



Walsall Council

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall to be held on **MONDAY the ELEVENTH day of SEPTEMBER, 2006, at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House, Walsall.

Dated this 1st day of September, 2006.

Yours sincerely,

Interim Chief Executive.

The business to be transacted is as follows:-

1. Apologies.
2. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 3rd July 2006.
3. Declarations of interest.
4. Mayor's announcements.
5. To receive any petitions.
6. To answer any questions in accordance with Council procedure rules:-
 - (a) From the public.
 - (b) From members of the Council.

7. Black Country Joint Core Strategy. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting. Council to agree the recommendations set out in the report.

8. Appointment of independent members to Standards Committee. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting. Council to agree the recommendation set out in the report.

9. Appointment of Interim Chief Executive. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting. Council to agree the recommendation set out in the report.

10. Appointment of Electoral Registration Officer and Returning Officer. Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting. Council to agree the recommendation set out in the report.

11. Membership of political group. Council to note that Councillors Aslam and Khan have left the Conservative Group and with the agreement of Councillor Oliver, Leader of the Labour Group have joined the Labour Group.

12. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by Councillor Andrew:

That this Council is totally opposed to the Department for Transport's (DfT) West Midlands Rail Franchise draft proposals to sever two of our direct connections to InterCity services and to threaten the third.

This Council:

1. Demands that the DfT recognises the ambitious growth agenda and urban renaissance which will make the Borough of Walsall one of the leading towns in the West Midlands.
2. Asks the DfT recognises that the franchise proposals would severely segregate the borough from the wider region and the country as a whole. This is totally unacceptable and will jeopardise our ambition to bring about long term economic success and sustained viability to the districts and communities of Walsall Borough.

3. Seeks confirmation from DfT that major changes to the West Coast main line timetable will not in any way restrict our existing four trains an hour in peak times specifically to Birmingham New Street and our connectivity to Birmingham International Airport. Any change will hamper Walsall's connectivity to the rest of the region and the country.
4. Is opposed to the curtailment of the current Stafford service at Rugeley Trent Valley and would ask that the services through to Stafford are retained within the franchise, with an enhanced frequency during peak times.
5. Asks that the DfT investigates ways of having improved rail services and facilities for the borough of Walsall rather than reduce our services.
6. Requests that the Regeneration Scrutiny Panel investigates and develops a Rail Service and facilities improvement plan for the borough of Walsall, in order to inform future decisions made by the DfT and to assist an investigation by the DfT for improved rail services and facilities.
7. Reiterates our strong opposition to the termination of the Walsall – Wolverhampton rail service. It asks that DfT retain it within the base specification as a shuttle between the two key centres with an enhanced frequency, particularly during peak times. We ask for progression of new interim stations being built to make the service more attractive to potential users and as part of our overall regeneration of the Darlaston Strategic Development Area and Willenhall district centre. We ask that the future development and potential of this link is taken into serious consideration.

(Note: Report relating to this matter is reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

13. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by Councillors Wilkes, Barton, Anson, Sarohi, Coughlan, J. Phillips and Burley:

This Council:

- supports the role which community associations and neighbourhood resource centres can play in creating safer and stronger communities;
- notes current Government thinking and recognised good practice to promote greater community ownership and management of assets, such as community centres;
- agrees with previous Scrutiny Committee resolution of concern at current Council policy on leases to community associations and neighbourhood resource centres, which offers short term leases based from a commercial valuation;

- notes that to date no community organisations have signed leases on these terms, and recognises that this represents a major potential loss of external funding revenue to the borough, which would add to local resource and improve the condition of community buildings.

This Council therefore supports a full review of current lease arrangements as above, based on the following principles:

- to offer leases of sufficient length to enable organisations to seek appropriate external funding, to be negotiated on an appropriate basis (between five to twenty five years), subject to evidence as to the viability and sustainability of individual organisations and standard terms and conditions to protect the interest of the Council as landlord;
- to leases based on a “peppercorn rent”, in line with previous Council policy;
- to support an appropriate division of responsibility in relation to structural and upkeep issues as between the landlord (the Council) and the tenant, along with an annual review of stock condition.