



# Walsall Council

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall to be held on **THURSDAY the 23<sup>rd</sup> day of February 2023 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House, Walsall.

Public access via: <https://aisapps.sonicfoundry.com/AuditeIScheduler/CreateSchedules/Past/41>

Dated this 15<sup>th</sup> day of February, 2023.

Yours sincerely,

Interim Chief Executive.

The business to be transacted is as follows:

1. To elect a person to preside if the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not present.
2. Apologies.
3. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 9<sup>th</sup> January, 2023 – **(pages 5 – 18)**
4. Declarations of interest.
5. **Local Government (Access to Information) Act, 1985 (as amended):**  
To agree that the public be excluded from the private session during consideration of the agenda items indicated for the reasons shown on the agenda.
6. Mayor's announcements.
7. To receive any petitions

8. To answer any questions in accordance with Council procedure rules:

(a) From the public: None

(b) From members of the Council:

**Councillor Simran Cheema:**

On the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023, the Wakes Ground Car Park in Willenhall saw yet another unauthorised encampment, impacting nearby local businesses and parents on the school run. Given that the cost of the Pleck transit site was in its thousands, more than what was anticipated, and was designed to relocate any such unauthorised encampments to the Pleck site -

1. Why are unauthorised encampments still occurring in the Borough
2. How many caravans have been booked on the transit site since its opening
3. How much revenue has been made against costs
4. Have we seen a statistical reduction in the number of unauthorised encampments since its opening?

**Councillor Peter Smith**

Given that I asked a Question at the Council meeting of September 20<sup>th</sup> 2021 that ended in these words:

*"..Will you therefore, if this drive for more and more office- based workers to work from home becomes inevitable, comment on the views that these "remote employees" could become particularly vulnerable in any future drives to save money if looking to delete posts and that the financial viability of the Civic Centre itself could become questionable, thus leading to the call to "rent out" more units of the Civic Centre and/or even to consider it being put up for sale?"*

and given that 16 months has elapsed since, could you update us on

- a) Plans for the future of the Civic Centre and indeed the Town Hall in Leicester Street both of which seem to be closed to the public and very much under-occupied and under-used? and
- b) If and when Full Council will have an opportunity to debate any such plans?

**Councillor Peter Smith**

Would the appropriate Portfolio holder inform me, this Council and members of the public of the most recent information available to him relating to:

- a) The outstanding arrears of Council tax owed to Walsall Council and
- b) The outstanding arrears of Business tax owed to Walsall Council.
- c) The extent of efforts to recover outstanding arrears of Council tax and business tax?

## **Councillor Peter Smith**

Given that many of us are all too familiar with ill-informed statements like “*what do we get from our Council other than having our bins emptied*”, would the appropriate Portfolio holder give me, this Council and the public a brief summary of the extent of Council services provided to the public and in particular some specific examples, if possible, of **the average yearly cost to the Council to:**

- a) educate a nursery, primary and a secondary school child.
- b) empty a grey, green and brown bin.
- c) cut back/pruning/pollarding the average tree on Council owned land?

9. To confirm the following recommendations of the **Personnel Committee**:

### **Pay policy statement and living wage 2023/24 (pages 19 – 56)**

- 1) That the Pay Policy Statement for 2023/2024 be approved; and
- 2) That the continuation of the living wage as detailed in the Pay Policy (section 6.5) and section 4.2, (option a) of the report (appended) be approved.

(Note: Report to Personnel Committee reproduced for this meeting)

10. To confirm the following recommendations of **Cabinet**:

### **(a) Corporate Budget Plan 2022/23 -2025/26, incorporating Capital Strategy; and the Treasury Management and Investment Strategy 2022/23. (Pages 57 – 259)**

To approve the recommendation as set out in the report [annexed].

(Notes: In accordance with Council procedure rule 17.8 “A recorded vote will be taken on any decision relating to the Council’s budget or Council tax”. Cover report and report to Cabinet reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting)

(Note: Report to Cabinet reproduced for this meeting)

### **(b) Council Tax Premium (Pages 260 – 277)**

1. That Cabinet recommends to Council that, from 1 April 2024, the length of time before being able to charge council tax premium, for properties that have been empty and unfurnished for more than 1 year, be reduced to one year rather than current two.

2. That Cabinet recommends to Council the introduction of a 100% council tax premium from 1 April 2024 for furnished properties that are no-ones sole or main residence.
3. That Cabinet delegates to the Executive Director for Children's and Customer Services, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder, authority to amend the recommendations to Council in the event of any changes to the Bill during its passage through the legislative process.

(Note: Report to Cabinet reproduced for this meeting)

11. **Portfolio holder briefings.** To receive a 5 minute presentation from the following portfolios:
  - a. Deputy Leader and Resilient Communities – Councillor Perry (**To Follow**)
  - b. Health and Wellbeing – Councillor Flint (**To Follow**)

(Note: A member of the Council may ask the portfolio holder any question and another associated question without notice upon each report. Questioning by members is limited to 10 minutes for each report presented.)