

Cabinet – 29 October 2014

Property Services – Restructure and Related Contract Procurement

Portfolio: Councillor M Nazir - Regeneration

Related portfolios: ALL

Service: Property Services

Wards: ALL

Key decision: YES

Forward plan: NO

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for the transformation of the Property Services teams to meet the long term ambitions of The Council's Members, citizens, partners and customers to deliver:
- i. a strategic asset management function;
 - ii. an efficient lifecycle function for; building repair, maintenance and contract management that fulfils the Council's statutory obligations through a single contract incorporating a service level agreement (the "Contract") with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council ("SMBC") under which the Council will be able to place works and services orders through two framework agreements ("Framework Agreements") SMBC have set up to appoint two single supplier contractors (the "Contractors"); and
 - iii. significant revenue cost efficiencies throughout and beyond the transformation programme and allowing members and Senior Management to focus budgets on frontline services.
- 1.2 In accordance with the Council's Contract Rules, a Cabinet resolution is required to award a contract where the anticipated value will exceed £500,000. It is expected that the value of the Contract which SMBC will deliver through the Framework Agreements with the Contractors will exceed this value.

2 Recommendations

Note: The decision will be made in the private session following consideration of the confidential information.

The recommendations are:

- 2.1 That Cabinet agrees to the Council entering into the Contract with Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) to host and manage building and mechanical and electrical repair services and works for the Council through the Framework Agreements with Graham's FM (John Graham Holdings Ltd) and Dodd Group (Midlands) Ltd, with the Contract to be tailored to meet the requirements of the Council for a period of three years, unless the arrangement is terminated within this time, with an anticipated annual spend of £5-10m.
- 2.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Regeneration to sign or authorise the sealing of the single Contract for the management and delivery of building related services and work orders.
- 2.4 That Cabinet approve the market testing of longer term procurement options for all Council building related services, including management of the commercial/retail investment estate.
- 2.4 That Cabinet acknowledge the restructure of the Council's Property Services team to deliver:
 - i. A strategic asset management team to advise on acquisitions, disposal and development opportunities;
 - ii. A programme & commissioning team to provide customer/client facing property advisory, support; and
 - iii. A contract and performance monitoring team to manage the lifecycle maintenance of the assets through the Contract with SMBC and other related supply chain contracts.

To achieve revenue savings of £1,150k per annum to contribute to the £85m savings need over the next four years. This includes £316k procurement savings arising from the Contract and £834k from the restructure of the Council's Property Services.

- 2.5 To note this will include the removal of the Head of Property Services post, subject to approval at Personnel Committee, in addition to the previous removal of the Assistant Director of Regeneration post for oversight of the Council's Property Services which is part of a continuing restructure of management posts within the Regeneration directorate.

3. Report detail

- 3.1 A Paper was submitted to 2nd July Cabinet (see Cabinet Report attached at Appendix 2) to open negotiations to join SMBC's Contract to provide building maintenance services and for the Executive Director for Regeneration to report back to Cabinet on the outcome of these negotiations.

- 3.2 For a number of years the Council's Property Services has relied on a variety of ad-hoc, termed and single tender contracts to meet the demands of their customers for capital projects, maintenance and repairs. As the portfolio has reduced and buildings services have been outsourced, the retained team now needs to transform to support operational service areas in the commissioning of building services with the creation of a separate team to monitor the performance of the supply chain for quality and value.
- 3.3 The structures proposed within the attached paper fully reflect the need to change to meet the operational demands for each directorate and provide robust performance, cost and contract monitoring of the outsourced Property Services.
- 3.4 The Contract is an immediately available compliant route for service delivery, removing the current high level of procurement activity and cost from the building services and project management teams. The new Contract will enable the retained teams to refocus on customer service and project management.
- 3.5 The potential volume of savings identified by the Contract has been calculated at an average of 22%. This is anticipated to achieve in excess of £316k revenue savings in 2015/16 and beyond (against an already reduced budget). Clearly all savings are dependent on the size of the retained estate and severity of work required.
- 3.6 By transforming the retained Property Services team to become a customer focused, commissioning service with a focus on service outcomes, this will deliver a measurable improvement in performance and value for money. The resultant restructure will meet the required level of budget savings for 2015/16 and beyond.
- 3.7 A full range of options were explored to test the viability of each Property Services area, independently, collectively, as a shared service on outsourced models.

The retained teams are:

- i. **Strategic Asset Management** - to advise on acquisitions, disposal and development opportunities;
- ii. **Integrated Facilities Management** providing:
 - (a) **Programme & Commissioning**
to provide customer/client facing property advisory, support
 - (b) **Commercial Management**
to provide contract and performance monitoring;
 - (c) **Energy Management**; and

(d) **Soft FM services**

to provide cleaning, caretaking and curator services. These remain unaffected by this report and related business case.

4. Council Priorities

- 4.1 A key aim of this report is to rationalise the supply chain to reduce management time and drive down costs. The recommendations of this report meet the Council's aim to manage available resources responsibly for the benefit of our community and deliver best value.
- 4.2 Customers and Property Services staff will have much more transparency and be able to actively challenge through the Council specifications to demand the required levels of service. Council officers will be empowered to challenge the self certification process within the supply chain to demonstrate best value.
- 4.3 The initiatives identified within this report will contribute to the Council's ongoing budgetary requirements.
- 4.4 In September 2012 the Council adopted the Marmot Objectives as objectives for improving Health and Wellbeing and reducing inequalities for the people of Walsall. These objectives have provided the framework for the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the Health and Wellbeing Strategy, the Sustainable Communities Strategy, and "The Walsall Plan". The Contract will include key performance indicators to measure the Contractors' compliance with the Walsall Plan in particular the level of spend with local suppliers, appointment of staff and offer of apprenticeships to local citizens.

5. Risk Management

- 5.1 There are currently over 150 contracts/suppliers with open orders within Property for building services. With so many contractors there is a high risk that the Council is not achieving value for money due to the high level of administration, operational management costs and the fragmentation of purchasing power.
- 5.2 With the volume of small repetitive orders there is a high risk of disaggregation of work and a delay in responding to and meeting customer deadlines.
- 5.3 If agreement is not reached with SMBC for the Contract, Property Services may not be able to deliver the committed savings.

6. Financial implications

- 6.1 The savings from the Contract are directly linked to the volume of expenditure on reactive and planned maintenance. The annual budget for maintenance will reduce in direct relationship to the size of the retained estate. The potential savings from this Contract have been established from the 2013/14

expenditure and these indicate an average saving of 22% which, if applied to the current estate will save in excess of £315k in 2015/16.

- 6.2 During the mobilisation of this Contract, expected to be January – March 2015, the Property Services team will be restructured to meet the commissioning and contract monitoring requirement sought from this Contract.

The savings identified from this restructure have been set out in the attached report and savings matrix, but will total £834k in 2015/16.

7. Legal Implications

- 7.1 All contractual arrangements must comply with the Public Contracts Regulations 2006 (as amended) and the Council's Contract Rules.
- 7.2 Once the approval being sought under this report is given, Legal Services will provide Property Services with comments about the principal terms of the proposed Contract in conjunction with the Framework Agreements and negotiate a Contract which is fit for the Council's needs.
- 7.3 By entering into the Contract, the Council would be able to place building services and mechanical and electrical repair works orders through established Frameworks Agreements which are OJEU compliant.

8. Property Implications

There are no direct asset implications as a result of this business case. However the implementation of recommendations from this report may impact on future property demands.

9. Health and Wellbeing Implications

None identified and or anticipated

10. Staffing Implications

- 10.1 The Contract will radically change the procurement, commissioning and contract management processes with the current Facilities Management and Design and Project Management teams. By joining this Contract there is the opportunity to radically change the operational management of these teams and by association the whole structure of the Property Services Division. The full implications of this restructure will be set out in the Property Services Restructure Business Case to be presented at JNCC on 4th November and for staff consultation thereafter.

11. Equality implications

The commissioning and procurement provided by Solihull MBC meets the requirements of the Equality Act and will include contract conditions which:

- Prohibit the contractor from unlawfully discriminating under the Equality Act
- Require them to take all reasonable steps to ensure that staff, suppliers and subcontractors meet their obligations under the Equality Act.

The SMBC Business Charter for Social Responsibility template is attached at **Appendix 1**.

12. Consultation

12.1 Consultation has been carried out with all Directorates, Executive Team and key customers. It is widely acknowledged there needs to be a significant improvement in the way building service contracts are procured and assets managed.

12.2 Full consultation with Unions all Council staff impacted will be carried out following approval of this report. Consultation will commence w/c 4th November 2014.

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29th October 2014



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29th October 2014

Background Papers

**SMBC Business Charter for Social Responsibility
template
Cabinet Paper 2nd July
Walsall Plan**

**Appendix 1
Appendix 2
Appendix 3**



Business Charter for Social Responsibility

This Charter describes the spirit, style and behaviours we will adopt and will expect our partners/suppliers to adopt as we jointly work together in an open, positive and honest manner to maximise the level of customer satisfaction and value.

Solihull's business community has a corporate and social responsibility to:

- Ensure the future prosperity of Solihull, its businesses and all its citizens
- Value and respect the needs and aspirations of the diverse communities in Solihull
- Enhance social opportunity and cohesion in a dynamic and changing business environment
- Help to develop improvements for disadvantaged neighbourhoods and people
- Create and maintain a sustainable, clean, safe and attractive environment for living, work and leisure
- Recognise and promote Solihull's diversity as a major asset

Businesses will be encouraged to sign up to the Charter and by sharing in a committed approach to these responsibilities, they will achieve economic and staff quality/retention benefits, and enhanced reputation in the community.

Solihull has issued a Concordat for Small and Medium-sized Enterprises, which is a statement of principles to encourage effective trade between Solihull and small businesses. ([Concordat](#)) The Concordat and Charter are complementary.

Solihull will make appropriate use of its legal powers including the power to promote the economic, social and environmental well being of our community. All tender processes and contract awards will comply with EU Public Procurement Directives and the principles of non-discrimination, equal treatment and transparency and our duties under UK law.

Jointly, we will encourage a diverse and competitive supply market, including small firms, social enterprises, ethnic minority businesses and voluntary and community sector suppliers.

Jointly, we are committed to consider the role of these suppliers in delivering specialist elements of larger contracts and framework agreements. Solihull will work with prime contractors – both at tender stage and during the life of a contract – to jointly establish the contribution that small firms, ethnic minority businesses, social enterprises and third sector suppliers can play in the supply chain. Solihull provides details of its prime contractors on its website.

Business Charter for Social Responsibility

Areas of Focus & Measures of Progress

Whilst the Charter is not a legal document, it is useful to describe areas of specific focus and some simple measures of progress. Positive progress against these measures may result in publicised recognition awards. Progress is to be reported on a six-monthly basis. A [self-assessment reporting 'tool'](#) is provided for this purpose.

1. Subcontracting to other business organisations or to third sector organisations within Solihull Borough

Where subcontracting is necessary and is accepted under the terms of any prime contract, it will be conducted under the 'spirit' of this Charter and the Compact Plus for Solihull ([Compact Plus](#)) The term 'third sector' describes a range of groups, organisations and institutions which occupy the space between the public and the private sector. These include all local voluntary and community groups, large and small registered charities, foundations, trusts, and the growing number of social enterprises and co-operatives.

2. Employment

Together, we will seek to reduce unemployment and raise the skills level of our local workforce. Working in partnership, we will promote local employment opportunities and where possible, we will encourage and facilitate learning and development of our local workforce. We will also encourage our subcontractors to endorse this philosophy throughout the supply chain network.

3. Equality and Diversity

Solihull Council's commitment to equality and diversity, and its framework for action, are expressed in its Equal Opportunities Policy [[Equal Opportunities Policy](#)] and Corporate Equality & Diversity Scheme [[Equality & Diversity Scheme](#)]. Jointly (including our subcontractors) we will familiarise ourselves with these documents and adopt an approach that demonstrates commitment to promoting equality and diversity in service provision, work undertaken within the Solihull community and employment.

Together, we will take all reasonable practicable steps to ensure that the way in which we operate - including policies, practices and procedures, do not discriminate or unfairly affect particular groups, such as black and minority ethnic groups and disabled people.

Business Charter for Social Responsibility

4. Managing Risk

When working with new partners or suppliers, the enthusiasm to have an impact and to deliver results can sometimes overtake the need to have all of the necessary arrangements and procedures in place. Problems can arise when governance and accountability arrangements are not agreed, not clear or are under-developed.

To avoid such difficulties, we intend to work with our partners and suppliers to develop a common understanding that:

- managing risk is a joint responsibility;
- we will take all reasonable steps to protect each other, our employees and anyone else (e.g. visitors, people living nearby and other members of the public) from significant risks;
- partners/suppliers may need help to develop their competency to manage risk;
- performance monitoring arrangements will include monitoring risk management arrangements to ensure they continue to be effective;
- the extent of any monitoring will be directly linked to the level of risk (the greater the risk, the greater the monitoring).

For a full copy of the Solihull MBC Risk Management Strategy, please refer to ([Risk Management Strategy](#)).

5. Environmental Sustainability

We acknowledge that climate change is occurring and that it will continue to have far reaching effects on people and places, the economy, society and the environment, and commit to working with partners and local organisations to progressively address the causes and impacts of climate change whilst ensuring social cohesion and economic vitality.

We will lead by example and reduce, where possible, the environmental impact of our business activities. This will include reduction of waste, increased recycling and the protection and enhancement of Solihull's natural environment for the benefit of wildlife and people. It will also include joint encouragement of the use of renewable energy sources and energy conservation.

Together, we will ensure that we follow sustainable procurement policies and processes which will exploit to the full the opportunities to minimise greenhouse gas emissions and detrimental environmental, social and economic impacts and encourage others to do likewise.

We will utilise guidance and best practice available from various organisations such as the Carbon Trust and others available via ([Solihull Footprint](#)).

6. Safeguarding

Solihull MBC is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and requires the support of the entire community to achieve this aim; including local businesses.

Business Charter for Social Responsibility

7. Corporate Parenting

The Children and Young People's Act 2008 identifies the role of the Corporate Parent. Corporate Parenting is a term used to define responsibilities towards looked after children, young people and care leavers (aged up to 21 years / 25 years). This group of people may also be called children / young people in care.

All elected members and local authority employees have a universal responsibility to ensure that these children and young people are considered when providing services. This also applies to partners such as Care Trust, Police, Solihull Community Housing, private and third sector providers. Education and Children's Services and workers directly providing services to these young people have a targeted responsibility. This also applies to services that are commissioned / contracted out to other agencies / partners, i.e. care placements.

Other organisations may be able to support Corporate Parenting by providing this group of people with opportunities for learning and development, including work experience.

8. Fraud

The Council recognises that the successful implementation of an anti-fraud and corruption culture is dependent on the commitment and involvement of Members, senior and other levels of management, all employees, workers and stakeholders in the wider community and its suppliers.

The Council's partners and suppliers should ensure that there are adequate arrangements in place to minimise fraud and corruption and protect the public funds that are being spent on behalf of the Council.

All partners and suppliers have a duty to report any suspected fraud or corruption that relates to Council funds to the Head of Solihull Audit Services.

For a full copy of the Solihull MBC Fraud Strategy, please refer to <http://www.solihull.gov.uk/tenders/procurementpolicy.htm>.

Signed:

(for Solihull MBC)

Signed:

(for XYZ Co)

Cabinet – 2nd July 2014**Property Services****Portfolio:****Related portfolios:** ALL**Service:** Property Services**Wards:** ALL**Key decision:** YES**Forward plan:** Yes**1. Summary****2. Recommendations**

2.1 For Members to agree to the recommendations as set out in **Section 4** of this report to achieve the following savings in 2015/16 and beyond:

Deletion of Head of Service	£ 74k
Asset Management	£188k
Design & project management	£253k
Building Surveyors & Engineers	£206k
Cleaning & Caretaking Services	£ 17k
Rationalisation of existing contracts	<u>£414k</u>
Total savings achievable in year	£1,155k

Further savings have been identified following market testing and procurement of Walsall specific contracts from April 2016 onwards.

3 Report Detail

3.1 The property service teams have recently been through a restructure to varying degrees and the new working structure is not yet fully embedded. The new teams are attempting to deliver to established service practices with much reduced and limited resources. A number of teams remain fractured with the teams focusing on the property and asset requirements rather than the requirements of the end user.

3.2 The attached option paper reviews each Property Service area and explores options for improving, challenging and changing services to meet customer requirements from a much reduced resource based. In order to meet the long term financial constraints of the council and the service delivery of the customer base, the service needs a radical change in structure, direction and management.

3.3 Asset Management

3.3.1 The team currently perform a number of duties for the council. The acquisition and disposal of property assets; year-end statutory asset valuations; professional property advice and the rental and management of a small commercial portfolio. In order to meet these deliverables from the current resources there is a lot of overlap of job role and functionality and as a result there is no critical mass in any one service area.

3.3.2 The team also advise WHG on new tenancy agreements for their retained retail stock for a small fee. Early discussions have been held with WHG to terminate this relationship as they do not see the retention of retail long term within their portfolio.

3.3.2 The commercial estate comprises a number of shop units in poor secondary locations generating a gross income of £620k per annum. The estate is in a general state of decline and no amount of capital investment would significantly increase this return. Leases are generally short term, 3 years with many of the tenants making late rental payments so the portfolio carries a higher level of arrears than is acceptable. An early change to be implemented is to transfer tenancy agreements to monthly rental payments paid by direct debit mandate with the rent demand raised annually or termly in advance. This will remove the need to raise quarterly and or monthly rent demands with payments checked electronically. Any outstanding arrears on the portfolio can also be collected in a controlled manner through direct debits. Where rents are currently paid in arrears the direct debit can be set up on a four weekly payment to correct this.

3.3.3 The level of time and management resource involved in managing this portfolio is expediential to the income recovery plus a further £120k is spent annually maintaining this estate. As this is an ongoing requirement the maintenance should be procured as long term contract for a 3 - 5 year term, taking the contract over the OJEU threshold.

3.3.4 Considerations should be given as the viability of this portfolio and if better return could be received from the appointment of a local agent to manage the estate. As an independent agent's fees are linked to the value of income recovery the agent would naturally be incentivised to recover rents on time and negotiate the best rent reviews, renewals and lettings. The agent would also cover all maintenance costs from the income recovered returning a net fee either monthly or quarterly to the council. Due to the size of the existing portfolio it is unlikely that more than one estate management officer would transfer under TUPE with the portfolio. As mentioned above, the current

overlap of duties would make the assessment of the role to transfer difficult to assess.

- 3.3.5 The recommendation from this report is to introduce a monthly tenancy contract with rent paid by monthly or 4 weekly direct debit, and to market test the appetite to outsource the management of the portfolio to a retained agency.**

The outsourcing of the agency contract should initially be cost neutral with the potential to increase income recovery over a sustained period of time. The management of this contract could then either be management as part of a wider contract management team or from within the retained Strategic Asset Management Team

- 3.3.6 Consideration should also be given to the council's desire for the long term retention of this estate or to explore alternate investment and development opportunities as part of its commitment to increasing employment in the borough. This could be achieved by investing and developing in small incubator units for new businesses.
- 3.3.7 A new Asset Management database has recently been procured and is due to go live this summer. This will greatly reduce the administrative functions and assist in delivering the year end statutory valuation.
- 3.3.8 By removing the time consuming retail portfolio from the as would allow the team to be restructured as a Strategic Asset Management team to meet the requirements of the retained estate. This would create a reduced team to provide professional property advice to the council.
- 3.3.9 The recommendation from this report is to transfer the retained asset management team as a Strategic Asset Management Team into the Regeneration Development and Delivery Team where it can be more aligned to implementing improvements to the Public Realm.**

The combined effect of the recommendations in 3.3.5 & 3.3.9 deliver savings in the first year of £188k.

3.4 Design & Project Management Team

- 3.4.1 The current team provide; project management from feasibility, design, writing scopes of works, specifications, tender documentation, project works management and technical support to larger projects. There is an overlap with a number of the technical support and smaller project management support requirements within the current Facilities Management team and there is a blur between where each of these roles and responsibilities end.
- 3.4.1 The current workload is heavily dependent on Children's Services, mostly school projects, with much of the focus on project delivery during the summer break. As a result there is a substantial reduction in workload in September 2014.
- 3.4.2 The majority of projects are separately designed, tendered and procured often at late notice with very short deadlines. This is very time consuming, costly to procure and does not allow either the project management or the successful contractor to plan adequately. As contractors are often procured at late notice there is the challenge that the council or its customers are not getting best value, although the team argue that having carried out a tendering exercise we often select the lowest bidder. A large proportion of the DMP team spend time preparing tenders rather than managing projects or more importantly contract management.
- 3.4.3 The team does not currently have a line manager and the opportunity should now be taken to transform this team from design and project management to one of commissioning and contract management during the hiatus in workload between September and December 2014.
- 3.4.4 **The recommendation of this report is to transfer this team to a new Integrated Facilities Management Team to enable full like cycle management contracts to be procured, managed and provided across the Council's and its customers retained estates.**

Any savings from the transfer of this team are contained with the savings identified within the new Integrated Facilities Management structure below.

- 3.4.5 By transferring the Asset Management team to the Development and Delivery team within Regeneration and the transfer of the Design & Project Management Team into a New Integrated Facilities Management team will remove the need for the Property Head of Service.
- 3.4.6 **The recommendation from this report is to remove the Head of Service role from this structure.**

The removal of this senior post will deliver a net saving of £74k.

3.5 Integrated Facilities Management.

- 3.5.1 This will be an enhanced facilities management team that will deliver a full life cycle service across all property assets and offer the same level of service to its customers.
- 3.5.2 A help desk function is currently being developed within the directorate support team to improve the works order process. Working closely with our new supply chain to improve the order and invoice functions we will greatly reduce the annual errors in cross and recharging customers for work.

Hard/Building Services

- 3.5.2 The council has for some time been reliant on third party suppliers to deliver all building support services. In order to optimise its building service's resources the retained team need to transform to become a commissioning and contract management team.
- 3.5.3 Collectively the building services and project management teams raise around 18,000 orders per annum. Over 80% of these orders are below £500. Many of these work orders are checked, estimated and verified by a council engineer or building surveyor.
- 3.5.4 New repair and maintenance call off contracts have recently been procured to provide compliant service delivery through to March 2016. These tenders have identified the potential to save in excess of 30% from these contracts. Similar contracts now need to be procured to provide a full range of technical, professional, support services, minor, intermediate and major works contracts to enable all projects to be planned and delivered from call offs, without the need for individual procurement.
- 3.5.5 When a call to the help desk is received the operator will raise a works order direct with the nominated contractor asking them to investigate and rectify the event raised up to pre determined values £300-500, or as required in the event of an emergency, flooding, fire or health and safety issues. The default code will be set to recharge all such requests and the cost and asset code will be added to the works order.
- 3.5.6 Discussions with Finance have indicated that such a methodology can be adapted and the supplier can then raise a single monthly statement of works and all costs charged directly to the asset and cost code without the need for a manual double entry to property and recharge.
- 3.5.7 Directorate support are initially using a bespoke database as an ordering system there is a CIPFA compatible module that can be procured to add to the asset Management database that can be managed by the council and its suppliers in real time. There is also an Oracle link that can be procured to upload order data on a fortnightly or real time basis, again removing the opportunity for year-end recharging errors.

3.5.8 All new contracts and orders should be monitored for performance, quality and cost. Work orders will be tested by a technical officer within the contract management team in Facilities Management on an agreed random technical audit of:

- 10% order up to £5,000
- 20% orders £5,000 - £10,000
- 100% all orders and projects over £10,000

3.5.6 The above actions will greatly reduce the volume of specifications/tenders being prepared, individual contracts being procured and orders raised with a reciprocal saving of time for monitoring and checking these orders. This will transform the team to a commissioning and contract management team.

3.5.7 In order to maximise this transformation a number of contracts will need to be procured from approved Crown Commission Frameworks in the short term, through to March 2016, whilst new OJEU compliant contracts are procured to commence April 2016.

3.5.8 The recommendation from this report is to approve the tendering and procurement of Technical & Professional Support Services, Minor, Intermediate and Major works contracts as follows:

Minor Works:	£2,500k.
Intermediate Works:	£8,000k.
Major Works:	£5,000k.
Mechanical & Engineering:	£2,500k.
Electrical Contract:	£1,500k.
Roofing Contract:	£2,000k.
Windows Contract:	£1,000k.
Alarms:	£ 250k.
Demolition Contract:	£ 750k
Asbestos removal:	£2,000k.
Technical Support	<u>£ 500k.</u>
	£23,000k.

These contracts to be procured from an approved Crown Commissioning Framework through to March 2016.

The savings from the creation of this new team will be:

Design & Project Management	£253k
Building Surveyors & Engineers	£206k

Soft Services

3.5.9 Due to the contractual nature of this service delivery with the Council's partners any major changes to this service can only be delivered through market testing and an OJEU compliant procurement process.

3.5.10 In the meantime cleaning regimes are currently being reviewed to drive down costs as appropriate to meet the service requirements and required hygiene and cleanliness levels.

3.5.11 Cleaning materials are currently procured through the YPO framework contract. These could be procured through a local contract at up to 20% cheaper than the existing contract. A new local contract should therefore be procured for a 3-5 year term. A new contract would allow items to be called off from the contract and a monthly statement raised by the supplier itemising individual items and cost codes so recharges can be levied direct to the customer removing the need for internal, manual recharging and additional administration.

3.5.12 The recommendations from this report are that a new cleaning material contract be procured in accordance with OJEU regulations.

This is expected to save £14k per annum in material costs and reduce the administrative burden by £1k per annum.

IFM Conclusion

3.5.13 In order to support the long term requirement of the Council, Partners and customers' retained estates the Council should market test both hard and soft service requirements with a view to sharing a service or services with an adjacent authority; appoint a single supply chain partner or suite of contract partners from April 2016 onwards.

3.5.14 The recommendation is that a market test of property, building support (hard & soft), technical support, minor, intermediate and major works ahead of a full OJEU compliant tendering exercise for mobilisation April 2016.

3.5.15 Once new contracts have been procured through to March 2016, the retained teams can be matched to the service requirements as commissioning, contract and commercial managers.

4 Summary Recommendations:

3.3.5 to introduce a monthly tenancy contract with rent paid by monthly or 4 weekly direct debit, and to market test the appetite to outsource the management of the portfolio to a retained agency.

3.3.9 to transfer the retained asset management team as a Strategic Asset Management Team into the Regeneration Development and Delivery Team

3.4.4 to transfer the Design and Project Management team to a new Integrated Facilities Management Team to enable full like cycle management contracts to be procured.

3.4.6 The Removal of the Property Head of Service role

3.5.8 to approve the tendering and procurement of Technical & Professional Support Services, Minor, Intermediate and Major works contracts

3.5.12 to procure a new cleaning materials contract

7. Legal implications

7.1

8. Property implications

8.1 This report recommends the break up and disposal of the remaining commercial investment portfolio and the withdrawal of all commercial agency activity.

This report will see a significant increase in agility within the property team and reduce its spacial requirements within the Civic Centre.

9. Health and wellbeing implications

9.1 There are no health & Wellbeing implications from this business case

10. Staffing implications

10.1 There are a number of staffing implications from this business case. Depending on the long term options selected for the service delivery of all building support services, the proposals in this report indicate that there will be the following implications:

Asset Management

6 job roles at risk

Design and Project Management	6 job roles at risk
Facilities Management	7 roles at risk
Head of Service	Role deleted – Vacant.

A number of role transfers are also possible.

11. Equality implications

11.1 There are no equality implications from this business case other than those mentioned within the staffing issues where staff may feel devalued as a result of these proposals.

12. Consultation

12.1 Consultation has been held Team managers for Asset management, Facilities Management, Cleaning & Caretaking. Interim Executive Directors for Children’s Services and Adult Services, Interim Director for Education.

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XX May 2014

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XX May 2014

The Walsall Plan 2013-2016

“Walsall is a great place to live, learn, work and invest”

DRAFT

Foreword

As Leader and Chief Executive of Walsall Council we are proud to work alongside our partners in the public, private and voluntary sector at a time when working in partnership could not be more important. It will only be through strong collaborative work that we will continue to deliver better outcomes for, and with our local communities.

The Walsall Plan sets out the top shared priorities for the Borough, our ambitions and in overview the arrangements in place to get us there. This plan is intentionally concise compared to the outgoing 2008 Sustainable Community Strategy. Local Government and local agencies are mindful that the public require outcomes not bureaucracy and it is for this reason we want to set out a very clear refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy for our area.

The Borough of Walsall is “a great place to live, learn, work and invest,” and we want it to remain just that. We are working hard with the police, health services including the new Clinical Commissioning Group and statutory “Health & Wellbeing Board”, the Fire and Rescue Service, Walsall Housing Group, Walsall College and our local voluntary and community sector amongst others, in order to deliver the best services whilst maximising the public value obtained from existing community assets, including local community venues, schools etc. This is in a climate where the Government is striving to eliminate the nation's debt. The Borough of Walsall and the agencies working within it, like the Country as a whole, needs to respond to growing and changing demand, improve social outcomes and create inclusive growth and prosperity. A joined up coherent approach is required that cuts across traditional service divides and geographical boundaries and the traditional relationship we have had with our customer, local Walsall people and the services we provide to them. These are indeed challenging times but our strong track record of partnership work means we are well placed to respond.

This document ambitiously holds on to Walsall remaining “a great place to live, learn, work and invest” by focussing on Wellbeing through the Marmot objectives which seek to address health inequalities and by clearly targeting:-

- **Supporting business to thrive and supporting local people into work.**
- **Improving health including well being and independence for older people**
- **Creating Safe and Sustainable Communities** – Reducing levels of crime and providing the right environment for people to live in.
- **Improving Safeguarding and the Learning and Life Chances for Children and Young People.** Recognising that a person's early years crucially help determine what kind of future they have and ensuring they are appropriately supported into adulthood.

It is with this clarity of purpose we are committing ourselves with our partners and we recognise we can only do this by working with local communities. We will continue to do this through our six Area Partnerships and as appropriate at ward level. Together we will ensure that Walsall will remain “a great place to live, learn, work and invest”.

Cllr Mike Bird
Leader – Walsall Council

Paul Sheehan
Chief Executive - Walsall Council

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1. Introduction

The Walsall Plan is the refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy for the Borough of Walsall covering the period 2013-2016. It provides the top shared priorities and ambitions for the Borough between key agencies from the public, private and voluntary sector who seek to improve the quality of life experienced in this part of the Black Country. It also sets out in overview the arrangements for getting there.

1.1 The Walsall Partnership Story so Far!

Partnership work in Walsall is nothing new, this plan replaces the 2008 version of "Walsall's Sustainable Community Strategy" which focussed on People, Places and Prosperity. A lot has happened since 2008 not least the economic recession, a change in Government and changes in legislation. Walsall's local circumstances have also changed within this context, for example, the Borough no longer has available Neighbourhood Renewal Funding and is seeing changes across all sectors as agencies and local people adapt to these austere times.

Within the above climate a lot has been achieved in the Borough and it is clear to continue to meet our communities' needs will require a continuation of the strong partnership approach to work that has served our communities well.

Highlights of successful partnership work in the Borough since 2008 include:-

People

- Successfully delivered the Home Office Drug Intervention Programme across Walsall.
- Developed the Black Country University Technical College, one of the first of its kind across the Country.
- Establishment of the Walsall Clinical Commissioning Group responsible for the commissioning of health services for people of Walsall.
- The Peer Review of Children's Services noted Walsall was a 'national leader' on Voice of Young People –and our turnout for the Youth Parliament elections was the 2nd highest nationally in 2011.
- 57.3% of primary schools, were judged good or better 78.6% secondary schools and 85.7 Special schools
- First time offenders and re-offending rates show continued reduction over previous years and both are lower than the national average and there has been a reduction in youth related ASB –down 34% from 10/11 to 11/12.
- The establishment of 5 Multi-agency locality based teams have worked intensively with over 300 vulnerable children;
- Set up new Learning Community Projects– groups of schools working together to share best practice to improve pupil outcomes
- Supported over 1,500 young people a year to leave Walsall College with the skills and qualifications necessary for employment or higher education.
- Successful £700,000 Big Lottery bid providing new play equipment for children and young including "The Move Project", a three in one truck designed to motivate young people in Walsall to get up and move and the "Reach Up" project, a mobile climbing structure.

- The introduction of Street Champions across the Borough developing local volunteers who act as the first point of contact for residents who wish to report problems such as anti-social behaviour and graffiti.
- Successfully bid for and developed "Bookmark" Bloxwich, a community venue at Bloxwich library offering cultural activities supported by a local charity. The facility includes a cafe run through a partnership with Walsall Adult Community College and Adult Social Care at Walsall Council, to give students with special needs work experience.
- Work to support Community Cohesion including work with the organisers of Caldmore Village Festival (established in 2009), The Shaheedee Asian Football Tournament which was the largest in its kind outside the Indian Sub Continent (2012) ; The first Walsall Pride event for the gay community of Walsall (2012).
- Worked with five government departments (Health, Culture Media & Sport, Work & Pensions, Children's Schools & Families and Communities & Local Government) to introduce the highly successful national Free Swimming scheme for children and the 60+
- The 2012 Olympic torch relay. Partnership working with the local and regional police, neighbouring authorities, NHS, Walsall College, local volunteers, public transport providers, schools etc to ensure the borough had a day to remember, seeing some 30,000 to 40,000 people turning out to line the streets.

Places

- Achieved the biggest reductions in crime across the West Midlands in 2012, with North Birmingham, where crime fell by over 25%
- The introduction of six Area Partnerships covering the Borough, providing multi-agency solutions to local issues from crime and litter through to health and supporting the most vulnerable.
- Established a Myplace facility for young people.
- £55 million of investment in our schools and learning resources include the Innovation Centre at Alumwell and the final phase of a significant enlargement scheme at Hillary Primary School, new builds at Sheffield Academy and Grace Academy and a significant enlargement project at Caldmore Primary.
- The number of car crashes in Walsall town centre plummeted by almost 60 per cent following the completion of the £23 million ring road.
- Opened a £55 million business College (Walsall College) with state of the art facilities designed to meet the training needs of industry.
- Opened £174 million of PFI-funded new facilities at Walsall Manor Hospital
- Successful application with the local Friends Group to the Heritage Lottery Fund to undertake the £7.6m Arboretum Restoration scheme
- Development of 322 residential units in Walsall town centre's Waterfront South site – a £40 million investment attracting £15m of Homes and Community Agency support.
- From April 2008 until December 2012 development of 3846 homes across Walsall

Prosperity

- The opening of Walsall Ring Road in 2009 providing great opportunities for investment in the Borough.
- The establishment of the Darlaston Enterprise Zone on the former IMI James Bridge copperworks. The Enterprise Zone will create much needed jobs for local

people and it is a priority for Walsall Council and for the Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership.

- Secured investment of £26m into road improvements in the Darlaston and Pleck areas to improve access and open up sites for new business development.
- Development of a new Premier Inn hotel on the Waterfront, adjacent to the New Art Gallery.
- The creation of four Multi Agency One Stops Shops in Bloxwich, Caldmore, Darlaston and Walsall Town Centre, which have been successful in getting 1,261 people into employment, supporting 1,801 qualifications, and providing information, advice and guidance to a further 3,373 Walsall people.
- Establishment of the Walsall Works Apprenticeship programme which represents a £2million investment by the Council in the young people of the Borough, to recruit and support over 700 16-24 year olds into Pre- and Full Apprenticeships with quality local employers.
- Walsall Council has secured approval from the Department for Transport for the Darlaston Strategic Development Access programme, bringing in £26million for road and rail infrastructure improvements vital to the future success of the Darlaston Enterprise Zone.

Despite the challenges brought by the economic climate partnership work in Walsall has delivered and continues to deliver new opportunities for better outcomes for local communities.

Recognising the citizens of Walsall and the agencies that work in the Borough are now facing quite different circumstances to those anticipated in 2008, it is important to ensure community planning in the Borough remains up to date and reflects the current priorities of local people and those of the key agencies operating in the Borough . It is for these reasons that this document has been produced to refresh the “Walsall Sustainable Community Strategy” as “The Walsall Plan.”

2. About the Walsall Plan

The Walsall Plan provides the vision for Walsall as “**a great place to live, learn, work and invest.**”. This document has been informed by a range of information including building on the experience of the last plan, information through the borough’s six Area Partnerships, work through key analysis documents such as Walsall’s Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, the Police Strategic Assessment, the Borough’s recent residents survey, “Your Place, Your Well Being” , Inspection judgements and the need for all partners to prioritise safeguarding – especially of children and at a national level importantly the Marmot Review, “Fair Society, Healthy Lives.”

The Borough is described below:-

2.1 A Snapshot of Walsall - Key facts

Walsall Borough is made up of 20 wards, and is located in the Black Country which is part of the West Midlands conurbation. It is important to recognise in describing the Borough, that the different areas of Walsall face differing issues. Below is a snapshot of the Borough:-

a) Population and Age Structure

Walsall has an estimated usually resident population of 269,300 (2011 National Census). This is an increase of 15,800 residents, or 6.2%, in the ten years since the previous census. This rate of growth is lower than nationally (a 7.8% increase) but in line with the West Midlands regional growth of 6.4%.

The trend towards an increasingly dependent population has continued in Walsall, with implications for services as younger and older people tend to be more resource-intensive, and a potentially negative impact on economic growth due to a declining young working age population.

According to the 2010 Index of Multiple Deprivation, the Government’s official measure of multiple deprivation at small area levels, Walsall was ranked as the 30th (45th in 2007) most deprived English local authority (out of 326), making it amongst the worst performing 10% of districts. The Borough has 41 LSOAs (lower level super output areas) in the most deprived 10% of the country, out of the Borough’s 169 areas. This equates to just over 24% of the total and is in excess of the 16% average for the Region. A further 34 LSOAs (20%) are in the next most deprived 10% nationally. The most deprived areas are predominately in the west of the borough although there are pockets of deprivation in the more affluent east.

b) Ethnicity

The 2011 Census shows an increase in the level of ethnic diversity in Walsall. While ‘White British’ remains the largest single group at 76.9%, the number of residents from a minority ethnic group has risen to almost 1 in 4 of the total population. This figure of 23.1% residents is an increase on the 14.8% in 2001 (and higher than the 19.5% in England and Wales in 2011).

The largest increase is in people of Asian background, with a rise from 10.4% in 2001 to 15.2% in 2011. Within this group, those of Pakistani background have increased the

most to 5.3% of all residents (although Asian Indian remains the largest minority ethnic group at 6.1%). Minority ethnic groups are highly concentrated in certain parts of the borough.

c) Health and Caring

The Census results confirm that overall health is poorer in Walsall than in England and Wales. One in five residents has a health condition that limits their day to day activities: 10.4% are limited a lot, and a further 10.3% limited a little. 77.3% of residents say their health is good or very good – lower than the 81.2% nationally – with 7.3% experiencing bad or very bad health (5.6% nationally).

In Walsall 11.4% of residents provide unpaid care to relatives, friends or neighbours compared with 10.3% nationally. This equates to over 17,000 people providing between 1 and 19 hours' unpaid care a week, while almost 8,800 provide unpaid care for over 50 hours a week.

A significant demonstration to supporting health and well-being in the Borough has been the adoption of the Marmot principles on health inequalities, by Walsall Council and how these principles have gone on to inform the Health and Well Being Strategy for the Borough which is supported by the Borough's Health and Well Being Board. The Health and Well Being Strategy is a key strategy that informs the overarching strategic approach supported by the Walsall plan.

Although predominately urban, Walsall offers great opportunities to access the countryside for outdoor leisure and recreation. There are 10 green spaces designated as Local Nature Reserves, 36 green spaces are designated as Sites of Importance to Nature Conservation (SINCs) and 64 are Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINCs); 6 green spaces are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

Indoor recreation and the opportunity for improved levels of physical activity is provided through a range of venues including Walsall Council's own leisure centres. Other providers such as Wolverhampton University, the Sports Colleges and the voluntary clubs also provide good access to sports facilities.

Local people can also access further help and support for a healthy lifestyle through the network of local libraries available across the Borough. For example, local GPs can prescribe books that can support people in understanding and coping with a range of medical conditions or making healthy lifestyle choices.

2.2 What Matters Most?

Recognising the above we believe that over all concerns the well being of individuals and local communities is what matters the most and at this present time getting people into work and keeping them there, is fundamental to ensuring well being.

To ensure wellbeing four main priorities have been established that are supported by a number of ambitions. The economy is at the top of the priorities but the remaining priorities are unranked and all clearly interlink:-

1) Supporting business to thrive and supporting local people into work.

Overview of Ambitions

- a. Young people are prepared for and find work
- b. Ensure people have the skills, abilities, attitudes and behaviours to find work, stay in work and get better work
- c. Ensure good transport links are available and further developed to make it easier to get to work and support the local economy
- d. Provide the places and conditions that attract businesses and encourages their development
- e. Reduce the level of child poverty in the Borough

The Challenge

Walsall has suffered a general economic decline over the past decade, exacerbated severely by the impact of the recent recession. There has been limited growth and new business creation as a consequence of this economic decline, and a fall in the number of available jobs resulting in high levels of worklessness.

Over 17% (27,850) of Walsall's working age population are not working and are dependent on out-of-work benefits; substantially higher than across West Midlands (13.7%) and England (11.9%). The highest proportion of these are dependent upon either Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and Incapacity Benefit suggesting they are unfit for work, or job seeker allowance and hence seeking work. However, across Walsall the average length of claims is increasing suggesting difficulties re-entering the job market. Claimant counts are rising most in wards that already suffer high rates of unemployment. One way to help combat this and allow people to re-enter the employment market would be through apprenticeships where individuals carry out work whilst training at the same time for a recognised qualification.

Double the proportion of 18-24 year olds are unable to find work compared to nationally. Walsall Council is supporting youth employment in a number of ways; including providing council apprenticeships and implementing 'Walsall Works' a multi-million financial investment aimed at creating the conditions for sustainable employment growth within Walsall based businesses. Our ambition is to that **young people are prepared for and find work.**

People's ability to gain access to employment is more limited in Walsall due to lack of skills and opportunities, and the situation is worsening in relation to the national and regional position. This has a knock-on effect on worklessness, income levels and hence poverty. There is a strong correlation between poverty and poor health outcomes.

A significant number of local businesses in Walsall have indicated that lack of skills and low aspiration acts as a barrier to recruiting new staff. The top three skills gaps were in literacy, numeracy and basic IT with the fourth being interpersonal and communications skills. Whilst school sector performance is improving, low skills and qualification rates amongst the adult population have been evident for some time. A fifth (19.5%) of Walsall's adult working age population have no qualifications, compared with just 15.1% regionally and 11.3% nationally; equating to 30,600 with no formal qualifications and 42,000 not reaching level 2 qualifications which is the threshold for employability. Some areas of the borough have intense needs for residents whose first language is not

English, including the need to support newly arrived migrants in language and citizenship skills. **We seek to ensure people have the skills, abilities, attitudes and behaviours to find work, stay in work and get better work.**

It is important for Walsall that the advantages brought through the Borough's location are maximised. Our ambition here is to **ensure good transport links are available and further developed to make it easier to get to work and support the local economy.**

Walsall has two major geographic advantages – its proximity to Birmingham and its location at the heart of the UK's road and rail network. The M6 is a major feature of the area and employers reliant on transport and travel provide many jobs both directly and indirectly within the local economy. The Borough is also close to the links to the M5 (connecting Walsall to the South West) and to the M54 (connecting the Borough to Wales). A series of proposals / opportunities exist to further improve the connectivity within Walsall and to areas such as Birmingham, addressing some of the issues set out above. Rail travel is an example of an area which shows the potential to provide a step change in sustainable travel within Walsall. This includes the potential to re-instate regular Walsall to Wolverhampton rail links via Willenhall and to re-instate Walsall to Aldridge rail services, the potential to re-open the Stourbridge to Lichfield via Walsall line, and the potential to take advantage of released capacity resulting from the delivery of High Speed 2 to Birmingham which would have implications for Walsall enabling longer distance services and enabling an increased frequency of services from Walsall to Birmingham.

Funding opportunities for the delivery of major transport infrastructure under the current economic climate remain uncertain.

It is vital that the Borough provides **the places and conditions that attract businesses and encourages their development.** Improving access to sites through highways improvements and identifying the reasons why sites are not being brought forward for development are key issues for us. We are finding that as well as land contamination, split ownership and overly ambitious land values are all contributory factors to land not being developed.

There are a number of areas of intervention needed to support sector growth to complement investment in economic infrastructure and skills, including; innovation, relocation assistance, business property, specialist premises, new markets; access to investment and inward investment. Walsall may also be able to capture benefits from the development of a low carbon economy by capitalising on its strong industrial base, existing engineering skills and strengths of key companies.

Reducing child poverty is an issue for the Borough as it is a key determinant in limiting life-long opportunities and increasing costs to the council and its partners and hence a key ambition to be driven forward. In Walsall, 30.6% of children were living in families whose income fell below 60% of the median national income in 2009, which equates to 16,675 children aged under 16 living in poverty in 2009, up by 1,010 from the previous year. The geographical variation in Walsall is substantial, ranging from 49.6% of children living in poverty in Blakenall to only 3.4% in Streetly. The Welfare Reform programme introduced by the national Coalition Government could place an estimated additional 2,200 children in relative poverty in Walsall. Addressing a complex issue such as child poverty requires all partners to work closely together to deliver Walsall's Child Poverty strategy outcomes of:-

- i. Priority access for parents to access worklessness reduction support services
- ii. Improved supply and quality of accessible childcare
- iii. More and better qualifications for young adults to help them find work
- iv. Less of a gap in attainment for those on Free school meals
- v. More support for families who are beginning to struggle and help that includes aspiration and attainment support
- vi. More hope for the future and self belief in attaining good qualifications and work
- vii. Better money management skills
- viii. Financial advice and support for families in poverty

2) Improving health including well being and independence for older people

Overview of Ambitions

- a. Help people to live healthy and active lifestyles from an early age, make healthy choices, including tackling the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse and reduce health inequalities.
- b. Reduce the number of people living with preventable ill health and people dying prematurely, while reducing the gap between communities.
- c. Reduce levels of obesity, including amongst the young.
- d. Reducing the high levels of infant mortality
- e. Support healthy ageing and independent living of the most vulnerable including those who suffer from poor mental health.

The Challenge

The recently refreshed Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2012 and the Director of Public Health's 2011/12 annual report Public Health is Everyone's Business identifies the wide ranging health and well-being challenges faced by the borough; particularly health inequalities typified by east – west trends in deprivation. Our ambition is to **help people to live healthy and active lifestyles, make healthy choices, including tackling the harm caused by drug and alcohol misuse and reduce health inequalities.**

In terms of life expectancy there is a wide discrepancy between Walsall's communities, with men living in the most deprived wards in Walsall dying on average 11 years younger (women 7 years) than those in the most affluent areas. Walsall's population is ageing and more people are living with ill-health and chronic long-term conditions in later life, and also ill for a longer period of time. As a Borough we must **reduce the number of people living with preventable ill health and people dying prematurely, while reducing the gap between communities.** This is due mainly to high levels of infant mortality In Walsall as the proportion of stillbirths and infants dying before their first birthday remain higher than regional and national levels. There are wide inequalities between most and least deprived in Walsall, with the proportion of stillbirths and infant deaths being much higher in deprived areas. As a Borough we must **reduce the high levels of infant mortality.**

Obesity is one of the greatest public health challenges facing Walsall with poor choices in lifestyle (smoking, diet and physical activity) at above average levels in the borough. Surveys show that more than 55% of Walsall residents take part in no recreational physical activity and active participation rates (19%) are well below the national average of 22.5%, placing Walsall 14 from bottom of 339 local authorities. Childhood obesity is

particularly concerning with nearly 4 out of every 10 Year 6 children in Walsall considered overweight or obese. It is important that we focus on reducing **levels of obesity, including amongst the young.**

A commitment to encouraging everyone to “have a healthy and active lifestyle for life” is in-line with the government’s Sport England Youth & Community Sport national strategy 2012-17. This links early years through 5 to 15 and 16 to 24 years of age to change behaviour and gain a life changing start in life.

Promoting Free School meals to all children who are eligible so that they can take advantage of a daily nutritionally balanced hot meal whilst they are at school will help improve health.

There is an essential role for a borough-wide strategy linking a range of public, private, education and voluntary sector leisure providers to jointly contribute to the wider health agenda. The Council has its own plans to replace and/or refurbish its leisure centres and this will facilitate an overall increase in activity levels and the associated benefits. This approach is a clear demonstration of Marmot’s *Proportionate Universalism*.

Walsall experiences high alcohol related harm across a number of health and crime indicators. There were 2,174 alcohol related recorded crimes in Walsall in 2009/10, whilst levels have reduced alcohol related crimes levels are higher in Walsall than the regional and national average.

The General Household Survey (2010) estimates Walsall has 34,058 hazardous drinkers, 33,550 binge drinkers and 10,174 harmful drinkers. Though alcohol related crime rates have fallen in Walsall in the last 5 years, it remains higher than regional and national rates. Walsall has a higher rate of alcohol related hospital admissions than the national and regional average; in 2009/10 there were 2,121 alcohol related admissions in Walsall, an increase of 6% on 2008/9.

Smoking is still the single greatest cause of illness and premature death in England – killing one in two smokers prematurely. The estimated prevalence for smoking within the Walsall population is 24.5%, representing approximately 50,000 adults. Rates of smoking during pregnancy are also high in Walsall 16.8%, compared to nationally (14%). In terms of drug misuse, there are an estimated 2,000 problematic drug users (i.e. those who misuse heroin or crack cocaine) in Walsall.

The level of people with learning difficulties who are in residential care homes is above average. There is a need to develop more community based care and support services that provide individuals with a greater opportunity to remain in their own accommodation, and alongside this appropriate support for carers. The programme for self directed care, whereby people are supported to have control over the state funded services to which they are entitled will continue in Walsall. At the same time the preventative strategy that helps people to remain independent of social care and health services with a good quality of life and a range of life chances will be further developed. In recognition of this we are committed to **supporting healthy ageing and independent living for people with care and support needs, including those who suffer from poor mental health. We will expect that local communities will play an active part in developing this approach.**

3) **Creating Safe, Sustainable and Inclusive Communities** – Reducing levels of crime and providing the right environment for people to live in.

Overview of Ambitions

- a. Safeguard the most vulnerable adults from harm
- b. Reduce the level of crime experienced in the Borough focussing particularly on those areas that have historically experienced higher levels.
- c. Ensure support is provided to divert offenders from crime – particularly young people.
- d. Sustain and improve the natural and urban environment.
- e. Build and further develop the voluntary and community sector in the Borough, building resilience to enhance community cohesion.
- f. Increase the opportunities for local people to have a greater role in local decision making.
- g. Ensure the housing needs of local communities are met.

The Challenge

Crime across the Borough, at the time of writing, is at an all time low, with Home Office figures for Walsall showing total recorded crime in the borough has dropped by more than 19%, meaning 2,163 fewer victims of crime. Whilst reports of Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) remain at high volume, levels of police reported ASB have decreased by 29% from 6,035 (2011/12 YTD) to 4,264 (2012/13 YTD). Most Serious Violence has increased by just under 9% between 2011/12 and 2012/13, although it should be noted that low numbers of incidents are involved and as such is open to fluctuation. Serious Acquisitive Crime had seen a 10% reduction year to date in 2012/13 from 2011/12, this is a reduction of 224 crimes. It is important to recognise within these statistics the needs of the most vulnerable who may be more prone to being victims of crime, including those who suffer domestic abuse. Here our ambition is to **safeguard the most vulnerable from harm.**

The Borough's Community Safety Strategic Assessment recognises that essentially there are six key areas within the borough which have been identified as priority areas for crime and community safety. These areas are identified a) as experiencing a relatively high number of repeat incidents that create multiple demands on local public services and b) where there's a need for a longer term partnership-wide approach to resolve 'challenging' community safety issues. During 2011/12 35.5% of total recorded crime incidents in the Walsall Borough occurred across the six priority areas. Our ambition is to further **reduce the level of crime experienced in the Borough focussing particularly on those areas that have historically experienced higher levels and by ensuring support is provided to divert offenders from crime.**

In helping support sustainable communities the role of the environment can not be underplayed and supporting opportunities to **sustain and improve the natural and urban environment** for the enjoyment of present and future generations is an important ingredient in ensuring Walsall is "a great place to live, learn, work and invest."

Local intelligence tells us that Walsall is a place that is relatively cohesive with the 2008 Place Survey results showing that 70.9% of people felt that people from different backgrounds got on well together and 56% of respondents felt that they belonged to their neighbourhood, comparing relatively well to national averages. Walsall's BME population

now forms 23.1% of the population; almost 1 in 4 and this is a significant increase on the 2001 census result of 14.8%. Initial analysis of this result suggests that Walsall has not seen the same volumes of Eastern European migration as some parts of the country have: only 3.8% of Walsall residents arrived in the UK in the past 10 years compared with 6.8% nationally, and only 1% were born in EU Accession countries. The largest increase locally is in people of Asian background, with a rise from 10.4% in 2001 to 15.2% in 2011. There are relatively low levels of hate crime in the borough; by nature most (78%) are racist offences followed by homophobic (10%). There are few identifiable patterns in offending, with the majority occurring spontaneously and secondary to altercations/arguments as opposed to unprovoked attacks with pattern of victimisation amongst the service industries, such as taxi drivers, retail staff and security offices who are abused as a result of undertaking their duties. With labour market restrictions from Romania and Bulgaria due to be lifted at the end of 2014, whilst the government has not released official predictions of the potential scale of immigration to the UK there is a great deal of speculation about the size and impact of population movement. This is also true for ongoing migration from other EU countries and the future for Walsall is similarly uncertain however, national research (<http://migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/commentary/romania-and-bulgaria-accession-guessing-game>) suggests that BME populations are expected to rise over the coming years with higher birth rates in these communities and an expected increase of eastern European residents from newly accepted EU countries such as Romania. Although it should be noted there are pockets in the borough which appear to be less cohesive with the Bloxwich area partnership having a much lower percentage of people (55.1%) who feel people from different backgrounds get on well together compared to the rest to the borough. The strength of our communities can be further supported by a strong and vibrant Voluntary and Community Sector. Sport and leisure has a key role to play through the 240 sports clubs, nearly all of which are run voluntarily by residents. The high profile demonstration of the 70,000 Gamesmakers at the London 2012 Olympics proves that people are keen to help and get involved; if they are asked. To further support community cohesion and to help sustain communities at a time of significant public sector cuts we need to **build and further develop the voluntary and community sector in the Borough.**

Your Place Your Well-Being research showed that despite an improvement in 'acting on concerns' since 2008 (from improved net result of -28 to -12), improvement is still needed since opinion remains very much divided on whether local public services are providing opportunities to have a say, acting on residents' concerns or keeping residents informed of improvements (net figures +4, -12 and - 8 respectively). The democratic deficit is well recognised nationally and key agencies in Walsall are committed to **increasing the opportunities for local people to have a greater role in local decision making**

65% of households in Walsall are living in owner occupied accommodation, 27% rent from a housing association and the remaining 8% rent privately or live rent free. The government's welfare and benefits system reform proposals will have a big impact on local residents that are benefit dependent, including an estimated 300 households that will be affected by the cap on household benefits.

Results from the recent 'your place your well being survey' highlights that the relative order of residents' priorities for improvement has changed, as a reflection of the current economic climate with recession related concerns becoming more salient. One third of respondents state that affordable decent housing (33%) is an important factor in their local quality of life (their fourth in the list of Quality of Life importance). It is recognised as

an ambition/aspiration in this plan that we must **ensure the housing needs of local communities are met.**

These concerns are exemplified amongst younger respondents, the unemployed, families by ethnicity and geographically. For example young people in Walsall are considerably more likely to say they would like to see improvements in local job prospects (54%), wages and the cost of living (27%) and affordable decent housing (30%) than corresponding borough averages (35%, 21% and 17%).

4) Improving Safeguarding, Learning and The Life Chances for Children and Young People. Recognising that a person’s early years crucially help determine what kind of future they will have.

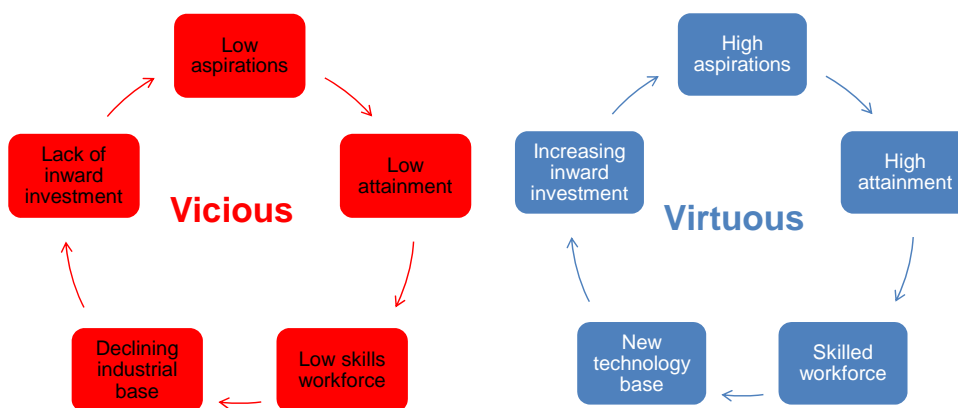
Overview of Ambitions

- a. Safeguarding : Improving the quality and effectiveness of frontline practice, growing the capacity, capability and culture across the partnership; and improving the quality of partnership and governance
- b. Early Help: A whole systems framework for children and families from early help to statutory intervention
- c. Good Education: Learning provision which promotes high expectations and standards, so that children and young people achieve well and fulfil their potential

The Challenge

The ‘general economic decline over the past decade’ referred to previously has a large negative impact on the life chances of children and young people – leading to a vicious cycle of deprivation. Our challenge is for all partners to agree on how best to transform this into a virtuous cycle as shown below. Raising aspiration and attainment is a key part of the transformation – but this relies on jobs existing for young people to aspire to.

Vicious or Virtuous Cycle



Our Vision and ambition for children's services is summarised by '*Being better together for children*', and '*children and young people in Walsall are safe, happy, healthy and with a bright future*'. It takes a community to raise a child and a whole partnership to keep children safe and cared for.

Ofsted judged Safeguarding Services for children and young people to be inadequate in June 2012. The Walsall Children and Young People's Services Improvement Board (WIB) was established in September 2012, with an independent chair to oversee the development and implementation of the agreed Improvement Plan and monitor compliance with the delivery of key milestones as required by the Improvement Notice issued by the Government. A key aspect of improvement is to ensure that other key partnership bodies e.g. the Walsall Children's Safeguarding Board and the Children and Young People's Partnership Board, Health and Wellbeing Board and Borough Management Team are productive, mutually challenging and impact positively on better outcomes for children. The entire partnership needs to prioritise **the safeguarding of children and young people**.

The JSNA summarised the challenges facing children in their early years in Walsall as substantial, they have a 'poor start in life' with high infant mortality rates and poor educational attainment at age 3-5 together with high levels of obesity. In a borough with very high levels of deprivation (28th highest level of child poverty out of 152 councils) children and their families require help and support at the right time at the right place. Our approach is to offer 'Early Help' based on a strong strategic approach across the borough with clear referral pathways and measures of impact to ensure children and young people and their families receive support at the earliest opportunity and that staff in all partners agencies understand what to do when children's needs do not meet the threshold for statutory intervention but require targeted multi-agency early help. Early help will mean that not only will outcomes for children and their families will improve – it will also reduce costs to the council and partners. Partners from several agencies are now sharing information as part of a national programme to coordinate and target multi agency support to the most vulnerable families. Better outcomes and reduced costs will be delivered by **Early Help: A whole systems framework for children and families from early help to statutory intervention**.

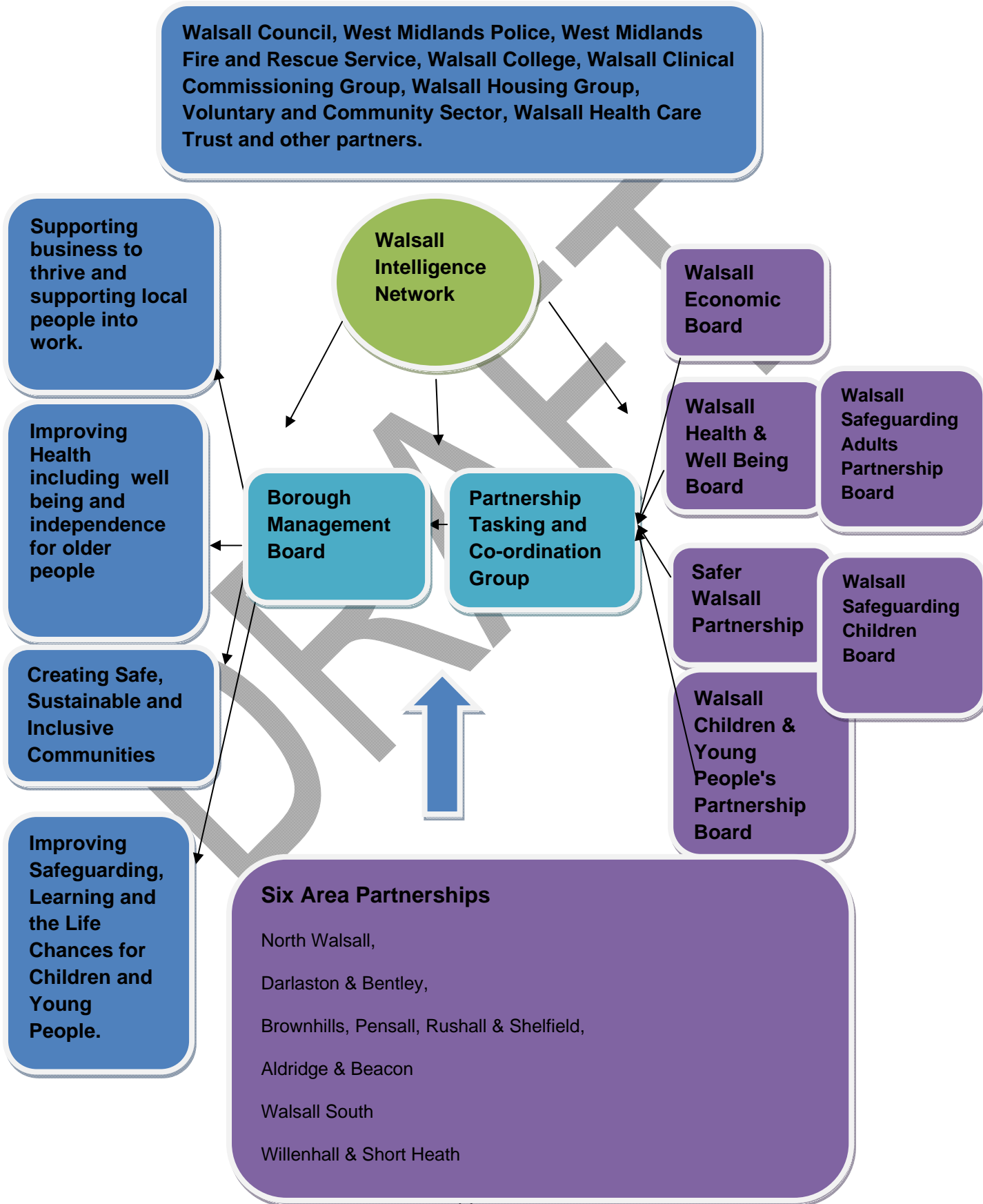
Dips in educational attainment at Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 mean both are in the bottom quartile – while this is to some extents because of 2 schools KS2 results being excluded and the English GCSE grading issue – this is challenging - as is our continued bottom quartile position at Key Stage 5 (A-Levels or equivalent). We are working with schools to improve our support to them and working with the college on adjusting their offer. The percentage of schools judged 'good or better' needs to increase from 57.3% of primary schools and 78.6% secondary schools. A new School Improvement Strategy is being developed to support schools and respond to the Academy programme that has resulted in most Secondary Schools becoming Academies – independent of the council. This means that **Good Education: Learning provision which promotes high expectations and standards, so that children and young people achieve well and fulfil their potential** is a key priority for the partnership.

2.3 How Will We Get There?

Partnership Arrangements In Walsall

Strategic Priorities

Thematic Groups



In order to deliver against the agreed priorities agencies in the Borough have developed a partnership infrastructure which enables each representative body to bring their resources together with others on the things that matter the most. Agencies that link into these arrangements include Walsall Council, Walsall Housing Group, Walsall College, West Midlands Police, West Midlands Fire & Rescue Service, the Walsall Healthcare NHS Trust and Walsall's Clinical Commissioning Group.

a) Delivery Plans

Under these arrangements each thematic group and Area Partnership pulls together delivery plans that fit with their remit and responsibility set against the Walsall Plan. The delivery plans are supported by operational leads from the Council and partner agencies who help facilitate, through a Partnership Tasking and Co-ordination Group, the co-ordination of activity and support performance management arrangements. They are also supported by shared partner data through the Walsall Intelligence Network (WIN). The outputs from all this work feeds through to the Borough Management Board whose membership includes the Chief Executive of Walsall Council, the Chief Superintendent of Police, the Chief Executive of Walsall Housing Group, the Principal and Chief Executive of Walsall College, Chief Executive of Walsall Health Care Trust, and the Borough Commander Walsall Fire Service etc. The Borough Management Board takes responsibility for ensuring the wishes of their respective agencies are followed in accordance with the Walsall Plan.

The Borough Management Board has agreed the following:-

"All partners are committed to improving the opportunities for all communities in Walsall and recognise that this can be enhanced through working together. To be effective a shared approach has been developed with the following values. These describe the way we behave and work together to deliver the shared vision and priorities as detailed within the Walsall Plan:-

- The community is at the heart of what we do. We practice inclusion and value diversity.
- We empower ownership at all levels across the partnership to enable the swift and effective delivery of services.
- We are committed to all our stakeholders and champion innovation and enterprise.
- Working positively in partnership we deliver opportunities and prosperity for people within the wider community in and around Walsall Borough.
- We manage resources responsibly for the benefit of our community."

b) Monitoring

Reporting from the thematic groups and Area Partnerships through to the Partnership Tasking and Co-ordination Group and the Borough Management Board is on a quarterly basis. Reports are made available to Walsall Council, including the relevant Council Scrutiny panels in order to further ensure good governance and accountability.

Details on the Delivery Plans and Performance Reports can be found at: www.walsallpartnership.org.uk.

3. Communicating to Communities and Communities Participating

Communicating how the Walsall Plan is being delivered and its impact on key issues for the Borough is supported by a range of media including social media, quarterly Area Partnership newsletters, and an annual partnership newsletter made available to partner agencies, Ward Members and the local community through community venues and via the internet.

It is the intention that communities are continuously involved in the delivery of the Walsall Plan and the related Delivery Plans. On that basis methods for public participation will be focussed through the Borough's Area Partnerships'. For further information on this and Area Partnerships please visit www.walsallpartnership.org.uk or contact the Communities and Partnerships service using the details below.

3.1 Further Information

For further information on the Walsall Plan please contact:-

Communities & Partnerships
Walsall Council
Civic Centre
Darwall Street
Walsall
WS1 1TP

Telephone: 01922 650000

Email: walsallpartnership@walsall.gov.uk

Website: www.walsallpartnership.org.uk