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COUNCIL

24 JUNE 2015

At the meeting of Watford Borough Council held at the Town Hall, Watford on Wednesday, 24th June, 2015.

Present: Chairman (Councillor K Hastrick)
The Mayor (D Thornhill)

Councillors Bashir, Bell, Bolton, I Brown (for minute numbers 23 to 32), J Brown (for minute numbers 23 to 32), Collett, Connal, Counter, Derbyshire, Dhindsa, Ewudo, Haley, Hofman, Johnson, Joynes, Khan, Martins, Mauthoor, Mehta, Mills, Rindl, Rogers, Scudder, Shah, Sharpe, Silver, Taylor, Turmaine, Walford, Watkin, Whitman, S Williams and T Williams

Also present: Freemen of the Borough, Mavis Tyrwhitt and Norman Tyrwhitt

Officers: Managing Director
Head of Democracy and Governance
Communications and Engagement Section Head
Town Centre Manager (for minute numbers 20 to 31)
Democratic Services Manager
Member Development and Civic Officer (for minute numbers 20 to 31)
Committee and Scrutiny Officer

20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Crout and Topping.

21 DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

There were no disclosures of interest.

22 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 2015 were submitted and signed.

OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mrs Sheila Jones

The Chairman informed Council of the death of Mrs Sheila Jones, who had been the Civic Mayor in 2002/03 and a Councillor from 1988-1996 and 1997-2004. Mrs Jones had passed away on Sunday 21 June. The Chairman had written to the family expressing the Council's condolences. She invited everyone to stand and observe a minute's silence in memory of Mrs Jones.

Councillor Mehta, the Mayor and Councillor Bell all paid tribute to Mrs Jones on behalf of their groups.

Audentior Awards

The Chairman announced that the nomination period for the Audentior Awards was open. Nominations should be submitted by 7 July. The link had been forwarded to all Councillors and was available on the Council's website.

Armed Forces Day

The Chairman advised that on Monday she had raised the flag outside the Town Hall to promote Armed Forces Day. On Saturday she would be attending an event with the Royal British Legion to mark the day.

Big Events

The Chairman stated that the Big Festival had started on 20 June and would run until 4 July. Most events were free and the majority took place in the Parade. She asked Members to go along and support the shows.

MAYOR'S REPORT

A report of the Mayor had been circulated with the agenda.

The Chairman invited Members to indicate whether they wished to ask a question of the Mayor. Councillors Bashir, Bolton, Haley, Turmaine, Connal, Khan, S Williams, Silver, Rogers, Shah and Bell indicated that they wished to ask questions.

- a) Councillor Bashir congratulated the Mayor on her sponsored fast in aid of the Watford Youth Centre. He hoped that it had not been too taxing. She had raised money for a worthy cause.

Councillor Bashir said that his question related to the Croxley Rail Link. He welcomed the progress that had been made. He asked the Mayor if she could update Council on whether there was any progress on securing the future of Watford Metropolitan line station

The Mayor said that she had fasted for a full 24 hours as she had not been aware that she could get up in the night and eat. She added that she had read about it and it had helped in understanding the benefits of fasting, which was relevant for all religions. She advised that she had raised a few thousand pounds for the Tolpits Lane centre. All funds helped the group to reach their final total.

The Mayor informed Council that the Croxley Rail Link should now be referred to as the extension of the Metropolitan line. All works were on track although there had been some slippage in the timetable, which for the size of the project was inevitable and was allowed for in the plan. Since the first day, Transport for London and the County Council felt that the closure of the Watford Metropolitan station was the price to be paid in order to benefit the rest of Watford. In carrying out a critical analysis of the cost benefit of the proposal put forward, the Mayor said she had made it work. They had not assumed the station would have to close. Park Ward Councillors had worked hard on this topic and continued to do so. She would continue to try to persuade those in charge to find a way to retain the station, particularly at peak times.

- b) Councillor Bolton asked if the Mayor was as shocked as he was following the recent announcement by the County Council to cut funding to the exceptional work of Home-Start. This would leave needy families having to be supported by Children's Centres, who were already very busy and may lack some of the skills required to deal with the complex issues of some families.

The Mayor responded that she was not really shocked by the announcement, but she was disappointed. She said that the local government cuts were starting to bite. The Local Government Association had carried out a full critique of how councils had been affected by the cuts. It had shown that districts had fared the best and shire counties had fared the worst. She advised that she understood the position the County Council was in. However, she questioned whether the County Council had made the right decision to cut the budget, which was relatively small in comparison with the County Council's overall budget. She did not feel the County Council had made the right decision. The County Council stated that the Children's Centres were a service that provided practical support to young families. She found this to be patronising and was concerned the County Council did not understand the organisation's work. Home-Start worked with those families who did not engage with Children's Centres. If Members spoke to Children's Centres they would be informed that the Centres found that getting to the hard to reach families was their biggest challenge. However, Home-Start was usually able to reach these families, as the group was not considered to be 'officialdom'; it was not part of Social Services. They were volunteers who were trained. They gave up to three hours practical support each week to each family. It was delivered cost effectively. 120 families were supported, who tended not to engage. They were troubled families, which had been a

successful initiative from the Coalition Government. The initiative referred to Home-Start. Health visitors referred families to Home-Start. This was not a 'do good' organisation. It met the hard to reach and challenging families. The Mayor stated that she would be meeting Emma, Home-Start's Chief Executive, to discuss the organisation's future plans.

The Mayor reiterated that she was not shocked by the cut in funding. She feared that the worst was to come. There was to be an emergency budget in the near future and she questioned what might be included in it. The Government had ring fenced many budgets in their election promises that local government would undoubtedly be affected. The way Watford Borough Council had managed its budget, she considered that Watford residents had not noticed any changes. However, she was fearful of what was to come.

- c) Councillor Haley stated that he considered the Mayor had painted too rosy a picture of antisocial behaviour in Watford and questioned whether she lived in the same town as the residents and himself. He gave details of recently reported statistics. He referred to a local vicar who had reported to him numerous incidents of antisocial behaviour and criminal activities taking place within the church grounds or surrounding area. He said that residents in his ward were fed up with a complacent council and asked what action the Mayor would be taking.

The Mayor said she was staggered by the confrontational manner of the question. All Central Ward Councillors were concerned about antisocial behaviour in the ward. It was not about complacency. Father David had already spoken to the Police. The majority of incidents were not antisocial behaviour but criminal behaviour. In those cases it was the responsibility of neighbourhood policing. Ward Councillors needed to work with the neighbourhood police to establish priorities. She referred to discussions about the removal of a phone box.

The Mayor said that she did not paint a rosy picture; she painted a realistic picture of what was happening in the town. The 19% reported increase in crime was due to the way crime was reported. Previously for example an incident involving 10 people was reported as one crime, now it was reported as 10 crimes. It was accepted by all Council Leaders across the country that there would be an increase in crime until such time as all incidents were recorded in the same way. The criminal damage could be traced to one person and the Police was dealing with this.

The Mayor commented that she did not recognise the Councillor's description of that area of Central Watford. She was recently in that area and had commented that it was a nice place to live. If there were issues in the area around the church the neighbourhood team should be dealing with them. Ward Councillors needed to be in contact with the team and asking what was being done.

- d) Councillor Turmaine had noted in the Mayor's report about the Big Events programme, which everyone was looking forward to. He asked if she could explain what was being done to ensure that the extra footfall coming to the events in the Town Centre would benefit the market.

The Mayor responded that the market needed to sell itself. The Council could bring the footfall to the town and that was one of the objectives of the Big Events. This would increase secondary spend, which should benefit the bars, restaurants and market. Footfall counters had been introduced in the town. One had been placed to enable the counting of people through the market. The recent count had been 11,000 people per week. It was then up to the traders to encourage people to stop and buy.

- e) Councillor Connal made reference to the creation of jobs connected to the Charter Place redevelopment. She asked whether it would be possible to guarantee the jobs for local Watford people.

The Mayor said it was not possible; it would be lovely if all employment law could be ignored and only people from Watford could be employed. No one was able to do that. In the contracts controlled by the Council and working with partners, companies were encouraged to use local supply chains and local people. It would be illegal to insist a company had to employ people from Watford. The Mayor stated that unemployment was minimal. The NEETS, those young people not in employment, education or training, was the lowest in the country. The town's statistics were well below the national average and that for the East of England. However, the creation of jobs was still paramount, as it kept the town vibrant. There were two prestigious companies who wanted to move to Watford. This would be a good news story for the town. Some of the jobs would go to local people. The jobs were not all low skilled. It was important to offer jobs with a range of skills. The Mayor added that it was the Council's role for the town to be open for business, assuring business that it was a business friendly town.

- f) Councillor Khan asked the Mayor, following the General Election, whether she still wanted to continue with her 'second preference job'.

The Mayor responded that of course she was happy to continue as Mayor. If he was asking if she was ready to retire, she stated she was not. She confirmed that she wanted to continue to serve Watford and continue the work already started.

- g) Councillor S Williams said that this was the third time he had asked a question about the market. He asked the Mayor whether she had visited the market since the heaters had been installed and if they were working.

The Mayor informed Council that the footfall counters showed an increase from 8,000 visitors to 11,000. She confirmed that she visited the market. She stated that she received a few positive emails about the market over the last week. They had been from younger people and one from a Council employee. She had been stopped in the Town Centre and told the heaters were working. There was still some work to be done. For example whether the food stalls were staining the pavement and if they should be outside some of the shops. However, it seemed to be moving in the right direction. She had received a text from someone to say that part of town was 'buzzing'. There were definite signs of improvement. The Liberal Democrat Councillors who were pro-markets would not let the situation rest. Everyone wanted it to be a success story, unfortunately it had taken longer than she would have hoped.

- h) Councillor Silver asked the Mayor if she could clarify how she knew all 150 calls were spurious, as referenced in her antisocial behaviour update.

The Mayor suggested that it might be useful for the antisocial behaviour officer to talk to Members, particularly those newly elected, to remind everyone of their role. The Mayor advised that the Council worked with the Housing Trust and Police. They responded to every call and investigated the matter. In this particular case one person had been identified as making the vindictive calls. Every call was logged and therefore counted.

The Mayor commented that the questions from the two new councillors had made her realise that all Members needed reassurance about how antisocial behaviour was dealt with. If that was not reflected in the reality of wards then it would be necessary to see what was happening. There were the Police and the Council and Trust's antisocial behaviour officers that could be contacted. No case should take longer than required to acquire the evidence for the case. This could be challenging for residents as they wanted problems to be stopped immediately.

- i) Councillor Rogers said that his question was about the insulation work at Magpie Place in Boundary Way. The work had caused a great deal of mess and problems. In 2013 residents had been advised it would take three months; it had now taken over a year and the work was still not finished. For years he had written to the Mayor's colleagues about residents' complaints and concerns about outstanding snagging items. The pointing at properties in Magpie Place was a mess and was not water-tight. All works needed to be done again properly. However, the new pointing in Lapwing Place was perfect. The residents in Magpie Place had had their properties devalued compared to those in Lapwing Place.

Councillor Rogers stated that he had discovered that the Council held £48,000 for retention and to rectify the work in Magpie Place, however

as yet no snagging work had been done. He questioned why residents were still living with the mess when the Council could have helped them years ago.

The Mayor commented that she assumed this was a Watford Community Housing Trust matter. She understood it affected two properties. She suggested that if Councillor Rogers wanted her to raise the matter with the Trust she would. If the money was held for works as mentioned, it was probably not held by the Council. She was unaware of the Council holding money in trust for the Housing Trust. She felt this was a matter between the tenants and Housing Trust, but she was happy to follow up on the matter. The Mayor advised that Councillor Collett may have further information which she would provide after the meeting.

- j) Councillor Shah informed the Mayor that following the incident in the Town Centre the previous week, she had been approached by residents and the presidents from the three Mosques in the town. Due to Ramadan the Mosques stayed open until the early hours of the morning. She had approached the Police and raised her concerns. The Police had reassured her that would provide extra patrols around all three Mosques. Councillor Shah asked what action the Mayor had taken on this issue.

The Mayor explained that when there was a major incident the responsibility lay with the Police and the Council's major partners. Her role was to ascertain that a community impact assessment was done. She had been reassured by the Police that extra patrols had been provided not only around the Mosques, but also to churches and other places of worship. She had been informed that key people in the community had been notified. The Mayor said that it was important that the Police had quickly made it clear that racial hatred was not a motivation. She had been also relieved when she had been advised that device had not been viable. If either of those circumstances has been true then Councillors would have been informed; the Police were good at keeping Members informed. When she had spoken to people in the community they had not been over frightened or over concerned. The Police were good at keeping everyone informed.

- k) Councillor Bell stated that his question related to principles and u-turns. he had noted the Mayor's comments on park and ride and how she seemed to have changed her views since 2002. At that time the Liberal Democrats had been against it. He referred to a Liberal Democrat leaflet which stated that the Liberal Democrats were campaigning for a 'No' vote on the Mayoral referendum. He questioned whether there were any other policies where she would do a u-turn.

The Mayor responded that with regard to mayoral powers, prior to the referendum it had not been clear how the checks and balances within the Council would work. It was an untried system; different to London.

Liberal Democrats were suspicious of the power held by the Mayor and how they would be held to account. However, the system appeared to work. The checks and balances were done by the non-executive councillors. The call-in process was available. She felt that if there was a democratic deficit in local government it was at the Police and Crime Commissioner level. There was no holding the Commissioner to account. There was no equivalent of call-in. She added that both she and Ken Livingstone had campaigned against the role of elected mayor and then carried out that role.

In response to the comments about park and ride, the Mayor said the Councillor's comments were a travesty. He had been referring to land that was located within Hertsmere Borough Council. The Liberal Democrats had not believed that locating the park and ride scheme within sight of the Harlequin would encourage people to leave their cars. If a park and ride was to be successful, it needed to be located sufficiently far enough away and the car journey in so difficult that people then wanted to use the park and ride. The reference had been to a specific proposal in a specific location. In terms of the principle of park and ride, the Portfolio Holder for Planning had done a great deal of research and wanted the mayor to look into sites for a park and ride scheme. The Mayor stated that sites had been sought for a scheme. The problem was that any sites suitable to help Watford's congestion were located within neighbouring authorities. None of the authorities were happy to help with a solution. This was absolutely not a u-turn. If there were to be a giant car park on the outskirts of Watford of course she should try to negotiate a scheme and help relieve the congestion along Hempstead Road.

25 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER COUNCIL
PROCEDURE RULE 10.0**

The Chairman reported that a question had been received from Councillor Bell.

The question and response were circulated at the meeting and are attached to the minutes as Appendix 1.

26 **QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC UNDER COUNCIL
PROCEDURE RULE 11.0**

Council was informed that questions had been received from Sara Jane Trebar and Andrew Moore. The questions and answers are attached to the minutes as Appendix 2.

27 **PETITIONS PRESENTED UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 12.0**

No petitions had been received.

28 **BUSINESS ESPECIALLY BROUGHT FORWARD BY THE CHAIRMAN OR THE HEAD OF PAID SERVICE WHICH IN THE OPINION OF THE CHAIRMAN SHOULD BE CONSIDERED AS A MATTER OF URGENCY.**

There was no urgent business.

29 **MOTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 13.0**

Council was informed that one motion had been received.

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Khan and seconded by Councillor Bashir –

“We call upon Watford Borough Council to ensure that burial provision is provided in Watford cemeteries on weekends and bank holidays from this year. This is to ensure that the service meets the needs of all residents of Watford and that a distressful time is not made worse by a delay in burials.”

The following amendment was moved by Mayor Thornhill and seconded by Councillor Sharpe –

“That the motion as printed be referred to the Cabinet to consider when it receives the report and recommendations from the current cemeteries review.”

Members debated the motion and amendment.

The amendment was put to Council.

In accordance with paragraph 18.4, Part 4 Rules of Procedures of the Council’s Constitution, the requisite number of Councillors demanded a named vote.

Those Members voting in favour of the amendment:

Chairman Councillor Hastrick, Mayor Thornhill, Councillors Bolton, I Brown, J Brown, Collett, Counter, Derbyshire, Hofman, Johnson, Martins, Rindl, Scudder, Sharpe, Taylor, Walford, Watkin and T Williams

Those Members voting against the amendment

Councillors Bashir, Bell, Connal, Dhindsa, Ewudo, Haley, Joynes, Khan, Mauthoor, Mehta, Mills, Rogers, Shah, Silver, Turmaine, Whitman and S Williams

The amendment was **AGREED** by 18 votes to 17.

On being put to Council the substantive motion was **AGREED**.

RESOLVED –

We call upon Watford Borough Council to ensure that burial provision is provided in Watford cemeteries on weekends and bank holidays from this year. This is to ensure that the service meets the needs of all residents of Watford and that a distressful time is not made worse by a delay in burials.

That the motion as printed be referred to the Cabinet to consider when it receives the report and recommendations from the current cemeteries review.

30 **THE LOCAL AUTHORITIES (STANDING ORDERS) (ENGLAND)
(AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2015**

Council received a report of the Head of Democracy and Governance setting out requirements to amend the procedure rules relating to the dismissal of the Council's statutory officers in order to comply with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2015.

RESOLVED –

that the Council Procedure Rules relating to the appointment and dismissal of Chief Officers as attached at appendix 1 to the report be approved.

31 **BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT BUSINESS PROPOSAL AND
DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN**

Council received a report of the Managing Director which outlined Watford Town Centre Partnership's proposals for the creation of a Watford Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID).

RESOLVED –

that Council ratifies the BID business proposal attached as appendix 1 to the report and authorises the Returning Officer to conduct a ballot of eligible non domestic rate payers within the proposed BID area.

32 **REVIEW OF WARD BOUNDARIES**

Council received a report of the Head of Democracy and Governance informing Members of the deliberations of the Boundary Review Group, which had met on three occasions in June.

The Chairman advised that she would be, with the agreement of Council, suspending standing orders to enable each mover to have up to 10 minutes to present their Group's proposals.

Councillors Mehta, for the Conservative Group, Councillor Khan, for the Labour Group, and Councillor Sharpe, for the Liberal Democrat Group, presented their proposals. The proposals are attached as Appendices 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

Members were then invited to vote on each submission.

On being put to Council, the Conservative submission, Appendix 3 to these minutes, was LOST.

On being put to Council, the Labour submission, Appendix 4 to these minutes, was LOST.

On being put to Council, the Liberal Democrat submission, Appendix 5 to these minutes, was AGREED.

RESOLVED –

that the Liberal Democrat proposal, attached as Appendix 5 to these minutes, be forwarded to the Boundary Commission as Watford Borough Council's submission on the review of Ward Boundaries.

Chairman

The Meeting started at 7.30 pm
and finished at 9.55 pm

QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL UNDER PROCEDURAL RULE 10.0 COUNCIL – 24 June 2015

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLOR NIGEL BELL

Received on 19.06.15

1. I would like to know what has happened about the proposal by the Mayor to 'match-fund' up to £100,000 for a Community Centre in Tolpits Lane?
How much has been raised so far?

As part of the budget approved by Cabinet in January 2015 and Budget Council (minute 58) it was agreed to make an addition to the capital programme to allow for matched funding support for community centres. The two projects in current contemplation are the Meriden community centre (matched funding the WFC Trust's Sport England and Veolia Env Trust bids) and the Muslim Youth centre (matched funding part of their community fundraising). As of at the end of April the Muslim Youth Centre trustees confirmed they had raised £50k. In respect of the Muslim Community Centre the Mayor has agreed to make a contribution of up to £100k towards development costs of the new centre. Such funding in all cases would be against agreed KPIs relating to delivery of the project.

For more information please contact: Manny Lewis
Ext: 8185

Question by members of the public under Council Procedure Rule 11.0

- 1) Sara Jane Trebar asked the following question –

“Now Watford Council is more politically balanced after the recent local elections should councillors consider debating the retention of an elected mayor past 2018 and to give Watford residents a yes/no vote alongside the full local council elections in 2016?”

The following answer was provided by Councillor Watkin –

“We think it is better for the council to focus on how best to provide services to the public and keep Watford as a successful town rather than looking inwards to our own constitutional arrangements. In our experience the issues that the public wish the council to debate are the services it provides that affect their daily lives, such as refuse collection or parks and playgrounds, and how it can work to ensure our town retains a thriving local economy and is a good place to live in.

The mayoral system is designed to cope with all potential compositions of the council chamber. There are examples in other authorities of the mayor’s party having an overwhelming majority of councillors, of an independent mayor who is not backed by any political group, and almost all situations in between. Therefore I don’t believe the make-up of the council has any direct bearing on the mayoral system.

There are provisions in the 2007 Local Government Act for instigating a referendum. Whether or not one is held and whatever its outcome, constitutionally the mayoral system would remain at least until the end of the current Mayor’s term of office. If the mayoral system continues, the people of Watford will in 2018 be able to choose who they consider the best person for the job, which may be a representative of any political party or none – that is the great thing about democracy.”

Sara Jane Trebar asked a supplementary question to which Councillor Watkin replied.

2) Andrew Moore asked the following question –

“In response to a recent question raised by Councillor Bell at the full council meeting in March 2015 in relation to allotment applications, Paul Rabbitt’s stated “that there had not been a steady decline in allotment applications year on year since 2009”. As Mr Rabbitt’s did not produce any information to substantiate this statement, please can he provide the total number of allotment applications by calendar year from the beginning 2009 to the end of 2014.

The following answer was provided by Councillor Scudder –

“The number of applications received for allotments since 2008 is

Year	No. of applications
2008	213
2009	340
2010	199
2011	136
2012	150
2013	155
2014	128
2015 to date	112

These figures show a significant rise from 2008 to 2009, a decline in 2010 and 2011 followed by increases in 2012 and 2013. A subsequent decrease in 2014 was expected as the council focused on delivery of the £810k allotment investment programme. However, we are already seeing a significant increase in applications in 2015, already outstripping this time last year and these applications are generating a significant number of new allotment holders.

However the main measure of how well Watford’s allotments are performing is through occupancy rates – that is how many people have taken up an allotment tenancy. Occupancy rates have consistently increased over the years. These were 66% in 2002, 89% in 2006, 91% in 2011 and 93% at present. As Mr Rabbitts said the number of applications fluctuates annually and is not a good reflection of actual uptake – while people might apply this does not necessarily follow through to taking up a tenancy.”

Andrew Moore asked a supplementary question to which Councillor Scudder replied.

Electoral data

Watford Borough Council

15 June 2015: Watford Borough Council requested the use of a revised set of existing electorate figures taking into account the latest canvas of electors. The Council argued that these figures were more accurate than those originally published as they take into account the impact of Individual Elector Registration. The Commission has considered the Council's request and concurs that these figures are the most accurate available. These figures supersede those previously published.

Scroll right to see the second table

Polling district	Description of area	Parish	Parish ward	Grouped parish council	Existing ward	01/06/15	2020
AA					Woodside	2,107	2,203
AB					Woodside	1,044	1,093
AC					Woodside	2,441	2,557
BA					Stanborough	1,797	1,898
BB					Stanborough	1,659	1,735
BC					Stanborough	2,115	2,215
CA					Meriden	439	459
CB					Meriden	2,720	2,846
CC					Meriden	2,963	3,104
DA					Leggatts	2,582	2,707
DB					Leggatts	1,977	2,077
DC					Leggatts	1,524	1,594
EA					Callowland	1,380	1,443
EB					Callowland	2,365	2,481
EC					Callowland	1,983	2,464
FA					Tudor	739	774
FB					Tudor	3,382	3,537
FC					Tudor	660	1,075
GA					Nascot	1,856	1,942
GB					Nascot	4,736	5,039
HA					Central	684	866
HB					Central	2,017	2,359
HC					Central	1,399	1,488
HD					Central	1,633	1,914
HE					Central	1,077	1,149

Conservative Group Submission

IA				Park	3,324	3,500
IB				Park	2,746	2,872
JA				Vicarage	2,693	2,869
JB				Vicarage	1,833	1,925
JC				Vicarage	1,473	2,849
KA				Holywell	4,164	4,630
KB				Holywell	2,350	2,475
LA				Oxhey	2,543	2,676
LB				Oxhey	2,916	3,106

Correction of Health Campus development projection on account of all initially being allotted to Vicarage while part will be located within Holywell						
	Transfer of electors projected for 1 of the 4 new blocks of Flats		Vicarage		-160	
	Addition of electors projected for 1 of the 4 new blocks of Flats		Holywell		160	
	Transfer of electors projected for new houses within Holywell area		Vicarage		-167	
	Addition of electors projected for new houses within Holywell area		Holywell		167	
	Transfer of electors projected for Health Campus development from Vicarage to Oxhey		Vicarage		-682	
	Addition of electors projected Health Campus development to Oxhey from Vicarage		Oxhey		682	
	Transfer of electors projected for Health Campus development from Holywell to Oxhey		Holywell		-327	
	Addition of electors projected Health Campus development to Oxhey from Holywell		Oxhey		327	
	Polling District CA from Meriden to Woodside		Meriden		-439	-459
	Polling District CA to Woodlands from Meriden		Woodside		439	459
	Polling District HA from Central to Tudor		Central		-684	-866
	Polling District HA to Tudor from Central		Tudor		684	866
	Transfer of area north of Whippendell Road inc. Raven Court from Holywell to Park		Holywell		-784	-800
	Transfer of area north of Whippendell Road inc. Raven Court to Park from Holywell		Park		784	800
	Transfer of properties within The Avenue area from Park to Nascot		Park		-125	-130
	Transfer of properties within The Avenue area to Nascot from Park		Nascot		125	130
	Transfer of Courtland-Minerva-Greenbank area from Nascot to Leggatts		Nascot		-337	-350
	Transfer of Courtland-Minerva-Greenbank area to Leggatts from Nascot		Leggatts		337	350

	2015	2020
Number of councillors:	36	36
Overall electorate:	71,321	77,923
Average electorate per Ward:	5,943	6,494
Average electorate per cllr:	1,981	2,165

Scroll left to see the first table

Name of ward	Number of cllrs per ward	01/06/15	Variance 01/06/2015	2020	Variance 2020
Callowland	3	5,728	-4%	6,388	-2%
Central	3	6,126	3%	6,910	6%
Holywell	3	5,730	-4%	6,305	-3%
Leggatts	3	6,420	8%	6,727	4%
Meriden	3	5,683	-4%	5,951	-8%
Nascot	3	6,380	7%	6,761	4%
Oxhey	3	5,459	-8%	6,792	5%
Park	3	6,729	13%	7,041	8%
Stanborough	3	5,571	-6%	5,848	-10%
Tudor	3	5,465	-8%	6,252	-4%
Vicarage	3	5,999	1%	6,634	2%
Woodside	3	6,031	1%	6,312	-3%

Electoral data

Watford Borough Council

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Polling district	Description of area	Parish	Parish ward	Grouped parish council	Existing ward	01/06/15	2020
AA					Woodside	2,107	2,203
AB					Woodside	1,044	1,093
AC					Woodside	2,441	2,557
BA					Stanborough	1,797	1,898
BB					Stanborough	1,659	1,735
BC					Stanborough	2,115	2,215
CA					Meriden	439	459
CB					Meriden	2,720	2,846
CC					Meriden	2,963	3,104
DA					Leggatts	2,582	2,707
DB					Leggatts	1,977	2,077
DC					Leggatts	1,524	1,594
EA					Callowland	1,380	1,443
EB					Callowland	2,365	2,481
EC					Callowland	1,983	2,464
FA					Tudor	739	774
FB					Tudor	3,382	3,537
FC					Tudor	660	1,075
GA					Nascot	1,856	1,942
GB					Nascot	4,736	5,039
HA					Central	684	866
HB					Central	2,017	2,359
HC					Central	1,399	1,488
HD					Central	1,633	1,914
HE					Central	1,077	1,149
IA					Park	3,324	3,500
IB					Park	2,746	2,872

Labour Group Submission

Appendix 4

JA				Vicarage	2,693	2,869
JB				Vicarage	1,833	1,925
JC				Vicarage	1,473	2,849
KA				Holywell	4,164	4,630
KB				Holywell	2,350	2,475
LA				Oxhey	2,543	2,676
LB				Oxhey	2,916	3,106
Correction of Health Campus development projection on account of all initially being allotted to Vicarage while part will be located within Holywell						
				Vicarage		-160
				Vicarage		160
				Vicarage		-167
				Oxhey		167
				Oxhey	706	706
				Central	-706	-706
				Oxhey		480
				Vicarage		-480
				Holywell	-138	-138
				Park	138	138
				Tudor		480
				Callowland		-420
				Central		-60

Labour Group Submission

Appendix 4

Hempstead Road to Langley Road(Dellfield Close(39), Woodville Court (20), Kenilworth Court (39), Oaklands Court (38), Kildonan Close (14), Hempstead Road - Langley Road (138a-94, including Dellfield Court, Woodville Court Mews, Trinity Court totaling 66)				Park	220	220
Hempstead Road to Langley Road(Dellfield Close(39), Woodville Court (20), Kenilworth Court (39), Oaklands Court (38), Kildonan Close (14), Hempstead Road - Langley Road (138a-94, including Dellfield Court, Woodville Court Mews, Trinity Court totaling 66)				Nascot	-220	-220
St Albans Road, Meriden				Stanborough	233	233
St Albans Road, Meriden				Meriden	-233	-233
Courtlands Close				Leggatts	-283	-283
Courtlands Close				Woodside	283	283
Mildred Avenue (odds) to move to Park				Vicarage	-143	-143
Mildred Avenue (odds)to move to Park				Park	143	143
The Avenue move to Nascot				Park	-63	-63
The Avenue move to Nascot				Nascot	63	63
1 property in Ridge Lane				Leggatts	-2	-2
1 property in Ridge Lane				Nascot	2	2
2 properties on Gammons Lane				Nascot	-4	-4
2 properties on Gammons Lane				Leggatts	4	4
Burrow Close (off Ridge Lane) move to Nascot				Leggatts	-36	-36
Burrow Close (off Ridge Lane) move to Nascot				Nascot	36	36

	2015	2020
Number of councillors:	36	36
Overall electorate:	71,321	77,923
Average electorate per Ward:	5,943	6,494
Average electorate per cllr:	1,981	2,165

Scroll left to see the first table

Name of ward	Number of cllrs per ward	01/06/15	Variance 01/06/2015	2020	Variance 2020
Callowland	3	5,728	-4%	5,968	-8%
Central	3	6,104	3%	7,010	8%
Holywell	3	6,376	7%	6,967	7%
Leggatts	3	5,766	-3%	6,060	-7%
Meriden	3	5,889	-1%	6,177	-5%
Nascot	3	6,469	9%	6,858	6%
Oxhey	3	6,165	4%	7,136	10%
Park	3	6,508	9%	6,809	5%
Stanborough	3	5,804	-2%	6,081	-6%
Tudor	3	4,781	-20%	5,866	-10%
Vicarage	3	5,856	-1%	6,853	6%
Woodside	3	5,875	-1%	6,136	-5%

For Discussion Suggested Boundary changes

When circulating my report for this meeting I asked if members could come to the meeting with their suggestions.

Councillor Sharpe has put forward these proposals for consideration by full council, 24 June 2015.

Watford Borough Council – Local Government Boundary Commission Review

Background

This review has been made necessary by the number of wards having a greater than 10% variance from the mean ratio of electors to councillors. Wards in this category either currently or by 2020 are as follows

Ward	Variance 2015	Variance 2020
Central	+15%	+20%
Nascot	+ 11%	+ 8%
Oxhey	-8%	-11%
Tudor	-20%	-17%
Vicarage	+1%	+18%
Figures calculated by the LGBCE.		

Watford currently has 36 councillors elected by thirds with 12 wards of 3 councillors each. The wards have existed in recognisably their current form and with the same names since 1974, with minor amendments made in 1998, which was the date of the last boundary review

At the first stage of this review the borough council recommended and the Commission has said it is minded to agree that Watford should continue to have 36 councillors divided by 12 wards and elected by thirds. As nearly all the current wards are based on recognisable communities, in many cases with boundaries based on clearly identifiable geographical features (borough boundaries, main roads, rivers, railway lines) there is merit in maintaining continuity in so far as possible. Therefore in putting forward proposals to redress the anomalies in ward size, we believe there is merit in keeping changes to the minimum necessary to ensure that they conform to the 10% rule.

In considering this review we are aware that the level of variation between wards projected for 2020 is based on the implementation of major regeneration schemes in Vicarage and part of Holywell ward (Watford Health Campus) and at Watford Junction. Inevitably in such large-scale projects there is a degree of uncertainty about the timing of development and this has a potential impact on the review, in that moving ward boundaries within existing residential areas to allow for future development could in leave wards with too few electors (more than 10% below average) in the short term with and the possibility that this may continue beyond 2020 if for any reason the new development is delayed.

We will consider first the above wards where boundary changes are clearly necessary, before addressing whether changes are desirable in other wards that fall within the 10% limit.

Central, Tudor and Callowland

Central ward is significantly above the 10% margin both currently and in the 2020 projection (+15% and +20% respectively). Neighbouring Tudor ward by contrast is well under the

acceptable margin for both dates (-20% and -17%). This is capable of a very straightforward remedy, which brings both wards within acceptable margins both for 2015 and 2020, and respects local community identity.

We propose moving Polling District HA from Central into Tudor ward. This would have the following effect:

Ward	Electorate 2020	Variance 2020
Central	6,910	+6%
Tudor	6,252	-4%

Central ward comprises a group of distinct residential communities on the fringes of the town centre and for most of the ward there are clear boundaries: the River Colne, Rickmansworth Road, St Albans Road, Cassio–Merton–Wiggenhall Roads.

Polling District HA, comprising the Radlett Road estate and some houses on Radlett Road itself is an exception. It is geographically separated from the rest of the ward by the West Coast mainline railway – a significant physical boundary. It is outside the area that would be commonly understood as Central Watford. As a self-contained residential community, it has limited natural geographical links to neighbouring areas. However it already shares a polling station with the nearby Reeds Estate (Polling District FC) in Tudor ward. Its main point of access/egress is onto Radlett Road most of which is in Tudor ward. This change would have the advantage of having no knock-on impact on other wards in the borough. It would also establish a clearly identifiable boundary between the two wards.

While the core of Tudor ward is the inter-war Tudor estate, but also includes adjacent areas leading off Radlett Road and Bushey Mill Lane that would not be considered part of the estate. Adding Polling District HA would be a reasonably good fit with the rest of the ward. We have considered an alternative of moving part of Polling District EA from Callowland into Tudor. This area was part of Tudor ward prior to 1998. However, this would not solve the problem of the excessive number of electors in Central ward, which would require the removal from that ward of areas more commonly understood to be part of Central Watford. It would also affect Callowland, requiring more changes to other wards than are necessary. In addition, the boundary between Polling District EA and Tudor is a clearly identifiable one, in the form of Bushey Mill Lane and the ‘Abbey Flyer’ railway line. As a result, its links to Callowland appear stronger than to Tudor, as acknowledged in the previous boundary review (Local Government Commission Final Report, 1998, p.13.) We would therefore reject this option.

Oxhey, Park, Holywell and Vicarage wards

Although Vicarage ward currently has close to the average number of electors, its electorate is projected to be +18% above the average by 2020. Oxhey, although currently well within the 10% variance is projected to be at -11% by 2020. Park and Holywell wards are within the 10% range for both 2015 and 2020, but their boundaries may be affected by the need for more electors in Oxhey and fewer in Vicarage.

Oxhey ward is a community distinct from the rest of Watford, with many links to Bushey in Hertsmeres Borough (for example local church parish boundaries; Bushey railway station being located in Oxhey). It has a strong boundary, being divided from the rest of Watford by

the River Colne and the green spaces of Oxhey Park and Riverside Recreation Ground. The ward boundary was unchanged in 1998 and indeed predates the 1974 review.

Nonetheless the projected shortfall in Oxhey's electorate and the increase in the number of voters in Vicarage ward means the boundary must be amended. We propose that the 'Riverside' area of the Watford Health Campus be included in Oxhey ward.

According to the current health campus masterplan, this would comprise the four blocks of flats which overlook the Colne Valley and Oxhey but omitting the houses that lead off Willow Lane (see attachment).

We estimate that this would add a future 400+ properties and around 640 electors to Oxhey (480 from Vicarage and 160 from Holywell). This would mean that by 2020 the electorate of Oxhey would be 1% below the borough average (as the ward is currently -8% and within the 10% margin there is no need to amend the boundary to include existing electors).

The boundary between Oxhey and Central/Vicarage wards can be amended to run down the centre of the new access road to be built linking Dalton Way to Watford General Hospital, deviating at the point where the road turns north towards Willow Lane.

These sections of the development will be separated from the rest of the health campus by the access road and will have at least as strong a relationship to Oxhey as they will to Vicarage ward. Their main access to the wider highway network will be to Wiggshall Road. The hospital access road will be a strong and readily-identifiable boundary. It will also mean that this stretch of the Colne Valley is united within Oxhey ward, including the area of Oxhey Park north of the River Colne which currently lies in Central ward.

We considered the alternative of moving the boundary of Oxhey and Central to include the area of Polling District HE known as Watford Fields in Oxhey ward. However, this area is very clearly separate from Oxhey – divided by the River Colne, the Oxhey Park green space and a railway line and embankment. The new link road will increase the geographical barrier between Oxhey and Watford Fields, whose main community links are towards central Watford.

Vicarage and with Holywell wards comprise the area generally referred to as West Watford. The boundary between them (Hagden Lane and Queens Avenue) is clearly defined, but this does not mark a real division between communities. Although currently close to the average in size of electorate, Vicarage is projected to be 18% above average by 2020. As above, we have proposed correcting this in part by moving the boundary with Oxhey from the River Colne to the new hospital access road. We would further propose including the southern side of Mildred Avenue into Park ward. The northern side is already in Park ward and as this is a residential road rather than a major transport route, there is merit in including both sides within the same ward.

Although Holywell and Park are within the 10% variance, Holywell is currently at the maximum and will still be close to it in 2020. Although not strictly necessary in terms of numbers, it would make sense to include Bramleas, Cherrydale and Raven Close in Park ward. This would be a minor adjustment, would be consistent with the boundary including the southern side of Mildred Avenue in Park ward and would ensure Holywell remained within the 10% margin. Holywell's numbers would also be affected by the adjustment of the Oxhey ward boundary as proposed above.

The above changes keep all four wards within the 10% margin projected for 2020, as follows:

Ward	Electorate 2020	Variance 2020
Holywell	7,045	+8
Oxhey	6,423	-1%
Park	6,743	+4%
Vicarage	6,691	+3%

Nascot

Nascot ward has 11% more electors than the borough average, but is projected to be only 8% above average by 2020.

Nascot essentially comprises the area between St Albans Road, Hempstead Road, and the West Coast mainline. Each of these represents a clear boundary and gives the ward a strong identity and sense of community – differentiated from Cassiobury to the west, Central Watford to the south, and Leggatts and Callowland wards, which are seen as part of North Watford.

The need to prevent Nascot having too many electors means that the last boundary review included a short stretch of Hempstead Road/The Avenue/Stratford Road in Park ward and part of Courtlands Drive in Leggatts ward. Such changes were unavoidable given the need to achieve greater equality of ward electorates, but undesirable in terms of coherent boundaries.

Although Nascot remains just outside the 10% variance in 2015, it is likely to be within it by 2020. The electorate in Nascot has expanded in recent years due to major development (such as at Willow Grange and the former West Herts College site now known as Nascot Grange), but it is now likely to grow at a slower rate than the rest of the borough..

If the Commission considered it necessary to change the Nascot border there may be scope to do this either at the North-eastern edge (Courtlands Drive area) or the South-western (around Hempstead Road) but in each case this would mean transferring voters who would consider themselves part of the Nascot community into a ward that they do not really identify with. Given that Nascot is projected to down to +8% and within the 10% margin by 2020, and given its strong geographic and community identity, it would be preferable not to amend the ward boundary.

Leggatts and Callowland

Both these wards are within +/-4% of the average both in 2015 and 2020. Although there could be arguments for amending the boundaries between the two wards, there is no need to do so and we would propose no change for these wards.

Meriden, Tudor and Stanborough wards

These wards are all located on the northern side of the A41, which constitutes a significant barrier from the rest of the borough, being a dual carriageway for much of its length within Watford borough, creating a significant geographical barrier and creating a clear distinction between communities on either side of this major road. They are often referred to as distinct from the rest of Watford (Meriden and Stanborough being known as ‘Garston’ and Woodside either by its own name or as ‘Leavesden’). In terms of community identity it is highly undesirable for ward boundaries to cross the A41. All three wards are currently well within the 10% variance in electorate, although the projections for 2020 will bring Stanborough and Woodside very close to the lower limit.

These three wards have very clear boundaries, in the form of St Albans Road (A412) and Kingsway/North Orbital (A405). Woodside is separated from the rest of the borough by dual carriageway and St Albans Road marks a clear division between Stanborough and Meriden.

Although it would be possible to create greater equality between the electorates, for example by moving the Kytes Drive/Coates Dell area into Woodside and/or the Cow Lane area into Stanborough, the attempt to equalise electorates would mean including electors in wards with which they do not really identify. We recognise that this does mean leaving Woodside and Stanborough close to the 10% margin, but consider that this is a lesser evil than amending clearly established boundaries that would leave small areas in wards with which the residents do not really identify.

Electoral data Watford Borough Council

15 June 2015: Watford Borough Council requested the use of a revised set of existing electorate figures taking into account the latest canvas of electors. The Council argued that these figures were more accurate than those originally published as they take into account the impact of Individual Elector Registration. The Commission has considered the Council's request and concurs that these figures are the most accurate available. These figures supersede those previously published.

Scroll right to see the second table

Polling district	Description of area	Parish	Parish ward	Grouped parish council	Existing ward	01/06/15	2020
AA					Woodside	2,107	2,203
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KA					Holywell	4,164	4,630
KB					Holywell	2,350	2,475
LA					Oxhey	2,543	2,676
LB					Oxhey	2,916	3,106
Correction of Health Campus development projection on account of all initially being allotted to Vicarage while part will be located within Holywell							
	Transfer of electors projected for 1 of the 4 new blocks of Flats				Vicarage		-160
	Addition of electors projected for 1 of the 4 new blocks of Flats				Holywell		160
	Transfer of electors projected for new houses within Holywell area				Vicarage		-167
	Addition of electors projected for new houses within Holywell area				Holywell		167
	Transfer Polling District HA from Central to Tudor				Central		-866
	Addition of Polling District HA to Tudor from Central				Tudor		866
	Transfer Raven Close from Holywell to Park				Holywell		-138
	Addition of Raven Close to Park from Holywell				Park		138
	Transfer Bamleas and Cherrydale from Holywell to Park				Holywell		-89
	Addition of Bamleas and Cherrydale from Holywell to Park				Park		89
	Transfer 1 to 103 Mildred Avenue(odds) from Vicarage to Park				Vicarage		-145
	Addition of 1 to 103 Mildred Avenue(odds) from Vicarage to Park				Park		145
	Transfer of proposed 3 x blocks of flats from Vicarage to Oxhey				Vicarage		-480
	Addition of proposed 3 x blocks of flats from Vicarage to Oxhey				Oxhey		480
	Transfer of proposed block of flats from Holywell to Oxhey				Holywell		-160
	Addition of proposed block of flats from Holywell to Oxhey				Oxhey		160

