



Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

21 November 2023 at 18:00

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

[Livestream Link](#)

Membership:

Councillor S. Ditta (Chair)
Councillor P. Kaur (Vice-Chair)
Councillor P. Gill
Councillor I. Hussain
Councillor S.B. Hussain
Councillor N. Latham
Councillor E. Morgan
Councillor L. Rattigan
Councillor C. Towe
Vacancy
Vacancy

Non-Elected

Voting Members:

K. Hinton (Archdiocese of Birmingham Representative)
Vacancy (Diocese of Lichfield)

Vacancy (Parent Governor Representative – Primary)
Vacancy (Parent Governor Representative – Secondary)
Vacancy (Parent Governor Representative – Special)

Non-Elected

Non-Voting Members:

S. Guy (Primary Teacher Representative)
W. Duffus (Secondary Teacher Representative)

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor M. Statham – Education and Skills

Quorum:

Four Members

Democratic Services, The Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW
Contact name: Nikki Gough Telephone: 01922 654767 Email: nikki.gough@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> <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. **Substitutions**
To receive notice of any substitutions for a Member of the Committee for the duration of the meeting.
3. **Minutes**
To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 5 September 2023.
(Enclosed)
4. **Declarations of Interest**
5. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended):**
To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.
6. **Corporate Financial Performance – Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring Position for 2023/23**
To provide the budget monitoring position for period 6 2023/24.
(Enclosed)
7. **Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2027/28**
To receive a presentation and report on the draft revenue and capital budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee. To provide feedback to Cabinet on the proposals.
(Enclosed)
8. **Specialist Provision Plan and SEN school places**
To provide an overview of the current position of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) specialist provision planning within the Local Authority.
(Enclosed)
9. **Mainstream School Pupil Place Planning**
To provide an update on School Place Planning.
(Enclosed)
10. **School Admissions Update**
To provide an update on school admissions activities.
(Enclosed)
11. **Recommendation Tracker**
To consider progress on recommendations from the previous meeting
(Enclosed)
12. **Areas of Focus**
To review the Committees Work Programme and the Forward Plans for Walsall Council and the Black Country Executive Committee.
(Enclosed)
13. **Date of next meeting**
The date of the next meeting will be 11 January 2023.

**Minutes of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee,
Council Chamber, Walsall Council House.**

Thursday 3 October 2023 at 6.00 P.M.

Committee Members present:

Councillor S. Ditta (Chair)
Councillor P. Gill
Councillor T. Jukes (Substitution)
Councillor P. Kaur
Councillor E. Morgan
Councillor L. Rattigan
Councillor C. Towe

Portfolio Holder:

Councillor Mark Statham – Education and Skills

Officers Present:

Rob Thomas - Head of Access
Judith Nash – Head of SEND
Lorraine Thompson - Virtual School & Vulnerable Groups Lead
Nicholas Perks - Quality Assurance Team Manager
Jack Thompson – Democratic Services Officer

Welcome and introductions were made.

The Chair informed Members that the Item 7, Inclusion Hub Update would be presented before Item 6 on Send Developments including EHC systems.

15 Apologies

Apologies were received from Councillors Latham and S.B. Hussain.

16 Substitutions

Councillor T. Jukes substituted for Councillor S.B. Hussain.

17 Declarations of Interest and Party Whip

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

18 Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)

There were no agenda items requiring the exclusion of the public.

19 Minutes

A copy of the Minutes of the meeting held on the 5 September 2023 were submitted [annexed].

A Member requested that the following be added to the Minutes under Minute 13. That a Member did not agree that Council's approach to the use of school attendance orders should be as a last resort for a child not attending school.

Members also requested that those present at the last meeting be reflected in the minutes in the present list and not only under the substitution minute.

Resolved:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 June 2023 a copy having previously been circulated and agreeing the above amendments, be approved and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

20 Inclusion Hub Update – Report

At the invitation of the Chair the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills introduced the report and highlighted the salient points.

Virtual School & Vulnerable Groups Lead informed the Committee of the following key points:

- There had been an increase in the number of referrals to the Inclusion Hub;
- The team had been working hard with schools to reduce the number of exclusions;
- The team had visited the youth justice hub to help support children on remand;
- The team was tracking children who had been excluded from school to offer them support;
- There was more work to be carried out on Special Educational Needs (SEN) support;
- An update on this would be presented to the Committee in the future.

Members of the Committee and the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills expressed their congratulations to the team and the Virtual School & Vulnerable Groups Lead on the work they had carried and their continued efforts.

Resolved

The Committee to note the impact of the work carried out by the Inclusion Hub.

21 SEND Developments Including EHC Systems – Report

At the invitation of the Chair the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills introduced the report and highlighted the salient points [see annexed].

The Head of SEND informed Members of the following points:

- It was important that SEN (Special Education Needs) support was not bypassed before entering into the process of obtaining an Education and Healthcare Plan (EHCP);
- The Council had put a robust SEN system in place;
- There were no issues with recruiting staff for the EHCP team and the Council had taken a unique approach to recruitment in the region;
- The Council had recently had eleven applications for the one post within the EHCP team;
- Having a full permanent EHCP team helped the service communicate more consistently with parents, meant that staff received more training, it had helped to reduce the EHCP assessment backlog and had helped to build stronger links with health partners;
- The Council had done work to improve relationships with parents as this was a weakness of the Council;
- A robust early years SEN offer had allowed the EHCP team to offer support to children who had not yet started school;
- Work was being undertaken to improve the local offer and this would be implemented in future;
- Those who had an EHCP using old format would be updated with the new template at their annual review.

A discussion took place between officers and Members, the key points included:

- Members congratulated the team, especially the improved cooperation with health partners and the hiring of permanent staff;
- The national average for meeting the 20-week deadline for EHCP was 49%, the Council was operating at 84% and was aiming for further improvements;
- The local offer was designed in cooperation with parents, and they were supportive of the new offer under development;
- Under the current joint inspection regime by Ofsted and the CQC (Care Quality Commission) the Council was currently graded at a 2. Meaning that the outcomes for children were inconsistent;
- In response to the level 2 outcome, the Council was aiming to show that inspectors upon their return, growth in new projects, strengthened pathways with social care and improvements in EHCP processes and delivery;
- It was the responsibility of the school to make sure that there was a qualified TA (Teaching Assistant) for children with EHCPs which specified support from a dedicated TA;
- The SENCO forum helped to coordinate training for schools;

- The caseload for EHCPs was not more than the national average;
- The Council was working towards delivering other projects which would help to offer alternatives to EHCPs;
- The team was confident it would sustain the high percentage of meeting the statutory deadline for EHCPs;
- When EHCPs were received they had to be dealt with within the statutory timeframes, however, there was a process in place to help manage the differing complexities of each application.

The Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills informed the Committee that success of the team could be built upon, and that good feedback had been received from parents.

Resolved

- **That the Committee note the impact of the work carried out by the SEND Service, including the developments within Education and Care (EHC) Systems.**
- **That the five key areas used to measure the preparedness for adulthood for children with EHCPs be shared with the Committee.**
- **That information of apprenticeship schemes offered to children with EHCPs be shared with the Committee.**

22 Transitions in Special Education Needs – Report

At the invitation of the Chair the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills introduced the item and highlighted key point, which included:

- There were ongoing developments being made with transitions;
- New documentation had been published for parents for the EHCP review process;
- There was a backlog of EHCP annual reviews, however, with the new process the aim was to clear the backlog.

Resolved

The Committee note the impact of the development progress and achievements made out by the SEND Service in relation to transitions.

23 Learning Recovery – Report

At the invitation of the Chair the Portfolio Holder for Education and Skills introduced the report and highlighted the salient points [see annexed].

The Quality Assurance Team Manager informed the Committee of the following points:

- The Councils virtual school was provided funding to help support looked after children and this was also distributed to families;

- The Department for Education provided support for summer schools and the online OAK Academy;
- The Council provided support to help the inclusion of children within the Borough into school;
- The Building Resilient and Inclusive Communities in Schools (BRICS) Programme centred around inclusivity and was funded through allocated funding from Schools Forum;
- The Council worked closely with Kooth, a mental health charity, to offer support school and families help;
- The Council offered a school recovery programme which was offered to maintained schools and these schools were supportive of the programme;
- There had been a slow improvement in Ofsted ratings for schools within the Brough and the Borough was now above the national average.

A discussion then took place between Members and Officers on the report, some of the key point included:

- Members requested that they be presented with an update on the work that is being undertaken to improve year one phonics;
- The Council, through its partners, had highlighted the concern around year one phonics to schools;
- Those schools with low year one phonics results would be receiving more help with phonics, specifically around how they were taught;
- Members requested that Council, through its School Improvement Programme make sure that teachers responsible for teaching phonics in schools have the required training or experience to teach phonics;
- Local Authorities get judged by the Department for Education based on all state schools within their borders and there is no differentiation between maintained schools and academies within the headline figures;
- Members expressed their disappointment that the figures from the Department for Education were presented this way.

Resolved

- **That Members be informed of the work that the Council was undertaking through its School Improvements Programme to improve year one phonics.**
- **That through the School Improvements Programme, the Council monitor that teachers responsible for teaching phonics to make sure that they have the relevant skills and experience to teach phonics and offer support to those who don't.**
- **Recommend Cabinet writes to the Secretary of State for Education to request that public performance data published on the Department for Education website on Local Authorities average education performance should split academy (Multi Academy Trusts or Companies) from maintained schools as Local**

Authorities have no control over academies and thus should not be judged on their performance.

24 Date of next meeting

The date of the next meeting would be 21 November 2023.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 19:04.

Signed:

Date:

**Education
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

DATE: 21 NOVEMBER 2023

**CORPORATE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE – QUARTER 2 FINANCIAL MONITORING
POSITION FOR 2023/24**

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr M Statham – Education and Skills

1. Aim

- 1.1 To provide the budget monitoring position for Period 6 2023/24. The Chair requested that this item be considered by the Committee.

2. Recommendations:

The Committee are requested to:

- 2.1 Note the revenue and capital forecast for the financial year end 2023/24 for the services under the remit of the committee.

3. Report detail - Know

- 3.1 This report summarises the forecast revenue and capital financial position for 2023/24, based on the position to September 2023, for services within the remit of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as reported to Cabinet on 18 October 2023. The full Cabinet report can be accessed by the following link:

[Corporate Financial Performance 2023/24 - Cabinet 18 October 2023](#)

- 3.2 The forecast revenue outturn for 2023/24 for the services under the remit of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee is an overspend of £0.83m after the net use of reserves of £0.08m, as shown in **Table 1**. The forecast revenue outturn shown is based on actual information from the financial system as at the end of August 2023, and discussions with managers regarding year end forecast and achievement of approved savings.
- 3.3. For completeness, the forecast revenue overspend for services under the remit of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is an overspend of £2.45m. This gives a total forecast position of an overspend of £3.28m for Children's Services directorate as of 30 September 2023.

Table 1: Forecast revenue analysis 2023/24 by Service

Service	Annual Budget	Year End Forecast	Net Use of Reserves	Action Plan	Draft Outturn after use of and transfer to Earmarked Reserves	Variance to Budget
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
Access & Inclusion	2.62	3.35	(0.03)	0.00	3.32	0.70
Home to School Transport	6.56	6.69	0.00	0.00	6.69	0.13
Education Funding - Accountable Body	(0.41)	(0.36)	(0.05)	0.00	(0.41)	0.00
Total Services within remit of Committee	8.77	9.68	(0.08)	0.00	9.60	0.83

3.4 The main variances are summarised in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Reasons for revenue outturn variance

Service	Variance £m	Explanation of Year End Outturn
Access & Inclusion	0.70	Use of agency within the educational psychologist team to cover vacant posts and increased demand.
Home to School Transport	0.13	Unachieved savings due to increased demand over and above expected levels (estimated 10%, actual increase 14%). Benefit will be achieved in full in 2024/25.
Education Funding – Accountable Body	0.00	
Total Services within remit of this Committee	0.83	

3.5 Reasons for Movements

The June forecast position reported to Cabinet in July 2023 was an overspend of £0.82m therefore there is a net increase in the overspend of £0.01m over the period.

3.6 Reserves

The total allocated reserves for 2023/24 for services under the remit of this committee are £1.91m, of which (£0.24m) has been used or committed to date and £0.16m will be transferred to reserves at the year-end, ringfenced for expected spend in 2024/25.

The use of reserves below is predominantly made up of grants carried forward from prior years to fund expenditure incurred in this financial year where grant conditions allow.

Table 4 below details the use of and transfer to reserves across the services within the remit of this committee.

Table 4: Summary of use of reserves and transfer to reserves				
Reserve Details	Allocated reserve	Use of reserve	Transfer to reserve	Balance of reserve
	£m	£m	£m	£m
Access & Inclusion	0.42	(0.03)	0.00	0.39
Home to School Transport	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
Education Funding – Accountable Body	1.49	(0.21)	0.16	1.44
Total Reserves	1.91	(0.24)	0.16	1.83

3.7 Risks

For the services under the remit of this committee, there are total risks of **£0.87m** which are not included in the above forecast. At this stage the risks are not a certainty and as such are not included in the monitoring position. There are high risks of £0.14m relating to Services within the remit of this committee. If any risks became a certainty, they would need to be included in the forecast position as an overspend, unless alternative action can be identified to mitigate these costs. A summary of the risk assessment is shown in **Table 5** below.

Table 5: Revenue Risks 2023/24				
Risk	Value £m	Ongoing £m	One Off £m	Actions to manage risk
High	0.14	0.14	0	Risk of increased demand for Education Psychologist assessments over and above expected demand.
Medium	0.63	0.32	0.39	One off risk of increased agency rates for Educational Psychologists – this risk will be reduced as permanent staffing structure is recruited to. Risk of increased demand for home to school transport services over and above expected demand.
Low	0.10	0.10	0	Risk of reduced traded income as schools convert to academies
Total	0.87	0.87	0.39	

3.8 Service Transformation Plan Benefits

Included within the budget for 2023/24 for services within the remit of this Committee are £0.40m of approved savings. **Table 7** gives an update on progress towards implementing these benefits:

Table 7: Delivery of 2023/24 approved savings – services within the remit of this Committee

Saving	Total savings £m	Delivered £m	To be delivered by 31/03/23 £m	Not fully guaranteed £m	At High risk of non-delivery £m
OP2 – Home to School Transport review of contracts and route optimisation	(0.30)	-	(0.17)	-	(0.13)
OP3 – Increase top slice of Basic Need Capital Funding	(0.10)	(0.10)	-	-	-
Total approved savings for services within remit of Committee	(0.40)	(0.10)	(0.17)	-	(0.13)

Each benefit is “BRAG” categorised as follows:

- Blue (delivered);
- Green (on track to be delivered with no issues at year end of 2023/24);
- Amber (not guaranteed at this stage but no major issues expected, some management action needed to ensure delivery) or,
- Red - (at high risk of not being achieved either in part or in full and therefore either alternative actions are required or a plan to ensure delivery is put back on track).

3.9 Capital Forecast

The capital programme for the services under the remit of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as at the end of September 2023, is £13.30m. As at September, it was expected that all £13.30m will be fully spent within the current financial year. A list of schemes within the remit of this committee is shown in **Table 8**.

Table 8: Capital Outturn 2023/24 – Services within the remit of this Committee

Scheme	Approved Budget £m	Actual year to date £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Year End Variance £m	Proposed Carry Forward to 2024/25 £m	Variance Over / (Under) £m
Council Funded schemes						
School Estate Condition Survey	0.25	0.00	0.25	0.00	0.00	0.00
School Temporary Classrooms	0.17	0.11	0.17	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Council Funded Schemes	0.42	0.11	0.42	0.00	0.00	0.00
Externally Funded Schemes						
Devolved Formula Capital	2.49	0.81	2.49	0.00	0.00	0.00
Capital Maintenance	4.03	3.91	4.03	0.00	0.00	0.00
Basic Need	2.31	0.16	2.31	0.00	0.00	0.00

High Needs Provision Allocation	3.70	2.20	3.70	0.00	0.00	0.00
Academies	0.35	0.00	0.35	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Externally Funded Schemes	12.88	7.08	12.88	0.00	0.00	0.00
Total Capital – Services within the remit of this Committee	13.30	7.19	13.30	0.00	0.00	0.00

4. Financial information

4.1 The financial implications are as set out in the main body of this report. The council has a statutory responsibility to set a balanced budget and to ensure it has an adequate level of reserves. The council will take a medium-term policy led approach to all decisions on resource allocation.

5. Reducing Inequalities

5.1 Services consider and respond to equality issues in setting budgets and delivering services. Irrespective of budgetary pressures, the Council must fulfil equal opportunities obligations.

6. Decide

6.1 To note the recommendations as set out in this report.

7. Respond

7.1 The Executive Director for Children’s Services, with finance in support will be working with Directors and Heads of service to review the forecast, to continue to implement mitigating actions for any further forecast overspends and to consider these financial implications in line with the council’s budget setting process.

8. Review

8.1 Regular monitoring reports are presented to Cabinet to inform them of the financial forecast for 2023/24, including an update on risks and impact on the budget for 2024/25 and beyond.

Background papers: Various financial working papers

Contact Officers:

Ross Hutchinson, Head of Finance (Deputy 151 Officer) – Finance Business Partnering & ESS projects

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Tanya Collier, Interim Finance Manager – Children’s & Education Services

☎ 01922 652346, ✉ tanya.collier@walsall.gov.uk

Colleen Male

Interim Executive Director, Children’s Services

EDUCATION SERVICES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Q2 FINANCIAL MONITORING POSITION FOR 2023/24

21 November 2023

Tanya Collier



Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE

Contents

- 1 Forecast Overview
- 2 Key Variances
- 3 Movement from previous month
- 4 Reserves
- 5 Risks
- 6 2023/24 STP Summary
- 7 Capital Forecast
- 8 Children's Social Care Demand Services

1. Forecast Overview

The forecast revenue outturn for 2023/24 for the services under the remit of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee is an overspend of **£0.83m** after the net use of reserves of £0.08m.

For completeness, the forecast revenue overspend for services under the remit of the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is an overspend of **£2.45m**. This gives a total forecast position of an overspend of **£3.28m** for Children's Services directorate as of 30 September 2023.

This is broken down further in Table 1 of the report.

2. Key Variances

The key variances contributing to the services overspend of **£0.83m** are:

- £0.70m use of agency within the educational psychologist team to cover vacant posts and increased demand.
- £0.13m unachieved savings due to increased demand over and above expected levels (estimated 10%, actual increase 14%). Benefit will be achieved in full in 2024/25.

The above is detailed in Table 2 of the report.

3. Movement from Jun 23 (P3) to Sep 23 (P6)

The forecast outturn position as at Period 3 (Jun 23) was an overspend of **£0.82m** therefore there is a net increase in the forecast overspend of **£0.01m**. There are no significant movements to detail in this report.

4. Reserves

The total allocated reserves for 2023/24 for services under the remit of this committee are **£1.91m**, of which (**£0.24m**) has been used or committed to date and **£0.16m** will be transferred to reserves at the year-end, ringfenced for expected spend in 2024/25.

Further information around the reserves can be found in section 3.6 and Table 4 of the report.

5. Risks

Low Impact (Green) **£0.10m** Medium Impact (Amber) **£0.63m** High Impact (Red) **£0.14m**

For the services under the remit of this committee, there are total risks of **£0.87m** which are not included in the above forecast. At this stage the risks are not a certainty and as such are not included in the monitoring position.

If any risks became a certainty, they would need to be included in the forecast position as an overspend, unless alternative action can be identified to mitigate these costs.

Further information around the risks can be found in section 3.7 and Tables 5 & 6 of the report.

6. 2023/24 STP Summary

Included within the budget for 2023/24 for services within the remit of this Committee are **£0.40m** of approved savings of which:

- £0.10m has been fully achieved to date;
- £0.17m is on track to be delivered by 31st March 2024;
- £0.13m is not expected to be achieved in this financial year.

Savings not expected to be achieved in year are shown in the current forecast overspend.

Plans are in place to ensure all unachieved savings are achieved in 2024/25 financial year.

Further information around the risks can be found in section 3.8 and Table 7 of the report.

7. Capital Forecast

The capital programme for the services under the remit of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee, as at the end of September 2023, is £13.30m. As at September, it was expected that all £13.30m will be fully spent within the current financial year.

Further information around the risks can be found in section 3.9 and Table 8 of the report.

**Education
Overview and Scrutiny Committee**

21 NOVEMBER 2023

Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 – 2027/28

Ward(s) All

Portfolios: Cllr M Statham – Education and Skills

Executive Summary:

The draft budget, as reported to Cabinet on 18 October 2023, includes the latest medium term financial outlook (MTFO) for the four-year period from 2024/25 to 2027/28. It also outlines the draft revenue budget for 2024/25 to 2027/28 (including savings proposals identified to date for consultation), the draft capital programme for 2024/25 to 2027/28, and sets out the process and timescale for setting a legally balanced budget for 2024/25.

Our MTFO has been updated for all known pressures, including best professional assumptions around the cost-of-living impact, and that on rising demand on our services. Due to the size and breadth of cost pressures, this has had a significant impact on the assumptions in relation to the 2024/25 budget, with additional growth now required of c£57.69m, resulting in a budget gap of c£18.06m.

The Council is legally obliged to set a one-year balanced budget (2024/25), however a medium-term approach is beneficial to allow for sound financial planning and to support future financial stability. The proposals set out in this report do not yet balance the budget for 2024/25, so there will be a requirement to report back on changes and options to close the gap at the next meeting of Cabinet on 13 December 2023. All draft proposals are subject to changes arising from the Autumn Statement due on 22 November 2023, and a provisional settlement yet to be received (anticipated mid December). A number of savings proposals are also included for 2025/26 to 2027/28, with further options being identified to allow for a balanced budget over the period 2025/26 to 2027/28 aligned to the Council Plan and Proud activity.

The 2024/25 draft budget assumes a 2.99% general council tax increase and a further 2% precept for Adult Social Care in line with current referendum assumptions, with a 1.99% per annum increase thereafter. This is expected to be confirmed when we receive our draft 2024/25 settlement in December 2023.

The draft capital programme for 2024/25 totals £132.08m. It sets out capital investment funded from the council's own resources of £75.23m (funded by capital receipts and borrowing) and externally funded schemes of £56.85m (funded by capital grants) and represents a balanced programme for 2024/25. In addition, the report sets out a further three years of indicative proposals to 2027/28. Despite reductions in capital funding in recent years and going forward, the draft capital programme contains significant investment into regeneration initiatives, highways, education, and into adult and children's social care and housing to support vulnerable households through Health through Warmth and provision of aids and adaptations.

This report provides an extract of the Proud draft revenue savings proposals and investments / cost pressures for 2024/25 – 2027/28 by Proud Outcomes identified to date, which fall within the remit of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration. It also provides a summary of the draft capital programme for schemes within the remit of this Committee.

Feedback from the Committee on the draft revenue and capital proposals to date will be reported back to Cabinet on 13 December 2023 for consideration.

The revenue proposals set out in the report to Cabinet on 18 October 2023 do not yet balance the budget for 2024/25, so there will be a requirement to report back on changes and options to close the remaining c£18m gap at the next meeting of Cabinet on 13 December 2023, and subsequent report to this committee should any changes relate to services within the remit of this committee.

The final draft budget will be considered by Cabinet on 7 February 2024 for recommendation to Council on 22 February 2024. Any changes to draft revenue and capital budget proposals as a result of equality impact assessments and consultation will also be fed into the final budget report.

Reason for scrutiny:

To enable consultation of the draft revenue and capital budget proposals for services within the remit of this Committee.

Recommendations:

That:

1. The Committee are recommended to consider the draft revenue budget proposals to date as attached that relate to the remit of this committee as shown in **Appendices 1** and **2**, and that feedback will be presented to Cabinet on 13 December 2023.
2. The Committee note that the revenue budget for 2024/25 is currently not balanced, with a gap of c£18m, and therefore a further report may be required to this committee if any changes to draft proposals outlined relate to services within the committee's remit.
3. The Committee are recommended to consider the draft capital schemes included in the draft capital programme attached that relate to the remit of this committee as shown in **Appendices 3** and **4**, and that feedback will be presented to Cabinet on 13 December 2023.

Background papers:

Various financial working papers.

Resource and legal considerations:

Cabinet on 18 October 2023 were presented with a list of draft Proud revenue savings proposals for consultation and a list of investment/cost pressures by Proud outcome, along with a draft capital programme over the period 2024/25 to 2027/28.

The full Cabinet report can be accessed at the following link:

[Draft Revenue Budget and Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 - Cabinet 18 October 2023](#)

Maximising Outcomes through Budgeting 2024/25 onwards

Our approach to budget setting was established in 2020 with overall financial savings expected to be delivered via Proud activity. For 2024/25 Proud work streams will continue to provide the 'enablers' to allow Directorates to deliver through Service Transformation Plans (STP's).

Directors reviewed their STP's to identify how individual services can be transformed to generate further efficiencies, along with any short-term investment requirements to enable this to progress, linking their current and future service delivery with Council priority outcomes as per the Council Plan. This allows for identification of potential transformation activity and associated savings for future financial years. Those identified to date are outlined within the draft budget report to Cabinet on 18 October 2023, with further work in train to identify further opportunities to close the financial gap for 2024/25 and future years.

The Council Plan direction of travel approach sets out how the budget will be aligned to deliver the desired outcome i.e., through different amounts of delivery, coordination, influencing, signposting, or regulating. A review of the current delivery model will be undertaken alongside the direction of travel and re-prioritised where appropriate to maximise value for money and overall delivery of outcomes and ensuring the 2024/25 onwards budget is built and developed on this moving forward.

Investment / cost pressures

Further to the changes in assumptions, the draft budget 2024/25 – 2027/28 includes provision for growth and investment of c£133m (£57.69m of this is in 2024/25). Those investments relating to the remit of this Committee are shown at **Appendix 1** and total £5.29m over 4 years.

Savings proposals

The Proud service transformation plans have identified £13.58m of financial benefit for 2024/25 (including the review of the £8.10m identified in the budget report to Council in February 2023). There is also £9.37m identified for 2025/26, £7.91m for 2026/27 and £6.72m for 2027/28. Benefits / savings are classified into two categories:

1. Policy Proposals - which require an Executive decision to proceed, and which will be referred for public consultation and equality impact assessment. These total £333k in 2024/25 (£453k over the four years to 2027/28).
2. Operational Proposals – savings which officers have delegations to implement; examples include restructures, back-office savings, operational efficiencies. These total £13.25m in 2024/25 (£37.12m over the four years to 2027/28).

Some proposals require investment to support delivery. Such investment will only be allocated if the relevant saving proposal is included within Cabinet's final budget report in February, once consultation and equality impact assessment has concluded.

Savings proposals outlined in the report to Cabinet on 18 October 2023 will assist in closing the gap over the four years to 2027/28. A gap of £18.06m remains after the delivery of the £13.58m saving identified for 2024/25, with a further £14.24m saving requirement for 2025/26, £8.57m for 2026/27 and £9.36m for 2027/28. Through budget week and beyond, a number of themes were identified for prioritisation to take forward to support the 2024/25 position and also form the foundations of the medium-term financial strategy, building on the work of the Proud programme. Directors continue to work on identifying additional options for Members consideration, and further reports will be presented to Cabinet outlining further options to balance the budget for 2024/25 onwards. A work stream review of the STP's is taking place to ensure that they maximise opportunities from the Proud ways of working and capabilities, and therefore capture the full benefits; to ensure they capture innovative thinking; and to challenge any opportunities to accelerate identified savings.

Those savings proposals relating to the remit of this Committee are shown at **Appendix 2** and total £257k over 4 years.

Net investment / savings

The following summarises the net investment /(savings) by Directorate for 2024/25.

Net Investment/savings by Directorate 2024/25	Investment £m	Savings £m	Net £m
Adult Social Care, Public Health and Hub	28.61	(4.59)	24.02
Children's Services	14.09	(4.14)	9.95
Children's - Customer Engagement	1.30	(0.43)	0.87
Economy, Environment and Communities	3.73	(3.06)	0.68
Resources and Transformation	0.86	(1.35)	(0.49)
Central / Capital Financing*	9.09	0.00	9.09
Total Net Investments by Directorate	57.69	(13.58)	44.11

*Central investment includes £8.09m of pay and pension costs which will be allocated to services following a detailed review of salary budget requirements.

Therefore, when central investments are taken into account, all Directorates will see a net increase in budgets.

Draft Capital Programme

The draft capital programme for 2024/25 is balanced and totals £132.08m. It sets out new capital investment funded from the council's own resources of £75.23m (funded by capital receipts and borrowing) and externally funded schemes of £56.85m (funded by capital grants). In addition, the report sets out a further three years of indicative proposals to 2027/28.

Those council funded schemes relating to the remit of this Committee are shown at **Appendix 3** totalling £2.00m over 4 years, and external funded schemes of £79.47m at **Appendix 4**.

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APPENDIX 1

Summary of New Growth and Investment 2024/25 to 2027/28 aligned to Proud Outcomes relating to the remit of this Committee.

Directorate	Ref No	Details of Growth by outcome	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Children and young people thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential							
Children's, Education & Customer Engagement	60	Increase in demand for Home to school transport	986,977	1,133,977	800,000	643,407	3,564,361
	61	Reduction in traded services attendance income target due to schools directly employing their own staff in response to the new requirements of the school attendance procedures and bill	36,387	36,387	36,387	0	109,161
	62	Home to School Transport Staffing Resources	27,487	19,633	0	0	47,120
	63	Increase staffing costs in Education, Health, and Care Plan Assessment team to meet increased demand	72,333	51,667	124,000	0	248,000
	64	Educational Psychology service - staffing to meet increases in demand	871,971	119,281	133,627	199,818	1,324,698
Total Children and young people thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential			1,995,155	1,360,945	1,094,014	843,225	5,293,340
Total Growth and investment relating to the remit of this Committee			1,995,155	1,360,945	1,094,014	843,225	5,293,340

Benefits Realisation (Savings) for Proud activity by Outcome 2024/25 to 2027/28 relating to the remit of this Committee.

A: Summary of Policy Proposals by Outcome 2024/25 – 2027/28

None relating to the remit of this Committee.

B: Summary of Operational Proposals by Outcome 2024/25 – 2027/28

Directorate	Ref No	Detail of Operational Proposals by Outcome	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Children and young people thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential							
Children's, Education & Customer Engagement	OP54	Culture shift, training, and workforce - payback of Education, Health, and Care Plan investment	(50,000)	0	0	0	(50,000)
	OP55	Reduce headcount	(61,971)	0	0	0	(61,971)
	OP56	Reduction in home to school transport investment	(145,000)	0	0	0	(145,000)
Total Children and young people thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential			(256,971)	0	0	0	(256,971)
Total Operational Proposals relating to the remit of this Committee			(256,971)	0	0	0	(256,971)

APPENDIX 3

Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 – Council Funded Schemes relating to the remit of this Committee.

Prior Year Approval Schemes

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Children and young people thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential							
Children's, Education & Customer Engagement	School Estate Condition Survey	Ongoing provision to cover school conditions.	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	1,000,000
	School Temporary Classrooms	Ongoing provision for improving / replacing permanent mobile classrooms when they reach a state of disrepair. This has been held corporately to fund emergency costs arising.	250,000	250,000	250,000	250,000	1,000,000
Total Children and young people thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential			500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,000,000
Total Prior Year Approval Schemes			500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,000,000
Total Draft Capital Programme – Council Funded Schemes within the remit of this Committee			500,000	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,000,000

APPENDIX 4

Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28 – External Funded Schemes relating to the remit of this Committee.

Directorate	Capital Scheme	Detail of Capital investment	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	Total £
Children and young people thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential							
Children's, Education & Customer Engagement	Basic Need	Paid to Local Authorities to support the capital requirement for providing new pupil places by expanding existing maintained schools, free schools or academies & establishing new schools (Department for Education-DfE).	2,500,000	9,346,409	23,368,088	0	35,214,497
	Devolved Formula Capital	Received by the Local authority then allocated out to individual schools as per allocations defined by the DfE. It is intended to provide schools with capital funding for improvement to buildings and other facilities, including ICT, or capital repairs / refurbishments and minor works. (Department for Education).	510,228	510,228	510,228	510,228	2,040,912
	Capital Maintenance	Allocated to the Local Authority on an annual basis to improve and maintain the condition of the school estate (buildings and grounds). Investment is prioritised on keeping school buildings safe and in good working order by tackling poor building condition, building compliance, energy efficiency, and health and safety issues. (Department for Education).	3,195,000	2,285,000	8,862,791	3,888,380	18,231,171
	High Needs Provisional Capital allocation	High Needs Provisional Capital Allocation (HNPCA) funding is paid to Local authorities to support the capital requirement for providing new SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities) pupil places by expanding/improving existing maintained schools, free schools, or academies. Confirmed Allocation for 2023/24.	2,867,030	2,867,030	13,884,142	4,365,293	23,983,495
Total Children and young people thrive emotionally, physically, mentally and feel they are achieving their potential			9,072,258	15,008,667	46,625,249	8,763,901	79,470,075
Total Draft Capital Programme – External Funded Schemes within the remit of this Committee			9,072,258	15,008,667	46,625,249	8,763,901	79,470,075

EDUCATION OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

DRAFT REVENUE BUDGET & DRAFT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2024/25 – 2027/28

**21 November 2023
Tanya Collier**



Walsall Council

PROUD OF OUR PAST OUR PRESENT AND FOR OUR FUTURE

Contents

- 1 Overview
- 2 Investments / Cost Pressures
- 3 Savings Proposals
- 4 Draft Capital Programme

1. Overview

The draft budget for the Local Authority, as reported to Cabinet on 18th October 2023, includes the latest medium term financial outlook (MTFO) for the four year period 2024/25 – 2027/28.

The MTFO is update for all known pressures, including best professional assumption around the cost-of-living impact and the impact of rising demand on our services.

Due to the size and breadth of cost pressures, this has had a significant impact on the assumptions in relation to the 2024/25 budget, with additional growth now required of c£57.69m, resulting in a budget gap of c£18.06m.

The proposals set out in the report to Cabinet do not yet balance the budget for 2024/25, so there will be a requirement to report back on changes and options to close the gap at the next meeting of Cabinet on 13 December 2023.

The final draft budget will be considered by Cabinet on 7 February 2024 for recommendation to Council on 22 February 2024.

2. Investments / Cost Pressures

Those investments relating to the remit of this Committee are shown at **Appendix 1** of the report and total **£5.29m** over 4 years.

The key investments relating to the remit of this committee include:

- Provision for future demand and cost increases relating Home to School transport;
- Increased resources to support current and future demand for Educational Psychology services.

3. Savings Proposals

Those savings proposals relating to the remit of this Committee are shown at **Appendix 2** of the report and total **£257k** over 4 years.

The key savings relating to the remit of this Committee include:

- Reduction in home to school transport costs through route optimisation and improved value for money;
- Reduction in current resources resulting from new ways of working.

4. Draft Capital Programme

Those council funded schemes relating to the remit of this Committee are shown at **Appendix 3** of the report totalling **£2.00m** over 4 years, and external funded schemes of **£79.47m** at **Appendix 4** of the report.

The key council funded capital projects within the remit of this Committee are:

- Provision to support the condition of the school estate;
- Provision for repairing / replacing permanent mobile classrooms when they reach a state of disrepair.

The key external funded capital projects within the remit of this Committee are:

- Basic Need funding provided by the DfE to support the capital requirement for providing new pupil places by expanding existing schools or establishing new schools;
- Devolved Formula Capital provided by the DfE then passported to schools to provide capital funding needed for improvements to buildings and other facilities;
- Capital Maintenance provided by the DfE to improve and maintain the condition of the school estate;
- High Needs Provisional Capital Allocation provided by the DfE to support the capital requirement for providing new SEND pupil places by expanding / improving existing schools.

Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Specialist Provision Plan and SEN school places

Wards	All
Service:	Admissions & Education Sufficiency Team, Access Service
Portfolio:	Councillor Statham

1. Aim

The aim of this report is to provide an overview of the current position of Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) specialist provision planning within the Local Authority.

2. Recommendations

That the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee considers the contents of this report and decides whether any further information or updates are required

3. Report detail

This report provides an update on the ongoing work surrounding our specialist provision and pupil place planning for SEND. The ongoing focus of the team is to review the requirement for SEND places across the borough in terms of pupil place planning and future proofing our place requirement. Working closely with the SEN and inclusion service, a five-year plan is being created to ensure our statutory responsibility for having sufficient school places is met.

3.1 Our Vision

Our vision is that all children and young people in Walsall will, irrespective of their learning needs or abilities, gain the skills and confidence to live well in their community. They will be supported and nurtured through an educational system that responds to their circumstances and prepares them for adulthood. Our ambition is to create a culture where there is effective, high quality learning provision, combined with meaningful and purposeful school partnerships, focused on the direct pursuit of improved outcomes for all Walsall’s children and young people.

We must ensure that Walsall’s Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) offer continues to improve the experience and outcomes for children and young people. We know that good provision requires a strong and effective culture of inclusion that supports all children and young people to thrive. All children and young people deserve the support they need to be confident, resilient individuals

with their own ambitions and aspirations as they develop into adulthood irrespective of their learning needs or abilities.

3.2 Local Authority Support

The Local Authority has the support of two Head Teachers, Cathy Draper (Short Heath Federation) and Kate Bargh (North Star Federation) on a part time secondment basis to support the development of the specialist provision review in Walsall.

Working closely with officers, they are working on the following projects in SEN:

- **Specialist provision group** – working closely with our capital and place planning teams to develop the special provision plan to meet the gaps identified through the special provision group review of SEN places.
- **Specialist inclusion service development** – working closely with our inclusion teams to develop services to support schools with behaviour, mental health support and children at risk of poor/non-school attendance or exclusion.

The work of the special provision review group aims to improve current processes and reorganise current provision to support better outcomes for children and young people (CYP) with SEND in Walsall. The work within this action plan aims to offer short, medium and long-term solutions. The expectation is that this work encompasses all sectors; education, health and social care and is co-produced with CYP and families working to the 'better together' principle.

The action plan is divided into two themes that interweave and have equal importance to the overall vision of improving outcomes for CYP with SEND. The two themes are: - the protocols to support inclusive practice and the review of specialist settings.

Inclusive Practice: The equity of inclusive practice across the borough is the highest priority. This is essential for the whole the education sector from early years to Post 16 to ensure we are preparing our children and young people adequately for adulthood. Much of this work will involve reinforcing the SEND Code of Practice (CoP) and establishing clear protocols, support, and pathways for all partners, including health and social care to support mainstream settings with the full inclusion of children and young people with SEND. This will entail working collaboratively with partners will allow greater opportunities to work in a more coordinated and efficient way.

Review of Specialist Settings: Whilst our inclusive vision and legal presumption, that all children including those with SEND have a right to mainstream education, is a priority we must also ensure that children with significant and complex SEND have the opportunity to attend a specialist setting in a timely way. A review of current specialist places (special schools and resourced provisions) will focus on the immediate and future needs. An accurate picture of the data will enable provision to support the needs of children and young people in the short, medium and long term. This will also include a full review of out of borough places that are used for SEND placements.

3.3 Pupil Place Requirement

Significant work has been undertaken to review the additional specialist places needed for the next 3-5 years.

The demand identifies provision for complex needs:

- Cognition & Learning including severe learning difficulties (SLD) and profound and multiple learning difficulties (PMLD)
- Communication & Interaction including Autism
- Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH)

The local authority will continue to look at meeting demand across 4 key areas:

- LA commissioned special schools
- Resourced provision in mainstream schools
- Alternate Provision
- Independent special schools

We have already begun to meet our growing need as significant additional capacity has been created and already commissioned at LA special schools and mainstream schools with resourced provision.

SPECIAL SCHOOLS					
SCHOOL NAME	COMMISSIONED PLACE NUMBER				
	Sep-19	Sep-20	Sep-21	Sep-22	Sep-23
Castle Special	178	189	204	222	222
Elmwood Special	67	72	72	77	77
Jane Lane Special	120	120	136	166	175
Mary Elliot Special	127	127	137	140	140
Oakwood Special	85	100	130	150	200
Old Hall Special	98	98	103	103	103
Phoenix Special Academy	41	41	41	41	47
Total	716	747	823	899	964

Over the last 4 academic years, there has been a 35% increase in commissioned numbers across the special schools.

ARP/SRP IN MAINSTREAM					
SCHOOL NAME	COMMISSIONED PLACE NUMBER				
	Sep-19	Sep-20	Sep-21	Sep-22	Sep-23
Bentley West Primary	10	10	10	10	10
Rushall Primary	15	15	16	23	23
Lindens Primary	10	10	10	10	10
St Francis of Assisi Secondary	13	13	11	11	0
Shire Oak Secondary	10	10	10	10	10
Pool Hayes Secondary	10	10	10	10	10
New Invention Infant	0	0	0	8	8
Christ Church CE Primary	0	0	0	8	8
Short Heath Junior	0	0	0	8	8
Total	68	68	67	98	87
PUPIL REFERRAL UNIT					
SCHOOL NAME	COMMISSIONED PLACE NUMBER				
	Sep-19	Sep-20	Sep-21	Sep-22	Sep-23
New Leaf	65	65	65	65	65
Shepwell	60	60	60	60	70
Total	125	125	125	125	135

Over the last 4 academic years, there has been a 15% increase in commissioned numbers across the specialist resource provisions (SRPs) in mainstream schools.

As part of plans to meet the additional demand, Cabinet approved funding of £2.4m to increase the number of places in SRPs by 122.

Several mainstream schools have agreed to have a specialist resource provision which are in the planning stages..

These include:

- Meadow View Primary School
- St James Primary School
- Pinfold Primary School
- Blue Coat Junior School
- Moorcroft Wood Primary School
- Christ Church Primary School – key stage 2
- Joseph Leckie Academy

These SRPs would provide 72 additional places.

In addition, several other schools are in conversation with the local authority over potential developments of SRPs for the remaining 50 places originally planned for.

In addition to the SRP developments, feasibility studies for expansion options at the existing special schools have been commissioned. The initial feasibilities have been undertaken and discussed with special schools.

A proposed expansion plan and capital strategy will be taken to Cabinet later in the autumn term, once plans are finalised and costs submitted for approval of capital funding.

A continual review of forecasted demands and places needed, as part of an annual sufficiency statement will ensure the needs for Walsall's pupils is kept under review.

Independent Sector

The local authority continues to have dialogue with independent providers who are looking to establish provision for SEN pupils in Walsall and where appropriate will commission places for pupils.

A new independent special school, Cherry Tree School, opened in September 2023 on the site of the former Abu Bakr Boys School on Queen Mary Street. The school provides capacity for 75 pupils with complex SEN needs.

In addition, a proposed new independent school is being developed by the Witherslack Group on the former site of Abu Bakr School on Scarborough Road. This school is currently planned to open in September 2024.

4. Financial information

The additional places and needs will form part of the SEND capital plan and utilisation of DfE grant funding for additional school places. This will be reported through the financial reports to scrutiny. Commissioned places are funded from the High Needs Block of schools funding

5. Reducing Inequalities

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.

6. Decide

The Committee may decide to note the current position and request further information or assurance if necessary.

7. Respond

Any recommendations made by the Committee will be assessed against the Access planned work and performance board programmes.

8. Review

The work of the Admissions & Education Sufficiency Team is subject to constant monitoring and assessment via the Children's Services Performance Board process.

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Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Mainstream School Pupil Place Planning

Wards All

Service: Admissions & Education Sufficiency Team, Access Service

Portfolio: Councillor Statham

1. Aim

The aim of this report is to provide the Education Scrutiny and Overview Committee with an update on:

- School Place Planning – Mainstream Primary and Secondary Schools
- Free School Development

2. Recommendations

That the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- notes falling birth rates impacting on surplus places in primary schools which will mean a requirement for conversations with schools about possibly reducing their Published Admission Number, or alternatives, to ensure a school does not become financially unsustainable.
- may require a further report on primary places in Spring or Summer term.
- notes the positive working to meet the forecasted demand for places with our secondary schools.
- considers the contents of this report and decides whether any further information or updates are required.

3. Report detail

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 schools 'in number, character and equipment to provide for all pupils the opportunity of appropriate education'.

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.

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.

For mainstream pupil place, planning purposes the borough has been divided into planning areas. There are 11 Primary Planning Areas and 4 Secondary Planning Areas. 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. (See Appendix A & B)

In order to plan pupil places effectively the Council must be open and transparent 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.

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

The school place planning service 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.

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.

3.1 Primary Sufficiency

School place planning forecasts must be agile and robust and will need to align to the Council's wider housing and regeneration plans and those of our neighbouring local authorities to ensure the impacts of new housing developments and cross border movement of pupils continues to be sufficiently planned for.

The table below shows the projected number of Reception places required against the capacity in terms of Published Admission Number (PAN) for Walsall as a whole.

Measure	Sep-24	Sep-25	Sep-26	Sep-27
PAN	3959	3959	3959	3959
Projected Intake	3529	3446	3448	3439
Surplus / Shortfall	430	513	511	520
Surplus %	11%	13%	13%	13%

Planning a sufficiency of school places requires a balance between two conflicting objectives. The first is to provide enough places to meet need along with a margin to allow some exercise of parental preference; the second is to ensure that there is not an excess of places overall or in any school or planning area. A working surplus across the whole borough however is necessary to ensure there are sufficient places for in-year admissions and an ability to meet parental preference.

Falling birth rates suggest that there will be a requirement for conversations with schools about possibly reducing their Published Admission Number, or alternatives, to ensure a school does not become financially unsustainable.

Work within the school place planning team is ongoing to develop a plan to ensure that schools remain financially sustainable during the years that this reduction is showing. This work has been communicated to primary schools through the Primary, Nursery and Special (PNS) head teachers' group and further conversations are being communicated with schools at planning area level.

A further report on the outcome of the conversations with primary schools and any proposed changes to admissions numbers for future years can be brought back to the commission in the Spring or Summer term.

3.3 Secondary Sufficiency

As part of the SCAP submission this summer, the school place planning team has revised the forecasted model based on the variances in the in/out of borough demands. The submitted SCAP model, therefore shows a forecasted shortfall of 308 Y7 places against the schools published admission numbers for September 2024.

The current forecasting model for secondary pupil places for Year 7 intakes shows the following:

	Measure	Sep-24	Sep-25	Sep-26	Sep-27	Sep-28	Sep-29
Total	Agreed Intake	3743	3743	3743	3743	3743	3743
	Projected Intake	4051	4036	4063	4117	4159	4003
	Surplus / Shortfall	-308	-293	-320	-374	-416	-260

Future projections are reviewed regularly based on the October census information, and on-time applications for school places to ensure the forecasted model is as accurate as possible with known information.

The expected shortfall of places across the Local Authority over the coming years is significant, therefore additional capacity is needed across the borough to ensure sufficient places are available.

Through ongoing conversations with schools and academy trusts/governing bodies, additional places have been secured for September 2024. To date, 9 schools (shown in green in the table below) have offered an additional 199 places without requiring any works to be undertaken at the site. Two additional schools are in the process of having works completing within school to create a further 110 places.

A total 309 additional places have therefore been secured for September 2024.

School Name	Base PAN	Uplift	Admitting 2024	
Aldridge School	270	15	285	No works required
Barr Beacon School	252	7	259	No works required
Bloxwich Academy	180	0	180	
Bluecoat CE Academy	150	10	160	No works required
Brownhills Ormiston Academy	150	17	167	No works required
Grace Academy Darlaston	180	40	220	No works Required
Joseph Leckie Academy	240	60	300	Works Required
Shelfield Ormiston Academy	240	25	265	No works required

Pool Hayes Community School	200	50	250	Works Required
Queen Mary's Grammar School	180	0	180	
Queen Marys High School	150	0	150	
Shire Oak Academy	270	0	270	
St Francis of Assisi	180	15	195	No works required
St Thomas More Catholic School	243	0	243	
The Streetly Academy	260	0	260	
Walsall Academy	208	0	208	
West Walsall E Act Academy	210	20	230	No works required
Willenhall E Act Academy	180	50	230	No works required
TOTAL	3743	309	4052	

It is positive that the forecasted demand for places has been secured with the support of several secondary schools. It would be beneficial to secure a 'planning' tolerance to allow for some additional migration impacts of in/out of borough preferences.

Officers in the school place planning team are continuing to engage with secondary schools to secure additional places if they are needed for allocation of school places on 01 March 2024.

Schools will exceed the Published Admission Number (PAN) for September 2024 to admit additional pupils into the cohort – the additional places offered will allow more pupils to secure one of their preferences for school admission and lead to less pupils being offered a non-preference school which will reduce admission appeals and home to school transport assistance for those pupils offered a place at alternative schools.

For the schools that have indicated they require building works to accommodate the additional pupils the Council has undertaken a Net Capacity Assessment (NCA) - a calculation of teaching and non-teaching spaces within the school. The NCA and subsequent schedule of accommodation has been used to determine what shortfalls in the existing spaces the schools have.

Utilising the NCA, the works required at the two schools are summarised below although final drawing and plans are still outstanding from the two schools:

Pool Hayes Academy - 50 pupils per year (250 pupils across the next 5 years)

To expand the school on a permanent basis by a new modular classroom block for September 2024, works required are:

- 7 x general classroom
- 2 x Toilet Blocks

- 2 x offices

Joseph Leckie - 60 pupils per year (300 pupils across the next 5 years)

To expand the school on a permanent basis by a new modular classroom block for September 2024, works required are:

- 7 x general classroom
- 2 x Toilet Blocks
- 2 x offices

As part of the procurement and delivery of these works, academies have opted to deliver their own capital schemes outside of Local Authority procurement exercises. In such circumstances, capital grant agreements, setting out the terms of the use of public funding provided by the LA, are signed by the Academy Trust, placing a legal obligation to deliver the project and provide the agreed number of places.

These agreements cover areas such as accounts and records, information management, warranties, data protection, insurance, and liabilities etc. The agreements should also set minimum terms regarding the repayment of grant should the agreed places be removed or no longer be made available by the Academy without prior agreement with the LA.

The LA will enter into grant agreements with each Academy Trust to allow them to proceed with the design, procurement, and delivery of the projects to provide the additional pupil places. Formal gateway and milestone reviews will be included within the agreements to ensure LA maintains oversight and assurance that the projects are continuing in line with agreed timelines and the projects remain value for money in terms of capital costs.

A further paper will be taken to Cabinet once plans are finalised and costs submitted for approval, following the approved paper to investigate costs that were agreed in December 2022.

Consideration of new provision – Free School

A new Free School has been approved for Walsall providing an additional 180 year 7 places. It is expected that the Walsall Free School will not open until September 2026, but it will significantly reduce the forecasted demand going forwards.

The DfE are currently undertaking a feasibility study for the new school. On completion of the site clearance and geophysical survey an application to the Coal Authority will be made to seek approval for drilling and soil sampling. This will then allow the completion of the feasibility study and a decision to proceed to the next stage of the project – design solution, planning application and procurement of a contractor.

4. *Financial information*

Any capital costs arising from works required will be funded from DfE grant funding Basic Need.

5. Reducing Inequalities

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.

6. Decide

The Committee may decide to note the current position and request further information or assurance if necessary.

7. Respond

Any recommendations made by the Committee will be assessed against the Access planned work and performance board programmes.

8. Review

The work of the Admissions & Education Sufficiency Team is subject to constant monitoring and assessment via the Children's Services Performance Board process.

Contact Officer(s)

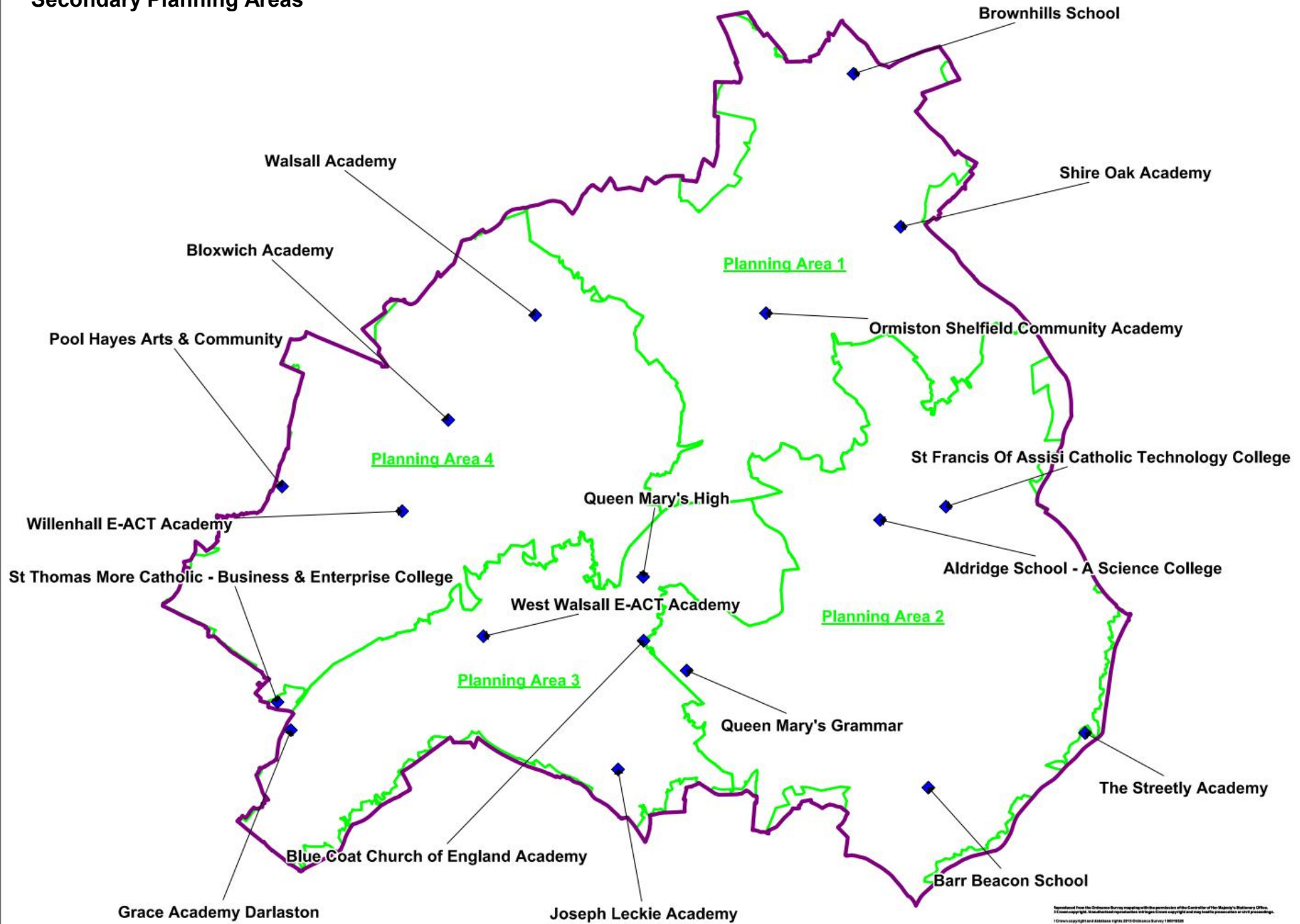
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Secondary Planning Areas



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Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee –

School Admissions Update

Wards All

Service: Admissions & Education Sufficiency, Access Service

Portfolio: Councillor Statham

1. Aim

The aim of this report is to provide the Education Scrutiny and Overview Committee with an update on school admissions activities undertaken by the Admissions & Education Sufficiency Team.

2. Recommendations

That the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

- considers the contents of this report and notes that all children who submitted an on-time application to Walsall for a secondary place in 2023 were made an offer of a school place even though the demand had also increased
- decides whether any further information or updates are required.

4. Report detail

Following on from the paper brought to the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2022, this report provides an update on the current work being undertaken by the Admissions & Education Sufficiency Team.

4.1. Background

Walsall Council carries out a number of school admission activities for its residents in accordance with the provisions of the School Admissions Code (2021)

Phased Admission Rounds

The Council works in conjunction with its neighbouring local authorities including Birmingham, Wolverhampton, Sandwell, and Dudley to co-ordinate the phased admissions rounds.

Phased admission rounds involve:

- **Reception Transfer Round** - admission to reception class at age 4.

- **Junior Transfer Round** - transfer from Year 2 to Year 3, for those children that are on roll at an infant school and need to transfer to a junior school to continue their primary education.
- **Secondary Transfer Round** – admission to Year 7, age 11.

Applicants can express up to three preferences for Reception and Junior transfer rounds and up to five for Secondary transfer rounds.

Applicants can express preferences for schools outside their home local authority and the purpose of the co-ordinated arrangements between local authorities is to ensure that all parents who submit applications receive a **single** offer of a school place from the local authority at the highest preference school at which a place is available.

Offers are sent to parents who submit an on-time application on National Offer Day from their home local authority – this is 1 March for secondary schools and 16 April for primary schools (or the next working day where 1 March or 16 April fall on a weekend or bank holiday), in the year in which the child will be admitted.

4.2 Phased Admissions - Secondary Round – September 2023

The number of children requiring a school place in Year 7 at a secondary school in September 2023 was higher than in previous years.

Table below show a comparison of data for September 2023 and September 2022

	September 2023	September 2022
Offered 1st preference	3112	3055
Offered 2nd preference	399	400
Offered 3rd preference	138	122
Offered one of their top three preferences	3649	3577
Offered any preference	3713	3628
Not offered any preferred school and allocated an alternative	216	208
Total Walsall on-time applications	3929	3836

All children who submitted an on-time application to Walsall were made an offer of a school place for September 2023.

There were 220 late application that were processed following National Offer Day and all the applications received by the end of summer term were also offered places within a Walsall school.

4.3. Phased Admissions – Secondary – September 2024

National Offer Day for children starting Secondary School 2024 is on 1 March 2024.

The portal for submitting applications opened on Monday 4 September 2023. The closing date for on time applications is 31 October 2023.

At the time of writing this report applications were being received for school places daily, with submitted applications currently being at over 3000. It is expected that there will be approximately 4100 applications into the authority.

In advance of closing date, officers are contacting primary schools in Walsall and neighbouring authorities where Walsall children are currently on roll in year 6 to prompt schools to remind parents of their requirements to apply prior to the closing date.

In addition, officers are liaising with all Walsall primary schools and gaining contact logs for parents/guardians of children who had yet to apply and contacting parents to support them in making applications.

Files are shared between authorities to ensure contact can also be made with any children who are Walsall residents but attend a school not in the borough of Walsall.

Officers have arranged drop-in sessions in areas across the borough where applications in previous years have been reduced to support applications being submitted. These sessions took place on:

Litchfield Street Hub – Tuesday 24 October – 9.00am – 1.00pm
Blakenhall Village Centre – Thursday 26 October 1.00pm – 4.30pm
Willenhall Library – Friday 27 October – 9.30am – 12.30pm
Darlaston Library – Friday 27 October – 1.00pm – 4.00pm

The service have worked with our colleagues in the Communications Team of Walsall Council and regular updates and reminders have been shared on social media, on Walsall Council's intranet as well as on the external Walsall Council website, to encourage and remind of the need to submit applications.

Where applications are not received on time is likely to result in children not receiving one of their preferred schools and an allocation of a school place being made. In line with the School Admissions Code 2021, local authorities must allocate all Walsall children a school place for the start of their secondary school career. If a preferred school is already at capacity, the closest school to the home address with spaces remaining will be allocated to the child. This could result in a place being allocated at a school further away from the home address than wanted.

4.4 Phased Admissions – Reception – September 2023

The number of children who were due to start school in September 2023 was slightly lower than in September 2022 due to the lower birth rate in 2018/19.

Reception Offers	September 2023	September 2022
Total Walsall on-time applications	3417	3440
Offered 1st preference	3154	3182
Offered 2nd preference	136	152
Offered 3rd preference	40	44
Offered one of their top three preferences	3330	3378
Allocated an alternative	87	94

Of the **87** children in Walsall not offered one of their preferred schools, **66** of these applicants had expressed a preference for only one school - rather than using all of the three preferences that is available to every applicant. Walsall Council always advises applicants to utilise all three preferences and recommends that all families contact their preferred schools before applying.

4.5 Phased Admissions – Reception/Junior Round – September 2024

National Offer Day for children starting Reception and moving to a Junior school in September 2024 is on Tuesday 16 April 2024.

The portal for submitting applications will open on Monday 6 November 2023.

Officers will be holding drop-in sessions across the borough focusing on areas where in previous years there have been higher volumes of late applications submitted.

Close work with early years settings and promotion of the application window will be undertaken with services working with families with young children including health visitors, school nursing service, early help, GPs and other educational practitioners to increase the number of applications received for Reception places.

4.6 Mid-Year Admissions Process in Walsall.

Parents and carers need to follow the mid-year admissions application process if they move into Walsall or wish to apply to change schools outside of the year groups and timescales that are covered by the phased admission rounds.

In Walsall, the process for making a mid-year admission application is as follows:

Primary Mid-Year Admission Application Process:

The Local Authority co-ordinates the mid-year admissions applications for most primary schools in Walsall so applications for these schools need to be made directly to the Local Authority via the School Admissions and Appeals Team.

In line with School Admission Code in 2021, several own admission authority schools have informed the Local Authority that they wish to take co-ordinate their own mid-year admissions and for these schools parents and carers need to make applications directly to them.

Parents and Carers should be sign posted to Walsall's School Admissions webpages for more information about the correct application process for each school.

All primary schools submit return a weekly data return that advise the admissions service where they have vacancies in any year groups – this allows the school admissions to make offers of school places to families in a timely manner and ensures the Council are discharging their statutory duties more effectively in accordance with the School Admissions Code.

This data also assists the Local Authority to monitor pupils in accordance with the following statutory guidance (Children Missing Education (2016) and Keeping Children Safe in Education (2021). This data is also used to inform the decisions of the Primary Fair Access Panel. The Panel meets every four weeks to consider referrals and make school placement allocations for pupils without school places in accordance with the Walsall Primary Fair Access Protocol.

Secondary Mid-Year Admission Application Process:

In line with the School Admissions Code, all secondary schools in Walsall have opted to co-ordinate their own mid-year admissions application process as they are their own admission authority. The Council is not the admission authority of any secondary school. Therefore, parents need to approach each school directly to make an application for a secondary school place.

As set out in the School Admissions Code, all admissions authorities should aim to notify applicants of the outcome of their mid-year application within 10 school days and they must notify applicants of the outcome of their application in writing within 15 school days.

Applicants must be informed in writing of the reason for refusal and their right to appeal the decision of the admission authority. Applicant must not be refused the opportunity to make an application or be advised that they can be placed on a school's waiting list instead of making a formal application.

Whilst secondary schools coordinate their own Midyear Admissions, they still have a statutory duty to return information to the Local Authority on any vacancies they have in schools across the years groups as well as advising of any applications they receive and whether the children are being offered a place or advised on their right to appeal. Schools must additionally advise the Local Authority of any child that has been removed from the schools roll and give reasons for this.

Similarly to the primary process, the Secondary Fair Access Panel meets every 4 weeks to consider referrals and make school placement allocations for pupils without school places in accordance with the Secondary Fair Access Protocol.

5.0. Decide

The Committee may decide to note the current position and request further information or assurance in respect of the progress of the processes.

6.0. Respond

Any recommendations made by the Committee will be assessed against the Access and Inclusion planned work and performance board programmes.

7. Review

The work of the Admissions & Education Sufficiency Team is subject to constant monitoring and assessment via the Children's Services Performance Board process.

Background papers

School Admissions Code (2021)

School Admissions Report – Education & Scrutiny Committee – November 2021

Pupil Place Planning Report – Education & Scrutiny Committee – February 2022

School Admissions Report – March 2022

Contact Officer(s)

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Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Recommendation Tracker (22/23)

29 June 2023	Procedural questions	Request for additional information on co-opted Members of the Committee and their voting rights.	Jack Thompson	Complete	31 August 2023	Email sent to Members clarifying the legislation and convention behind co-opted Members, their voting rights and how they are appointed.
	Areas of focus	That the suggested items for the Committees work programme be compiled, ordered in themes and be sent via email to all Members of the Committee.	Jack Thompson	Complete	5 July 2023	Agreed work programme sent to Members via email.
4 September 2023	Children not in School Update Report	That the Cabinet write to the Secretary of State for Education to implement the Children Not in School Register as soon as possible.	Jack Thompson	In Progress		Report to be presented to Cabinet on the 18 October 2023.
		To request that Cabinet asks that the Government pay the fees for children in Elective Home Education to sit standardised examinations.	Jack Thompson	In Progress		Report to be presented to Cabinet on the 18 October 2023.

		<p>That the Cabinet note the concerns of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding the disproportionately lower school attendance figures of boys, SEN pupils and those pupils receiving free school meals.</p>	Jack Thompson	In Progress		Report to be presented to Cabinet on the 18 October 2023.
		<p>That the Committee receive an updated report on attendance in the future. An interim report being made available to Members of the Committee in January and a full school term update being presented at its meeting in February 2024.</p>	Jack Thompson/ Sharon Kelly/ Rob Thomas	In Progress		Committee to receive update via email in January and a report presented at the meeting in February 2024.
		<p>That the Committee receive the following additional information:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of ongoing legal proceeding in relation to school attendance orders; • To seek advice on whether individual school attendance data can be shared with the Committee and to write to Members once this determination had been made; • To be given the percentage of change in 	Jack Thompson/ Rob Thomas/ Lorraine Thompson	In Progress		

		<p>the Total EHE Registrations table comparing the Council with regional and statistical neighbours;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide data on the number of referrals for exclusions to the Councils Inclusion Hub in the report on the Hub to be presented at the next meeting of the Committee in October. 				
3 October 2023	Minutes	That under Minute 13, the discussion on School Attendance a bullet point be included that; "A Member questioned why legal action was the last resort when children were not attending school as it was the legal responsibility of parents to ensure that their child attended".	Jack Thompson	In Progress		
	Send Developments Including EHC Systems – Report	That the areas used by the Council in determining a child/young adults' preparation for adulthood be sent to Members of the Committee.	Jack Thompson/ Judith Nash	In Progress		

		That information on the apprenticeships offered to those with EHCPs be shared with the Committee.	Jack Thompson/ Judith Nash	In Progress		
	Learning Recovery - Report	That the Committee be presented with evidence of the work being undertaken by the Council to improve year one phonics as the gap between the Borough performance and the national average had widened.	Jack Thompson/ Nicholas Perks	In Progress		
		That school improvement contractors measure whether schools causing concern in relation to year one phonics have teachers who are qualified and/or experienced to teach phonics. That this be assessed through the work of improvement partners.	Nicholas Perks	In Progress		
		That the Cabinet write to the Secretary of State for Education to request that Local Authorities education performance data should not include Academies (Multi Academy Trusts or Companies) as Local Authorities had no control over them and thus should not be judged on their performance.	Jack Thompson	In Progress		

Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee: Work programme 2023/24

Main agenda items	05/09/23	03/10/23	21/11/23	11/01/24	15/02/24	26/03/24
Theme: Children not in School						
Attendance	X					
Children Missing in Education (CME)	X					
Exclusion and Suspensions	X					
Theme: Inclusion						
SEND Developments inc EHCPs		X				
Inclusion Hub		X				
Transitions		X				
Learning Recovery		X				
Theme: School Place Planning						
Specialist Provision Plan inc SEN school places			X			
Mainstream Pupil Place Planning and Capital Strategy			X			
School Admissions			X			
Quarter 2 Financial Monitoring & Budget Setting 2024/25			X			
Theme: Outcomes						
School Attainment Data				X		
Ofsted Data and Outcomes				X		
Schools Causing Concern				X		
Theme: Skills and development						
Skills Strategy and Development					X	
Post 16 Provision					X	
Alternative Provision					X	
Attendance – full term update report					X	
Theme: Early years						
School Readiness and EYFS (Early Year Foundation Stage) Outcomes						X
Early Years SEN Development						X

Childcare Sufficiency and Plans						X
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FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS

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

2 OCTOBER 2023

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
NOVEMBER 2023 TO FEBRUARY 2024 (02.10.2023)**

1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Reference No./ Date first entered in Plan	Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside the Council)	Decision maker	Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer	Main consultees	Contact Member (All Members can be written to at Civic Centre, Walsall)	Date item to be considered
26/23 (5.6.23)	<p>Draft Revenue Budget and Draft Capital Programme 2024/25 to 2027/28</p> <p>To provide an updated medium term financial outlook, draft revenue budget and capital programme for 2024/25 to 2027/28, including savings proposals, and to set out the process and timescales for setting a legally balanced budget for 2024/25.</p>	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Rate payers, voluntary and community organisations, Internal Services	Cllr Bird	18 October 2023
32/23 (3.7.23)	<p>Council Plan 2022/25 – Q1 23/24</p> <p>To note the Quarter 1 2023/24 (outturn) performance against the Markers of Success in the Council Plan 2022/25</p>	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Elizabeth Connolly Elizabeth.Connolly@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	18 October 2023
27/23 (5.6.23)	<p>Corporate Financial Performance 2023/24</p> <p>To report the financial position based on 6 months to September 2023.</p>	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	18 October 2023

48/23 (2.10.23)	Armed Forces Covenant To approve the new Walsall Armed Forces Covenant.	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Katie Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	18 October 2023
40/23 (4.9.23)	Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) To seek approval for the adoption and publication of guidance on BNG, the publication of the Black Country Local Nature Recovery Map and Strategy, and its use as a working document	Cabinet Key Decision	The Black Country Local Nature Recovery Map and Strategy Sammy Pritchard Sammy.Pritchard@walsall.gov.uk David Holloway David.Holloway@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	18 October 2023
41/23 (4.9.23)	Willenhall Framework Plan: Phase 1 Developer Partner Procurement Outcome and Award To provide an update on the outcome of the developer partner procurement <i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>	Cabinet Key Decision	Kauser Agha Kauser.Agha@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services, Legal (external)	Cllr Andrew	18 October 2023
42/23 (4.9.23)	Sale of the Former Allens Centre, Hilton Road, Willenhall To seek approval for the sale of the former Allens Centre in Willenhall. <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	18 October 2023

43/23 (4.9.23)	Integrated sexual and reproductive health services and the Healthy Child Programme 0-19 Section 75 Agreement Extensions To seek approval for the extension of the Section 75 agreement for the delivery of integrated sexual and reproductive health services and the Healthy Child Programme 0-19.	Cabinet Key Decision	Esther Higdon Esther.Higdon@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services Walsall Healthcare Trust	Cllr Flint	18 October 2023
33/23 (3.7.23)	Winter Service Operational Plan 2023- 2028 To approve the winter service operational plan.	Cabinet Key Decision	Paul Leighton Paul.Leighton@walsall.gov.uk Graham Wallis Graham.Wallis@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Murphy	18 October 2023
44/23 (4.9.23)	Street Lighting Post-PFI Arrangements To approve the service delivery model for the street lighting service from April 2028.	Cabinet Key Decision	Katie Moreton Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Murphy	18 October 2023
45/23 (4.9.23)	Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2023/24 The Food Standards Agency (FSA) requires all local authorities to prepare an annual service delivery plan to reflect the work required of food authorities by the FSA, under the requirements of the Food Standards Act 1999 and the framework agreement on local authority	Cabinet Council Non-key Decision	Paul Rooney Paul.Rooney@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Perry	Cabinet 18 October 2023 Council 6 November 2023

	enforcement. In accordance with this requirement a Food Law Enforcement Service Plan 2023/24 has been prepared and a decision is required from members to obtain authority to approve this plan.					
34/23 (3.7.23)	Early Years Funding Formula 2023/24: That Cabinet approves changes to the Early Years Funding Formula for 2023/24 following notification of an increase in the hourly funding rates.	Cabinet Key Decision	ESFA – Early Years funding operational guide Richard Walley Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk	Schools Forum Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	18 October 2023
35/23 (3.7.23)	Schools Mainstream Local Funding Formula 2024/25: That Cabinet approves the Mainstream Local Funding Formula, to be used for the allocation of mainstream funding to schools in Walsall.	Cabinet Key Decision	ESFA – Schools revenue funding operation guide Richard Walley Richard.walley@walsall.gov.uk	Schools Forum Internal Services	Cllr M. Statham	18 October 2023
46/23 (4.9.23)	SEN Place Requirement To approve finance for additional special educational needs school places.	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services	Cllr M. Statham	18 October 2023
37/23 (7.8.23)	Autumn Budget and Spending Review, and feedback from Overview and Scrutiny Committees on draft revenue and capital budget proposals 2024/25 to 2027/28 To provide an update on the impact of the Autumn Budget and Spending Review on the medium-term financial outlook, and to consider feedback from	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Council tax payers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations. Internal services	Cllr Bird	13 December 2023

	Overview and Scrutiny Committees on the draft revenue and capital budget.					
38/23 (7.8.23)	<p>Treasury Management Mid Year Position Statement 2023/24</p> <p>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 2023/24 including prudential and local indicators.</p>	Council Non-key Decision	<p>Treasury Management Code of Practice.</p> <p>Richard Walley</p> <p>Richard.Walley@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Internal services	Cllr Ferguson	13 December 2023
49/23 (2.10.23)	<p>Technology Strategy 2023/24 – 2027/28</p> <p>To approve the Technology Strategy, which outlines the Council's approach to investing in and implementing technology, which will support the delivery of the Council Plan and enable transformation change</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	<p>Sharon Worrall</p> <p>Sharon.worrall@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Internal services	Cllr Ferguson	13 December 2023
39/23 (7.8.23)	<p>Strategic Leisure Review</p> <p>To update on the performance and impact of the four leisure facilities. To approve recommendations around the current and future facility stock.</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	<p>Stuart Webb</p> <p>Stuart.Webb@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Internal services	Cllr Flint	13 December 2023
36/23 (7.8.23)	<p>Healthy Eating for Children and Young People Programme</p> <p>To seek approval to procure a new healthy eating and weight management</p>	Cabinet Key Decision	<p>Esther Higdon</p> <p>Esther.Higdon@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Internal Services Walsall Healthcare Trust	Cllr Flint	13 December 2023

	programme for children and young people in Walsall.					
14/23 (6.2.23)	Growth Funding for Schools: To enable the Local Authority to fulfil its duty to secure sufficient primary and secondary school places, through the adoption of a policy for the application of revenue funding for school growth.	Cabinet Key Decision	Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk	Internal services, Schools Forum	Cllr M. Statham	13 December 2023
50/23 (2.10.23)	Corporate Financial Performance 2023/24: To report the financial position based on 9 months to December 2023.	Cabinet Non-key decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Corporate Management Team and Internal Services	Cllr Bird	7 February 2024
51/23 (2.10.23)	Corporate Budget Plan 2024/25 – 2027/28, incorporating the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management and investment Strategy 2024/25: To recommend the final budget and council tax for approval by Council.	Cabinet Council Key decision	Vicky Buckley Vicky.Buckley@walsall.gov.uk	Council tax payers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations, Corporate Management Team and Internal Services	Cllr Bird	Cabinet 7 February 2024 Council 22 February 2024
52/23 (2.10.23)	Council Plan 2022/25 – Q2 23/24: To note the Quarter 2 2023/24 (outturn) performance against the Markers of Success in the Council Plan 2022/25.	Cabinet Non-key decision	Elizabeth Connolly elizabeth.connolly@walsall.gov.uk	Internal Services	Cllr Bird	7 February 2024

<p>54/23 (2.10.23)</p>	<p>Adult Social Care Commissioning Strategy 2023 - 2026</p> <p>To approve an interim commissioning strategy.</p>	<p>Cabinet Key Decision</p>	<p>Nigel Imber – Nigel.Imber@Walsall.Gov.uk</p> <p>Market Sustainability and Improvement Fund 2023 to 2024 - Capacity Plan</p> <p>Health and Wellbeing Strategy</p> <p>Walsall Wellbeing outcomes framework</p>	<p>Internal consultees</p> <p>Local and regional partners</p>	<p>Cllr Pedley</p>	<p>7 February 2024</p>
<p>53/23 (2.10.23)</p>	<p>Determination of the Scheme for coordinated admissions, and the Admission Arrangements for Community and Voluntary Controlled Primary Schools for the 2025/26 academic year:</p> <p>To determine the scheme of admissions and admission arrangements for community and voluntary-controlled primary schools for 2025-26.</p>	<p>Cabinet Key Decision</p>	<p>Alex Groom Alex.Groom@walsall.gov.uk</p>	<p>Internal consultees</p> <p>Public</p> <p>Local Authorities</p> <p>Schools</p> <p>Faith Groups</p>	<p>Cllr M. Statham</p>	<p>7 February 2024</p>

Black Country Executive Joint Committee
Forward Plan of Key Decisions

Published up to February 2024

Date Created	Key Decision	Contact Officer	Main consultee	Date of meeting
	Black Country Executive Joint Committee Governance			
04/09/2023	<p>Change Control and Delegated Authority</p> <p>Approval of BCJC Delegated Authority to the Single Accountable Body Section 151 Officer (SAB s151 officer) and approval of the revised Black Country Local Enterprise Partnership (BCLEP) Assurance Framework Change Control and Delegated Authority delegations, as detailed in the attachment of the report (BCLEP Assurance Framework Appendix 23).</p>	<p>David Moore david.moore@walsall.gov.uk</p> <p>Mark Lavender mark.lavender@walsall.gov.uk</p>	Walsall Council	01/11/2023