

Economy and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee

23 November 2023 at 6:00PM

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

[Livestream Link](#)

Membership:

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

Portfolio Holder(s):

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

Quorum:

4 Members

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

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

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

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="715 91 1406 203">(i) the total nominal value of the securities exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or<li data-bbox="715 237 1406 497">(ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
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Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act, 1972 (as amended)

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

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

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 19 October 2023.
4. **Declarations of Interest and party whip**
To receive declarations of interest or the party whip from Members in respect of items on the agenda.
5. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended):**
To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.
6. **Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge Train Stations**
To provide an overview of the progress of Willenhall, Darlaston and Aldridge Train Stations.
(Pages 13 – 15 - Enclosed)
7. **Tree Planting Strategy**
For the Committee to consider the Council's Tree Planting Strategy.
(Pages 16 – 22 - Enclosed)
8. **Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2027/28**
To consult the Committee on the draft revenue and capital budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee.
(Pages 23 – 38 - Enclosed)
9. **Corporate Financial Performance – Quarter 2 (Financial Monitoring Position for 2023/24)**
To provide an overview of the Corporate Finance Performance for Quarter 2 in respect of services within the remit of this Committee.
(Pages 39 – 46 - Enclosed)
10. **Areas of focus – 2023/24**
To consider the areas of focus for the Committee during 2023/24.
(Pages 47 – 48 - Enclosed)
11. **Forward Plans**
To receive the latest Forward Plans in respect of the following:
 - Executive Forward Plans.
 - Black Country Joint Executive Committee.
 - West Midlands Combined Authority Board.*(Pages 49 – 63 - Enclosed)*
12. **Recommendations Tracker**
To consider progress on recommendations from the previous meeting.
(Pages 64 – 66 - Enclosed)

13. Date of next meeting

To note the date of the next meeting will be 16 January 2024.

**ECONOMY AND ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
23 October 2023 at 6.00pm held at Walsall Council House, Lichfield Street,
Walsall, WS1 1TW.**

Committee Members	Councillor M. Follows (Chair) Councillor P. Bott Councillor S. Cheema Councillor P. Gill Councillor F. Hassan Councillor A. Hicken Councillor P. Kaur Councillor R. Larden Councillor K. Sears Councillor M. Ward Councillor J. Whitehouse	
Portfolio Holders	Councillor M. Bird Councillor A. Andrew Holder	Leader of the Council Deputy Leader and Portfolio for Regeneration
Officers Present:	Dave Brown David Moore Sian Lloyd Matt Powis	Interim Executive Director, Economy Environment and Communities Interim Director of Regeneration and Economy Democratic Services Officer Senior Democratic Services Officer

19. Apologies

An apologies for absence was received from Councillor Allen.

20. Substitutions

Councillor Sears substituted for Councillor Allen.

21. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

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

There were no items to consider in private session.

23. **Minutes of the previous meeting**

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12 September 2023, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

24. **Regeneration Update**

The Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration presented an update in respect of regeneration activities taking place in the Borough in accordance with the Council's Plan 2022-2025 and the vision of the "We Are Walsall 2040" plan (see annexed).

He highlighted that £1.5 billion was being invested into transforming the Borough with a number of interventions to regenerate and support economic activity, increase housing choice and make Walsall a better-connected destination for businesses and residents.

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

Walsall Town Centre

- A Member of the Committee raised concerns about issues of drugs and criminal activity within the town centre. In response, the Deputy Leader (Regeneration) and Leader of the Council confirmed that the Council was working with West Midlands Police on both issues and CCTV had been introduced as a crime prevention deterrent. In addition, the Council had drone technology at its disposal which would complement the presence of rapid response Police cars to reduce criminal activity in the town centre. There were concerns about the number of homelessness and perceived intimidation especially with elderly or vulnerable shoppers.
- The Council wished to introduce compulsory knife arch for licensed night-time economy businesses to reduce the number of incidences involving knife crime in the town centre.
- There was a suggestion of a 2am curfew for licensed businesses within the town centre as recommended by West Midlands Police. However, this would be subject to debate by the Licensing and Safety Committee.
- The Master Plan would enhance Walsall Art Gallery and Walsall Leather Museum as cultural focal points in the area. However, there was opportunity to promote and encourage Walsall as a major cultural and sporting events due to its status as home to British Judo.

- There was a consensus that the UNESCO Geopark should be widely advertised and promoted to encourage tourism. A Member of the Committee requested an update in this respect and an update on Moorcroft Wood with the associated visitor centre at a future meeting of the Committee.
- Christmas and continental markets had been well received in previous years and encouraged footfall into the town centre.
- There were no new build targets for new residential projects in the town centre. However, there was a perception that the Council's existing parking policy of limiting residential car parking to one and half spaces was preventing new planning applications. Therefore, a review of the Council's parking policy was required.
- The Council was looking to review the types of residential living within the town centre and attracting different types of housing to the town centre such as retirement living.
- A Member sought clarification of the number of electric vehicles charging points in the town centre. In response, the Interim Executive Director of Economy Environment and Communities confirmed that a response would be provided in writing.
- The Council was reviewing the Future High Streets Programme which would improve the appearance of the town and improve rail and bus connectivity within the centre. In addition, with the addition of Adult Education, it was hoped that the town centre footfall would increase.
- A lengthy discussion ensued about the traffic flow within the town centre. It was suggested that reopening Park Street to vehicle traffic would improve connectivity with shops and businesses and ultimately improve footfall. The Leader of the Council highlighted that the town centre had the potential to be a retail destination if the town could attract companies like Apple Inc.
- Interim Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Communities confirmed that the Council was in the process of reviewing the Master Plan to incorporate new opportunities. There was a suggestion that the Council should be radical with regeneration plans to improve the town centre offer.

Bloxwich Town Deal

- Deputy Leader (Regeneration) confirmed that procurement had commenced on the Green Bloxwich programme which included regeneration of the Park Lodge and existing pavilion at King George V Playing Field.
- The Chair queried about whether there was any demand with the incubation space and digital access centre. In response, the Deputy

Leader (Regeneration) confirmed there were a high number of entrepreneurs in Bloxwich who could be assisted in setting their own businesses and would benefit from a digital access centre. A building had been identified which would be run by the Council initially with a future partner sought thereafter.

- The Council was committed to improving cycling improvements within Bloxwich. Measures had been taken to widen towpaths and implementing lighting on the canal network.
- Local Community Advisory Group would be the driving force for community projects within Bloxwich. There would be interconnectivity within projects including initiatives to activity remove barriers for people to uptake walking and cycling.
- There were no current plans to link regenerative work on the canal network between Bloxwich and Wednesfield. However, there was a proposal for the project to link with other parts of the Borough and connect to the network in Birmingham.

Willenhall

- The Council had agreed a new procurement developer partner for regeneration works in Willenhall which would be announced once the Executive Forward Plan 'call-in' window had ceased.
- A Member sought clarification on whether the Council would commit to a new Market Place for Willenhall following the decline of the local market. In response, the Deputy Leader (Regeneration) confirmed that Willenhall had already received over £2m in investment of the public realm and derelict shops in recent years. There was a view that historical conservation decisions taken in Willenhall had resulted in the area suffering from restrictive local planning policy which had damaged business confidence. It was the Council's view that regenerative projects in the area would renew outer areas of the town which would have a net positive effect on the town centre.
- There were a number of schemes in Phase 1 Moat Street and Villiers Street workstream with the Council successfully submitting a bid in August 2022 for £20m to support the delivery of the project. It was hoped that the scheme would allow many sites in the area to be regenerated.
- A Member sought clarification on the link between Willenhall Town Centre and the proposed Willenhall Train Station. In response, the Deputy Leader (Regeneration) confirmed that the Council was investigating how best to improve the junction near to the train station site to improve the link to the town centre to ensure best use of public transport. A copy of the Transport Scheme would be circulated to Willenhall Councillors.

- A Member sought clarification on proposals for Kendrick Road and Iron Park, Moxley Tip. In response, the Deputy Leader (Regeneration) confirmed that issues with Kendrick Road were commercially sensitive and was not currently subject to public debate.
- Housing building on brownfield sites in Willenhall required extensive negotiations with existing landowners. The Council was committed to target regeneration of brownfield sites in the area and had already seen the delivery of 800 units in Willenhall.

Strategic Employment Land

- There was a view that the skills agenda should be focused on delivering skills for the future such as developing skills for current and upcoming electric and hydrogen technology. The Council was actively engaged with the skills agenda to work with businesses to identify skill shortages and enable retraining for individuals that want to upskill or retrain in later life.
- Concerns were raised about the uptake of vehicle electric charging points and how they would integrate with terrace neighbourhoods within the Borough.

M6 Junction 10

- Members requested that Highways England and SISK be invited to attend the next available meeting of the Committee due to ongoing concerns of delays with the project. In addition, Members expressed their frustrations about the flow of traffic in the area and synchronisation of traffic lights.
- The Leader of the Council was sympathetic to the Committee's view in respect of the works at Junction 10. He highlighted that further work was needed with advance signage prior to Junction 10 and illuminated signage so drivers had advanced notice of lane changes.

The Chair thanked the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration for attending the Committee.

Resolved:

- 1. That, the Cabinet and Council Officers should be radical in changes to the Borough's Town Centre plans as our town centres have radically changed post-pandemic.**
- 2. In connection with (1) above, the Council look to increase transport links by moving bus services closer to Walsall Train Station and Park Street, Walsall.**
- 3. That, the Council explore a clearer vision of future housing potential in our town centres in future plans and reports.**
- 4. That, an update on the UNESCO Black Country Geopark be presented at a future meeting of the Committee.**
- 5. That, Highways England and SISK be invited to a special meeting of the Committee.**

25. **Areas of Focus – 2023/24**

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

A Member requested that an item on cycling infrastructure plans be added to the Committee’s area of focus for 2023/24.

Resolved:

- 1. That, cycling infrastructure programme and the Government’s Recycling Strategy be included as part of the areas of focus for 2023/24**
- 2. That, forward plans be noted.**

26. **Recommendation Tracker**

The Democratic Services Officer updated the Committee on the recommendations from previous meetings of the Committee. She advised that one outstanding item remained in relation to the derelict properties’ taskforce. (Annexed)

Resolved:

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

27. **Date of next meeting**

It was noted that the date of the next meeting would be 23 November 2023.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated 7.43pm.

Signed:

Date:

Rail Programme Update

Willenhall, Darlaston & Aldridge



Walsall Council



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. The novated deal with Kier Group following BGCL group going into administration was completed earlier in October.
2. The 21 day mobilisation period has been completed with a revised & updated programme received by the project team & being reviewed.
3. Grouting work has started on site & a recent visit by Eddie Hughes, Jane Stephenson MP & WMCA Mayor was held along with senior colleagues from Kier Group & TfWM to show commitment to the scheme.
4. EFG deal has been completed earlier this month.
5. The schedule impact of the administration of BGCL & novation to Kier means that the new stations are likely to be operational in Q1 2026.
6. The CRSTS Rebase approved by the WMCA Board in Sep 23 included the proposal to meet the cost pressure pending DfT approval has given an approved revised budget for the scheme of £69.84m. However, additional cost pressures still remain as a result of novation & prolongation with the anticipated project cost to further increase to a total from £81.27m to £85.27m, £11.43m to £15.43m over and above the pressure notified in June



Rail Programme Update



Aldridge – New Station

1. Proposal for a new 1-platform station at Aldridge, providing a service to Walsall. Goal for entry into service is Spring 2027, funded via CRSTS.
2. Lessons learned from Package 1 stations – the plan is to undertake early intrusive surveys at the site to reduce ground risk.
3. Delivery strategy in development, exploring the option for Network Rail to deliver the station, with WMRE as client. This has the opportunity to further reduce risk by closer management of asset handover and track access.
4. Timetable modelling is currently underway; this will determine the likely service pattern and anticipated passenger numbers.
5. Parking study is also underway, due back in December; this will determine the need for parking, taking into account local residents, travel patterns, and available space.

Economy & Environment Scrutiny – 23 November 2023

Tree planting strategy

Portfolio: Councillor Flint – Wellbeing, Leisure and Public Spaces

Related portfolios: Councillor Murphy – Street Pride

Service: Healthy Spaces - Place & Environment

Wards: All

1. Aim

- 1.1. Trees and open green spaces have a positive impact on wellbeing, connect communities to nature and, support carbon reduction.

2. Recommendations

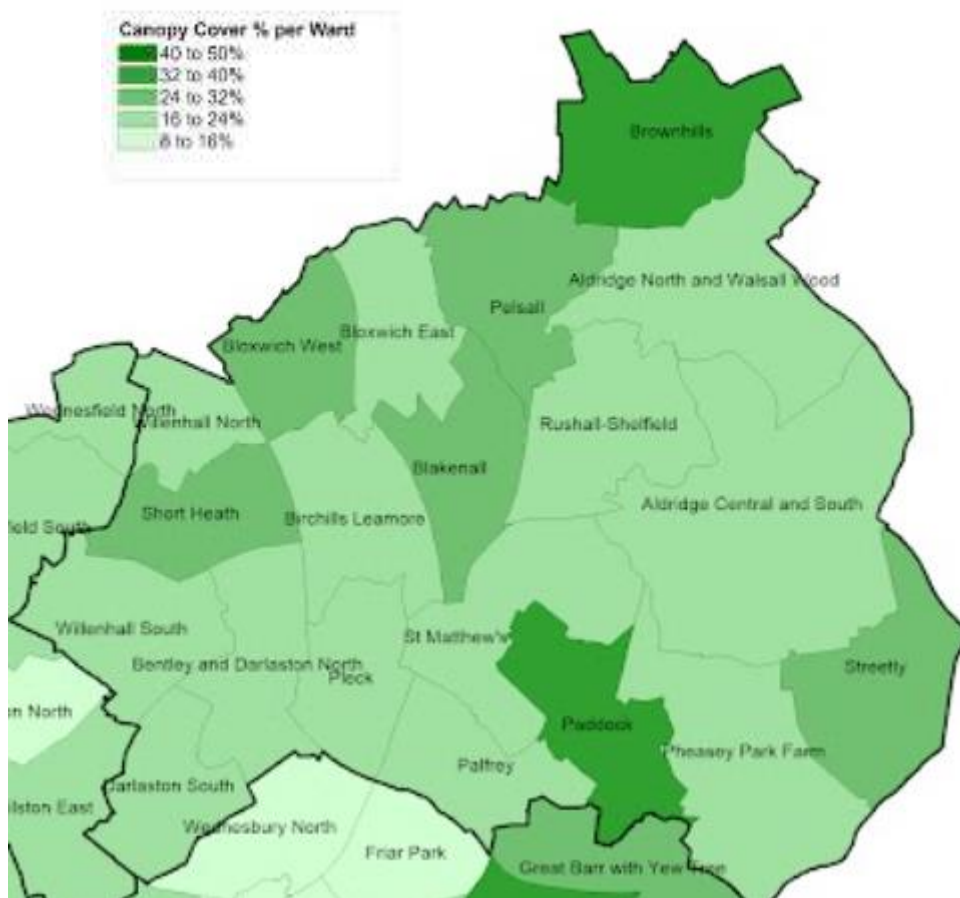
- 2.1. The committee is asked to note the work being carried out in respect to tree planting across the borough.

3. Report detail – know

- 3.1. Walsall is geologically and topographically diverse, comprising leafier suburbs across the eastern side of the borough with denser tree canopies and a more rural landscape within a patchwork of farmland, green spaces and parks to the west, defining the industrial heritage of the town.
- 3.2. All local authorities have a responsibility to protect their natural heritage. Walsall is no exception to this in managing large numbers of trees, both directly and indirectly to ensure their preservation for future generations and contribute to tackling wider implications of climate change and biodiversity loss.
- 3.3. In 2017, the average tree canopy cover, measured across 283 towns and cities in England, was 16%. There is significant variability in tree canopy cover across England's towns and cities, ranging from 3% in Fleetwood, Lancashire to 45% in Farnham, Surrey.¹
- 3.4. The graphic below sets out canopy cover across the borough of Walsall.

¹

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5b03d59340f0b65a2d82ce17/FR_FC_TreeCanopyData_leaflet.pdf



3.5. The Urban Forestry Strategy 2016 – 2026 was approved by Cabinet on 8 February 2017. It sets out a strategic framework for the management of trees in the borough and was prepared with reference to legislative drivers along with local, regional and national policies.

3.6. In delivering the strategy, the council has committed to:

- Ensure that the tree population is protected, developed and expanded for the future.
- Ensure the health and safety of both people and property are protected through risk management and pro-active maintenance of our tree stock.
- Ensure that maintenance of our trees is managed in a professional manner undertaking appropriate works giving due consideration to health and requirements of the trees.
- Promote a greater sense of community ownership, awareness and education on the importance and management of our trees and the benefits to people's wellbeing.

- Consider the wider impact of trees at a regional and national level and how Walsall’s approach has an impact on the wider global climate.

3.7. The ambition to protect, develop and expand the tree population has been the primary aim of the council’s tree planting work and is delivered alongside effective risk management and pro-active maintenance:

- Protection and maintenance of the existing urban forest is achieved through the council’s tree inspection and cyclical works programme. Tree inspections take place every 5 years and are completed on a ward by ward basis.
- The council take a risk-based approach to prioritisation of both planned and reactive tree maintenance work. Action, in the form of maintenance or removal, will generally be taken in the event that a tree is dangerous, dying or diseased. The council does not routinely do work to mitigate nuisances such as falling leaves, sap or birds or squirrels.
- The council’s tree policies are set out in appendix 5 of the urban forestry strategy.
- Wherever possible, works will be planned to take place at an appropriate time of year, following the routine inspection.

3.8. Regarding street trees specifically, the code of practice Well-Managed Highway Infrastructure [“the code”], provides comprehensive guidelines and standards for the management of highway infrastructure, including the management of trees.

3.9. The code emphasises the importance of regular inspections and prompt action to remove safety critical risks. However environmental responsibility is also acknowledged. Trees play a vital role in mitigating air pollution, providing shade, and supporting wildlife. Proper tree management is essential to preserving these environmental benefits.

3.10. The following table sets out tree planting and tree removal over the last five years:

Year	Planting				Felling	
	Woodland (no. trees)	Area planted (Ha)	Heavy / standards (no. trees)	Orchard (no. trees)	Area felled (ha) / number of trees	m3
2018 / 2019			no data		2 ha	65
2019 / 2020	3000	1.25	45	22	0.4 ha	27
2020 / 2021	5500	3.4	221	20	0.52 ha	26

2021 / 2022	21900	13.7	360		120 trees + 4.9 ha	185
2022 / 2023	16700	6.6	450	20	675 trees + 2 ha	90

NOTE: Not all trees removed are counted - scrub clearance work from heathlands is not included in these numbers; some other smaller scale works are not included in these figures. The areas felled (ha) relate to clear felling to create open habitat - any numbers relate to thinning of woodlands / plantations.

3.11. In 2023/24 the council plans to plant 19,754 trees. Details of the six funded programmes are set out at appendix A.

4. Financial information

4.1. Tree planting in the borough is primarily funded through grant funding and agreements with partners to facilitate tree planting. Current funding sources include the following:

- Urban Tree Challenge Fund – Forestry Commission
- Trees for Climate - Forestry Commission / Forest of Mercia
- MOREwoods – Woodland Trust / WMCA
- Coronation Living Heritage Fund – Defra
- Local community organisations – e.g. Aldridge Rotary / local schools, and tree planting funded by businesses e.g. Severn Trent Water / Sylvagen also fund tree planting in the borough.

5. Reducing Inequalities

5.1. Trees improve air quality by absorbing pollutants, providing cleaner air to breathe. This directly benefits disadvantaged communities, often more exposed to pollution, by reducing respiratory illnesses and associated healthcare costs.

5.2. The presence of trees enhances the aesthetic appeal of public spaces, attracting investments and boosting property values. This economic development can create job opportunities in low-income areas, reducing unemployment and income disparities.

5.3. Trees can help mitigate the urban heat island effect, offering relief from extreme heat, which can disproportionately impact vulnerable populations. Access to green spaces with trees contributes to better mental and physical health, reducing healthcare expenses and improving overall well-being.

6. Decide

- 6.1. The committee is asked to note the work being carried out in respect to tree planting across the borough.

7. Respond

- 7.1. The 2023/24 tree planting programme is scheduled for completion by the end of March 2023.
- 7.2. Commitments in respect to future tree planting and the replacement of trees that need to be removed, will be set out in the council's climate change action plan in 2024.

8. Review

- 8.1. The council's urban forestry strategy is scheduled for review in 2025 prior to expiry in 2026.

9. Appendices

- 9.1. Appendix A: The 2023/24 tree planting programme.

10. Background Papers

- 10.1. Urban Forestry Strategy - Cabinet Report 8 February 2017 [item 13]

<https://cmispublic.walsall.gov.uk/cmis/Meetings/tabid/70/ctl/ViewMeetingPublic/mid/397/Meeting/2342/Committee/328/Default.aspx>

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Appendix A

2023/24 Tree Planting Programme

Tree planting plans for planning season 2023 -24 are detailed in the tables below. The majority of the sites selected for tree planting funded through Trees for Climate fund have been allocated from the sites designated for rewilding.

Total number of tree planting planned for 2023/24: 19,754

Coronation Living Heritage Fund - Orchards	
Sites	Trees
Winterley Lane Allotments	80
Goscote Lane Allotments	10
Millfield Primary School	5
Delves Green Allotments	33
Leighswood Primary	32
St Giles C of E Primary	27
North West Primary Academy	10
Total	197
Tree for Climate 2023/24	
	Trees
Hundred Acre Wood	40
Leyland Farm	1000
	250
Moreton Avenue Open Space	24
Redhouse Play Area	27
Ryecraft Community Hub	40
Fibbersley	760
Park Lane	663
Stubbers Green Open Space	6000
Vigo Common	938
Brookmeadow	1523
Festival Avnue	194
Sandland Road	335
Rushall Manor (private)	1250
Bently Lane	1240
Sneyd Lane	2670
Total	16962
Coronation Living Heritage fund – Micro Woods	
Sites	Trees
King George V	600
Reedswood Park	600
Total	1200
Urban Tree Challenge Fund	
Site	Trees
Bradbury Park	39
Trevor Road	11

Highfield Road North	25
Nest Common Play Area	32
Greenwood Road	30
Brockhurst Crescent	20
Link Road / Castle Road	15
St Lawrence Way	20
Fisher Road	52
Bradley Lane	16
Total	260
Albert Jagger funded tree planting	
Site	Trees
Green Lane – Old Birchills	135
Total	135
MOREwoods – Woodland Trust /WMCA	
Site	Trees
Cavendish Road	1000
Total	1000

**Economy and Environment
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

23 NOVEMBER 2023

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

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr A Andrew – Deputy Leader and Regeneration
Cllr G Perry – Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities
Cllr K Murphy – Street Pride
Cllr G Flint – Wellbeing, Leisure, and Public Spaces

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 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 Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny 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 should any changes relate 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 draft revenue and capital budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee.

Recommendations:

That:

1. 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.
2. 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 may be required to this committee if any changes to draft proposals outlined relate to services within the committee's remit.
3. 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 £4.74m 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 as shown in table 4 below. 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 £2.88m over 4 years.

Net investment / savings

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

Net Investment/savings by Directorate 2024/25	Investment £m	Savings £m	Net £m
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
Total Net Investments by Directorate	57.69	(13.58)	44.11

*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 £82.83m over 4 years, and external funded schemes of £74.13m 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 £
Supporting a dynamic, resilient, and diverse economy where businesses invest, and everyone has the right jobs and the right housing in the right place							
Economy, Environment & Communities	1	Town Centre Officer post - to support the regeneration of the high street - funded from Public Health Grant	86,315	0	0	0	86,315
	2	Contractual inflation - Urban Traffic Control	22,764	22,764	22,764	22,764	91,056
	3	Contractual inflation - Traffic Control	73,900	13,574	12,768	13,140	113,382
	4	Contractual inflation - Highways maintenance	172,371	129,279	118,505	118,505	538,660
	5A	Under-recovery of planning income	220,000	0	0	0	220,000
	5B	Planning fee consultation	(220,000)	0	0	0	(220,000)
	6	New posts within planning and land registry to deal with increased demand - linked to saving OP9	210,934	70,000	(140,000)	0	140,934
	7	Remove staff parking charges saving from 2023/24	18,000	0	0	0	18,000
	8	Remove charge developers for travel plans saving from 2023/24	30,000	0	0	0	30,000
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			614,284	235,617	14,037	154,409	1,018,347
People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life							
Economy, Environment & Communities	37	Leisure services income shortfall – fall out of investment as fee income recovers	(150,000)	0	0	0	(150,000)
	38	Coroners - contractual inflation	125,712	18,443	9,563	13,662	167,380
Total People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life			(24,288)	18,443	9,563	13,662	17,380
The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough							
Economy, Environment & Communities	82	Contractual inflation - Household Waste Recycling Centre haulage and management	319,578	66,701	34,586	49,408	470,273
	83	Increase in vehicle fuel costs	(125,000)	(75,000)	0	0	(200,000)
	84	Agency for domestic and garden waste	263,904	70,502	74,027	74,027	482,460
	85	Commercial Implementation Manager	89,000	0	0	0	89,000
	86	Under recovery of licensing income	72,643	0	0	0	72,643
	87	Environmental Health posts	95,928	0	0	0	95,928
	88	Assure Computer System Maintenance Support	11,750	0	0	0	11,750
	89	Enforcement of fly tipping, litter dropping, cigarette dropping etc.	50,000	0	0	0	50,000

Directorate	Ref	Details of Growth by outcome	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Economy, Environment & Communities	92	Removal of 2023/24 saving - Rewilding of all urban grassed areas - to manage public grassed open spaces and verges for biodiversity rather than visual appearance. Most areas would only receive one cut per year; however, pitches, visibility splays, paths and edges would be cut more	352,348	0	0	0	352,348
	93	Removal of 2023/24 saving - Increase recycling rates and reduce contamination	382,523	0	0	0	382,523
	94	Removal of 2023/24 saving - residential garden waste disposal	30,000	0	0	0	30,000
	95	Contractual inflation – Energy from waste, garden waste, co-mingled waste, landfill tax, vehicle hire, management of markets	1,140,131	279,386	175,361	223,372	1,818,249
	97	To support healthy spaces activities	50,000	0	0	0	50,000
Total The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough			2,732,805	341,589	283,974	346,807	3,705,174
Total Growth and investment relating to the remit of this Committee			3,322,801	595,649	307,574	514,878	4,740,902

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

Directorate	Ref No	Detail of Policy Proposals by Outcome	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
People can access support in their community to keep safe and well and remain independent at home							
People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life							
Economy, Environment & Communities	P1	Leisure health checks based on 5% forecast take up	(5,125)	(20,125)	0	0	(25,250)
		Leisure health checks - linked Investment (one off) - Tanita Body Composition Scale purchase, 12 months licence, IT equipment and marketing	40,000	(40,000)	0	0	0
	P2	Registrars – introduction of charges for change of name deeds	(3,000)	0	0	0	(3,000)
Total People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life			31,875	(60,125)	0	0	(28,250)
We get things right, first time and make all services accessible and easy to use							
Economy, Environment & Communities	P3	Arts and Events income - to introduce new online shop sales and ticketing	(15,000)	(10,000)	(25,000)	(25,000)	(75,000)
Total We get things right, first time and make all services accessible and easy to use			(15,000)	(10,000)	(25,000)	(25,000)	(75,000)
The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough							
Economy, Environment & Communities	P4	Street lighting dimming and trimming during the evening	(160,000)	0	0	0	(160,000)
	P5	Cease provision of Christmas lights	(40,000)	0	0	0	(40,000)
	P6	Closure of Fryers Road and Merchants Way Household Waste Recycling Centres for 1 day (7 to 6) - saving on contract spend	(150,000)	0	0	0	(150,000)
Total The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough			(350,000)	0	0	0	(350,000)
Total Policy Proposals relating to the remit of this Committee			(333,125)	(70,125)	(25,000)	(25,000)	(453,250)

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
			£	£	£	£	£
Supporting a dynamic, resilient, and diverse economy where businesses invest, and everyone has the right jobs and the right housing in the right place							
Economy, Environment & Communities	OP1	Street lighting energy savings	(263,000)	0	0	0	(263,000)
	OP2	Income from Enterprise Zone due to historic business rates	(147,000)	0	0	0	(147,000)
	OP3	Arena restructure	(6,747)	0	0	0	(6,747)
	OP4	Increase On Street Parking charges	(20,000)	0	0	0	(20,000)
	OP5	Increase Off Street Parking charges	(55,000)	0	0	0	(55,000)

Directorate	Ref No	Detail of Operational Proposals by Outcome	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Economy, Environment & Communities	OP6	Capitalisation of highways works	(200,000)	0	0	0	(200,000)
	OP7	Traffic enforcement income model	(25,000)	0	0	0	(25,000)
	OP8	Funding of Building Control officer posts from Local Authority Building Control funds for 1 year only	(86,000)	86,000	0	0	0
	OP9	One off use of Biodiversity Net Gain grant allocation (linked to investment 6 for new Ecology officer post)	(10,000)	10,000	0	0	0
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			(812,747)	96,000	0	0	(716,747)
Education, training, and skills enable people to contribute to their community and our economy							
Economy, Environment & Communities	OP10	Libraries partnership with voluntary sector	(223,446)	0	0	0	(223,446)
	OP11	Capitalise Full Book fund	(145,000)	0	0	0	(145,000)
Total Education, training and skills enable people to contribute to their community and our economy			(368,446)	0	0	0	(368,446)
People can access support in their community to keep safe and well and remain independent at home							
Economy, Environment & Communities	OP13	Income generation from penalty notices for littering	(30,000)	0	0	0	(30,000)
Total People can access support in their community to keep safe and well and remain independent at home			(30,000)	0	0	0	(30,000)
People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life							
Economy, Environment & Communities	OP26	Review of coffee shop operations	(10,000)	(10,000)	0	0	(20,000)
	OP27	Above inflation increase to fees and charges	(20,000)	0	0	0	(20,000)
	OP28	Bereavement services new memorial garden at North Walsall Cemetery (linked capital investment of £480k required)	(55,000)	0	0	0	(55,000)
	OP29	Leisure personal training	(8,400)	0	0	0	(8,400)
	OP30	Leisure commercial courses	(4,000)	0	0	0	(4,000)
	OP31	Leisure programme review	(15,000)	0	0	0	(15,000)
	OP32	Active Living Centres income generation	(180,000)	180,000	0	0	0
	OP33	Commercialisation of services – potential to develop services to be self-funding	(47,000)	(1,410)	(1,452)	0	(49,862)
OP34	Fees and charges directorate wide	(318,284)	0	0	0	(318,284)	
Total People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life			(657,684)	168,590	(1,452)	0	(490,546)

Directorate	Ref No	Detail of Operational Proposals by Outcome	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough							
Economy, Environment & Communities	OP66	Additional Trade Waste Income	(68,350)	0	0	0	(68,350)
	OP67	Capitalisation of highways mtnce potholes to replace undeliverable 2023/24 saving	(200,000)	0	0	0	(200,000)
	OP68	Increase parking penalty notices income target to reflect demand	(20,000)	0	0	0	(20,000)
	OP69	Other waste disposal - (e.g., grey bin, plasterboard, textiles)	(280,000)	0	0	0	(280,000)
	OP70	W2R (Waste to Recycling) reconciliation credit	(150,000)	0	0	0	(150,000)
	OP71	Trade waste increase in income	(100,000)	0	0	0	(100,000)
	OP72	Income generation - full cost recovery of penalty notices for fly tipping	(5,000)	0	0	0	(5,000)
Total The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough			(823,350)	0	0	0	(823,350)
Total Operational Proposals relating to the remit of this Committee			(2,692,227)	264,590	(1,452)	0	(2,429,089)

Total Savings Proposals	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
A - Policy Proposals	(333,125)	(70,125)	(25,000)	(25,000)	(453,250)
B - Operational Proposals	(2,692,227)	264,590	(1,452)	0	(2,429,089)
Total Savings Proposals	(3,025,352)	194,465	(26,452)	(25,000)	(2,882,339)

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 £
Supporting a dynamic, resilient, and diverse economy where businesses invest, and everyone has the right jobs and the right housing in the right place							
Economy, Environment & Communities	Traffic Signals Infrastructure	The council has a statutory duty to maintain all its traffic signal infrastructure. This programme of planned pedestrian crossing replacements will ensure the safe and efficient movement of pedestrians across the borough (Traffic Management Act 2004). Also supports delivery of the council's carbon reduction targets.	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	800,000
	Provision of Community Dropped Crossings	These are dropped kerbs at strategic points along footways which permit access for wheelchairs, pushchairs, mobility scooters etc. to cross roads. The investment will allow the council to provide a rolling programme of community crossing points.	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	80,000
	Highways Maintenance Programme	As Highway Authority the council has a legal responsibility to maintain the highway network to avoid a deterioration of our roads, increasing the likelihood of accidents.	2,800,000	2,800,000	2,800,000	2,800,000	11,200,000
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			3,020,000	3,020,000	3,020,000	3,020,000	12,080,000
People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life							
Economy, Environment & Communities	Memorial Safety Management in Cemeteries	The continued inspection and making safe of memorials in Walsall cemeteries and to discharge the council's duty of care within the cemeteries. Increased safety of memorials benefits the residents of Walsall by delivering a safer environment within Walsall cemeteries.	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	80,000
Total People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life			20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	80,000
The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough							
Economy, Environment & Communities	Promotion of Community Health and Safety	Ongoing funding of road safety schemes, to address local community concerns. In supporting the delivery of these local schemes, it is possible to improve local quality of life and safety creating safer communities.	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	480,000
Total The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough			120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	480,000
Total Rolling Programme Schemes			3,160,000	3,160,000	3,160,000	3,160,000	12,640,000

Prior Year Approval Schemes

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	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							
Economy, Environment & Communities	Enterprise Zones	Required for the Council to cash-flow borrowing costs associated with capital investment into the Enterprise Zone. Financial modelling forecasts that these costs are expected to be recovered from future business rates generated from within the zone, although the Black Country LEP are the decision-making body in relation to where business rates within the zone are invested. Therefore, on the basis that the BCLEP approve that costs on Walsall sites can be recovered through the business rates mechanism, then the Council will only be required to cash-flow these costs.	1,099,612	0	0	0	1,099,612
	Future High Streets Fund	To invest in Walsall to deliver a much-needed boost to our high street at this challenging time (External funding announced by MHCLG (now DLUHC – Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities) on 26 December 2020.). The additional £4.49m has been added from previously reports for the refurbishment of the Saddlers Centre including the transformation of the public realm area from the centre to the bus station with additional works to the train station concourse. This will be part of the transformative investment in Walsall Town Centre around the rail and bus stations. £4.49m increase - £3.471m in 2024/25, £1.02m in 2025/26.	10,022,220	13,613,723	975,057	0	24,611,000
	Yorks Bridge (Top Up)	Yorks Bridge is currently the subject of a 7.5 tonne weight limit. Replacement scheme funded using council capital funding and the Department for Transport Maintenance Block.	1,500,000	0	0	0	1,500,000
	Other schemes carried forward from previous years requiring completion	The Development Team structure is currently a Team Leader and 4 officers. Capitalising posts will enable further capacity to be introduced to the team to support delivery of the pipeline.	327,649	327,649	327,649	327,649	1,310,596
Resources and Transformation	Towns Deal	In 2021/22, Walsall and Bloxwich were successful in being awarded £21.3m from DLUHC for each town. Working with the Town Deal Board and partners, a project confirmation table has been submitted for each project, with an underwriting requirement from the Council of £5.48m as the Council's share of the shortfall compared to the awarded allocation.	0	0	0	0	0
		Walsall Towns Deal - council contribution.	0	1,779,600	0	0	1,779,600
		Bloxwich Towns Deal - council contribution.	0	3,700,000	0	0	3,700,000

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Resources and Transformation	Other schemes carried forward from previous years requiring completion	Car Park Surfacing works, Electric Vehicle charging, Changing Places, and toilets plus further capital works to units during/post connected gateway scheme.	350,000	150,000	150,000	0	650,000
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			13,299,481	19,570,972	1,452,706	327,649	34,650,808
People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life							
Economy, Environment & Communities	Children's Play Equipment	Installation of 6 new outdoor gyms and the improvement of 13 main play sites at a total cost of £1.644m to enhance the quality of play and fitness provision for young people and adults. This will be funded from S106 monies (£229k) and £1.07m council funded and seek to find the remaining fund externally. Continuation of a 2023/24 approved scheme.	524,886	0	0	0	524,886
Total People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life			524,886	0	0	0	524,886
The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough							
Economy, Environment & Communities	Waste Management Strategy	Strategic acquisition of property to support the future delivery of the council's waste management strategies.	5,471,653	0	0	0	5,471,653
	Capitalisation of wheeled bin stock	Linked to revenue savings option. Wheeled bin stock capitalisation	180,000	180,000	180,000	180,000	720,000
Total The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough			5,651,653	180,000	180,000	180,000	6,191,653
Total Prior Year Approval Schemes			19,476,020	19,750,972	1,632,706	507,649	41,367,347

Development Investment

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	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							
Economy, Environment & Communities	High Streets Fund - further match funding	This project was approved by Cabinet 21 April 2021 - To part match fund external/council funds to invest in Walsall to deliver a much-needed boost to our high street. Originally £3,727,171 in 2024/25 and £1,067,476 in 2025/26. Rephased to 2026/27.	0	0	5,026,928	83,072	5,110,000

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Economy, Environment & Communities	Willenhall Masterplan	Willenhall Garden City Phase 1 is part of a housing-led regeneration programme with public sector intervention in land assembly and gap funding required to support private sector delivery of new homes.	0	2,546,574	0	0	2,546,574
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			0	2,546,574	5,026,928	83,072	7,656,574
People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life							
Economy, Environment & Communities	Active Public Places	To deliver the full project scope of public realm works, canal bridge and basin works (approved by Cabinet)	1,000,000	744,000	0	0	1,744,000
Total People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life			1,000,000	744,000	0	0	1,744,000
The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough							
Economy, Environment & Communities	HWRC station - Middlemore Lane	This is additional budget required to cover the uncontrollable increased inflationary / construction pressures on the existing project. To provide a new Waste Transfer Station (WTS) and large Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) at Middlemore Lane in Aldridge.	17,375,391	0	0	0	17,375,391
Total The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough			17,375,391	0	0	0	17,375,391
Total Development Investment			18,375,391	3,290,574	5,026,928	83,072	26,775,965

New Capital Schemes

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life							
Economy, Environment & Communities	Streetly Crematorium-Cremator Reline (No.3)	Capital for the relining of the 3rd Cremator at Streetly Crematorium. Other 2 cremators have been relined last year. If not repaired this creates a service risk as should either of the 2 cremators require repairs or not be working, this affects the number of services which could be offered daily. This would cause a possible delay in cremations and cause a pressure on environmental responsibilities as well as impacting staff who would incur overtime to cover the additional duties and time required.	54,000	0	0	0	54,000
	Enhancement of Darlaston Pool	Implement new water features to improve teaching pool facilities and attract new business. 3-year payback	45,000	0	0	0	45,000
Total People are supported to maintain or improve their health, wellbeing, and quality of life			99,000	0	0	0	99,000
Supporting a dynamic, resilient, and diverse economy where businesses invest, and everyone has the right jobs and the right housing in the right place							
Economy, Environment & Communities	Capitalisation of Reactive Highways maintenance - Pothole Funding	Capitalisation of Reactive Highways maintenance- Pothole Funding	200,000	200,000	200,000	200,000	800,000
	Street Lighting Inspections	Capitalisation of electrical Inspections of Street Lighting - Health and Safety	54,468	62,469	35,793	63,091	215,821
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			254,468	262,469	235,793	263,091	1,015,821
The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring							
Economy, Environment & Communities	Capitalisation of Library Book Fund	Capitalisation of Library Book Fund	290,000	145,000	145,000	145,000	725,000
	Replacement of PCs in Libraries	Replacement of 153 PCs in Libraries	205,000	0	0	0	205,000
Total The Council will deliver trusted, customer focused, and enabling services, which are recognised by customers and our partners for the value they bring			495,000	145,000	145,000	145,000	930,000
Total New Capital Programme requests			848,468	407,469	380,793	408,091	2,044,821
Total Draft Capital Programme – Council Funded Schemes within the remit of this Committee			41,859,879	26,609,015	10,200,427	4,158,812	82,828,133

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 £
Supporting a dynamic, resilient, and diverse economy where businesses invest, and everyone has the right jobs and the right housing in the right place							
Economy, Environment & Communities	High Streets Fund	To invest in Walsall to deliver a much-needed boost to our high street at this challenging time, as announced by MHCLG (now Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities - DLUHC) on 26 December 2020.	1,711,813	0	0	0	1,711,813
	LTP Highway Maintenance Programme	This capital funding, known as the maintenance block, is distributed by the Integrated Transport Authority (ITA). As the Highway Authority we have an extremely high-profile duty to maintain our highway network. This money is provided by the Department for Transport via the ITA with the condition that it should be spent on the classified road network. Includes allocation for potholes and bridge strengthening.	3,568,700	3,568,700	3,568,700	3,568,700	14,274,800
	Local Network Improvement Plan	The Government provides each locality with grant funding to help implement the Local Transport Plan in their area. The grant is used for the implementation of small-scale capital schemes; development of major capital schemes and to part fund major schemes implementation costs. The programme is designed to address road safety issues, progress the Council's major scheme aspirations; and resource the required 'local contributions' to approved major schemes. (Department for Transport / West Midlands ITA).	1,563,100	1,563,100	1,563,100	1,563,100	6,252,400
	Levelling Up Fund	£20 million announced on 19 January 2022 by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to kickstart the delivery of over 500 new homes connecting local people in Willenhall to jobs, parks, and new rail station.	12,896,442	0	0	0	12,896,442
	Levelling Up Fund	£20 million announced on 19 January 2022 by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to kickstart the delivery of over 500 new homes connecting local people in Willenhall to jobs, parks, and new rail station.	4,338,024	0	0	0	4,338,024
	Levelling Up Fund	£3.2m of LPIF Funding as part-funding for the Willenhall Masterplan project to to kickstart the delivery of over 500 new homes connecting local people in Willenhall to jobs, parks, and new rail station.	3,200,000	0	0	0	3,200,000

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Economy, Environment & Communities	Other schemes carried forward from previous years requiring completion	Local Transport Plan - Yorks Bridge	387,962	0	0	0	387,962
Resources and Transformation	Towns Deal	In 2021/22, Walsall and Bloxwich were successful in being awarded £21.3m from DLUHC for each town. A grant offer has been received, which has been accepted by the signing of a Heads of Terms. Working with the Town Deal Board and Partners, a Project Confirmation Table has been submitted for each project, with an underwriting requirement from the Council of £5.48m as the Council's share of the shortfall compared to the awarded allocation. This is subject to formal completion of a full business case for all of the projects.	0	0	0	0	0
		Walsall Towns Deal	1,076,399	11,891,369	0	0	12,967,768
		Bloxwich Towns Deal	7,841,367	7,076,781	0	0	14,918,148
	Other schemes carried forward from previous years requiring completion	Land & Property Investment Fund	3,111,000	60,682	0	0	3,171,682
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			39,694,807	24,160,632	5,131,800	5,131,800	74,119,038
The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough							
Economy, Environment & Communities	Walsall Urban Tree Challenge Fund	Working in partnership with Trees for Cities - a joint application was made to the Forestry Commission. The project will plant 360 extra heavy standard trees in wide verges or small open spaces. The grant covers 50% of the cost of tree purchase and 50% of maintenance costs.	15,734	0	0	0	15,734
Total The people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener Borough			15,734	0	0	0	15,734
Total Draft Capital Programme – External Funded Schemes within the remit of this Committee			39,710,541	24,160,632	5,131,800	5,131,800	74,134,772

DATE: 23 NOVEMBER 2023

**CORPORATE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – QUARTER 2 (P6) FINANCIAL MONITORING
POSITION FOR 2023/24**

Ward(s) All

Portfolio: Councillor A. Andrew – Deputy Leader and Regeneration
Councillor G. Perry – Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities
Councillor K. Murphy – Street Pride
Councillor G Flint – Wellbeing, Leisure, and Public Spaces

1. Aim

To provide the budget monitoring position for Period 6 2023/24. The Chair requested that this item be considered by the Committee.

2. Recommendations

The Committee are requested to:

- 2.1 To note the revenue and capital forecast for the financial year-end 2023/24 for the services that fall under the remit of the committee.

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, for services within the remit of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny 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](#)

- 3.2 The current net forecast position on the £32.270m revenue budget is an overspend of £0.263m after the net use of reserves. The current net capital position is a proposed £10.405m carry forward.

- 3.3 Reasons for the current position are shown in Table 1 below:

Table 1 – Reasons for revenue outturn variance		
Service	Variance £m	Explanation of Year End Variance
Cultural Service	(0.161)	(£0.120m) underspend on staffing costs for arena and leather museum due to vacancies and (£0.043m) net over recovery in performance income.
Planning Services & Building Control	0.000	£0.607m planning staffing overspend to support back log of cases through the use of addition staff and agency and income pressure due to decrease to cost of living crisis. Zero/fully mitigated variance.

Regeneration & Economy	(0.200)	(£0.200m) one off use of EGP reserve to support.
Environment	(0.100)	(£0.120m) underspend on staffing costs due to vacancies and due to delay in recruitment of vacant posts. £0.020m consultancy costs for parks strategy report.
Leisure	(0.427)	(£0.427m) net over recovery of ALC income due demand and additional HAF income offset by STP 23/24 Red pressures due to delayed delivery.
Commercial	0.453	£0.188m market income pressure due continued reduction of number of operating days. £0.094m coroners contract pressure due to demand on coroners' service. £0.177m under recover of Cremation and Burial income due increased competition offset by (£0.072m) over recovery of registers income due to increase demand.
Highways & Transportation	(0.208)	(£0.087m) over recovery of s38, Street works FPN, NRSWA and EAT income. (£0.133m) underspend of non-essential operational costs in year.
Operations	1.049	£0.889m unachieved STP 23/24 savings. £0.744m Staffing overspend for the year. £0.244m HWRC contract pressure due to high CPI inflation rate. £0.519m W2R contract pressure due to high inflation rate. £0.121m overspend on clothing, materials, vehicle hire & maintenance. (£0.767m) Underspend on waste disposal costs. (£0.201m) Underspend on fuel. (£0.200m) over recovery of trade income. (£0.107m) over recovery of Tarmac/Fleet income. (£0.200m) Capitalisation of Velocity Patcher.
Emergency Planning	(0.025)	(£25k) staff underspend due to delay in recruitment.
Library Services	(0.301)	(£0.205m) underspend on staffing costs due to vacancies and delay in recruitment. £0.061m unachieved STP saving. (£0.145m) reduction in revenue costs for Book fund can be capitalised in year.
Regulatory Services	0.072	(£0.104m) staffing underspends due to vacant posts in traded standards service, £0.055m overspend in legal fees, £0.072m overspend in staffing costs due to delay in restructure in community protection service and £0.061m loss of income due to cease of Enforcement of fly tipping, litter dropping and cigarette dropping.
EE Management	0.111	E&E management staffing pressure.
Programme Management	0.000	Zero/fully mitigated variance.
Total Services within remit of this Committee	0.263	

3.4 The forecast revenue position by service is shown in Table 2 below:

Service	Annual Budget £m	Year End Forecast Variance £m	Planned Use of Reserves £m	Action Plan £m	Variance after Reserves & Action Plan £m
Cultural Service	1.277	(0.048)	(0.113)	0.000	(0.161)
Planning Services & Building Control	0.993	0.888	(0.081)	(0.607)	0.000
Regeneration & Economy	0.578	0.642	(0.382)	(0.460)	(0.200)

Environment	1.154	0.187	(0.287)	0.000	(0.100)
Leisure	0.948	(0.427)	0.000	0.000	(0.427)
Commercial	(1.854)	0.453	0.000	0.000	0.453
Highways & Transportation	5.702	4.061	(4.018)	(0.251)	(0.208)
Operations	20.840	1.249	0.000	(0.200)	1.049
Emergency Planning	0.247	(0.025)	0.000	0.000	(0.025)
Library Services	2.511	(0.156)	0.000	(0.145)	(0.301)
Regulatory Services	1.241	0.122	(0.050)	0.000	0.072
EE Management	0.471	0.111	0.000	0.000	0.111
Programme Management	0.161	0.285	(0.285)	0.000	0.000
Total Services within remit of this Committee	34.270	7.141	(5.215)	(1.663)	0.263

3.5 Reasons for Movements

The June forecast position reported to Cabinet in July 2023 was an overspend of £0.597m therefore, there is a net decrease in the overspend of £0.334m over the period. The key reasons for movements are detailed in Table 3 below:

Table 3 – Reasons for movement		
Service	Movement £m	Reason for movement
Environment	(0.114)	Reduction in staffing forecast due to delay in recruitment of vacant posts and decrease of road sweepers hire forecast.
Leisure	(0.206)	Increase of ALC income forecast due to increased demand and increase prices.
Commercial	0.177	Reduction of Cremation and Burial income forecast due increased competition and fall in demand
Highways & Transportation	(0.240)	Additional s38, Street works FPN, NRSWA and EAT income forecasts and reduction of non-essential operational costs in year.
Operations	0.444	Net additional W2R inflation costs in year above the value received as part of the 23/24 budget
Library Services	(0.276)	Revised staffing forecast for the year and (£145k) capitalisation of costs in relation to book fund.
Regulatory Services	(0.119)	Net reduction in staffing forecast due to delay in recruitment of vacant posts and reduction of operational costs for the year.
Total Services within remit of this Committee	(0.334)	

3.5. Reserves

The total allocated reserves for Economy and Environment in 2023/24 are £25.473m of which net £6.330m has been used or committed to date. Table 4 below details the current net use of reverses included within the forecast.

Table 4 - Summary of use of reserves and transfer to reserves				
Reserve Details	Allocated reserve	Use of reserve	Transfer to reserve	Balance of reserve
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Cultural Service	0.293	(0.113)	0.000	0.181
Planning Services & Building Control	0.886	(0.688)	0.000	0.198
Regeneration & Economy	3.738	(1.154)	0.312	2.896
Environment	1.098	(0.379)	0.093	0.811
Leisure	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Commercial	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Highways & Transportation	17.470	(4.222)	0.156	13.404
Operations	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Emergency Planning	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Library Services	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Regulatory Services	0.050	(0.050)	0.000	0.000
EE Management	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
Programme Management	1.938	(0.387)	0.103	1.653
Total Reserves	25.473	(6.993)	0.663	19.143

3.6. Risks

For the services under the remit of this committee, there are a number of High risks totalling **£0.468m** which have not been included within the above forecast. At this stage the risks are not certainties and as such are not included in the monitoring position. High risks of **£0.4688m** are included in the corporate monitoring report to CMT. If the risks become certainties, they will need to be included in the forecast position as overspends unless alternative action can be identified to mitigate these costs. A summary of the risk assessment is included in Table 5 below.

Table 5 – Revenue Risks 2023/24				
Risk	Value £k	Ongoing £k	One Off £k	Actions to manage risk
High	468	0	468	Economy and Environment continue to identify possible in year mitigations and review budgets as part of Council's MTFO plan.
Total	468	0	468	

The main high risks (Red risk) that could negatively impact the current forecast position should it occur are detailed further in Table 6 below.

Table 6 - High risks		
Service	Reason / explanation of risk	£k
Commercial	Bereavement income due to new competitor entering the market	276
Commercial	Bereavement Services burial and crematorium reductions due to fall in demand	106
Operations	Increase tonnage for garden waste and disposal	53
Operations	Increase Landfill - disposal and tax	48
Operations	Increased costs from Co-mingled	120
Operations	Bulky Waste delay on updated prices on system	13
Regulatory	Regulatory Services recruitment in Environmental Health to cover backlog of inspections.	52
Leisure	Continuing growth of Active living centre income	(200)
Total High Risks		468

3.7 Service Transformation Plan Benefits

Included within the budget for 2023/24 for services within the remit of this Committee are £3.627m of approved savings. Table 7 gives an early indication of the progress towards implementing these benefits:

Table 7: Delivery of 2023/24 approved savings – services within the remit of this Committee					
Saving	Total savings £m	Delivered (Blue) £m	To be delivered by 31/03/24 (Green) £m	Not fully guaranteed (Amber) £m	Not achieved (Red) £m
P3a-Outsource Outdoor Pursuits Service to a community group	0.013	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.013
P4-Increase in bulky waste charges from £10 to £30 for up to 3 items, £50 for 4-6 items and £70 for 7-9 items	0.136	0.000	0.000	0.031	0.105
P5-Reduce grass cutting frequencies	0.040	0.040	0.000	0.000	0.000
P6-Rewilding of all urban grassed areas - to manage public grassed open spaces and verges for biodiversity rather than visual appearance. Most areas would only receive one cut per year; however, pitches, visibility splays, paths and edges would be cut more	0.352	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.352
P7-Increase resident and business parking permit charges by 20%	0.003	0.002	0.002	0.000	0.000
P9-Part night lighting - reduce energy consumption by 20%	0.040	0.000	0.040	0.000	0.000
P10-Garden waste collection - 2 weekly from May-Nov	0.100	0.100	0.000	0.000	0.000
OP66-Modified winter maintenance service - the same roads will be gritted but split into 5 routes rather than 6	0.030	0.030	0.000	0.000	0.000
P12-Parking dispensation charging of £15 per vehicle per day	0.020	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.015
P13-Reintroduce staff parking charges – reduction from £45 to £15 per month	0.018	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.018
OP16-Enhancement of Darlaston Pool - implement new water features to improve teaching pool facilities and attract 'new business' - linked to capital investment	0.015	0.000	0.000	0.004	0.011
OP17-Development of Oak Park office space to create more functional fitness space to expand classes - linked to capital investment	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.013	0.038
OP18-Improvement to DD collection processes	0.010	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.005

OP19-Review of coffee shop operations	0.010	0.010	0.000	0.000	0.000
OP20-Develop new concessions in more parks	0.005	0.005	0.000	0.000	0.000
OP21-Increase rental income from Park Lodges	0.005	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.004
OP23a-Income generation review of fees and charges - increase bereavement charges by 5%, registrars and interment fees by 3%	0.094	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.089
OP23b-Income generation review of fees and charges - increase bereavement charges by 5%, registrars and interment fees by 3%	0.094	0.000	0.000	0.005	0.089
OP24-Income generation review of fees and charges - increase active living by 5%; dry sports by 2%	0.052	0.000	0.052	0.000	0.000
OP62/65-Clean, Green & Leisure restructure and delivery model review	0.291	0.291	0.000	0.000	0.000
OP63-Income generation review of fees and charges - increase grounds maintenance, trees, and arboretum rents by 5%; domestic waste and street cleansing by 10%; sale of bins by 22%; vehicle testing by 2.16%; vehicle goods and services by 20%	0.055	0.027	0.000	0.029	0.000
C/fwd from 22/23-Premium bulky waste collection service	0.015	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.015
OP57-Additional Trade Waste Income	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
OP25-Further efficiencies relating to Customer Access Management	0.096	0.096	0.000	0.000	0.000
C/fwd from 22/23-Bookable Gyms - perm replaced on going	0.030	0.030	0.000	0.000	0.000
OP54-Charge developers for travel plans	0.030	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.030
OP55-Street lighting energy savings	0.728	0.000	0.728	0.000	0.000
OP56-Increase recycling rates and reduce contamination	0.383	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.383
OP58-Increase domestic dropped crossing charges by 20%	0.004	0.002	0.002	0.000	0.000
OP59-Increase s.38 and s.278 fees	0.045	0.045	0.000	0.000	0.000
OP60-Increased bus lane/ bus gate enforcement	0.050	0.050	0.000	0.000	0.000
OP64-Income generation review of fees and charges - increase traffic management by 10%; street naming and numbering and skip permits by 2%	0.009	0.004	0.004	0.000	0.000
OP61-Trade waste over recovery of income	0.130	0.130	0.000	0.000	0.000
OP62-Waste to recycling review	0.300	0.300	0.000	0.000	0.000
C/fwd from 22/23-Offer residential gardening service	0.030	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.030
OP4-Regeneration & Economy team review	0.260	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.260
OP1-Income generation review of fees and charges - increase planning development charges by 5%	0.001	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.001
OP53-Income generation review of fees and charges - increase Arts Centre hire and lettings by 12%; bar commission fees by 15%	0.007	0.000	0.007	0.000	0.000
OP74-Heritage and culture / Arts and events - increase fees and charges - perm replaced perm replaced on going	0.009	0.009	0.000	0.000	0.000
OP22-Above inflation increases to fees and charges	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000
OP5-Income generation review of fees and charges - increase library hire and lettings by 5%	0.001	0.000	0.001	0.000	0.000
OP65-Income generation review of fees and charges - increase regulatory licences and permits by 28%	0.005	0.000	0.005	0.000	0.000
C/fwd from 22/23-Review of Libraries management	0.061	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.061
Total approved savings for services within remit of Committee	3.627	1.172	0.842	0.096	1.518

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 a robust delivery plan is required);

3.8 Capital Summary

The capital programme for the services under the remit of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee is £56.67m with the current forecast position projected to £45.839m for Period 6 (September) as detailed in Table 8 below. The proposed £10.405m carry forward is split across a number of service areas.

Table 8- Capital Forecast 2023/24					
	Annual Budget	Actual Year to Date	Forecast	Year End Variance	Proposed carry f/wd to 2024/25
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Service					
<u>Council Funded</u>					
Environment Services	0.989	0.227	0.989	0.000	0.000
Leisure and Commercial	0.634	0.068	0.634	0.000	0.000
Highways, Transport and Operations	11.349	3.407	10.923	(0.426)	0.000
Regeneration & Economy	8.574	0.001	4.727	(3.847)	(3.847)
Libraries	0.194	0.087	0.194	0.000	0.000
Total Council Funded	21.740	3.790	17.477	(4.273)	(3.847)
<u>Prudential Borrowing</u>					
Environment Services	8.526	1.635	8.526	0.000	0.000
Total Prudential Borrowing	8.526	1.635	8.526	0.000	0.000
<u>Externally Funded</u>					
Environment Services	0.801	0.131	0.801	0.000	0.000
Leisure and Commercial	0.000	0.005	0.000	0.000	0.000
Highways, Transport and Operations	8.646	2.534	8.147	(0.499)	(0.499)
Regeneration & Economy	7.393	4.495	2.279	(5.113)	(5.113)
Libraries	0.202	0.000	0.202	0.000	0.000
Programme Management	9.361	1.393	8.416	(0.945)	(0.945)
Total Externally Funded	26.403	8.558	19.845	(6.557)	(6.557)
TOTAL	56.670	13.981	45.839	(10.831)	(10.405)

4. Financial information

- 4.1 The financial implications are as set out in the main body of this report. The council has a statutory responsibility to set a balanced budget and to ensure it has an adequate level of reserves. The council will take a medium term policy led approach to all decisions on resource allocation.

5. Reducing Inequalities

5.1 Services consider and respond to equality issues in setting budgets and delivering services. Irrespective of budgetary pressures, the Council must fulfil equal opportunities obligations.

6. Decide

6.1 To approve the recommendations as set out in this report.

7. Respond

7.1 The Interim Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities, with finance in support will be working with Directors and Heads of service to review the forecast, to continue to implement actions for any further forecasts and to consider these financial implications in line with the council's budget setting process.

8. Review

8.1 Regular monitoring reports are presented to Cabinet to inform them of the financial forecast for 2023/24, including an update on risks and impact on the budget for 2023/24 and beyond.

Background papers: Various financial working papers

Contact Officers:

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Dave Brown

Executive Director, Economy, Environment and Communities

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

Committee responsible for all aspects and general services related to the economy and environment including:
 Responsibility of scrutiny of flood risk management functions which may affect the Local Authority's area as required by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010

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

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

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

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

Items to be scheduled in work programme:

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



FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

**Council House,
Lichfield Street,
Walsall, WS1 1TW**
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 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 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>Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 – Update:</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 Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Council tax payers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations. Internal services	Cllr Bird	13 December 2023
55/23 (6.11.23)	<p>Walsall Borough Local Plan - Call for Sites:</p> <p>To agree authorisation for the Council to publicise and implement a Call for</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	David Holloway David.Holloway@walsall.gov.uk Page 51 of 66	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	13 December 2023

	Sites exercise for the Walsall Borough Local Plan.					
56/23 (6.11.23)	Walsall Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2022-2025: To note and forward to Council for approval the Walsall Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2022-2025.	Cabinet Key Decision	Phil Rutherford Philip.Rutherford@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services YJS Partnership Board	Cllr Elson	13 December 2023
38/23 (7.8.23)	Treasury Management Mid Year Position Statement 2023/24: 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 Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services	Cllr Ferguson	13 December 2023
39/23 (7.8.23)	Strategic Leisure Review: 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 Stuart.Webb@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services	Cllr Flint	13 December 2023
36/23 (7.8.23)	Healthy Eating for Children and Young People Programme: To seek approval to procure a new healthy eating and weight	Cabinet Key Decision	Esther Higdon Esther.Higdon@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services Walsall Healthcare Trust	Cllr Flint	13 December 2023

	management programme for children and young people in Walsall.					
61/23 (6.11.23)	Walsall Tobacco Control Plan 2023-2027: To approve the Tobacco Control Plan	Cabinet Non-key decision	Joe Holding Joe.Holding@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services SWPB	Cllr Flint	13 December 2023
60/23 (6.11.23)	Community Grant – Bloxwich Community Partnership: To agree funding and leasing arrangements in relation to Palace Play, Shop and Eat Blakenall Row, Walsall WS3 1LW	Cabinet Key Decision	Sarah Oakley Sarah.Oakley@walsall.gov.uk	Bloxwich Community Partnership	Cllr Perry	13 December 2023
62/23 (06.11.23)	Adult Social Care Contributions Policy 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 Kerrie.Allward@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Pedley	13 December 2023
14/23 (6.2.23)	Growth Funding for Schools: To enable the Local Authority to fulfil its duty to secure sufficient primary and	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk	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)	SEN Place Requirement: To approve finance for additional special educational needs school places.	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services	Cllr M. Statham	13 December 2023
50/23 (2.10.23)	Corporate Financial Performance 2023/24: To report the financial position based on 9 months to December 2023.	Cabinet Non-key decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Corporate Management Team and Internal Services	Cllr Bird	7 February 2024
51/23 (2.10.23)	Corporate Budget Plan 2024/25 – 2027/28, incorporating the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management and investment Strategy 2024/25: To recommend the final budget and council tax for approval by Council.	Cabinet Council Key decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Council 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)	Council Plan 2022/25 – Q2 23/24: To note the Quarter 2 2023/24 (outturn) performance against the Markers of Success in the Council Plan 2022/25.	Cabinet Non-key decision	Elizabeth Connolly elizabeth.connolly@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	7 February 2024
57/23 (6.11.23)	Walsall Net-Zero 2041 Climate Strategy:	Cabinet	Katie Moreton Page 54 of 66	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	7 February 2023

	To approve the Walsall Net-Zero 2041 Strategy.	Key Decision	Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk			
54/23 (2.10.23)	Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2023 – 2026: To approve an interim commissioning strategy.	Cabinet Key Decision	Nigel Imber – Nigel.Imber@Walsall.Gov.uk	Internal consultees Local and regional partners	Cllr Pedley	7 February 2024
53/23 (2.10.23)	Determination of the Scheme for coordinated admissions, and the Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools for the 2025/26 academic year: To determine the scheme of admissions and admission arrangements for community and voluntary-controlled primary schools for 2025-26.	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk	Internal consultees Public Local Authorities Schools Faith Groups	Cllr M. Statham	7 February 2024
58/23 (6.11.23)	High Needs Funding Formula 2024/25: To approve changes to the High Needs Funding Formula, as agreed by Schools Forum, to be used for the allocation of Dedicated Schools Grant	Cabinet Key Decision	Richard Walley Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk	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>Early Years Funding Formula 2024/25:</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</p> <p>Key Decision</p>	<p>Richard Walley</p> <p>Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk</p>	<p>Schools Forum</p> <p>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
	Black Country Executive Joint Committee Governance			
04/09/2023	<p>Change Control and Delegated Authority</p> <p>Approval of BCJC Delegated Authority to the Single Accountable Body Section 151 Officer (SAB s151 officer) and approval of the revised Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (BCLEP) Assurance Framework Change Control and Delegated Authority delegations, as detailed in the attachment of the report (BCLEP Assurance Framework Appendix 23).</p>	<p>David Moore david.moore@walsall.gov.uk</p> <p>Mark Lavender mark.lavender@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Walsall Council	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:
Regional Activity & Delivery Update 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
WMCA Financial Monitoring Report - November 2023 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
Investment Zone and Levelling Up Zone Governance 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
Air Quality Framework 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>WMCA Homelessness Taskforce: Update and Key Priorities 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>HS2 / 'Network North' Update and Implications 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>Birmingham Eastside Extension 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>New Stations Package 1 Update 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>State of the Region 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>Health of the Region To consider an update report reviewing the health of the region.</p>	WMCA Board 12 January 2024	Open	Councillor Izzi Seccombe Wellbeing Portfolio Lead	Julia Cleary, Mubasshir Ajaz Head of Corporate Support & Governance, Head of Health and Communities • Strategy, Integration and Net Zero

Draft WMCA 2024/25 Budget To consider the draft WMCA budget for 2024/25.	WMCA Board 12 January 2024	Open	Councillor Bob Sleigh Deputy Mayor	
Skills Funding To consider the latest position regarding skills funding.	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Councillor George Duggins Skills & Productivity Portfolio Lead	Dr. Fiona Aldridge Head of Insight & Intelligence
WMCA's Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Transport Delivery Overview & Scrutiny Committee - Progress Update To provide a quarterly summary of the activity of work of the WMCA's overview and scrutiny function, as required by the Deeper Devolution Deal.	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Andy Street Mayor	Lyndsey Roberts Scrutiny Officer

The Forward Plan

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

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

What is a key decision?

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

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

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

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

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

Councillors or members of the public wishing to:

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

should contact the Governance Services team: governance.services@wmca.org.uk

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

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

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