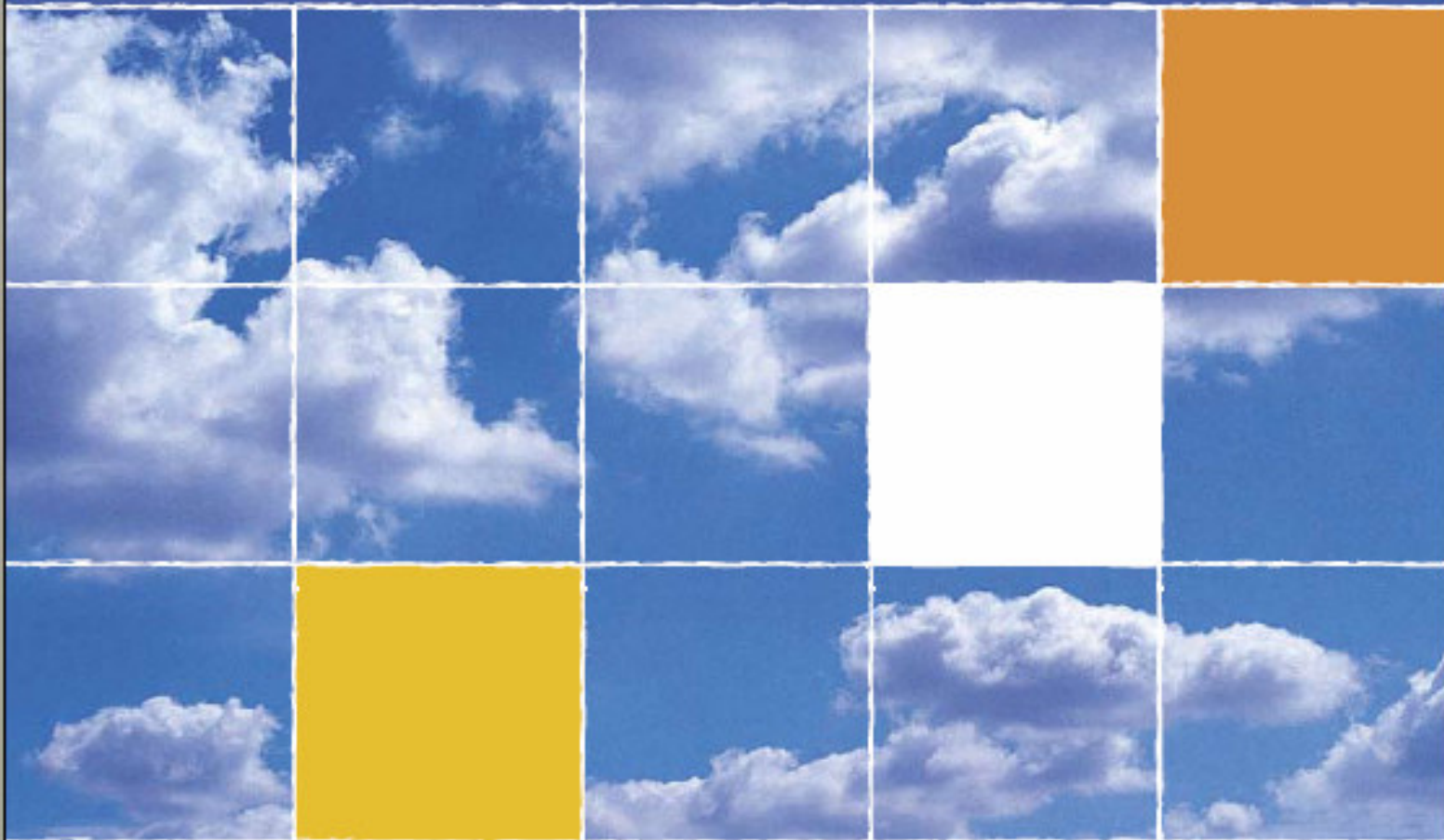# Walsall Council People and Place Perspectives

A picture of our community January 2007

Walsall Council

Contents

Figures and Diagrams:

Introduction

This document paints a picture of Walsall and its communities; the place and the people. It presents a range of data that compares Walsall to the national or regional average and demonstrates the differences that exist within the Borough. The data shows the size and make up of the population and then looks in more detail at issues relating to particular groups, such as children and young people, and at issues that affect everyone with an interest in Walsall, including its environment and economy.

By looking at the needs of the Borough and listening to what the community is telling us we can strive to tackle the issues that affect and concern local people. We have embarked on a journey to deliver a vision for Walsall that improves local quality of life by delivering excellent services and relevant support. Local people increasingly say they recognise recent improvements and we have been assessed by the Audit Commission as a 3★ authority which is improving well.

One of our priorities is to listen to what people want. Throughout this document, evidence gathered from a variety of public consultation exercises is used to set this in the context of what our citizens want and what they think about the services we provide. The best councils are good listeners and they act on intelligence. The people and place perspective provides an opportunity to reflect on the recent thoughts and aspirations of our community and to consider the demographic challenges that we face. It gathers together a wide range of customer, socio-economic and key quality of life information to help inform decision making.

This document is an integral part of the council's corporate integrated planning and performance framework (CIPPF). **Figure 1** (overleaf) shows how services are designed, delivered and performance managed using demographic data and feedback in formulating and finessing the council's aims and objectives.

Figure 1: the CIPPF

The diagram shows a circular framework (CIPPF) with outer ring labels: Customer Feedback, Borough Demographics, Environmental, Economic, Political, Technological, Legislation.

Inner elements:

- Neighbourhood Agreements ↔ **WBSP** Community Plan/Sustainable Community Strategy ↔ Local Area Agreements and Partner Plans
- Corporate Plan, vision, priorities, pledges and values
- Financial planning ↔ • Directorate Plans • Service Plans • Team action plans ↔ Workforce planning
- External audit and inspection
- Internal monitoring, review and corrective action
- Individual Performance Management / Individual targets and development
- Service delivery and improvement

The place: population trends and characteristics

There are 253,300 people living in Walsall.

Population declined throughout the 1990s and between 1993 and 2000 there was a decrease of nearly 4,000 people. **Figure 2** shows a significant drop between 2000 and 2001 but this is thought to be a statistical blip caused by the re-basing of the Government's annual population estimates following the release of the 2001 Census results.

Figure 2: Population change in Walsall 1991 – 2005 (ONS MYE)
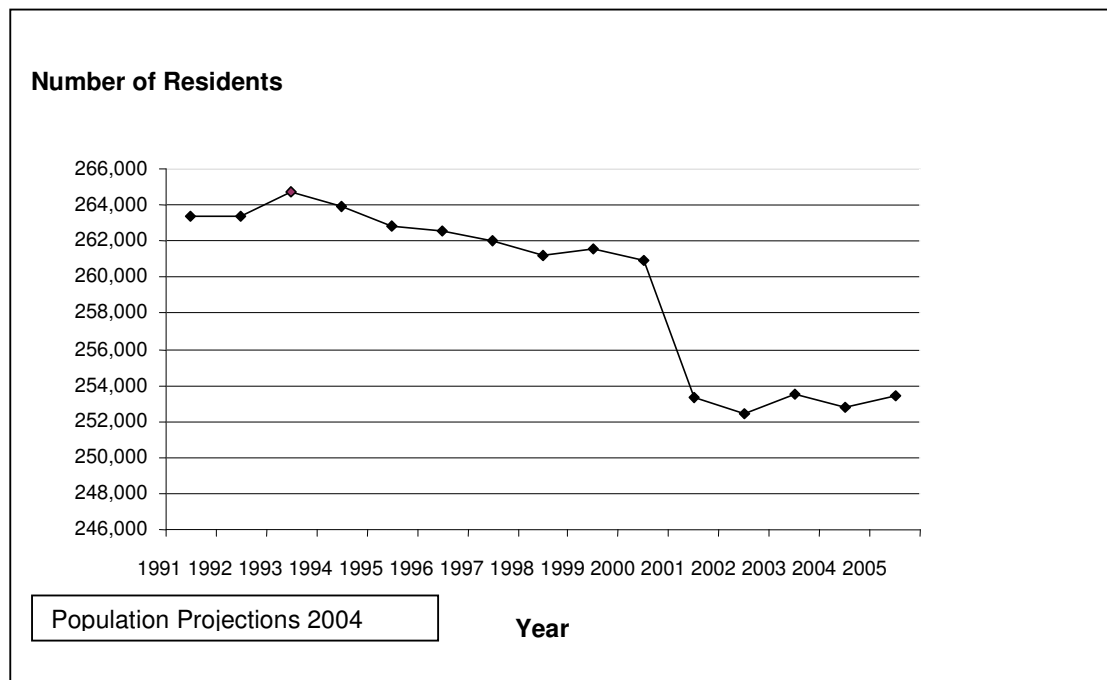
The population has increased very slightly since 2001. There have been slight fluctuations but the latest estimate is 100 people greater than in 2001.

This pattern of population change is not dissimilar to other urban areas, especially in the West Midlands.

The population losses of the 1990s reflect a move out to the surrounding shires. The trend has been accentuated in Walsall with the earlier collapse of traditional manufacturing industries based in the area.

Population loss also reflects a complex combination of socio-demographic factors; marriage and co-habitation occurring later in life, reduced fertility, longer life expectancy, all leading to smaller average household size and the need to build more houses to accommodate fewer people.

Halting population decline has been brought about by Government and regional policies, which have been rigorously applied locally and have encouraged development in existing urban areas with a particular focus on the re-use of brownfield land.

This context has posed particular problems for Walsall Council as it provides population based services. The overall trend masks differences within the structure of population, which in turn affects services aimed at particular groups. However, total population is a major factor taken into account by Government in allocating funding to councils, so whilst we have experienced increasing demand for many services we have had to respond with a smaller share of the national funding allocations. Official Government population projections for Walsall are illustrated in **Figure 3.** They show population estimates through to 2021.

Figure 3: Population projections 2004 (ONS)

Population (Thousands)
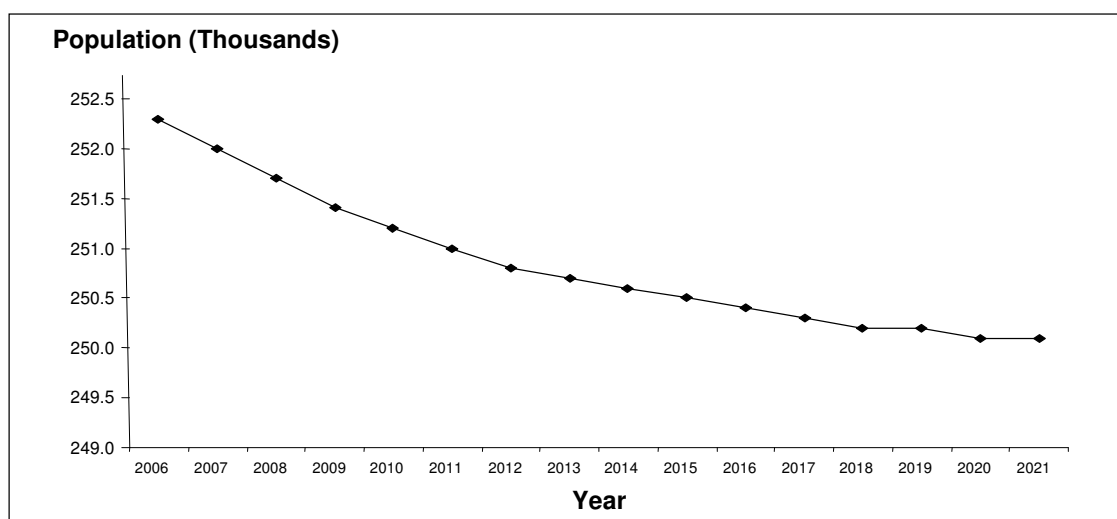
In order to plan how we respond to these projected trends it is important to understand how the figures are calculated. Births, deaths and the ageing population can be predicted accurately. Migration assumptions, however, are based on replicating recent trends. This means that we have some control over whether they materialise or not.

If we can release sufficient land for housing it may be possible to reverse the projected decline. This is a major policy objective of the Black Country Study and our own Local Development Framework (LDF). We are pushing at an open door; there are pressures to control carbon emissions through reducing commuting and Government is committed to remedying the damage to the environment caused through large scale industrialisation by re-using brownfield land.

Figure 4 overleaf shows the percentage age structure of the existing population of the Borough. Walsall has relatively high dependent population. There are more people aged under 14 and over 60 than the averages for England and Wales. The proportion of people aged 15-24 is very similar to the national average. Consequently there are fewer people of working age.

Figure 4: 2005 % age structure of population in Walsall and England & Wales Expressed as a percentage (ONS)
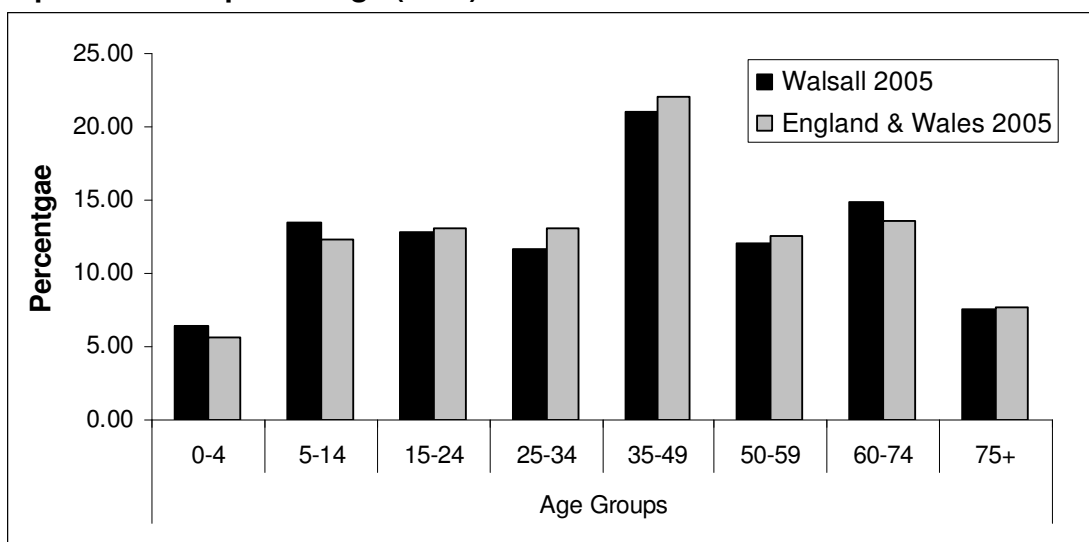
Clearly many of the Council's services are targeted at the dependent population; schools and support for young people at one end of the age range, and social care and health provision at the other.

The Council is committed to ensuring equality in everything it does. It is recognised that this principle must be applied in every activity and with each individual coming into contact with us.   The ethnic breakdown of the population is an important factor influencing this aim. According to the 2001 Census nearly 1 in 6 people living in the Borough are from a minority ethnic group. Of these, most are of Indian, Pakistani, mixed, black or Bangladeshi origin.

Figure 5: Ethnicity of population   Figure 6: Percentage of ethnic groups
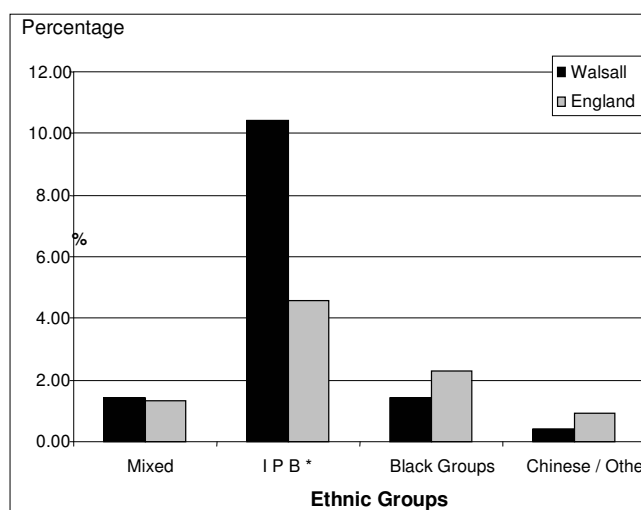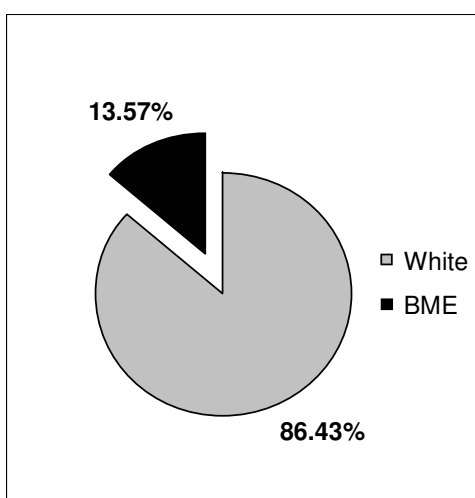
* Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi

There is a clear concentration of Black Minority Ethnic (BME) groups in the districts to the South and South-West of the Borough; in Caldmore, Pleck, Birchills and towards Darlaston. Up to 70% of the population in some of these areas is from BME Groups.

Figure 7: Distribution of BME population
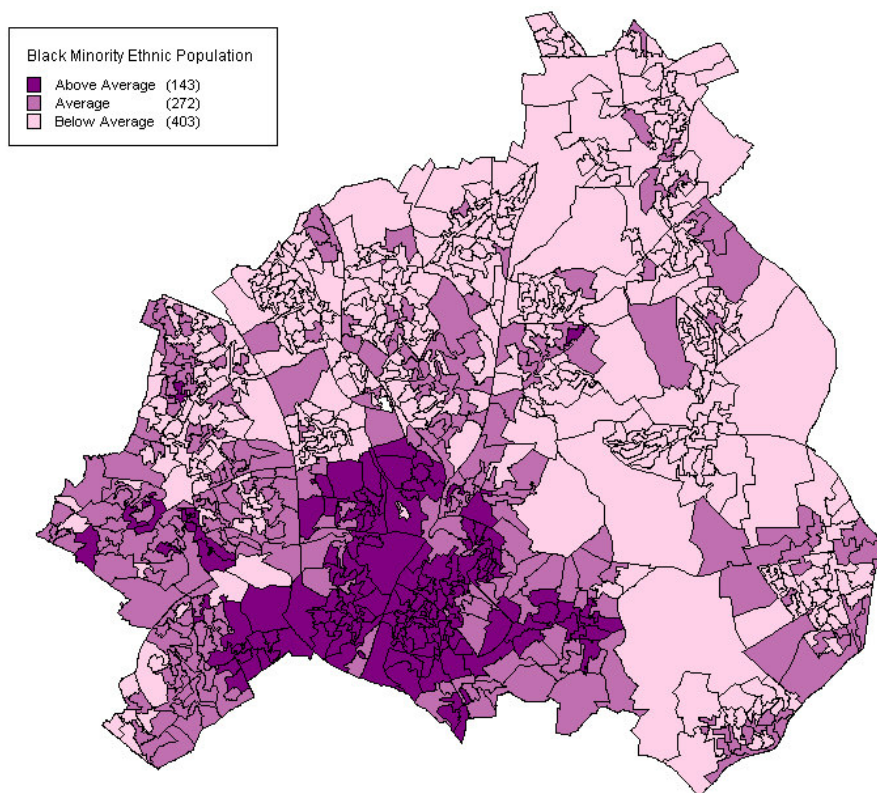
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Population projections by ethnic group are not available at Borough level. But by looking at existing age structures it is possible to assume that trends over the next decade will be:

- White Groups – a stable and ageing population;
- Mixed Groups – the existing very young population results from greater integration of parents from different ethnic backgrounds. This is likely to continue, resulting in an increase of mixed race groups;
- Black Groups – currently there is a concentration of 35 - 39s leaving the most fertile age group, resulting in fewer births. It is likely that there will be more elderly males than females;
- Indian – the likely growth is in older age groups, yet there are still sufficient numbers of young adults to see growth in numbers of children;
- Pakistani – the greatest growth is likely in young/middle aged adults and children;
- Bangladeshi – the same pattern as for Pakistanis; greatest growth is likely in young/middle aged adults and children.

BME groups have become well established in Walsall but there are major changes starting to happen in immigration patterns which will impact on the future make up of the population and on Council services. **Figure 8** shows the change in the number of new immigrant workers registrations with the Department of Work and Pensions. Between 2002/03 and the most recent figures the number of Indian Pakistani or Bangladeshi people coming to the UK has remained at around the 320 - 340 mark. Eastern Europeans, mostly from Poland and the Czech Republic, have risen from zero to 550+. Changes in membership of the EU will continue to impact on immigration to Britain and to the Borough.

Figure 8: Changes in immigrant workers
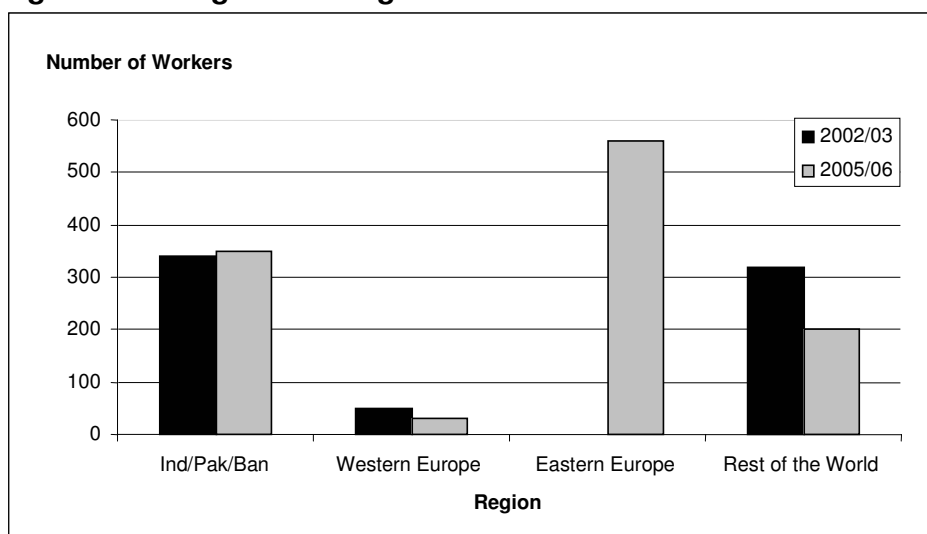
It is clear that the Council will have to respond to the changes in the ethnic composition of the population. The proportion of the population from ethnic groups will increase. There will be growing numbers of older people particularly of Indian origin and a new wave of immigrant workers from Eastern Europe is likely. These factors will undoubtedly impact on the Council's duty to promote equality and community cohesion.

The place: deprivation

The Indices of Deprivation 2004 are measures of deprivation for each local authority and super output area in England. For every area, a deprivation score and rank is provided for each of the seven domains; income, employment, crime, health, education, access and the living environment. The results are also combined to form the Index of Multiple Deprivation that provides a single score and rank of deprivation.

**Figure 9: Map of multiple deprivation**
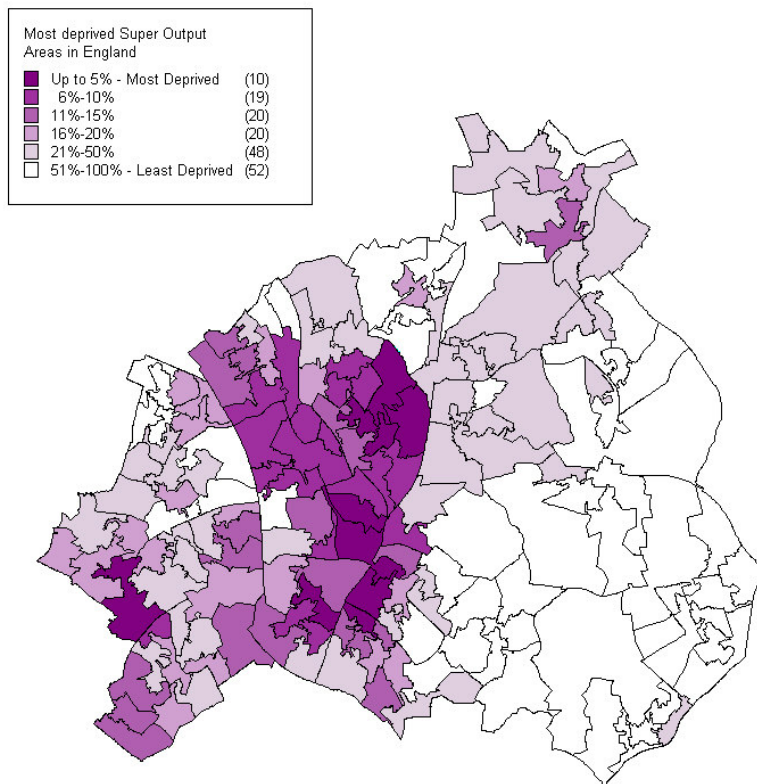
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Of the 354 local authorities in England, Walsall ranks in the top 50 most deprived for measures of extent, income and employment. For each measure Walsall ranks in at least the top 20% most deprived districts in England as shown in **Figure 10**. Walsall also consistently ranks highly amongst the local authorities in the West Midlands region. The top 50 local authorities as well as the most deprived 10 and 20 percentiles are significant in terms of deprivation levels.

Figure 10: Relative deprivation

Walsall's Ranks of:	England Rank (out of 354)	Most Deprived Percentile	West Midlands Rank (out of 34)
average score	51	15%	5
average rank	61	20%	5
extent	39	15%	5
local concentration	54	20%	6
income scale	32	10%	5
employment scale	36	15%	7

The Indices of Deprivation are a useful planning tools for the Council to assess which domains require the most work to close the gap with the national position.

It also demonstrates that Walsall is an extremely diverse borough containing both some of the most deprived areas in England and Wales and some of the most affluent. This will help in targeting areas of greatest need by working towards the Government's neighbourhood renewal ambitions.

The people perspective: what people think

The use of customer intelligence, including measures of satisfaction, has an increasingly high profile in performance management. Such information has a key role in capturing the perspectives of residents and other stakeholders on the progress made by the council and its partners towards meeting their high expectations.   It is also used to compare satisfaction locally with national results in comprehensive performance assessment (CPA).

The council continues to place emphasis on gathering this intelligence and ensuring its integration into decision making processes. There is a vast amount of information available from the people perspective. As well as using the specific results to inform service delivery, the council has been making a special effort to assemble the key strategic messages across all sources of information.

The people perspective presents the extent to which the council is meeting the expectations of its customers.   Mind maps have been used to analyse the results, understand the feedback and act upon the findings. We have used this tool to present the information from different perspectives; the business community, citizens' panel, complaints, children and young people and from the overall Vision 2008 perspective. Primarily this document summarises the key strategic issues for use in decision making. **Figure 11** shows the key sources of feedback.

Figure 11: range of perspectives used to inform peoples perspective:
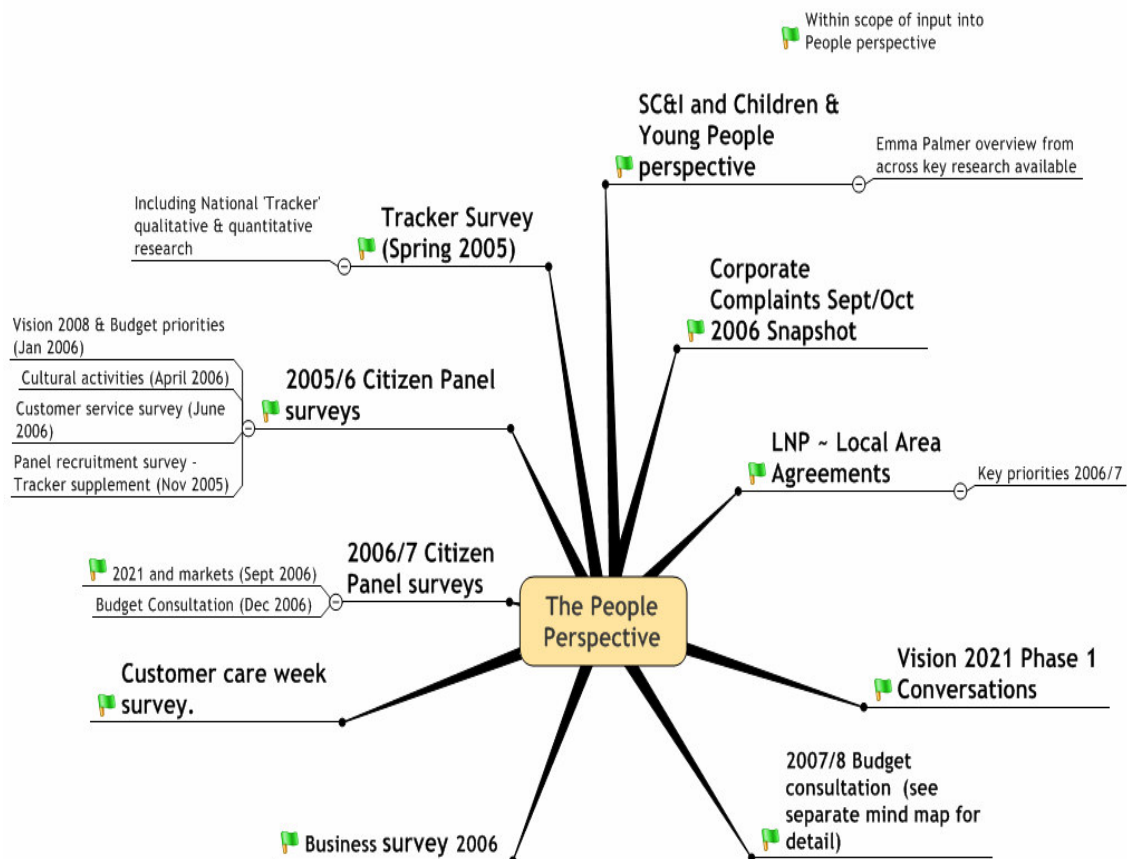
In addition this section summarises the most up to date information available from the recent 2007/08 budget setting process. The results of the 2006/07 statutory 'general' best value survey, providing the most reliable update on a wide range of satisfaction measures, are not yet fully available. This information will be used in February 2007 for the CPA 2006 scores. **Figure 12** shows the input to the 2007/08 budget consultation process.

Figure 12: Participants in the 2007/08 budget consultation process
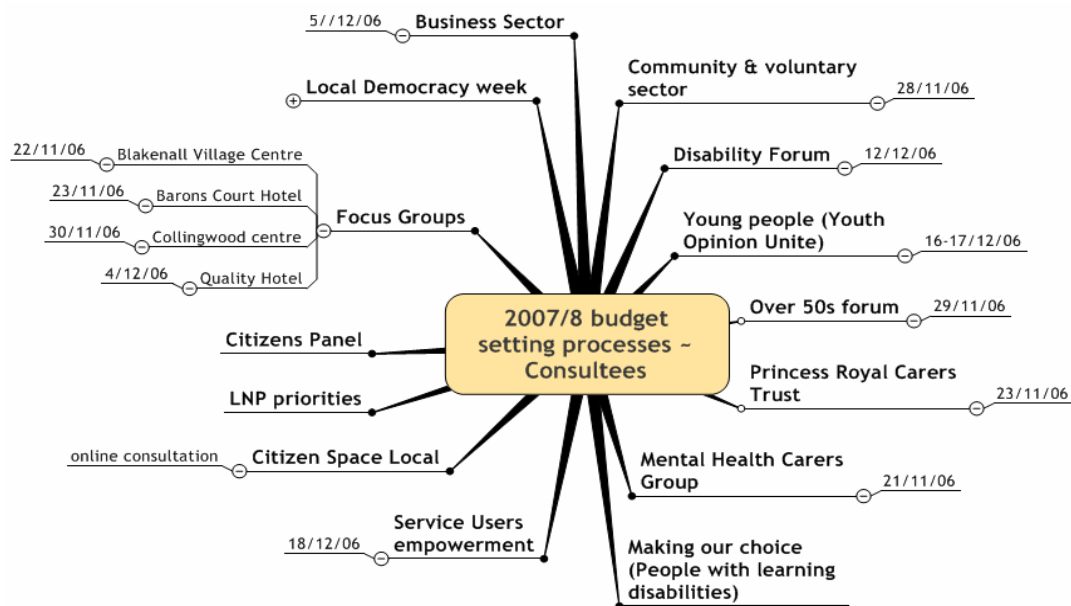
The following sections set out a summary of key messages by vision priority.

Bringing it all together

Research shows that perceptions are improving. An assembly of recent feedback indicates an improving trend in satisfaction across a range of key council services benchmarked against results from the previous best value general surveys.

Whilst we await the overall satisfaction result from the 2006/07 best value survey, the Tracker Survey 2005 and more recent citizen panel feedback provides an indicative 56% overall satisfaction with the council.

These results indicate that the council's overall reputation is improving and most of our services are seen in the highest esteem ever.

Figure 13 overleaf shows improved satisfaction between 2001/02 and 2005/06 for a wide range of services from libraries and parks to recycling and leisure facilities. The council is responsive to feedback. For example, the decline in satisfaction with council tips resulted from changes following new contractor arrangements across civic amenity sites including a lower height barrier at the entrance and different opening hours. As a result of this feedback and an increase in 'Tell Us' complaints, opening hours were extended and arrangements put in place for access for high vehicles. Alongside other improvements to the service, subsequent feedback indicates much improved perceptions.

Figure 13: Improving perceptions

Survey year

| 2000/1 | 2003/4 | 2005/6 |

90
80
70
60
50
40
30

% Satisfaction

- Overall satisfaction (BV3)
- Waste collection (BV90a)
- Recycling facilities: BV90b
- Council tips: BV90c
- Sport & leisure facilities: BV119a
- Libraries: BV119b
- Museums & Galleries: BV119c
- Theatres/concert halls: BV119d
- Parks & Open Spaces: BV119e
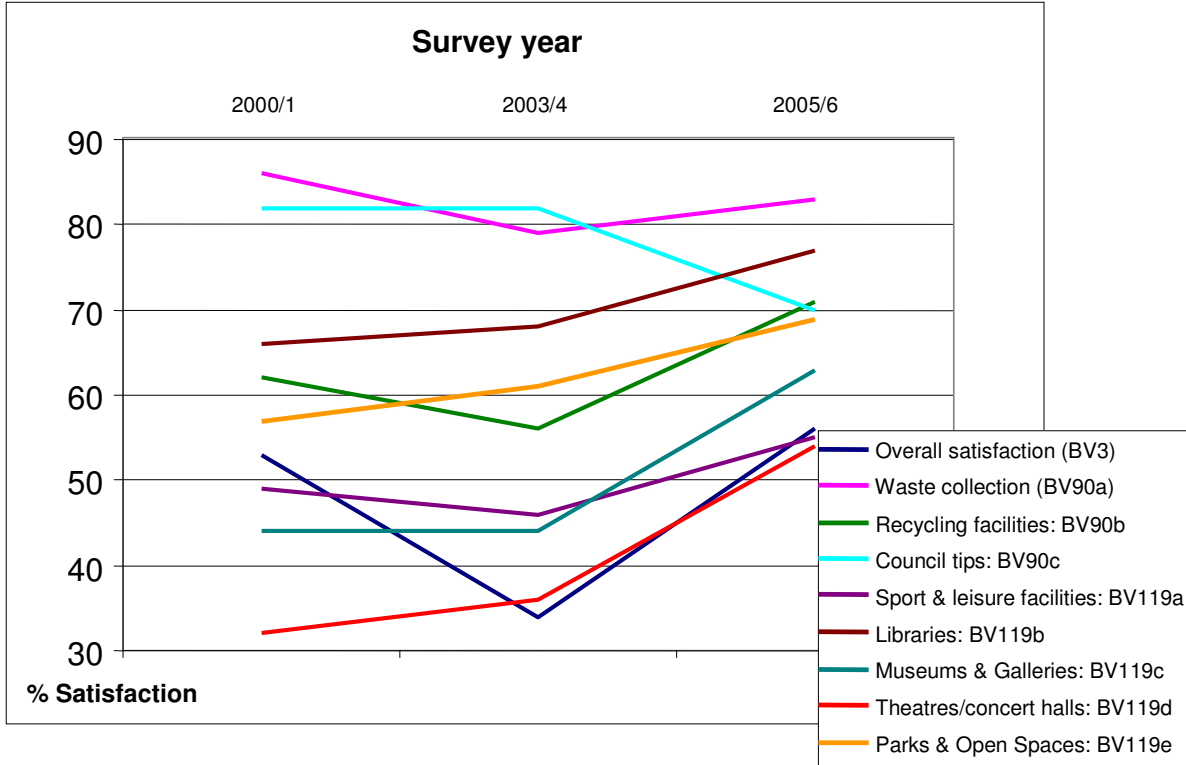
[Source; 2000/1 & 2003/4 Best Value Surveys, 2005/6 Citizen Panel results]

Understanding the differing perspectives

Mind mapping is a creative way of recording information and ideas in a way that allows a large number of complex ideas to be compressed into simple 'pictures'. It makes the information easier to understand and share, and have proved very useful in communicating customer feedback. Here they are used to summarise the strategic messages received.

They are also good for breaking down the results by client groups so that improvements are targeted more appropriately. Each map describes a central theme and thoughts on feedback branches from that theme. In this example (**Figure 14** overleaf) looking at an overall satisfaction theme, the mind map indicates the communities where satisfaction is highest and lowest, as well as the pointers to dissatisfaction.

This information has been used to target specific improvement in these communities in order to improve services and raise satisfaction. This clearly demonstrates that we take account of the views of our diverse borough.

Figure 14: Mind mapping research findings; Tracker Survey overall satisfaction

longstanding residents, 21+ years (49%)

Blakenall and Bloxwich (45%)

Palfrey and Pleck (35%)

WITH THE COUNCIL
24% dissatisfaction
Satisfaction LOWEST
amongst the following
Groups/Areas

WITH THE COUNCIL
Satisfaction HIGHEST
amongst the following
Groups/Areas

Brownhills and Aldridge North (70%)

Pelsall and Rushall Shelfield (66%)

People aged between 18-24 (62%)

Overall Satisfaction
with the way the
authority runs things
56%
BV3
KEY MEASURE FOR
MULTIPLE
COMPONENTS OF CPA

Area is dirty/litter

Activities/Facilities for youths

Road and pavement repairs

Speeding traffic

Council tax too high for services provided

Top five pointers
to dissatisfaction
with the Council

WITH ENVIRONMENTAL
SERVICES
Groups/Areas driving down
satisfaction

Blakenall and Bloxwich

Darlaston

Palfrey and Pleck

St Matthews and Birchills Leamore

Other Mets Average is 54%
National Average is 55%

Source: Tracker Survey 2005

The council has analysed the results of recent research; most notably the Tracker Survey 2005, which is seen as the forerunner to the upcoming 2006/07 general survey results. This enables deeper understanding of the different perceptions of Walsall's diverse community. Tracker action planning has used this information to develop an improvement strategy.

Perceptions can be influenced and action planning is immensely important. But the tracker survey highlighted to us that solutions should be targeted at the needs of individuals. A 'one size fits all' approach to tackling service delivery inequalities neither maximises potential to improve perception overall nor evens out disparity between areas with highest and lowest satisfaction levels.

It also highlights issues associated with neutral opinions in establishing levels of satisfaction. This includes people who do not engage with some specific services. They have no direct experience so have a neutral opinion. Also some geographical communities do not have a close affinity with the council; for example because they lie on the outskirts of the borough and feel remote and left out or do not recognise the council brand associated with improvements in their area such as New Deal.

This helps us locate hotspots of dissatisfaction and adjust service delivery accordingly. It also recognises areas of extreme neutrality against the needs of various communities to aid targeted action.

It also taught us that actions targeted towards improving communication, marketing and tackling street scene issues such as cleanliness standards are key satisfaction drivers and universally beneficial to the improvement of resident quality of life.

Figure 15: Tracker survey map of positive resident views

Kerbside Recycling
Q2 - Overall, how satisfied are you with your local area as a place to live?
Respondents who are Very / Fairly Satisfied

Respondents who are
Very / Fairly Satisfied

- 93 to 93 (1)
- 37 to 93 (10)
- 23 to 37 (6)
- 14 to 23 (3)
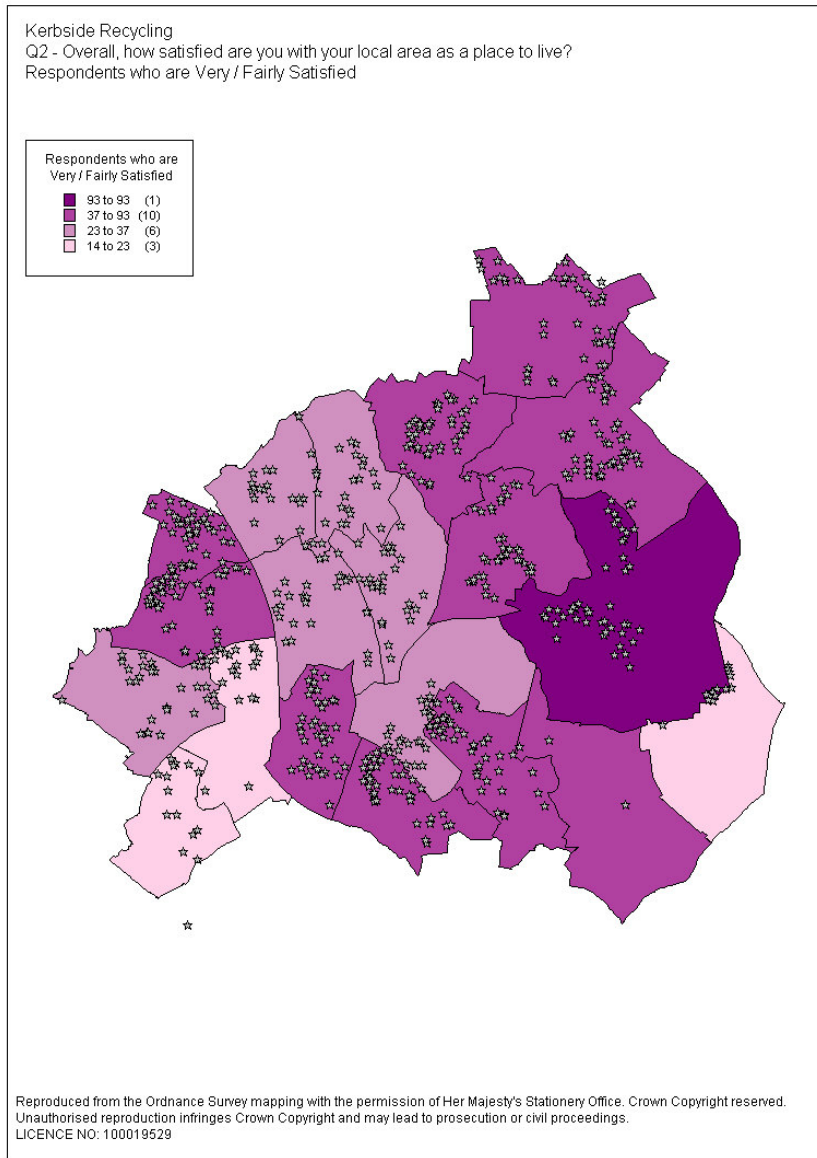
Future aspirations

Understanding people's desires for the future helps the council inform future priorities. Feedback from three recent notable sources reiterates views on future improvements. (**Figures 16 – 18** overleaf)

Figure 16: Focus on service improvements – general residents perspective
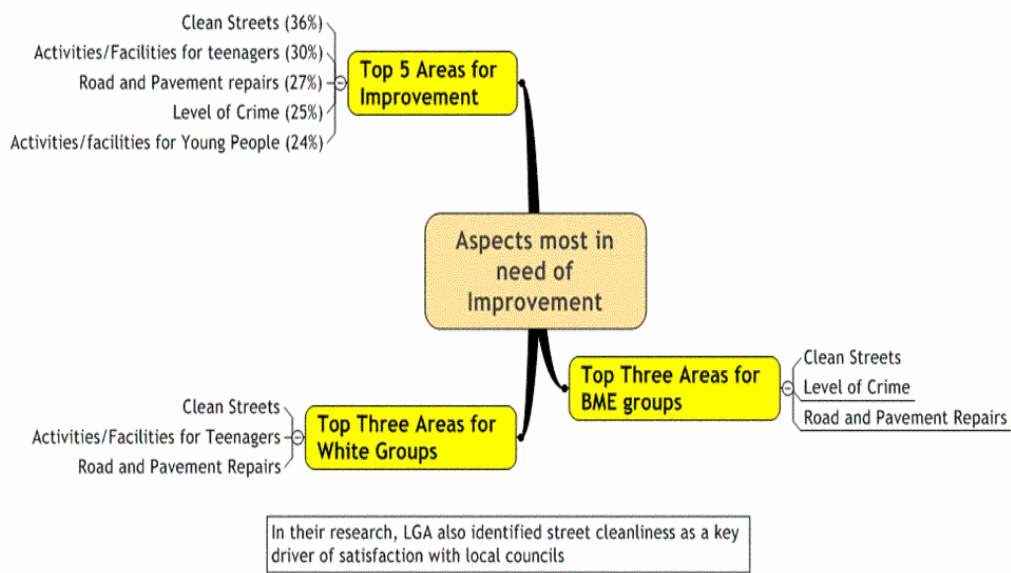
Source: Tracker Survey 2005

Figure 17: Focus on service improvements – Citizen's Panel perspective
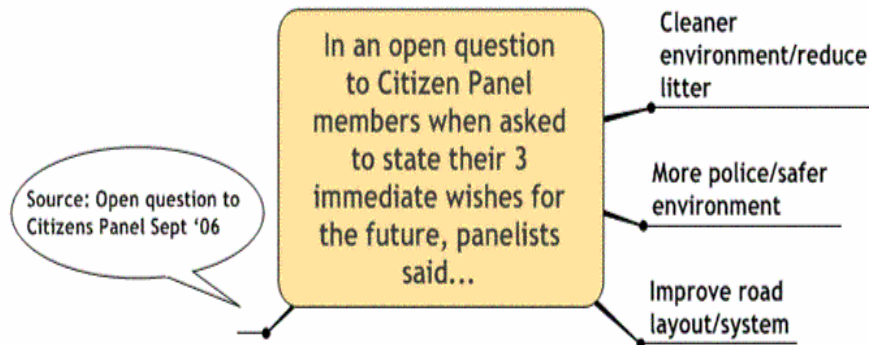
Figure 18: Focus on service improvements, key stakeholder longer-term priorities
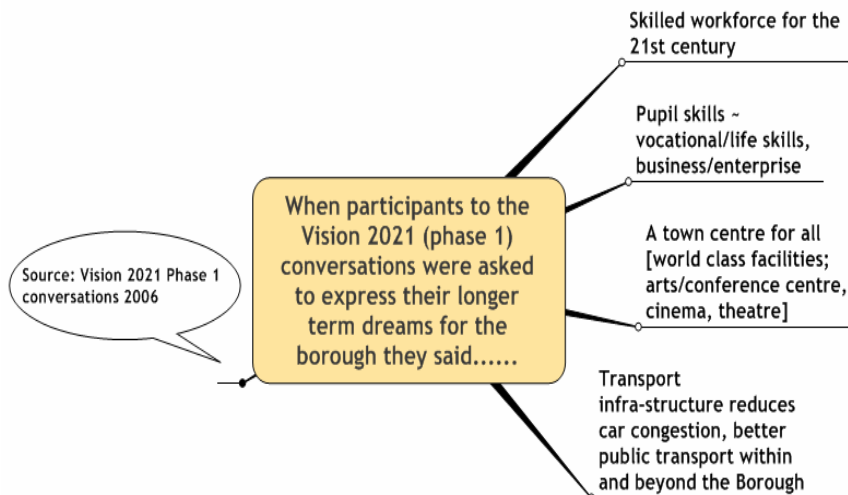
Our priorities from a people and place perspective

Our performance framework aligns all activity to our vision for the borough, so this section presents the people and place perspectives themed by our ten Vision 2008 priorities. Following a similar approach taken in the setting of 2004/05 and 2005/06 vision pledges; the people perspective mind maps show, through the use of a 'flag', where feedback has helped us to frame pledges for 2007/08.

The information from both the people and place perspectives provides a firm grounding for the current work on our longer term vision; Vision 2021. Each of our vision pledges are examined in the following sections. This examination is structured to look firstly at the context and needs relevant to the vision theme, then presents relevant factual information and what local people have said, before finally setting out the impact on what we do.

Ensure a clean and green borough

Context and Needs

**Figure 19** shows the relative air quality in the various parts of the borough. **Figure 20** (overleaf) maps access to green space for residents in the different geographical areas within the Walsall Council area. **Figure 21** (overleaf) shows our greenbelt areas.

Figure 19: Air quality
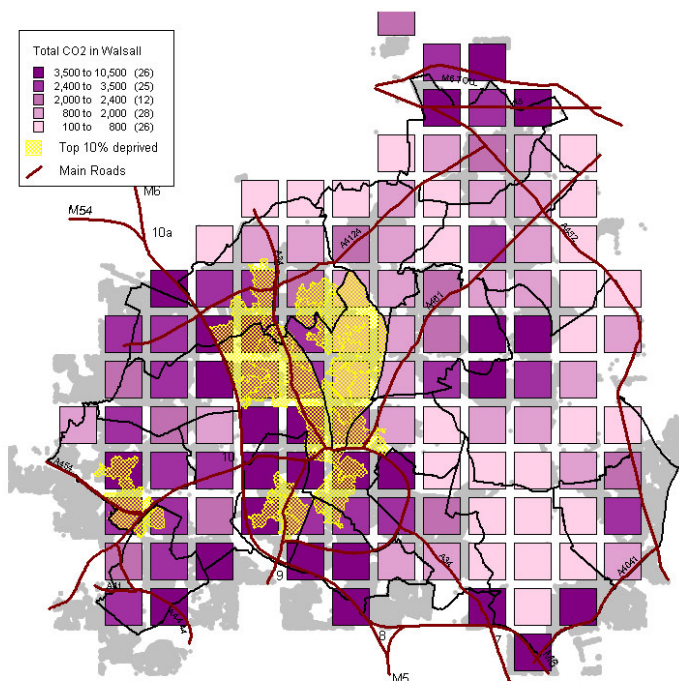
Due to the intensive road network and certain heavy industrial operations Walsall has relatively challenging issues in relation to air quality. The council is working closely with its partners to identify and address areas of poor air quality and has recently declared the entire borough an *Air Quality Management Area* due to levels of nitrogen dioxide.

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Figure 20: Access to green space in Walsall
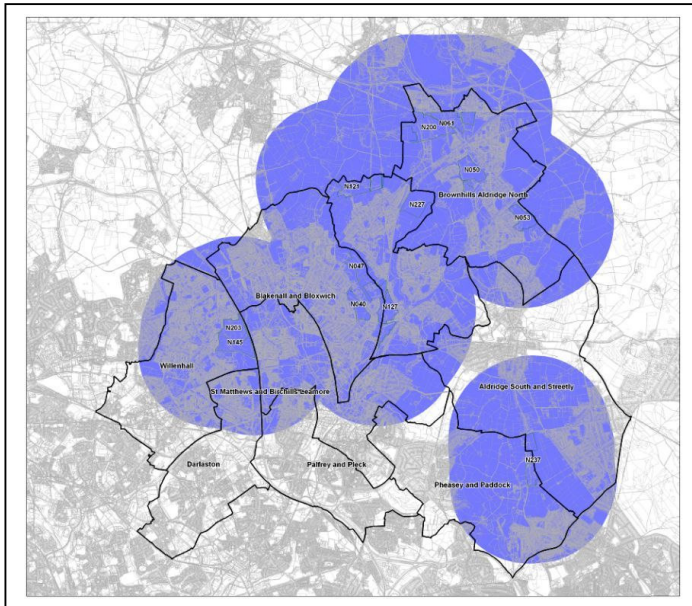
The blue shaded areas show a 2km buffer of proximity to accessible natural green space of over 20 hectares (not including agricultural land unless with unrestricted access).

There are large areas of the borough that do not have access to these sites, particularly in the south and west of the borough.

Figure 21: Green belt in Walsall
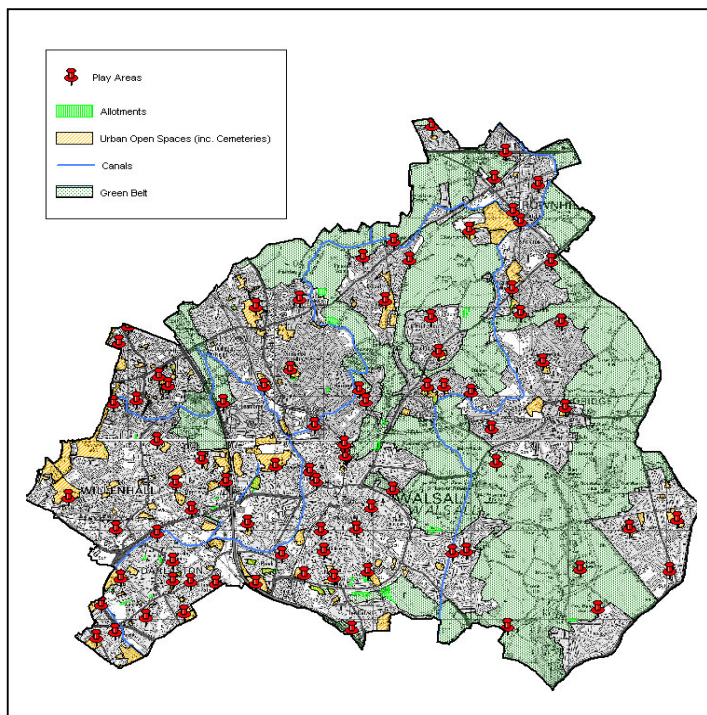
Walsall covers 10,000 hectares (40 square miles). Over one third of the borough is green belt and there is a considerable amount of open space in the built up area.

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What Local People Say

The diagram shows a mind map centered on "Ensure a clean & green borough" with the following branches:

- 97% residents see clean streets as single important factor influencing neighbourhood satisfaction
  - Big issue across rented sector
  - Vision pledge developed for 2007/8
- cleanliness (litter) THE No1 satisfaction driver; a top priority for improvement
- Satisfaction with Waste collection (A universal service) well below national average @ 70%
  - Some elements of our waste strategy are creating a new forms of dissatisfaction, for example people missing out on brown bins, excess waste rules, closed bin lids, missed bins.
    - Vision pledge developed for 2007/8
  - Rated as an important service by residents. Perception has a big impact on all services
  - Waste management complaints 'missed bins'
- Negative perceptions of fly-tipping
- Relatively good feedback on recycling and while emphasis on it is welcomed people want more i.e. plastics
  - And there are participation, neutrality and dissatisfaction issues
- Parks & open spaces are seen as valued assets but in need of improvement
  - Vision pledge developed for 2007/8
- IMPROVEMENTS TO CLEANLINESS STANDARDS AND FLY-TIPPING WOULD REAP SATISFACTION IMPROVEMENTS ACROSS ALL SERVICES AND REDUCE COMPLAINTS

The Impact on What We Do
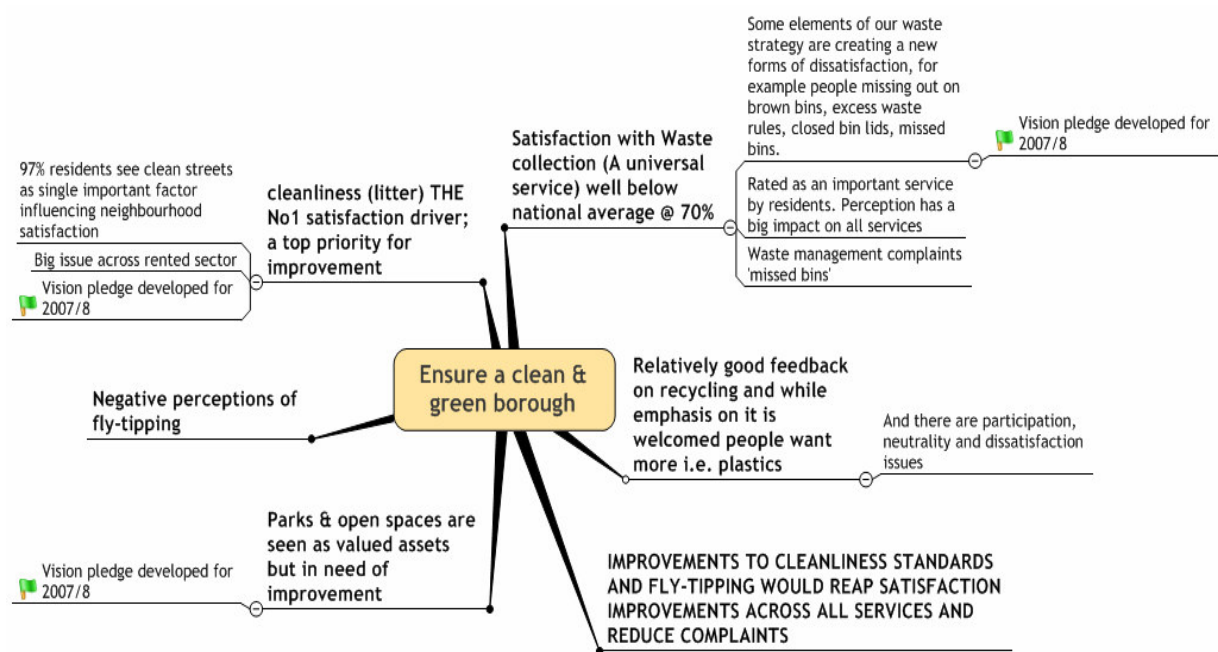
Improving the environment is a key priority for the Council. People tell us they value cleanliness in determining personal perceptions of neighbourhood satisfaction. However, the West of the borough in particular suffers from poor air quality and people have more restricted access to quality green space than those in the East.

The Greenspaces Strategy will ensure that the Borough has excellent, well used and valued green spaces, at the heart of all local communities, that are safe, accessible and welcoming and meet the needs of current and future generations.

The Strategy is intended to inspire local communities to expect higher quality parks and open spaces and to feel proud of what can be achieved working with the Council.

Make it easier for people to get around

Context and Needs

Figure 22: Car ownership: vehicles per household in Walsall v England & Wales
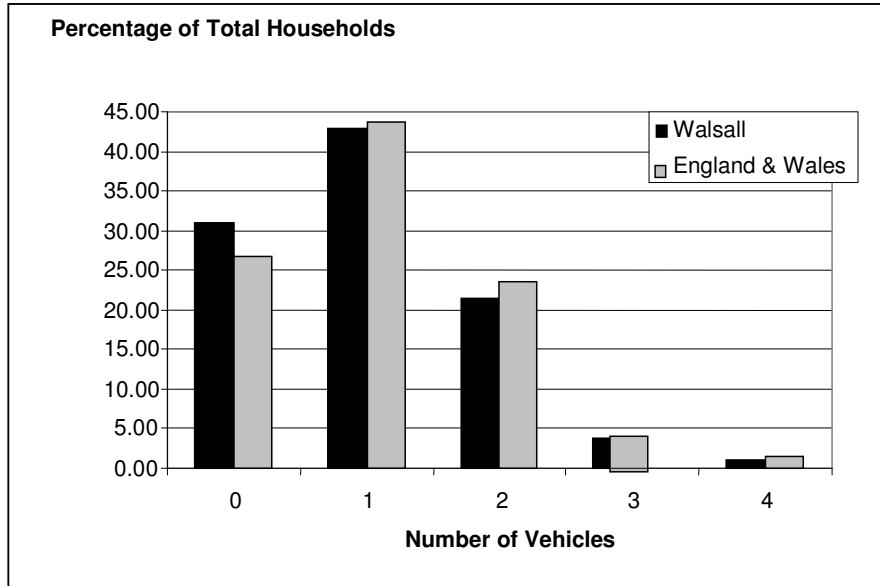
Walsall has 4.14% more households without any vehicle than the average for England and Wales.

What Local People Say

The Impact on What We Do

Walsall residents are more reliant on public transport than the rest of England and Wales and satisfaction with local bus services is high. We nevertheless must continue to improve our road network. Promoting the use of public transport is essential if we are to improve air quality and reduce congestion.

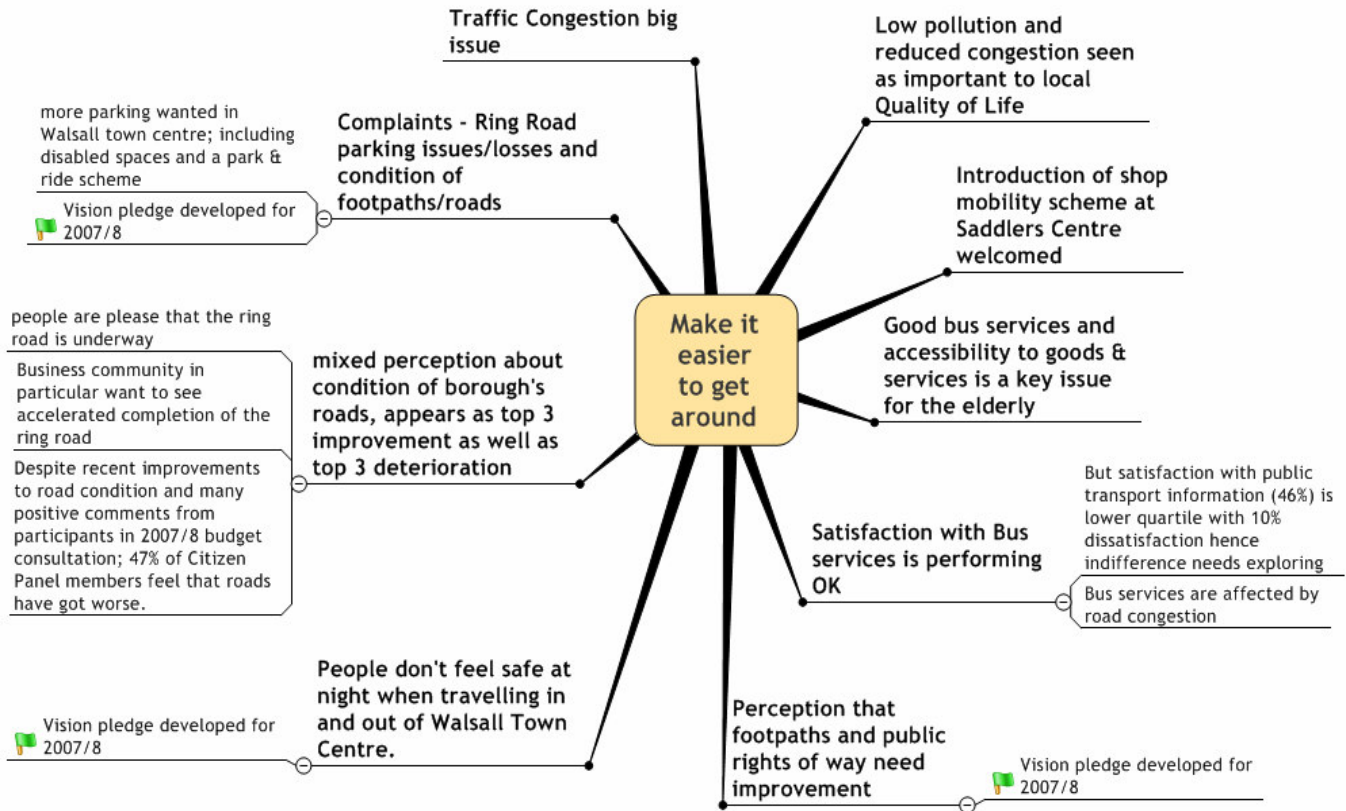We will continue to develop a transport approach which supports the future needs of the borough and which helps unlock future opportunities, particularly in our key centres and corridors. A particular focus will be on ensuring we have transport network which enables local people to access employment and training opportunities.

Congestion is clearly a major issue in Walsall as in other parts of the conurbation. The council now has further statutory duties under the Traffic Management Act to demonstrate better management of traffic to minimise congestion on the road network. This has the added benefit of improving air quality related to traffic and the operation of both public and private transport. Air quality monitoring is underway and this will be linked to traffic management computer systems which monitor and control traffic signals to assist this process. Further highway improvements will be delivered through the continued implementation of the Town Centre Transport Package and, together with our private sector partners and stakeholders, several major regeneration projects.

The need to invest in the highways network is well understood. The Local Transport Plan for the West Midlands has been recently assessed as 'excellent' and this council will deliver the significant programme of highway projects and improvements together with an enhanced highways maintenance service. Linking with the development priorities of the town centre and other areas the council has prepared a Car Parking Strategy and with its delivery this will be coordinated with achieving other targets and outcomes such as security and safety and potentially greater use of cycling and walking. After securing funding through the Local Authority Agreement process improvements will be made in the areas of delivering school travel plans and improvements to public rights of way.

One of the key was we are addressing road safety and fear of crime issues is by investing in better street lighting. The council's public lighting partnership with Amey has delivered a high quality of street lighting. Liaison with the community will continue to ensure that their needs are appropriately addressed.

Ensure all people are safe and secure

Context and Needs

Figure 23: Total crime rates for Walsall v England & Wales
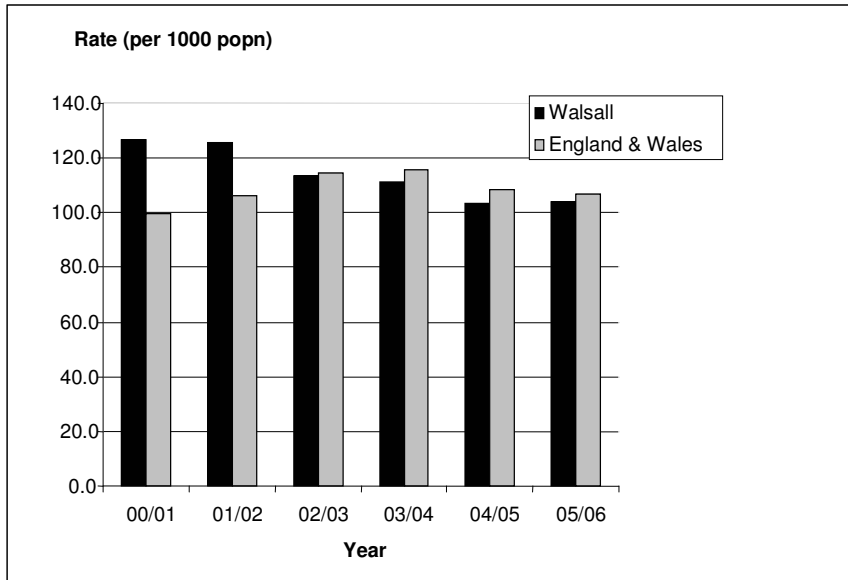
The graph shows a continued decrease in Walsall's total crime rate over the last six years.

The England & Wales crime rate has fluctuated over the same period and is currently above that of Walsall.

Figure 24: Map of total crime in Walsall

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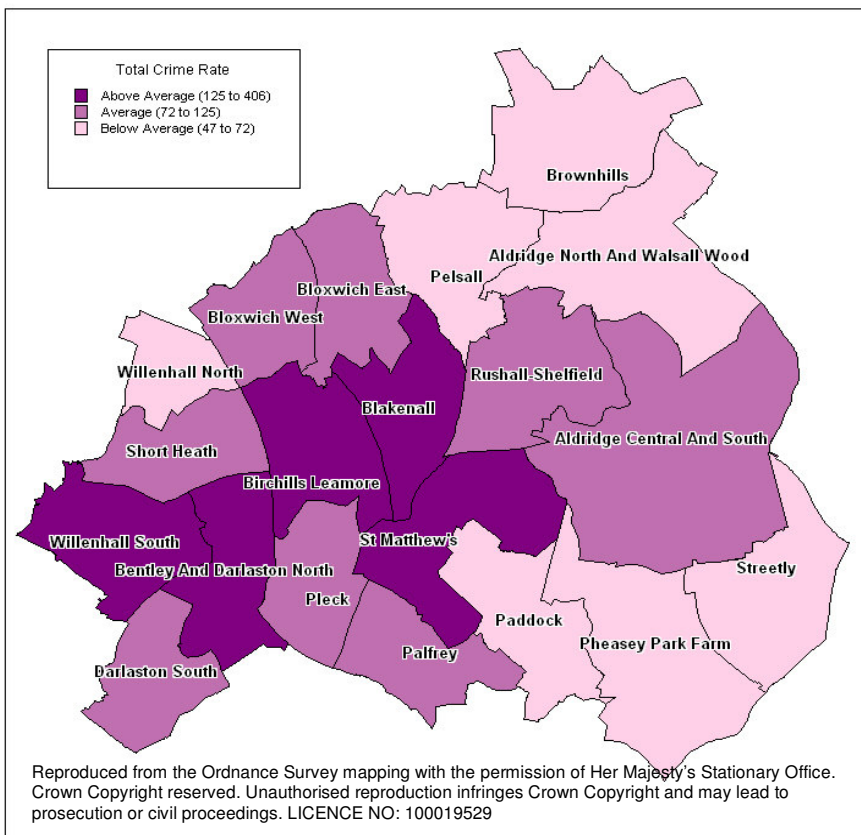
The map shows that the wards suffering an above average level of total crime are St. Matthews, Blakenall, Birchills Leamore, Bentley and Darlaston North and Willenhall South.

Figure 25: Vehicle crime in Walsall v England & Wales

Rate (per 1,000 Population)

Legend: ■ Walsall ☐ England & Wales

X-axis (Year): 00/01, 01/02, 02/03, 03/04, 04/05, 05/06
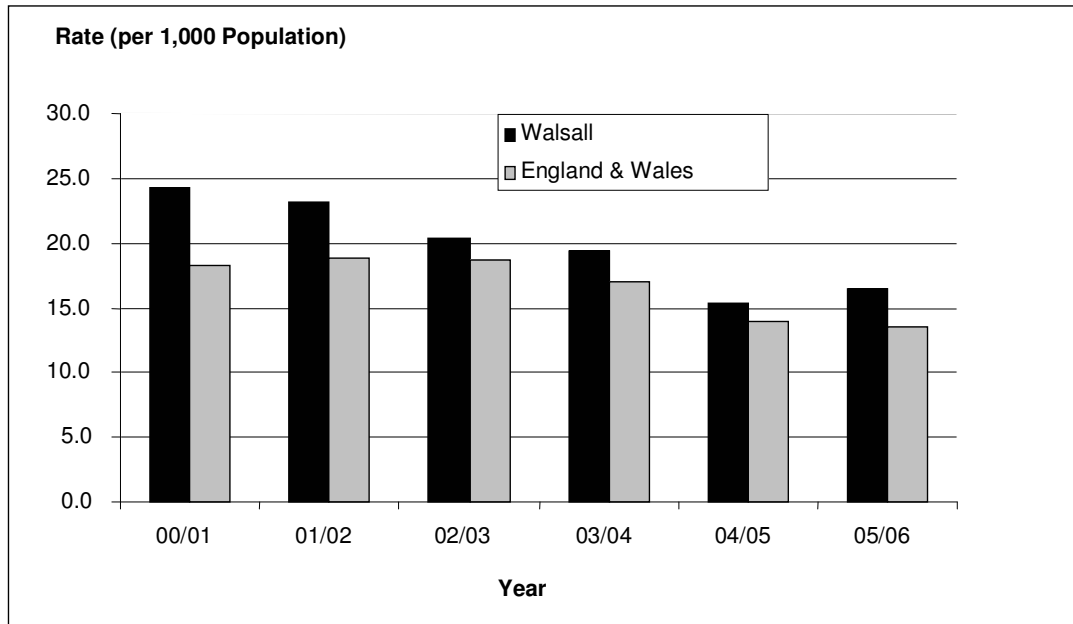
Figure 26: Vehicle crime by ward 2005/06
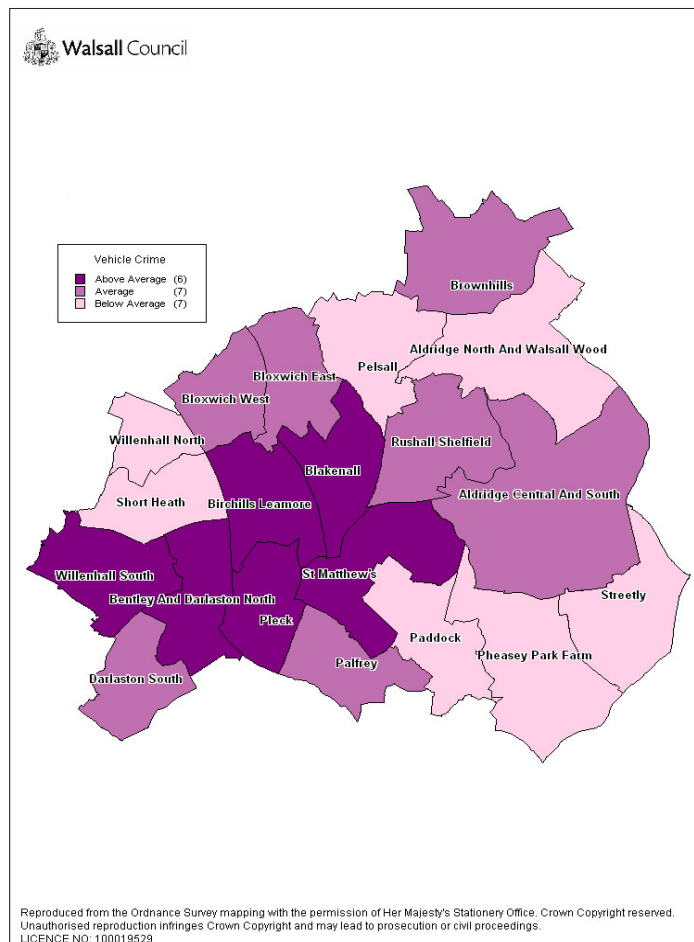
Vehicle crime in Walsall has gradually reduced over the last few years but is still above the rate for England and Wales.

Vehicle crime is high within Walsall town centre and to areas to the west of the borough.

Figure 27: Violent crime in Walsall v England & Wales 2005/06
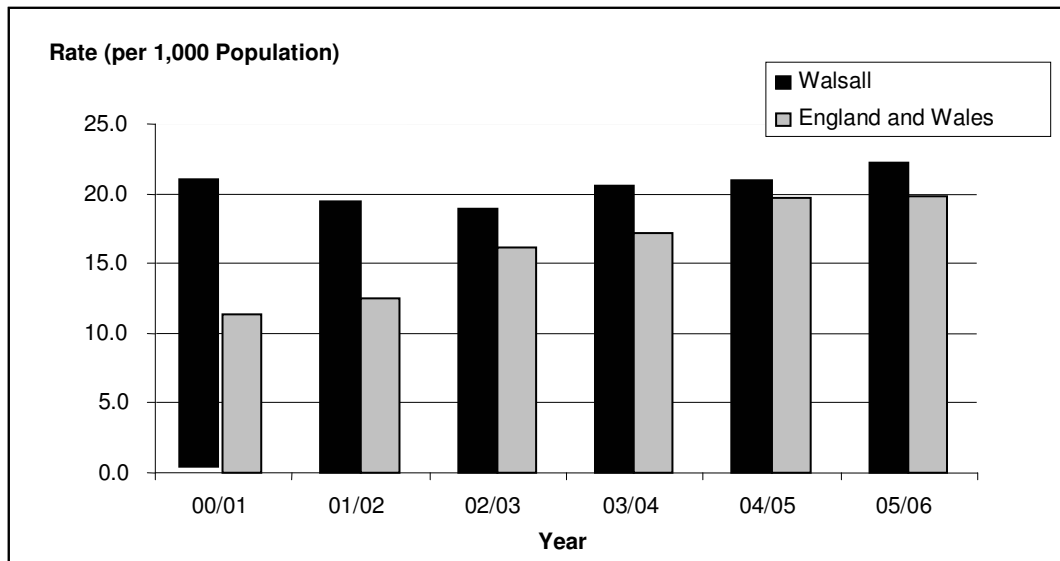
Figure 28: Incidents of violence by ward 2005/06
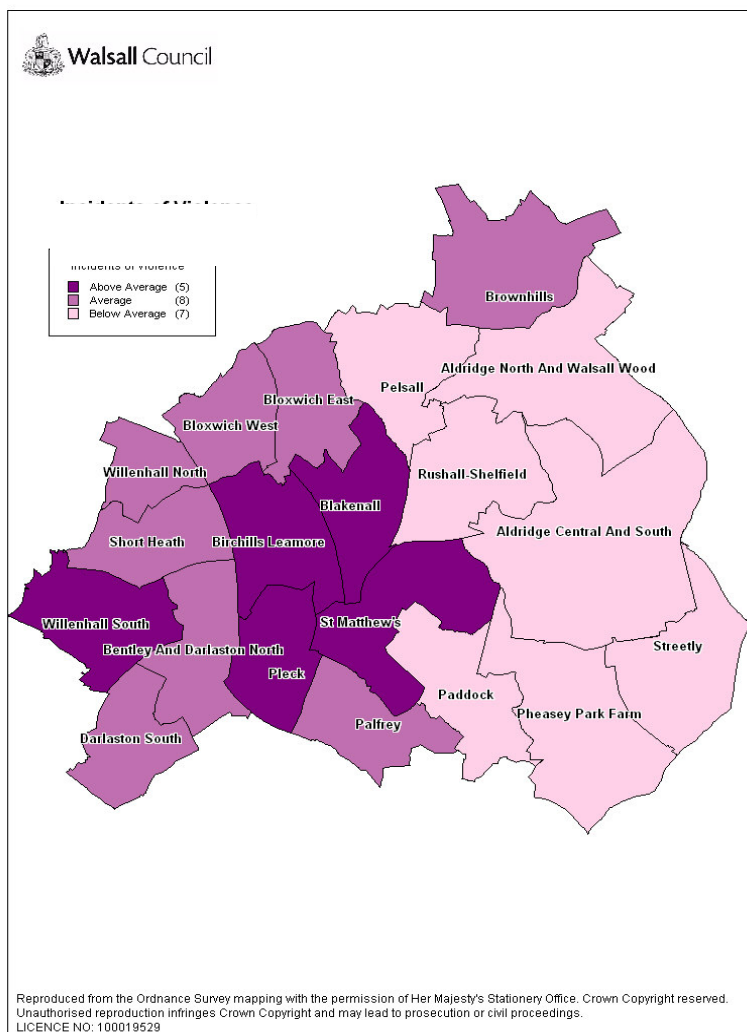
Violent crime in Walsall over the last few years has been erratic with recent figures above the national average.

Violent crime in Walsall is high in and around the town centre.

Figure 29: Burglary dwelling in Walsall v England & Wales 2005/06

Rate (per 1,000 Population)

(bar chart comparing Walsall and England and Wales, Years 00/01 to 05/06)
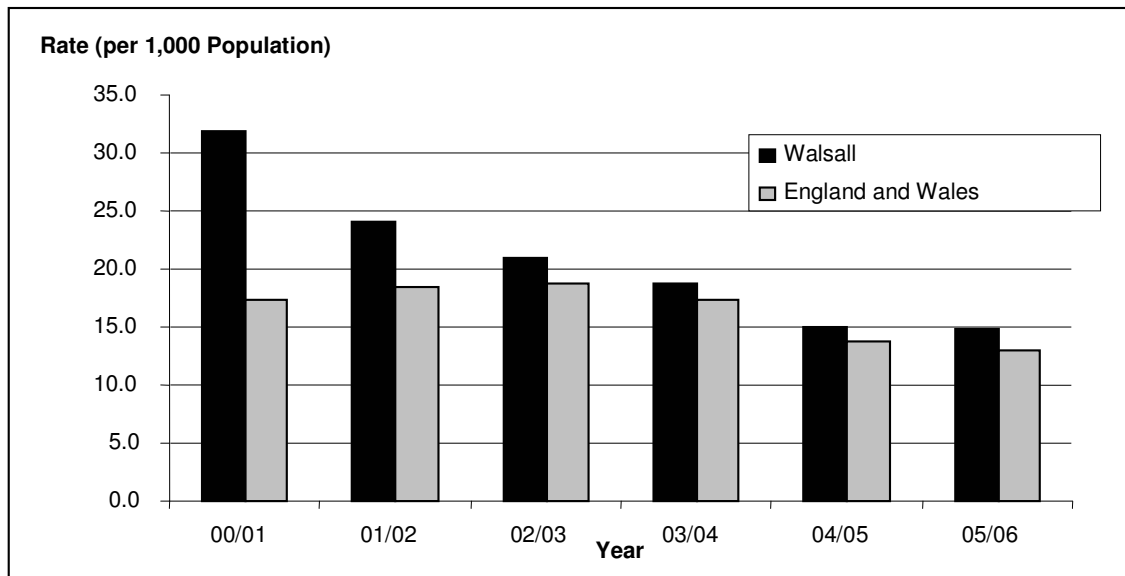
Figure 30: Burglary dwelling by ward 2005/06
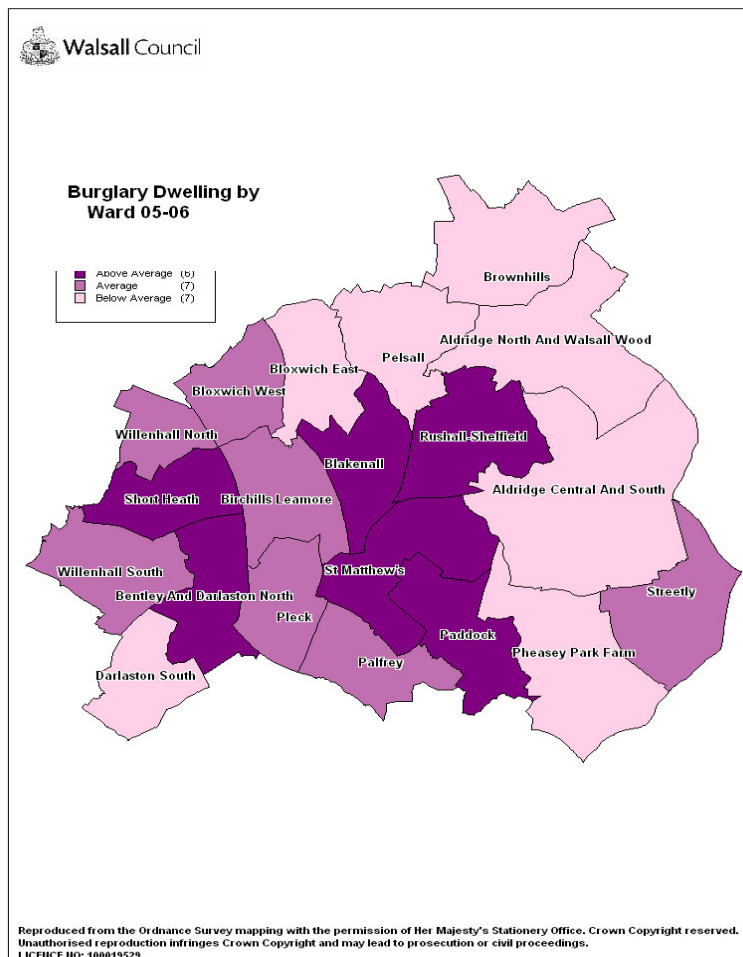
Burglary to dwellings in Walsall has reduced by over half in the last 6 years from a rate of 31.8 to 14.8. The burglary rate in Walsall is higher than for England and Wales.

Burglaries are particularly high in and around the more deprived areas such as Blakenall and Bentley and Darlaston North.

What Local People Say

People rank value for money on how council tackling ASB as lowest

Strong link in perception with ASB around lack of facilities for Children & Young People

including issues around environmental crimes

Anti-social behaviour a big concern

94% rank this as a top priority (96%) says its key to neighbourhood Quality of Life

Those dissatisfied with local QofL; 32% cite speeding traffic, and 23% level of crime as areas of concern

32% perceived that levels of anti-social behaviour has worsened

while 47% felt crime prevention measures had improved

Ensure all people are safe and secure

60% of businesses have been affected by crime, robbery & vandalism

People want the council to tackle environmental crime in particular through enforcement action

Vision pledge developed for 2007/8

56% disagreed that council was 'making area safer, cleaner, greener'

Tackling incidences and perception of crime including fear of crime alongside activities/facilities for young people is a key priority

Vision pledge developed for 2007/8
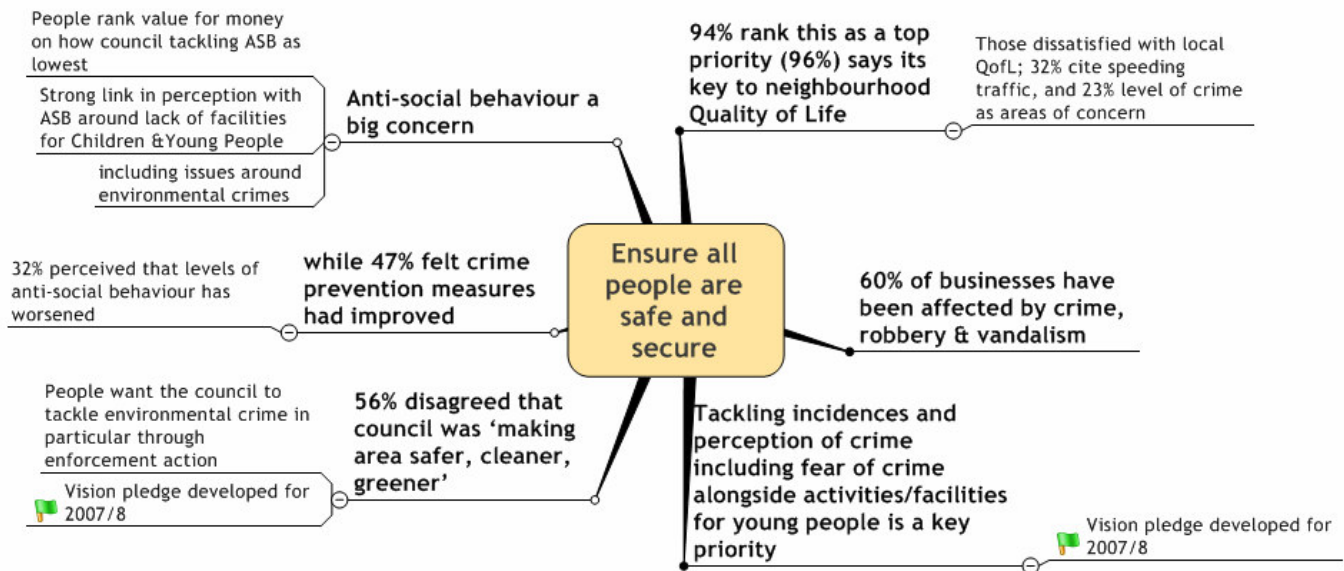
The Impact on What We Do

Crime in Walsall has reduced significantly over the last six years and in many cases the improvement has been greater than the national average. However, the public still do not think that the situation has improved. The council must continue to work with partners to help reduce the perception of crime and ensure that people feel safe. Measures to reduce anti-social behaviour are of key importance.

The problem of crime and fear of crime can only be tackled effectively by all agencies working in partnership. Walsall is currently the second most successful Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership Area across the West Midlands for reducing total crime and is testament to the excellent work done by all Partnership agencies. The Partnership has developed a number of successful measures to tackle crime, anti-social behaviour and environmental issues within our communities.

The council has agreed targets based on this research and consultation to:

- Reduce domestic violence
- Reduce overall crime and the fear of crime
- Improve fire safety
- Reduce substance misuse and increase drug users in treatment
- Reduce youth crime

Anti social behaviour is frequently shown to be a major cause of public concern in local consultations. Our approach to addressing this problem is by focusing our efforts to develop local solutions, supporting parental responsibility and promoting the "Respect" agenda through Local Neighbourhood Partnerships and Community Action Groups.
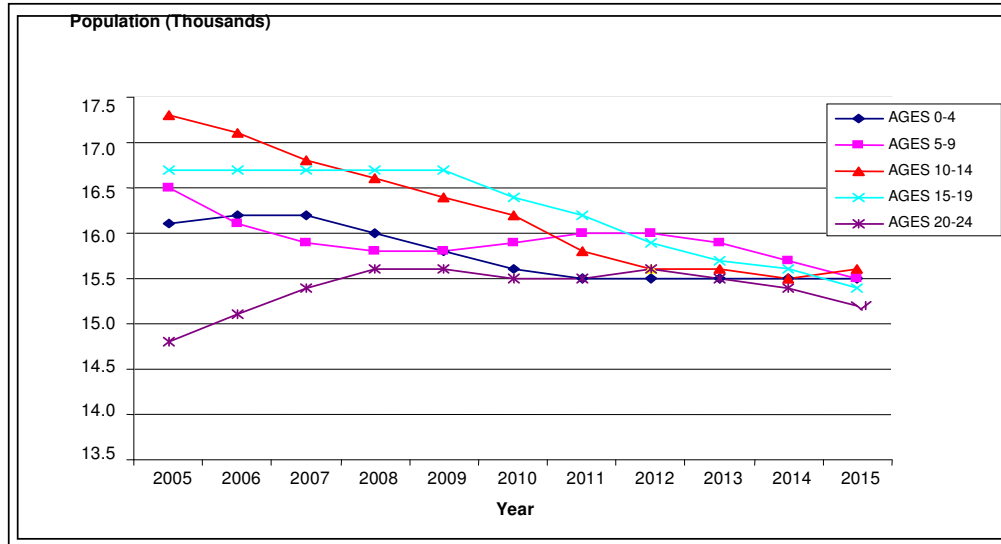
The council will also continue it's highly effective summer programme of activities for young people, with its proven track record of reducing youth crime during the school summer holiday period.

Our research has shown that the fear of crime is often associated with a lack of "official" presence in public places. Through the partnership large numbers of additional police community support officers are being introduced. We have also introduced the street champions' scheme with volunteers taking responsibility for their local neighbourhood. This will be rolled out across further areas next year. Finally we are reorganising our parks service so staff spend more time in parks. All of these initiatives are designed to provide reassurance to residents.
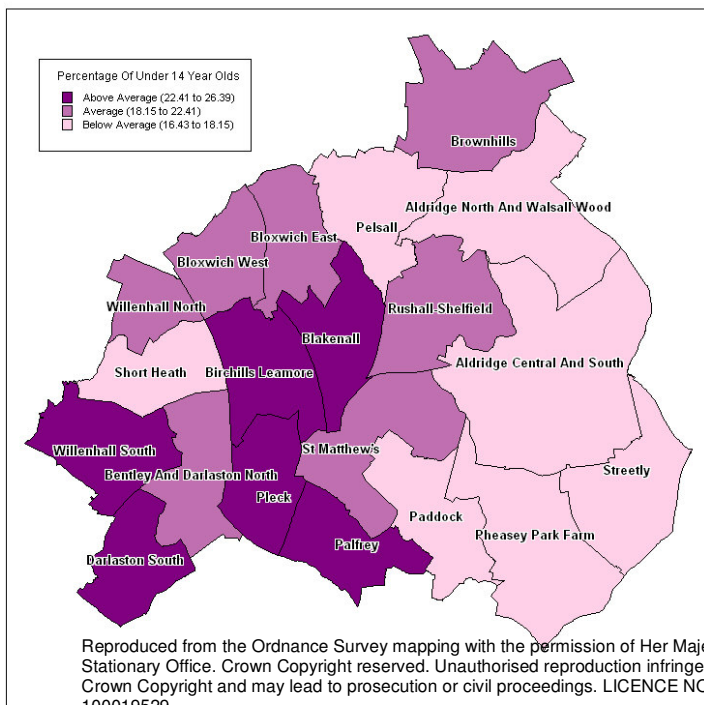
Make our schools great

Context and Needs

Figure 31: Population projections for young people

Population (Thousands)

Legend:
- AGES 0-4
- AGES 5-9
- AGES 10-14
- AGES 15-19
- AGES 20-24

X-axis: **Year** (2005 to 2015)

The overall population of young people is projected to decline by 4,200 in Walsall between 2005 and 2015. The population of 10 -14 year olds and 15 -19 year olds will decline by 1,700 and 1,300 respectively. 0-4 year olds will settle at a constant rate with new birth rate trends. 5 - 9 year olds is projected to fall initially then rise again. 20 -24 year olds will rise steadily from 2005 until 2008 and is then projected to stay at a fairly constant level until 2015.

Figure 32: 0 to 14 year olds in Walsall

Percentage Of Under 14 Year Olds
- Above Average (22.41 to 26.39)
- Average (18.15 to 22.41)
- Below Average (16.43 to 18.15)

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There is an above average concentration of young people aged 0-14 in deprived wards in the borough

Figure 33: % pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C GCSEs
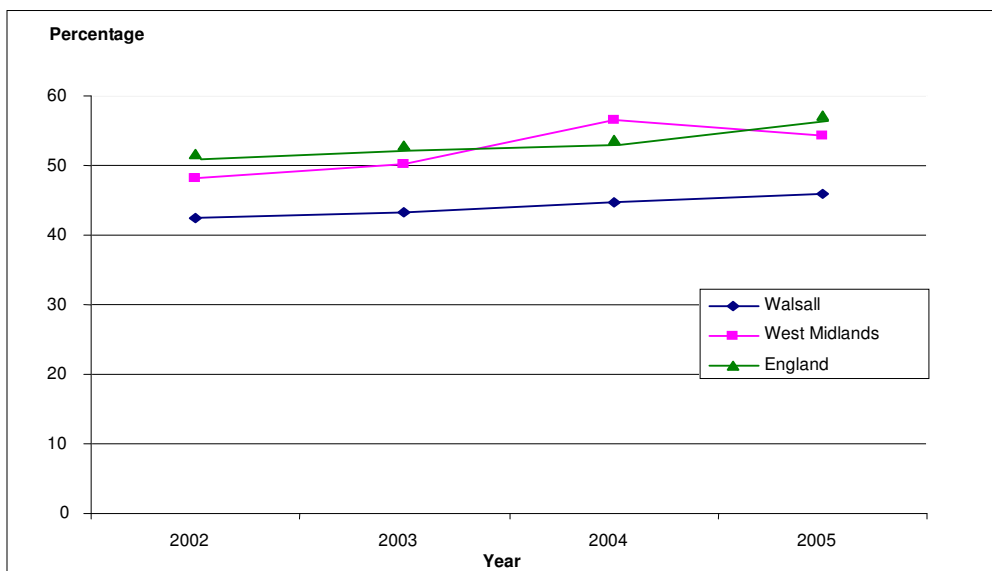
Walsall has shown gradual improvements in GCSE attainment (% pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C GCSE's) since 2002 and this is also reflected in national figures. Recent 2006 unverified figures suggest Walsall has closed the gap slightly with England and Wales by 9% compared to a gap of 11% the previous year.

Figure 34: Map of GCSE attainment
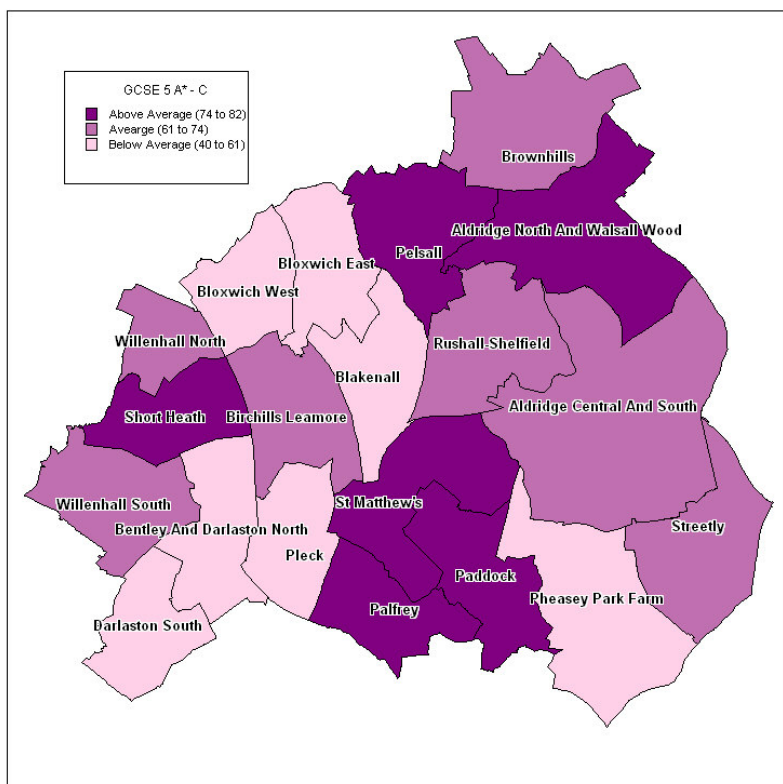
The wards with above average number of pupils achieving 5 or more A*-C GCSE's are Aldridge North and Walsall Wood, Paddock, Palfrey, Pelsall, Short Heath and St Mathew's.

Figure 35: Maps of Key Stage 2 attainment for English, Maths and Science
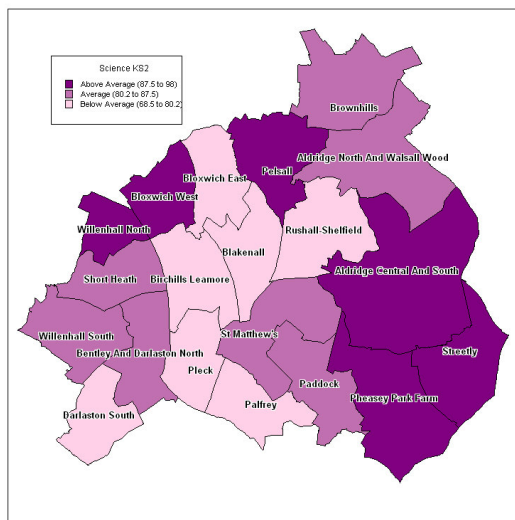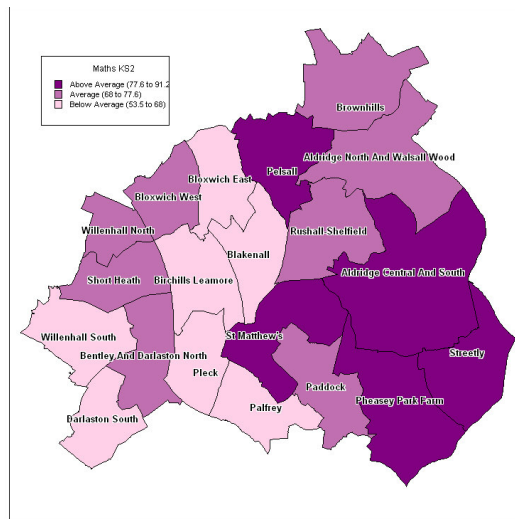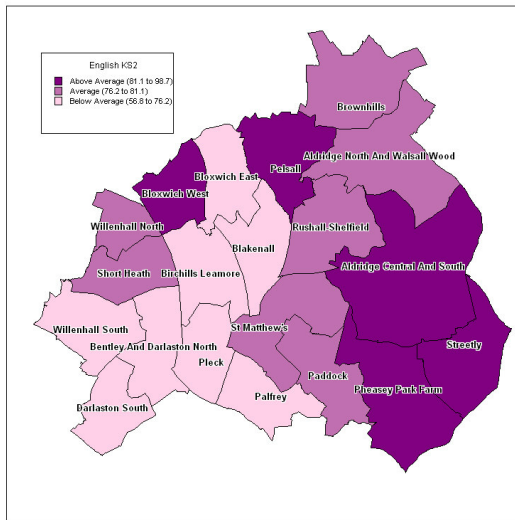
Key Stage 2 attainment for English, Maths and Science is greater to the East of the borough than the West.

Figure 36: Maps of Key Stage 3 attainment for English, Maths and Science

The general pattern with Key Stage 3 attainment for English, Maths and Science is greater to the East of the borough.

Figure 37: 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET)

16 to 18 year olds NEET

■ 14 to 18	(7)
■ 9 to 14	(21)
■ 5 to 9	(53)
■ 0 to 5	(88)
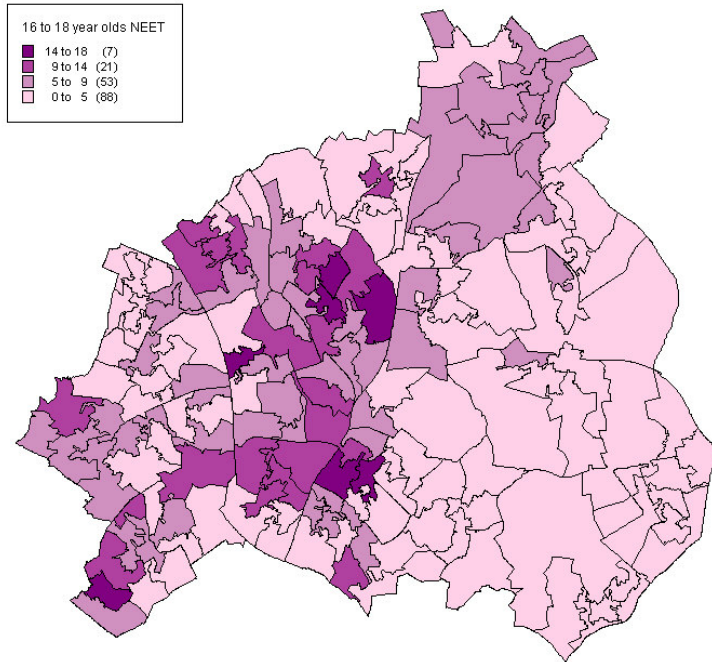
In the first quarter of 2006/07 Walsall had a NEET percentage of 10.4% compared nationally to 8.6%. The spread of those who are NEET across the borough correlates strongly with the most deprived areas.

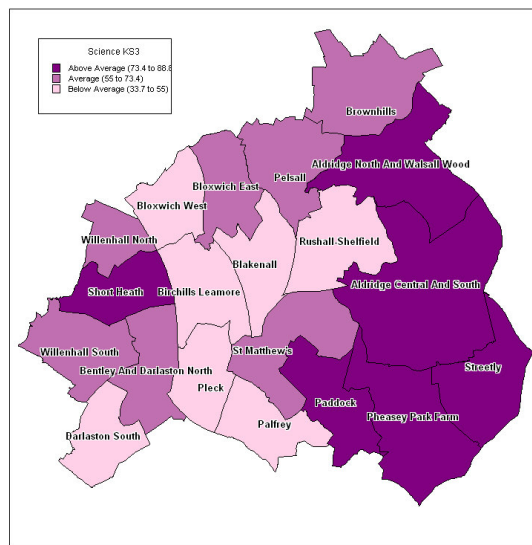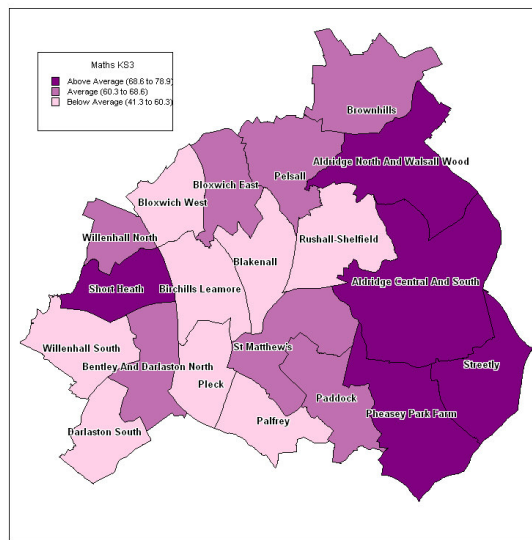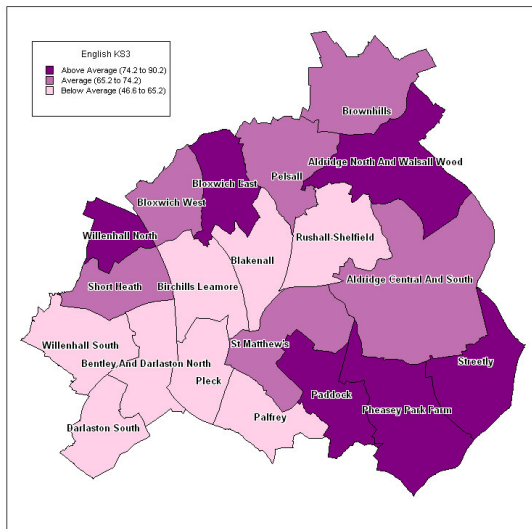Reproduced from the Ordnance Survey mapping with the permission of Her Majesty's Stationary Office. Crown Copyright reserved. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown Copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings. LICENCE NO: 100019529

Figure 38: Income deprivation affecting children index

Most deprived Super Output Areas in England

■ Up to 5%
■ 6%-10%
■ 11%-15%
■ 16%-20%
■ 21%-50%
■ 51%-100%
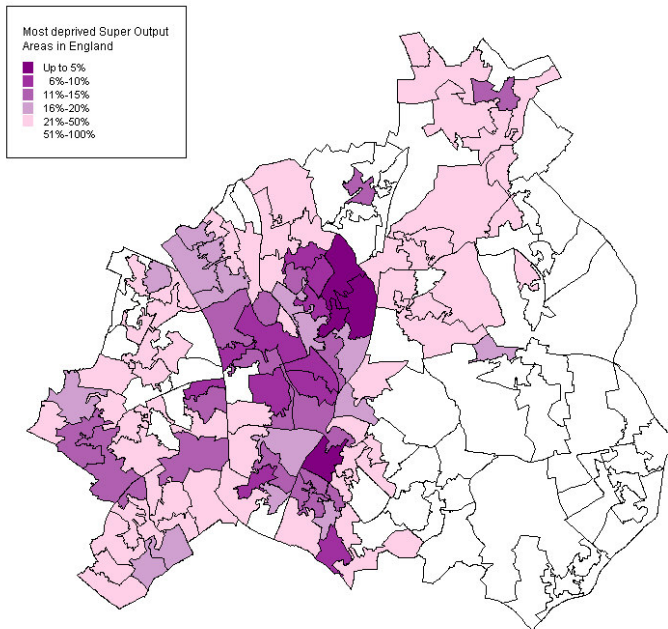
This shows children under 16 who were living in families in receipt of Income Support and Job Seekers Allowance. In Walsall there is a high proportion within Blakenall and Birchills Leamore.

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What Local People Say

Aspirations for education (top 5 rank of issues, by importance):
1 = Aspirations of pupils should be raised
1 = Increased parental involvement/accountability
2 Promote variety of learning opportunities
3 Physical learning environment to be improved
4 Skills & knowledge in schools serves local needs
5 More vocational training should be on offer

Negative net perception of improvements in quality of school buildings

Vision pledge developed for 2007/8

Vision pledge developed for 2007/8 (to raise aspirations)

96% view education provision as important to local Quality of Life

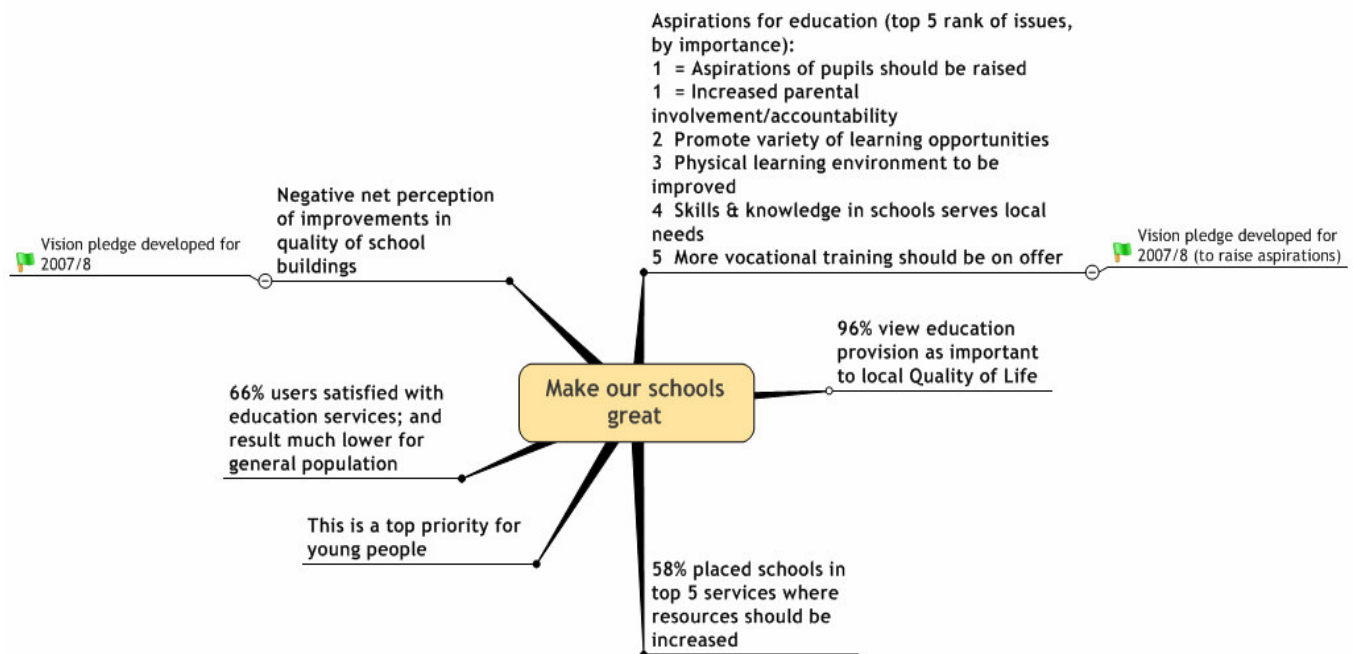66% users satisfied with education services; and result much lower for general population

Make our schools great

This is a top priority for young people

58% placed schools in top 5 services where resources should be increased

The Impact on What We Do

Educational attainment in the Borough has improved and this year it looks like the gap with England and Wales has closed. An ambitious improvement programme has been put in place and the results are beginning to be seen. We must continue the improvement, even as the focus is placed on reviewing the contract with Education Walsall, as residents agree that education is one of our key priorities.

Achievements in Children's services as a whole and educational attainment in particular has improved. The gap between the attainment of children and young people in Walsall and those nationally has reduced which is excellent news.

We are very ambitious for the children and young people in our schools and continue to set ourselves targets to improve the results they achieve.

The NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) level, although higher than the national figure, has also improved considerably in recent years and we will continue to make this a key target for our partnership work. This is critical to support the young people themselves and their communities, to be aspirational about the future.

We are using the increased data we have about children and young people to make sure that we increase the work we do to target our work to support the different schools and neighbourhoods across the borough who all have very distinct challenges. The work we have already begun to work with local partnerships is a key strategy to achieve this. It is very clear that local people, including young people, want us to make children's services and schools in particular a key priority for the local authority.

Make Walsall a healthy and caring place

Context and Needs

Figure 39: Population projections of older people
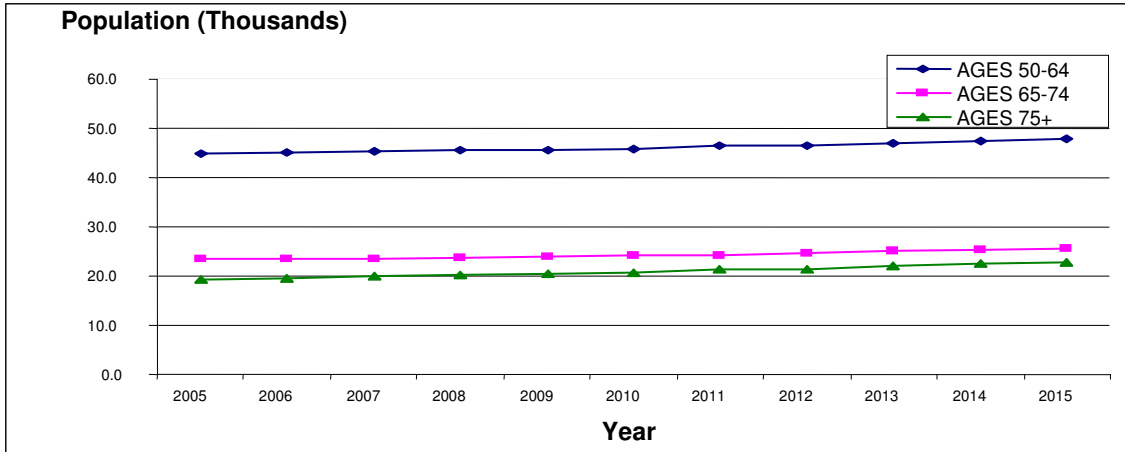
The number of elderly people in Walsall is projected to increase from 87,800 to 96,200 by 2015. The rate of increase will be greatest in the over 75s.

Figure 40: Population aged 60 and over
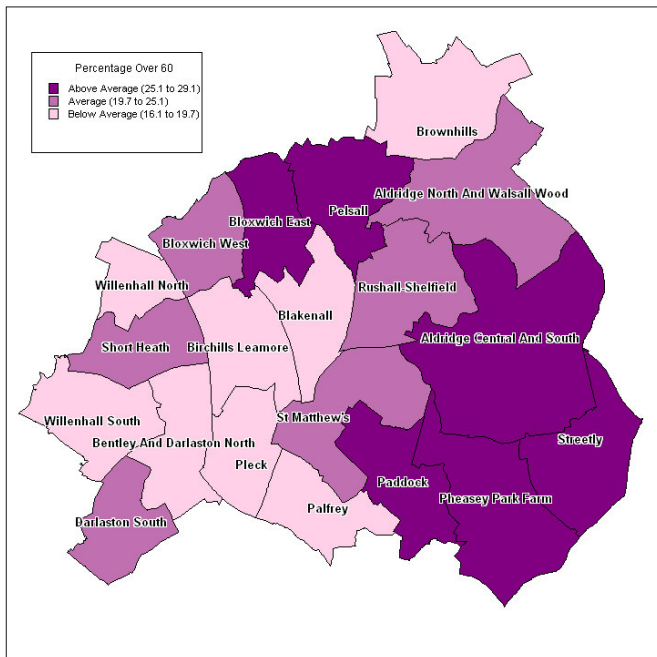
This map shows an above average of people aged 60 and over in Pelsall, Bloxwich East, Aldridge Central and South, Streetly, Pheasey Park Farm and Paddock, these are the more affluent areas in the east of the borough.

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Figure 41: Life expectancy
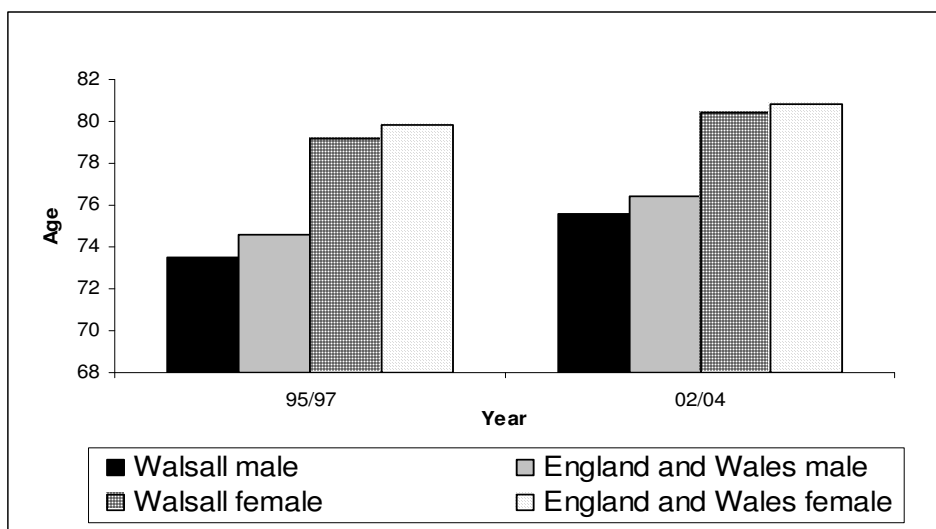
For men in Walsall, life expectancy has increased from 73.5 years in 1995/97 to 75.6 years in 2002-04. This is an increase of 2.1 years, and compares favourably to an increase of 1.85 years in the rest of England and Wales.

For women in Walsall, life expectancy has increased from 79.2 years in 1995-97 to 80.4 years in 2002-04. This is an increase of 1.2 years, compared to 1.03 years across England and Wales. The average life expectancy in Walsall for men and women has increased over the last five years; however it is still lower than the average for England and Wales.

Figure 42: Income deprivation affecting older people index

This map shows the concentration of over 60s who are Income Support or Job Seekers Allowance claimants. The concentrations are high centrally in the borough as well as pockets towards the south west.

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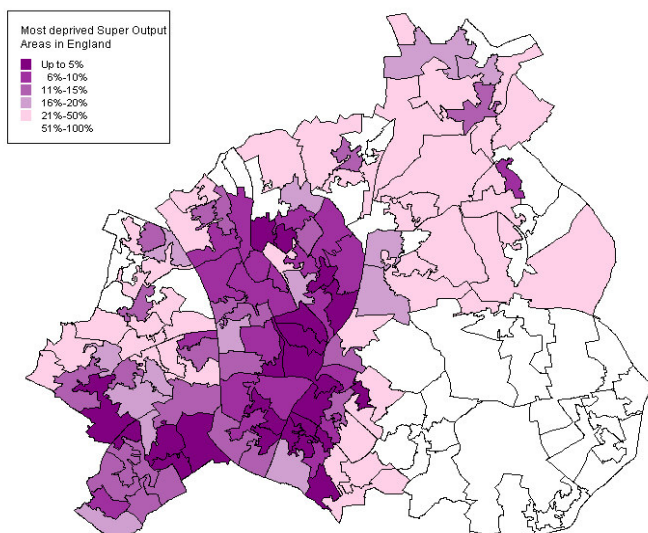
Figure 43: Disability living allowance claimants
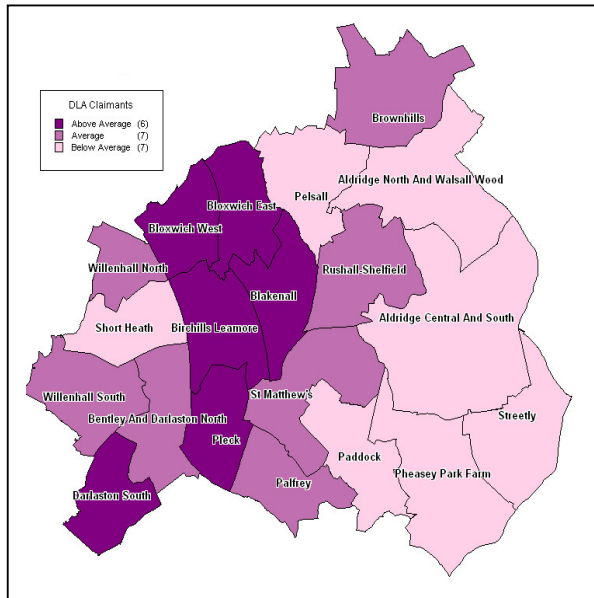
Disability Living Allowance claimants are concentrated in the same areas of the borough as those experiencing multiple deprivation. Nationally the prevalence of disability increases with age, approximately 75% of men and women aged 85 and over have a disability. Nationally, 20% of those with a disability are under 45. Although on average females live longer than males, a greater proportion of a females lifespan is lived in ill health (15% compared to 12%)

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What Local People Say

The Impact on What We Do

39

Improving health and reducing health inequalities will remain a key priority for the council and its partners. The increase in numbers of older people over the next few years will place added pressure on social care and leisure services.
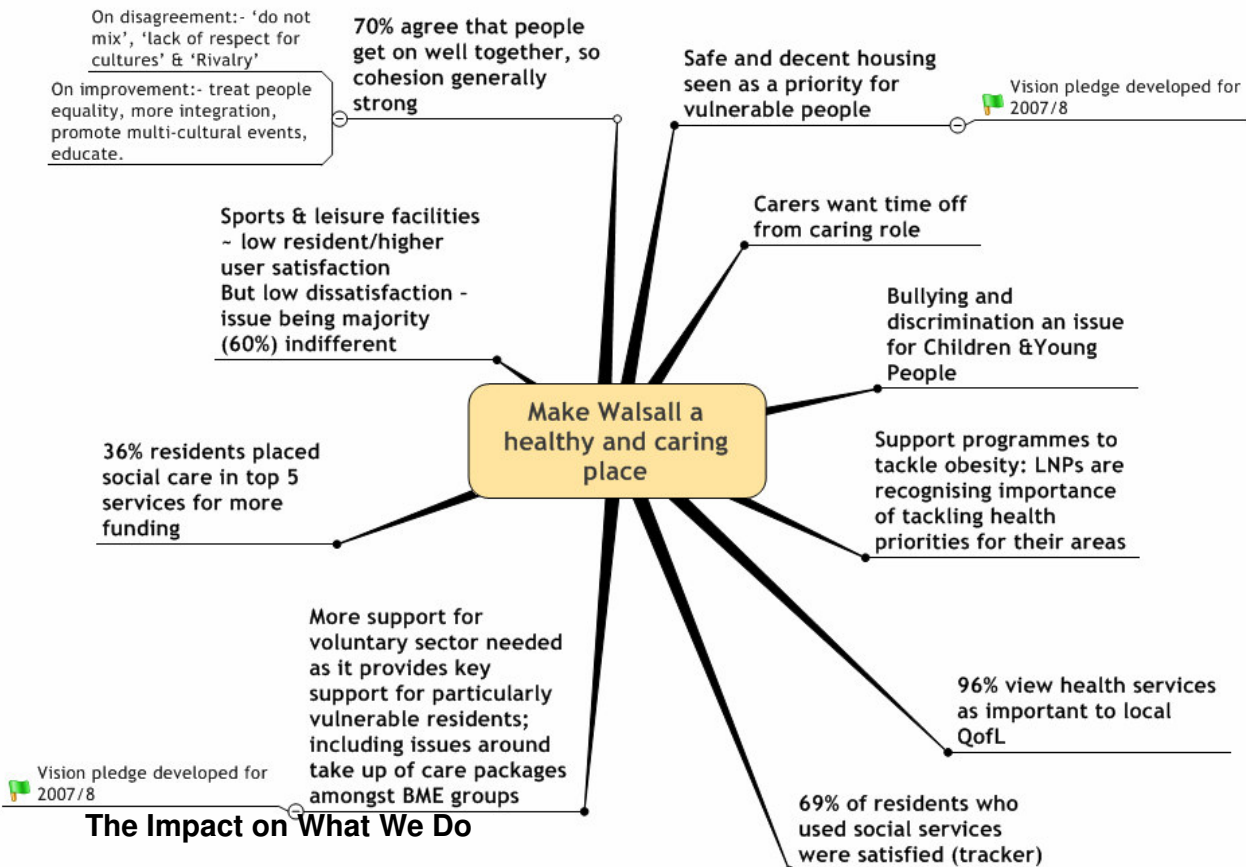
Our key strategic priorities within adult social care and housing are aimed at modernising services to enable older people and people with disabilities to remain independent in their own homes. This will ensure that people get a wider choice of services that are higher quality, more flexible and can be more individually tailored to their needs. To achieve this we will be:

- implementing a 4 year programme to re-provide our residential homes for older people and replacing them with extra care housing and other specialist facilities
- implementing a new community meals service
- ensuring that more homes meet the "decent homes" standard
- increasing the provision of major adaptations and continuing to reduce waiting lists for adaptations, occupational therapist assessments and equipment
- developing new services to meet the needs of people from black and ethnic minority communities
- redeveloping our learning disability day services

These plans can be found in our Joint Strategies and Joint Commissioning Plans for older people, mental health, physical and sensory impairments and learning disabilities, in our service plans and in the action plan for improving services for older people that was developed in response to the inspection of those services in May 2006.

We will be continuing to work closely with public health and our health partners to tackle health inequalities and obesity, and ensure that the council delivers improvements in line with the Health Inequalities Action Plan that the tPCT will be putting in place during 2007.

There will also be a major focus on encouraging healthier lifestyles through increasing physical activity and improved eating habits. This will start from our provision of healthier school meals through to creating interesting and non threatening programmes to enable people to take more exercise.

Encourage everyone to feel proud of Walsall

Figure 44: Map of cultural facilities in Walsall

Key
- New Art Gallery
- Leather Museum
- Libraries
- Parks

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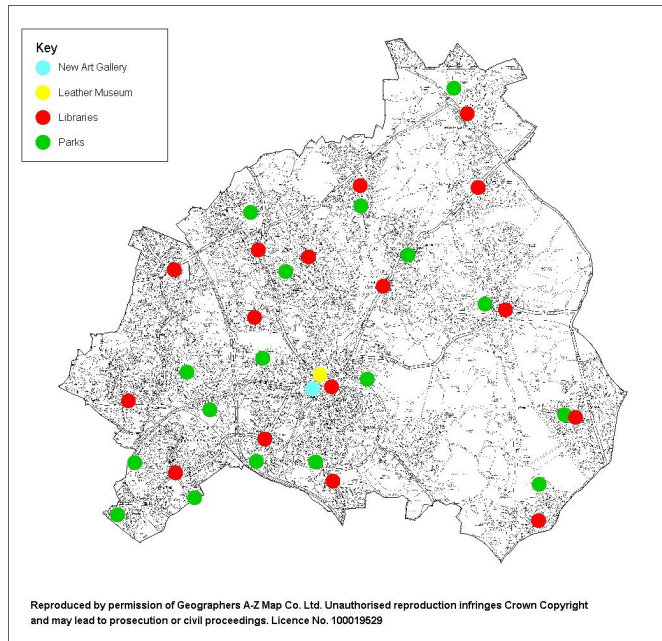
Walsall has a wide range of cultural assets evenly spread throughout the borough. The Leather Museum and the New Art Gallery are key landmarks which are associated with Walsall.

Figure 45: Museum, leisure and library activity

Visits to libraries, museums and leisure centres in Walsall have shown a significant increase over the last 2 to 3 years

Museums & Galleries (BV170a) Visits/Usages

2003/4	2004/5	2005/6
250,738	264,792	372,416

Library Visits

	2004/5	2005/6
	1,700,148	1,797,911

Leisure Centre Visits

	2003/4	2004/5	2005/6
	788,014	750,960	872,220

Library Active Borrowers

	2004/5	2005/6
	55,195	57,912
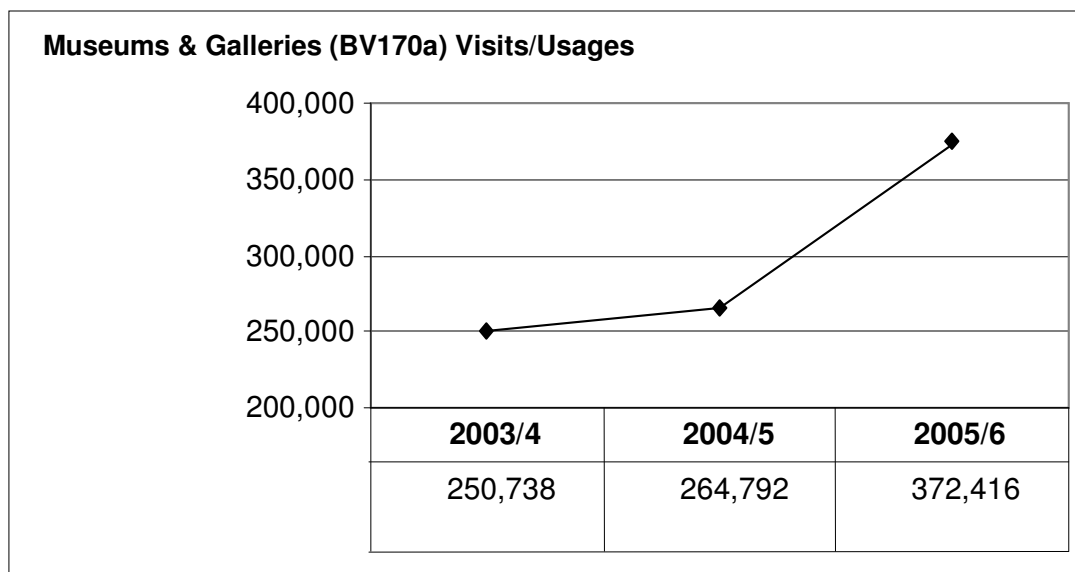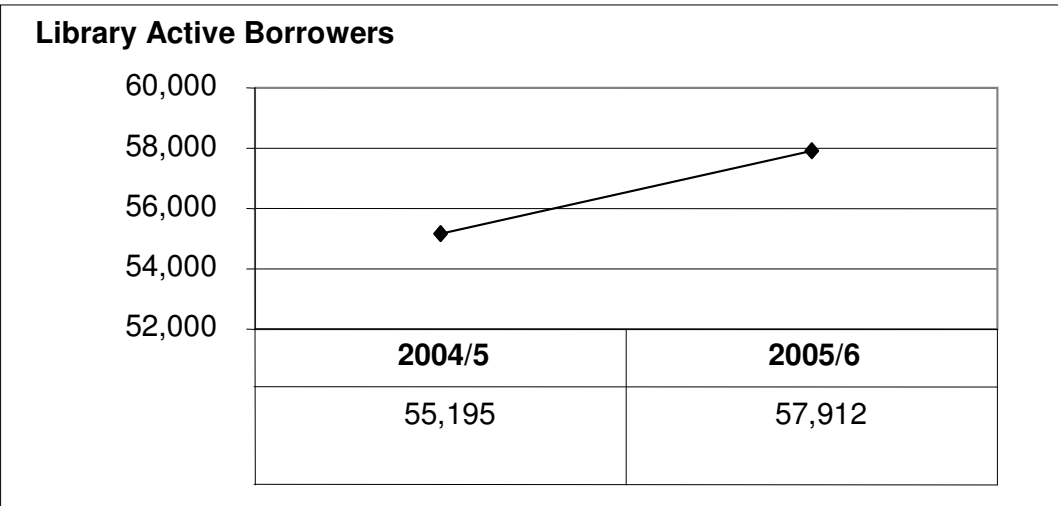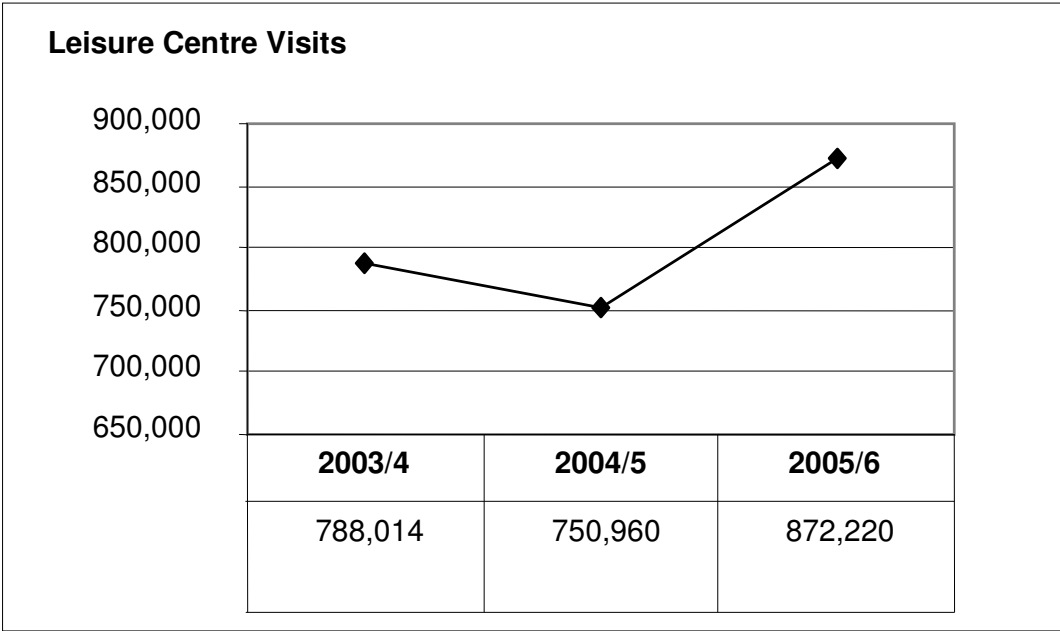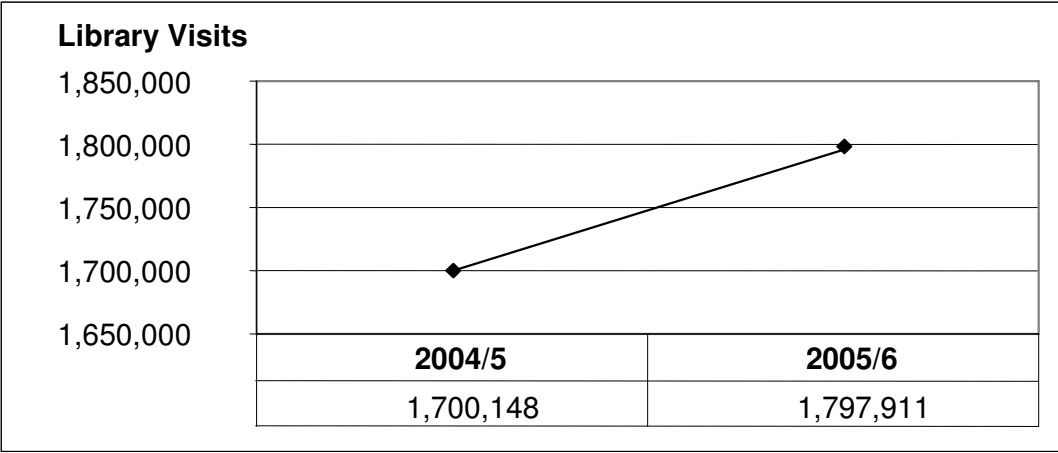
Within libraries in Walsall, the number of active borrowers has increased demonstrating that more people are actively using the libraries. This is borne out by the matching increase in library books issued.

Library Books Issues

2004/5	2005/6
1,380,425	1,409,716

What Local People Say

People value (top 3)
~Living near family/friends communities;
~Walsall's green spaces (esp 65+),
~Regional location and central accessibility.

Some communities feel marginalised and have a sense of lost identity. Residents also favour celebrating Walsall's history.

Vision pledge developed for 2007/8

Encourage everyone to feel proud of Walsall

Reasons favouring image as good
~Improvements are being made
~Service standards are good
~Good reputation/publicity
~Act promptly
~Word of mouth
~Street cleansing / refuse collection has improved (recycling)

Overall perception on Walsall image has improved (45% see good image)

72% local Neighbourhood satisfaction; strong (84%) sense of belonging

Local people want a say in how money is spent locally.

Vision pledge developed for 2007/8

The Impact on What We Do

The council must continue to engage local people in shaping its services. This has helped improve the image of the council in the eyes of residents and will help people feel proud of the Borough.

We are modernising the library service to ensure there are better buildings and services available to library users. We are one of the few authorities that meets all 10 of the national library standards and every time a library is improved or rebuilt membership levels improve rapidly.

The Greenspaces strategy commits the council to setting minimum standards for the quality and maintenance of parks and these will ensure that people can, once again, be proud of their open spaces. A major Heritage Lottery Fund bid will, if successful, restore the Arboretum to its former glory.

Past research indicates that as a Borough, Walsall is a fairly cohesive society; with 7 in 10 residents thinking their area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on and where people from different ethnic groups are respected. In addition, resident feelings towards Walsall and indeed their local area is very strong. 83% of respondents expressed a strong sense of belonging to their immediate neighbourhood and 84% to the borough of Walsall.

We are placing more emphasis on marketing Walsall as a place; a destination for inward investment, business, knowledge workers and tourism. A great deal of research has been done to inform a marketing strategy for the borough. The WBSP commissioned a study by Clarke Associates called 'Tipping the Balance' which identifies and quantifies awareness and perceptions among national and local audiences of Walsall.

We have already embarked on a number of initiatives aimed at promoting 'Pride in Walsall' including:

- Gateway signage and public art: e.g. Brownhills Miner, Palfrey Horse
- New civic quarter
- Celebrating and promoting our cultural heritage and facilities. Including for example; arts and events programme; New Art Gallery exhibitions, Walsall leather museum, Walsall Illuminations and the Forest Arts Centre.
- Walsall Pride newsletter circulated quarterly to all households across the borough.
- Civic Pride awards
- Library modernisation
- Town centre regeneration
- Empowering local communities through Local Neighbourhood Partnerships

Make it easier to access local services

Context and Needs

The planning service is responding to the needs of its customers and as well as meeting or exceeding national targets for speed of decision has invested time in the development of online service delivery so that customers can receive services from the comfort of their homes and offices.

Here is a list of the online services available:

Planning Portal: (www.planningportal.gov.uk)

- Online submission of Planning Application
- Priority registration for applications received online.
- Receive instant email notification on receipt of electronic applications.
- Pay on-line through a secure website.
- Paperless process.
- Pre application advice

Planning Interactive (www.walsall.gov.uk/planning)

- Search and view historic planning decisions
- List of live applications
- View the progress of live planning applications
- Digital interactive maps of planning applications
- Facility to view documents and plans
- Comment on individual planning applications
- View the appeals register
- View planning decisions on current live applications
- View planning registers including weekly lists
- Pre application advice

As customers become aware of the benefits of online planning services; so the proportion of applications submitted online is increasing.

Figure 46: Planning applications submitted on line April – December 2006
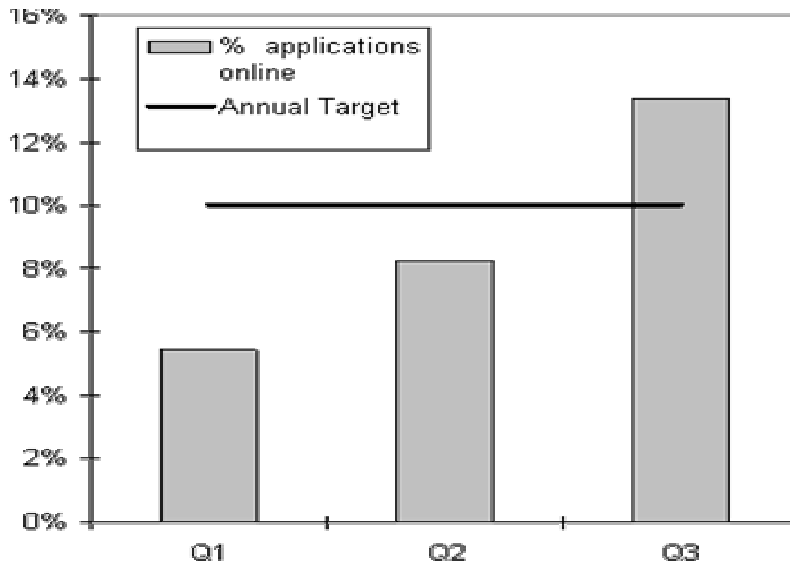
What Local People Say
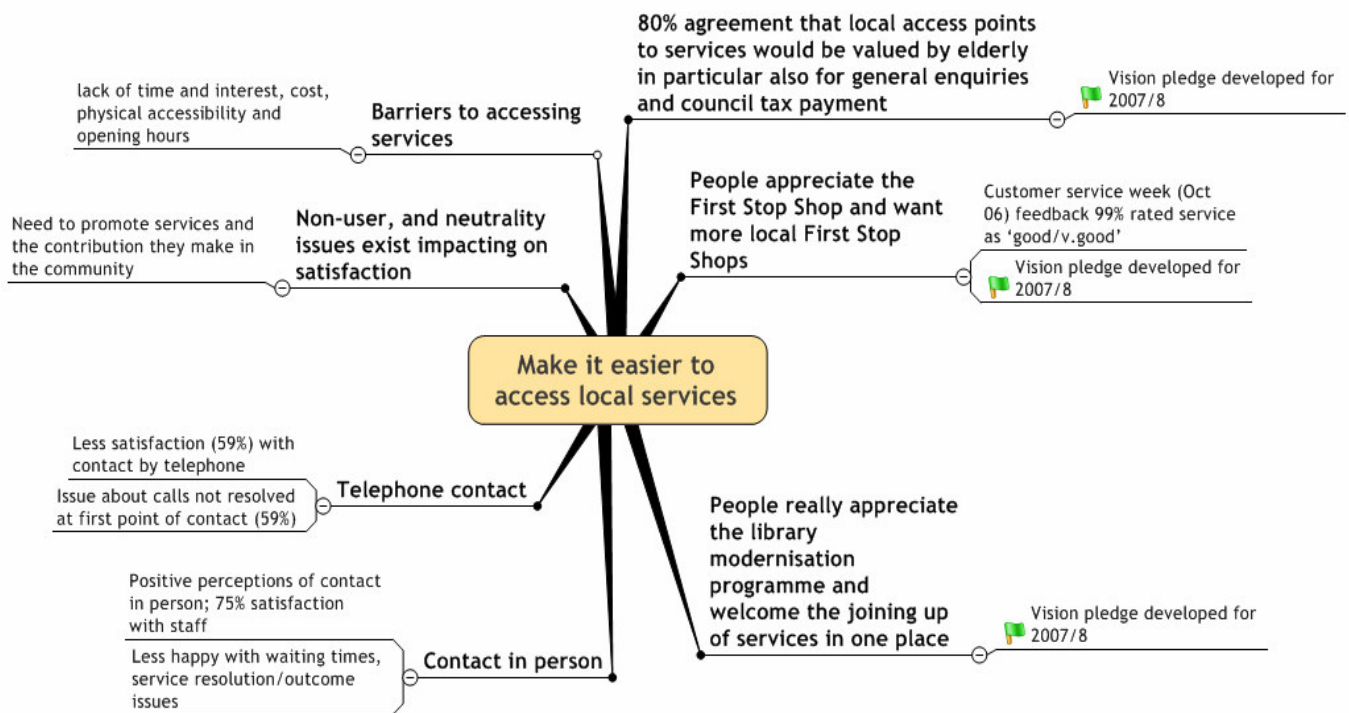
The Impact on What We Do

Walsall is relatively compact and can demonstrate a good spread of local services. Residents value making access to services easier.

Forming part of the new Civic Quarter the council transformed its Civic Centre First Stop Shop (FSS) in April 2005 and customer feedback is very positive. It brings together a large number of reception points and delivers a comprehensive range of services including; leisure, education, social services, benefits, planning, street pride, transportation and a banking hall for council tax and other payments. To date our customer care representatives have dealt with detailed enquiries from around 327,000 customers. On average we spend 11 minutes handling each enquiry although this ranges from less than 2 minutes for simple enquiries to 1 hour for complex enquiries (as at Qtr 3 2006/07). In addition, records available since April 2006 indicate an additional 22,500 casual callers i.e. visitors for meetings, internet users,

The number of customer enquiries dealt with through the FSS has steadily increased as awareness and popularity has grown and as more services are delivered there. We have started work on developing other service delivery channels for example call centre (opened December 2006), local access points and online.

Figure 47: FSS customer enquiries by quarter April 2005 – Dec 2006
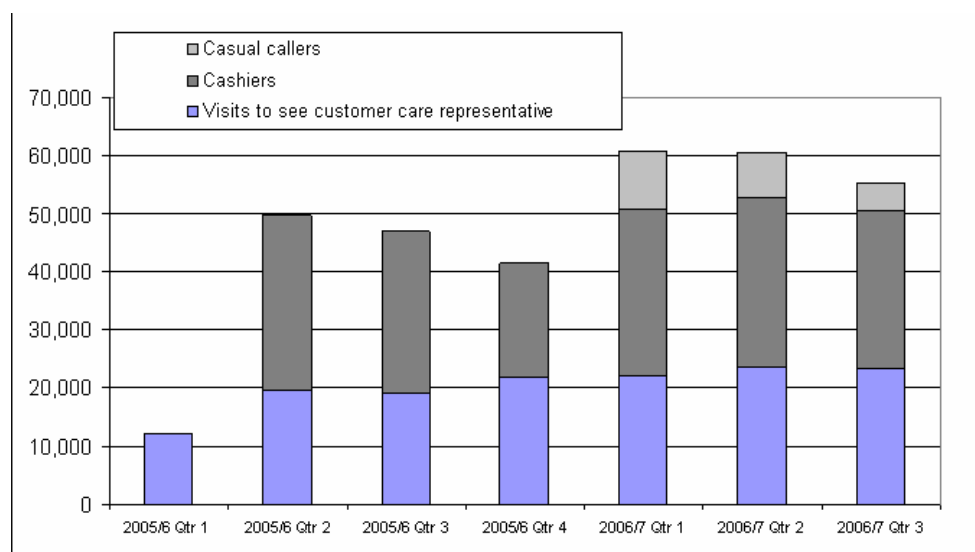
We will be developing a new contact centre or access team, to improve access to adult social care services, which will ensure that people get speedy advice and access to a community care assessment more quickly. We are also working with health partners to develop a joint approach to call handling and first contact which will also link to our plans to develop a Joint Urgent Care Centre.

We will also continue to invest in innovative ways to broaden access by residents and developers to our planning services, this will help ensure the service is increasingly responsive to the needs of applicants.

Strengthen the local economy

Context and Needs

Figure 48: Worklessness
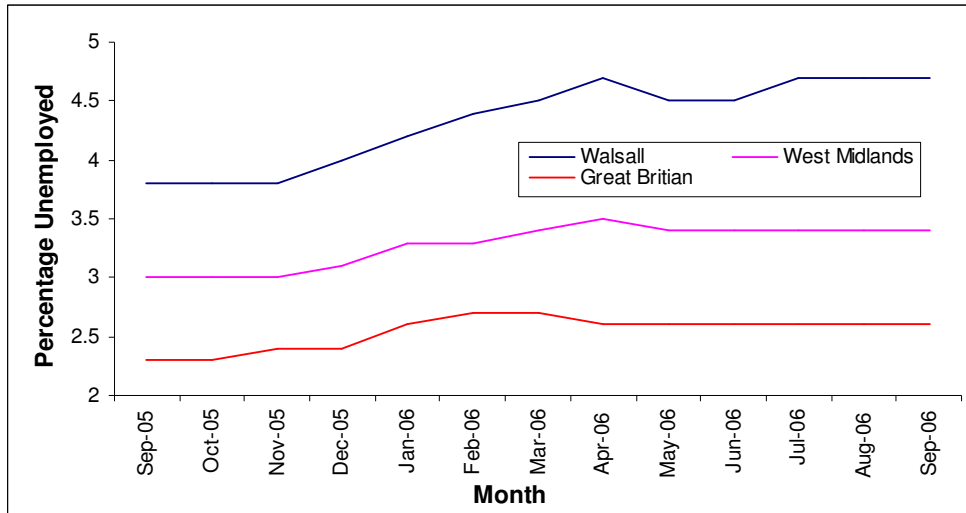
(Claimant count as proportion of resident working age population at Mid Year 2004)

59% of the population are of working age. 70.3% are in employment, 4.9% are unemployed and 24.8% are economically inactive. According to the latest Job Seekers Allowance claimant count data issued by the Office for National Statistics for August 2006, the claimant unemployment rate for Walsall stands at 4.7% a total of 7,008 claimants. This compares with 2.6% for Great Britain. Walsall's unemployment rate has been rising for the last twelve months; it is higher than the West Midlands and rates for Great Britain.

Figure 49: Map of worklessness
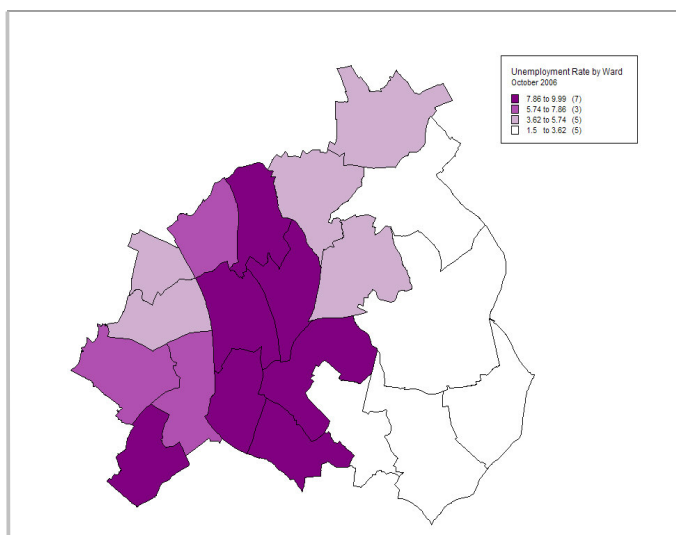
Worklessness is highest in the centre and South West of the Borough. High concentrations of unemployment remain in St Matthews ward with the rate at over twice the borough's average of 6.2%.

Walsall's rate of unemployment expressed as a proportion of the working population is higher than the national average but below the average for the Black Country.

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Figure 50: Employment by occupation Jan 2005 – Dec 2005
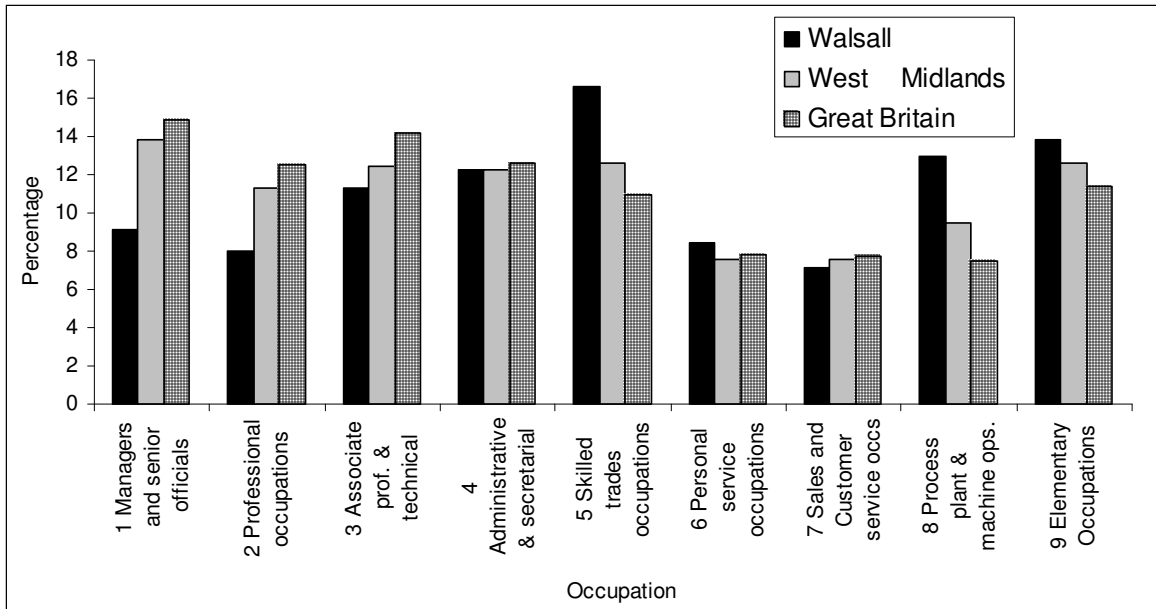
Walsall has high numbers of people in the sectors of skilled trade and plant/ manual/factory workers

Figure 51: Industry by size and type
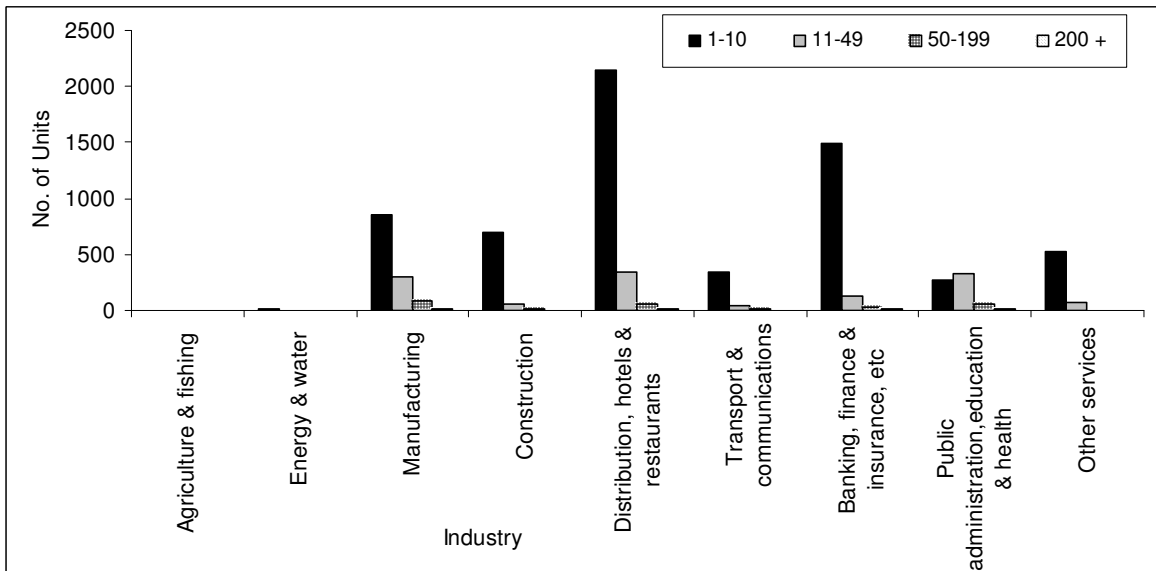
There are many small businesses in Walsall; particularly those relating to service industries (distribution, hotels, restaurants, transport, communications, banking, finance, insurance, public administration, education and health). There are a very small number of large firms, (only in manufacturing, distribution hotels and restaurants and public administration, education and health).

Figure 52: Average annual earnings 2005

Average Annual Earnings 2005
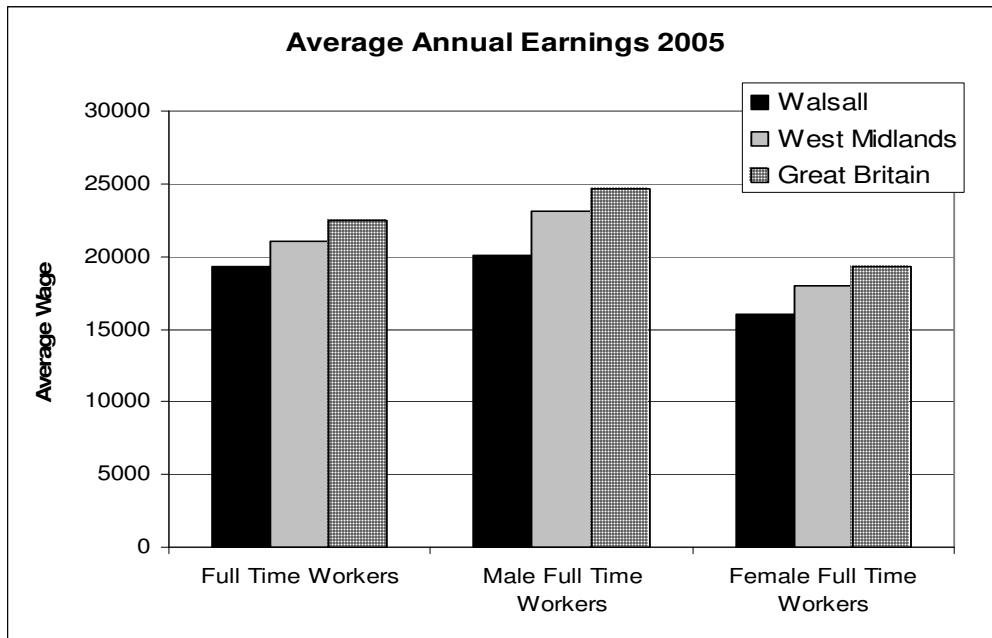
Wage rates in Walsall are lower than the West Midland average and the National average.

Figure 53: NVQ qualifications Jan 2005 – Dec 2005
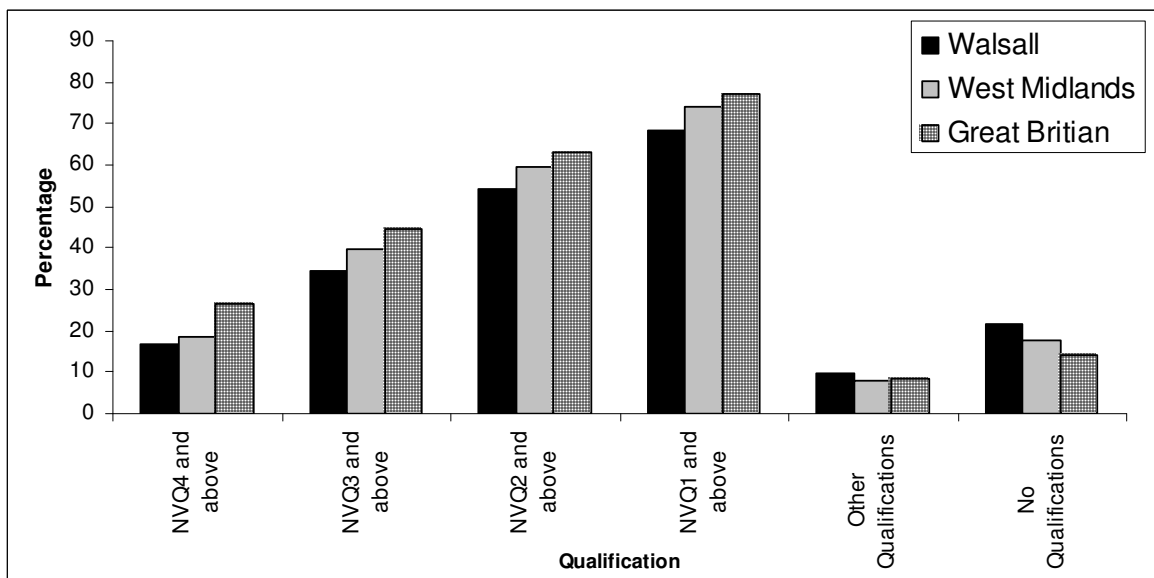
Walsall's qualifications are lower for all levels of NVQ. Walsall is higher than the West Midlands average and the national average in the percentage of people with no qualifications.

Figure 54: Education, skills and training domain
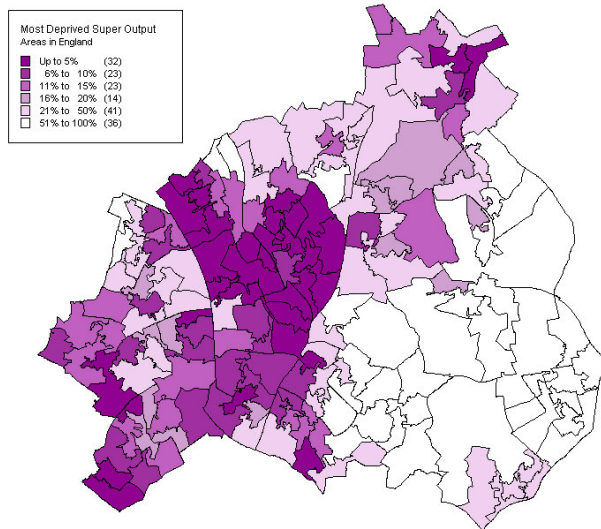
Levels of education, skills and training correspond to the areas of employment, income and areas of multiple deprivation.

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What Local People Say

Vision pledge developed for 2007/8

People welcome the regeneration improvements put in place i.e. town wharf, civic quarter; they see this as important to the local economy and welcome more.

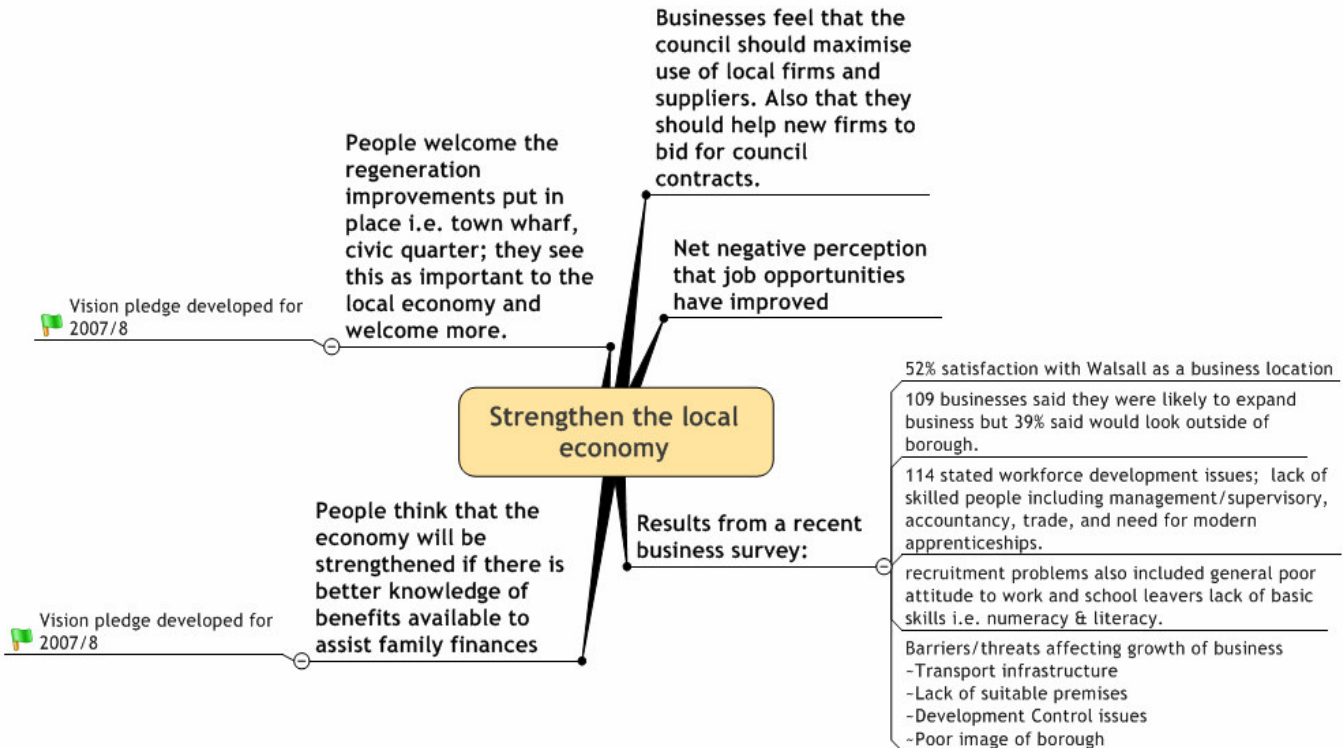Businesses feel that the council should maximise use of local firms and suppliers. Also that they should help new firms to bid for council contracts.

Net negative perception that job opportunities have improved

Strengthen the local economy

Vision pledge developed for 2007/8

People think that the economy will be strengthened if there is better knowledge of benefits available to assist family finances

Results from a recent business survey:

52% satisfaction with Walsall as a business location

109 businesses said they were likely to expand business but 39% said would look outside of borough.

114 stated workforce development issues; lack of skilled people including management/supervisory, accountancy, trade, and need for modern apprenticeships.

recruitment problems also included general poor attitude to work and school leavers lack of basic skills i.e. numeracy & literacy.

Barriers/threats affecting growth of business
-Transport infrastructure
-Lack of suitable premises
-Development Control issues
~Poor image of borough

The Impact on What We Do

The council must continue to work with Partners on its regeneration plans to strengthen the local economy. Local people will benefit from improved job opportunities and wage rates. The council can take steps to ensure that sites are made available for firms wanting to locate or expand in the area.

The People and Places perspective profile clearly supports the need to restructure and diversify the local economy, though stimulating enterprise and business growth in new sectors. This is turn will create new and better employment opportunities which increasingly need to be directed towards those communities where worklessness is highest. Walsall faces some significant challenges with regard to both the level and types of skills our citizens have, relative to the future needs of business.

The council and its partners will continue to work pro-actively to:

- Create the environment and infrastructure for new and existing businesses to grow and diversify, particularly in our key centres.
- Stimulate enterprise and business competitiveness, specifically increasing the levels of business start ups
- Address worklessness and skill levels, by connecting local people to new employment and employer influenced training opportunities.
- Maximising opportunities to attract sustainable levels of investment and funding

We will increasingly focus our collective efforts on addressing identified areas of need but also on areas or sectors that display the potential for growth.

Listen to what people want

Context and Needs

The council has undertaken a great deal of consultation activity over the past 12 months and we have worked hard to develop and improve the many different ways in which we listen to local people. We have sought resident views using many different approaches, ranging from traditional survey and focus group work to more unusual approaches including mystery shopper exercises, interactive displays and community modelling, 'Placecheck', visioning events and workshops.

We have amassed a great deal of information which has enabled us to critically assess our current performance and identify areas for further improvement, influencing future plans and budgets. Indeed this document clearly demonstrates how important we believe the people perspective is when undertaking community needs analysis.

Figure 55: Map of Walsall's Local Neighbourhood Partnership areas

The development of the 9 LNP areas in Walsall is an opportunity for local people to have a real say in the issues affecting their neighbourhood. The LNPs will identify what matters to people and prepare a plan for what needs to improve.

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What Local People Say
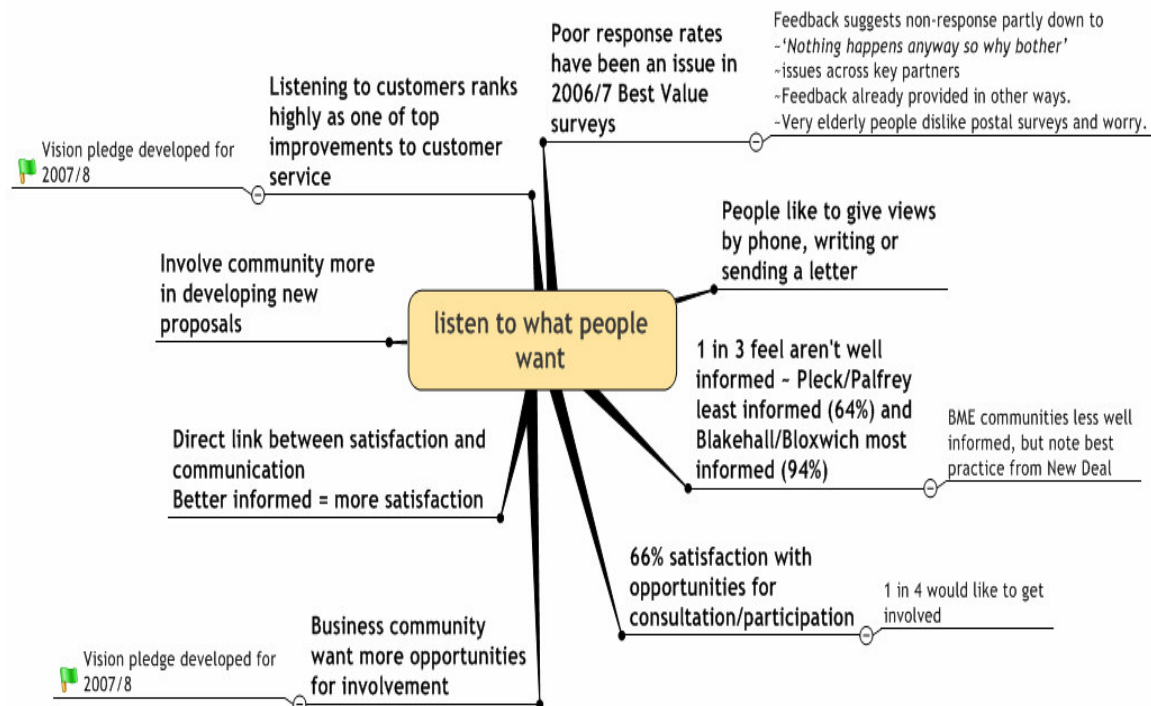
The Impact on What We Do

The council has recognised the need to understand, embrace and act upon the feedback of our citizens. We are constructively using this to design and implement service plans so that services and customer satisfaction improves. The resulting budget plan is a key part of the council's CIPPF.

We are underpinning this with a major project to improve the customer experience by further promoting customer focus and embedding excellent customer care into the everyday culture of the organisation. Over the past year we have also:

- Build upon our nine LNPs so that, working with residents, we develop local action plans to reflect local priorities
- Made full use of our citizens' panel of 1,250 residents, undertaking at least 3 further surveys providing strategic information on current issues and priorities
- Worked closely with our partners including community and voluntary organisations to roll out our Local Compact, which includes a set of updated consultation principles which support, complement and enhance our newly refreshed corporate consultation strategy.
- Implemented action plans to manage improvements identified through the 'tracker' survey of public satisfaction organised with the Department for Communities and Local Government to ensure that our services address the views and meet the expectations of residents and service users.
- Undertaken the third triennial 'Best Value' survey of resident satisfaction.
- Built upon the existing strong links with Youth Opinions Unite as the formal mechanism by which young people can be consulted regarding any issue that may impact directly or indirectly on their lives.

# Transform Walsall into an excellent local authority

Context and Needs

We recognise that the Council needs to continue to transform the way it delivers services and interacts with the community and partners, we also strive to continuously improve internal processes and key under-pinning elements of the corporate infrastructure. In January 2006 Cabinet endorsed a transformation and change programme that is delivering improvements to services. The programme is underpinned by a clear principle to improve the customer experience and ensure we meet customer needs for efficient and cost effective services.

The programme addresses a broad agenda which will continue to evolve. Success is being measured by both the tangible and less tangible; a mix of financial savings, performance improvement, process efficiency, improved community engagement, continuing inward investment all transforming the way in which services are delivered. Transformation will be embedded in every service team to ensure Walsall's Vision for the future lives and breathes at every level of the organisation.

The transformation programme aims to implement improvements across several services with particular focus on customer contact with the council. This will initially be achieved through the improvement and development of enabling infrastructure, including a call centre; improving the customer experience and giving staff the ability to respond more quickly and effectively to customer enquiries. A more efficient back office is also expected to release investment, which can be realigned with council priorities.

The programme also encompasses the ongoing corporate project "Improving the Customer Experience", which places our residents and service users at the heart of transformation, focussing effort on improving how we deal with customer contact.

What Local People Say
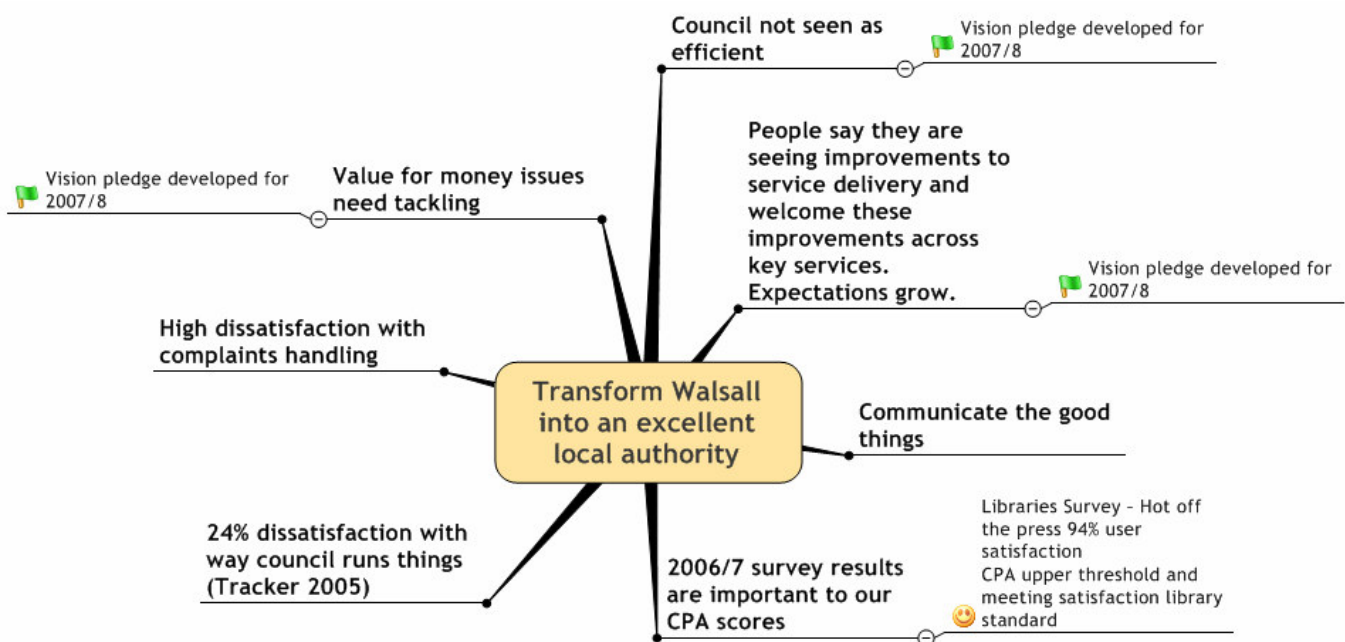
The impact on what we do

Our main determinants of excellence are customer satisfaction with our services and the views of our external regulators. The previous analysis has illustrated that customer satisfaction is improving, although we recognise we have more to do.

We have also worked hard using the frameworks set by external regulators to critically appraise our service delivery and infrastructure and use the rigors of the inspection approach to significantly improve across a range of factors.

The final summary in this document (**Figure 55**) demonstrates the current position compared with previous assessment outcomes, showing that our improvement journey so far has been independently positively viewed.

Figure 55

The council has a strong track record of improvement. The pace of change has been rapid and significant as demonstrated by CPA results between 2002 and 2006:

Measure	2002	2006
Overall CPA rating	"Worst council in the country " un-categorised ⟶	3★
Corporate Assessment	Special measures ⟶	3
Overall customer satisfaction	43% ⟶	54%*
BVPIs Top Two Quarters	29% ⟶	51%**
Education	Government Intervention ⟶	3***
Social Care Children	Government Intervention ⟶	3***
Social Care Adults	Government Intervention ⟶	2
Use of Resources	2 ⟶	3
Benefits	2 ⟶	2
Housing	Poor ⟶	4
Environment	Poor Service ⟶	4
Culture	2 ⟶	2

* adjusted for deprivation and compares 2003/4 to 2006/7
** comparison between 2003/4 and 2005/6
*** this is now a combined children and young people service

These improvements, as objectively measured, demonstrate that we have made significant progress on our "excellent council" agenda. We are now a self aware, outward looking, customer focused organisation with a track record of strong and sustained improvements. The pace of change has been rapid and significant.

A number of factors have contributed towards improved service delivery including our work to secure a comprehensive understanding of our community and incorporating this work into our overall planning processes. Data regarding demographics and residents' and partners' perceptions of the area, the council and our services enables services to be tailored to match the needs and requirements of our citizens and other key stakeholders. The work to refine and develop our customer feedback processes will continue because it is an essential aspect our continuous service improvement agenda.

We are committed to delivering good and improving services. This document demonstrates how the council's vision and ten priorities that lie within it remain relevant and enable key issues for partners, citizens and other stakeholders to be addressed within the strategic framework of the council.