



Walsall Council

Scrutiny Overview Committee

14 March 2024 at 6:00PM

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

[Livestream Link](#)

Membership:

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

Portfolio Holder(s):

Councillor Bird – Leader of the Council

Quorum:

4 Members

Democratic Services, The Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW
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[Walsall Council Website](#)

**If you are disabled and require help to and from the meeting room,
please contact the person above**

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

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

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

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

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

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

Part 1 – Public Session

- 1. Apologies**
To receive apologies for absence from Members of the Committee.
- 2. Substitutions**
To receive notice of any substitutions for a Member of the Committee for the duration of the meeting.
- 3. Minutes of the previous meeting**
To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 6 February 2024.
(Enclosed Pages 1–4)
- 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. Social Housing – Invitation to social landlords**
To receive brief presentations from the Borough’s social housing landlords.
(Enclosed Page 5)
- 7. Electoral Services – Impact of new legislation**
To receive an overview of the impact of the implication of legislation in accordance with the Elections Act 2022.
(Enclosed Pages 6–9)
- 8. Section 106 Monitoring**
To receive an update on Section 106 Monitoring.
(To Follow)
- 9. Scrutiny Chairs Feedback**
To invite Scrutiny Chair’s present to present their feedback in respect to matters raised at other Scrutiny Overview Committees since the previous meeting.
- 10. Housing Standards Working Group – Terms of Reference**
For the Committee to consider the terms of reference for the housing standards working group.
(Enclosed Pages 10-13)
- 11. Areas of focus – 2023/24**
To consider the areas of focus for the Committee during 2023/24
(Enclosed – Page 14)
- 12. Forward Plans**
To receive the latest Forward Plans in respect of the following:
 - Executive Forward Plans.
 - Black Country Joint Executive Committee.
 - West Midlands Combined Authority Board.*(Enclosed – Page 15 -30)*

13. Recommendations Tracker

To consider progress on recommendations from the previous meeting.

(Enclosed – Pages 31 - 34)

14. Date of next meeting

To note the date of the next meeting will be 18 April 2024

Minutes of the Scrutiny Overview Committee held in the Council Chamber at Walsall Council House

Tuesday, 6 February 2024 at 6.00p.m.

Committee Members present: Councillor J Murray (Chair)
Councillor A Nawaz (Vice-Chair)
Councillor A Hicken
Councillor K Hussain
Councillor T Jukes
Councillor N Latham
Councillor K Sears
Councillor G Singh-Sohal
Councillor V Waters

Portfolio Holder present: Councillor Bird – Leader of the Council
Councillor Andrew – Deputy Leader and Regeneration
Councillor Ali – Customer

Officers present: Judith Greenhalgh – Executive Director of Resources and Transformation
Dave Brown - Executive Director of Economy, Environment and Communities
Shaun Darcy – Director of Finance, Corporate Landlord, Assurance and Section 151
Alison Ives – Head of Planning and Building Control
Stuart Wootton – Finance Planning Manager
Matt Powis – Senior Democratic Services Officer

49. **Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Follows and P Bott.

50. **Substitutions**

Councillor Jukes substituted on behalf of Councillor P Bott.

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

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

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

There were no items to consider in private session.

53. **Minutes**

A copy of the minutes of the meeting held on the 10 December 2023 was submitted [annexed].

Resolved

That, the minutes of the meeting held on 10 December 2023, copies having previously been circulated, be approved as a true and accurate record.

54. **Walsall Borough Local Plan**

The Deputy Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration outlined the report and highlighted that work had commenced to prepare for a new Borough Local Plan. It was noted that the new local plan would replace the Black Country Plan which had formally ceased on 19 October 2022.

The purpose of the Local Plan was to ensure that the Borough had a development plan and form the basis of decisions on planning applications as well as other development matters. In addition, the Plan would set out the site allocations and ensure locally distinctive development.

It was noted that the Local Plan would replace existing development plans which comprised of the Black Country Core Strategy, Site Allocation Document, Walsall Town Centre Area Action Plan and the remaining policies of the Walsall Unitary Development Plan.

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

- Supply of brownfield land available in the Borough was running out, which would only exacerbate existing housing pressures.
- Consultation had commenced for a call for sites, which invited the public to submit their ideas and thoughts to the Council to help shape the future Local Plan.
- There were concerns that the abolition of 'duty to cooperate' would only increase the shortfall of adequate housing supplies.
- The Council had formally commenced work with other neighbouring authorities on cross boundary issues. Recent consultations included Telford Council, Sandwell MBC, Dudley MBC and South Staffordshire Council.

- Engagement and cooperation with neighbouring authorities was critical as the Council had a duty to demonstrate cross boundary planning alignment.
- The Council had remediation strategies in place and was ready to work with developers on housing types and viability proposals.
- The Local Plan would endeavour to include existing plans, strategic policies and other aspects of legislation required.
- It was expected that the Local Plan would be adopted by 2027.
- Planning Services had successfully reduced its planning application backlog and was making progress delivering government targets.

Resolved:

That, the progression and timescales of Walsall Borough Local Plan be noted.

55. Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2027/28 – Supplementary Feedback.

The Leader of the Council introduced the report which provided supplementary budgetary proposals and information since consideration of the item at Committee on 11 December 2023. He confirmed that the Council had a balanced budget for 2024, which would be presented to Council on 22 February 2024 subject to proposed mitigations. He expressed his gratitude for officers in respect of the finance preparations and the work conducted in accordance with the Proud Programme.

The provisional 2024/25 settlement was received on 18 December 2023 which confirmed referendum principles for the increase in Council Tax of 2.99%. In addition, there was a further 2% precept for Social Care authorities in 2024/25. Therefore, it was proposed that an increase of 4.99% was required for 2024/25. The Council was aware of other local authorities facing financial difficulties such as Birmingham City Council. However, it was highlighted that the Council had worked tirelessly to address budget shortfalls.

The net impact of the settlement was a £830k reduction compared to 2024/25 Medium Term Financial Outlook (MTFO) assumptions. The final settlement announced on 5th February 2024 confirmed an additional £3m for social care across adults and children's and a further £0.4m across services grant, top up grant and Public Health Grant. There was a consensus from the Committee that there continued to be concerns on future local government funding and the budget for 2025/26 remained a challenge.

A discussion ensued in respect of the funding for social care. Adequate and sustainable funding for social care was required to address the issues within the sector. There was a commitment that no vulnerable adults or children would be put at risk regardless of funding shortfalls within the sector.

A question was raised regarding historic debt with Integrated Commissioning Board (ICB). In this respect, the Leader of the Council confirmed that the

Council had come to an agreement with the ICB. A new funding model was being developed and would result in a positive outcome for the Council.

Resolved:

- 1. That, the draft revenue budget and capital programme for 2024/25 – 2027/28 as presented on 6 February 2024 be noted.**
- 2. To note and thank the Cabinet and Officers on their work to secure a funding agreement with ICB.**

56. Scrutiny Chair Feedback

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

57. Areas of focus – 2023/24

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

It was noted that the WMCA Update item be delayed until the next municipal year with an informal briefing note circulated on transportation.

Resolved:

That, the areas of focus for 2023-24 as amended and forward plans be noted.

58. Recommendations Tracker

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

Resolved:

That the recommendation tracker be noted.

59. Date of next meeting

It was noted that the date of the meeting would be 14 March 2024.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.01p.m.

Signed:

Date:

14 March 2024

Invitation to Social Housing Landlords

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: Councillor A Andrew – Deputy Leader and Regeneration
Councillor G Ali – Customer

1. Aim

For the Committee to consider representations from local social housing landlords.

2. Recommendations

That, the Members consider the presentations provided by local social housing landlords, ask questions and consider if there are any areas, they wish to make recommendations on or follow up at future meetings.

3. Report detail – know

In accordance with the Committee’s agreed Areas of Focus, Members expressed the wish to holds discussion with local registered providers of social housing.

As part of this theme two local providers will attend the meeting and provide presentations. The attendees are:

Organisation	Representative
WATMOS	Kul Bains – Chief Executive
Walsall Housing Group	Gary Fulford – Group Chief Executive

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14 March 2024

Implementing tranche 2 of Elections Act 2022

Ward(s): All

Portfolios: All

1. Aim

The purpose of this report is to inform the Scrutiny Overview Committee of changes to aspects of electoral administration as part of the implementation of second tranche of Elections Act 2022. It provides a summary of the changes in terms of postal vote applications, postal vote handling and for overseas electors which are all being implemented ahead of elections scheduled for 2 May 2024. Responsibilities for the implementation of legislative changes sit with the Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer and the report details the actions being taken by the Council to fulfil these responsibilities.

2. Recommendations

Scrutiny Overview Committee are recommended to note the changes being introduced by Elections Act 2022 legislation, the responsibilities of the Returning Officer and the Electoral Registration Officer and the actions being taken to deliver these responsibilities.

3. Report detail – know

3.1 The aim of the Elections Act 2022 is to enhance the administration and conduct of elections in the United Kingdom. It introduces several key changes. Prior to elections in May 2023 the introduction of voter identification and changes relating to accessibility were implemented. Ahead of elections in May 2024, changes to postal vote applications, postal vote handling and qualification for overseas electors are being implemented.

3.2 **Online absent voter applications (OAVA).** Since October 2023 electors have been able to apply for a postal or proxy vote online via www.gov.uk. This is the fastest and most secure way for an elector to make an application. In doing this the identity of electors is checked against DWP records in a similar way to when electors register to vote.

3.3 When applying for a postal vote, electors are required to provide their national insurance number and although the simplest and safest way to apply is via the government portal this has not removed the provision of paper application forms. New paper application forms have been designed to reflect the requirement to provide a national insurance number. Application forms that do not include the national insurance number are rejected as they cannot be processed.

- 3.4 The Elections Team are required to input information from paper applications to the government portal to ensure consistency in the processing and to enable the matching with DWP data. This has placed an additional administrative burden on the Election Team the government is continuing to try and improve the portal and the processing time required.
- 3.5 As with the introduction of Voter ID in 2023, the Elections Team have worked with Walsall Connected so they are able to support those electors that require a postal vote to apply via the government portal as this offers the greatest security of their personal data.
- 3.6 The Election Team have been proactive in contacting existing postal and proxy voters regarding the change in requirements in applying for an absent vote and are processing all applications being received.
- 3.7 **Postal vote handling.** Restrictions on the handling of postal votes were introduced in January 2024. These restrictions apply to political campaigners and to individual electors.
- 3.8 A close family member (e.g., Spouse, Civil Partner, Parent, Grandparent, Brother, Sister, Child or Grandchild). If political campaigners do handle the postal vote of a family member, the relationship is declared on the 'return of posting voting documents'. It is a new criminal offence for any political campaigner found in possession of a postal vote that is not theirs or that of a close family member. If found guilty a person could face a fine and / or imprisonment up to two years.
- 3.9 There is now a limit on the number of postal votes an elector can hand in at a polling station. This limit is postal ballot packs for up to five other electors and their own. When handing in postal votes at a polling station the elector is now required to complete a form with their name, address and, where appropriate, the reason for handing in other people's postal votes. This accompanies the postal votes when they are returned to the election's office / count venue. They will also need to complete a declaration that they are not handing in more than the permitted number of postal vote packs and that they are not a political campaigner.
- 3.10 The limits to number of postal vote packs being handling and the requirement to complete a declaration form which apply at polling stations also apply to elector's hand delivering postal votes to the Returning Officer, for example handing in at the Council House / Civic Centre building. Any postal votes left at any council building, mailbox or via internal mail without a completed 'return of postal voting documents' form being completed will be rejected.
- 3.11 Other grounds for the rejection of votes include if it is suspected a person has already handed in the maximum number of postal votes on any previous occasion at the election, if the return of postal voting documents form is not completed with all the required information and if someone attempts to hand in more than five postal ballot packs for other electors. As with current practice, the Electoral Registration Officer (ERO) will write to electors who have had their postal votes rejected, explaining the reason for the rejection.
- 3.12 In addition to the changes regarding postal vote handling, secrecy requirements which apply at polling stations are being extended to postal and proxy votes. This

means it is now an offence to try and find out how someone has voted when completing their postal vote, or to communication how a postal or proxy voter has voted. Anyone found guilty of breaching secrecy requirements could face a fine or imprisonment for up to six months.

- 3.13 Information regarding the changes to postal vote handling will be shared at the Candidates and Agents briefing and has been included in a presentation to all elected members. In addition, this will be included in training for polling station staff.
- 3.14 **Overseas electors.** In January 2024 the 15-year limited on British citizens living overseas being able to vote was abolished. This means any British overseas citizen is able to register to vote in the electoral area they lived in before leaving the UK, providing residency in the UK can be evidence (e.g., previously included in the electoral register documentary evidence for the qualifying address etc.).
- 3.15 Overseas electors can apply to register online via www.gov.uk/registertovote and are encouraged to apply for a postal or proxy vote. Electors living outside of mainland Europe are advised that a postal vote may not arrive in time and to appoint a proxy to vote on their behalf. Overseas electors are only able to vote in UK Parliamentary General Elections.

4. Financial information

The Government has provided all Local Authorities with a grant to cover some of the costs associate with the implementation of Elections Act 2022. There are specific restrictions on how this grant can be used but includes elector engagement and some administrative costs. There are currently no additional financial implications for the council in relation to implementing the second tranche of Elections Act 2022.

5. Reducing Inequalities

The Elections Act 2022 was introduced to the House of Commons in July 2021 and received Royal Assent on April 28, 2022. Its primary objectives are to enhance the security, accessibility, and transparency of elections and campaign in the United Kingdom. Given these primary objectives, implementing the requirements of the legislation align with ensuring all eligible electors have the opportunity to participate in the upcoming elections, reducing any inequalities in the participation of the electoral process.

6. Decide

Scrutiny Overview Committee are asked to note this report regarding the 2nd tranche of the Elections Act 2022 and the actions being taken by the council to implement these requirements.

7. Respond

As part of the ongoing implementation of the Elections Act 2022 the Elections Team under the guidance and direction of the ERO and RO will continually review and revise activity to ensure responsibilities are fulfilled.

8. Review

This report sets out the latest changes being implemented as part of tranche 2 of the Elections Act 2022 and the additional requirements placed on the council in terms of the responsibilities of the ERO and RO. The Election Team will complete a post-election evaluation to identify learning and potential improvements.

Background papers

A previous report on voter reforms being implemented in 2023 was received by Scrutiny Overview Committee in April 2023 [Voter reforms and raising awareness](#).

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14 March 2024

Housing Standards Working Group – Terms of Reference

Ward(s): All

**Portfolios: Councillor A Andrew – Deputy Leader and Regeneration
Councillor G Ali – Customer**

1. Aim

For the Committee to consider the terms of reference for the housing standards working group.

2. Recommendations

That, the Housing Working Group Terms of Reference be approved.

3. Report detail – know

In 2023/24 municipal year, the Committee recommended to commence a housing standards working group in January 2024. Following this recommendation, the Committee resolved the following membership:

- a. Councillor P Bott
- b. Councillor M Follows
- c. Councillor A Hicken
- d. Councillor A Nawaz
- e. Councillor V Waters

The working group has conducted regular meetings on various topics of housing standards since January 2024 such as:

- Housing supply and demand.
- Future homes and construction of new builds.
- Energy efficiency requirements.
- Housing complaints data/feedback from local residents.

It is expected that the group's final report will be presented to the Committee on 18th April 2024.

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Scrutiny Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Housing Standards Working Group

Initiation Document

Working Group Name:	Housing Standards Working Group
Committee:	Scrutiny Overview Committee
Municipal Year:	2023/24
Chair:	Councillor Hicken
Lead Officers:	Elise Hopkins (Director, Customer Engagement) Appollo Fonka (Strategic Housing and Standards Leas) Nikki Gough (Democratic Services Officer)
Membership	Councillors A. Nawaz, V. Waters, P. Bott, A. Hicken, Follows
Co-opted Members	Not specified

1. Context

- 1.1. During the first round of Overview and Scrutiny meetings, Housing Standards was identified as a potential working group topic. It was agreed that this Working Group would commence in January 2024.
- 1.2. Where people live impacts health, educational achievements, and life chances in general. Housing is a key determinant of health; poor quality housing being intrinsically linked with poor health. House condition may either cause ill health or make it worse. Addressing defect causes within homes can improve occupants' health and lower the costs to the health service through fewer GP visits, fewer emergency admissions to hospital and fewer accidents that then require expensive and intensive rehabilitation.
- 1.3. Poor housing affects children particularly severely, not just in childhood but throughout their life. Guaranteeing all children, a decent quality home that their family can afford would transform lives for decades to come.
- 1.4. People should all be able to afford to rent or buy a home that meets their needs, whatever their income. Housing costs shouldn't stop people buying life's essentials, or stand in the way of getting a job or higher pay.
- 1.5. All homes should be in places of security and comfort, where people can relax free from risks and with the right support in place. Homes should support people's health and wellbeing, not make it worse.
- 1.6. Homes must be comfortable to live in, cheap to heat, and no longer reliant on burning expensive fuels for energy.
- 1.7. Investment in housing, and the dynamics of the housing market itself, have wide-ranging impacts on growth, jobs, skills, productivity and financial stability at a local and national level. Our housing strategy must actively support our objectives for local growth and stability.

2. Objectives

2.1 To determine how Walsall Council can design and deliver a long-term plan to meet the following themes, as set out in the National Housing Federation's report – 'Why we need a long-term plan for housing'.

1. Every child should live in a good quality, secure home with enough space to play and learn.
2. Everyone lives in a home they can afford, and that makes work pay.
3. Everyone lives in healthy and safe home, which meets their needs.
4. Everyone lives in a warm and energy efficient home.
5. Housing underpins local growth and economic stability.

3. Scope

In order to review the Borough's readiness to meet the themes outlined in the plan the working group will consider the following:

- 'Why we need a long-term plan for housing' - National Housing Federation's report.
- Stock Condition Survey 2019.
- Walsall Council Housing Strategy.
- Housing availability and need.
- Understanding the responsibility of tenants and landlords.
- Feedback from local residents.

In addition to the above we will also consider the readiness of other providers such as:

- Social Housing providers.
- Private Landlords.
- Housing of Multiple Occupation providers.

4. Equalities Implications

- 4.1. The Equality Act 2010 protects children, young people and adults against discrimination, harassment and victimisation in relation to housing, education, clubs, the provision of services (including healthcare) and work.
- 4.2. The public sector equality duty in Section 149 of the Equality Act requires public bodies, including local authorities and healthcare providers, to take active steps to eliminate discrimination and to do positive things to promote equality.

5. Who else will contribute?

- 5.1 Walsall Housing Group, Green Square Accord, Head of Regeneration, Cabinet Members National Housing Federation, National/local landlord forums. Feedback from local residents.

6. Timescale and Reporting Schedule

- 6.1. The following dates are based upon the need for the working group to be completed in the same municipal year:
 - a. Terms of Reference to be approved by Overview Scrutiny Committee – 6 February 2024
 - b. Draft report to be considered by Working Group – Early April 2024
 - c. Final report to be considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee – 18 April 2024
- 6.2. A detailed timetable of meetings and activities can be found at Appendix A.

7. Risk Factors

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

Risk	Likelihood	Mitigation
Short timescale to complete work.	Medium	Realistic expectations of what can be achieved. Clearly defined objectives and timetable.
Social Landlords are not able to engage within timescale.	Medium	Invite Partners as soon as possible, allow virtual attendance.
Objectives of the Group are broad within the timescales available.	Medium	Members complete research and information gathering outside of meeting – report back at meetings.

Appendix A Timetable

Date at 5pm.	Activity
23 rd January	Initial meeting – Terms of Reference agreed.
6 th February	Terms of Reference presented to Scrutiny Overview Committee.
13 th February	Information and evidence gathering by Working Group.
26 th February	Information and evidence gathering by Working Group.
12 th March	Information and evidence gathering by Working Group.
21 st March	Information and evidence gathering by Working Group.
8 th April	Draft conclusions and recommendations agreed by Group.
18 th April	Present final report and recommendations to Scrutiny Overview Committee.

Scrutiny Overview Committee – Area of Focus – 2023-24

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



FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

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

4 MARCH 2024

FORWARD PLAN

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

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

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

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

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

- (1) A key decision is:
 - (i) any decision in relation to an executive function which results in the Council incurring expenditure which is, or the making of savings which are, significant, having regard to the Council’s budget for the service or function to which the decision relates or
 - (ii) any decision that is likely to have significant impact on two or more wards within the borough.
- (2) The threshold for “significant” expenditure/savings is £500,000.
- (3) A decision taker may only make a key decision in accordance with the requirements of the Executive Procedure Rules set out in Part 4 of this Constitution.

**FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS
APRIL 2024 TO JULY 2024 (04.03.2024)**

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
20/24 (4.3.24)	<p>Walsall Proud Programme: Next Stages of Transformation</p> <p>This report details the key outcomes, achievements and progress of the Council's Proud transformation journey and outlines the approach to service transformation going forward.</p>	Cabinet Non-key decision	Caroline Brom Caroline.Brom@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	20 March 2024
18/24 (4.3.24)	<p>Public Sector Equality Duty:</p> <p>To note the Public Sector Equality Duty annual report which will be published in March 2024 in accordance with our obligations with the Equality Act 2010.</p>	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Karen Griffiths Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	20 March 2024
7/24 (5.2.24)	<p>Darlaston Long Term Plan for Towns:</p> <p>To authorise the Executive Director for Resources and Transformation, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration, to act as</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Philippa Venables Philippa.Venables@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	20 March 2024

	Accountable Body for the Darlaston Long Term Plan for Towns.					
8/24 (5.2.24)	Fixed Penalty Notices: Cabinet to consider law changes allowing the increase of penalties for litter, fly tipping and duty of care and approving the new penalty limits in Walsall.	Cabinet Key Decision	David Elrington David.Elrington@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	20 March 2024
9/24 (5.2.24)	West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2024/25: To approve the West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2024/25.	Cabinet Key Decision	Matt Crowton Matt.Crowton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	20 March 2024
2/24 (8.1.24)	Acquisition of a Strategic Town Centre Development Site: To approve the acquisition of a strategic town centre development site. <i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>	Cabinet Key Decision	Nick Ford Nick.Ford@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	20 March 2024
15/24 (5.2.24)	Acquisition of a Town Centre Property for Strategic Regeneration: To approve the acquisition of a town centre property for strategic development.	Cabinet Key Decision	Nick Ford Nick.Ford@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	20 March 2024

	<i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>					
11/24 (5.2.24)	<p>Connected Gateway:</p> <p>To approve delegations to enable continued delivery of the external grant funded programmes/ projects in line with the agreed governance and assurance framework.</p> <p><i>This will include a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i></p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Simon Tranter Simon.Tranter@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	20 March 2024
14/24 (5.2.24)	<p>Healthy Levelling Up Partnership:</p> <p>To agree to the Healthy LUP proposal and agree delegations to bring forward proposals for funding under the scheme.</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Simon Tranter Simon.Tranter@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	20 March 2024
17/24 (4.3.24)	<p>Strategic Acquisition in Pheasey:</p> <p>To approve the use of Compulsory Purchase powers to bring forward the development of a derelict site.</p> <p><i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i></p>	Cabinet Non-key decision	Nick Ford Nick.Ford@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	20 March 2024
16/24 (14.02.24)	<p>Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy:</p> <p>To adopt a new strategy and establish a council led steering group to</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	Jaki Brunton-Douglas Jaki.Brunton-Douglas@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	20 March 2024

	undertake ongoing monitoring and annual update.		Black Country PPOSS - Overarching Strategic Framework Walsall PPOSS - Assessment Report			
65/23 (4.12.23)	Contract for Multiple Recyclable Materials: To award off-take and processing contracts for multiple recyclable materials. <i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>	Cabinet Key Decision	Katie Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk Alan Bowley Alan.Bowley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Murphy	20 March 2024
6/24 (8.1.24)	Alternative Provision Contract: To approve the award contracts for the provision of Alternative Education. <i>This will include a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>	Cabinet Key Decision	Laura Wood Laura.Wood@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	20 March 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 – High Needs Block to schools in Walsall for the 2024/25 financial year.	Cabinet Key Decision	Richard Walley Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk	Schools Forum, Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	20 March 2024

59/23 (6.11.23)	Early Years Funding Formula 2024/25: 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.	Cabinet Key Decision	Richard Walley Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk	Schools Forum, Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	20 March 2024
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	20 March 2024
14/23 (6.2.23)	Growth Funding for Schools: To enable the Local Authority to fulfil its duty to secure sufficient primary and secondary school places, through the adoption of a policy for the application of revenue funding for school growth.	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services, Schools Forum	Cllr M. Statham	20 March 2024
66/23 (4.12.23)	Waste Management Strategy Update - Fryers Road Household Waste Recycling Centre redevelopment (HWRC): That Cabinet approve the pre-tender budget for the redevelopment of a larger Fryers Road HWRC and agree to use the Pagabo framework (design and build stages) for the procurement of Fryers Road HWRC.	Cabinet Key Decision	Katie Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk Stephen Johnson Stephen.Johnson@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew Cllr Murphy	17 April 2024

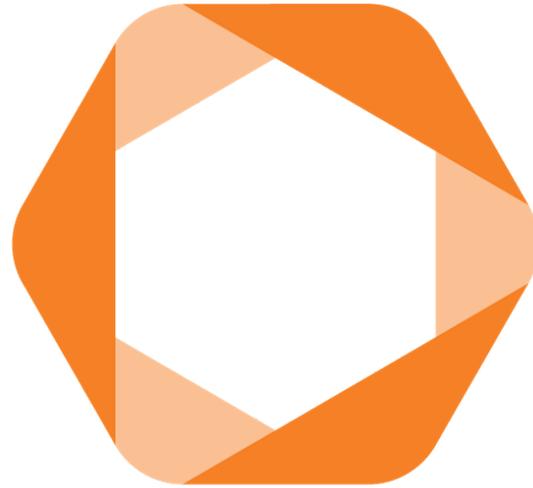
67/23 (4.12.23)	Council Plan 2022/25 – Q3 23/24: To note the Quarter 3 2023/24 (outturn) performance against the Markers of Success in the Council Plan 2022/25.	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Elizabeth Connolly Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	17 April 2024
20/24 (4.3.24)	Protective Characteristics for Care Leavers: To agree that ‘care experience’ be treated as if it were a Protected Characteristic under the Equalities Act 2010, so that decisions on future services and policies made and adopted by the council consider the impact on people with care experience.	Cabinet Key Decision	Zoe Morgan Zoe.Morgan@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Elson	17 April 2024
13/24 (5.2.24)	Multifunctional Devices leasing contract: To consider the award of a 5-year contract for the leasing of multifunctional devices (MFDs) and production print devices. <i>This will include a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>	Cabinet Key Decision	Sharon Worrall Sharon.Worrall@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Ferguson	17 April 2024
19/24 (4.3.24)	Compact Sweeper Hire Contract: Award of contract for 5 hired compact sweepers (plus a spare) for 6 years. Street Cleaning – Clean & Green.	Cabinet Key Decision	Den Edwards Den.Edwards@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services	Cllr Murphy	17 April 2024

	<i>This will include a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>					
21/24 (4.3.24)	Healthwatch Contract Extension: For Cabinet approval to extend the current contractual arrangements for Healthwatch under Reg 72 to allow for full design, tendering and implementation.	Cabinet Key Decision	Grace Charles Grace.Charles@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Pedley	17 April 2024
10/24 (5.2.24)	Surveillance and Access to Communications Data: To review the authority's performance as regards directed surveillance and to approve an updated policy for surveillance and the interception of communications data.	Cabinet Key Decision	David Elrington David.Elrington@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	17 April 2024
12/24 (5.2.24)	Walsall Safer Streets – Palfrey Big Local and General Update: To cover the work of Palfrey Big Local, their resident led approach and the outcomes they have achieved.	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Paul Gordon Paul.Gordon@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services Palfrey Big Local	Cllr Perry	17 April 2024
57/23 (6.11.23)	Walsall Net-Zero 2041 Climate Strategy: To approve the Walsall Net-Zero 2041 Strategy.	Cabinet Key Decision	Katie Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	July 2024

Black Country Executive Joint Committee
Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Published up to June 2024

Date Created	Key Decision	Contact Officer	Main consultee	Date of meeting
	No decisions scheduled.			



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:
<p>WMCA Financial Monitoring Report - March 2024 To update on the latest financial position</p>	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Councillor Bob Sleigh Deputy Mayor	Beverly Sullivan, Sally Truman Financial Planning and Coordination Manager, Lead Financial Planning Accountant
<p>Investment Zone Gateway Ratification / Investment & Delivery Plan To consider updates on Gateway Ratification and the Investment & Delivery Plan.</p>	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Councillor Stephen Simkins Portfolio Lead for Economy & Innovation	Steve Bowyer Partnerships and Engagement Strategic Lead
<p>Investment Zone Finance & Funding Plan (including Business Rates Retention Memorandum of Understanding) To approve the Finance & Funding Plan and Business Rates Retention memorandum of understanding.</p>	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Councillor Stephen Simkins Portfolio Lead for Economy & Innovation	Carl Pearson Head of Major Funding
<p>Single Settlement Memorandum of Understanding To consider the ratification of the Single Settlement Memorandum of Understanding.</p>	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Councillor Sharon Thompson Portfolio Lead for Levelling Up / Devolution	Jonathan Gibson Head of Policy & Public Affairs
<p>Black Country Innovative Manufacturing Organisation To consider the latest BCIMO update.</p>	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Councillor Bob Sleigh Portfolio Lead for Finance	Linda Horne Executive Director of Finance & Business Hub

<p>Skills Funding To agree delegations for the commissioning of skills funding.</p>	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Councillor George Duggins Portfolio Lead for Skills & Productivity	Dr. Fiona Aldridge Head of Insight & Intelligence
<p>Cycle Hire Scheme Update To endorse the additional funding requirements to operate the scheme to October 2025.</p>	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Portfolio Lead for Transport	Andrew Thrupp Head of Operational Assets
<p>Bus Service Improvement Plan Additional Funding Allocation To consider additional funding received in respect of BSIP.</p>	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Portfolio Lead for Transport	Adam Lane, Jon Hayes Consultant SPM, Head of Bus
<p>Request by Warwick District Council to become a Non-Constituent Authority of WMCA To consider the request submitted by Warwick District Council that it should be granted equivalent status as the non-constituent councils with the right to be represented on the WMCA Board and other boards.</p>	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open		Julia Cleary Head of Corporate Support & Governance
<p>Arrangements for Mayoral Question Time with MPs To agree the arrangements for mayoral question time sessions with the region's MPs.</p>	WMCA Board 15 March 2024	Open	Andy Street Mayor of the West Midlands	Jonathan Gibson Head of Policy & Public Affairs
<p>Penalty Fares for Midland Metro Following public consultation, to agree a new penalty fare amount and to consider moving to a proposed two-tier penalty structure, where the fee amount will reduce for early payment.</p>	WMCA Board 14 June 2024	Open	Councillor Mike Bird Portfolio Lead for Transport	Chris Hopkinson Owner Representative - West Midlands Metro

<p>Private Sector Representation To consider retaining existing private sector representation on WMCA boards until such time as the future Single Settlement governance structure is known.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 14 June 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Stephen Simkins Portfolio Lead for Economy & Innovation</p>	<p>James Hughes Member Relationship Manager</p>
<p>Bus Options Report To consider options for the future delivery of the region's bus network.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 19 July 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Mike Bird Portfolio Lead for Transport</p>	<p>Steven Hayes Head of Network Transformation</p>
<p>Key Route Network Review 2023/24 To approve the amended Key Route Network within the WMCA area.</p>	<p>WMCA Board 19 July 2024</p>	<p>Open</p>	<p>Councillor Mike Bird Portfolio Lead for Transport</p>	<p>Rachel Ing Corridor Manager</p>

The Forward Plan

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

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

What is a key decision?

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

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

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

The forward plan also provides notice of when the WMCA may decide to exclude the press and public during consideration of a particular matter due to the potential for disclosure of confidential or exempt information. The grounds upon which local authorities can exclude the press and public are specified by law and details of the exempt categories are available on request from the Governance Services team (governance.services@wmca.org.uk).

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

Scrutiny Overview Committee – Recommendation Tracker (23/24)

Committee Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Action/Recommendation	Officer responsible	Status	Target Completion Date	Notes
12 December 2022	Customer Engagement	<p>That data be shared with Members regarding:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. A detailed breakdown on the time it takes calls to be answered across the Council.</p>	Elise Hopkins	In progress	January 2024	This item has been delayed due to progress on a new customer demand dashboard
28 th September 2023	West Midlands Police – Update on Policing within Walsall	<p>That Cabinet are requested to:</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">a. Ensure Walsall Council works with West Midlands Police to improve road safety and reduce road harm in the Borough.</p> <p style="padding-left: 40px;">b. Consider the feasibility of co-locating the Council's community protection teams alongside West Midlands Police to increase co-operative working.</p>	Democratic Services	Completed	13 December 2023 – Cabinet	Awaiting response back to Scrutiny.

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

9 November 2023	Local Authority Control of Housing Waiting List	A discussion ensued on the rights of tenants in respect of disrepair and notice of repossession. It was agreed for information on this matter to be disseminated to all Councillors.	Elise Hopkins	Completed	Circulated to Members of the Working Group on 23 January 2024	
11 December 2023	Budget and Capital Programme Feedback	<p>A number of questions were raised in respect of discussions from the Budget and Capital Programme (Forecast Revenue & Capital Outturn):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renovation of Park Tennis Courts • One Palfrey Big Local • Social Housing Decarbonisation Scheme Reduction 	Stuart Wootton	Completed	Circulated on 20 December 2023	
	Budget and Capital Programme Feedback	A breakdown of temporary accommodation numbers would be circulated to the Committee.	Elise Hopkins	In progress	TBC	

	Budget and Capital Programme Feedback	Officers confirmed that a study would be carried out on whether it would be feasible for the Council to incentivise one-off annual Council Tax payments. This would be subject to whether the Council achieved better investment returns and cashflow as a result.	Shaun Darcy	In progress	TBC	
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