



# COUNCIL MEETING

**Wednesday, 14th October, 2015**

**7.30 pm**

**Town Hall, Watford**

**Publication date: 6 October 2015**

**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](mailto:legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk) .

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

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Visitors may park in the staff car park after 4.00 p.m. and before 7.00 a.m. This is a Pay and Display car park; the current charge is £1.50 per visit.

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6 October 2015

Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Borough of Watford to be held on Wednesday, 14th October, 2015 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 24 June 2015 to be submitted and signed.

Copies of the minutes of this meeting are usually available seven working days following the meeting.

*(All minutes are available on the Council's [website](#).)*

- 4. OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENTS**
- 5. MAYOR'S REPORT** (Pages 7 - 10)
- 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**

The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Johnson and seconded by Councillor Collett

*"Housing and the 2015 Emergency Budget*

*1. Council notes with concern the increasing pressure on housing in Watford, and the South East in general, with Private Rented Sector evictions now accounting for as many cases of homelessness as all other causes combined, and with market rents in Watford significantly exceeding the levels that housing benefit will cover.*

2. Council further notes that the 2015 Emergency Budget will have a harmful effect on the housing situation in Watford and on those in housing need, particularly by:
  - a) reducing the Overall Benefits Cap, and designating Watford as an outside London area with an Overall Benefits Cap of £20,000;
  - b) freezing Local Housing Allowance rates for 4 years;
  - c) removing housing benefit for 18-21 year olds;
  - d) extending the 'right to buy' to assured tenants of social landlords; and
  - e) reducing social rents which will deprive housing associations of revenue and undermine their ability to build.
  
3. Council recognises that:
  - a) the housing market in Watford is closely linked to those of London, and median market rents in Watford exceed those of some London Boroughs;
  - b) private housing rent increases in Watford have substantially exceeded both the Consumer Price Index and the Retail Price Index;
  - c) remaining living at home is simply not an option for 18-21 year olds who are fleeing domestic abuse or estranged from their parents;
  - d) social landlords have questioned the legitimacy of legislating to allow the sale of assets owned by charities and not-for-profit companies; and that many stakeholders are concerned that the policy will result in a permanent loss of social housing for future generations; and
  - e) the National Housing Federation has stated that at least 27,000 homes will now not be built.
  
4. Council requests that the Elected Mayor writes to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to:
  - a) make the case for Watford Borough residents to qualify for the London rate of Overall Benefit Cap;
  - b) explain that it is already difficult or impossible to find homes that are affordable with Local Housing Allowance, and that freezing the allowance against a general rise in rents is an unfair burden on claimants and the Council; and
  - c) request further information about what criteria the Department will use to define 18-21 year-old applicants for housing benefit as vulnerable.
  
5. Council further requests that the Elected Mayor writes to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to ask for clarification on Government plans to extend the 'right to buy' homes in the ownership of registered social landlords, and to express concerns about the policy, both because of its negative impact on availability of affordable housing and its interference in the property rights of charitable bodies.
  
6. Council further requests the Housing Section Head to continue to work closely with housing providers such as Watford Community Housing Trust to
  - a) consider the effect that reducing social rents and extending the right to buy will have on the future supply of social housing; and
  - b) explore possible solutions to help mitigate any housing shortages these changes may cause."

The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Rindl and seconded by Councillor Martins

- 1) *“Council notes that over 6 million people have been displaced in Syria and over 3 million people have fled to other countries.*
- 2) *Council commends the efforts and generosity of many residents who have donated time, money, clothing and food to refugees both from Syria and other unstable areas.*
- 3) *Council especially recognises the hard work of volunteers at Watford and Three Rivers Refugee Partnership who give long-term practical support and befriending to refugees in Watford, and Council congratulates them on their new status as a registered charity.*
- 4) *Council further notes that Watford is already experiencing a significant shortage of social housing supply against unprecedented levels of homelessness in the Borough; and that housing costs in Watford are much higher than in other parts of the country, and often not completely covered by current housing benefit rates.*
- 5) *Council believes that the UK has a moral responsibility to take part in the international humanitarian effort to assist refugees.*
- 6) *Council welcomes the Government’s decision to expand the existing Syrian Vulnerable Person Scheme to resettle an additional 20,000 refugees.*
- 7) *Council therefore resolves to work with key bodies at national and county levels (such as Hertfordshire County Council and health partners) to support Syrian refugee resettlement if requested to do so by the Minister for Syrian Refugees.*
- 8) *Council further resolves to seek funding from all possible sources to help cover the cost of resettlement so that refugees receive the support they need and that local services are not put under unreasonable pressure.*
- 9) *Council thanks the Head of Community and Customer Services for liaising with partner organisations on this important issues, and requests that he continues this work.”*

The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Bell and seconded by Councillor Joynes

*“Council notes the recent Care Quality Commissions damning report on the state of West Herts Health Trust, including Watford General Hospital.*

*In particular the Council notes that;*

*A and E patients at Watford General Hospital faced long delays before they are examined by a doctor,*

*That untrained staff were assessing and directing the care of A and E arrivals,*

*That facilities were in such a bad state of repair that they “caused a potential risk to staff and visitors, and*

*That there was a chronic lack of nurses so serious that it posed ‘a major risk’ to patients and major staff shortages in the maternity unit,*

*Although acknowledging that care in children’s and young people’s services is outstanding ,the report found that there was low morale across the hospital.*

*The Council recognises that;*

*The shocking state of the hospital is a major concern for Watford residents which is a result of the failure by the current Conservative Government and previous Tory/Lib Dem Government to properly fund our health service.*

*The current shortfall in funding at the West Herts Hospital Trust is £32.8million, a deficit that is worsening not improving in the current financial year (see Trust Board papers for 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015).*

*The vacancy rate at the hospital is 15.9% with major shortages amongst nursing staff contributing to reductions in service quality and poor staff morale (see Trust board papers 1<sup>st</sup> October 2015).*

*Staff have highlighted poor working facilities within the hospital (staff survey results 2014) that are in urgent need of investment and modernisation.*

*We, therefore, call on the Mayor,*

*To acknowledge that the Conservative/Liberal Democrat Government were severely mistaken to have scrapped the planned hospital modernisation plan under the last Labour Government and that the Health trust has been severely underfunded over the past 5-years.*

*To immediately write to the secretary of state for health demanding that the Government fully fund the rebuilding and modernisation of the hospital and provide sufficient funding to ensure the trust can deliver the level of staffing and facilities to create a safe level of service.”*

The following motion has been proposed by Councillor Haley and seconded by Councillor Mauthoor

*“This Council notes the totally inadequate response to the international humanitarian crisis resulting from the civil war in Syria.*

*Watford Council has a proud record welcoming refugees and our town’s residents have shown their decency and compassion towards the dispossessed over many years in response to war and natural disaster.*

*This Council resolves to show leadership in working with partners from across the voluntary sector, the Government, and the County Council to ensure that services*

*are co-ordinated in order to provide adequate resources and funding for any refugees that are settled in our area.*

*Further the Council resolves to establish a cross-sector working group of relevant Council and government departments to work with those voluntary groups, faith and non-faith groups who want to make any refugees who are re-settled in Watford safe and welcome.”*

**11. BOUNDARY REVIEW REPORT** (Pages 11 - 60)

Report of Head of Democracy and Governance

**12. ADDITION TO CAPITAL PROGRAMME - WATFORD BUSINESS PARK** (Pages 61 - 66)

Report of Managing Director

**13. ANNUAL REPORT OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY IN WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL 2014/15** (Pages 67 - 94)

Annual report of Overview and Scrutiny in Watford

**14. NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15** (Pages 95 - 126)

Report of Committee and Scrutiny Officer

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

**Manny Lewis, Managing Director**



## Mayor's Report – October Council

### Business Improvement District

Ballot papers have now gone out in the town centre for businesses to vote on whether they think Business Improvement District (BID) is right for Watford.

Over 200 BIDs are already operating successfully around the country, including one in every major city. Their success is ascribed to the fact they are focused, cost efficient and entrepreneurial.

The Business Plan for the Watford BID sets out how nearly £3 million of investment, raised via a small proportionate levy charged to every business in the BID area, would be spent across the five year term of the BID. It focuses on activities and initiatives that will enhance the look and feel of the town, secure the future of the town and maintain and improve the footfall, through increased marketing, promotion and events - especially while the Charter Place redevelopment works are underway.

The business plan is available to download online at [watfordbid.co.uk/business-plan.html](http://watfordbid.co.uk/business-plan.html) or a hard copy is available from the Town Centre Manager on 01923 278260.

All votes must be returned by 5pm on 29th October. The result will be announced on 30th October.

### Cemeteries

In September, Cabinet received a report on the service provided at Watford cemeteries. A range of issues were raised in the Institute of Crematorium and Cemetery Management's review and during engagement with local stakeholders. Most of these will be taken forward in a Cemetery Strategy and detailed action plan, but I am glad to say that discussions have already begun with Gardens of Peace about providing weekend and bank holiday services.

### Charter Place

Following Government approval for the Compulsory Purchase Order earlier this summer, work is due to start on the redevelopment of Charter Place imminently, starting with the removal of fixtures and fittings. The demolition is due to start in December.

During the works, Watford will remain open for business. There will be covered walkways in and out of the shopping centre.

## **West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust**

Council will be aware that West Hertfordshire Hospital Trust has been taken into special measures because of concerns about quality of care.

I am in regular contact with management at the Trust and I have requested a meeting with the Secretary of State for Health. Everyone I've spoken to is determined to turn things around. The criticisms in the CQC report about lack of space and facilities that need updating make Watford Health Campus even more important. We still await a decision on the allotments from the Secretary of State. Both council officers and I will continue to offer any assistance we can.

The aim is always to get hospitals out of special measures within a year, and I hope that will be the case in Watford.

## **Tall Buildings Strategy**

Over the last few months the Borough has been approached about a number of proposed new tall buildings, and it's apparent that we need a clear Tall Buildings Strategy that will consider heights, locations, how the building functions as a unit, how it interacts with the existing community, how the building would be serviced, while protecting Watford's best views. To that end, the officers have been working with Design South East and Members to draw up a draft strategy.

Any strategy must consider the needs and ambitions for our borough. Watford is not London, and residents do not want to be surrounded by high-rises. The feedback so far is that very tall buildings should be the exception in Watford, not the rule. Any new buildings must be of good quality that provide desirable housing for local residents and spaces for businesses.

The workshops are ongoing, and we are looking to put a draft strategy out to consultation this autumn. What is clear is that central government is forcing some development on us, and Watford is certainly attracting the interest of developers. New residential and commercial development is inevitable, and it is our responsibility to ensure that that development is suitable for our town and is of maximum benefit to local residents and businesses.

## **Taxis**

Passengers with disabilities make up a significant part of the business for taxi and private hire drivers, as they are quite often the most flexible form of transport available to them.

Earlier this year WBC conducted a mystery shopper exercise with an independent company to see how licensed taxi and private hire drivers treated passengers with disabilities.

The results showed that there are some areas where a better service could be provided, particularly when helping passengers into and out of the vehicles and when communicating with them. The biggest problems related to travel by wheelchair users, and work is needed to train drivers about securing wheelchairs.

The results were considered by our Licensing Committee on 14 September 2015. The Committee agreed to form a working group with trade representatives, passenger representatives and councillors to look at how to improve the services and to inform passengers more about what they can expect from licensed drivers.

I am pleased that drivers and passenger representatives have already volunteered and are working together to provide a better service for passengers with disabilities. Drivers who want to take part in the working group can still do so by contacting the licensing team by emailing [licensing@watford.gov.uk](mailto:licensing@watford.gov.uk) or telephoning 01923 278476.

## **Big Events**

Watford's Big Events this summer were a huge success. Initial feedback from residents and visitors was good, and footfall on the High Street increased significantly.

The next in the Big Events series is Diwali on The Parade. It's set to bring colour, lights and culture to the heart of Watford. The free event takes place from 12pm-5pm on Sunday 25 October and is linked with Diwali at the Palace – a vibrant Diwali dance celebration being shown at Watford Palace Theatre. There's lots planned to make it even more magical than last year, with a host of dance and musical performances, and hands-on workshops. I hope I'll see you there.

## **Budget**

We are already starting to work on next year's budget. Although we are not expecting disastrous cuts, the long-term trend is for smaller government grants and a higher proportion of revenue being raised locally. The Chancellor of the Exchequer has indicated that there will be dramatic changes to the way that business rates are distributed. I would welcome changes that would see the Borough keeping more of our Business Rate receipts and residents benefiting from our booming town. However, we have been down this road before with previous government announcements. As ever, the devil will be in the detail.

## **Queen's Birthday**

September saw Her Majesty, Queen Elizabeth II, become the longest serving monarch. Her Majesty has reigned over our country since 1952, overseen 12 Prime Ministers and witnessed worldwide change. It was an honour for me to sign and send a letter of congratulations from the borough.

## **Ramadan Fast**

Thank you to everyone who supported my sponsored fast in aid of Tolpits Lane community centre. It raised over £5,000.

## **A Personal Note**

On a personal note, I'd like to thank everyone who sent such warm congratulation about my peerage. It's a great honour. I will continue to put my duties as Elected Mayor first, and I will always work hard for our town.

## PART A

**Report to:** Council  
**Date of meeting:** 14 October 2015  
**Report of:** Head of Democracy and Governance  
**Title:** To Consider the Local Government Boundary Commission's Draft Proposals on Warding Patterns for Watford

### 1.0 **SUMMARY**

- 1.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission published its draft proposals on warding patterns for Watford on 25 August 2015. A copy of that report is attached as Appendix 1.
- 1.2 All councillors were sent a copy and asked if they had any comments to refer them to members of the Boundary Review Group. The Group met on 9 September 2015 but was unable to make any recommendations from that meeting to Council

### 2.0 **RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1 To make any recommendations it sees fit on the Local Government Boundary Commission's proposed warding patterns

**Contact Officer:**

For further information on this report please contact: Carol Chen Head of Democracy and Governance  
telephone extension: 8350 email: [carol.chen@watford.gov.uk](mailto:carol.chen@watford.gov.uk)

### 3.0 **DETAILED REPORT**

- 3.1 Council considered its initial submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission at its meeting on the 24 June 2015. Council will recall that the Boundary Review Group had been unable to establish a consensus and each of the Groups on the Council therefore put forward proposals for Council to consider. Attached at Appendix 2 is the agreed Council submission that was sent on 29 June 2015.
- 3.2 On 25 August the Local Government Boundary Commission published its draft proposals on warding patterns for Watford. All councillors were sent a copy. In addition to publishing its draft proposals it also published a revised date for submitting responses from 26 to 19 October 2015. A copy of the draft proposals are attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.3 The Boundary Review Group was reconvened and met once on 9 September. No consensus was reached at that meeting. The Review Group agreed that as with the original submissions it should be left to each Group to put forward any proposed comments direct to Council.
- 3.4 Members are reminded that the criteria that the Commission uses to determine boundaries are:
- Delivering electoral equality, each councillor should represent as far as possible the same number of electors.
  - Reflecting the interests and identities of local communities, and
  - Promoting effective and efficient local government.

This latter criteria has been considered in their views on council size. Any response from the council will have to demonstrate that it has had regard to those criteria otherwise it is unlikely that the Commission will have regard to it.

- 3.4 Attached as Appendices 3, 4 and 5 are the respective proposals from each of the Groups.
- 3.5 Council is asked to agree a response to the Local Government Boundary Commission

### 4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

#### 4.1 **Financial**

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

#### 4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

- 4.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that the Local Government Boundary Commission will make the final decision on Warding Patterns for Watford. It is due to publish its final warding patterns in December 2015.

#### 4.3 **Equalities**

- 4.3.1 The Local Government Boundary Commission's primary criteria for warding patterns is equality in voting.

#### 4.4 Potential Risks

Potential Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Overall score
The Commission ignores the Council's submission	2	2	4

#### 4.5 Staffing

4.5.1 N/A

#### 4.6 Accommodation

4.6.1 N/A

#### 4.7 Community Safety

4.7.1 N/A

#### 4.8 Sustainability

4.8.1 N/A

#### Appendices

Appendix 1 Local Government Boundary Commission's draft proposals on warding patterns

Appendix 2 The Council's submission on warding patterns to the Local Government Boundary Commission

Appendix 3 Liberal Democrat Proposals

Appendix 4 Labour Proposals

Appendix 5 Conservative Proposals

#### Background Papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

#### File Reference

None



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# Summary

## Who we are

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent body set up by Parliament. We are not part of government or any political party. We are accountable to Parliament through a committee of MPs chaired by the Speaker of the House of Commons.

Our main role is to carry out electoral reviews of local authorities throughout England.

## Electoral review

An electoral review examines and proposes new electoral arrangements for a local authority. A local authority's electoral arrangements decide:

- How many councillors are needed
- How many wards or electoral divisions there should be, where are their boundaries and what should they be called
- How many councillors should represent each ward or division

## Why Watford?

We are conducting an electoral review of Watford Borough Council as the Council currently has high levels of electoral inequality where some councillors represent many more or many fewer voters than others. This means that the value of each vote in borough council elections varies depending on where you live in Watford. Overall, 33% of wards in Watford currently have a variance of more than 10% from the average for the borough. Tudor ward currently has 20% fewer electors than the average for Watford, while Central ward has 15% more.

## Our proposals for Watford

Watford Borough Council currently has 36 councillors. Based on the evidence we received during previous phases of the review, we consider that maintaining this council size will ensure the Council can discharge its roles and responsibilities effectively.

## Electoral arrangements

As Watford Borough Council elects by thirds, the Commission will aim to produce a uniform pattern of three-member wards. Our draft recommendations therefore propose that Watford Borough Council's 36 councillors should represent 12 three-member wards across the borough. None of our proposed wards would have an electoral variance of greater than 10% from the average for Watford by 2020.

**You have until 19 October 2015 to have your say on the recommendations. See page 19 for how to have your say.**



# 1 Introduction

1 This electoral review is being conducted following our decision to review Watford Borough Council's ('the Council's) electoral arrangements to ensure that the number of voters represented by each councillor is approximately the same across the borough.

## What is an electoral review?

2 Our three main considerations in conducting an electoral review are set out in legislation<sup>1</sup> and are to:

- Improve electoral equality by equalising the number of electors each councillor represents
- Reflect community identity
- Provide for effective and convenient local government

3 Our task is to strike the best balance between them when making our recommendations. Our powers, as well as the guidance we have provided for electoral reviews and further information on the review process, can be found on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

## Consultation

4 We wrote to the Council as well as other interested parties, inviting the submission of proposals on council size. We then held a period of consultation on warding patterns for the borough. The submissions received during consultation have informed our draft recommendations.

This review is being conducted as follows:

<b>Stage starts</b>	<b>Description</b>
17 March 2015	Council size decision
12 May 2015	Invitation to submit proposals for warding arrangements to LGBCE
7 July 2015	LGBCE's analysis and formulation of draft recommendations
25 August 2015	Publication of draft recommendations and consultation
19 October 2015	Analysis of submissions received and formulation of final recommendations
3 December 2015	Publication of final recommendations

## How will the recommendations affect you?

5 The recommendations will determine how many councillors will serve on the Council. They will also decide which ward you vote in, which other communities are in that ward and the name of your ward.

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<sup>1</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## What is the Local Government Boundary Commission for England?

6 The Local Government Boundary Commission for England is an independent body set up by Parliament under the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

Members of the Commission are:

Max Caller CBE (Chair)  
Professor Colin Mellors (Deputy Chair)  
Dr Peter Knight CBE DL  
Alison Lowton  
Sir Tony Redmond  
Professor Paul Wiles CB

Chief Executive: Jolyon Jackson CBE

## 2 Analysis and draft recommendations

7 Legislation<sup>2</sup> states that our recommendations are not intended to be based solely on the existing number of electors<sup>3</sup> in an area, but also on estimated changes in the number and distribution of electors likely to take place over a five-year period from the date of our final recommendations. We must also try to recommend strong, clearly identifiable boundaries for the wards we put forward at the end of the review.

8 In reality, the achievement of absolute electoral fairness is unlikely to be attainable and there must be a degree of flexibility. However, our approach is to keep variances in the number of electors each councillor represents to a minimum.

9 In seeking to achieve electoral fairness, we work out the average number of electors per councillor by dividing the electorate by the number of councillors as shown on the table below.

	<b>2015</b>	<b>2020</b>
Electorate of Watford	71,321	77,923
Number of councillors	36	36
Average number of electors per councillor	1,981	2,165

10 Under our draft recommendations, none of our proposed wards will have electoral variances of greater than 10% from the average for the borough by 2020. We are therefore satisfied that we have achieved good levels of electoral fairness for Watford.

11 These recommendations cannot affect the external boundaries of Watford or result in changes to postcodes. They do not take into account parliamentary constituency boundaries. There is no evidence that the recommendations will have an adverse effect on local taxes, house prices, or car and house insurance premiums and we are not, therefore, able to take into account any representations which are based on these issues.

### Submissions received

12 See Appendix B for details of submissions received. All submissions may be inspected at our offices and can also be viewed on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk)

### Electorate figures

13 As prescribed in the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009, the Council submitted electorate forecasts for 2020, a period five years on from the scheduled publication of our final recommendations in December 2015. These forecasts were broken down to polling district levels and projected an increase in the electorate of approximately 9% to 2020. The growth will largely be driven by development within the borough, including the development of the health campus site.

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<sup>2</sup> Schedule 2 to the Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

<sup>3</sup> Electors refers to the number of people registered to vote, not the whole adult population.

14 During the preliminary period of the review, the Council had expressed some concerns that its existing electorate figure of 69,255 was probably lower than it should be as a result of the impact of Individual Elector Registration (IER). It cited the fact that its February 2014 register recorded 71,313 electors which was higher than the figure of 69,255 taken in December 2014 figure following IER. However, following discussion the Council agreed that there was no more accurate figure available so we decided to use this as the basis of consultation on warding patterns.

15 Towards the beginning of the consultation on warding patterns, the Council informed us that its most recent electoral register (June 2015) had recorded an increase to 71,321 in electors which it considered was a more accurate reflection following the establishment of IER. It expressed concern that the figures originally provided were inaccurate, which would also affect the accuracy of its forecast figures. The Council therefore requested that we consider a revised set of existing and forecast electorate figures. On balance, in light of the evidence provided by the Council, we considered that the revised figures were the best available at the present time and these figures form the basis of our draft recommendations.

## Council size

16 Watford Borough Council put forward a submission supporting a council size of 36, the retention of the existing council size. We received no other submissions with alternative council sizes.

17 We carefully considered the evidence provided by the Council and considered that it had demonstrated that the authority can operate efficiently and effectively under the existing council size and ensure effective representation of local residents.

18 We therefore consulted on electoral arrangements for Watford based on a council size of 36 members.

19 In response to this consultation we did not receive any further comments to persuade us that the council size was incorrect. We have therefore based our draft recommendations on a council size of 36 elected members.

## Warding patterns

20 During consultation on warding patterns, we received 15 submissions, including three borough-wide proposals. The remainder of the submissions provided localised comments for warding arrangements in particular areas of the borough.

21 The three borough-wide schemes provided a uniform warding arrangement of three-member wards for the borough. The Council, supported by the Liberal Democrat Group, put forward a pattern of 12 three-member wards. These were based on the existing wards with a number of amendments to improve electoral equality and to follow identifiable boundaries. The Conservative Group put forward similar proposals to the Council and Liberal Democrat Group, but with a number of modifications. Under both the Council and Conservative Group proposals there would be two wards – Stanborough and Woodside – with 10% fewer electors than the borough average by 2020.

22 The Watford Labour Party also proposed 12 three-member wards. Its warding pattern was broadly similar to the Council and Conservative Group proposals, but subject to a number of differences to improve electoral equality or strengthen boundaries. Under its proposals only Stanborough ward would have a variance of 10% or fewer electors than the borough average by 2020.

23 We note that there were areas of general consensus between all three proposals, including the need to transfer parts of the health campus development to the Oxhey ward. We are therefore proposing to transfer parts of this to the Oxhey ward.

24 We had concerns that the Council and Conservative Group were both proposing the retention of the existing Stanborough and Woodside wards which would have 10% fewer electors than the borough average by 2020. We noted that the Watford Labour Party put forward proposals to address these poor levels of electoral equality. Although, the Council and Conservative Group acknowledged the poor levels of electoral equality in these wards, they argued that the boundaries for these areas were too strong to be breached. Our tour of the area confirmed that these wards do have strong boundaries, however, we consider that there are options to improve electoral equality.

25 Our draft recommendations are for 12 three-member wards. We consider that our draft recommendations will provide for good electoral equality while reflecting community identities and interests where we have received such evidence during consultation.

26 A summary of our proposed electoral arrangements is set out in Table A1 (on pages 21–2) and on the large map accompanying this report.

27 We welcome all comments on these draft recommendations. We also welcome comments on the ward names we have proposed as part of the draft recommendations.

## Draft recommendations

28 The tables on pages 8–16 detail our draft recommendations for each area of Watford. They detail how the proposed warding arrangements reflect the three statutory<sup>4</sup> criteria of:

- Equality of representation
- Reflecting community interests and identities
- Providing for convenient and effective local government

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<sup>4</sup> Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Act 2009.

## Central, Holywell, Oxhey and Vicarage

Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2020	Description	Detail
<b>Central</b>	3	6%	This ward comprises the existing Central ward, less the housing around the Raphael Drive and Brocklesbury Close areas. This ward also does not include the new development being built on the health campus site.	<p>We are proposing modifications to the existing ward to secure better electoral equality. As proposed by a number of respondents, we are including the new development being built on the health campus site in our Oxhey ward. During our visit to the area we observed the new access road for the development and understand it will be facing onto the River Colne.</p> <p>We note that there were support and objections to transferring the area of housing around Raphael Drive and Brocklesbury Close from Central ward to Tudor ward. We also note that there was one proposal to include the Watford Fields area in the Oxhey ward, while retaining Raphael Drive and Brocklesbury Close in the Central ward.</p> <p>On balance, following our tour of the area and consideration of the evidence submitted to us we consider that the Watford Fields area is better placed in the Central ward. We also considered that the area of housing around Raphael Drive and Brocklesbury Close whilst having road links into Central ward is separated by the railway line. We are therefore including this area in the Tudor ward under our draft recommendations.</p>
<b>Holywell</b>	3	8%	This ward comprises the existing Holywell ward, less an area to the south of the new health campus site and less	We are proposing modifications to the existing Holywell ward transferring an area of the new development on the health campus site to the Oxhey ward. This was supported by a number of respondents, including all those who put forward borough-wide proposals.

			two small residential areas to the north of the ward.	<p>One respondent suggested that an additional area of the health campus should be transferred to Oxhey ward. Having considered the proposals we consider that including the new development as suggested in three borough-wide warding patterns provides for good electoral equality and identifiable boundaries.</p> <p>To the north of Holywell there were proposals to include the Raven Close and Cherrydale areas in the Park ward to further improve electoral equality. Following our tour of the area we propose that these areas should be included in the Park ward.</p>
<b>Oxhey</b>	3	-1%	This ward comprises the existing Oxhey ward plus areas of Central, Holywell and Vicarage wards.	<p>We are proposing modifications to the existing Oxhey ward, transferring areas of housing in the health campus development in the Central, Holywell and Vicarage wards. This is necessary to improve electoral equality, particularly in Central and Vicarage wards. The new development on the health campus site will access Oxhey via the new access road to the development. This new development will also face onto the River Colne.</p> <p>One respondent proposed transferring the Watford Fields area to Oxhey ward. As stated in the Central area discussion (above), we have not proposed this as part of our draft recommendations because our tour of the area suggested this area sits better in the Central ward.</p>
<b>Vicarage</b>	3	3%	This ward comprises the existing Vicarage ward less an area to the south of the new health campus site and a small area in the north of the ward.	We are proposing modifications to the existing Vicarage ward to secure better electoral equality. As proposed by a number of respondents, we are transferring an area including parts of the new development on the health campus site to the Oxhey ward.

				In addition, as suggested by a respondent we are uniting the whole of Mildred Avenue in a single ward, but running the boundary down the rear of the houses to the south of the road. Our tour of the area suggested that this boundary would be identifiable.
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### Leggatts, Nascot and Park

Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2020	Description	Detail
Leggatts	3	-3%	This ward comprises existing Leggatts ward, plus part of Nascot ward and less Courtlands Close and Burrow Close.	<p>We are proposing modifications to the existing Leggatts ward. Although there was some support for the retention of the existing ward, we propose modifications to improve electoral equality elsewhere in the borough and also to strengthen boundaries.</p> <p>We propose to include Courtlands Close in the Woodside ward. While we acknowledge that this area is separated from Woodside by the A41, our tour of the area confirmed that it does have direct road links via Ashfields. Transferring this area significantly improves the -10% variance in Woodside to 5% fewer electors than the average.</p> <p>We also propose transferring Minerva Drive and part of Greenbank Road from Nascot ward to Leggatts ward. We acknowledge that this area is part of the area covered by Courtlands Residents' Association, but we note that the area covered by the residents' association is already divided between different borough wards. Our tour of the area also confirmed that the housing on Minerva Drive and Greenbank Road had good road links into Leggatts via Goodwood</p>

				<p>Avenue. This modification would also improve the electoral equality in the Nascot ward.</p> <p>Finally, we propose a minor amendment to include all of Burrow Close in the Nascot ward. The current boundary separates this road and does not reflect the access of the cul-de-sac.</p>
<b>Nascot</b>	3	5%	<p>This ward comprises the existing Nascot ward, plus Burrow Close and The Avenue, but less Minerva Drive and part of Greenbank Road.</p>	<p>We are proposing modifications to the existing Nascot ward to strengthen boundaries, but also improve electoral equality.</p> <p>We received a proposal that suggested that an area to the east of Hempstead Road should be included in the Park ward rather than Nascot ward. We have decided not to include this proposal in our draft recommendation. During our tour of the area our observations were that Hempstead Road forms a strong and identifiable boundary.</p> <p>As detailed in the Leggatts section (above), we are transferring the Minerva Drive and Greenbank Road from the Nascot ward to Leggatts ward. We acknowledge that this area is part of the Courtlands Residents' Association, but we note that the area covered by the residents' association is in both the Nascot and Leggatts wards. Our tour of the area also confirmed that Minerva Drive and Greenbank Close had good road links into Leggatts ward via Goodwood Avenue. This modification also improves electoral equality in the Nascot ward.</p> <p>A number of respondents suggested that the whole of The Avenue should be included in a single ward, although there was also an objection to this. Our tour of the area suggested that running the boundary to the west of the houses on The</p>

				<p>Avenue would provide for a clear boundary and reflect the evidence received. We have therefore decided to include all of the housing on The Avenue in our Nascot ward as part of the draft recommendations.</p> <p>Finally, we propose a minor amendment to include all of Burrow Close in the Nascot ward. The current boundary separates this cul-de-sac and the modification reflects its access into the ward.</p>
<b>Park</b>	3	3%	This ward comprises the existing Park ward, less The Avenue but plus part of Holywell and Vicarage wards.	<p>We are proposing minor modifications to the existing Park ward to improve boundaries and electoral equality. As discussed in the Vicarage and Holywell sections (above), we are including areas of housing on Raven Close, Cherrydale area and Mildred Avenue. We consider these modifications provide for clear boundaries and good electoral equality.</p> <p>As detailed in the Nascot section (above), we have decided not to include an area of housing to the east of Hempstead Road in our Park ward. We considered that Hempstead Road provided a clear and identifiable boundary.</p> <p>Additionally, we have decided that all of The Avenue should be included in our Nascot ward as part of our draft recommendations.</p>

### Meriden, Stanborough and Woodside

Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2020	Description	Detail
<b>Meriden</b>	3	-7%	This ward comprises the existing Meriden ward less the Kytes Drive area.	We received some proposals supporting the retention of the existing Meriden ward. We also received a proposal to modify the ward boundaries. A proposal suggested that the

				<p>even-numbered houses on St Albans Road should be included in the Stanborough ward rather than the Meriden ward. While this would worsen electoral equality in Meriden ward it would improve it in Stanborough ward.</p> <p>We considered this proposal carefully, because although there was support for retaining the existing wards in this area, we do not think there is sufficient justification for a Stanborough ward with 10% fewer electors than the average. However, the proposal to transfer the even-numbered houses on St Albans Road is not viable as this does not transfer electors on Kilby Close, Holtsmere Close or Cow Lane, which would mean none of these roads have internal road access into the Meriden ward. Therefore, we are not including this proposal as part of our draft recommendations.</p> <p>We note that it is not possible to transfer electors to Stanborough from any other wards because of the very strong boundary of North Western Avenue. We are therefore including the Kytes Drive area of Meriden ward in our Stanborough ward. Although there was some objection to this, our tour of the area suggested that this area has good access to Stanborough ward and would improve electoral equality in Stanborough. Including this area in the Stanborough ward would worsen electoral equality in the Meriden ward to 7% fewer electors than the borough average by 2020, but improve it to 4% fewer in Stanborough.</p> <p>We also considered whether it might be possible to include the Kytes Drive area in the Woodside ward to improve the poor electoral equality for that ward. However, our tour of the</p>
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				area confirmed that while it is possible to cross the Kingsway North Orbital Road, this forms a strong barrier.
<b>Stanborough</b>	3	-4%	This ward comprises the existing Stanborough ward plus the Kytes Drive area.	<p>As stated in the Meriden section (above), we are proposing modifications to the Stanborough ward. Although we note that there was support for the retention of the existing ward, we also note that there was support for some modification to improve the variance of 10% fewer electors than the average that would result from no change. We do not consider there to be sufficient evidence for poor electoral equality, particularly when there are alternatives.</p> <p>As stated in the Meriden section, we have decided not to include even-numbered houses on St Albans Road in the Stanborough ward as this would leave a number of roads (Kilby Close, Holtsmere Close or Cow Lane) with no internal road access into Meriden ward. We have, however, identified that the Kytes Drive area has good links to Stanborough by St Albans Road. Although there was some objection to this, our tour of the area suggested that this area has good road access to Stanborough ward. This would improve electoral equality in this ward to 4% fewer electors than the borough average by 2020.</p>

<b>Woodside</b>	3	-5%	This ward comprises the existing Woodside ward plus the Courtlands Close area.	<p>As stated in the Leggatts section (above), we are proposing modifications to the Woodside ward. Although there was support for retaining the existing ward, we note that there was also support for transferring the Courtlands Close area of Leggatts ward to Woodside. Some of the support for retaining the existing ward specifically rejected this proposal, arguing that the A41 forms a strong boundary between the two areas.</p> <p>We have considered the evidence and while we acknowledge that the A41 is a strong boundary, our tour of the area confirmed that the area does have direct road links via Ashfields. On balance, we do not consider we have received persuasive evidence to justify the retention of a ward with 10% fewer electors than the average when there is an alternative. We are therefore proposing that Courtlands Close should be included in our Woodside ward as part of our draft recommendations. Our proposed Woodside ward would have 5% fewer electors than the borough average by 2020.</p>
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### Callowland and Tudor

Ward name	Number of Cllrs	Variance 2020	Description	Detail
<b>Callowland</b>	3	-2%	This ward comprises the existing Callowland ward, with no changes.	We are not proposing any amendments to this ward. We note that a number of respondents considered that it might be possible to include an area of the Callowland ward in the Tudor ward. However, these modifications were rejected by respondents. Therefore, in light of the good electoral equality that this ward has we are retaining it without amendment.

<b>Tudor</b>	3	-4%	This ward comprises the existing Tudor ward plus housing around the Raphael Drive and Brocklesbury Close areas.	<p>As stated in the Central ward section (above), we are proposing amendments to this ward to improve electoral equality.</p> <p>As stated above, a number of people suggested that the housing in the Raphael Drive and Brocklesbury Close areas could be included in this ward. However, there were also objections, arguing that this area of housing has links into Central ward. These respondents therefore proposed retaining the housing in the Raphael Drive and Brocklesbury Close areas in the Central ward and instead suggested that the Watford Fields area could be included in the Oxhey ward, to address the fact that Central ward would have too many electors by 2020.</p> <p>On balance, following our tour of the area, and consideration of the evidence submitted to us, we consider that the area of housing around Raphael Drive and Brocklesbury Close should be included in the Tudor ward as part of our draft recommendations. Our tour of the area suggested that while there are crossing points over the railway, we considered the railway forms a barrier between the housing area above and Central ward.</p>
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## Conclusions

29 Table 1 shows the impact of our draft recommendations on electoral equality, based on 2015 and 2020 electorate figures.

**Table 1: Summary of electoral arrangements**

	Draft recommendations	
	2015	2020
Number of councillors	36	36
Number of electoral wards	12	12
Average number of electors per councillor	1,981	2,165
Number of wards with a variance more than 10% from the average	0	0
Number of wards with a variance more than 20% from the average	0	0

### **Draft recommendation**

Watford Council should comprise 36 councillors serving 12 three-member wards. The details and names are shown in Table A1 and illustrated on the large maps accompanying this report.

### **Mapping**

**Sheet 1, Map 1** illustrates in outline form the proposed wards for Watford. You can also view our draft recommendations for Watford on our interactive maps at <http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk>



### 3 Have your say

30 The Commission has an open mind about its draft recommendations. Every representation we receive will be considered, regardless of whom it is from or whether it relates to the whole borough or just a part of it.

31 If you agree with our recommendations, please let us know. If you don't think our recommendations are right for Watford, we want to hear alternative proposals for a different pattern of wards.

32 Our website has a special consultation area where you can explore the maps and draw your own proposed boundaries. You can find it at [consultation.lgbce.org.uk](http://consultation.lgbce.org.uk)

33 Submissions can also be made by emailing [reviews@lgbce.org.uk](mailto:reviews@lgbce.org.uk) or by writing to:

**Review Officer (Watford)**  
**14<sup>th</sup> Floor Millbank Tower**  
**Millbank**  
**London SW1P 4QP**

The Commission aims to propose a pattern of wards for Watford which delivers:

- Electoral equality: each local councillor represents a similar number of voters
- Community identity: reflects the identity and interests of local communities
- Effective and convenient local government: helping your council discharge its responsibilities effectively

A good pattern of wards should:

- Provide good electoral equality, with each councillor representing, as closely as possible, the same number of voters
- Reflect community interests and identities and include evidence of community links
- Be based on strong, easily identifiable boundaries
- Help the council deliver effective and convenient local government

Electoral equality:

- Does your proposal mean that councillors would represent roughly the same number of voters as elsewhere in the council area?

Community identity:

- Community groups: is there a parish council, residents' association or other group that represents the area?
- Interests: what issues bind the community together or separate it from other parts of your area?
- Identifiable boundaries: are there natural or constructed features which make strong boundaries for your proposals?

Effective local government:

- Are any of the proposed wards too large or small to be represented effectively?
- Are the proposed names of the wards appropriate?

- Are there good links across your proposed ward? Is there any form of public transport?

34 Please note that the consultation stages of an electoral review are public consultations. In the interests of openness and transparency, we make available for public inspection full copies of all representations the Commission takes into account as part of a review. Accordingly, copies of all representations will be placed on deposit at our offices in Millbank Tower (London) and on our website at [www.lgbce.org.uk](http://www.lgbce.org.uk). A list of respondents will be available from us on request after the end of the consultation period.

35 If you are a member of the public and not writing on behalf of a council or organisation we will remove any personal identifiers, such as postal or email addresses, signatures or phone numbers from your submission before it is made public. We will remove signatures from all letters, no matter who they are from.

36 In the light of representations received, we will review our draft recommendations and consider whether they should be altered. As indicated earlier, it is therefore important that all interested parties let us have their views and evidence, **whether or not** they agree with the draft recommendations. We will then publish our final recommendations.

37 After the publication of our final recommendations, the changes we have proposed must be approved by Parliament. An Order – the legal document which brings into force our recommendations – will be laid in draft in Parliament. The draft Order will provide for new electoral arrangements to be implemented at the next elections for Watford Borough Council in 2016.

## Equalities

38 This report has been screened for impact on equalities, with due regard being given to the general equalities duties as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. As no potential negative impacts were identified, a full equality impact analysis is not required.

## Appendix A

**Table A1: Draft recommendations for Watford Borough Council**

	<b>Ward name</b>	<b>Number of councillors</b>	<b>Electorate (2015)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>	<b>Electorate (2020)</b>	<b>Number of electors per councillor</b>	<b>Variance from average %</b>
1	Callowland	3	5,728	1,909	-4%	6,388	2,129	-2%
2	Central	3	6,126	2,042	3%	6,910	2,303	6%
3	Holywell	3	6,280	2,093	6%	7,038	2,346	8%
4	Leggatts	3	6,027	2,009	1%	6,321	2,107	-3%
5	Meriden	3	5,766	1,922	-3%	6,054	2,018	-7%
6	Nascot	3	6,428	2,143	8%	6,817	2,272	5%
7	Oxhey	3	5,459	1,820	-8%	6,423	2,141	-1%
8	Park	3	6,381	2,127	7%	6,682	2,227	3%
9	Stanborough	3	5,927	1,976	0%	6,204	2,068	-4%
10	Tudor	3	5,465	1,822	-8%	6,252	2,084	-4%
11	Vicarage	3	5,856	1,952	-1%	6,693	2,231	3%

**Table A1 (cont): Draft recommendations for Watford Borough Council**

Ward name	Number of councillors	Electorate (2015)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %	Electorate (2020)	Number of electors per councillor	Variance from average %
12 Woodside	3	5,878	1,959	-1%	6,139	2,046	-5%
<b>Totals</b>	36	71,321	–	–	77,923	–	–
<b>Averages</b>	–	–	1,981	–	–	2,165	–

Source: Electorate figures are based on information provided by Watford Borough Council.

Note: The 'variance from average' column shows by how far, in percentage terms, the number of electors per councillor in each electoral ward varies from the average for the borough. The minus symbol (-) denotes a lower than average number of electors. Figures have been rounded to the nearest whole number.

# Appendix B

## Submissions received

All submissions received can also be viewed on our website at <http://www.lgbce.org.uk/current-reviews/eastern/hertfordshire/watford>

### Local authority

- Watford Borough Council

### Political parties

- Watford Labour Party
- Watford Conservative Group
- Watford Liberal Democrats

### Councillors

- Councillor R. Martins
- Councillor S. Giles-Medhurst (Three Rivers District Council)

### Local organisations

- Cassiobury Residents' Association
- Courtlands Residents' Association

### Residents

- Seven local residents

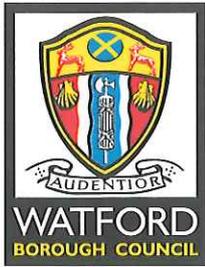
# Appendix C

## Glossary and abbreviations

Council size	The number of councillors elected to serve on a council
Electoral Change Order (or Order)	A legal document which implements changes to the electoral arrangements of a local authority
Division	A specific area of a county, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever division they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the county council
Electoral fairness	When one elector's vote is worth the same as another's
Electoral inequality	Where there is a difference between the number of electors represented by a councillor and the average for the local authority
Electorate	People in the authority who are registered to vote in elections. For the purposes of this report, we refer specifically to the electorate for local government elections
Number of electors per councillor	The total number of electors in a local authority divided by the number of councillors
Over-represented	Where there are fewer electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average

Parish	A specific and defined area of land within a single local authority enclosed within a parish boundary. There are over 10,000 parishes in England, which provide the first tier of representation to their local residents
Parish council	A body elected by electors in the parish which serves and represents the area defined by the parish boundaries. See also 'Town council'
Parish (or Town) council electoral arrangements	The total number of councillors on any one parish or town council; the number, names and boundaries of parish wards; and the number of councillors for each ward
Parish ward	A particular area of a parish, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors vote in whichever parish ward they live for candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the parish council
Town council	A parish council which has been given ceremonial 'town' status. More information on achieving such status can be found at <a href="http://www.nalc.gov.uk">www.nalc.gov.uk</a>
Under-represented	Where there are more electors per councillor in a ward or division than the average
Variance (or electoral variance)	How far the number of electors per councillor in a ward or division varies in percentage terms from the average
Ward	A specific area of a district or borough, defined for electoral, administrative and representational purposes. Eligible electors can vote in whichever ward they are registered for the candidate or candidates they wish to represent them on the district or borough council





## Watford Borough Council

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Paul Kingsley,  
Local Government Boundary Commission,  
14<sup>th</sup> Floor  
Millbank Tower  
Millbank  
London SW1P 4QP

enquiries to: Carol Chen  
phone no: 01923 278350  
our reference: CJC/CJC/W10004-38  
your reference:  
doc ref: 2142720580  
date: 29 June 2015  
email: [carol.chen@watford.gov.uk](mailto:carol.chen@watford.gov.uk)  
**department fax 01923 278366**

Dear Paul

### **Boundary Review for Watford Borough Council**

I am writing on behalf of Watford Borough Council with its submission for your consideration.

Council in order to consider this matter set up a cross party working group the Boundary Review Group. This Group initially met in December 2014 and January 2015 to consider the Council's submission on the number of councillors for Watford. It recommended that Watford should retain 36 councillors and this was approved by Council at its meeting on 28 January 2015. You already have my submission on that dated 10 February 2015.

The Boundary Review Group met 3 times on 11,17 and 22 June following the publication of your consultation on 12 May 2015.

Copies of the minutes of those Group meetings are attached for your information. Unfortunately as you will see from the minutes the Group were unable to put forward any proposals to Council for its consideration as it could not reach unanimous agreement on any of the proposals put forward. The Group therefore decided to leave it individual party groups to put forward their proposals to Council for debate and decision.

Council met to consider the matter on 24 June 2015 and I attach a copy of the report and minutes of that meeting relating to the consideration of the review.

Having considered submissions from each of the party groups on the Council it voted to approve the following as its submission.

In considering this review the Council is aware that the level of variation between wards projected for 2020 is based on the implementation of major regeneration schemes in Vicarage and part of Holywell ward (Watford Health Campus) and at Watford Junction. Inevitably in such large-scale projects there is a degree of uncertainty about the timing of development and this has a potential impact on the review, in that moving ward boundaries within existing residential areas to allow for future development could in leave wards with too

few electors (more than 10% below average) in the short term with the possibility that this may continue beyond 2020 if for any reason the new development is delayed.

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

### **Central, Tudor and Callowland**

Central ward is significantly above the 10% margin both currently and in the 2020 projection (+15% and +20% respectively). Neighbouring Tudor ward by contrast is well under the acceptable margin for both dates (-20% and -17%). This is capable of a very straightforward remedy, which brings both wards within acceptable margins both for 2015 and 2020, and respects local community identity.

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

<b>Ward</b>	<b>Electorate 2020</b>	<b>Variance 2020</b>
<b>Central</b>	<b>6,910</b>	<b>+6%</b>
<b>Tudor</b>	<b>6,252</b>	<b>-4%</b>

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

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

While the core of Tudor ward is the inter-war Tudor estate, but also includes adjacent areas leading off Radlett Road and Bushey Mill Lane that would not be considered part of the estate. Adding Polling District HA would be a reasonably good fit with the rest of the ward.

The Council considered an alternative of moving part of Polling District EA from Callowland into Tudor. This area was part of Tudor ward prior to 1998. However, this would not solve the problem of the excessive number of electors in Central ward, which would require the removal from that ward of areas more commonly understood to be part of Central Watford. It would also affect Callowland, requiring more changes to other wards than are necessary. In addition, the boundary between Polling District EA and Tudor is a clearly identifiable one, in the form of Bushey Mill Lane and the 'Abbey Flyer' railway line. As a result, its links to Callowland appear stronger than to Tudor, as acknowledged in the previous boundary review

(Local Government Commission Final Report, 1998, p.13.) The Council has therefore rejected this option.

### **Oxhey, Park, Holywell and Vicarage wards**

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

Oxhey ward is a community distinct from the rest of Watford, with many links to Bushey in Hertsmere Borough (for example local church parish boundaries; Bushey railway station being located in Oxhey). It has a strong boundary, being divided from the rest of Watford by the River Colne and the green spaces of Oxhey Park and Riverside Recreation Ground. The ward boundary was unchanged in 1998 and indeed predates the 1974 review.

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

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

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

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

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

The Council considered the alternative of moving the boundary of Oxhey and Central to include the area of Polling District HE known as Watford Fields in Oxhey ward. However, this area is very clearly separate from Oxhey—divided by the River Colne, the Oxhey Park green space and a railway line and embankment. The new link road will increase the geographical

barrier between Oxhey and Watford Fields, whose main community links are towards central Watford.

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

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

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

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

## Nascot

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

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

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

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

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

### **Leggatts and Callowland**

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

### **Meriden, Tudor and Stanborough wards**

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

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

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

Please find attached:

Minutes of Boundary Review Group meetings of 11, 17 and 22 June 2015.

Report to Council and Council minutes of 24 June 2015.

Spreadsheet of defeated Conservative Group Proposal.  
Spreadsheet of defeated Labour Group Proposal  
Spreadsheet of Approved Council Proposal  
Map showing Approved Council Proposal.

Yours sincerely

*Carol Chen*  
**Carol Chen**  
**Head of Democracy and Governance**

**Watford Borough Council meeting, 14 October 2015**

**Liberal Democrat group proposed response to the Local Government Boundary Commission draft recommendations**

**Proposal 1 – Stanborough and Meriden**

We note the Commission’s proposals and rationale for proposing include the Kytes Drive area in Stanborough and rejecting alternative proposals.

Despite the problems identified by the Commission in including the eastern side of St Albans Road in Stanborough to redress the imbalance in electorate size, we believe this would be a preferable solution to that proposed by the Commission.

While incorporating the east side of St Albans Road would mean Kilby Close, Holtsmere Close and Cow Lane would not have road access within Meriden ward, they all still have pedestrian access into neighbouring areas of Meriden, would not really be ‘orphaned’ from the rest of the ward and retain strong links to the ‘Avenues’ area of Meriden ward. The properties on St Albans Road facing away from Meriden and towards Stanborough would clearly have a relationship with the latter ward.

In our view the Commission’s proposal of linking the Kytes Drive area to Stanborough ward is more problematic than the St Albans Road alternative. It leads to a very unusual configuration of Stanborough ward, in a figure of eight shape, linked only by the narrowest of boundaries. There will be a strong sense of the Kytes Drive area being severed from the rest of Stanborough ward, virtually a separate enclave. This area has strong community links to Meriden ward, most notably through the shared boundary onto Garston Park.

Accordingly, we would propose revision of the Commission’s proposals along the following lines:

**Move the eastern side of St Albans Road into Stanborough ward from Meriden (233 electors). Move Kytes Drive, Coates Dell and Coates Way from Stanborough into Meriden ward (352 electors).**

This would result in the following electorates for these wards:

Ward	Number of councillors	Electorate (2015)	Electors per councillor	Variance from average	Electorate (2020)	Number of councillors per councillor	Variance from average
Meriden	3	5,891	1,963	-1%	6179	2,060	-5%
Stanborough	3	5,802	1,933	-2%	6079	2,026	-6%

**Watford Borough Council meeting, 14 October 2015****Liberal Democrat group proposed response to the Local Government Boundary Commission draft recommendations****Proposal 2**

We note the Commission's proposals for the Leggatts/Nascot boundary, but believe that Greenbank Road has strong community links with Nascot and that it is undesirable to split the road. Feedback from local residents indicates a strong wish to remain within Nascot ward. We accept that other options to reduce the Nascot electorate in the short term are also problematic and that keeping Greenbank Road in Nascot would mean that in the short term Nascot had too many electors. Nonetheless, by 2020 projections indicate that Nascot will have to have come significantly towards the average. Even with the inclusion of the remainder of Greenbank Road it would be well within the 10% variance, with a smaller electorate than at least one other ward. In view of the long-term trend of Nascot moving towards the borough average, an excessive electorate in the short-term should be regarded as acceptable. Keeping Greenbank Road in Nascot would also avoid an awkward boundary in which Leggatts ward has a narrow and lengthy protrusion into what appears naturally to be part of Nascot.

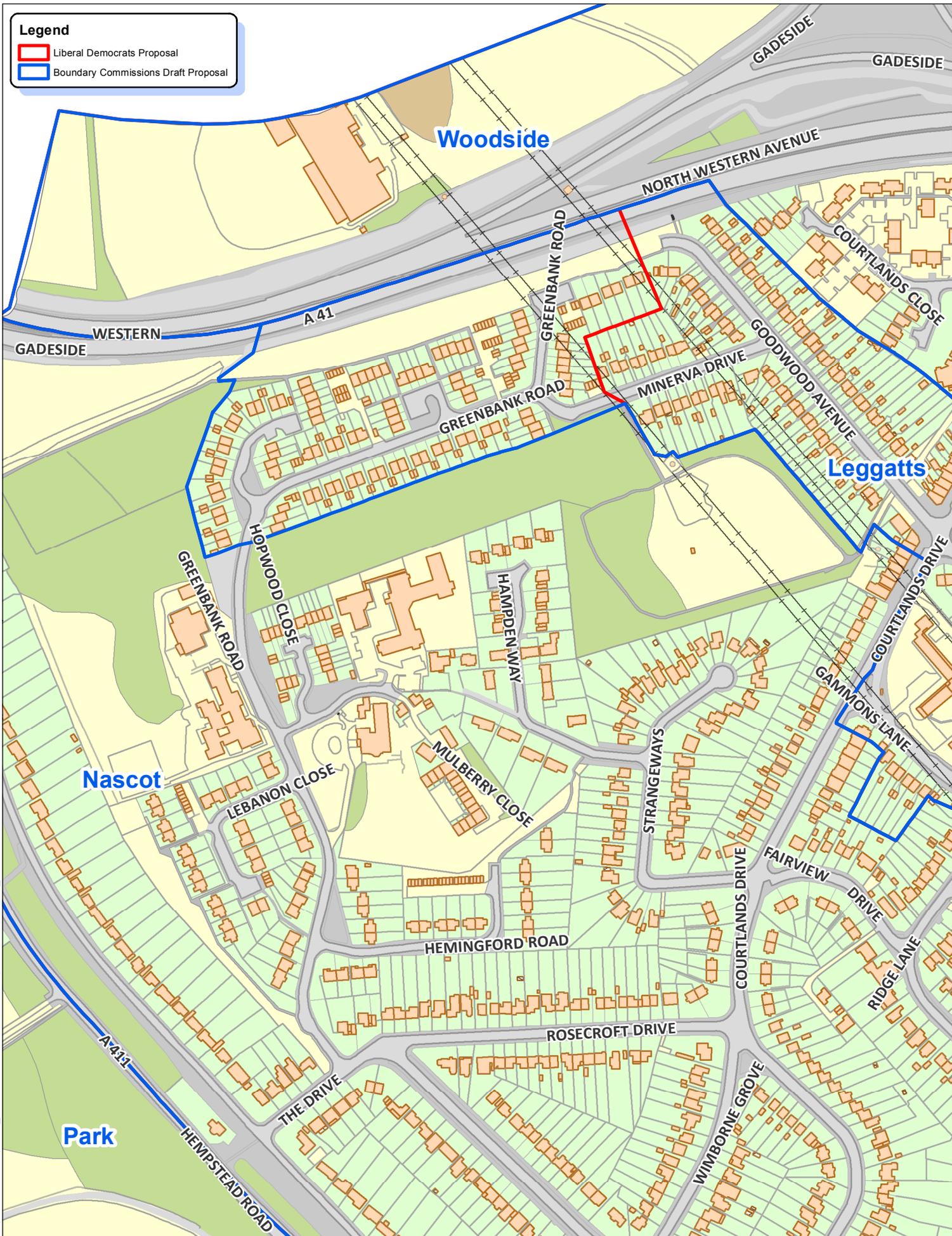
**Proposal****Retain all of Greenbank Road in Nascot ward.**

This would result in the following situation for these wards:

Ward	Number of councillors	Electorate (2015)	Electors per councillor	Variance from average	Electorate (2020)	Number of councillors per councillor	Variance from average
Leggatts	3	5,809	1,936	-2%	6,103	2,034	-6%
Nascot	3	6,646	2,215	+12%	7,035	2,345	+8%

**Legend**

- Liberal Democrats Proposal
- Boundary Commissions Draft Proposal



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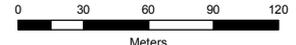


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**Liberal Democrats revision (re Leggatts/Nascot boundary) to Boundary Commission's draft recommendation**

Map Produced by: ryanro  
 Publication Date: 06/10/2015

Scale 1:3,500

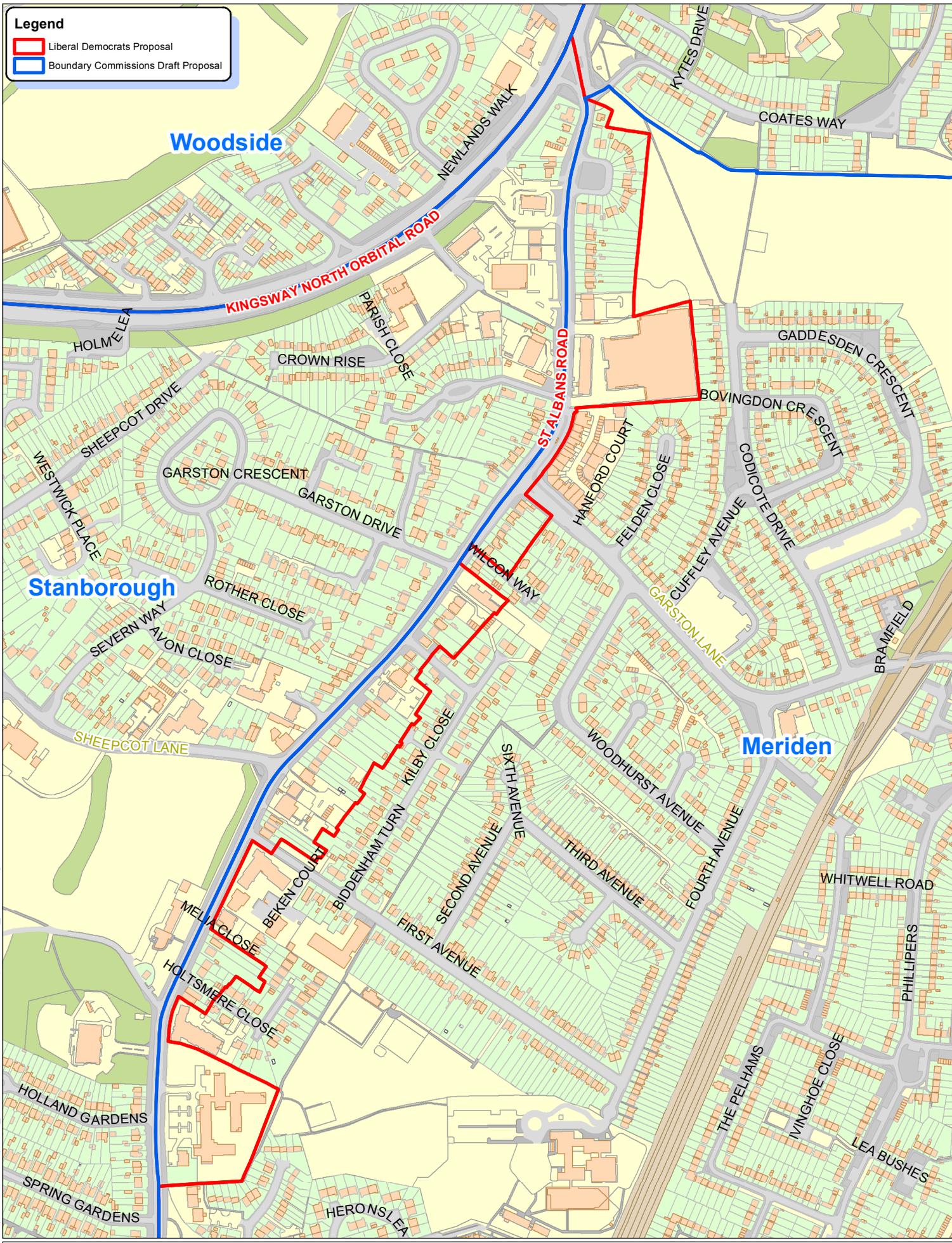


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**Legend**

- Liberal Democrats Proposal
- Boundary Commissions Draft Proposal



Filepath: I:\GIS\Corporate\_GIS\Data\Elections\Oct2015\Maps\Meriden\_Stanborough.mxd

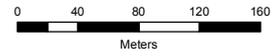


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**Liberal Democrats revision (re Meriden/Stanborough boundary) to Boundary Commission's draft recommendation**

Map Produced by: ryanro  
 Publication Date: 06/10/2015

Scale 1:5,000



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### **Watford Labour Group on Watford Borough Council**

1. We have studied and looked at the proposals by the Local Government Boundary Commission into the changes of Watford Borough in detail.
2. We acknowledge that the report has put forward some proposals to deal with the inequality in the Stanborough ward. There was a proposal, by the Local Government Boundary Commission to move some areas from the Meriden ward to the Stanborough ward.
3. We disagree with the proposals put forward by the commission which stated;

*“We note that it is not possible to transfer electors to Stanborough from any other wards because of the very strong boundary of North Western Avenue. We are therefore including the Kytes Drive area of Meriden ward in our Stanborough ward. Although there was some objection to this, our tour of the area suggested that this area has good access to Stanborough ward and would improve electoral equality in Stanborough. Including this area in the Stanborough ward would worsen electoral equality in the Meriden ward to 7% fewer electors than the borough average by 2020, but improve it to 4% fewer in Stanborough.”* p13  
Watford Draft Recommendations.

4. In looking at the recommendation by the commission, we feel that this is not the right way of resolving any inequality within the Stanborough ward.
5. The Labour group proposes that the Kytes Drive area, including Coates Way remain within the Meriden Ward.
6. We conclude that alternative ways are explored of resolving any inequality of the Stanborough ward without the addition of the Kytes Drive area.

**05/10/15**



## **Conservative Group Comments on Local Government Boundary Commission's Warding Proposals**

We accept all of the Commission's proposals except for one.

We believe that the transfer of Kytes Drive into Stanborough would not meet the stated aims. It is not a part of the Stanborough Community for one, but more concretely it would not be within the boundaries of Stanborough nor have access. In their report the LGBC states "that this area has good access to Stanborough ward", I have included a screen shot showing that this access is via Coates Way. This being a contradiction to the reasoning not to move the even numbered houses of St Albans road into Stanborough which was that it restricts direct/internal access to the ward;

"the proposal to transfer the even-numbered houses on St Albans Road is not viable as this does not transfer electors on Kilby Close, Holtsmere Close or Cow Lane, which would mean none of these roads have internal road access into the Meriden ward."

If this is true of Kilby Close et al, then it is also true of Kytes Drive. Where Kilby Close et al would remain geographically within Meriden, Kytes Drive would instead be an isolated bulge inside another ward should it be moved to Stanborough.

If we also moved Coates Way to counter this issue it would exacerbate the other major obstacle to this proposal. In that moving Kytes Drive increases Electoral Inequality within Meriden. Whilst we accept that Stanborough is too small moving an area from an already too small ward does not increase the overall equality of the people of Watford it simply re-locates the problem to a different area.

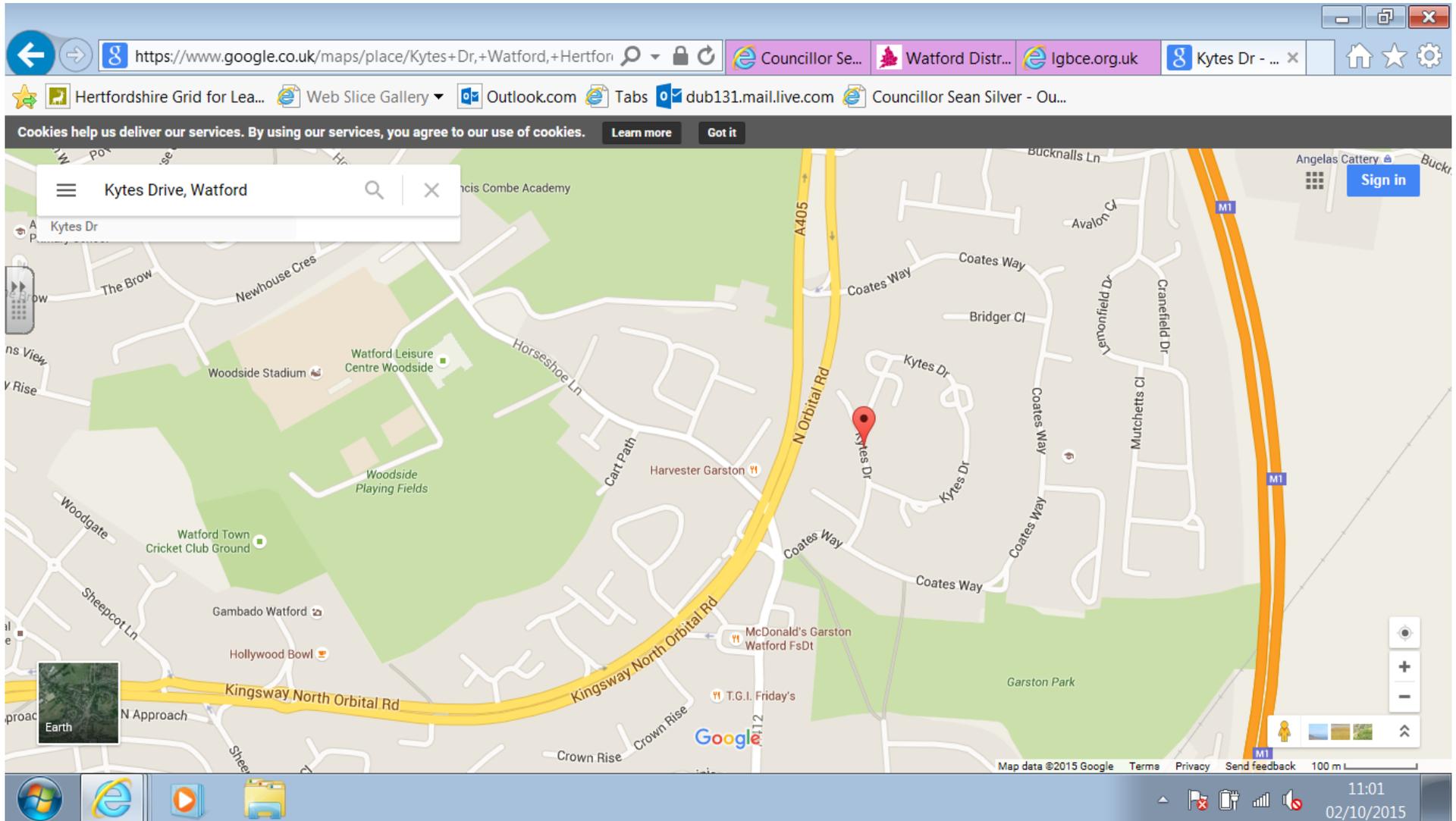
Given that it does not make sense based on community, geographical grounds nor having a logical boundary this proposal seems to be solely based on Electoral inequality. In this case the benefit (two wards being at a variance rather than one but the total variance remaining constant) seems to be outweighed by the costs.

Conservative Group.



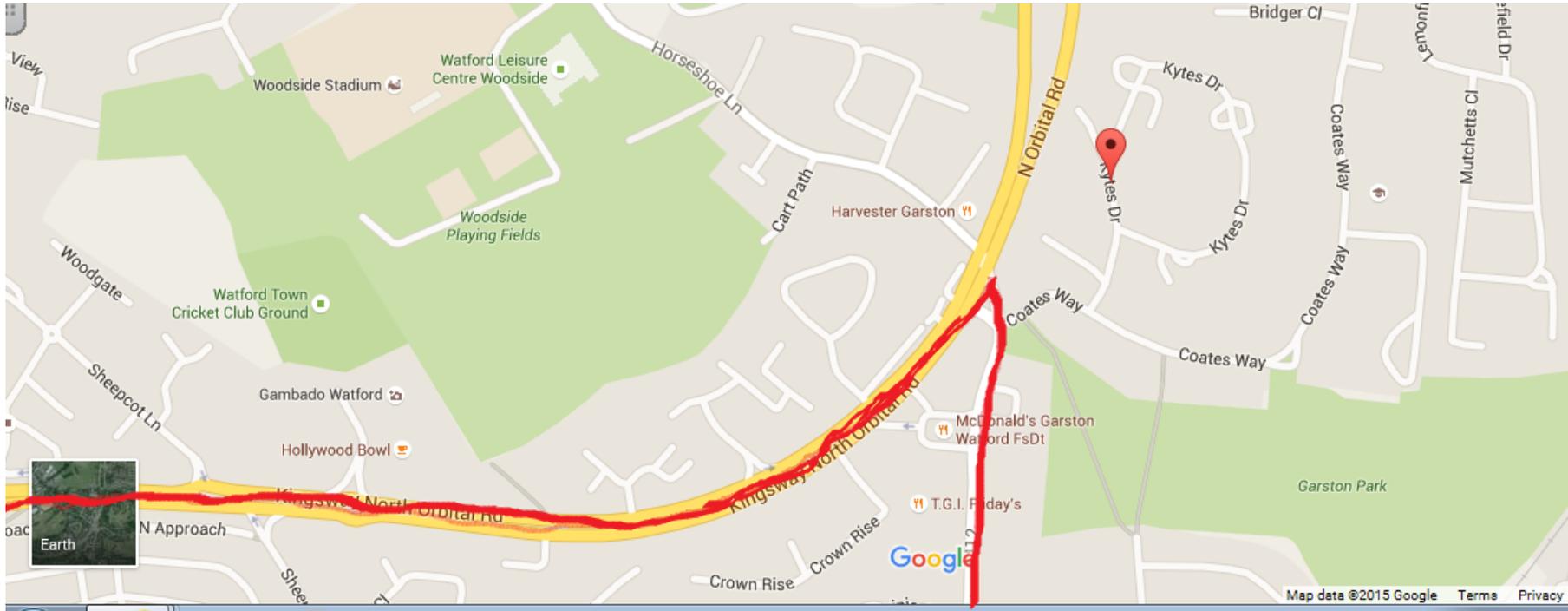
## Appendix 5

The two maps below show first the location of Kytes Drive, secondly the Stanborough boundary marked as it stands.



## Appendix 5

The two maps below show first the location of Kytes Drive, secondly the Stanborough boundary marked as it stands.



**Report to:** Council  
**Date of meeting:** 14 October 2015  
**Report of:** Managing Director  
**Title:** Addition to Capital Programme – Watford Business Park

## 1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks approval for an addition to the capital investment programme of £800k for the next phase of implementing the Watford Business Park redevelopment.

## 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That Council approves an addition of £800k to the capital investment programme for 2015/16 subject to business cases being made for each lease acquisition.

### **Contact Officer:**

For further information on this report please contact: Manny Lewis, Managing Director. Ext 8186

## 3.0 DETAILED PROPOSAL

- 3.1 Cabinet at its meeting of 1 September 2014 approved the overall masterplan and redevelopment strategy for WBP and a progress report was set out to Cabinet on 13 July 2015 with the initial steps required to achieve vacant possession.

Budget Council at its meeting of 29 January 2015 had approved the three year capital investment programme attached as Appendix 1. The three year programme retains a carry forward balance of £2.5m at the end of 2017/18 and provision can therefore be made to fund leasehold acquisitions in WBP in accordance with the masterplan and vacant possession strategy. Council is asked to approve an addition to the capital programme of £800k for acquisition costs in 2015/16. Business cases for each acquisition will be considered by Cabinet and/or the Property Investment Board in advance of any purchases.

A full report setting how the vacant possession strategy will be achieved and funded as well as the delivery structure and returns to the Council on the scheme is planned for November Cabinet.

## 4.0 **IMPLICATIONS**

### 4.1 **Financial**

- 4.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that earmarking £800k for WBP acquisitions can be accommodated within the existing capital programme funding, subject to individual business cases being approved for each proposed purchase.

A review of the long term capital investment options for the Council as its major schemes move into the delivery is being undertaken by Finance and conclusions and recommendations will follow as part of the overall budget setting process for 16/17 onwards.

### 4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

- 4.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are no direct legal implications arising from the report.

### 4.3 **Potential Risks**

A full risk assessment will be part of each business case review.

#### Background Papers:

Cabinet reports of 1 September 2014 and 13 July 2015.  
Budget Council report 29 January 2015.

APPENDIX 1

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

Cost Centre	Capital Schemes	2014/15			2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
		Current Budget	Total Budget Variances	Revised Budget	Revised Budget	Revised Budget	Revised Budget
<b>WA6920</b>	<b>Key Projects</b>						
WAA983	Cultural Quarter Phase 1	2,050,582	0	2,050,582	89,710	0	0
WAA954	Green Spaces Strategy	52,741	0	52,741	0	0	0
WAA923	Health Campus-Contribution to LABV	1,500,000	(1,500,000)	0	3,000,000	0	0
WAA927	Health Campus-Loan to WHHT	2,000,000	(2,000,000)	0	0	0	0
WAA920	Health Campus	1,603,790	(500,000)	1,103,790	500,000	0	0
WAA167	Contribution to Croxley Rail Link	0	0	0	0	0	0
WAA211	New Market	2,462,364	0	2,462,364	0	0	0
<b>WA6921</b>	<b>Environmental Services</b>						
WAA992	Additional Green Waste Bins	18,000	(18,000)	0	18,000	18,000	0
WAJ300	Decent Homes Assistance	219,015	0	219,015	200,000	0	0
WAJ602	Energy Grants	26,954	0	26,954	0	0	0
WAJ600	Environmental Services Schemes	8,393	0	8,393	0	0	0
WAJ800	Environmental Services Schemes	72,590	0	72,590	0	0	0
WAA975	Recycling Boxes	36,940	(36,940)	0	0	36,940	0
WAA161	Replacement Domestic Bins	22,186	(22,185)	1	20,000	22,185	0
WAA197	Veolia Contract Fleet Requirement	0	124,750	124,750	0	0	0
<b>WA6922</b>	<b>Community &amp; Leisure Services</b>						
WAA201	Allotments Upgrades	1,374,720	(16,000)	1,358,720	0	0	0
WAB966	Cassiobury Park HLF Project	478,261	70,420	548,681	2,816,760	2,782,120	0
WAA202	Farm Terrace Allotments	647,835	0	647,835	0	0	0
WAA219	Gaelic Football Relocation	908,146	(600,000)	308,146	600,000	0	0
WAA912	Improvements Community Centres	80,000	0	80,000	0	0	0
WAA214	Museum CCTV Intruder Alarm Sys	50,000	0	50,000	0	0	0
WAA215	Town Centre CCTV Camera Replac	21,000	0	21,000	21,000	21,000	0
<b>WA6923</b>	<b>Housing Services</b>						
WAJ203	Affordable Housing	24,328	0	24,328	0	0	0
WAJ100	Mand Disabled Facilities Grant	599,552	0	599,552	400,000	400,000	400,000
WAA987	Stand Alone Prop to Decent Std	61,922	0	61,922	50,000	50,000	50,000
<b>WA6924</b>	<b>Parking Services</b>						
WAA950	Upgrading/Resurfacing CarParks	59,111	0	59,111	0	0	0
<b>WA6925</b>	<b>Asset Management</b>						
WAA203	Atrium Phase 5	34,000	0	34,000	0	0	0
WAA995	Building Investment Programme	1,015,369	0	1,015,369	400,000	400,000	400,000
WAA210	Car Parks Structure Surv	15,000	10,000	25,000	0	0	0
WAA173	CCTV Control Room Relocation	0	198,000	198,000	0	0	0
WAA925	Charter Place	0	0	0	0	0	0
WAA994	Depot Refurbishment	0	0	0	0	0	0
WAB963	Guest Market (Indoor)	0	0	0	0	0	0
WAA952	Match Funding Capital Projects	35,000	0	35,000	35,000	20,000	20,000
WAA213	Pop Up Toilets Refurbishment	35,000	(35,000)	0	0	35,000	0
WAA225	Property Review	0	100,000	100,000	0	0	0
WAA991	Veolia Capital Improvements	90,000	1,040	91,040	92,100	93,170	94,250
WAA185	Watford Business Park Redevelo	225,000	0	225,000	0	0	0

Cost Centre	Capital Schemes	2014/15			2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
		Current Budget	Total Budget Variances	Revised Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
<b>WA6926</b>	<b>ICT</b>						
WAA132	ICT - Document Management Proc	15,000	0	15,000	0	0	0
WAA134	ICT-Env Health	189,139	0	189,139	45,000	0	0
WAA109	ICT-Hardware Replacement Prog	80,000	0	80,000	160,000	160,000	200,000
WAA221	ICT-Project Management Provisi	120,000	0	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000
WAA212	Telephony-Cost of Server Repla	10,000	0	10,000	0	0	0
<b>WA6927</b>	<b>ICT Shared Services</b>						
WAA982	ShS-Hardware Replace Prog	18,000	0	18,000	30,000	78,000	45,000
WAA945	ShS-IT Modernisation	906,917	0	906,917	0	0	0
WAB925	ShS-HR Appraisal Module	0	3,600	3,600	0	0	0
<b>WAA601</b>	<b>Corporate Services / Project Management</b>						
WAA601	Support Services	552,470	0	552,470	500,000	400,000	400,000
<b>WA6990</b>	<b>New Schemes Requiring Approval (see details of Schemes Below)</b>						
WAA190	Green Spaces Strategy	0	0	0	150,000	200,000	250,000
WAA191	ShS-Business Application Upgrades	0	0	0	195,000	165,000	165,000
WAA192	Town Hall Subway CCTV	0	0	0	37,000	0	0
WAA193	Clarendon Road Streetscape Improvements	0	0	0	18,000	0	0
WAA194	Introduction of Electric VehicleCharging Units	0	0	0	20,000	10,000	10,000
WAA195	Watford Museum HLF Matchfunding	0	0	0	0	125,000	0
WAA196	Private Sector Stock Condition Survey	0	0	0	150,000	0	0
<b>WA6928</b>	<b>Section 106 Funded Schemes</b>						
WAB300	Contribution to Croxley Rail Link	0	0	0	0	0	0
WAB931	Himalayan Way Play Area	98,942	0	98,942	0	0	0
WAB932	Jellicoe Road Play Area Improv	6,893	0	6,893	0	0	0
WAB938	Goodwood Rec Play Area Improve	5,000	0	5,000	0	0	0
WAB940	East Drive Play Area	120,000	38,500	158,500	0	0	0
WAB942	Waterfields Rec Play Area	122,172	7,100	129,272	0	0	0
WAB944	Berry Avenue Play Area	60,000	0	60,000	0	0	0
WAB945	Southwold Road Play Area	50,000	0	50,000	0	0	0
WAB946	Ridgehurst Avenue Play Area	50,000	(23,500)	26,500	0	0	0
WAB948	Riverside Recreation Ground	310,300	0	310,300	0	0	0
WAB949	Oxhey Park	0	2,150	2,150	0	0	0
WAB950	King George V Playing Field	0	39,400	39,400	0	0	0
WAB951	Colne River Project	464,903	(7,100)	457,803	0	0	0
WAB952	Fern Way Play Area Landscaping	15,000	(15,000)	0	0	0	0
WAB953	Radlet Road MUGA	30,000	0	30,000	0	0	0
WAB954	Knutsford Road	34,600	0	34,600	0	0	0
WAB958	Local Park Improvements	60,779	0	60,779	0	0	0
WAB960	Wiggenhall Allotments	0	0	0	0	0	0
WAB961	Cherry Tree Allotments	12,000	0	12,000	0	0	0
WAB962	Local Nature Reserves	38,784	0	38,784	0	0	0
WAB964	Centennial House Landscaping	210	0	210	0	0	0
WNC004	Colne Valley Improvements	8,699	0	8,699	0	0	0
WNC022	Multi Use Games At Meriden	120,000	0	120,000	0	0	0
<b>WA4900</b>	<b>TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>19,327,607</b>	<b>(4,178,765)</b>	<b>15,148,842</b>	<b>9,667,570</b>	<b>5,136,415</b>	<b>2,154,250</b>

Cost Centre	Capital Schemes	2014/15			2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
		Current Budget	Total Budget Variances	Revised Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
WA6920	Key Projects	9,669,477	(4,000,000)	5,669,477	3,589,710	0	0
WA6921	Environmental Services	404,078	47,625	451,703	238,000	77,125	0
WA6922	Community & Leisure Services	3,559,962	(545,580)	3,014,382	3,437,760	2,803,120	0
WA6923	Housing Services	685,802	0	685,802	450,000	450,000	450,000
WA6924	Parking Services	59,111	0	59,111	0	0	0
WA6925	Asset Management	1,449,369	274,040	1,723,409	527,100	548,170	514,250
WA6926	ICT	414,139	0	414,139	325,000	280,000	320,000
WA6927	ICT Shared Services	924,917	3,600	928,517	30,000	78,000	45,000
WAA601	Corp Serv / Project Mgt	552,470	0	552,470	500,000	400,000	400,000
WA6990	New Schemes Requiring Approval	0	0	0	570,000	500,000	425,000
WA6928	Section 106 Funded Schemes	1,608,282	41,550	1,649,832	0	0	0
WA4900	<b>TOTAL CAPITAL PROGRAMME</b>	<b>19,327,607</b>	<b>(4,178,765)</b>	<b>15,148,842</b>	<b>9,667,570</b>	<b>5,136,415</b>	<b>2,154,250</b>

Capital Funding		2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18
		Revised Budget	Budget	Budget	Budget
<b>CAPITAL FUNDING</b>					
	Grants & Contributions	697,951	2,523,900	2,489,000	239,000
	Reserves	3,041,605	38,000	77,125	0
	Capital Receipts	9,433,536	6,573,810	2,038,170	1,915,250
	Section 106 Contributions	1,975,750	531,860	532,120	0
	<b>TOTAL CAPITAL FUNDING</b>	<b>15,148,842</b>	<b>9,667,570</b>	<b>5,136,415</b>	<b>2,154,250</b>
<b>AVAILABLE FUNDING-CAPITAL RECEIPTS</b>					
	Balance Brought Forward	13,701,293	7,797,367	3,223,557	2,485,387
	Used for Financing	(9,433,536)	(6,573,810)	(2,038,170)	(1,915,250)
	In Year Receipts	3,529,610	2,000,000	1,300,000	2,000,000
	<b>BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>7,797,367</b>	<b>3,223,557</b>	<b>2,485,387</b>	<b>2,570,137</b>
<b>AVAILABLE FUNDING-SECTION 106</b>					
	Balance Brought Forward	2,788,107	1,312,356	795,496	273,376
	Used for Financing	(1,975,750)	(531,860)	(532,120)	0
	In Year Receipts + Interest	500,000	15,000	10,000	5,000
	<b>BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>1,312,356</b>	<b>795,496</b>	<b>273,376</b>	<b>278,376</b>

#### Details of New Schemes Requiring Approval

1. Green Spaces Strategy: This will allow the delivery of targeted actions within the Green Spaces Strategy which was adopted by Cabinet on 11th November 2013. This budget will ensure the attainment of the action plan and will also allow the sustained programme of improvement works to continue unabated. There is though the recognition that funding must be obtained from other sources and in particular grant awarding bodies. This scheme also includes costs incurred relating to knotweed removal and land decontamination.

2. Business Application Upgrades: The Council are contractually obliged with all our third party business application vendors to remain within two version of our business applications. Very few upgrades for business applications have occurred since Capita took over supporting our business applications estate in May 2013. The ICT Service needs to upgrade all business applications to support service levels.

3. Town Hall Subway CCTV: The subway public toilet entrances are not covered by the town centre CCTV system. The newly refurbished subway walls, approaches and poster sites have been subject to vandalism and anti social behaviour. The public toilets are currently being refurbished and coverage of these entrances are desirable.

4. Clarendon Road Streetscape Improvements: Town centre camera C10 is pole mounted and covers the area from

Beechen Grove to The Parade. There is a desire to see street clutter reduced in this area as part of the HCC streetscape plans for Clarendon Rd and this could be achieved by removing the cctv pole. It is proposed that C10 is relocated to a wall mounted bracket to improve the view along Watford House Lane a key pedestrian route to the New Watford Market.

**5. Introduction of Electric Vehicle Rapid Charging Units:** The introduction of Rapid Charging Units for 5 Electric Vehicles will enable the Borough to continue to expand the required infrastructure to encourage the take up of electric vehicles. On street rapid chargers will provide opportunities for the towns fleet of taxi's to change over to electric vehicles. With a range of 60-80 miles per charge the new infrastructure will provide the ability to rapidly charge in 20 minutes.

**6. Watford Museum HLF Matchfunding:** Watford Museum is in need of renewal and the Council has the opportunity to make a bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for £1.25m to assist with this. This capital bid is the 10% WBC match funding to lever in the £1.25m

**7. Private Sector Stock Condition Survey:** Opportunity for joint procurement with other LAs in order to achieve efficiencies. The council has a statutory duty to keep under review the condition of residential property in the private sector. This is undertaken by commissioning a detailed Private Sector Stock Condition Survey of a sample of properties so that data can be extrapolated. Commissioned services will include stock modelling in order to select a sample of properties, fieldwork in over 1,000 properties and detailed reporting. The data will inform our revised Private Sector Renewal Policy and associated initiatives.

## PART A

**Report to:** Council  
**Date of meeting:** 14 October 2015  
**Report of:** Committee and Scrutiny Officer  
**Title:** Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny in Watford Borough Council 2014/15

### 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 2014/15 (Appendix 1).

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 that Council notes the Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny in Watford Borough Council 2014/15.

**Contact Officer:**

For further information on this report please contact: Sandra Hancock,  
Committee and Scrutiny Officer  
telephone extension: 8377 email: [legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk](mailto: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 2014/15; 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 2014/15;
  - 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.

### 4.4 **Potential Risks**

<b>Potential Risk</b>
None identified in this report

## Appendices

- Appendix 1 - Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny in Watford Borough Council 2014/15

## Background Papers

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

- Minutes of scrutiny committee and Task Group meetings
- Reports produced by and presented to scrutiny committees
- Scrutiny survey 2014/15

## File Reference

None



# Annual Report of Overview and Scrutiny in Watford Borough Council 2014/15

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

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## 1. Introduction and overview

In 2014/15 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 2014/15 were –

- Property Review (continued from 2013/14)
- Controlled Parking Zones Policies Task Group

The Annual Survey has been carried out and a summary of the results can be found in section 6 of this report.

Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs met on one occasion with the Mayor and members of the Cabinet in 2014/15. Further information is available in section 7.1.

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 and training across the councils. Further details are provided in section 7.5.

In 2014/15 there was a slight decrease in councillor involvement in scrutiny. 27 out of 36 councillors attended at least one scrutiny meeting, compared to 28 in 2013/14. 21 Councillors had participated in a scrutiny meeting as a member or a substitute. Four Portfolio Holders attended scrutiny meetings to respond to questions on behalf of the Executive. Two Councillors had attended meetings solely as observers and participated when permitted by the scrutiny committee or panel.

## 2. Overview and Scrutiny Committee

### Membership:

Councillor Karen Collett (Chair)

Councillor Jagtar Dhindsa (Vice Chair)

Councillors Jeanette Aron, Nigel Bell, Sue Greenslade, Kareen Hastrick, Anne Joynes, Rabi Martins and Darren Walford

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

Councillors Peter Jeffree (observer), Asif Khan (substitute and Chair of Budget Panel), Kelly McLeod (substitute and Chair of Community Safety Partnership Task Group) and Peter Taylor (substitute and Chair of Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel)

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

Councillor Stephen Johnson (Portfolio Holder for Housing)

### 2.1 The Committee's work programme for 2014/15

Overview and Scrutiny Committee met on five 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. It was noted that the number of indicators presented to Overview and Scrutiny had significantly reduced since the introduction of the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel.
- **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 followed correctly and if not, whether a decision needs to be submitted to Council. The Scrutiny Committee was provided with links to the relevant Cabinet reports and minutes as requested.
- **Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee** continued to be included as regular item on the agenda in 2013/14. The Council's appointed representative for 2014/15, Councillor Jeanette Aron, 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 provided by the relevant Chairs, either in person or in writing. The updates enable Overview and Scrutiny Committee to be aware of the work being undertaken by the other Scrutiny Panels and Task Groups.

- **Task Groups –**

**Property Task Group** continued during 2014/15.

**Controlled Parking Zones Policies** was set up and its work completed during the year.

**Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework (Community Centres)** was approved and carried out its review during the latter stages of the year.

Further information about the Task Groups can be found in Section 5.

- **Review of previous reports**, during 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 2014/15 were –

**Small Grants Fund** – A review of the Fund for the period May 2013 to March 2014 (review update)

**Watford Community Housing Trust**  
(Housing Trust review update)

- **Fly tipping trends and service provision** was reported to the Scrutiny Committee following a request during discussion about the relevant performance indicators in June. The Environmental Crime Officers gave a presentation on the role of the team, the regulations relevant to fly tipping and enforcement.
- **WBC Housing Services** moving forward was presented to Overview and Scrutiny. The report set out how the service was moving forward and covered different parts of the service including Households in temporary accommodation, number of rough sleepers in Watford, new build homes in Watford and the number of households accessing private rented sector accommodation.

## 2.2 Call-in

There were no call-ins of Executive decisions during 2014/15.

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

## 2.3 Chair's commentary

The Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) committee continues to review services; scrutinising policy, performance and progress throughout.

One of the presentation reports that the committee welcomed was that of the Head of Community and Customer Services which highlighted the work of the council's environmental crime team and functions as to how fly tipping is regulated and enforced. It was clear that our officers considered each case, either in a formal way or informal depending on the circumstances. In addition the team work with other departments and agencies to assist with investigations and to educate those who fly tip. Furthermore, this message is taken into schools and to land owners offering information and clear advice. The Head of Community and Customer Services provided us with a presentation relating to current housing trends, areas such as homelessness, temporary accommodation and private sector tenancies were discussed. The committee will continue to monitor the pressures that have made demands on the service throughout the year.

One of the task groups set up on the recommendation of officers was the review of Watford Borough's Council's Controlled Parking Zones. Officers wanted to resolve common issues raised by members of the public which needed clarity. The task group was to review:

- Current policies
- Councillor views
- Resident views and comments
- Business and public views.
- Officers' within the service views.

This group was able to take their recommendations to Cabinet who agreed with the new proposals so making the rules and policies fit for purpose.

The Committee continues to receive reports from Outsourced Services Panel, Budget Panel and the Community Safety Partnership Task Group. This is so all members are updated on performance indicators, topics and policies. It is very important for us to be involved with decisions at an early stage to apply real influence and play the role of a 'Critical Friend' I feel that O&S has maintained those principles.

I and the committee agreed to look at The Corporate Plan in order to review other services due to the fact many of them are now outsourced and these will be incorporated this year. These will include Events, Watford Museum and Social Media.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Vice Chair Cllr Dhindsa and all members of O&S for all their hard work and support over the year. Moreover, my thanks to all the officers at WBC, outside agencies, stakeholders and members of the public.

Councillor Karen Collett  
Chair Overview and Scrutiny Committee 2014/15

### 3. Budget Panel

#### Membership

Councillor Asif Khan (Chair)

Councillor Anne Joynes (Vice Chair)

Councillors Jeanette Aron, Shirena Counter, George Derbyshire, Jagtar Dhindsa, Sue Greenslade, Rabi Martins and Peter Taylor

The following Councillors also participated in Budget Panel during the year:

Councillors Karen Collett (as a substitute), Jackie Connal (observer), Mark Hofman (observer), Helen Lynch (as a substitute and observer) and Tim Williams (as a substitute)

The following Portfolio Holder attended Budget Panel meetings during the year:

Councillor Mark Watkin (Portfolio Holder for Shared Services and Democracy and Governance)

#### 3.1 The Panel's Work Programme for 2014/15:

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

- **The Final Outturn for 2013/2014** was considered by Budget Panel prior to it being presented to Cabinet. This report is presented annually to Budget Panel. Members discussed several areas in depth, including the increases to the reserves, variations to the relocation costs for the Hurling Club and employee costs related to the Veolia contract, income from Intu for the shopping centres, the use of agency staff in Shared Services particularly Revenues and Benefits and the increase in costs for ICT. The recommendations to Cabinet were agreed.
- **Watford Economic Growth and Delivery Assessment** was presented to the Panel by the Economic Development Manager and the Head of Regeneration and Development. Members were informed about the key employment sectors in Watford, the town's role in the region, future growth scenarios for Watford and the potential for new jobs. They discussed the redevelopment of areas including Watford Business Park and the area around Watford Junction. It was noted that an Economic Development Strategy was to be developed.
- **Property Rents** was brought to the Panel for information and discussion. Members were informed about impacts on the Council's income. Areas covered in the discussion included Intu, Watford Business Park, rent recovery, occupancy rates across the Council's portfolio and the property review that had recently been completed.
- **The Finance Digest Budget Monitor** was regularly considered by the Budget Panel. Members monitored the expenditure, income and pressures on services.
- **Fees and Charge 2015/16**, the draft report was reviewed by the Panel. The Panel welcomed the fact that many of the charges would not be increased in the new year. Members discussed the proposals to increase the charges for

Cheslyn Gardens, the removal of graffiti from private properties and special collections. The Panel recommended to Cabinet that there should be no increase in the charges for special collections.

- **Draft Revenue and Capital Estimates 2014/2018 and Treasury Management Strategy 2015-2019** 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

There were no specific training sessions included in this year's work programme.

The reports and minutes for Budget Panel are available on the Council's website – [www.watford.gov.uk/budgetscrutiny](http://www.watford.gov.uk/budgetscrutiny)

### 3.3 Chair's Commentary

With the government's continued program of austerity leading to local government finances being squeezed and paradoxically council services being used more than ever, it has never been more important to scrutinise the finances of the council. The committee has taken on this role very well, with members analysing the council's finances robustly. It has been absolutely clear that there is a need for the council to maximise its revenue and be less reliant on central government grant; this has been the ground work for 2014-15 of the panel.

Going forward, the panel will look at ways in which the council can increase its revenue through a more entrepreneurial approach. With local government finances looking more uncertain, it's important for council's finances to be on a sustained and surer footing.

Councillor Asif Khan  
Chair of Budget Panel 2014/15

## 4. Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel 2014/15

### Membership

Councillor Peter Taylor (Chair)  
Councillor Kareen Hastrick (Vice Chair)  
Councillors Counter, Dhindsa, Greenslade, Joynes and Martins

The following councillors also participated in the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel during the year: Councillors Jeanette Aron, Karen Collett and Seamus Williams (substitutes) Councillor Asif Khan (observer).

The following Portfolio Holders attended Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel during the year: Councillors Derek Scudder (Portfolio Holder for Corporate Strategy and Client Services) and Mark Watkin (Portfolio Holder for Shared Services and Democracy and Governance).

Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Shared Services at Three Rivers District Council also attended a number of the meetings which related to shared services.

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

### 4.1 Work programme

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

#### 1. **The Shared Services Lead Authority Model and terms of reference**

In April 2014, there was a change to the way that the shared services with Three Rivers District Council are delivered. Watford Borough Council is now responsible for delivering ICT and HR services which are sold to Three Rivers. Three Rivers is responsible for delivering Revenues and Benefits and Finance and Watford buys these services. The new model of governance means that the shared services were brought into the remit of the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel.

The Panel received a presentation covering the changes to the services at their first meeting in July. The terms of reference had also been amended as a result and the Panel reviewed these changes.

#### 2. **Quarterly performance indicators**

The Panel has received regular performance reports provided by the Partnerships and Performance Section Head. As a result of the changes to the governance of shared services, the performance indicators related to these four services are now also reported to OSSP.

In addition to the indicators for the Veolia environmental services contract, the SLM leisure centres contract, the Colosseum and the parking service, new indicators that the Panel have oversight of include:

- ICT availability to users during core working hours

- ICT Helpdesk response times
- Sickness absence
- Average time to process housing benefits claims
- Collection rates of council tax and business rates

Indicators relating to the Finance service are monitored by the Budget Panel as part of the Finance Digest.

The Panel continues to use their in-depth review of services to suggest new indicators for monitoring.

### **3. Revenues and Benefits**

This service had previously been scrutinised by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Head of Revenues and Benefits attended OSSP on two occasions.

At the first meeting in September, he updated the Panel on outstanding issues in the service which included communication with residents, the impact of issues with the IT systems; benefit overpayments and how delays in the service were being minimised.

One issue which arose from the meeting in September was Council tax collection and recovery. Officers returned to discuss this topic with the Panel in February 2015. The Panel discussed the progress made on benefit overpayments. Officers also responded to questions related to the impact of the ICT service on Revenues and Benefits. Councillors asked about how contact was made with people who were in arrears. There was also a discussion about the use of bailiffs and how this was overseen.

The Panel congratulated Revenues and Benefits on the service improvements and agreed to keep a watching brief on progress.

### **4. Parks and Streets**

The Council's contract with Veolia, which covers both waste and recycling and parks and streets, is part of the Panel's remit for oversight. Having reviewed waste and recycling on a couple of occasions, the Panel wished to concentrate on parks and streets and officers attended in November to make a presentation to the Panel.

The Panel raised their areas of concern and interest with officers; these included fly tipping, overgrown vegetation and Green Flag awards. Members also wished to discuss how the levels of street cleansing were measured and the role of Council officers.

A number of actions were raised to investigate different issues around the Borough raised by members of the Panel.

### **5. ICT**

The Council's ICT contract with Capita had also been added to the OSSP terms of reference. As there had been a number of concerns about the performance of the service, officers and representatives from Capita attended two meetings.

The discussion at the meeting in October centred on the programme for improvement and the associated milestones. Representatives from Capita updated councillors on how the staffing of the contracts would be restructured and improved. They also reiterated their commitment to the contracts and to ensuring improvements.

Members discussed the Modernise IT programme which would introduce hardware replacement cycles as well as an upgrade to the operating systems. A project was also underway to review the Council website.

An update on the ICT contract was requested and reported in February 2015. The Panel expressed some continued dissatisfaction with the service which was acknowledged by Capita who underlined that they were investing heavily and were aware of the issues. The Panel were updated on the improvements made in the number of outstanding calls and in the staffing contracts.

Council officers informed the Panel of the actions which had been taken. The way that the contract was monitored and the options for the Council were outlined.

#### **6. SLM Leisure Centres**

SLM manages the Council's two leisure centres and officers attended the meeting in January to update councillors on how the contract was monitored. They discussed how the targets were set and reported.

Representatives from SLM also attended the meeting and provided a presentation. Councillors were particularly interested in customer feedback and how this was undertaken. The standard of cleaning and review of equipment was discussed and SLM outlined the improvements which were being made. They highlighted partnership initiatives including local healthcare professionals.

#### **7. Site visits**

This year, the Panel felt it would be useful to undertake visits to a number of sites which were important in the delivery of outsourced contracts. This enabled Members to increase their understanding of the operations and to meet key members of staff.

A site visit was undertaken to the depot on Wiggenhall Road which was Veolia's base particularly for the waste and recycling service. Councillors also visited Woodside Leisure Centre with representatives from SLM.

The reports and minutes for Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel can be found on the Council's website –

<http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteId=223>

## **4.2 Chair's Commentary**

In our meetings this year we looked in detail at a number of the council's outsourced services and how these were being managed. Significant progress has been made in Revenues and Benefits and the Committee recognised that the Veolia and SLM

contracts are being well managed overall. Members remain concerned about the ICT contract with Capita and this was the focus of two of our meetings. I would anticipate that the Panel will want to revisit this contract again in the coming year.

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. I would also like to thank all those who run outsourced services for facilitating visits and for attending our meetings. Finally, I would like to thank all the councillors who participated in our work this year for their constructive approach.

Councillor Peter Taylor  
Chair of the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel (2014/15)

## 5. Task Groups

### 5.1 Community Safety Partnership Task Group

#### Membership

Councillor Kelly McLeod (Chair)

Councillors Jeanette Aron, Stephen Bolton, Rabi Martins, Binita Mehta, Mo Mills, Seamus 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.

#### **Work programme**

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

- Domestic Abuse - with input from Hertfordshire County Council Community Safety Unit.
- Neighbourhood Watch and Crimestoppers - with a presentation by the Hertfordshire Constabulary Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator.

The topics considered at the meetings were:

#### **1. An overview of the Community Safety Partnership**

The Anti-Social Behaviour Coordinator provided the Task Group with an overview of the structure and responsibilities of the Community Safety Partnership and the work of the Anti-Social Behaviour Action Group (ASBAG); including the Safety Net system. He informed Members about the types of anti-social behaviour the partnership dealt with, the recent changes to legislation and the powers for victims under the new regime.

Members discussed crime levels in Watford and how these had decreased. Other topics covered included how the 'Community Trigger' operated and how incidents of anti-social behaviour should be reported. The Safer Neighbourhoods Inspector explained the structure of the Police's Safer Neighbourhood Team and outlined the Police action plan for the coming year and the associated key areas. He explained that there would be a focus on community engagement and communication of community safety messages.

Councillors discussed the Safer Streets campaign and the extent of coverage in the town. They also discussed how offenders were supported after they had been discharged from prison; with the Safer Neighbourhoods Inspector outlining the Protection Plan for vulnerable people and the Online Watch Link (OWL) programme. Discussions were held about the Scan Net identification system used in licensed premises and the positive effect this had had on crime and disorder in the town.

The Safer Neighbourhoods Inspector updated Members about recent work on domestic abuse, the sporadic nature of criminal damage offences and he provided reassurance that football fans had a minimal impact on instances of

anti-social behaviour. It was due to this update that the committee decided that the wider council members should have the briefing before full council.

## **2. Visit to the Watford CCTV Control Room**

Immediately prior to the December Task Group meeting, Members visited the CCTV Control Room at Watford Police Station where they were hosted by the Transport and Projects Officer. He provided information on the background to the project, CCTV camera design and positioning, camera activity, recordings, funding, incident analysis, data subject requests, Watford Business Against Crime, Pubwatch, police airwaves and future developments and opportunities. Members were given a demonstration on how the cameras and screens operated.

Discussions were then held at the subsequent Panel meeting about the visit and Members considered the control room to be very impressive. They discussed matters relating to portable CCTV equipment with the Safer Neighbourhoods Inspector; including protocols governing its use, funding issues and the use of signage. Members also discussed how partnership working could be utilised to help in the development of CCTV in general.

## **3. Update on Crime Figures for Watford**

The Safer Neighbourhoods Inspector provided information on crime trends in Watford and on the activities being undertaken to address the issues. He explained that crime had fallen each year of the last five years and that this might be difficult to sustain. In fact overall crime had risen this year which might be partly due to new crime recording rules introduced by the Home Office; where each victim of an incident would now be recorded as an individual crime.

Members discussed a wide range of issues including pre-Christmas crime prevention messages, the revised crime recording procedure, the Safer Streets campaign, the Community Messaging system and Prolific or other Priority Offenders; the Safer Neighbourhoods Inspector provided reassurance about the systems in place when sexual offenders were released from prison. Members discussed the use of Hertfordshire Police and County Council websites with regard to the reporting of domestic abuse and how vulnerable people could potentially be identified during Safer Streets operations. The Community Safety Manager informed the Panel about research commissioned by the County Council on domestic abuse that would likely impact on the funding for the Women's Centre.

Councillors discussed issues around lone working and theft from person offences. They complimented the police for their operational activity in the town centre and other areas; including the seizure of alcohol, how they dealt with a potentially volatile situation and prevented criminal damage offences. The Safer Neighbourhoods Inspector outlined how the police worked in partnership with the Red Cross to improve safety in the town and reassured Members that police had a good understanding of patron numbers in night clubs. He also advised Members how they could assist the police in engaging with communities. In conclusion, issues around Operation Yew Tree, reported crime in Albert Road and communication methodologies were discussed.

It was believed to be helpful for members to have a briefing by the Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinator on Neighbourhood Watch and Crimestoppers as this programme had lost momentum and was being re-launched in the community.

#### **4. The Probation Service**

The Panel welcomed a manager from the Bedfordshire, Northamptonshire, Cambridgeshire and Hertfordshire Community Rehabilitation Company (BeNCH CRC), who gave a presentation on changes to the delivery of probation services. The presentation included information on:

- The roles of the different organisations in managing high and low risk offenders.
- Details of the programmes run by BeNCH CRC.
- How risk levels for different offenders were determined.
- The changes brought in by the Offender Rehabilitation Act 2014.

Following the presentation, Members discussed the following issues with the manager; the varying terms of reference for the National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Companies, the supervision of offenders, training of probation officers, mental-health pathways in probation, the relationship with the Housing Service, how anti-social behaviour by offenders was managed, how Councillors could support the Probation Service, details of offender based projects and how offenders needs were assessed.

#### **5. Draft Community Safety Plan**

The Community Safety Manager introduced the draft Community Safety Plan explaining that the Responsible Authorities Group had merged with One Watford as a trial to encourage creative solutions from a wider range of partners. She outlined the three priorities in the plan, which were:

- Updating crime – relating to how crime figures were reported having regard to changes in recording procedures.
- Protect our communities – relating to focusing on the victim and vulnerability and ensuring authorities understood the make up of communities.
- Reassure and inform – relating to the development of a communication strategy looking at targeted campaigns and case studies to illustrate successes and being more interactive.

In response to questions from Members, the Community Safety Manager informed the Group that work was being conducted to ensure authorities had a good understanding of the demographics of communities, that the partnership was always looking for ways to develop their work with new groups and that a plan would be developed and training provided to raise awareness of the Prevent Strategy.

The reports and minutes for Community Safety Partnership Task Group can be found on the Council's website – <http://watford.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CommitteId=209>

### **Chair's Commentary**

This task group plays an important role in building relationships between council members, council officers and the various official bodies that provide Watford with community safety. It is a forum for council Members to influence and inform our community safety partners of local issues and concerns and to receive updates on what these partners are hoping to achieve and accomplish.

I would like to acknowledge and thank all who attended our meetings for their input and contributions and know that these relationships will continue to build.

**Councillor Kelly McLeod**

Chair of the Community Safety Partnership Task Group (2014/15)

## **5.2 Property Task Group**

### Membership:

Councillor Nigel Bell (Chair)  
Councillors Kareen Hastrick and Asif Khan

The following Portfolio Holder also attended the Property Task Group during the year: Councillor Iain Sharpe (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development)

The Task Group lost two of its original members in 2014/15. Councillor Stephen Johnson was made a Portfolio Holder and member of Cabinet and was therefore no longer eligible to participate as a scrutiny member. Councillor Malcolm Meerabux was not re-elected at the May 2014 elections.

The Task Group met on two occasions during 2014/15. As agreed at its first meeting held in 2013/14, Members considered the Strategic Property Review's interim report. The report had been produced by the appointed consultants, Lambert Smith Hampton. The Task Group discussed various aspects of the course including ICT systems, income, hostels and property investment. The Task Group also reviewed the consultant's final report prior to its presentation to Cabinet. During the discussions the Task Group made several recommendations to officers for consideration as the review continued.

There are currently no further meetings planned for the Task Group.

## **5.3 Controlled Parking Zones Policies Task Group**

### Membership:

Councillor Karen Collett (Chair)  
Councillors Kareen Hastrick, Peter Jeffree, Anne Joynes and Darren Walford

The scrutiny suggestion was proposed by Jane Custance, the Head of Regeneration and Development. The aim was to review the various policies that related to the allocation of resident and business parking permits within the Controlled Parking

Zones. Originally Councillor Rabi Martins had been appointed to the Task Group, but it was agreed at the first meeting that Councillor Jeffree would take his place.

The Task Group met on three occasions and was provided with information on the complaints and comments that were received from the public about the policies. As requested Members were also provided with information about the rules and policies for parking schemes in other local authority areas. In order to support its work the Task Group agreed to send out a survey form to all those Councillors who had a parking scheme within their ward. Six out of 18 Councillors responded to the survey and their responses were circulated to the Task Group.

As a result of the information it received, the Task Group agreed to 20 recommendations related to different policies for the Controlled Parking Zones. The Task Group's final report was presented to Cabinet on 16 February and 9 March. Cabinet agreed all the recommendations.

Officers have been asked to provide an update on the progress of implementing the recommendations to Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in November 2015.

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

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

Task Groups' final reports are available in the online [Library](#).

For further information please contact the [Committee and Scrutiny Officer](#).

## **6. 2014/15 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.

### **6.1 Councillors' survey**

Of the 37 councillors (including the Mayor) in Watford Borough Council, 10 have completed the survey; there are nine less responses than in 2013/14. Six out of the 22 Councillors who were permanent or substitute members of a scrutiny committee or task group during 2014/15 completed the survey. The results of the survey showed that:

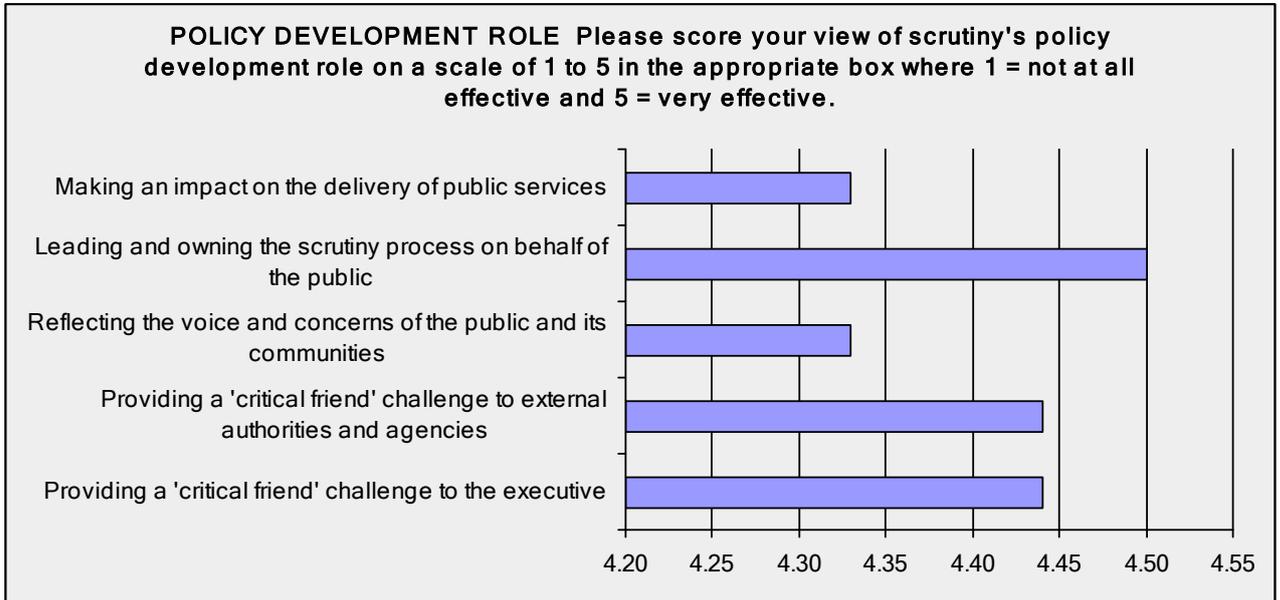
Two respondents stated that they had not been Members of a scrutiny committee or task group as they were a member of the Executive. One respondent stated that they had no time or had other commitments and the other person stated that they attended meetings when matters were of interest. The six scrutiny members all stated that they were 'very likely' to take part in scrutiny during 2015/16 and they had all understood their role.

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.

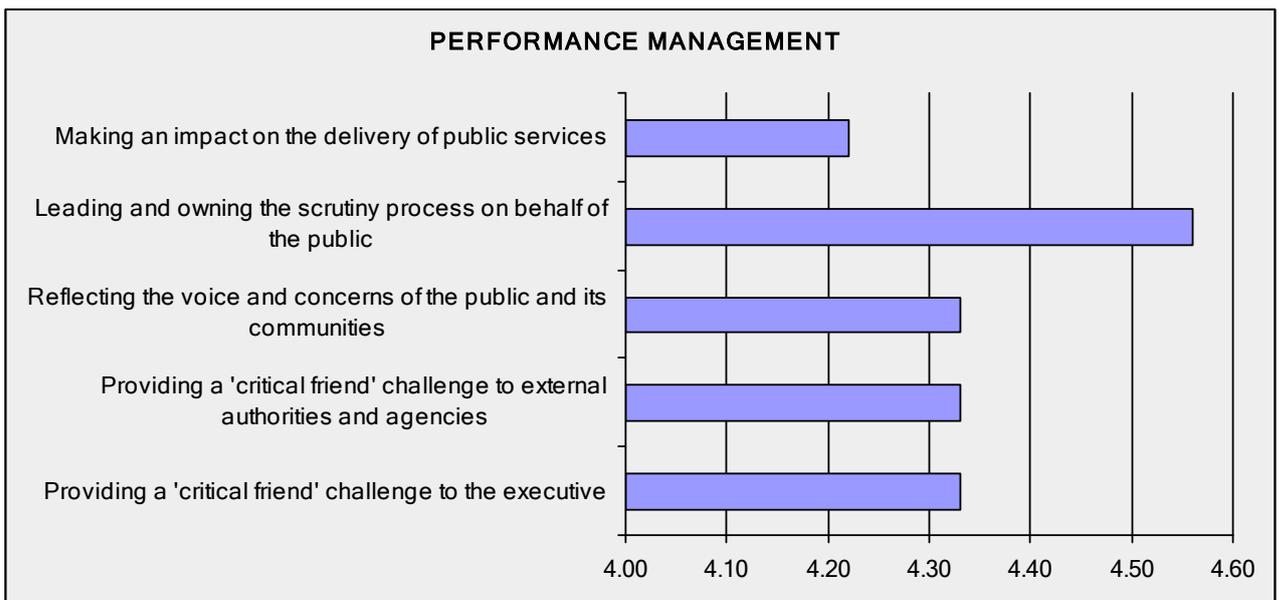
- Making an impact on the delivery of public services
- Leading and owning the scrutiny process on behalf of the public
- Reflecting the voice and concerns of the public and its communities
- Providing a 'critical friend' challenge to external authorities and agencies
- Providing a 'critical friend'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

9 of the respondents completed the questions about scrutiny's roles in policy development, performance management, budget and finance and task groups. 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 3.75 or higher. This showed a small increase of 0.83 when compared to the 2013/14 survey results. 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 4.33 and the highest was 4.50. This shows an overall improvement on the 2013/14 results, which were 3.67 and 4.00 respectively. All nine respondents considered scrutiny had done a good job in this area.

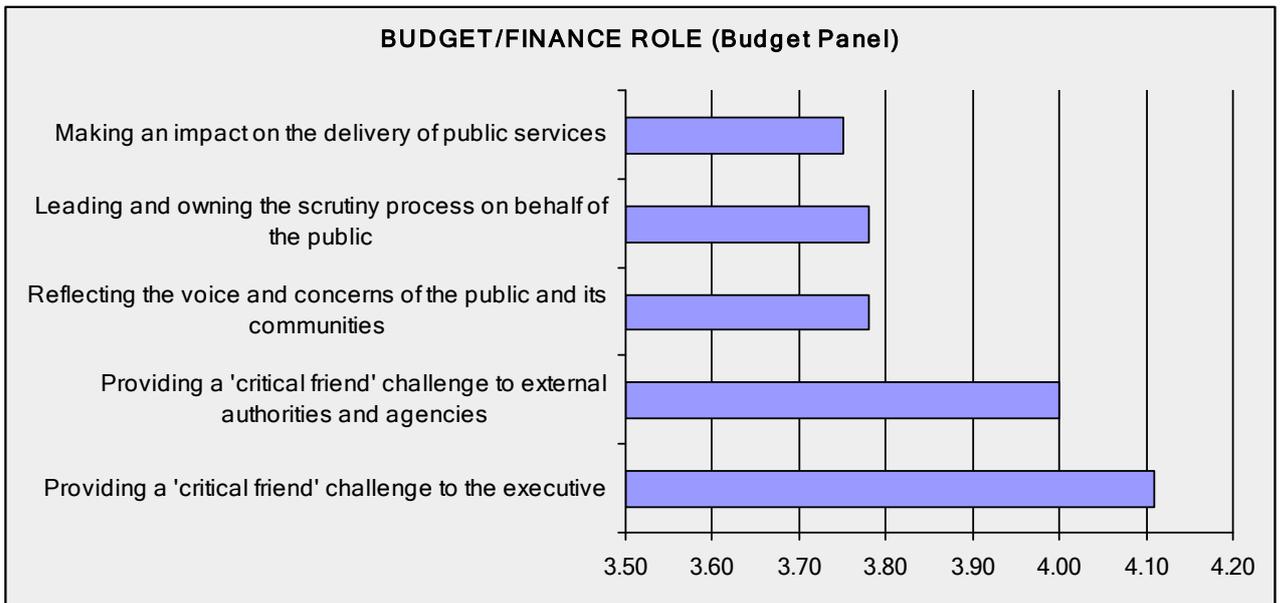


The second graph shows the average rating for each aspect for the **Performance Management** role of scrutiny. The lowest rating average was 4.22 and the highest was 4.56. This shows an overall improvement on the 2013/14 results, which were 3.54 and 4.00 respectively. Eight out of the nine respondents to this question thought that scrutiny had done a good job in its performance management role. The other respondent did not know.



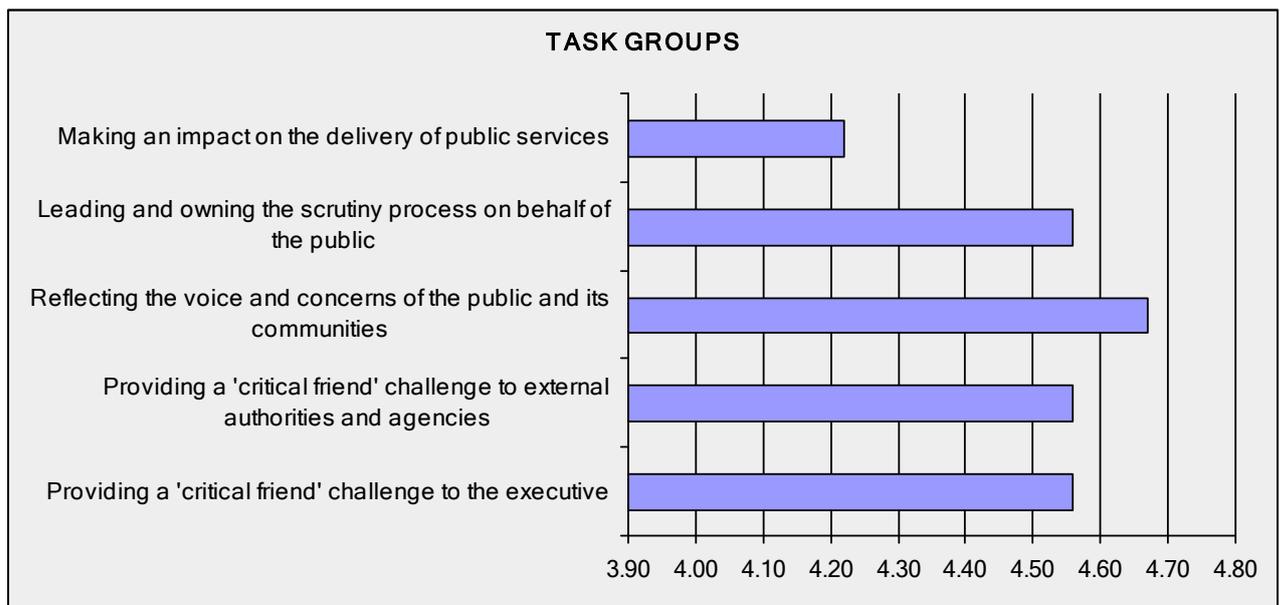
The third graph shows the average rating for each aspect for the **Budget and Finance** role of scrutiny. The lowest rating average was 3.75 and the highest was 4.11. This shows an overall increase in Members' views on the effectiveness in this area of scrutiny when compared to the 2013/14 results, which were 2.92 and 3.33 respectively.

There was a mixed reaction to the effectiveness of scrutiny's budget and finance role in this year's survey. Eight of the respondents replied that scrutiny had done a good job, but two respondents had said 'no'. The reasons given were that Budget Panel appeared to make few suggestions and that Members did not drill into the budget and constructively challenge officers and the Executive.



The final graph shows the average rating for each aspect for **Task Groups**. The lowest rating average was 4.22 and the highest was 4.67. This shows an overall improvement on the 2013/14 results, which were 4.07 and 4.27 respectively.

The rating for 'Making an impact on the delivery of public services' had a mixed response. Four respondents gave it a 5 (very effective) rating and one gave it a rating of 2 (not particularly effective). There were no reasons given for this rating. Overall eight respondents thought that task groups had done a good job during the year.



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.

- “Provide guidance/training for Chairs as they are what determines whether or not the scrutiny is effective.”

“An in house presentation for councillors new and old would be good please. Just helpful to ensure all councillors know why we have this role, how to participate in the meetings, what can and cannot be done etc.”

*Democratic Services has developed a guide for Chairs of all committees. It provides information on useful skills and the Chair's role before, during and after a meeting. Each year following Annual Council the document will be circulated to all Chairs and Vice-Chairs.*

*An in-house presentation may be more suitable at the beginning of the Municipal Year. Democratic Services' presentation to the new councillors at their induction includes a section on scrutiny and Members' roles in this part of the decision-making structure.*

*The Committee and Scrutiny Officer has developed a scrutiny handbook which is given to all new councillors at their induction and to all Members appointed to*

*scrutiny committees and panels at Annual Council. A short guide is being finalised for all Task Group members and will be given to them at the beginning of a review.*

*The Democratic Services Manager, Committee and Scrutiny Officer and Member Development and Civic Officer receive information from different organisations about training courses. As appropriate courses arise Members will be informed and offered the opportunity to attend.*

- “I would like one question at a time and the Chair to ensure that the person asking the question does not just talk. Most Councillors are extremely concerned about their Wards, their Constituents, plans for the future etc. and they, like me, do not want time wasted with meaningless words.”

*The ‘An Introduction to Scrutiny’ handbook contains a section on questioning skills. It suggests that questions should be posed one at a time, as asking too many at once can be confusing. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer will remind all Chairs to ask councillors to put one question at a time and ensure that those speaking do not wander from the topic under discussion.*

- “I would prefer that notes/information regarding a topic were issued before meetings so that time isn’t wasted and the committee can begin questions/discussion as soon as possible. It also gives members time to prepare questions. I am not a lover of ‘informative’ slideshows where the person delivering the presentation reads what is on the slide.”

*The Committee and Scrutiny Officer acknowledges this comment and recognises that when members are provided with information in advance of a meeting, they are able to prepare questions they may wish to raise at the meeting. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer will advise all officers presenting a report to scrutiny that a written report/briefing paper should be forwarded to Democratic Services for publication in the agenda.*

## **6.2 Officers’ survey**

This survey, similar to the Councillors’ survey, was completed by 15 officers, only one of whom had had no involvement with scrutiny during 2014/15. The survey showed that 13 of the officers felt that they understood their role. 11 officers stated that they had been appropriately briefed by the Committee and Scrutiny Team. The other three respondents had answered ‘partially’. Additional comments suggested that information about Members’ concerns and earlier discussion would have helped the officers prior to the meeting. Democratic Services will ensure that all officers due to attend a scrutiny committee or panel are provided with information about Members’ concerns and previous discussions. The majority of officers had responded that they had felt the demands on them or their service had been manageable.

Officers were asked whether they considered scrutiny had been an effective ‘critical friend’ to their service. There were some negative responses this year for Policy Development (1 person), Performance Management (2) and Budget/finance (2). One officer was concerned that Members only appeared to be interested in performance issues. Two respondents indicated that Members needed to scrutinise performance

rather than it be used as an educational tool about a service. One person felt that this may be due to Members not having sufficient knowledge. Performance Management is an area that Democratic Services will look to develop and ensure Members are provided with the right information and skills to aid them in this work.

In response to a request for comments on Property Review Task Group, several officers raised concerns about the review – ‘not very effective’, ‘initial scope too broad’, ‘evolved into a much wider brief...’. Initially this Task Group had been requested and agreed by Overview and Scrutiny Committee prior to consultant’s being engaged to carry out a review of the Council’s property portfolio. Once the Task Group started it was agreed that it would look at the consultant’s interim and final reports before they were presented to Cabinet. This Task Group is still ongoing and has not yet produced a final report. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer will discuss the future of the Task Group with the Chair, Councillor Bell, and officers.

The comments for the Controlled Parking Zone Task Group were more positive. The feedback from officers and Councillors involved in the Task Group were positive. All parties had worked well together and the Task Group produced a final report incorporating 20 recommendations. Some of the more negative comments about the Task group may not have been aware of the scope of the review.

When asked how scrutiny could be improved officers made the following comments (responses are shown in italics):

- “Better scoping of subjects”

“Further opportunity to engage with members as to the key drivers and issues within their respective patches, allowing for greater clarity to be presented on specific areas/perceived problem areas within the town. Getting under the skin of issues which are not always evident borough wide.”

*Recently the Committee and Scrutiny Officer has arranged meetings between councillors proposing topics and the relevant officers for the subject. This has enabled early discussions about the proposed subject and amendments to be made to the scrutiny proposal form as required.*

*The Committee and Scrutiny Officer will encourage councillors to discuss topics with officers at the earliest opportunity.*

- “Documented briefing templates for scrutiny topics.”

“Better briefing from members what they want to see and areas to focus on.”

*The scrutiny proposal form should set out the topic and any specific areas to be reviewed. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer will ensure that all officers have been fully informed about the scrutiny topic under discussion and any specific areas councillors would like officers to cover. She will look into the development of a template that can be completed and circulated to officers and the Chair prior to the meeting.*

- “The process could be made more efficient if Elected Members are provided with an overview of the service and/or with supporting documentation prior to

the review.”

*Once a scrutiny topic has been agreed and a Task Group has been set up, the Committee and Scrutiny Officer identifies any background information that may be of use to members. This would include any Council policies, information from the internet or previous reports to Council, Cabinet or scrutiny. The information is collated and each member of the Task Group is provided with the supporting documentation. As officers become more involved in a review and further supporting information is identified or requested this is also provided to the Task Group.*

*This year the Committee and Scrutiny Officer has asked the client management teams for the Council’s outsourced services to provide her with a brief overview of each of the contracts. The information will be collated and put together to form an introductory handbook for Councillors appointed to the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel. This will ensure that councillors have important information about the contracts including who has been awarded the contract; the length of contract; monitoring arrangements and any additional information the client management teams feel that would be of benefit to the Panel. The handbook is currently being brought together and will be given to the Scrutiny Panel as soon as possible in 2015/16.*

There was one further comment which said that it was important that officers were able to comment on draft minutes prior to approval as this ensured that any technical details was correct. The writer acknowledged that the committee team did this and was receptive to any clarification. Democratic Services will continue to do this for scrutiny and all committees to ensure the minutes are accurate before publication.

### **6.3 Survey of members of the public and external organisations**

This year the survey was completed by one person, who had attended the Community Safety Partnership Task Group. The person had attended to give evidence to the Task Group and said that they had understood the purpose of the meeting. Their further responses were positive. They did not make any comments about their experience at the meeting or suggestions for new reviews.

Due to the poor response rate the Committee and Scrutiny Officer will look into ways to improve responses to future surveys. One example may be to introduce a feedback form for circulation to members of the public, representatives from organisations or other interested parties soon after the meeting. This may encourage more people to respond if there is less of a time gap after their attendance.

### **6.4 Scrutiny Suggestions**

Several scrutiny suggestions were included in the councillors’ and officers’ surveys. The Committee and Scrutiny Officer will look at the suggestions and, if it is possible to identify the proposer, send the scrutiny proposal form and discuss with them the suggestion.

## **7. Other Scrutiny work**

### **7.1 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.

One Joint Cabinet and Scrutiny meeting was held during 2014/15. It met in March 2014 and reviewed the scrutiny work programmes for the year and received an update on the current Task Groups. The Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel updated the meeting on scrutiny's progress throughout the year.

### **7.2 Scrutiny Training**

In July 2014 a training session was held for non-executive councillors "Being an effective 'critical friend': questioning skills and techniques." It was arranged to enable councillors to develop their skills required for scrutinising outsourced contracts. The session was run by Tim Young, who is an independent scrutiny and policy consultant and Associate of the Centre for Public Scrutiny and Local Government Information Unit. It was attended by seven councillors.

In addition the Head of Corporate Strategy and Client Services held a 'Contract Management' session which was open to all councillors. The training session, held on 30 September 2014, provided Members with an opportunity to find out how key service contracts were managed by the Council and how good contract management practice was being developed. Six councillors attended the training.

An introduction to scrutiny at Watford Borough Council is covered in Democratic Services' presentation to new Councillors at their induction. They are provided with a copy of the handbook 'An Introduction to Scrutiny' and the Centre for Public Scrutiny's 'Overview and scrutiny in local government: a handbook for elected members'.

### **7.3 Scrutiny Handbook**

The Committee and Scrutiny Officer introduced a Scrutiny Handbook, which was given to all Councillors involved in one of the scrutiny committees or panels. The handbook provided an introduction to scrutiny and its role at Watford Borough Council. It had a section on questioning skills and the different types of questions that could be used with their advantages and disadvantages. It also included a list of previous scrutiny reviews and the list of documents available from the newly established scrutiny library. The handbook will be regularly reviewed and adapted as required.

A new handbook is in the process of being developed for the members of Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel. It will highlight the Council's key contracts and useful information for the Scrutiny Panel.

## **7.4 Scrutiny Library**

The scrutiny library contents list has been included in 'An Introduction to Scrutiny', which is given to newly elected members and all participants of scrutiny committees and panels.

## **7.5 Hertfordshire Scrutiny Network**

The Scrutiny Network has continued to hold meetings throughout 2014/15. The group continues to receive notification of Police and Crime Panel meetings. Each authority's work programmes are circulated to the other councils, enabling officers to see what else is being scrutinised around the county. The Network enables officers to share experiences and feedback 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 allows officers and the Executive to consider 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, enabling them to identify any recommendations related to the district councils.

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](mailto:legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk)

Overview and Scrutiny Annual Report – 2014/15

## PART A

**Report to:** Council  
**Date of meeting:** Wednesday, 14 October 2015  
**Report of:** Committee and Scrutiny Officer  
**Title:** Neighbourhood Forum Annual Report 2014/15

### 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 provided at Appendix 2 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](mailto: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 2014/15 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. Two 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 2014/15 all 12 Neighbourhood Forums chose to fund projects for their area. Ten of the wards

have made donations to local groups to cover the cost of new equipment or towards the costs of local events. The majority of the wards put some of their funds towards environmental improvements in their areas, including planting trees and hedges and the installation of additional cycle hoops. Two wards jointly contributed towards the cost of resurfacing the underpass under the A405. 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 there are no financial implications within this report and all wards were within budget.

##### 4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

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

##### 4.3 **Potential Risks**

None identified

#### Appendices

- Appendix 1 – Neighbourhood Forum Expenditure 2014/15
- Appendix 2 – 2014/15 Neighbourhood Forum Annual Reports

#### Background Papers

- Application forms and expenditure sheets for the individual forums

#### File Reference

None

**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM  
EXPENDITURE 2014/15**

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.

<b>WARD</b>	<b>AMOUNT SPENT ON MEETINGS</b>	<b>AMOUNT SPENT ON PROJECTS IN WARD</b>	<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>
Callowland	-	£2,499.20	<b>£2,499.20</b>
Central	£214.00	£2,246.76	<b>£2,460.76</b>
Holywell	-	£2,500.00	<b>£2,500.00</b>
Leggatts	-	£2,400.00	<b>£2,400.00</b>
Meriden	-	£2,500.00	<b>£2,500.00</b>
Nascot	£705.25	£1,777.50	<b>£2,482.75</b>
Oxhey	-	£2,499.40	<b>£2,499.40</b>
Park	-	£2,499.02	<b>£2,499.02</b>
Stanborough	-	£2,499.97	<b>£2,499.97</b>
Tudor	-	£2,302.50	<b>£2,302.50</b>
Vicarage	-	£2,500.00	<b>£2,500.00</b>
Woodside	-	£2,500.00	<b>£2,500.00</b>

**Total spent:                   £29,643.60**



**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM  
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

**Name of Forum:** Callowland Neighbourhood Forum

**Membership:** Councillors Sohail Bashir, Ian Brandon, Seamus Williams

**Activities during 2014/15**

**Meetings:** No Forum meetings were arranged

**Projects**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Neston Road Gate	£420.00	We have had excellent feedback from residents saying that the gate has been a huge success in preventing potential anti-social behaviour. They also commented that it has helped to lower the perception of crime
New Bike Hoops and New church Noticeboard	£2,079.20	The Church has been very thankful for the new noticeboard as the previous one was in need of urgent repair. It is obviously seeing regular use.  Residents have thanked us for providing new bike hoops and are happy to use them for their intended purpose

Signed. Councillor Seamus Williams

Councillor Sohail Bashir

Date 14 September 2015



**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM  
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

**Name of Forum:** Central

**Membership:** Councillors Rabi Martins, Stephen Bolton and Helen Lynch

**Activities during 2014/15**

**Meetings**

**Date of Meeting 1: 15/7/2014**

**Publicity**

Notice on Community Notice Board  
Notice of meeting leaflets  
Word of mouth during street surgeries

**Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below)**

**Other invitees**

**Topics covered**

Community Safety  
Street Cleaning  
Parking  
Environmental improvements

**Details of any costs associated with the meeting**

Holy Rood Community Hall £30.00

***e.g. venue hire , sound equipment etc.***

**Date of Meeting 2 17/11/2014:**

**Publicity**

Notice on Community Notice Board  
Notice of meeting leaflets  
Word of mouth during street surgeries

**Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below)**

19

**Other invitees**

*e.g. Council officers, Mayor. Police, HCC etc.*

Police  
Community Safety Officer  
Environmental Health Officer

**Topics covered**

Community Safety  
Street Cleaning  
Parking  
Environmental improvements

**Details of any costs associated with the meeting**

*e.g. venue hire , sound equipment etc.*

St. Mary's Church Hall £72.00

## Date of Meeting 3: 24/11/2014

### Publicity

Notice on Community Notice Board  
Notice of meeting leaflets  
Word of mouth during street surgeries

### Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below)

23

### Other invitees

*e.g. Council officers, Mayor. Police, HCC etc.*

Police  
Community Safety Officer  
Environmental Health Officer

### Topics covered

Community Safety  
Street Cleaning  
Parking  
Environmental improvements

### Details of any costs associated with the meeting

*e.g. venue hire , sound equipment etc.*

Spiritualists' Church £40.00

**Date of Meeting 4 12/3/2015**

**Publicity** Notice on Community Notice Board  
Notice of meeting leaflets  
Word of mouth during street surgeries

**Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below)** 31

**Other invitees** Mayor  
*e.g. Council officers, Mayor. Police, HCC etc.* Police  
Community Safety Officer  
Environmental Health Officer

**Topics covered** Town Development Plans  
Community Safety  
Street Cleaning  
Parking  
Environmental improvements

**Details of any costs associated with the meeting** St Mary's Church Hall £72.00  
*e.g. venue hire , sound equipment etc.*

## Date Projects

Project	Costs	Comments
1 .Queens Road Community Action Group support for promotion of events	£107.00	Business and residents group covering Queens Road and surrounds
2 Television for Woodfields Residents	£449.00	Presented at a social Supported by local businesses
3. Jose Andrade Art Exhibition	£150	Jose Andrade is a retired Central Ward resident and carer for son with long term terminal condition Cost of venue and publicity Supported by Mayor Thornhill and Richard Harrington M.P.
4.Radlett Road Table Tennis Club Christmas Party	£125.00	The Table Tennis Club is run free of charge by volunteers for children on the estate the Christmas Party was also supported by the Housing Trust
5. Small of Acts of Kindness	£400.00	Contribution towards the cost of setting up a new charity to help single elderly people in the town in association with other local volunteer organisations
6. St Johns Community Club	£500.00	Contribution towards the costs of a Community Notice Board in Sutton Road managed by St John's Church Community Club

7. Centre Point Knitting Club      £140.00

Support for the start up of a knitting club at Centre Point

8. Tree Planting                      £375.00

Contribution towards tree planting in Estcourt Road

Signed.      Councillor .....

*RMartins*                      (*Rabi Martins*)

Councillor  
*S Bolton (Stephen Bolton)*

Date.....3 September 2015.....

**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM  
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

**Name of Forum:** Holywell

**Membership:** Councillors Nigel Bell, Jackie Connal and Matt Turmaine

**Activities during 2014/15**

**Meetings:** No meetings were funded from this budget

**Projects**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Contribution to West Watford Free Church to cover the purchase cost of new crockery for Café West	£525.00	The Holywell Councillors are delighted to contribute to the maintenance of the facilities required to help Café West continue to operate. All three of us know how vital a community hub this provides. We also recognise the role it plays and Cllr Connal continues to engage actively.
Contribution to Westfield Children's Centre towards stories and tea session	£1,000.00	In difficult times, it's essential that our West Watford community is able to continue to deliver services to all residents of West Watford. Supporting our Children's Centre is a valuable contribution to helping people in our community look after their kids and raise them well.
Contribution to Holywell Youth Club for materials for activities	£800.00	Once again, it's an honour to help the Holywell Youth Club to support our local youngsters. It is vital that as councillors, we ensure that our young people are able to find routes to creative and productive engagement, which this contribution will assist.

Declutter pavements of  
redundant street clutter

£175.00 One of the attributes required to foster a culture of good community engagement is to be able to see what we want our Ward to look like on a day-to-day basis. We believe it is essential to help make the streets of West Watford safer and more visually compelling by contributing to removing the street sign and other 'left-overs' that cause such hazards, which need to be avoided.

TOTAL £2,500.00

Signed. Councillor Matt Turmaine

Councillor Jackie Connal

Councillor Nigel Bell

Date.....31/08/2015.....

**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM  
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

**Name of Forum:** Leggatts Ward

**Membership:** Councillors Asif Khan, Anne Joynes and Bilqees Mauthoor

**Activities during 2014/15**

**Meetings:** No meetings were held - Councillors attended all local resident associations within the ward instead

**Projects**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Contribution to Orchard School towards the cost of a new shed	£500.00	The shed would be used by local children to store their gardening equipment, pots and plants which they are using to cultivate their school allotment plot in their grounds.
Contribution to 1st North Watford scouts towards cost of flooring	£1900	The First North Watford scouts is a long and established scouts group within the ward. The help provided to them helps them maintain and improve their scouts' hut which was in need of updating. The funding will ensure that the facilities are used for future generations of local children from within the area.

Signed. Councillor Asif Khan

Councillor Anne Joynes

Councillor Bilqees Mauthoor

Date...11 August 2015.....



**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM  
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

**Name of Forum:** Meriden

**Membership:** Councillors Jan Brown, Sue Greenslade, Kareen Hastrick

**Activities during 2014/15**

**Meetings** – The Councillors do not set up specific Forum meetings as they attend residents’ meetings within the ward.

**Projects**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Pitch hire fee paid for Meriden Ballers FC	£576.00	The football team is composed of local youths
Paid for the hire of an inflatable slide for the Meriden Fun Day	£200.00	Fun Day organised with the Green Canteen and WCHT
Equipment for the Green Canteen including tables and gazebo weights	£725.76	The Green Canteen is a joint venture with HCC for people with learning difficulties who sell the produce that they grow.
Funding to provide landscape enhancements in the ward, including new trees	£998.24	

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

Date 2 September 2015



**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM  
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

**Name of Forum:** Nascot Ward

**Membership:** Councillors Jeanette Aron; Mark Hofman; Mark Watkin

**Activities during 2014/15**

**Meetings**

**Date of Meeting:** 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015

**Publicity**

Agenda Leaflet Delivery to all homes in Nascot Ward  
Posters on Residents Noticeboards  
Agendas sent to residents via Residents Associations E-Newsletters

**Number of people in attendance (excluding invitees below)**

90

**Other invitees**

*e.g. Council officers, Mayor, Police, HCC etc.*

Howard Oldstein, General Manager of Intu Watford  
David Swan, Hertfordshire County Council Highways  
Sgt. Adam Wills, Watford Neighbourhood Team  
Representatives of all the major Residents Associations in the Ward

**Topics covered**

The future for Charter Place  
Courtland's Drive/Hempstead Road plus other highway matters.  
Police Report  
Reports from the Residents' Associations (Courtlands Residents Association; Ridge Residents Association; Nascot Grange Residents Association, Nascot Residents Association.)

**Details of any costs associated with the meeting**

*e.g. venue hire , sound equipment etc.*

Agenda Printing - £235.25  
Agenda Delivery by D2D - £425  
Hire of Holy Rood School Hall - £45  
Minutes for the meeting - £0

**Comments**

A very successful meeting. Our Agenda attracted a wide range of attendees.

These forums are so useful in gauging what really matters to our residents. Those that attend gain an insight into what we are trying to achieve on their behalf and also allows our residents to have a voice with issues that are of concern to them. For those residents that are unable to attend often a fellow resident is their conduit.

The presentation by the General Manager of Intu proved very popular with many questions from the floor. It was clear that Intu's plans are generally popular.

By having Highways officers in attendance particularly when discussing the state of the roads and local highways issues helps in providing residents with more detail and knowledge of what can be done to try to tackle areas of concern.

The neighbourhood police sergeant and his team of police officers have always been fully engaged in our ward community life and provide excellent support to us all. They come to offer practical advice about community safety, share where they can any concerns they have about problems within the ward, they provide us with the statistics about crime in our locality and Borough wide. They also promote OWL messaging and the Neighbourhood Watch. It was reassuring to hear that Nascot remains one of the Wards with the lowest incidence of crime in the Borough.

Our resident associations are important to us and are a really wonderful way for residents who feel they can take an active part in community life. Their work is invaluable and very much appreciated by us and it rare for them to have a platform to present themselves to our community and attract new members.

## Projects

Project	Costs	Comments
Lunch Club venue costs	£432	Hire of Cheslyn House once a month for a year
Hire of Recital Hall for 3 x Nascot Grange residents meetings	£94.50	The ward team, particularly Councillor Aron worked hard to establish a residents association at Nascot Grange to help them address a wide range of issues affecting them and the community's use of their site. These meetings were held to help establish the association
Funding on new plantings in North Watford Playing Field – Dell Woods	£56.00	The Ridge Range Association has worked assiduously to improve the woodland in North Watford Playing Fields. This was a donation to help fund additional shrubs for the woodland.
Repair of sculpture in Willow Grange public area	£225	This iconic sculpture is located in the public space at the front of Woodland Grange and needed repairing.
Nascot Residents Association Noticeboard in Stamford Road playground	£500	The Nascot Residents Association is long established but lacks funds for capital projects. This grant helped them communicate better with their residents through this noticeboard.
Installation of cycle hoops	£270	Located around the ward.
Assistance in purchasing banners for Courtlands Residents Association	£200	These will be used to help publicise the CRA at its various events, most notably its annual fun day.
Signed.	Councillor 1 Mark Watkin Councillor 2 Mark Hofman Councillor (Jeanette Aron)	

Date 14<sup>th</sup> August 2015



**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM  
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

**Name of Forum:** Oxhey Neighbourhood Forum

**Membership:** Councillors Shirena Counter, Iain Sharpe and Peter Taylor

**Activities during 2014/15**

**Meetings**

Although there were no Neighbourhood Forum meetings held during the year, there were a larger number of smaller meetings which were arranged and funded separately. These included amongst others:

A number of meetings to discuss the Health Campus Road
Several meetings of residents of Attenborough Court to discuss flooding and problems with buildings management
Meetings of the Watford Heath residents' association to discuss improvements to the area

**Projects**

Project	Costs	Comments
Cost of insurance to cover Wassailing	£221.40	Insurance to cover Wassailing which is an annual community event that is very popular with local residents (attended by 50 – 100 people). Without this, the event could not have been held.
Donation towards cycle path resurfacing	£1778.60	Donation to help with the resurfacing of poorly surfaced cycle lanes in public parks such as Oxhey Park & Riverside Recreation Ground
Funding towards replanting of trees	£300	This was to replace 2 trees – one in Cross Road and one near Bushey Station

Map for OVEG	£200	This was a donation towards a bespoke map of Oxhey Village on behalf of the Oxhey Village Environment Group
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Signed. Councillor 1...Shirena Counter  
Councillor 2 Iain Sharpe...  
Councillor 3...Peter Taylor.....

Date...14<sup>th</sup> September 2015.....

**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM  
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

**Name of Forum:** Park Ward Neighbourhood Forum

**Membership:** Councillors George Derbyshire, Peter Jeffree and Binita Mehta

**Activities during 2014/15**

**Meetings:** No Neighbourhood Forum meetings were held this year

**Projects**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Contribution towards relocation CCTV cameras in Park Ward	£573.02	Contribution towards project to link CCTV cameras in Nascot and Park Ward to central control room for monitoring purposes.
Cost for replanting one roadside tree on Cassiobury Estate	£150	Funding to Bob Clarke, Veolia for roadside tree replanting for which he has no budget.
Donation to Fullerians RFC	£200	Donation to this important neighbourhood sports club for replacement of kitchen equipment.
Cost for replanting 9 roadside trees on Cassiobury Estate and in Triangle	£1,310	Funding to Bob Clarke, Veolia for roadside tree replanting for which he has no budget.

Purchase of microphones for  
Vibe Radio

£66

Launched in August 2011, Vibe 107.6 FM is a not for profit community radio station run by the local people of Watford and South West Hertfordshire.

Purchase of Gujarati school  
printer

£200

Support for purchase of printer by the local Gujarati language supplementary school. The sustaining of the ethnic mother tongue is an important way for immigrant communities to retain a sense of identity and heritage.

Signed. Councillor 1 George Derbyshire.....

Councillor 2 Binita Mehta.....

Date... 15 September 2015.....

**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM  
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

**Name of Forum:** Stanborough

**Membership:** Councillors Keith Crout, Derek Scudder and Tim Williams

**Activities during 2014/15**

**Meetings** No meetings were held during 2014/15

**Projects**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Cost</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Replacement trees	£300	To replace two trees in the ward
Post and rail fencing	£995	To repair and replace sections of post and rail fencing which were damaged and unsightly.
Hotplates	£75	To provide two hotplates for the Girl Guide group in East Drive for their cookery lessons
Underpass resurfacing	£1115	To contribute to the resurfacing of the subways under the A405

Signed. Councillor Derek Scudder

Councillor Tim Williams

Councillor Keith Crout

Date 4 September 2015



**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM  
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

**Name of Forum:** Tudor

**Membership:** Councillors Stephen Johnson, Darren Walford and Kelly McLeod

**Activities during 2014/15**

**Meetings:** No meetings were arranged from this budget

**Projects**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Dec-14 Christmas lights at Tudor shops	£375.00	This has become an annual event. The local community join in for a carol concert and turning on the lights ceremony.
Feb-15 Christmas tree	£531.00	In future years we will be able to decorate the tree and add to the Christmas lights.
Mar-15 Wildlife sign	£865.50	The wildlife sign has now been added to by another sign donated by the Green Gym. The pair add an informative touch to Knutsford park.
Mar-15 Hedging and Shrubs	£531.00	The extra planting will add to the local green environment of the Ward.

Signed. Councillor 1.....Steve Johnson.....

Councillor 2.....Darren Walford.....

Date...13/8/2015.....



**NEIGHBOURHOOD FORUM  
ANNUAL REPORT 2014/15**

**Name of Forum:** Woodside  
**Membership:** Councillors Ian Brown, Karen Collett, Glen Saffery

**Activities during 2014/15**

**Meetings** – None held

**Projects**

<b>Project</b>	<b>Costs</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Watford and District YMCA Community Centre	£500.00	Money was given to help with utensils for cooking as well as assisting in cooking healthy meals for those in the community.
Leavesden Community Group	£150.00	Children's Christmas Party entertainer.
Grasscrete Verge	£700.00	Woodgate to assist completion of bays to add more parking.
Underpass resurfacing.	£1,500.00	To resurface the underpass on Woodside.

Signed. Councillor 1.....Karen Collett  
Councillor 2.....Ian Brown

Date.....16/06/15.....

