

Economy and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

21 November 2024 at 6:00PM

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

[Livestream Link](#)

Membership:

Councillor M Follows (Chair)
Councillor J Whitehouse (Vice-Chair)
Councillor M Bird
Councillor P Bott
Councillor S Cheema
Councillor P Gill
Councillor F Hassan
Councillor A Hicken
Councillor I Hussain
Councillor R Larden
Councillor K Margetts

Portfolio Holder(s):

Councillor G. Perry – Leader of the Council and Strategy, Partnerships and Communities
Councillor A. Andrew – Associate Leader and Economic Growth and Regeneration
Councillor G. Flint – Health and Wellbeing
Councillor A. Garcha – Resident Access and Housing Support
Councillor P. Kaur – Education and Skills
Councillor K. Murphy – Street Pride

Quorum:

4 Members

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

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

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

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

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

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

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

To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 24 October 2024.

(Enclosed, Pages 1 - 7)

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. Willenhall and Darlaston Train Stations

To receive a presentation from the West Midlands Rail Executive on the progress of Willenhall and Darlaston Train Stations.

(Enclosed Pages 8 -11)

7. Underutilisation of Community Assets (Walsall Town Hall)

For the Committee to consider a report on the underutilisation of community asset including a focus on Walsall Town Hall.

(To Follow)

8. Walsall Net Zero 2041 Strategy

For the Committee to consider the Walsall Net Zero 2041 Strategy.

(To Follow)

9. Areas of focus – 2023/24

To consider the areas of focus for the Committee for the remainder of the municipal year and the working group initiation documents.

(Enclosed, Pages 12 - 21)

10. Forward Plans

To receive the latest Forward Plans in respect of the following:

- Executive Forward Plans.
- Black Country Joint Executive Committee.
- West Midlands Combined Authority Board.

(Enclosed, Pages 22 - 33)

11. Recommendations Tracker

To consider progress on recommendations from the previous meeting.

(Enclosed, Page 34)

12. Date of next meeting

To note that the next scheduled meeting will take place on 14 January 2025.

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

Thursday, 24 October 2024 at 6.00p.m.

Committee Members present: Councillor M Follows (Chair)
Councillor J Whitehouse (Vice-Chair)
Councillor M Bird
Councillor P Bott
Councillor S Cheema
Councillor P Gill
Councillor I Hussain
Councillor R Larden
Councillor K Margetts

Portfolio Holders present: Councillor A Andrew – Associate Leader and Economic Growth and Regeneration
Councillor G Flint – Health and Wellbeing
Councillor A Garcha – Resident Access and Housing Support

Officers present: Dave Brown – Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Communities.
Kathryn Moreton – Director of Place and Environment
Sundeep Sangha – Strategic Finance Business Partner
Jaki Brunton-Douglas – Healthy Spaces Team Manager
Matt Powis – Senior Democratic Services Officer

93. **Apologies**

An apology was received from Councillor Hicken.

94. **Substitutions**

There were no substitutions submitted for the duration of the meeting.

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

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

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

There were no items to consider in private session.

97. **Minutes**

A copy of the Minutes of the meeting held on the 10 September 2024 was submitted. [annexed].

Resolved:

That, the minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2024 copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

98. **Protection of Trees, Wildlife and Biodiversity**

The Portfolio Holder for Health and Wellbeing presented a report on the Council's responsibilities to protection of trees, wildlife and biodiversity. [annexed].

The Committee were informed that a third of the Borough was classed as green, open space which included parks, recreation grounds, playing fields, children's play areas, woodlands, countryside sites, nature reserves and associated small pockets on housing and industrial sites.

The Environment Act 2021 set out biodiversity targets including 10% Biodiversity Net Gain for developments, halting species decline by 2030 and improving species abundance by 2042. There was an overall aim to restore 500,000 hectares of wildlife habitat including strengthening local nature recovery and conservation sites.

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

- There were limited protection methods available for the Council to secure biodiversity on private land. One protection method was Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) which the Council utilised on a case-by-case basis.
- Developers were required to submit planning permission for any new housing developments and as such the Council was able to liaise and negotiate with developers to provide protections on proposed development sites.
- Enforcement of planning permission was a tool available to the Council and used on a case-by-case basis.
- The Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Communities advised Members liaise with the planning team if they were aware of any sites in the Borough which were in breach of planning legislation.

- There were many opportunities for planning applicants to offset biodiversity of potential building works with other ecological projects within the Borough.
- There was a view that the Council needed to review and audit the safety and sensibility of street trees across the Borough.
- Purple Horizon aimed at extending up to 12,000 hectares of heathlands, wetlands, woodlands and grasslands across the West Midlands. Ultimately, restoring and connecting protected areas for future generations.
- Maintaining street trees has always been a difficult task for urban areas. The Council was dedicated to ensuring that any new development included the appropriate species of trees in suitable locations. It was also noted that the Council's Tree Planting Policy was scheduled for review in 2026.
- There was a wider call to identify how to improve biodiversity across the Borough which included parks and sites of interest.
- A call for sites was made across the Borough for future planning. This included a chance to assess potential sites for biodiversity net gain.
- The Council was dedicated to increasing the number of trees in current green areas to enhance both the space and its biodiversity.
- There was a regular call for volunteers across all aspects of Council work including litter picking and Children's Services. The Portfolio Holder called for new business sponsors to support volunteering work.

Resolved:

That, the Council's policy on the protection of trees, wildlife and biodiversity be noted.

99. Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2025/26 – 2028/29

The Associate Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration introduced the report and underlined that it was still a time of budgetary pressures. He highlighted that the report covered aspects within the remit of the Committee and full budget consultation was published and available on the Council's website.

A Member expressed his frustrations about the Council's budgetary process and stated that Scrutiny only received the headline proposals of the budget and not the granular details needed to fully scrutinise the executive.

Safer streets, safer people

A Member supported the Council's commitment to not implement green waste collection charges. In response, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that the proposal was considered by the administration as part of the budgetary preparations. However, the proposal was abandoned.

Supporting business and inclusive growth

Ref: OP71 Markets Review

A Member sought clarification on the operational proposal for a markets review. In response, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Council was working with consultants in respect of the Borough Markets and findings were due to conclude in December 2024.

Ref: OP57 Increase bulky waste collection charges by 20%

A Member sought clarification on whether there had been an increase in fly tipping as a result of previous decisions to increase bulky waste collection charges.

In response, it was confirmed that there had been a dip in the number of collections however, there had been no material changes. The Council regularly benchmarked neighbouring areas for fees and charges of Council services to ensure competitiveness.

Ref: OP70 Increase in fees and charges

A Member queried whether there would be an increase to car parking charges. In response, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that there would be no increases.

Safer streets, safer people

Ref: P4 Introduce more rewilding

A Member sought clarification on the sites earmarked for rewilding. In response, it was confirmed that the Council was looking for additional sites for rewilding and not just existing sites. Public consultation on grass cutting was due to commence in the coming weeks which would also capture the views of rewilding in the Borough.

There was a discussion about ticks and the impact on humans and animals.

It was noted that the Committee would receive a report on the grass cutting consultation in January 2025.

Supporting business and inclusive growth

Ref: P5 Relocation of the leather museum

The Chair sought clarification on the proposal to relocate the leather museum. In response, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that a town centre location was being considered to relocate the leather museum permanently. However, the proposal was in its infancy, and it was important to relocate the museum to a more prominent location.

Efficient and effective services

Ref: P2 Phased changes to school crossing patrols

There was a discussion about the use of school crossing controls in the Borough. In response, the Director of Place and Environment confirmed that the Council was looking to implement appropriate road crossing mechanisms at category 1 school crossing locations across the Borough. It was noted that there were nearly 50 sites for potential installation of crossing equipment and a public consultation would commence in the coming months.

Ref: 39 Increase in the number of local buildings and the increased cleaning and caretaking responsibilities and OP33 Review of Cleaning and caretaking in Council buildings.

Different cleaning standards were in place across Council sites, leading to reported financial shortfalls. A review of cleaning frequency for Council estates was planned.

Ref: 41 One-off reduction in demand leading to income pressure on cremations income due to local competitor.

Members observed that a plan for cremation services was in progress to enhance what was provided to the residents. The service was being adjusted and modified to meet local requirements and demand.

Ref: OP58 Reaction in costs linked to waste strategy/Sherbourne

Contamination of waste was a continuing problem for the Council. It was noted that there needed to be continuing education to encourage people to dispose of waste in the right way. It was noted that state of the art technology would reduce costs associated with waste collection over a number of years.

There was a discussion in respect of the rollout of food waste collection services across the Borough. In this respect, it was noted that the food waste collection was due to be a mandatory service for Councils in England. However, Councils were still awaiting confirmation from the Government about any new burden funding to facilitate the rollout. In this respect, the Chair requested a future report on the topic.

Resolved:

That, the draft revenue budget proposals including the revenue and capital budgetary schemes be noted.

100. Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring for 2024/25

The Committee received a report which considered the forecast revenue and capital outturn for 2024/25 up to 16 October 2024. [annexed]

Members noted that in relation to forecast capital, it was proposed that £51.463m would be carried forward. In respect of forecast revenue, there was a predicted overspend of £2.705m with use of earmarked reserves.

Resolved:

That, the revenue and capital forecast for the financial year-end 2024/25 be noted.

101. Areas of Focus

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

A Member sought clarification on the Moxley Urban Farm and involvement of Wolverhampton City Council. In this respect, it was noted that the Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Communities would provide a response in writing.

Resolved:

- 1. That, the areas of focus for the Committee be noted.**
- 2. That, clarification on Moxley Urban Farm be circulated to the Committee in writing.**

102. Forward Plans

The Committee considered the forward plans.

Resolved:

That the forward plans were noted.

103. Recommendations Tracker

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

Resolved:

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

104. Date of next meeting

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7:00 p.m.

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be 21 November 2024.

Signed:

Date:

21 November 2024

Willenhall and Darlaston Train Stations

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Councillor Perry – Leader of the Council and Strategy, Partnerships and Communities
Councillor Andrew – Associate Leader and Economic Growth and Regeneration
Councillor Flint – Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Garcha – Resident Access and Housing Support
Councillor Kaur – Education and Skills
Councillor Murphy – Street Pride

Report

In accordance with the Committee Work Programme, Members requested an update on Willenhall and Darlaston Train Stations.

James Callingham, Programme Sponsor, and Victoria Kinally, Project Sponsor at the West Midlands Rail Executive (WMRE), will provide Members with an update on the progress of the work at both rail stations.

Following consideration of the presentation, Members are encouraged to comment and provide questions as necessary.

Recommendation:

That, the Committee consider the presentation from the West Midlands Rail Executive and make any comments as necessary.

Contact Officer:

Matt Powis

Senior Democratic Services Officer

☎ 01922 652156

✉ matthew.powis@walsall.gov.uk

Rail Programme Update

Willenhall, Darlaston & Aldridge Railway Stations



Walsall Council

Page 9 of 34



IMPROVE
outcomes and
customer experience



IMPROVE
employee satisfaction
and engagement



IMPROVE
service efficiency
and performance

Rail Programme Update

Package 1 – Walsall to Wolverhampton Connectivity

1. Our Contractor (Kier) are fully mobilised with site offices at both locations and construction underway at both sites.
2. Willenhall - Ground remediation work completed, with installation of flooding attenuation tank and sewer diversion to follow.
3. Darlaston - Land remediation work and platform stabilisation structures completed, with car park sub-base and installation of platform foundations to follow.
4. Planning amendment to be submitted to include a Secondary Means of Escape at both sites.
5. Unauthorised unstable building adjacent to construction site in Willenhall risking project schedule – project exploring design change of platform retention to mitigate any delays.
6. Site visit held with Cllr Andrews and Anne Shaw (Executive Director of Transport for West Midlands) on the 1st October 2024
7. Project currently on track to deliver within budget of £85.27m, which was approved by the WMCA Board in November 2023 and remains on schedule to complete in Winter 2025-26.

[Page 10 of 34](#)



Darlaston aerial view of progress



Willenhall aerial view of progress

Rail Programme Update

Aldridge - New Station



1. Planning for a new 1-platform station at Aldridge, providing a service to/from Walsall, funded in current capital programme, and work is ongoing.
2. Agreement at WMCA Board in July 2024 that delivery phase will now be in the post-2027 capital programme, with funding to be secured.
3. WMCA are engaging Network Rail to undertake the Option Selection and Outline Design stages, which will feed into the Outline Business Case and the future Planning Application.
4. Full suite of site investigations due to commence in early 2025.
5. Timetable study concluded: Aldridge will initially be provided with a half-hourly 2-car diesel shuttle service to Walsall where there will be cross-platform interchange available into the electric service to Birmingham. The journey time to Walsall will be around 6 minutes and 39-40 minutes to Birmingham. The diesel shuttle is designed to be a first step towards providing through electric services to Birmingham.
6. Parking study continues. Further work, taking into consideration residents, access arrangements and travel patterns, shall be considered during the next phase of planning.

Page 11 of 34

Economy and Environment – Area of Focus – 2024/25

9 July 2024	10 September 2024	24 October 2024	21 November 2024	14 January 2025	24 February 2025	10 April 2025
Prioritisation of work programme	Community Cohesion Portfolio Presentations	Draft Budget and Capital Programme Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Protection of Trees, Wildlife and Biodiversity Terms of Reference for High Streets Working Group	Rewilding and Grass Cutting Terms of Reference for Enforcement (All Encompassing) Working Group		Flood Management (Pending) Net Zero Strategy (Pending)	

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

Economy and Environment – Area of Focus – 2024/25

Items to be scheduled	Notes
Public Toilets Pilot Update	
Cycling Infrastructure Programme	
Government Recycling Strategy	
Darlaston Town Funding – Referral by SOC	
Recommendation Monitoring:	Regeneration Update (Masterplan) – Considered by Cabinet on 7 February 2024.
	Fly Tipping Enforcement and Activity – Considered by Cabinet on 17 April 2024.
	Derelict Sites Taskforce Update – Considered by Cabinet on 11 September 2024: <i>The Cabinet is leading on strengthening the Councils approach to derelict properties and has set up a cross-service Taskforce to provide focus and leadership. The Taskforce is leading on a review to develop a policy/strategic plan on actions required to improve the Council's approach to addressing the challenging issue of derelict properties including tackling landowners, long term void sites and identifying what resources across council services are required to make an impact across the borough.</i>

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

Economy and Environment – Area of Focus – 2024/25

Prioritisation topics to be scheduled:

Town Deals and Review of District Centres
Willenhall and Darlaston Train Stations
Voluntary Sector – Team Walsall
Derelict Building Taskforce
Devolution Deal and Levelling Up.
Recycling and Waste Collection (Super Tip)
Heritage Assets
Decarbonisation Building Programme
Underutilisation of Community Assets (Walsall Town Hall)
Strategic Public Transport point and bus networks
Community Protection of environmental crime (success of enviro crime scenes)
Debrief on the chemical spill and lessons learned.

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

Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Enforcement Working Group

Initiation Document

Working Group Name:	Enforcement Working Group
Committee:	Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Municipal Year:	2024/25
Chair:	Hicken
Lead Officers:	Matt Powis (Senior Democratic Services Officer), Paul Gordon (Director – Resilient Communities) , David Elrington (Head of Community Safety and Enforcement)
Membership	Councillors Cheema, Hicken, Larden
Co-opted Members	

1. Context

- 1.1. On 9 July 2024, the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered topics for potential working groups for the year. The Committee had received many reports on fly-tipping and associated enforcement activities in the Borough.
- 1.2. Following, a lengthy debate, Members agreed to establish a working group on enforcement powers investigate and review the effectiveness of Council enforcement powers.

2. Objectives

What do you want it to achieve? It is important to have clearly defined outcomes at the start to give the working group direction and ensure it adds value.

To review the Council's existing enforcement powers and resources to strengthen the Council's long term enforcement capabilities. This includes taking a thematic approach to review the appearance of the borough, safety of people, enforcement, directorate capability and future demands/development.

The focus will be on 'envirocrime' within the following scope:

- Community Safety and Enforcement
- Resilient Communities
- Planning Enforcement

Specific aspects include:

- Environmental crimes including fly-tipping and fly-posting.
- Littering.
- Section 215.
- Food hygiene, public safety, illegal goods.
- Enforcement and fines including FPN, vehicles, court and legal action.
- Team sizes, prioritisation, capability, including recovery of costs, expenditure and income generation.
- Future need/demand including legislation and emerging trends/risks.
- Targeted interventions and incentives.

Scope

Page 15 of 34

What should be included and excluded.

Page 15 of 34

1. Assess statutory and non-statutory enforcement & how the council prioritises enforcement activity.
2. Review education provision and prevention measures. How the Council and Partners educates the public?
3. How effective is enforcement? Are there any limitations? What is working well?
4. What are the local/national factors?
5. What are the resources available? Financing, monies, team sizes and capability.
6. Are there any neighbourhood areas piloting any schemes/incentives as part of their enforcement activities?

3. Who else will contribute

Representatives from primary service areas:

- a. Community Safety and Enforcement
- b. Resilient Communities
- c. Planning Enforcement
- d. Legal Services

Other contributions from:

- e. Healthy Spaces
- f. Public Health
- g. Portfolio Holders
- h. West Midlands Police

Other stakeholders as appropriate as part of the working group's investigation.

4. Timescale and Reporting Schedule

- 4.1. The following dates are based upon the need for the working group to be completed in the same municipal year:
 - a. Terms of Reference discussion – 25 October 2024
 - b. Terms of Reference to be approved by Economy and Environment OSC – 21 November 2024
 - c. Draft findings report to be considered by Working Group – TBC
 - d. Final report to be considered by Economy and Environment OSC - TBC
- 4.2. A detailed timetable of meetings and activities can be found at Appendix A.

5. Risk Factors

- 5.1. The following table documents potential obstacles to the progress of the working group:

Risk	Likelihood	Mitigation
Availability of witness and elected members	Medium	Organise a schedule of meetings to assist planning
Complexity of legislation	High	Provide a breakdown including briefing notes to make legislation easier to digest.
Large amounts of information/data	Medium	Ensure all information is presented well and appropriately presented to minimise confusion.

6. Equalities Implications

- 7.1 The public sector equality duty in Section 149 of the Equality Act requires public bodies to take active steps to eliminate discrimination and to do positive things to promote equality. Legal framework for utilising enforcement powers is dependent on legislation and there is general duty for ensure compliance with equality legislation.

Appendix A Timetable

Date	Activity
7 November 2024	Issue draft Terms of Reference for consideration and comment

Walsall Council Overview & Scrutiny Working Group
Initiation Document

Work Group Name:	High Streets Working Group
Committee:	Economy and Environment
Municipal Year:	2024/25
Lead Member:	Councillor Cheema
Lead Officer:	Simon Tranter
Support Officer:	Nikki Gough
Membership:	Councillor S. Cheema Councillor A. Hicken, Councillor R. Larden.
Co-opted Members:	N/A

1.	Context
	On 9 July 2024, the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee considered topics for potential working groups for the year. Following, a lengthy debate, Members agreed to establish a working group on High Streets.
2.	Objectives
	<p>What do you want it to achieve? It is important to have clearly defined outcomes at the start to give the working group direction and ensure it adds value.</p> <p>To make lasting legacy recommendations considering to identify common themes and establish what the future of high streets is.</p> <p>The high streets in scope are:</p> <p>Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Daralaston, Walsall and Willenhall.</p>
3.	Scope
	<p>What should be included and excluded?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand what activities are already planned, for example: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Town Centre masterplan and Connected Gateway b. Bloxwich Town Deal c. Willenhall Masterplan 2. What is working well? 3. What are the local difficulties? 4. What blockers exist? 5. What role can the Council play in stimulating high streets? 6. What do people want/need from local high streets?
4.	Equalities Implications
	<p>The public sector equality duty in Section 149 of the Equality Act requires public bodies to take active steps to eliminate discrimination and to do positive things to promote equality.</p> <p>The working group will consider the equality impact of their recommendations.</p>
4.	Who else will you want to take part?

Walsall Council Overview & Scrutiny Working Group
Initiation Document

	<p>Think about who else, other than lead officers and members, it would be useful to include either as part of the working group or to bring information at specific points. For example- partners, stakeholders, other authorities.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Benchmarking with statistical neighbours;2. CBRE3. Local Businesses – multinational, national and local4. Local residents including young people <p>*with local businesses and local residents the intention is to use existing consultation data in the first instance to inform the working group.</p>									
5.	Timescales & Reporting Schedule									
	<p>The following dates are based upon the need for the working group to be completed in the same municipal year:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Terms of Reference – 18 October 2024b. Terms of Reference to be approved by Economy and Environment OSC – 24 October 2024c. Information and evidence gathering meetings – November 2024 – February 2025d. Conclusions and recommendations considered by the Group – March 2025e. Final report to be considered by Economy and Environment OSC – 10 April 2025									
6.	Risk factors									
	<p>Are there any obstacles that can be predicted? For example, is it dependent on other organisations outside your control and duty to cooperate? Identifying these factors early and how they will be mitigated should help minimise their impact.</p> <table><tr><th>Risk</th><th>Likelihood</th><th>Measure to Resolve</th></tr><tr><td>Availability of witness and elected members</td><td>Medium</td><td>Organise a schedule of meetings to assist planning</td></tr><tr><td>Large/borough wide remit</td><td>Medium</td><td>Plan schedule of meetings. Choose to refocus of select areas as work progresses if required.</td></tr></table>	Risk	Likelihood	Measure to Resolve	Availability of witness and elected members	Medium	Organise a schedule of meetings to assist planning	Large/borough wide remit	Medium	Plan schedule of meetings. Choose to refocus of select areas as work progresses if required.
Risk	Likelihood	Measure to Resolve								
Availability of witness and elected members	Medium	Organise a schedule of meetings to assist planning								
Large/borough wide remit	Medium	Plan schedule of meetings. Choose to refocus of select areas as work progresses if required.								

Date Agreed:		Date Updated:	
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Timetable:

Walsall Council Overview & Scrutiny Working Group
Initiation Document



FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

**Council House,
Lichfield Street,
Walsall, WS1 1TW**
www.walsall.gov.uk

4 November 2024

FORWARD PLAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS
DECEMBER 2024 TO MARCH 2025
(04.11.2024)**

7	1	2	3	4	5	6	
	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
	47/24 (5.8.24)	Council Plan 2025-2029: To consider the final version of the Council Plan following consultation and recommend this to Council for approval.	Cabinet Key Decision	Karen Griffiths Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk Elizabeth Connolly Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services, external stakeholders, other interested parties (via Public Consultation exercise)	Cllr Perry	11 December 2024
	61/24 (7.10.24)	Making Connections Walsall: To approve a contract extension for 1 year (April 2025 – March 2026) to enable collaboration and partnership discussions regarding a new social prescribing delivery model for Walsall residents.	Cabinet Key Decision	Sarah Oakley Sarah.Oakley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	11 December 2024

49/24 (5.8.24)	Treasury Management Mid-Year Position Statement 2024/25: 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 2024/25 including prudential and local indicators.	Cabinet Council Non-key Decision	Richard Walley Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Statham	11 December 2024
32/24 (4.6.24)	Appointment of Contractor for Civic Centre and Council House Decarbonisation Works: To appoint a contractor for decarbonisation works at the Civic Centre and Council House. <i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>	Cabinet Key Decision	Nick Ford Nick.Ford@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	11 December 2024
63/24 (7.10.24)	The Walsall Borough Local Plan (WBLP) - revised Local Development Scheme (LDS): To approve the progression of the WBLP under a revised LDS, and the publication of the revised LDS, to include other development plan documents and planning policy documents.	Cabinet Key Decision	David Holloway David.Holloway@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	11 December 2024

72/24 (4.11.24)	Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) 2023-24: To update members, stakeholders/partners and communities about funds received and spent through Section 106 planning obligations and to approve for submission to government, the 2023-24 Infrastructure Funding Statement.	Cabinet Key Decision	Andrew Tyrer Andrew.Tyrer@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	11 December 2024
62/24 (7.10.24)	Adoption of the new Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy: To approve the new Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and establish a council-led steering group to undertake ongoing monitoring.	Cabinet Key Decision	Black Country PPOSS - Overarching Strategic Framework Jaki Brunton-Douglas Jaki.Brunton-Douglas@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	11 December 2024
71/24 (7.10.24)	Net-Zero 2041 Strategy: To approve the draft Net-Zero 2041 Strategy and the establishment of a 'Walsall Net Zero Partnership' to deliver the borough-wide elements of the Strategy.	Cabinet Key Decision	Kathryn Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	11 December 2024
35/24 (4.6.24)	Walsall Housing Allocations Policy: To approve Walsall's Housing Allocations Policy which details how the Council will prioritise applicants for nomination to housing association properties.	Cabinet Key Decision	Neil Hollyhead Neil.Hollyhead@walsall.gov.uk	Public Consultation Internal Services Housing Associations	Cllr Garcha	11 December 2024

39/24 (1.7.24)	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029: To approve the final version of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy following consultation.	Cabinet Key Decision	Karen Griffiths Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk Elizabeth Connolly Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services, external stakeholders, other interested parties (via Public Consultation exercise)	Cllr Lee	11 December 2024
57/24 (2.9.24)	IT Goods, Software and Associated Services contract awards: To award a contract for the provision of IT Goods, Software and Associated Services.	Cabinet Key Decision	Sharon Worrall Sharon.Worrall@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Lee	11 December 2024
56/24 (2.9.24)	Middlemore Lane Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) & Waste Treatment Service Operational Arrangements: To approve a short-term service contract for the operational management of the new waste facility at Middlemore Lane and the existing HWRC at Fryers Road and approve a new finance lease agreement for the operational equipment, HWRC containers, and other physical resources at Middlemore Lane. <i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>	Cabinet Key Decision	Kathryn Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Murphy	11 December 2024

48/24 (5.8.24)	Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2028/29 – Update: To provide an updated medium term financial outlook, draft revenue budget and capital programme for 2025/26 to 2028/29, 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.	Cabinet Key Decision	Ross Hutchinson Ross.Hutchinson@walsall.gov.uk	Council tax payers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations Internal Services	Cllr Statham	15 January 2025
46/24 (5.8.24)	Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): To seek approval of a draft Planning Obligations SPD for consultation with key partners, stakeholders, infrastructure providers and the general public. The document will be consulted on a 6-week consultation.	Cabinet Key Decision	David Holloway David.Holloway@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	15 January 2025
64/24 (7.10.24)	Council Plan 2025-2029 Baseline Performance Report: To consider baseline performance data aligned to the corporate priorities as set out in the Council Plan 2024-2028.	Cabinet Key Decision	Elizabeth Connolly Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	12 February 2025

65/24 (7.10.24)	Walsall Place Based Strategy: That Cabinet approve the Walsall Place Based Strategy (PBS) that sets the vision and delivery plan for the Single Settlement.	Cabinet Key Decision	Simon Tranter Simon.Tranter@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	12 February 2025
70/24 (7.10.24)	Gasholders - Black Country Enterprise Zone: To approve entering a Funding Agreement with City of Wolverhampton Council for site preparation works and the approach to progressing project delivery. <i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>	Cabinet Key Decision	Caroline Harper Caroline.Harper@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	12 February 2025
66/24 (7.10.24)	Corporate Budget Plan 2025/26 – 2028/29, incorporating the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management and investment Strategy 2025/26: To recommend the final budget and council tax for approval by Council.	Cabinet Council Key Decision	Ross Hutchinson Ross.Hutchinson@walsall.gov.uk	Council tax payers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations Internal Services	Cllr Statham	Cabinet 12 February 2025 / Council 27 February 2025
67/24 (7.10.24)	Corporate Financial Performance 2024/25: To report the financial position based on 9 months to December 2024.	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Ross Hutchinson Ross.Hutchinson@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Statham	12 February 2025

68/24 (7.10.24)	Determination of School Admission Arrangements 2026-27: To determine school admission arrangements for the 2026-27 academic year.	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services Schools Forum	Cllr Kaur	12 February 2025
69/24 (7.10.24)	Middlemore Lane and Fryers Road Household Waste and Recycling Centres (HWRC) & Waste Treatment Service: To approve the new long-term service provision for the operational management of two new waste facilities at Middlemore Lane and Fryers Road and approve the pre-tender budget for the operational management of a waste transfer station and two household waste recycling centres.	Cabinet Key Decision	Kathryn Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk Stephen Johnson Stephen.Johnson@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Murphy	12 February 2025
73/24 (4.11.24)	Early Years Funding Formula 2025/26: To approve the proposed Early Year Funding Formula for 2025/26.	Cabinet Decision	Tanya Collier Tanya.Collier@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services Schools Forum	Cllr Kaur	19 March 2025
74/24 (4.11.24)	High Needs Funding Formula 2025/26: To approve the proposed High Needs Funding Formula for 2025/26.	Cabinet Decision	Tanya Collier Tanya.Collier@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services Schools Forum	Cllr Kaur	19 March 2025

75/24 (4.11.24)	Adult Social Care and Children's Services Case Management System: To approve the renewal of the contract for Mosaic before the current contract ends on 31/07/2025.	Cabinet Key Decision	Anne Doyle Anne.Doyle@walsall.gov.uk Maxine Jones Maxine.Jones@walsal.gov.uk	Internal Services External Stakeholders	Cllr Pedley	19 March 2025
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Black Country Executive Joint Committee - Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Published up to March 2025

Date Created	Key Decision	Contact Officer	Main consultee	Date of meeting
	Black Country Enterprise Zone			
05/08/2024	<p>Gasholders</p> <p>Approval of the Gasholders project (Walsall Council) for grant funding from the Black Country Enterprise Zone (BCEZ) business rate surpluses.</p> <p>Approval for the City of Wolverhampton Council and Walsall Council to proceed to enter into a separate Grant Agreement which will set out the terms and conditions of the funding.</p>	<p>Simon Tranter simon.tranter@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Walsall Council	13/01/2025
	Land and Property Investment Fund (LPIF)			
02/09/2024	<p>Approval for the remaining LPIF programme funds to be awarded, either on an equal grant sum split or on a full grant sum award to a single project basis; with the projects being Alfred Gunn House (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council) and Oxley Health & Wellbeing Facility (Wolverhampton City Council).</p>	<p>Tammy Stokes tammy_stokes@sandwell.gov.uk</p> <p>Simon Tranter simon.tranter@walsall.gov.uk</p> <p>Richard Lawrence Richard.Lawrence@wolverhampton.gov.uk</p>	<p>Sandwell Council</p> <p>Walsall Council</p> <p>Wolverhampton City Council</p>	13/01/2025

	<p>Approval for the Accountable Body (Walsall Council) for the LPIF programme to proceed to enter into grant agreement with the Alfred Gunn House project (Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council) if funding recommendation is agreed.</p> <p>Approval for the Accountable Body (Walsall Council) for the LPIF programme to proceed to enter into grant agreement with the Oxley Health & Wellbeing Facility project (Wolverhampton City Council) if funding recommendation is agreed.</p>			
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Recommendation Tracker

Committee Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Action/Recommendation	Officer responsible	Status	Target Completion Date	Notes
23 November 2023	Draft Budget and Capital Programme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cost benefit analysis in respect of preventative measures with fly tipping compared to 2022. 2. Clarification on whether the Council could recover costs associated with fly tipping from a Magistrates' or Small Claims Court. 	Dave Elrington	In progress	TBC	
16 January 2024	Off-Road Vehicles	Conviction data relating to off-road vehicles to be circulated to the Committee.	Dave Elrington	In progress	TBC	
24 October 2024	Area of Focus	That, clarification on Moxley Urban Farm be circulated to the Committee in writing.	Dave Brown	Completed and circulated to Councillor Bott		