

## **Cabinet – December 2022**

### **We Are Walsall 2040 Engagement feedback**

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Councillors Gary Perry & Councillor Tim Wilson
<b>Related portfolios:</b>	All
<b>Service:</b>	Policy & Strategy Unit
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Forward plan:</b>	Yes

#### **1. Aim**

- 1.1 To report engagement feedback from residents, voluntary and community groups and the business community as part of We are Walsall 2040 engagement to Cabinet

#### **2. Summary**

- 2.1 A range of engagement activities were carried out with residents, businesses, community groups, schools and partners throughout June-November 2022. In total over 8k people have been consulted through the We are Walsall engagement programme and the insight has helped us consider the key priorities to inform the development of the 2040 borough plan.
- 2.2 The presentation alongside this report outlines the findings from key activities within the summer of engagement. Residents, communities and businesses have highlighted their current and future priorities and concerns on a range of issues.
- 2.3 In general the engagement feedback focusses on the need to continue to create a thriving borough where people feel safe, with clean green streets and spaces, good jobs and leisure opportunities for all. Engagement highlights the need for us to continue with our key areas of focus; our plans to regenerate, strengthen partnership working and communicate our ambition to collectively foster a sense of pride.

#### **3. Recommendations**

- 3.1. That Cabinet note the findings from various engagement activities carried out throughout June-November 2022 to inform the We are Walsall 2040 borough plan.
- 3.2. That Cabinet note existing and planned activities that will address priorities and concerns raised through We are Walsall 2040 engagement.

3.3. Cabinet are asked to note the timescales for development of the borough plan through to ratification at Council June 2023

#### **4. Report detail - know**

##### ***Context***

4.1 A paper was taken to Cabinet in December 2021 outlining our plans to work with partners to develop a borough plan for 2040 (The borough plan-‘Our Walsall Story’) that sets out the long-term ambition for Walsall based on our residents, businesses and partners views to be achieved by 2040.

4.2 The shared Borough Plan will provide a framework for future collaboration across all communities and partners with a shared ambition, priorities and outcomes to create a borough that works for everyone. It will be a key strategic arch stone for future collaboration, signalling intent and ambition of place to encourage regional and national partnership and investment.

4.3 Insight work was commissioned to look across various data and needs assessments (including Joint Strategic Needs Assessment and partner data) to understand our priorities, our customer needs, our demographics and to understand further the challenges and opportunities for the future. This insight and engagement will be used to develop the focus of the borough plan to ensure we can work towards a Walsall where all can thrive in 2040.

4.4 To inform the development of the plan a programme of engagement was designed to comprehensively capture a breadth of real voices from residents, community groups, businesses and partners. This included commissioning a range of engagement activities using qualitative and quantitative methods to ensure we were as open to as many views as possible over the summer and autumn. Methods used include:

- Postal survey to 10k homes,
- Online survey,
- Commissioned focus groups ,
- Parents and expectant parents focus group,
- Commissioned programme of activity through the voluntary community sector,
- Postcards seeking views in libraries, leisure centres and cultural venues across Walsall,
- Schools engagement activities,
- Business surveys and business stakeholder discussions
- Surveys to parents of HAF activities over spring half-term,
- Attendance at events such as Pride, Walsall jobs expo, WHG summer fete.

4.5 Thousands of data points and engagement responses have been analysed over recent weeks to create a clear picture of emerging views, priorities and needs for Walsall 2040. A presentation has been created alongside this report outlining the main findings from some of the key engagement activities and events. Throughout the presentation Cabinet will hear a range of views on Walsall as a place, areas

for improvement and key priorities for 2040. Alongside this a summary of some key activities and areas of focus in development or underway that will help already address the priorities including Economic strategy, Town Centre Masterplan, Street Scene Strategy development...

- 4.6 There is clear alignment in the findings across and between all the activities undertaken with resident views focussed on a few key priorities for maintenance and improvement that centre on ensuring they can live quality lives in a borough that is thriving.
- 4.7 A key priority for residents and communities is to feel safe in towns, neighbourhoods and streets. The Council and partners are already working to revitalise the Safer Walsall Partnership, increase reassurance messaging and enforcement and work to create a community safety partnership ready for 2040.
- 4.8 We have heard the clear desire from residents and communities to focus on our regeneration ambitions to revamp and revitalise town centres and create a draw for businesses and leisure and retail opportunities. This aligns with our existing ambitions and key areas of focus with respect to regeneration, our new economic strategy and Town Centre Master plan.
- 4.9 Our data and insight shows us that parks and green spaces usage remains high post-covid. Our engagement programme reinforces the importance that residents put on ensuring the borough retains its fantastic parks and green spaces and that the borough remains clean and green. Furthermore residents have told us they want to do more and for Council and partners to do more to help reduce environmental impact of waste and address the challenges around Climate change.
- 4.10 The engagement and insight is currently being assessed and priorities are in development to inform the borough plan for 2040. A draft of the plan will be presented to Cabinet and Council in February 2023, following which the public and partners will be formally consulted throughout March and April on the plan. The final plan will be presented to Council in June 2023 for ratification and a 3-5 year delivery plan will be created to ensure delivery and monitored by the Walsall Proud Partnership. Regular updates will be provided to Cabinet.

### ***Risk management***

- 4.11. The key risk associated with We are Walsall 2040 is that the plan is not fit for purpose leading to lack of buy-in from key partners and the public and failure to impact on delivering much needed ambition for the borough.
- 4.12. The breadth and scale of engagement activities carried out between June-November 2022 - the thousands of people consulted ensure that the strategy is built on a strong foundation of c-produced insight, based on need and public priorities.
- 4.13. Partners will be presented with the engagement findings and involved in drafting the borough plan to ensure wider partner buy-in and support and creation of a collective vision and ambition.

### ***Financial implications***

- 4.14. There are no specific financial implications of this report.

### ***Legal implications***

- 4.15. There are no direct legal implications from this report.

### ***Procurement Implications/Social Value***

- 4.16. There are no direct procurement implications from this report.

### ***Property implications***

- 4.17. There are no direct property implications from this report.

### ***Health and wellbeing implications***

- 4.18. Health and wellbeing has been highlighted as a key priority for residents and many community groups and public have expressed a desire in the engagement feedback to do more to manage their own and their communities health.
- 4.19. The 2040 borough plan will align with the new Health & Wellbeing Strategy and work is already underway to embed health within the 2040 delivery plan and take a health in all policies approach.

### ***Staffing implications***

- 4.20. There are no direct staffing implications from this report.

### ***Reducing Inequalities***

- 4.21. The We are Walsall 2040 borough plan will consider addressing inequalities as a key focus to ensure we can meet the ask of residents to create a borough that thrives.

### ***Climate Change***

- 4.22. Resident feedback from the Postal and online survey has highlighted that 6 in 10 are concerned about climate change and the impacts for their future. Nine in ten residents in both the postal and online surveys have indicated that they want the Council to work with partners in the borough to look at what else we can do to mitigate the impact of climate change. This will therefore be a key area of focus for the 2040 borough plan.

### ***Consultation***

- 4.23. The 2040 plan is based on extensive engagement that was carried out and this report and presentation provides an overview of the engagement feedback received to inform the strategy development.

4.24. The draft borough plan will be approved for consultation by Cabinet and Council and open for consultation formally throughout March and April 2023.

## 5. **Decide**

This is an opportunity for Cabinet to reflect on the breadth of engagement carried out during June-November 2022 and understand the concerns, hopes and priorities of residents, businesses and community groups in shaping our collective ambitions for the borough for 2040.

## 6. **Respond**

Following consideration of engagement feedback and insight a strategy is in development to outline the 2040 borough ambitions. The Council is already undertaking programmes and activities that directly address the priorities and concerns identified by the public through the 2040 conversations. Work will continue to develop a clear 2-5 year delivery plan to ensure that we achieve key milestones and staging posts on our journey towards the 2040 ambitions.

## 7. **Review**

Cabinet will have an opportunity to reflect and consider the draft borough plan in February 2023 and to consider and agree the delivery plan.

Quarterly updates will be provided to the Walsall Proud Partnership and through portfolio holders to ensure performance against the borough plan 2040 is on track.

**Background papers** – [Cabinet December 2021 The borough plan-'Our Walsall Story'](#)

### **Annexes:**

Appendix 1 Presentation 'We are Walsall 2040 Engagement feedback'

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Councillor Mike Bird

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5 December 2022

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