



Walsall Council

Minutes of the **MEETING** of the Council of the Walsall Metropolitan Borough held on **Monday 22nd February 2010 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House.

Present

Councillor J.G. O'Hare (Mayor) in the Chair

Councillor A.G. Clarke (Deputy Mayor)

“ K. Aftab
“ A.J.A. Andrew
“ T.G. Ansell
“ D.A. Anson
“ M. Arif
“ C.M. Ault
“ J.M. Barton
“ L.A. Beeley
“ M.A. Bird
“ C. Bott
“ P. Bott
“ R. Carpenter
“ B. Cassidy
“ K. Chambers
“ J. R. Cook
“ S.P. Coughlan
“ C.U. Creaney
“ B.A. Douglas-Maul
“ M. D. Flower
“ A.E. Griffiths
“ A.D. Harris
“ L.A. Harrison
“ E.F. Hughes
“ P.F. Hughes
“ H. Khan
“ S.W. Madeley

Councillor Mrs. B.V. McCracken

“ M. Munir
“ Mushtaq Ahmed
“ M. Nazir
“ T.S. Oliver
“ A.J. Paul
“ G. Perry
“ K. Phillips
“ D.J. Pitt
“ M.G. Pitt
“ I.C. Robertson
“ J. Rochelle
“ H.S. Sarohi
“ K. Sears
“ Mrs. D.A. Shires
“ I. Shires
“ P.E. Smith
“ C.D.D. Towe
“ D.J. Turner
“ W.T. Tweddle
“ A. Underhill
“ R.A. Walker
“ G. Wilkes
“ V.G. Woodruff
“ M. Yasin
“ P.A. Young
“ Zahid Ali

80. **Apologies**

Apologies for non-attendance were submitted on behalf of Councillors Johnson, Madeley, Mrs. Pitt and Sanders.

81. **Minutes**

Resolved

That the minutes of the meetings held on 21st December, 2009 and 11th and 28th January, 2010, copies having been sent to each member of the Council, be approved as correct records and signed.

82. **Declarations of interest**

Councillor Underhill declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the item appearing in the Corporate budget relating to the Integrated Young Peoples Support Service/ Walsall Youth Service.

83. **Mayor's announcements – Late item**

The Mayor informed the Council that he had received a request to include a late and urgent item relating to election posters on the agenda for this meeting. Taking into account the issue and the Council's procedure rules he proposed to put it to the Council to decide if they wished to consider the matter as the last item of business.

It was **moved** by Councillor Bird and seconded by Councillor Andrew:

That the item relating to election posters be taken as the last item of business at this meeting.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried and it was:

Resolved

That the item relating to election posters be taken as the last item of business at the meeting.

84. **Petitions**

The following petitions were submitted:

- (1) Councillor Creaney – Willenhall Leisure Centre
- (2) Councillor Coughlan – Security at the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple, Willenhall
- (3) Councillor Griffiths – Disability Housing Support Project

85. **Questions by members**

(1) **Looked after children**

Councillor Cassidy asked the following question of Councillor Walker:

“What are the outcome figures over the past five years for looked after children in Walsall in comparison to borough-wide outcomes:

- number who achieve the Government target of 5 A to C grades at GCSE, including English and Maths?
- number who achieve the Government target of 5 A to C grades at GCSE, excluding English and Maths?
- how many achieved only one GCSE, and how many left school with no GCSEs at all?
- how many miss more than 25 days schooling in a year?
- numbers who leave our care at 19 who are NEET (not in employment or training)?
- how many go to University?
- how many are assessed as having a mental health disorder?
- how many aged 10 or over were cautioned or convicted for an offence and how many have received a custodial sentence?
- how many within our care have become teenage parents?”

Councillor Walker said she was disappointed about the question, we have a duty to looked after children and support children in our care. I do not think this is the environment to discuss this issue. The number of children is so low that they could easily be identified.

Looked after children often feature less advantage in their lives prior to coming into care. Many have come into the care of the Council from chaotic and dysfunctional family lives – consequently it is unreasonable to compare their outcomes with the general population of happy, well cared for children. However, we know that children in deprived neighbourhoods living with their families have similar outcomes to our looked after children. For example, some neighbourhoods achieved similar rates of 5+ A*-C GCSEs results in 07-8 (most recent data) (eg; Darlaston South ‘Herbert’s Park’ 20% and ‘Rough Hay’ 24%) to our LAC results of 21% in 08-9.

Unfortunately, I have not been able to gather all the information as some of that data was not collected locally or nationally.

Councillor Walker replied as follows to the points raised in the question:

(1) Number who achieved the Government target of 5 A to C grades at GCSE, including English and Maths?

It is only from 2008/09 that we have been asked to collect 5+ GCSE's A*-C including English and Maths, and in that year (summer 2009) while no LAC achieved this, 2 just missed with English and maths grades at C and D. (In 2009 6 LAC achieved 5+ A* to C and for them the English results were 1 C, 3 D, and 2 E, and Maths results were 1 C, 2 D, 2 E and 1 F.)

The national rate was 8.4% in 2008 – to achieve this would require about 3 LAC to achieve this level in Walsall. Based on Fischer family predictions our LAC cohort achieved better than expected and the one LAC it predicted should exceed the target, unfortunately this child experienced mental health problems that meant they could not attend school – they were provided home tuition from the virtual school and achieved some GCSEs.

Referring to the table she agreed to share this after the meeting.

(2) Number who achieved the Government target of 5+ A* to C grades at GCSE, excluding English and Maths?

Table 1 shows year on year improvement for Walsall LAC and it is likely that in 2008/9 we will have overtaken the national rate. Performance is lower than all children because of the special challenges they face and a large minority have Special Educational Needs. The percentage annual improvement has significantly improved from year to year.

Table 1 Children achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs

Academic Year	Walsall LAC	All Walsall Children	All LAC (Eng Ave)
2004/05	6.7% (2/30)	46.0%	10.8%
2005/06	7.1% (2/28)	50.0%	11.8%
2006/07	10.0% (4/39)	50.5%	12.6%
2007/08	14.0% (5/35)	58.6%	13.9%
2008/09	21.0% (6/28)	64.0%	N/A

(Note: No government target for LAC exists)

Although there were 28 young people in the LAC cohort in 2008/09, only 21 LAC actually sat the GCSE exams (please refer to section 3a). Therefore the proportion of LAC who sat the exams achieving 5+ A*-C GCSEs was 28.6% for 2008/09.

(3) How many achieved only one GCSE?

This data is not collected by government nor locally. Almost all who sat achieved at least 1 GCSE (see table 2a) – this would mean last year around 75% obtained at least one GCSE.

Table 2a Number who did not sit a GCSE

Year	Walsall LAC
2004/05	43.3% (13/30)
2005/06	57.1% (16/28)
2006/07	41.0% (16/39)
2007/08	37.1% (13/35)
2008/09	25.0% (7/28)

3a. and how many left school with no GCSEs at all?

Our performance is similar to the national rates and is primarily due to children not sitting for GCSEs – see similarity between Table 2 and 2a. A significant reason for children not sitting for exams is their SEN status. Of the 2008/9 cohort 46% had a statement of SEN (6 for behaviour, 7 for learning). 7 of these young people have complex learning difficulties or behavioural needs resulting in them being placed in residential care and they did not sit an exam. 2 of these young people have severe learning difficulties, 1 young person was remanded in custody, 1 young person refused to attend GCSEs. 3 (10%) of these young people attended alternative education programmes resulting in life skills/preparation for work accreditation.

This is year 11 data only – it is probable that by the time they leave care the numbers will have increased (especially for equivalent qualifications)

Table 2: Children Leaving school with no GCSEs

Year	Walsall LAC	All Walsall Children	All LAC (Eng Ave)
2004/05	46.7% (14/30)	5.0%	39.8%
2005/06	57.1% (16/28)	4.3%	58.6%
2006/07	41.0% (16/39)	3.3%	36.3%
2007/08	37.1% (13/35)	1.9%	34.4%
2008/09	25.0% (7/28)	1.9%	N/A

(4) How many miss more than 25 days schooling in a year?

Performance is now in line with the rest of the borough and has consistently been better than the national rates.

Table 3 Children missing more than 25 days schooling in a year

Year	Walsall LAC	All Walsall Children	All LAC (Eng Ave)
2004/05	8.0% (23)	N/A	12.3%
2005/06	8.0% (23)	N/A	12.6%
2006/07	6.5% (18)	6.5%	13.3%
2007/08	6.6% (17)	6.7%	11.9%
2008/09	6.1% (15)	6.0%	N/A

Table 4 NEET

Year	Walsall former LAC	All Walsall 18-25 year old (DCSF data)	Similar councils average
2004/05	33.3% (5/15)	23%	36%
2005/06	16.7% (5/30)	20%	42.8%
2006/07	11.8% (2/17)	26.8%	41.4%
2007/08	23.7% (9/38)	25.8%	39.2%
2008/09	50.0% (14/28)	N/A	42.7%
2009/10	30% (forecast out-turn)	N/A	N/a

(6) How many are assessed as having a mental health disorder?

This is a complex question as there is no performance measure of a mental health disorder. National research has found that around 45 per cent of looked after children suffer from some form of mental health problem – but this covers a wide range; from mild to severe. Our specialist CAMHS team for LAC (Carmen) received 47 LAC referrals over the last 9 months.

The new National Indicator NI58 'Emotional Health of LAC', a rating based on carers view of LAC shows that our score is almost identical to other similar councils. We are reviewing our CAMHS strategy to provide increased support to LAC using the Strength and Difficulties questionnaire (SDQ) results to focus support.

(7) How many aged 10 or over were cautioned or convicted for an offence and how many have received a custodial sentence?

In previous years this has provided a challenge; however targeted work (eg: ROLAC work, Restorative Justice Approaches) over last 18 months has resulted in an improvement so that we match the national performance at under 9%

Table 6 Offending

Year	LAC Number/% Offending	Number Receiving a Custodial Sentence	All young people in local police force area	National rates for LAC
2004/05	26/217 12.0%	N/A	N/A	9.3%
2005/06	27/237 11.4%	N/A	4.24%	9.6%
2006/07	27/222 12.2%	4	4.43%	9.5%
2007/08	27/216 12.5%	4	4.43%	8.8%
2008/09	18/205 8.8%	3	4.43%	N/A

(8) How many within our care have become teenage parents?

There was only one teenage girl who was a mother and still looked after on 31st March 2009, so the rate was 1.1%. However she was already a mother when she came into care. Comparative data is only available at a national level and in 2009 it was 2.5%

Some of the achievements:

- Support a number of young people to remain in foster care to enable them to progress through to further and higher education. One student in Essex University studying Law and comes home to foster carers during holidays; one in permanent employment and attending college.
- Two year 6 students sat the Q M exam and one has been asked to help design the website for the Gifted and Talented programme.
- One is a judo champion for his age and weight and will be starting a judo apprenticeship at Wolverhampton University, he has won medals at competitions around the world.
- A year 9 young person experienced bullying and had very low self esteem is now a looked after children representative on the anti bullying committee. He has been on fund raising for the children's hospice, is hoping to do his Duke of Edinburgh award and will be attending a week at Wolverhampton University.

In conclusion Councillor Cassidy stated that she had checked with senior officers who were comfortable with this question at Council.

(2) Permit Scheme Operator charges

Councillor Robertson asked the following question of Councillor Ansell:

“Has this Council opted to become a ‘Permit Scheme Operator’ under the Traffic Management Act of 2004 as amended on April 2008 and if so, what charges have been levied for permits to service utilities to open up highways and pavements, how many permits have been issued and what level of fines have been charged for time overruns since the new amended Act came into force?”

Councillor Ansell replied that his Council has not yet applied to the Secretary of State for permission to become a permit scheme operator. This is because we are working with neighbouring authorities to develop and implement a common permit scheme for the West Midlands as a whole.

The ability for a local authority to apply to operate a permit scheme was granted in April 2008 as part of the Traffic Management Act 2004. Officers from all the West Midlands local authorities have been exploring the options and benefits of a common permit scheme. Initial feedback from the Department for Transport to all local authorities was that whilst the powers were technically available for use they did not automatically expect all authorities to utilise them. In late 2009 the DfT changed its stance and actively started to encourage applications from local authorities. In early January 2010 additional guidance was released to all local authorities.

Councillor Ansell said that so far, permit schemes have been approved by the Secretary of State for only two local authorities in the country and both of these became operational only last month.

Councillor Robertson asked the following supplementary question:

Do you agree that in those Authorities that have been operating these permits that potentially the income from this would be around £2.5m a year, in Walsall we have about 15,000 openings of the road a year and in other parts of the country the overruns have been able to charge about £0.5m a year for over staying their welcome in closing the road.

Councillor Ansell agreed that there was a potential for income from these permits but it is unquantifiable at the moment. He went on to say that he was sure that utility companies will make sure they do not incur any costs but any income received from this scheme will be spent on our roads.

(3) Highway repairs

Councillor Phillips asked the following question of Councillor Ansell:

“What budget has been allocated to highways repairs over the next financial year in comparison to last year and what is the estimated extra spend now needed to repair frost damage and so reduce claims against this Council? “

Councillor Ansell replied that in the current year 2009/10 the Council's total budget for highways maintenance works is £5.7 million. This is made up of £750,000 capital, £4 million revenue and an allocation of £987,000 from the DfT through the Local Transport Plan.

It is still a little early to assess the full extent of the damage to the road network. But we all recognise that there has been damage to the roads due to the severe weather this year and for that reason we have allocated a further £100,000 to enable a rapid response for the repair of potholes.

For next year, 2010/11 we are expecting a reduction in the LTP highways maintenance allocation which could be in the region of £150,000. Keeping our roads in good repair is a priority for local people and for this Council. That is why we are proposing, elsewhere on tonight's agenda, to increase our highways maintenance budget by £200,000.

Councillor Ansell said that we have been meeting with other local authorities and the Government Office for the West Midlands to explore the potential for increased government funding to support our efforts.

Councillor Phillips asked the following supplementary question:

“Could you explain what quality checks are in place and who is carrying out these checks?”

Councillor Ansell said that the checks were being carried out by inspectors in the department. At the present time the department were looking at safety issues when doing temporary repairs and following on from this permanent repairs would be carried out.

(4) Illegal scrap collections from homes

Councillor Young asked the following question of Councillor Andrew:

“What actions and results have been achieved following the notice of motion passed by this Council on 2nd July 2007 to tackle the issue of tat wagons operating illegally from homes in residential areas throughout the borough and what as a consequence has been the cost to the tax payers of Walsall for replacement stolen drain covers over the past three years.”

Councillor Andrew said that individual cases have changed over time.. One has, for example, ceased to be an issue as the occupier has moved. Others continue to be problem sites. Partnership working with the Police is central to this and much other work (such as void and derelict buildings).

In the last 3 years we have had 566 incident reports of missing gully gratings as follows:

2007	214
2008	214
2009	120
2010 to date	18

We do not have accurate costs as the historic payment mechanisms do not show individual items, however, current rates are a “make safe” cost is about £100 and a permanent repair is about £500. An indicative cost therefore is £340k.

Existing gully gratings can easily be removed as there are not any fixings therefore to prevent further thefts hinged gully gratings are now installed. These are more expensive, however, the additional cost is thought worthwhile in the long run. We believe we have over 34,000 and many more belonging to utility companies who will be counting and locating these. The target is to replace any stolen grating within 1 hour and not more than 2 hours.

Councillor Young asked the following supplementary question:

“Would it not have been wise to have held consultation groups in relation to this matter?”

Councillor Andrew replied that he agreed and that the replacement covers will be designed to be more difficult to steal. He posed the question that perhaps the Police should be looking at which scrapyards are accepting these gully gratings and drain covers.

(5) Disposal of tyres

Councillor Smith withdrew his question to Councillor Flower:

(6) New Deal for Communities

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Andrew:

“As the Council is the accountable body for New Deal for Communities and given that New Deal’s “Communications” Budget for 2009/10 was £147,599 with a forecast overspend of £1268, bringing the 2008/10 forecast outturn to £148,867 which equates to approximately £32 for every household in the New Deal footprint area, can the appropriate Portfolio holder explain to me, this Council and the public whether he believes that this represents a good use of public money and value for money?”

Councillor Andrew replied that in his opinion this question was electioneering. He reminded Councillor Smith that the New Deal programme was a government initiative community led regeneration programme. Volunteers sit on the Board of this body. A household survey by new Deal showed that households were not well informed. He said that they felt disenfranchised. This Council does not run New Deal and he went on to say that people in the area should have their say.

(7) Communications budget

Councillor Smith asked the following question of Councillor Bird:

“Given that the Council’s budget for “Communications” for 2009/10 is a net £597,808, which equates to approximately £6 for every household in the Borough of Walsall and given also that Walsall Council has had and is likely to have serious budgetary constraints placed upon it, can the appropriate portfolio holder explain to me, this Council and the public;

- (a) how this represents good use of public money and value for money and
- (b) whether money could be saved by the Council by the Council and its various “partners” sharing resources in the area of “Communications”?”

Councillor Bird replied that the budget for the communications unit for 2009/10 is not £598k it is £493k. Additionally, there is an income target of £40k for the unit – so far this financial year they have obtained £70k of external income against this target.

In 2009/10 £80k has been saved against communications activity across the Council and in 2010/11 the communications unit is tasked with saving a further £80k.

In April 2009, Scrutiny conducted a value for money review of the communications unit, its work and its outcomes – Scrutiny confirmed that the unit did provide value for money. It would cost significantly more to buy these services in from external providers.

In December 2008 the unit was subject to an independent Peer Communications Review led by the IDeA (the Improvement & Development Agency) who concluded that the team was working effectively and delivering successful, prioritised communications activity.

Councillor Bird said that the communications unit is an extremely busy team – in 2009 it responded to over 1,800 media enquiries from local and national media (that's 35 per week), often dealing with complex questions about many of the 800 services this council delivers. But its work is not just reactive – last year the unit delivered over 1,200 press releases promoting the work of the council, our events and our services in order to make our services as accessible as possible to our residents. There is little point in holding an event if no one knows it is taking place.

Incidentally, both of these statistics suggest the team to be the second busiest communications unit in the West Midlands – the team is actually one of the smallest in the region.

Councillor Bird went on to say that it isn't just media work that the team is responsible for – they also manage the Council's web site which is one of the top 20 best local government web sites in the country in 2009 (source: SOCITM, the society of chartered IT managers)

They deliver the communications and consultation activity that supports our building schools for the future programme, they deliver our social media activity (Twitter and Facebook), they produce our resident magazine (Walsall Pride) and they are responsible for communicating with all staff – no easy task with such a large workforce across multiple sites and many without email access.

At this point in Councillor Bird's reply, Councillor Smith raised a point of order that the 30 minute period for asking questions had expired and would he (Councillor Smith) be allowed to asked a supplementary question.

The Mayor said that in his opinion, it would be helpful for Councillor Bird to finish giving his answer and that Councillor Smith would have to ask his supplementary question at another time.

Councillor Bird carried on to say that the team also plays a key role in building the profile and reputation of Walsall – not just the Council, but the place – on a regional and international stage with the obvious benefits this has in terms of inward investment.

There is a growing emphasis on partnership working generally and the unit already works closely with colleagues from other public agencies, such as NHS Walsall (giving out public information on swine flu for example), and West Midlands Police, (supporting the borough's work on the safer agenda).

In conclusion Councillor Bird stated that this is an area we will continue to develop in the months and years to come and we will be looking at how we might share resources with other partners for opportunities to make further efficiencies that will benefit the people of Walsall.

86. Recommendations of Cabinet

(1) Corporate budget and Treasury Management and Investment Strategy

The report to Cabinet on 3rd February 2020 was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Towe and duly seconded:

(i) Revenue

- (a) That the recommendations of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in respect of the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the budget calculations and the adequacy of reserves as set out in Annex 8 be noted and endorsed.
- (b) That the final net levies below for outside bodies be noted.

LEVY	AMOUNT (£)
West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority	13,717,864
Environment agency	80,626

- (c) An opening working balance for 2010/11 set at a prudent level of c£6.712m in line with the council's medium term financial strategy.
- (d) That the following statutory determinations be noted (references are to the Local Government Finance Act, 1992):
 - I. **£749,782,451** being the aggregate gross expenditure, which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) (a) to (e) of the Act.
 - II. **£504,286,230** being the aggregate income which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3) (a) to (c) of the Act.
 - III. **£245,496,221** being the amount, by which the aggregate at (I) above exceeds the aggregate at (II), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32 (4) as its budget requirement for the year.
 - IV. **£137,295,771** being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-Domestic Rates (**£119,841,273**); Revenue Support Grant (**£17,402,066**); and the Collection Fund Surplus (**£52,432**).

- V. **£1,384.64** being the amount at (d III) above, less the amount at (d IV) above, equal to **£108,200,450**, divided by the Council Tax Base of **78,143.38**, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33 (1) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (average council tax at band D) – an increase of 3.9%.

VI. Valuation bands

Being amounts given by multiplying the amount at (v) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands.

A	B	C	D
£923.09	£1,076.94	£1,230.79	£1,384.64
E	F	G	H
£1,692.34	£2,000.04	£2,307.73	£2,769.28

- (e) That the final precepts from the Fire & Civil Defence Authority and the Police Authority, issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, for each of the categories of dwelling shown below be noted.

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY	VALUATION BANDS			
	A	B	C	D
Police	£66.30	£77.35	£88.40	£99.45
	E	F	G	H
	£121.55	£143.65	£165.75	£198.90
	A	B	C	D
Fire & Civil Defence	£31.89	£37.20	£42.52	£47.83
	E	F	G	H
	£58.46	£69.09	£79.72	£95.66

- (f) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (d) (vi) and (e) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts of council tax for 2010/11 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

A	B	C	D
£1,021.28	£1,191.49	£1,361.71	£1,531.92
E	F	G	H
£1,872.35	£2,212.78	£2,553.20	£3,063.84

- (g) To replace Annex 6 in the Budget Plan with the revised Annex 6 attached, which contains the final Council Tax data.
- (h) That notice be given of the council tax within twenty one days of it being set by publishing details of the same in the “Walsall Observer”; and the “Walsall Advertiser” being newspapers circulating in the Authority’s area.
- (i) That the chief financial officer be instructed to take all necessary action in relation to council tax, community charge and national non-domestic rates, including, where appropriate, the signing of all documents, the giving of notices and the taking of necessary steps to ensure collection thereof.
- (j) Approval of the budget plan, including the opening cash limits, savings and investment proposals set out in the annexes, subject to the following changes to Annexes 3 and 7E of the budget plan:
1. Saving number 115: Closure of Willenhall Leisure Centre to be deferred for a maximum of 6 months from 3 February 2010 to allow the Executive Director and his officers to work with the 9 Willenhall councillors and report back after 3 months (from 3 February) to Cabinet with their findings. Deferral would reduce the saving up to a maximum of £158,065 (from £216,565 to £58,500)
 2. The amendment in 1) above to be funded by a reduction in the contribution to balances contained within the budget, up to a maximum of £158,065, from £3.15m to £2.99m, resulting in revised net opening reserves of £6.712m.

(ii) Capital

- (a) That the draft capital programme set out in the following tables be approved bearing in mind the principle that unless affordable from within current resources, specific projects funded by unsupported borrowing will not be commenced until a payback agreement is in place.

DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11	
MAINSTREAM SCHEMES	ESTIMATED VALUE £
Basic need	1,443,204
Modernisation of all schools	312,582
Schools access initiatives	586,620
Local transport plan	2,476,000
Risk management	100,000
Uninsured property damage	200,000
Contingency	365,000
Redhouse community centre	300,000
Streetly crematorium – mercury abatement equipment / new cremators	125,801
Provision of alternative accommodation to release leased buildings	1,000,000

Hollybank rehabilitation centre	300,000
Barcroft primary	150,000
Targeted capital fund	1,165,000
Finance direct – unsupported borrowing	1,285,000
Building schools for the future	900,000
Health centre, library and children’s centre for Pelsall	200,000
Cleaner, greener – additional litter bins	10,000
Refurbishment of Goscote adult training centre	600,000
Town centre on street parking	250,000
Cleaner, greener – re-organise community clean teams: purchase of hot jet pavement cleaning machine to clean pavement areas in district centres and shopping precincts	116,000
Asbestos removal	155,000
Legionella	275,000
MAINSTREAM SCHEMES	ESTIMATED VALUE £
Statutory testing of building services and resulting works	300,000
Freer street structural works	350,000
Darlaston baths roof	200,000
Education development centre works to driveway to remove dangerous junction	25,000
Hatherton road multi-storey car park	200,000
Memorial safety	100,000
Health and safety executive works at depot	264,000
Relocation of depot	1,000,000
Shop maintenance	120,000
Aids and adaptations	1,500,000
Civic building air condition replacement	100,000
Planned property maintenance (essential maintenance of non- education premises – back log of repairs)	500,000
Willenhall townscape heritage initiative	75,000
Demolition of redundant buildings to save on business rates	200,000
Highways maintenance	950,000
Strategic acquisitions	1,000,000
Sneyd reservoir overflow replacement	45,000
Darlaston Scout Hut roof repairs	55,000
Lower Bridge St swapping of taxi rank and disabled bays	70,000
Regenerating Walsall	370,000
Total	19,739,207

MAINSTREAM CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11	
RESERVE BIDS	ESTIMATED VALUE £
Investing in working smarter programme	1,000,000
Walsall town hall toilet refurbishment	40,000
One stop shop	5,000
Former Moxley junior school	50,000
Personalisation – refresh of ICT and PARIS	150,000
Accommodation review	TBD
Green rivers	200,000

Roof of link bridge to civic centre	75,000
Room 17a council house air conditioning	90,000
Civic centre – supply / extract motors	60,000
Leckie sons of rest – arboretum	230,000
Contingency	45,000
Darlaston town hall replacement kitchen	100,000
TOTAL	2,045,000

NON-MAINSTREAM CAPITAL PROGRAMME – SCHEMES FUNDED FROM GRANT 2010/11	
NON MAINSTREAM SCHEMES	ESTIMATED VALUE £
Developed formula capital	4,772,102
Modernisation	3,003,360
Extended schools	277,901
Harnessing Technology	1,101,784
Children's centres – phase 3	241,350
Primary capital programme	6,735,729
Early years capital grant	1,015,217
14-19 diplomas, special educational needs and disabilities	6,000,000
Children's centres – maintenance	105,248
Aiming high for disabled children	273,600
Youth capital fund	181,600
Safer stronger community fund	106,655
Waste infrastructure capital fund	150,000
Walsall children's play portfolio	320,000
Walsall arboretum restoration programme	762,000
Palfrey park restoration programme	296,500
Pelsall health centre, children's centre and library	2,450,000
Playbuilder	599,369
Disabled facilities grant	1,215,000
Aids and adaptations	2,662,400
AWM	95,000
HLF	120,319
Willenhall townscape heritage initiative – HLF	150,000
Willenhall townscape heritage initiative – VIEW	75,000
Waterfront south phase 2 – growth point	247,000
Social care single capital pot	129,000
Mental health for single capital pot	137,000
Information for social care grant	100,858
Local transport plan integrated transport	3,047,000
Development of highway asset inventory	47,500
Road safety partnership	31,272
Bus showcase	2,000,000
Darlaston project development	150,000
Red routes	2,400,000
Total	40,999,764

LEASING PROGRAMME 2010/11 (as set out in annex 14)	
PORTFOLIO	TOTAL BUDGET £m
Environment portfolio	4.668
Total	4.668

- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the Leader to allow reserve list items in the draft capital programme 2010/11 to commence following confirmation that funds are available.

(iii) Treasury Management

- (a) That the 2010/11 treasury management and investment strategy document set out in Annex 15 including a revised minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy 2009/10 and MRP policy 2010/11, and the adoption of the prudential indicators set out in Annex 16 be approved.
- (b) That decisions to effect movements between conventional borrowing and other long term liabilities, such as leases, be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer.
- (c) That decisions to use capital receipts or unsupported borrowing within the framework of approved prudential indicators be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer.

Amendment moved by Councillor Coughlan and seconded by Councillor Smith:

Council are recommended to amend the budget saving number 115 (page 48), relating to the closure of Willenhall Leisure Centre, to re-instate a further £100,000 to enable the centre to operate for the full financial year (removing the remaining saving of £58,000) and to promote and develop sporting and leisure activities for the people of Willenhall (by providing additional investment of up to a further £41,500). This is proposed to be funded via a reduction in the general inflation provision contained within services budgets.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared **lost** – the voting at the request of several members of the Council being recorded as follows:

**For the amendment -
24 members**

Cllr: Oliver
I. Shires
Anson
Barton
C. Bott

**Against the amendment -
31 members**

Cllr: Bird
Aftab
Ahmed
Andrew
Ansell

P. Bott	Arif
Cassidy	Ault
Chambers	Beeley
Cook	Carpenter
Coughlan	Clarke
Creaney	Douglas-Maul
P. Hughes	Flower
Khan	Griffiths
Madeley	Harris
Nazir	Harrison
Phillips	E. Hughes
Robertson	McCracken
Sarohi	Munir
D.A. Shires	O'Hare
Smith	Paul
Underhill	Perry
Wilkes	D. Pitt
Woodruff	M. Pitt
Young	Rochelle
	Sears
	Towe
	Turner
	Tweddle
	Walker
	Yasin
	Zahid

Amendment moved by Councillor I. Shires and seconded by Councillor. D.A. Shires:

Council are recommended to amend the budget by removing the remaining saving of £58,000 relating to the closure of Willenhall Leisure Centre which would allow the centre to remain open, this to be funded from reducing the investment proposal for a Corporate Feasibility Study Resource (Annex 2, page 42 of Council papers) from £225,000 to £166,500

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared **lost** - 24 members voting in favour and 31 against.

Amendment moved by Councillor Nazir and seconded by Councillor Robertson:

Council are recommended to amend the investment into Children's Services (page 40), to include an additional £200,000 investment to fund a cross-borough outreach team to develop sporting activities and challenges for our young people, working along the Integrated Young Peoples Support Service/Walsall Youth Service and partner organisations. This is proposed to be funded via a reduction in the pay award provision contained within the budget.

At this point in the meeting, it was **moved** by Councillor Oliver and duly seconded:

That Council procedure rule 9(a) be suspended for the remainder of the meeting in order to enable the business to be completed.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried and it was:

Resolved

That Council procedure rule 9(a) be suspended for the remainder of the meeting in order to enable the business to be completed.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared **lost** – 19 members voting in favour and 29 against.

Amendment moved by Councillor Phillips and seconded by Councillor Oliver:

Council are recommended to remove the budget saving number 74 (page 46), relating to the reduction in opening hours for district toilets. This is proposed to be funded via a reduction in the general inflation provision contained within the services budgets.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared **lost** – the voting at the request of several members of the Council being recorded as follows:

For the amendment- 23 members

Cllr: Oliver
I. Shires
Anson
Barton
C. Bott
P. Bott
Cassidy
Chambers
Cook
Coughlan
Creaney
P. Hughes
Khan
Madeley
Nazir
Phillips
Robertson
Saroji
D.A. Shires
Smith

Against the amendment - 31 members

Cllr: Bird
Aftab
Ahmed
Andrew
Ansell
Arif
Ault
Beeley
Carpenter
Clarke
Douglas-Maul
Flower
Griffiths
Harris
Harrison
E. Hughes
McCracken
Munir
O'Hare
Paul

Underhill
Wilkes
Woodruff

Perry
D. Pitt
M. Pitt
Rochelle
Sears
Towe
Turner
Tweddle
Walker
Yasin
Zahid

Amendment moved by Councillor Robertson and duly seconded:

Council are recommended to amend the budget investment in Communities and Partnerships (page 40), to include an additional £75,000 towards the ongoing costs of the Walsall Domestic Violence Forum. This is proposed to be funded via a reduction in the general inflation provision contained within services budgets.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared **lost** – 22 members voting in favour and 29 against.

Amendment moved by Councillor Wilkes and duly seconded:

Council are recommended to amend the budget investment in Environment (page 40), to include an additional £100,000 toward one-off costs of repair to potholes and highway defects as a result of the recent severe winter weather. This is proposed to be funded via an earmarked reserve.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared **lost** – 21 members voting in favour and 33 against.

The original motion was put to the vote and declared carried – 31 members voting in favour and 20 voting against and it was:

Resolved

(i) Revenue

- (a) That the recommendations of the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) in respect of the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the budget calculations and the adequacy of reserves as set out in Annex 8 be noted and endorsed.
- (b) That the final net levies below for outside bodies be noted.

LEVY	AMOUNT (£)
West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority	13,717,864
Environment agency	80,626

- (c) An opening working balance for 2010/11 set at a prudent level of c£6.712m in line with the council's medium term financial strategy.
- (d) That the following statutory determinations be noted (references are to the Local Government Finance Act, 1992):
- I. **£749,782,451** being the aggregate gross expenditure, which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) (a) to (e) of the Act.
 - II. **£504,286,230** being the aggregate income which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3) (a) to (c) of the Act.
 - III. **£245,496,221** being the amount, by which the aggregate at (I) above exceeds the aggregate at (II), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32 (4) as its budget requirement for the year.
 - IV. **£137,295,771** being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-Domestic Rates (**£119,841,273**); Revenue Support Grant (**£17,402,066**); and the Collection Fund Surplus (**£52,432**).
 - V. **£1,384.64** being the amount at (d III) above, less the amount at (d IV) above, equal to **£108,200,450**, divided by the Council Tax Base of **78,143.38**, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33 (1) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (average council tax at band D) – an increase of 3.9%.
 - VI. Valuation bands

Being amounts given by multiplying the amount at (v) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands.

A	B	C	D
£923.09	£1,076.94	£1,230.79	£1,384.64
E	F	G	H
£1,692.34	£2,000.04	£2,307.73	£2,769.28

- (e) That the final precepts from the Fire & Civil Defence Authority and the Police Authority, issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, for each of the categories of dwelling shown below be noted.

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY	VALUATION BANDS			
	A	B	C	D
Police	£66.30	£77.35	£88.40	£99.45
	E	F	G	H
	£121.55	£143.65	£165.75	£198.90
Fire & Civil Defence	A	B	C	D
	£31.89	£37.20	£42.52	£47.83
	E	F	G	H
	£58.46	£69.09	£79.72	£95.66

- (f) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (d) (vi) and (e) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts of council tax for 2010/11 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below.

A	B	C	D
£1,021.28	£1,191.49	£1,361.71	£1,531.92
E	F	G	H
£1,872.35	£2,212.78	£2,553.20	£3,063.84

- (g) To replace Annex 6 in the Budget Plan with the revised Annex 6 attached, which contains the final Council Tax data.
- (h) That notice be given of the council tax within twenty one days of it being set by publishing details of the same in the "Walsall Observer"; and the "Walsall Advertiser" being newspapers circulating in the Authority's area.
- (i) That the chief financial officer be instructed to take all necessary action in relation to council tax, community charge and national non-domestic rates, including, where appropriate, the signing of all documents, the giving of notices and the taking of necessary steps to ensure collection thereof.
- (j) Approval of the budget plan, including the opening cash limits, savings and investment proposals set out in the annexes, subject to the following changes to Annexes 3 and 7E of the budget plan:
1. Saving number 115: Closure of Willenhall Leisure Centre to be deferred for a maximum of 6 months from 3 February 2010 to allow the Executive Director and his officers to work with the 9 Willenhall councillors and report back after 3 months (from 3 February) to Cabinet with their findings. Deferral would reduce the saving up to a maximum of £158,065 (from £216,565 to £58,500)
 2. The amendment in 1) above to be funded by a reduction in the contribution to balances contained within the budget, up to a maximum of £158,065, from £3.15m to £2.99m, resulting in revised net opening reserves of £6.712m.

(ii) Capital

- (a) That the draft capital programme set out in the following tables be approved bearing in mind the principle that unless affordable from within current resources, specific projects funded by unsupported borrowing will not be commenced until a payback agreement is in place.

DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11	
MAINSTREAM SCHEMES	ESTIMATED VALUE £
Basic need	1,443,204
Modernisation of all schools	312,582
Schools access initiatives	586,620
Local transport plan	2,476,000
Risk management	100,000
Uninsured property damage	200,000
Contingency	365,000
Redhouse community centre	300,000
Streetly crematorium – mercury abatement equipment / new cremators	125,801
Provision of alternative accommodation to release leased buildings	1,000,000
Hollybank rehabilitation centre	300,000
Barcroft primary	150,000
Targeted capital fund	1,165,000
Finance direct – unsupported borrowing	1,285,000
Building schools for the future	900,000
Health centre, library and children's centre for Pelsall	200,000
Cleaner, greener – additional litter bins	10,000
Refurbishment of Goscote adult training centre	600,000
Town centre on street parking	250,000
Cleaner, greener – re-organise community clean teams: purchase of hot jet pavement cleaning machine to clean pavement areas in district centres and shopping precincts	116,000
Asbestos removal	155,000
Legionella	275,000
MAINSTREAM SCHEMES	ESTIMATED VALUE £
Statutory testing of building services and resulting works	300,000
Freer street structural works	350,000
Darlaston baths roof	200,000
Education development centre works to driveway to remove dangerous junction	25,000
Hatherton road multi-storey car park	200,000
Memorial safety	100,000
Health and safety executive works at depot	264,000
Relocation of depot	1,000,000
Shop maintenance	120,000
Aids and adaptations	1,500,000

Civic building air condition replacement	100,000
Planned property maintenance (essential maintenance of non-education premises – back log of repairs)	500,000
Willenhall townscape heritage initiative	75,000
Demolition of redundant buildings to save on business rates	200,000
Highways maintenance	950,000
Strategic acquisitions	1,000,000
Sneyd reservoir overflow replacement	45,000
Darlaston Scout Hut roof repairs	55,000
Lower Bridge St swapping of taxi rank and disabled bays	70,000
Regenerating Walsall	370,000
Total	19,739,207

MAINSTREAM CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2010/11	
RESERVE BIDS	ESTIMATED VALUE £
Investing in working smarter programme	1,000,000
Walsall town hall toilet refurbishment	40,000
One stop shop	5,000
Former Moxley junior school	50,000
Personalisation – refresh of ICT and PARIS	150,000
Accommodation review	TBD
Green rivers	200,000
Roof of link bridge to civic centre	75,000
Room 17a council house air conditioning	90,000
Civic centre – supply / extract motors	60,000
Leckie sons of rest – arboretum	230,000
Contingency	45,000
Darlaston town hall replacement kitchen	100,000
TOTAL	2,045,000

NON-MAINSTREAM CAPITAL PROGRAMME – SCHEMES FUNDED FROM GRANT 2010/11	
NON MAINSTREAM SCHEMES	ESTIMATED VALUE £
Developed formula capital	4,772,102
Modernisation	3,003,360
Extended schools	277,901
Harnessing Technology	1,101,784
Children's centres – phase 3	241,350
Primary capital programme	6,735,729
Early years capital grant	1,015,217
14-19 diplomas, special educational needs and disabilities	6,000,000
Children's centres – maintenance	105,248
Aiming high for disabled children	273,600
Youth capital fund	181,600
Safer stronger community fund	106,655
Waste infrastructure capital fund	150,000

Walsall children's play portfolio	320,000
Walsall arboretum restoration programme	762,000
Palfrey park restoration programme	296,500
Pelsall health centre, children's centre and library	2,450,000
Playbuilder	599,369
Disabled facilities grant	1,215,000
Aids and adaptations	2,662,400
AWM	95,000
HLF	120,319
Willenhall townscape heritage initiative – HLF	150,000
Willenhall townscape heritage initiative – VIEW	75,000
Waterfront south phase 2 – growth point	247,000
Social care single capital pot	129,000
Mental health for single capital pot	137,000
Information for social care grant	100,858
Local transport plan integrated transport	3,047,000
Development of highway asset inventory	47,500
Road safety partnership	31,272
Bus showcase	2,000,000
Darlaston project development	150,000
Red routes	2,400,000
Total	40,999,764

LEASING PROGRAMME 2010/11 (as set out in annex 14)	
PORTFOLIO	TOTAL BUDGET £m
Environment portfolio	4.668
Total	4.668

- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Financial Officer, in consultation with the Leader to allow reserve list items in the draft capital programme 2010/11 to commence following confirmation that funds are available.

(iii) Treasury Management

- (a) That the 2010/11 treasury management and investment strategy document set out in Annex 15 including a revised minimum revenue provision (MRP) policy 2009/10 and MRP policy 2010/11, and the adoption of the prudential indicators set out in Annex 16 be approved.
- (b) That decisions to effect movements between conventional borrowing and other long term liabilities, such as leases, be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer.
- (c) That decisions to use capital receipts or unsupported borrowing within the framework of approved prudential indicators be delegated to the Chief Finance Officer.

(2) **Corporate Plan 2010/11**

The report to Cabinet on 3rd February 2010 was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Bird, duly seconded and:

Resolved

That the Corporate Plan 2010/11 be adopted, as a key part of the Council's policy framework.

(3) **Amendment to Constitution – Traffic Regulation Orders**

The report to Cabinet on 3rd February 2010 was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Bird, duly seconded and:

Resolved

That the Constitution, Part 3, Table 5, paragraph 25.29 be amended as follows:

That the words "Development Control Committee" in the final sentence be replaced by the words "relevant Executive Director in consultation with the portfolio holder".

87. **Local Admission Forum**

The report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Walker, duly seconded and:

Resolved

(1) That the following be appointed members of the Walsall Admission Forum for a four year term of office (subject to their continuing eligibility) from 22 February 2010:

- Brett Westwood (Foundation schools, primary)
- Alison Bruton (voluntary aided schools, secondary)
- Bernard Dickenson (academies)
- Rajesh Patel (parents, primary sector)
- Karen Bird (parents, primary sector).

(2) That further reports be received following receipt of further nominations.

88. **Pay and grading**

The report was submitted.

It was **moved** by Councillor Bird, duly seconded and:

Resolved

That authority to enter into negotiations with the Unions, and employee representatives be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, and portfolio holder for Finance and Personnel.

89. **Membership of Committees**

Resolved

- (1) That the following members be appointed to the undermentioned Scrutiny and Performance Panels in place of Councillor Harris:
 - Corporate – Councillor Douglas-Maul
 - Environment – Councillor Beeley
- (2) That no appointment be made to the Chair of Environment Scrutiny and Performance Panel for the remainder of the municipal year.

90. **Notice of motion – Looked after children**

The report was submitted.

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Walker and seconded by Councillor E. Hughes:

This Council recognises its duty as corporate parents to looked after children and children with disabilities:

We recognise the importance of ensuring the very best outcomes for children and young people in our care.

We as elected members, therefore commit to:

- Familiarising ourselves with the DCSF publication “If this were my child” which outlines the duties of elected members in relation to children and young people in care and ensure we are aware of our duties as corporate parents.
- Sharing and supporting the achievements of our young people by attending the annual celebration the “Excellent Night Out”.

- Attending a training workshop provided by Walsall Council to outline our duties as corporate parents and enable us to all play our part.
- Identifying Councillor champions to support each of the key areas of development (for example, leisure, employment, academic achievement, life skills, sport, etc.) to ensure we offer the very best opportunities to the young people in our care.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried and it was:

Resolved

This Council recognises its duty as corporate parents to look after children and children with disabilities:

We recognise the importance of ensuring the very best outcomes for children and young people in our care.

We as elected members, therefore commit to:

- Familiarising ourselves with the DCSF publication “If this were my child” which outlines the duties of elected members in relation to children and young people in care and ensure we are aware of our duties as corporate parents.
- Sharing and supporting the achievements of our young people by attending the annual celebration the “Excellent Night Out”.
- Attending a training workshop provided by Walsall Council to outline our duties as corporate parents and enable us to all play our part.
- Identifying Councillor champions to support each of the key areas of development (for example, leisure, employment, academic achievement, life skills, sport, etc.) to ensure we offer the very best opportunities to the young people in our care.

91. Notice of motion – Staffordshire hoard

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Bird and seconded by Councillor Andrew:

This Council welcomes and supports the campaign to keep the Staffordshire Hoard in this area. The find is exceptionally important for Brownhills, Walsall, Staffordshire and the wider Midlands, and urges the government to provide funds to ensure that the hoard is kept within the ancient Kingdom of Mercia.

Amendment moved by Councillor Cassidy and seconded by Councillor Towe:

This Council welcomes and supports the campaign to keep the Staffordshire Hoard in the West Midlands and acknowledges that the find is uniquely important for Brownhills and Walsall, in particular, as well as the wider region. Council therefore instructs officers to:

- Ensure that Walsall has a place on the hoard GOWM steering group so that the views of the residents of this borough are represented.
- Requests officers to investigate establishing a public appeal to raise funds to assist with displaying some of the hoard in Walsall.
- Undertake to ascertain how much, great or small, Walsall Council can contribute directly to the appeal.

Furthermore this Council calls on the Government to provide funds to ensure that the hoard is kept within the West Midlands region and that it be permanently housed as near to the site of its origin as possible.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared **carried**.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared carried and it was:

Resolved

This Council welcomes and supports the campaign to keep the Staffordshire Hoard in the West Midlands and acknowledges that the find is uniquely important for Brownhills and Walsall, in particular, as well as the wider region. Council therefore instructs officers to:

- Ensure that Walsall has a place on the hoard GOWM steering group so that the views of the residents of this borough are represented.
- Requests officers to investigate establishing a public appeal to raise funds to assist with displaying some of the hoard in Walsall.
- Undertake to ascertain how much, great or small, Walsall Council can contribute directly to the appeal.

Furthermore this Council calls on the Government to provide funds to ensure that the hoard is kept within the West Midlands region and that it be permanently housed as near to the site of its origin as possible.

92. Notice of motion – Concessionary bus travel for over 60's

The following motion, notice of which had been duly given was **moved** by Councillor Oliver and seconded by Councillor Wilkes:

This Council supports free concessionary bus travel for the over 60s, enjoyed by 8 million people, and calls on our major political parties on social and environmental grounds to pledge its continuation without changing the criteria for eligibility, and further to extend the validity of the pass – and that of the schemes in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales – so as to cover all of the United Kingdom.

Amendment moved by Councillor Ansell and duly seconded:

This Council supports free concessionary bus travel for the over 60s, enjoyed by 8 million people, and calls on our major political parties to pledge its continuation without changing the criteria for eligibility, provided that the additional costs of doing so are funded by central government, thereby avoiding any adverse impact on Walsall Council tax payers.

On being put to the vote the amendment was declared carried.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared carried and it was:

Resolved

This Council supports free concessionary bus travel for the over 60s, enjoyed by 8 million people, and calls on our major political parties to pledge its continuation without changing the criteria for eligibility, provided that the additional costs of doing so are funded by central government, thereby avoiding any adverse impact on Walsall Council tax payers.

93. **Late item – Election posters**

It was **moved** by Councillor Bird and seconded by Councillor Oliver:

That in order to maintain the street scene and local environment, the Council's political groups have agreed, from today, not to affix or erect election materials, including posters, to Council assets and street furniture.

In the event that any such materials are placed on Council assets and street furniture, officers of the Council are instructed to arrange for removal at the earliest opportunity.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared carried and it was:

Resolved

That in order to maintain the street scene and local environment, the Council's political groups have agreed, from today, not to affix or erect election materials, including posters, to Council assets and street furniture.

In the event that any such materials are placed on Council assets and street furniture, officers of the Council are instructed to arrange for removal at the earliest opportunity.

The meeting terminated at 11.02 p.m.