



COUNCIL MEETING

Wednesday, 30th July, 2014

7.30 pm

Town Hall, Watford

Publication date: 22 July 2014

CONTACT

If you require further information or you would like a copy of this agenda in another format, e.g. large print, please contact Caroline Harris on 01923 278372 or by email – legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk .

Welcome to this meeting. We hope you find these notes useful.

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Induction loops are available in the Council Chamber.

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22 July 2014

Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Borough of Watford to be held on Wednesday, 30th July, 2014 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 11 June 2014 to be submitted and signed.
(All minutes are published on the Council's website.)

4. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS

5. MAYOR'S REPORT (Pages 1 - 4)

**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. MOTIONS SUBMITTED UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 13.0

- (1) The following motion is being moved by Councillor Iain Sharpe and seconded by Councillor Kareen Hastrick

"Council notes that:

According to information made available to Hertfordshire County Council's Highways and Waste Panel, the county council is intent on reducing support for bus routes so that it only supports bus services starting before 6.30 pm and withdraws funding for non-commercial Sunday services

Such a reduction would affect 39 services across the county, including several directly serving Watford, and approximately 200,000 passenger trips.

While this council recognises the county's need to make budget savings, it believes that such a blanket approach to cutting bus services is unacceptable, and will adversely affect local bus passengers.

This council therefore resolves to request formally that the county not proceed with these cuts."

- (2) The following motion is proposed by Councillor Anne Joynes and seconded by Councillor Seamus Williams

"This Council resolves to call on the County Council to withdraw their proposed cuts to bus services which would see funding withdrawn if the service starts after 6.30pm and the withdrawing of non-commercial Sunday services.

This would severely affect Watford residents and their quality of life, when we should surely be trying to improve a vital public service and try to encourage non-car use in and out of Watford."

- (3) The following motion is proposed by Councillor Derek Scudder and seconded by Councillor Tim Williams

"This council notes with concern the proposals outlined as part of Hertfordshire County Council's current consultation on household waste sites.

These include:

- a 44% reduction in opening hours at Waterdale, including reduced hours at weekends and closure on Thursdays and Fridays

- complete closure of the Elstree site

This council notes that when the county council closed the Wiggshall Road household waste site, its cabinet member for waste claimed that Watford would remain 'well-provided for' due to the facilities at Waterdale and Elstree.

The proposed cuts and closure make a mockery of this assurance.

The council notes the Mayor wrote to the leader of Herts County Council on 14th July expressing her concern over the changes. Council endorses the mayor's action and resolves to respond formally to the consultation, opposing these proposals."

- (4) The following is a motion proposed by Councillor Nigel Bell and seconded by Councillor Matt Turmaine

"This Council resolves to write to the Coalition Government calling on them to repeal the 'Bedroom Tax or spare room subsidy' at the earliest

opportunity.

Last week the Department of Work and Pensions published a report revealing the Bedroom Tax has been a disaster.

It found that half of affected tenants have cut back on essentials, that more than half have racked up debts, and that not much more than 1 in 20 have 'downsized' or moved into private accommodation.

The DWPs own analysis showed only 19% of those affected had applied to move and even fewer were able to find a smaller property.

Many disabled people and their families have had the stress of having to cope with this so-called 'spare room' tax.

It is the right time for Watford Council to join the many other Councils and Campaigners to show a United front in calling for the repeal of this hated and unnecessary Tax."

11. ANNUAL SCRUTINY REPORT (Pages 5 - 32)

Report of the Committee and Scrutiny Officer and Scrutiny Chairs

12. NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 33 - 68)

Report of Committee and Scrutiny Officer and Ward Councillors

13. ICT ROADMAP

Report of Cabinet 23/07/14 (to follow)

14. MUNICIPAL BONDS

Report of Cabinet 23/07/14 (to follow)

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Manny Lewis', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Manny Lewis, Managing Director

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Mayor's Report – July 2014

Here is my report on information, news and updates relating to the town and my activities as Elected Mayor.

Town Centre

Big Events launch

A big thanks to those of you that turned out for the launch of our Big Events programme. The sun came out and the atmosphere was brilliant, and Mary Portas was a real pleasure to have as our star guest, sharing tales of her memories of Watford from her youth. We've now also held the Big Dance and the Big Family Sports Day, which have been really successful and are gearing up for the classic movies and family favourites on the Big Screen. Behind all of the theatrics and the fun events we have planned for the rest of the year, lies our solid determination to keep our high street thriving and not let it suffer the fate that some have elsewhere in the country.

Parade improvements

The Parade area makeover is now complete and after some initial teething problems the pond is functioning properly. I am very pleased with how it looks and am getting very positive responses from residents. The redevelopment is just another piece of the jigsaw in our plan to upgrade the whole town centre, which started last year with the redevelopment of the Lower High Street / Kings Street block. It will continue with the launch of our new covered market in Autumn in the grounds of the TJ Hughes building, and the plans in place with Intu to completely renovate and improve Charter Place.

Licence fees waived for pavement café

We wanted local cafés, bars and restaurants to have the best chance to capitalise on the opportunities the Big Events will bring to increase their revenues, so have decided to waive the fees for having pavement licences, so more will take advantage of the additional space and spill out onto The Parade. You can already see how much busier the top of the town feels, and those places with outdoor tables had a real buzz about them during the most recent event, The Big Family Sports Day. It's about creating that café culture feel that residents have always told us was missing from this part of town.

Imagine Watford - feedback

We've had some really excellent feedback on this year's Imagine Watford festival. Hundreds of people have commented about how 'magical' Watford felt, how proud they feel of our town and just how much they enjoyed it. This is really reassuring as it's exactly why, together with the Palace Theatre, we have put it on for the past four years.

The visitor survey data shows that this year's festival reached an audience of 92,811 people, compared with 88,532 last year and 49,902 audience members the year

before. So it's an upward trend, that I hope will keep on rising as the word gets out that this really is a great event that it is worth putting in the diary. It also showed that 73% of people had attended the festival before and 72% rated the performances as 'excellent' and a further 24% rated them as 'good'.

Jobs & the economy

£200 million boost for Hertfordshire

I recently met with representatives from the Herts Local Enterprise Partnership to hear about all the activities they are involved in that are designed to promote growth and prosperity across the county. So, I was very pleased to hear in the week after that they had successfully secured £200 million investment for infrastructure, businesses and skills, which will help deliver new homes and jobs, and significantly support our Croxley Rail Link plans.

Positive jobs news

Figures released this month by Office of National Stats have shown that unemployment in Watford has fallen by 30% in the last year. It is now just 1.9%. 1,164 people in the borough claimed job seekers allowance, which is 519 fewer than a year ago. This is very good news for the town and demonstrates the importance of the work we have been doing on economic development, to attract and retain businesses in our town, and plan for long term jobs growth.

Parks & green spaces

Heritage Lottery Fund success

Members will undoubtedly be aware that we have been successful in securing £4.5 million of lottery money for restoring Cassiobury Park. Council officers worked really hard to prepare our bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, and I thank those of you that worked with them to help shape the proposals. All the hard work has really paid off and we can now restore much of the history to the park and further improve the facilities we offer our residents.

River Colne Sculptures

I was delighted to unveil the new sculptures we had commissioned for the Colne River Corridor. There is one sculpture in Timberlake car park (Radlett Road), one sculpture in Radlett Road Playing Fields, two sculptures in Waterfields Recreation Ground and one sculpture in Water Lane. The artist Luke Perry drew his inspiration from the history, traditions and interests of the local community, to create sculptures inspired by the heritage or natural history of the river.

Health Campus

Link Road plans

Earlier this month I met with the MP, along with the chief executive of the West Herts Hospitals Trust and senior representatives from Herts County Council and Kier, to clarify the position regarding the proposed link road. Mr Harrington had mistakenly believed that the link road was going to be a private road and was campaigning to have it widened, with turnings off into West Watford. However, the hospital confirmed it would not wish to have a main road running right through the middle of their site and Hertfordshire Highways would not be in a position to spend the millions of additional pounds required to build such a road, which they maintain would worsen the traffic conditions in West Watford and Oxhey. The road proposals will remain as they were agreed, many years ago now, through massive consultation and compromise.

Farm Terrace – allotment holders compensation

The compensation package for allotment holders at the Farm Terrace site, is set to be formally agreed at Cabinet on 23rd July. Subject to agreement, they will be served with a 12 month notice in line with the 1922 Allotments Act with a view to closing Farm Terrace in September 2015. We have engaged with willing tenants individually and as groups, to understand their needs and support them in a move to the new site at Paddock Road or one of the other Watford sites, including the relocation of existing plants, and structures such as sheds and greenhouses. They have also been offered free rent on their new plot if they move early and compensation, proposed at three levels, depending on whether they relocate voluntarily, give up completely or whether they remain in situ until the notice is served in September.

Meeting the community

New Hope Trust: community market garden

I spent some time last month with the New Hope Trust, who invited me to come and see their Community Market Garden. It's an excellent initiative and I was pleased to see that their business sponsors, Affinity Water and Amey, had been really closely involved in getting it off the ground.

DRUM

Disabled charity DRUM is a well respected and much valued charity in our town. Every year they invite me to their annual BBQ and this year's was a celebration of their latest project, which was themed around movies. They presented me with a pair of red 'Dorothy' shoes like those in the Wizard of Oz.

Queens Road Summer Market

Councillor Lynch and her colleagues on the Queens Road Action Group invited me to open the 2014 Queens Road Summer Market earlier this month. It was great to watch the jive dancing demonstration, in which local residents enjoyed taking part. I

would encourage all members to go along to check out the stalls and entertainment, and to show your support for what they are trying to achieve. The next market is on the 9th August. It was also good to see yet another new shop has opened up in this part of town. Queens Furnishings stocks an interesting range, everything from ethnic jewellery to antique china!

Schools talks

I always enjoy the opportunity to meet with and talk to our younger residents. Most recently I gave an assembly at Coates way school about the importance of taking pride in your town, and how everyone can do their bit to make a difference. They were lovely young people and a pleasure to spend time with. I also recently visited Kingsway junior school, where pupils presented oral reports to me about local community issues they were affected by. I also spent an evening at Bushey Meads school where I was a guest speaker at one of their events, and went to Holy Rood school to present prizes for a spelling competition.

World War One Commemorations

Earlier this month I joined the Leavesden Green Community Group in their commemorating of the centenary of World War One and the unveiling of the new War Memorial outside Dale Court. A number of special commemoration events are being held in Watford: on Sunday 3 August a special commemoration service will take place at St Mary's Church, which starts with a civic procession at 10.15am, followed by a service at the church, at which I've been asked to do a reading. On Monday 4 August between 10pm to 11pm, for 'LIGHTS OUT' there will be a vigil at the Peace Memorial, or services at St Mary's Church and at Christ Church.

Watford Museum will also be hosting a new exhibition, 'The Great War: Watford 1914', from Thursday 7 August to 27 September, as well as working on an online roll of honour. Museum volunteers are cross referencing newspapers from the period with the roll of honour in order to provide some background to those listed using obituaries.

Get your Audentior nominations in

And finally, we are once again looking for nominations for the Audentior Awards, so please have a think about the people or groups within your communities that always go the extra mile to help or support others. Contact Democratic Services for information on how to nominate.

PART A

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: 30 July 2014

Report of: Committee and Scrutiny Officer and the 2013/14 Scrutiny Chairs

Title: Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny in Watford Borough Council 2013/14

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 The Constitution requires that Overview and Scrutiny Committees report to Council annually on their work during the preceding year. This report introduces the Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny in Watford Borough Council 2013/14 (Appendix 1).

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 that Council notes the Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny in Watford Borough Council 2013/14.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact:

Sandra Hancock, Committee and Scrutiny Officer

telephone extension: 8377

e-mail: legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Carol Chen, Head of Democracy and Governance

3.0 DETAILED PROPOSAL

3.1 The Annual Scrutiny Report refers to the scrutiny work carried out during 2013/14; it –

- describes the work and process of the Council's scrutiny committees over the preceding year;
- sets out some facts regarding the structure and operation during 2013/14;
- gives an indication of performance as measured by the scrutiny survey.

3.2 The main details are contained within the report, attached at Appendix 1.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 **Financial**

4.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no financial implications in this report.

4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

4.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are no legal implications in the report

4.3 **Potential Risks**

Potential Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Overall score
None identified in this report			

Appendices

Appendix 1 Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny in Watford Borough Council 2013/14

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report:

- Minutes of scrutiny committee and Task Groups meetings
- Reports produced by and presented to scrutiny committees
- Scrutiny survey 2013/14

File Reference

None



Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny in Watford Borough Council 2013/14

A report of the Committee and Scrutiny Officer and
Scrutiny Committee Chairs

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1. Introduction and overview

In 2013/14 the scrutiny structure comprised Overview and Scrutiny Committee as the over-arching committee, Budget Panel and Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel. Community Safety Partnership Task Group continued to monitor the Community Safety Partnership. Task Groups which took place during 2013/14 were –

- Watford Community Housing Trust (continued from 2012/13)
- Property Review (to be continued in 2014/15)

The Annual Survey has been carried out and a summary of the results can be found in section 6.1 of this report.

Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs met three times with the Mayor and members of the Cabinet in 2013/14. Further information is available in section 6.2.

Officers have continued to attend the Hertfordshire Scrutiny Network, a network of officers from the County Council, the ten district councils, within Hertfordshire and neighbouring authorities in Bedfordshire. The network provides an opportunity to share scrutiny related information across the councils. Further details are provided in section 6.5.

In 2013/14 there was an increase in councillor involvement in scrutiny. 28 out of 36 councillors attended at least one scrutiny meeting. 22 Councillors had participated in a scrutiny meeting as a member or a substitute. Three Portfolio Holders attended scrutiny meetings to respond to questions on behalf of the Executive. Three Councillors had attended meetings as observers and participated when permitted by the scrutiny committee or panel.

2. Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership:

Councillor Karen Collett (Chair)

Councillor Asif Khan (Vice Chair)

Councillors Jeanette Aron, Nigel Bell, Sue Greenslade, Kareen Hastrick, Stephen Johnson, Ann Lovejoy and Rabi Martins

The following Councillors also participated in Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the year:

Councillors Jackie Connal (observer), Shirena Counter (Chair of Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel), Jagtar Dhindsa (Chair of Budget Panel), Anne Joynes (observer), Malcolm Meerabux (observer), Lindsey Scudder (substitute) and Darren Walford (substitute)

The following Portfolio Holders attended Overview and Scrutiny Committee during the year:

Councillors Derek Scudder (Portfolio Holder for Corporate Strategy and Client Services), Iain Sharpe (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development) and Mark Watkin (Portfolio Holder for Shared Services and Democracy and Governance)

2.1 The Committee's work programme for 2013/14

Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on six occasions this year. The Scrutiny Committee received reports on the following subjects –

- **Outstanding actions and questions** continued to be included as a regular report to the Scrutiny Committee. The report included all the actions and questions which had been raised at previous meetings. The actions and questions remained on the report until Overview and Scrutiny Committee was satisfied with the response and it was agreed the actions had been completed.
- **Performance updates** were presented on a quarterly basis. The Scrutiny Committee reviewed the performance of the Key Performance Indicators and other performance measures identified for review. At the meetings Members discussed the performance indicators and sought clarification in certain areas. Members continued to monitor the performance of the **Benefits Service** and received regular updates throughout the year.
- **A referral from Audit Committee** was included on the agenda in March. Audit Committee had reviewed the Council's Risk Register and concerns had been raised about **homelessness** and the potential pressures on the Council's use of temporary and bed and breakfast accommodation. The Head of Community and Customer Services and Housing Section Head attended Overview and Scrutiny Committee's meeting in March to provide a presentation on the Council's legal duties in respect of homelessness and how it was managed in Watford. Information was provided about the

HomeLet scheme which had started in July 2013 and was included in the performance report.

- **Executive Decision Progress report** was included as a regular item on the agenda following its introduction in 2011/12. The report included details of all proposed decisions and those decisions taken by the Executive and officers. It also included details of any consultation with the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Chair is consulted about any decisions which have not met the 28 day deadline or which need to be dealt with under the urgency procedures. The report enables the Scrutiny Committee to consider whether the key decision procedure has been followed correctly and if not, whether a report on a decision needs to be submitted to Council.
- **Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee** became a regular item on the agenda in 2013/14. The Council's appointed representative for 2013/14 provided Members with an overview of the work carried out by the Health Scrutiny Committee. Full details of the Scrutiny Committee are available on the [County Council's website](#).
- **Updates from Budget Panel, Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel and Community Safety Partnership Task Group** were added as regular items to the agenda during the year. Members on Overview and Scrutiny Committee felt that as the over-arching scrutiny committee for the Council it should be aware of the work being undertaken by the other Scrutiny Panels and Task Groups. The three Chairs are invited to each meeting to provide an update of their panels' latest meeting. If the Chair is unable to attend a written update is provided.
- **Task Groups** – there were no new scrutiny topics considered during the year. Two scrutiny Task Groups carried out reviews during the year. One Task Group completed its review of Watford Community Housing Trust and the other commenced its review of the Property service. Further information is available in Section 5.
- **Review of previous reports** Throughout the year the Scrutiny Committee received responses from Cabinet and checked the progress of recommendations from previous reviews. In some cases Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to carry out a further review in the future and in other cases Members agreed that the recommendations had been met. The reviews carried out in 2013/14 were –
 - Voluntary and Community Sector Commissioning Framework (review update)
 - Hospital Parking Charges (review update)
 - Affordable Housing review (review update)
 - Services for the Deceased (review update)
 - Management of Disabled Parking Bays (Cabinet response and review update)
 - Watford Community Housing Trust (Housing Trust and Cabinet's responses and review update)

2.2 Call-in

There were no call-ins of Executive decisions during 2013/14.

The Scrutiny Committee reviewed the recommendation from the call-in in December 2011. At the meeting in 2011 the Scrutiny Committee had ratified the Cabinet's decision but had requested that scrutiny should examine the impact on the four organisations which had been subject to the largest cuts in voluntary sector grants. Overview and Scrutiny Committee was provided with a summary of the impact on the four organisations and the latest status of the groups.

The reports and minutes for Overview and Scrutiny Committee can be found on the Council's website – www.watford.gov.uk/overviewandscrutiny

2.3 Chair's commentary

Scrutiny still continues to develop both in terms of its approach to monitoring the Council's performance and seeking to improve its involvement with the public. This report provides the opportunity to review last year's activity within Overview and Scrutiny.

Our committee monitored Revenues and Benefits which over the past year has implemented several changes, one being reducing the waiting time for claimants to receive payment. In addition the department identified areas to improve and one of these initiatives was to meet with Thrive Homes and WCHT to discuss the service provided by the teams and for the registered social landlords to be more specific when questioning tenants, thus cutting waiting times. Furthermore it was clear that staff had been asked to put forward improvements and that the morale of the team was much improved. The committee was pleased with the new approach and the service would continue to be monitored in 2014/15.

One of the main areas of work that Overview and Scrutiny undertook was a review of services provided by Watford Community Housing Trust. This was brought about by councillors receiving large volumes of casework. It was agreed by the task group to invite tenants to the Town Hall and for a survey to be carried out. Engaging with the tenants enabled us to understand their concerns and the results mirrored the calls and enquiries Councillors had received. Overall 20 recommendations were put to the Trust, which consisted of aims and strategies, customer satisfaction, repairs, communication and social enterprise. I am pleased to report that many of these areas are now being looked at and are included in the Trust's aims. The call waiting time in our opinion is far from satisfactory and this we will be pursuing in future meetings with the Trust. I on behalf of O&S would like to thank them for all their cooperation in sending us the relevant information and answering questions during the process.

Our Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel has gained additional services over the past year. It was felt that such an important area required training for all Councillors and I am pleased to report this will be carried out in July.

The Community Safety Task Group has received an ASB and Scan Net briefing which was very informative and the public were comforted that this was in place.

All councillors have now received all contact details of police officers for their wards. Later this year the panel will consider the impact of the Antisocial Behaviour, Crime and Policing Bill on Watford and the Police.

A Property Task Group was set up in the year in which they were given a presentation by the Property Team. There is currently a Property Review taking place which the task group is involved in.

We look forward to a visit from Paul Regan from Healthwatch Hertfordshire who has been invited to attend O &S to provide a presentation. Healthwatch Hertfordshire acts as patient advocates. Furthermore Councillors have shown an interest in looking at Mental Health concerns within young people; this was due to newspapers and agencies reporting an increase in the last year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all the Chairs of Task groups and Panels as well as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for their dedication and interest over the past year. Furthermore I would like to thank all officers of WBC and outside agencies who attended to update us and answer questions. In addition a huge thanks to Democratic Services, Pat Thornton, Sandra Hancock, Rosy Wassell and Jodie Kloss for their research, minute taking and follow ups. Lastly, I want to thank the community of Watford for attending meetings and helping us make the improvements necessary to improve services. This in my opinion is effective Scrutiny and one we should all be proud of.

Councillor Karen Collett
Chair Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2013/14

3. Budget Panel

Membership

Councillor Jagtar Singh Dhindsa (Chair)
Councillor Steve Rackett (Vice Chair)
Councillors Jeanette Aron, Shirena Counter, George Derbyshire, Sue Greenslade, Rabi Martins, Peter Taylor and Matt Turmaine

The following Councillors also participated in Budget Panel during the year:
Councillors Nigel Bell (observer), Jackie Connal (observer), Peter Jeffree (as a substitute), Stephen Johnson (as a substitute), Anne Joynes (observer), Asif Khan (observer), Malcolm Meerabux (observer) and Mo Mills (observer)

The following Portfolio Holders attended Budget Panel meetings during the year:
Councillor Derek Scudder (Portfolio Holder for Corporate Strategy and Client Services), Councillor Iain Sharpe (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development) and Councillor Mark Watkin (Portfolio Holder for Shared Services and Democracy and Governance)

3.1 The Panel's Work Programme for 2013/14:

The Panel met on six occasions during the year and considered the following:

- **The Final Outturn for 2012/2013** was considered by Budget Panel prior to it being presented to Cabinet. Members discussed several areas in depth, including the Pension Fund, budget estimates, the Revenues and Benefits Service and the Car Parking Reserve. As a result of the discussions it was agreed that reports would be produced for future meetings on the financial performance of Revenues and Benefits and the commercial rent portfolio.
- **The Finance Digest Budget Monitor** was regularly considered by the Budget Panel. Members monitored the expenditure, income and pressures on services.
- **The Medium Term Financial Strategy** was considered at several meetings during the year and discussions covered several areas in the Strategy. Members had welcomed the Head of Strategic Finance and Shared Services' clear explanation of the Strategy. The latest Strategy was presented to the Panel with the Draft Revenue and Capital Estimates report in January.
- **Revenues and Benefits Finance** was reviewed by the Panel in September and October. The Panel discussed Benefit Subsidy and received comparative data at the October meeting. It also reviewed the collection rates for Council Tax and Non-Domestic Rates.
- **Non-Domestic Rates – Review of Discretionary Relief** was discussed in September. The Panel was advised of the types of mandatory and discretionary relief available. As a result of this discussion it was agreed that a training session would be incorporated into the work programme in order to

inform the Panel about Business Rates since April 2013. The training session took place at the November meeting.

- **Review of Parking Reserve Account** was carried out by the Panel in October. Members were informed about the Parking Reserve Account and the proposed traffic related schemes that had been identified for the forthcoming financial year. The Panel discussed the staffing arrangements at the Parking Shop and the deployment of Civil Enforcement Officers. At the end of the discussion it was agreed that at this stage the Panel would not make any suggestions about the future use of the reserve. It was acknowledged that the Panel would be able to review the parking permit charges at the following meeting when it was due to review fees and charges.
- **An Overview of Commercial Rents and Next Steps** was presented to the Panel in November. The presentation provided an overview of the property owned by the Council, debt management and asset valuations. The Panel was informed about the Property Review being carried out during 2014.
- **Fees and Charge 2014/15**, the draft report was reviewed by the Panel. Members focussed on the proposal to increase the parking permit charges. Members were concerned at the high percentage increase of the first permit from £22 to £25. The Panel agreed that a modest increase of £1 would be more acceptable. This recommendation was reported to Cabinet as part of the budget report in January.
- **Draft Revenue and Capital Estimates 2014/2018 and Treasury Management Strategy 2014-2017** was discussed at the January meeting prior to its consideration by Cabinet and Council. Members considered the various components of the report including revenue estimates, reserves and the Capital Programme. The minutes of the discussion were forwarded to Cabinet.

3.2 Training

Two training sessions were organised and took place at the beginning of the meetings held in October and November.

The session in October provided an overview of Local Government Finance and how the Council was funded.

The second training session, held in November, provided the Panel with an overview of the changes to Business Rates since April 2013 and the impact on Watford Borough Council.

The reports and minutes for Budget Panel are available on the Council's website – www.watford.gov.uk/budgetscrutiny

3.3 Chair/ Vice Chair's Commentary

This year has been another busy year for the Budget Panel with further cuts having been made by the Government.

I am pleased to say I thoroughly enjoyed Chairing the Budget Panel. The work carried out by the Panel is listed above.

Two training sessions were organised for the benefit of new members on the Budget Panel. The first session in October provided an overview of Local Government Finance and how the Council was funded. The second training session, held in November, provided the Panel with an overview of the changes to Business Rates since April 2013 and the impact on Watford Borough Council. The feedback has been very positive.

All meetings attracted a very good attendance both from Panel members and interested member colleagues.

I feel that the Panel worked well with there being lively discussion on a number of occasions. One of them was on the proposal to increase the parking permit charges for the first permit from £22 to £25. After a long discussion the Panel agreed that a modest increase of £1 would be more acceptable. It was generally felt that the political dimension had not intruded upon the ultimate decisions taken by the Panel.

Finally I would like to thank the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Shared Services, Councillor Mark Watkin for attending each meeting and answering questions. We would like to thank Joanne Wagstaffe, who joined us last year, for all her hard work and a very personal thank you for all her help to me as Chair. Thanks to all other officers who attended the meetings to present their reports and answer questions and my personal thanks to Sandra Hancock for her hard work/help. I would like to wish the new Chair and Vice Chair of the Panel best of luck.

Last but not least a big thank you to Steve Rackett (the vice chair of the Budget Panel) for all his work/help, who served on the panel for a number of years and stood down this year as a Councillor.

Councillor Jagtar Singh Dhindsa
Chair of Budget Panel 2012/13

4. Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel

Membership

Councillor Shirena Counter (Chair)

Councillors Sue Greenslade, Kareen Hastrick, Anne Joynes and Steve Rackett

The following Councillors also participated in the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel during the year: Councillors Stephen Johnson (observer) and Derek Scudder (Portfolio Holder for Corporate Strategy and Client Services).

The remit of the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel is to scrutinise services which have been externalised and to monitor the performance of these services on a regular basis. It is politically balanced and reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

4.1 The Panel's Work Programme for 2013/14:

The Panel met on three occasions and considered the following topics:

1. Terms of reference

Following the Council's service redesign, which saw the outsourcing of waste, recycling, parks and open spaces to Veolia, the Panel's terms of reference were updated. The contracts which come under the remit were specified to be as follows:

- Waste, Recycling, Street Cleansing, Parks and Open Spaces
- Leisure centres
- Colosseum
- Management of Hostels and Temporary Accommodation
- The Parking Service

Additional contracts are to be added to the terms of reference as and when they are entered into.

In addition, the corresponding new Council structure had led to the creation of a new service, Corporate Strategy and Client Services. At its first meeting of the year, the Panel received an introduction to the structure of the new service and how the contracts were monitored by officers.

2. Quarterly performance indicators

The Panel has received regular performance reports provided by the Partnerships and Performance Section Head. The format and content of the reports has evolved over the year as the Panel has scrutinised different contracts and decided to monitor particular indicators on a regular basis.

Among the performance indicators monitored through this report are:

- Usage of the leisure centres measured in membership and throughput levels
- Number of performances and community hires of the Colosseum
- Satisfaction levels with leisure facilities
- Levels of residual waste and recycling

- Number of missed bins and time levels for resolution
- Numbers of parking penalty charge notices, appeals won and the reasons for any lost

As the Panel reviews services, further indicators are added to the performance report and this has allowed the Panel to monitor services on an ongoing basis after reviewing them in detail. Councillors have been particularly keen to increase the number of qualitative indicators to the performance report to gain a fuller understanding of residents' views.

3. The contract with Veolia

The Waste and Recycling Client Manager attended the meeting of the Panel in November. The presentation provided the Panel with a background to the contract, an overview of the services provided, an explanation of how the contract was managed by the Council's environment client team and details of the performance mechanisms that were in place.

The Panel considered the early results of the new co-mingled recycling service and discussed the feedback from residents. Issues such as contamination levels in the recycling collections and fly-posting were also discussed with officers.

Members received a further update on the service at the meeting in February 2014 after the new service had had more time to settle down. The update provided the Panel with the latest waste and recycling figures. There was a discussion about chewing gum and other street-care issues as well as the process for increasing the number of parks to be awarded Green Flags. This contract is to be monitored closely through the performance report and in more detail again in early 2015.

4. The Colosseum contract with HQ Theatres

The contract with HQ Theatres was scrutinised at the meeting in February 2014. The presentation provided the Panel with details of the history of the Colosseum, how the programmes were delivered, key performance indicators, a summary of performances between September 2011 and December 2013, community use and an overview of the finances. In addition, details were provided about the vision for the future and the areas for development.

The discussion centred on the balance between commercial hires to ensure sustainability and opening the venue up to community groups. The Panel also received further information about the way the finances were structured.

Chair's Commentary

The Panel is still a relatively new panel and with the increasing number of services needing scrutiny, is still very much "finding its feet". Part of its work this year has been to determine the level of scrutiny required so that it is not overwhelmed with excessive detail, yet scrutinises performance sufficiently thoroughly to identify any areas that may be of concern.

The meetings have been productive and all members have actively participated. As user satisfaction is one of our key concerns, we have requested more qualitative data to supplement the quantitative data and provide a more holistic picture of performance.

On behalf of the Panel, I would like to thank all the officers involved for their hard work and support, which has ensured that the panel has had a very successful year

Councillor Shirena Counter
Chair of Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel (2013/14)

5. Task Groups

5.1 Community Safety Partnership Task Group 2013/14

Membership:

Councillor Asif Khan (Chair)

Councillors Jeanette Aron, Anne Joynes, Ann Lovejoy, Rabi Martins, Kelly McLeod and Malcolm Meerabux

The following Councillors also participated in the Community Safety Partnership Task Group during the year as observers: Councillors Mark Watkin and Tim Williams.

The Community Safety Partnership Task Group is a statutory Task Group which is established each year to scrutinise the work of the Community Safety Partnership.

The Task Group's Work Programme for 2013/14:

The Task Group met on four occasions and arranged two all-member briefings, these were:

- Drug and Alcohol Treatment with input from Spectrum and Hertfordshire County Council
- Scan Net and the changes to the Antisocial Behaviour regime with presentations by Hertfordshire Constabulary and the Council's Antisocial Behaviour Coordinator

The topics considered at the meetings were:

1. An introduction to the Community Safety Partnership (CSP)

The Task Group welcomed the new Chief Inspector for Watford who provided Members with an overview of his priorities for the Borough. He discussed how best to engage with the vulnerable members of the community which was to be a particular focus.

Councillors discussed the new structure for the neighbourhood policing teams with the Neighbourhood Inspector. Other topics covered included engagement with residents' associations and the Immobilise programme which recorded details of mobile phones to prevent thefts.

There was a discussion about the use of stop and search; the Task Group were asked about the checks and balances in place.

The Partnership's action plans also considered as well as the targets achieved during the previous year.

The Community Safety Manager summarised the changes to the CSP including the inclusion of the NHS on the Watford Responsible Authorities Group and changes in the Probation Service.

2. Thriving Families

The Task Group were interested in learning more about the Thriving Families programme and how it operated in Watford. The County Council's Programme Manager and the Watford and Three Rivers Team Manager presented an overview to Members. This presentation covered:

- Ethos and aims of the programme
- Problems experienced by the families involved
- How outcomes were measured
- Operation in Watford
- Future development

The Task Group discussed how the programme interacted with other agencies as well as early intervention and identifying local hotspots.

3. Community Safety Engagement Surveys

In early 2013, the Task Group considered scrutiny suggestions put forward by Members. One of the suggestions, made by Councillor Meerabux, related to how community groups engaged on community safety issues. The Task Group decided to circulate three questionnaires to councillors, local residents' associations and community groups and Police officers from the Safer Neighbourhood Team.

At the meeting in December, the Task Group considered the results of the surveys which included:

- Councillors found that casework, residents' association meetings and other neighbourhood meetings were the most effective ways of engaging with local residents on community safety issues.
- For the Police, the most effective engagement strategies were community events and beat surgeries

The Task Group considered the results and agreed a number of actions to encourage engagement on community safety issues. These included highlighting the availability of the Police to attend community events, providing a contact sheet to councillors with the Police Safer Neighbourhood Team's details and encouraging residents with an interest in community safety to contact their local Sergeant.

4. Learning Points from all-member briefings

There were two areas that the Task Group felt that all councillors might be interested in learning more about. These were drug and alcohol treatment and Scan Net and the changes to Antisocial Behaviour. Task Group members attended the briefings and then discussed the learning points at subsequent meetings. This approach gave opportunities for wider participation in learning about community safety.

Chair's Commentary

The committee played an important role this year with a much more of a strategic focus on issues related to community safety. Many of the meetings involved

greater member and partner involvement which showed the strong interest in this area.

In an era of spending cuts and shrinking budgets, it is testament to all the partner agencies on how they are meeting the challenges that they are being confronted with.

There was a strong emphasis at looking at the impact of community safety on the most vulnerable in our communities; this work is vitally important to continue.

Members of the panel engaged in thorough scrutiny of the work carried out by the partner agencies including the use of Scan Net and the impact of drug and alcohol treatment within the borough. In addition as important changes to the anti-social behaviour legislation are going through parliament, we had a timely update from Liam Fitzgerald. All of these areas are something which have scope for further enquiry.

I would like to thank all the partner agencies for their contributions to the panel as well as other community organisations that are actively playing an important role in community safety. Going forward, we would welcome councillors to bring any suggestions they wish the task group to scrutinise.

Finally, I would like to express gratitude to the members of the task group who were all pro-active in the meetings and worked extremely closely in the scrutiny that took place.

Councillor Asif Khan

Chair of the Community Safety Partnership Task Group (2013/14)

5.2 **Watford Community Housing Trust Task Group**

Membership:

Councillor Asif Khan (Chair)

Councillors Karen Collett, Jackie Connal, Stephen Johnson and Anne Joynes

Councillors Ian Brandon and Kelly McLeod attended meetings during the review.

The Watford Community Housing Trust Task Group was completed in September 2013. It had been carried forward from 2012/13. A successful drop-in session for tenants had taken place in May 2013, enabling residents to speak individually to Councillors. The Task Group then met the Housing Trust's Chief Executive who responded to the Task Group's questions. The final report was forwarded to the Housing Trust, those residents who had attended the drop-in sessions, residents' and tenants' groups and the Council's Executive.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee has monitored the original recommendations. In January 2014 the Scrutiny Committee invited the Housing Trust's Chief Executive to provide an update on the implementation of the recommendations. A further update has been requested to take place during 2014/15.

5.3 Property Task Group

Membership:

Councillor Nigel Bell (Chair)

Councillors Kareen Hastrick, Stephen Johnson, Asif Khan and Malcolm Meerabux

The original scrutiny suggestion was submitted by Councillors Asif Khan and Steve Rackett. Although appointed to the Task Group by Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Councillor Rackett stepped down as he had been elected as Chairman of Watford Borough Council for 2013/14. Councillor Nigel Bell replaced him on the Task Group prior to the first meeting. During 2013/14 there has been one meeting of the Task Group. At the meeting the Task Group received a presentation by the Head of Regeneration and Development and the Programme Manager setting out an overview of the property owned by Watford Borough Council and asset management. The Programme Manager also explained about the review that was to be carried out by a consultant. It was agreed that the Task Group would be informed of the review's progress and would be able to review the consultant's report.

This Task Group will continue to work in 2014/15 until it has completed its review and made its recommendations.

The reports and minutes of all scrutiny meetings are available on the Council's website -

<http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/mgCalendarMonthView.aspx?GL=1&bcr=1>

For further information please contact the Committee and Scrutiny Officer.

6. Other Scrutiny work

6.1 2013/14 Scrutiny Survey Results

An annual scrutiny survey is carried out and people and organisations who have been involved with scrutiny during the preceding year are asked to participate. This includes councillors, council officers and members of the public or representatives from external organisations who have attended as guests and witnesses.

Councillors' survey

Of the 36 councillors and the Mayor in Watford Borough Council, 19 have completed the survey; this is an increase of two more respondents than in 2012/13. 10 out of the 19 Councillors who were members of a scrutiny committee or task group during 2013/14 completed the survey. The results of the survey showed that:

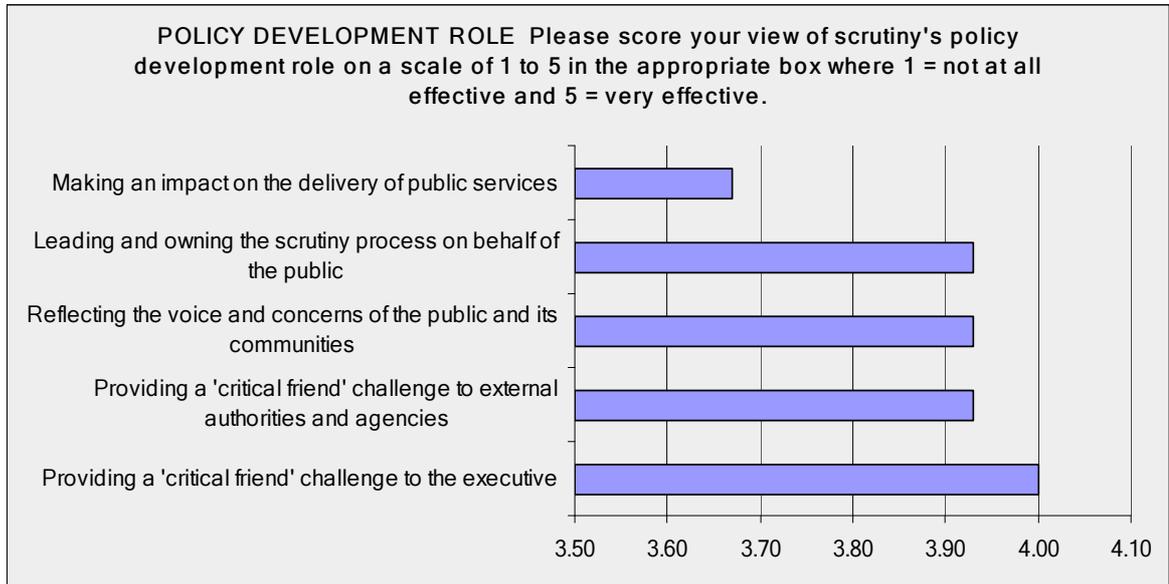
One Member had not taken part in scrutiny during the year as they were a member of the Executive. Three other respondents stated that they had no time or had other commitments. One person stated that there had been no task groups proposed where they could take part.

Members were asked to rate how effective they felt different aspects of the scrutiny work were in the five key areas identified by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

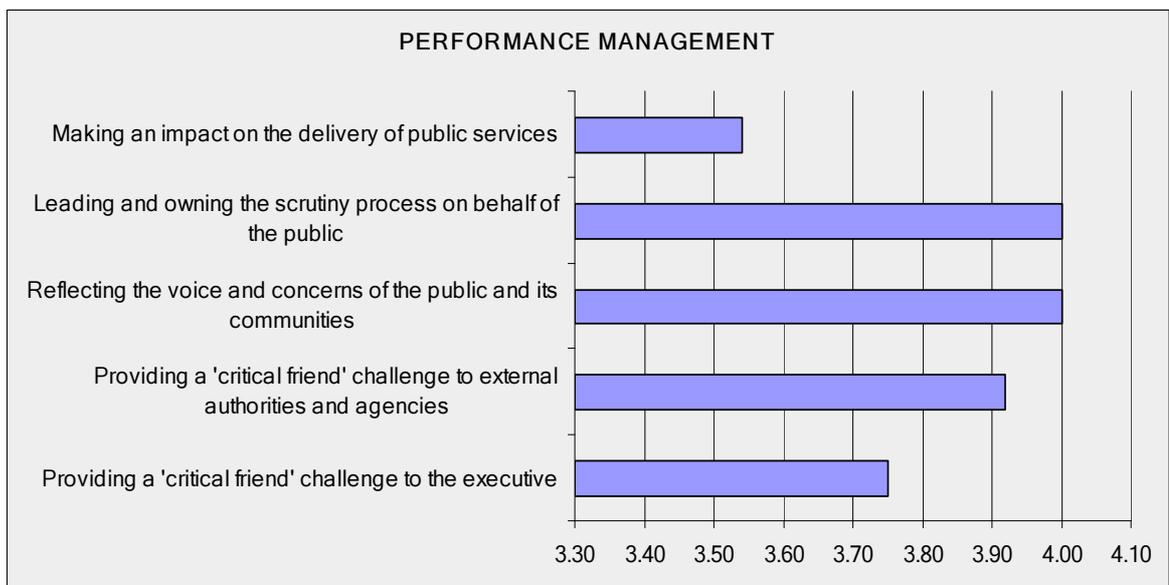
- Making an impact on the delivery of public services
- Leading and owning the scrutiny process on behalf of the public
- Reflecting the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
- Providing a 'critical friend' challenge to external authorities and agencies
- Providing a 'critical friend' challenge to the executive

15 of the respondents completed the questions about scrutiny's roles in policy development and performance management. 14 respondents scored scrutiny's budget and finance role. The scores were out of 5 with 1 being the lowest and 5 being the highest. All the aspects of scrutiny work received a rating average of 2.92 or higher. This showed a small decrease of 0.15 when compared to the 2012/13 survey results. The decrease was due to lower averages in scoring scrutiny's budget and finance role. The individual scrutiny areas are explored further in the following graphs.

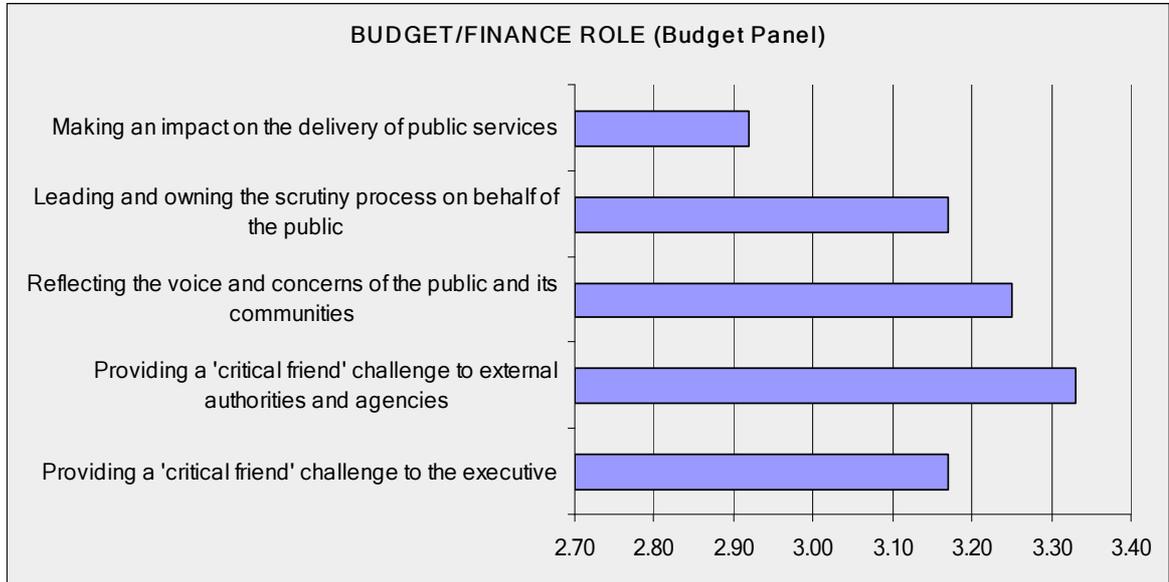
The first graph below shows the average rating for each aspect for the **Policy Development** role of scrutiny. The lowest rating average was 3.67 and the highest was 4.00. This shows an overall improvement on the 2012/13 results, which were 3.33 and 3.94 respectively.



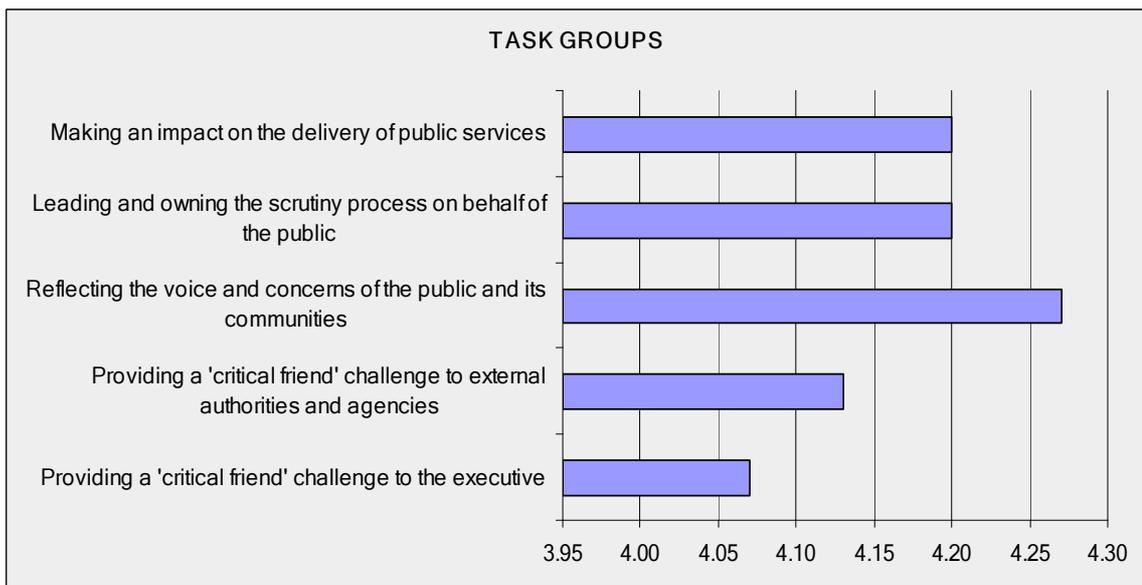
The second graph shows the average rating for each aspect for the **Performance Management** role of scrutiny. The lowest rating average was 3.54 and the highest was 4.00. This shows an improvement on the lowest rating of the 2012/13 results, which was 3.40. There has been a slight decrease in the highest rating which was 4.07 in 2012/13.



The third graph shows the average rating for each aspect for the **Budget and Finance** role of scrutiny. The lowest rating average was 2.92 and the highest was 3.33. This shows an overall decrease in Members' views on the effectiveness in this area of scrutiny when compared to the 2012/13 results, which were 3.07 and 3.60 respectively.



The final graph shows the average rating for each aspect for **Task Groups**. The lowest rating average was 4.07 and the highest was 4.27. This shows an improvement on the lowest rating of the 2012/13 results, which was 3.73. The highest average rating has stayed the same, namely 4.27, which had been scored in both surveys for 'Reflecting the voice and concerns of the public and its communities'.



Members were asked for their views about how scrutiny could be improved in the future. Shown below are some of the comments received. Democratic Services' responses are shown in italics.

- “I think the member make up of the scrutiny topic groups should reflect members' interests and not reflect any political bias/majority.”

The scrutiny Task Groups are not politically balanced. When a scrutiny suggestion is received the Committee and Scrutiny Officer emails all non-executive councillors and invites them to express an interest in participating in the proposed review. All the names of Councillors who have responded stating they wish to be included in the Task Group are then included within the report to Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The report sets out the scrutiny suggestion and the Scrutiny Committee decides whether to proceed with the review. The names are recorded in the order in which they are received by the Committee and Scrutiny Officer.

- “It may help new members of scrutiny to have a summary of the past topics and outcomes.”

For 2014/15 the Committee and Scrutiny Officer has produced a 'Welcome to Scrutiny' pack for all new Councillors elected in June 2014 and all Councillors appointed to Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Budget Panel, Outsourced Services Scrutiny and Community Safety Partnership Task Group. Within the pack a list of all previous scrutiny reviews has been provided, including the dates the final reports were submitted to the main scrutiny committee and the Executive. This information enables those interested in a review to find the information on the Council's website.

- “There were a few problems with a member using their position to politicise meetings which in my mind detracts from our reason for being there. This was being dealt with and so hopefully any future meetings will always be non political allowing members to do their work properly for the benefit of the Watford Community.”

Members are advised that scrutiny should be non political. Officers are only able to remind Councillors of this and can not control a meeting as that is the role of the Chair.

There were two further responses which provided positive comments about the Committee and Scrutiny Team and the development of scrutiny over the years.

Survey of officers

This survey, similar to the Councillors' survey, was completed by 10 officers. The survey showed that 8 of the officers, who responded to the survey, felt that they understood their role and had been appropriately briefed by the Committee and Scrutiny Team. The other two respondents had skipped these questions. Officers were asked whether they considered scrutiny had been an effective 'critical friend' to their service. There were no negative responses.

When asked how scrutiny could be improved one officer commented “Scrutiny has improved significantly over the last year with a sense of the process being well organised. I think when setting the topics and agendas it is important to recognise the time and resource required to undertake a thorough piece of work and to be proportionate. This aspect has also been better achieved this year even with quite a challenging set of agendas.” The Committee and Scrutiny Team will continue to work with other services to ensure that realistic timescales are reflected in reviews and work programmes. The Team will also ensure that scopes for Task Groups clearly define the aims of the suggested review.

A second officer stated that “We will need to work with TRDC on scrutinising the shared services under the new model.” The scrutiny of shared services at Watford Borough Council will be carried out by the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel in 2014/15. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer has contacted the Principal Committee Manager at Three Rivers District Council to identify the Lead Councillor for shared services at that authority. The Lead Councillor at Three Rivers District Council will be added to the contact list for the Scrutiny Panel. They will be informed of the dates of meetings and the agendas and reports as they are published. The procedures will be developed further during the 2014/15 Municipal Year.

Survey of members of the public and external organisations

This survey was completed by 6 people who had been guests and witnesses at scrutiny meetings. One respondent had attended Community Safety Partnership Task Group and the other five respondents had attended the Watford Community Housing Trust Task Group. There was one fewer response when compared to the 2012/13 survey.

All six of the respondents stated that they had understood the purpose of the meeting and their role. Two people commented on the atmosphere of the meeting. One of the responses referred to the use of the committee room, which it was felt diluted any welcoming atmosphere. The layout of the committee room had made it challenging when presenting evidence or responding to questions. The Committee and Scrutiny Team will review the use of the Committee Rooms for Task Groups, liaising with the relevant Chairs.

One respondent commented about guests being able to air their views about the subject under scrutiny. They said that more events where the public were able to meet Councillors and talk to them would be useful and more were needed. The Committee and Scrutiny Team works with Task Groups to review the witnesses required for the subject under scrutiny and how to involve them in the review. The Team has used a variety of ways to engage with the public including questionnaires and open drop-in sessions.

One person has made a suggestion for a scrutiny topic. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer will contact the person to discuss the suggestion further.

Scrutiny Suggestions

Several scrutiny suggestions were included in the three surveys. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer will try to identify those people who have submitted suggestions and ask them to complete the scrutiny proposal form for more information.

6.2 Cabinet/scrutiny meetings

The Joint Cabinet Scrutiny meeting comprises the Mayor and her Cabinet and the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Budget Panel and Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel.

Three Joint Cabinet and Scrutiny meetings were held during 2013/14. The first meeting in July 2013 reviewed the scrutiny work programmes for the year and received an update on the current Task Groups. The Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee updated the meeting on scrutiny's progress throughout the year, often assisted by the other scrutiny Chairs.

6.3 Scrutiny Training

Two training sessions were held at the beginning of Budget Panel. The sessions covered Local Government Finance and Business Rates since April 2013.

One Councillor attended a training session about Local Government Finance organised by the Local Government Information Unit. He also attended the Parliamentary session organised by the Centre for Public Scrutiny.

Training on scrutinising contract management and services delivered by external providers has been arranged for 2014/15.

6.4 Scrutiny Library

Democratic Services has compiled a Scrutiny Library. Members are able to borrow the documents. Some of the documents are available online and the scrutiny library index provides the relevant links. All Councillors on a scrutiny committee or panel in 2014/15 will be provided with a copy of the available documents.

6.5 Hertfordshire Scrutiny Network

The Scrutiny Network has continued to hold meetings throughout 2013/14. The group continues to receive notification of Police and Crime Panel meetings. Each authority's work programmes are circulated to the other councils; this enables officers to see what else is being scrutinised around the county. The Network enables officers to share experiences and feed back from any training they have participated in.

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer informs the Managing Director, Heads of Service, the Mayor and relevant Portfolio Holders of scrutiny topic groups arranged by Hertfordshire County Council. This enables officers and the Executive to decide whether they wish to be involved in the review, either by submitting a statement to the topic group or attending as a witness. Final reports from topic groups are circulated to relevant officers and Councillors within the authority.

For further information on this report or copies of the final reports produced by the Task Groups, please contact -

Sandra Hancock, Committee and Scrutiny Officer
Telephone: 01923 278377
Email: legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report – 2013/14

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*PART A

Report to: Council
Date of meeting: 30 July 2014
Report of: Head of Democracy and Governance
Title: Neighbourhood Forum Annual Report 2013/14

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 Neighbourhood Forums were established at Annual Council on 21 May 2008. It was agreed that each Forum would comprise the three ward councillors for the local electoral ward.
- 1.2 In accordance with the protocol for Neighbourhood Forums, each Forum is required to produce an annual report providing details of the activities which had taken place during the year. The report should include information about the Forum's spending, meetings and projects.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 that the annual reports be noted.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Sandra Hancock,
Committee and Scrutiny Officer
telephone extension: 8377 email: legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Carol Chen, Head of Democracy and Governance

3.0 DETAILED PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Neighbourhood Forums were established to enable the ward councillors to engage with local residents and businesses and other community groups in their Ward. They could also be used to promote the Council's business and to carry out consultation on ward-related matters.

- 3.2 In 2013/14 each Neighbourhood Forum was allocated a budget of £2,500. The budget can be used to set up meetings with residents, businesses and other community groups. Five Neighbourhood Forums have held at least one meeting within their wards.
- 3.3 The budget can also be used to support projects within the ward. During 2013/14 11 Neighbourhood Forums chose to fund projects for their area. Many of the wards have made donations to local groups to cover the cost of new equipment or other expenses. Several wards used their funds towards environmental improvements in their areas, including hiring skips, planting trees and the purchase of bat and bird boxes for installation in a local park. Two wards jointly contributed towards the cost of the relocation of the CCTV equipment to Shady Lane. A third ward agreed to make a contribution towards the cost of the relocation from its 2014/15 budget. Details of the overall expenditure for each ward are shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.4 11 wards have submitted an Annual Report and these are attached as Appendix 2.

4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 **Financial**

- 4.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the expenditure was within the allocated budget for 2013/14.

4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

- 4.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are no implications in the report.

4.3 **Potential Risks**

Potential Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Overall score
None identified within this report			

Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Neighbourhood Forum expenditure statistics 2013/14
 Appendix 2 – Neighbourhood Forum Annual Reports

Background Papers

- 2013/14 Statement of Accounts and applications for each Neighbourhood Forum

File Reference

None

**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
EXPENDITURE 2013/14**

The table below provides expenditure details of each Neighbourhood Forum. It has been broken down to show the amount spent on holding meetings and funding projects within the wards.

WARD	AMOUNT SPENT ON MEETINGS	AMOUNT SPENT ON PROJECTS IN WARD	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
Callowland	£240.00	-	£240.00
Central	£295.75	£2,004.00	£2,299.75
Holywell	-	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
Leggatts	-	£2,095.86	£2,095.86
Meriden	-	£2,232.20	£2,232.20
Nascot	£683.85	£1,816.15	£2,500.00
Oxhey	£70.00	£2,415.99	£2,485.99
Park	£472.92	£2,027.08	£2,500.00
Stanborough	-	£2,500.00	£2,500.00
Tudor	-	£2,480.00	£2,480.00
Vicarage	-	£2,208.74	£2,208.74
Woodside	-	£2,480.00	£2,480.00

Total: £26,476.68

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**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

Name of Forum: Central Ward Neighbourhood Forum

Membership: Councillors Rabi Martins, Helen Lynch and Lizz Ayre

Supported by County Councillor Stephen Giles Medhurst

Date of Meeting 1: 24th June 2013

The Forum was targeted on the Watford Fields Residents

Publicity	Leaflet and word of mouth
Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below)	23
Other invitees <i>e.g. Council officers, Mayor. Police, HCC etc.</i>	Police Representative Community Safety Officer Environmental Health Officer
Topics covered	Community Safety Highways and Cycling on Footpath Town Centre Improvement plans Environmental Issues
Details of any costs associated with the meeting	Venue Hire and refreshments £45.50 (Notices of meetings were distributed by ward members to keep costs down)
Comments	Turn out was average for the area because of our decision to hold smaller meetings around the ward; this suits the layout of the Ward best.

Date of Meeting 2 : 31st July 2013

The Forum was targeted on Radlett Road Estate Residents

Publicity	Leaflet and word of mouth
Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below)	35
Other invitees <i>e.g. Council officers, Mayor. Police, HCC etc.</i>	Brian Scott WCHT representative Radlett Road Residents Association Representatives
Topics covered	Community Safety Issues on the Radlett Road Estate Plans to address problems caused by Commuter Parking on the Estate
Details of any costs associated with the meeting <i>e.g. venue hire , sound equipment etc.</i>	Venue Hire and refreshments £18.00 (Notices of meetings were distributed by ward members to keep costs down)
Comments	Subsequent to the meeting parking controls have been produced and will be implemented following statutory Consultation

Date of Meeting 3 : 6 November 2013

The Forum was targeted on residents in Gladstone Road, Grosvenor Road, Derby Road, Water Lane and Shaftesbury Road

Publicity	Leaflet
Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below)	27
Other invitees <i>e.g. Council officers, Mayor. Police, HCC etc.</i>	Environmental Health Officer Police Community Safety Officer
Topics covered	Refuse Collection and Bins on Environment Improvements around Water Lane and Waterfields area Cycling on Pavements Anti-social Behaviour
Details of any costs associated with the meeting <i>e.g. venue hire , sound equipment etc.</i>	Printing of leaflet £66.59 (Notices of meetings were distributed by ward members to keep costs down)
Comments	

Date of Meeting 4: 12th March 2014

The Forum was targeted at residents from the whole ward

Publicity	Leaflet and word of mouth
Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below)	42
Other invitees <i>e.g. Council officers, Mayor. Police, HCC etc.</i>	Mayor Community Safety Officer Police Representative
Topics covered	Plans for the town (Mayor) Community Safety Issues Highways Issues
Details of any costs associated with the meeting <i>e.g. venue hire , sound equipment etc.</i>	Venue Hire, Printing of the Notice and refreshments £175.66 (Notices of meeting were distributed by ward members to keep costs down)
Comments	

General Comment :

Because of the geographic nature of the ward Central NF meetings are targeted for specific streets / locations

In addition to the formal Neighbourhood Forum meetings we also held several smaller meetings with resident groups including in the sheltered homes (Dyson, Homemanor, Crosfield) to discuss a range of general issues

Projects

Project	Costs	Comments
Radlett Road Football Club	£300.00	Sponsored shirts for youth football club established by volunteers
Community Notice Board in Queens Road	£100.00	Costs for installation only The board itself was procured in the previous year
Central Primary School – provision of tank to house abandoned turtles	£500.00	Purchase of tank and equipment Helps young children learn understand wild life
St John's Church community Club	£375.00	Contribution towards set up of club and purchase of Board Games
Annual Community Clean up on the Radlett Road Estate	£540.00	Payment for hire of skips The clean up is a community activity supported by ward councillors This is an annual event
Tree guards for saplings in the ward	£189.00	To deter vandals from damaging the saplings planted at the request of residents with funding from the county locality budget

Signed. Councillor 1.....*R martins.*

Councillor 2.....Helen Lynch

Date: 3 July 2014

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**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

Name of Forum: Holywell Neighbourhood Forum

Membership: Councillors Nigel Bell, Jackie Connal and Matt Turmaine

Activities during 2013/14

Meetings: No meetings were held in 2013/14

Projects

Project	Costs	Comments
Donation to Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) to cover the cost of the animal display for the Holywell Fun Day on 3 August 2013	£250.00	The animal display was part of a wonderful Holywell Fair that brought everyone together.
Donation to West Watford Free Church towards cost of drainage works and maintenance on the Church's grounds	£750.00	The work ensured a safe environment for all users of the facilities.
Donation to Meet and Greet Social Club towards the rent paid to W3RT for use of Holywell Community Centre.	£400.00	It was agreed to make a one-off donation towards part of the Social Clubs hire costs. The Social Club provides a range of services that promote the well-being and independence of the over 50's.

Donation to Herts Constabulary towards the cost of relocation of the CCTV equipment to Shady Lane. £573.02

Holywell Councillors agreed to jointly fund the CCTV's relocation to Watford Police Station. This ensured an improvement in monitoring the CCTV behind the Tolpits Lane shops. It will help to combat anti-social behaviour and vandalism.

Donation to Homestart Watford and Three Rivers £526.98

The donation helped Homestart to support a vulnerable family in Holywell.

Signed Councillor J Connal
Councillor N Bell
Councillor M Turmaine

Date 20 June 2014

**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

Name of Forum: Leggatts

Membership: Councillors Asif Khan, Anne Joynes, Steve Johnson

Activities during 2013/14

Meetings

No meetings were held

Projects

Project	Costs	Comments
Contribution to Courtlands RA towards cost of marquee	£250.00	This was in part funding with Nascot ward councillors. The marquee will be of benefit for local residents for a number of years.
Donation to Early Years at Beechfield School	£200.00	To ensure that young children have play equipment to use in the early years section of the school.
Donation to Early Years at Cherry Tree School	£200.00	To ensure that young children have play equipment to use in the early years section of the school.
Donation to Early Years at Orchard School	£200.00	To ensure that young children have play equipment to use in the early years section of the school.
Donation to North Watford FC	£250.00	Help with safety equipment and for this new local club in the area.

Project	Costs	Comments
Contribution to the flowers etc for Hollytree House	£200.00	For the benefit of local residents in the area.
3 skips for ward	£750.00	Help with community clean-ups across the ward.

Signed. Councillor 1...Asif Khan

Councillor 2...Anne Joynes.....

Councillor 3.....

Date 10 June 2014

**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

Name of Forum: Meriden

Membership: Councillors J Brown, Greenslade and Hastrick

Activities during 2013/14

Projects

Project	Costs	Comments
Donation to Watford FC Sports and Educational Trust for Extra Time Project	£760	This provision is run for people aged over 55 at Meriden Community Centre. It includes facilities such as bowls, board games, floor basketball. The contribution made by Meriden Ward councillors is to cover staff time at £10.00 per hour for 2 hours, 38 weeks of the year.
Donation to Watford Unite, run by Watford FC Sports and Educational Trust	£715.67	It is a provision for young people ages 11-19 and provides two nights a week of recreation. Separate sessions are held for dance and football coaching. Our contribution is for football equipment, an aerobic mat and portable sound system. The sessions are free to young people.
Purchase of Meriden Football Club Equipment	£756.53	A newly set up football club for young people, under the auspices of Meriden Residents' Association. Football strip, goal nets, corner flags etc. were purchased to set them up

Signed. Councillor 1.....Jan Brown.....
 Councillor 2...Kareen Hastrick.....
 Councillor 3... ..

Date.....12th June 2014.....

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**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

Name of Forum: Nascot Neighbourhood Forum

Membership: Councillors Jeanette Aron, Hark Hofman and Mark Watkin

Activities during 2013/14

Meetings

Date of Meeting 1: 5th February 2014

Publicity	Leaflet distribution and notices on Resident Association Noticeboards and newsletters
Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below)	70
Other invitees	Mayor Dorothy Thornhill, Sgt Lillitou & PCSO Dalton Nick Garibaldi – Nascot Residents Association Gary Wilson – Courtland's Residents Association Fran Clarke – Ridge Residents Association
Topics covered	'What's going on in Watford' Safety & security Resident Associations Reports Herts County Council Report Local Issues

Details of any costs associated with the meeting	<p>£425 distribution of leaflets £258.85 printing</p> <p>Holyrood School kindly gave the use of their school hall and equipment free of charge</p>
Comments	<p>In Nascot Ward we feel it is very important for our residents to meet in a forum where we can share what is happening locally through our partners at WBC, the Residents Associations and our Community Safety partners. Our residents can raise their concerns or any issues they may have that impacts on their lives and those of others around them, from the attendance on the evening the Forum was very much a worth while endeavour.</p> <p>Due to other requests for funding from our Forum Budget, only one meeting was held this year.</p>

Projects

(Please provide details of projects including information about costs; why you selected the project; community involvement; whether the event/outcome was successful e.g. feedback from residents etc)

Project	Costs	Comments
Radios for the Nascot Wood Schools	£170 with a discount of £10 from supplier Each set £60, one for the nursery, Infant and Junior School	Three sets of radios were supplied to the Nascot Wood Schools following a recommendation from our Community Police Officer regarding efficient systems in place for whole school evacuation of the children and staff.
Radios for Holyrood School	£119.98 Two sets required	New radios were required for Holyrood School to aid the staff in their Emergency Evacuation procedure for the children and staff
Storage for St Thomas' Pre school	£400	To enable a smooth transition from St Thomas' Church to their new home at Cherrytree School help with funding for new storage facilities was required for St Thomas' Pre school.
Courtland's residents Association – new marquee for Fun day	£250	Working with our colleagues in Leggatts Ward we provided a new marquee for the Courtland's Fun Day, a community event for everyone to enjoy.
Ridge Resident's Association – provision of a skip for deadwood clearing	£220	The skip was required for the clearance of dead wood from the woodland area at North Watford Playing Fields due to the high winds and damage suffered during the winter.

CCTV unit at Goodwood Parade and other independent units around Watford Borough and their inclusion into the Main Suite at Shady Lane	£573.02	By working with our Community Police Officer Kevan Ball on his aim to have all independent CCTV units around WBC monitored at the new CCTV suite at Shady Lane and with our fellow councillors from Park and Holywell, we collectively used funding from our Forum Budgets to fund the supply of three laptops and the engineering time and wiring to enable this to happen.
Donation to Chairman's Charities	£83.15	As the Charities chosen this year could relate to any community we felt to donate the remainder to these worthy causes was a good use of our funds.

Signed. Councillor 1...Jeanette Aron
 Councillor 2...Mark Watkin
 Councillor 3...Mark Hofman

Date..... 14th May 2014

**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

Name of Forum: Oxhey Neighbourhood Forum

Membership: Councillors Shirena Counter, Iain Sharpe, Peter Taylor

Activities during 2013/14

Meetings

Date of Meeting 1: August 28th 2013

Publicity	Emails to interested residents plus post on OVEG Facebook page
Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below)	Approx 20
Other invitees <i>e.g. Council officers, Mayor. Police, HCC etc.</i>	Jane Custance, Head of Regeneration & Development and Simon Hoskin, Senior Planning Officer.
Topics covered	Discussion with the Bat Protection & Allotment Group about the demolition of a garage by the owner despite the possibility that bats were using it to roost and the Planning Department's response.

Details of any costs associated with the meeting <i>e.g. venue hire , sound equipment etc.</i>	None. Meeting held in LJs coffee shop who did not want payment.
Comments	This was a potentially difficult meeting with residents feeling that the Council had not responded to their concerns quickly enough. However, it involved a constructive discussion and resulted in agreement to use ward funding for an ecology survey and also for bird and bat boxes.

Date of Meeting 2: February 6th 2014

Publicity	Posters
Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below)	6
Other invitees <i>e.g. Council officers, Mayor. Police, HCC etc.</i>	Representatives from London Midland
Topics covered	Presentation on the proposed train blockades between London Euston and Hemel Hempstead.
Details of any costs associated with the meeting <i>e.g venue hire , sound equipment etc.</i>	Venue Hire £70 Printing and distribution costs - nil
Comments	This meeting was very poorly attended, probably because London Midland had just announced that the blockades proposed would be changed to weekend only. This meant it had become a non-issue

Date of Meeting 3: March 18th 2014

Publicity	Emails to interested residents living in Aldenham Close
Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below)	15 - 20
Other invitees <i>e.g. Council officers, Mayor. Police, HCC etc.</i>	Representatives from the social landlord
Topics covered	Discussion about difficulties residents are having with maintenance and repairs
Details of any costs associated with the meeting <i>e.g venue hire , sound equipment etc.</i>	None. Meeting held in LJs coffee shop who did not want payment.
Comments	This meeting enabled residents to raise their issues as tenants with the landlord (WCHT) and to facilitate an action plan for improvement

Date of Meeting 4: March 25th 2014

Publicity	Posters & emails
Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below)	Approx 50
Other invitees <i>e.g. Council officers, Mayor. Police, HCC etc.</i>	This was a joint meeting organised with the Oxhey Village Environment Group (OVEG). Justin Webber from the Conservation/planning team attended to give a presentation
Topics covered	The recent designation of Oxhey Village as a conservation area and the practical implications for residents. Myths and facts about a conservation area.
Details of any costs associated with the meeting <i>e.g venue hire , sound equipment etc.</i>	N/A
Comments	This meeting was well attended as Oxhey Village had recently been designated as a conservation area and residents had lots of queries.

Projects

Project	Costs	Comments
Banner for Friends of Attenborough Fields	£100	Contribution towards a banner to publicise the work of this local organisation which manages a large area of open space between Oxhey and Bushey on behalf of the local community.
Contribution towards new second-hand tractor for Friends of Attenborough Fields	£700	Donation to help Friends of Attenborough Fields purchase a second-hand tractor to help with their ongoing conservation work.
Provision of bird-boxes and bat boxes at Oxhey Grange allotments	£500	This was in response to requests from local residents who were concerned to protect local wildlife.
Provision of bird-boxes and bat boxes at Oxhey Park	£176	This was in response to requests from Friends of Oxhey Park, and provided an additional benefit to the park alongside the wider improvement programme carried out by Watford Borough Council.
Contribution to the renovation of kitchen at Bushey and Oxhey Methodist Church	£343.99	This was a contribution towards a wider renovation project. The hall is an important community facility, used by a variety of local groups and organisations in Oxhey Village and beyond. Our donation was specifically to assist with the kitchen renovation.
Donation to Signpost, Watford	£600	This organisation exists to provide free and confidential counselling to young people in Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere. Their work provides important benefits to the local community and this was a contribution towards their work in Oxhey Ward, which comprises 10% of their client population (slightly higher than average).

Signed. Councillor 1... Shirena Counter
 Councillor 2 Iain Sharpe...
 Councillor 3... Peter Taylor.....

Date... 30th June 2014.....

**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

Name of Forum: Park – Cassiobury Neighbourhood Forum
Cassiobury Triangle Neighbourhood Forum

Membership: Councillors George Derbyshire, Peter Jeffree and Malcolm Meerabux

Activities during 2013/14

Meetings

Date of Meeting 1: Tuesday 3 December 2013

Publicity Notice of meeting delivered to every house in the Neighbourhoods

Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below) Approximately 150

Other invitees Matt Hill, WBC Cassiobury Park Project Officer
e.g. Council officers, Mayor. Police, HCC etc.

Topics covered Presentation of the results of the public consultation about proposals for upgrading the facilities of Cassiobury Park as part of the WBC bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

Details of any costs associated with the meeting <i>e.g. venue hire , sound equipment etc.</i>	Printing of notices and agendas	£232.92
	Delivery of notices	£140
	Hire of venue (James Theatre)	£100

Comments

The Forum was an opportunity for residents to raise with their councillors any issues of concern relating to life on the Cassiobury Estate or in the Cassiobury Triangle.

As stated above, there was also a presentation about the Heritage Lottery Fund bid for Cassiobury Park.

Projects

Project	Costs
Donation to the Junior Section of West Herts Cricket Club towards the cost of a new cricket net	£500
Donation to Peace Hospice Care towards cost of maintaining the hospice gardens	£250
Donation to Peace Hospice Care for purchase of an Ipad for use by patients	£499
Donation to GROW	£778.08

Signed. Councillor G Derbyshire

Councillor P Jeffree

Date.....2 July 2014.....

**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

Name of Forum: Stanborough

Membership: Councillors Keith Crout, Derek Scudder and Tim Williams

Activities during 2013/14

Meetings: No meetings were held in 2013/14

Projects

Project	Costs	Comments
Replacement trees	£560	To replace a number of trees at different locations to improve the street scene
Post and rail fencing	£1940	To repair and replace sections of post and rail fencing which were damaged and unsightly

Signed. Councillor Derek Scudder.....
Councillor Tim Williams.....
Councillor Keith Crout.....

Date: 3 July 2014

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**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

Name of Forum: Tudor

Membership: Cllr. Kelly McLeod, Cllr. Lindsey Scudder, Cllr. Darren Walford

Activities during 2013/14

Meetings: No meeting were held during 2013/14

Projects

Project	Costs	Comments
Christmas lights at Tudor Parade	£1,500.00	Working with the Peace Hospice, St Peters Church and the Tudor Arms, we arranged a choral service (singalong) that was attended by over 70 people on the night that celebrated the lights being switched on by Mayor Dorothy Thornhill . The Tudor Arms raised money through their patrons for the Peace Hospice , and the church provided the song sheets. We have provided power, lights and sorted out the payment for the power to the lights and the Peace Hospice have provided the power connection. It was a great community event and will be a new tradition on the estate.
Replacement bench	£980.00	The local bench at the junction of Bushey Mill Lane and Tudor Avenue was in need of replacement due to age. We have removed the memorial plaque and will have it reinstalled by the Council. This bench is used by all of the community throughout the year and is a significant meeting point.

Signed. Councillor 1.....Kelly McLeod
Councillor 2.....Lindsey Scudder
Councillor 3.....Darren Walford

Date.....03/04/14

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**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

Name of Forum: Vicarage Ward

Membership: Councillors Jagtar Singh Dhindsa, Nasreen Shah and Mo Mills

Activities during 2013/14

Meetings: No Meetings held during the year.

Projects

Project	Costs	Comments
Mini Bin – pocket ashtrays	£415.00	These will help encourage residents and visitors to dispose of their cigarette butts and chewing gum in a safe and environmental friendly way. These are reusable, clean, safe and utterly brilliant.
Hiring of Skips to clear the alleyways in Vicarage ward.	£1250.00	This project is to enhance the area by cleaner alleyways and the resident to be able to gain excess their back gardens by the alleyways.
For printing letters	£43.74	to notify the residents regarding the clean up of the alley ways

Project	Costs	Comments
Equipment for The West Herts Junior Cricket Club	£500.00	<p>The project will enable young children from the age of 10 years old to be trained and use their energy in a positive outlet.</p> <p>A project like this will involve parents, other family and friends in a positive competitive sport that will help to build skills for young people and set them up to continue with the same theme in to their teenage years.</p>

Signed. Councillor J Dhindsa
 Councillor M Mills
 Councillor N Shah

Date: 1 July 2014

**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM
ANNUAL REPORT 2013/14**

Name of Forum: Woodside

Membership: Councillors I Brown, K Collett and G Saffery

Activities during 2013/14

Projects

(Please provide details of projects including information about costs; why you selected the project; community involvement; whether the event/outcome was successful e.g. feedback from residents etc)

Project	Costs	Comments
Lemarie Centre	£800.00	Updated the hot water pipes and brought them inside. Less heat will be lost and this will make a substantial saving.
Woodside Leisure Centre	£260.00	Supplied them with a table tennis table so that local people can be involved with local competition.
Church of the Nazarene- lights for hall that is used for the Youth club and equipment.	£700.00	The lighting needed replacing and would give the local youth club more use. Equipment was added so that different court games could be played.
CCTV camera for Weall Green.	£300.00	To assist with Anti-Social Behaviour and give the local people peace of mind. Residents are happy that we are helping the local community tackle crime.
Leavesden Children and Family Centre	£420.00	Supplied toys, books and cooking classes for families. This is help with good parenting and to assist those who are on low income.

Signed Councillor 1.....Karen Collett.....

Councillor 2.....Ian Brown.....

Councillor 3.....Glen Saffery.....

Date.....15/06/14.....