (unless the documentation contains exempt information).

The forward plan also provides notice of when the WMCA may decide to exclude the press and public during consideration of a particular matter due to the potential for disclosure of confidential or exempt

information. The grounds upon which local authorities can exclude the press and public are specified by law and details of the exempt categories are available on request from the Governance Services team ([governance.services@wmca.org.uk](mailto:governance.services@wmca.org.uk)).

Councillors or members of the public wishing to:

- make a representation about why a matter should be heard in public, or
- submit information to the decision-making body about an item in the forward plan, or
- request details of relevant documents, or
- seek advice about the WMCA's decision-making arrangements,

should contact the Governance Services team: [governance.services@wmca.org.uk](mailto:governance.services@wmca.org.uk)



## Scrutiny Overview Committee – Recommendation Tracker (23/24)

Committee Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Action/Recommendation	Officer responsible	Status	Target Completion Date	Notes
12 December 2022	Customer Engagement	<p>That data be shared with Members regarding:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. A detailed breakdown on the time it takes calls to be answered across the Council.</p>	Elise Hopkins	In progress	January 2025	This item has been delayed due to progress on a new customer demand dashboard
28 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	West Midlands Police – Update on Policing within Walsall	<p>That Cabinet are requested to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. Ensure Walsall Council works with West Midlands Police to improve road safety and reduce road harm in the Borough.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b. Consider the feasibility of co-locating the Council's community protection teams alongside West Midlands Police to increase co-operative working.</p>	Democratic Services	In progress	13 December 2023 – Cabinet	

28 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	Areas of Focus 2023- 24	Democratic Services assess the feasibility of collating all items related to police and judicial matters which could be considered by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committees.	Craig Goodall	In progress	April 2024	
9 November 2023	WMCA Annual Report	That those members appointed to the West Midlands Combined Authority, Transport for West Midlands, Fire Authority and the Police and Crime Panel provide an annual report to full Council.	Democratic Services	In process	TBC	
9 November 2023	Recruitment and Retention	<p>A Member requested figures relating to internal promotions with a specific breakdown on ethnic backgrounds. Response would be provided in writing.</p> <p>Electronic exit interview forms were provided to those employees leaving the Council. In addition, face to face exit interviews could be requested on demand as appropriate. A breakdown of the reasons and figures on exit monitoring would be provided to the Committee in writing.</p>	Michele Leith Nicola Rickhuss	In process	TBC	

<b>9 November 2023</b>	Local Authority Control of Housing Waiting List	A discussion ensued on the rights of tenants in respect of disrepair and notice of possession. It was agreed for information on this matter to be disseminated to all Councillors.	Elise Hopkins	In process	TBC	
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