



# Walsall Council

## Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Thursday 13 February 2025 at 6:00PM

Conference room 2, Council House, Lichfield Street, Walsall

### [Livestream Link](#)

#### Membership:

Councillor N. Latham (Chair)  
Councillor C. Towe (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor M. Bird  
Councillor S. Ditta  
Councillor A. Hicken  
Councillor S. Hussain  
Councillor N. Gultasib  
Councillor L. Rattigan  
Councillor E. Russell  
Vacancy  
Vacancy

#### Non-Elected

#### Voting Members:

Vacancy (Archdiocese of Birmingham Representative)  
Vacancy (Diocese of Lichfield)

Vacancy (Parent Governor Representative – Primary)  
C. Pruden (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 P. Kaur – Education and Skills

#### Quorum:

4 Members

Democratic Services, The Council House, Walsall, WS1 1TW  
Contact name: Nikki Gough Telephone: 01922 654767 Email: [nikki.gough@walsall.gov.uk](mailto: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:

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Prescribed description</b>
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**  
To receive apologies for absence from Members of the Committee.
- 2. Substitutions**  
To receive notice of any substitutions for a Member of the Committee for the duration of the meeting.
- 3. Minutes of the previous meeting**  
To approve and sign the minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2025.  
(Enclosed, Pages 1 - 4)
- 4. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**  
To receive declarations of interest or the party whip from Members in respect of items on the agenda.
- 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. Skills Strategy and Development including Employment Pathways**  
To provide an update on the development of a Walsall Employment and Skills Strategy.  
(Enclosed, Pages 5 -8)
- 7. Post 16 Provision**  
To provide an overview of the post-16 landscape in Walsall and the work of the Post-16 Strategy Group.  
(Enclosed, Pages 9 - 24)
- 8. Alternative Provision**  
This report provides an overview of alternative provision, current practice, an overview of Walsall's quality assurance process and framework, and the future strategy.  
(Enclosed, Pages 25 - 37)
- 9. Areas of Focus**  
To review the Committees work programme and the Forward Plans for Walsall Council and the Black Country Executive Committee.  
(Enclosed, Page 38 - 48)
- 10. Recommendations Tracker**  
To consider progress on recommendations from the previous meeting.  
(Enclosed, Pages 49 -50)
- 11. Date of next meeting**  
To note that the date of the next meeting will be on 25 March 2025.

# **Minutes of the Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee held in a Conference Room, Walsall Council House**

**20 January 2025 at 6.00 PM**

## **Committee Members present:**

Councillor N. Latham (Chair)  
Councillor C. Towe (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor M. Bird  
Councillor S. Hussain  
Councillor E. Russell

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

## **Portfolio Holder:**

Councillor P. Kaur – Education and Skills

## **Officers Present:**

S. Kelly – Director (Access and Inclusion)  
R. Beards – Head of Service (Inclusion)  
N. Perks – Quality Assurance Team Manager  
R. Thomas – Head of Access  
T. Collier – Strategic Finance Business Partner (Virtual)  
N. Gough – Democratic Services Officer

The Chair gave welcome and introductions.

### **109. Apologies**

Apologies were received from Councillors Harrison, Hicken and Rattigan.

### **110. Substitutions**

There were no substitutions for the duration of the meeting.

### **111. Declarations of Interest and Party Whip**

There were no declarations of interest or party whip.

### **112. Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 (as amended)**

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

### 113. Minutes

A copy of the Minutes of the meeting held on the 22 October 2024 were submitted [annexed].

#### **Resolved:**

**That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2024 a copy having previously been circulated, be approved, and signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.**

### 114. Ofsted Data and Outcomes

The Quality Assurance Team Manager presented the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed). Members were informed that the report set out how schools were currently inspected by Ofsted and described changes to the inspectorate's framework. The report provided the latest Ofsted outcomes data for Walsall.

The Committee was informed that from September 2024 the DfE announced that the single headline grades of 'overall effectiveness' for schools would no longer be used. This would be replaced with gradings across 6 subcategories, which would be followed by the introduction of school report cards from September 2025.

It was noted that School Ofsted outcomes in Walsall were improving - currently 91% of Walsall schools were rated as good or outstanding which placed Walsall above the national average by 0.5 percentage points.

There then ensued a period of questioning, The Quality Assurance Team Manager provided information on how the Local Authority would be involved in schools that needed improvement.

A discussion was held on the perception that Walsall schools did not perform well, members suggested that this should be rectified as based on the data presented, schools in Walsall were performing well and this needed effectively communicating to the public. Officers agreed to consider how communication could be improved. The Director stated that school outcomes should improve year on year as actions fed through and stressed that it may take some time for this to become clear. A discussion on the importance of the school environment in pupil performance was held.

#### **Resolved**

- 1. The Committee noted the changes in how schools Ofsted outcomes were now reported together with Walsall's current Ofsted position.**
- 2. The Committee recognised the progress that schools in Walsall had made and improving Ofsted judgements over recent years.**

**3. Officers consider how communication in relation to school performance could be improved.**

**115. Schools Priority Education Investment Areas and Attainment Data**

The Quality Assurance Team Manager presented the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed). The report detailed school results for 2024 and provided context in relation to the national, West Midlands and statistical neighbours. It was noted that progress had been made from 2023 and in reducing the gap to national. In particular, the trend in closing the overall gap to national within Early Years. This reflected the improving quality of schools in Walsall.

The report informed members that Priority Education Investment areas were areas that had been selected based on low key stage 2 and 4 attainment areas and high rates of disadvantage. The Local Needs Funding for Walsall Priority Education Investment area programme funding was £2.7 million. During a period of questioning, Officers confirmed that once available feedback on the impact of the Walsall Priority Education Investment area programme would be circulated outside of the meeting. Further challenge was provided in relation to the reasons for lower attainment (than national levels) at grade 5 in Maths and English.

Officers confirmed that where a schools attainment data was not improving that it would receive extra support. This was often provided by the Local Authority through signposting to high performing schools. Members were advised that schools received headline data for all schools in Walsall with contextual data to allow identification of similar demographics and areas of strength.

**Resolved:**

- 1. That the Schools Priority Education Investment Areas and Attainment Data report be noted.**
- 2. That feedback and evaluation of the Walsall Priority Education Investment area programme be circulated outside of the meeting.**
- 3. That a further report be provided once validated data is received.**

**116. Family of Schools Development and Schools Causing Concern (SCC)**

The Quality Assurance Team Manager presented the report and highlighted the salient points (annexed). The report set out an overview of the statutory duties that the local authority must undertake as part of the DfE 'Support and Intervention in schools' statutory guidance, together with the authorities own local Schools Causing Concern protocols and the development of the Family of School's strategy. It was stressed that federations of schools were encouraged as it drove improvement.

In response to queries from the Committee, Officers confirmed that there were no schools in Walsall with a warning notice. The governance of schools was

considered, and the Quality Assurance Team Manager explained that the School Governance Team provided advice, support and training to schools.

**Resolved:**

**That the Committee noted the Family of Schools Development and Schools Causing Concern report.**

**117. Areas of Focus**

A discussion was held in relation to the areas of focus and the items that needed to be scheduled. It was agreed that this would be discussed with the Chair outside of the meeting.

**Resolved:**

**That the areas of focus was noted.**

**118. Recommendation Tracker**

The Committee received the tracker of recommendations from previous meetings, including progress made and outstanding items.

[Annexed]

**Resolved:**

That the recommendation tracker be noted.

**119. Date of next meeting**

The date of the next meeting would be 13 February 2025.

There being no further business, the meeting terminated at 7.10 p.m.

Signed:

Date:



13 February 2025

## Skills Strategy Development and Employment Pathways

### 1. Aim

- 1.1 To provide an update on the development of a Walsall Employment and Skills Strategy, which is a workstream led by the Walsall Employment and Skills Board (WESB). WESB is an established strategic partnership board of key stakeholders working in the employment and skills areas. The current strategy is in draft format and is subject to final approval by the WESB following a full consultation process.

### 2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The Committee review the current position on the development of the Walsall Employment and Skills Strategy and consider its content, in particular the sector analysis which focuses on the available employment pathways for our residents.

### 3. Report detail – Know

- 3.1 The Walsall Employment and Skills Strategy aims to build a more sustainable, inclusive and stronger local economy in Walsall, through the creation of growth for the place, businesses and people residing in the borough. The strategy creates a more equal borough by ‘closing the gap’ between local and regional disparities, understanding and addressing issues such as poor education attainment, unemployment, low skills and skills deficits at all levels such as within key populations, target groups, geographical hotspots, neighbourhoods and business sectors areas.
- 3.2 The strategy provides a clear evidence-based overview using data and information on the current economic position. The strategy has been prepared by the Employment and Skills Team working with several Council service areas and external partner organisations to shape the narrative within the document and creating clear tangible areas of focus with actions to drive improvement in the economic growth of the borough. The priorities set within the document have been clearly aligned to the Skills pillar of the emerging Walsall Place Based Strategy.
- 3.3 Members of Cabinet have previously received and approved the Walsall Economic Strategy and its recommendations, which set out the need for a Walsall Employment and Skills Strategy to clearly understand the challenges and issues faced in relation to poor skills, economic inactivity and unemployment to agree a clear set of actions to address these specific concerns.
- 3.4 The WESB considered the recommendations, who up until this point were working towards the priorities set within the West Midlands Skills Strategy and Walsall Corporate Plan, however agreed the value and benefit of creating its own strategy.

- 3.5 Following the recommendation to create a local strategy, a framework for a Walsall Employment and Skills Strategy was prepared and presented to the WESB, and a decision was made that the document would be developed by officers within the Council Employment and Skills Team, in consultation with members of the WESB.
- 3.5 The strategy was intended to be a high-level document, with cross cutting themes which may not feature as separate sections but would be blended and embedded within the document. This will help the strategy to reference issues such as poor education attainment, housing, health diversity and inclusion ie SEND, young and older people, marginalised communities and the working poor.
- 3.6 The structure of the document includes a visual display of data and information, and holds the following content:

*Foreword* – delivered from the Leader of the Council and Portfolio for Education and Skills which sets the reason for the strategy as a clear framework which sets out an agreed focus and plan, having understood the boroughs skills challenges but also recognising the value and benefits that an inclusive skills system has across all education and skills stages, in order to achieve the best outcome for our residents.

*Executive Summary* – a summary of the key points from the strategy document.

*Setting the Scene* - highlighting the key economic challenges in the borough

*Economic Overview* - in terms of population, households, benefit, earnings, skills, unemployment, apprenticeships.

*Strategic Ambitions* - setting out the agreed three core ambitions of the strategy:

- A skills ecosystem which is accessible for all and particularly those disengaged from education and those people most in need.
- A skills offer which raises aspirations and allows everyone to thrive to reach their full potential.
- A flexible responsive skills system that works to create a growing and expanding economy for businesses and future investment.

*Economic Overview* - in terms of population, households, benefit, earnings, skills, unemployment, apprenticeships.

*Alignment* – reviews how the strategy aligns to other strategies and plans.

*Pillars* - will provide a clear overview and highlight areas of focus to developing solutions to key employment and skills challenges across 6 key pillars.

- Inclusive Communities
- Children and Youth People
- Post 16 Education and Skills
- Employment and Labour Market
- Unemployment and Economic Inactivity
- Entrepreneurship and Self Employment

- 3.7 The work of the Walsall Employment and Skills Board clearly aligns and contributes towards the priorities set within the Walsall Council Corporate Plan 2022-2025:
- *Economic – Enable greater local opportunities for all people, communities and businesses*
  - *People – Encourage our residents to lead more active, fulfilling and independent lives to maintain or improve their health and wellbeing.*
  - *Communities – Empower our communities so that they feel they are connected and belong in Walsall, creating safe and healthy places whilst building a strong sense of community.*

The emerging Walsall Employment and Skills Strategy recognises and responds to all the priorities set within the We are Walsall 2040, which creates a key framework to ensure we are creating a strong and prosperous borough with opportunity for all:

- *We are thriving and happy*
- *We are proud of our Borough*
- *We are healthy and well*
- *We are prosperous and innovative*

#### **4. Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct or specific financial implications of this report as it concerns the adoption of the strategic document. However, as we progress into implementation of recommendations and seek funding, we will prepare any financial business cases for each priority or programme activity and funding applications will be development for submission through the formal governance structures and approval processes.

#### **5. Reducing Inequalities**

- 5.1 The strategy recognises the correlation and importance of health and wellbeing as a fundamental contributor to economic prosperity. As such health is a cross-cutting theme through the pillars within the strategy as a promotion of economic regeneration. The strategy will outline clear areas of focus to improve health interventions and health indicators to measure impact and monitor success.
- 5.2 It is essential that all of Walsall's residents, communities and any protected groups are identified and benefit from the required actions and any proposed interventions and planned activities in the strategy. Any programme or project activities will be subject to a full Equality Assessment and peer challenge from colleagues in terms of equality and diversity.

#### **6. Consultation**

- 6.1 The drafting of the strategy framework and subsequent draft copies of the strategy have been consulted on with members of the Walsall Employment and Skills Board. The board members have been invited to present the drafts to their respective organisations which represent a cross section of partner organisations include services of the Local Authority, Public Health, Department for Work and Pensions, Further Education, Higher Education, Housing, Health, Voluntary Sector, Schools and

Community. The members have helped to shape the document so it responds to their respective organisations, other key strategies and aligns to any key priorities.

Consultation at every stage of the strategy will be key to ensure it meets the needs of existing governance structures, Strategic Boards, Anchor Institutions, stakeholders and partners, ie Proud Partnership, Walsall Employment and Skills Board, Walsall Economic Board, Walsall College Strategic Board, Walsall Association for Secondary Headteacher, Virtual Headteachers Forums etc.

## **7. Decide**

- 7.1 To support development of Skills strategy and identify if this committee would wish to receive a copy of the final strategy following consultation.

## **8. Respond**

- 8.1 Delivery of the strategy will commence once the final version has been accepted and approved by members of the WESB. Any specific business cases, funding applications or requests for investment will be presented through formal structures.

## **9. Review**

- 9.1 To agree a process for the continuous review of the strategy to ensure this is updated to reflect any emerging key changes to the local economy or regional priorities.
- 9.2 Annual updates will be presented to Members, highlighting performance against each pillar and to raise any concerns against delivery of priorities.

## **Author**

Jane Kaur-Gill  
Employment and Skills Manager  
☎ 07983 612618  
✉ [jane.kaur-gill@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:jane.kaur-gill@walsall.gov.uk)

**Post 16 Provision**

**Ward(s): ALL**

**Portfolios: Education and Skills Councillor Kaur**

**1. Aim**

This report provides the scrutiny committee with an update on post-16 provision within the borough.

**2. Summary**

This report will provide scrutiny committee with an overview of the post-16 landscape in Walsall and the work of the Post-16 Strategy Group.

**3. Report detail – Know**

3.1. Within Walsall there are 19 secondary schools and Walsall College, which is a further education provider (FE). Walsall does not have a sixth form centre, the nearest provider being the Sutton Coldfield A-Level Centre, which is part of the Birmingham Metropolitan College.

1. Aldridge School
2. Barr Beacon School
3. Bloxwich Academy
4. Blue Coat Academy
5. *Brownhills Ormiston Academy\**
6. Grace Academy
7. Joseph Leckie
8. Ormiston Academy
9. Pool Hayes Academy
10. Queen Mary's Grammar
11. Queen Mary's High
12. Shire Oak Academy
13. St Francis of Assisi R.C.
14. St Thomas More R.C.
15. The Streetly Academy
16. Walsall Academy
17. Walsall Studio School
18. West Walsall E-ACT
19. *Willenhall E-ACT\**
20. Walsall College (FE)

Brownhills Ormiston Academy and Willenhall E-ACT\* are the exceptions to the norm and do not have a sixth form.

Schools and settings will have their own admission criteria for their sixth form that they will publish on their websites alongside their sixth form provision. Walsall College is an FE provider and offers a wide range of vocational and academic courses.

### **3.2. The Post-16 Strategy Group**

This is our key strategic partnership with schools and Walsall college with the aim of ensuring that a comprehensive and dynamic range of education and training opportunities is available to all students across the borough. The group aims to enhance learner choice and actively engage with students to improve the quality of the post-16 offer, thereby elevating student outcomes throughout the borough.

Aligned with local and regional employer demands, the post-16 offer aspires to raise student aspirations and create opportunities for diverse and rewarding career pathways, including further and higher education. This initiative supports social mobility and personal development. The post-16 provision will involve all providers working collaboratively to establish an efficient and sustainable model across the borough. This will be complemented by high-quality, impartial career advice and guidance that adheres to statutory requirements. Our goal is to ensure that every young person leaving school post-16 has a confirmed transition route and they retain that placement to support their pathway into further education, work and skills.

The Post-16 Strategy Group Plan for 2024-2025 outlines a road map aimed at improving post-16 education in Walsall. The plan focuses on addressing key challenges, facilitating collaboration, and ensuring equitable access to high-quality education and career opportunities for all students.

Membership includes Headteachers, members, and curriculum leads of mainstream, specialist and Post-16 schools and settings, work and skills officers, careers hubs officer, West Midlands Combined Authority, West Midlands Skills Board, Virtual School, Social Care, SEND, alternative provision, and, admissions and sufficiency teams.

The group is divided into sub-groups to ensure that the appropriate professionals are engaged in the relevant areas, enabling us to leverage expertise and enhance decision-making to drive improvement.

The Post 16 plan overview:

- The strategic objectives included in the plan are designed to focus on 8 key areas of development, enhancing awareness and maximising academic & vocational opportunities, promote equal respect for Post-16 pathways, encouraging collaboration between Post-16 providers on curriculum development, supporting high-quality Post-16 provision for SEND Learners, prioritising support for children in care transitioning to Post-16, prioritising support for children in care transitioning to Post-16, and promoting Gatsby Benchmarks and effective career advice.
- Key Actions: Specific, measurable actions with timelines and assigned responsibilities to achieve these objectives.
- Impact Measures: Clear metrics to evaluate success, including enrolment rates, retention, student satisfaction, and stakeholder collaboration.

The plan emphasises the importance of collaboration between educational providers, local businesses, and stakeholders to create a unified and effective approach to Post-16 education. It aims to prepare students for both higher education and employment while addressing local economic demands and promoting sustainability.

The Post-16 plan and offer will see all providers working in collaboration to create an efficient and sustainable model of post-16 provision across the borough. In conjunction with high quality impartial career advice and guidance that meets all the statutory requirements. We will strive to ensure that every young person leaving school post-16 has a confirmed progression route.

#### 4. Key Stage 5 (KS5) Data Information

- 4.1. In KS5, young people undertake A-Level or Vocational Exams. These are generally reported as an average point score and are undertaken at the end of Year 13. (Non-Statutory).
- 4.2. The headline attainment measures are the average point score (APS) per entry which report level 3 qualifications by four performance cohorts (A level, academic, applied general, and tech level). The average point score per entry is calculated by dividing the total number of points achieved by students in a particular cohort by the total size of entries for those students.
- 4.3. To be included in a particular performance cohort for a provider, the student must have entered for at least one of the following qualifications:
  - **A-Level** qualifications cover applied single award AS or A levels or applied double award AS or A levels. This covers students at the end of advanced level study who were entered for at least one A/AS level, applied single A/AS level, applied double A/AS level or combined A/AS level during 16-18 study. It does not include those pupils taking Tech levels.
  - **Academic** qualifications cover A levels and a range of other academic qualifications taken at level 3, including AS levels, the International Baccalaureate, Applied A levels, Pre-U, Free-standing mathematics qualifications and the extended project.
  - **Applied general** qualifications are defined by the DfE as 'rigorous level 3 qualifications for post-16 students who wish to continue their education through applied learning and that equip students with transferable knowledge and skills. These qualifications are reported in terms of a Distinction\*/Distinction/Merit/Pass rather than a grade at A Level/Academic.
  - **Tech levels** are defined by the DfE as 'rigorous level 3 qualifications for post-16 students wishing to specialise in a specific industry or occupation and that develop specialist knowledge and skills to enable entry to employment or progression to a related higher education course. These qualifications are

reported in terms of a Distinction\*/Distinction/Merit/Pass rather than a grade at A Level/Academic.

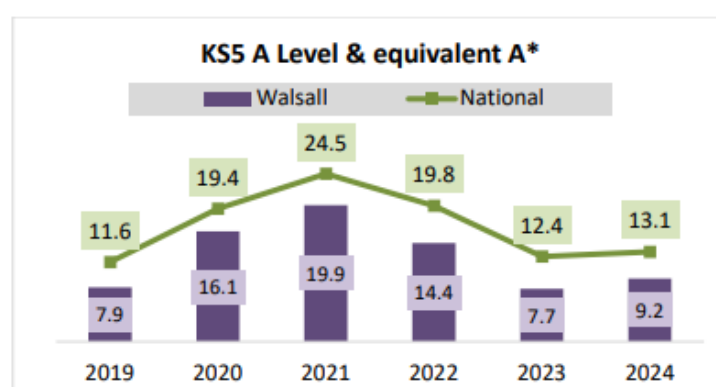
4.4. The latest provisional KS5 dataset was released by the Department for Education (DfE) on 28th November 2024. Validated data will be released in February 2025. It is expected that there will be some changes in results when the final validated data is released. This data is based on the state funded sector only (this does not include the colleges).

4.5. The average points per entry for the A Level cohort is 32.1, compared to the national average of 34.3 points (-2.2 points gap to national). Due to quality issues in some of the vocational data this provisional release will not include data on outcomes for applied general and tech level qualifications. Complete data for all qualifications will be included in the scheduled update with revised data in February 2025.

KS5 Headline Measures	Walsall 2024 Vs Walsall 2023	Walsall 2024 Vs Walsall 2019	Walsall 2024 Vs National 2024	Walsall 2024 Vs National 2024 - Gap
% A* Grades	Better	Better	Below	Improving
% A*-A Grades	Better	Better	Below	Widening
% A*-E Grades	Better	Better	Below	Improving
Average point Score - A'Level	Better	Better	Below	Widening
Average point Score - Tech Level	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available
Average point Score - Applied General	Not available	Not available	Not available	Not available

4.6. Over the past five years, the percentage of pupils in Walsall achieving an A\* in their A Level and equivalent increased from 7.9% in 2019 to 9.2% in 2024, with a high of 19.9% in 2021. 6.4. The gap to national has slightly increased from 3.7 percentage points in 2019 to 3.9 percentage points in 2024. 6.5. KS5 school level data is currently unavailable.

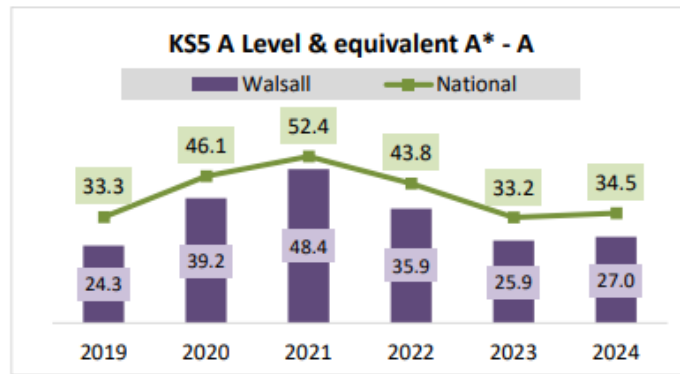
#### A Level and equivalent A\*



4.7. The percentage of pupils in Walsall achieving an A\*-A in their A Level and equivalent qualification has increased from 24.3% in 2019 to 48.4% in 2021. 2023 declined to 25.9% and in 2024 improved by 1.1 percentage points to 27.0%. 2024 data demonstrates that Walsall are closing the gap to national, from 9 percentage points in 2019 to 7.5 percentage points in 2024. KS5 school level data is currently unavailable.

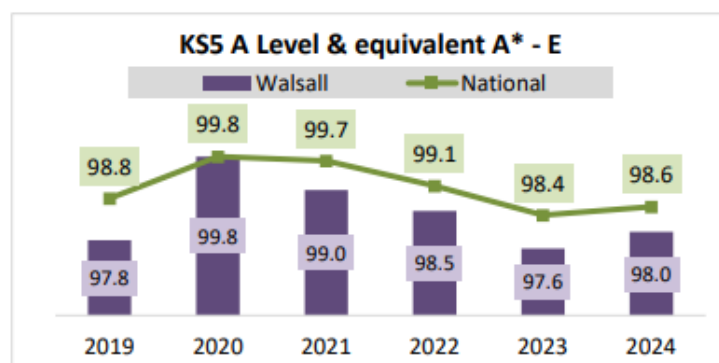


### A Level and equivalent A\*-A

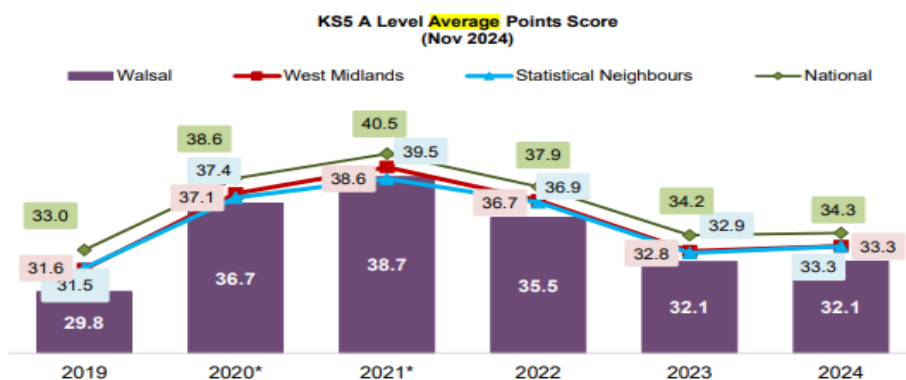


4.8. The percentage of pupils in Walsall achieving an A\*-E in their A Level and equivalent qualification declined from 97.8% in 2019 to 97.6% in 2023. Attainment for 2024 has improved by 0.4 percentage points to 98%. Walsall is narrowing the gap to national from 1 percentage point in 2019 to 0.6 percentage points in 2024. KS5 school level data is currently unavailable.

### A Level and equivalent A\*-E

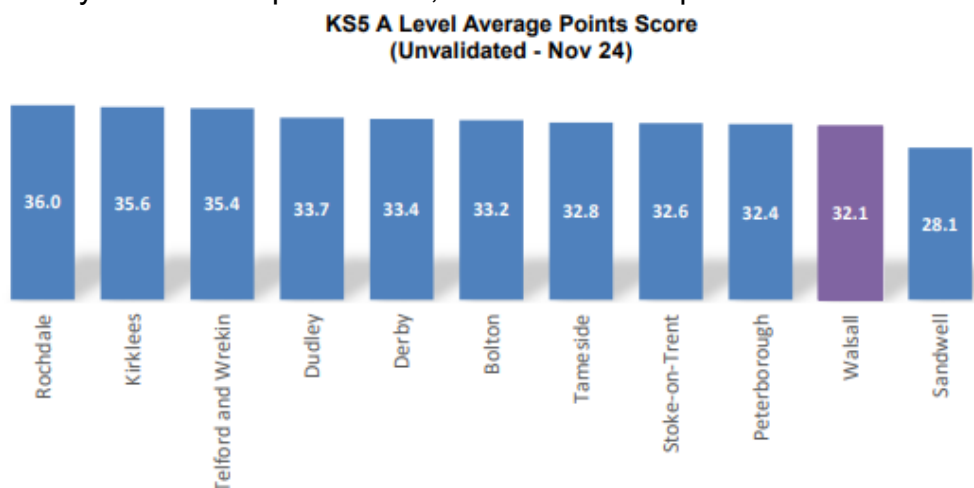


4.9. The average point score for A level has increased from 29.8 points in 2019 to 32.1 points in 2023. Attainment for 2024 has remained the same compared to 2023.



4.10. Compared to statistical neighbours, Walsall ranked 10th and was 0.3 points below Peterborough. Compared to Rochdale (36 points), who had the highest average point

score per entry at A 'Level qualification, Walsall was 3.9 points below.



4.11. 2024 data is currently unavailable, due to quality issues in some of the vocational data this provisional release will not include data on outcomes for tech level qualifications. Complete data for all qualifications will be included in the scheduled update with revised data in February 2025.

## 5. Walsall Works

5.1. Launched in 2012, the programme provides an inclusive service for economically inactive people of working age who are currently not working, unemployed benefit claimants who are actively seeking employment or those who are employed in low waged jobs or those with an aspiration through developing workplace skills. We work with local employers to understand the demands of the local labour market and bring forward local employment opportunities to our residents of all ages. Our free job brokerage service matches current job vacancies to participants registered on our programmes.

Qualified Advisors will support people to improve employability but also their key skills i.e. communication, timekeeping, presentation, problem solving, team working as well as improving CVs, job searching and assisting with registration to courses. We host job vacancies on our website [www.walsallworks.com](http://www.walsallworks.com), through weekly jobs bulletin and on all social media platforms, and these also helps to promote our outreach services. Jobs fairs and group sessions are delivered weekly and provide a valuable opportunity for participants to meet employers and training providers. Walsall Works host a series of events across the borough as well as focussed events to market pre-employment, apprenticeships and placements.

We have robust relationships with our further education and independent training providers so that we can actively market the plethora of training budget devolved and available in the borough and provisions across the wider region.

During 2024, Walsall Works secured 1,219 positive outcomes for participants, ranging from employment, apprenticeships, part or full-time training, self-employment and work placements.

## NEETs Prevention

5.2. During 2024, Walsall Works offered supports funded through the Commonwealth Games Legacy Funding to prevent young people becoming NEET. Post Black Country Impact funding, we have maintained close partnership with key services in order to source referrals of our most vulnerable young people from Transitional Leaving Care Team, Early Help Team, SEND Team (including those with ECHP's), Youth Justice Service and Family Hubs. We also receive some referrals of young people at risk of becoming NEET from education providers and local authority services i.e. children missing education, home school elected services, early help services, young carers.

The service is delivered face to face on a one-to-one basis from various settings in our co-location venues below, established in 20 locations across the borough. Advisors will meet young people regularly to create clear action plans focussing on tackling barriers that may prevent progression into training, education, apprenticeship, job placements or employment opportunities.

An employer engagement officer works closely with Advisors to better understand participant aspirations and career goals, in order to bring forward relevant opportunities. In this academic year, we have attended some secondary school careers events to raise awareness of our service and the labour market. We also continue to promote our offer through various forums represented by education i.e. Post 16 Group, SEND Group, Walsall Learning Alliance and Childrens Alliance.

5.3. During 2024, 338 young people aged 16-18 enrolled and 316 aged 19-24 years. In the same year, 420 positive outcomes were secured for young people, 190 were young people aged 16-18 and 234 were aged 19-24 years.

## 6. Special Education Needs

6.1. To improve our intelligence gathering we collect information from participants which allows us to analysis our service users, improve services and triage new participants to ensure they get the most appropriate and relevant support from us. The data below outlines the number of young people aged 16-24 who have disclosed they have a health barrier, learning difficulty or physical disability and those with an current EHCP. This data does not account for those who choose not to disclose this personal information but does include those state they have a disability but prefer not say what this is. Our improvement in processes has resulted in an increase in capturing the data and outcomes for those with learning difficulties and disabilities.

Learning Difficulty / Disability	2024	2023	2022
Aspergers Syndrome	2	4	3
Autism Spectrum Disorder	29	14	19
Disability Affecting Mobility	1	3	6

Dyslexia / Dyscalculia	18	14	9
EHCP (Education Health Care Plan)	13	15	1
Hearing Impairment	2	1	2
Learning Difficulty	13	11	11
Mental Health Difficulty	17	22	36
Other Unique Disability	27	2	7
Yes (But Prefer Not to Say)	3	4	7
Visual Impairments	2	1	1
Social and Emotional Difficulty	3	0	0
Total	130	96	108

The support provided through the Walsall Works programme is a universal offer regardless of personal circumstances, barriers or difficulties. All participants who are registered are supported until they voluntarily exit the programme or until they achieve a positive outcome. The reported participant outcomes in 2024 for those with a learning difficulty and disability are set out below and this highlights 24 positive outcomes were achieved showing a good mix of employment and education results.

<b>Outcome Type</b>	<b>Employer / Provider</b>	<b>Job or Learning type</b>	<b>Learning Difficulty / Disability</b>
Education	Nacro Training walsall	L1 Business & Retail	Learning Difficulty
Education	Nova Training	L1 Employability and work experience in child care.	Mental Health Difficulty
Education	Nacro training Walsall	Personal and Development inc English and Maths	Dyslexia / Dyscalculia
Employment	Co-op	Retail Assistant	Mental Health Difficulty
Employment	Co-op	Retail Assistant	Mental Health Difficulty
Employment	Ability Healthcare	Care Worker	Learning Difficulty
Employment	Shire Oaks Court Health Care Limited	Health Care Assistant.	Mental Health Difficulty
Apprenticeship	Homeserve	Customer Service Apprentice	Autism Spectrum Disorder
Training	Juniper	Internship	Learning Difficulty
Training	Netcom	Infrastructure Technician Course	Autism Spectrum Disorder
Education	Walsall College	Level 2 Diploma in Site Carpentry Evening	Learning Difficulty
Education	Nacro Training	L1 Health and Social Care	Dyslexia / Dyscalculia
Training	Job Change	3 day care course	Dyslexia / Dyscalculia
Training	Nacro Training	Health and Social Care L2. English GCSE	Dyslexia / Dyscalculia
Education	Nacro Training Walsall	Work ready programme with English and Math's	Dyslexia / Dyscalculia
Education	sixth form	Level 2 Creative Pathway	Dyslexia / Dyscalculia
Education	Studio school	English / Maths	Dyslexia / Dyscalculia

Training	Job change	Health and safety level 1	Dyslexia / Dyscalculia
Training	Wolverhampton CSCS Training Centre	Health, safety and environment test for Operatives	Dyslexia / Dyscalculia
Employment	Ratcliffe Cleaning	Cleaning operative	Dyslexia / Dyscalculia
Training	RMC	ESOL non accredited	Mental Health Difficulty
Training	Job Change	3 day care course	Mental Health Difficulty
Employment	Carpet Right	Customer Service Advisor	Autism Spectrum Disorder
Employment	Decathlon	Full time Sports Advisor	Autism Spectrum Disorder

## 6.2. NEETs Tracking

The management of our Client Caseload Information System (CCIS) is contracted to Prospects Services (Shaw Trust) who tracks the status of young people in year 11 to 13 for statistical returns to DfE. Prospects provide the local authority with real time information to identify those who are not participating in education or those without destinations. Prospects collect the data but do not provide any local follow up to re-engage those who have become NEET or who are 'Not Known' to mainstream education. There is a heavy reliance on the Employment and Skills Team to make contact with these young people and to engage them in our services. Considerable work has been undertaken this past year to improve data sharing agreements, to ensure that the tracking of our most vulnerable young people is accurate in order to closely identify those who are NEET.

Further improvements to the tracking systems include the use of private emails, phone numbers, home addresses so that we may use all communication methods to ascertain the current status of young people and provide the most accurate NEETs figures to DfE. We have used this information to write to parents and to conduct home visits. We can also use the emails to better communicate our offer, events and other support services.

December 2024 figures (latest full month reporting) show a slow but steady improvement from the start of the academic year, with NEET figures at to 3.2% we continue to contact the individuals and offer the support and services of Walsall Works to assist these young people back into education, training or employment.

There has been significant activity to reduce the number of Not Known's from a record 14% (1005) in the October return, down to 3.4% (269) currently and with further activity scheduled before February half term, our aspiration is to significantly reduce this number by at least half.

The Not Knowns are a difficult subset to validate, but our ongoing efforts to make contact by email and postal campaigns has proven successful, and with a planned activity to visit last known addresses of these young people to understand where they are and what they are currently doing in terms of education, training or employment.

Current December 24 Stats - RPA				
Year 12	Year 13	Combined	Target	
94.6%	89.8%	92.32	94.9%	
Current December 23 Stats - NEET				
Year 12	Year 13	TOTAL	Current %	Target
88	165	254	3.2%	3.1%
Current December 23 Stats - Not Known				
Year 12	Year 13	TOTAL	Current %	Target
107	162	269	3.4%	4.1%

### 6.3. Careers Enterprise Company (CEC)

The CEC is the national body for careers education in England, delivering support to schools and colleges to deliver modern, 21st century careers education. Careers 5.16 Hubs bring together schools, colleges, employers, and apprenticeship providers in a local area. Their goal is to work together and help schools and colleges improve how they prepare young people for their best next steps following education.

Until this academic year, Walsall was the only WM Local Authorities not to have transitioned the responsibility for leading and managing a team of Enterprise Coordinators. In October 2024 Walsall Works secured funding to 1.5 FTE posts in order to continue the facilitation of high-quality careers and enterprise education for 11–18-year-olds. This is more effective delivery enabling better alignment to local economic and skills priorities and will improve career outcomes and achieve sustainable change at a local and national level. It ensures careers service delivery is consistently of a high quality, aligning to the Gatsby Benchmarks and performance requirements set in a grant agreement with CEC.

CEC Co-ordinators will provide support to schools to delivering CIAG against the 8 Gatsby Benchmarks identified as the core priorities within a good quality careers and enterprise programme in schools.

These are:

- Stable careers programme
- Learning from career and labour market information
- Addressing the needs of each pupil
- Linking curriculum learning to careers
- Encounters with employers
- Experiences of workplaces
- Encounters with further and higher education
- Personal guidance

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, post-16 provision and outcomes remain a focal area for our Local Authority. We have made significant progress by creating the Post-16 Strategy Group to drive priority areas forward and build relationships and trust between our providers. The Post-16 Strategy Group Plan for 2024-2025 is a detailed and comprehensive framework aimed at addressing key challenges and opportunities in post-16 education. With clearly defined objectives, actionable plans, and measurable outcomes, it provides a robust roadmap for improving educational access, equity, and outcomes in Walsall.

This is a key focus moving forward and the next 12 months will see further efforts to develop our post-16 offer, ensuring good quality and positive outcomes across all post-16 settings in our region to ensure pupils get the right support, in the right place, and at the right time.

## 8. Decide

The committee may decide to request further information on the education outcomes of children within Walsall.

## 9. Respond

Any recommendations made by the committee will be responded to by the appropriate service area.

## 10. Review

The actions and outcomes within this report are monitored by Access & Inclusion SMT and by individual schools.

### Author(s)

Amy Nash  
Post-16 and Alternative Provision Manager  
☎ 07599658295  
✉ [amy.nash@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:amy.nash@walsall.gov.uk)

&

Nick Perks  
Quality Assurance Team Manager  
☎ 07944 279911  
✉ [nick.perks@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:nick.perks@walsall.gov.uk)

&

Jane Kaur Gill  
Employment and Skills Manager  
☎ 07983 612618  
✉ [jane.kaur-gill@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:jane.kaur-gill@walsall.gov.uk)

# **TERMS OF REFERENCE for the Walsall Post 16 Strategy Group & Post-16 Plan**

**September 2024**

## **Purpose**

The Post-16 Strategy Group is dedicated to ensuring that a comprehensive and dynamic range of education and training opportunities is available to all students across the borough. The group aims to enhance learner choice and actively engage with students to improve the quality of the post-16 curriculum, thereby elevating student outcomes throughout the borough.

Aligned with local and regional employer demands, the post-16 offer aspires to raise student aspirations and create opportunities for diverse and rewarding career pathways, including further and higher education. This initiative supports social mobility and personal development.

The post-16 provision will involve all providers working collaboratively to establish an efficient and sustainable model across the borough. This will be complemented by high-quality, impartial career advice and guidance that adheres to statutory requirements. Our goal is to ensure that every young person leaving school post-16 has a confirmed transition route.

## **The main aims of the group are:**

- 1.To enhance awareness of the diverse range of post-16 education and training opportunities and ensure that both academic and vocational choices are maximised for all students in the borough.
- 2.To promote equal respect for all post-16 pathways by monitoring and sharing best practices, while recognising that different qualifications and training are suited to different learners based on their intended career goals.
- 3.To ensure that **all** post-16 providers share provision plans to enhance curriculum development across the borough and our neighbouring authorities.
- 4.To identify and address barriers to accessing provision for post-16 learners across the borough and our neighbouring authorities, including curriculum offer and place planning to ensure Walsall has sufficient places for learners. This includes planning for the number of post-16 specialist places required over the next 5 years.
- 5.To ensure that strategies address the needs of all young people, including the most able and those with SEND (as defined in the SEND banding document), and that these strategies are integrated and cohesive.
- 6.To ensure high-quality post-16 provision for students with SEND and to target suitable programs designed to support those with special educational needs and disabilities.
- 7.To ensure that students in care are supported in all provisions by identifying key leaders within those settings to provide dedicated support to children in care.



8. To use destinations data and Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) to help inform the post-16 borough-wide offer on an annual basis.
9. To work with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Careers Hubs to ensure that Gatsby Benchmarks are prioritised and provision meets the needs of the labour market.
10. To establish an IAG (Information, Advice, and Guidance) network that benefits all students and post-16 leaders, through the roles of CE Coordinators.
11. To ensure all students that are transported to post-16 provisions, have support to promote their independence and preparation for adulthood.
12. To target appropriate provision for young people aged 16-19 years old who are at risk of becoming NEET or are identified as NEET.
13. To monitor and report on the impact of the Walsall Post 16 Strategy Group in order to improve progress against these aims.

*Sept 2024*

### **Summary of the Post-16 Strategy Group Plan 2024-2025**

The Post-16 Strategy Group Plan for 2024-2025 outlines a road map aimed at improving post-16 education in Walsall. The plan focuses on addressing key challenges, facilitating collaboration, and ensuring equitable access to high-quality education and career opportunities for all students.

It includes:

- **Strategic Objectives:** Nine key objectives targeting areas such as academic opportunities, vocational pathways, mental health, sustainability, and alignment with regional economic needs.
- **Key Actions:** Specific, measurable actions with timelines and assigned responsibilities to achieve these objectives.
- **Impact Measures:** Clear metrics to evaluate success, including enrolment rates, retention, student satisfaction, and stakeholder collaboration.

To ensure the terms of reference are fulfilled, the group has identified objectives and created a comprehensive action plan for the Walsall Post-16 Strategy Group. It outlines specific actions aimed at achieving strategic objectives, including enhancing collaboration among stakeholders, improving educational outcomes, and addressing key challenges in post-16 education.

The overall plan emphasises the importance of collaboration between educational providers, local businesses, and stakeholders to create a unified and effective approach to post-16 education. It aims to prepare students for both higher education and employment while addressing local economic demands and promoting sustainability.

The action plan provides a comprehensive action plan for the Walsall Post-16 Strategy Group. It outlines specific actions aimed at achieving each strategic objectives, including enhancing collaboration among stakeholders, improving educational outcomes, and

addressing key challenges in post-16 education. The plan also includes timelines and responsibilities for each action.

### **Objective 1: Enhance Awareness and Maximise Academic Opportunities**

This objective focuses on developing borough-wide communication strategy to promote both academic and vocational post-16 pathways, ensuring it is embedded as an ongoing annual initiative. Evaluating existing student engagement events and webinars to enhance opportunities for showcasing the full range of post-16 options, including academic, vocational, and apprenticeship pathways. Additionally, create a comprehensive website to provide detailed information on all available post-16 pathways in Walsall, making it easier for students to explore and access their options.

### **Objective 2: Promote Equal Respect for Post-16 Pathways**

This objective aims to ensure equal promotion of academic and vocational pathways by assessing the availability of regular CPD sessions for careers advisers and teaching staff. It seeks to leverage Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) to tailor career advice based on local job market demands, with this information shared consistently with staff and advisers. Additionally, it focuses on engaging parents through information sessions that emphasise the benefits of pathways such as apprenticeships and T Levels. A campaign highlighting success stories from both vocational and academic routes will also be developed to celebrate student achievements and inspire others.

### **Objective 3: Encourage Collaboration Between Providers on Curriculum Development**

This objective aims to establish a borough-wide post-16 curriculum network, including Special Schools, to facilitate coordination among providers, enabling the discussion of curriculum development and the sharing of best practices. The network will also support the annual exchange of curriculum provision plans to address gaps and prevent duplication in course offerings across the borough.

### **Objective 4: Improve Access and Address Barriers to Post-16 Education**

This objective focuses on ensuring sufficient post-16 places and specialist provisions by projecting demand over the next five years and conducting a borough-wide needs assessment to identify barriers to access, such as geographic and socio-economic factors. Annual surveys of parents and students will gather insights into challenges like transport, finances, and other support needs. Collaboration with transport providers will aim to secure affordable travel options while promoting independence for students attending post-16 institutions. Life skills training and independence programs will further support students with transport needs in their transition to adulthood. Clear information on bursaries and financial support for disadvantaged students and those with SEND will be provided. Additionally, systems to monitor post-16 attendance will be explored, along with schools being supported to identify at-risk students at the earliest point. Tailored support, such as mentoring and alternative pathways, will be explored to address the needs of students at risk of becoming NEET.

### **Objective 5: Support High-Quality Post-16 Provision for SEND Learners**

Objective 5 aims to improve the quality and accessibility of Post-16 education for learners with SEND, including the best SEND providers. It focuses on conducting needs assessments to identify barriers, emerging needs, exploring specialist programmes to support career guidance and transitions, and ensuring every post-16 provider has a

dedicated SEND coordinator working closely with the Walsall SEND team. Additionally, it prioritises exploring suitable placements, reviewing Education, Health, and Care Plans and supporting inclusion in both mainstream and specialist education settings. These efforts aim to provide tailored support and promote successful outcomes for SEND learners.

### **Objective 6: Prioritise Support for Children in Care Transitioning to Post-16**

Objective 6 aims to enhance support for children in care within post-16 education by identifying key leaders to provide dedicated assistance and monitoring their academic progress and well-being to offer tailored support, such as tutoring and mental health services. A network meeting of CIAG advisors and Virtual School post-16 leads will be established to improve communication and ensure seamless transitions. Virtual School are leading on key initiatives in post-16 transition sessions in the spring term and a Post-16 Options Fair specifically for Year 11 CIC students.

### **Objective 7: Strengthen Use of Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) and Destinations Data**

This objective ensures the borough-wide post-16 education offer aligns with local labour market needs by analysing LMI and student destination data annually. The findings will be used to inform curriculum adjustments to match evolving job markets and integrate LMI data into curriculum design, equipping students with skills required by local and regional employers. Partnerships with local businesses will be further developed to provide work experience, internships, and employment opportunities. Additionally, alternative education pathways, such as flexible schedules, online courses, and part-time options, will be explored to address the diverse needs of NEET students. The Walsall Employment and Skills Board have agreed to support this objective to ensure robust collaboration with employers.

### **Objective 8: Promote Gatsby Benchmarks and Effective Career Advice**

This objective focuses on strengthening careers education by exploring a borough-wide Information, Advice, and Guidance network across all post-16 providers to support the delivery of the Gatsby Benchmarks. Collaboration with the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and local Careers Hubs will ensure these benchmarks are prioritised in all institutions. Career leaders will be trained or guided on using the benchmarks to help students make informed career choices. Regular career workshops and fairs will connect students with employers and educational opportunities. Additionally, re-engagement programs for NEET students will be explored, alongside partnerships with local businesses and training providers to offer apprenticeships, vocational training, and internships aligned with local labour market needs.

### **Objective 9: Monitoring and Reporting Progress**

Objective 9 emphasises the importance of tracking progress and measuring impact through regular monitoring and reporting. Key actions include collecting feedback during termly meetings, presenting annual progress reports to stakeholders, and using evidence to demonstrate continuous improvement and stakeholder satisfaction. This ensures accountability and the effective implementation of strategies.

### **Impact Measures**

Impact measures have been created to evaluate the success of the action plan. These include quantitative measures, such as increased enrolment in Post-16 programmes,

improved retention rates, and positive student and parent/carer feedback. It also includes qualitative assessments, such as enhanced stakeholder collaboration and improved perceptions of post-16 education pathways.

## **Conclusion**

The Post-16 Strategy Group Plan for 2024-2025 is a detailed and comprehensive action plan aimed at addressing key challenges and opportunities in post-16 education. With clearly defined objectives, actionable plans, and measurable outcomes, it provides a robust roadmap for improving educational access, equity, and outcomes in Walsall.

## Alternative Provision

Ward(s): ALL

Portfolios: Education and Skills Councillor Kaur

### 1. Aim

**This report provides an update on Alternative Provision within Walsall LA.**

### 2. Summary

This report provides an overview of what alternative provision (AP) is, current practice within AP, an overview of Walsall's quality assurance process and framework, and our future strategy with a focus on supporting our AP providers and young people within AP.

### 3. Report detail – Know

For the purposes of the Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities January 2013, the definition of Alternative Provision (AP) is as follows:

*'Education arranged by local authorities for pupils who, because of exclusion, illness or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education; education arranged by schools for pupils on a fixed period exclusion; and pupils being directed by schools to off-site provision to improve their behaviour.'*

The Council has statutory duties to provide Alternative Education Provision for Walsall resident pupils of compulsory school age defined as the above.

Alternative Providers (AP's) deliver a range of alternative approaches to providing access to education for young people who are excluded or at risk of exclusion, at risk of disengaging from mainstream school provision or otherwise require alternative education provision to meet their educational entitlement. It is crucial to provide a safe and supportive environment for these vulnerable children and young people to ensure good outcomes for them.

The AP Team has worked closely with the SEND (Special Educational Needs) Team to develop and implement the SEND and AP strategy, ensuring a collaborative approach to supporting students with additional needs. This partnership involves joint efforts to complete the Self-Evaluation Framework (SEF), identifying strengths and areas for improvement within the provision. The teams also work together to deliver the SEND and AP 12-month plan, which outlines targeted actions and priorities aimed at enhancing the quality, accessibility, and outcomes of both SEND and alternative provision services.

By aligning resources and expertise, the AP and SEND Teams ensure a robust strategy that prioritises the needs of vulnerable students and drives continuous improvement across Walsall's education framework.

#### **4. Walsall Context**

The majority of pupils in Alternative Provision are male and have identified vulnerabilities; however, this academic year has seen an increase in exclusions among female pupils. A significant portion of the cohort has identified SEND, with or without an Education, Health, and Care (EHC) plan, or Social, Emotional, and Mental Health (SEMH) needs. Many pupils are eligible for free school meals, and a number are children in care. Some pupils are on child protection, child in need, or early help plans, though the majority are not open to social care services. Attendance upon entering AP is often low but typically improves for most Key Stage 4 pupils, who benefit from and enjoy the vocational studies available.

#### **5. Pupil Referral Units, AP Framework and Quality Assurance**

Walsall has two Pupil Referral Units (PRUs): one focused on behaviour, The New Leaf School and one on medical needs, The Shepwell Centre. Alongside these PRUs, the Local Authority commissions places at The Ladder School, an alternative provision free school, as well as at other good or outstanding registered independent settings on our approved framework. This ensures that students accessing alternative provision following a permanent exclusion receive high-quality education and are supported to achieve positive outcomes in AP.

Walsall operates an open AP procurement framework, which has recently reopened for new tenders. This framework allows AP providers from across the country to apply and join throughout the year, with new tenders reviewed and moderated each term. This flexible approach enables the continuous addition of new providers, enhancing the alternative provision available for Walsall's students. Since opening the framework in April 2024, we have completed 3 cycles of moderation, and 29 new providers have joined the framework. By having an open framework, Walsall will continue to attract a greater number of AP providers to the framework, ensuring a diverse and comprehensive AP offer that delivers a wide range of courses, qualifications, and high-quality education.

All new providers applying to join Walsall's AP framework undergo a rigorous evaluation process, including quality-focused questions and moderation during procurement. Once accepted onto the framework, they are incorporated into the ongoing quality assurance (QA) processes.

Walsall's extensive AP framework enables schools to utilise unregistered provision as a vocational or supportive option to their main curriculum. Currently, the framework includes 52 providers: 9 registered schools, 41 unregistered providers, and 2 DfE-accredited online schools. For example, Walsall Construction Training Ltd, an unregistered provider, offers vocational courses in gas, electrical, and plumbing trades.

Among the registered independent schools on the framework is Sandwell Valley School, which received an outstanding rating from Ofsted in 2022.

Before placing any students, the Local Authority carries out up to three types of quality assurance (QA) audits through onsite visits. These QA visits are commissioned to assess the quality of education provided at all settings and are conducted annually. For providers that are not registered schools, the Local Authority additionally commissions health and safety and safeguarding audits. Additionally, Walsall also undertakes quality assurance for 40 additional settings commissioned by SEND and the Virtual School, ensuring those provisions are of high quality and appropriate to meet the needs of our most vulnerable cohorts.

Alternative provision can be established by public, voluntary, or private sector organisations. Most alternative providers are not required to register with any official body, and there are no formal national systems for evaluating their quality. However, any provider offering education must register as an independent school if they meet the DfE criteria: providing full-time education to five or more pupils of compulsory school age, or one such pupil who is looked-after or has an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP). Walsall Local Authority monitors this through the AP Register process to ensure that no AP providers on our framework operate as illegal schools. Additionally, Walsall LA provided feedback and facilitated a working group to gather input from AP providers on the 'Strengthening Protections in Unregistered Alternative Provision' consultation and Ofsted's thematic reviews. The feedback from these groups has enabled us to refine our monitoring and oversight processes, ensuring that all unregistered provisions are safe for students and deliver high-quality education and services.

Unregistered providers on Walsall's AP framework undergo three annual audits to assess their suitability and quality. Only providers that meet the Local Authority's QA criteria will be approved for student placements. Registered schools with a recent Ofsted inspection that satisfies our QA standards will receive annual visits to ensure the education offered remains appropriate for our students. If the QA process identifies concerns, the AP Manager or Quality Assurance Team Manager will work with the provider to address the issues. Should these concerns remain unresolved or be of a serious nature, the Local Authority will remove students from the setting and may suspend or remove the provider from the AP framework. The AP and SEND Team Managers work closely together to ensure QA's processes are robust and feedback is shared across both teams.

The AP Register is a key initiative introduced by Walsall Local Authority to monitor and oversee students in alternative provision settings, including those not directly commissioned by the Local Authority. It tracks all students attending providers on Walsall's AP framework, ensuring comprehensive oversight of Walsall children accessing alternative provision. The AP Register is cross-referenced with data from the School Attendance Service and SEND teams to ensure all students in AP are accounted for and visible.

This comprehensive approach to monitoring students in AP will allow the Local Authority to collaborate effectively with schools to define the expected outcomes of AP placements, establish appropriate timeframes, and monitor student engagement. The register will ensure that students do not remain in AP longer than necessary and that graduated responses are applied either before or alongside their time in alternative provision. It also ensures that AP placements are suitable and personalised to meet each student's specific needs. The success of this process relies on collaboration between Local Authority teams, the School Attendance Service, SEND teams, AP providers, schools, and multi-agency partners. This coordinated effort guarantees that all provisions are safe, high-quality, and aligned with Walsall Local Authority's commitment to delivering positive outcomes for students in alternative education. The data is collated into our Alternative Provision Score card, that will allow the LA to monitor trends of students accessing AP, why and for how long, to ensure AP is used appropriately in line with student needs.

We currently have Walsall students at 5 registered providers and 15 unregistered provisions. We have 56 permanently excluded children in Key Stage 4 (KS4) are placed in alternative providers for their education provision, on roll of the New Leaf School and The Ladder School. Quality assurance activities, including audits, site visits, and Ofsted inspections, ensure standards are met and highlight areas for improvement.

## **6. Walsall Alternative Provision Quality Assurance Framework:**

### **6.1. Quality Assurance – Why?**

There is an expectation that all providers within the directory AP providers sign up to the QA process as described in this document. All outcomes of QA visits undertaken by Walsall Council are shared on the Walsall Council Website.

There are three elements to Walsall's QA process:

#### **Teaching and Learning:**

Teaching and learning quality assurance (QA) for alternative provision is vital to ensure that educational standards are consistently met, promoting effective teaching practices and positive student outcomes. Through systematic evaluation and continuous improvement, QA processes enhance the learning experience, ensuring that all students receive a high-quality education tailored to their needs.

This commitment to excellence not only supports student achievement and well-being but also upholds the provider's reputation and accountability, building trust and confidence among students, parents, and commissioners.

#### **Safeguarding:**

Safeguarding quality assurance (QA) for alternative provision is vital to ensure that all safeguarding policies and practices are effectively implemented, protecting the welfare and safety of vulnerable students. This QA process helps identify and address potential risks, ensures compliance with legal and regulatory requirements, and fosters a safe, supportive environment. By maintaining rigorous safeguarding standards, providers build trust and confidence among students, parents, and commissioners.






## Health and Safety:

Health and safety quality assurance (QA) for alternative provision is vital to ensure a safe and secure environment for students and staff. By systematically evaluating and improving health and safety practices, QA processes help prevent accidents and manage risks effectively. This commitment to maintaining high health and safety standards not only protects the well-being of everyone in the provision but also upholds the providers reputation and accountability, building trust and confidence among students, parents, and commissioners.

## QA Ratings

All self-evaluation and QA visits will use a standard RAG rating:

	RED – Requirement not met or significant deficiencies; urgent improvement needed
	AMBER – Requirement partially met; processes to be enhanced or embedded
	GREEN – Requirement fully met

The expectation is each visit is carried out in partnership with the provider. Therefore, we would expect and welcome managers to join the audit visit. Each visit would take no longer than one day and can be undertaken online if the provider does not have physical premises.

## QA Cycle

Walsall Council will complete a QA with each provider on the framework on an annual basis.

The Walsall Alternative Provision Quality Assurance Framework will:

### Ensure High-Quality Education:

- Support alternative provision settings to deliver a curriculum that is broad, balanced, and tailored to meet the needs of individual students.
- Promote high standards of teaching and learning to ensure positive educational outcomes for all students.
- Ensure all learners receive consistently high- quality learning experiences and their statutory entitlement within the Alternative Provision (AP) sector.

### Safeguarding:

- Safeguard and promote the wellbeing of all children accessing education in the Alternative Provision (AP) sector.
- Ensure robust safeguarding policies and practices to protect the welfare of all students.

- Foster a safe and supportive environment where students feel secure and valued.

### **Support Personal Development:**

- Encourage the development of social, emotional, and behavioural skills to prepare students for reintegration into mainstream education or progression to further education, training, or employment.
- Provide tailored support to address individual needs, including mental health and well-being.

### **Promote Accountability and Improvement**

- Establish clear accountability mechanisms to monitor and evaluate the quality and effectiveness of alternative provision settings.
- Facilitate continuous improvement through regular review, feedback, and implementation of best practices.
- Establish robust collaboration between commissioners and Alternative Providers.

## **Key Components of Walsall's Alternative Provision Quality Assurance Framework:**

### **Leadership and Management:**

- Strong and effective leadership committed to continuous improvement and high standards.
- Clear vision and strategy for delivering high-quality alternative provision.
- Robust governance structures to provide oversight and accountability.

### **Curriculum and Teaching:**

- Curriculum that is broad, balanced, and meets the needs and interests of students.
- High-quality teaching that engages and motivates students.
- Regular assessment and tracking of student progress to inform teaching and learning

### **Safeguarding and Welfare:**

- Comprehensive safeguarding policies and procedures compliant with KCSIE 2024.
- Trained and designated safeguarding leads (DSLs) and staff.
- Safe recruitment practices and ongoing safeguarding training for all staff.
- Systems to ensure student safety, including online safety measures and secure environments.

### **Personal Development and Support:**

- Holistic support for students' social, emotional, and mental health needs.
- Access to additional services and support, such as counselling and mentoring when they need it.

- Programs to develop students' life skills and prepare them for future opportunities.

### **Engagement and Partnership:**

- Active engagement with parents, carers, and families to support student outcomes.
- Effective collaboration with local authorities, schools, and external agencies.
- Strong links with the community and employers to enhance learning opportunities.
- Inspire confidence across Alternative Providers and support the culture of continual improvement within the Alternative Provision (AP) sector.

### **Monitoring and Evaluation:**

- Regular self-evaluation and review of provision to identify strengths and areas for improvement.
- Use of data and feedback to drive improvement and inform decision-making.
- External inspections and audits to provide independent assessment of quality and effectiveness.
- Enable recognition and sharing of good practice across schools, colleges and other providers.

### **Professional Development:**

- Ongoing professional development opportunities for staff to enhance their skills and knowledge.
- Support for staff well-being and workload management.
- Encouragement of reflective practice and sharing of best practices.
- By achieving these aims, the framework will ensure that alternative provision settings deliver high-quality education and care, safeguard students and are held to high standards of accountability and continuous improvement. A directory of Alternative Provision providers on the framework will be available for all commissioners to access.

The impact of this robust process is shown through the outcomes of OFSTED unannounced inspections of our providers. Since 2022 all inspections have resulted in a positive inspection outcome with all providers deemed as suitable. In one inspection an inspector reported to us that the provider commented on the fantastic support and communication from the AP Team that they don't get from other LA's.

## **6.2. Processes and Procedures within Alternative Provision**

Ofsted has also highlighted national concerns regarding the appropriateness of some alternative provisions (AP) and a lack of oversight by schools over their students attending these settings. In response, the Local Authority has published its new procurement framework on the council's Local Offer website. This allows schools to review the quality assurance outcomes of AP providers they may consider

commissioning places with directly. While further development is needed for the AP Framework Directory, this is a significant step forward in ensuring all commissioners have the knowledge and understanding required to support appropriate AP commissioning.

Each Alternative Provision has their own safeguarding policy and identifies safeguarding staff within their provision, in line with Keeping Children Safe in Education 2024 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023. All Alternative Providers are encouraged to complete a Section 175 Audit to identify areas for development around safeguarding.

The AP Managers Meeting, held termly, has a safeguarding and pupil outcome focus and is a forum to share good practice across AP. There have been Continual Professional Development (CPD) sessions on Ofsted Inspections and Quality Assurance, ordinarily available offers, and Safeguarding. This year's sessions have been focused on monitoring of outcomes and responses to prospective AP framework changes.

The local authority employs a team of 4 AP Keyworkers and an AP Manager who are all Level 3 safeguarding trained and provide support to our PRU's, AP's, students and families. This team supports the safeguarding team at the New Leaf Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) or other Alternative Provision providers on our AP framework. The keyworkers' main role is to support the students in their AP setting(s) and monitor their progress and outcomes. They work with KS4 students and providers to improve attendance and help resolve any issues to avoid a breakdown of placements.

To respond to the need to strengthen the monitoring of student outcomes in Walsall LA-commissioned AP placements, the Local Authority has implemented new Individual Learning Plan (ILP) and Education, Outcomes, and Transition Plan (EOTP) processes. These processes now provide a structured approach to supporting students' educational journeys, particularly those with additional needs. The process begins with a comprehensive assessment of individual needs, aspirations, and current progress, along with barriers to progress and individualised targets. These are documented in the ILP and reviewed termly. This sets out clear, measurable goals tailored to the student and ensures they understand what they are working towards. Regular evaluation and adaptation of the ILP's ensures support meets the evolving needs of students. Key components include collecting data on academic performance, attendance, behaviour, and post-16 destinations to monitor progress and guide targeted interventions, ensuring the delivery of high-quality education and positive outcomes. In response to parental feedback, regular feedback is provided to parents and carers, in the form of daily contact, progress reports and ILP reviews.

The Expected Outcome and Transition Plans (EOTP's) for students in AP, complements the ILP by focusing on long-term outcomes, including educational, personal, and career transitions. It ensures a seamless transition between educational phases by involving relevant stakeholders, such as school staff, local authority representatives, and external agencies.

The AP Team conducts regular reviews of both plans in collaboration with providers, students, and parents/carers. These reviews monitor progress, adjust targets as needed, and provide students with evidence of their success when targets are being met.

Key to the success of this implementation has been the collaborative approach with AP's, ensuring that all professionals involved have contributed to the plans. This has maximised the effectiveness of decision-making and ensured that the plans remain focused on achieving the best possible outcomes for each student in AP. This structured and collaborative approach has provided students with tailored support, enabling them to overcome barriers and achieve their potential during their time in AP. Additionally, this collaborative approach ensures alternative provision remains, flexible, effective, and focused on achieving the best outcomes for students.

This years renewed focus has been supporting students return to mainstream education or other appropriate pathways, with priority given to their academic, social, and emotional development. Regular reporting and reviews of transition processes ensure transparency and continuous improvement within the team. Feedback from parents, students, AP providers, and schools is essential for improving services and sharing good practices.

### **6.3. Gathering and using Feedback**

We now hold termly reviews with parents, carers, and students in alternative provision to gather valuable feedback and ensure their experiences are reviewed and improved where possible. These reviews provide an opportunity to understand the needs and perspectives of students and their families, enabling a collaborative approach to education and support in AP. To enhance this process, we have implemented an online reporting system that delivers real-time data and generates feedback evaluation reports. This system allows us to track progress and experiences for students in AP and identify areas requiring improvement across the service.

By using this data-driven approach, we can make informed decisions about provision, tailor interventions, and drive meaningful improvements in the quality of education and support provided to students in AP. This initiative reflects our commitment to transparency, accountability, and the delivery of high-quality alternative provision.

### **6.4. Parent, Carer and Student Feedback:**

- **Safety:** 83.3% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that their child is happy at their alternative provision, with 88.9% of respondents stating that they strongly agreed or agreed that their child feels safe at their alternative provision. Just 5.6% disagreed with the statement that their child is happy at their alternative provision and a further 5.6% were unsure.
- **Wellbeing:** A significant proportion of respondents also strongly agreed or agreed that their child's well-being and behaviour has improved since accessing alternative provision, with 83.3% of respondents agreeing their child's well-being has improved and 72.2% agreeing their child's behaviour has improved. This is likely to be linked to the fact that 89.9% of children enjoy the qualifications at their alternative provision.
- **Personal Development:** 94.4% of respondents strongly agreed or agreed that their child's alternative provision provider supported their child's wider personal development.

These reviews have provided valuable insight into how students and parents feel about alternative provision and highlighted key areas of focus, including post-16 transitions, attendance, and ensuring parents and pupils have a clear understanding of progress and achievements in AP.

In response to feedback regarding low attendance and additional support around post-16 advice and guidance, we have developed and implemented a Key Stage 4 attendance plan for KS4 students on the roll of The New Leaf School, featuring personalised strategies to improve student attendance. We will be overseeing the impact of this plan into the spring and summer terms. Additionally, we have extended our AP Keyworker support for these pupils, into the autumn term of post-16 study to provide support to reduce the risk of NEET (Not in Education, Employment, or Training) and to support retention in post-16 placements.

- **Behaviour:** Majority (91.4%) of respondents feel their behaviour has improved since starting the provision. 5.7% of respondents reported that their behaviour has "Sometimes" improved. 2.9% of respondents do not feel their behaviour has improved.
- **Attendance:** Majority (85.7%) of respondents feel their attendance has improved, and 14.3% of respondents do not feel their attendance has improved. While most respondents report improvement in attendance, a notable 14.3% do not feel any progress, suggesting further focus may be needed in this area.
- **Attitude to Learning:** Majority (94.3%) of respondents feel their attitude to learning has improved, 2.9% of respondents reported "Sometimes" improvement in their attitude to learning, and 2.9% of respondents do not feel their attitude to learning has improved. Nearly all respondents feel a positive shift in their attitude toward learning, demonstrating the provision's success in enhancing academic engagement.
- **Attitude Towards Staff:** 97.1% of respondents feel their attitude towards staff has improved, while 2.9% of respondents do not feel their attitude towards staff has improved. This signifies a very high level of improvement in attitude towards staff and highlights the strong relationships and trust developed between students and staff.
- **Attitude Towards Peers:** 82.9% of respondents feel their attitude towards peers has improved, while 14.3% of respondents reported "Sometimes" improvement in their attitude towards peers and 2.9% of respondents do not feel their attitude towards peers has improved.

## 7. AP Thematic Review Working Group:

Summary of the Alternative Provision Thematic Review Meeting Evaluation Report (Dec 2024):

**Purpose:** The Alternative Provision Thematic Working Group was established to celebrate existing strengths within the system and identify areas for development to further enhance the quality of AP and strengthen the outcomes of students in AP in Walsall. The group aimed to address key challenges and develop strategic, evidence-based recommendations to ensure that AP effectively meets the diverse needs of students. By facilitating collaboration and building on current successes, the group sought to drive improvements that would strengthen the provision and support positive outcomes for all learners.

**Membership:** The AP Thematic Working Group brought together a diverse membership, including representatives from the AP Team, AP providers, Admissions and Sufficiency, the Inclusion Hub, Virtual School, PRUs, parents, carers, pupils, Education Psychology, the Quality Team, the SEND Team, the School Attendance Service, Health, and Social Care. Weekly or bi-weekly meetings were held over an eight-week review period, lasting 1-2 hours, with agendas shared in advance and minutes documented in a shared Teams area.

**Objectives:** Over an 8 week period, the group focused on key objectives: (1) developing a bespoke Walsall definition of AP, (2) creating a centralised AP Register, (3) establishing a robust model for reviewing AP providers, (4) designing effective student transition pathways, (5) enhancing multi-agency collaboration for commissioning and decision-making, (6) creating a preventative model led by the Local Authority, and (7) refining AP commissioning arrangements to meet local needs.

These activities culminated in the finalisation and implementation of frameworks and strategies to strengthen Walsall's AP, with a review mechanism to ensure ongoing progress.

The group emphasised the importance of multi-agency collaboration, involving key agencies and partners, and providing training to the social care workforce to improve their understanding of the AP process. They also focused on the importance of ensuring smooth transitions for students, involving parents and students in decision-making, and addressing challenges such as budget constraints and staffing capacity.

The working group has made significant strides by encouraging focused and clear planning, resulting in a precise set of actions moving forward. The group adopted a solution-focused approach, not merely discussing challenges but collaboratively identifying what needs to be implemented and how to achieve it. This child-centred and improvement-driven focus has united stakeholders across Local Authorities, ensuring alignment and prioritisation of the needs of children at the heart of decision-making and action planning.

Overall, the efforts of the Alternative Provision Thematic Review Working Group have laid a strong foundation for sustainable improvements in AP, for future development of a more efficient, accessible, and supportive system that meets the diverse needs of students in Walsall. The implementation plan seeks to drive forward the identified improvements with clear focus and actions.

## **8. Future Development**

We will use our AP Register to support further collaboration with schools for students in AP, to monitor their outcomes and reduce their time in AP. We will work collaboratively with our schools, providing them with our audit checklists and commissioning guidance to support teachers in quality assuring alternative provision placements. Where required, this will help schools establish a robust process to ensure that the placements they commission are safe and appropriate for their students, and they are making good progress.

Ongoing work of the Thematic Review implementation plan will continue the work to improve access and further drive positive outcomes in AP. By driving action in these areas, the group aims to further improve the quality, accessibility, and outcomes for students of Walsall accessing of alternative provision ensuring it better meets their needs.

## **9. Conclusion:**

In conclusion, Alternative Provision remains a focal area for our Local Authority. While we have made significant progress, there is more to drive forward to ensure an accessible supportive service for the use of AP, particularly in the areas of intervention and further collaboration with AP's and mainstream schools that commission AP. The next 12 months will see targeted efforts in line with the implementation plan to support all pupils within AP and ensure good outcomes across all AP settings in our region to ensure pupil's get the right support, in the right place and at the right time.

## **10. Decide**

The committee may decide to request further information on Alternative Provision.

## **11. Respond**

Any recommendations made by the committee will be responded to by the appropriate service area.

## **12. Review**

The actions and outcomes within this report are monitored by Access & Inclusion SMT and by individual schools.

Author(s)

Amy Nash  
Post-16 and Alternative Provision Manager  
(07599658295)  
[amy.nash@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:amy.nash@walsall.gov.uk)

&

Nick Perks



Quality Assurance Team Manager  
(07944 27991)  
[nick.perks@walsall.gov.uk](mailto:nick.perks@walsall.gov.uk)

## Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Area of Focus – 2024/25

03 September 2024	22 October 2024	19 November 2024	09 January 2025	13 February 2025	25 March 2025
Children not in School	Inclusion	School Place Planning	Outcomes	Skills and development	Early years
<p>Attendance and Elective Home Education (EHE).</p> <p>Children Missing Education (CME).</p> <p>Exclusion and Suspensions.</p>	<p>Home to School Transport (H2ST)</p> <p>Inclusion Hub</p> <p>Budget Setting 2024/25</p>	<p>Specialist Provision Plan (inc. SEN school places) and Mainstream Pupil Place Planning and Capital Strategy</p> <p>Quarter 2 financial monitoring</p> <p>Fair Access Protocol (inc. School Admissions).</p> <p>Special Education needs developments inc. designated schools grant (DSG)</p>	<p>School Attainment Data and Priority Education Investment Areas and Ofsted Data and Outcomes.</p> <p>Family of Schools Development and Schools Causing Concern.</p>	<p>Skills Strategy and Development including Employment pathways.</p> <p>Post 16 inc. Not in Education Employment Training (NEETS) and vulnerable groups.</p> <p>Alternative Provision including SEND.</p>	<p>School Readiness and EYFS (Early Year Foundation Stage) Outcomes including phonics.</p> <p>Early Years Special Educational Needs (SEN) Development.</p> <p>Childcare Sufficiency and Wraparound Programs.</p>

\*Quarter 1 and Quarter 3 Financial reports will be circulated via e-mail to Members of the Committee and will not form part of the Committee's Agenda unless specially requested by the Committee.

## Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Area of Focus – 2024/25

Items to be scheduled	Notes
Further update on 'Attendance'.	
Home to School Transport transformation Plan.	
Report on free schools.	
Update on sufficiency of specialist placements.	

\*Quarter 1 and Quarter 3 Financial reports will be circulated via e-mail to Members of the Committee and will not form part of the Committee's Agenda unless specially requested by the Committee.



## **FORWARD PLAN OF KEY DECISIONS**

**Council House,  
Lichfield Street,  
Walsall, WS1 1TW**  
[www.walsall.gov.uk](http://www.walsall.gov.uk)

**4 February 2025**

## 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](mailto:Craig.Goodall@walsall.gov.uk) and can also be accessed from the Council’s website at [www.walsall.gov.uk](http://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](mailto: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  
MARCH 2025 TO JUNE 2025 (04.02.2025)**

7	1	2	3	4	5	6
Reference No./ Date first entered in Plan	Decision to be considered (to provide adequate details for those both in and outside the Council)	Decision maker	Background papers (if any) and Contact Officer	Main consultees	Contact Member (All Members can be written to at Civic Centre, Walsall)	Date item to be considered
2/25 (6.1.25)	<b>Operational Technical Advisors (Construction Projects):</b>  To appoint operational technical advisors for building contracts. The advisors' supply operational support for technical disciplines, such as architects, quantity surveyor, mechanical and electrical engineers. They do not provide strategic advice.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Simon Tranter  <a href="mailto:Simon.Tranter@walsall.gov.uk">Simon.Tranter@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	12 February 2025
66/24 (7.10.24)	<b>Corporate Budget Plan 2025/26 – 2028/29, incorporating the Capital Strategy and the Treasury Management and investment Strategy 2025/26:</b>  To recommend the final budget and council tax for approval by Council.	Cabinet  Council  Key Decision	Shaun Darcy  <a href="mailto:Shaun.Darcy@walsall.gov.uk">Shaun.Darcy@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Council tax payers, business rate payers, voluntary and community organisations  Internal Services	Cllr Statham	Cabinet 12 February 2025 / Council 27 February 2025
67/24 (7.10.24)	<b>Corporate Financial Performance 2024/25:</b>  To report the financial position based on 9 months to December 2024.	Cabinet  Non-key Decision	Shaun Darcy  <a href="mailto:Shaun.Darcy@walsall.gov.uk">Shaun.Darcy@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Statham	12 February 2025

77/24 (2.12.24)	<b>All Age Carers Strategy 2024-2027:</b> To approve the All-Age Carers Strategy, which highlights the role of Carers and outlines plans for improving the wellbeing of Carers living in the borough.	Cabinet	Andrew Osborn <a href="mailto:Andrew.Osborn@walsall.gov.uk">Andrew.Osborn@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services External Partners	Cllr Pedley Cllr Elson	12 February 2025
71/24 (7.10.24)	<b>Net-Zero 2041 Strategy:</b> To approve the draft Net-Zero 2041 Strategy and the establishment of a 'Walsall Net Zero Partnership' to deliver the borough-wide elements of the Strategy.	Cabinet Key Decision	Kathryn Moreton <a href="mailto:Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk">Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	12 February 2025
62/24 (7.10.24)	<b>Adoption of the new Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy:</b> To approve the new Playing Pitch and Outdoor Sports Strategy and establish a council-led steering group to undertake ongoing monitoring.	Cabinet Key Decision	Black Country PPOSS - Overarching Strategic Framework Kathryn Moreton <a href="mailto:Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk">Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Flint	12 February 2025
35/24 (4.6.24)	<b>Walsall Housing Allocations Policy:</b> To approve Walsall's Housing Allocations Policy which details how the Council will prioritise applicants for nomination to housing association properties.	Cabinet Key Decision	Elise Hopkins <a href="mailto:Elise.Hopkins@walsall.gov.uk">Elise.Hopkins@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Public Consultation Internal Services Housing Associations	Cllr Garcha	12 February 2025
1/25 (6.1.25)	<b>Private Rented Sector offer to landlords:</b> To approve the Council's policy detailing actions aimed at increasing	Cabinet Key Decision	Elise Hopkins <a href="mailto:Elise.Hopkins@walsall.gov.uk">Elise.Hopkins@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Garcha	12 February 2025

	access to private rented sector properties for homeless households. <i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>					
68/24 (7.10.24)	<b>Determination of School Admission Arrangements 2026-27:</b> To set out the proposed scheme for co-ordinated secondary and primary admissions and mid-year admissions for the 2026/27 academic year and the proposed admission arrangements for primary community and voluntary controlled schools for the 2026/27 academic year.	Cabinet Key Decision	Sharon Kelly <a href="mailto:Sharon.Kelly@walsall.gov.uk">Sharon.Kelly@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services Schools Forum	Cllr Kaur	12 February 2025
73/24 (4.11.24)	<b>Early Years Funding Formula 2025/26:</b> To approve the proposed Early Year Funding Formula for 2025/26.	Cabinet Decision	Sharon Kelly <a href="mailto:Sharon.Kelly@walsall.gov.uk">Sharon.Kelly@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services Schools Forum	Cllr Kaur	12 February 2025
46/24 (5.8.24)	<b>Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document (SPD):</b> To seek approval of a draft Planning Obligations SPD for consultation with key partners, stakeholders, infrastructure providers and the general public. The document will be consulted on a 6-week consultation.	Cabinet Key Decision	Simon Tranter <a href="mailto:Simon.Tranter@walsall.gov.uk">Simon.Tranter@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	19 March 2025
3/25 (6.1.25)	<b>West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2025/26:</b>	Cabinet Key Decision	Kathryn Moreton <a href="mailto:Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk">Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	19 March 2025



	To seek approval of the West Midlands Local Transport Plan Settlement and Transport Capital Programme 2025/26, to support the delivery of transport capital projects including the West Midlands Local Transport Plan (LTP).					
74/24 (4.11.24)	<b>High Needs Funding Formula 2025/26:</b> To approve the proposed High Needs Funding Formula for 2025/26.	Cabinet Decision	Sharon Kelly <a href="mailto:Sharon.Kelly@walsall.gov.uk">Sharon.Kelly@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services Schools Forum	Cllr Kaur	19 March 2025
5/25 (6.1.25)	<b>Public Sector Equality Duty Report 2024/25:</b> To note the Public Sector Equality Duty annual report which will be published in March 2025 in accordance with our obligations with the Equality Act 2010.	Cabinet Non-key Decision	Keith Beech <a href="mailto:Keith.Beech@walsall.gov.uk">Keith.Beech@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services Corporate Equality Group	Cllr Lee	19 March 2025
75/24 (4.11.24)	<b>Adult Social Care and Children's Services Case Management System:</b> To approve the renewal of the contract for Mosaic. The current contract ends on 31/07/2025.	Cabinet Key Decision	Andrew Osborn <a href="mailto:Andrew.Osborn@walsall.gov.uk">Andrew.Osborn@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services External Stakeholders	Cllr Pedley Cllr Elson	19 March 2025
70/24 (7.10.24)	<b>Gasholders - Black Country Enterprise Zone:</b> To approve entering a Funding Agreement with City of Wolverhampton Council for site preparation works and the approach to progressing project delivery.	Cabinet Key Decision	Simon Tranter <a href="mailto:Simon.Tranter@walsall.gov.uk">Simon.Tranter@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	16 April 2025

	<i>This will be a private session report containing commercially sensitive information.</i>					
4/25 (6.1.25)	<b>Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document:</b>  To approve the final version of the Supplementary Planning Document for adoption.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Simon Tranter  <a href="mailto:Simon.Tranter@walsall.gov.uk">Simon.Tranter@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew	16 April 2025
78/24 (2.12.24)	<b>Waste Management Strategy, Fryers Road Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC) redevelopment:</b>  To approve the pre-tender budget for the redevelopment of a larger Fryers Road HWRC and agree to the use of the Pagabo framework (design and build stages) for the procurement of Fryers Road HWRC.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Kathryn Moreton  <a href="mailto:Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk">Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Andrew  Cllr Murphy	16 April 2025
6/25 (6.1.25)	<b>Provision of HWRC Skips and Associated Plant Equipment:</b>  To award a contract for the provision of skips and associated equipment for the Middlemore Lane HWRC.	Cabinet  Key Decision	Kathryn Moreton  <a href="mailto:Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk">Kathryn.Moreton@walsall.gov.uk</a>	Internal Services	Cllr Murphy	16 April 2025

**Black Country Executive Joint Committee**  
**Forward Plan of Key Decisions (published on 06/01/25)**

**Published February 2025 to May 2025**

<b>Date Created</b>	<b>Key Decision</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>	<b>Main consultee</b>	<b>Date of meeting</b>
	<b>Black Country Enterprise Zone</b>			
05/08/2024	<p>Gasholders</p> <p>Approval of the Gasholders project (Walsall Council) for grant funding from the Black Country Enterprise Zone (BCEZ) business rate surpluses.</p> <p>Approval for the City of Wolverhampton Council and Walsall Council to proceed to enter into a separate Grant Agreement which will set out the terms and conditions of the funding.</p>	<p>Simon Tranter  <a href="mailto:simon.tranter@walsall.gov.uk">simon.tranter@walsall.gov.uk</a></p>	Walsall Council	13/01/2025
	<b>Land and Property Investment Fund (LPIF)</b>			
02/09/2024	<p>Programme Management Costs &amp; Project Approval</p> <p>Approval for the Accountable Body for the Land and Property Investment Fund (Walsall Council) to proceed to enter into a Grant Agreement with Wolverhampton City</p>	<p>Richard Lawrence  <a href="mailto:Richard.Lawrence@wolverhampton.gov.uk">Richard.Lawrence@wolverhampton.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Simon Tranter  <a href="mailto:simon.tranter@walsall.gov.uk">simon.tranter@walsall.gov.uk</a></p>	<p>Wolverhampton City Council</p> <p>Walsall Council</p>	13/01/2025

	Council to deliver Oxley Health & Wellbeing Facility project to commence in 2024/25 financial year, and for the Accountable Body for the Land and Property Investment Fund (Walsall Council) to retain required remainder for the programme management costs.			
--	---	--	--	--

## Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Recommendation Tracker (24/25)

Meeting date	Agenda item	Action/Recommendation	Officer	Status	Target date	Notes
23 July 2024	<b>Areas of focus report 2024-25.</b>	Performance report breakdown of good/outstanding, primary/secondary, academy and maintain schools to be provided to Scrutiny Members.	Sharon Kelly	Complete	20 January 2025	
3 September 2024	<b>Attendance Update</b>	A further update on attendance be provided with updated data including data indicating the number of schools performing below the national average (in relation to school attendance) is circulated to the Committee.	Rob Thomas	In progress	April 2025	
22 October 2024	<b>Home to School Transport</b>	That the transformation plan is considered at a future meeting of the Committee alongside the impact of the savings proposals.	Rob Thomas	To be scheduled.		
19 November 2024	<b>Mainstream School Pupil Place Planning</b>	That a further report on the proposed secondary free school and the special free school be provided at a future meeting.	Rob Thomas	To be scheduled.		

19 November 2024	<b>Specialist Provision Plan</b>	That an update on sufficiency of specialist placements be provided to a future meeting.	Rob Thomas	To be scheduled.		
20 January 2025	<b>Ofsted Data and Outcomes</b>	Officers consider how communication in relation to school performance could be improved.	Sharon Kelly	In progress.		
20 January 2025	<b>Schools Priority Education Investment Areas and Attainment Data</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That feedback and evaluation of the Walsall Priority Education Investment area programme be circulated outside of the meeting.</li> <li>2. That a further report be provided once validated data is received.</li> </ol>	Nick Perks			