



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

COUNCIL MEETING

12 March 2024

7.30 pm

Town Hall, Watford

Contact

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For information about attending meetings please visit the [council's website](#).

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Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Borough of Watford to be held on Tuesday, 12 March 2024 starting at 7.30 pm at the Town Hall, Watford to take into consideration and determine upon the following subjects, namely: -

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Disclosure of Interests

3. Minutes

The [minutes](#) of the meeting held on 30 January 2024 to be submitted and signed.

4. Official Announcements

5. Mayor's Report (Pages 7 - 12)

Report of the Mayor

6. Questions by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 10.0

7. Questions by Members of the Public under Council Procedure Rule 11.0

8. Petitions presented under Council Procedure Rule 12.0

9. 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.

10. Vice Chairman 2024-25 (Pages 13 - 18)

Report of the Democratic Services Manager

11. Allocation of disposal proceeds to acquire TA properties (Pages 19 - 22)

Report of the Senior Regeneration Manager

12. Council Pay Policy Statement - April 2024 (Pages 23 - 61)

Report of the Executive Head of Human Resources and Organisational Development

Motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13.0

13. Motion - Fly tipping

The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Trebar and seconded by Councillor Watling:

“We live in a beautiful town with many beautiful parks and green spaces which are enjoyed every day by our residents. What a shame it is, therefore that if you turn down any main street in Watford on many corners of that street you will see at least one item of rubbish left on the floor or a household item dumped.

“Sustainable Watford”, is the re-branded new Environmental Strategy 2023-2030 and Delivery Plan 2023-2025, however it does not deal with the central issue which consistently plagues Watford; disgusting, disgraceful and unsafe fly tipping.

According to the Watford Observer 21st January, the number of fly-tipping incidents in Watford apparently decreased last year from 1,342 in 2021-22 to 1,168 fly-tipping incidents in Watford in the year to March 2023. I would argue that these are reported cases and do not show the true extent of the problem.

Veolia do an excellent job of picking up fly tipping in Watford in areas they know and regularly pick up rubbish from hotspots from these areas. They should be commended for their service. However, not all these areas are reported regularly because the fly tipping is often picked the next day, by Veolia. This does not go to the root of the problem. We need the CCTV to be circulated to different places to catch the perpetrators and deter them. Where the current CCTV is placed is based on recorded ‘hot spots’ not other areas which need to be considered - not on how often residents (the victims of this crime are reporting it) but based on areas where there is constant fly tipping and Veolia regularly pick up rubbish from.

Fly tipping is not a victimless crime. We are all victims of it. We need to show across the whole town that we are taking it seriously and that we are actively acting to stop it across all wards.

We have to use all resources to hand to tackle this. CCTV and hefty fines are one of the best ways to deter criminals who fly tip but there are other methods we should consider at the same time.

This council resolves that the Mayor:

1. Should encourage all residents and businesses to behave responsibly and with community spirit to avoid littering. This could be achieved through the use of social media and print outlets such as ‘My Watford Magazine’ to inform residents that fly tipping is illegal and to tell them that we are

actively working to bring the criminals to justice. We should also inform them of how to arrange for large items to be collected by the council to create greater awareness.

2. Continue working to promote and encourage measures and initiatives to reduce waste and support more reuse and recycling.
3. Commend and thank Veolia for all their hard work and continue to work with the contractors of the Council to fulfil their obligations to keep our borough clean.
4. Continue to support robust enforcement, including via CCTV evidence, directed at those making Watford a less pleasant place to be and where possible increase CCTV into other known fly tipping areas.”

14. Motion - Interfaith Association

The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Dychton and seconded by Councillor Stotesbury:

“Watford Council notes:

1. The considerable and positive work done by the Watford Interfaith Association since it was established in 1977.
2. That the Watford Interfaith Association brings people of all faiths and none closer together through their annual interfaith pilgrimage, Peace Garden and other events and activities.
3. Reports of a concerning rise in hate crimes in the UK, including increased cases of antisemitism and Islamophobia.
4. The decision of the UK government to end all funding for the Interfaith Network for the UK, which will result in the closure of the charity.

Council believes:

1. The work of interfaith associations has never been more important.
2. At this time, every effort should be made to bring faith communities together to tackle the challenges our society faces.
3. That it is deeply regrettable that the government has decided to end all funding for the Interfaith Network for the UK.

Council calls on the Elected Mayor of Watford to write to the Rt Hon Michael Gove MP, the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, to outline our opposition to this decision.”

15. Motion - Stop the Conservatives punishing local councils for building houses

The following motion has been proposed by Councillor G Saffery and seconded by Mayor Taylor:

“Council Notes that:

Watford Council was recently identified, alongside 58 other Councils, by the Conservative government as failing the 'Housing Delivery Test.'

Despite the fact that over 700 new homes have been constructed in the Borough in each of the last two years measured by this test, the Conservatives have opted to punish Watford Borough Council for apparently not building enough, requiring the council to produce an 'action plan' and continuing to place us under the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development.'

This will further weaken local control over the type of development that is appropriate for our area and could lead to more applications for increasingly tall buildings. It also significantly weakens the Council's hand when defending appeals against our decisions to refuse proposals that do not adequately meet local policy or housing need.

The Council has made significant efforts to meet local demand through our award-winning Local Plan, approved by the Government's own planning inspectorate and adopted by this Council in November 2022.

However the Conservatives' approach unfairly penalises these efforts to actively contribute to solving the housing crisis. It rides roughshod over local policy, compromising both the quality and affordability of new homes and increasing the density of development in areas like Watford that are already built up. It increases the burden on local infrastructure without the requisite investment from national government to support it. Perversely, the Government's approach even fails to prioritise the area of most acute need – the provision of family-sized social and affordable housing units.

The Council expresses its dismay at the government's continuing punitive measures despite our constructive efforts to address the national housing shortage – prioritising sustainability, affordability and quality through our local plan.

Council strongly voices its concerns regarding the overly-centralised planning

system, emphasising the fact that local councils doing their part to deliver new homes should not face unwarranted punishment.

Council acknowledges that some local councils are contributing almost nothing to addressing national housing shortages, and yet it is councils making substantial efforts that bear the brunt of penalties.

Council resolves to:

1. Ask the Elected Mayor to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, seeking assurance that local councils with strong and up to date local policies to address housing need will not be subject to punitive measures.
2. Ask the Secretary of State to reform national policy to make housing targets fairer and more evenly spread.
3. Urge the government to consider the impact of cuts on local councils and to provide support rather than punitive measures for those actively working towards meeting housing targets.

This motion aims to safeguard local councils from unjust sanctions, instigate a fairer assessment of housebuilding efforts, and encourage closer dialogue between Local and UK government to address the housing crisis more effectively.”

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Donna Nolan', with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Donna Nolan, Chief Executive