

## **Cabinet – 6 February 2008**

### **Corporate Plan 2008/09**

<b>Portfolio:</b>	Councillor John O'Hare
<b>Service:</b>	Corporate Performance Management
<b>Wards:</b>	All
<b>Key decision:</b>	Yes
<b>Forward plan:</b>	Yes

#### **1. Summary of report**

This report sets out for approval the council's Corporate Plan for 2008/09, which is attached as an appendix. This plan confirms the council's commitment to the shared vision for the borough of Walsall set out in the draft Sustainable Community Strategy, developed through the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, and sets out the main objectives the Council will be pursuing over the year, to improve the services the council provides to citizens and to make the borough a better place to live, work and in which to invest.

#### **2. Recommendations**

- 2.1 That cabinet approves the Corporate Plan for 2008/09 as a key part of the council's policy framework, and to refer it on to Council for adoption.
- 2.2 That cabinet delegate to the Executive Director for Regeneration authority to make minor changes to the Corporate Plan, as submitted to this meeting, including changes to reflect any revision there may be to the Sustainable Community Strategy arising from the current period of public and partner consultation on that document, to conclude on 19 February.

#### **3. Background information**

- 3.1 At its meeting of 19 December 2007, cabinet considered a report, set in the context of the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy for the borough, and building on discussion at the joint cabinet/Strategic leadership team away day on 31 October, on the development of a new shared vision for the borough, taking the council and its partners' vision and aspirations for the borough forward, beyond 2008, towards 2021.
- 3.2 Cabinet, on 19 December, resolved to
  - (1) note the contents of this report;

- (2) endorse the emerging vision for the borough, to 2021, developed through the WBSP, and set out in this report
  - (3) endorse the outcomes framework, also set out in this report, as the cornerstone of the council's Corporate Plan for 2008/09, to be prepared for submission to cabinet in February, and for performance planning by directorates and council services
  - (4) That any significant changes to the emerging vision, arising from the WBSP's current consultations with partners, are brought to cabinet as they emerge.
- 3.3 The attached Corporate Plan reflects the new shared vision, and the outcomes framework, and provides the key council document through which the council, its directorates and services will deliver the authority's commitment to the shared vision, priorities and actions.

#### **4. Resource considerations**

- 4.1 **Financial:** The council pledges and key service actions identified in the corporate plan are accounted for within the draft 2008/09 budget, also presented for approval at tonight's meeting.
- 4.2 **Legal:** The publication by the council of a Corporate Plan, to be supplemented in June 2008 by a set of performance data, including the statutory Best Value performance indicators, for the year 2007/08, complies with government guidance on the publication of annual performance plans, as set out in Circular 05/2006 of the former Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
- 4.3 **Staffing:** The development of a forward looking vision, linked to directorate, service and team actions and targets, provides a clear focus on addressing the priorities for the borough and its people, for all council employees to be taken forward through the year ahead via the Individual Performance Management (IPM) process, as set out in the council's Corporate Integrated Performance Planning Framework (the CIPPF).

#### **5. Citizen impact**

The priorities for the year ahead, and the set of [add number] pledges set out in this report have been developed in the context of the council, and the borough partnership's on-going analysis and assessment of the borough, its communities and local needs and priorities, through the 'State of the Borough' and People & Place Perspectives work. The pledges address issues and concerns expressed by partners, organisations and residents through consultation including consultation towards the council's budget for the year ahead. The achievement of the Council's pledges will significantly improve local services for the benefit of residents. The achievement of the pledges will enable local people to judge how well the Council is doing; feedback on the delivery of these pledges will be provided through the year in the Beacon Index, and also via the council publication, Walsall Pride.

## **6. Community safety**

Community safety, the reduction of crime, and of the fear of crime in our communities, are key elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy, and these issues are reflected in the new shared vision which looks forward to a borough which “will be a good place to live, work and invest, where people get on well with each other [and] get around easily and safely”. The council’s own outcomes framework, developed to focus the council’s efforts to deliver our contribution to the shared vision and the Sustainable Community Strategy, focuses on seven citizen (or customer) outcomes, including outcomes to ensure that citizens are “safe and secure” and “free from discrimination or harassment”.

Three of the new pledges relate to community safety issues.

## **7. Environmental impact**

Likewise, the new shared vision includes a focus looking towards a borough which “will be a good place to live, work and invest, where people consider the impact of what we do now on future generations, feel proud to live, having high quality distinctive design of buildings and spaces, where there is a wide range of facilities for people to use and enjoy, and everyone has the chance to live in a home fit for their purpose and for the future, and where people can get around easily and safely”. The council’s own outcomes framework focuses on action to ensure that citizens enjoy a high quality of life – clean, green, and mobile”.

A significant number of the new pledges relate to environmental issues.

## **8. Performance and risk management issues**

### **8.1 Risk:**

The Corporate Plan, and the set of pledges set out within it, have been risk assessed as an integral part of service planning processes.

### **8.2 Performance management:**

The Council has a hierarchy of plans, including budget plans, within the Corporate Integrated Planning and Performance Framework (CIPPF) to ensure that high level corporate priorities are translated into detailed plans throughout the organisation. The Corporate Plan sets out high level corporate priorities and this plan is underpinned by directorate, service and team plans which set out more specific targets and improvements which are necessary in order to achieve our priorities. All pledges and key actions will be identified in the appropriate directorate, service and team plans, currently being finalised for the year ahead.

Pledges are monitored by the relevant directorate and by the Strategic Leadership Team, with regular reviews presented to cabinet as part of the Beacon Index.

## 9. Equality implications

Equality is a key theme within the new shared vision for the borough, which looks towards a borough where “people get on well with each other [and] people are our strength”. The council’s own outcomes framework, developed to focus the council’s efforts to deliver our contribution to the shared vision and the Sustainable Community Strategy, includes a specific focus on action to ensure that citizens are “free from discrimination or harassment”. The Corporate Plan reiterates the council’s core values, which include respect and equality.

## 10. Consultation

The shared vision for the borough, set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, and central to the council’s corporate priorities and to the Corporate Plan, as been developed by the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership following a detailed consultation programme, Vision 2021. Directorate priorities, and the set of pledges set out in this plan reflect the needs and priorities of local people, and our stakeholders, based upon information, including demographic information held by council services, and on customer feedback, including the recent budget consultation programme, and as set out in the People & Place Perspectives report.

### Background papers

All published.

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Tim Johnson  
Executive Director

25 January 2008



Councillor John O'Hare  
Leader of the Council

25 January 2008

**Walsall Council**

**Corporate Plan**

**2008/09**

**February 2008**

**Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council**

# Contents

Page

1. Setting the scene – introduction by the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive
2. The purpose of this document
3. Looking to the future – our vision for the borough of Walsall, our priorities and our pledges for 2008/09
4. Holding fast to our values
5. Acting on the views of local people
6. Delivering our vision – directorate priorities for the year
7. Working together – the new Sustainable Community Strategy and our Local Area Agreement
8. Using resources effectively
9. Making it count – our performance management framework
10. Sources of further information

# 1. Setting the scene

The Council's Corporate Plan for 2008/09 is a key document for the authority, for our directorates and our services, and for the community at large – the borough and the people that we are here to serve. This year's plan is particularly important, as it coincides with the publication of the new Sustainable Communities Strategy, which we have helped to develop with our partners in the Walsall Partnership. Walsall Council is 100% behind the new Sustainable Communities Strategy, and has signed up to the new shared vision for the borough, looking ahead to the year 2021, that the Strategy seeks to achieve.

This year's Corporate Plan then marks the transition from the council's Vision 2008, and the ten priorities that underpinned, and helped define that vision, to the new shared vision for the borough, that Walsall will be a great place to live, work and invest, where.....

- people get on well with each other
- growing up is as good as it can be and young people fulfil their potential
- people are our strength and have the skills and attitude required by employers
- people consider the impact of what we do now on future generations
- people feel proud to live, having high quality distinctive design of buildings and spaces
- there is a wide range of facilities for people to use and enjoy
- everyone has the chance to live in a home fit for their purpose and for the future
- people can get around easily and safely
- there are more and better jobs for local people
- people support and look after each other
- people can live an independent and healthy life

The Walsall Partnership, formerly known as the Walsall Borough Strategic Partnership, brings together the council and all other local stakeholders, ensuring maximum impact from our resources. The new Sustainable Communities Strategy, linked through to the Local Area Agreement, will ensure that we all focus on this vision, and the delivery of positive outcomes for local people, in the areas that matter most.

For the council, this Corporate Plan provides our commitment to do this – at a strategic level. The plan provides the framework, and focus, to shape all of our operational services, our plans and strategies, and our contributions to other partnership activity. It does not contain everything that the council is doing – these important details can be found in directorate, service and team plans, and in plans and strategies specific to services, functions, themes, or localities.

Quite rightly our new vision is focussed on the needs, the priorities and the emerging issues for our borough and for local people. It is customer focussed. However, for the council to contribute as effectively as we want to do, meeting our own expectations but also matching the expectations and reaching the standards demanded by our citizens and our partners, we need to retain a focus on our own organisation – to continue our drive to transform our services, our processes, and our ways of working, so that we meet those expectations, and make full use of the resources that are available to us, with maximum impact where it is most needed.

This Corporate Plan:

- Focuses the efforts of all our employees on the issues that matter to citizens

- Ensures we put resources firmly behind our priorities
- Strengthens our joint working with our partners through the new Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement
- Enables local people and our partners to judge how well we are doing and whether we are achieving our objectives
- Sets out the part we will play in the collective efforts of the Borough Partnership.

We hope you find this plan interesting and informative and welcome any comment you have about it.

Councillor John O'Hare  
Leader of the Council

Paul Sheehan  
Chief Executive



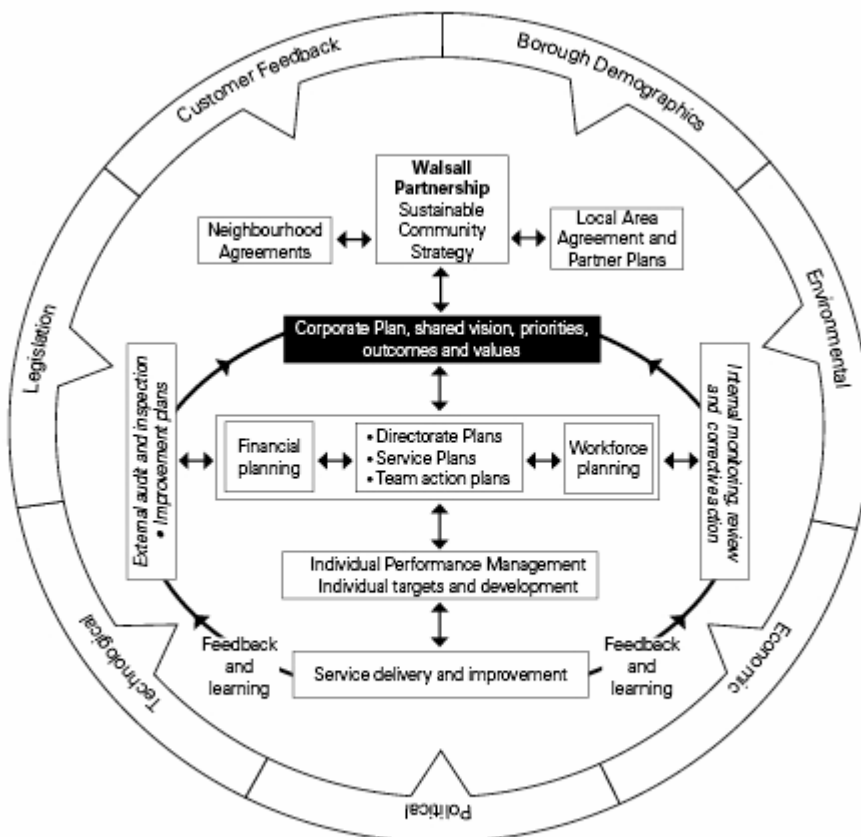
## 2. The purpose of this document

The council publishes a Corporate Plan each year as a key element of the corporate integrated planning and performance framework (CIPPF). The plan sets out the council's vision for the borough, its aims and objectives, and the key priorities for the year ahead, both corporately and within each directorate. The plan reflects the council's contribution to the work of the Walsall Partnership, and the new Sustainable Community Strategy for the borough, and the Local Area Agreement which will take it forward.

The Corporate Plan is published alongside the council's annual budget, as it is a key driver in setting the budget for the year and the medium term. The Corporate Plan, the budget, and other key plans and strategies of the council, and of the wider partnership, are informed by an understanding of the people, nature and demographics of our borough, captured within a comprehensive document 'People & Place Perspectives: a picture of our community' which is available on the council's web site. This combines a range of primary statistical and trend data, customer feedback, and analysis which has been used along with other information to undertake needs analyses. This has supported the design and delivery of our services, through service planning, and this Corporate Plan which in turn has driven the council's budget proposals.

The CIPPF diagram below shows how our services are designed, delivered and performance managed, and how our service delivery and financial planning are reflected in, and informed by this Corporate Plan. Further details relating to the CIPPF can be found in chapter 9.

**Figure 1: The Council's Corporate Integrated Planning & Performance Framework**



### 3. Looking to the future – our vision for the borough of Walsall, our priorities and our pledges for 2008/09

During 2007/08, the council worked closely with partner organisation through the Walsall Partnership to develop and deliver the wide ranging consultation programme 'Vision 2021', and to develop key analyses of the borough, its communities, and customer feedback, including the Walsall Partnership's 'State of the Borough' report, and the council's 'People and Place Perspectives' report, which have informed the development of the new Sustainable Communities Strategy, the overarching community plan for the borough, and, internally, the preparation of the council's corporate priorities, set out in this plan, and our policy-led budget for 2008/09 and beyond.

The Sustainable Communities Strategy (SCS), described in greater detail in chapter 7 of this plan, includes clear targeted plans to be delivered by local partners, singly and in partnership. The SCS informs, and sits at the heart of the plans of the individual partners, including the council. The council is committed to the SCS, and to the delivery of our own contribution to the implementation of the strategy, and the action plans, including the Local Area Agreement, which will make it happen. To this end, the council has endorsed, and signed up to the new **shared vision for the borough** of Walsall, looking ahead to 2021, that is set out in the SCS, that

"Walsall will be a great place to live, work and invest, where.....

- people get on well with each other
- growing up is as good as it can be and young people fulfil their potential
- people are our strength and have the skills and attitude required by employers
- people consider the impact of what we do now on future generations
- people feel proud to live, having high quality distinctive design of buildings and spaces
- there is a wide range of facilities for people to use and enjoy
- everyone has the chance to live in a home fit for their purpose and for the future
- people can get around easily and safely
- there are more and better jobs for local people
- people support and look after each other
- people can live an independent and healthy life"

This is the council's vision for the borough of Walsall, its communities, and its citizens.

To underpin, and ensure that the council focuses its resources on the new vision, and delivers its contribution to the achievement of that vision, a new outcomes framework including key organisational drivers for the council has been developed, and adopted, built around seven **citizen outcomes**, each focussed on action to ensure that citizens are:

- Healthy
- Safe and secure
- Aspiring and achieving
- Enjoying a high quality of life – clean, green, and mobile

- Active - contributing to their communities
- Financially & materially secure - achieving economic well-being
- Free from discrimination or harassment

These citizen outcomes are customer facing, and are be backed up by three **internal drivers** to provide the momentum to deliver the council's commitment to the SCS, the shared vision, and our citizen outcomes. These are:

- Effective use of resources
- Delivering quality services and meeting customer expectations
- Taking forward the transformation agenda

Together, these provide a tightly drawn framework through which this council can set out directorate, service and team priorities, and deliver the outcomes of the SCS. Accordingly, these seven citizen outcomes and three organisational drivers, supportive of the new vision, provide the cornerstone for our performance planning processes, reflecting the Corporate Integrated Planning & Performance Framework (CIPPF). In addition, they are supported and 'made real' by a set of pledges, each of which provides tangible evidence of the priority given to one of the outcomes or drivers, and which are monitored throughout the year via the Beacon Index.

### **Citizens are healthy**

Our pledge for the year ahead is that:

- We will adapt the homes of 200 people with a disability so they can live independently
- We will increase number of people carrying out regular physical activity

### **Citizens are safe and secure**

Our pledge for the year ahead is that:

- We will improve support to families so that the number of looked after children is reduced to the median of similar councils
- We will take firm action against nuisance drinking in public places
- We will ensure more parks staff are present and visible in public places
- We will increase our actions to tackle graffiti, anti-social behaviour and fly tipping

### **Citizens are aspiring and achieving**

Our pledge for the year ahead is that:

- We will reduce the gap between Walsall and other similar councils to less than 5% points for pupils achieving 5 A\*-C GCSEs (including English & Maths)
- We will increase the attainment of Pakistani and Bangladeshi pupils at Key Stage 4: an increase of 12% for 5 A\*-C for Pakistani pupils rising to 35%, and an increase of 10% for 5 A\*-C for Bangladeshi pupils rising to 38%

### **Citizens are enjoying a high quality of life – clean, green, and mobile**

Our pledge for the year ahead is that:

- We will improve services to children with disability by increasing the number respite foster care breaks by 10%
- We will spend £2.5 million on regeneration and improvement projects focussed on Walsall town centre, district and neighbourhood centres and strategic corridors
- We will maintain weekly waste collections for all households and begin kerbside collection of plastic and cardboard.
- We will complete the town centre transport package to ease congestion and improve the environment in Walsall town centre.

### **Citizens are active - contributing to their communities**

Our pledge for the year ahead is that:

- We will actively promote opportunities for volunteering in Walsall; including opportunities within the council
- We will support at least 60 community and voluntary groups through our community cash scheme

### **Citizens are financially & materially secure - achieving economic well-being**

Our pledge for the year ahead is that:

- We will reduce child poverty by increasing the take-up of free school meals
- We will implement 'Think Walsall' by December 2008 to generate more training and employment opportunities for Walsall people
- We will reduce the average time it takes to process benefit claims to 28 days

### **Citizens are free from discrimination or harassment**

Our pledge for the year ahead is that:

- We will hold a community event in each Local Neighbourhood Partnership area to celebrate their cultural diversity

### **Effective use of resources**

Our pledge for the year ahead is that:

- We will increase the in-year collection of council tax from 97.0% to 97.2%
- We will promote reduction of energy consumption across the borough and reduce energy use in council buildings through investment in improved energy management and better housekeeping

### **Delivering quality services and meeting customer expectations**

Our pledge for the year ahead is that:

- We will increase by 25% the number of letters sent out to citizens informing them of planning applications for neighbouring properties, and introduce a new tailored service of building inspections for domestic extensions
- We will extend the range of services available through our contact centre

- We will increase the number of places in Walsall where civil ceremonies can take place

### **Taking forward the transformation agenda**

Our pledge for the year ahead is that:

- We will deliver improvements to Bloxwich, Pleck, Streetly, South Walsall, Pheasey, Beechdale and Darlaston libraries
- We will deliver £2 million savings through a sharpened approach to procurement

## 4. Holding fast to our values

As we move forward, working towards a new vision for the borough of Walsall, to 2021, seeking to transform our services to meet the needs and expectations of citizens and service users, we hold fast to our core values of **respect, integrity, equality, listening** and **excellence** which will continue to guide us in our day to day work.

Through our commitment to these values, we signal to everyone the beliefs, behaviours and principles that underpin all that we do. These shared and agreed values set out what the council stands for and how it will behave:

### Respect

- We will respect every individual – our citizens, stakeholders and staff – and their differences and diversity
- We will have mutual respect for the professionalism of individuals, teams and partners – communication will be valued and criticism will be constructive
- In respecting everyone we will behave with civility, courtesy, decency, dignity, understanding, consideration and tolerance

### Integrity

- We will be honest, open and consistent in all our dealings with our stakeholders, so that we may earn and maintain their trust
- We will keep our promises, be accountable and take responsibility for our actions
- We will demonstrate decisive, responsive, impartial and fair leadership

### Equality

- We will, through our policies, statements and actions, include, promote and celebrate the great diversity of individuals and cultures across the borough
- We will gear our resources to ensure that our citizens and staff will see and feel real fairness and equality for all
- We will make council services accessible, and tailored to the needs of all, regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, religion, lifestyle or disability

### Listening

- We will listen and consult residents, community organisations, voluntary groups and staff – caring about and acting upon their views and concerns
- We will learn from any comments or complaints that local people may have and ensure they are responded to effectively
- We will consult citizens on major changes and involve them in the things that matter in their community, working with them to deliver the vision at local levels

### Excellence

- We will strive to become an excellent council – forward-facing, outward-looking and constantly seeking to develop and improve our services in ways most meaningful to citizens
- We will learn, develop and work effectively and efficiently, acting as one council to deliver our vision for the benefit of all Walsall citizens

- We will empower, trust and value our staff by providing the support, training, communication and opportunities to develop the ownership, responsibility and confidence to make decisions, solve problems and fulfil our potential to achieve continuous improvement for the benefit of local people.

## 5. Acting on the views of local people

Walsall Council is committed to working with, listening to and involving local people in our decision making and citizens and communities are at the centre of what we do and the services we provide. Effective consultation and engagement activity ensures that our focus, in our policies, our plans and service strategies, and our budgets, is firmly on the issues and concerns of our communities, our stakeholders, and our citizens.

Consultation is essentially about two-way communication. It's about involving people to gain an understanding of ideas, concerns and opinions. By seeking the views of residents and then acting on the results, the council can ensure that its services better reflect needs and aspirations of people who live and work in the borough.

We aim to be a listening and responsive organisation and we use a wide range of consultation methods to understand better what matters to residents.

Our approach to consultation reflects the Community Engagement Strategy, agreed by all the partners in the Walsall Partnership. We also respect the principles of the Local Compact (see chapter 7).

This chapter highlights some of the consultation activities we have been involved in over the past year, and the key themes that have emerged. It also outlines how we will intend to develop our approach to consultation and engagement for the year ahead.

Each year the council undertakes a wide and varied programme of consultation and community engagement activity. We do this to:

- Obtain valuable feedback about our services to enable us to tailor them to meet the needs of all our users and citizens
- Gather citizen intelligence to enable us to identify the changing needs and priorities of local communities, ensuring that we can move fast to change our services accordingly, and develop services to meet local needs
- Generally, plan our services better, and ensure that we use our resources appropriately and effectively.

Consultation and engagement for the council covers a wide range of activities, and includes the use of a wide variety of different approaches, tools and techniques including:

- Postal questionnaires
- Focus groups and residents' workshops
- Public meetings and events
- Telephone and face to face interviews
- Online web surveys and polls
- Comments, compliments and complaints forms
- Mystery shopping
- Use of creative arts techniques and other innovative methods

Within the council, consultation and engagement currently happens in many ways. At the centre of our approach are the nine Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNPs), each covering either two or three of our electoral wards. These bring together ward councillors, other public service providers, and local people and groups, and provide a forum for discussing, and shaping local service provision. Each LNP is supported by a framework of community based groups reflecting local issues and priorities.



Other formal and informal mechanisms for consultation include:

- Our 1,250 strong Citizens' Panel
- Groups and panels of users of specific council services
- Youth Opinions Unite (YOU), our umbrella group for the views of young people
- Schools councils
- Liaison with community and voluntary organisations
- Specific service user groups
- Liaison through the Community Empowerment Network (CEN), and fora such as the Disability Forum and the BME Alliance
- Friends of local parks groups

### **Key findings**

Some of the key themes and messages identified in recent consultation activity have included:

#### **Best Value General Satisfaction Survey 2006/07**

Results from the statutory 2006/07 Best Value General Satisfaction Survey, part of the set of Best Value performance indicators for 2006/07, show that overall satisfaction with the way the council runs things has improved from 34% (2003/04 comparative survey) to 45% (2006/07), an increase of +11 percentage points.

Furthermore, two in three (66%) of 2006/07 BVPI respondents rated themselves as satisfied with their local area as a place to live, with one in ten (10%) rating themselves as very satisfied. Conversely just 6% were dissatisfied.

The majority of respondents to the 2006/07 BVPI survey agreed that the council treats all types of people fairly (67% a great deal/to some extent), is working to make the area cleaner and greener (66%), and is making the local area a better place to live (63%).

Overall, one third (33%) of respondents to the 2006/07 BVPI survey felt that the council keep them very or fairly well informed. In addition one fifth (22%) were satisfied with the opportunities we provide for participation in local decision making. In terms of influencing local decision making affecting the local area, the majority of respondents (68%) disagreed that they can influence decisions affecting the local area, while the corresponding 32% felt that they can.

However, encouragingly, one quarter (25%) of all respondents reported that they would like to be more involved in the decisions we make and a further 49% say that it would depend on the issue in question.

#### **Budget consultation**

Each year the council undertakes comprehensive public consultation in preparation for the budget setting process. During September and October 2007 we consulted over 1,000 people including residents, stakeholders, young and older people, people with disabilities, black and minority ethnic groups, local community groups and businesses on how the council should spend its 2008/09 budget.

Findings from budget consultation towards the 2008/09 budget revealed that a clean, green, safe environment is at the forefront of most peoples' minds when thinking about what makes somewhere a good place to live. Litter free streets, well maintained parks and

open spaces, safe, secure communities with local visible policing are top priorities for local people.

In terms of what makes somewhere a good place to live<sup>1</sup>, Citizens' Panel respondents prioritised the following top five aspects:

- Level of crime (69%)
- Health services (50%)
- Clean streets (49%)
- Education provision (40%)
- Activities for teenagers (27%)

The top five aspects are largely consistent with other local survey results (2006/07 BVPI survey) and with trends nationally.

Citizens' Panel members were further asked to specify which aspects most need improving, the top five were:

- The level of crime (50%)
- Road and pavement repairs (46%)
- Activities for teenagers (45%)
- Clean streets (41%)
- The level of traffic congestion (38%)

Looking at specific vision priorities, consultation has highlighted:

- The council priority 'ensuring all people are safe and secure' remains the top priority for local people, being significantly more important than any other of the council priorities<sup>2</sup>
- Anti social behaviour remains a key concern for all groups, in particular younger and older respondents who express concerns about youths hanging around on the streets, dropping litter and causing damage to property
- Local people think that anti-social behaviour should be tackled through more visible policing and law enforcement, as well as providing more activities for young people
- Results show that 'a clean and green borough' is the second most important council priority
- The consistent message is that people want to see clean streets, clearing up litter hotspots, removal of graffiti, investing in deprived areas cleaning them up and improving the general look of the area
- Recycling is seen as important and many residents want to see the council actively encouraging people to recycle more. Residents are generally satisfied with the kerbside recycling service, but many want to see the extension of the scheme to include the collection of cardboard and plastics

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<sup>1</sup> Panel members were asked to choose from a list of 20 the 5 aspects they think makes somewhere a good place to live. Citizens' Panel budget consultation survey, September 2007. Base 518.

<sup>2</sup> Budget consultation money allocation exercise. Base 469.

- Overall, residents are satisfied with the household waste collection service and the majority of residents do not want to see changes made to the frequency of the collection
- Local parks and open spaces are much appreciated by the community, but seen as in need of investment and improvement in particular addressing security and personal safety in parks
- Being able to travel in and around the borough as well as to areas further afield is an important aspect of an individual's quality of life. Being independent is especially important to younger and older people and those with disabilities. Whilst transport links are perceived to be good in the area, local people want the council to influence transport providers to create a public transport system that is cheaper, cleaner and safe, and ensure that it reaches all areas of the borough
- A good standard of education is seen as imperative for the future of the borough. Lack of basic skills in young people is a concern amongst residents. Whilst generally education in the borough is seen as good there are aspects where respondents call for improvements including the quality of teaching staff, school buildings and facilities
- Tackling obesity, promoting healthy eating and exercise and providing good access to health services are seen by many as the main priorities for making Walsall a healthy and caring place. Funding and supporting carers, voluntary and community organisations and improving services for older people and people with disabilities were important issues for specific groups
- A high proportion of people are satisfied with their neighbourhood as a place to live and have a strong sense of belonging - the borough's green spaces, living near friends and family, and the borough's geographic location are valued by local people - but more needs to be done to make people proud of the borough
- Local people believe that making improvements where they are most in need will help make people feel proud of Walsall. Local people identify the street scene, entertainment and shopping facilities as key areas for investment
- Residents would like to see more shops, entertainment, and leisure, cultural and recreational facilities in the borough: places where people can come together to socialise and have fun. A clean and green, safe borough with an image encompassing success, educational attainment, prosperity and economic well being will draw in new businesses, retain those that are already located here, attract tourists and make residents feel proud of the borough and confident in its future
- Thinking to the future, people want to see the borough grow to be a strong modern economic centre where advanced new business thrives and provides local jobs for local people
- Representatives of the business sector highlight the importance of targeting training and support to owner-managers of small to medium enterprises, to encourage them to grow and to stay in the borough. In addition they feel the council should encourage volunteering as a means of increasing the employability of local people

- Local people want to be given sufficient opportunities to have their say, and want to know that their voice is being heard and that their concerns are being acted on. Just listening is not enough, feeding back on actions and outcomes is an essential part of the process, something that residents want more of.

### **Consultation in 2008/09**

In 2008/09, consultation and community engagement remain a key priority for the council.

We will:

- Contribute fully to the Partnership Engagement Forum established in 2006 by the Walsall Partnership as a means to coordinate consultation activity across the range of partners, and to share our results
- Continue to work closely with the nine Local Neighbourhood Partnerships (LNPs)
- Make full use of our Citizens' Panel of 1,250 residents, undertaking another programme of surveys providing strategic information on current issues and priorities
- Work with our partners to undertake the new statutory Communities & Local Government Place Survey in 2008/09, implementing action plans to manage improvements identified and ensure that our services address the views and meet the expectations of residents
- Local Involvement Networks (LINKs) are being established throughout England and intend to give local people a greater voice in the provision of local care and health services. We will endeavour to support the development of the Walsall LINK and undertake our duty to monitor the contract put in place
- Ensure that budget consultation is inclusive and that results feed into the budget setting process at the earliest stage possible
- Continue to develop e-consultation methods and maximise the use of the council website for obtaining views and opinions and feeding back results and outcomes of consultation
- Continue to build upon the existing strong links with existing groups including Youth Opinions Unite (YOU) and the Over 50s Forum
- Work to improve the way we feedback consultation findings and outcomes, ensuring that the feedback given is timely, appropriate, accessible and representative
- Use a variety of channels to feedback consultation findings including the local press and council publications (magazines and newsletters) and maximise electronic communication channels for customer feedback.

## **6. Delivering our vision – directorate priorities for the year**

This chapter of the Plan sets out the key priorities for each of our directorates during the year ahead, that will be reflected and set out in more detail in directorate, service and team plans.

### **Our directorates' priorities**

Within the context provided by the new shared vision for the borough, and within a framework provided by the council's new citizen outcomes and internal drivers (see chapter 3), directorates have each developed their own plans. Set out below are the key priorities for each directorate for the year ahead:

#### **Children and Young People**

The directorate provides a wide range of services; children's social care, education support through Education Walsall, Youth Services, Youth Offending, ICT, Procurement and Print and Design. The directorate's priorities are defined by the five 'Every Child Matters' outcomes which have informed the council's new outcomes framework. The Director for Children's Services has a statutory duty to lead the cooperation of council directorates and partner agencies in the delivery of improved outcomes for children and young people so that 'growing up in Walsall is as good as it can be'. Consequently our priorities extend beyond the immediate control of the council and so rely on our community and partnership leadership role. During 2008/09 we will lead other directorates and partners in delivering these priorities:

##### **Citizens are healthy**

- To halt the rise in obesity among children aged 4-11
- To reduce the rate of infant mortality

##### **Citizens are safe and secure**

- To improve support available to local families and reduce the number of looked after children
- To reduce the number of domestic violence registrations on the Child Protection Register

##### **Citizens are aspiring and achieving**

- To reduce the gap between Walsall and other similar council areas in the percentage of school pupils achieving 5 or more GCSE's (grade A-C) including Maths and English
- To increase the proportion of looked after children achieving 5 or more GCSE's.

##### **Citizens are enjoying a high quality of life – clean, green, and mobile**

- To improve services to children with a disability by increasing the number of respite foster care breaks
- To increase young people's participation in high quality PE and sport

### **Citizens are active - contributing to their communities**

- To increase young people's participation in positive activities
- To reduce the number of first time entrants to the youth justice system

### **Citizens are financially & materially secure - achieving economic well-being**

- To reduce the proportion of young people not in employment, education or training
- To reduce child poverty by ... and increasing the take-up of free school meals

### **Citizens are free from discrimination or harassment**

- To increase the attainment at Key Stage 4 (GSCE) of pupils with a Pakistani or Bangladeshi background

### **Making effective use of resources**

- To deliver £2 million savings through a sharpened approach to procurement

### **Delivering quality services and meeting customer expectations**

- To provide Integrated ICT support to enhance delivery of council services
- To use regular feedback from children and young people to drive our planning and service improvement

### **Taking forward the transformation agenda**

- To fully utilise ICT to enhance business support systems and deliver increased efficiencies
- To deliver whole council print strategy to increase efficiency by reducing high cost desktop printing

## **Corporate Services**

The directorate provides a range of services and undertakes key functions central to the council's governance arrangements including the statutory s151 (Chief Finance) Officer and statutory s5 (Monitoring) Officer. Services include, in relation to finance, financial planning, reporting, analysis, accountancy, treasury management, systems and advice, payroll and pensions and insurance, revenues and benefits and welfare rights, and internal audit and, in respect of legal and constitutional services, services relating to contentious, non-contentious legal matters including planning and employment law, social services, and conveyancing, support for cabinet, council and regulatory committees, and for the Mayor, and members' services. The directorate works closely with, and supports the Audit and Standards regulatory committees. Corporate performance management, transformation and human resources & development, which previously formed part of the directorate structure, currently report to the Executive Director for Regeneration, and are included in the regeneration directorate plan for 2008/09

During 2008/09 our priorities are:

### **Citizens are financially & materially secure - achieving economic well-being**

- To build upon our previous year's performance improvement in processing benefit claims

### **Making effective use of resources**

- To continue to build on our strong arrangements for use of resources

- To continue to deliver effective financial management and planning and a secure financial future
- To deliver an unqualified set of accounts
- To continue to provide an effective system of internal audit

### **Delivering quality services and meeting customer expectations**

- To consolidate our improved performance in the collection of Council Tax and NNDR rates

### **Taking forward the transformation agenda**

- To continue to demonstrate sound corporate governance arrangements

## **Neighbourhood Services**

The directorate is responsible for frontline services to local people – the roads and pavements, local libraries, museums, galleries and leisure centres, the condition of public buildings such as schools, the cleanliness of the streets, local parks and areas of public open space, and the quality of the air. The directorate is responsible for trading standards, environmental health, licensing services and emergency planning services, and also for neighbourhood partnerships and programmes, equality & diversity, and for the Safer Walsall Borough Partnership. During 2008/09 our priorities are:

### **Citizens are healthy**

- to deliver our play strategy
- to work to increase levels of physical activity

### **Citizens are safe and secure**

- to publish and begin to implement a new Alcohol Strategy
- to complete and begin to deliver a new Community Safety Plan for the borough
- to publish and implement a new Community Cohesion Strategy
- to focus on community safety, crime reduction and tackling anti-social behaviour – providing reassurance to local people

### **Citizens are aspiring and achieving**

- to complete the merger of the College of Continuing Education and the Walsall Community College to improve the quality and take up of adult education provision

### **Citizens are enjoying a high quality of life – clean, green, and mobile**

- to increase the amount of waste that is recycled
- to reduce congestion in our town centres by introducing new decriminalised parking arrangements
- to modernise our enforcement arrangements
- to introduce the new highways maintenance contract

### **Citizens are active - contributing to their communities**

- to develop, and begin to implement a new voluntary sector strategy
- to further strengthen Local Neighbourhood Partnerships
- to implement new lease arrangements for community buildings
- to increase activity across the generations

### **Citizens are financially & materially secure - achieving economic well-being**

- to increase the number of vocational courses provided by the College of Continuing Education, increasing the qualifications of local people

### **Citizens are free from discrimination or harassment**

- to continue to tackle racist incidents
- to produce, with Walsall teaching Primary Care Trust, a new interpretation, translation and transcription service
- to develop and implement a Community Cohesion Strategy

### **Making effective use of resources**

- to manage our resources effectively
- to deliver our health and safety action plan
- to progress with our plans for the depot
- to generate new income through sponsorship
- to make better use of council office space through the delivery of our Accommodation Strategy
- to take action to reduce our sickness absence rates
- to make progress with Investor in People accreditation
- to strive to achieve the GO local government award

### **Delivering quality services and meeting customer expectations**

- to implement a business continuity plan across all service areas
- to move ahead with the Equality Standard, working towards Level 4
- to expand the customer contact centre
- to increase the number of services awarded Chartermark

### **Taking forward the transformation agenda**

- to transform the catering service
- to implement major Lottery funded projects including Bloxwich Library, the Arboretum and Playbus
- to deliver improvements to our libraries
- to deliver a strategy for leisure centre improvement

## **Regeneration**

The directorate works to develop, coordinate, deliver and promote sustainable regeneration across Walsall to ensure that our borough remains prosperous and vibrant. The directorate is responsible for development and delivery, planning and building control, strategic regeneration, town centre management and communications; the directorate also provides the council lead role for the Walsall Partnership and Walsall New Deal for Communities. Currently, corporate performance management, transformation and human resources & development, also report to the Executive Director for Regeneration, and are included in the directorate plan for 2008/09. Priorities for 2008/2009 will be to deliver real and meaningful outcomes for Walsall residents, fulfil our statutory responsibilities and meet our partner and public expectations, focussed upon:

### **Citizens are healthy**

- introducing employee well being measures including health fairs, health surveillance and stress reduction initiatives

### **Citizens are enjoying a high quality of life – clean, green, and mobile**



- supporting and developing district, local centres and priority neighbourhoods for those who live, work and visit the borough
- enhancing the image of the borough's strategic corridors and gateways
- promoting economic, environmental and social sustainability within the borough
- developing an effective and appropriate transport infrastructure to aid the growth and prosperity of the borough
- transforming Walsall town centre in to a competitive and vibrant sub-regional centre
- supporting the delivering of the Local Area Agreement, Sustainable Urban Development and City Region Programmes for the benefit of the citizens of Walsall

### **Citizens are financially & materially secure - achieving economic well-being**

- stimulating and support activities that help to address worklessness and help to improve the skills levels of all Walsall citizens, especially those experiencing disadvantage
- stimulating enterprise and business competitiveness in Walsall's economy
- implementing a fair pay scheme for Council employees using the national job evaluation scheme

### **Citizens are free from discrimination or harassment**

- reviewing the disciplinary and grievance procedure for council employees
- training managers in effective people management including managing discipline and grievance
- achieving Equality Standard level 3 across the council and ensuring that the diversity of our community is reflected throughout service delivery.

### **Making effective use of resources**

- continuing to optimise our strong performance management and improvement arrangements to support delivery of better services for local people
- implementing new recruitment and retention strategies including new pay and rewards models
- reducing the amount of office space we use by 20% over the next 4 years by making better use of our town centre accommodation
- rationalise, standardise and increase flexibility in business support services

### **Delivering quality services and meeting customer expectations**

- ensuring the effective delivery of our statutory and regulatory and contractually required services and obligations,
- delivering further improvements to the council's arrangements for consultation and engagement, maximising the value of the new Viewfinder database and use feedback proactively to improve service delivery
- delivering an excellent regeneration service which exceeds the expectations of our customers, partners and investors.
- deliver a best practice coordinated communications service
- improving the content of our website and increase accessibility to information and services.
- delivering a strong, clear and consistent brand identity for the council
- improving the availability of services through local access points and introduce a mobile access service that will visit neighbourhoods and communities across the borough.
- extending the availability of telephony services through our contact centre and improve the resolution of queries at first point of contact.

## **Taking forward the transformation agenda**

- managing the transition from Corporate Performance Assessment to Comprehensive Area Assessment
- influencing and being influenced by national, regional and local strategic policies and best practice to support the growth and regeneration of the borough
- deliver a strategic review of communications across all council services and functions making greater use of ICT to e-enable key Human Resources & Development processes including managing sickness absence, redeployment, and employee learning
- introducing a licence to manage programme to enable managers to better lead and manage organisational change
- through our transformation programme maximising efficiencies, assisting with service modernisation and improving the experience of customers when accessing services
- completing the remodelling of business support activity to improve efficiency and remove bureaucracy

## **Social Care and Inclusion**

The directorate is responsible for a wide range of frontline and support services to local people and support services providing essential infrastructure to front line services. Adult Services includes the Older People's Service; Younger Adults and Disability Service; Walsall Integrated Learning Disabilities Service; and Mental Health Service. Strategic Housing comprises Housing Strategy and Partnerships; Supporting People; Supported Housing; and Housing Standards and Improvement. During 2008/09 our priorities are to ensure that citizens are:

### **Healthy**

- We will deliver our assessments and services more promptly
- We will enable more people to live in their own home
- We will promote access to housing
- We will increase the availability of housing for people with specific housing needs (including extra care)

### **Safe and Secure**

- We will ensure our services safeguard the needs of users and vulnerable people
- We will optimise the continuity or recovery of directly provided and purchased services in the event of disruptive challenge

Underpinned by our commitment to:

### **Deliver quality services and meeting customer expectations**

- We will deliver services which reflect the views, needs and aspirations of local people and service users
- We will develop more locally accessible services offering greater choice
- We will continue to increase our understanding of the specific needs of black and minority ethnic citizens and will improve services
- We will utilise information and performance management systems in order to promote a culture of continuous improvement
- We will regularly review our business processes and will design and implement a single pathway to directorate services and council activities

- We will deliver our medium term financial plan within budget and service parameters whilst ensuring Gershon efficiencies
- We will continue to manage demands and competing priorities

**Make effective use of resources**

- We will continue to deliver more integrated and co-ordinated services with Health partners
- We will continue to work closely with other council services to ensure a holistic approach to meeting people's needs
- We will continue to develop good partnerships, specifically with the voluntary sector, to ensure delivery of improved quality of life outcomes

**Take forward the transformation agenda**

- We will continue to improve development of our staff teams to deliver more effective services
- We will improve the quality of the physical working environment by continuing to progress our asset management and best use of our property portfolio
- We will implement a workforce management plan

## **7. Working together – the new Sustainable Community Strategy and our Local Area Agreement**

We recognise that to be successful in achieving our objectives we need to work with a wide range of other organisations including other public agencies, voluntary and community groups, and the private sector.

Effective and inclusive partnerships, focussed on specific outcomes, are fundamental in enabling us to deliver our priorities and objectives. The council participates in the work of many local partnerships, formal and less formal, strategic and operational, contractual and based on pooled resources, statutory and voluntary.

Central to partnership working within the borough is the Walsall Partnership, established as the local strategic partnership required by law. The Walsall Partnership brings together the council's leadership with key partners - police, health economy, housing providers, local business, community and voluntary organisations, schools and colleges. The Partnership is responsible for the borough's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), and, jointly with the council, for the Local Area Agreement (LAA), which will help deliver that plan.

The SCS has been prepared as the over-arching plan for the Borough; it provides the shared vision for 2021 that the council and its partners are now working towards. Similarly the Local Area Agreement, the delivery plan of the SCS, is being renewed into a format that will concentrate on up to 35 targets that will make a real difference to the quality of life of the borough's residents.

### **Sustainable Community Strategy**

The draft SCS is into its final phase of consultation and will be published by April 2008. It shapes the future ambitions for the borough under three headings - people and communities, places and prosperity.

#### People and Communities

Walsall has a diverse community and we are promoting being friendly and getting on with each other. People are our most important resource for the future and so we frequently consult with communities at all stages in the preparation of our plans and services. In the SCS, consultations with residents have told us that they want people in neighbourhoods to be:

- Safe and free from crime
- Friendly and look after each other
- Treated in the way they wish to be treated
- Able to meet one another

#### Places

Creating places where people want to live and feel proud of is important to retain and attract people to Walsall. Successful places have a mix of well-designed homes, a choice of facilities and a high quality environment with access to jobs and services. The poor quality of the urban environment undermines efforts to attract new industries and people, leading to a spiral of decline, particularly in some of the local centres and neighbourhoods.

We aim to create growth in housing, improve local centres and stimulate the local economy by focussing investment in new homes, jobs, transport improvements, community facilities and the environment. We recognise that Walsall has diverse communities with specific requirements and that there is a growing demand for smaller homes due to both an increasingly ageing population and single-parent families.

The draft SCS sets out our plan for Walsall town centre and a series of regeneration corridors covering parts of Willenhall, Darlaston, Leamore and Birchills. It sets out what local neighbourhoods will be like:

- Accessible, safe and secure
- Make you feel proud
- Have access to high quality open space available for play, recreation and enjoyment
- Clean streets

### Prosperity

More and better paid jobs to reduce the difference in levels of prosperity between rich and poor is the main way of enabling the wider benefits sought in the SCS. Our view is that a more prosperous economy will lead to improved health and well-being, lower levels of crime, and greater educational achievement. Walsall will be a place where there is:

- A local workforce with the skills, expertise and knowledge to gain, keep and transfer to the jobs created by business investment
- More investment in schools to enable them to prepare pupils for work
- More on-the-job training and work-based learning
- A vibrant town centre
- Better use of canals and the development of amenities and attractions alongside them
- A more flexible approach to working with developers
- Improved transportation
- Reduced business crime

### **The Local Area Agreement**

Our current LAA was signed off in March 2006 but the more focused format recently introduced by Government with up to 35 priority outcomes is welcomed. We are in the process of identifying with our partners exactly which indicators will be included in our new LAA.

Improved performance management has resulted in greater achievement across the range of targets contained in our existing LAA. At the end of our first year review all outcomes except worklessness and skills were on course to be achieved. As we develop our new LAA, which is due to be agreed with Government in June 2008, the lessons learned over the last eighteen months will allow us to improve still further our performance management arrangements.

From the vision and aspirations set out in our SCS we have identified nine outcomes with a series of priorities within each. These will guide the indicators selected for inclusion in our new LAA.

Outcome	Priority
<b>People and Communities</b>	
Feeling safe and being healthy	Reducing total levels of recorded crime
	Ensuring partnership support in tackling crime and anti-social behaviour in neighbourhoods
	Promoting social inclusion and narrowing the gap between rich and poor, the sick and the healthy, particularly increasing the life expectancy of disadvantaged communities
	Improving the quality of life and increase the independence of people in Walsall
	Reducing the incidence of road traffic collisions
Creating opportunity and potential	Encouraging the achievement of personal goals, skills and ambitions
	Improving personal health through changing lifestyles
	Enhancing the quality of life for people living and working in Walsall
	Providing accessible learning opportunities
Developing strong and dynamic communities	Encouraging active citizens participating in local decision-making structures
	Ensuring communities can influence decisions affecting their local area
	Ensuring strong neighbourhoods where people can get on well together
	Creating cleaner, greener and safer neighbourhoods
<b>Places</b>	
Improving housing	Preventing homelessness
	Increasing the number and choice of affordable homes
	Ensuring that at least 70% of vulnerable households, within the private sector, live in decent homes by 2010
	Enabling people to live more independently
Enhancing the quality of life for people living and working in Walsall	Ensuring the provision of adult learning opportunities across the borough
	Broadening the access to information, including the internet, in an appropriate environment
	Improving the quality and range of cultural and leisure activities and facilities
<b>Prosperity</b>	
Education and skills	Supporting children to do as well as they can and enjoy their childhood and youth
	Improving educational attainment and school facilities
	Reducing child poverty and promoting the economic well-being of young people and their families
	Increasing the skills and knowledge of people who are in work and helping the workless find jobs by providing more skills-for-life training
Accessible, sustainable places	Delivering the vision of Walsall being a town for enterprise
	Managing our key road and public transport networks

for business	Focusing on climate change by reducing carbon dependence and by using environment technologies
	Offering a full range of high quality support to new and existing local businesses
	Preventing business arson
A vibrant town centre and neighbourhoods	Attracting new businesses
	Developing the waterfront
	Creating a new shopping experience
	Creating a new cultural, educational and leisure facility
Research and development	Developing the skills of our local people to ensure that the demands of new businesses are met
	Working with our educational providers
	Building a technology-based infrastructure to support knowledge and communications-focused business
	Creating a gigaport to support business' constant need for faster data transfer

## **Our Local Compact - working with community and voluntary organisations**

In September 2005 a revised and expanded Local Compact was launched alongside our Community Plan. The Compact is an agreement between public services including the council, the local NHS, and others, with the community and voluntary sector, operating within the framework provided by the Walsall Partnership. It has been developed by joint working between the agencies, and will help ensure effective joint working towards our common goals and vision for the Borough of Walsall. The Compact provides standards and makes clear the way in which we should work together. It includes a set of detailed policy statement on effective joint working in terms of information and communication, consultation and engagement, funding issues, volunteering, learning and development, and in respect of disability organisations and black and minority ethnic community organisations. The council is committed to the Local Compact and will continue to work with partners to ensure that the principles are reflected in all that it does in particular the on-going work on the Local Area Agreement.

## 8. Making effective use of our resources

Our budget and capital programme are constructed in accordance with the principles set out in the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS); an integral aspect of our Corporate Integrated Planning & Performance Framework (CIPPF). This robust way of working has been in place for several years and governs our policy-led, medium term approach to financial planning and management. The MTFS contains eight key objectives that demonstrate our commitment to ensuring that financial activities contribute to the transformation, development and improvement of the organisation and that the budget enables delivery of our vision, priorities, and pledges, and of stable, sustainable, financial health. Once again, even with the harder test, the Audit Commission has scored the council 3 out of 4 for use of resources in the corporate assessment. The Audit Commission has also identified best practice within our financial standing, risk management and financial reporting and management arrangements.

### Consultation

Managers are accountable for delivering services to standard, on time and within budget, and are involved in constructing the base budget, bidding for investment and in working up savings options. Cabinet and the Strategic Leadership Team lead the budget process and fully participate throughout. Budget consultation takes place with a wide range of stakeholders; residents, service users, business and third sector representatives, employees and unions, and the outcomes inform the process. Scrutiny panels examine the draft budget twice and their views are taken into account by cabinet before making a final recommendation to full Council. Risk management principles are followed throughout the process.

### Delivering the vision

The budget and each investment and efficiency option are assessed as to their contribution and impact on delivery of the council's shared vision, our priorities and pledges and on service performance and quality. Capital investment is determined from the appraisal of capital proposal forms submitted by services and assessed against a similar framework and in accordance with the capital strategy.

### Headlines for 2008/09

- The net budget requirement is £227.924m
- Savings, changes to fees and charges and service re-alignments, realising £7.809m, will be implemented
- There is investment of £5.139m and corporate pressures of £8.107m
- There are financing and other changes of £7.716m
- Opening general reserves will be £5.175m in line with the MTFS
- Central contingency will be £0.611m in line with the MTFS
- Funding for education is now through a Dedicated Schools Grant of *circa* £174m
- The capital programme totals £57.706m, comprising mainstream schemes of £28.009m and grant funded projects of £29.697m
- This will be funded by £7.987m supported borrowing, £14.972m of unsupported borrowing (Prudential Code), £5.050m of capital receipts and £29.697m of capital grants
- A leasing programme of £14.816m will be implemented.

### Efficiency and value for money

Despite the harder test, the Audit Commission has once again scored the council 3 out of 4 for value for money in the corporate performance assessment. Through the Comprehensive Spending Review the council is expected to achieve 3% cashable



savings. The government is yet to issue the targets but the council has significant efficiencies included in its budget for 2008/09.

### **More information**

The CIPPF, MTFS, capital strategy, revenue budget and capital programme provide extensive details on the issues summarised in this section of the plan.

### **Statement on contracts**

Set out below are details of contracts during the past financial year which have involved a transfer of staff under TUPE. All transfers complied with the requirements of the Code of Practice on Workforce Matters in Local Authority Service Contracts.

Transfers out of the authority are as follows:

Meals on Wheels: 40 employees to Sodexo (6 January 2008)  
Social Care: 400 employees to Housing 21 (29 February 2008)  
Grounds Maintenance: 18 employees to Pinnacle (29 February 2008)

Transfers into the authority are as follows:

70 employees from Walsall College to Building Cleaning (1 January 2008)  
2 employees from Black Sisters Collective to Youth Services (1 August 2007)  
10 employees from Alumwell Community Association to Alumwell Business & Enterprise College (1 September 2007)

## **9. Making it count – our performance management framework**

We recognise that robust and comprehensive performance management is essential in delivering service and corporate excellence. The purpose of performance management is to raise and maintain at a high level the performance levels of individuals, services and the authority as a whole to ensure that we deliver high quality, cost effective services. Performance management will make a significant contribution in delivering the shared vision for the borough and identifying the council's role in contributing towards this.

The council's corporate integrated planning and performance framework (CIPPF), shown in diagrammatic form in chapter 2, presents key elements of our performance management process clearly and simply. This framework is continuously refined and developed over time with the assistance of our partners.

It is recognised that strategic risk management, as a corporate self diagnostic tool, provides demonstrable evidence of the organisation's capacity to improve. Hence risk management is an integral part of every planning process within this framework – including the development of this plan, and the priorities and the pledges set out within it.

The diagram illustrates the relationship between the various elements that when jointly managed ensure continuous improvement and effective service delivery. Delivery of our vision for the borough of Walsall is managed through the various elements outlined in the diagram.

As with all council functions and policies, equality is a key foundation within our performance management framework and features within our service planning and individual performance management processes.

### **Performance management processes**

#### **1. Sustainable Community Strategy**

The overarching influence is the Sustainable Community Strategy for the borough, formerly known as the community plan and our relationship with the community and our partners. The Sustainable Community Strategy which has been developed jointly with our partners through the Walsall Partnership sets out a shared vision for the borough, through to 2021, based on the aspirations of the communities of Walsall. The council has signed up to this vision – it is our vision for the borough.

The SCS provides the focus for the LAA, and for the plans and strategies of the partner organisations, including the council, which make up the WP.

#### **Neighbourhood agreements**

These are plans developed by each of the nine local neighbourhood partnerships to address local issues and needs. They are intrinsically linked to the community plan as they represent the aspirations and priorities of local areas within the borough.

#### **LAA and partner plans**

Local Area Agreements pave the way for local authorities to look more to the communities

they serve when deciding priorities. The new LAA framework provides a dramatic reduction in targets set centrally. A new national indicator set (NIS) of 198 performance indicators has been developed to represent national priorities for local authorities and their partners. Of those, a maximum of 35 will be agreed as the LAA targets for Walsall.

There will be detailed negotiation between central government and Walsall Partnership, informed by discussion with our community, so that those targets really focus in on the priorities that matter to local people, whether that is housing, crime and grime, or services for the elderly.

LAA's give local authorities the flexibility to direct funding to meet those priorities. They also put an emphasis on partnership working, because we know that delivering for the people we serve means working closely with all our partners - the businesses, hospitals, schools, charities – who play a role in making Walsall stronger, safer, and greener.

## **2. Corporate Plan, vision, priorities, pledges and values**

The council's own Corporate Plan, which is published each year, sets out, at a strategic level, the council's commitment to deliver its own contribution to the work of the wider partnership to take forward and implement the Sustainable Community Strategy, and achieve our **shared vision for the borough** of Walsall.

The Corporate Plan is focussed on the shared vision and on tangible, significant outcomes for the people of our borough, which address the key priorities and concerns for our community.

In addition, to ensure that the council as an organisation is fit for purpose and able to deliver its share of the citizen outcomes, the Corporate Plan has a complementary focus on internal priorities: our continuing transformation agenda, focus on meeting customer expectations, and commitment to the effective use of resources.

Reflecting this, the council has adopted a new **Walsall Outcomes Framework**, comprising seven citizen (or customer) outcomes, and three internal drivers, to ensure that we have the capacity, expertise and momentum to drive forward, and to achieve our goals.

Our **seven citizen outcomes** are focussed on action to ensure that citizens are:

- Healthy
- Safe and secure
- Aspiring and achieving
- Enjoying a high quality of life – clean, green, and mobile
- Active - contributing to their communities
- Financially & materially secure - achieving economic well-being
- Free from discrimination or harassment

Our **three internal drivers** are:

- effective use of resources
- delivering quality services and meeting customer expectations
- taking forward the transformation agenda.

The Corporate Plan includes a set of **pledges** – key actions to be undertaken and achieved during 2008/09 – each of which supports those outcomes and drivers, and which will be monitored through the year in the Beacon Index.

Our **core values** remain unchanged. Whilst we move ahead, and seek to transform all of our services to the benefit of the community and our service users, we have reaffirmed our core values which will continue to guide us in our day to day work and support the council's vision of building a better borough. Our five core values of respect, integrity, equality, listening and excellence signal to everyone the beliefs, behaviours and principles that underpin all that we do. They are central to our approach, and will guide us towards our shared vision for the borough and its people. These shared and agreed values set out what the council stands for and how we will behave.

### 3. Financial Planning

This encompasses all financial decision making processes from the medium term financial strategy, decision conferences, and strategic choices exercises through to the formal annual budget setting process and the individual management of budgets at service level. The various elements that jointly inform and deliver our financial planning and management are illustrated below.

**Figure 2: Financial aspects of the CIPPF**

<b>FINANCIAL STRATEGIES, PLANS &amp; PROCESSES WITHIN THE CIPPF</b>					
<b>CATEGORY</b>	<b>OVERALL</b>	<b>REVENUE</b>	<b>CAPITAL</b>	<b>TREASURY MANAGEMENT</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
	<b>MTFS</b>				
<b>Strategies</b>			Capital Strategy	Treasury Management Strategy	Risk Management Strategy
<b>Guidance</b>	CIPFA & technical guidance	Budget Guidelines	Capital Guidelines	CIPFA Code of Practice for TM	Risk Management Toolkit
<b>Plans</b>	MTFP	Annual Budget	Capital Programme & AMP	Treasury Policy Statement	Risk Management Action Plans
<b>Governance</b>	Constitution	Budget Management & Control Manual & SIC		Prudential Indicators & Annual Report	Risk Register reporting and regular review
	Contract & Finance Procedure Rules				Audit Committee Reports & annual report
	Internal & External Audit Plans and our response to inspection and audit				

#### **4. Directorate plans, service plans and team plans**

Recognising the strategic importance of the corporate plan, key statutory documents and neighbourhood agreements and partner plans, this element also includes all planning processes from the directorate plan through to the service and team plans produced that detail the actions being taken to deliver the priorities. There are various influences upon the planning process which are related to external and internal factors as detailed below. For example consultation is a key influence and driver for service delivery and improvement and can be either a corporate process, e.g. the Citizens' Panel, or service based.

**Directorate plans** – how each directorate will contribute towards delivery of the corporate plan.

**Service and team plans** - more detailed plans for individual council services and teams, setting out specific targets and improvements to be achieved over a three year period but focusing on the current year.

#### **5. Workforce Planning**

Major improvements in performance come when the right people with the right knowledge, skills and behaviours are deployed appropriately. Workforce planning is the process of analysing the future skills and competencies that are needed to deliver new and improved services, and assessing the strengths and development needs of our current workforce against these requirements. This element is informed by the Individual Performance Management (IPM) process and includes both corporate and directorate workforce development plans and training programmes. It is closely linked to the council's organisational development and human resources strategies and is influenced by external and internal factors in the same way as service planning.

#### **6. Individual Performance Management Plans**

The IPM process provides a framework for managers and staff to meet and discuss work performance for the previous year, and agree targets and personal development needs for the coming year. It allows managers to give constructive feedback on employee performance and is the forum through which priorities are translated from service and team plans into individual actions. IPM is an integral element of the CIPPF and applies to all employees.

#### **7. External audit and inspection**

Audit and inspections are key processes for assessing the performance of a service or function and for identifying ways improvements can be made. External inspections (e.g. Corporate Assessment, Joint Area Review and service based inspections) also provide an opportunity to benchmark the performance of the council and its functions against other authorities in order to share good practice and learn from good examples.

#### **8. Internal monitoring, review and corrective action**

The continual monitoring, review and implementation of required corrective action is vital to ensure continuous improvement and is undertaken at every level of the financial, service and individual planning processes. In addition, this ensures that we take action in response to actual performance to make outcomes better than they would have otherwise been. It is recognised that both officers and elected members play key roles in the delivery of effective

performance management to deliver continuous improvement. Key to this is the way services react and learn from the monitoring they undertake whether it is in the form of customer feedback or as part of a performance action plan.

## **9. Feedback and Learning**

In order to continually build on the progress we are making, we constantly strive to capture the feedback from users and other stakeholders to enable us to learn from the outputs that we deliver. Improving outcomes to our resident's matters most, and their feedback; through either formal consultation, inspection, periodic surveys or simple ad hoc remarks help us improve our way of working and ultimately deliver improved services. This information is constantly being sought and fed back into the organisation in order to help us prioritise our resources around the needs of our users.

## 10. Sources of further information

The council produces a wide range of information, including other key plans and strategies, as described in chapter 8. Details of these plans can be found on the **council's web site**, [www.walsall.gov.uk](http://www.walsall.gov.uk), or can be obtained from the directorate or service concerned.

Of particular note are the **Corporate Budget Plan**, covering the five years from 2008/09 to 2012/13, published each year, the document '**People & Place Perspectives: a picture of our community**' which is available on the council's web site and provides a detailed insight into the borough, and its people and their needs, through the provision and analysis of demographic and other statistical information, the results of consultation and other customer feedback. Also published each year is a set of key **Performance Data**, which is produced in June as a supplement to the Corporate Plan and contains a wide range of key performance information relating to our services. This is supplemented by the quarterly progress reports on key performance targets, including the council's pledges, which are presented to cabinet in our Beacon Index reports.

Also available is the borough's **Sustainable Community Strategy**, prepared by the Walsall Partnership. This is available on the Partnership's own web site at [www.wbsp.org.uk](http://www.wbsp.org.uk), along with a range of other information on the Partnership.

Also available on the council's web site are full details relating to the **council's decision making processes**, including the council's **constitution**, and details of the role of the cabinet, the scrutiny & performance panels, the standards committee and regulatory committees for development control and licensing, and at a local level details relating to the nine local neighbourhood partnerships. Details of **forthcoming meetings**, as well as reports and minutes, are available on the web site, as are details relating to elected **councillors**, their electoral wards and local 'surgeries'. Details can also be obtained from local libraries.

The council operates in accordance with the **Freedom of Information Act (FOIA)** and related legislation. Information held by the council and by council services which is not already available publicly can be requested in line with the FOIA, and the council will respond within 20 working days. In some instances, where the council may be unable to release information, a reason will be provided. For more information, visit the council web site at [www.walsall.gov.uk](http://www.walsall.gov.uk).

**Comments, complaints and compliments** about council services can be made at any council service, by letter or using the council-wide Tell Us form, or via the council web site. Complaints will be acknowledged promptly, and a full response will normally be provided within 15 working days.