

## Council – 23 September 2024

### Decision note

Item	Decision
1. Elect Person to Preside	Not applicable as the Mayor was in attendance.
2. Apologies	Councillors Cheema, Flint, Harrison, Gultasib and Rasab.
3. Minutes	That the minutes of the meeting held on 8 <sup>th</sup> July 2024 be approved as a correct record.
4. Declarations of interest	None.
5. Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985	There were no items in private session.
6. Mayor's announcements	Received.
7. Petitions	<b>Councillor Nawaz</b> – Petition calling for effective traffic calming measures in and around Union Street in St Matthews Ward.  <b>Councillor Martin</b> – Traffic Calming Mouse Hill and Allens Lane, Pelsall
8. Questions	<b>From the Public:</b> None  <b>From Members:</b> The questions from members were responded to.
9. Committee Appointment – Standards	Councillor Burley appointed Vice Chair.
10. Black Country Consortium Appointment	Councillor Perry appointed for the remainder of the Municipal Year.
11. Appointments Panel	That Council:-  <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Dissolves Personnel Committee;</li><li>2. Establishes an Appointments Panel and approves the terms of reference as set out in Appendix 1 of this report;</li></ol>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Approves an amendment to the Constitution to reflect the changes set out in 1 and 2 above.</li> <li>4. Appoints members to the Appointments Panel as detailed in paragraph 5.4</li> <li>5. Appoints the Leader of the Council as Chair and Associate Leader as Vice Chair.</li> <li>6. Establishes 2 Employment Appeal Sub Committees and agrees the membership including Chairs and Vice Chairs detailed in paragraph 5.6; and</li> <li>7. amend membership of Employment Appeals Committee B replacing Councillor Hussain with Councillor Jukes.</li> </ol>
<p>12. Recommendations of Cabinet:-</p> <p>(a) Treasury Management Annual Report</p> <p>(b) Walsall Youth Justice Plan</p>	<p>To note and forward to Council, for consideration and noting (in line with the requirements of the Treasury Management Code of Practice (2021)), the Annual Treasury Management Report 2023/24 including prudential and local indicators (Appendix A).</p> <p>3.1 That Cabinet notes the initial overview and activity set out in the report and recommends the Walsall Youth Justice Annual Strategic Plan to Council for approval.</p> <p>3.2 That Cabinet delegate authority to the Executive Director of Children’s Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People, to make any future minor amendments to the plan, if and when required.</p>
<p>13. Portfolio holder briefing</p>	<p>The following portfolio holder gave a presentation and answered questions from members thereon: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Councillor Pedley – Adult Social Care</li> </ul>
<p>14. Notice of Motion – Winter Fuel Payments</p>	<p>Given that the Winter Fuel Payments, have been made available to everyone above State Pension age in the UK (most recently, this included those born on or before 24 September 1957) – which will no longer be the case from this winter as a result of a statement recently made by the Chancellor, Rachel Reeves, and that,</p> <p>Until this winter approximately 11.4million pensioners were entitled to a winter fuel payment of between £100 and £300 per year but as from this year only about 1.5 million pensioners on pension credit and other benefits will be eligible to receive this allowance, thus taking the allowance away from</p>

	<p>approximately 10 million pensioners nationally and thousands of pensioners locally, and given further that the Energy Price Cap is likely to rise by 10% this October and stay high across the winter, leaving most energy bills nearly double those before the energy crisis at levels unaffordable for millions.</p> <p>In <b>Walsall</b> alone, <b>45,992</b> households received winter fuel payments up until September 2023. However, under the new means-tested rules, approximately <b>36,000</b> pensioners over the age of 65 are set to lose out, with only an estimated <b>2,705</b> of those eligible for Pension Credit. The abrupt nature of this change, with just three months' notice, leaves little time for those affected to find alternative support, exacerbating the already dire situation.</p> <p>Walsall Metropolitan Borough Council calls on the Government to review, in time for the forthcoming winter, its recently announced plans to scrap the winter fuel allowance for all pensioners other than for those who receive Pension credit and other benefits, which will deprive over 10 million senior citizens, nationally, and potentially thousands of pensioners in the Borough of Walsall, of between £100 and £300 per year.</p> <p>To write to all four Walsall MPs requesting they support this call and request from the Government a full and open impact assessment which takes into account the inevitable pressure this will place on local services including health and housing and not one produced in the eleventh hour which purely focusses on those losing out.</p>
<p>15. Notice of Motion – Acorns Children’s Hospice</p>	<p>Acorns Children’s Hospice provides essential care and support for children with life-limiting and life-threatening conditions, as well as their families, in Walsall. This care includes respite, end-of-life care, and bereavement support, among other critical services. However, Acorns is facing significant financial challenges due to rising costs and stagnant local NHS funding, which has not increased since 2021/22. Currently, Acorns relies on fundraising, donations, and profits from charity shops for two-thirds of its income.</p> <p>Without sustainable funding, Acorns may be forced to reduce services or turn away children for the first time in its 36-year history, which would have a devastating impact on local families who depend on their support.</p> <p><b>Motion:</b></p> <p>This Council notes that:</p>

	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Acorns Children’s Hospice is a vital resource for children with life-limiting conditions and their families in our constituency.</li><li>2. The Children’s Hospice Grant, a ringfenced NHS fund, is crucial for the continued operation of children’s hospices like Acorns, enabling them to provide essential services.</li><li>3. There has been no increase in local NHS funding for children’s hospices since 2021/22, despite rising operational costs, which has led to increased reliance on external fundraising efforts.</li><li>4. The current Children’s Hospice Grant is only guaranteed until 2024/25, leaving future funding uncertain.</li></ol> <p>This Council believes that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. The UK government must ensure equitable and sustainable long-term funding for children’s hospices, including Acorns, to safeguard the essential services they provide to local families.</li><li>2. Maintaining and protecting the Children’s Hospice Grant as a centrally distributed, ringfenced grant is critical to ensuring that children’s hospices can continue to support the health and well-being of life-limited and life-threatened children.</li></ol> <p>This Council resolves to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Support the campaign led by Acorns Children’s Hospice, calling on the UK government to:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Protect and maintain the Children’s Hospice Grant as a directly distributed, ringfenced grant.</li><li>- Guarantee the Children’s Hospice Grant for at least five years.</li><li>- Increase the Grant annually by the rate of inflation.</li></ul></li><li>2. Write to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, urging the government to commit to the above actions to secure the future of Acorns and other children’s hospices.</li><li>3. Engage with local MPs and stakeholders to advocate for the continuation and enhancement of funding for children’s hospices.</li></ol>
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	<p>4. Raise awareness within our community about the importance of Acorns Children’s Hospice and encourage local support and engagement with their fundraising efforts.</p> <p><b>Action:</b></p> <p>The Council requests that the Leader of the Council writes to the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and local MPs, expressing this Council’s support for the campaign led by Acorns Children’s Hospice, and urging them to take immediate steps to secure sustainable funding for these vital services.</p>
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