

Cabinet



Wednesday 11 September 2024 at 6:00 p.m.

Meeting venue: Conference Room 2, Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall.

[Livestream Link](#)

Portfolios

Councillor G. Perry,
Leader of the
Council



Councillor A.
Andrew,
Associate Leader -
Economic Growth
and Regeneration



Councillor M.
Statham, Deputy
Leader and Finance



Councillor G. Flint,
Health and
Wellbeing



Councillor K.
Pedley, Adult Social
Care



Councillor E. Lee,
Internal Services



Councillor S. Elson,
Children and Young
People



Councillor P. Kaur,
Education and Skills



Councillor K.
Murphy, Street
Pride



Councillor A.
Garcha, Resident
Access and
Housing Support



Quorum 3 members

Democratic Services, The Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW

Contact name: Craig Goodall Telephone: 01922 654765 Email: craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk

[Walsall Council Website](#)

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

The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012

Specified pecuniary interests

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

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

Democratic Services, The Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW
 Contact name: Craig Goodall Telephone: 01922 654765 Email:

craig.goodall@walsall.gov.uk
[Walsall Council Website](#)

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

	<p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the relevant person has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.</p>
--	--

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

Access to information: Exempt information

Part 1

Descriptions of exempt information: England

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

Part 1 – Public session

1. **Apologies**

2. **Minutes – 17 July 2024**

(Enclosed)

3. **Declarations of interest**

4. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended):**

To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.

5. **Petitions**

(Note: For advice on how to submit petitions, contact Democratic Services. Contact details on the front page of the agenda).

6. **Questions**

(30 minutes will be allowed for pre-submitted questions from non-executive members and the public. All questions will have been submitted at least 7 clear days before the meeting. Answers will be provided at the meeting - no supplementary questions will be allowed.)

7. **Forward plan**

(Enclosed)

Associate Leader, Economic Growth and Regeneration: Councillor Andrew

Key Decisions

8. Article 4 Direction for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) *(Enclosed)*

9. Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy *(Enclosed)*

Deputy Leader and Finance: Councillor Statham

Key Decision

10. Commercial Strategy *(Enclosed)*

Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People: Councillor Elson

Key Decisions

11. West Midlands Regional Residential Children's Homes Framework
(Enclosed)
12. Contract Extension of the Black Country Family Drugs and Alcohol Court (FDAC) Service in the Boroughs of Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley
(Enclosed)

Non-key Decision

13. Walsall Youth Justice Service Annual Strategic Plan (Enclosed)

Portfolio Holder for Resident Access and Housing Support: Councillor Garcha

Key decision

14. Registration with the Regulator of Social Housing to enable provision of additional Homeless Temporary Accommodation (Enclosed)

Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills: Councillor Kaur

Key Decision

15. Secondary School Sufficiency (Enclosed)

Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care: Councillor Pedley

Key Decision

16. Community Reablement – Phase 1 (Enclosed)

Recommendations from Overview & Scrutiny

17. Recommendations from the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the Derelict Properties Taskforce
(Enclosed)

-o0o-

Cabinet

Wednesday 17 July 2024

Minutes of the meeting held in Conference Room 2 at the Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall at 6pm.

Present

Councillor Perry	Leader of the Council
Councillor Andrew	Associate Leader – Economic Development and Regeneration
Councillor M. Statham	Deputy Leader – Finance
Councillor Elson	Children and Young People
Councillor Flint	Health and Wellbeing
Councillor Garcha	Resident Access and Housing Support
Councillor Kaur	Education and Skills
Councillor Lee	Internal Services
Councillor Murphy	Clean and Green
Councillor Pedley	Adult Social Care

In attendance

E. Bennett	Chief Executive
K. Allward	Executive Director – Adult Social Care
D. Brown	Executive Director – Economy, Environment and Communities
J. Greenhalgh	Executive Director – Resources and Transformation
C. Male	Executive Director – Children’s and Customer
S. Darcy	Director of Finance, Corporate Performance Management and Corporate Landlord
C. Goodall	Principal Democratic Services Officer
E. Cook	Democratic Services Officer

Others in attendance

Councillor Hicken
Councillor Nawaz

Part 1 – Public Session

4241 Welcome

Councillor Perry opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and explaining that the Cabinet was meeting that evening in person and that the agenda and reports for this meeting were available on the Council’s website. He explained that voting would be by way of a show of hands which would be witnessed and recorded by the Democratic Services officer in attendance.

4242 Apologies

There were no apologies received.

4243 Minutes

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2024 were submitted.

Resolved

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 April 2024, a copy having been sent to each member of the Cabinet, be approved and signed as a correct record.

4244 Declarations of interest

No declarations of interest were received.

4245 Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985

Resolved

That the public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the items set out in the private part of the agenda for the reasons set out therein and Section 100A of the Local Government Act, 1972

4246 Petitions

No petitions were received.

4247 Questions

No questions were received.

4248 Forward plan

The forward plan as of July 2024 was submitted:

(annexed)

Resolved

That the forward plan be noted.

4249 Recommendations from Scrutiny Overview Committee regarding the Housing Standards Working Group

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Hicken introduced the report on behalf of the Scrutiny Overview Committee.

(annexed)

Councillor Hicken provided an overview of the Working Group's findings and Cabinet members thanked the Working Group for their work.

It was **moved** by Councillor Perry and **seconded** by Councillor Andrew and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That:

1. the findings and recommendations of the Housing Standards Working Group be noted, and;
2. a report responding to the working groups recommendations be received at a future meeting.

4250 **Recommendations from Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the Primary Care Access and GP Access Working Group**

At the invitation of the Chair, Councillor Nawaz introduced the report on behalf of the Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

(annexed)

Councillor Nawaz provided an overview of the Working Group's findings and Cabinet members thanked the Working Group for their work.

It was **moved** by Councillor Perry and **seconded** by Councillor Flint and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That:

1. the findings and recommendations of the Primary Care Access and GP Access Working Group be noted, and;
2. a report responding to the working groups recommendations be received at a future meeting.

4251 **Draft Council Plan 2025-2029**

Councillor Perry introduced a report which presented the draft new Council Plan for 2025-2029.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Perry and **seconded** by Councillor Andrew and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the content of the report and agree the draft Council Plan for consultation with public, staff and partners;**
- 2. Noted the review and creation of a new Corporate Quarterly Performance reporting process including a review and refresh of the Council Corporate Performance Management Framework based on the new Council Plan.**

4252 Council Plan 2022/25 – Markers of Success

Councillor Perry introduced a report which reviewed the Council's performance against the Council Plan 2022-25 Markers of Success.

(annexed)

It was noted that this would be the final performance outturn against the 2022-25 Council Plan.

It was **moved** by Councillor Perry and **seconded** by Councillor Andrew and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet:

- 1. Noted the performance and key achievements in Q4 relating to the period January-March 2024;**
- 2. Noted that this was the final performance outturn against the current Council Plan 2022-2025 and that a new Council Plan was in development which would have a new performance framework, to begin reporting following Council's ratification in January 2025.**

4253 Productivity Plan

Councillor Perry introduced a report which set out the draft Council Productivity Plan, in response to the request from the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities for each Local Authority to produce a productivity plan.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Perry and **seconded** by Councillor Andrew and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet:

1. **Noted and celebrated the successes highlighted by the Productivity Plan;**
2. **Approved the Council's Productivity Plan and noted the plans and work already underway to continue the Council's improvement journey and to deliver value for money in the delivery of effective services.**

4254 **Pre-Audit Outturn 2023/24**

Councillor Statham introduced a report which informed Cabinet of the pre-audit revenue and capital outturn position for 2023/24, and financial health indicators for 2023/24.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Statham and **seconded** by Councillor Perry and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet:

1. **Noted the pre-audit revenue outturn underspend of £856k, equivalent to 0.06% of gross revenue expenditure after service mitigating actions of £4.13m and central mitigating action of £19.95m. Without mitigating actions being identified the outturn would have been an overspend of £23.22m;**
2. **Noted the service's position (table 1 and Appendix 1), delivery of savings approved for 2023/24 including the amendments as detailed in section 4.8 to 4.10 and the carry forward of undelivered 2023/24 savings (Appendix 4) to 2024/25 and that 2024/25 savings delivery will be kept under review and progress reported to Cabinet in July;**
3. **Noted the transfers from and to earmarked reserves as set out in table 2 and Appendix 2;**
4. **Noted that the opening general reserves balance will be £19.56m as at 1 April 2024;**
5. **Noted the pre-audit capital outturn is a net break-even position, net of carry forwards of £53.54m (Table 5 and Appendix 5 and 6);**
6. **Noted and agreed the final amendments to the 2023/24 capital programme (since the last update to Cabinet in February 2024), as set out in table 4 in section 4.11 and approve the capital re-profiling from 2023/24 to 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 5 and 6;**
7. **Noted the financial health indicators for 2023/24 as summarised in Appendix 9;**

8. **Noted the prudential indicators as set out in section 4.22 to 4.24 and Appendix 10;**
9. **Noted the performance and demand data at Appendix 7 and 8 in relation to Adult and Children's Social Care Services.**

4255 Corporate Financial Performance 2024/25 and approach to Budget Setting for 2025/26

Councillor Statham introduced the report which reported on the forecast corporate financial position for 2024/25 and set out the approach and timeline for the 2025/26 budget process.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Statham and **seconded** by Councillor Perry and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet:

1. **Noted potential forecast revenue spend above budget of £9.05m, noting that further actions were being taken to address this potential position. A detailed plan would be reported to Cabinet in October 2024, outlining actions to be taken;**
2. **Noted that there were additionally high risks of £11.24m to the revenue forecast identified within services as set out in Table 2. These risks were actively being monitored and action was being taken to reduce / eliminate them where possible;**
3. **Noted the progress on savings approved for 2024/25 as detailed in section 4.13 and 4.14;**
4. **Noted the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) action plan position as detailed in sections 4.15 to 4.19;**
5. **Approved amendments to the capital programme as set out in section 4.21, including the rephrasing of capital programme to 2025/26 at Appendix 6;**
6. **Noted that the forecast for the capital programme was predicted on budget;**
7. **Approved the release of £875k from the development pool for the highways maintenance capital programme and detailed in sections 4.25 to 4.26;**

8. **Approved the release of £1.73m from the development pool to support the construction of a new road bridge over the Wyrley and Essington canal as detailed in sections 4.27 to 4.30;**
9. **Approved the release of £860k from the development pool to fund additional costs of enabling support services / one source programme as detailed in sections 4.31 to 4.32;**
10. **Noted financial health indicator performance as set out in sections 4.33 to 4.38 and Appendix 8;**
11. **Noted the prudential indicators as set out in section 4.39 to 4.41 and Appendix 9;**
12. **Approved the write off-of debt as detailed in section 4.42;**
13. **Noted the work underway to update to the medium-term financial outlook and approved the approach for setting the 2025/26 budget, as set out in sections 4.43 to 4.52, aligned to the Council Plan, Budget Framework and Proud Promises;**
14. **Approved the updated Medium Term Financial Framework as set out in section 4.53.**

4256 **Treasury Management Annual Report 2023/24**

Councillor Statham introduced the report which set out the council's 2023/24 year- end position for treasury management activities.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Statham and **seconded** by Councillor Perry and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet noted and forwarded to Council, for consideration and noting (in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Code of Practice (2021)), the Annual Treasury Management Report 2023/24 including prudential and local indicators (Appendix A).

4257 **West Midlands Addressing Ethnic Disparity Pathfinder**

Councillor Elson introduced the report which provided an overview of the West Midlands Addressing Ethnic Disparity Pathfinder project and sought approval for its delivery.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Elson and **seconded** by Councillor Perry and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

1. That Cabinet approved the Council acting as the Accountable Body for the West Midlands Addressing Ethnic Disparity Pathfinder project;
2. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to subsequently sign contracts or other related documents and to authorise any variations to the contractual arrangements should this be required.

4258 **West Midlands Regional Independent Fostering Agency Framework**

Councillor Elson introduced the report which sought approval to join the new West Midlands Regional Foster Care Framework (the 'new Framework') and to call off (order, arrange and pay) for foster placements from this framework.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Elson and **seconded** by Councillor Statham and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

1. That Cabinet authorised the Council to enter into the Access Agreement with Coventry City Council to join the new West Midlands Regional Fostering Framework;
2. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to subsequently authorise the sealing of deeds and/or signing of contracts and any other related documents for the provision of such services, as appropriate, including any agreement with Coventry City Council to facilitate these services;
3. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to authorise any variations to the contractual arrangements or other related documents for such services should this be required throughout the duration of the term of any contracts;
4. That authority be delegated to the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to enter into 'call off' contracts with Independent Fostering Agencies who are awarded 'Fostering Framework Agreement' contracts by Coventry City Council pursuant to the new West Midlands Regional Foster Care Framework for a period of 4 years from 1 August 2024 with the provision to extend the ability to call off for by 2 increments of 3 years to an expiry date no later than 31 July 2034;

5. **That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to enter into 'spot contracts' where the framework does not meet capacity and/or capability requirements.**

4259 Families First for Children – Pathfinder Programme

Councillor Elson introduced the report which provided an overview of the Families First for Children – Pathfinder Programme and sought approval for its delivery.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Elson and **seconded** by Councillor Perry and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

1. **That Cabinet approved the Families First Wave Two Pathfinder Programme;**
2. **That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to subsequently sign contracts or other related documents and to authorise any variations to the contractual arrangements should this be required;**
3. **That Cabinet noted the initial overview and activity, the proposed structure, financial plan and implications for future budget setting.**

4260 Draft Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029: Draft for Consultation

Councillor Lee introduced the report which presented the draft Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2025-2029, 'Ensuring Equity'.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Leend **seconded** by Councillor Statham and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet:

1. **Noted and approved the draft EDI strategy for public consultation;**
2. **Noted the future plans and work already underway to strengthen EDI across the Council aligned to the EFLG;**

3. **Agreed to the inclusion of Armed Forces as a local characteristic for EDI within the Equality Impact Assessment process, alongside the existing 9 statutory characteristics and the existing local characteristic of care leavers.**

4260 **Interim Provision of Street Lights**

Councillor Murphy introduced the report which sought approval for the award of a contract for the interim delivery of public lighting services.

(annexed)

The decision was taken in the private session following consideration of exempt information.

4261 **Exclusion of public**

Resolved

That during consideration of the remaining items on the agenda, the Cabinet considered that the items for consideration were exempt information by virtue of Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act, 1972, and accordingly resolved to consider the items in private.

Part 2 - Private Session

The following is a public summary of the decisions taken in the private session.

4262 **Interim Provision of Street Lights**

Councillor Murphy introduced the report which sought approval for the award of a contract for the interim delivery of public lighting services.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Murphy and **seconded** by Councillor Statham and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That authority be delegated to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities, in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Economic Growth & Regeneration, to enter negotiations with Amey with a view to directly awarding a contract for delivery of public lighting services for the 11-month interim period between the end of the PFI contract and the commencement of the combined highway services contract

(Exempt Information under paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended)

4263 **Corporate Financial Performance 2024/25 and approach to Budget Setting for 2025/26 – Supplementary Report**

Councillor Statham introduced a supplementary report in conjunction with the public report and its recommendations, containing exempt information.

(annexed)

It was **moved** by Councillor Statham and **seconded** by Councillor Andrew and it was;

Resolved (unanimously)

That Cabinet approved the release of funding from the Development Pipeline Fund for the Willenhall-Framework Plan Phase 1 scheme, Moat Street/Villiers Street.

(Exempt Information under paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended)

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7:19 pm.

Chair:

Date:



FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

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

2 September 2024

FORWARD PLAN

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

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

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

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

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

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

**FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS
OCTOBER 2024 TO JANUARY 2025
(02.09.2024)**

7	1	2	3	4	5	6
Reference No./ Date first entered in Plan	Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside the Council)	Decision maker	Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer	Main consultees	Contact Member (All Members can be written to at Civic Centre, Walsall)	Date item to be considered
42/24 (2.7.24)	Article 4 direction for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs): To approve the making of a borough-wide, non-immediate Article 4 direction to remove permitted development rights for the change of use from dwellinghouses to smaller HMOs. To issue public notice of the Article 4 direction for a period of at least 6 weeks to allow for representations.	Cabinet Key Decision	David Holloway David.Holloway@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	11 September 2024
44/24 (5.8.24)	Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy: To approve the Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy.	Cabinet Key Decision	Nicola Byrne Nicola.Byrne@walsall.gov.uk Matt Crowton Matt.Crowton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	11 September 2024

23/24 (18.3.24)	Commercial Strategy: To agree the strategic approach to generating income, reducing costs, fostering an entrepreneurial culture, forming partnerships, and investing in businesses to support local economies and social objectives	Cabinet Key Decision	Michele McPherson Michele.McPherson@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	11 September 2024
33/24 (4.6.24)	West Midlands Children's Residential Homes Framework: To agree call off contracts with Residential Children's Homes providers under the West Midlands Regional Framework.	Cabinet Key Decision	Sally Gamston Sally.Gamston@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services Regional stakeholders (during tender development)	Cllr Elson	11 September 2024
45/24 (5.8.24)	Walsall Youth Justice Strategic Plan 22/25 Annual Update Report: To receive and recommend to Council for approval, the annual youth justice plan and update report.	Cabinet Council Non-key Decision	Phil Rutherford Philip.Rutherford@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Elson	11 September 2024
50/24 (5.8.24)	Black Country Family Drugs and Alcohol Court (FDAC) Partnership contract: To approve a variation to the Black Country Family Drugs and Alcohol Court (FDAC) Partnership contract, to further extend the original term by 12 months.	Cabinet Key Decision	Paula Wilman Paula.Wilman@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Elson	11 September 2024
34/24 (4.6.24)	Temporary Accommodation Regulator Registration: To approve registration with the Regulator of Social Housing for the purpose of providing additional	Cabinet Key Decision	Neil Hollyhead Neil.Hollyhead@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Garcha	11 September 2024

	Temporary Accommodation for homeless people.					
43/24 (2.7.24)	Secondary School Sufficiency: To consider the expansions of secondary schools in Walsall to support the requirement for additional school places to meet the Local Authorities statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places available across the borough for all Walsall residents.	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Kaur	11 September 2024
51/24 (12.8.24)	Community Reablement Service Procurement: To delegate authority to the Executive Director for Adult Social Care to award a contract for the provision of support to the community reablement service.	Cabinet Key Decision	Andrew Osborn Andrew.Osborn@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services Community Providers	Cllr Pedley	11 September
32/24 (4.6.24)	Appointment of Contractor for Civic Centre and Council House Decarbonisation Works: To appoint a contractor for decarbonisation works at the Civic Centre and Council House. <i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>	Cabinet Key Decision	Nick Ford Nick.Ford@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	16 October 2024

46/24 (5.8.24)	Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD): To approve a draft SPD for consultation.	Cabinet Key Decision	David Holloway David.Holloway@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	16 October 2024
52/24 (2.9.24)	Disposal of Links to Work Building, Stephenson Avenue, Beechdale, Walsall, WS2 7HF To approve the disposal of the Links to Work Building. <i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>	Cabinet Key Decision	Ian Jeavons Ian.Jeavons@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	16 October 2024
40/24 (1.7.24)	Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2028/29: To provide an updated medium term financial outlook, draft revenue budget and capital programme for 2025/26 to 2028/29, including savings proposals.	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Ross Hutchinson Ross.Hutchinson@walsall.gov.uk	Council tax payers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations, Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	16 October 2024
41/24 (1.7.24)	Corporate Financial Performance 2024/25: To report the financial position based on 6 months to September 2024.	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Ross Hutchinson Ross.Hutchinson@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	16 October 2024
53/24 (2.9.24)	Children and Young People Strategy:	Cabinet Key Decision	Isobel Vanderheeren Isobel.Vanderheeren@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services Children and young people	Cllr Elson	16 October 2024

	To approve the Children and Young People 2040 Strategy.					
35/24 (4.6.24)	Walsall Housing Allocations Policy: To approve Walsall's Housing Allocations Policy which details how the Council will prioritise applicants for nomination to housing association properties.	Cabinet Key Decision	Neil Hollyhead Neil.Hollyhead@walsall.gov.uk	Public Consultation Internal Services Housing Associations	Cllr Garcha	16 October 2024
54/24 (2.9.24)	Local Area Network (LAN) contract award: To award a contract for provision and support of the Council's Local Area Network (LAN).	Cabinet Key Decision	Sharon Worrall Sharon.Worrall@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Lee	16 October 2024
55/24 (2.9.24)	Service Channel Management Platform contract award: To award a contract for the continued provision the Councils Service Channel Management Platform.	Cabinet Key Decision	Sharon Worrall Sharon.Worrall@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Lee	16 October 2024
56/24 (2.9.24)	Middlemore Lane Household Waste and Recycling Centre (HWRC) & Waste Treatment Service Operational Arrangements: To approve a short-term service contract for the operational management of the new waste facility at Middlemore Lane and the existing HWRC at Fryers Road and approve a new finance lease agreement for the operational equipment, HWRC	Cabinet Key Decision	Kathryn Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Murphy.	16 October 2024.

	containers, and other physical resources at Middlemore Lane.					
47/24 (5.8.24)	Council Plan 2025-2029: To consider the final version of the Council Plan following consultation and recommend this to Council for approval.		Karen Griffiths Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk Elizabeth Connolly Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services, external stakeholders, other interested parties (via Public Consultation exercise)	Cllr Perry	11 December 2024
48/24 (5.8.24)	Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2025/26 to 2028/29 – Update: To provide an updated medium term financial outlook, draft revenue budget and capital programme for 2025/26 to 2028/29, including update to savings proposals, impact of Autumn Statement, and progress on budget consultation to date including feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the draft revenue and capital budget.		Ross Hutchinson Ross.Hutchinson@walsall.gov.uk	Council tax payers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations, Internal Services	Cllr Perry	11 December 2024
49/24 (5.8.24)	Treasury Management Mid Year Position Statement 2024/25: To note and forward to Council, for consideration and noting (and in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Code of Practice (2017), the mid year report for treasury management activities 2024/25	Cabinet Council Non-key Decision	Richard Walley Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	11 December 2024

	including prudential and local indicators.					
39/24 (1.7.24)	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2024-2029: To approve the final version of the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy following consultation.	Cabinet Key Decision	Karen Griffiths Karen.Griffiths@walsall.gov.uk Elizabeth Connolly Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services, external stakeholders, other interested parties (via Public Consultation exercise)	Cllr Lee	11 December 2024
57/24 (2.9.24)	IT Goods, Software and Associated Services contract awards: To award a contract for the provision of IT Goods, Software and Associated Services.	Cabinet Key Decision	Sharon Worrall Sharon.Worrall@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Lee	11 December 2024

Article 4 Direction for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs)

Portfolio: Councillor Andrew
Associate Leader, Economic Growth & Regeneration

Related portfolios: Councillor Flint – Health and Well-being
Councillor Garcha – Resident Access & Housing Support

Service: Planning and Building Control Services

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1. The aim is to provide the council the means to have greater consideration and control over the increasing number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) within the borough, by enabling all HMO proposals to be assessed through the planning decision making process.

2. Summary

- 2.1. Consultants, Lambert Smith Hampton were commissioned to produce a report to evidence whether there was justification to enable the council to prepare an article 4 direction on HMOs, and which area it should cover - the whole borough or specified locations within the borough.
- 2.2. The study concluded that there was sufficiently robust and demonstrable evidence for the council to proceed with the making of a non-immediate article 4 direction on HMOs covering the whole borough.
- 2.3. Should the recommendations of this report now be agreed by this Cabinet, the next steps for progressing the article 4 direction would be for the council to give notice by publicising and consulting on the direction, thereby enabling the community and other stakeholders to comment.
- 2.4. The results of this consultation would then be reported back to a future Cabinet meeting. Informed by the responses received, the council will then consider whether to proceed with confirming an article 4 direction. That confirmation, if agreed, would not take place until after the expiration of 12 months from the date of the council giving notice to proceed with the article 4 direction.
- 2.5. The article 4 direction on HMOs would align with the Council Plan (2022/25) by

supporting a resilient economy where everyone has the right housing in the right place and enabling communities to be more resilient and supportive of each other.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Cabinet authorises the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities in consultation with the Associate Leader, Economic Growth and Regeneration to make a non-immediate article 4 direction which will be applied to the council's administrative area (borough-wide) to remove permitted development rights for the change of use of dwellinghouses (C3 use) to smaller Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) (C4 use).
- 3.2. That notice of the article 4 direction is publicised for a period of at least six weeks to allow members of the public and other interested stakeholders to submit comments on the proposal.
- 3.3. That Cabinet notes that a further report will be submitted to a meeting following the end of the consultation period to consider any comments made, and informed by these comments, determine whether the article 4 direction should be confirmed.
- 3.4. That should the article 4 direction be confirmed that that confirmation not take place until 12 months after first notice has been made.

4. Report detail – know

Context

The planning system and planning policy

- 4.1. Under planning legislation and regulations, HMOs are divided into 2 use classes: smaller and larger HMOs: -
 - smaller HMOs are defined under class C4 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987 (as amended) as houses or flats occupied by between 3 and 6 unrelated individuals who share basic amenities;
 - larger HMOs are unclassified by the use classes order and therefore defined as sui-generis, and comprise houses or flats occupied by more than 6 unrelated individuals who share basic amenities.
- 4.2. Currently the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) 2015 (as amended) allows the change of use of a single family dwellinghouse (C3) to a smaller HMO (C4) without the need for planning permission as permitted development. Whereas a change of use from a C3, C4, or any other use, to a larger HMO requires express planning permission following the making of an application.
- 4.3. Paragraph 53 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that

the use of article 4 directions to remove national permitted development rights should be limited to situations where it is necessary to protect local amenity or the well-being of the area, be based on robust evidence, and apply to the smallest geographical area possible.

- 4.4. There are two types of article 4 direction: an immediate article 4 direction and a non-immediate one.
- 4.5. A non-immediate article 4 direction can only be introduced following a period of public consultation, and only be confirmed following a period of at least 12 months after it has been made, with a requirement to notify the Secretary of State following confirmation.
- 4.6. An immediate article 4 direction can come into effect in withdrawing permitted development rights as soon as it is made, but the direction must be confirmed by the council within 6 months following local consultation, again with the Secretary of State notified.
- 4.7. However, with an immediate article 4 direction, within a 12 month period of it being made, applicants can claim compensation from a council if they have planning permission refused for a development scheme they would normally have been able to carry out under permitted development rights, with any such compensation claims made against abortive expenditure, or losses and damages directly related to the withdrawal of permitted development rights.
- 4.8. To avoid the risk of compensation claims, councils usually pursue non-immediate article 4 directions in respect of HMOs, with a lead in time of 12 months before the direction is brought into effect. This is as permitted development rights apply upon completion of a development. Applying a 12-month period provides a reasonably sufficient amount of time for existing projects to be completed under the General Permitted Development Order. The LSH report confirmed that a non-immediate article 4 direction was appropriate and the evidence for it was sufficient, with an immediate article 4 direction considered inappropriate.
- 4.9. At present, the primary policy for the assessment of applications for larger HMOs by the council is through saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policy H7 (Hostels and Houses in Multiple Occupation):
- 4.10. UDP Policy H7: proposals for the establishment, enlargement or alteration of hostels or houses in multiple occupation will be encouraged if it can be demonstrated that:
 - i. There would be no harm to the amenity of the occupants of neighbouring buildings or the intended occupiers of the proposed accommodation
 - ii. There would be no harm to the character and appearance of the building or the surrounding area.
 - iii. It would not impair the free flow of traffic or highway safety
- 4.11. UDP Policy H7 will need to be replaced either through a policy within the

emerging Walsall Borough Local Plan (WBLP) or a national development management policy. In the interim, before a replacement policy is adopted, this existing policy will need to be used in the assessment of smaller HMOs (as well as larger HMOs), should the article 4 direction be confirmed.

The evidence for making an article 4 direction with respect to HMOs

- 4.12. Consultants Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) were procured to produce a report to evidence whether there was justification to enable the council to prepare an article 4 direction in respect of HMOs, and what area it should cover: the whole borough or specified locations within the borough. The LSH report is attached at **Appendix A**.
- 4.13. The LSH report considers:
- the approach taken to HMOs by neighbouring authorities, for example:
- 4.14. Birmingham – a city-wide article 4 direction came into force from 8 June 2020 – previously there was a direction just covering Selly Oak, Edgbaston and Harborne.
- 4.15. Dudley – a borough-wide article 4 direction came into force from September 2023.
- 4.16. Wolverhampton – introduced a city-wide article 4 direction in 2017.
- the current stock of HMOs within the borough (table 1, page 12 of the report): -
 - there are an estimated 2,030 HMOs within the borough, equating to 11% of the private rented housing stock
 - St. Matthews ward has the most HMOs – 308/15.2% of the total number of HMOs within the borough, followed by Pleck 247/12.2%, and then Willenhall South 205/10.1%, with the ward with the least number of HMOs being Willenhall North – 22/1.1%
 - existing HMO licensing schemes: -
 - there are both mandatory and additional licensing schemes (ALS) in place for HMOs within the borough - mandatory - HMOs occupied by five or more unrelated people; additional – HMOs occupied by three or four unrelated people;
 - there is currently one ALS scheme in place covering the wards of Paddock, Palfrey, Pleck and St. Matthews (since 1 September 2022).
- 4.17. Both licensing regimes impose conditions relating to residential amenity and safety, which landlords need to meet to lawfully let a property to tenants.
- crime and anti-social behaviour:
 - the LSH report is informed by engagement with the council's Head of Community Building and Cohesion to understand the impact of HMOs on community safety and resilience

- 4.18. The level of reported crime against the estimated number of HMOs within neighbourhoods, comprising amalgamated adjoining wards, is assessed to understand if a correlation exists between the two issues.
- health and wellbeing
- 4.19. The LSH report comments on the complex interactions between living conditions, deprivation and health problems, which HMOs clearly lie at the centre of as a form of low-cost intermediary housing.
- 4.20. Based on the evidence, the LSH report recognises that HMOs can contribute towards meeting the housing needs of an area, particularly for people on low incomes, housing vulnerable individuals, students, and the growing number of one person households.
- 4.21. While not specific to Walsall, it is acknowledged that there have been concerns from the public for a number of years around the perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour associated with HMOs. However, the report evidences that while there are levels of crime reported within areas which have large concentrations of HMOs, there is no established and credible link between the two.
- 4.22. However, the LSH report states that there is evidence of a significant and increasing numbers of HMOs within the borough. In addition, high concentrations of HMOs in any one area can present a challenge to creating mixed, balanced and sustainable communities, as well as having the potential to adversely impact on residential character and amenity, and also giving rise to a particular fear of crime and anti-social behaviour. In addition, it is recognised that there are often poor management practices relating to HMOs which can impact negatively on the health of the immediate and neighbouring occupants of these properties.
- 4.23. These negative impacts which may be attributed to a growing proliferation of HMOs within the borough are considered to outweigh any positive aspects on meeting a housing need
- 4.24. The reasoning given for a borough-wide direction, which is evident in justifying this approach by all councils who have adopted it, is based upon an assertion that this will give the most consistent and comprehensive means to manage HMOs across an area, providing clarity for the council, residents and potential landlords. To date this approach appears to have been through the respective consultations of local authorities proceeding with non-immediate Directions with no challenges or interventions from Government.
- 4.25. The LSH report concludes by recommending that the council should make a borough-wide article 4 direction to deliver this consistent and comprehensive approach to the control of HMOs and to mirror the approach of neighbouring authorities.

Steps needed to confirm a borough-wide article 4 direction

- 4.26. Subject to Cabinet approving the report's recommendations, the next steps would be:
- 4.27. Notification of the making of the article 4 direction in a local newspaper and by physical display and on the council's website setting out the period for public consultation;
- 4.28. Informing the Secretary of State of the making of the article 4 direction and further notification to the Secretary of State following its confirmation should it proceed;
- 4.29. Reporting back to Cabinet following public consultation to consider the representations received during the consultation period, and recommending whether to go ahead or not with the confirming of the article 4 direction;
- 4.30. If it is decided to confirm the direction, that that confirmation not take place until 12 months after the notification of the making of the article 4 direction.
- 4.31. Consultation on the article 4 direction would need to follow the council's Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) (2018), which on this matter aligns with Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015: -
- 4.32. In implementing the procedure laid down in Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015, as soon as practicable after the article 4 direction is made, notice would be given through the following means:
- 4.33. a consultation period of 6 weeks, comprising publication of all relevant documents/data, and the potential to instigate a short feedback survey. Consultation will be publicised widely via a range of online and offline channels.
- 4.34. Given that it is not practical to notify all owners/occupiers within the borough, in order to reach as many residents and interested parties as possible, notices would need to be displayed in prominent locations in Walsall Town Centre, Aldridge, Bloxwich, Brownhills, Darlaston and Willenhall District Centres, as well as Caldmore, Pleck, Palfrey, Birchills, Leamore and Bentley Local Centres where there are higher than average concentrations of existing HMOs.
- 4.35. The publication of all relevant documents on the council's website and potentially on the council's Commonplace engagement platform, and available in hard copy in all libraries and Walsall Connected Centres.
- 4.36. The placing of a notice in the local press; consultation with planning agents, previous applicants for HMOs and letting agents within the borough, as well as other key stakeholders.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.37. The article 4 direction relating to HMOs would align with the Council Plan (2022/25) by supporting a resilient economy where everyone has the right housing in the right place, enabling communities to be more resilient and supportive of each other, and people of Walsall feel safe in a cleaner, greener borough.

Risk management

- 4.38. If the council proceeds with an immediate article 4 direction, there is a risk of compensation claims from property owners or developers who have incurred abortive expenditure or losses due to the withdrawal of permitted development rights. To mitigate this risk, the council is recommended to pursue a non-immediate article 4 direction with a lead-in time of 12 months before it comes into effect.

Financial implications

- 4.39. The cost of procuring the LSH report has been met through existing budgets. It is intended that the making of the article 4 direction will be carried out in-house, with staff calling on existing budgets as necessary, for instance, to publicise the direction.
- 4.40. Based on the figure of 16 licences issued for smaller HMOs in 2023, as an indication, the projected additional planning fee income for this type of development, should an article 4 direction be confirmed and using the current planning application fee schedule, would equate to approximately £10,000 per year. However, that amount would likely be relatively small when set against any monies required to settle compensation claims should the council proceed with an immediate article 4 direction.

Legal implications

- 4.41. The recommendations made have been informed by the requirements of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and the Regulations set out in Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended).

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.42. Lambert Smith Hampton (LSH) were procured to provide the evidence referred to in this report in accordance with the council's standard commissioning procedures.

Property implications

- 4.43. There are no direct property implications for the council as it is largely private landlords that operate HMOs.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.44. The impact of HMOs on the health and well-being of communities is considered within the LSH report, which highlighted the complex interconnections between living conditions, deprivation and health problems, which HMOs can be said to lie at the centre of as a form of low-cost, intermediary housing. Good quality affordable housing, and housing for vulnerable people can have positive health impacts.
- 4.45. However, often poor management practices relating to HMOs can impact negatively on the health of the immediate and neighbouring occupants of these properties, including the potential for an increase in fly-tipping, anti-social behaviour and waste accumulation, which both has an immediate detrimental impact on the local neighbourhood as well as attracting vermin.
- 4.46. It is considered that the additional planning controls which would be brought in through an article 4 direction, coupled with increased licensing coverage and criteria, would contribute significantly towards removing these negative impacts.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.47. An Equality Impact Assessment would be undertaken prior to the making of the article 4 direction.
- 4.48. In aiming to manage the location and proliferation of HMOs, this will potentially limit the potential issues associated with HMOs and also improve the residential amenity of occupiers of HMOs. In addition, the council will continue to influence the provision of housing so that it meets the needs of all.

Staffing implications

- 4.49. There are no significant staffing implications or resourcing arising as a result of the recommendations within this report: the making of the article 4 direction would be led by existing staff within the planning policy team.

Climate Impact

- 4.50. There is no direct connection between HMOs and climate impact. However, improvements to the standards of HMOs are made possible by additional licensing and planning controls, for instance, in terms of helping to mitigate against climate change, through improved energy efficiency in HMOs.

Consultation

- 4.51. Should the recommendations on this report be agreed, a consultation exercise on giving notice of the article 4 direction would be undertaken, as required through the regulations in order for the direction to be lodged as a non-immediate direction.

- 4.52. Relevant officers within the council, including the communications team, have been consulted on this report, and will be engaged with further on into the process of making the article 4 direction.

5. Decide

- 5.1. The options are: -

- i. *Do nothing* – this option is likely to result in the continued, uncontrolled proliferation of HMOs within the borough, with the potential to further intensify social and amenity problems
- ii. *Carry out an immediate article 4 direction* – this would require all proposals for HMOs to seek planning permission by way of planning applications, but its immediate effect is likely to result in compensation claims being lodged against the council – this is not considered necessary nor appropriate and so is not recommended
- iii. *Carry out on a non-immediate article 4 direction but only in selected areas (wards) within the borough* – this will not provide comprehensive coverage, would need to be demonstrated through robust evidence as to why one area has been included but an adjoining area excluded, and may lead to the displacement of HMOs into excluded areas
- iv. *Carry out a non-immediate article 4 direction which covers the whole borough* – as informed by the evidence and recommended in this report

6. Respond

- 6.1. Should the recommendations of this report be agreed, a further report would be taken to a meeting of the Cabinet following the consultation period, which will recommend actions as to how the council responds to the representations received, to inform whether the article 4 direction progresses to confirmation.

7. Review

- 7.1. The effectiveness of the article 4 direction, if confirmed, would be kept under review through the monitoring of planning applications and the decisions made, including through the appeal process.
- 7.2. In addition, as part of a review of all extant development plan policies, the effectiveness of UDP policy H7, as the existing primary policy on assessing planning applications for HMOs will be reviewed, especially given its intended replacement with a new policy on this theme within the WBLP or through a national development management policy.

Appendices

Appendix A - Lambert Smith Hampton Report - Houses in Multiple Occupation – Review of Article 4 Directions – Walsall Council – May 2024

Background papers

None.

Author

David Holloway
Planning Policy Manager
✉ David.Holloway@walsall.gov.uk
☎ 01922 650874



Dave Brown
Executive Director
30 August 2024



Councillor Andrew
Portfolio holder
30 August 2024

Houses in Multiple Occupation

Review of Article 4 Directions

Walsall Council

May 2024

Prepared and Reviewed by:

Stephen Hemming MRTPI – Head of Planning Consultancy (Midlands)

Jeevan Thandi MRTPI – Associate Director, Planning Consultancy

Draft Report Issue Date: 10 April 2024

Final Report Issue Date: 3 May 2024

This document has been prepared and checked in accordance with the Lambert Smith Hampton Quality Assurance procedures and authorised for release.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Stephen Hemming', followed by a period.

For and on behalf of Lambert Smith Hampton

Contents Page

1.0	Introduction.....	3
2.0	Background to Houses in Multiple Occupation.....	4
3.0	Approach of Neighbouring Local Authorities.....	7
4.0	HMOs in Walsall.....	11
5.0	Controls and Implementation.....	20
6.0	Recommendations and Next Steps	23

Appendix 1: Additional Licensing Scheme Conditions

Appendix 2: Crime Area Analysis

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Lambert Smith Hampton on behalf of Walsall Council to consider the background to Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) generally and within the borough and the possible controls available to the council.
- 1.2 There have been concerns raised by both members and residents about the potential impact of a proliferation of HMOs in certain wards within the borough and this has previously led to an enhanced licensing regime although the concerns remain.
- 1.3 The report reviews what HMOs are and how they are controlled by the planning system, as well as considering the rising need for HMOs as a home for many people and the impact this might have in different areas.
- 1.4 There has been previous research carried out in respect of HMOs in Walsall, and the report considers the outcomes of this work, and reviews the current controls in place in the borough, together with the geographical spread of HMOs and the possible impact on areas.
- 1.5 The approach of other authorities, both neighbouring Walsall and further afield across the West and East Midlands, has been reviewed to understand the approach that they have taken to introducing additional controls to the creation of HMOs including Article 4 Directions removing permitted development rights and specific planning policies covering HMOs.
- 1.6 A number of these authorities have introduced Article 4 Directions which cover the whole of their administrative area, rather than specific wards, and the potential for this approach in Walsall is considered.
- 1.7 The report sets out the options available in respect of introducing an Article 4 Direction to control and manage HMOs, and the requirements for making and confirming the Direction with recommendations for the suggested approach and the next steps required.
- 1.8 The report does not consider recent changes to the General Permitted Development Order (GDPO) which have widened and extended the scope and scale of properties (including offices and retail premises) which can be converted to residential use under permitted development rights.

2.0 Background to Houses in Multiple Occupation

- 2.1 This section considers the definition of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) together with the controls available to authorities under planning legislation. This will include a review of what constitutes an HMO, together with the requirements for planning consent to create an HMO and how this might be reinforced through the introduction of an Article 4 Direction.
- 2.2 HMOs are properties rented out to at least 3 people who are not from one household but share facilities like a bathroom and kitchen. Most HMOs are conversions or subdivisions of larger houses.
- 2.3 HMOs provide an important way of meeting the housing needs of an area, particularly for people on low incomes, young professionals, students and the growing number of one person households. At the same time, high concentrations of HMOs in any one area can present a challenge to creating mixed, balanced and sustainable communities and impact on residential character and amenity.
- 2.4 Currently under planning legislation HMOs are divided into two uses classes most commonly known as 'Small' and 'Large' HMOs. A 'Smaller' HMO is defined under Class C4 of the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, which sets out that this is the use of a dwellinghouse by no more than six unrelated individuals.
- 2.5 Currently the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order (2015) allows the change of use of a single-family dwelling house (C3) to a Small HMO (C4) without requiring planning permission. In essence this means that a house is able to be converted, or used, as a smaller HMO without requiring any planning consent if it is to be used by no more than six unrelated individuals.
- 2.6 Larger HMOs that can accommodate more than 6 people are regarded as 'Sui Generis' which means that they are classified as falling within a use class of their own, and subsequently no change of use rights are afforded. This means that the creation of Larger HMOs already requires planning approval, this coming under the control of the local planning authority.
- 2.7 In considering the control of HMOs through planning powers, councils can introduce Article 4 Directions which are afforded through Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. An Article 4 Direction enables LPAs to remove specific permitted development rights, such as those afforded under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class L (Small HMOs to dwellinghouses and vice versa).

- 2.8 There are two approaches to the implementation of Article 4 Directions, those without immediate effect and those with immediate effect.
- 2.9 In respect of the use of Article 4 Directions, paragraph 53 of the National Planning Policy Framework sets out the following in relation to removal of national permitted development rights:
- Be limited to situations where an Article 4 Direction is necessary to protect local amenity or the well-being of the area (which could include the use of Article 4 directions to require planning permission for the demolition of local facilities);
 - In all cases, be based on robust evidence, and apply to the smallest geographical area possible.
- 2.10 Article 4 Directions can only be introduced following a period of public consultation with a requirement to notify the Secretary of State following adoption (see section 5 below). Compensation may be payable following imposition of an immediate Direction, therefore nearly all authorities opt for a non-immediate Direction to control and manage HMOs (see section 3 below).
- 2.11 In understanding the potential future pressures for HMO accommodation there are two important aspects to consider. The first being the need for this type of accommodation within an area and the second being the approach of neighbouring authorities, whereby if neighbouring authorities have sought to restrict and control the provision of HMO's within their authority areas, this may contribute to an increase in Private Rented Sector (PRS) landlords seeking to provide HMO accommodation in areas where permitted development rights remain (see section 3 below).
- 2.12 HMO accommodation is generally recognised as meeting a specific need in terms of type and tenure of accommodation as shared accommodation of this nature can be more affordable for single persons. For instance, under Universal Credit & Housing Benefit rules, the rate of "housing costs" for someone who is single and under the age of 35, is normally restricted to the Shared Accommodation Rate (SAR) when they are in the private rented sector accommodation. The Shared Accommodation Rate only provides for a single room in a shared house in someone's area, even if they do not live in shared housing.
- 2.13 Recent changes to the General Permitted Development Order (GDPO) have given wider opportunities to convert properties from other uses to residential use. This includes lifting the floor limit for office conversion and removing the requirement for a period of

vacancy, as well as extending the range of other properties which can be converted under permitted development (PD) rights which now includes retail and other town centre uses.

- 2.14 These types of PD conversion do not come under the scope of HMOs, with guidance making it clear that local authorities must have good reason to remove the PD rights through Article 4 Directions, and as such they have not been considered within this report.

3.0 Approach of Neighbouring Local Authorities

- 3.1 One of the concerns raised by members is in relation to the approach taken to HMOs by neighbouring local authorities, with a number introducing area wide Article 4 Directions, and the potential impact that this might have upon demand for HMOs within Walsall. It is clear that the number of Article 4 Directions being introduced to control HMOs has increased over recent years, and as such it is useful to review the approach that other authorities have taken locally and across the wider West and East Midlands.
- 3.2 We have reviewed the approach taken by a number of local authorities both in the Black Country and West Midlands, and across the East Midlands. Whilst Walsall probably has most in common with other Black Country authorities in terms of the likely demand for HMOs, it was considered useful to review how other authorities of various sizes have dealt with the issue.
- 3.3 The following looks at each of the authority areas in turn and sets out the details of any restrictions on HMOs, particularly for Article 4 Directions, looking at how long they have been in place and how much of the authority area they cover. Details have been obtained from Council websites and no contact has been made with the respective authorities at this time.

Birmingham City Council

- 3.4 Historically Birmingham has had Article 4 Directions in place covering Selly Oak, Edgbaston and Harborne, which were principally intended to prevent the proliferation of student housing associated with the University of Birmingham, which had seen a significant amount of family housing being lost to student accommodation.
- 3.5 The review of HMOs and their controls in the city came about following concerns being raised by councillors and residents about the high concentrations of HMOs in certain areas, together with the impact that this could have on the character and residential amenity of the area.
- 3.6 A review of HMOs across the city identified concentrations in various areas including those where there were Article 4 Directions in place, and considered the various options for how Directions might be put in place from nothing being put in place, multiple area-based Directions or a single city-wide Article 4 Direction.
- 3.7 At the Cabinet meeting on 14th May 2019, it was agreed that a single city-wide Direction

should be put in place on the basis that this would provide a the most consistent and comprehensive approach to manage the distribution of HMOs across the city.

- 3.8 As part of the review of the Development Management SPD, the existing policy relating to HMOs was reviewed and consulted upon with an over-concentration of HMO properties considered where they would constitute more than 10% of residential properties within 100 metres of the application site as well as considering continuous frontages and sandwiching of C3 properties by non-family housing.
- 3.9 The city-wide Article 4 Direction came into force from 8 June 2020, with the existing area-based Directions being cancelled at the same time.

Dudley Council

- 3.10 Dudley Council followed a similar process to Birmingham following concerns from members and residents about the effect of a proliferation of HMOs in the borough. Following a vote in October 2021, officers were instructed to review the situation with HMOs across the area, with consideration of similar options to Birmingham, i.e. no Article 4 Direction, area-based or borough-wide.
- 3.11 The Council had no specific policies which sought to manage the location and nature if HMOs, referencing the NPPF together with policies in the Black Country Core Strategy and Dudley Borough Development Strategy in the determination of planning applications for larger HMOs. Reference was also made to the proposed policy in the draft Black Country Plan, albeit this is of course no longer proceeding.
- 3.12 Having considered extensive evidence, the recommendation was made that a borough-wide Article 4 Direction was put in place in order to provide consistent and comprehensive management of HMOs across the borough, with the Direction being made and coming into effect from September 2023.

Wolverhampton City Council

- 3.13 Wolverhampton introduced an Article 4 Direction in respect of small HMOs in 2017 which covers the whole of the council's area. This followed consultation in 2016, which in turn followed evidence gathering and council decisions to make the Direction.
- 3.14 Responses to the consultation included a direct request to the Secretary of State to intervene in the Article 4 Direction, although it was determined by the DHLUC that it was not considered that there were clear reasons for intervention at Government level.

Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council

- 3.15 Sandwell and Walsall are the only Black Country authorities which have not yet introduced an Article 4 Direction restricting HMOs. Sandwell has recently carried out a consultation on additional licensing controls for HMOs, but does not yet appear to have considered the introduction of an Article 4 Direction.

West and East Midlands

- 3.16 Other authorities across the West and East Midlands have taken differing approaches to the introduction of Article 4 Directions to control HMOs in their areas.
- 3.17 **Coventry City Council** introduced an Article 4 Direction in September 2023, which restricts the creation of HMOs in a number of wards principally covering the centre and south of the city area.
- 3.18 **East Staffordshire Borough Council** confirmed an Article 4 Direction in March 2022 relating to HMOs within the settlement boundary of Burton upon Trent which comprises the main urban area in the borough. The council has a policy relating to HMOs dating back to 2018.
- 3.19 **Leicester City Council** has an Article 4 Direction dating back to August 2013. This relates to specific named streets and runs of properties within those streets. Further consultation was undertaken in 2022 to review the extension of the Direction to a further 3 areas, although it was not proposed to introduce a city-wide direction.
- 3.20 **Nottingham City Council** introduced an Article 4 Direction restricting HMOs across the whole of the city in 2011. This has subsequently been followed up with the introduction of Policy HO6 within their local plan concerning the change of use of properties to HMOs, along with an updated Guidance Note in 2019.
- 3.21 **Rugby Borough Council** has very recently introduced an Article 4 Direction covering five wards in close proximity to Rugby town centre. The Direction was introduced following the proliferation of HMOs in these wards which anecdotally is believed to have been in response to the demand for accommodation from mainly single workers at the numerous distribution sites in the locality.
- 3.22 Other authority areas including Stoke on Trent, Telford and Stafford do not currently have Article 4 Directions in place, but do have local plan policies relating to their control and have considered the introduction of Directions to control and manage the number of HMOs alongside licensing controls.

- 3.23 We have carried out a high level review of the impact of the introduction of area wide Article 4 Directions on the number of planning applications for HMOs, but have not been able to identify any significant increase in applications.

4.0 HMOs in Walsall

- 4.1 This section of the report considers the current position of the council towards the control of HMOs in Walsall, with particular reference to existing planning policy and the Additional Licensing Schemes (ALS) that been designated - and proposed to be designated - within the borough. The section also draws upon previous assessments of the borough's privately rented housing stock (including the HMO stock) which have been used to facilitate the delivery of the council's housing strategy and enable targeted interventions in the improvement of housing. In doing so, this section elaborates on the particular wards of the borough in which there is the greatest prevalence of HMOs and in quantitative terms, what this translates to in terms of socio-economic conditions and level of crime.

Planning Policy

- 4.2 At present, the consideration of applications for large HMOs classified as "sui generis" is primarily governed by saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) Policy H7, the wording of which is copied below.

Policy H7: Hostels and Houses in Multiple Occupation

Proposals for the establishment, enlargement or alteration of hostels or houses in multiple occupation will be encouraged if it can be demonstrated that:

- i. There would be no harm to the amenity of the occupants of neighbouring buildings or the intended occupiers of the proposed accommodation.
- ii. There would be no harm to the character and appearance of the building or the surrounding area.
- iii. It would not impair the free flow of traffic or highway safety.

- 4.3 The saved UDP policy is encouraging in its position towards HMOs, subject to proposals protecting the residential amenity of both intended residents and neighbours, and there being no adverse impact on the building, surrounding area and highway network. The text accompanying the policy notes that whilst HMOs (and hostels) play an important role in meeting housing needs, they can create amenity issues, including for adjacent occupants through noise or on-street parking. As set out at paragraph 6.14, there is an opportunity to bolster the wording of this policy through the new local plan, so as to reflect on the greater range of issues relating to HMOs and ensure that new proposals adhere to a stricter range of criteria concerning the impact and harm of these issues.

HMO Stock

- 4.4 Based on Council data – namely, the Integrated Dwelling Level Housing Stock Modelling and Database compiled for the council by BRE in September 2019 and the most recent Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) – there is an estimated total of 2,030 HMOs within the borough, which equates to 11% of the private rented housing stock. Of these, 304 HMOs are licensed under the Additional Licensing Scheme (ALS) which is detailed further below. Table 1 below extracts the relevant figures from the BRE report and indicates the number and percentage of HMOs by ward, with the dotted red line indicating the 11% borough-wide figure.

Table 1: Stock of HMOs by Ward			
Ward	Number of HMOs	% of borough's HMOs	% of private rented stock is HMOs
St. Matthew's	308	15.2	14
Pleck	247	12.2	17
Willenhall South	205	10.1	13
Palfrey	196	9.7	18
Birchills Leamore	131	6.5	10
Blakenall	129	6.4	14
Bentley and Darlaston North	117	5.8	13
Darlaston South	117	5.8	12
Paddock	103	5.1	13
Bloxwich East	70	3.4	9
Brownhills	56	2.8	9
Pheasey Park Farm	50	2.5	9
Bloxwich West	49	2.4	6
Rushall-Sheffield	44	2.2	7
Aldridge Central and South	43	2.1	6
Short Heath	39	1.9	7
Aldridge North and Walsall Wood	39	1.9	6
Pelsall	34	1.7	6
Streetly	31	1.5	6
Willenhall North	22	1.1	4
Total	2,030	-	-

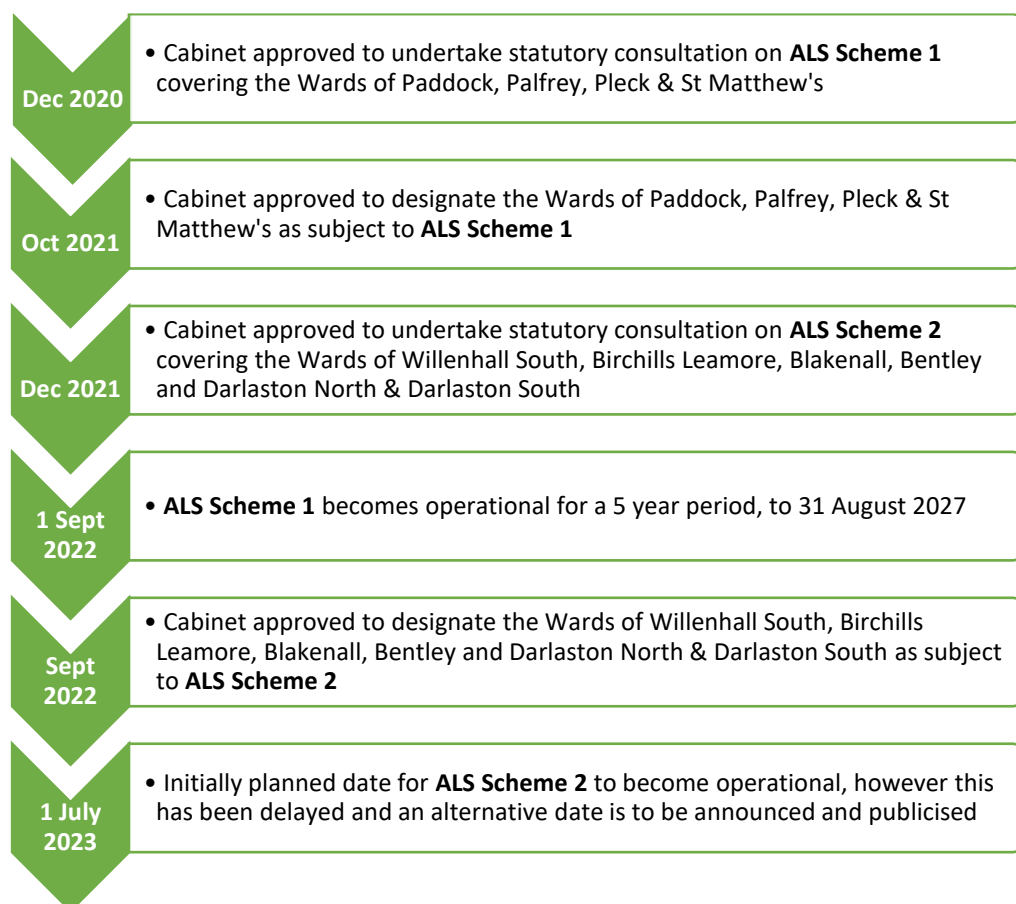
- 4.5 The table suggests that 9 of the borough's 20 wards have a stock of HMOs that exceed the borough-wide average of 11%. As noted below, these wards are either subject to an ALS ("Scheme 1") or intended to be subject to an ALS in due course ("Scheme 2").

- 4.6 To inform the content of this report and further refine the estimation of HMO stock within the borough, the council has provided planning application data dating from April 2018 to February 2024. Whilst this does helpfully identify a range of applications that have successfully gained permission for the change of use of a property to a HMO, these are limited in number (specifically, 15no.), and when considered with the permitted development right that eliminates the greater extent of planning applications that would otherwise need to be submitted, this means that the full stock of HMOs cannot be estimated through this source of data.
- 4.7 By looking at Lower Layer Super Output Areas (LSOAs), it is also possible to take a more granular view of HMO stock within Walsall. For example, the 2019 BRE Modelling and Database identifies that there are 49 LSOAs with a higher percentage of HMOs than the overall Walsall figure of 11%. A similar analysis of LSOAs shows that within the estimated total stock of HMOs, there is a 31.5% prevalence of low-income households.
- 4.8 With HMOs being a by-product of the private rented and buy-to-let sectors, it is also important to highlight the significant contribution of these sectors towards the borough's housing stock and the likely increased reliance on private rented housing in the future, especially against the backdrop of house price inflation. The results of the 2021 Census indicate that 16.3% of households within the borough are of private rented tenure; notably, this is an increase of 4.6% when compared against the results of the 2011 Census.

Additional Licencing Scheme (ALS)

- 4.9 The mechanism currently used by the council to control the prevalence of HMOs within the borough is the Additional Licensing Scheme (ALS). The scheme requires landlords of private rented HMOs that are occupied by 3 or 4 unrelated people to apply to the council for a license in order to let the property for such purpose. HMOs occupied by 5 or more unrelated people are already subject to "Mandatory" licensing. Both forms of licensing (Additional and Mandatory) impose conditions relating to residential amenity and safety that HMO landlords must meet in order to lawfully let a property to tenants.
- 4.10 The government requires councils to apply a set of prescribed conditions which cannot be altered or removed as they are set by the Housing Act 2004; these are set out at **Appendix 1** (numbered 1 to 12 inclusive) in respect of Walsall's ALS and relate to, inter alia, gas and electrical safety, bedroom sizes, waste disposal and emergency escape lighting. An additional set of conditions can also be agreed and set by the council.

- 4.11 Over the last four years, the council has consulted on the introduction of two ALS within the borough and has subsequently introduced one scheme in accordance with section 56 of the Housing Act 2004. The trajectory for doing so is summarised by the following flow diagram.



- 4.12 The following tables 2 and 3 also provide a summary of both Additional Licencing Schemes in terms of: the extent of designation (by geographical area and wards); the period/proposed period of operation; the conditions/proposed conditions that apply to the Scheme; the number of HMOs within these wards and wider Scheme area; and the proportion of these HMOs which have Category 1 Hazards (under Housing Health and Safety Rating System) and disrepair; and the proportion of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) within the Scheme area which are in the most deprived in the country.

Table 2: Walsall HMO ALS Scheme 1

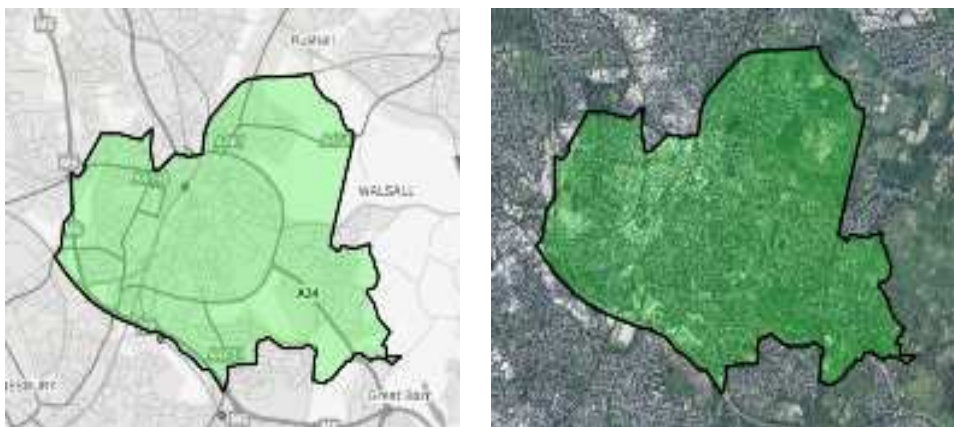

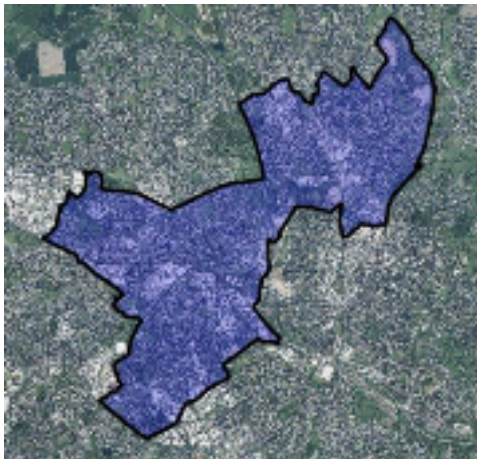
Designated Area	 <p>R: (c) Ordnance Survey L: (c) Copyright Bluesky International Ltd/Getmapping PLC 2024</p>
Designated Wards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paddock • Palfrey • Pleck • St Matthew's
Period of Operation	1 September 2022 to 31 August 2027
ALS Conditions	The Government requires councils to apply a set of prescribed conditions which cannot be altered or removed as they are set by statute; these are set out at Appendix 1 and are numbered 1 to 12 inclusive. An additional set of conditions are agreed and set by the council and these are numbered 9 to 39 inclusive at Appendix 1 . Specific conditions can also be applied to an HMO licence and are consulted upon directly with the landlord.
No. of HMOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paddock - 103 • Palfrey - 196 • Pleck - 247 • St Matthew's – 854 • Total – 854 (42.1% of borough's HMOs)
% of HMOs with Cat 1 Hazards & Disrepairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Paddock – Hazards 18.4%; Disrepair 13.6% • Palfrey – Hazards 18.9%; Disrepair 21.9% • Pleck – Hazards 19%; Disrepair 22.3% • St Matthew's – Hazards 23.4%; Disrepair 21.1% • Total – Hazards 20.5%; Disrepair 20.7%
% of LSOA in Scheme Area of Most Deprived in England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 10% Most Deprived – 40% • Top 20% Most Deprived – 63%

Table 3: Walsall HMO ALS Scheme 2

Proposed Designated Area	  <p>R: (c) Ordnance Survey L: (c) Copyright Bluesky International Ltd/Getmapping PLC 2024</p>
Proposed Designated Wards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bentley and Darlaston North • Birchills Leamore • Blakenall • Darlaston South • Willenhall South
Proposed Period of Operation	1 July 2023 to 30 June 2028 (<i>delayed; alternative date to be announced and publicised</i>)
Proposed ALS Conditions	The Government requires councils to apply a set of prescribed conditions which cannot be altered or removed as they are set by statute; these are set out at Appendix 1 and are numbered 1 to 12 inclusive. An additional set of conditions are agreed and set by the council and these are numbered 9 to 39 inclusive at Appendix 1 . Specific conditions can also be applied to an HMO licence and are consulted upon directly with the landlord.
No. of HMOs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bentley and Darlaston North - 117 • Birchills Leamore - 131 • Blakenall - 129 • Darlaston South - 117 • Willenhall South - 205 • Total – 699 (34.4% of Borough's HMOs)
% of HMOs with Cat 1 Hazards & Disrepairs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bentley and Darlaston North – Hazards 17.1%; Disrepair 10.3% • Birchills Leamore – Hazards 12.2%; Disrepair 10.7% • Blakenall – Hazards 15.5%; Disrepair 12.4% • Darlaston South – Hazards 15.4%; Disrepair 8.5% • Willenhall South – Hazards 15.6%; Disrepair 11.2% • Total – Hazards 15.2%; Disrepair 10.7%
% of LSOA in Scheme Area of Most Deprived in England	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top 5 Most Deprived – 19% (21% of Dwellings) • Top 10% Most Deprived – 43% (46% of Dwellings) • Top 20% Most Deprived – 88% (91% of Dwellings)

Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

- 4.13 Whilst not specific to Walsall, it is acknowledged that there have been concerns from the public and members for a number of years around the perceptions of crime and anti-social behaviour associated with HMOS, and the negative impact this has on local communities. These perceptions often materialise through representations to HMO planning applications which often reference issues relating to the behaviour of occupiers. It is important to recognise that in many cases, these views may be perceptual rather than actual. For example, attitudes towards the nature of occupiers may be based on the perception of who may live there (i.e. ex-offenders, migrants, those suffering with mental health or addiction issues) and the nature of activity that may occur, whereas actual attitudes towards the impact on neighbouring residential amenity are likely to be based upon experience within the local area.
- 4.14 This report has also been informed by engagement with the council's Head of Community Building and Cohesion who has confirmed that the negative perception of HMOs in terms of crime and anti-social behaviour is often expressed at community safety and partnership meetings. It was recognised that whilst negative perceptions can be driven by personal prejudices, they are more often a genuine concern, based on notable changes in the housing mix which often create tension between families and single people. In addition, it is often considered that the changeable and transient population of areas with greater concentration of HMOs means that it is harder to take action and alleviate particular concerns around safety and waste management.
- 4.15 To further consider the correlation (rather than causation) between the prevalence of HMOs and level of crime and anti-social behaviour, it is helpful to refer to the official crime statistics held by West Midlands Police, which are accessed via the police.uk data portal¹. This data is geographically arranged and presented in the form of various 'neighbourhoods' within the borough, which broadly align with ward boundaries, albeit with wards amalgamated in most cases. For example, the Willenhall 'neighborhood' encompasses the wards of Willenhall North, Shorth Heath and Willenhall South.
- 4.16 As set out in more detail at **Appendix 2**, it is possible to consider the level of reported crime against the estimated number of HMOs in order to understand if a correlation exists between the two issues. This is also summarised as follows:

¹ <https://www.police.uk/pu/your-area/west-midlands-police>

- Aldridge North & Walsall Wood, Aldridge Central & South, Pheasey Park Farm and Streetly – these wards contain 8% of the estimated total of HMOs within the borough and account for 10% of all reported crimes over the period April 2021 to December 2023 within the borough.
- Bentley & Darlaston North and Darlaston South – these wards contain 11.5% of the estimated total of HMOs within the borough and account for 11% of all reported crimes over the period April 2021 to December 2023.
- Blakenhall and Birchills Leamore – these wards contain 12.8% of the estimated total of HMOs within the borough and account for 14% of all reported crimes over the period April 2021 to December 2023.
- Bloxwich East and Bloxwich West – these wards contain 5.9% of the estimated total of HMOs within the borough and account for 9% of all reported crimes over the period April 2021 to December 2023.
- Brownhills, Pelsall and Rushall Shelfield – these wards contain 6.6% of the estimated total of HMOs within the borough and account for 10% of all reported crimes over the period April 2021 to December 2023.
- Palfrey and Paddock – these wards contain 14.7% of the estimated total of HMOs within the borough and account for 10% of all reported crimes over the period April 2021 to December 2023.
- Pleck – this ward contains 12.2% of the estimated total of HMOs within the borough and accounts for 7% of all reported crimes over the period April 2021 to December 2023.
- St Matthews – this ward contains 15.2% of the estimated total of HMOs within the borough and accounts for 14% of all reported crimes over the period April 2021 to December 2023.
- Willenhall North, Short Heath and Willenhall South – these wards contain 13.1% of the estimated total of HMOs within the borough and account for 16% of all reported crimes over the period April 2021 to December 2023.

4.17 Whilst in some instances the above analysis does indicate a loose correlation between the level of reported crime and the estimated number of HMOs, this is not considered to be strong enough to credibly suggest there is a link between the two issues. This is also a result of the two issues not existing in isolation and the wider association between the socio-economic conditions of an area and dependency on HMOs for short-term housing which is elaborated on elsewhere within the report. Nevertheless, the analysis is helpful in so far as confirming that the level of crime is not a factor which, in isolation, should be used to justify the control of HMOs within a particular ward or area.

- 4.18 Where other neighbouring authorities have undertaken this type of review a broad correlation between the levels of crime reported and the level of HMOs within an area, although again there is no definitive evidence that there is a causal effect from a concentration of HMOs leading to high levels of crime.

Health and Wellbeing

- 4.19 In the process of consulting on the introduction of ALS, it has been previously highlighted to Cabinet that there are complex interconnections between living conditions, deprivation and health problems, which HMOs clearly lie at the centre as a form of low-cost, intermediary housing. It is also acknowledged that the council has a statutory duty to tackle what are known as Category 1 Hazards under the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) which, as the above tables 2 and 3 suggest, are more prevalent within HMOs. Alongside this, there are poor management practices relating to HMOs which impact negatively on the health of the immediate and neighbouring occupants of these properties. These cannot be addressed through the use of existing statutory powers.
- 4.20 For example, poorly managed HMOs can lead to fly tipping / waste accumulation, either by the landlord and or tenant, which both have an immediate detrimental impact on the local neighbourhood and wellbeing of residents and also can act as an attractant to vermin and pests. The cost of dealing with fly tipping within the borough is significant and principally borne by the council. The council's own waste and street cleaning team have previously acknowledged the ALS as being particularly helpful in the process of issuing the correct capacity for waste collection of HMO properties and reducing the contamination of recycling.

5.0 Controls and Implementation

- 5.1 As outlined in section 2 above, if the council is minded to introduce additional planning controls to manage the creation of HMOs in the area, it can introduce an Article 4 Direction to remove the permitted development right afforded under Schedule 2, Part 3, Class L (Small HMOs to dwellinghouses and vice versa) of the GPDO, thereby requiring planning permission to be granted for new small HMOs.
- 5.2 There are two types of Article 4 Direction – immediate and non-immediate. Immediate directions apply immediately as the name suggests, albeit the local authority is required to confirm the Direction within six months following public consultation. Non-immediate Directions, however, do not take effect until after public consultation and subsequent confirmation by the local authority. The Secretary of State is notified of all Article 4 Directions made by local authorities as soon as practicable after confirmation. The Secretary of State can also intervene where there are clear reasons to do so.
- 5.3 With an immediate Article 4 Direction, there is for potential for applicants to claim compensation from local authorities if they have had planning permission refused for a development scheme that they would normally be able to carry out under permitted development rights. Any such compensation claims can only be made against abortive expenditure or losses and damages directly related to the withdrawal of permitted development rights.
- 5.4 To avoid the risk of such compensation claims, local authorities tend to pursue non-immediate Article 4 Directions in respect of small HMOs, often with a lead-in time of 12-months before the Direction is brought in to affect. The maximum period of time that an Article 4 Direction can be applied after being confirmed is two years following the date on which the representation period began
- 5.5 The council will initially need to follow its internal processes to consider the making of a non-immediate Direction with decisions being made through Corporate Management Team (CMT) with any decision endorsed by Cabinet. These processes are set out within the Walsall Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) which was most recently revised in November 2018. This confirms that when producing an Article 4 Direction, the council will:
 - Undertake consultation for a minimum of 3 weeks;
 - Make all the relevant documents available on the website, in the main library and at the planning reception;

- Place a notice in the local press;
- Display at least 2 site notices within the area the Direction would apply for a minimum of 6 weeks;
- Where reasonable notify all owners and occupiers within the area the Direction would apply to; and
- Clearly set out when the Article 4 Direction will come into force.

5.6 The above process will also need to align with the legislative procedure for introducing an Article 4 Direction which is set out within Schedule 3 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015. This process is summarised as follows:

- Notice of any Direction made under article 4(1) of the Order must be undertaken as soon as practical after the Direction has been made in the following forms and for a minimum period of six weeks.
 - a) Local advertisement; and
 - b) By site display in no fewer than 2 locations within the area to which the Direction relates

5.7 Whilst it exceeds local and national requirements, the council may also consider direct consultation with planning agents, previous applicants for HMOs and letting agents within the area.

5.8 In respect of the consultation, Schedule 3 Para. 1 (1)(c) sets out that notice should be served on the owner and occupier of every part of the land within the area of site to which the Direction relates. However, exceptions are given to this requirement within paragraph (2) which sets out that the LPA need not serve notice on an owner or occupier if it is considered that the number of individuals within the area to which the Direction relates would make individual service impracticable.

5.9 It is generally accepted that given the areas which may be considered for directions in respect of HMOs, that it would not be practical to serve notice on all owners or occupiers of every C3 single family dwelling house within the area, or within any respective areas considered appropriate for adoption of an Article 4 Direction.

5.10 Further controls in respect of HMOs may also be introduced through the formulation of appropriate planning policies setting out the issues to be considered as part of any proposals for the introduction of HMOs (either as large HMOs or where Article 4

Directions have removed permitted development rights.

5.11 These would need to be consulted upon, and can be introduced either as an SPD, or as policy to be introduced within the new local plan which would expand upon saved UDP policy H7. Appropriate policies may contain controls such as:

- Limit on the percentage of HMOs within a certain radius of the application site;
- Limit on continuous frontages of HMOs, or sandwiching of C3 residential uses;
- Loss of facilities supporting other objectives and policies;
- Cumulative impacts of amenity, character, appearance, highway safety and parking;
- Standard of accommodation (may also be controlled under licensing).

5.12 The council may also consider the need for HMO housing through its Housing Needs Assessment which will be carried out as part of the evidence base for a local plan. This will look at the need for housing of various types and unit sizes, including identifying the need for single person accommodation, which will often be met through HMOs. This requirement for single person accommodation may also be taken into account in determining any applications for HMOs.

6.0 Recommendations and Next Steps

- 6.1 It is clear from the research undertaken to prepare this report, which includes a review of research which has previously been carried out by or on behalf of the council, that there are significant and increasing numbers of HMOs within the borough. The average across Walsall is at around 11% of properties, with nine wards having a percentage in excess of that level.
- 6.2 Concern has been raised by both members and the public about the uncontrolled growth of HMOs through the use of permitted development (PD) rights, albeit it is worth bearing in mind that these PD rights are only able to be exercised for “small” HMOs.
- 6.3 Large HMOs are already subject to planning controls through the classification of being “sui generis”, thus allowing for consideration of any proposals through the planning system. The consideration of these applications is currently governed by saved Unitary Development Plan (UDP) policy H7 which is encouraging in its position towards HMOs.
- 6.4 It is also apparent that HMOs, and other similar residential properties, play an increasingly important part in the provision of housing in the borough, particularly for single person households and those depending upon benefits.
- 6.5 There is a view that a higher-than-average number of HMOs within an area (generally considered on a ward-wide basis) will lead to an increased level of crime within an area, and whilst there are levels of crime reported within areas that have large concentrations of HMOs, there is no established link between the two.
- 6.6 Where planning applications for HMOs are submitted, the increased potential for crime is often raised as an issue and a reason to refuse permission. Within this context, it is important that the council acknowledges recent case law² which has established a series of tests which must be passed before a ‘fear of crime’ can be considered a material consideration in the determination of an application. In particular, the fear of crime:
 - must be objectively justified;
 - must have some reasonable basis; and
 - must relate to the use of the land in question rather than assumptions “not supported by evidence as to the character of future occupiers”.

² APP/Y3425/W/23/3315258: Stafford Education and Enterprise Park, Weston Road, Stafford (26 June 2023)

- 6.7 If the council are to consider bringing small HMOs under planning control by removing PD rights, then this can be done through the introduction of an Article 4 Direction. The council will have to follow their internal processes following Cabinet approval, and align with the council's Statement of Community Involvement to agree to making a Direction, following which it will need to be advertised in accordance with Schedule 3 of the GDPO.

- 6.8 The council will firstly need to decide whether they should introduce an Article 4 Direction to control HMOs and then decide whether this should cover specific areas or the whole of the council area. It is also assumed that the council would pursue a non-immediate Direction, so as to avoid compensation claims being made against the council by any developers for abortive expenditure or losses and damages directly related to the withdrawal of the permitted development right.

- 6.9 Allowing a 12-month grace period for enforcing the Article 4 Direction would enable developers of new small HMOs to become aware of the removal of these rights before planning and commencing the conversion of such properties. The date that the Article 4 Direction is confirmed must be within two years following the date on which the representation period began.

- 6.10 Whilst Government guidance is that Article 4 Directions should only be introduced where there are specific and evidenced issues necessitating the removal of PD rights, it is clear that other authorities, including neighbouring authorities (Birmingham, Dudley and Wolverhampton), have introduced Directions covering the whole of their administrative areas.

- 6.11 The reasoning given for a borough-wide Direction appears in all cases to be based upon an assertion that this will give the most consistent and comprehensive approach to the management of HMOs across an area, providing clarity for the council, residents and potential landlords. To date this approach appears to have been through the respective consultations with no challenges or interventions from the Government.

- 6.12 Notwithstanding the important role of HMOs in providing a low-cost and intermediary form of housing, particularly for the most vulnerable within society, it is clear that the proliferation of HMOs could potentially disrupt community cohesion and resilience across the borough, as well as give rise to a particular fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.

- 6.13 It is therefore recommended that the council should adopt a borough-wide Article 4

Direction in order to deliver this consistent and comprehensive approach to the control of HMOs and to mirror the approach of neighbouring authorities. Whilst it has been suggested that being out of step with other areas may lead to an increase in HMOs where they are not controlled in the same way, there is no evidence to support this.

- 6.14 Once council approvals are in place, the necessary publication of the introduction of the Direction will need to be made. As set out above, it is accepted that it is not practical to directly contact everyone who may be affected, and as such public notices through press and websites would be acceptable. It is also recommended that local planning agents and letting agents, together with appropriate trade bodies should be consulted. Once the consultation period has been undertaken, the Direction can be formally made and brought into place.
- 6.15 Alongside the introduction of an Article 4 Direction, it is also recommended that through the new local plan process (preparation of which is anticipated to commence later this year), the council introduce a relevant planning policy to replace and strengthen saved UDP Policy H7, to be applied in the determination of future planning application for HMOs. This was proposed to be included within the Black Country Plan, but as this is not proceeding, an alternative approach should be introduced, either through the emerging local plan or through a specific SPD in the interim. However, it is understood that the local planning regulations do not allow an SPD to include development management policies and therefore the effectiveness of this approach may be somewhat limited.
- 6.16 Such a policy should set out the parameters against which applications will be assessed and will provide the council with a robust tool to control the introduction of HMOs and to defend any potential planning appeals arising from refusals of planning permission.

Appendix 1

Additional Licensing Scheme Conditions

Appendix 3

Conditions for Walsall Additional Licensing

Explanatory Note:

For Additional Licensing the Government requires councils to always use a set of what are known as prescribed conditions. Councils are not permitted to alter or remove any of these conditions. They are set by statute. These conditions are shown below in Section A and they are numbered 1 to 12 inclusive

The Government also permits two forms of extra types of condition:

- a) Those that are locally agreed by a council – these conditions are numbered 9 to 36 inclusive;
- b) Those that the council applies to a specific HMO licence under the Additional Licensing scheme. These are consulted upon directly with the parties (HMO applicant etc.) at the point of an HMO licence being considered. If parties do not agree to the specific additional condition(s) they are able to appeal directly to the First tier tribunal for consideration of the matter. An example, of the nature of 'specific conditions' is where the officer requires that occupancy is reduced to a lower level within a stated period (i.e. 3 months etc.) this sort of condition is used to provide a landlord with the opportunity to legally and fairly reduce the occupancy levels so that the property is not over-crowded

WALSALL COUNCIL

LICENCE CONDITIONS FOR HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION COVERED BY ADDITIONAL LICENSING

(Housing Act 2004 part 2 Section 67 and Schedule 4)

Address of property:	
----------------------	--

These conditions must be complied with as any contravention may lead to formal enforcement action by the Council. Note that any reference to Licence Holder also applies to the Manager (where applicable) and both parties are jointly responsible for full compliance with the above conditions.

You should take advice from the Council or an independent body if you do not understand a condition.

Failure to meet license conditions can result in a criminal conviction and an unlimited fine or be issued with a financial penalty in line with the council's approved policy.

A. Prescribed Conditions set by Government and required by the Housing Act 2004

<u>1</u> <u>Gas Safety</u>	If gas is supplied to the premises, the Licence Holder must provide to the Council a Landlord's <i>Gas Safety Record issued in accordance with the Gas Safety (Installation and Use) Regulations 1998 (as amended)</i> with respect to all gas appliances, fittings, flues and pipework. Such a Gas Safety Record must have been obtained from a competent person and be dated within the 12 months prior to the date of application for this licence.
<u>2</u> <u>Furniture and Furnishings</u>	The Licence Holder must ensure that all upholstered furniture supplied by them for use by any occupier of the premises is compliant with the <i>Furniture and Furnishings (Fire Safety) Regulations 1988 (as amended in 1989 and 1993)</i> . They must supply to the Council when requested, a declaration as to the safety of such furniture. Any such furniture which fails to comply with these regulations must be removed from

	the premises without delay and properly disposed of. Suitable replacement furniture must be provided as appropriate.									
<u>3</u> <u>Electrical Appliances</u>	The Licence Holder must ensure that all electrical appliances supplied by them for use by any occupier of the premises are maintained in a safe condition. They must supply to the Council when requested, a declaration as to the safety of such appliances.									
<u>4</u> <u>Smoke Alarms</u>	The licence holder must ensure that suitable smoke alarms are installed in the property and must keep them in proper working order. The licence holder must supply the authority with a declaration as to the condition and positioning of such alarms.									
<u>5</u> <u>Carbon Monoxide Alarm</u>	The licence holder must ensure that a carbon monoxide alarm is installed in any room in the house which is used wholly or partly as living accommodation and contains a solid fuel burning combustion appliance. They must keep them in proper working order and supply the authority with a declaration as to the condition and positioning of such alarms.									
<u>6</u> <u>Tenancy Agreement</u>	The Licence Holder must supply to all occupiers of the house a written statement of the terms on which they occupy it.									
<u>7</u> <u>Bedroom Sizes</u>	<p>A room smaller than the specified relevant sizes below must not be used as sleeping accommodation, and communal space in other parts of the HMO cannot be used to compensate for rooms smaller than the prescribed minimum.</p> <table><tr><td>Number of People</td><td>Age in Years</td><td>Minimum Bedroom Floor Area</td></tr><tr><td>One person</td><td>over 10</td><td>6.51m²</td></tr><tr><td>Two persons</td><td>over 10</td><td>10.22m²</td></tr></table> <p>Any area of the room in which the ceiling height is less than 1.5m cannot be counted towards the minimum room size.</p>	Number of People	Age in Years	Minimum Bedroom Floor Area	One person	over 10	6.51m ²	Two persons	over 10	10.22m ²
Number of People	Age in Years	Minimum Bedroom Floor Area								
One person	over 10	6.51m ²								
Two persons	over 10	10.22m ²								
<u>8</u> <u>Waste Disposal</u>	The licence holder must ensure that suitable and adequate provision is made for the storage and disposal of domestic refuse from the house and that the council's arrangements for storage and waste disposal are adhered to.									
<u>9</u> <u>Electrical Installation Condition</u>	The Licence Holder must ensure that the fixed electrical installation of the premises is inspected and tested at intervals not exceeding five years. This must be carried out by a suitably qualified electrical contractor who should be a member of an approved scheme such as NICEIC, ECA, NAPIT and registered to undertake electrical works in accordance with part P of the Building Regulations. Electrical contractors that are on a relevant competent person scheme can be found at www.competentperson.co.uk									
<u>10</u> <u>Electrical Installation Remedial Works</u>	All remedial works equivalent to C1, C2 or FI must be completed as specified and an updated written confirmation obtained upon completion of such works.									
<u>11</u> <u>Electrical Installation Certification</u>	Test reports on the condition of the electrical installation in the property must be provided to the Council within 7 days of the date of a demand.									
<u>12</u> <u>Emergency Escape Lighting</u>	The Licence Holder must ensure that the premises is provided with a satisfactory emergency lighting throughout the communal fire escape route in according to the size, layout and type of accommodation. This must be inspected, tested and serviced by a competent person in accordance with the current British Standards.									

<u>13</u> <u>Automatic Fire</u> <u>Detection &</u> <u>Warning System</u> <u>Standard</u>	The Licence Holder must ensure that an automatic fire detection and warning system that is designed and installed to the current applicable British Standard for Houses in Multiple Occupation and is maintained in proper working order.
<u>14</u> <u>Fire Safety</u> <u>Certification</u>	The licence holder must provide maintenance reports to Walsall Council on request within 28 days with regards to emergency lighting, fire detection and alarm systems. The maintenance must be undertaken by a qualified fire alarm engineer and certification provided to confirm the systems complies with the relevant British Standards.
<u>15</u> <u>Fire Fighting</u> <u>Equipment</u>	The Licence Holder must ensure that all firefighting equipment, where provided, is maintained in accordance with the manufacturer's recommendations and that replacement or refilled equipment is provided without delay following any usage which renders it no longer effective.
<u>16</u> <u>Condition of</u> <u>Furniture</u>	The licence holder will ensure that any furniture supplied at the start of a tenancy or licence is in safe and good condition and maintained or replaced as far as it is the Landlord's responsibility throughout the tenancy.
<u>17</u> <u>Information that</u> <u>must be</u> <u>Displayed</u>	<p>A copy of the following documents should be displayed in a prominent position within the property at all times:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This licence, or a copy of it • Gas Safety Certificate (If Supplied) • Name and address of Licence Holder OR their Manager • Contact Telephone Number of Licence Holder OR their Manager <p>A schedule of these licence conditions must also be available for viewing by any occupier either by providing copies to each person or by displaying adjacent to the licence</p>
<u>18</u> <u>Property</u> <u>Inspections</u>	The licence holder shall ensure that inspections of the property are carried out at least every 6 months to identify any problems relating to the condition and management of the property. The records of such inspections shall be kept for the duration of this licence. As a minimum requirement the records must contain a log of who carried out the inspection, the date and the time of inspection and any issues found and action(s) taken. Copies of these must be provided within 7 days of the Council's demand.
<u>19</u> <u>Fit and Proper</u> <u>Persons</u>	The Licence Holder shall ensure that any person or persons involved with the management of the house are to the best of their knowledge "fit and proper persons" for the purposes of Section 66 of the Act.
<u>20</u> <u>Tackling Anti-</u> <u>Social</u> <u>Behaviour</u>	<p>The licence holder shall ensure that all reasonable and practical steps are taken to prevent and respond to anti-social behaviour. These include written tenancy management arrangements to prevent or reduce anti-social behaviour by persons occupying or visiting the property. Copies of these must be provided to the Council within 7 days of the Council's demand.</p> <p>If the licence holder or manager / manager receive complaints of anti-social behaviour that concern the occupiers of, or visitors to the property or that result from their actions they must comply with requirements (a) to (h) below:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure that written notes are kept of any meetings or telephone conversations or investigations regarding anti-social behaviour. If a complaint is received, or anti-social behaviour is discovered, within 7 days the tenant must be informed of the allegations of anti-social behaviour in writing and of the consequence of its continuation. Take all necessary steps to establish if it is continuing.

<p><u>20</u> <u>Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour</u> <u>continued</u></p>	<p>d) Where the anti-social behaviour is continuing after 14 days from receipt of the complaint, the licence holder, or their manager must, within 7 days visit the premises and give to the tenant, or leave at the property marked for their attention, a warning letter advising them of the possibility of eviction.</p> <p>e) Where the licence holder or his manager has reason to believe that the anti-social behaviour involves criminal activity the licence holder must ensure that the appropriate authorities (e.g. Police, Council etc.) are informed.</p> <p>f) If after 14 days of giving a warning letter the tenant has failed adequately to address the anti-social behaviour so that it is continuing, the licence holder must take appropriate formal steps under the tenancy agreement, whether to enforce its terms or to terminate it, including, where necessary, by taking legal proceedings against the occupier(s).</p> <p>g) Where the obligation under (f) has arisen, the licence holder must, within 7 days, provide to the Council in writing a plan setting out the steps they proposes to take, and the timescale for taking those steps, in order to resolve the problem</p> <p>h) If the licence holder is invited to do so, they must attend a case conference or Multi-Agency Meeting arranged by the Council or Police (whether following the provision of a plan referred to at (g) above, or generally.</p> <p>i) There may be instances where anti-social behaviour occurs more than once, but not continuously and possibly several months apart. In such circumstances the licence holder would still be expected to take all reasonable and practical steps to ensure it is effectively dealt with, up to and including eviction.</p>
<p><u>21</u> <u>Notification of Change of Circumstances</u></p>	<p>The licence holder must inform, in writing, the Council within 21 days of any material change in circumstances including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change of their address • Change of manager, management arrangements or ownership • Any changes to their, the manager's or any associate's circumstances which could affect their fit and proper person status i.e. any cautions or convictions for any offence involving fraud, dishonesty, violence, drugs, sexual offences (under Sexual Offences Act, schedule 3) discrimination or breach of housing or landlord/tenant law • Any changes to their, the manager's or any associate's circumstances which could affect their fit and proper person status i.e. any cautions or convictions for any offence involving fraud, dishonesty, violence, drugs, sexual offences (under Sexual Offences Act, schedule 3) discrimination or breach of housing or landlord/tenant law • Any proposed changes to the layout of the house that would affect the licence or licence conditions. <p><i>Licence holders should note that some of the changes above may result in either a new application or a variation being required to an existing licence.</i></p>
<p><u>22</u> <u>Preventing and Tackling Overcrowding</u></p>	<p>The number of persons residing in the premises at any one time shall not exceed the maximum number of occupants stated on the licence. The licence holder must not allow the property to be overcrowded and communal rooms (e.g. living rooms) must not be used as bedrooms. If the licence holder becomes aware of overcrowding at the property, they must take all reasonable steps to deal with the issue and advise the authority of the actions taken.</p>
<p><u>23</u> <u>Care of Common (Shared) Areas</u></p>	<p>The licence holder must make arrangements to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The common parts in the premises are kept free from obstruction, in a clean condition and in good order and repair. • Common areas, including shared living rooms, kitchens, and hallways are not used for sleeping by tenants or their guests. <p>Smoking is not permitted in any common area.</p>

<u>24</u> <u>Maintenance</u> <u>of External</u> <u>Areas</u>	<p>The licence holder must ensure that: At the beginning and for the duration of each letting, the garden and external areas of the property must be free of refuse, litter and excess vegetation and maintained in a reasonable state of repair. Fencing and other external elements where present, are properly maintained, kept in a clean, clear and/or sound condition.</p>		
<u>25</u> <u>Bin</u> <u>Provision</u> <u>for Waste</u> <u>Collection</u> <u>and</u> <u>Disposal</u>	<p>The licence holder shall ensure that suitable and adequate provision is made for refuse storage and collection which comprises of closable bins of suitable capacity; including for recycling as specified by Walsall council. The Council currently operates the following 3 kerbside collection services:</p>		
	Type of Waste	Collection Frequency	Minimum Capacity of Wheeled Bins
	Domestic household general waste	Fortnightly	140 litres
	Domestic household dry recyclable materials (commingled)	Fortnightly	240 litres
	Household garden waste	3 weekly	240 litres
<p>Bin collection days for properties in Walsall can be found at: https://www.walsall.gov.uk/waste/bincollections</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The licence holder shall ensure so far as is reasonably possible that the occupiers make arrangements for the collection of waste in accordance with these provisions and, when the property is unoccupied, adhere to these provisions themselves.• The licence holder is also responsible for ensuring that any kind of refuse which the Council will not ordinarily collect (e.g. large items of furniture, hazardous waste etc.) are disposed of responsibly and appropriately.			
<u>26</u> <u>Information</u> <u>Provision</u> <u>for</u> <u>Waste</u> <u>Collection</u> <u>and</u> <u>Disposal</u>	<p>The licence holder shall at the beginning of a tenancy, provide written information to the occupiers of the property indicating:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• which day refuse collections will take place;• what type of bins to use for household and recycling waste;• details of the Council's bulky waste collection service;• the occupiers responsibility to put bins out no earlier than 4pm on the day before collection (and be presented by at least 6.30am on collection day) and to return refuse containers within the boundary of the property on the same day that they are emptied or at the latest by 6.30am the day after the collection;• that occupiers should make arrangements for any extra rubbish that cannot fit in the bins to be collected and/or disposed of as soon as is reasonably possible and ensure that such rubbish, where possible, is stored at the rear of and within the boundary of the property until collection/disposal;		
<u>27</u> <u>Provision</u> <u>of</u> <u>Amenities</u> <u>for</u> <u>Cooking,</u> <u>Food</u> <u>Storage</u> <u>and Space</u> <u>Heating</u>	<p>The Licence Holder must ensure that the premises are provided with sufficient and adequate standard amenities for use by the current or intended number of occupiers for Cooking, Food Storage and Space Heating in line with our 'HMO Amenities Standards' which can be found on the following link https://go.walsall.gov.uk/hmo_licensing</p>		
<u>28</u> <u>Rent and</u> <u>other</u> <u>charges</u>	<p>You must give written receipts to tenants at the time the payment is made for any rent paid in cash. Where rent is paid weekly you must provide a rent book or similar document and this must be kept up to date. During the fixed term of the tenancy agreement, any rent increase proposed must be through the appropriate legal procedure (currently Housing Act 1988 s.13).</p>		
<u>29</u> <u>Tenancy</u> <u>Deposits</u>	<p>Where a deposit is taken the licence holder must provide the tenant with the relevant information about the Approved Deposit Scheme to which it is protected. In addition to giving the prescribed information to the tenants, you, or your manager, must keep a record of having given this information, such that you have clear evidence</p>		

	of the information having been given to the tenant. Where the deposit is paid in cash, a receipt should be issued stating clearly what this money is for, and the grounds for a refund.
<u>30</u> <u>Termination</u> <u>of</u> <u>Tenancies</u>	The Licence Holder must use lawful means to seek repossession of the property from any tenant/s or licencees.
<u>31</u> <u>Lock</u> <u>Changes</u>	Where previous tenants have not surrendered keys, the licence holder will arrange for a lock change to be undertaken, prior to new tenants moving in.
<u>32</u> <u>Occupancy</u> <u>Levels</u>	Only bedrooms xxxx (this will list specific bedroom numbers where relevant) are suitable for double occupancy in this property. The remainder of the bedrooms must not be occupied by more than a single person.
<u>33</u> <u>Right to</u> <u>Rent</u> <u>Checks</u>	You must ensure that you undertake all lettings in line with the Right to Rent Scheme including but not limited to securing references. https://www.gov.uk/check-tenant-right-to-rent-documents/who-to-check .
<u>34</u> <u>Training</u>	In the event that the Council confirms the presence of significant and/or continuous deficiencies in the supervision and/or maintenance of a licensed HMO the licence holder and/or manager may be required by the Council to attend an accredited management training course.
<u>35</u> <u>Minimum</u> <u>Energy</u> <u>Efficiency</u>	<p>The HMO have a valid (in date not expired) Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) throughout the duration of the licence. The government proposes that private rented dwellings including HMOs must achieve an EPC of a minimum rating of D by 2025. Where a licence is granted up to or past 2025 it will be contingent upon the HMO either:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meeting the minimum EPC level i.e. D by 2025 or • Have a valid exemption and be registered prior to 2025 on the national exemption register. <p>Where the landlord / managing agent of the HMO fails to secure either a) or b) above this condition will be considered breached and action taken under HMO licensing and or Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards.</p>
<u>36</u> <u>Remedial</u> <u>Works</u> <u>Required</u>	<u>Note:</u> This section is used as relevant to list remedial works that are required at the specific HMO property

Advisory Notes for Landlords:

To help prevent / tackle ASB the Council recommends:

That the licence holder demands references from persons who wish to occupy the house and shall supply evidence of these to the local authority within 7 days of demand. The reference should provide testimony as to the tenant's past record of keeping to tenancy conditions and not committing anti-social behaviour, or provide other genuine and significant evidence as to the likelihood of them keeping to tenancy conditions and not committing anti-social behaviour.

The reference must also provide the referee's name, address and either an up to date telephone number or email address. Copies of these references shall be kept for the duration of this licence.

Right to Rent

Landlords are advised to ensure that they follow all relevant legislation relating to Right to Rent: <https://www.gov.uk/check-tenant-right-to-rent-documents>

To help minimise potential for disputes the Council recommends:

That landlords consider the use of inventories and suggests that before the tenant “checks in” a detailed inventory should be completed by the licence holder. It is best practice for the inventory to be initialled on all pages by both parties, signed and dated by them on the last page.

A copy should be provided to the tenant whilst retaining a copy for your own records. The inventory procedure should be repeated for “check out” inventory at the end of tenancy. Note: Inventory covers items included within the tenancy and the condition of the Property.

B. Legislation also permits:

The Council to attach conditions to individual licences if there are issues specific to the property. If and when these are proposed the HMO applicant will be consulted on the conditions prior to the final licence being issued. The Council will consider any representation made by the HMO applicant. The HMO applicant also has a right of appeal to the First Tier Tribunal if they do not agree with a specific condition that is proposed.

Appendix 2

Crime Area Analysis

CRIME AREA ANALYSIS
NEIGHBOURHOOD: DELVES
WARDS: PALFREY, PADDOCK

Area Map



(c) 2024 Google

**Crime by Quarter
(April 2021 to
Dec 2023)**

Apr - Jun 2021	629	9.2%
Jul - Sep 2021	696	10.2%
Oct - Dec 2021	718	10.5%
Jan - Mar 2022	653	9.6%
Apr - Jun 2022	632	9.3%
Jul - Sep 2022	596	8.7%
Oct - Dec 2022	575	8.4%
Jan - Mar 2023	610	8.9%
Apr - Jun 2023	533	7.8%
Jul - Sep 2023	564	8.3%
Oct - Dec 2023	611	9%

**Total Amount of
Crime (April 2021
to Dec 2023)**

6,817 (10% of all reported crimes within the borough across the same period)

**Total Number of
HMOs**

299 (14.7% of all HMOs within the borough)

CRIME AREA ANALYSIS
NEIGHBOURHOOD: ST MATTHEW'S
WARDS: ST MATTHEW'S

Area Map



(c) 2024 Google

**Crime by Quarter
(April 2021 to
Dec 2023)**

Apr - Jun 2021	1193	8.6%
Jul - Sep 2021	1245	9%
Oct - Dec 2021	1453	10.4%
Jan - Mar 2022	1268	9.1%
Apr - Jun 2022	1263	9.1%
Jul - Sep 2022	1300	9.3%
Oct - Dec 2022	1231	8.9%
Jan - Mar 2023	1199	8.6%
Apr - Jun 2023	1211	8.7%
Jul - Sep 2023	1299	9.3%
Oct - Dec 2023	1246	9%

**Total Amount of
Crime (April 2021
to Dec 2023)**

13,908 (14% of all reported crimes within the borough across the same period)

**Total Number of
HMOs**

308 (15.2% of all HMOs within the borough)

CRIME AREA ANALYSIS
NEIGHBOURHOOD: PLECK
WARDS: PLECK

Area Map



(c) 2024 Google

**Crime by Quarter
(April 2021 to
Dec 2023)**

Apr - Jun 2021	544	7.8%
Jul - Sep 2021	626	9%
Oct - Dec 2021	632	9.1%
Jan - Mar 2022	634	9.1%
Apr - Jun 2022	650	9.4%
Jul - Sep 2022	661	9.5%
Oct - Dec 2022	758	10.9%
Jan - Mar 2023	695	10%
Apr - Jun 2023	579	8.3%
Jul - Sep 2023	635	9.1%
Oct - Dec 2023	532	7.7%

**Total Amount of
Crime (April 2021
to Dec 2023)**

6,946 (7% of all reported crimes within the borough across the same period)

**Total Number of
HMOs**

247 (12.2% of all HMOs within the borough)

CRIME AREA ANALYSIS

NEIGHBOURHOOD: WILLENHALL

WARDS: WILLENHALL NORTH, SHORT HEATH, WILLENHALL SOUTH

**Crime by Quarter
(April 2021 to
Dec 2023)**

(c) 2024 Google

**Total Amount of
Crime (April 2021
to Dec 2023)**

Apr - Jun 2021	1460	9.4%
Jul - Sep 2021	1595	10.3%
Oct - Dec 2021	1524	9.8%
Jan - Mar 2022	1333	8.6%
Apr - Jun 2022	1432	9.2%
Jul - Sep 2022	1566	10.1%
Oct - Dec 2022	1393	9%
Jan - Mar 2023	1263	8.1%
Apr - Jun 2023	1267	8.2%
Jul - Sep 2023	1380	8.9%
Oct - Dec 2023	1302	8.4%

**Crime by Quarter
(April 2021 to
Dec 2023)**

15,515 (16% of all reported crimes within the borough across the same period)

**Total Number of
HMOs**

266 (13.1% of all HMOs within the borough)

CRIME AREA ANALYSIS

NEIGHBOURHOOD: ALDRIDGE

WARDS: ALDRIDGE NORTH & WALSALL WOOD, ALDRIDGE CENTRAL & SOUTH, PHEASEY PARK FARM, STREETLY

**Crime by Quarter
(April 2021 to
Dec 2023)**

(c) 2024 Google

**Total Amount of
Crime (April 2021
to Dec 2023)**

Apr - Jun 2021	985	9.8%
Jul - Sep 2021	933	9.3%
Oct - Dec 2021	978	9.7%
Jan - Mar 2022	948	9.4%
Apr - Jun 2022	921	9.2%
Jul - Sep 2022	1005	10%
Oct - Dec 2022	927	9.2%
Jan - Mar 2023	965	9.6%
Apr - Jun 2023	843	8.4%
Jul - Sep 2023	768	7.6%
Oct - Dec 2023	781	7.8%

**Crime by Quarter
(April 2021 to
Dec 2023)**

10,054 (10% of all reported crimes within the borough across the same period)

**Total Number of
HMOs**

163 (8% of all HMOs within the borough)

CRIME AREA ANALYSIS
NEIGHBOURHOOD: BROWNHILLS
WARDS: BROWNHILLS, PELSALL, RUSHALL SHELFIELD

**Crime by Quarter
(April 2021 to
Dec 2023)**



(c) 2024 Google

**Total Amount of
Crime (April 2021
to Dec 2023)**

Apr - Jun 2021	935	9.5%
Jul - Sep 2021	904	9.2%
Oct - Dec 2021	904	9.2%
Jan - Mar 2022	911	9.2%
Apr - Jun 2022	901	9.1%
Jul - Sep 2022	968	9.8%
Oct - Dec 2022	937	9.5%
Jan - Mar 2023	938	9.5%
Apr - Jun 2023	846	8.6%
Jul - Sep 2023	876	8.9%
Oct - Dec 2023	756	7.7%

**Crime by Quarter
(April 2021 to
Dec 2023)**

9,876 (10% of all reported crimes within the borough across the same period)

**Total Number of
HMOs**

134 (6.6% of all HMOs within the borough)

CRIME AREA ANALYSIS
NEIGHBOURHOOD: BLOXWICH
WARDS: BLOXWICH EAST, BLOXWICH WEST

Crime by Quarter
(April 2021 to
Dec 2023)



(c) 2024 Google

Total Amount of
Crime (April 2021
to Dec 2023)

Apr - Jun 2021	865	9.6%
Jul - Sep 2021	879	9.8%
Oct - Dec 2021	923	10.3%
Jan - Mar 2022	849	9.4%
Apr - Jun 2022	841	9.3%
Jul - Sep 2022	948	10.5%
Oct - Dec 2022	814	9%
Jan - Mar 2023	672	7.5%
Apr - Jun 2023	749	8.3%
Jul - Sep 2023	772	8.6%
Oct - Dec 2023	692	7.7%

Crime by Quarter
(April 2021 to
Dec 2023)

9,004 (9% of all reported crimes within the borough across the same period)

Total Number of
HMOs

119 (5.9% of all HMOs within the borough)

CRIME AREA ANALYSIS

NEIGHBOURHOOD: DARLASTON

WARDS: BENTLEY AND DARLASTON NORTH, DARLASTON SOUTH

**Crime by Quarter
(April 2021 to
Dec 2023)**

(c) 2024 Google

**Total Amount of
Crime (April 2021
to Dec 2023)**

Apr - Jun 2021	1019	9.1%
Jul - Sep 2021	1100	9.8%
Oct - Dec 2021	1051	9.4%
Jan - Mar 2022	967	8.6%
Apr - Jun 2022	1002	8.9%
Jul - Sep 2022	995	8.9%
Oct - Dec 2022	982	8.7%
Jan - Mar 2023	1033	9.2%
Apr - Jun 2023	1072	9.5%
Jul - Sep 2023	1001	8.9%
Oct - Dec 2023	1014	9%

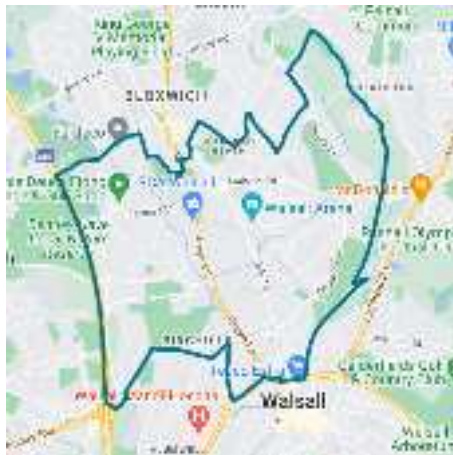
**Crime by Quarter
(April 2021 to
Dec 2023)**

11,236 (11% of all reported crimes within the borough across the same period)

**Total Number of
HMOs**

234 (11.5% of all HMOs within the borough)

CRIME AREA ANALYSIS
NEIGHBOURHOOD: BLAKENHALL
WARDS: BLAKENHALL, BIRCHILLS LEAMORE

Crime by Quarter (April 2021 to Dec 2023)	 (c) 2024 Google		
Total Amount of Crime (April 2021 to Dec 2023)	Apr - Jun 2021	1389	9.5%
	Jul - Sep 2021	1389	9.5%
	Oct - Dec 2021	1450	10%
	Jan - Mar 2022	1225	8.4%
	Apr - Jun 2022	1340	9.2%
	Jul - Sep 2022	1521	10.4%
	Oct - Dec 2022	1330	9.1%
	Jan - Mar 2023	1272	8.7%
	Apr - Jun 2023	1194	8.2%
	Jul - Sep 2023	1200	8.2%
	Oct - Dec 2023	1257	8.6%
Crime by Quarter (April 2021 to Dec 2023)	14,567 (14% of all reported crimes within the borough across the same period)		
Total Number of HMOs	260 (12.8% of all HMOs within the borough)		

Cabinet – 11 September 2024

Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy

Portfolio: Councillor Andrew – Associate Leader, Economic Growth & Regeneration

Related portfolios: None

Service: Place & Environment (Strategic Transport)

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1. The report seeks adoption of the Walsall Electric Vehicle (EV) Chargepoint Strategy that sets out the action plan for the delivery of EV chargepoints focused on Council-owned land up to 2030, with interim targets up to 2026.
- 1.2. The Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy aims to set the direction of government capital funding ringfenced for EV infrastructure and through wider private investment (working with chargepoint operators) in the borough. The roll out of EV chargepoints through the strategy would aim to provide equity to access of EV infrastructure, providing residents without access to off-street parking the equal opportunity to drive and charge an EV in Walsall. EV chargepoints in car parks could also support revenue generation on Council-owned assets, through concession agreements with EV chargepoint operators (CPOs).

2. Summary

- 2.1. The strategy considers evidence-based forecasts for the future need for charging points in the borough. This suggests the needs for 1,134 standard chargepoints and 153 rapid chargepoints by 2030. Our action plan aims to provide at least 600 standard chargepoints and 65 rapid chargepoints by 2030 delivered by Walsall Council working with CPOs through concession agreements. It is assumed that this will be supported by private sector investment and further publicly available chargepoints to meet the full requirements of the forecasts estimated.
- 2.2. In line with the government's commitment to ban the sale of new diesel and petrol cars from 2035, the borough of Walsall requires EV charging infrastructure to facilitate the forecast uptake in electric vehicles (EVs). The roll out of EV chargepoints across the borough is a key action to facilitate

Walsall Council's commitment to the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) target to be a carbon net zero borough by 2041, supported by our We Are Walsall 2040 ambition to be the lead regionally in carbon sustainability with a net zero economy.

- 2.3. The UK's second-hand battery EV sales were up by 71% (41,505) with a market share of 2.1% in the first three months of 2024, as more people are attracted to cost savings and environmental benefits (SMMT, 2024). This is an increase from 1.6% market share in 2023 and 0.9% market in 2022. This increase is likely to continue, so Walsall needs to be ready to facilitate this increasing demand.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Cabinet approve the adoption of the Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy as set out at Appendix A.
- 3.2. That Cabinet approve the future delivery of infrastructure in line with the targets identified in the Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy, subject to all relevant legal, financial, and planning approvals.
- 3.3. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities, in consultation with the Associate Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration, to award the contract(s) for the provision of electric vehicle chargepoints across the borough to meet the interim targets included in the Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy.
- 3.4. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities, in consultation with the Associate Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration, to subsequently authorise the sealing of deeds and/or signing of any related contract(s) and/or document(s) for the provision of electric vehicle chargepoints across the borough to meet the interim targets included in the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy, to include 300 chargepoints across the borough up to 2026 as well as any extension and variation of these contractual arrangements should this be required throughout the duration of the contract(s).
- 3.5. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Communities, in consultation with the Associate Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration, to negotiate on its behalf with the West Midlands Combined Authority, government departments and private sector to maximise the values of future financial resources allocated to the council in pursuit of the delivery of electric vehicle chargepoint infrastructure. This includes signing relevant agreements and contracts for electric vehicle chargepoint investment across the borough in line with targets outlined within the Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy.
- 3.6. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment & Communities, in consultation with the Associate Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration, to authorise the sealing of deeds and/or

signing of grant agreements relating to the development of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure capital funding and City Region Sustainable Transport Scheme capital funding for the Black Country Transport and Innovation Programme.

4. Report detail – know

Context

- 4.1. The Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy sets out the strategic vision for delivery of EV chargepoints boroughwide. Given the government ban on the sale of petrol and diesel vehicles in 2035, and Walsall Council's commitment to be a carbon neutral authority by 2041, there are risks associated with not adopting a clear strategy and making a conscious effort to deliver the infrastructure required to meet these targets. The strategy acknowledges in its four core principles that to support our decarbonisation goals the council need to continue to remain committed to support the delivery of projects that reduce private car ownership and use and encourage greater use of active travel and public transport modes. This strategy aims to provide the infrastructure needed to facilitate a move to EVs in the borough, but not to encourage short distance vehicular trips.
- 4.2. Walsall Council commissioned a consultant (City Science) to develop a draft Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy in 2023. The draft strategy was supported when consulted on publicly between 21st February – 20th March 2024. It sets out the targets for short-term roll out of chargepoints by 2026, and longer-term strategic roll out of chargepoints to 2030. The focus on 2030 was aligned to the government's then commitment to phase out the sale of new diesel and petrol cars and light goods vehicles (LGVs) by this date. The council acknowledges that the date is postponed to 2035 but the strategy continues to focus on delivery by 2030 in line with the need to support Walsall ambitions to be the lead regionally in carbon sustainability with a net zero economy.
- 4.3. The strategy considers opportunities available on council-owned land for charging infrastructure including, but not limited to, on-street, council-owned car parks, libraries, leisure centres and community centres.

Progress to Date

- 4.4. In April 2022 Cabinet delegated authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities to authorise the sealing of deeds and/or signing of contracts and any other related documents, as well as any extension and variation of the contractual arrangements for the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS). ORCS funding through the Office of Zero Emission Vehicle (OZEV) will generate the delivery of the first 35 public on-street chargepoints in the borough of Walsall this year.
- 4.5. Further funding has been allocated to Walsall for charging infrastructure, as well as the wider Black Country and West Midlands (see the Finance section

for more details of funding secured to date). This will kickstart the delivery of chargepoints across the borough, but further investment is required, including from the private sector, to achieve the full target infrastructure by 2030.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.6. In 2022, domestic transport was the highest contributing sector of net greenhouse gas emissions in the UK (28%). The main source of emissions from this sector is the use of petrol and diesel in road vehicles.
- 4.7. Responding to climate change is critical to the future of the borough's quality of life and therefore the EV Strategy is fully consistent with the 5 strategic priorities identified in the council's corporate plan.

Risk management

- 4.8. The council will enter contracts with CPOs as required to procure the installation and operation of chargepoint infrastructure targeted in the strategy. There are different commercial options for the council to enter which will be reviewed on case-by-case basis. It is suggested though that in any related procurement, the CPO takes on the revenue costs for operation and maintenance of the chargepoints, and key performance indicators that agree the replacement of any hardware and response times to any down time. This will reduce the financial risk and resource constraints on the council.
- 4.9. Walsall Council is already in a concession contract with Wenea West Midlands Limited for the deployment of a minimum of 35 chargepoints. This contract has an initial term of 10 years from 12th January 2024, together with a right for the Provider (as the relevant licensee or tenant, as applicable) to extend the term to a total contract length of up to 15 years.
- 4.10. The contribution of capital annually through the council's transport capital funding and government capital grant funding sources, including but not limited to On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS), Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS), allows the council a greater level of control over locations, costs to the customer, the type of contract with the chargepoint operator, potential levels of revenue-share and other contract terms.
- 4.11. Where chargepoints are funded through such government capital grants, the smaller capital contribution required from the CPO results in a lower financial risk than a fully funded model.
- 4.12. Due to the long-term time nature of the proposal, there is a risk that the technology may become obsolete and that the chargepoints are underutilised. This risk forms part of the key performance indicators within our existing CPO contract agreement. The contract is also structured so that the chargepoints themselves remain the property of the CPO, removing the risk of the council being left with stranded assets requiring disposal, and increasing the incentives for the operator to keep the hardware up to date to the very end of

the contract. It is included within the contract that the CPO is responsible for the removal of equipment and reinstating the site to the reasonable satisfaction of Walsall Council in the case of any early suspension of the site or at the termination of the contract.

- 4.13. In most cases, public chargepoints (both on- and off-street) would be subject to a traffic regulation order (TRO) subject to consultation. This would ensure EV access to spaces as uptake increases. Many CPO agreements are subject to TROs on chargepoints that require EV parking bays to be 'EV charging only'. It is noted this is in most cases, subject to public consultation and existing parking constraints. In response to the public consultation for the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy, 16 respondents (57%) supported restrictions to be put in place at council-owned car parks and pay and display bays for spaces to be 'EV charging only' and limited hours. However, on residential streets, only 11 respondents (37%) supported restrictions, 9 respondents (30%) did not support restrictions and 7 respondents (23%) responded 'don't know'. In the early period of EV charging infrastructure, Walsall Council understand that EV uptake may be limited. There would be a balanced approach to enforcement while demand incrementally builds.

Financial implications

- 4.14. Walsall Council commissioned City Science to develop a draft Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy using capital funding that was allocated through the 2023-2024 Transport Capital Programme.
- 4.15. Capital grant funding including ORCS, LEVI and CRSTS (the latter subject to full business case approval by West Midlands Combined Authority), will be used to deliver EV chargepoint infrastructure. This is in addition to wider private sector interest in the investment of chargepoint infrastructure in the borough.
- 4.16. ORCS grant capital funding is for a total of £338,712 covering up to 75% of the total capital costs of installation. The chargepoint operator Wenea and sister company Gamma Energy will provide the remaining 25% of match funding.
- 4.17. West Midlands Combined Authority secured £3,016,582 of LEVI Pilot Capital funding, of which Walsall Council has a provisional allocation of approximately £226,000 for the Pelsall Charging Hub.
- 4.18. Walsall Council has entered a concession contract with Wenea West Midlands Limited for the delivery of the ORCS and LEVI Pilot Capital funding schemes.
- 4.19. LEVI capital funding is for a total of £14.5 million for the West Midlands, including an allocation within this for Walsall Council to be determined and spent by March 2027. The procurement of CPOs for this funding is in development at a West Midlands level.

- 4.20. The West Midlands CRSTS fund includes an allocation of £7 million for the Black Country for ultra-low emission infrastructure, including EV charging infrastructure in Walsall. This scheme is currently at full business case development stage to be submitted to WMCA Board in 2024 for approval and release of funding.
- 4.21. Walsall Council will seek to provide the required match funding, develop the outcomes of the action plan in the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy and seek to install additional chargepoints through the 2024-2025 Transport Capital Programme allocation of £118,493 (approved at Cabinet in March 2024).

Legal implications

- 4.22. Contract performance will be monitored regularly and will be subject to appropriate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). If KPIs are not met then remedial action can be taken, up to and including termination of the contract.
- 4.23. EV chargepoints are considered as permitted development. However, the council's Highways, Transport and Operations service will be consulted to determine if any additional permissions are required on the final location of each piece of infrastructure.
- 4.24. The lawfulness of any installed chargepoint could be subject to challenge by a third party.
- 4.25. All works will be evidenced by a written contract in a form approved by the Director of Governance or by a call-off from a suitable framework and shall be made and executed in accordance with the council's Contract Rules. This may require the council to engage external legal support.

Procurement implications/social value

- 4.26. The council has options by which to procure services with a CPO, including calling off the existing contract for ORCS and the forthcoming LEVI Capital funding framework led by WMCA. This will be procured through an open tender which will be broken into lots for types of charging. The tender is expected to be advertised in summer 2024, followed by bidding and scoring over the following 2 months. With time for any contract negotiations, the contract may be available as early as March 2025. There is a risk of this process taking longer due to the complex nature of the agreement and owing to the number of organisations involved.
- 4.27. Any contractual arrangements will be procured in compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 as applicable and the council's Contract Rules or, if applicable, the Procurement Act 2023 and its related regulations and guidance, which is due to come into force of 28 October 2024. The council's Procurement and Legal Services Teams will work with Highways, Transport & Operations officers to ensure that all contracts for CPO procurement and call-offs from any frameworks are conducted in compliant ways and maximise the

best interests of the Council, our residents, and businesses, offering the best value for money.

- 4.28. Tender documentation for ORCS, and future procurement included a quality question on what social value the CPO can deliver. The documents state that potential benefits to local business, employment, training, and development are of particular interest.

Property implications

- 4.29. The council has opportunities to deliver chargepoints on council-owned land, with the land remaining in the council's ownership. This includes delivering on-street standard and rapid chargepoints. In addition to this, the strategy aims to roll out infrastructure in council-owned car parks, at leisure centres, libraries, green spaces and community centres.
- 4.30. There are no direct implications as a corporate landlord, as we are not suggesting passing any land onto other private or public organisations. Chargepoints on council-owned land will remain within the ownership of Walsall Council but operate under concession or spaces leased to CPOs.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.31. The Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy seeks to align with the Walsall Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy (2022 – 2025). The action plan included sets out the targets for the roll out of chargepoint infrastructure up to 2030, which will support the steps needed to be a healthy borough by 2040, by reducing carbon emissions and improving air quality to support the reduction of health inequality across the borough of Walsall.
- 4.32. The transition to EVs will improve air quality across the borough and support mitigation of the health impacts of nitrogen oxides (NOx) and particulate emissions emitted by petrol and diesel vehicles. More deprived areas tend to suffer from poorer air quality, and the difference in EV ownership uptake between our most affluent and deprived areas is likely to further exacerbate this. Where Walsall Council cannot increase the uptake of EV ownership in the borough, it can provide equity of access to EV charging facilities to enable public uptake.

Reducing inequalities

- 4.33. An equality impact assessment for the EV Strategy sets out how reducing inequalities has been considered and assessed.
- 4.34. It is still the case that most EV owners have off-street parking. Owning a house with off-street parking follows the same pattern of inequalities as vehicle ownership. Approximately 39% of residents in Walsall live in flats/apartments or maisonettes and terraced houses (Office of National Statistics, 2023). The lack of suitable public charging infrastructure remains a significant barrier to switching to zero emission fleet operations (SMMT, 2024). By installing on-

street chargepoints, Walsall Council would support equitable access to EV charging for residents that lack access to off-street parking.

- 4.35. In response to the public consultation for the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy, 22 respondents (77%) considered vehicle security to be 'very important' when considering charging an EV at a public chargepoint. 21 respondents (70%) also considered the location and convenience of the chargepoint to be 'very important' and 20 respondents (63%) considered personal safety to be 'very important'. This clearly demonstrates the need for equity of access to chargepoint infrastructure across the borough and where the private sector cannot provide this, Walsall Council must support the safety and accessibility of readily available, operational infrastructure. We aim to support, in particular, our residents without access to off-street parking and the economic growth of our local businesses.
- 4.36. All chargepoints and associated infrastructure will take due consideration of accessibility for disabled drivers in line with the latest design guidance, such as PAS 1899:2022. Minimum footway widths (of at least 1.2m) will be maintained to ensure the safe and accessible passage of all potential users to be able to safely complete their desired walking or wheeling journeys.

Staffing implications

- 4.37. There are no anticipated implications on staffing at this time.
- 4.38. Walsall Council is supported by 3 FTE Electric Vehicle and Transport Innovation Programme staff at Black Country Transport (BCT), working in collaboration with Walsall Council's Strategic Transport Team. BCT resource is supported by OZEV LEVI Capability Funding for Tier 1 local authorities in England, as well as funding from the CRSTS programme.
- 4.39. Dedicated Electric Vehicle and Transport Innovation Programme staff are supported by wider Walsall Council services as required through the programme delivery lifecycle. This includes, but is not limited to, Transport, Highways & Operations, Legal Services, and Procurement. It may be the case in the future as demand and EV uptake increases, there is a need to review resource capacity at the council to review the need for a dedicated FTE.
- 4.40. A concession or lease model would require less resource and minimise risk to Walsall Council, although resource will be required at the council for contract management. Engineering, installation, operation and back-office resource for the chargepoint infrastructure will be delivered and managed by the CPO. This will be clearly identified as part of the contractual agreement and monitoring through KPIs. This is the approach taken through the concessional agreement for the ORCS programme.

Climate impact

- 4.41. In 2019 Walsall Council declared a climate emergency and in 2022 adopted the West Midlands Combined Authority target to reach net zero carbon

emissions across the borough no later than 2041.

- 4.42. Our draft Walsall Net Zero Strategy builds on these climate change pledges, and We are Walsall 2040 Borough Plan which includes the ambition to have the infrastructure in place to enable residents to smoothly switch to net zero and improve air quality across the borough.
- 4.43. Promoting the uptake of electric vehicles and responding to climate change will help to reduce harmful emissions. The draft Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy aims to support the draft Walsall Net Zero Strategy and our strategic commitment to tackling climate change impacts in our borough to ensure that Walsall will be a clean and green borough, fit for future generations.
- 4.44. The subject of this report aligns with Action 4.3 outlined in the council's climate change action plan 2020-2025 'to promote and encourage ultra-low and low emission vehicles in Walsall and sustainable transport options in accordance with the Transport in Walsall Strategy 2017-22 and the West Midlands / Black Country Ultra Low Emission Vehicle'.
- 4.45. The provision of chargepoints will promote the use of cleaner technologies to reduce carbon emissions, air pollution and adverse impacts upon residents.

Consultation

- 4.46. The draft strategy was consulted on publicly between 21st February – 20th March 2024. The consultation aimed to understand stakeholders' support for EV chargepoints across the borough and the type of chargepoints Walsall's public and businesses need (slower, cheaper charging or quick rapid 'charge and go'). It also considered if respondents already had access to or were considering a move to EV.
- 4.47. Consultation was undertaken with the following audiences:
 - Associate Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration and Ward Councillors - Email distribution of Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy Briefing Note and face to face briefing with Associate Leader for Economic Growth and Regeneration.
 - The Public and stakeholders – Online questionnaire and dedicated EV Chargepoint Strategy area on the Council's Walsall Says Commonplace and Walsall Council website, with further circulation of links on social media and via press release.
 - Walsall businesses – Direct email correspondence with key businesses through Walsall Council's Business Engagement Team.
 - Council officers – Internal communications and link to online questionnaire for comments on the draft strategy on Commonplace.
- 4.48. The strategic transport team has reviewed the responses to the public consultation and will use this information to shape the final draft version of the

strategy prior to Cabinet approval. A summary of the outcomes of this public consultation is included in **Appendix B**.

- 4.49. The Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy Commonplace page will be kept up to date with any future updates to the strategy and delivery of chargepoints. This includes links to future consultation on the roll out of specific chargepoints and locations.
- 4.50. Direct responses were made to members of the public and businesses who provided direct email correspondence to the consultation. The Strategic Transport Team continue to work through these enquiries with residents to support their EV charging infrastructure needs as appropriate.
- 4.51. In August 2023, City Science led a series of internal and external engagement workshops to support the development of the draft strategy. Each workshop had approximately 15-20 attendees. Officers across all relevant sectors of the council were invited to the internal workshop, with attendees including but not limited to Procurement, Finance, and Property. External workshops were attended by a range of local businesses, third sector organisations, West Midlands Police, and wider public sector organisations. All attendees to the 2023 workshops were invited to comment on the draft strategy as part of the 2024 public consultation.

5. Decide

- 5.1. Different commercial models for the procurement of EV chargepoint infrastructure were assessed in the development of the strategy. The type of delivery model may depend on the type of chargepoint, as such to ensure equitable access to chargepoints. Government funding has focused on increasing the provision of on-street residential infrastructure, thereby supporting the charging needs of residents without access to off-street parking. As rapid operators offer fully funded models, funding to support local authorities to deliver rapid chargepoints has become extremely limited.
- 5.2. As part of the recommendations of the strategy to support choice and reduce costs to the users, Walsall Council will consider working with a variety of CPOs, providing a range of benefits including a variety of tariffs for users to choose from and allows the council to monitor both chargepoint reliability and revenue potential over time between CPOs.
- 5.3. This report recommends approval of the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy and the delegation of authority to award the contract(s) for the provision of EV chargepoints across the borough due to the timeline of requiring chargepoint delivery by 2026 for the initial targets as identified in the EV Strategy Action Plan.
- 5.4. The report also recommends the delegation of authority to authorise the sealing of deeds and/or signing of grant agreements relating to the development of Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding and City Region Sustainable Transport Scheme (CRSTS) capital funding for the Black

Country Transport and Innovation Programme to meet the delivery timescales of this funding up to March 2027.

6. Respond

- 6.1 Subject to the approval of the recommendations in this report, the next step will be for the LEVI capital funding programme tender to be approved to provide a successful framework of CPOs for future installations through this funding. The full business case for the CRSTS funded project is scheduled to be approved by summer 2024, and delivery will commence shortly afterwards through the existing contract with Wene West Midlands. The delivery of the ORCS programme is already commissioned and underway.
- 6.2 Approval of the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy will allow for preparations for the next round chargepoint delivery in line with the action plan and consideration of delivery including within council car parks and discussions with the owners and occupiers of other potential locations, such as retail spaces. This will involve the exploration of further funding opportunities including through private sector investment.

7. Review

- 7.1 As is the case with the contractual agreement for the ORCS programme, future procurement tender documents will include a set of key performance indicators as part of the scheme criteria, which address operational and customer service needs.
- 7.2 The KPIs indicators will provide a series of metrics by which to measure and monitor the performance of the successful CPO. Failure to meet the KPIs will lead to discussion with the CPO about how to improve the service, financial penalties, or even termination of the contract.
- 7.3 The Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy includes a set of 10 recommendations to accelerate the delivery of EV chargepoints across the borough. These recommendations include targets for delivery of standard and rapid chargepoints, opportunities to deliver on council-owned land and providing a good spatial spread of chargepoints. This action plan and the target number of chargepoints to be delivered by 2026 and 2030 will be monitored by the Strategic Transport Team working in collaboration with Black Country Transport and West Midlands Combined Authority to continue to support the delivery of the wider Black Country ULEV Strategy and the forthcoming West Midlands Net Zero Vehicle Strategy.

Appendices

- Appendix A** – Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy
- Appendix B** – Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy –
Public Consultation Response Summary

Background papers

Black Country Ultra-Low Emission Vehicle Strategy –
[Black Country ULEV Strategy 2020.qxp_Layout 1 \(blackcountrytransport.org.uk\)](https://blackcountrytransport.org.uk/Black_Country_ULEV_Strategy_2020.qxp_Layout_1)

West Midlands Local Transport Plan ‘Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands’ –
Final Core Strategy –
[Local Transport Plan - Related Documents | Transport for West Midlands \(tfwm.org.uk\)](https://tfwm.org.uk/Local_Transport_Plan_-_Related_Documents_|_Transport_for_West_Midlands)

West Midlands Local Transport Plan ‘Reimagining Transport in the West Midlands’ –
Big Moves Summary
tfwm.org.uk/media/uuuhqpb4/big-moves-summary.pdf

Author

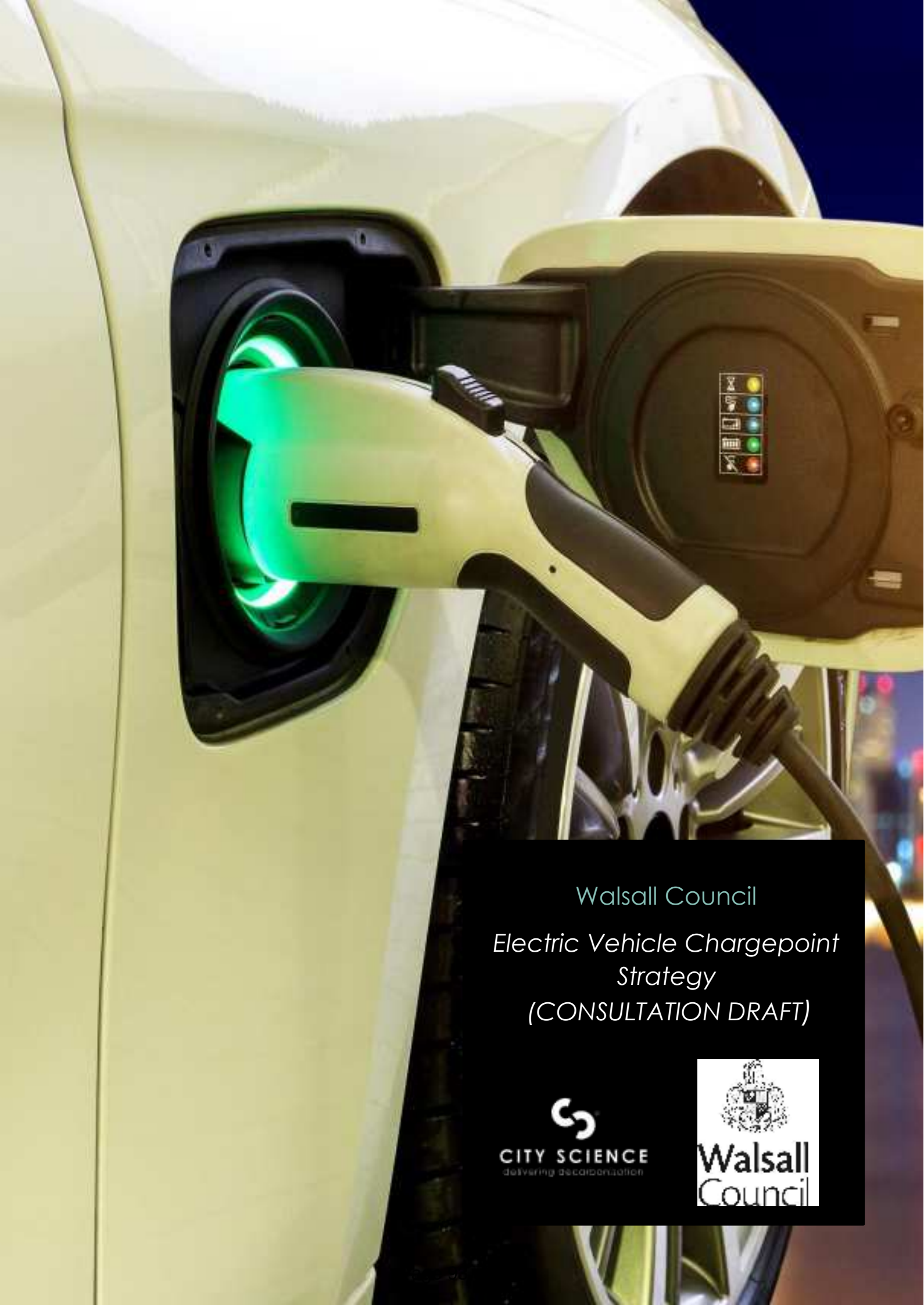
Nichola Byrne
Principal Transport Planner, Walsall Council
✉ Nichola.Byrne@walsall.gov.uk



Dave Brown
Executive Director
30 August 2024



Councillor Adrian Andrew
Portfolio Holder
30 August 2024



Walsall Council
*Electric Vehicle Chargepoint
Strategy*
(CONSULTATION DRAFT)

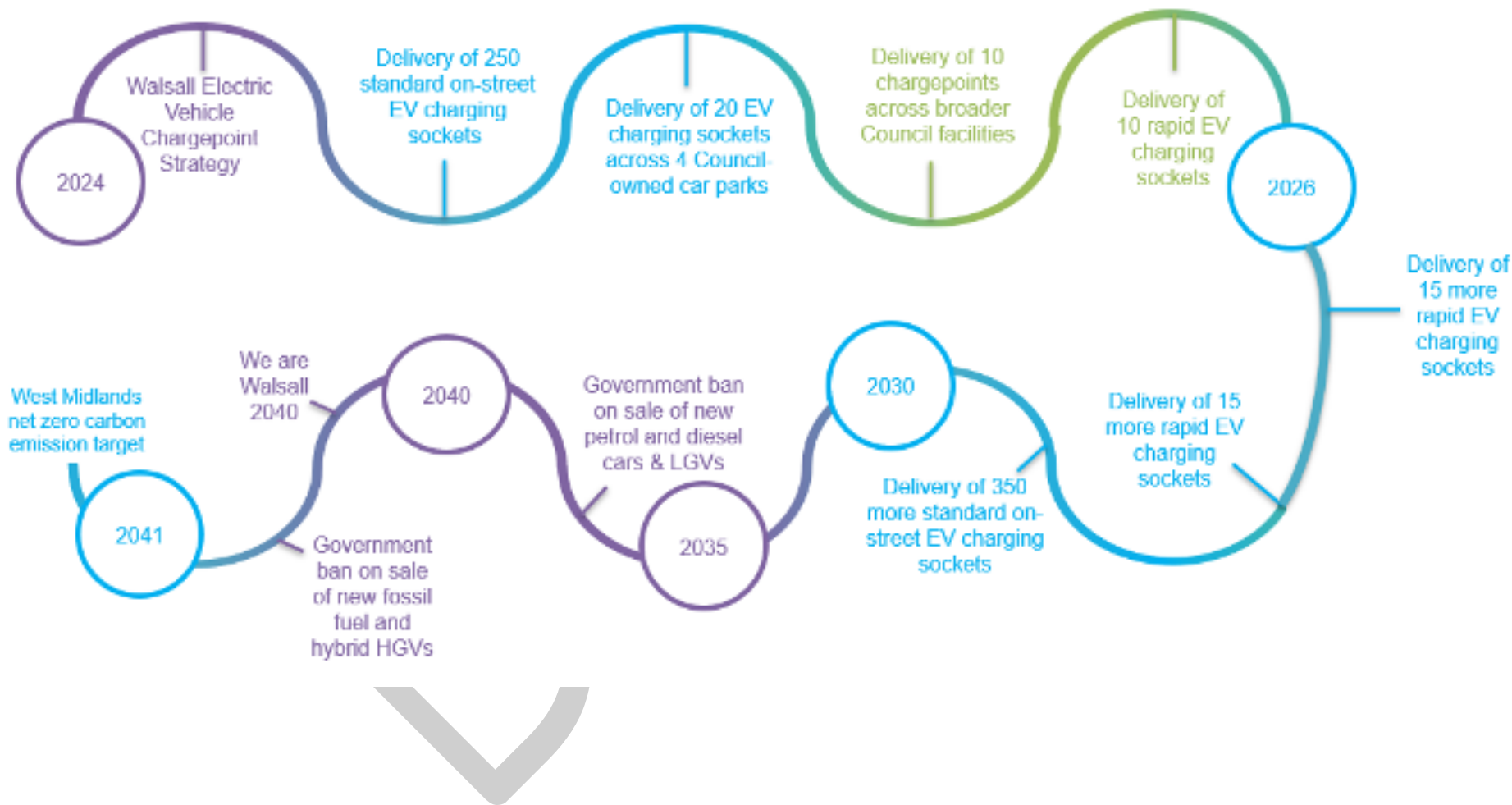




Contents

1	Executive Summary	2
1.1	Overview & Approach.....	2
1.2	Key Findings	2
1.3	Recommendations	2
1.4	Next Steps.....	2
2	Introduction	3
2.1	Key Principles.....	3
3	Current Situation	4
3.1	Policy & Strategy Landscape	4
3.2	Existing Chargepoint Provision	4
4	Future Demand	5
4.1	Approach	5
4.2	Anticipated Chargepoint Need	5
5	Chargepoint Delivery	6
5.1	Approach	6
5.2	Supporting Chargepoint Delivery on Council-Owned Land	6
6	Key Findings, Recommendations & Next Steps.....	9
6.1	Key Findings	9
6.2	Key Recommendations	9
6.3	Next Steps.....	11

Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy Delivery Plan





Key Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
CPO	Chargepoint Operator
CRSTS	City Regional Sustainable Transport Settlement
DfT	Department for Transport
EV	Electric Vehicle
EVCATS	Electric Vehicle Charging Area Transit Stations
KRN	Key Route Network
LEVI	Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Fund
LGV	Light Goods Vehicle
MRN	Major Road Network
ORCS	On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme
RCF	Rapid Charging Fund
SPD	Supplementary Planning Document
SRN	Strategic Road Network
TfWM	Transport for West Midlands
ULEV	Ultra Low Emission Vehicle
WMCA	West Midlands Combined Authority



1 Executive Summary

1.1 Overview & Approach

The aim of this Strategy is to provide a clear, strategic vision for Walsall, to support the delivery of new electric vehicle (EV) chargepoints in-keeping with the wider Black Country and West Midlands context. It will support the short term roll out of chargepoints while also looking ahead strategically to 2030. Our focus is 2030 as when the analysis that informs this strategy was conducted the Government's commitment was to phase out the sale of new cars and light goods vehicles (LGVs) by 2030. We acknowledge that the date has now been postponed to 2035.

This Strategy is evidenced by an accompanying Baseline Report and full technical EV Strategy which are available upon request.

1.2 Key Findings

- Existing Chargepoint Provision: Walsall currently hosts 16 chargepoints, none of which are owned by the Council. A range of funding has been secured which should deliver a further 102 sockets across the Borough over the next few years.
- Future Need: Forecasting has highlighted a significant difference between current delivery and anticipated future need. It indicates that 227 standard and 56 rapid chargepoints are required in 2023, rising to 1,134 standards and 153 rapids by 2030.
- Funding & Delivery Models: Whilst funding allocated to date will undoubtedly help kickstart delivery of chargepoints, some of the funding has been allocated across the region and therefore the proportion available to support delivery within the Borough is limited. To help address the gap we recommend that the Council explore further funding options to ensure the Borough is well-positioned for the transition to EVs.
- Opportunities on Council-Owned Land: The Council has opportunities to deliver chargepoints on Council-owned land. This includes delivering on-street standard chargepoints, and rapid chargepoints for high mileage vehicles, alongside potentially rolling out infrastructure in Council car parks, at leisure centres, libraries, and community centres. There is also an opportunity to influence through the planning system, via specifying the level of provision required through the Local Plan or a Supplementary Planning Document.

1.3 Recommendations

The findings and insights gained whilst developing this Strategy have supported the development of key recommendations to support the accelerated delivery of EV chargepoints across the Borough. These include targets for delivery of standard and rapid chargepoints, opportunities to deliver on Council-owned land and providing a good spatial spread of chargepoints to support equity.

1.4 Next Steps

It is anticipated that the Strategy will be adopted by Summer 2024.

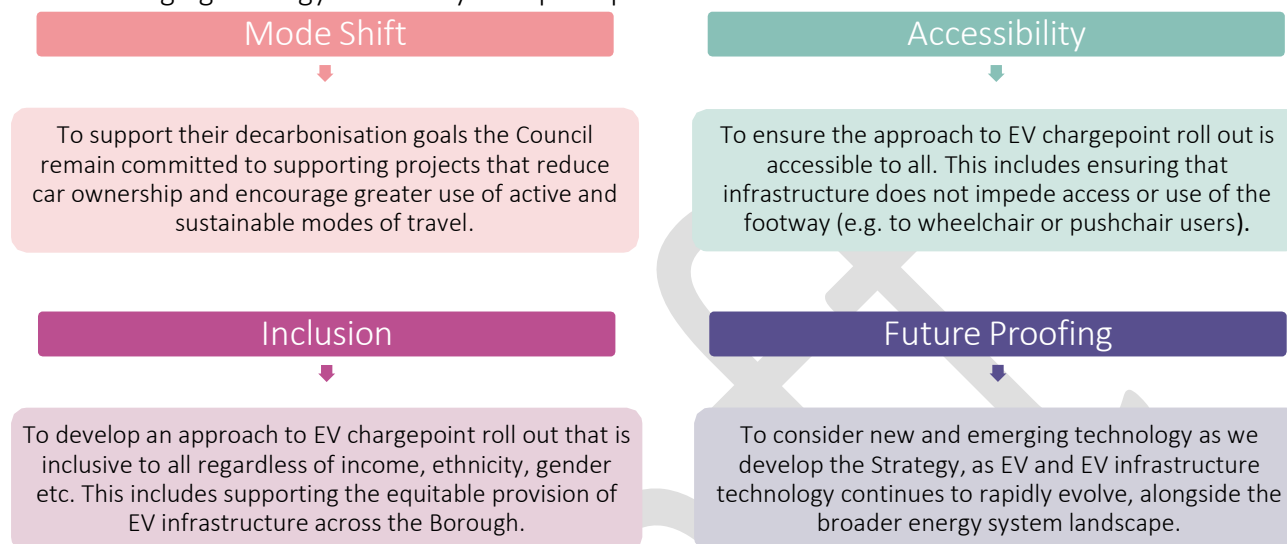


2 Introduction

2.1 Key Principles

The Council has identified four core principles which will ensure that the EV Chargepoint Strategy aligns with and supports its broader vision and goals.

The EV Charging Strategy & Delivery Plan principles are as follows:



2.1.1 Chargepoint Definitions

The definition of standard and rapid chargepoints, along with usual charging times for a typical 60kW battery) used within this Strategy are shown in Table 2-1.

Report Terminology	Charging Type	Charging Speed	Time to Full Charge
Standard	Slow	3.7kW	16 hours
	Standard	7.4kW	8 hours
	Fast	11 – 22kW	3-4 hours
Rapid	Rapid	43 – 50kW	1-2 hours
	Ultra-Rapid	50 – 350kW	30 mins or less

Table 2-1: Charging Speed Terminology



3 Current Situation

Chapter at a Glance

This Chapter provides an overview of the current policy landscape and existing chargepoint provision within Walsall Borough.

3.1 Policy & Strategy Landscape

To ensure this Strategy aligns with national, sub-regional and local policy, we reviewed a range of policies, strategies, and documents. The review highlights that at a national, sub-regional and local level there is a clear policy framework to work towards a net zero future, with an emphasis on accelerating the transition to EVs.

- National: The government are providing a range of tools and funding to support local authorities to plan and deliver local public charging infrastructure.
- Regional: At a regional level, this Strategy will build on the work delivered in the Black Country Ultra Low Emission Vehicle (ULEV) Strategy and integrate with the forthcoming West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Infrastructure for Zero Emissions Vehicles Strategy.
- Local: The Council has refreshed its net zero commitment, to meet the wider regional WMCA target to be net zero by 2041 and developed We Are Walsall 2040. Walsall Area Action Plan reflect a desire to improve the availability of sustainable transport options including EV charging, and a need to deliver on the infrastructure requirements set out in the Black Country ULEV Strategy.

3.2 Existing Chargepoint Provision

3.2.1 Chargepoint Locations & Types

According to the National Chargepoint Registry there are 16 EV chargepoints currently available to the public across the Borough (as of June 2023). Of the 16 chargepoints, 11 are standard and five are rapid. The Borough's existing chargepoints are all located within the car parks of commercial establishments including hotels, shopping centres and large supermarkets. At present no chargepoints have been delivered by Walsall Council (although plans are underway), and there is a lack of on-street, publicly accessible chargepoints in residential areas to support households that do not have access to off-street parking.

4 Future Demand

Chapter at a Glance

This Chapter summarises the results of the chargepoint forecasting and outlines the anticipated chargepoint needs for the Borough in the future.

4.1 Approach

To establish the anticipated number of chargepoints required in Walsall for 2025 and 2030, we used a forecasting tool which is available to all local authorities. The tool predicts the number of EVs and the required chargepoints, based upon the size of the current vehicle fleet and EV sales predictions.

It should be noted that while the outputs may vary between this report and other regional forecasts due to the selection of different scenario assumptions, all forecasts indicate the need for a significant increase in the availability of charging infrastructure across the region.

4.2 Anticipated Chargepoint Need

Figure 4-1 sets out the anticipated EV chargepoint needs for Walsall, considering the Borough's residents, visitors, and businesses.

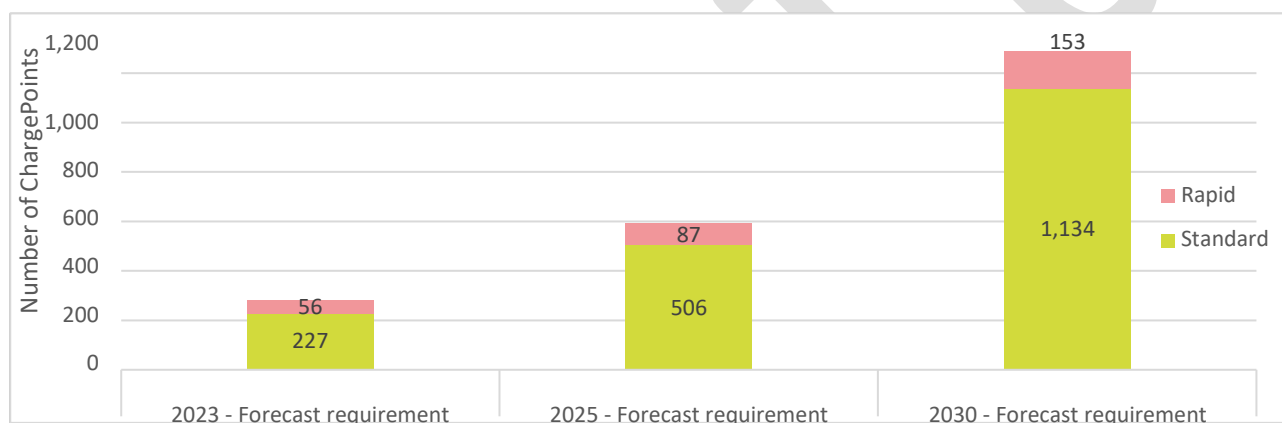


Figure 4-1: Anticipated EV Chargepoint Provision (NEVIS, 2021)

There is a clear gap between current chargepoint provision and anticipated need in the immediate and short/medium term. At present the Borough has a total of 16 chargepoints – 11 standard and five rapids, compared to anticipated need for 227 standard and 56 rapids in 2023. By 2030 this rises to 1,134 standard and 153 rapids. A substantial increase in both standard and rapid chargepoints is required at pace, to meet anticipated need and support the Borough's net zero goals.

Council Action



Anticipated Chargepoint Need: The forecasting has demonstrated that there is a significant gap between existing and future chargepoint infrastructure needs. Rapid progress on delivery of chargepoints is required to help accelerate the uptake of EVs. To support an acceleration in delivery of chargepoints to meet future demand, the Council will commit to delivery targets for standard and rapid chargepoints.



5 Chargepoint Delivery

Chapter at a Glance

This Chapter builds on the anticipated chargepoint need for the Borough as outlined in Chapter 4 and considers various delivery models which could support the roll out of EV

5.1 Approach

This Strategy has been developed in close collaboration with key stakeholders to support local and sub-regional alignment, to harness local knowledge and insights and align and respond to the needs of the Borough's residents, visitors, and businesses.

5.2 Supporting Chargepoint Delivery on Council-Owned Land

There are a number of ways for Walsall Council to support chargepoint delivery on its land, to increase standard chargepoint provision, accelerate the delivery of rapid chargepoints, and ensure an equitable spread of chargepoints across the Borough.

5.2.1 Standard On-Street Chargepoints

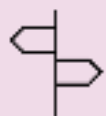
Based on data about housing types within the Borough approximately 39% of residents (those that live in flats/apartments or maisonettes and terraced houses) do not have access to off-street parking. Through supporting on-street chargepoint delivery the council can support equitable access to chargepoints for residents that lack access to off-street parking.

The analysis showed that there are clear areas of good off-street parking that we assume correlate to households living in detached and semi-detached homes. However, it also highlighted areas that have low levels of access to off-street parking including Druid's Heath and Willenhall town centre. This points to the importance of on-street EV chargepoint provision such as the 70 sockets planned over the next year.

5.2.2 Car Parks

The Council owns and manages 17 public car parks. The car parks are primarily clustered within central Walsall and Willenhall. A total of 961 bays are provided across all car park sites. At present none of the sites provide EV chargepoint facilities.

Council Action



Car Park Review: Whilst the car parks clearly provide a significant opportunity for chargepoint delivery, the Council will conduct analysis to identify any car park sites that require investment or may be repurposed. Chargepoint delivery can then be targeted at the long-term car park sites to avoid inefficiencies. e.g. the removal of chargepoints.

5.2.3 Broader Community Facilities

There are a number of additional car park facilities that are owned and operated by the Council. These include libraries, community centres, and leisure facilities across the Borough. There are 19 facilities in total, delivering approximately 1,145 spaces. Whilst not all the sites are likely to be suitable for chargepoint delivery the Council will explore opportunities at the larger car park sites. This includes at leisure centres (including Oak Park, Bloxwich and Darlaston) Walsall Arena and at community centres.



Equitable Transition



Walsall Council are committed to ensuring that Council-owned infrastructure is spread across the Borough, providing access to chargepoints for all users. This includes those without access to off-street parking as well as people with disabilities, mobility impairments and the elderly.

5.2.4 Pay & Display Bays

The Council own and operate approximately 225 pay and display bays across the Borough. The majority of these are located in Walsall town centre and provide short-term parking (e.g. for 2 hours max). As centrally located and visible locations, they provide ideal sites for standard chargepoints (both slow and fast).

5.2.5 Rapid Chargepoints

Alongside supporting on-street public chargepoints, there is also a need to accelerate the delivery of rapid chargepoints that are essential for fleet users (e.g. taxis, and fleet operators) and longer distance drivers, to ensure that a lack of chargepoints does not negatively impact the Borough and the local economy. At present the borough has five rapid chargepoints, however the forecasting indicates that 87 are required by 2025 (and 153 by 2030). In the short-term, particularly looking to 2025, we propose that Walsall's key focus should be on-street delivery. However, Walsall Council will also explore supporting the delivery of rapid charge points on or near key strategic roads. Whilst it is anticipated that the private sector (e.g. CPOs) will lead rapid chargepoint delivery, they lack access to land and therefore in our role as landowners, local authorities can support rapid delivery. High flow routes, such as the Strategic and Major Road Networks (SRN & MRN) and the West Midlands Key Route Network (KRN), are of interest to rapid CPOs and present the potential for revenue generation for the Council.

5.2.6 Planning Influence

There are a number of EV charging requirements listed within the Building Regulations that define which buildings must have chargepoints provided, and how many.

As the local planning authority, we have the opportunity to set higher standards for chargepoint requirements in developments within our area. This would ensure that developers provide appropriate levels of infrastructure to meet future demand and support our goal of increasing the level of provision.



6 Key Findings, Recommendations & Next Steps

Chapter at a Glance

This Chapter consolidated the key findings from the development of the Strategy and outlines recommendations to support infrastructure delivery.

6.1 Key Findings

The key findings are as follows:

- **Existing Chargepoint Provision:** Walsall currently hosts 16 chargepoints, none of which are owned by the Council. A range of funding has been secured which should deliver a further 102 sockets across the Borough over the next few years.
- **Future Need:** Forecasting has highlighted a significant difference between current delivery and anticipated future need. It indicates that 1,134 standards and 153 rapids by 2030.
- **Funding & Delivery Models:** While some public funding that has been secured will undoubtedly help kickstart delivery of chargepoints, some of the funding has been allocated across the region to date to support delivery within the Borough. We commit to seeking further public funding and exploring options with chargepoint operators to ensure the Borough is well-positioned for the transition to EVs.
- **Opportunities on Council-Owned Land:** The Council is a significant landowner and as such there are many opportunities to deliver chargepoints on Council-owned land. This includes committing to the delivery of on-street standard chargepoints, and rapid chargepoints for high mileage vehicles, alongside rolling out infrastructure in Council car parks, at leisure centres, libraries, and community centres. There is also an opportunity to influence through the planning system, through specifying the level of provision required in the Local Plan or a Supplementary Planning Document.

6.2 Key Recommendations

There are a number of key actions that the Council will consider to accelerate delivery of chargepoints (Table 6-1).

No.	Key Recommendations	Rationale
1.	Continue to explore future funding options for delivery of chargepoints	There is a significant gap between the anticipated need outlined by the forecasts and current and planned delivery. Whilst the Council should continue to maximise match funding from Government, we will also consider exploring options with private CPOs.
2.	Promote the EV chargepoint request form on the Council's website.	To understand need and help identify suitable sites for early roll out. Responding to demand should also help accelerate the transition to EVs.
3.	Commit to delivering 250 standard on-street sockets by 2026, and 600 by 2030.	Analysis indicates that approximately 39% of the Boroughs residents do not have off-street parking. On-street chargepoints are essential to support equity.
4.	Commit to delivering ten rapid sockets by 2026, and 25 by 2030.	Rapids are essential to fleet vehicles (e.g. taxis and private hire vehicles) and to long distance private drivers, which is pertinent given the influence of the M6 motorway. We propose a phased approach to rapid delivery, so that officers can capitalise on expertise from the initial roll out to scale up delivery.



No.	Key Recommendations	Rationale
5.	Conduct a car park review to determine which of the Council's sites have a long-term future. Long-term and high-quality car park sites can then be assessed for chargepoint suitability. We	Car parks present a significant opportunity to the Council. We currently operate 17 car parks that can support both standard and rapid chargepoint installation. Site feasibility assessments will be required e.g. to assess electrical capabilities at each site.
6.	Commit to delivering ten sockets across the broader community facilities (e.g. leisure and community centres) by 2026.	Community facilities are generally located in the heart of communities and therefore provide convenient, central locations that can support an equitable and inclusive approach to chargepoint delivery.
7.	Commit to delivering ten sockets in Pay and Display bays across the Borough by 2026.	The Council owns and operates approximately 225 pay and display bays across the Borough. The majority of these are located in Walsall town centre and provide short-term parking (e.g. for 2 hours max). As central, visible locations they provide ideal sites for standard chargepoints (both slow and fast), and for catering to the needs of all drivers.
8.	Work with a wide range of CPOs and explore charging prices.	To support choice and reduce costs to the users, we will consider working with a variety of CPOs, providing a range of benefits including a variety of tariffs for users to choose from and allows the Council to monitor both chargepoint reliability and revenue potential over time between CPOs.
9.	Commit to ensuring that there is good spatial provision of chargepoints across the Borough.	Council Officers shall use their influence to actively work with CPOs to ensure that there is an equitable provision of chargepoints across the Borough. The distribution of chargepoints will be continually monitored and evaluated to ensure an equitable approach.
10.	Utilise the Office of Zero Emission Vehicles' accessibility specifications	To support the Strategy's accessibility principle, and design in access for all users, including people with disabilities and in parent and child spaces.

Table 6-1: Summary of Key Recommendations

6.3 Next Steps

The Council are undertaking consultation on the EV Chargepoint Strategy. It is anticipated that the Strategy will be adopted in Summer 2024.

Walsall Electric Vehicle Chargepoint Strategy

Public Consultation Analysis (Feb-March 2024)



Walsall Council



IMPROVE
outcomes and
customer experience



IMPROVE
employee satisfaction
and engagement

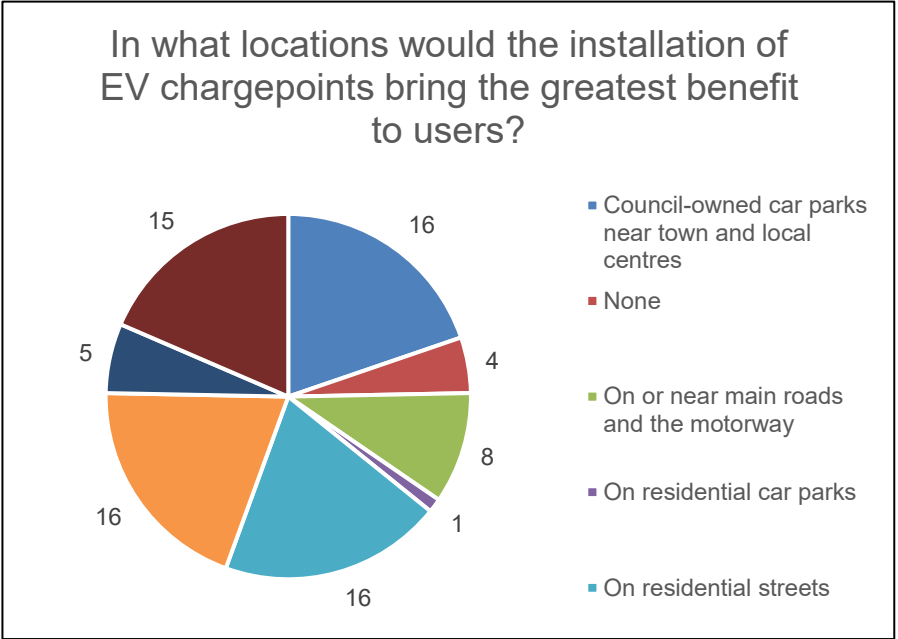
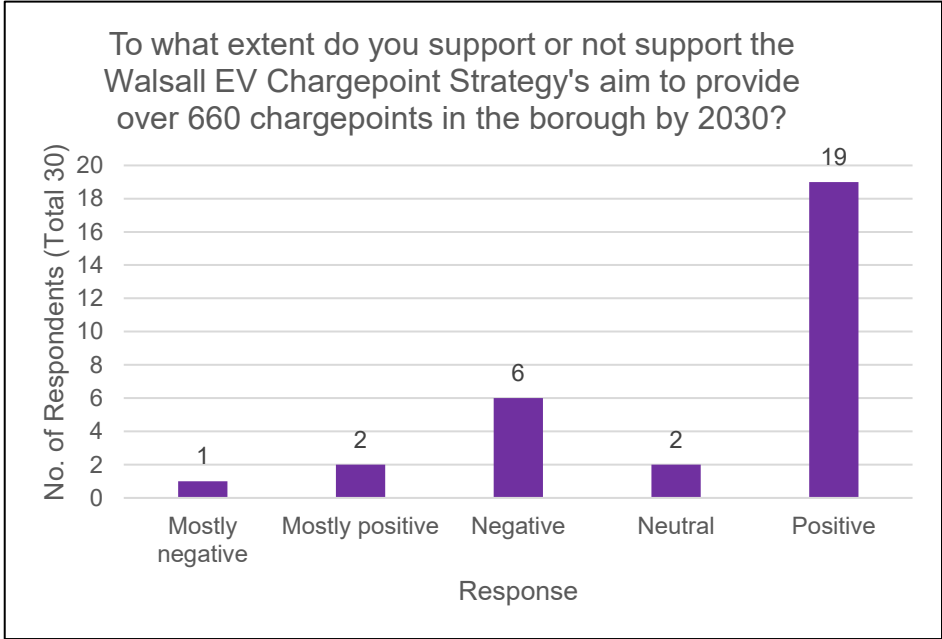


IMPROVE
service efficiency
and performance

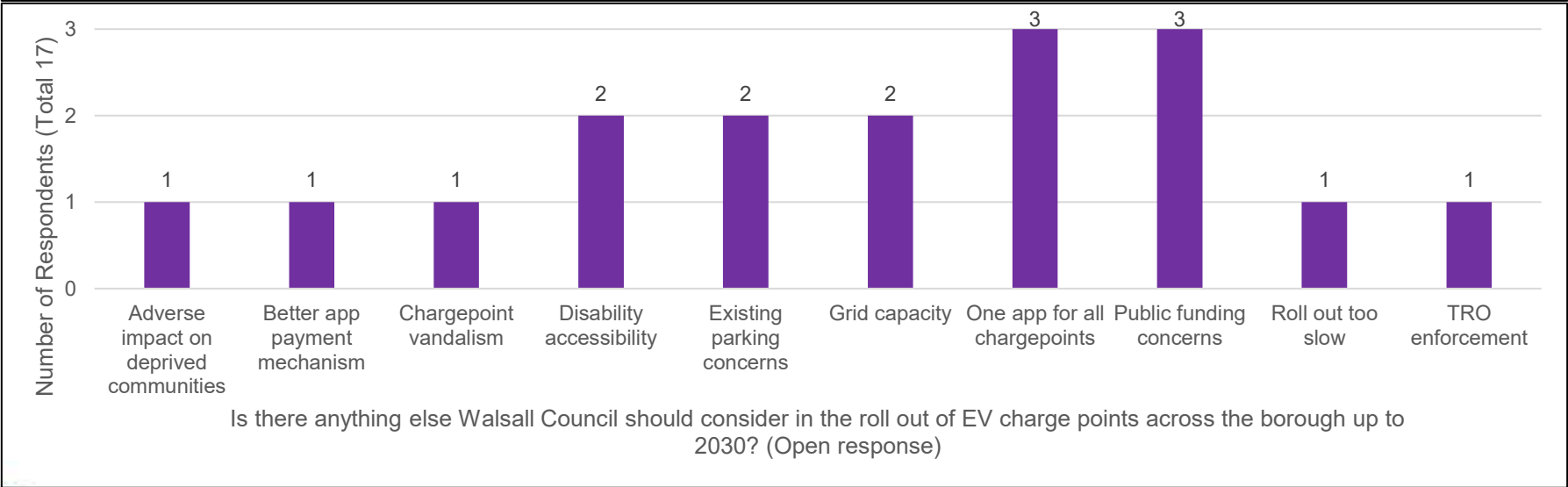
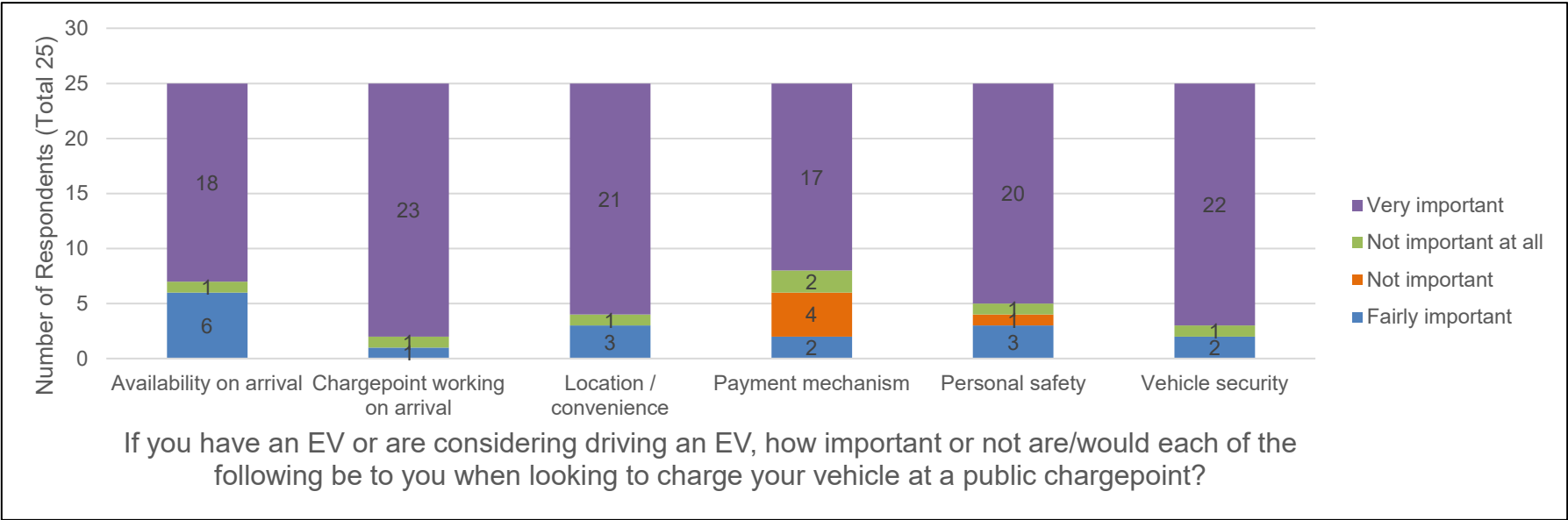
Summary

- Public consultation ran between 21st February – 20th March 2024
- Consultation was undertaken with the following audiences:
 - The Public and stakeholders – Online questionnaire and dedicated Electric Vehicle (EV) Chargepoint Strategy area on the Council's Walsall Says Commonplace and Walsall Council website, with further circulation of links on social media and via press release.
 - Walsall businesses – Direct email correspondence with key businesses through Walsall Council's Business Engagement Team.
 - Council officers – Internal communications and link to online questionnaire for comments on the draft strategy on Commonplace.
- A total of 30 responses were received, all through Commonplace, with overall support for the Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy.
- 70% of respondents were positive or mostly positive to support Walsall EV Chargepoint Strategy's aim to provide over 660 chargepoints in the borough by 2030.

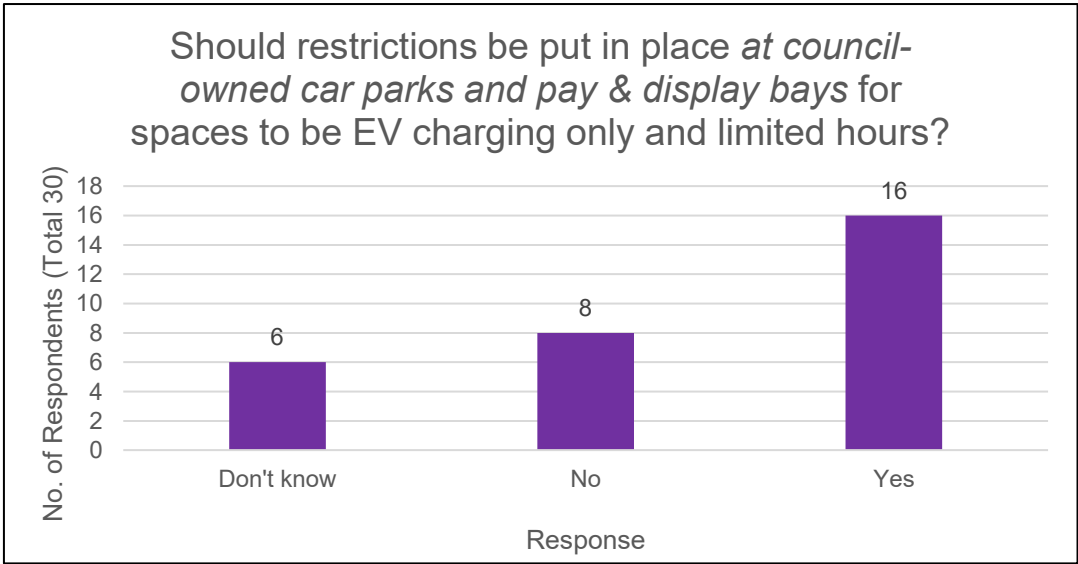
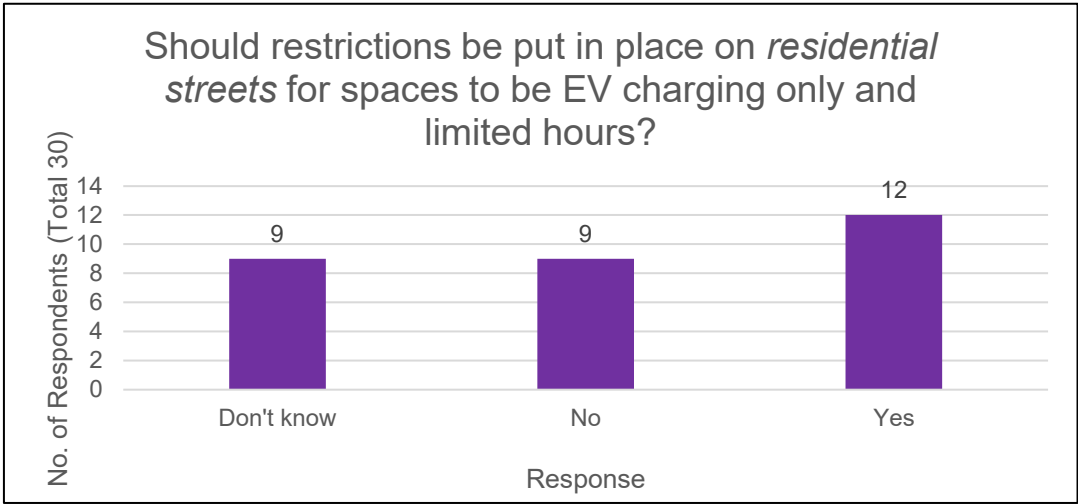
Respondent – EV Chargepoint Delivery and Locations



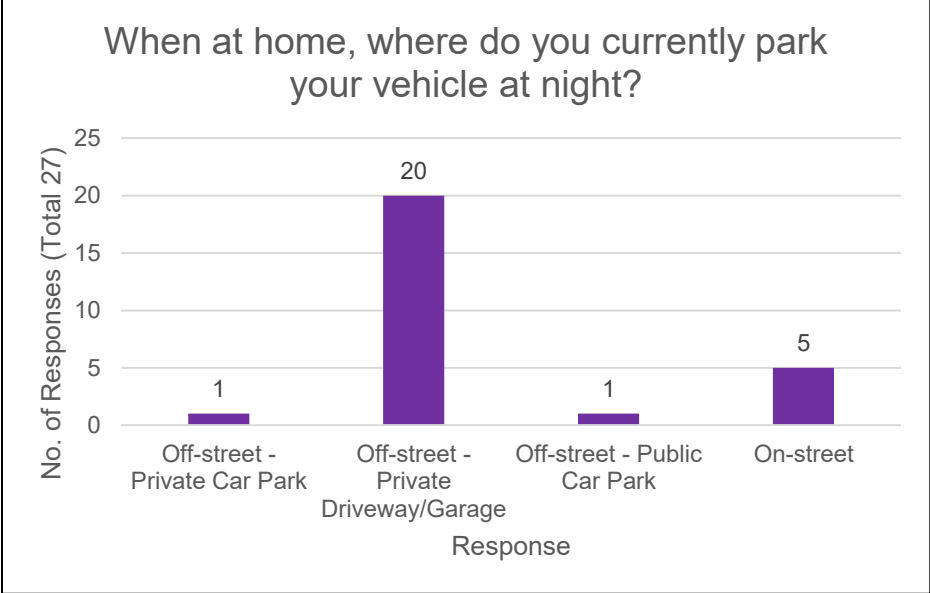
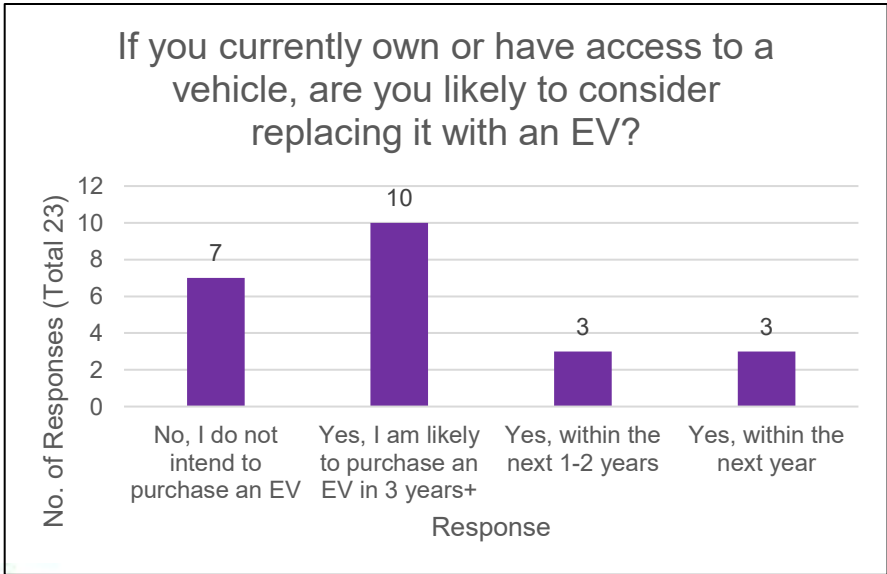
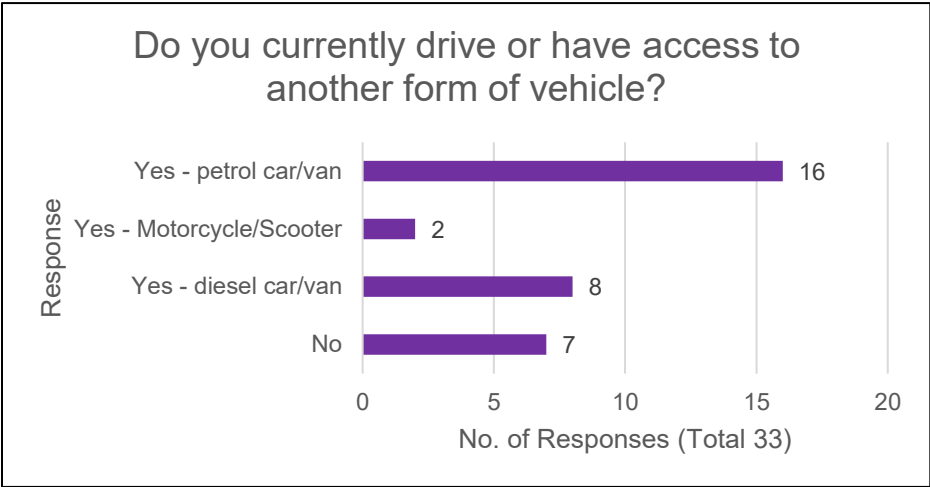
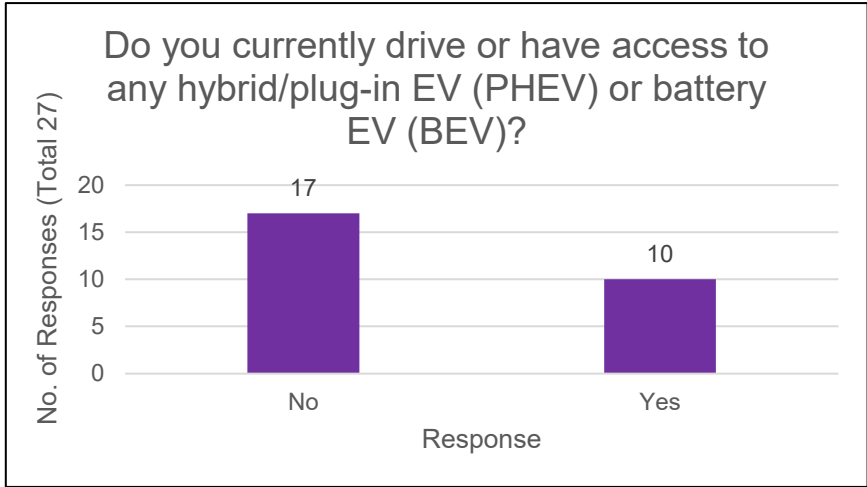
Respondent – EV Charging Facilities & Considerations



Respondent – EV Parking Restrictions



Respondent – Access to Vehicle and EV Ownership



Commercial Strategy

Portfolio: Councillor Statham – Deputy Leader and Finance

Related portfolios: All

Service: Place and Environment

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1 Aim

- 5.1 The commercial strategy enables the council becoming more commercially minded and more business-like in its activities. It also allows the council to develop new approaches, find new ways to manage and improve services and their cost effectiveness, whilst also identifying ways of generating additional financial income.

2 Summary

- 2.1 Many councils across the UK are facing a challenging financial future. If councils want to continue to meet the needs of its residents, it must increase the revenue coming into the council through becoming more commercial.
- 2.2 The commercial strategy (Appendix A) is set out to enable the council to consider the ways in which income generation and commercial opportunities contribute to the delivery of the Council's vision.
- 2.3 This is about behaving in a more business-like way, considering the generation of new sources of income, leveraging our assets to achieve long-term sustainable commercial success whilst continuing to serve the needs of our residents.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet is recommended to approve Walsall Council's commercial strategy contained at **Appendix A** of this report.
- 3.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Economy, Environment and Communities, in consultation with the Associate Leader and Portfolio Holder for Finance, to make minor amendments to the strategy and update the programmes.

4 Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 Commercial activity is not new to the council, which currently operates commercial services in a range of service areas. The commercial strategy aims to set the framework for a co-ordinated approach across the council, looking within for the expertise to drive this forward.
- 4.2 While not under the formal umbrella of 'Commercialisation', the examples below show how the council has already been working in a more commercially minded way:
- 4.3 The conversion of unused space within a facility into a customer activity area used to generate income, e.g. Bloxwich spin studio, Oak Park Box12. These were joint working and collaborative ventures to assist partners to deliver more for our residents.
- 4.4 Personal training is an example whereby we reviewed the less cost-effective model and redesigned it to increase net gain.
- 4.5 Phasing out cash payments for swimming lessons by encouraging all new starters to sign up to the direct debit payments, therefore reducing admin burden and improving retention.
- 4.6 The creation of a corporate membership scheme to allow companies to promote our leisure services memberships to their employees as a workforce benefit, ultimately boosting leisure sales.
- 4.7 Council catering services support mayor functions and the holiday activity food(HAF) programme whilst council security services support election cleans and cabinet/public meetings, tasks that would otherwise be outsourced to independent contractors.
- 4.8 The commercial strategy outlines our intended approach, emphasising flexibility to leverage the talents of our workforce, partners, contractors, and community in service delivery. In many ways we are already starting to deliver (as referred to in para 4.1 above).
- 4.9 The commercial strategy aims to:
 - Adopt a commercial mindset in service management, fostering innovation and optimising assets and services to generate surplus income for reinvestment and cost reduction.
 - Increase revenue through service-based savings or income; improving efficiency of service delivery through reducing costs and streamlining

processes, increasing community wealth or producing social value by acting on the Council's position.

- Support our corporate priorities and achieve future financial sustainability while collaborating with communities to sustain the economy, environment, and well-being.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.10 Internal focus: Income generated by the initiatives in the commercial strategy action plan will help support service delivery across the council.

Risk management

- 4.11 Each business plan associated with an income generation or cost recovery opportunity will have its own risk management plan however there are also some generic risks.
- 4.12 Consideration will need to be given as to the impact of delivering services to external entities on the ability of the council to deliver core services to core customer groups.

Financial implications

- 4.13 Each business plan associated with an income generation or cost recovery opportunity will have its financial and return on investment data.

Legal implications

- 4.14 All legal implications will be part of the business case stage.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.15 Social value (including the 'Walsall pound') is part of our commercial approach.

Property implications

- 4.16 The review of our council estate and the need to optimise our assets for a commercial purpose.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.17 There are no health and wellbeing implications to this report.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.18 The implications for reducing inequalities have been considered. An equalities impact assessment (EqIA) has been carried out and is attached to this report as **Appendix F**.

Staffing implications

- 4.19 There are no direct staffing implications arising as a result of this report. However, during the business case stage, the resource requirements, if any, will be considered in more detail.

Climate Impact

- 4.20 There are no direct climate impacts arising from this report. During the business case stage, climate impacts will be considered.

Consultation

- 4.21 There will be internal consultation only.

5 Decide

- 5.1 Cabinet is asked to approve the Commercial Strategy

6 Respond

- 6.1 Delivery of the commercial strategy will be integrated into our budget setting process and commercial strategy management system.

7 Review

- 7.1 Regular progress updates will be provided to CMT and Cabinet on the ongoing progress of transformation linked to the Council plan and wider budget reporting and will remain in line with internal governance monitoring.

Appendices

Appendix A – Commercial Strategy 2024-2029
Appendix B – Income Commercial Principles
Appendix C – Business Plan Template
Appendix D – Directorate Service Plan
Appendix E – Commercial Governance Process
Appendix F – EqlA

Background papers

None.

Author

Michele McPherson
Commercial Implementation Manager
☎ 07548 901167
✉ Michele.McPherson@walsall.gov.uk



Dave Brown
Executive Director

11 September 2024



Councillor Mark Statham
Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for
Finance

11 September 2024

Innovating for our success

Commercial Strategy for 2024-2029



Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE

Page 116 of 291

Contents

Introduction	3
Section 1: Why do we need a Commercial Strategy?	4
Our commercial vision	4
Why have a commercial strategy?	5
Links to other Walsall Council policies and strategies	6
Section 2: What do we want to accomplish?	7
Aims and Objectives	7
Section 3: How will we deliver?	8
Our commercial approach	8
Our Strategic Themes	8
Theme 1 – Commercial Culture	9
Theme 2 – Commercial Process	11
Theme 3 – Commercial Programmes	12
Section 4: How will we measure success?	13
Managing our performance	13
Commercial Strategy Programme 2024–2025	14
Commercial Strategy Programme 2024–2029	15



Introduction

Commercialisation is about behaving in a more business-like, efficient, and practical way in which will deliver better financial, social, and environmental value for our residents.

The strategy acknowledges the council's primary aim is not only income generation, and realising this aspiration will require considered investment, and significant organisational change.

The scope of the strategy includes:

- Reducing costs or increasing efficiency by adopting a more commercial approach.
- Developing a more innovative and forward thinking culture and mindset among staff.
- Partnering with private or third sector organisations to deliver services or projects.
- Investing in or creating new businesses or ventures that support the local economy or social objectives.
- Generating income from existing or new assets, services, or activities.
- Ensuring the Walsall pound remains within the borough.
- Promoting positive social value outcomes, such as addressing inequality and meeting borough needs.

Noteworthy instances of commercial activity to date include:

- Generating cost savings through efficiency and process redesign.
- Collaborating to enhance partner capabilities in serving residents.
- Providing income-generating services for the council while fortifying service delivery resilience.

Section 1

Why do we need a Commercial Strategy?

Our commercial vision

To be a financially resilient, innovative, and effective organisation, delivering excellence for residents in a dynamic, business-like, and efficient manner.





Why have a commercial strategy?

In order to overcome current and future financial challenges, the council will need to adopt a sustainable, commercially focused approach.

This entails fostering a commercial culture that promotes efficiency, innovation, transparency, and intelligent risk management while prioritising customer satisfaction. The council will need to rethink its functions, exploring new income generating avenues and accepting the possibility of some initiatives failing.

This strategy document will guide commercial activities aimed at addressing funding shortfalls, responding to demand for essential services, and reflecting evolving community needs. Implementation will be supported by a commercial strategy steering group, working in collaboration with directors and service managers. The role of the group will be to support idea development and implementation within service areas to become routine service delivery.

Financial position

Despite managing our finances very well over many years, the council is facing significant budget deficits in future years as the costs of providing our services increase and the funding received is forecasted to reduce.

We estimate that in 2025/26 this will lead to a budget deficit of approximately £20m rising to £40m by 2027/28 for the 3-year period.

It is therefore of utmost importance that the council's Commercial Strategy is playing a key role in generating more income through business like trading of services reducing the impact of service cuts and forming an integral part of a structured approach to securing the council's financial sustainability.

The council has, for several years, allowed investment to be made in upfront costs associated with commercial activities and to take a structured approach to generate income and making savings to meet the budget gap and this area of work has supported the achievement of circa £15m of additional income forecast by 2024/25.

Links to other Walsall Council policies and strategies

This strategy will impact all service areas across the council. It will be a key enabler allowing the council to 'work smartly' and its impact will be evidenced in all aspects of service delivery if implemented correctly.

It is therefore essential that the commercial approach aligns and supports the council's ambitions and strategic objectives. This document aligns to:

- Walsall Council Plan: Our Council Plan 2022-2025 (walsall.gov.uk)
- Corporate Budget Plan: A4_Poster_Style_01 (walsall.gov.uk)
- We Are Walsall 2040: We Are Walsall 2040
- Economic Strategy Action Plan: Document.ashx (walsall.gov.uk)
- Income and Commercial Policy principles: (Appendix B)
- Directorate service plan: (Appendix C)



Section 2

What do we want to accomplish?

Aims and objectives

The strategy's primary aim is to deliver better financial, social, and environmental value for residents by behaving in a more business-like and commercial way. The objective is to deliver an additional cumulative financial return of £15m over the period 2025/26 to 2028/29.

A detailed set of commercial work programmes will be established and managed through service delivery planning processes, subject to annual updates. It will demonstrate a proactive and adaptive approach that contributes to the council's financial objectives through commercial initiatives.

The initial objectives will be to:

- Optimise the use of council owned assets to deliver better financial, social, and environmental benefits for our residents
- Deliver a financial return to the council to help contribute towards statutory services or to invest in new projects
- Where possible, to assist discretionary services to achieve a break-even financial position, to reduce the risk of closure for these services and to assist the council in generating additional income
- Actively seek new business opportunities that will provide a financial return to the council
- Deliver services to new and existing customers from both within the local authority environment and beyond, particularly where we are uniquely placed to do so

Section 3

How will we deliver?

Our commercial approach

The council's commercial approach is not a 'quick fix' solution, but a medium to long-term programme. Delivering lasting financial security is essential but so too are social and environmental benefits.

The council's commercial approach will be underpinned by **five** principles

Ethical & equal
consideration
of all ideas

Positive
community
impact

Innovation

Leveraging
resources

Good
governance

All council services (or elements of services) will be considered in the context of the commercial approach. Whilst commercial opportunities will be mixed, taking a more business-like and practical approach, namely understanding service performance, cost, and outcomes, will help to drive efficiency and maximise the benefits delivered with the available funding.

Our Strategic Themes

To achieve our commercial ambitions, the council will focus on the following strategic themes:

Commercial Culture

There will have been a cultural shift that embeds new ways of thinking and promotes commercial awareness.

Commercial Process

Day-to-day activities will be delivered in a more business-like, practical, and efficient manner that balances both customer service and true economic potential.

Commercial Programmes

Embracing intelligent investment opportunities will have increased financial returns to the council.

Theme 1 – Commercial Culture

In 2021, the council recognised more commercially focused service delivery models are needed to ensure long-term financial sustainability and to continue to deliver the priorities that matter to our residents against our 2040 vision.

The role of the commercial implementation manager was established and together with staff learning, and development opportunities, provides service managers with the tools needed to begin taking a more business-like approach. To ensure a coordinated approach, strategic leads were identified, and a commercial strategy steering group was established to support the identification and progression of opportunities.

The council acknowledges it is in the initial stages of fostering a commercial culture and to strengthen both culture and capability, the council will implement the following initiatives:

Staff engagement and communication plan

For the council's ambitions to be achieved, all staff must grasp the aspirations, their role's implications, and how their individual and collective efforts contribute through the following activities:

- Develop a robust staff engagement plan, that will engage with staff at all levels. (Ref CC1 – Commercial strategy plan 24/25)
- Develop a campaign plan with communication, marketing, and brand teams to establish an engagement process for staff 'new idea' suggestions. (Ref CC1 – Commercial strategy plan 24/25)
- Continue with annual performance conversations and engagement with staff throughout the year will encourage innovation and support the realisation of opportunities.
- Regular communications, in a variety of formats will keep both staff and managers informed and engaged with the progress in respect to commercial projects.

Staff skills development plan

To implement long term change, staff need to be equipped with the skills, knowledge, and experience to be able to take a more commercial approach. The council will need a skilled and forward-thinking workforce, capable of driving innovation and progressive change.

- Develop a commercial training programme. Coaching, learning and development will enhance the skills of the existing workforce with specific training provided where there is a business benefit. (Ref CC1 Commercial strategy plan 24/25).
- Support the recruitment and selection process with an innovative approach, acknowledging the council's ambitions and provide a mechanism to address skills gaps and facilitate future initiatives.
- Professional networks and partnerships will be embraced with a particular focus on opportunities to benefit from shared learning, best practice, and collaboration.

Commercial governance

Developing and realising commercial propositions is a joint endeavour and requires a collaborative approach across the organisation. Additionally robust governance will be needed to facilitate an intelligent approach to risk and ensure due diligence. Clarity of roles and responsibilities, and the appropriate level of ownership are therefore key to success.

- A rolling pipeline of commercial opportunities will be co-produced with directors and heads of service to ensure that dependencies and opportunities for shared benefit are realised.
- Opportunities will be supported by robust business cases, incorporating full costings, including staffing, concept development and implementation.
- The commercial strategy steering group will provide advice, guidance and appropriate check and challenge throughout the process from conception to delivery.
- This will include agreeing, at an early stage, the appropriate governance based on the value and risk profile of the initiative:



Once a new project is ready for consideration it will be presented to the commercial strategy steering group for review and input.

or

The approach is one of enablement and empowerment and so not all projects will need to go to the commercial strategy steering group for endorsement. Those that are below a financial threshold and where the lead Executive Director and Service Area Director are content to approve as operational decisions, these will be reported into the commercial strategy steering group for information and resulting good news stories being circulated.



Theme 2 – Commercial Process

Local authorities are mandated to ensure value for money (VFM) in service delivery. Exploring outsourcing, partnerships, service charges and income generation provide opportunities to maintain quality while addressing funding gaps.

The council is empowered to generate income through charging, trading, and investing, unless legal restrictions apply. Trading via Local Authority Trading Companies (LATCo), is common among councils, utilising trading and charging powers to address market failures, provide new services, and cover costs.

Facing economic pressures, the council endeavours to cut costs and boost income, prioritising high-quality service delivery. The commercial strategy aims to reassess service delivery methods and enhance competitiveness.

To support its approach the council will implement the following activities:

Trading income review

A thorough assessment of trading and income potential across all service areas will aim to develop a comprehensive understanding of existing and potential revenue streams using the following criteria:

- Opportunity to maximise contributions to overheads
- Scale of potential contribution versus required investment
- Current capability and commercial approach
- Current service performance and future market potential
- Corporate plan priorities to meet council needs
- Any unique skills or market advantage within the service

Future pipeline commercial projects

All future pipeline commercial projects will be overseen by the council's commercial strategy steering group. This will ensure that ideas and projects can be scoped, developed, and implemented throughout the duration of the Commercial Strategy (2024-2029), with the primary intention of generating sustainable revenue income.

To ensure that all new initiatives are fully explored and vigorously challenged, a robust governance is in place that is inclusive and reflects the inherent value of commercialisation to the local authority.

A summary of the approach to considering future pipeline proposals is set out in Appendix E.

Customer insight and market analysis

The council needs to understand both customer needs and market potential to identify commercial opportunities. This involves staying informed about national and local policies, tracking legislative changes, and aligning strategies with evolving trends and regulations. This can be achieved through a market-based approach as illustrated in Ref CP1 of the commercial strategy programme plan 24/25.

The commercial strategy steering group will be responsible for monitoring the commercial landscape to explore new business opportunities, support the individual service areas by providing key guidance on the commercial opportunities, governance and strategic direction going forward.

Alternative service delivery models

The council will strive to develop alternative ways to deliver outcomes, through shared services, partnership models and outsourcing. The council will assess the most suitable service delivery model based on legal, financial, capability, and capacity considerations, determining the most effective approach in each case. The recommended model will prioritise customer experience and look to optimise service quality, income generation, and alignment with the council's values.

Theme 3 – Commercial Programmes

The strategy builds on the council's experience to date and promotes a culture of continuous improvement and shared learning across the organisation:



Commissioning



Procurement and
Contract Management



Assets and Investments



Income Generating Services



Traded Services



Cost Recovery Services

Understanding costs and income

Ensure all departments understand service costs and income opportunities, implementing market-focused delivery.

Traded services

Sustain and enhance commercial performance for existing and new traded services.

Income generation

Secure full cost recovery for existing and new income-generating services, exploring untapped areas for additional income.

Shared services

Collaborate in shared/joint services to share resources, knowledge, skills and capitalise on economies of scale.

Procurement and contract management

Establish a resilient supply chain by prioritising best value for money in commissioning and procurement, while ensuring outsourced activities meet the highest standards and provide optimal returns through effective contract management.

Assets and capital development

Leverage existing assets for optimal financial returns through strategic asset development and utilise funds for capital investment to build a robust investment portfolio.

Adopting a more commercial approach increases risk, necessitating an intelligent approach to risk, with informed evaluation and decisions in respect to tolerance and mitigations for each commercial project.

The financial risk of maintaining the status quo is greater than that of pursuing a 'commercial council'. Financial sustainability and resilience for the council is crucial to avoid impact and reductions on both discretionary services and the quality of statutory services. Therefore, adopting this strategy offers the council a better chance to continue providing all services at a level of excellence to residents.

Section 4

How will we measure success?

Managing our performance

The commercial strategy steering group will oversee the effective delivery and implementation of the commercial strategy.

The commercial strategy will be supported by a delivery plan, identifying the initiatives that are to be developed and implemented within each financial year. The delivery plan is expected to be confidential due to the commercially sensitive nature of some of the initiatives. An annual report will be produced and presented to the corporate management team (CMT) on the progress of the delivery of the commercial strategy.

As set out in section 3 above, all new initiatives will be fully explored and robustly challenged and if the outline business case demonstrates the initiative is worth pursuing, a detailed business case will be produced. The business case will be subjected through the service area governance process, seeking approval and will have clear timeframes and outputs. If the proposal is approved, these outputs will be measured against and reported to the corporate management team (CMT).

Commercial projects and activities will be integrated into relevant service area business plans, with progress tracked through the council's existing directorate governance process.

Evaluating the success of commercialism involves more than recording additional income, as for many statutory services fees are set centrally or they are legally required to be breakeven. We need to be able to report on how the council embraces commercialism in daily activities, such as cost reduction, offering additional services, and staff behaviours.



Appendix 1

Commercial Strategy Programme 2024-2025

Ref	Theme	Activity	Lead Officer	Target Completion Date
CC1	Commercial Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop the staff engagement plan. Develop a communications campaign plan. Establish a campaign to generate new ideas and create a shortlist of new opportunities. Investigate and develop the staff commercial training options and pricing. 	CMB lead – Commercial Implementation manager	March 2025
CP1	Commercial Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Perform comprehensive analysis of both discretionary and statutory services to identify opportunities for commercial growth, emphasising collaboration and competitive market exploitation. The marketing-based approach will focus on identifying unique selling points and market positioning to inform pricing structures and promotional activities for the targeted services. 	Head of Marketing, Service area lead, Commercial Implementation Manager	March 2025
CP2	Commercial Programmes	<p>Fees and charges, Traded services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengthen the customer-centric approaches to income generation through enhanced financial management, focusing on the profit and loss and full cost recovery of non-trading statutory services. All services will review their fees and charges, traded services, annually in line with the Income commercial policy 	Corporate Finance Director, Commercial Implementation Manager	Annually
CP3	Commercial Programmes	<p>Budget setting process</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Senior officers and councillors to prioritise the council's income-generating expertise, identifying the top potential areas currently delivered by the council. Market analysis is crucial for understanding where the greatest impact on income generation can be made. Development of service area plans (Appendix D) will be a key driver in the budget setting process and contribute to the corporate budget plan. 	Corporate Finance Director	Annually

Appendix 2

Commercial Strategy Programme 2024-2029

Ref	Theme	Description	Lead Officer
CC2	Commercial Culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Deliver the staff engagement plan. ■ Deliver the training programme plan ■ Support the recruitment and selection process to ensure we have a mechanism to address the current skills gap and identify skills required for future initiatives. ■ Develop a commercial culture, changing mindsets, encouraging commercial behaviours, and celebrating commercial successes. ■ We will build commercial skills into our recruitment processes, particularly in the areas with the most substantial commercial focus. ■ We will ensure there is effective horizon scanning for new commercial opportunities, including bidding for grant funding, and ensure there are effective channels for staff to suggest new commercial ideas. 	Commercial Implementation Manager/service area leads
CP4	Commercial Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Maximise returns from existing traded services and bring them in line with our current Income commercial policy. ■ Deliver increased value and financial savings through more effective contract management and procurement. ■ Increase returns from our existing property, land, and investments. ■ Innovate in our approach to debt collection. 	Commercial Implementation Manager – Service area leads
CP5	Commercial Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ We will invest in opportunities that bring financial returns, as well as social environmental and wider economic benefit. 	Commercial Implementation Manager – Service area leads
A09	Commercial Programmes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Develop a future pipeline through annual budget reviews, regular service reviews and planning within departments will enable teams to provide opportunities for staff to reflect on the guiding principles in the strategy and give rise to the development of proposals that could meet key objectives. 	Commercial Implementation Manager – Service area leads

Innovating for our success

Commercial Strategy
for 2024-2029

Economy, Environment & Communities

Walsall Council
Civic Centre
Darwall Street
Walsall
WS1 1TP

Web: www.walsall.gov.uk

Appendix B

Income and total cost recovery principles and requirements

The following principles inform decision making on income generating and total cost recovery proposals.

Principle 1: We recover total costs of service delivery on a fair and transparent basis, to sustain and support service delivery and development as we move to a self-financing position as a Council.

Principle 2: We will seek to recover the total costs of service delivery and generate a surplus, to contribute toward corporate costs, unless there is a legal barrier to doing so or it has been otherwise agreed by Cabinet.

Principle 3: We assess our total costs each year using a standard method of assessing total cost, which includes directorate and corporate overheads.

Principle 4: We will only trade where we are confident that by doing so we are contributing to our corporate objectives and can do so on a sustainable basis.

Principle 5: Where we decide locally to subsidise services, including providing any concessions, we do so based on a clear understanding of the rationale, link to our objectives and outcomes and associated income potentially foregone.

Principle 6: We will expect payment in advance, or at point of sale, unless there is a rationale for not doing so, and will develop and use the most cost efficient collection channels available.

Principle 7: We will have a consistent framework and approach, led corporately, and using service understanding of demand and volume to forecast income within our budget planning and reporting processes.

Principle 8: Charging should be used to promote fairness and to influence public behaviour where it is appropriate to do so.

Details Included within each Principle

Principle 1: We recover total costs of service delivery on a fair and transparent basis, to sustain and support service delivery and development as we move to a self-financing position as a Council.

Our rationale for charging is to recover the total costs of service delivery so that we are better able to invest in our strategic priorities. By generating income and promoting the recovery of total costs of service delivery we are moving towards

a self-financing model, which is necessary given the reductions in central Government funding, and will enable more resources to be focussed on where we create the most value.

Generating income and recovering total costs of service delivery is about more than financing and funding. We are also developing our framework for total cost recovery to help us to utilise pricing strategies that meet wider objectives including:

- *Encouraging demand* – there are some services where we are actively seeking to stimulate demand and take up of services. Our pricing should be encouraging access and utilisation of Council services. This objective will include setting prices at competitive levels and also intelligent charging strategies that encourage utilisation by fostering a sense of *investment* among users.
- *Encouraging pride in services* – that the Council delivers services to a standard that warrants the levying of fees and charges that should be a source of organisational pride.
- *Encouraging high professional standards* – charging, particularly at a *market rate*, obliges service delivery to high standards.

The impact of total cost recovery on market efficiency should be considered, particularly where the Council has a monopolistic position in a particular service area (e.g. the provision of local land information), or is subsidising a service which is operating in a market where there are other private providers.

Principle 2: We will seek to recover the total costs of service delivery and generate a surplus, to contribute toward corporate costs, unless there is a legal barrier to doing so or it has been otherwise agreed by Cabinet.

We must have the legal power to recover the total costs of service delivery for the relevant service or, alternatively, there must be no legal barriers to recovering costs. It is the responsibility of the service to consult and seek advice on the basis for total cost recovery.

The amount of revenue raised from a total cost recovery proposal must be sufficient to meet the costs of implementation and enforcement of a new service.

We start from the assumption that, for an existing service, we will be targeting total cost recovery unless there is a limitation to this.

A mechanism for implementing and enforcing total cost recovery must exist, and should be well tested beforehand.

Users can only be compelled to pay for a service if those who do not pay can be excluded from consuming the service (i.e. where the service is not a public good) or where targeted concessions or exceptions are implemented as part of an agreed process. Where a service is a public good, it should explore the option of voluntary contributions.

Principle 3: We assess our total costs each year using a standard method of assessing total cost, which includes directorate and corporate overheads.

The total cost of a local authority service is made up of all expenditure required to deliver the service, including overheads. There may be fees and charges for all or part of the service.

In determining the total cost, the local authority is free to decide what methodology it wishes to adopt. Drawing on existing and familiar principles as set out in the CIPFA Best Value Accounting Code of Practice (the Code) the total cost will be determined by the amalgamation of the Code's definition of Total Cost, an appropriate contribution for Corporate and Democratic Core (CDC) and Non-Distributed Costs (NDC), as those terms are defined in the Code, as a part of the costs of provision.

The total cost of delivering a unit of service needs to be understood in order to provide a basis for pricing decisions and efficient management of the service. Accurate data on volumes of units delivered needs to be maintained in order to calculate unit cost.

To help achieve this, our financial systems and processes may need to evolve to support us to:

- Keep expenditure separate from income;
- Keep expenditure and income relating to statutory services and grant funded services separate from those of other services;
- Allocate all components of total cost down to services and individual cost centres using a consistent method that reflects actual costs incurred.

Our pricing should be compared with those of other public, private and third sector services. If we are unable to recover our total costs on a comparable basis then we should be asking whether we need to provide the service and, if so, what value we add. Likewise, we also need to consider if, by providing the service, we are stopping others supplying services and preventing competition that would benefit our communities.

Full use of differential charging, discounting and other alternative pricing structures should be made to maximise commercial benefit and target service take-up amongst target groups in line with our policy objectives.

Prices should be informed by data and intelligence on current and potential service users and customers and supply from other providers in order to understand the nature of supply and demand in each market the Council is operating in. Forecasting techniques should be used to model future income.

In order to improve recovery performance, current service expenditure needs to be challenged as well as income. We remain totally committed to being an efficient service provider.

By virtue of section 93(4) of the 2003 Act, authorities are to secure that for “each kind of service” the income from charges does not exceed the total costs of provision over a period as specified by the local authority. The local authority is allowed to compare the charges for and income from similar or related services together and so offers some flexibility to group services together when assessing compliance with the duty imposed by section 93(3) of the 2003 Act. Any service or group of similar or related services that consistently over- recovers over a period specified by the local authority should present a proposal with options for addressing consistent over recovery, which may include an option to trade.

We will seek to recover the total costs of delivering services funded through specific grants through the grant funding arrangement itself.

Principle 4: We will only trade where we are confident that by doing so we are contributing to our corporate objectives and can do so on a sustainable basis.

Services that are achieving, or have the potential to achieve, total cost recovery, from charging, will be encouraged to operate more commercially in order to reduce dependence on revenue support and stimulate efficiency. Where a service (group of services) has consistently over recovered over a period and is able to demonstrate how it will achieve sustainable, significant commercial benefits over and above current levels of recovery, then a trading and commercial model may be considered for that service.

Any decision to consider the use of a trading / commercial model should be based on a business case with robust validation to determine if setting up such a company would be beneficial. The business case must demonstrate that there

is potential to both enhance delivery of our corporate objectives and to generate an agreed return per annum within two years of trading.

Principle 5: Where we decide locally to subsidise services, including providing any concessions, we do so based on a clear understanding of the rationale, link to our objectives and outcomes and associated income potentially foregone.

The decision on whether to subsidise a service is for Cabinet. The advice they receive should be informed by discussion at CMT, following Directorate Team discussions where relevant or based on advice through delegated authority.

A decision to subsidise a service needs a clear rationale. This is separate to the prior decision about whether total cost recovery is permissible and is therefore focussed on local decisions about additional subsidy and concessions. The decision should be linked to our strategic priorities, but may also include pricing decisions to encourage take up, stimulate alternative providers to improve service availability and quality and/or prototyping and testing of new service models.

The financial impact of subsidy decisions on the authority needs to be identified, both individually and collectively, and actively managed and reviewed. Likewise the impact of total cost recovery decisions on communities must also be considered through the relevant Equalities Impact Assessment.

In deciding whether to subsidise services which are also provided by other suppliers on a fully commercial basis, the rationale and degree of commonality with other suppliers must be discussed with the relevant governance Board prior to approval by Cabinet. Such decisions may have implications for competition, State Aid and may require expert legal advice.

The overall level and profile of service subsidy agreed must be made available to decision makers.

The principles governing concessionary pricing for particular users are limited to promoting equity and increasing access to services, particularly amongst those that would otherwise be unable to pay or are specifically targeted groups.

Differential pricing for one type of user should be readily defensible and easily explained to all users. It must also be readily enforceable based on simple business rules requiring limited discretion and oversight.

Any concessionary price for different types of user agreed must be applied consistently and transparently across all Council services. This should be captured in our business processes and in our register and recording of total cost recovery mechanisms. Eligibility should only need to be assessed once and then applied across all relevant services.

The impact of subsidies must be monitored, reviewed and evaluated as part of the annual review.

Principle 6: We will expect payment in advance, or at point of sale, unless there is a rationale for not doing so, and will develop and use the most cost efficient collection channels available.

Our starting position is that we should seek payment in advance of service delivery. This will depend on the nature of the service being delivered. For example it may be an annual license, a one off payment or a regular fee. We will be developing our processes and technology to facilitate easier payment and cost recovery.

Pricing and total cost recovery should be administered to maximise ease of collection and minimise the costs of collection, from both the Council and user perspective.

We will increasingly introduce modern methods of payment and cost effective channels, seeking to phase out high cost and labour intensive methods of income collection and debt management to reduce transaction costs. Chasing payment for services increases our overheads and charges for all services. We will increasingly automate this process.

Principle 7: We will have a consistent framework and approach, led corporately, and using service understanding of demand and volume to forecast income within our budget planning and reporting processes.

See section in relation to Income Management Annual Cycle process below (section 5.11)

Principle 8: Charging should be used to promote fairness and to influence public behaviour where appropriate to do so.

Charging can be used to rationalise or manage demand due to available resources or to influence behaviours and choices. This might also include penalties for anti-social and negative behaviours which have adverse

consequences on others. Understanding our aim will be fundamental to our pricing decisions.

Business Plan

2024 -



Walsall Council

Introduction

Situational Analysis

Market demographics

Customer profile

SWOT analysis (see appendix 1)

TOWS matrix

Capitalise on strengths and take advantage of opportunities
<div></div>
Capitalise on strengths to successfully combat threats
<div></div>
Address weaknesses to take advantage of opportunities
<div></div>
Address weaknesses to successfully combat threats
<div></div>

Ansoff product/market matrix

The Ansoff matrix can be used to identify opportunities to grow revenue for the service, through developing new products and services or tapping into new markets.

	Existing products	New products
Existing markets	<div>Market penetration</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"></div>	<div>Product development</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"></div>
New markets	<div>Market development</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"></div>	<div>Diversification</div> <div><ul style="list-style-type: none"></div>

Competitor analysis

Marketing Mix

Market Segmentation and targeting

Customer segments

Segment	Older Adults	Parents	Students	Adults
Demographics				
Occupations				
Activities				
Social media				
Hobbies and Interests				
Location				
Barriers to Purchase				
USP attractions				
Tone of marketing				
Notes				

Strategy

Council Plan

The Vision	Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised. Together we are committed to developing a healthier, cleaner and safer Borough and creating an environment that provides opportunities for all residents, communities and businesses to fulfil their potential and thrive.
Economic	Enable greater local opportunities for all people, communities and businesses
People	Encourage our residents to lead active, fulfilling, and independent lives to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing.
Internal	Council services are customer focused effective, efficient, and equitable.
Children	Have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.
Communities	Empower our communities so that they feel they are connected and belong in Walsall, creating safe and healthy places whilst building a strong sense of community.

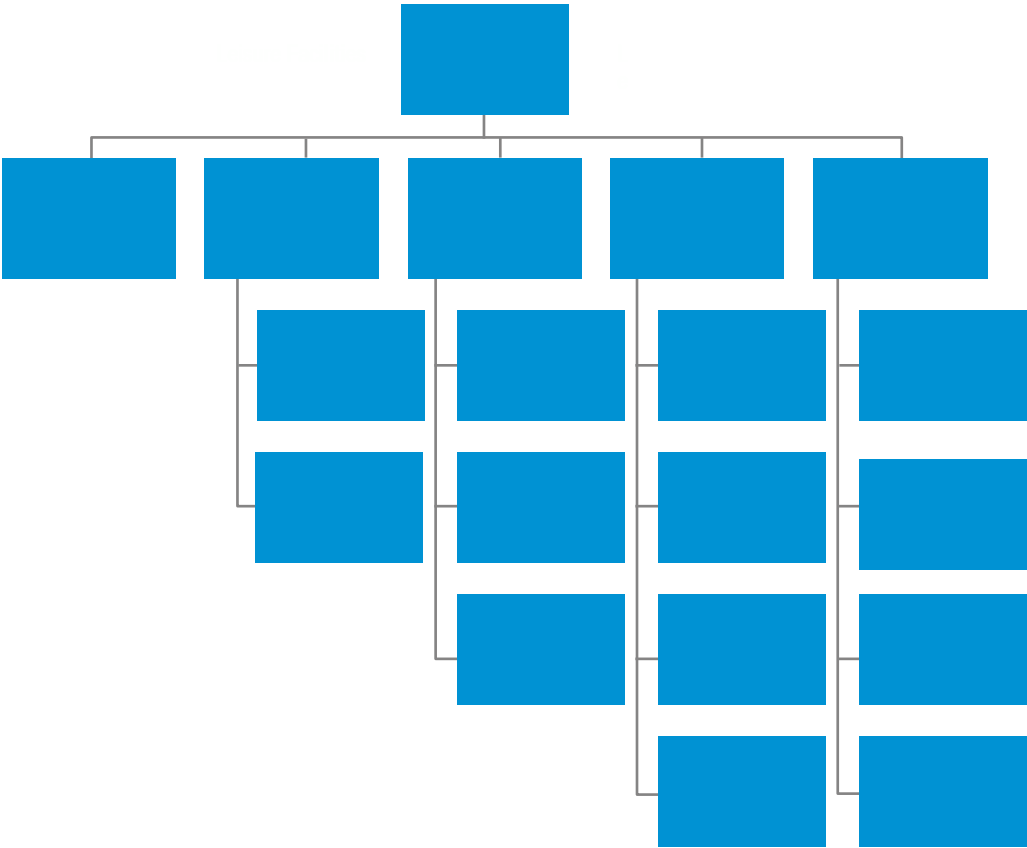
Service Aim	
--------------------	--

The service will achieve the above aim by delivering the following objectives:

Objective 1	
Objective 2	
Objective 3	
Objective 4	
Objective 5	

Resource Plan

People



Systems and processes

Investment required

	Year 1 YYYY/YY	Years 2-5 YYYY/YY – YYYY/YY	Total

[Image]

Financial Plan

Potential growth

Fitness memberships

The figures below show targets for fitness membership growth at each site over a 5-year period:

Net growth per site per year						
	Mon/YY	YYYY/YY	YYYY/YY	YYYY/YY	YYYY/YY	YYYY/YY
Bloxwich	2,106	80	80	80	70	60
Oak Park	2,396	150	100	80	70	60
Walsall Gala	616	40	30	30	20	10
Darlaston	687	40	30	30	30	20

The financial impact of achieving the above member growth is shown below:

Growth forecast impact						
	Average annual unit price	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27	2027/28	2028/29
Bloxwich	£294	£23,520	£23,520	£23,520	£20,580	£17,640
Oak Park	£294	£44,100	£29,400	£23,520	£20,580	£17,640
Walsall Gala	£252	£10,080	£7,560	£7,560	£5,040	£2,520
Darlaston	£252	£10,080	£7,560	£7,560	£7,560	£5,040

Total growth forecast

Operational cost saving measures

Impact to net operating cost

	YYYY/YY	YYYY/YY	YYYY/YY	YYYY/YY	YYYY/YY	YYYY/YY	YYYY/YY

Risks and assumptions

Any risks to service delivery or the wider council e.g. financial, legal, operational, reputational

Description	Rating (RAG)	Mitigations	Residual Rating (RAG)	Owner (Group Manager)	Lead Officer

Risk rating: ● High ● Medium ● Low

Appendix 1

SWOT analysis Month/Year

Strengths:

.

Opportunities:

.

Weaknesses:

.

Threats:

Service manager		Date created	
Head of Service		Signed off by	
Director		Date updated	
Directorate		Version	

> Directorate Three Year Plan – 2024/25 (existing), 2025/26 and 2026/27

Guidance Note

Guidance notes

These guidance notes outline key considerations and requirements when completing the Directorate Plans for your area. Completing this template will allow the Council to identify a range of potential budgetary options for exploration and discussion with CMT and Members. The standard template and proposed process ensures we have a consistent approach to inform budget discussions and earlier identification of savings options. It enables the Council to review and think about our services and how they link to outcomes and the cost of delivering them and supports forward planning and the identification of support requirements from enabling services. This template specifies the minimal level of information required to support budget options. Please feel free to add further supporting information as appropriate for your directorate/service(s).

What is the ask?

Directors are asked to review the template and firstly consider if they need one per directorate or require one per Head of Service/Service area within their directorate. This is a local decision for each Director depending on the makeup of services within their directorate and what works practically to ensure quality consideration of options.

Whilst the process requires sign off from the Director each Director should consider

- Engagement with the heads of service in your directorate to input/inform options and scenarios.
- Engagement with wider directorate staff to inform options and scenarios.
- Ongoing engagement and dialogue with your Executive Director around options and scenarios.
- Ongoing engagement and dialogue with relevant portfolio holders around options and scenarios.
- Collaboration and engagement with other directors to iterate and share/align thinking and support a One Council approach.

Section 1: Service Overview

This section asks for a high-level summary **aim** for your directorate/service, a short list of the service functions covered and high-level **budget summary** for the service including an overview (where appropriate) of capital, revenue, income, grant funding. If budget headings do not apply, please insert N/A.

Section 2: Strategic Priorities

The ambitions for the current **Council Plan and We are Walsall 2040** strategies are included as they key strategic arch stones for the Council. Please indicate (with an X) which ambitions your service(s) currently address.

Section 3: Service Vision and Objectives

Please provide a high-level **vision** statement for your service and the key objectives planned for the next 3 years to achieve that vision. Please consider service delivery bau objectives, existing transformation objectives, external delivery or partnership working objectives that inform/shape your service.

Section 4: Service Delivery

Please outline the **key achievements** for you service area(s) over the last year. This is important to understand the success and level of delivery within current financial context for your service area(s) and helps frame part of the ongoing discussion on options and models.

Please outline what your **current service offer** (delivery model, functions) looks like and if retained over the next 3 years. Please include high-level budget summary (capital and revenue if appropriate) where possible using existing known information available to you.

Please provide a summary of the **key projects/programmes** underway or planned within your service area(s). These should be high level priorities and projects to achieve key deliverables for your service and help you meet your service objectives and vision and/or that impact on financials. Please indicate the lead officer within your directorate, any delivery timescales/dates and where you need support from enabling services (Legal, Procurement, DaTS, HR & ABS, Transformation and Change, Hub, Customer). This is important to ensure that supporting and enabling services can fully consider requests for support and iterate their own Directorate plans to accommodate as appropriate.

Please in the space provided paste any live links to any relevant **performance service data/KPIs** that you feel contribute to the context and narrative for this template. If there is no key performance information to support the template, please leave this box blank.

Section 5: Budget Planning Scenarios

This section contains three distinct **budget scenarios** for your Directorate(s) to consider and outline.

- a) The **‘as is’** scenario. This scenario assumes that you will receive no change to budget for the next three years outside of inflationary increases. This scenario also assumes that you will continue to deliver against any existing or agreed savings. Please consider what your directorate/service(s) will look like, the model and any changes required (without additional resources) including:
 - managing increased demand.
 - prevention/earlier intervention.
 - commissioning/outourcing/procurement.
 - staffing and service changes to manage demand differently.
 - Investment in technology/digital.
 - Reduction or cessation of services as appropriate.

- b) The **‘efficiency’ scenario**. This scenario assumes a reduction of 20% revenue for your directorate/service(s). This scenario also assumes that you will continue to deliver against any existing or agreed savings, so this reduction is additional to any agreed savings for your area(s). As above please consider what your directorate/service(s) will look like, the model and any changes required (without additional resources) including:
- managing increased demand.
 - prevention/earlier intervention.
 - commissioning/outourcing/procurement.
 - staffing and service changes to manage demand differently.
 - Investment in tech/digital.
 - Reduction or cessation of services as appropriate.
- c) The **‘investment’ scenario**. This scenario assumes that you will continue to deliver against any existing or agreed savings but asks you to consider any invest to save ideas that will generate savings above the ‘as is’ model. As above please consider what your directorate/service(s) will look like, the model and any changes required including:
- managing increased demand.
 - investment in prevention/earlier intervention.
 - commissioning/outourcing/procurement.
 - staffing and service changes to manage demand differently.
 - Investment in tech/digital.

For all three scenarios please include any indicative budget, what dependencies/support is needed to achieve this scenario and if this is a new proposal or has been previously considered/amended from a previous proposal. This is important to help us understand if Members have already considered any similar proposals – all options must be on the table for consideration over the next three years!

Please outline any **risks/impacts** for each of the options a, b, c above. Please specifically reference which scenario (risk x, scenario a) the risk refers to in the description box. If appropriate, please include live links to any existing risk registers.

Support

If you have any problems understanding this template or need further guidance, please contact stpbudgetsetting@walsall.gov.uk

>Directorate Three Year Plan – 2024/25 (existing), 2025/26 and 2026/27

Section 1: Service Overview

Purpose:	Aim: >summarise in a couple of sentences the purpose of your service area e.g. We inspect and maintain the boroughs roads and associated assets to ensure safe and reliable journeys on the local highway network<											
	Activities: >summarise the activities that the team do e.g. Highway inspections; emergency, reactive and planned highway repairs; preventative and structural carriageway and footway maintenance, maintenance of highway drainage assets; highway asset management planning<											
Budget 24/25:	Capital	£		Gross Revenue	£		Gross Income	£		Income of which Grant Funding	£	
Staffing	Service Manager(s):						Total FTE:				Vacancies:	

Section 2: Strategic Priorities

Council Plan Inequalities are reduced and all potential is maximised.	We Are Walsall 2040 Walsall in 2040 will be the most improved borough in the region, a vibrant place where people are proud to live and residents in all neighbourhoods have the same life chances.
People: Encourage our residents to lead active, fulfilling, and independent lives to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing.	Thriving and happy: Thriving and happy: By 2040 we will be a borough where all people feel safe, where communities and people do more to help each other and themselves, and children have the best start in life
Internal: Council services are customer focused effective, efficient, and equitable.	Healthy and well: By 2040 we will be a wellbeing centred borough where people are healthy and live full and active lives
Children: Have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.	Prosperous and innovative: By 2040 Walsall will be a place that it is easy to get around, where people are confident to access services digitally and the economy works for everyone.
Communities: Empower our communities so that they feel they are connected and belong in Walsall, creating safe and healthy places whilst building a strong sense of community.	Proud of our borough: By 2040 we will be a borough known for having vibrant clean towns with quality green spaces that we all enjoy, a place where residents and partners take responsibility to respect the environment and are climate ready, and where communities come together to celebrate their heritage and culture

Section 3: Service Vision and Objectives

>Service Name<
>Vision statement e.g. ‘High quality, cost effective, leisure provision, for all’ or “a safe, reliable and resilient road network” or “to give the very best care to people coping with bereavement”
Objective 1: ...>e.g. Help reduce inactivity and increase physical activity levels of residents<
Objective 2: ...
Objective 3: ...
Objective 4: ...

Section 4: Service Delivery

Key Achievements in 2023/24	
What your current Service Offer looks like for the next three years?	
Description	Curent Net Revenue Budget 24/25
	£

	£
	£
	£
	Changes required to Net revenue Budget 24/25

Current and planned Projects (impacting financials – both savings and investments)

Current Project/ Programme with a financial impact	Lead Officer	Delivery Date	Enabling and Support Service Requirements						
			Legal	Procurement	Data's	HR & ABS	Transformation & Change (PMO)	HUB	Customer

Performance Measures –

Please add in any links to relevant performance measures

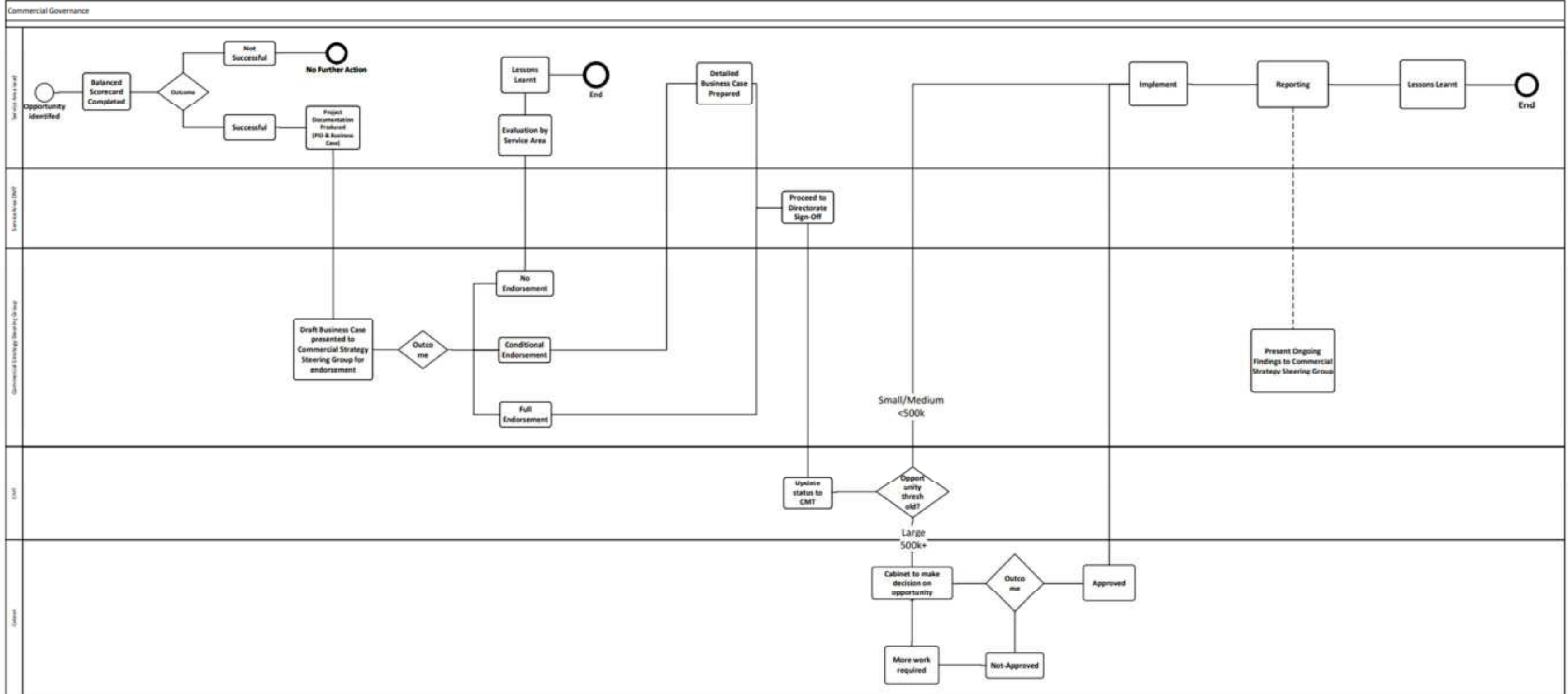
Section 5: Budget Planning Scenarios

Budget scenario	£'000 (approx)	Dependencies? What do you need to do this?	Existing or New proposal?
Model delivering as is within current resources (including your current 24/25 savings) – Please add rows as applicable EXAMPLE: Service A will continue to operate with current service delivery model and anticipates no increase in demand – Service XX will commit to cut 2 FTE in FY25/26 to keep up with cost increases – this equates to approx. £££ Service XX will be renewing XX contract and will commit to a 5% reduction in spend – this equates to APPROX ££			
Model with 20% efficiency savings			

EXAMPLE: Service A will look to reduce staffing resources through automating data analysis and reporting and the focus for remaining staff is on what this means rather than the doing Please add rows as applicable			
Model with investment to transform and save EXAMPLE: Service A looking for investment in a prevention model to reduce the demand inflow over a 3 year period. This will involve improved tech and additional FTE's in the first instance Service A to pilot a change around the use of an external provider/partner to deliver xyz as a cost effective alternative to in-house - if successful this could be rolled out and would result in xyz			

Key Risks – [or link to live document](#)

Risk description	Risk rating RAG	Mitigating actions	Residual risk rating RAG



Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	Commercial Strategy		
Directorate	EE&C		
Service	Place and Environment		
Responsible Officer	Michele McPherson		
Proposal planning start	March 2024	Proposal start date (due or actual date)	September 2024

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?		Yes / No	New / revision
	The commercial strategy envisions Walsall Council as a resilient, innovative, and enterprising entity, committed to delivering sustainable services that meet resident needs. This also involves a dynamic and transparent collaboration with partners to ensure the long-term delivery of critical services.			
	Policy			
	Procedure			
	Guidance			
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?			
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?			
	Other - give details			
2	What is the business case for this proposal? Please provide the main purpose of the service, intended outcomes and reasons for change?			
	Walsall Council has the challenging task of managing funding reductions amid a growing demand for essential services, necessitating a more holistic and innovative approach. To address this, a commercial strategy is being implemented, aiming to sustain service provision, stimulate income generation, and contribute to growth, community support, and environmental protection. The council recognises the need for a more agile and commercially aware operating model to maximise value from limited resources and adapt to changing resident needs. The delivery plan is illustrated in the commercial strategy.			
3	Who is the proposal likely to affect?			
	People in Walsall	Yes / No	Detail	
	All		No direct impact to residents of Walsall.	
	Specific group/s			
	Council employees			
	Other (identify)			
4	Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer's protected characteristics.			

	<p>This strategy emphasises a holistic approach to stimulate innovation and enterprise, nurturing a culture that forms an integral part of the council's planning and business practices. Walsall Council's commitment to increased commercial acumen aligns with its goal of delivering positive social outcomes, addressing inequality, and meeting evidenced needs within the borough. The success of this strategy relies on the adoption of guiding principles, a cultural shift, and collaboration across the organization, reinforcing existing corporate plans and positioning the council to gain additional benefits from service delivery agreements with partners.</p>
5	<p>Please provide details of all engagement and consultation undertaken for this proposal. (Please use a separate box for each engagement/consultation).</p> <p>No public, partners engagement has been undertaken. Engagement has taken place internally only. (namely, CMT, DG.)</p>

	Consultation Activity n/a			
	Type of engagement/consultation	Internal engagement, CMT, Directors, Finance, Policy Strategy unit	Date	dd/mm/yy
	Who attended/participated?	e.g. general public, service users (specify if it was for a protected characteristic group e.g. Disability Forum).		
	Protected characteristics of participants	n/a		
	Feedback <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overall views and key comments including quotes from participants used to help express sentiments in relation to your proposal; • Views of people with protected characteristics in relation to your proposal; • Avoid using general feedback, unless you can compare it with views of people with protected characteristics. 			
6	Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation			
	<p>Explain outcomes of CMT discussions.</p> <p>This is an internal strategy and there is no impact on the protected characteristics. It's about becoming more business like in our approach to providing services to our residents.</p>			
7	How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group? The effect may be positive, negative, neutral or not known. Give reasons and if action is needed.			
	Characteristic	Affect	Reason	Action needed Yes / No
	Age	There will be no impact to these protected characteristics.		
	Disability			
	Gender reassignment			
	Marriage and civil partnership			
	Pregnancy and maternity			
	Race			
	Religion or belief			
	Sex			

	Sexual orientation	
	Armed Forces	
	Care Responsibilities	
	Health, Social and Economic Inequalities	
	Other (give detail)	
	Further information	
8	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.	(Delete one) No
None		
9	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?	
A	No major change required When no potential for discrimination or adverse impact is identified and all opportunities to promote equality have been taken.	
B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality Are you satisfied that the proposed adjustments will remove the barriers identified?	
C	Continue despite possible adverse impact For important relevant proposals, compelling reasons will be needed. You should consider whether there are sufficient plans to reduce the negative impact and/or plans to monitor the actual impact. Consultation may suggest a change of action, but some actions will be required regardless of consultation e.g. budget savings. Mitigating actions may be required to minimise impact identified through consultation.	
D	Stop and rethink your proposal Actual or potential unlawful discrimination is identified; the proposal will need reviewing immediately. You may need to consult with appropriate officers including your executive director, finance or Equality, Safety and Wellbeing.	

Action and monitoring plan				
Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome

There is no impact.

Update to EqIA

Date	Detail
Apr 2029	Commercial Strategy is on a 5 year cycle
Use this section for updates following the commencement of your proposal.	

Contact us

Policy and Strategy Unit
Email: PolicyandStrategy@walsall.gov.uk

Inside Walsall: http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Service_information/Equality_and_diversity

West Midlands Regional Residential Children's Homes Framework

Portfolio: Councillor Elson – Children and Young People

Related portfolios:

Service: Children's Services

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1. To ensure our children in care and care experienced young people live in safe, nurturing homes and in settings that offer value for money, this report seeks approval to join the new West Midlands Regional Residential Care Framework (the 'new Framework') and to call off (order, arrange and pay) for residential home placements from this framework.
- 1.2. Local Authorities in the West Midlands region have a strong history of working together and jointly commissioning children's services for a range of provision, including residential children homes placements and this new Framework has been procured on behalf of the West Midlands region by Coventry City Council. It will replace the current Residential Framework that expires on 16th December 2024.

2. Summary

- 2.1. There are 665 children in care in Walsall (as of 31 March 2024): 12 of them placed in internal residential homes; and 82 children placed in external provision, which a total of 57 different providers. There are currently 24 young people in residential placements purchased through the current residential framework and 58 placed via spot purchases in various settings. The Council's total gross expenditure was £23.3m on external residential placements in 2023/24.
- 2.2. The number of children in residential settings encompasses a range of provision including residential homes, residential schools, CQC registered providers, Mother and Baby Placements, Supported Accommodation, unregulated provision and Secure Accommodation. Providers have been leaving the existing framework due to a lack of flexibility within the framework and new framework is aiming to address this by removing price caps, introducing new lots and requiring all homes owned by the providers to be listed under the framework. This will contribute to the Council's Sufficiency Strategy in providing good quality, affordable residential care for our children.

- 2.3. The current West Midlands Residential Framework is due to expire on 16 December 2024 and the West Midlands Authorities/Trusts shall cease to use this and the new framework will commence.
- 2.4. Coventry City Council, managed via the Commissioning Hub is the lead local authority for this new framework, which will be accessed by 12 other West Midlands Local Authorities and 2 Children's Trusts. This report shares the proposed form of the framework at the time of writing and is subject to the Association Directors of Children's Services final approval.
- 2.5. The West Midlands Regional Residential Framework remains the preferred means by which residential home placements are sourced in the region from the independent market. Renewing the framework is therefore central to the West Midlands Local Authorities and Children's Trusts' strategy for securing sufficient homes to meet need in the coming years. When the framework was first launched, the proportion of placements made through it was around **70%** across the region. This has shifted over last two years in line with the change in the market and the increased cost of running the provision. For Walsall, currently 34% of our residential placements are made via the current framework. The new framework has been designed with a view to making the framework attractive for providers to join. It is estimated that the introduction of the framework will create a cost avoidance in the region of £20million as estimated by the Commissioning Hub.
- 2.6. Not being part of the new regional framework arrangements would leave the Council vulnerable to market driven forces, resulting in an increase in spot purchased placements, potentially increasing overall costs as such placements are more expensive. The current framework arrangements have been successful in maintaining costs and has helped the Council access a wider market of residential home providers. Renewing these regional arrangements will help the Council to continue to manage the market through a collaborative commissioning approach.
- 2.7. The new framework will enable, Walsall Children's Services access to, placements with external providers who have been subject to competition and due diligence, with agreed terms and conditions and prices, via a tendering exercise that is compliant with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. The value of these arrangements is substantial, with £23.3m spent by the Council on all residential placements, during 2023/2024.
- 2.8. Approval for Coventry City Council to progress with the West Midlands Residential Children Homes Framework tender on behalf of the region was ratified by Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) in February 2024. The Council has been party to the tendering exercise and is named in the tender documentation along with 12 other West Midlands Local Authorities and 2 Children's Trusts.
- 2.9. Approval is sought to enable the Council to call off residential placements from the new framework, which will commence on 17th December 2024. The new

framework is initially for 5 years with the provision to extend by 2 increments of 3 and 2 years, with an expiry date no later than 16 December 2034.

- 2.10. This is a key decision due to the estimated value of £131m over the initial 5 years of the framework for placements made by the Council.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1. That Cabinet authorise the Council to enter into an Access Agreement with Coventry City Council to join the new West Midlands Regional Residential Framework.
- 3.2. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to subsequently authorise the sealing of deeds and/or signing of contracts and any other related documents for the provision of such residential services under the framework, as appropriate, including any access agreement with Coventry City Council to facilitate access to and provision of these services.
- 3.3. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to authorise any variations to the contractual arrangements or other related documents for such services should this be required throughout the duration of the term of any contracts.
- 3.4. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to enter into 'call off' contracts with Residential Children's Home Providers who are awarded 'Residential Framework Agreement' contracts by Coventry City Council pursuant to the new West Midlands Regional Residential Care Framework for a period of 5 years with the provision to extend by 2 increments of 3 and 2 years respectively with an expiry date no later than 16 December 2034.
- 3.5. That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services, to enter into 'spot contracts' where the framework does not meet capacity and/or capability requirements.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1. Analysis was undertaken to understand the changes which have taken place at a national level and in the local residential care market to inform the development of the new framework. This included data analysis and engagement events with providers. The framework has been developed in collaboration with other local authority consortia to build on the best practice and achieve consistency in approach to developing framework terms and conditions across the UK.

4.2. The key features of the new framework are:

a) **Lot structure** - The new framework has six Lots:

- **Lot 1 Planned and Same Day Residential Care** – “Children and young people requiring planned and / or same day residential care and accommodation only, who are normally resident within the Local Authorities”
- **Lot 2 Crisis Care/Short Term** – “Children and young people requiring Crisis placements consisting of residential care at short notice for a relatively short duration, who are normally resident within the Local Authorities”
- **Lot 3 Residential Care with DEF Regulated Education** – “Children and young people who require a residential placement with DFE regulated education, who are normally resident within the Local Authorities”
- **Lot 4 Residential Parenting Assessment** – “Parents and their Children requiring a placement for the purposes of conducting an assessment of parenting capacity, who are normally resident within the Local Authorities”
- **Lot 5 Therapeutic Residential Care** – “Children and young people requiring a therapeutic residential placement, who are normally resident within the Local Authorities”
- **Lot 6 Children with Disabilities** - “Children and young people with disabilities requiring planned and/ or same day residential care and accommodation only, who are normally resident within the Local Authorities”

b) **Annual Uplift Policy** – There is no price cap and the provider’s tendered pricing shall be fixed until 31 March 2026 and thereafter the following annual review policy will apply:

- A standard formula will be used to calculate the uplift percentage. This will be comprised of the National Living Wage increase (for the concurrent April where the increase will come into effect) and the Consumer Price Inflation including Owner-occupiers’ Housing costs (CPIH) rate for August (of the year before the uplift) in a 50:50 ratio.
- Providers will receive an automatic uplift annually on all their stated placement costs. New prices will be implemented on 1 April each year, commencing with 1 April 2026.

c) **Method of call-off** - The method of call from the new framework will be ‘Direct award’ or ‘Mini Competition.’ When an Authority/Trust has a referral, they will contact all the Providers on the Framework under the relevant Lot for the service required, to share high level referral information regarding the child or young person. The Authority/Trust will determine whether the Providers have placement availability according to the specific needs of the child or young person and how quickly they need to be placed. If only one Provider

can potentially meet the requirement, the Authority/Trust will follow a Direct Award Process. If the Authority/Trust identifies more than one Provider that can potentially meet the requirement, a Mini Competition will be conducted.

d) **Pricing Schedule** - For the new framework, a full cost breakdown is required for costs relating to all the Lots. The cost of pocket money, savings and gifts is proposed to be included in the placement weekly cost. The level of pocket money etc. to be given to the child will be discussed at the point of placement, according to the Placing Authority's local policy and guidelines. Providers will be required to outline their prices within age bands of 0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-17 years old. Details of these costs and processes will be included within the Individual Placement Agreements (IPA) and Providers will be required to add the agreed costs to their total weekly placement cost.

e) **Legacy Placements** - All legacy placements will transfer onto the new framework at their existing prices but on the new framework terms and conditions. There is no plan to automatically increase the prices to the framework level. It is recognised within the West Midlands region that majority of placements are for less than a year in a residential setting. This is due to several reasons, including placement breakdowns/moves and young people reaching adulthood. As a result, the number of placements potentially classed as legacy is expected to be limited. The proposal is that qualifying placements providers will be invited to approach individual local authorities and Trusts to discuss and negotiate any potential uplifts to the legacy placements to be effective from 1st April 2025. This is to mitigate against potential placement breakdowns due to sustainability issues and it is proposed that such legacy placements will be uplifted by a maximum of the annual uplift following the NLW/CPIH formula.

f) **Data Protection** - The new framework has a Data Sharing Agreement for the sharing and protection of children's Personal Data and Special Categories of Personal Data between the Providers and Placing Authorities. Each Provider will have its own Data Sharing Agreement that will be signed by all 14 Authorities/Trusts.

g) **Insurances** - Under the new framework, Public Liability cover has been increased from £5 million to £10 million. Sexual abuse and molestation public liability cover has been increased £500k to £5 million. All other insurances levels remain the same. After the framework has expired, Providers are required to have Medical Malpractice insurance cover in place for a further 5 years and Professional Indemnity Insurance for a further 6 Years.

h) **Contract Management** - In the new framework there are 3 Key Performance Indicators and other performance management information that that Providers will be monitored against, required either on a quarterly or annual basis.

i) **Discounts** - The new framework requires no mandatory discounts from Providers. However, a Provider can offer a voluntary discount for sibling groups where they are placed together.

The Procurement/Tender Process

- 4.3. Tenders were sought for the provision of residential care homes provision through an open procurement process using Coventry City Council's e-tendering system CWS-JETS.
- 4.4. The West Midlands Residential Recommissioning Group, which included representation from Walsall Children's Commissioning, oversaw the development of the tender and tender documents. The Group will also support the quality evaluation aspects of the tender from 1 October 2024.
- 4.5. It is envisaged that the Framework Agreement will be awarded to around 130 Providers across Lots 1 - 6 for sufficiency purposes across the West Midlands region. The tenders will be evaluated against the criteria included in the Invitation to tender of a Selection and Award Process Criteria (Pass/Fail). Providers who had met all the mandatory and/or minimum requirements (Pass/Fail Criteria) will be awarded onto the framework for the Lots that the Provider had applied for.
- 4.6. The framework will be a subject to review in the 5th and the 8th year and the results of those reviews will inform the West Midlands Region's decision whether to offer any extension. Additionally, the new framework will include the option to revise and reset prices at these stages to mitigate against unexpected economic situations and maintain sufficiency of provision.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.7. The Council's Corporate plan: 2022-25 sets out a commitment to give children and young people the best possible start in life ensuring they are safe from harm, happy, healthy, and learning well. The provision of quality residential placements to keep children safe is central to this priority.

Risk management

- 4.8. Potential risk and liabilities as identified through the implementation and procurement process are managed through the development and enforcement of the terms of the overall Framework, individual call off contracts and the Access Agreement, all developed by Coventry City Council and agreed by Walsall Council.

Financial implications

- 4.9. The current average cost of an internal residential care placement is £3.5k per week compared to the framework residential home average of £6.1k per week. However, included within this average are two high-cost complex placements. When removing these the average reduces to £5.5k per week. Spot purchase placement costs are on average £6.1k per week, which is 10% higher than the cost compared to the current framework rate. However, the current weekly cost of a spot placement is as high as £9k per week. This illustrates that not being

party to the framework would put Walsall Council at risk of having to purchase placements for young people at a significantly higher cost and under less favourable terms and conditions.

	Number of Children		Number of Providers		Annual Spend in 2023/2024	Average weekly cost of placement
Framework	24	29%	18	32%	£8m	£5.5k
Spot	58	71%	39	68%	£15.3m	£6.1k

- 4.10. Renewing the Framework has come at a time of considerable financial pressure for Councils and Trusts, as well as increases in costs for the providers. In response, commissioners have worked to set fair pricing by simplifying the new framework which will enable providers to offer fair and competitive prices.
- 4.11. The tendering exercise has been supported by the West Midlands Commissioning Hub. No additional financial contribution is required from the West Midlands Local Authorities for Coventry City Council leading on this framework.
- 4.12. The current Medium Term Financial Outlook includes a 4% uplift per annum for all residential framework placements in 2025/26.
- 4.13. Where there is an identified health need, the Council will continue to seek funding from the relevant health funding agency to ensure health partners are meeting their responsibilities.
- 4.14. Currently of the 24 framework placements, 13 are under the average weekly cost of £5.5k. If these providers were to be successful in qualifying for an uplift under the legacy placement terms, there could be a potential pressure of c.£423k per annum from April 2025, which has not been included within the Medium Term Financial Outlook.

Legal implications

- 4.15. The contractual documents for the new framework have been developed by Coventry City Council Council's Legal Services.
- 4.16. The overarching Framework and Access Agreement will outline the responsibilities and accountability of Coventry City Council and each participating Local Authority in relation to their use of the Framework and include indemnities that protect the Council from the actions of other participating Local Authority in their use of the new Framework.
- 4.17. While Coventry City Council will be contracting with each residential home provider, for each Walsall Council placement, the Council will enter a 'call off' contract with an IFA, which will specify the terms on which each residential home placement is ordered, arranged and paid for.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.18. The procurement process has been conducted in accordance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015, the Council's Contract Rules, and Social Value Policy.
- 4.19. The collaborative procurement process has the benefit of shared resource, knowledge, and experience. However, care has been taken to protect the Council's interest and minimise any increased procurement related risk that may be associated with such arrangements. Procurement advice was sought to minimise procurement-related risk. However, there will always remain an inherent risk of legal challenge associated with any procurement undertaken.
- 4.20. Social value is an integral part of this contract and all tenders will be evaluated on their ability to bring social value including employment and volunteering opportunities as part of their service delivery. The successful bidders will need to clearly demonstrate their social value through a commitment to create opportunities for local people and voluntary sector organisations.
- 4.21. The recommendation to award report will be presented to Third Party Spend Board (TPSB) Gateway 2 and will provide full details on the procurement process and how the evaluation was undertaken.

Property implications

- 4.22. There are no property implications. Providers source their own properties.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.23. The content of this report has considered the Marmot objectives. Our priority is that Children are safe from harm, happy and learning well with self-belief, aspiration, and support to be their best: Walsall children are provided with the best start in life so they can fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to their communities. The new framework arrangements for the provision of residential placements will keep children safe and reduce the impact of adverse childhood experiences and associated health inequalities. This is an explicit objective of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Walsall Plan – Health and Well Being Strategy 2022-2025.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.24. The new Framework arrangements will support our Children in Care and aim to maximise opportunities for them, reducing inequalities for this cohort of children and families by ensuring good quality provision.

Staffing implications

- 4.25. Residential care placements are sourced by Walsall Children's Services Home Finding Team. The new Framework arrangements support this small team to source residential placements in a more effective, efficient and compliant way.

Climate Impact

- 4.26. There are no climate impact implications. All contracts, monitoring and placement searches are done online to reduce our carbon footprint.

Consultation

- 4.27. The tender was developed in consultation with key stakeholders, including residential homes providers at provider events to discuss the tender. The event gained feedback on current provision, future needs and identified issues and changes to be considered in the development of the new Framework.
- 4.28. Changes to the new framework aim to enable providers to offer fair and competitive prices and free up capacity to build meaningful relationships between providers and placing authorities in the best interest of the children.
- 4.29. There are many opportunities for engaging with children and young people on an individual basis and these inform the ongoing management and delivery of the framework.
- 4.30. This report has been brought to Cabinet following internal consultation with Council representatives, directors and the portfolio holder for Children's Services.

5. Decide

- 5.1. This report recommends that Walsall Council joins the new Framework to enable the Council to enter 'call off' contracts with Providers to ensure the purchasing of individual residential home care placements which are compliant, subject to due diligence, quality checks and offer value for money.

6. Respond

- 6.1. The implementation and management of the new Framework is managed by Coventry City Council in partnership with West Midlands regional authorities. This includes both individual authority and collective contract management as well as processes for addressing concerns. Walsall's Children's Home Finding Service are embedding the new Framework arrangements within their Placements Process, supported by the Children's Commissioning Team.

7. Review

- 7.1. The new Framework Arrangement is monitored and managed by Coventry City Council with performance management supported collaboratively across the region. Performance information will be reported to both the Operational and

Strategic Regional Commissioning Groups at which Walsall Children's Services has consistent representation.

- 7.2. Internally, social care teams work closely with Home Finding and Commissioning teams to support quality oversight of placements and provider behaviours.

Author

Joanna Butryn
Commissioning Manager, Children's Services

✉ joanna.butryn@walsall.gov.uk

☎ 01922 650703



Colleen Male
Executive Director, Children's Services

16.08.2024



Councillor Elson
Portfolio Holder, Children and Young
People
27.08.2024

Contract Extension of the Black Country Family Drugs and Alcohol Court (FDAC) Service in the Boroughs of Walsall, Sandwell and Dudley

Portfolio: Councillor Elson – Children and Young People

Related portfolios:

Service: Children's Services

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 The aim is to continue to deliver a Black Country Family Drug and Alcohol Court (FDAC) to children and families who are subject to care proceedings initiated by the Local Authority where serious parental substance misuse is a key factor, but who may also present with domestic abuse and /or mental health issues.
- 1.2 FDAC is a multi-disciplinary specialist team who work closely with the Family Court to deliver an expert assessment considering the family's needs, concerns and strengths, in order to return the child safely to the care of their parents or to ensure permanent care for the child, within appropriate timescales.
- 1.3 Walsall MBC is the lead authority, working in collaboration with Sandwell Children's Trust and Dudley MBC. Walsall MBC has the option of referring up to 15 families annually. The families need to meet the basic criteria to be accepted into FDAC along with a social work led assessment to identify if the family is likely to benefit from the specialist court.

2. Summary

- 2.1 On 20th March 2019 Cabinet approved for Walsall Council to enter into a collaboration agreement with Dudley MBC and Sandwell Children's Trust for a Family Drugs and Alcohol Court within the Wolverhampton Justice Centre. Cabinet also gave approval for Walsall Council take the lead role on behalf of the collaborating Local Authorities on the commissioning, procurement and contract management of a Family Drug Alcohol Court.
- 2.2 As lead Local Authority, Walsall MBC was granted £1.09m from the Department of Education to support the implementation of the FDAC Model, as part of the Supporting Families; Investing in Practice Programme. This is 50% of the total

contract value, the remainder of which is proportionately funded by the three parties to the collaboration. The collaboration was for a 3-year period (1 April 2020 to 31st March 2023) with the option to extend by 2 periods of 1 year with a maximum total contract term of 5 years,

- 2.3 In April 2020 Change Grow Live (CGL) were awarded a 3-year contract to deliver the FDAC Service for the Black Country. The 32 allocated places per year are as follows:

Local Authority	Walsall MBC	Sandwell Children's Trust	Dudley MBC	Annual Total	Contract total
No of families	15	12	5	32	96

- 2.4 The initial take up of the service was slower than expected, with referrals not meeting the expected volume and further impacted by Covid. Work was undertaken to raise awareness and understanding of the FDAC service, as well as reviewing the suitability of families referred into the service, resulting in an increase in referrals and families benefiting from accessing the service.
- 2.5 To maximise opportunities for family support, a slight change was made in May 2022 to the service specification to allow a third of the places to be used for families in pre-court proceedings, recognising the benefits of this approach in reducing risks and complexity and preventing families from entering full care proceedings and enabling the children to stay within their family.
- 2.6 Approval is sought under this report to vary the contract and extend the contract term for a further 12 months from and including 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. This will enable a review of the impact of the overall FDAC programme to inform the future direction and sustainability of the service. The service is funded through 50% Grant funding from Department for Education and an 50% allocations-based contribution from partner Local Authorities. The outcome of the review will inform any potential future service from April 2026.
- 2.7 The FDAC model supports family reunification where it is right to do, building resilience in families and reducing drift in planning for children's care. This supports the priorities set out in the Council's Corporate Plan to give children and young people the best possible start in life, ensuring they are safe from harm, happy and learning well and Walsall's Right 4 Children aspiration that every child and family in Walsall is understood, feels happy and safe, with a strong sense of belonging, enabling them to learning, achieve and succeed.
- 2.8 This is a key decision because it exceeds the threshold for significant expenditure and affects children and families across all wards.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Children's Services, to vary the contractual arrangements to allow the extension of the contract from 1 April

2025 until 31 March 2026, and subsequently authorise the sealing or signing of any associated contracts, deeds or associated contracts, deeds or other related documents.

- 3.2 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director for Children's Services, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Children's Services, to authorise any lawful variations to the contractual arrangements for services identified above, should this be required at any time during the term, in line with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's Contract Rules.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 The FDAC model is an adaptation of the Family Treatment Courts developed in the United States. It is an alternative model of care proceedings in that it involves extensive work with the parents whose substance misuse is impacting on their parenting capacity and who may also present with domestic violence and / or mental health issues. The problem-solving trauma informed approach of the FDAC multi-disciplinary team offers holistic support to manage and assess the complexity of these needs.
- 4.2 Where families are able to engage successfully with the FDAC programme, the outcomes they can achieve include:
- Reunification
 - Reduction or abstinence in substance misuse
 - Parental recognition of their own and children's needs
 - Improved mental health and well-being
 - Developing trusting relationships with the team and improved parental circumstances.
- 4.3 On 30 June 2020 the Council entered into a 3-year contract with Change Grow Live (CGL) for the delivery of a FDAC Service for the Black Country FDAC, for which Walsall are the lead Local Authority in collaboration with Sandwell Children's Trust and Dudley MBC. Allocations are as follow:

Local Authority	Walsall MBC	Sandwell Children's Trust	Dudley MBC	Total	Contract total
No of families	15	12	5	32	96

- 4.4 To date 88 families have had a FDAC assessment. Of these, 16 families have not participated in the programme. The families that have not participated have either not shown a commitment to engage; or have not accepted the concerns, or they were in a mental health crisis and not able to engage in the intensity of FDAC programme. Of the 88 families, 17 were subject to pre-proceedings.

Performance and outcomes 2022 – 2024

- 29% of families achieved reunification
 - 39% achieved abstinence from alcohol and 30% achieved abstinence from drugs by the end of the intervention
 - 55% families diverted from court and stepped down to child in need or child protection plan
 - 20% issued into standard Care proceedings
 - 25% Issued into FDAC proceedings
- 4.5 Children's Commissioning and Social Care teams plan to undertake a review of the impact of the overall FDAC programme to inform the future direction and sustainability of the service, including revenue options. The proposed extension to this contract will allow sufficient time to undertake a further analysis of the benefits and undertake any appropriate strategic procurement processes prior to the extension expiring on 31 March 2026. Potentially, this will allow opportunity to open the collaboration arrangements to other Black Country Local Authorities.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.6 Walsall Council's Corporate Plan: 2022 – 2025 sets out a commitment to give children and young people the best possible start in life ensuring they are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well. The key principles of FDAC are central to this priority because it supports family reunification where it is right to do so and reduces drift in planning for children's care.
- 4.7 The Corporate Plan sets out a commitment to people having increased independence and improved health so they can positively contribute to their communities. The FDAC Model builds resilience in families. In addition, it promotes the development of parent mentors as volunteers in the service; these would be parents who have successfully graduated from the FDAC programme.

Risk management

- 4.8 Potential risks and liabilities are identified and mitigated through strong governance and performance management processes managed by the FDAC Steering Group and the close working relationship between the Steering Group and the commissioning leads led by Walsall Children's Commissioning Team.
- 4.9 FDAC service has clear pathways and protocols in place between the Local Authorities and CGL to ensure effective workflow is manageable over the contract period. Executive Directors from each Local Authority have delegated decision-making authority to their representatives on the Steering Group. Walsall's Director – Children's Social Work, is the Vice-Chair of the Steering Group.
- 4.10 The contract extension period needs to be agreed with the provider by the end of September. If the contract extension is not in place, the FDAC Service would not be able to receive referrals from October onwards due to the timescales required to complete the work by the end of the current contract. There is also

a risk that uncertainty will lead to FDAC team leaving for other jobs if this is not resolved by this time.

Financial implications

- 4.11 The contract was awarded to Change, Grow, Live for a 3-year period from and including 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2023 with the option to extend by 2 periods of 1 year each, with a maximum total contract term of 5 years ending on 31 March 2025, which is proportionately funded by the three collaborating local authorities.
- 4.12 In February 2020, as lead Local Authority, Walsall were granted £1.09m from the DfE (Department of Education) to support the implementation of the Family Drug and Alcohol Courts Model, as part of the Supporting Families; Investing in Practice Programme. It is forecasted that by the end of 2024/25, there will be £229k of the grant remaining. It is proposed, if Cabinet were to approve the variation of the contract detailed above, the remainder of the grant will be used to fund the final project costs and 50% of the CGL contract value for 2025/26, with the remaining 50% being funded from contributions from each of the 3 local authorities, based on the number of allocated places.
- 4.13 The forecasted CGL contract spend to date is as follows:

20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25	Total Spend
£329,040	£335,621	£335,621	£342,333	£349,180	£1,691,795

- 4.14 The cost of extending the contract for a further 12 months is £356,163. Following allocation of the remaining reserve, detailed in 4.12, Walsall's contribution in 2025/26 would be £83,476. This is within the service's allocated budget for the FDAC programme.

Legal implications

- 4.16 Legal Services and Procurement have assisted Children's Services to ensure the extension of the current contractual arrangement is carried out lawfully and using a methodology which will be contractually binding.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.17 All procurement activity will be undertaken in compliance with Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council Contract Rules. Procurement and Legal Services will co-ordinate to ensure there is a consistency of advice and approach.
- 4.18 As the contract options that were originally available in the contract have now been exhausted; in order to extend further, this contract must be modified in line with Regulation 72 1(e) of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015. These

statutory provisions set out the scenarios under which the contracts that are subject to the Regulations can be modified.

- 4.19 Advice has been sought from Legal Services and Procurement as to whether the proposed extension of the contract term is a lawful modification under the applicable statutory provisions. As the contract is classified as a 'light touch contract' and the proposed extension is only for one fifth of the maximum original five-year contract term, the proposed extension is not considered to be a substantial change to the original contract and therefore is unlikely to be regarded as unlawful or vulnerable to legal challenge.
- 4.20 Procurement will ensure that all relevant notices are published to comply with the relevant statutory requirements.

Property implications

- 4.21 There are no property implications arising from this report.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.22 The content of this report has considered the Marmot objectives. Our priority is that children are safe from harm, happy and learning well with self-belief, aspiration and support to be their best. The FDAC service will reduce the impact of Adverse Childhood Experiences and associated health inequalities on children. This is an explicit objective of the Joint Needs Assessment, Walsall Plan – Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2022 – 2025.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.23 The FDAC Service will positively improve the opportunities for families to effectively engage with the Family Court where drugs and alcohol dependency impacts on their parenting capacity and has the potential to reduce inequalities for this cohort of children and ensure that family substance misuse issues are addressed. An equalities impact assessment has been undertaken and will be reviewed as part of the evaluation of the service.

Staffing implications

- 4.24 The FDAC multi-disciplinary team will be employed by an external provider. As such, there are no staffing implications for the Council.

Climate Impact

- 4.25 There are no climate impact implications.

Consultation

- 4.26 There are no requirements for statutory consultation, but children and families will be involved in the ongoing development of the FDAC Service.

- 4.27 This report has been brought to Cabinet following internal consultation with Council representatives, Directors and the Portfolio Holder for Children's Services.

5. Decide

- 5.1 Cabinet is requested to approve the proposal to enter into extended contractual arrangements for the continued provision of the FDAC Service as set out in this report and agree the recommendations as outlined in section 3.

6. Respond

- 6.1 Subject to Cabinet approval of the recommendations, Children's Services will:
- (a) Extend the current contractual agreement from and including 01 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 and make any variations, therefore ensuring appropriate contractual arrangements are in place.
 - (b) Return to Cabinet following a review of the impact of the FDAC service, setting out options for future provision.

7. Review

- 7.1 As the lead authority, Walsall Council undertakes the performance management and monitoring of the contract on behalf of the members of the collaboration. This is supported by a Steering Group, chaired by a Family Court District Judge and ensures an overview of performance offering all stakeholders a space to resolve any non-contractual issues. The commissioning leads provide a summary of performance and outcome measures to the Steering Group. Under its Terms of Reference, the Chair of the Steering Group is authorised to speak with the executive leads and seek resolution for any operational issues that may emerge from the members of the collaboration.

Appendices

Background papers

Author

Paula Wilman
Childrens Commissioning Lead
✉ Paula.Wilman@walsall.gov.uk
☎ 652906

Raji Bains
Commissioning, Consultation and
Contract Management Officer
✉ Raji.Bains@walsall.gov.uk

☎ 650718

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Colleen Male'.

Colleen Male
Executive Director
16.08.2024

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Elson'.

Councillor Elson
Portfolio Holder, Children and Young
People
27.08.2024

Walsall Youth Justice Service Annual Strategic Plan

Portfolio: Councillor Elson – Children and Young People

Related portfolios: Councillor Garcha – Resident Access and Housing Support
Councillor Kaur – Education and Skills

Service: Children's Services

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 Youth Justice partnerships have a statutory duty to produce an annual youth justice plan for submission to the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales showing how youth justice services will be provided and funded.
- 1.2 The Youth Justice Plan is prepared on an annual basis in accordance with the guidance "Youth Justice Plans: guidance for youth justice services March 2024" and specific conditions as set within the Youth Justice Board Effective Practice Grant. The youth justice plan sets out key achievements over the past 12 months, how Walsall Youth Justice Service is structured and funded and also identifies risks to service delivery and improvement.
- 1.3 The plan, reviewed in June 2024, outlines the partnerships priorities for 2022 to 2025 and provides commentary on the three national performance indicators for youth justice services;
 - Rate of first-time entrants to the youth justice system
 - The number and rate of custodial sentences
 - The proportion of young people re-offending

2. Summary

- 2.1 To provide Cabinet with an overview of the Youth Justice Annual Strategic Plan, the key areas of work which have been undertaken over the past 12 months and the partnership's priorities going forward.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet notes the initial overview and activity set out in the report and

recommends the Walsall Youth Justice Annual Strategic Plan to Council for approval.

- 3.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, to make any future minor amendments to the plan, if and when required.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 The Youth Justice Service (YJS) partnership recognise that these priorities will take time and as such we have published a 3-year plan. As we are working through the final year of that plan, we have chosen to add an additional priority to improve the partnerships data intelligence and specialist insight. In addition to our Strategic Needs Assessment 2024, this will place us in a strong position in early 2025 to enter into a new multi-year plan. We know it will require investment and energy to achieve positive change. Our YJS Partnership Board members, managers and practitioners are committed to the Child First vision and to improving outcomes for our children.

❖ **Transitions and Resettlement**

To improve the transition experience of children in the justice system, the YJS will:

- Develop our close partnership with the Probation Service, to improve our Transition 2 Adulthood offer.
- Develop our relationship with HMYOI Werrington to improve our resettlement offer for children and transition into the adult estate.

Strategic Lead: Head of Probation

This priority is aligned to the Safer Walsall Partnership reducing re-offending priority and the regional Transition 2 Adulthood policy framework.

❖ **Reducing Serious Youth Violence:**

To reduce incidents of serious youth violence in Walsall, the YJS will:

- Work collaboratively with the Safer Walsall Partnership to implement the serious violence strategy.
- Deliver effective violence and knife crime interventions for children.
- Ensure the YJS is sufficiently resourced to manage risk to others.

Strategic Lead: Superintendent Walsall Police.

This priority is aligned to the Safer Walsall Partnership and recognises the Serious Violence Duty (2021) and the delegated responsibilities on agencies and partnership.

❖ **Disproportionality**

To reduce disproportionality and improve outcomes for overrepresented children, the YJS will:

- Lead on the YJB regional ethnic disparity pathfinder.

- Ensure the team are culturally competent and sufficiently skilled and confident in supporting children to explore identity and discrimination.
- Implement a bespoke offer for children with black and mixed ethnicity.

Strategic Lead: Head of Service (Corporate Parenting) – Children's Social Care.

This priority is linked to the Council's Corporate Equality Group and objectives within the Corporate Plan 2022-25.

❖ Identifying and responding to unmet need (Health).

To identify and respond to the unmet needs of children, the YJS will:

- Develop our 'Unmet Need' hub of education and health professionals in the team.
- Work with partners to secure long-term additional funding and resources to continue our Education Psychology and Speech and Language offer.

Strategic Lead: Head of CAMHS commissioning

Our partnership recognises that there is a clear need to 'level up' health provision for Walsall children in line with the Black country and regional developments.

❖ Voice of our children

To ensure the voice of our children is clearly heard and drives our strategic thinking and operational delivery, the YJS will:

- Ensure the voice of our children is heard within our strategic partnership board and influences the wider partnership.
- Ensure the voice of our children is clear within our assessments, plans and interventions.
- Employ a Youth Justice apprentice to find new ways to collaborate and consult with our children and ensure their feedback contribute to our data intelligence.

Strategic Lead: YJS Strategic Lead

Following the findings of the HMIP assurance review in 2021, the partnership is committed to better evidencing how we hear and are responsive to the voices of our children both strategically and operationally.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.2 Reducing the number of children entering the youth justice system is a corporate measure and a key performance indicator for the Youth Justice Board.
- 4.3 The YJS plan will contribute to the Council's priorities as follows:
 - People- the YJS Plan supports our families to integrate and make a positive contribution to their community whilst improving health and wellbeing.

- Children- improving outcomes for the children in the justice system is at the heart of the work undertaken by the Youth Justice Service and intrinsic to each of the priorities within the plan.
- Communities- working closely with the Safer Walsall Partnership, the YJS shares a priority to manage and reduce violence and to make our communities safer.

The strategic plan focusses on how partners in Walsall will ensure that Youth Justice Services are effectively delivered to reduce youth crime and re-offending, protect the public from harm and promote safeguarding

Risk management

- 4.4 The strategic plan recognises a number of risks to future delivery, including the improvements needed surround the health pathways for children in the justice system and a potential change in Police policy which would negatively impact on the number of children as first time entrants. The Youth Justice Performance and Partnership Board maintains oversight of risks to delivery and mitigating action on a quarterly basis through detailed performance and quality assurance reports. Partners, including West Midlands Police, National Probation Service, Community Safety, Public Health, Child and Adolescent Mental Health (CAMHS), Education, Employment and Skills, are required at each quarterly board meeting to confirm their resource allocation and are held accountable for the performance of their own organisation.

Financial implications

- 4.5 The strategic plan outlines the resource and funding arrangements for YJS including those from statutory partners, the Youth Justice Board for England and Wales, and the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner. Adopting the plan is not expected to incur any additional costs over and above the above budgeted costs detailed within the plan.

Legal implications

- 4.6 Under Section 40 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 it is the duty of each local authority, after consultation with the relevant persons and bodies, to formulate and implement a youth justice plan for each year setting out how youth justice services are to be provided and funded in their area; and how the youth offending team (Youth Justice Service) established by them are to be composed and funded, how they are to operate, and what functions they are to carry out. The youth justice plan is required to be submitted to the Youth Justice Board and be published in such manner and by such date as the Secretary of State may direct.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.7 None.

Property implications

- 4.8 None.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.9 The health and wellbeing of Walsall children is key within the content of the strategic plan. Improving outcomes for children in the justice system increases the health and wellbeing of those who commit offences and associated victims.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.10 Inequality is inherent within the Criminal Justice System. The plan does not represent an adverse impact to children at risk of offending and re-offending. Indeed, it identifies that addressing disproportionality (the overrepresentation of children from black, Asian and minority ethnic groups) is a priority leading into 2022-25. Significant work has been undertaken over the past year and the Youth Justice partnership is in a stronger place to better understand this inequality through data and consultation with families and partners.

Staffing implications

- 4.11 There are no staffing implications in the creation and review of the Strategic Plan 2022-2025. The current establishment is fully funded and financial contributions have been confirmed.

Climate Impact

- 4.12 There are no climate impact implications in this report.

Consultation

- 4.13 Consultation has been carried out with children involved in the criminal justice system, Youth Justice Service staff and with Youth Justice Service Performance and Partnership Board members.

5. Decide

- 5.1 A 'do nothing' option is not seen as viable as it is a statutory requirement for the council to have a Youth Justice Plan.
- 5.2 To recommend to Cabinet:
1. That Walsall's Youth Justice Annual Strategic plan (review) be approved.
 2. That the Executive Director of Children's Services, in consultation with the portfolio holder, be authorised to make any future minor amendments to the plan if and when required.

6. Respond

- 6.1 The Youth Justice Service will continue to fulfil its statutory functions and deliver services to children in Walsall to work towards those key performance indicators. The plan details some of the actions that the Youth Justice Service will take to reduce offending behaviour, manage risk of harm to the public, and safeguard both children open to the service and others. The strategic plan sets the vision and strategic direction of the service over the coming 12 months.

7. Review

- 7.1 There is an annual requirement to complete a YJS Strategic Plan and as such progress against priorities and a review of achievements will be completed in the planning schedule for 2025-2026.
- 7.2 The YJS Performance and Partnership Board meets on a quarterly basis and will monitor, and review progress made against the priorities and the delivery plan.

Appendices

None.

Background papers

None.

Author

Phil Rutherford

Strategic Lead – Youth Justice Service

Phillip.rutherford@walsall.gov.uk

☎ 650400



Colleen Male
Executive Director Childrens Services
16.08.2024



Cllr Elson
Portfolio Holder Childrens Services
27.08.2024

Walsall Youth Justice Service Strategic Plan 2022 - 2025

Updated June 2024



Child First

Service	Walsall Youth Justice Service
Service Manager/ Lead	Phil Rutherford
Chair of YJS Board	Colleen Male
Date	Updated June 2024

Contents

Page 2. Introduction, vision and strategy

- Forward by the Chair of the YJS Performance and Partnership Board (Page 2)
- Introduction (Page 3)
- Local Context (Page 5)

Page 6. Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

- Update on the previous year- key achievements. (Page 7)
- Progress on priorities in previous plan (Page 9)
- Performance over the previous year (Page 12)
- Risks and issues (Page 15)

Page 16 Plan for the forthcoming year

- Child First and Child's Voice (Page 16)
- Resources and services (Page 18)
- Board Development (Page 19)
- Workforce Development (Page 21)
- Evidence base practice and innovation (Page 22)
- Priorities for the coming year (Page 24)
- Standards for children (Page 26)
- Service development (Page 26)

Page 28. National Priority Areas

- Children from groups which are overrepresented. (Page 28)
- Policing (Page 29)
- Prevention and Diversion (Page 30)
- Education (Page 32)
- Restorative justice and victims (Page 33)
- Serious violence, exploitation, and contextual safeguarding (Page 33)
- Detention in police custody (Page 36)
- Working with families (Page 36)

Page 37. Sign off submission and approval

Appendix 1 YJS Performance and Partnership Board Membership (Page 38)

Appendix 2 Board attendance (Page 39)

Appendix 3 Safer Lives Survey Findings (Page 40)

Appendix 4 Strategic Needs Assessment- Child Voice (Page 41)

Appendix 5 Staffing structure chart and table of staff demographics (Page 42)

Appendix 6 YJS Expenditure (Page 43)

Appendix 7 Thematic review summary (Page 44)

Appendix 8 Court National Standards – Action Plan (Page 48)

Appendix 9 Common Youth Justice terms (Page 50)



Foreword from Chair of the Youth Justice Partnership:

We are now in the final year of the Youth Justice Partnership's three-year plan and this review gives us an opportunity to look back at some achievements of the past 12 months and space to consider how to best continue improving outcomes for some of the most vulnerable children in Walsall. The partnership remains in a good position to improve practice and ensure that the Youth Justice Service is well resourced. This being said, there is more work to be done!

Our partnership commitment to the Youth Justice 'Child First' vision continues and this aligns well with the Walsall Right 4 Children vision aimed at ensuring "every Child and Family in Walsall is understood, feels happy and safe, with a strong sense of belonging enabling them to learn, achieve and succeed." It is encouraging to hear our partners in the justice system and beyond recognise the 'Child First' vision and use language that supports it.

It's an exciting time in Walsall. Our Youth Justice Service led on a West Midlands wide bid to create an Ethnic Disparity Pathfinder Project which will develop services for vulnerable children of black and mixed heritage in Walsall, in or on the periphery of the youth justice system. Similarly in March 2024 Walsall received confirmation that they had been successful in their bid to be a Families First Wave Two Pathfinder commencing in July 2024. This is an exciting opportunity to lead national level reforms of Children's Services and partnership working to protect children and help and support families. The Pathfinder Programme represents an exciting opportunity for Walsall Council and Children's Services to be at the forefront of sector-wide reforms, to design and test those reforms, and support their implementation nationally.

We continue as a learning organisation and have commissioned a strategic needs assessment of the children within the youth justice system here in Walsall. This has helped our strategic partnership better understand the children we support and to identify the areas on which we need to focus over the coming year and beyond. Children's views have helped shape this analysis and although this has told us that our youth justice practitioners are excellent at forming strong and positive relationship, we also know that often these children enter the system with unmet needs.

This year the YJS Performance and Partnership Board has continued to grow and mature, and it is closely aligned to the Safer Walsall Partnership and Safeguarding Partnership. Our partners from our closest secure estate, Werrington HMYOI and Brinsford HMYOI, have been a welcome addition and have helped us get assurance regarding the care of children in the secure estate.

The HMIP joint thematic inspection in June 2023 has had a lasting impact upon local practice and brought the complex needs of children in the secure estate into focus. There has been an increase in the number of Walsall children sent to YOIs over the past two years and therefore the inspection presented us with an opportunity to learn and consider our practice for these children across the partnership.

The partners have worked together to identify the youth justice strategic priorities for 2022 – 2025 by listening to our children, our practitioners, and managers, and aligning our strategy with the Safer Walsall Partnership, the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner and the West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership. In 2024 we have reviewed these priorities, and the below plan sets out where we want to focus our attention over the next 12 months and beyond. Over the coming year the YJS Board will consider the successes and areas to improve whilst preparing for our next multi-year plan from 2025.

Colleen Male

Chair of the Youth Justice Partnership

Introduction:

On behalf of the Youth Justice Service Performance and Partnership Board we are proud to introduce Walsall Youth Justice Service's (YJS) Strategic Plan for 2022 to 2025. A review of this plan has been approved by the YJS Performance and Partnership Board in May 2024.

Our Youth Justice partnership is committed to continual learning and development to improve life outcomes for children and families, to have fewer victims of youth crime and a safer Walsall.

We share the Youth Justice Board's vision for a 'Child First' youth justice system:

"A youth justice system that sees children as children, treats them fairly and helps them to build on their strengths so they can make a constructive contribution to society."

Behind our partnership's vision for children in the youth justice system, and for those at risk of entering it, is a desire to ensure that they are seen as children first, that their uniqueness is understood and responded to and that their voices are clear and strong within our delivery. We believe in understanding the adversity and trauma a child goes through and having a strength-based approach to build resilience for a sustainable crime free life. Our Child First vision, aligns well with Walsall Children's Services aspirations, foundations, and priorities for our children:

Our Aspiration: "Every Child and Family in Walsall is understood, feels happy and safe, with a strong sense of belonging enabling them to learn, achieve and succeed."



Our Foundations

We will focus on understanding children's lived experience and how we can improve them	We will work with children, young people and families and their local communities enabling them to make positive and sustainable connections	We will focus on or actively addressing gaps in equality and racism.	We will learn and improve together – we will drive a culture of continuous improvement by diligently closing the learning loop	We will continue to be proud of what we do and celebrate our achievements
--	--	--	--	---

Executive Summary:

Walsall Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a statutory multi-agency service under Section 37 of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act in partnership with the Local Authority, Walsall Children's Services, West Midlands Police, National Probation Service and Health. The YJS is also supported by numerous other partners who contribute to the YJS' agenda. The principle aim of the YJS partnership is to prevent and reduce offending and re-offending behaviour in children and young people and have the below national key performance indicators (KPI):

Main KPI	New KPI from April 2023
Reducing the number of young people entering the system for the first time	Accommodation suitability:
Reducing re-offending	Education, training & employment (ETE):
Reducing the use of custodial disposals.	Special Educational Needs
	Mental and emotional wellbeing:
	Substance misuse needs & intervention:
	Out of court disposals (OOCs):
	Management Board attendance:
	Serious youth violence (SYV):
	Victim referrals and intervention:

Reducing the number of young people entering the Youth Justice System also remains a key Council objective. According to the YJB database, between January 2023 and December 2023, the number of first-time entrants in Walsall reduced by 13% when compared to the previous 12-month period.

Published re-offending data for Walsall YJS has demonstrated a further 1% improvement in the binary rate when compared to the previous 12-month period. The latest proportion of young people re-offending is measured at 25.3% which is better than the national and regional average. Positively, alongside an improving binary rate, the number of re-offences that are committed at 3.65 per child is low when compared to national and regional performance.

In Walsall we are worried about the number of our children that have been remand and sentenced to custody, and particularly concerned about the serious violence that underpins those custodial outcomes. Our current published performance is 0.38 per 1000 of the 10-17 population which is higher than our regional and national comparators. This is equating to 12 custodial sentences between January and December 2023. These numbers include a single serious incident in Walsall in January 2023 where 7 children were remanded and 5 were eventually sentenced to lengthy custodial sentences.

2. Local context

Our Children in Walsall

POPULATION: 286,105

0-17 POPULATION : 69,375 (24.2%)

The Number of Children and Young People aged 0-17 is projected to rise to 71,570 by 2034 (increase of 3.5%)

Almost 1 in 4 people are children aged below 16, 24.2% (69,375) of walsall's population (286,105) are children and young people under the age of 18 years with under 16s have 12.1% increase over the decade.



18,179(26.3%) are under 5
19,630(28.4%) are aged 5-9
20,045(29%) are aged 10-14
11,267(16.3%) are aged 15-17



Children and Young People's Health

Life Expectancy at Birth is 81.7 years for females and 77.8 years for males

Compared to 82.6(F) and 78.7 (M) in the west Midlands and 83.2(F) and 79.3(M) nationally

Children we Support At 31st May 2024

Children in Care: 658
Child Protection Plans: 220
Children in Need: 1002
Children receiving Early Help: 1,835



Education

At 31st May 2024 X Children and young people had an EHCP (X per 10,000 aged 0-25)

4,661 of EHCPs are supporting Autistic Spectrum Disorder
19.7% are supporting Speech, Language and Communication Difficulties
23.9% are supporting moderate learning difficulties
22.1% are supporting Social, Mental and Emotional Difficulties



EDUCATION & WELFARE

65% of the children in schools have 75% or above attendance.

15% of children are a part of Education and Health Care Plan

46% In total with Special Education Needs

30% of the SEN Support are being met

In 2023, 35.3% of children in walsall lived in low income families, compared to 23.4% in 2015.



Walsall is a diverse city and is expected to become even more diverse with more than one-third of Walsall from BME Backgrounds. 37.4% of walsall's School children are from BME background



Deprivation Levels are High

In the indices of Deprivation affecting children (IDACI), Walsall is the 17th most deprived LA in the country with 26% of the neighbourhood in the top 10% of the most deprived nationally

5.4 per 1000 Children die before their first birthday

Compared to 5.6 in the west Midlands and 3.9 nationally



1.9% of girls become pregnant at age 15, 16 or 17

Compared to 1.5% in the west Midlands and 1.3% nationally



28.5% of children in year 6 are living with obesity or severe obesity

Compared to 25.2% in the west Midlands and 22.7% nationally

Special Education Needs

At 31st May 2024

7,140 Children and young people receiving SEN support. Those receiving SEN support in schools is 11,801 Children



Fixed Term Suspension

5306 fixed term suspensions from May 23 to May 24

Permanent Exclusions

75 Permanent exclusions from May 23 to May 24

Economic Activity

6% of people aged 16 and over are unemployed compared to 4.5% across the West Midlands and 3.7% Nationally

5.5% of people aged 16-64 claim unemployment related benefits compared to 3.6% across the West Midlands

Free school Meals

37% Children are eligible for FSM
6% of these have a postcode in the North Locality



Neglect

22.3% of CYP subject to neglect had substance misuse as a factor
Of all CYP referred for neglect, 34.7% are aged 0-4, 25% 5-9, 31.9% 10-14 and 8.3% 15-17

Governance, leadership and partnership arrangements

Walsall YJS sits within the Children's Services directorate and the Strategic Lead for the YJS reports into the Head of Service for Family Hubs, Early Help and Youth Justice within the partnership's portfolio within the Children's Services directorate. There are clear links between children in the youth justice system, children's social care and those involved in exploitation, going missing or who are excluded from education. The YJS Strategic Lead is part of the senior leadership team within Children's Services.

Walsall Youth Justice Service Performance and Partnership Board meet quarterly and is chaired by the Executive Director of Children's Services. Partners from the Local Authority, Children's Services, Health, Police and National Probation Service regularly attend. Full board membership and attendance can be found in Appendix 1. The agenda is set by the Chair of the Performance and Partnership Board and contains regular reports on issues that impact upon YJS delivery, factors that are impacting on the daily lives of children in Walsall and seeks to hear the voice of our children at each meeting.

- **Safer Walsall Community Safety Partnership (SWP)**

The YJS Strategic Lead sits on the Safer Walsall Partnership Board and ensures alignment with the YJS Performance and Partnership Board with shared strategic priorities. The YJS attend:

- a) Strategic Violence Reduction sub-group*
- b) Violence Against Women and Girls sub-group*

The YJS Performance and Partnership Board has strengthened the ties with the Safer Walsall Partnership in 2023, the Chair of the Youth Justice Partnership is an SWP member and ensures connectivity through Walsall's Police Superintendent -the strategic lead for the Serious Violence Duty for both partnerships.

- **West Midlands Local Criminal Justice Board**

The YJS participates in the regional LCJB Youth Improvement Subgroup to ensure that the desistance needs of children are given the appropriate focus. Within this forum, the YJS are also able to engage with regional criminal justice partners, including West Midlands Police and the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, to horizon scan.

- **West Midlands Violence Reduction Partnership (VRP).**

The YJS is a key partner to the VRP and the Strategic Lead sits on the West Midlands VRP Strategic Board and Programme Delivery Board. To support strategic delivery, the YJS also support the:

- a) VRP Sports Strategic Partnership Board.*
- b) School Exclusion sub-group*

- **Contest (the UK's strategy for counter terrorism: Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare)**

The Strategic Lead for Walsall YJS is the Chair of the Local Authority's Channel Panel and as sits on Walsall's Contest Board which is responsible for driving forward the delivery and implementation of the government's Contest Strategy.

- **Walsall Safeguarding Partnership**

The Chair of the Youth Justice Partnership represents the YJS on the Safeguarding Partnership executive group and the YJS Strategic Lead sits on the Safeguarding Leadership Group and contributes to the following:

- a) Exploitation subcommittee*
- b) Strategic Exploitation Panel*

- **Children's Services Performance Board**

The YJS Strategic Lead sits on the Children's Services Performance Board and presents YJS data against key performance indicators and locally agreed priorities- including the Social Care/YJS interface and first-time entrants.

Key achievements from the past 12 months:

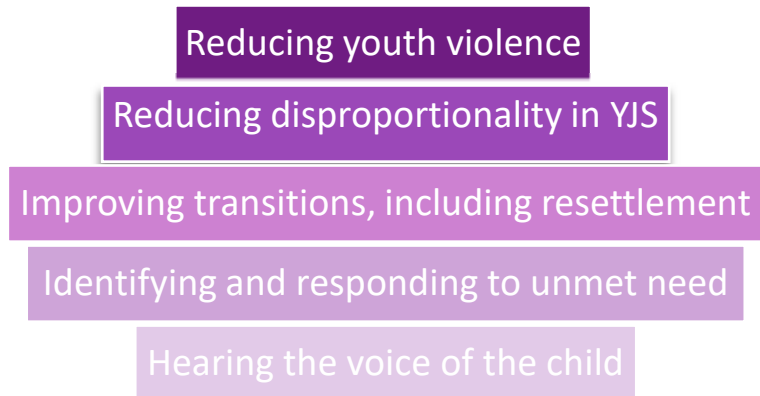
The practitioners and managers within the YJS should feel incredibly proud of what they have achieved during the past 12 months:

- *HMIP Thematic Inspection- Remand*; The YJS and its partners received a thematic inspection of children who had been remanded in June 2023. The partnership was keen to learn and to promote the effective practice occurring within the team. Practitioners used the time to reflect on their practice and helped partners understand their part in supporting children in custody. The inspectors found effective practice here in Walsall and have helped us make improvements across the system to reduce unnecessary remands.
- *Ministry of Justice- Turnaround*; In December 2022, the Home Office provided funding to youth justice services to work with children on the periphery of crime who can be diverted. We used our funding to second an Early Help worker into the YJS and commission the Inspire Group to deliver sport coaching and mentoring. In 2023, we were invited by the Home Officer to present our successful sport model at the national Turnaround celebration event.
- *Development of the YJS partnership panel and our diversion offer*; Our joint decision-making partnership panel has improved significantly over the past year. It is well resourced by partners including, Police, Liaison & Diversion (NHS), Early Help, Substance Misuse and more. Panels members and YJS staff completed training with the Youth Justice Legal Centre to develop child first approaches to diverting children at the lowest and safest level possible. As a result, there is a reduction in children entering the justice system for the first time.
- *Walsall's Exploitation and Missing Hub*; YJS managers chair and support the daily multi-agency exploitation triage discussions. We have bolstered this resource by introducing two exploitation practitioner champions to support discussions, completed assessments and National Referral Mechanism (NRM) notifications. Our co-location has strengthened this partnership.
- *Lived Experienced Mentors*; the YJS was successful in securing funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), through the Safer Walsall Partnership (SWP), to work with St-Giles and provide a mentor for our young people involved in serious violence and criminal exploitation. We have had positive outcomes for young people and as such we have committed to providing lived experienced mentors for the next 2 years.
- *Work to address Disproportionality*; In April 2024, Walsall and the 6 other Youth Justice Services in the West Midlands were successful in applying for regional pathfinder to support children with black children in the justice system. It is multi-year funding and will be academically evaluated. The learning from the pathfinder will then be used to inform practice across the country. In 2023 we have worked closely with:
 - *Open Lens Media*- we launched the Reformation 2 documentary film in Black History month in partnership with Open Lens local. Through the creation of the film and the contributions of our boys with black and mixed ethnicity, we produced a partner recommendations report to consider a disproportionality strategy across Walsall.

- *Resettlement Mentor-* through Safer Walsall Partnership funding we commissioned a local mentor, Ricky Otto, to work with black boys within the secure estate to help them navigate their time in custody and help them effectively resettle back home. We will be developing our ability to demonstrate impact of this work over 2024.
- *Equality and Disproportionality Forum-* provides practitioners with a safe space to discuss equality and overrepresentation of children in the justice system. The Forum oversees progress and has set up a practice improvement sub-group.
- *Virtual School & Inclusion Hub:* The partnership between YJS and the Virtual School and the Inclusion Hub remains strong. We are actively tackling the issue of attendance, exclusions, SEN and more via our regular Education Support Meetings. The Inclusion Hub lead is committed and pro-active is supporting this vulnerable group of children.
- *Improving the skills and expertise of the team:* we are developing our exciting 'health hub' approach within the YJS and, with the support of health partners, we are currently recruiting to employ; a nurse, situated within the YJS, to assess and support the health needs of our children, a Speech and Language Therapist and a Specialist Education Psychologist. These additions to the team, will work alongside our new CAMHS psychologist who has been recently appointed.
- *Youth Justice Apprenticeship:* Our level 3 apprentice consults with children on service delivery and issues affecting them in their communities. They also support with end of order interviews, and we are re-profiling the post to provide support and mentoring to 16+ children who need extra help to access jobs or training. Our apprentice led our annual safer lives surveys to understand children's experiences of community safety. In March 2024 we advertised for an additional level 5 youth justice apprenticeship through Unitas.
- *Loughborough University- Child First Research:* we have continued working with researchers from Loughborough University, establishing a project reference group with Walsall children who are helping design 'Child First' research methods.
- *Effective response to increased numbers of children in the secure estate:* the YJS has improved its partnership with Werrington YOI and has regular oversight meetings. The increased levels of serious youth violence and resulting children in the secure estate, has led the YJS partnership to instigate a coalition with the Safer Walsall Partnership and Safeguarding Partnership to consider how to prevent the next generation of children becoming involved in violence.
- *Our Youth Offer:* Our structured positive activity offer for children is excellent and focusses on strength-based approaches and building resilience. Mostly through external funding and strong partnership, our offer has included;
 - Sport: our partnership continues with the Inspire Group to deliver multi-sports diversion activities and mentoring across Walsall and provides children with links to local sport clubs and coaching qualifications. In addition to this, we have formed a new partnership with Impower, a local martial arts and mentoring organisation.
 - Music: our music studio mentoring programme has continued throughout 2023. 'Co-Lab YTH' consists of a local music artist, producer and Walsall youth worker who provide our young people with a safe space to express themselves through music who also receive support to avoid exploitation, issues around gangs and knife crime.

Progress on previous plan

The YJS Performance and Partnership Board reviewed its progress against last year's priorities in May 2024. This activity was informed by our strategic needs assessment and our learning from the HMIP thematic inspection of children on remand in June 2023. Walsall YJS' strategic plan for 2022-2025 identified the following priorities:



Reducing youth violence:

Reducing youth violence is shared priority across several different partnerships and systems in Walsall as the impact of serious incidents weighs so heavily upon individuals, their families, and the wider community. To respond to this, the Youth Justice Performance and Partnership Board, the Safer Walsall Partnership and the Safeguarding Partnership have joined together to explore if our current systems and ways of working are most effective in reducing serious youth violence in Walsall. To support this work, the partnerships above alongside the Probation Service, have commissioned multi-year academic research to understand any driving factors, best practice, and recommendations for models of delivery.

Over the past 12 months, communities in Walsall have been shaken by a high-profile violent incident involving multiple children, adults and a young man losing his life. Many people have been affected by the crime and we have seen tensions rise across Walsall. The ensuing increase in remanded children and a lengthy trial out of area has strained YJS resources, but the team have responded well to this adversity. These incidents deepen the resolve of the partnership to address the root causes of violence.

The Serious Violence Duty (SVD) was introduced by government through the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022, to commence in January 2023. For Walsall, it was agreed that the lead is the Safer Walsall Partnership (SWP). There are key requirements for the duty holder authorities to fulfil together:

- Undertake an evidence-based analysis of the causes of serious violence in their area.
- Develop a strategic needs assessment (SNA) based on the analysis.
- Develop and implement a strategy with solutions to prevent and reduce serious violence in their area, which will need to be reviewed every year.

Walsall's SNA is important for all of us to identify our needs and assets in our communities and understand local trends. We can then intervene appropriately, using both a universal and targeted approach to prevent violence. We combined national, regional, and local intelligence, using both data to develop this assessment. The voice of YJS children is strong within the SNA:



Our local Police Superintendent is the youth justice partnership's strategic lead for our reducing youth violence priority. Our priority is combined with the preventing violence priority of the Safer Walsall Partnership. Underneath the YJS Partnership Board and the Safer Walsall Partnership Board, there is a Violence and Harm Prevention Subgroup and an Operational Delivery Group.

The YJS are developing our individual response, within the above structures, to preventing and reducing youth violence. Our work is always in partnership. We have delivered interventions and programmes such as the 'Street Doctors' knife crime programme and we have commissioned a Virtual Reality Knife Crime Decision Making Programme. We also supported the VRP Step Together Programme which have 'chaperone' routes from schools in Walsall. The VRP has a strong and growing presence in Walsall and the YJS are a key partner.

Our YJS Strategic Needs Assessment will inform our learning and activities for the next 3 years.

Reducing disproportionality in the youth justice system.

We have continued our partnership with Open Lens, a local media and training organisation who have consulted with and delivered interventions with our boys with black and mixed ethnicity. Through this work we commissioned Open Lens to create a documentary exploring what it's like for black boys to grow up in Walsall and a partnership strategy to reduce the number of boys with black and mixed ethnicity entering the justice system. We were incredibly excited to launch the documentary film at the Light Cinema in Walsall town centre in Black History Month. People from across the partnership attended the event, asked questions of our distinguished panel and pledged to do more in their local organisations. We will be working with Open Lens in 2024 to re-develop the film into a training package for partners. We have also established a training and employment pathway for black boys through Open Lens.

Using Safer Walsall Partnership funding, we commissioned a local mentor, a former professional footballer with lived experience of the justice system, to support our boys in custody and help them resettlement back in their communities. This support has helped our boys in Werrington better manage their time with the aims to reduce violence, restraints, and engagement with services.

When HMIP visited Walsall in June 2023, they commented that our work to address disproportionality was 'meaningful' and that we responded well to the learning and recommendations within the HMIP thematic report that explored the experience of boys with black and mixed ethnicity. Our disproportionality work has also influenced the Safer Walsall Partnership who have now adopted a strategic equality priority.

Within the service, our Disproportionality Forum provides a safe space for youth justice staff and our partners to come together to discuss factors impacting upon under and over-representation in Walsall. In support, we have a practice improvement group that makes changes to delivery learning from 'best practice' and our discussions in the forum. In 2024, the Disproportionality Forum will once again self-evaluate our practice against the HMIP Thematic inspection on the experiences of boys with black and mixed ethnicity.

Improving transitions, including resettlement.

HMIP stated in their thematic inspection of remand that they were happy to see that we had transitions as a strategic priority, but they recommended it should be our focus for the next year. Our cohort in custody is changing as children become adults while serving long sentences and therefore our partnership with Probation becomes more crucial. Our Head of Probation is the YJS Partnership's strategic lead for this priority and for governance we have set up a transitions and re-offending subgroup for both the YJS and Safer Walsall Partnership. Our partnership is developing a Transitions Hub with dedicated probation officers who will work complete transition

and maturity interventions to ensure a smooth transition into Probation. We have invited HMYOI Brinsford onto our Performance and Partnership Board to ensure the needs of this cohort receive the necessary focus. In support of both our disproportionality and transitions work, our resettlement mentor is a valuable addition to our transitions work.

The HMIP thematic preparation was a positive opportunity for the partnership and highlighted the needs of the children on remand. The partnership completed a multi-agency audit of remanded children and their history from early years, and we have an action plan in place. Our partnership work with children in the secure estate is good and practitioners are skilled and work well together. Our partnership with Werrington YOI is strong and monthly planning meetings happen where issues are solved. We need to continue our work to better consider alternatives to remand at Court with our partners in Social Care and we need to better support transitions within the secure estate, with adult services and back to the community. HMIP noted the influence Walsall's Inclusion Hub was starting to have on children in the secure estate to help the transition of children from the community, especially for those with education and health care plans or special education needs. As our cohort has become older, the accommodation needs of 17- and 18-year-old children and young people has become increasingly more difficult to solve.

Identifying and responding to unmet need.

Our YJS Strategic Needs Analysis tells us that in October 2023, 13% of children had a diagnosed special education need with 23% having a education and health care plan. We know that 61% of our children at this point had been excluded from school and 55% had at least four recorded adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). The research undertaken within the Strategic Needs Assessment tells us that children in the justice system are the most vulnerable, that have been exposed to multiple traumatic experiences in their short lives, they are often not in school and as a result their needs have not been properly identified and met.

Our strategic lead for this priority is the head of CAMHS commissioning for the Black Country and we are working with CAMHS to review the youth justice mental health worker role. Limited access to services means that children enter the justice system with a host of unmet need. Our partnership recognises that our health offer needs to improve. We identified funding to improve our education psychology model to work with our CAMHS Psychologist. This model is being joined by a Speech Therapist and a school nurse funded through the Public Health contract for the 0-19 Health Child Programme.

Our partnership with the Virtual School & Inclusion Hub keeps growing. We have a Vulnerability Matrix which helps target support for children who struggle with education attendance. Inclusion Hub staff complete personal education plans for children in care and on remand, monitor education and health care plans and support those missing education. Through our education support meetings, we have education plans in place for children where attendance is a concern.

Hearing the voice of our children.

Improving how the YJS and the strategic partnership board hears and responds to the voice of our children was rightly identified as a strategic and operational priority. We have improved and diversified how Board members can better understand the lived experience of our children and have had opportunities to hear first-hand and through other means what our children have to say. This has included children and young people attending our strategic boards to share their experiences. We have also appointed an apprentice whose role is to focus on seeking the views of our children. Later section of this plan details our work to ensure that we remain 'Child First', we collaborate with our young people and ensure their voice can influence models of delivery and wider systems.

Performance, Priorities and National Key Performance Indicators

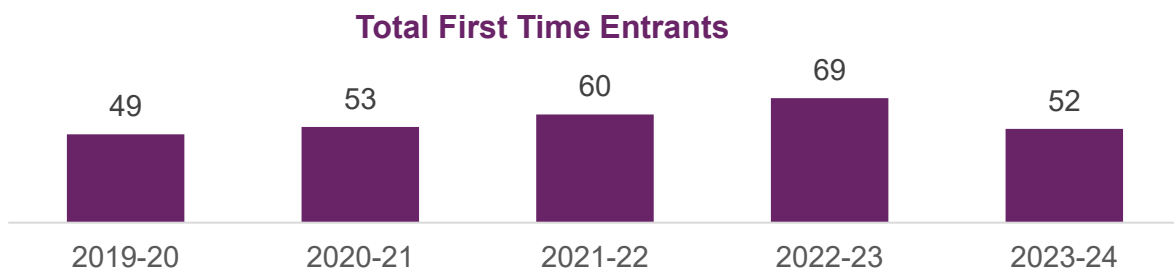
A detailed performance scorecard is shared with the YJS Performance and Partnership Board on a quarterly basis and monthly with the senior leadership within Children's Services. This enables detailed performance conversations to be had on a regular basis with managers and practitioners and enables strategic leaders to better understand the cohort of children we work with and challenge our delivery.

The YJS Performance and Partnership Board have been working with performance analysts over the last year to enhance the partnership's data monitoring, KPIs and local information. This led to a better monthly performance scorecard that guides our audit process and our capacity to learn and change practice. Board members, YJS managers and practitioners have a clearer and more comprehensive view of the cohort we are working with from diversion interventions to custodial sentences. Detailed analysis such as the YJS Ethnicity Report and audit reports have increased the partnership's awareness of some of the difficulties we face and enable us to make practice decisions based on evidence. Our key performance indicators are shown in this section.

First Time Entrants:

What we have done to reduce first time entrants during 2023/24:

- Jointly audited our first-time entrants with the Police to understand the effectiveness of voluntary interventions and to review our joint decision-making processes.
- Completed joint training with Police and the Youth Justice Legal Centre to promote diversion and child first decision making.
- Embedded the MOJ Turnaround Programme for those on the periphery of the YJS.
- Operation Checkpoint- diversion for children involved in non-aggravated knife crime.
- Use of Outcome 22 deferred prosecution for children involved in low level offending.
- Held an established Youth Justice Partnership Panel which identifies and supports children at risk of engaging in offending and violent behaviour.
- The YJS is a key partner in Exploitation Hub and chairs the daily multi-agency exploitation triage with Social Care and the Police.



First Time Entrants rate per 100,000 of 10-17 population				
	Walsall	PCC Area	Family	England
April 23- March 24	163	121	191	161
April 22- March 23	220	163	213	172
Percentage change	-26.1%	-25.6%	-10.4%	-6.9%

The above First Time Entrants (FTE) chart details the rate per 100,000 of the 10-17 population. Positively we have improved by over 26% when compared to the previous year, however we are still higher than the West Midlands Police Force area. Locally we have made significant progress as a partnership to ensure that we work with children at the lowest safest level. Our local monitoring of FTE tells us that 84% are boys. We also know that currently 32% of FTE are from a minority ethnic background. Children from Black ethnicity groups enter the system at a younger age, compared to other ethnicity groups. Due to the increase in young people charged for serious violence offences, we are currently seeing 63% of the FTE cohort receiving a conviction in Court.

Re-offending:

What we have done during 2023/24 to reduce re-offending:

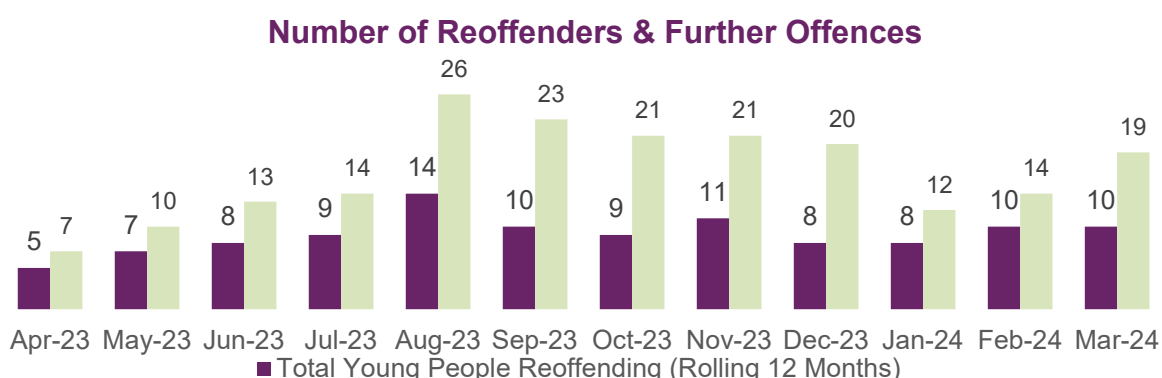
- The YJS has focussed on improving the assessment practice of youth justice officers, including a focus on reviewing and safely reducing risk in the right circumstances.
- Walsall have continued to embed the use of a restorative 'MyPlan' with our children subject to both out of court disposals and court orders. The MyPlan helps children and families take ownership of some of the problems impacting upon their lives.
- Reviewed and implemented QA processes to provide better focus on issues impacting desistance, such as culture, identity, victims, and important external controls.
- We have a good partnership in place with pro-active Police offender manager colleagues.
- The YJS have created a Programmes Officer to co-ordinate and deliver group activities and programmes for children, alongside responding to emerging risks and issues.
- There is a strong positive activity offer for our children with multiple projects available such as the Co-LAB YTH music programme and our sport programmes.
- Our partnership with St-Giles is set to continue over the next year to provide lived experienced mentors to some of our most vulnerable and risky children.

	Number in Cohort	# Re-offenders	# Re-offences	Reoffences/re-offender	Re-offences/offender	% Reoffending
July 21-June 22	91	26	90	3.46	0.99	28.6%
July 20 – June 21	79	21	52	2.48	0.66	26.6%
July 19 – June 20	104	28	121	4.32	1.16	26.9%

The above chart represents the most up to date published re-offending data for Walsall and how it compares to the same period for the previous three years. The below chart presents a current comparison to the national, regional, and family data. Walsall YJS regularly performs better than comparators although our binary rate of re-offending has increase by 2% and there have been 40 more re-offences when considering the previous 12 month.

July 21 – June 22	Re offences/re-offender	% Reoffending
England	4.33	32.6%
Family	4.34	28.9%
PCC West Midlands regio	3.51	27.9%

Our assessments of desistance remain good and our offer to children involved in offending is strong. The YJS is working closely with our colleagues in the local authority performance hub to develop our local ability to monitor and track when children open to the YJS re-offend. This will give us the ability to respond quickly to emerging patterns and better respond to children.

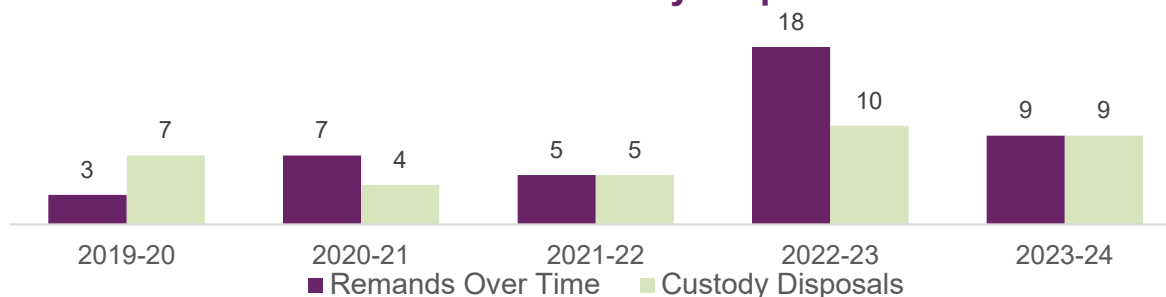


Use of Remands, Custody and Constructive Resettlement

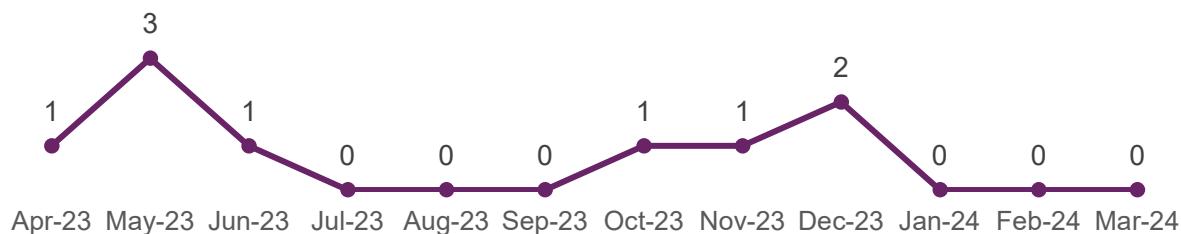
What we have done during 2023/24 to reduce the use of custody and improve outcomes:

- The partnership closely monitors children in the secure estate, undertakes audits and learning has been shared with the YJS Performance Board.
- A resettlement policy is in place in partnership with Social Care.
- As part of the YJS High Risk process, dedicated resettlement support panels are held for children subject to custodial sentences to support release plans.
- We welcomed HMIP to Walsall to support their joint thematic inspection of remanded children in June 2023. We have effective and child first practice in Walsall.
- The partnership completed a multi-agency audit of remanded children and held a reflection event with partners to understand practice and issues impacting these boys.
- Sought accommodation for children at risk of remand and provided robust remand to local authority accommodation packages.
- Delivered training to Children's Social Care improving awareness of the experience of children in custody.

Total Remands & Custody Disposals



Remands Over Time



The number of boys remanded into custody since April 2022 has been of huge concern to the partnership. The above chart highlights 9 remand episodes, however this represents a significant reduction when compared to the previous year (18). In February 2023, 7 children were remanded for a murder offence until they appeared for trial and sentencing in May 2024. The violence behind these remands is concerning with 10 children remanded for murder over a two-year period. 8 of the children had not received YJS input prior to the remand and 8 children were receiving support from Social Care at the point of remand. The audit will help us drive forward improvements for children in the secure estate but will also support the partnership in understanding how to intervene earlier. We are working to make sure that all alternatives to remand are robustly considered on each occasion. Children receiving custodial sentences is a KPI and between April 2023 to March 2024 the number reduced from 10 to 9 when compared to the year before. Overrepresentation can be seen with 66% of the cohort from an ethnic minority. Four children were first-time entrants.

Challenges, risks and issues

Although our offer for staff is strong, since the covid pandemic the YJS has continued to struggle to recruit youth justice officers and has relied upon agency staff to cover vacancies. We recognise that this is a national issue, but we are trying to address the problem in several ways. Our recruitment processes are being reviewed to reach talent. Our flexible working arrangements are strong, and we are implementing a 9-day fortnight to improve the welfare of the team. We are supporters of apprenticeships and are looking to upskill and attract positive values-based people who are interested in supporting our children. Our Workforce and Inclusion Strategy now details career pathways for those who are looking for progression and expands upon the welfare support that is on offer. We are committed to investing in the workforce.

Serious youth violence in the borough remains a concern for the partnership and will again be a priority for us to work on. Violence remains the most common offence type our children are committing and we are seeing increases in violent behaviour in specific localities in Walsall. We are working closely with partners in the Police, community safety team and exploitation team to address the levels of violence in these areas. The YJS has improved its community links, and established intervention centres in localities where there is often concerning behaviour. We have linked in with local schools, have engaged in community events such as the Lionheart Project, and provided interventions to those children caught on the periphery of disorder. However, these are multi-generational issues and continued work in these localities will need to continue.

Our youth justice partnership recognises that our health pathways for children in the justice system in Walsall need to improve. The YJS Board approved an Education Psychology model in February 2024, and have recruited to a Senior Education Psychology post. Speech, language, and communication provision also needs to be further developed locally and positively we have recruited to a new post. Similarly, we have identified funding through Public Health 0-19 service contract for a school nurse. The children in the YJS that require support from the above are part of a vulnerable group that struggle with inclusion in school and are disproportionately excluded. The partnership has identified responding to unmet need as a key priority. This being said, we still have work to do to promote the inclusion of children in school and ensure correct provision is in place. We need to work with our partners to identify long-term mainstream funding.

Through our board development day in June, partners identified that the quality of data intelligence was a risk for the partnership. Our strategic needs assessment for 2024 identified that our children have experienced a disproportionate number of adverse childhood experiences prior to entering the justice system, however our strategic decision making is not fully informed by partnership data and specialist insight and analysis. This issue will form part of our strategic priorities for 2024/25 in preparation for a new multi-year plan next year.

Over the past 12 months, we have reduced the number of first-time entrants by over 26% through positive collaboration with our local Police partners. There is a current risk associated with a potential change in West Midlands Police policy which could negate the established joint-decision making process across the region and would once again increase the numbers of children in the formal justice system as first-time entrants. This is yet to materialise but should a change in policy be forced onto Youth Justice Services, there will be additional consequences to children on a local level, such as increased exclusions from schools and college and longer term associated impact. It would also impact upon the success of future inspections.

We've been notified that Ministry of Justice Turnaround funding will be coming to an end in March 2025. There is a risk that children who were eligible for support under the Turnaround scheme will no longer receive desistance diversionary desistance interventions due to capacity within the current YJS structure. If the partnership wishes to continue to support this group of children in 2025, without additional funding streams being identified, we will need to consider re-profiling already overstretched children's services resource.

Looking forward – Plan for the forthcoming year

Child First

Walsall YJS are a trauma aware organisation. We understand that our children have experienced significant childhood adversity during their short lives which includes a range of trauma and abuse. Involvement within the justice system can at times re-traumatise them. Child First practice is about working in a way that reduces the stigmatisation that contact with the justice system brings. Our youth justice partnership shares the YJB's Child First vision, and our delivery is based upon the YJB's approach:

1. Prioritise the best interests of children and recognising their particular needs, capacities, rights and potential. All work is child-focused, developmentally informed, acknowledges structural barriers and meets responsibilities towards children.

2. Promote children's individual strengths and capacities to develop their pro-social identity for sustainable desistance, leading to safer communities and fewer victims. All work is constructive and future-focused, built on supportive relationships that empower children to fulfil their potential and make positive contributions to society.

3. Encourage children's active participation, engagement, and wider social inclusion. All work is a meaningful collaboration with children and their carers.

4. Promote a childhood removed from the justice system, using pre-emptive prevention, diversion and minimal intervention. All work minimises criminogenic stigma from contact with the system.

The YJS enables practitioners to undertake the Child First Effective Practice Award and this forms part of our offer to our apprentices. This course explores four tenets of Child First practice, focussed on supporting practitioners to build constructive relationships with their children and families. Our training offer for staff is good and we expect all our managers and practitioners to complete the wider Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate as an additional vocational qualification. We currently have three of the team undertaking the qualification.

We know that sustainable desistance is achieved by building pro-social identities through the identification of strengths, and to do this practitioners need time and space to develop relationships with children. The YJS are committed to improving our collaborative approaches. We continue to partner with Loughborough University to support their current research project determining the extent of Child First principles and collaborative approaches in youth justice. Our children and practitioners are working with researchers to help develop a methodology and approach to the study and have established a Project Reference Group. Our Youth Justice Partnership is looking forward to working with Loughborough to learn from a best practice toolkit.

Our children have found the activity empowering and fun and their feedback is making a good contribution.

Collaborating with children is an important part of the work we do to help positively change their lives, but we also want the views of our children to be central to our strategic direction and to

influence our partners. A practice example could be how we use a 'MyPlan' approach to working with children to identify the things in their lives that will make a positive change.

Our disproportionality champions have developed a tool to support practitioners to have complicated conversations with children to better understand their views, experiences and perceptions of ethnicity and identity. To further improve practitioner confidence, they have also delivered workshops with the team to promote these conversations and to share best practice and case studies of what has worked well for specific children.

As part of our Turnaround offer for children on the periphery of the justice system, we have worked with a local media organisation to create a short video for children and parents who are eligible for the programme. The video is created specifically to let children know what the offer entails and how support plans will be designed by collaboration. The video aims to distance itself from the stigma of the criminal justice system and focusses on strengths, interests, and positive diversion. We have explored using a voiceover with a local accent to make it more accessible. Our children, and their parents, can access the video on YouTube using a QR code that we share.

The 'Child First' approach is not limited to the practice examples given above. Strategically our partnership is determined to ensure that the Child First tenets are visible within our Performance and Partnership Board, that our children are central to discussions and that we hear their voice.

Voice of the child

The YJS seeks to hear the views of our children in the time we spend with them every day and have implemented a recording tool that helps capture what they have to say. Practitioners use this information to help tailor their work and the interventions that work best for that child. We also seek the views of children to consider models of delivery, changes in practice and reviews of policy. They also help us recruit new staff. We have embedded a restorative 'MyPlan' for our children and families to ensure that the support they receive is owned by them and inclusive.

Enabling children in the YJS to shape the wider strategic partnership discussions:

To help Board members understand the lived experience of the children we work with, the YJS Partnership adopted a strategic priority to ensure that the voice of children in the justice system impacts upon our strategic direction. Our Board meetings in 2023 have been based upon a thematic priority and children's voice underpins the discussions and decision making. Below are examples of how the Board have done this:

- 'K', a young man on licence from custody, spoke to the Board about his experiences with the Police, Youth Justice and eventually the secure estate. He talked to Board members about what life was like as a young man that had transitioned into the adult secure estate and the difficulties he faced. Through a mentoring scheme he was able to successfully rehabilitate and through additional support he had started his own mentoring organisation.
- As part of our YJS Strategic Needs Assessment, we consulted with over 50 children we were working with to understand their views on life in Walsall and their experiences of being supported in the justice system. Managers and practitioners were proud to hear how they were positively received by children, but it is apparent that the fear of knife crime is central to their thinking.
- 'S' wrote about his experiences of entering into a YOI for the first time. This semi-structured interview enabled him to talk freely about his fears and anxieties that he faced when he first went through his custody induction and how he managed to survive his sentence. S is also helping us support other children who are facing custodial sentences.
- On film, 'D' spoke about how our Disproportionality Resettlement Mentor had provided him with a safe space to explore his self-identity as a black boy in the criminal justice system. He explained that having someone who he could relate to helped him open up,

improve his self-esteem and develop his aspirations. In addition to speaking to our Board members, our mentor had the opportunity to talk about his work at the Youth Justice Leaders Summit in February 2024.

- Our mentor talked to the Board, alongside safeguarding leads from Werrington YOI, to help partners understand the experiences of boys within custody. He articulated the thoughts and feelings of the boys as they navigated their way through the custody regime and their conflicting emotions attached to toxic masculinity, survival, guilty and remorse. Board members were determined to practice 'child first' principles in their approach to caring for these boys.

The voices of children in the justice system are beginning to impact upon wider partnership thinking, M's story is being heard within the Children's Alliance and is shaping strategies to address over and underrepresentation across the partnership. Similarly, the experiences of boys in the secure estate have influenced strategic partnership boards to collaborate and consider wider system thinking about addressing serious youth violence.

We have continued our work this year with Open Lens, a local media and training organisation, to develop our response to addressing disproportionality in the justice system. Open Lens have worked with boys with black and mixed ethnicity to understand their experience of growing up in Walsall. These boys, in collaboration with Open Lens and strategic leaders, have developed a documentary detailing how structural barriers, trauma, discrimination and individual experience have impacted their lives. Clips of the film have been used to influence the wider children's services and the findings will contribute to a partnership strategy to address overrepresentation.

Enabling children in the justice system to shape youth justice services:

Our partnership with Loughborough University has continued in 2023 and our children are helping create a research project designed to influence 'child first' principles in the justice system. The voice of our children is instrumental in improving services locally in Walsall and further afield.

Walsall YJS believes in recruiting youth justice apprentices. The role was created as our young people told us that earning money is a priority for them, they struggle to find training and employment opportunities that interest them and that having a criminal record can destroy their chances. This opportunity is open to someone who has experienced the youth justice system, who has made positive changes to their life and is keen to help others do the same. The purpose of the apprenticeship is to bridge the gap between staff and children and collaborate with them to seek their views. In 2024 our new apprentice led our safer lives survey (see appendix 3) to better understand issues around violence, knife crime and community safety. This year we are looking to further expand our apprenticeship offer and are working with Unitas to access the full Youth Justice practitioner level 5 apprenticeship.

As part of our consultation with our families, we understand that sometimes they received mixed messages at different stages of the system and these messages were difficult to understand. As a result, we developed literature detailing what was happening and what to expect. Our children suggested wording and we consulted with CAMHs to understand if the leaflets were accessible for those with Special Educational Needs. We also worked closely with our Education Psychology colleagues to develop videos for our children and parents helping them to understand their diagnosis of Attention Deficit and Hyperactivity Disorder and autistic spectrum disorder, accessible through a QR code.

Resources and services

Walsall YJS is resourced through a range of partnership funding, deployed staff and dedicated pathways which are overseen by the YJS Performance and Partnership Board. The YJB grant is a mainstream of funding which the partnership uses to finance staffing and resources to deliver

functions across the youth justice partnership and within the YJS (see appendix 4). The local authority's financial contribution, through Children's Services, supports the YJB grant and ensures that YJS staff are equipped to meet the needs of the children we support. Our connectivity improved in 2022 as the YJS became co-located space with the Exploitation and Missing Team and Walsall Partnership Police. This strengthened our partnership, improved information sharing and collaboration for our shared cohort of children at risk.

The Police also make a significant contribution to the partnership. Walsall Police provide a financial contribution, deploy a Youth Crime Officer and have nominated Youth Officers aligned to the YJS. This is in addition to a financial contribution from the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) which is used to fund practitioners who deliver crime prevention and diversion interventions. PCC funding, through the Safer Walsall Partnership, is also used to focus on our strategic priorities in improving outcomes for those children involved in serious youth violence and criminal exploitation through lived experienced mentors, and providing a dedicated offer for boys with black and mixed ethnicities who are overrepresented in the justice system.

The National Probation Service provide a 0.6 full time equivalent (fte) Probation Officer who oversees transition to adulthood work, and a 0.25 (fte) Probation Service Officer based in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) who contributes to daily referral screenings. These posts are crucial in driving forward improvements within our priority to strengthen transitions.

Our health 'hub' model is improving this year. CAMHS provide a 0.5 (fte) Psychologist to support our children with mental health needs. We are pleased that Public Health are committing funding through the 0-19 service to the YJS partnership to employ a 0.6 (fte) school nurse for 2024/45 dedicated to assessing and supporting the physical health needs of our children. Although we have had difficulties recruiting to the post, we are optimistic that we will be successful before the summer. The Beacon Substance Misuse Service remains a strong partner and we have a named worker who bases themselves in the YJS. And lastly, in partnership with the Youth Insights Team, we are being joined by a specialist Speech and Language Therapist who will be based within the team and will assess our children as they enter the service.

The education needs of children open to the YJS are supported and monitored by Walsall's Inclusion Hub and a named specialist lead for this cohort of children. The Council's Employment and Skills Team have deployed an information, advice and guidance worker to support children aged over 16 and we have a dedicated employment skills pathway for our black boys. In 2024, we have used YJS funding to recruit to a specialist Education Psychologist to support our children with undiagnosed and diagnosed special educational needs to provide specialist support and help youth justice staff ensure their plans and interventions are accessible.

Our mentoring and positive activity offer is strong. We have mentors to work with children involved with gangs and a dedicated mentor to work with black children in the secure estate. We have two established sport partners who deliver weekly multi-sports and another that delivers mixed martial arts. We also commission a local music studio to support our children.

Walsall YJS confirms that it is compliant with the minimum staffing requirements as set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998. Partners have confirmed that their contributions to the Service have been maintained for 2024-25 and the establishment is fully funded.

Board Development

For 2022 onwards, the YJS Board aligned its structure with the Safer Walsall Partnership, reviewed its terms of reference and adopted a model of quarterly themed learning meetings based upon our strategic priorities. Below this structure, leaders from the partnership will drive progress within sub-groups dedicated to the strategic priorities. The YJS Board are committed to

engaging with the youth justice agenda and responding to what our children have to say, advocating for them within their strategic networks.

Following our Board development day in January 2023, our Youth Justice Performance and Partnership Board held a workshop in October with an independent facilitator. This supported strategic leaders from across the partnership to improve their working knowledge of court work in youth justice, to review practice in a busy combined court with other services in the Black Country and to understand how this experience impacts upon children. Board members were joined by operational managers from the Youth Justice Service who provided knowledge and oversight, and received an input from our youth justice practitioner who has lead for court work who took them through a ‘day in the life of a youth justice court officer’. The workshop was well attended with positive contributions. Following this workshop, the Director for Partnerships in Children’s Service went to observe court first hand. In May and June 2024, we have held two further Board development workshops to review our strengths and areas for improvement as a partnership. We have considered the current risks to the partnership and confirmed our strategic priorities for 2024-25. Board members agreed to review the strategic governance structure of the Board in the final year of our three-year plan to ensure that the partnerships drive forward improvements for children in the justice system by using higher quality data intelligence. Importantly, these development days gave our managers and practitioners a further opportunity to meet with Board members and take them through some of the excellent practice they deliver with young people.

Our Board has continued to grow over the past twelve months, and we have welcomed new members. We have responded to our growing population in the secure estate, and we are pleased to have colleagues from Werrington and Brinsford YOIs join our membership to provide better oversight of this group of children. Our Board induction document has been reviewed to help new members be clear of their roles and responsibilities towards the partnership, so they can effectively represent the partnership within their wider strategic networks.

The national Youth Justice Board launched its new oversight framework in April 2023 to increase their understanding of performance across the system. In Walsall we have been placed into quadrant 2 and will engage with the local YJB oversight manager for support on a regular basis. Our YJS Partnership is keen to work with the YJB to consider national best practice. We have also worked with an independent youth justice specialist to help shape the strategic governance model we have in place and to provide ongoing support for leaders. This support builds on the ‘Review of progress against HMIP recommendations’ completed in 2021.

Strategic Youth Violence Collaborative:

Walsall has seen a series of serious youth violence incidents over the last two years leading to a high number of children being remanded into the secure estate. Following the scale of a recent serious incident, the Youth Justice Partnership instigated a coalition with the Safeguarding Partnership and Safer Walsall Partnership to seek assurance that:

- There is an effective plan to safeguard our communities from violence.
- Effective structures are in place to identify learning for the medium and long term.

The coalition, which meets monthly, sits outside of normal governance procedures, and indicates a shared vision to approach the violence problem with creativity and desire to change. Through this coalition, the partners have come together to commission a two-year academic research project to help us challenge our current perceptions of violence and to consider whether our current systems are based on best practice and evidence. The research started in March 2024.



Workforce Development

The strengths of the Youth Justice Service are dependent upon the people working hard each day to improve outcomes for children. Our offer for staff is good and information throughout this plan details how the service has delivered training that is focussed on priorities and improving performance for children. Training has focussed on subjects such as motivational interviewing, restorative practice, cultural competence and unconscious bias, risk assessment and planning, speech and language, RESPECT family conflict training and many more. Walsall YJS are committed to investing in its staff to complete the Youth Justice Effective Practice Certificate (YJEPC) and the Child First qualification through Unitas. We currently have 3 new practitioners undertaking the YJEPC and two more planned for Autumn 2024.


Following our thematic HMIP inspection of children on remand, we were keen to work together with colleagues in Social Care to deliver training on the lived experience of boys within the secure estate and to improve our shared planning. This proved a huge success with over 100 attendees from Social Care where we heard from practitioners involved in the care of these children and directly from children who had experienced a remand episode. In addition to the above, our audits and self-assessment prior to inspection told us that we needed to improve the skills and confidence of those practitioners who worked in Court to ensure that the risks and needs of children were properly understood by decision-makers and that we do all we can to avoid unnecessary remands. We commissioned the Youth Justice Legal Centre to deliver bespoke training for the team which was well received.

In 2023, linked to our strategic priorities and our thematic learning, we identified the need for further training to improve trauma awareness for children involved in serious youth violence and as such, in partnership with Early Help, we received funding in 2024 to train our workforce in Drawing and Talking Therapy. More details can be found in the 'Evidence-based practice and innovation' section of this plan.

Our practice in 2023 was informed by a training plan linked to our Workforce and Inclusion Strategy supporting practitioners and managers within the service to develop in their current roles and to aspire for progression. We have trained Mental Health First Aiders and managers have been trained in supporting staff who are receiving clinical supervision with psychologists. Our wellbeing offer for the team will continue in 2024/25, we have recommissioned clinical supervision with a local psychology service and as our workforce changes, we are reviewing our training plan for practitioners. We undertake a yearly health check with staff and action findings to improve wellness at work. As mentioned previously in this plan, we are staunch supporters of apprenticeships and are looking to upskill and attract positive values-based practitioners who have an interest in supporting children involved in offending. We need to diversify our offer to staff as we continue to struggle to recruit since the pandemic.

Workforce demographics:

As of 1st April 2024, the YJS has 18.5 permanent posts paid by the local authority who are supported by 2 business support officers. A service structure can be found in appendix 2. The management team is stable and has been in place for over 12 months, although we have seen changes within the practitioner group during 2022 and are holding 2.5 vacancies currently covered by agency staff. Our current workforce demographics 35% male and 65% female with 15% Asian and 22% black ethnicity.

	Qualifications	YJEPC	Specialisms	Practice Champions
	Probation x 3 Social Work x 4 Youth Work x 4 Other x 7	CPWs x 4 YJOs x 6 Managers x 5 (1 x in progress)	Court Victims and RJ Programmes & Interventions	Girls, DA & VAWG Exploitation Equality & Disproportionality Children's Voice

Evidence-based practice and innovation

Our performance scorecard continues to mature, and we have an audit process aligned with early help and children's social care. Combined with learning from practice reviews and inspections, the improvements in our oversight and the evidence gained from better analysis have supported changes in practice.

The evidence base of 'what works' to support and prevent children becoming involved in violence is growing. The Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) have released a toolkit to support those working with children and young people. It summarises the best available research evidence about different approaches to preventing serious youth violence.

The YEF's research states that pre-court diversion leads to greater reductions in offending than processing through the courts. It suggests that pre-court diversion reduces reoffending by 13%. Furthermore, if children are diverted but do commit another offence, this offence is likely to be less serious. There is also evidence that pre-court diversion has a greater impact than diversion after a charge is made. This provides support for the argument that you can achieve greater impacts by limiting a child's experience of the criminal justice system. Current evidence suggests the impact of pre-court diversion has been greater with younger children (aged 12-14). Our work with the Ministry of Justice Turnaround Programme and our diversion work through the YJS partnership panel has been detailed earlier in this document.

The YEF also evaluated research of sport-based programmes which found desirable impacts on reducing aggression, promoting mental health and responding to other behavioural difficulties. We know that for sport programmes to be effective, coaches running the programmes need to form trusted relationships with children, the sessions need to be in safe and accessible locations and times and are best utilised when they link children into other positive activities. Our partnership with the Inspire Group is strong and now based on several years of development. We have established sport programmes to work with children on the periphery of the justice system, but we also have an offer for children currently involved in violence and offending.

Below are other examples of how the YJS has adopted evidence-based practice:

Working with girls

Fewer girls than boys offend. In England and Wales, they make up just one in five of the caseload of youth justice services and the population of children in custody. Girls tend to commit less serious crimes than boys and normally pose little risk of harm to other people. Their offending is often a response to emotional problems and relationship difficulties, with parents, partners, and friends. Because of their relatively low number the distinct needs of girls sometimes get overlooked in a juvenile criminal justice system primarily designed to deal with offending by boys. (HMIP Girls in the Criminal Justice System 2014).

Over 2023, we saw an increase in the number of girls that were coming into the YJS. To respond to this trend, we improved our services and created a dedicated group intervention for girls. The Girls Glow group is run by our girls practice champion. It is a girls only safe space with intervention topics surrounding staying safe and out of trouble, relationships and health, self-esteem, and aspirations. Girls that attend receive advice and guidance from female practitioners and specialists within the team. They are also provided with care packages which include sanitary products, toiletries, and sportswear to enable them to confidently attend and engage with our other interventions offers, such as reparation activities and our mixed martial arts groups.

Virtual Reality Interventions:

The YJS currently has two virtual reality intervention offers for our children. Firstly, we have worked with West Midlands Fire Service to deliver one to one virtual reality interventions with

children involved with vehicle crime and secondly, we have commissioned Round Midnight knife crime virtual reality interventions for children involved in knife crime. The programme is based on research and collaboration with 1200 children and developed through Birmingham University. Children believed that exploring risk taking behaviour through this lens was powerful and impactful. These interventions are popular with YJS children and have high engagement rates.

Sport

According to the Youth Endowment Fund evidence base toolkit, the estimated impact on reducing violence through the provision of sport programmes is high. *“The review also found desirable impacts on reducing aggression, promoting mental health and responding to other behavioural difficulties.”* The research suggests that the relationship between adults running the sessions and the children involved is likely to be an important driver of impact. Ideally staff can become a mentor, role model, and trusted person who children will turn to for advice.

In Walsall we have a strong sport offer for the children in the YJS. Our partnership with the Inspire Group multi-sports organisation continues to grow and they are an integral part of our prevention Turnaround offer. All children who come through the prevention pathway are given the opportunity to take part in weekly sports activity and are given a mentor who helps them attend the sessions, access community sport and has a keen focus on improving school attendance. Our children often tell us that they are interested in taking part in contact sports. As such, we have commissioned a local organisation called Impower who deliver excellent mixed martial arts tuition with a real focus on personal development and discipline.

We are working with the Street Games charity who, through Youth Endowment Fund funding, are considering Walsall as a pilot site due to our strong history with sport intervention and our local trusted organisations. This could be an exciting development for 2024.

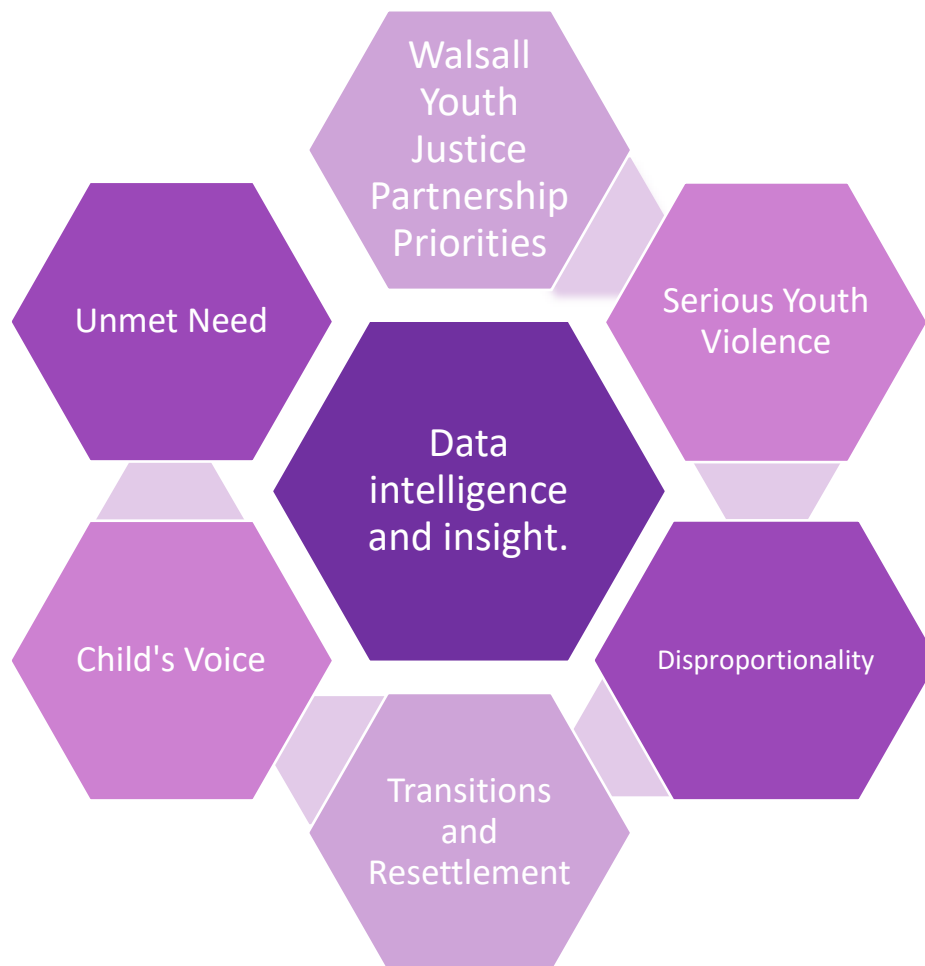
Drawing and Talking Therapy

We have identified ‘Drawing and Talking’ as a therapeutic intervention for children and have trained the YJS workforce as a sustainable response to health inequalities related to youth violence. Drawing and Talking training is designed to educate practitioners in a short-term proactive intervention intended to complement, rather than replace, the work of specialist mental health services. Drawing and Talking therapy will provide a creative outlet for children to develop better engagement with services and improve overall wellbeing specifically targeted at those children most vulnerable to youth violence.

A recent publication of a collaboration between Sandwell Youth Offending Service and the University of Wolverhampton was able to evidence how a move towards engagement through the arts in youth justice fits within a contemporary ‘Child First’ approach by developing services that are authentic to children. Drawing and talking therapy utilise drawing to help children express their feelings differently in ordinary verbal language. The Drawing and Talking therapeutic approach allow individuals to discover and communicate emotions through a non-directed technique. This is especially important when recognising that it is approximated that 60-90% of children within the youth justice system have some level of Speech, Language and Communication Needs compared to 10 % of the wider population.

Strategic Priorities

Walsall youth justice partnership is a forward-facing learning organisation that has a Child First Vision at its heart. We have aligned our priorities with our strategic partners, and we have listened to our young people and practitioners that experience the justice system every day. We are in the final year of our 3-year plan and recognise the hard work needed to make a long-lasting difference to children in the justice system. Our strategic priorities have been reviewed following our Board development day in 2024.



The YJS partnership recognise that these priorities will take time and as such we have published a 3-year plan. As we are working through the final year of that plan, we have chosen to add an additional priority to improve the partnerships data intelligence and specialist insight. In addition to our Strategic Needs Assessment 2024, this will place us in a strong position in early 2025 to enter into a new multi-year plan. We know it will require investment and energy to achieve positive change. Our YJS board members, managers and practitioners are committed to the child first vision and to improving outcomes for our children.

❖ Transitions and Resettlement.

To improve the transition experience of children in the justice system, the YJS will:

- develop our close partnership with the Probation Service, to improve our Transition 2 Adulthood offer.
- Develop our relationship with HMYOI Werrington to improve our resettlement offer for children and transition into the adult estate.

Strategic Lead: Head of Probation

This priority is aligned to the Safer Walsall Partnership reducing re-offending priority and the regional Transition 2 Adulthood policy framework.

❖ Reducing Serious Youth Violence:

To reduce incidents of serious youth violence in Walsall, the YJS will:

- Work collaboratively with the Safer Walsall Partnership to implement the serious violence strategy.
- Deliver effective violence and knife crime interventions for children.
- Ensure the YJS is sufficiently resourced to manage risk to others.

Strategic Lead: Superintendent Walsall Police.

This priority is aligned to the Safer Walsall Partnership and recognises the Serious Violence Duty (2021) and the delegated responsibilities on agencies and partnership.

❖ Disproportionality

To reduce disproportionality and improve outcomes for overrepresented children, the YJS will:

- Lead on the YJB regional ethnic disparity pathfinder.
- Ensure the team are culturally competent and sufficiently skilled and confident in supporting children to explore identity and discrimination.
- Implement a bespoke offer for children with black and mixed ethnicity.

Strategic Lead: Head of Service – Children’s Social Care.

This priority is linked to the Council’s Corporate Equality Group and objectives within the Corporate Plan 2022-25.

❖ Identifying and responding to unmet need (health).

To identify and respond to the unmet needs of children, the YJS will:

- Develop our ‘Unmet Need’ hub of education and health professionals in the team.
- Work with partners to secure long-term additional funding and resources to continue our Education Psychology and Speech and Language offer.

Strategic Lead: Head of CAMHS commissioning

Our partnership recognises that there is a clear need to ‘level up’ health provision for Walsall children in line with the Black country and regional developments.

❖ Voice of our children

To ensure the voice of our children is clearly heard and drives our strategic thinking and operational delivery, the YJS will:

- Ensure the voice of our children is heard within our strategic partnership board and influences the wider partnership.
- Ensure the voice of our children is clear within our assessments, plans and interventions.
- Employ a youth justice apprentice to find new ways to collaborate and consult with our children and ensure their feedback contribute to our data intelligence.

Strategic Lead: YJS Strategic Lead

Following the findings of the HMIP assurance review in 2021, the partnership is committed to better evidencing how we hear and are responsive to the voices of our children both strategically and operationally.

The above strategic priorities and objectives are expanded further in detailed delivery plans.

Standards for children in the justice system

As per communication from the YJB, a new national standards audit is due during 2023-2024. In consultation with the Lord Chancellor, the YJB have agreed that all youth justice services should complete a self-assessment against one selected Standard in 2023-2024. Selecting just one 'Standard' reduces the burden on services in a year when there are a number of substantial changes being implemented to drive improvements in outcomes for children. It also means that time and attention can be given to the quality and accuracy of the self-assessment. The Standard selected was 'Standard 2: At Court'. Services were required to return their self-assessment by the 31st of October 2023.

The YJS operational managers completed audits, based on the questions within this self-assessment template and the Standard 2: At Court document. A random sample of 20 children was chosen within the date range provided. Following completion of the audits, the YJS management team met to moderate the results and discuss examples of good practice and short- and medium-term changes to delivery that were needed. An action plan was put into place.

Walsall Youth Justice Performance and Partnership Board held a workshop in October 2023 with an independent facilitator. This supported strategic leaders from across the partnership to improve their working knowledge of court work in youth justice and to review the available evidence. Board members were joined by operational managers from the Youth Justice Service who provided knowledge and oversight and presented the findings of the audit. Board members were assured of the audit methodology and heard the practice that sits behind delivery within court and were satisfied that any gaps and improvements needed were being addressed. To reinforce the audit, Board members heard a presentation directly from the YJS's lead court officer which detailed 'a day in the life of a youth justice court officer' working in a busy and complex shared court across the Black Country. The workshop was well attended with positive contributions.

The Board used that workshop to complete section A of the self-assessment and to review the operational audit findings.

Please see appendix 8 for the detailed action plan and progress made.

13. Service development

Walsall YJS's Child First vision is built upon the 4 tenets of Youth Justice Board's Child First approach as outlined in its Strategic Plan 2022-25. Our service improvements contained within this strategic plan will have a basis on that approach. Informed by an independent review of progress, our local Performance and Partnership Board originally developed our strategic direction and priorities in January 2022 and determined governance arrangements that will drive forward service improvements. An update to our multi-year plan (2022-25) was considered in June 2023 and then again in June 2024.

The YJS changed office space in 2022 to co-locate with colleagues in the Police, Walsall's Exploitation Team and the MASH. We believe there are clear strategic and operational benefits to be had from the co-location of managers and practitioners:

- Improve our focus on our Reducing Serious Youth Violence strategic priority.
- Improve our strong relationship with the police and support of high-risk children.
- Develop our partnership with the Multi-agency Exploitation Hub
- Better information sharing between partners and more efficient daily triage processes.
- Develop our pathways with Children's Social Care through the MASH front door.

In 2023, the YJS Partnership has reviewed the incidents of serious youth violence that occurred in 2022. We had an unprecedented number of children involved in violent offences that met the threshold for notification to the Youth Justice Board and as such the partnership completed a multi-agency audit exploring the journey of these children from early years until their current circumstances. There were a number of findings and recommendations that were consistent across the children such as overrepresentation of boys with black and mixed ethnicity, the impact of both absent and present fathers, poor experience of education including exclusions and family involvement with early help and social care services. These learning reviews, alongside a wide range of youth justice information and data contributed towards the Safer Walsall Partnership's Serious Violence Needs Assessment. The YJS partnership was a leading agency in the development of the wider serious youth violence strategy.

Thematic Review:

The YJS partnership received an HMIP thematic inspection in June 2023 which focussed on remanded children. We had an increase in the numbers of remanded children between April 2022 and March 2023 and we used this opportunity to pull the partnership together to better understand the journeys behind these children, learn from audit and ultimately improve practice. The violence and the disproportionality underpinning remands is a priority for our partnership. In preparation, we delivered a learning and reflection event following a multi-agency audit of all the children who were in scope for inspection. In addition to the YJS, partners from Social Care, Police, and Education audited assessment practice, planning, multi-agency working and family engagement. A wider lens was given to consider the historical context for these children to identify any potential missed opportunities. We have in place an audit action plan.

We are pleased that the inspectors found effective practice here in Walsall and that the strengths far outweighed any areas for consideration. Inspectors found that the YJS practitioners were knowledgeable and manage these children well. The inspection recognised the national issues impacting upon these children, such as placement sufficiency and a small and challenged secure estate. However, despite these challenges outside of the YJS' control, the Service supports remanded children well and works closely with partners in Social Care, the Police and YOI staff.

A joint thematic inspection youth remand: A review by HMI Probation June 2023.	
YJS management board considerations:	Effective and Positive Practice
Robust and consistent decision making is needed to consider remand into care of the local authority	Practitioners and managers are knowledgeable and manage these children well.
Review of practice of completion of Bail A+, to support Bail packages and negotiation with YCS.	Strong evidence of effective care planning for children on remand, including good information sharing between the partnership including the secure estate.
Review of risk of harm classifications for children in custody- improved consideration of evidence not related to the offence.	Evidence of good multi-agency plans of support for some children on ISS bail and evidence that they were being safely managed in the community.
Develop partnership training- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> lived experience of boys in custody practitioner confidence in court trauma training- UASC. 	Children and young people's need over the course of the remand period were assessed and responded to in a proportionate manner by joint working between Youth Justice and Social Care.
The YJS Partnership needs to ensure 'Child First' thinking within agencies such as Police, Solicitors Firms and Youth Custody Service.	Evidence of positive relationships with children from both youth justice and social care and there was evidence of 'child first' and respectful practice.
The partnership needs to strengthen speech and language support for these children.	Evidence of support for the wider families within the community from both YJS and Children Social Care.
Strengthening our transition planning, through the development of a transition toolkit and T2A Hub with the Probation Service.	Work to address disproportionality within the Service was meaningful.
In some instances, poor info sharing between Police, YJS and HMYOI to approve contacts	Appropriate Adult provision was robust.

To support the partnership’s improvement journey, during 2021/2022 the YJS Partnership have discussed learning from HMIP thematic reports exploring ‘education, training & employment services in youth offending teams- June 2022’, ‘the work of youth offending services during the COVID-19 pandemic- November 2020’ & ‘experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system- October 2021’. The summary of these reviews is in Appendix 4.

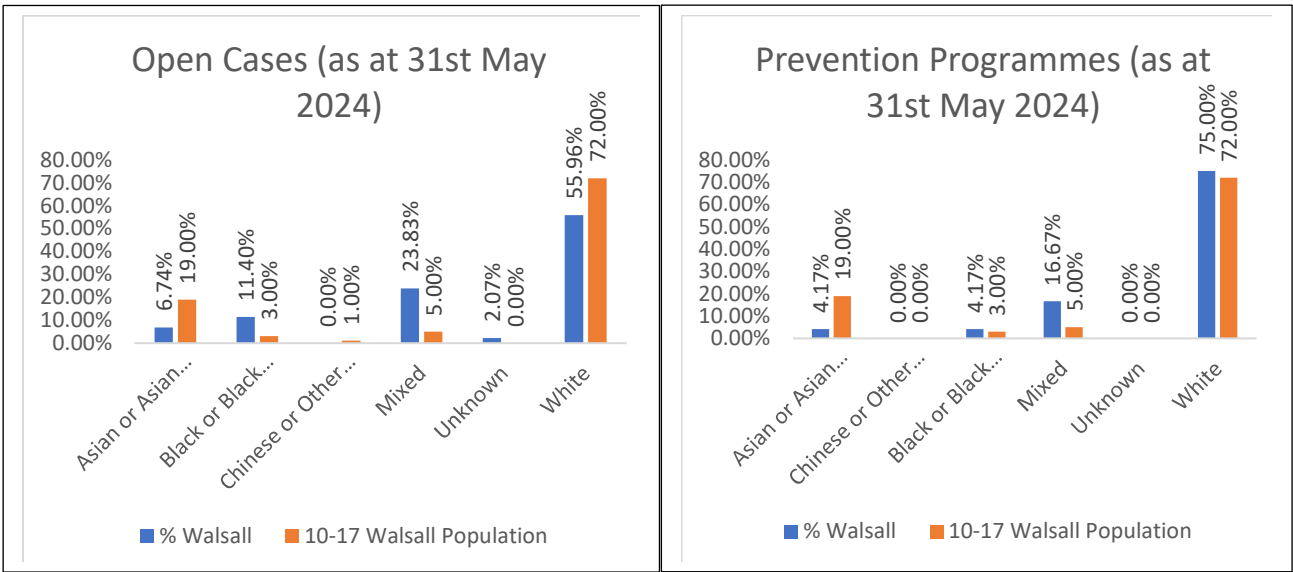
National Priority Areas

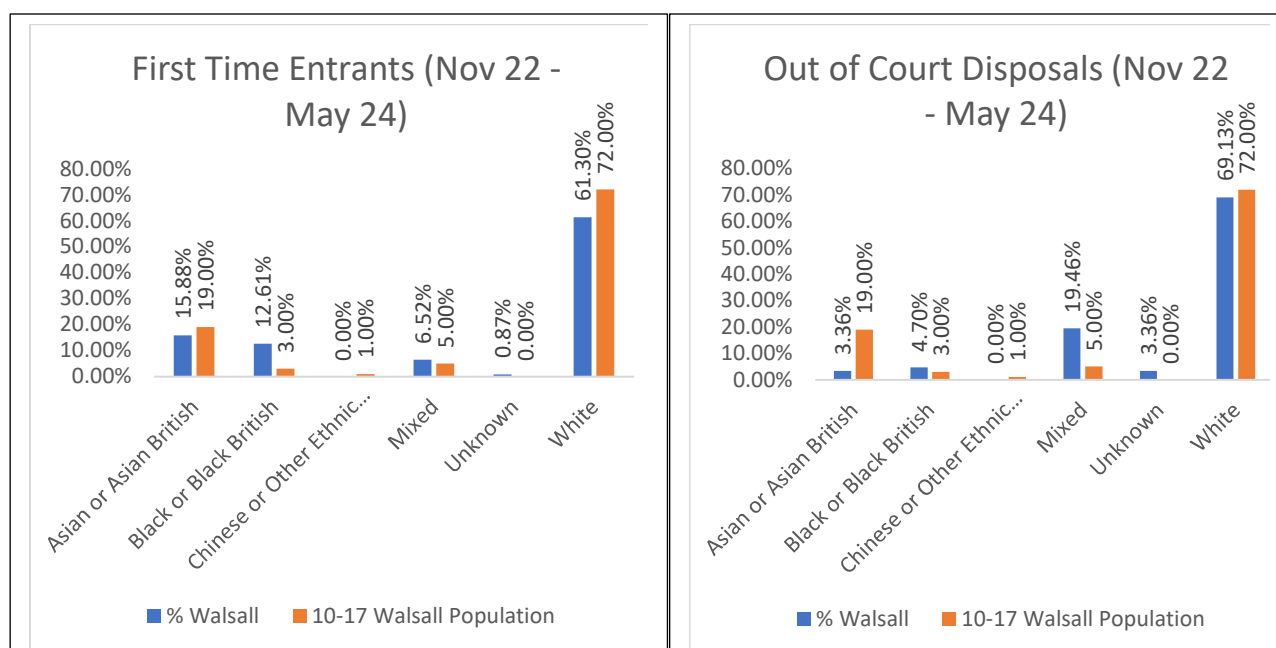
Children from overrepresented groups

What we have done during 2023/24 to reduce disproportionality and improve outcomes for children from over and under-represented groups:

- HMIP were clear that our partnerships work to address disproportionality was meaningful and well embedded across the service.
- Reviewed the partnership full Ethnicity Analysis for 2020-2022 with a focus on the overrepresentation of children with mixed ethnicity. A further 2-year analysis is required.
- Our YJS Equality and Disproportionality Forum provides oversight of an action plan and enables youth justice professionals a safe space to discuss equality and diversity issues.
- The Disproportionality Practice Improvement Sub-Group meets regularly to consider practice developments needed as identified by the overarching Disproportionality Forum.
- In partnership with Open Lens Media to deliver a programme for boys with black and mixed ethnicities, using film, media and personal coaching to improve outcomes.
- Established a dedicated training and employment pathway for boys with black and mixed ethnicity.
- The YJS have also used funding to commission a mentor to support black children within the secure estate and help prepare them to resettlement back in the community.
- We have identified two practitioner Disproportionality Champions to help lead on issues impacting our children.
- We have identified a lead for working with fathers to improve our practice.
- In 2022 and again in 2023, the YJS have supported Palfrey One Big Local in the schools Lionheart Challenge to help local children develop ideas to reduce the levels of violence.
- Established a Girls Intervention Group
- In partnership with the police and crime commissioner we deliver Stop and Search Programmes for children to improve their understanding of the law and their rights.

The charts below tell us that, similarly to the national picture, we continue to see the overrepresentation of black boys and boys with mixed ethnicity within the local justice system.





Our latest scorecard data also tell us that just over 50% of all custodial sentences and remand episodes in Walsall between April 2023 - March 2024 were given to children with non-white ethnicity. We have seen a slight increase in the number of Asian young people entering the system again this year, however overall, this group remains underrepresented in the formal justice system when considering the wider population in Walsall. We know that most recorded violent offences are committed by white children, however a disproportionate amount of violence is committed by children with black and mixed ethnicity. Our data also tells us that black children are disproportionately represented in the numbers of children involved with breach of bail offences, and they are more likely to enter the system on average at a younger age of 14 or below.

Reducing disproportionality has been a priority for the YJS during 2023-24 and will continue to be a priority over the next 2-year period.

Policing

Our local policing partnership is strong. Our superintendent is the deputy chair of the Board and the strategic lead across both the youth justice and the community safety partnership in reducing serious youth violence. Operationally, we have 1.5 youth crime officers who work with the YJS to manage out of court disposals. Similarly, our alignment with Police Offender Manager team means that we are able to work closely to put in place robust and supportive risk management plans. Our local police have taken part with us in joint training with the Youth Justice Legal Centre to help us embed Child First principles and the effectiveness of diverting children from the formal criminal justice system.

Our YJS Performance and Partnership Board identified an increase in first time entrants in 2023 and as such commissioned a joint audit with the police to examine the effectiveness of our diversion interventions compared to our formal Youth Conditional Caution interventions. As a result, and in combination with the training completed as detailed above, has meant we were able to strengthen our joint decision-making partnership panel and provide more robust diversion interventions. As a result, our first-time entrants rates have safely reduced.

Prevention, Diversion and Out of Court Disposals

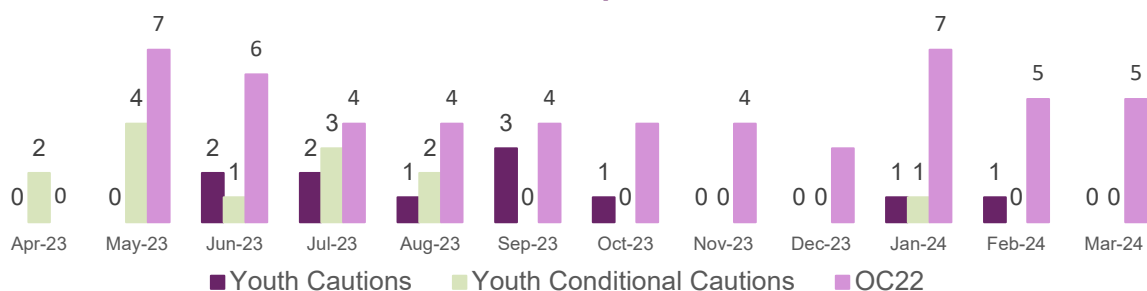
What we have done to improve prevention and diversion interventions and out of court disposals during 2023/24:

- Delivered an excellent Ministry of Justice Turnaround offer for children on the periphery of the justice system seconding an Early Help lead and a sport mentoring service.
- Established a well-resourced Youth Justice Partnership Panel to provide oversight of diversion referrals and joint out of court disposal decisions.
- Early Help remain a valued partner to the panel and the relationship with the Violence Reduction Partnership provides additional capacity and resource.
- The YJS have increased its practitioner capacity to work with children through the diversion pathway or who receive out of court disposals.
- Children are now assessed using the YJB's pre-court assessment tool after volunteering to pilot the tool.
- YJS practitioners deliver a range of creative and bespoke interventions for our children and have access to a strong youth offer.
- Continue to support children who have been referred from schools and children's services who have clear desistance concerns.

Number of Prevention Programmes Open to the YJS April 2024



Out of Court Disposals



During the period between April 2023 and March 2024, Walsall YJS supported 24 children who received a type of caution which positively demonstrates a reduction from 33 over the previous year. This positive reduction in cautions is a direct result of an increase in the use of outcome 22 and Turnaround interventions. By working closely together through jointly auditing first time entrants we were able to demonstrate that children who receive a voluntary diversion intervention engage better than on compulsory interventions and had better re-offending rates.

The MOJ Turnaround Programme went live in December 2022 following a short preparation period. The MOJ are providing multi-year grant to YJS' across England and Wales over three

years, funding them to intervene earlier and improve outcomes for children on the cusp of entering the youth justice system. The overall aims of the Turnaround programme are to:

- achieve positive outcomes for children with the aim of preventing them from offending.
- Ensure children are consistently offered a needs assessment and opportunity for support.
- improve the socio-emotional, mental health and wellbeing of children.

In Walsall we have used Turnaround funding to second an Early Help worker who will be the lead professional for these children, who will assess, plan and co-ordinate interventions. We have also used funding to commission a local sports organisation to deliver positive activities and 121 mentoring sessions. Learning from Youth Endowment Fund research, we know that sport and mentoring are evidence based to reduce levels of violence within communities. We can track offending performance of the Turnaround cohort and will report more in next year's plan. In 2024, we were asked by the Ministry of Justice to present our offer during the national celebration event as a model of good practice.

The Centre for Justice Innovation argue that for most children involved in crime, formal criminal justice processing makes them more likely to commit crime again. There is a strong evidence base that shows that youth diversion is a better way of addressing low level criminal behaviour, can reduce crime, cut costs, and create better outcomes.

Core principles of youth diversion (*The Centre for Justice Innovation Toolkit*)

Minimise labelling: Youth diversion schemes should take all reasonable steps to avoid stigmatising the young people they work with, and to prevent them from forming deviant or delinquent identities that may interfere with their development.

Avoid net-widening: Ensure that the scheme operates as an alternative to the formal justice system, rather than as a supplement to it. Diversion should only be for young people who would otherwise be dealt with formally in the criminal justice system.

- Do not overdose young people: Programming offered through diversion should be therapeutic and targeted. For most diverted young people, this will generally be light touch and informal

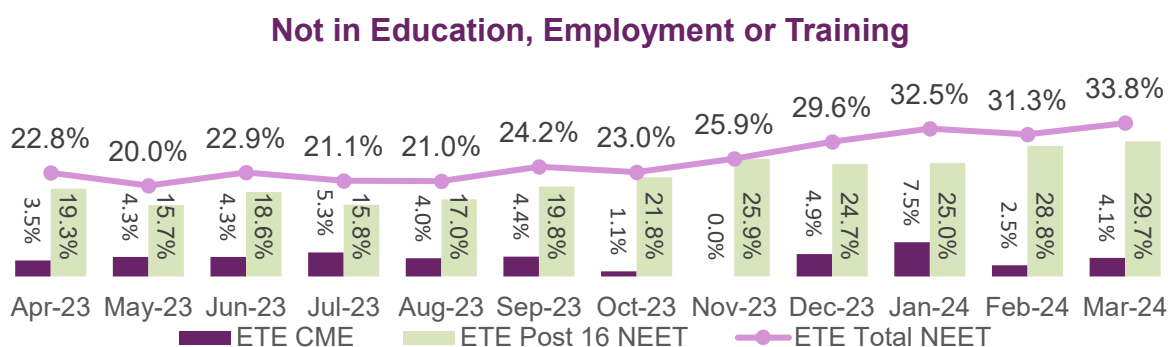
Research in Northamptonshire Youth Offending Service found that prosecuting children increased the likelihood of them re-offending even when considering different offence types and personal characteristics (*Kemp V, Sorsby A, Liddle M, Merrington S (2002). Assessing responses to youth offending in Northamptonshire. Nacro Research briefing 2.*)

The Youth Justice Partnership approved a diversion pathway for children at risk of engaging in violent behaviour, offending and harmful sexual behaviour. In partnership with Walsall police, we established a daily triage process to identify children involved in violent behaviour. The panel is well resourced with colleagues from Children's Services, Early Help, NHS Liaison and Diversion, Beacon Drug and Alcohol Services and commissioned intervention providers such as the Inspire Group. The panel identify the need for assessment and assign a lead professional to engage with the child and deliver interventions. All children eligible for out of court police disposals are also discussed at the Youth Justice Partnership Panel. A joint decision is made regarding eligibility and then allocated to a youth justice worker to undertake an assessment and make a proposal for suitability based on risk, need, offence seriousness and the wishes of victims. The partnership is developing our ability to track the offending behaviour of this group of children to demonstrate effectiveness.

Education

What we have done to improve education, training, and employment outcomes during 2023/24:

- The YJS' strong partnership with the Inclusion Hub supports our children under 16.
- We have introduced a youth justice personal education plan for children where issues have been identified around attendance, exclusion, and SEN.
- The Virtual School complete Personal Education Plans (PEP) for all remanded children.
- The YJS has had an Impact worker deployed to the team to support 16+ young people.
- We have a 16+ training pathway via Open Lens Media for our black boys.
- Our partnership with the Local Authority's employment and skills team actively monitors and manages our 16+ children with a NEET Action Group
- We are supported by Walsall Works, an initiative supported by local businesses to help young people find employment to develop work experience opportunities.
- We have identified funding for an Education Psychologist to be embedded within the team to improve our 'unmet need' and communication model.



The total percentage of children open to the YJS who are not in suitable education, training or employment have increased over the past 6 months. In March 2024 there were 6 children classed as missing education (CME) and not in school and support has been put in place through the YJS to get them back into education. Through robust scrutiny, these children have YJS education plans in place to explore how YJS workers can support the CME process. We believe that these numbers are steadily increasing as our cohort is slowly changing, combined with a reduction in the total cohort of children we are working with. This includes:

- Fewer children in custody
- Older children entering the YJS (mostly 17, some 18)
- The pre-court and post-court split is shifting with more pre-court disposals being put in place. This means that older NEET children enter the YJS, and although support is put in place, 3 months is not enough time to demonstrate solid outcomes.

Education performance management and education plans:

Although it is clear that the majority of school age children open to the YJS do not achieve over 90% attendance, we are confident that the cohort of children has good oversight. The partnership working between the YJS, and the Inclusion Hub is strong and we have started a new Education Support Meeting initiative where there is combined oversight of these children, a separate education plan is created and progress is reviewed. The addition of an Education Psychologist to the team will only strengthen the planning and support provided to these children.

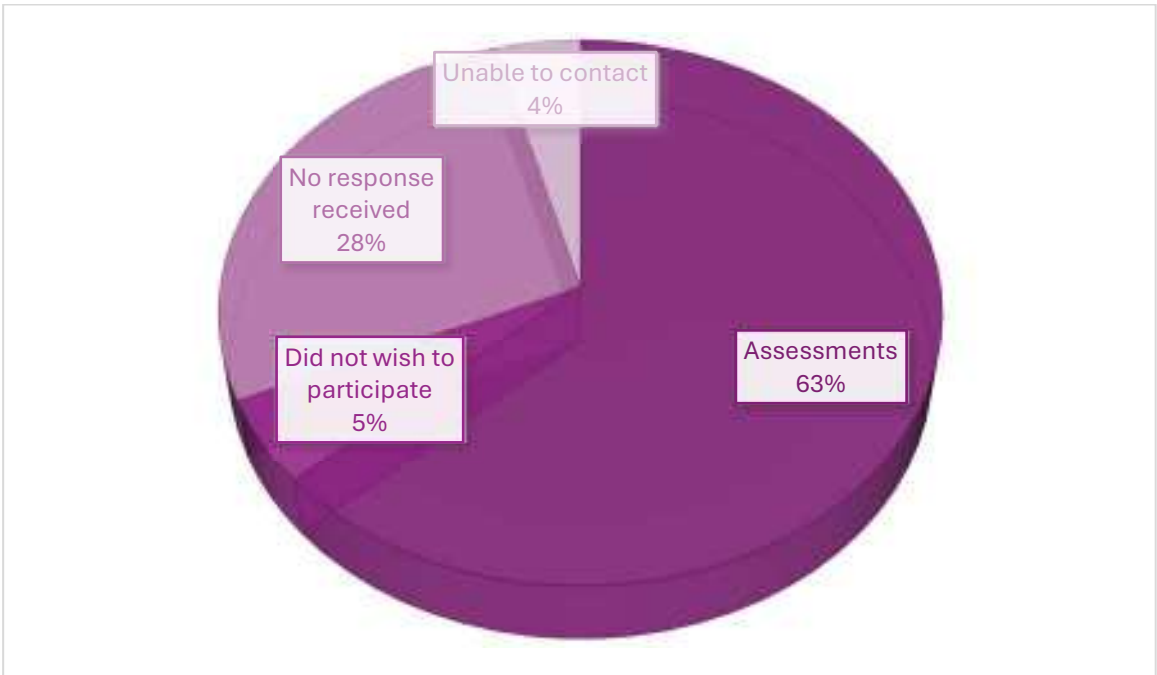
We do recognise that children often enter the youth justice system with special educational needs (currently 49%) and that children completing their intervention with us will often have reduced timetables, receive their education in short stay 'pupil referral units' and have experienced exclusion. 61% of our children have on average experienced at least 1 type of exclusion from school. We continue to be faced with challenges when supporting Children in Walsall over the age of 16. Often the 'pull' of working for 'cash in hand' is greater than attending a training

provision with longer term benefits, combined with difficulties created by a difficult education history, experience of exclusion and few qualifications.

Restorative approaches and Victims

Our victim and restorative justice offer is now well established. Feedback received from victims where we have offered support has been incredibly positive with 93% rating the service they received as being ‘excellent’.

Over the past 12 months we have had 130 victims of crime committed by children. 115 of those victims have been contacted or attempts have been made to contact them. 5 were unable to be contacted, we didn’t receive a response from 33 and 6 victims did not wish to participate. We completed assessments with 76 victims, the outcomes of which included signposting to other agencies/services, offering direct support and intervention to the victims, direct reparation, and restorative justice.



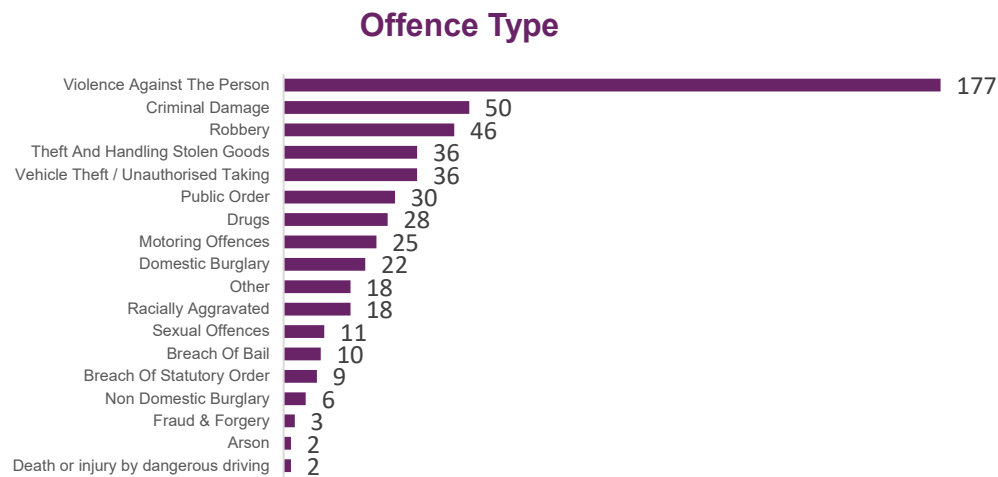
Serious Violence, Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding

Preventing and reducing youth violence is a strategic priority for the partnership. Between April 2022 and March 2023, Walsall YJS reported serious incident notifications for a total of 14 children in relation to offences such as wounding, attempted murder, and murder. From April 2023, the number of notifications to the YJB has significantly reduced to 2. Violence is the most common offence type we see, and we are seeing a larger number of children entering the formal youth justice system for the first time by receiving custodial sentences. Work to address the strategic priority to prevent and reduce youth violence is detailed earlier within this plan and our close alignment to the Safer Walsall Partnership. Walsall’s Serious Violence Strategy is embedded on page 9 of this plan and details of the Serious Violence Collaborative is contained on page 21.

From April 2023 to March 2024, Walsall has experienced a noteworthy 9.76% decrease in serious youth violence (SYV) among individuals under 25 years of age. This reduction is part of an encouraging trend of year-on-year decreases, evidencing the positive impact of our multifaceted prevention strategies. Despite the overall positive trend, a concerning development has emerged regarding knife-related offences within the context of serious youth violence. There has been a specific increase in knife-related incidents, with nine additional offences recorded

during this 12-month period. Although these figures represent a small number in absolute terms, they are significant enough to warrant specific attention and action due to their potential impact and the broader national trend towards increased knife violence among youth.

Violent offending is monitored monthly through the YJS performance scorecard. If we consider the period between April 2023 and March 2024, we can see that violence against the person makes up a significant percentage (35%) of all offences linked to children in the Youth Justice Service.

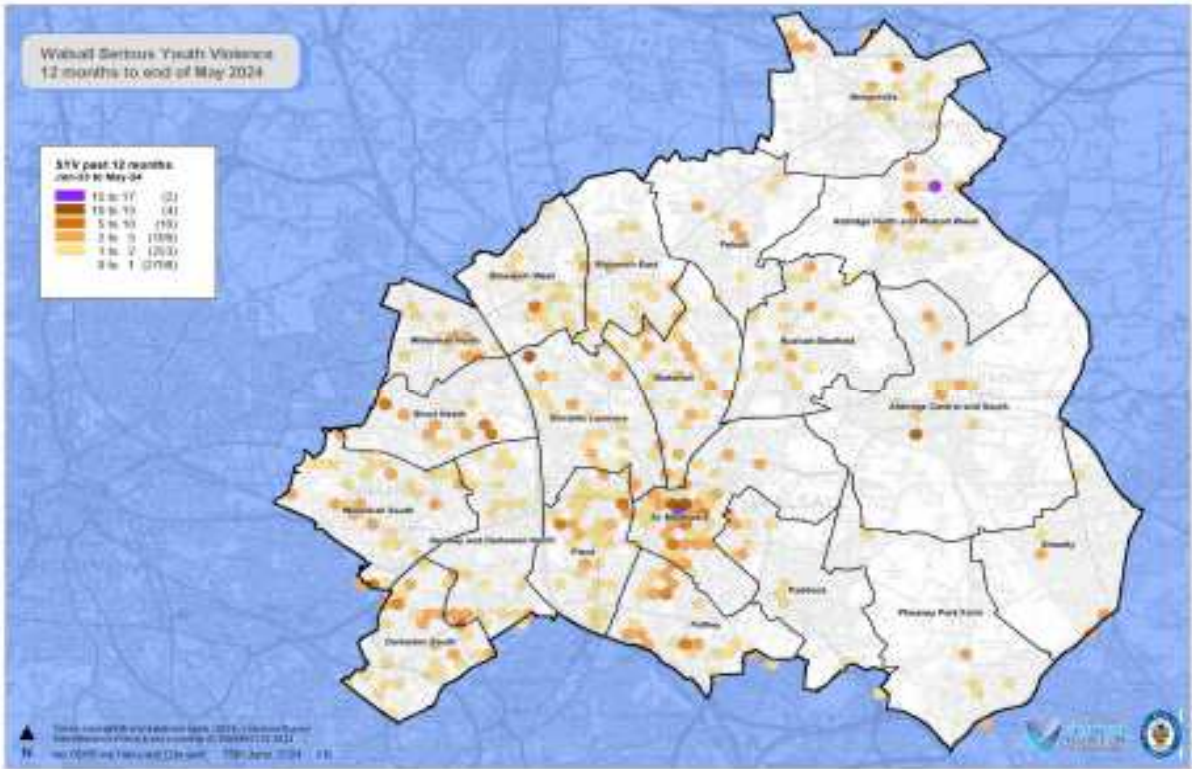


Further data can be found in Walsall’s Serious Youth Violence Strategic Needs Assessment and our Youth Justice Service Needs Analysis. Our relationship with the Police analysts is improving and the Youth Justice Partnership now is in receipt of detailed data relating to victims and suspects, aged 0-25, who are involved in serious youth violence. This information is regularly shared with the Safer Walsall Partnership through the local Police Superintendent who leads on addressing violence for the partnership. The below data is taken from Police data and relates to individuals that are classified as a suspect involved in serious violence.

Walsall Serious Youth Violence, Age Band and Gender of Suspect 1 st May 2023- 31 st May 2024				
Age Band	Female	Male	Unknown	All Genders
5-9	2	2	0	4
10-14	58	84	19	161
15-19	33	83	4	120
20-24	11	32	0	43
25-29	5	18	0	23
30-34	17	25	1	43
35-39	13	11	1	25
40-44	7	10	1	18
45-49	3	10	1	14
50-54	2	4	0	6
55-59	5	4	0	6
60-64	1	2	0	3
65+	1	3	0	4
Not known	4	4	0	9
All Age Bands	162	292	27	481

We know from Police data that most suspects in relations to serious youth violence are boys aged 19 and under. The richness of Police information received also helps the partnership understand which areas of Walsall experience the highest levels of serious violence incidents,

during which days and times. This information is allowing us to prepare additional mentoring and youth outreach work for the summer holidays and beyond. The below diagram tells us that most violent incidents occur in the west of Walsall and the St Matthews area.



Exploitation:

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework that assesses potential victims of modern slavery. Victims may not be aware that they are being exploited or trafficked and may have agreed to elements of their exploitation, or accepted their situation (NRM, Gov.uk, 2022). Between January 2019 and December 2022 there were 209 persons referred to the NRM for exploitation in Walsall, of which there were 77 victims referred between September 2021 to September 2022. The local authority is the biggest referrer (56% of all referrals), followed by West Midlands Polices (32%). Two thirds of people referred for exploitation were male (69%). Children aged 14 to 17 years are at the greatest risk of being exploited.
Walsall Serious Violence Duty Strategic Needs Assessment – Dr Helen Lowey 2023

Walsall YJS are one of the three main statutory partners (YJS, Police and Social Care) who have joined together with Street Teams, a local organisation working with exploitation, to form Walsall’s exploitation hub. The Hub meets daily to triage assessments and review incidents. Professionals within the hub also oversee missing children. From daily triage, professionals coordinate disruption meetings for the perpetrators of exploitation and safety plans for victims. This activity is supported by our co-location in office space. In February 2024, the YJS managers completed child journey and dip sample audits focussing on children who were identified as being at risk of exploitation. Of the 25, 4 girls were assessed as being at risk of sexual exploitation and 21 boys assessed at being at risk of criminal exploitation. 12 of the children had been referred to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and 22 of the children had been referred into the exploitation hub for information sharing.

Children vulnerable to exploitation are also vulnerable to radicalisation and involvement with violent extremism. Although no children open to the YJS have been referred into prevent or Channel Panel over the past year, it is important that YJS staff are appropriately trained. As such, all staff are required to complete Prevent Training as part of their inductions. In February 2023 YJS practitioners attended a Synergy Training event at Bescot Stadium delivered by West

Midlands Counter Terrorism Police and in December 2023, Walsall held a Channel Conference led by the YJS Strategic Lead (Chair of Channel Panel) and Walsall's Prevent Co-ordinator.

Detention in Police Custody

Between January and December 2023, there were 15 times, relating to 15 children, where a child was kept overnight in police custody. On only one occasion a child was transferred to accommodation under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 (PACE). There is good dialogue between the Police and the Local Authority (LA), however there is a mixture of outcomes. There is an even split between the LA reporting no beds available, with the decision being made that due to the time, transferring a child was inappropriate. Within normal working hours, YJS staff undertake the Appropriate Adult (AA) role if family are not available. Outside of this, the YJS has dedicated staff who undertake the AA role through the Emergency Duty Team.

Working with Families

The YJS has trained practitioners in 'Respect' training for supporting families where there is child to parent abuse, and we have also had training in reducing parental conflict. The parents of our children are integral to the process and are included in My Plans and planning meetings. Through our consultation with families, we understand that fathers are not involved enough in the work that we do with children in the justice system. Research has highlighted that men are too frequently overlooked and are poorly engaged by universal and specialist services. This then appears to set a pattern that is evident through targeted and specialist services, including care proceedings and certainly the youth justice system. Based on this understanding, Walsall has developed a Father's Strategy. In support, the YJS has identified a practitioner fathers champion.

Learning from Serious Incidents:

The YJS has undertaken a review of children who have been involved serious violent incidents in 2022. This followed an excellent partnership review, written by a Head of Service from Children's Social Care, which explored the journey of a 15-year-old boy who ultimately become involved in a fight and seriously injured another boy with a knife. The review was presented to the YJS Performance and Partnership Board in February 2023, alongside a case study which detailed the impact on the victim and the support provided to him and his family. The main learning points and recommendations from both reviews are detailed below:

Learning Points	Recommendations
Maintaining a focus on the child	Ensure clear training opportunities are in place for staff in conducting effective direct work with children when assessing their needs.
Issues of neglect and how we work with families where it is a long-standing issue	Ensuring that our assessment guidance regarding neglect is clear and that professionals involved understand its long-term impact in line with the current Walsall partnership Neglect Strategy.
Use of fixed term exclusions for younger children:	Ensure that staff within the Virtual School and Inclusion Hub provide support, challenge and training to schools who are excluding, ensuring they fully understand the implications and how they impact on outcomes
EHCP processes – when learning difficulties are identified	Ensure staff within the Virtual School and Inclusion Hub work alongside the SEN Team to ensure EHCPs are prioritised for children with a social worker/YJO and are, wherever possible, completed within timescales
Working with fathers:	A recent audit has been completed regarding working with fathers and the findings of this will be incorporated into overall practice development.
Step-up & step-down processes:	Within both MASH and across the localities, we need to ensure that the new step up/step down processes are working effectively.
Earlier identification of Young People at risk of Serious Youth Violence:	A strategic needs assessment for youth violence has now been commissioned to provide an analysis and context in relation to incidents of serious youth violence here in Walsall and will inform a strategic coordinated approach to reduce youth violence and secure better outcomes for children, young people within their community.

16. Sign off, submission and approval

Chair of YJS Board	Collen Male- Executive Director of Childrens Services	Phil Rutherford- YJS Strategic Lead
Signature		
Date	28.06.2024	28/6/24

17. Appendices

Appendix 1

Current YJS Performance and Partnership Board membership:

- West Midlands Police – Superintendent
- National Probation Service – NPS lead for the Black Country
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services- Head of Commissioning
- Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services- Clinical Lead
- Black Country Magistrates Youth Panel Chair
- ICB- Managing Director Walsall Place
- Head of Safeguarding – HMYOI Werrington
- Head of Resettlement – HMYOI Werrington
- Senior Probation Officer – HMYOI Brinsford
- Local Authority –
 - Executive Director of Children's Services (Chair)
 - Director of Children's Services - Partnerships
 - Social Care Head of Service- Corporate Parenting
 - Public Health – Lead Consultant
 - Head of Resilient Communities
 - Community Safety Manager
 - Education- Director of Access and Achievement
 - Education- Virtual School Lead
 - Education- Head of Inclusion
 - 16+ Education- Employment and Skills Manager

Supporting Officers-

- Youth Justice Service Strategic Lead, Walsall Children's Services
- Youth Justice Service Team Managers
- Youth Justice Board- Regional Advisor
- Local Authority Accountant – finance.
- Local Authority Performance Officer
- Administrative Support, Youth Justice Service

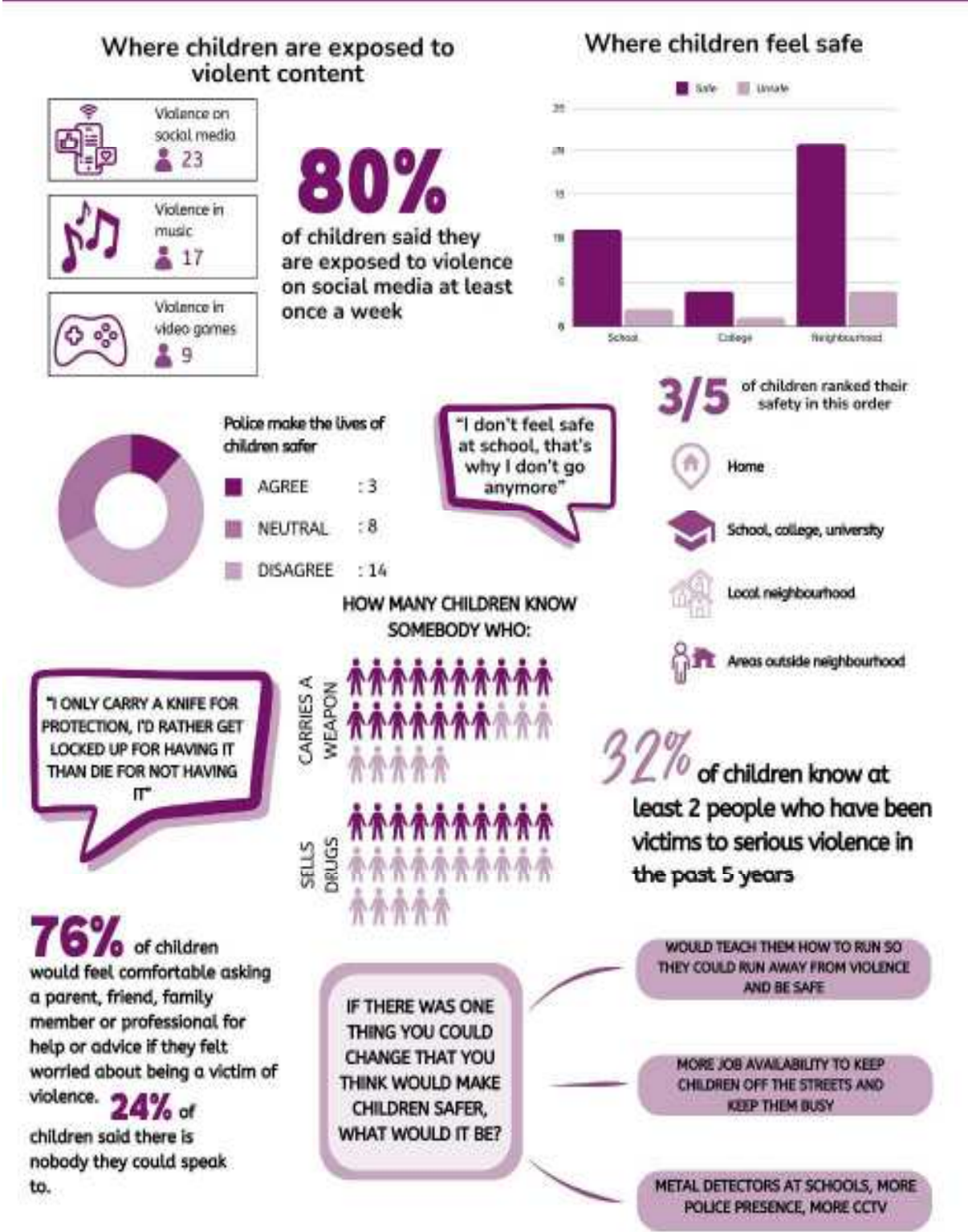
Appendix 2

Last 4 Performance & Partnership Board Meeting Attendees					
Name	Job Title	10/05/2022	23/09/2022	17/02/2023	14/06/2023
Sally Rowe (Chair)	Director of Children's Services	x	x		x
Frances Bate	Team Manager, Walsall Youth Justice Service	x	x		
Phil Rutherford	Strategic Lead, Youth Justice Service (YJS)	x	x	x	x
Mamps Gill	YJB, Head of Region for Midlands	x	x	x	x
Lorraine Thompson	Virtual Schools for Looked After Children	x		x	x
Lee Allen	Senior Performance Officer, Children & Social Care	x	x		
Samantha Jones	Superintendent for West Midlands Police	x			
Lee Westlake	Special Advisor to the P&P Board Meeting	x	x	x	x
David Elrington	Regulatory Services Manager	x	x		
Leanne Barnett	Deputy Head of Walsall & Wolverhampton Probation Service	x			
Helena Kucharczyk	Head of Service, QA and Performance Improvement	x		x	
Margaret Courts	Head of CAMHS Commissioning for the Black Country And West Birmingham CCG	x	x	x	x
Ann Williams	Finance- accountant	x			
Isabel Vanderheeren	Director of Early Help Partnership Children's Services	x	x	x	x
Jane Kaur-Gill	Employment & Skills Manager, Regeneration	x			
Zoe Morgan	Head of Service for Health, Protection & Support	x	x		x
Mark Patrick	Team Manager, Walsall Youth Justice Service	x			
Khalique Shah	Business Support Officer	x	x	x	x
Tanya Collier	Lead Accountant, Children's Services		x		
Sharon Kelly	Director of Access & Inclusion, Children's Services		x	x	
Paramjit Bains	Chair of Black Country Youth Panel		x		x
Shona Chand	Victim Liaison Officer, Walsall Youth Justice Service		x	x	
Daina Anderson	Founder & CEO of Open Lens Media		x		
Natalie Lau	Head of Walsall & Wolverhampton Probation		x	x	x
Malachi Edwards	Young person		x		
Kelly Rutherford	Senior Practitioner, Walsall Youth Justice Service			x	
Samuel Booth	Apprentice, Walsall Youth Justice Service			x	
Emma Thomas	Deputy Head of Service & Partnership Lead for Business Insights			x	
Nadia Ingles	Consultant in Public Health – Inequalities & Mental Well-being			x	x
Emma Fletcher	Seconded Service Manager & Clinical Lead, Walsall CAMHS			x	
Steve Gittins	Community Safety Manager, Walsall Council			x	x
Esther Higdon	Public Health for Children & Young People			x	
Rob Thomas	Head of Access & Education			x	
Maria Kilcoyne	Associate Director for Safeguarding & Partnerships			x	x
Jonathan Parkes	Head of Safeguarding - Werrington YOJ				x
David McNally	Youth Justice Board- regional advisor				x
Pervez Mohammed	West Midlands Police- Superintendent				x
Ricky Otto	Disproportionality Resettlement Officer				x
John O'Connor	Team Manager – Walsall YJS				x

Safer Lives Survey Findings

Exploring youth experiences with violence, safety perceptions, and community resilience.

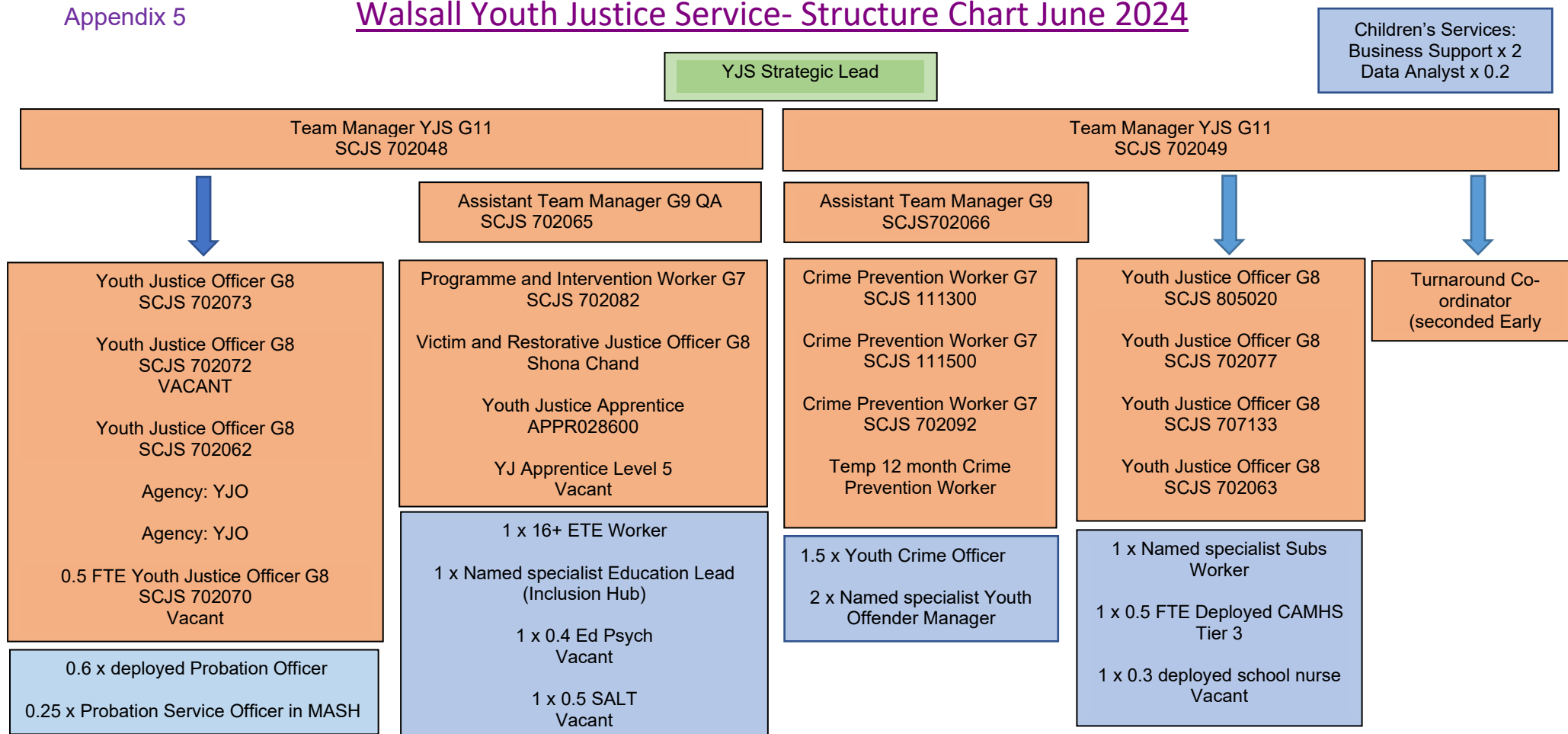
*These are findings taken from the Safer Lives Survey 2024 which were asked to 25 children aged 13 - 19 in the Walsall area





*Taken from Walsall Youth Justice Service Strategic Needs Assessment 2024.

Walsall Youth Justice Service- Structure Chart June 2024



Position (no reported disabilities)	Sex	Ethnicity
Strategic Lead	Male	White
Team Managers	1 x male and 1 x female	2 x White
Assistant Team Manager	2 x female	2 x White
G8 Officers	7 x female 2 x male	5 x white, 2 x black, 1 x Asian, 1 x mixed (1.5 x vacancy)
Crime Prevention Workers G7	4 x female	3 x white, w x Asian
Programme Worker	Male	Black
Apprentice	Female	Black

Breakdown of expenditure to accompany certificate, 2023-24

Walsall

INCOME	Youth Justice Board ¹	Local Authority	Police	Police and Crime Commissioner	Probation	Health	Welsh Government	Other	Total
Cash	£493,835	£542,150	£21,888	£76,885	£5,000			£2,660	£1,142,418
In-kind									£0
Total income	£493,835	£542,150	£21,888	£76,885	£5,000	£0	£0	£2,660	£1,142,418

1. This includes all grants received from YJB

If possible, please provide a breakdown against each funding source. If this information is not retained, please give details of the total amounts spent against each area.

EXPENDITURE	Youth Justice Board ²	Local Authority	Police	Police and Crime Commissioner	Probation	Health	Welsh Government	Other	Total
Salaries	£467,093	£514,689	£21,888	£76,885					£1,080,555
Activity costs	£17,130	£19,838						£2,660	£39,628
Accommodation	£0								£0
Overheads	£6,497	£3,533			£5,000				£15,030
Equipment	£3,115	£4,090							£7,205
Total expenditure	£493,835	£542,150	£21,888	£76,885	£5,000	£0	£0	£2,660	£1,142,418

2. Figures provided in sheet (1a), plus sheet (1b) if applicable

Notes:

Other income of £2,660 is contribution from Youth Justice Board towards the Youth Justice Leaders summit film. Corresponding expenditure is included within activity costs

Appendix 7

A joint inspection of education, training & employment services in youth offending teams in England & Wales, A review by HM Inspectorate of Probation June 2022.	
YJS management boards should:	What we did:
Ensure that all children have a comprehensive ETE assessment.	All children that enter the YJS have an assessment of their ETE. Where issues are highlighted, a comprehensive assessment is completed by the Virtual School & Inclusion Hub, including those on remand in custody (PEPs). This ensures that where needs are identified these are promptly shared with establishments to make sure the child is receiving the correct level of support.
Monitor, alongside the local authority, key aspects of ETE work for children working with the YJS, including school exclusion, level of attendance, extent of additional support provided to children with SEN/ ALN, ECHP reviews.	<p>YJS and VLH meet on a monthly basis to discuss primarily those children that are of concern, regarding low attendance, exclusions, SEN/EHCP including children that are remanded into custody. VLH pro-actively attend professionals' meetings, risk discussions & remand meetings to ensure children/families are being offered appropriate support. They also work closely with Youth Justice staff to offer support & guidance when managing complex situations.</p> <p>Monthly monitoring of EHCPs has been introduced to ensure that reviews are completed in line with timescales, where this does not occur this is escalated via the appropriate channels. Monthly YJS performance scorecard allows us to monitor and pick up any trends or issues. The scorecard breaks down types of provisions, no. of NEET children, attendance, SEN and EHCP's.</p>
Develop ambitious aims for ETE work in the YJS, including the achievement of Level 2 English and Maths by every child.	For some children when they enter the YJS, we know that their schooling has been disrupted for reasons such as exclusion, managed moves or poor attendance. We work hard, through Black Country Impact & the Local Authority Walsall Works employment & skills offer, to ensure children are offered opportunities to complete their Level 2 in English and Maths, alongside other key skills/training. Going into 2023/24, we need to further develop our pathways for post 16 children.
Establish a greater range of occupational training opportunities for those children beyond compulsory school age	<p>The YJS have introduced a training pathway for black and mixed heritage boys, the Triangle Trust Pathway, via Open Lens. This supports our transition for children into adulthood up to the age 29.</p> <p>Black Country Impact offers advice & guidance to children post 16, identifying their interests, strengths, abilities & supporting them into a provision/activity that best suits their needs.</p> <p>Virtual School works with children in care post 16 to offer advice & guidance and support them to access appropriate provision/training.</p>
Monitor & evaluate the levels of educational engagement & attainment in disproportionately represented groups within the YOT caseload in order to develop improvement.	<p>YJS report on ETE status for all children including OOC & Turnaround.</p> <p>Open Lens work with boys from black and mixed heritage boys as we understand & acknowledge that they may require a different type of support.</p>

A thematic review of the work of youth offending services during the COVID-19 pandemic A review by HM Inspectorate of Probation November 2020	
YJS management boards should:	What we did:
Identify the backlog of cases that are being processed through courts, and ensure that there is sufficient workforce capacity to deal with increased caseloads	The backlog within the Youth Court was quickly worked through by the summer of 2021. Court staff were provided with the technology to engage virtually and attended Court in person. Caseloads consistently monitored and resources re-purposed for the increase in Out of Court Disposals
Work with partners to include children who are defined as high vulnerability by YOTs within the local definition of vulnerable children.	Children in the YJS cohort were defined locally as highly vulnerable and our partner the Virtual School prioritised support this group.
Consider how this group of children are to be reintroduced to school, education and employment and how any attainment gap is to be addressed.	YJS children were provided with the opportunity to receive laptops to enable them to better re-engage with school. School hours, attendance and placement suitable monitored on a monthly basis.
YJSs should:	
Routinely assess children's access to IT and remote communication methods as a standard part of assessments.	QA process updated to ensure that upon entering the YJS children were assessed for IT capability.

The experiences of black and mixed heritage boys in the youth justice system A thematic inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation October 2021	
YJS partnership boards should:	What we did:
have a vision and strategy for improving outcomes for black and mixed heritage boys, and make sure these are understood by staff and partner agencies	Funding through the PCC and SWP has enabled the YJS to work with a local organisation to develop our Disproportionality Strategy in 2022
ensure that all board members contribute data from their individual services that identifies areas of disproportionality and the action being taken to address them, and that this data is used to develop a joint strategic needs assessment	Following the YJS ethnicity analysis, children's services commissioned analysis from across all part of CS, including education and supported this will a full locality analysis
have a joint set of targets, for example with children's services, for improving service delivery for these boys, and make sure mechanisms are in place to monitor and evaluate outcomes.	Reducing disproportionality remains a priority for the YJS with a Board member, (Head of Children's Social Care) taking strategic lead for this work across the partnership
YJS managers should:	
establish effective processes for gaining feedback from black and mixed heritage boys on the services they receive and use this feedback to	The role of the YJS apprentice is to gather the views of our children. Our work with Open Lens will have a child steering group to gather feedback from children as part of the engagement and development programme to establish legacy

assess, review and improve the quality and suitability of service provision	
make sure that staff understand what is expected of them in their work with black and mixed heritage boys and that they are inducted, trained and supported to work effectively with this group of children	YJS staff have been trained in engaging our black children and we undertook commissioned unconscious bias training. Further training is planned for 2022 and we are working local community leaders to support this.
improve the quality of management oversight to make sure it is sufficiently focused on diversity, what this means in practice and that there are clear escalation routes to address any barriers to black and mixed heritage boys accessing services	Audit tools and QA gatekeeping tools have been amended to improve our oversight of this cohort of children. We have also undertaken audits based on the recommendations of this thematic review
address gaps in specialist provision for black and mixed heritage boys, either by delivering it in-house or by commissioning it from appropriate local community organisations and evaluate referral and uptake rates for the services provided	We have commissioned specialist provision for our black and mixed heritage boys- an engagement and development programme based on improving ETE skills through media.
offer suitable support and intervention to the parents/carers of black and mixed heritage boys and review the suitability of this provision	We have continued to work with first class legacy during 2021 to refer parents to the kitchen table talks programme

Appendix 8

Self-Assessment Standard 2: Work in Court Action Plan			
Operational Actions	Lead	By when	Notes
Review the YJS Quality Assurance Policy	Kelly Rutherford	December 31 st 2023	Completed.
Review the YJS Court Procedures to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Meeting the needs of children with special or alternative needs i.e. interpreters - Provision for specialist assessments - Action to ensure parental attendance at court - Use of standard case recording tool to capture information sharing with children/parents post court and evidence levels of understanding 	Kelly Rutherford	December 31 st 2023	Completed.
Amend the quality assurance tool to include a focus on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use of interpreters (child and parents) - Engaging with fathers in report preparation 	Kelly Rutherford	November 30 th 2023	Completed.
Improve management oversight on ChildView and record weekly Court preparation meeting.	Kelly Rutherford	End of October 2023	Completed
Implement Court Skills training with the YJS team (action from multi-agency audit for remand thematic)	Phil Rutherford	March 31 st 2024	Completed. YJLC commissioned.
The YJS should develop a post-court questionnaire/session, in conjunction with speech and language therapists, to be used with children during their induction appointments to help the service improve practice and to recognise levels of comprehension (Q7)	Kelly Rutherford	December 31 st 2023	In progress.
Improve information sharing with children and parents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ‘Going to Court’ literature to be shared with local custody suite for use when charging child to Court - Referral Order video to be created to explain panel processes to children and parents/carers - Joint co-creation with Werrington YOI of secure estate information packs to ensure parents and children have all available information at the earliest opportunity to offer reassurance and understanding of next steps. 	Fran Bate	March 31 st 2024	Completed.
Strategic Actions			
The YJS Board to consider if the YJS Partnership Panel would benefit from additional ‘standing’ members from across Children’s Services (Q1)	Zoe Morgan (HOS Social Care) & Phil Rutherford	November 2023	Completed. Early Help represented on Partnership Panel.
The YJS board members requested that pre-court and diversion work is discussed at a Board meeting in the next 6 months. (Q1)	Phil Rutherford	April 2024	Completed.
The YJS lead should ensure that our Remand and Custody procedures include suitable preparation time for practitioners to complete full assessments and reports to better advise the Court. (Q2)	John O’Connor	January 31 st 2024	Completed.

The YJS and children's social care should review their joint-working protocols in support of the finding from the inspection. (Q2)	John O'Connor	December 31 st 2023	Ongoing.
Board members were aware that Walsall boys with black and mixed ethnicity were overrepresented in the secure estate in Walsall and wanted further assurance that this is considered within monthly performance reporting and within the YJS Disproportionality Forum. (Q2)	Mark Patrick	December 31 st 2023	Completed. Scorecard includes ethnicity breakdown.
The YJS Board to develop an escalation pathway through to the Chair and Vice Chair of the YJS partnership board if there are observed occurrences of unfair treatment of children within the Court. (Q3) To be included in review YJS Court procedures.	Phil Rutherford	November 30 th 2023	Completed.
The Board wanted to increase its visibility within the Court arena to support this agenda and considered observation opportunities for board members and highlighted YJS Practice Week in February 2024 as a suitable vehicle. (Q4)	Phil Rutherford	February 28 th 2024	Completed. Board members have observed Youth Court.
The Board wished to ensure that they were periodically informed of data and trends relating to disproportionality within court, but also wanted to consider individual case studies to highlight the issues and impact. (Q4)	Phil Rutherford	April 30 th 2024	Ongoing.
The Board would benefit from future inputs from youth justice practitioners to improve the engagement of strategic leaders in our delivery. (Q5)	Fran Bate	April 30 th 2024	Completed. YJS practitioners invited to attend Board.
The Board should continually monitor YJS resourcing to cover Court, especially when there are unforeseen challenges such as events including multiple children or planning for multi-handed trials (Q5)	Phil Rutherford	April 30 th 2024	Completed. Discussed at February Board.
Walsall YJS should, in partnership with the 3 other Black Country YJS, approach the Sentencers and HMCTS to attempt to establish a system for report feedback. (Q7)	Phil Rutherford	December 31 st 2023	Ongoing. Regional attempts made, not yet implemented.
The YJS partnership should extend its membership to HMCTS and review Court attendance at the YJS Performance and Partnership Board. (Q7)	Phil Rutherford	November 30 th 2023	Ongoing. Regional attempts made through YJB.
The YJS should work closely with Children's Social Care to ensure children in the justice system are involved in wider engagement and participation work with the Children's Champion (Q7)	Phil Rutherford	February 28 th 2024	Completed. YJ involved in developing CS Participation strategy
Joint learning sessions are planned between the YJS and Children's Social Care to improve knowledge and understanding of the experiences of children who attend Court and also are sent to custody (Q7)	Jenny Cockroft (HOA QA Social Care) and Phil Rutherford	1 st session November 2023	Completed. November 2023.

Appendix 9

Common youth justice terms

Please add any locally used terminology

ACE	Adverse childhood experience. Events in the child's life that can have negative, long lasting impact on the child's health, and life choices
AIM 2 and 3	Assessment, intervention and moving on, an assessment tool and framework for children who have instigated harmful sexual behaviour
ASB	Anti-social behaviour
AssetPlus	Assessment tool to be used for children who have been involved in offending behaviour
CAMHS	Child and adolescent mental health services
CCE	Child Criminal exploitation, where a child is forced, through threats of violence, or manipulated to take part in criminal activity
Children	We define a child as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. This is in line with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and civil legislation in England and Wales. The fact that a child has reached 16 years of age, is living independently or is in further education, is a member of the armed forces, is in hospital or in custody in the secure estate, does not change their status or entitlements to services or protection.
Child First	A system wide approach to working with children in the youth justice system. There are four tenants to this approach, it should be: developmentally informed, strength based, promote participation, and encourage diversion
Child looked-after	Child Looked After, where a child is looked after by the local authority
CME	Child Missing Education
Constructive resettlement	The principle of encouraging and supporting a child's positive identity development from pro-offending to pro-social
Contextual safeguarding	An approach to safeguarding children which considers the wider community and peer influences on a child's safety
Community resolution	Community resolution, an informal disposal, administered by the police, for low level offending where there has been an admission of guilt
EHCP	Education and health care plan, a plan outlining the education, health and social care needs of a child with additional needs
ETE	Education, training or employment

EHE	Electively home educated, children who are formally recorded as being educated at home and do not attend school
EOTAS	Education other than at school, children who receive their education away from a mainstream school setting
FTE	First Time Entrant. A child who receives a statutory criminal justice outcome for the first time (youth caution, youth conditional caution, or court disposal)
HMIP	Her Majesty Inspectorate of Probation. An independent arms-length body who inspect Youth Justice services and probation services
HSB	Harmful sexual behaviour, developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour by children, which is harmful to another child or adult, or themselves
JAC	Junior Attendance Centre
MAPPa	Multi agency public protection arrangements
MFH	Missing from Home
NRM	National Referral Mechanism. The national framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery in order to gain help to support and protect them
OOCD	Out-of-court disposal. All recorded disposals where a crime is recorded, an outcome delivered but the matter is not sent to court
Outcome 22/21	An informal disposal, available where the child does not admit the offence, but they undertake intervention to build strengths to minimise the possibility of further offending
Over-represented children	Appearing in higher numbers than the local or national average
RHI	Return home Interviews. These are interviews completed after a child has been reported missing
SLCN	Speech, Language and communication needs
STC	Secure training centre
SCH	Secure children's home
Young adult	We define a young adult as someone who is 18 or over. For example, when a young adult is transferring to the adult probation service.
YJS	Youth Justice Service. This is now the preferred title for services working with children in the youth justice system. This reflects the move to a child first approach
YOI	Young offender institution

Cabinet – 11 September 2024

Approval of Registration with the Regulator of Social Housing to enable provision of additional Homeless Temporary Accommodation

Portfolio: Councillor Garcha – Resident Access and Housing Support

Related portfolios: Councillor Andrew – Associate Leader, Economic Growth and Regeneration
Councillor Elson – Children's Services

Service: Customer Engagement

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 To ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations to provide homeless households in priority need with temporary accommodation (TA) where required.

2. Summary

- 2.1 The Housing Act 1996 requires housing authorities to ensure that accommodation is available for a homeless household, if they have reason to believe that the applicant may be homeless, eligible for assistance and have a priority need.
- 2.2 Walsall retained 92 units of market rent Homeless TA (which didn't require registration with the Regulator of Social Housing) at stock transfer in 2003. Since 2022 there has been a constant increase in the number of homeless households requiring TA, exceeding available units, and having to be placed in bed and breakfast accommodation, which is an unsuitable and expensive option to meet this need.
- 2.3 As part of the Cabinet approved Homelessness Strategy 2023 to 2028, the Council commissioned an independent review in 2023 which recommended that between 32 to 52 additional TA units are required. It also concluded that the preferred approach, to ensure reduced revenue costs, would be to acquire and refurbish additional homes.
- 2.4 The Council has been successful in attracting £2.2m Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) capital which it is using to fund the purchase of some of this TA. It is being match funded by Affordable Housing Section 106 (planning) contributions. Both funding streams require that an Affordable Rent (80% of market rent) is charged.
- 2.5 In order to charge an Affordable Rent for these TA units the Council needs to become a Registered Provider (RP) with the Regulator of Social Housing.

- 2.6 Registration is automatic for local authorities. Being an RP brings conditions in that it must:
- have certain TA policies in place (ASB, complaints, tenancy management)
 - publish Tenant Satisfaction Measures:
 - meet Decent Homes standards
 - provide an annual return to the Regulator.

3. Recommendations

That Cabinet approves registration with the Regulator of Social Housing to become a Registered Provider.

4. Report detail – know

Context

- 4.1 Local housing authorities in England have a duty to secure accommodation for homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. Households can either be placed in temporary accommodation pending the completion of inquiries into an application, or after an application is accepted until suitable secure accommodation becomes available. This accommodation is typically referred to as TA. At stock transfer in 2003, Walsall retained 92 units of TA housing in 5 blocks in 3 locations around the borough. These units are charged at a market rent and did not require registration with the Regulator of Social Housing as a Registered Provider. In 2018/19 an additional 2 dispersed units were acquired following the granting of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) due to being long term empty. Following this successful pilot, Cabinet in December 2021 approved the purchase and refurbishment of additional dispersed TA units using Affordable Housing Section 106 contributions.
- 4.2 Homelessness pressures have increased in Walsall in 23/24:
- the homeless service received a total of 2155 applications/inquiries, compared to 2036 in 22/23, showing a 6% increase;
 - from the total of 2155, 1334 applications, (62%) were advice or early closures, this compares to 1293 cases (64%) in 2022/23;
 - 36% of current housing requests progress to homeless duty, and it is expected that as unaffordability continues to increase, this will impact on the Council's homelessness case volume.
 - service data shows the largest reason for application as being the loss of an assured shorthold tenancy at 279 households, compared with 232 households in 22/23;
 - from January 2023 to 2024 we have assisted over 450 households with Household Support Fund (HSF) to prevent homelessness. From April 2024 to June 2024 we have awarded 232 customers and a total of 252 awards, demonstrating significant demand from customers.
- 4.3 When considering future trends, it is anticipated that homelessness will continue to increase due to:
- the increase in private rent levels;
 - shortage of social housing (especially larger properties) and a demand for adapted homes;

- low Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates (even though they have been increased from April 2024);
- the reduction in Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funding from DWP;
- the short term funding nature of the Household Support Fund.

4.4 From April 2024 LHA rates have returned to 30th percentile of local rents (set as at September 2023), bridging some of the gaps between rent rises and benefit rates and potentially could mitigate some of the £27,000 current weekly shortfall in Housing Benefit and private rents in Walsall. The Office for National Statistics 2022/23 suggested that in Walsall the average rent for a 3-bedroom house is £795 per month, however locally advertised properties (Zoopla) are significantly higher, ranging between £900 and £1200 pcm. From April 2024 the LHA rate for a 3 bed is only £747 per month, which leaves a significant shortfall for many residents. As noted above, typical advertised 3 bed rents will still be higher than this figure, leaving a shortfall for prospective tenants. Also, the delay over the last few years in unfreezing LHA rates has seen a rise in rent arrears, with many residents approaching the Council with cumulative arrears issues, which has increased the costs associated with preventing homelessness when residents eventually approach for assistance. All of these factors have contributed to an increase in the number of households presenting as homeless and in priority need and requiring TA.

4.5 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires that all local authorities review and publish a revised Homelessness Strategy every five years. The current Strategy was approved by this Cabinet in March 2023 and runs to 2028. It contains a detailed Action Plan. One of the key actions of the Strategy was to carry out a comprehensive TA Options Appraisal and analysis to address the trends highlighted in paras 4.2 to 4.4. An external TA Options Appraisal was commissioned in March 2023, with final report provided in August 2023. The report concluded that between 32 and 52 additional TA units were required to meet need. The report considered the most appropriate and cost effective solutions to deliver this increase as per Table 1 below, in essence concluding that B&B and Private Sector Leasing were revenue costly to the Council, compared with an acquisition and refurbishment policy.

Table 1: TA Options Appraisal August 2023 - Decision making matrix

Matter relevant for the decision	Council owned General Fund units in existing blocks	B&B	Nightly Let	Hostels	Private Leased	Dispersed properties purchased by Walsall Council
Cost to Walsall Council	Low cost (no Housing Benefit Subsidy loss)	High cost (significant Housing Benefit Subsidy loss)	High cost	Low cost But capital cost to purchase and convert	Medium cost (some Housing Benefit Subsidy loss)	Low revenue cost (no HB Subsidy loss) but high capital cost

Suitability: In area? Y/N	Y	Likely to be a mix or in and out of area	Likely to be a mix of in and out of area	Y	Y	Y
Suitability Good quality TA? Y/N	Y	N - 1 room and shared facilities. Unlawful for families over 6 weeks	Mixed – nightly let could be 1 room or a self - contained unit	Mixed - 1 room and shared facilities are negative points, but support is provided	Y	Y
Can be used flexibly Y/N	Y	Y	N – landlord is likely to insist that unit used as per its size	Y	Y	Y
Can it be delivered quickly Y/N	Y	Y	Y	N – site would need to be found and planning permission possibly needed plus time to convert	Y	N – properties would need to be purchased and made fit to let which is likely to have a significant lead in time
Any additional capital costs to the Council	Y - cyclical repairs as well as day to day repairs	N	N	Y – capital cost to purchase and convert for use as TA	N	Y – capital costs to purchase units

- 4.6 The results of the TA Options Appraisal were used to formulate a business case which resulted in this Cabinet approving a £6.4m investment for a programme to purchase and refurbish a minimum of 32 additional TA units during 2024 to 2027. At the same time the Council has been successful in attracting £2.2m Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) which is being used to acquire (or use redundant Council assets) and refurbish additional TA properties, match funded by Affordable Housing S106 contributions as described in para 4.1. The LAHF grant funding and S106 contributions have been used first to purchase and refurbish additional TA, thus reducing the potential call on Council capital. The conditions associated with the LAHF capital mean that the majority of the units must be ringfenced to help

Afghan households (under Afghan Relocation Assistance Programme and Afghan Citizens Resettlement Scheme) matched to by the Home Office. However when the Council has assisted these Afghan households to move on to secure tenancies, we are then able to retain the TA units for general needs use, thus contributing to increased TA stock at a later date. The other requirement of both the LAHF and S106 capital funding is that the units must be affordable. There are two main affordable alternatives, being Social Rent or Affordable Rent. Due to the transient use of these properties and associated costs, the lower rent levels achieved with Social Rent are not a viable option to be able to maintain the units and provide the service. Therefore, Affordable Rents (80% of a market rent inclusive of service charges) are being charged. Affordable Rents must be calculated and provided by a RICS surveyor in accordance with the Rent Standard. In order to charge an Affordable Rent, the provider must be registered with the Regulator of Social Housing as a Registered Provider (RP). Registration for Local Authorities is automatic, but brings certain requirements.

- 4.7 The requirements applicable to an RP in summary will be met by providing a robust TA Policy, meeting Decent Homes requirements, publishing Tenant Satisfaction Measures performance, and ensuring Affordable Rents are calculated and charged appropriately. In more detail the requirements are set out in the **Regulatory Standards**: [Regulatory standards - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/regulatory-standards-for-social-housing) This contains two sets of standards being Economic and Consumer:

Economic Standards: The Regulator proactively seeks assurance from RPs that they are meeting the economic standards. These apply to all RPs except for local authorities because the Regulator does not have the power to set economic standards for local authorities (except rents). So a local authority RP is only required to meet the Rent Standard.

Consumer Standards: The Regulator also sets consumer standards and takes a reactive approach (for RPs with less than 1,000 units) in response to referrals or other information received and to intervene where failure to meet the standards has caused, or could have caused, serious harm to tenants. These consumer standards apply to all RPs, including local authorities:

The 4 consumer standards are:

- **Safety and Quality Standard** – maintain an accurate record of individual property condition, comply with health and safety, meet decent homes standard, ensure delivery of repairs and maintenance in an effective, timely and efficient manner, and allocate homes to specific needs
- **Tenancy Standard** – allocate and let homes in a fair and transparent way, taking needs into account, provide tenancy support advice and assistance, ensure all licence agreements meet statutory and legal requirements, publish tenancy management policy
- **Neighbourhood and Community Standard** - promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing, have a policy to deter and tackle ASB and hate incidents, including reporting mechanisms actions and support, and a policy for how we recognise and respond to Domestic Abuse
- **Transparency, Influence and Accountability** (including Tenant Satisfaction Measures) - being open with tenants and treating them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints, influence decision making and hold their landlord to account. Publish performance against the Tenant satisfaction Measures annually.

The Regulator also publishes a Consumer Standards Code of Practice which is to help tenants and landlords understand what is expected under the consumer standards and how landlords might deliver the outcomes of these standards.

4.8 We will ensure requirements are met by:

- The Council's Corporate Landlord team will build in works required to meet and maintain Decent Homes Standard into cyclical maintenance projections. It should be noted that all additional TA units subject to an Affordable Rent have been refurbished initially to a standard that will meet or exceed the Decent Homes standard
- Develop and publish a TA Policy that incorporates all of the Tenancy, Neighbourhood and Community, and Transparency Influence and Accountability Standards requirements
- Publish annual performance against the Tenant Satisfaction Measures for our TA residents
- Submit the annual return required

4.9 Due to being a small (less than 1,000 units) local authority landlord the regulation regime is less onerous compared to large local authority landlords and private registered providers (Housing Associations). The published regulatory approach at [Requirements and approach for different types of landlord - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk) state the requirements for small local authority landlords as:

- "Not subject to programmed inspections (small landlords may be subject to inspections that are not programmed...)
- Regulatory Judgements published in certain circumstances
- Gradings under Review (where a landlord is being investigated due to suspected serious failings) list applies for the consumer standards
- Not subject to an annual review of TSM data (we may use their TSM data to inform our regulation)"

Council Plan priorities

4.10 There are a broad range of health, well-being and broader socio-economic inequalities for people affected by homelessness. Increasing the supply of self contained TA to prevent the use of B&B in conjunction with a continued focus on homelessness prevention will assist meeting Council priorities as below:

- *Economic - enable greater local opportunities for all people, communities and businesses.* Homelessness remains a key barrier to accessing employment.
- *People - encourage our residents to lead more active, fulfilling and independent lives to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing.* Where TA is required it is much more appropriate to offer self contained units rather than rooms in B&B to help maintain independence and better health and wellbeing.
- *Children - have the best possible start and are safe from harm, happy, healthy and learning well.* Self contained TA units are a more preferable environment for children rather than a room in B&B

Risk management

- 4.11 Potential to receive a poor Regulatory Judgement or action for any breach of RP requirements. This could have a reputational impact, and costs to rectify. For the less onerous regulation regime applied to small landlords (less than 1,000 units), and with relevant safeguards in place to meet the RP requirements as outlined in 4.8, the risk is minimal.

Financial implications

- 4.12 Capital resources being used to purchase additional TA units consist of
- £2.2m LAHF external grant funding ,
 - £1.5m S106 Affordable Housing Contributions
 - £6.4m Council capital.

The LAHF and S106 funds are being spent first to look to reduce impact on Council capital where possible. This capital investment will provide revenue savings against Housing Subsidy loss versus a no action approach.

- 4.13 Day to day repairs, void management and staffing costs are covered by rental income of these units and the wider existing TA portfolio. Council capital investment may be required to ensure the units are maintained to a Decent Homes standard which will be included in any Corporate Landlord Cyclical Maintenance Plan. It should be noted that the investment required to maintain Decent Homes Standard is likely to be a similar level to that of maintaining to our current standards.

Legal implications

- 4.14 The Council has a duty under the Housing Act 1996 to ensure that TA is available if required.

Procurement /Social Value

- 4.15 Properties are being refurbished by existing contractors sourced through an existing compliant procurement process.

Property implications

- 4.16 All assets are registered on the Asset Register and insurance schedules. Responsibility for cyclical maintenance and meeting the Decent Homes standard will be managed by Corporate Landlord.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.17 Minimising the impact of homelessness, and support to affected households provided by the proposed approach, helps to ensure the Council meets its objective of a Marmot Council.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.18 The implications for reducing inequalities have been taken into account and assessed as set out in a detailed Equality Impact Assessment (EQIA) at **Appendix A**. Applicants aged 18 to 34 years (head of household) represent nearly 60% of households that are owed a duty. In line with national trends the most common age group in households owed a duty are also aged 25 to 34, however Walsall has an over representation of persons aged 18 to 24. For 23/24 service data 914 households had an ethnicity category completed which showed that households from black and minority ethnic households are adversely affected by homelessness, with 423 (46%) households from a white British background and the remaining 54% from White other groups, Black African/Caribbean/Black British households and Asian/Asian British respectively.

Staffing implications

- 4.19 The TA portfolio will continue to be managed by Customer Engagement, with any additional staffing costs covered by rental income. The Corporate Landlord team will manage the condition of the units within existing staffing resources.

Climate Change

- 4.20 The TA units will be refurbished to EPC rating C levels.

Consultation

- 4.21 Walsall's Homelessness Strategy 2023 to 2028, which contains the actions to complete a TA Options Appraisal and develop a policy for sourcing TA, had significant consultation, including focus groups with service users.

5. Decide

- 5.1 A 'do nothing' option means that households continue to be placed in B&B, with resulting HB Subsidy loss for the Council, poor outcomes for customers, and it is illegal to keep families with Children in B&B for longer than 6 weeks.
- 5.2 Not becoming an RP means that we are unable to use £2.2m LAHF and £1.5m S106 to procure and refurbish additional TA units, and so this £3.7m would need to be met from Council capital instead.

6. Respond

- 6.1 If approved officers will register with the Regulator of Social Housing and continue the programme of acquiring and refurbishing properties.

7. Review

- 7.1 The outputs will be regularly monitored through the multi-agency Walsall Homelessness and Housing Steering Group, alongside monthly monitoring at Customer Engagement Strategic Management Team.

Appendices:

A: Equality Impact Assessment

Background papers

None

Authors

Neil Hollyhead

Customer Engagement Lead – Housing and Resettlement

☎ 01922 655411

✉ neil.hollyhead@walsall.gov.uk



Judith Greenhalgh
Executive Director
Resources & Transformation

11 September 2024

A. Garcha

Councillor A Garcha
Portfolio Holder – Resident Access
Access & Housing Support

11 September 2024

APPENDIX A:
Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) for Policies, Procedures and Services

Proposal name	Approval of Registration with the Regulator of Social Housing to enable provision of additional Homeless Temporary Accommodation		
Directorate	Resources and Transformation		
Service	Customer Engagement - Housing and Resettlement		
Responsible Officer	Neil Hollyhead		
Proposal planning start	2023/24	Proposal start date (due or actual date)	2024/25

1	What is the purpose of the proposal?	Yes / No	New / revision
	Show which category the proposal is and whether it is new or a revision.		
	Strategy	No	Revision
	Procedure	YES	
	Guidance	No	
	Is this a service to customers/staff/public?	Customers	
	If yes, is it contracted or commissioned?	No	
	Other - give details		
2	What is the business case for this proposal? Please provide the main purpose of the service, intended outcomes and reasons for change?		
	<p>Local housing authorities in England have a duty to secure accommodation for homeless households in priority need under Part 7 of the Housing Act 1996. Households can either be placed in temporary accommodation pending the completion of enquiries into an application, or after an application is accepted until suitable secure accommodation becomes available.</p> <p>At stock transfer in 2003, Walsall retained 92 units of Temporary Accommodation (TA) in 5 blocks in 3 locations around the borough. In 2018/19 an additional 2 dispersed units were acquired following the granting of Compulsory Purchase Orders (CPO) due to being long term empty. Following this successful pilot, the Cabinet in December 2021 approved the purchase and refurbishment of additional dispersed TA units using Affordable Housing Section 106 contributions.</p> <p>The Council has been successful in attracting £1.6m Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) capital fund which it is using to fund the purchase of TA. This has been match funded by Affordable Housing S106 contributions. Both funding streams require that the units are affordable, and that an Affordable Rent (80% of market rent) is charged. In order to charge an Affordable Rent for these TA units the Council needs to be a Registered Provider (RP) with the Regulator of Social Housing ("the Regulator").</p> <p>Registration is automatic for local authorities. Being an RP brings conditions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have certain TA policies in place (ASB, complaints, tenancy management) • publish Tenant Satisfaction Measures: • meet Decent Homes standards • provide an annual return to the Regulator. 		

3	Who is the proposal likely to affect?		
	People in Walsall	Yes	Detail
	All		Households with a priority need either placed in temporary accommodation pending the completion of enquiries into an application, or after an application is accepted until suitable secure accommodation becomes available.
	Specific group/s	X	
	Council employees		
Other (identify)			
4	Please provide service data relating to this proposal on your customer's protected characteristics.		
	Introduction		
	Walsall Key Demographic Data		
	<p>Socio-economically, across Walsall there is a stark geographic divide between the West and the less deprived East. Nationally Walsall has high levels of deprivation. The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation now ranks Walsall as the 25th most deprived English local authority (out of 317), placing Walsall within the most deprived 10% of districts in the country (33rd in 2015, 30th in 2010 and 45th in 2007).</p>		
	<p>Census 2021 data informs a Walsall population of 258,478, 49.2% of the population are male with 50.8% female. Currently, Walsall has around 117,000 units of which 24% are housing provider owned and 76% privately owned, (Source, Live tables on dwelling stock (including vacants) - GOV.UK)</p>		
	<p>From the total number of Walsall households 16.3% rented privately in 2021, this is an increase from 11.7% in 2011. The increase in the percentage of privately-rented homes was greater in Walsall (4.7%) than across the West Midlands (14.0% in 2011 to 17.9% in 2021).</p>		
	(Source: Census 2021, ONS)		
	<p>The east of the Borough has an older population and a slower growth (<1% in 9 years). Conversely the centre, South & West of the borough continues to see rapid population growth and a much younger population, such as Blakenall wards with a median age of 31 and a growth of 7.8% compared to 2011. In comparison Aldridge Central and South has a median age of 48 and a growth rate compared to 2011 of 12%. (Source: Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Walsall).</p>		
	<p>Under 16s now account for 22.4% of the Walsall population, and over 65s, 17.6%. Walsall's dependency ratio has continued to rise with 0.65 dependants: 1 working age adult in 2019 (England 0.57). There are estimated to be 9000 additional over 60s by 2031. (Source: Office for National Statistics).</p>		
	<p>85.2% of Walsall's population were born in the UK. The minority ethnic population (i.e. all those who identify as other than White British) has increased from fewer than 1 in 4 residents in 2011 to 1 in 3 in 2021 (Figure 1)</p>		
	Figure 1: Ethnic Profile		
		2021	2011
	Walsall		
	White	71.4%	78.8%
	Asian	18.7%	15.2%
Black	4.6%	2.3%	
Mixed	3.3%	2.7%	
Other	2.1%	0.8%	
White British	67.4%	76.9%	
Minority Ethnic	32.6%	23.1%	

Source: Census 2021 and Census 2011.

61% of the population is of working age, broadly in line with the national figure. 76% are classed as economically active, slightly below both the regional and national averages. Of the households that have at least one person aged 16 to 64, 14% are classed as workless (12,000). The lack of labour market access is a regular component of homeless households in the borough (Nomis Official Labour Market Statistics 2022). 27% of the working age population have an NVQ Level 4 or above, this compares to a regional figure of 39% and a national figure of 44%.

In terms of income and employment scales, the average wage in Walsall (£548 p/w gross) is 6% below the regional average and 12% below the national. 8% of persons aged 18 to 24 claim out of work benefits – this compares to 6% regionally but is almost twice the national equivalent. According to DWP figures (02/22), Walsall is ranked fourth out of all West Midland authorities in the percentage of working age people (6%) receiving unemployment related benefits^[*ibid*].

Homelessness pressures and increased housing market pressures

Homelessness pressures have increased in Walsall:

- In 2022/23 the homeless service received a total of 2036 applications/inquiries, compared to 2155 in 23/24, showing a 6% increase.
- In 2023/24 from the total of 2155, 1334 applications, (62%) were advice or early closures, this compares to approximately 1293 cases (64%) in 2022/23.
- In 2023/24 36% of current housing requests progress to homeless duty, and it is expected that as unaffordability continues to increase, this will impact on the Council's homeless case volume.
- Service data shows for 2022/23 the largest reason for application being the loss of an assured shorthold tenancy (232 households), for 23/24 this has slightly increased to 279 households.
- 3% reduction in successful preventions from 2022 to 2023, attributed to the complex needs of households, and the rising cost-of-living which is making many private rented properties not financially viable.
- The number of homeless cases due to a section 21 (no fault eviction) notice being issued within private rented sector shows an increase of nearly 11% between 2022 and 2023 (which clearly demonstrates the impact of rising rents making the private sector more unaffordable for low-income households).
- From January 2023 to 2024 we have assisted over 450 households with Household Support Fund (HSF) to prevent homelessness. From April 2024 to current we have awarded 232 customers and a total of 252 awards, demonstrating significant demand from customers.

When considering future trends, it is anticipated that homelessness will continue to increase due to:

- the increase in private rent levels,
- shortage of social housing (especially larger properties),
- low Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates (even though they have been increased from April 2024),
- the reduction in Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) funding from DWP and the short-term funding nature of the Household Support Fund.

From April 2024 LHA rates have returned to 30th percentile of local rents in September 2023, bridging some of the gaps between rent rises and benefit rates and potentially could mitigate some of the £27,000 current weekly shortfall in Housing Benefit and private rents in Walsall. The Office

for National Statistics 2022/23 suggested that in Walsall the average rent for a 3-bedroom house is £795 per month, however locally advertised properties (Zoopla) are significantly higher, ranging between £900 and £1200 pcm. From April 2024 the LHA rate for a 3 bed is only £747 per month, which leaves a significant shortfall for many residents. As noted above, typical advertised 3 bed rents will still be higher than this figure, leaving a shortfall for prospective tenants. Also, the delay in unfreezing LHA rates has seen a rise in rent arrears, with many residents approaching with cumulative arrears issues, which has increased the costs associated with preventing homelessness when residents eventually approach for assistance. All of these factors have contributed to an increase in the number of households presenting as homeless and in priority need and requiring Temporary Accommodation.

Internal council data on number of placements show since 2018 a large number of placements in temporary accommodation.

Row Labels	Count of CRM State All TA placements
2018	115
2019	162
2020	191
2021	194
2022	146
2023	156
2024	110
Grand Total	1075

From the 1st July 2023 to 1st July 2024 a total of 282 bed and breakfast placements were utilised. Murran and Brady 2022, state living in homeless accommodation during the early years of a child's life also has the potential to impact on a child in many ways, for example, academically, physically, emotionally and socially. In the current paper, the authors review existing literature regarding the impact of family homelessness on children's development in order to identify key messages for social work practitioners working with children and families experiencing homelessness, for example, in the field of child protection and welfare. Findings reveal that family homelessness impacts on various aspects of a child's world and ultimately on their development, as a result of reduced social networks, inappropriate space to facilitate play, increased school mobility and school-dropout rates and increased levels of behavioural challenges and mental health concerns.

Row Labels	Count of CRM State Bed and breakfast
2023	136
Qtr3	77
Qtr4	59
2024	146
Qtr1	71
Qtr2	73
Qtr3	2
Grand Total	282

Housing waiting list, as at 31/03 each year demonstrates a large volume of people waiting for social rented accommodation in Walsall :

2024 – 3840 new register opened September 2023 (currently being registered).
2023 – 14630
2022 – 13728
2021 - 14327

Social lets in Walsall for the last 4 years show around 1500 social lets per annum.

2023/24 – not yet available

2022/23 – 1515 [Microsoft Power BI](#) link to live tables core

2021/22 – 1881

2020/21 - 1660

Key research:

Homelessness is intertwined with social problems and housing market problems (Fitzpatrick, 2005; Stephens et al, 2010). Social problems, such as mental health issues and drug abuse, appear to play a key role in homelessness in most European countries. Housing market problems such as affordability and evictions play an important role in some countries and a minor role in others, depending on the welfare and housing systems. Housing systems seem to have changed in the wake of the Global Financial Crisis (GFC) and according to the responses of various governments. Some countries were more adversely affected others much less so. In the case of those affected more, housing systems are currently undergoing change that is affecting housing opportunities and the chances of eviction.

Elsinga 2015, states the provision and management of social housing for those who are unable to access the housing market is essential to the maintenance of the fabric of society, Routledge 2006. Social housing has been used to address a wide variety of housing needs. It was developed in some cases to tackle a perceived housing market failure by increasing the availability of affordable and adequate housing, although it has also been used as a tool to enhance labour mobility, and in urban planning in attempts to regenerate deprived urban space or replace shanty towns. Alongside these roles, social housing has often been used as a means to improve the housing situation of some of the poorest households and, to varying degrees, as a means to address some forms of homelessness, Feansta, 2011.

Research done in Kitchener-Waterloo found a surprisingly high rate of personal connections to the homeless among those randomly selected to participate in a focus group on the issue (Jeffrey, 1999). It is widely acknowledged that there are homeless people and that they exist in greater numbers than ever. This is perhaps the limit of a common understanding of the issue. The reasons and root causes for homelessness are a matter of intense debate with important implications for public policy. The provision of hostel accommodation for those who are homeless has a long history. Despite the fact that their functions and consequences are often questioned, hostels remain a basic element in the provision of services for those who are homeless in all European countries. presenting and discussing the main functions allegedly served by the hostel, as well as its inherent and associated problems. The research concluded that the reasons for hostels boil down to a need for physical shelter in emergency and transition situations where self-contained dwellings and regular hotels are unavailable or deficient. However, in addition to this an organised provision of mainstream housing, let with security of tenure and coupled with support when requested by the residents is the only working solution to homelessness and would also minimise the need for homeless hostels.

Kelly et al 1990, found data relating to 526 homeless families in temporary accommodation were collected in a study directed mainly to the examination of support networks of a sample of these families. The data, however, have allowed the authors to examine the effects of certain characteristics of these families on the average length of stay in temporary accommodation before they were housed permanently. Log-linear analysis was used to establish the independent effect of various attributes available from the data. In general the feature which seemed to influence the length of stay most was the time of the year when the family was admitted into temporary accommodation followed by the sort of reason the families gave for being homeless at the time of admission. Those who had been illegally evicted tended to take

longer to be rehoused whilst those with rental or tenant difficulties took less time to be rehoused. The authors are then able to produce profiles based on this analysis of those families which are likely to stay longest in temporary accommodation as against those likely to stay the shortest time.

Nowicki 2023, explored how ideological shifts in the UK stemming from the rise of neoliberalism in the 1970s and 80s altered the country's housing landscape. The research showed a shift in social housing from aspirational housing to social housing being associated with those in need. The research further supports the need for temporary accommodation and a need for interim accommodation as part of the overall housing journey.

5 Please provide details of all engagement and consultation undertaken for this proposal. (Please use a separate box for each engagement/consultation).

Consultation Activity

Complete a copy of this table for each consultation activity you have undertaken.

Complete a copy of this table for each consultation activity you have undertaken.			
Type of engagement/consultation	Internal	Date	2023/24
Who attended/participated?	Key service areas including TA leads. Homeless consultation		
Protected characteristics of participants			

Type of engagement/consultation		Date	
Who attended/participated?			
Protected characteristics of participants			

Type of engagement/consultation		Date	
Who attended/participated?			
Protected characteristics of participants			

6	Concise overview of all evidence, engagement and consultation There is a requirement for councils to register and provide a refined offer to those in units secured by this route. The consultation with internal colleagues identified a strong support to continue with this proposal.			
7	How may the proposal affect each protected characteristic or group? The effect may be positive, negative, neutral or not known. Give reasons and if action is needed.			
	Characteristic	Affect	Reason	Action needed No
	Age	positive	The under 35's are a group which are affected by a number of welfare reforms and receive reduced levels of benefit. They are therefore more likely to be affected by homelessness. The Homeless Reduction Act (2017) is set to improve outcomes for young single people. A major beneficiary of this service is the young persons provision (16-29 years olds) therefore would be disproportionately affected if this service was not provided. The over 65 population is increasing in the borough and maintaining independence and homes is key.	No
	Disability	Positive	28% of all customers in poverty have a disability (report commissioned JR Foundation 2016) https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/news/2016/august/half-people-poverty-are-disabled-or-live-disabled-person Disabled people are therefore more likely to become homeless than non-disabled people. However, there is a large number of individuals particularly Housing	no

			First, rough sleeper and domestic abuse customers with significant mental health issues.	
	Gender reassignment	neutral	No information is available and so the impact is not currently known. However, the service (young persons services) have a known cohort currently 16/17 year olds who are likely to be accessing services in the future	Unknown
	Marriage and civil partnership	neutral	No information specific data is available and so the impact is not currently known – The cohort of people from previous years have not been in a marriage or civil partnership and tend to be single. Those accessing the refuge service are in many cases are in marital relationship and therefore a cohort of individuals are directly impacted by the service.	No
	Pregnancy and maternity	Positive	No information specific data is available and so the impact is not currently known. Where a service user is pregnant consideration is given to the household. It is also noted those in the whg young persons service had seen an increase in pregnancies.	No
	Race	Positive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shelter states Black people are disproportionately affected by homelessness with 1 in 23 black households becoming homeless or threatened with homelessness, versus 1 in 83 households from all other ethnicities combined. • 11% of homeless people applying for help are black even though black people make up 3% of households in England. • A quarter (24%) of people making homelessness applications to local councils are from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic 	No

			<p>(BAME) groups, even though they make up just over a tenth (11%) of all households in England.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A person who is Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) becomes homeless or threatened with homelessness every eight minutes. 	
	Religion or belief	neutral	No information specific data is available and so the impact is not currently known	Unknown
	Sex	Positive	Women are more likely to experience homelessness than men.	No
	Sexual orientation	Positive	Young people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender comprise up to 24 per cent of the youth homeless population, Last year the <u>Albert Kennedy Trust</u> , an organisation that supports young LGBT people, or those living in hostile environments, estimated that 150,000 were homeless or at risk of homelessness as a result of intolerance.	No
	Age	positive	The under 35's are a group which are affected by a number of welfare reforms and receive reduced levels of benefit. They are therefore more likely to be affected by homelessness. The Homeless Reduction Act (2017) is set to improve outcomes for young single people. A major beneficiary of this service is the young persons provision (16-29 years olds) therefore would be disproportionately affected if this service was not provided. The over 65 population is increasing in the borough and maintaining independence and homes is	No

			key.	
8	Does your proposal link with other proposals to have a cumulative effect on particular equality groups? If yes, give details.			(Delete one) No
9	Which justifiable action does the evidence, engagement and consultation feedback suggest you take?			
	A	No major change required		
	B	Adjustments needed to remove barriers or to better promote equality		
	C	Continue despite possible adverse impact		
	D	Stop and rethink your proposal		
Action and monitoring plan				
Action Date	Action	Responsibility	Outcome Date	Outcome
Mar 2025	Review standards and understand impact on customers	TA Team lead	April 2026	<p>Understand the impact to customers: In more detail the requirements are set out in the Regulatory Standards: Regulatory standards - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) This contains two sets of standards being Economic and Consumer:</p> <p>Economic Standards: The Regulator proactively seeks assurance from RPs that they are meeting the economic standards. These apply to all RPs except for local authorities because the Regulator does not have the power to set economic standards for local authorities (except rents). So a local authority RP is only required to meet the Rent Standard.</p> <p>Consumer Standards: The Regulator also sets consumer standards and takes a reactive approach (for RPs with less than 1,000 units) in response to referrals or other information received and to</p>

				<p>intervene where failure to meet the standards has caused, or could have caused, serious harm to tenants. These consumer standards apply to all RPs, including local authorities: The 4 consumer standards are:</p> <p>Safety and Quality Standard – maintain an accurate record of individual property condition, comply with health and safety, meet decent homes standard, ensure delivery of repairs and maintenance, and allocate homes to specific needs</p> <p>Tenancy Standard – allocate and let homes in a fair and transparent way, taking needs into account, provide tenancy support advice and assistance, ensure all licence agreements meet statutory and legal requirements, publish tenancy management policy</p> <p>Neighbourhood and Community Standard - promote social, environmental and economic wellbeing , have a policy to deter and tackle ASB and hate incidents, including reporting mechanisms actions and support, and a policy for how we recognise and respond to Domestic Abuse</p> <p>Transparency, Influence and Accountability (including Tenant Satisfaction Measures) - being open with tenants and treating them with fairness and respect so that tenants can access services, raise complaints,</p>
--	--	--	--	--

				<p>influence decision making and hold their landlord to account. Publish performance against the Tenant satisfaction Measures annually.</p> <p>The Regulator also publishes a Consumer Standards Code of Practice which is to help tenants and landlords understand what is expected under the consumer standards and how landlords might deliver the outcomes of these standards.</p>

Update to EqIA	
Date	Detail
25/07/24	First draft
08/08/24	Second draft – with EQIA lead amends Review of evidence and data

Contact us

Community, Equality and Cohesion
Resources and Transformation

Telephone 01922 655797

Textphone 01922 654000

Email equality@walsall.gov.uk

Inside Walsall: http://int.walsall.gov.uk/Service_information/Equality_and_diversity

Secondary School Sufficiency

Portfolio: Councillor Kaur – Education and Skills

Related Portfolios:

Service: Children's Services

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1 Aim

- 1.1 This report details the schemes proposed for inclusion in the secondary school expansion programme and seeks approval to implement the proposed plans, to ensure the provision of sufficient school places.

2 Summary

- 2.1 The Council has a statutory duty to ensure there are sufficient school places for resident children who want a school place. A local authority has a general duty, under section 14 of the Education Act 1996, to ensure that there are available, in its area, sufficient school places 'in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of an appropriate education'.
- 2.2 To meet its statutory responsibilities Walsall Council needs to ensure it understands where the pressures on school places will come from. These pressures include changes in the population, housing developments, and cross border migration.
- 2.3 The projections of future demand for school places are based on birth data sourced from the Office of National Statistics, historical pupil retention data from the school census, pupil yield from housing developments obtained from the council's planning department and inward and outward migration data.
- 2.4 For mainstream pupil place planning purposes, the borough has been divided into planning areas, (see Appendix 1). These areas were drawn up taking account of ward boundaries, geographical features (such as major roads and housing developments), and patterns from historical school admissions data.
- 2.5 Every year each local authority completes Department of Education (DFE) statutory School Capacity (SCAP) return. Based on the forecast, and to meet local demand, further places are required across Walsall.

- 2.6 To ensure that there is sufficiency of school places in Walsall investment in additional capacity is required.
- 2.7 Capital grant funding for Basic Need from the DFE is received annually to support the cost of increasing mainstream school places where required.

3 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet approve the continued cost to expand Pool Hayes Academy at £3,647,700.
- 3.2 That Cabinet approve the cost to expand West Walsall EACT Academy at £500,000.
- 3.3 That Cabinet approve a design and feasibility study to for the expansion at Ormiston Sheffield Academy at a cost of £325,000, once full financial costs are established, a further paper will be brought to Cabinet for approval.
- 3.4 That Cabinet approve a design and feasibility study for the expansion at Willenhall EACT Academy, at a cost of £325,000, once full financial costs are established, a further paper will be brought to Cabinet for approval.

4 Report detail

- 4.1 To plan pupil places effectively the Council must be open and transparent in communicating the details on the pressures on school places in each planning area. The Council must also manage expectations and avoid any adverse impact on schools regarding school development proposals. When new capacity is needed, it is important to establish guidelines to ensure that this new capacity is provided appropriately and in the right place:
- We should seek to meet demand locally to allow children a school place within a reasonable walking distance from their home.
 - Our planning of school places should reflect our school improvement strategy: we should work to make all schools good or outstanding. When seeking to expand schools, we should favour the expansion of schools where there is proven demand and well-established and successful leadership and management at a good or outstanding school.
 - We should consider the impact of any changes on the viability and standards at existing schools. Where necessary we should work with schools to provide optimum forms of entry appropriate to the capacity of the school site and the level of demand for that school. On occasions, over time, it may be appropriate to reduce the capacity of some schools as others grow in size.
 - The guidelines set out above will need to be balanced against the need to make best use of scarce capital resources and the physical practicalities of available sites.

- 4.2 The Local Authority adopts an annual cycle to school organisation and place planning, linked to the Department for Education School Capacity (SCAP) survey for mainstream schools. This survey is submitted in July each year and comprises four parts:
- capacity of schools
 - forecasts of pupil numbers per national curriculum year group by planning area
 - additional places due to be created by planning area.
 - place planning commentary by planning area of local circumstances e.g., migration, changes of school category.
- 4.3 The Admissions & Education Sufficiency Team prepares and submits this survey and its component parts, and during the yearly planning cycle updates its core data including changes to school capacity data following alterations and expansion of the school estate, planning department data on housing completions in each planning area, school census numbers and school admission application numbers and preferences.
- 4.4 The outcome of the validated and moderated submission by the DfE is an allocation of funding known as basic need funding. This capital grant is allocated to all LAs who have a forecasted demand for places above their existing capacity to help in meeting the statutory duty in making sure there are enough school places for children in our area.

Secondary School Place Demand

- 4.5 In recent years, including for September 2024 academic year intake, the pressures for pupil places have been managed by secondary schools in Walsall admitting over their Published Admission Number (PAN) and more aligned to the physical capacity of the school by creation of bulge classes. This has been of great support to the Local Authority and the local community however some schools are now no longer able to provide this continued support within the existing infrastructure in their school settings. Additional places are therefore required across the borough.
- 4.6 The current forecasting model from September 2024 onwards for Year 7 places shows the following:

Planning Area	Measure	Sep-24	Sep-25	Sep-26	Sep-27	Sep-28	Sep-29
3351001	Agreed Intake	660	660	660	660	660	660
	Projected Intake	739	702	731	739	733	707
	Surplus / Shortfall	-79	-42	-71	-79	-73	-47
3351002	Agreed Intake	1142	1142	1142	1142	1142	1142
	Projected Intake	1164	1152	1205	1175	1170	1165
	Surplus / Shortfall	-22	-10	-63	-33	-28	-23
3351003	Agreed Intake	1030	1030	1030	1030	1030	1030
	Projected Intake	1015	1037	1028	1068	1091	1033
	Surplus / Shortfall	15	-7	2	-38	-61	-3
3351004	Agreed Intake	1041	1041	1041	1041	1041	1041
	Projected Intake	1134	1145	1099	1135	1165	1098
	Surplus / Shortfall	-93	-104	-58	-94	-124	-57
Total	PAN	3873	3873	3873	3873	3873	3873
	Projected Intake	4052	4036	4063	4117	4159	4003
	Surplus / Shortfall	-179	-163	-190	-244	-286	-130
	Surplus %	-5%	-4%	-5%	-6%	-7%	-3%

- 4.7 To support places for September 2025 schools, have, where possible, agreed to admit above their published admission number where no additional expansion works are needed. Appendix 2 shows where places have been confirmed and where conversations are ongoing to support the growth through expansion proposals requiring capital investment.
- 4.8 The published admission number (PAN) is the number of pupils which can be admitted into every year group. Due to the forecasted shortfall in places, conversations are held with schools and in some cases the school will agree to 'uplift' their PAN to increase the number of places available. This uplifted PAN number can be seen in the 'agreed to admit' column in the table above.
- 4.9 Appendix 2 is coloured coordinated, green shows where schools are supporting an uplift without an works being required; amber are showing where schools could support with Capital funding; red is where schools are not offering support through uplift or with capital funding support.
- 4.10 To meet demand for places from September 2025, expansion schemes require works to be undertaken at various schools in Walsall. It is proposed that this will comprise of four schools. The Admissions & Education Sufficiency Team have worked closely with the schools to work through the options to expand the schools and to meet the area accommodation guidelines as set out in DfE published area guidelines - Building Bulletin 103.
- 4.11 Without the capital investment, the Local Authority will not be able to support the requirement for school places as per the projections and therefore will not meet its statutory duties.
- 4.12 Details on the schools proposed for expansion are detailed below.

Pool Hayes Academy

- 4.13 Pool Hayes Academy is an academy in planning area 4. The school was inspected by Ofsted in April 2022 and was judged as “Good.”
- 4.14 The school has been oversubscribed for many years and had fully supported the Local Authority with providing additional places to meet demand.
- 4.15 In December 2022 Cabinet approval was received to provide a temporary solution for 50 pupils in September 2023 whilst a permanent solution was agreed and secured. Funding of £695,400 was approved for this temporary support. The trust has advised that the actual cost for providing this solution was £655,400.
- 4.16 It was suggested within the December 2022 Cabinet paper that to expand Pool Hayes Academy on a permanent basis by a new modular classroom block from September 2024, works required are:
- 7 x general classroom
 - 2 x Toilet Blocks
 - 2 x offices

Pool Hayes Academy-50 pupils (250 pupils over 5 years)	£	Comments/Assumptions
Estimated cost	2,590,000	Works
Contingency and Risk	518,000	Based on 20% of works
Fees -15%	466,200	Design fees and corporate landlord oversight
FFE & ICT	73,500	£4500 one off cost Furniture*3 and £300 per pupil for next 4 years
Total	3,647,700	

- 4.17 Following Cabinet approval of feasibility funding of £639,830, a full feasibility has been completed, including full pre-construction ground and other surveys, design solutions up to RIBA stage 4 (technical design) planning application submission and procurement works. it has been determined that to undertake the works to create a permanent expansion at Pool Hayes Academy, funding of £3,647,700 would be required.
- 4.18 The identified costs from December 2022 are therefore aligned to the most recent costs following the feasibility and design works which are shown in the table below.

Establishment	Temp/Perm Places	Overall No. of places	Estimated Cost £	Cost per place £	National Average per place
Pool Hayes	Temporary &	250	4,303,100	£17,217.40	£21,235

Academy	Permanent				
---------	-----------	--	--	--	--

- 4.19 The cost per place of £17,212.40 is significantly lower than the national average as shown in the table above.
- 4.20 Each year, the Educational Building and Development Officers Group (EBDOG) complete a national benchmarking study which analyses the capital cost of building new school places across the country, comparing the like for like cost of school buildings delivered by local authorities and the DfE. They then publish the average cost per pupil place which can be used as a benchmark when considering a programmes value for money.'
- 4.21 To support the Local Authority, Pool Hayes Academy have agreed to admit 50 additional pupils in September 2024, it is recognised that all additional pupils to date have been accommodated within the existing provision and by further using the temporary solution. The Academy however do not have sufficient accommodation for this to continue without the permanent solution.
- 4.22 It is proposed that the permanent expansion project at Pool Hayes Academy is approved – recommendation 3.2 seeks to approve this funding.

Ormiston Shelfield Academy

- 4.23 Ormiston Shelfield Academy is an academy in planning area one, the school was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2023 and was judged "Good."
- 4.24 The school has been oversubscribed for a number of years and has fully supported the Local Authority with providing additional places to meet demand.
- 4.25 Ormiston Shelfield Academy has provided 30 additional places for the last academic year and for September 2024 within their current accommodation, however the space within school will not allow for further accommodation.
- 4.26 To ensure sufficiency of provision, Ormiston Shelfield Academy are proposing to permanently expand the capacity of the school with effect from September 2025. The PAN would increase from 240 to 270 which would provide an additional 30 Year 7 places from September 2025 and 150 permanent places in total (Years 7-11) by September 2027.
- 4.27 For the school to take a further 30 mainstream pupils across the next 5 years (150 pupils total) works required as follows:
- Five additional classrooms
 - Staff toilets
 - Pupil toilets
 - Office space
 - Common room
 - Internal remodelling of other spaces

- 4.28 The creation of the space within Ormiston Sheffield Academy would also enable the school to create a satellite provision to support children with Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) needs as part of the SEN expansion programme across the borough.
The satellite solution as a part of Shepwell School would support some of our most vulnerable pupils with Education and Health Care Plans (EHCPs) to continue to be educated within a mainstream school environment but with access to specialist areas for parts of their education.
- 4.29 For Shepwell School to provide a satellite provision at Ormiston Sheffield the works required include:
- Remodelling of areas to create separate student areas in classrooms
 - Door access controls and secure access to the provision
 - Support intervention spaces
 - Storage, FFE and ICT provision
- 4.30 Based on the national benchmark rates, a project that provides 150 additional mainstream places and 30 specialist SEN places would equate to circa £6m of funding. However, due to the collaborative approach between the LA, Ormiston Sheffield and Shepwell School, a reduction in accommodation is proposed which would significantly reduce the project costs to circa £4m.
- 4.31 For the LA and the academy to move forward with plans to expand the provision, approval for a design and feasibility study is required at a cost of £350,000 – recommendation 3.4 seeks to approve this funding.

Willenhall EACT Academy

- 4.32 Willenhall EACT is an academy in planning area four, the school was last inspected by Ofsted in December 2022 and judged “Requires Improvement.” Since the last inspection, the school has seen a change in leadership and a recent monitoring inspection in June 2024 confirmed that leaders have made progress to improve the school.
- 4.33 The school have supported the Local Authority for the last three years providing an additional 150 places due to an increased demand from parents. The school has accommodated pupils in their existing infrastructure but would not be able to continue to offer additional places without capital funding to support the school.
- 4.34 The school has advised that with capital investment they could create up to three forms of entry over a staggered period. This would be an increase of 90 pupils per year group, and 450 places across all year groups over a period of years.
- 4.35 For the LA and the academy to move forward with plans to expand the provision, approval for a design and feasibility study is required at a cost of £300,000 – recommendation 3.4 seeks to approve this funding.

West Walsall EACT Academy

- 4.36 West Walsall EACT is an academy in planning area three, the school was last inspected by Ofsted in January 2023 and judged “Good.”
- 4.37 The school have supported the Local Authority for the last four years providing 20 additional places each year within school. The school has accommodated pupils in their existing infrastructure but would not be able to continue to offer additional places without capital funding to support the school.
- 4.38 The school has advised that with capital investment they could create an additional 20 places per year group, and 100 places across all year groups over a period of years.
- 4.39 For the school to admit the additional pupils they have identified an underused area previously used for Post 16 social space and is currently used for KS3/4 teaching.
- 4.40 The space consists of a large open plan area of approx. 99m², one teaching space of approx. 99m² with a storage area of approx. 24m² and two rooms formed with folding partitions off the main open plan area of approx. 48m² and 45m².
- 4.41 The proposal would convert the above space to become six or seven teaching spaces with corridor access.
- 4.42 For the school to provide the additional 100 places, a contribution from the Local Authority of £500,000 would be required. This is an estimated cost of the project including contingency & risk, fees, FFE and ICT.

Establishment	Temp/Perm Places	Overall No of places	Estimated Cost £	Cost per place £	National Average per place
West Walsall EACT Academy	Permanent	100	500,000	£5,000	£21,235

- 4.43 The cost per place of approximately £5,000 is significantly lower than the national average as shown in the table above.
- 4.44 E-ACT Trust would be delivering the project, and the funding would be provided from the council via a Grant Agreement.
- 4.45 For the LA and the academy to move forward with plans to expand the provision, £500,000 is required – recommendation 3.3 seeks to approve this funding.

Swift Free School

- 4.46 The Swift Free School (Windsor Academy Trust) was a Wave 12 Free School, which moved to ‘pre-opening’ stage in April 2017. It is a mainstream

secondary phase free school with a proposed capacity of 1150 pupils (900 secondary places in years 7-11 – 180 children per year, plus 250 places in post 16).

- 4.47 Despite a number of false starts, mainly due to site availability, the project moved to the formal position of DfE 'sign off' to proceed in 2021 when through an intensive conversation, the LA evidenced the forecasted demand through SCAP projections and were able to put forward a range of LA sites that the DfE could consider its location.
- 4.48 The DfE are still conducting due diligence and site investigations in advance of completing a feasibility study.
- 4.49 The project is currently scheduled to deliver the new school in its permanent accommodation in time for September 2027 intake, this date has however been revised on many occasions.
- 4.50 The creation of the Free School would not alone be enough to support the growing need for places within Walsall. The additional capacity the school will create is planned to meet the additional demand for places from September 2027. If the free school did not proceed, the LA would need to consider additional expansion projects at other schools in the borough as a response to forecasted need for additional places.

Evaluation of alternative options

- 4.51 Representatives of the local authority have attended various Walsall Associated Head Teachers (WASH) meetings and discussed with all secondary head teachers the rising demand for school places within Walsall. Some schools have been able to meet demand for places by strategically adapting their timetabling within school, this has allowed them to create additional space and admit more students on roll per year group. Schools have done this now for a number of years with little to no funding and the ability to support further is in short measure.
- 4.52 All secondary schools were offered opportunities within the WASH meeting to have further conversation with the Local Authority to expand and aid in developing additional school places.
- 4.53 The permanent expansion of the four schemes would allow more families the opportunity to attend a preferred school and ensure the Council's statutory duty can be fulfilled.
- 4.54 The four schemes would create an additional 190 places in year 7, equating to 950 places within five years.
- 4.55 The creation of additional capacity would reduce the number of admissions appeals for places, increase parental preference for school places and reduce the number of Fair Access placements within schools above their admission numbers.

Council Plan priorities

- 4.56 Providing sufficient secondary school places in the borough is in line with the council corporate plans, to ensure children and young people have access to high quality education and training opportunities and that schools are more inclusive.

Risk management

- 4.57 The provision of additional places will enable the Council to meet its statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient school places to meet the increasing demand for secondary places in the area and will create a greater opportunity for children to attend a local school.

Financial implications

- 4.58 The estimated build/alteration costs for the proposed Secondary School expansions are to be funded from the Basic Need Grant.
- 4.59 Basic Need is a non-ringfenced capital external grant given under Section 31 of the Local Government Act 2003, by the Department for Education (DfE) to Local Authorities (LAs). The purpose of the funding is to support LAs in the creation of mainstream places through the expansion / remodelling of existing schools.
- 4.60 The total grant funding for Basic Need is summarised in the table below.

Allocations	Basic Need
Carry Forward of Grant Allocation 2021/22	£17,001,046
Confirmed Grant Allocation 2025/26	£6,846,409
Total Funding Available	£23,847,455

Note: Funding beyond 2025/26 will be dependent on the commitment from central government to provide mainstream places and has not been confirmed.

- 4.61 Current basic needs balance after accounting for approved future expansion commitments from previous cabinet reports stands at £17m and external basic needs capital grant allocation of £6.8m for 2025/26 has been confirmed.
- 4.62 Historically there have been significant risks associated with increased costs for existing school expansions. It is therefore prudent to put an additional 20% contingency budget into the expected costs to account for the risk of increased prices given the current inflationary pressures, increased cost of labour and material and other economic challenges.
- 4.63 The contingency level for Walsall is currently set at 20% of the estimated costs and will be monitored as each scheme progresses.

- 4.64 The contingency level for Walsall is currently set at 20% using the estimated costs as a basis and would be monitored as each scheme progresses.
- 4.65 If the estimated costs do not increase further, a level of Basic Need funding would remain uncommitted, at the end of each project. This funding would then be carried forward to support the creation of school places in future years.
- 4.66 The capital needed to provide the additional places at Pool Hayes Academy is £3,647,700, this is after the initial funding was agreed for the temporary funding.
- 4.67 The capital needed to provide the additional places at West Walsall EACT Academy is £500,000.
- 4.68 The capital needed for a design and feasibility study to for the permanent expansion at Ormiston Sheffield Academy and Willenhall EACT Academy at a cost of £650,000. Once full financial costs are established, a further paper will be brought to Cabinet for approval.

Secondary schools/academies expenditure	No of places	Basic Need
Pool Hayes Academy	250	£3,647,700
West Walsall	100	£500,000
Feasibility work for Ormiston Sheffield academy and Willenhall academy	n/a	£650,000
Total Funding Available		£4,797,700

- 4.69 Should the academies or Schools' project not go ahead into permanent construction phase or the site may be deemed unsuitable, the feasibility cost would be treated as aborted cost.
- 4.70 The on-going increase in revenue funding for the schools will be met from the Dedicated Schools Grant, whereby funding is allocated to the academies to support increases or decreases in line with pupil numbers at each school. Therefore, if there is growth in overall pupil numbers, this will attract more Dedicated Schools Grant funding which will then fund the additional places being created.
- 4.71 Value for money – Total cost per pupil place: In the latest Education Building and Development Officers Group (EBDOG) survey (published November 2023) which benchmarks the cost of school expansions, the average cost per place for a secondary school place is £21,235. The costs for the two expansions listed below would fall within this benchmark and represent value for money.

Establishment	Temp/Perm Places	Overall No. of places	Estimated Cost £	Cost per place £	National Average per place
Pool Hayes Academy	Temporary & Permanent	250	4,303,100	£17,217.40	£21,235
West Walsall EACT Academy	Permanent	100	500,000	£5,000	£21,235

Legal implications

- 4.72 Failure to provide places would cause a breach of statutory duty.
- 4.73 Where a provision is provided to a non-maintained school/s additional grant agreements and potentially variation to leases, Academy, will be required.
- 4.74 If Cabinet approves the Recommendations of this report, legal advice will be taken about educational and planning issues and consents arising together with the contractual arrangements for any subsequent design and build work, plus any related supplies of goods and services as part of the full feasibility study.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.75 There are no direct procurement implications from this report as the contracts will be let by the relevant academy who will be responsible for compliance with the Public Contracts Regulations.

Property implications

- 4.76 In accordance with any well-planned construction programme, it will be important to undertake pre-construction feasibility activity and site surveys to inform all necessary consents, as well as construction costs, and future maintenance responsibilities. Such consents will need to include planning and building regulations in addition to any specific requirements of other statutory bodies/ undertakers.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.77 In relation to the Marmot principles the most relevant principles in line with pupil place planning with school builds is that enabling all children and young people to maximise their capabilities and to have control over their lives.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.78 It is of crucial importance to the Council's strategic objectives that the young People of Walsall can access the right provision to meet their need to achieve the appropriate qualifications, progressing to employment and / or training and to make a positive contribution within the Borough in the future.

Staffing implications

- 4.79 There may be a requirement for schools to employ additional staff to accommodate the larger numbers of pupils, there will be no redundancies from this scheme.

Climate Impact

- 4.80 Corporate Landlord will review each scheme to reduce the carbon footprint which may include renewable heating solutions, natural ventilation systems avoiding air-conditioning sourcing carbon natural materials where possible.

Consultation

- 4.81 This paper has been brought to Cabinet following internal consultation with Council representatives, directors and the portfolio holder for Children's Services, wider consultation is not required.

5 Decide

- 5.1 The increase of places at schools is necessary for the Local authority to meet its statutory duties of providing sufficient school places for all Y7 Walsall residents.

6 Respond

- 6.1 Subject to approval, works will begin to undertake the necessary requirements to enable the schools to admit the pupils from September 2025.

7 Review

- 7.1 Annual reviews of the pupil projections are undertaken by Walsall Council in conversation with the DFE as part of the School Capacity (SCAP) survey which is submitted every July.

Background papers

None

Author

Alex Groom
Admissions & Education Sufficiency Service Manager
Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk
Tel: 01922 652583

Rob Thomas
Head of Access
Rob.Thomas@walsall.gov.uk
Tel: 01922 652984



Colleen Male
Executive Director, Children's Services
16.08.2024

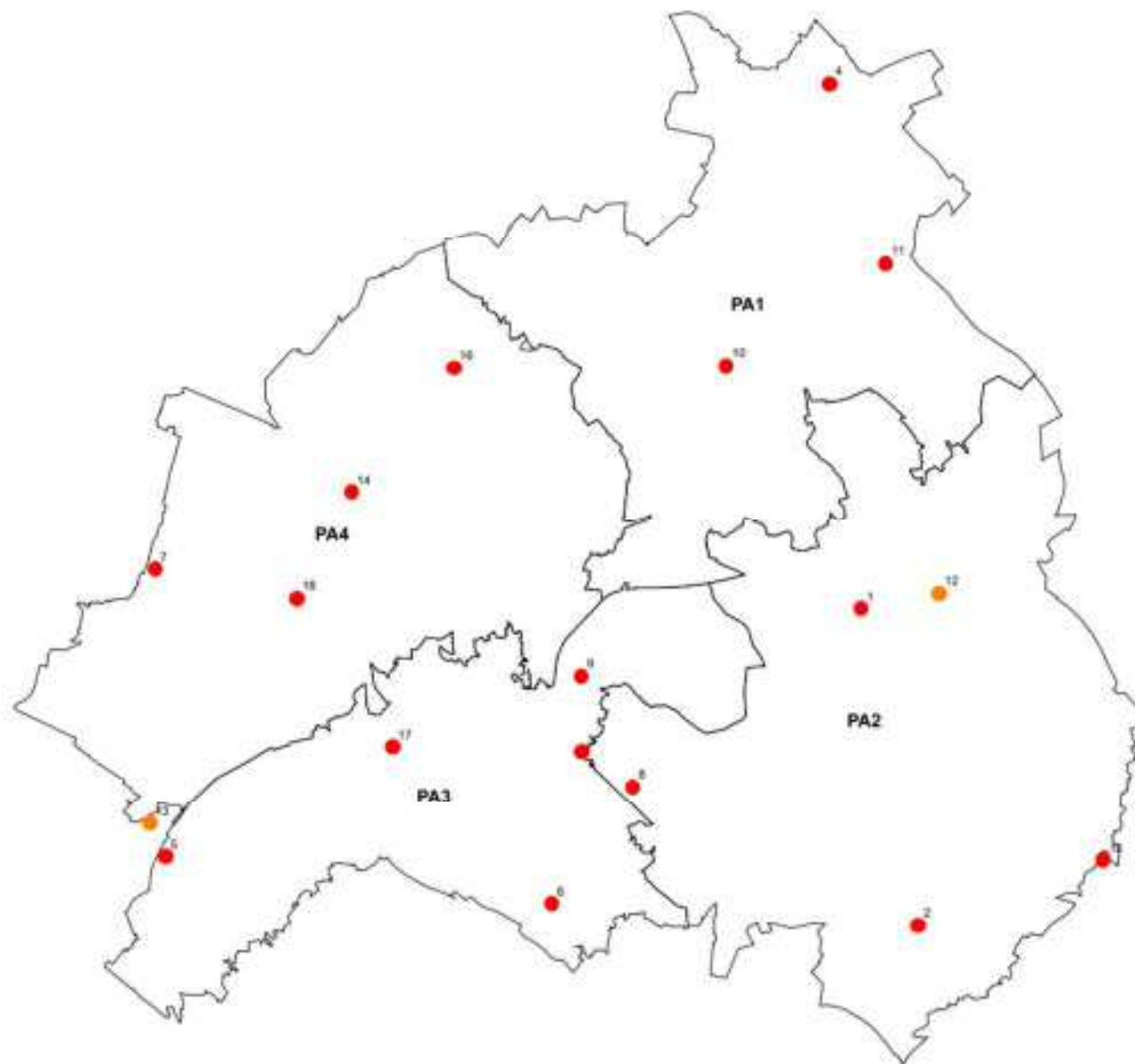


Councillor Pard Kaur
Portfolio Holder, Education & Skills
28.08.2024

Secondary School by Type

● Academy (16)
● Voluntary Aided School (2)

#	School	Type	Age Range
1	Aldridge School	Academy	11 – 18
2	Barr Beacon School	Academy	11 – 18
3	Blue Coat Church of England Academy	Academy	11 – 18
4	Brownhills School	Academy	11 – 16
5	Grace Academy Darlaston	Academy	11 - 18
6	Joseph Leckie Academy	Academy	11 - 18
7	Pool Hayes Academy	Academy	11 – 18
8	Queen Mary's Grammar	Academy	11 – 18
9	Queen Mary's High	Academy	11 – 18
10	Ormiston Shelfield Community Academy	Academy	11 – 18
11	Shire Oak Academy	Academy	11 – 18
12	St Francis Of Assisi Catholic Technology College	Voluntary Aided	11 – 18
13	St Thomas More Catholic School Secondary	Voluntary Aided	11 – 18
14	Bloxwich Academy	Academy	11 – 18
15	The Streetly Academy	Academy	11 – 18
16	Walsall Academy	Academy	11 – 18
17	West Walsall E -ACT Academy	Academy	11 – 18
18	Willenhall E -ACT Academy	Academy	11 - 16



PAN**Planning Area 1**

Brownhills School	150
Shire Oak Academy	270
Ormiston Shelfield Community Academy	240
Total Planning Area 1:	660

Planning Area 2

Aldridge School - An Academy	270
St Francis of Assisi Catholic Technology College	180
The Streetly Academy	260
Barr Beacon School	252
Queen Mary's Grammar School (Boys)	180
Total Planning Area 2:	1142

Planning Area 3

West Walsall E-Act Academy	210
Joseph Leckie Academy	240
Blue Coat Church of England Academy	150
Queen Mary's High School (Girls)	150
Grace Academy Darlaston	180
Total Planning Area 3:	930

Planning Area 4

Pool Hayes Arts and Community	200
St Thomas More Catholic Business & Enterprise College	243
Willenhall E-ACT Academy	180
Bloxwich Academy	180
Walsall Academy	208
Total Planning Area 4:	1011

Total 3743

	Confirmed	
	Uplift	Admission Number
Agreed - confirmed in writing - no works	17	167
Agreed - confirmed in writing - no works	30	300
Dependant on Cabinet approval - 30 places	30	270
	77	737
Agreed - confirmed in writing - no works	15	285
Agreed - confirmed in writing - no works	15	195
Agreed - confirmed in writing - no works	10	270
Agreed - confirmed in writing - no works	9	261
	0	180
	49	1191
Dependant on Cabinet approval - 20 places	20	230
Agreed - confirmed in writing - no works	20	260
Agreed - confirmed in writing - no works	10	160
	0	150
Agreed - confirmed in writing - no works	40	220
	90	1020
Dependant on Cabinet approval - 50 places	50	250
	0	243
Dependant on Cabinet approval - 90 places	90	270
Agreed - confirmed in writing - no works	3	183
	0	208
	143	1154
	359	4102

Cabinet – 11 September 2024

Community Reablement – Phase 1

Portfolio: Councillor Pedley – Adult Social Care

Related portfolios:

Service: Adult Social Care

Wards: All

Key decision: Yes

Forward plan: Yes

1. Aim

- 1.1 The aim of this report is to outline and seek approval for procurement related to the provision of Community Reablement – Phase 1 from 1 November 2024 to 31 March 2025.

2. Summary

- 2.1 This report outlines proposals for the procurement of Community Reablement support funded by Adult Social Care (ASC), which is a key decision because it will continue to commit the Council to incur expenditure above the value of '£500,000' and it affects all wards across the borough.
- 2.2 It is proposed by ASC that one main provider will be awarded a contract, with one other provider awarded a contract as a contingency, following completion of a compliant procurement process.
- 2.3 Phase 1 is acting as a pilot before we proceed with a Phase 2 open tender procurement process for the long-term arrangement.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet delegates authority to accept tenders and award contracts for the provision of Community Reablement services, for a period from 1st November 2024 until 31st March 2025, with the option to extend the contract by up to a further 6 months by the Executive Director of Adult Social Care, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, following completion of the tender.
- 3.2 That Cabinet delegates authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care to enter into

contracts for these services and to subsequently authorise the sealing of any deeds, contracts or other related documents for such services.

- 3.3 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director of Adult Social Care in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care to authorise any variations to the contractual arrangements or other related documents for such services should this be required throughout the duration of the term of any contracts, provided they are in line with the Council's Contract Rules and any relevant legislation, including Public Contract Regulations 2015.

4. Report detail - know

Context

- 4.1 A community reablement service is required to maximise people's level of independence and it is about delaying and mitigating the longer need for care and support. The Council has seen a year-on-year increase in the level of home care hours provided due to increased complexity of needs, but also an increase in contacts and demand.
- 4.2 Councils have recognised that an effective reablement offer, or short period of support, at the first point of contact with Adult Social Care is the most effective way to support a person around their quality of life and well-being, as well as manage increasing demand and costs for home care.
- 4.3 Adult Social Care have been working to introduce a strength-based approach to support people with well-being and independence. Having a reablement offer is a key part of ensuring the Council has the right approach and has the right conversations with people in those early stages.
- 4.4 There is a current (commissioning) gap in that Walsall people cannot access reablement if they approach the Council for an assessment of their care and support needs.

Reablement should be accessible to local people on a universal basis. Currently reablement is only available to people who have been hospitalised (or would have been hospitalised e.g. accessed admission avoidance services) before being referred into intermediate care reablement.

- 4.5 The key principles of community reablement are to delay or mitigate the longer-term need for care and support. Therefore the commissioned service will have an emphasis upon delivering positive person centred re-abling outcomes, reducing subsequent hospital admissions, reducing demand for long term commissioned (including Direct Payments and residential placements) services and also facilitating access to community services e.g. diversion for people with lower-level needs in the medium term e.g. during 25/26 and the development of an associated offer for people with dementia.
- 4.6 The service will be delivered for 25 days on average and it will support people with many areas including:

- Encouragement, prompting, building confidence plus encourage people to have standing and sitting tolerance
- Moving and handling techniques and/or use of appropriate equipment;
- Personal hygiene including continence care, washing and dressing;
- Assistance with nutrition and hydration;
- Prescribed medication administration;
- Maintaining a habitable home and making use of the environment safely;
- Accessing the community and making use of local facilities;
- Emotional and psychological support;
- Support to use assistive technologies.

4.7 Through the development of a Business Case/Options appraisal a number of different reablement models have been considered. This has now led to approval by the ASC Continuous Improvement Board of a hybrid model – community reablement service led by Occupational Therapists with elements of the associated care and support (e.g. night-time calls) delivered through the independent sector care market. There would also be associated training and support coordinated by the in-house team to support the independent sector provider.

4.8 This service offer will deliver better outcomes for people including avoiding hospital admissions and the likelihood of person needing Adult Social Care, but this Phase 1 project will also deliver significant financial savings/cost avoidance for the Council.

Council Plan priorities

4.9 One of the key areas of focus in the Council Plan 2022 -2025 for 'People' is to:

- encourage our residents to lead more active fulfilling and independent lives to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing.
- have increased independence, improved health and can positively contribute to their communities.

Risk management

4.10 The risks and mitigation associated with the programme have been considered as set out below:

Risk	Mitigation
1. Following the 6-month phase 1 proof of concept period the assumptions made, recruitment planning etc. do not enable us to commence full implementation.	An exit strategy if the 6 months 'proof of concept' reveals that we are unable to recruit the right staff, procure the right care, unable to see the cashable benefits etc.

2.	Not identifying an independent sector provider which is willing/able to deliver required model following a compliant procurement process	Already undertaken work with procurement colleagues on robust market engagement feeding associated learning into tender process and testing the appetite of the providers to bid.
3.	Risk of negative impact upon existing hospital admission reablement service in terms of recruitment and independent sector provision i.e. providers losing longstanding experienced reablement carers to the local authority.	Robust HR linked planning to ensure that existing service is not significantly impacted and/or existing LA staff are supported to move into reablement service roles.

Financial implications

- 4.11 The initial in year cost of this contract for the five-month period from 1 November 2024 to 31 March 2025 is £684k. This is based upon the procurement of 1,260 hours per week at £25 per hour. This cost will be funded from within the existing domiciliary care budget and additional investment approved within the 2024/25 budget. The Community Reablement Service will enable reductions in the ongoing long term care needs of service users and is estimated to deliver savings of £3.3m in 2025/26.

Legal implications

- 4.12 The Directorate has, in consultation with Legal Services, elected to use the Council's standard contract for goods and services. This has been modified as required by Legal Services to fit the mini competition and ensure the contract is sufficiently robust, as well as to ensure the Council's best interests are fully protected and minimise any risk of a legal challenge.
- 4.13 The procurement is to be carried out in accordance with the Council's Contract Rules and the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 and the Council's best value duty.

Procurement Implications/Social Value

- 4.14 The procurement process will be conducted via the Councils' e-procurement portal, in accordance with the Public Contracts Regulations 2015 (the Regulations), the Council's Contract Rules and Social Value Policy.
- 4.15 Steps will be taken to minimise procurement-related risk. However, there will always remain an inherent risk of legal challenge associated with any procurement undertaken by the Council.
- 4.16 Input has and will continue to be sought from Procurement and Legal Services, as required to ensure the conduct of a compliant procurement process and contract arrangements.

- 4.17 Social value will be evaluated as part of this procurement process in line with the Council's Social Value charter and policy.
- 4.18 The procurement process being used is a closed competition under the Light Touch Regime of the Public Contracts Regulations 2015.
- 4.19 The contract will run from 1st November 2024 until 31st April 2025 with the option for the Council to extend for a period of up to 6 months.

Property implications

- 4.20 There are no property implications for the Council.

Health and wellbeing implications

- 4.21 This will enable the Council to promote independence and to support people to live as independent as possible.

Reducing Inequalities

- 4.22 An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) is not required because this contract is related to the Community Based Services (CBS) Contract where an EQIA has already been completed for this service.
- 4.23 This service will not impact adversely on the community due to the nature of the service and will enhance the independence and quality of life of service users which are often disadvantaged.
- 4.24 For Community Reablement - Phase 2, the Council will ensure an EqIA is completed.

Staffing implications

- 4.25 There are no staffing implications arising out of this report.

Climate Impact

- 4.26 There are no specific climate change implications contained within this report.

Consultation

- 4.27 Soft market testing has been conducted with the market to inform the development of the specification. The specification will also stress the importance of collaboration with the Council in-house team as part of on-going service development.

5. Decide

Cabinet is requested to consider the content of this report and agree the recommendations as outlined in section 3.

6. Respond

Subject to Cabinet approval of the recommendations, ASC will:

- i) Award the contracts to the successful applicants
- ii) Reassure Cabinet that ASC will retender for services via an Open Procurement Process for Community Reablement – Phase 2

7. Review

ASC will monitor impact and lessons learnt through the contract in line with our contract management process

Appendices

None

Background papers

None

Author

Tim Bryant
Head of Service for Commissioning
☎ 01922 652699
✉ Tim.Bryant@walsall.gov.uk



Kerrie Allward
Executive Director
Adult Social Care and Public Health
28 August 2024



Councillor Keir Pedley
Portfolio Holder, Adult Social Care
28 August 2024

Recommendations from Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the Derelict Properties Taskforce

Portfolio: Councillor Andrew – Associate Leader of the Council and Regeneration

Wards: All

Key decision: No

Forward plan: No

1. Aim

To receive a recommendation from the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee made on 11 April 2024.

2. Recommendations

That Cabinet considers the recommendation of the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

3. Report detail – know

At its meeting on 11 April 2024, the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report regarding the Derelict Sites Taskforce.

Following a previous update presented at the Committee on 12 September 2023, the Derelict Sites Taskforce had worked to collaboratively to encourage redevelopment of sites in the Borough and take enforcement action if necessary. Members were reminded that the taskforce comprised of representatives from Planning Services, Enforcement, and Building Control and championed by the Deputy Leader and Portfolio Holder for Regeneration.

The taskforce used a range of measures, such as advice, incentives, and enforcement, to facilitate the regeneration of these sites and improve the local environment and the economy. Some of the sites that the taskforce dealt with included the Sneyd, Vernon Way, and the Saddlers Quay.

The Committee reviewed and discussed various abandoned sites throughout the Borough. Following, a lengthy debate, it was resolved that the Cabinet seek to secure a new staff appointment to specifically monitor and progress derelict properties in the Borough.

Resolved:

That, the Cabinet seek to secure a new staff appointment to specifically monitor and progress derelict properties in the Borough.

4. Decide

The recommendations of the Committee are set out and the Cabinet could choose to:

1. Accept the recommendations as set out;
2. Reject the recommendations; and/or
3. Choose to receive a report in more depth at a future Cabinet meeting.

5. Respond

Following the decision of Cabinet, the Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee will be advised of the outcome of their recommendation.

6. Review

Subject to the decision of Cabinet, further reports at Economy and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings or Cabinet meetings may be required.

Background papers

None

Author

Matt Powis

Senior Democratic Services Officer

☎ 01922 652156

✉ Matthew.Powis@walsall.gov.uk