



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

COUNCIL MEETING

14 July 2020

7.30 pm

Virtual meeting

Contact

Sandra Hancock
democraticservices@watford.gov.uk
01923 278377

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Publication date: 15 July 2020

13. Motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13.0 (Pages 5 - 8)

1. The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Ezeifedi and seconded by Councillor Bashir –

The COVID 19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on our Watford Community. According to a recent Hertfordshire Public Health report Watford and Hertsmeres has both the highest rate of COVID 19 cases and the highest crude mortality rate of COVID 19 registered death per 10,000 population in Hertfordshire.

Watford Borough Council has risen boldly to the unprecedented challenge of COVID 19 through an effective partnership with various agencies, the voluntary sector and the wider community. It is great to note that over the past months, political differences have been put aside in pulling together to support our community.

However, the Public Health England (PHE) review confirmed that death rates from COVID-19 were higher for Black and Asian ethnic (BAME) groups when compared to white ethnic groups. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities presents an opportunity to create a fast but sustainable change that would mitigate further impact.

As part of it's COVID 19 recovery strategy,

This council resolves to:

1. Review the PHE report and track progress against the issues raised within it affecting the Watford BAME Community as a matter of urgency.
2. Liaise with PHE to implement culturally competent COVID-19 education and prevention campaigns, working in partnership with local BAME and faith communities to prepare the communities to take full advantage of interventions including contact tracing, antibody testing and ultimately vaccine availability.
3. Update it's Equalities and Action Plan to ensure that COVID-19 recovery strategies actively reduce inequalities caused by the wider determinants of health to create long term sustainable change.

2. The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Khan –

Changing Street names - celebrating the rich diverse heritage of Watford.

The Council notes that Watford has a rich, diverse and positive history which must be celebrated. One way to celebrate this is to ensure that street names, buildings, statues and monuments reflect our town and that they do not contain any the negative history which this town abhors. The Black Lives Matter campaign has rightly focussed on the serious concerns of symbols of oppression and slavery.

The council also notes that there are street names that are named after people who were involved in the slave trade, colonisation and oppression, which does not reflect the forward thinking, outward looking Britain and our town.

The council notes that it is not tenable to continue to have these existing names for these streets.

Watford has been enriched by its ethnic minority citizens that have come from right across the world or born in UK. The likes of Luther Blissett, Anthony Joshua, John Barnes are but a few, who have made contributions to our town, but there are many more.

Council resolves to

1. Rename street names such Rhodes Way, Clive Way, Colonial Way and Imperial Way.
2. Consult with the Royal Mail, local businesses and residents to ensure that their views are considered.
3. A task and finish group is set up to report back with suggested names to replace these street names.
4. When naming new buildings, street names, statues or monuments that the council ensure that they reflect our town and its history and diversity.

3. The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Sharpe and seconded by Mayor Taylor –

Council notes that the government have placed significant pressure on Watford Borough Council to deliver more homes, tripling the council's housing target to deliver 793 dwellings a year.

Council notes that the government, as part of the National Planning Policy Framework, are planning to meet their promise to build 300,000 new homes a year by building heavily on brownfield land. Watford is made up of 95%

brownfield land, meaning we will be under increased pressure to build more homes. The Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing and Local Government Robert Jenrick MP recently stated he wanted 'much greater building in urban areas' particularly 'above and around major train stations.'

Council notes the recent proposed changes to in the government's Planning for the Future White Paper. These include handing powers away from Development Management Committees and to government run development corporations and a further expansion of permitted development rights, including the right for developers to build upwards without planning permission.

Council believes that we have a housing crisis across the country and therefore we should build more good quality homes, particularly for local families and young people who may otherwise find it difficult to get on the housing ladder.

Council believes that the government's current National Planning Policy Framework seriously constrains council's powers to insist that developers provide affordable housing or infrastructure such as schools, doctors surgeries or improved public transport in new development.

Council believes that effective planning policy should require improvements to public transport and to infrastructure such as schools, health facilities etc. as part of new development to ensure there is a good quality of life for existing and new residents.

Council calls on the government to reform its current rules surrounding development to give councils more power to:

- Challenge unrealistic targets.
- Insist on improved infrastructure with new developments.
- Challenge viability assessments that allow developers to get away without providing adequate affordable housing for local young people.
- Scrap permitted development rights that lead to substandard homes being built, such as the recent case of windowless flats in Wellstones.

Council resolves for the Mayor to write to the Secretary of State for the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government to call on reform to planning rules to give councils more powers.



Donna Nolan, Managing Director

Motion on Impact of COVID 19 on Watford BAME COMMUNITIES

The COVID 19 pandemic has had a devastating impact on our Watford Community. According to a recent Hertfordshire Public Health report Watford and Hertsmere has both the highest rate of COVID 19 cases and the highest crude mortality rate of COVID 19 registered death per 10,000 population in Hertfordshire (12.7 in Watford and 17.6 in Hertsmere – as of 23 June 2020)

Watford Borough Council has risen boldly to the unprecedented challenge of COVID 19 through an effective partnership with various agencies, the voluntary sector and the wider community. It is great to note that over the past months, political differences have been put aside in pulling together to support our community.

However, the Public Health England (PHE) review (report published 16 June 2020) confirmed that death rates from COVID-19 were higher for Black and Asian ethnic (BAME) groups when compared to white ethnic groups. The disproportionate impact of COVID-19 on BAME communities presents an opportunity to create a fast but sustainable change that would mitigate further impact.

As part of its response to COVID 19 and associated recovery strategy,

This council resolves to:

[1. Review the PHE report and track progress against the issues raised within it affecting the Watford BAME Community as a matter of urgency.] replace with

Write to the NHS, Public Health Hertfordshire, Hertfordshire County Council and other health and regulatory services partners to ensure they have reviewed the PHE report and recommendations and have in place practical actions and support that will have a positive impact on Watford's BAME community now and in the longer-term and, through our Overview and Scrutiny Committee, request regular (quarterly) updates on the progresses achieved for our community.

2. Establish an Overview and Scrutiny Task and Finish Group to provide research and insight into our local BAME community, focusing on the issues that matter to them and working with them to develop recommendations that will deliver change and improved outcomes.

3. As part of Hertfordshire County Council's Local Outbreak plan, work with partners, including the NHS [Liaise with] and PHE to implement culturally competent COVID-19 education and prevention campaigns, working in partnership with local BAME and

faith communities to prepare the communities to take full advantage of interventions including contact tracing, antibody testing and ultimately vaccine availability.

4. Review the council's [Update it's] Equalities objectives and equalities and diversity policy in the light of the findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group and use these to provide a robust and focused framework for [and Action Plan to ensure that] COVID-19 recovery strategies to make sure they actively reduce inequalities caused by the wider determinants of health to create long term sustainable change.

Motion: Changing Street names - celebrating the rich diverse heritage of Watford.

The Council notes that Watford has a rich, diverse and positive history which must be celebrated. One way to celebrate this is to ensure that street names, buildings, statues and monuments reflect our town and that they do not contain any the negative history which this town abhors. The Black Lives Matter campaign has rightly focussed on the serious concerns of symbols of oppression and slavery.

The council also notes that there are street names that are named after people who were involved in the slave trade, colonisation and oppression, which does not reflect the forward thinking, outward looking Britain and our town.

The council notes that it is not tenable to continue to have these existing names for these streets.

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Council resolves to

1. Rename street names such Rhodes Way, Clive Way, Colonial Way and Imperial Way.
2. Consult with the Royal Mail, local businesses and residents to ensure that their views are considered.
3. A task and finish group is set up to report back with suggested names to replace these street names.
4. When naming new buildings, street names, statues or monuments that the council ensure that they reflect our town and its history and diversity.

That this motion be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee with a recommendation to set up a task and finish group to consider the question of appropriateness of street names etc., as outlined in the motion, and the need for a formal council policy on street naming, providing opportunities for all relevant stakeholders to participate in its work, before making recommendations to cabinet.

Labour amendment to motion 3.

Proposed by Councillor Bell

“Further to the motion this Council calls on the Mayor and his administration to urgently review their tall buildings policy in light of the massive development given planning permission at ‘The Range site’ in St Albans Road last year and other developments in Clarendon Road and Ascot Road which will dramatically change the skyline and character of Watford for ever!

We are also calling on the Mayor and his Cabinet to urgently reinforce their affordable housing policy of 35% affordable homes for every application of 10 or above units and to not allow developers to get round this by using the ‘affordable rooms’ get out again the Council should look to increase the social rented quota in any affordable homes policy.

It is right that we should as a united Watford Council here across Party strongly criticise the Conservative Government’s plans to steamroller local planning democracy, and resist any attempt to take away our rights of scrutinising and questioning developers as they are given the green light to cram as many units into such small space which will make our town one of the most overdeveloped and densely crammed boroughs in the Country which we must strive to resist on behalf of all our residents.”