



Walsall Council

Dear Councillor,

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Metropolitan Borough of Walsall to be held on **MONDAY the TWENTY-FIFTH day of FEBRUARY, 2008 at 6.00 p.m.** at the Council House, Walsall.

Dated this 15th day of February, 2008.

Yours sincerely,

Chief Executive.

The business to be transacted is as follows:-

1. Apologies.
2. To elect a person to preside if the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are not present.
3. To approve as a correct record and sign the minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 14th January 2008.
4. Declarations of interest.
5. Mayor's announcements.
6. To receive any petitions.

7. To answer any questions in accordance with Council procedure rules:
- (a) From the public.

**Mr. R. Day of 26 Littleton Road, Walsall – Brown bin collection
(Councillor Walker)**

“Could the Cabinet Member explain why residents of Littleton Road were not informed about the winter-break in the brown bin collection? If the Council did attempt to contact residents, how was this done? What safeguards are there for ensuring that all residents are informed? Could the Cabinet Member explain why, despite numerous attempts to contact her, she failed to explain the winter-break, the reasons behind it and the dates, to members of the public? Could the Cabinet Member explain why in early December when she promised to call Mr Day of Littleton Road back within two days she failed to do so? Could the Cabinet Member give a guarantee that any future brown bin collection winter-breaks will be properly communicated to members of the public?”

- (b) From members of the Council.

**(1) Councillor Smith - Referrals to Standards Board for England
(The Mayor)**

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public how many referrals to the Standards Board for England have been made by Walsall Council’s Monitoring Officer, year by year, since the Standards Board for England was established?”

**(2) Councillor Smith – Improvements to Norfolk Place depot
(Councillor Andrew)**

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public how much money has been spent on improvements/alterations to/refurbishing of, the Council’s depots in Norfolk Place, Walsall, year by year in the last 5 years, including the projected spend for the financial year 2007/8?”

**(3) Councillor Smith – Improvements to Civic Centre and Town Hall
(Councillor Andrew)**

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public how much money has been spent on improvements/alterations to/re-modelling of/refurbishment of, rooms and working areas within the Town Hall and Civic Centre year by year over the last 5 years, including the projected spend for 2007/2008?”

(4) Councillor Smith – Brown bin scheme (Councillor Walker)

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder tell me, this Council and the public what percentage of households, ward by ward, in ascending order, are presently not included in the Council’s brown bin recycling scheme?”

(5) Councillor Smith – Brown bin scheme – update for Blakenall Ward (Councillor Walker)

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder give me, this Council and the public an update as to when all those Council tax paying households in the Blakenall ward with a garden and presently without a brown bin such as those households in Alderley Crescent, Ashfield Close, Awlmaker Grove, Bloxwich Road, Brewer Street, Cannon Street, Cannon Street North, Cartbridge Crescent, Cartbridge Walk, Chaucer Road, Church View Close, Coalpool Place, Dalby Road, Dartmouth Close, Dartmouth Place, Deans Place, Derby Street, Dryden Road, Epping Close, Essex Street, Forest Lane, Forest Place, Goldsmith Road, Goscote Close, Goscote Place, Halford Crescent, Henley Close, Hereford Street, Holden Crescent, Holden Place, Hunter Crescent, Jubilee Close, Keats Road, Kent Close, Kent Street, Leckie Road, Marlow Street, Masefield Road, Mill Place, Mill Street, New Forest Road, North Street, Oswin Place, Oswin Road, Pinfold, Portland Street, Proffitt Close, Proffitt Street, Raymond Close, Roberts Road, Rose Bank Drive, Rutland Street, St. Peters Terrace, St. Thomas Close, Stag Crescent, Wareham Close, Webster Road, Whateley Place and Whateley Road will be treated equally and fairly and issued with a brown garden recycling bin?”

(6) Councillor Smith – Brown bin scheme – NRF funding (Councillor Walker)

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public, following revelations at the 5 November 2007 Council meeting that at least £84,000 and possibly £134,000 of NRF money was used to finance brown bins in those “11 neighbourhoods identified as being deprived or at risk”, how it is that one of the most, if not the most, deprived wards in the Borough, namely the Blakenall ward, still has amongst the lowest percentage of households included in the brown bin scheme, whereas the least economically deprived wards have amongst the highest percentage of households included in the brown bin scheme?”

(7) Councillor Smith – Employee sickness (Councillor Griffiths)

“Would the appropriate portfolio holder inform me, this Council and the public as to the circumstances, if any, that would justify Walsall Council sanctioning house surveillance on its employees off work through sickness?”

(8) Councillor Smith – Welfare Rights Service (Councillor Griffiths)

“Can the portfolio holder tell me, the Council and the public whether the 7.5 post strong Income Maximisation Team (in the Welfare Rights Team) which incidentally has been short-listed for an award in the “Annual Citizen Impact Award” category of the Council’s Celebration of Achievements Awards Ceremony on April 4 2008 presumably for their achievement in bringing millions of pounds of extra and permanent income to mainly older and disabled residents of the Borough, will still be in post by the time the Awards take place or is their sterling work to be rewarded by the deletion of their posts by 31st March 2008?”

(9) Councillor Oliver – Consultation on children’s education (Councillor Zahid Ali)

“Does the Cabinet believe that consultation with parents about potential major changes to their children’s education should be a priority - and in particular before formal public decisions are made to pursue a change of status away from Local Authority control?”

(10) Councillor Oliver – School curriculum (Councillor Zahid Ali)

“Does the Cabinet support the concept of teaching (and promoting) the doctrine of “creationism” with equal status within the school curriculum?”

7. To confirm the following recommendations of **Cabinet:-**

(1) Corporate Plan 2008/2009

That the Corporate Plan 2008/2009 be adopted.

(Note: The report to Cabinet relating to this recommendation is reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

(2) Annual Treasury Management and Investment Strategy

That the 2008/9 treasury management and investment strategy document set out in Appendix A to the report and the adoption of the prudential indicators set out in Appendix B to the report be approved.

(Note: The report to Cabinet relating to this recommendation is reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

(3) Capital Programme 2008/2009 to 2012/2013

That the draft capital programme set out in the following tables be approved bearing in mind the principle that unless affordable from within current resources, specific projects funded by unsupported borrowing will not be commenced until a payback agreement is in place:

MAINSTREAM CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/9	
SCHEME	ESTIMATED VALUE
	£
Schools access initiative	586,620
Education basic need	1,443,204
Modernisation - all schools	3,517,114
Education ICT	313,209
Local Transport Plan	2,127,000
Disabled Facilities Grants	610,000
Risk Management	100,000
Uninsured property damage	200,000
Contingency	346,915
Shop Maintenance	117,379
Additional data storage	180,000
Corporate PC refresh programme	450,000
Corporate Printer refresh programme	36,000
Corporate Server refresh programme	140,000
Information management	126,000
Network solution	270,000
Remote data centre	190,000
Remote telephone systems	45,000
Systems upgrade	90,000
Thin client	45,000
Replacement of SOSCIS - PARIS project	215,000
Youth service building refurbishment	100,000
Work to secure safe water supplies	400,000
Asbestos removal	250,000
Memorial safety	100,000
Energy and water conservation measures in council buildings	250,000
Improving physical access to services (DDA)	200,000
Improving security In local neighbourhoods	200,000
Highways maintenance annual revenue replacement	595,000
Regenerating Walsall	250,000
Town, district and local centres	850,000
Strategic corridors and gateways	350,000
Environmental regeneration capital programme	200,000
Clear major adaptations	3,687,000
Targeted capital bids	750,000
Library modernisation plan	375,000
Highways maintenance	1,000,000
Palfrey Park HLF	75,000

Private sector house condition survey	50,000
Upper Rushall Street car park extension	350,000
Major repairs to non-education premises	1,000,000
Replacement of Local History Centre air conditioning system	60,000
Streetly Crematorium – mercury abatement equipment/new cremators	75,000
Decriminalisation of parking enforcement	75,000
Waste collection service	1,300,000
Internal alterations to Darlaston health centre	66,000
Software to automate benefit application forms	100,000
Statutory testing of mechanical and electrical supplies	300,000
Disabled facilities at pedestrian crossings	180,000
Upgrading of fire alarm system and emergency lighting at central library	15,080
Joseph Leckie sons of rest structural works	180,000
Walsall TCTP ring road land acquisition	150,000
Public lighting PFI	200,000
Maintenance of cemetery chapels	125,000
Darlaston town hall refurbishment	100,000
Essential maintenance of non-education premises – backlog of repairs	300,000
Walsall arboretum restoration programme	153,085
Redhouse community centre	50,000
Redundant buildings – ongoing maintenance and demolition costs	50,000
Darlaston Strategic Development Area	150,000
Clear major adaptations – additional funding	700,000
Private sector renovation grants	1,500,000
TOTAL	28,009,606

MAINSTREAM CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2008/9	
RESERVE BIDS – NOT CURRENTLY FUNDED	ESTIMATED VALUE
	£
Benchmarking software	15,000
Implementation of 2 cashier machines	75,000
Workflow software to automate post summons recovery action	50,000
Redundant buildings – ongoing maintenance and demolition costs	175,000
Energy and water conservation measures in council buildings	250,000
Office accommodation review	50,000
Bridge strengthening	80,000
TOTAL	695,000

NON MAINSTREAM CAPITAL PROGRAMME – SCHEMES FUNDED FROM GRANT 2008/9	
SCHEME	ESTIMATED VALUE £
Childrens centres maintenance	57,907
Devolved formula capital	4,871,184
Early years	1,015,217
Extended schools	507,472
Harnessing technology grant	934,468
Streetly school new changing room block	362,822
Sure start, early years and child care grants	208,574
Bloxwich library project	867,765
Specific road safety grant	20,000
Town Centre Transport Package	1,632,000
Bridge Street/Ablewell Street Townscape Heritage Initiative – AWM	150,000
Bridge Street/Ablewell Street Townscape Heritage Initiative – HLF	174,707
Bus showcase	800,000
Local transport plan	2,739,000
New deal for communities	1,300,000
Red routes	1,670,000
Willenhall Townscape Heritage Initiative - Heritage Lottery Fund	50,000
Willenhall Townscape Heritage Initiative - VIEW contribution	25,000
PARIS implementation - single capital pot	129,000
Mental health	138,000
Targeted capital fund	3,000,000
Palfrey park restoration programme	296,500
Disabled Facilities Grants	915,000
Private sector renovation grants	1,500,000
Walsall arboretum restoration programme	6,331,931
TOTAL	29,696,547

LEASING PROGRAMME 2008/9	
DIRECTORATE	TOTAL BUDGET £'000'S
Neighbourhood Services	4,272
Social Care and Inclusion	331
Childrens Services	114
TOTAL	4,717

(Note: The report to Cabinet relating to this recommendation is reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

(4) Corporate Revenue Budget Plan 2008/2009 to 2012/13

(a) That the net final levies for outside bodies be noted:

LEVY	AMOUNT (£)
West Midlands Passenger Transport Authority	13,319,197
Environment agency	79,848

(b) That approval be given to an opening working balance for 2008/9 set at a prudent level of £5.175m in line with the council's medium term financial strategy.

(c) That the following opening cash limited budgets for 2008/9 be approved:

BUDGET	2008/9 BUDGET (£)
DIRECTORATE BUDGETS:	
Corporate services	15,880,830
Social care and inclusion	74,239,767
Children and young people	53,736,518
Neighbourhood services	66,589,845
Regeneration	5,432,799
CORPORATE PROVISIONS/CONTINGENCIES ETC:	
Capital financing	14,822,776
Non-service specific central items	4,074,157
Contribution to general reserves	500,000
Less: Capital Charges	-21,254,456
LEVIES:	
Passenger Transport Levy	13,319,197
Environment Agency Levy	79,848
WALSALL MBC NET BUDGET REQUIREMENT	227,421,281

(d) That the following statutory determinations be noted (references are to the Local Government Finance Act, 1992):

- I. **£666,280,468** being the aggregate gross expenditure, which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2) (a) to (e) of the Act.
- II. **£438,859,187** being the aggregate income which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32 (3) (a) to (c) of the Act.
- III. **£227,421,281** being the amount, by which the aggregate at (I) above exceeds the aggregate at (II), calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 32 (4) as its budget requirement for the year.
- IV. **£128,923,198** being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-Domestic Rates (**£113,104,177**); Revenue Support Grant (**£15,745,021**); and the Collection Fund Surplus (**£74,000**).

- V. **£98,498,083** being the amount at (III) above, less the amount at (IV) above, all divided by the Council Tax Base of **76,771**, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 33 (1) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.

(e) Valuation bands

Being amounts given by multiplying the amount at (V) above by the proportions set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act and calculated in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act of the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwelling listed in different valuation bands.

A	B	C	D
£855.34	£997.90	£1,140.45	£1,283.01
E	F	G	H
£1,568.13	£1,853.24	£2,138.35	£2,566.02

- (f) That the precept from the Fire & Civil Defence Authority and the precept for the Police Authority, issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1992, for each of the categories of dwelling shown below be noted.

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY	VALUATION BANDS			
	Police	A	B	C
£63.11		£73.63	£84.15	£94.67
E		F	G	H
Fire & Civil Defence	£115.71	£136.74	£157.78	£189.34
	A	B	C	D
	£30.49	£35.58	£40.66	£45.74
	E	F	G	H
	£55.90	£66.07	£76.23	£91.48

- (g) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at (e) and (f) above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the amounts of council tax for 2007/8 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:

A	B	C	D
£948.94	£1,107.11	£1,265.26	£1,423.42
E	F	G	H
£1,739.74	£2,056.05	£2,372.36	£2,846.84

- (h) That notice be given of the council tax within twenty one days of it being set by publishing details of the same in the "Walsall Observer"; and the "Walsall Advertiser" being newspapers circulating in the Authority's area.

- (i) That the appropriate officers be instructed to take all necessary action in relation to council tax, community charge and national non-domestic rates, including, where appropriate, the signing of all documents, the giving of notices and the taking of necessary steps to ensure collection thereof.

(Note: The report to Cabinet relating to this recommendation is reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)

8. To consider the following motion, notice of which has been duly given by **Councillor Smith**:

This Council calls for the portfolio holder for Environment to reconsider the Council's present policy of charging householders a flat rate charge for the replacement of wheelie bins, irrespective of householders' ability to pay or the circumstances surrounding the need for a replacement bin and for such a reconsideration to be reported to the next meeting of Council.

(Note: Report reproduced in the reports booklet for this meeting.)