

COUNCIL

24 January 2017

Present: Councillor D Walford (Chairman)
Councillor J Dhindsa (Vice-Chair)
Councillors D Thornhill, D Barks, S Bashir, N Bell, S Bolton,
S Cavinder, K Collett, J Connal, K Crout, A Dychton, J Fahmy,
A Grimston, K Hastrick, M Hofman, J Johnson, S Johnson,
A Joynes, P Kent, Ahsan Khan, Asif Khan, R Laird, J Maestas,
B Mauthoor, A Rindl, G Saffery, D Scudder, N Shah, I Sharpe,
N Steele, P Taylor, M Turmaine, M Watkin and T Williams

Also present: Freemen of the Borough, Mavis Tyrwhitt and Norman
Tyrwhitt
Councillor Martyn Greensmyth, Mayor of Broxbourne
Borough Council

Officers: Managing Director
Deputy Managing Director - Place Shaping and Corporate
Performance
Head of Democracy and Governance
Shared Director of Finance
Head of Finance (Shared Services)
Communications and Engagement Section Head
Finance Business Partner (Projects)
Democratic Services Manager
Mayor's Political Assistant
Member Development and Civic Officer
Committee and Scrutiny Officer

48 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Martins and Mills.

49 **Disclosure of Interests**

The Head of Democracy and Governance informed members that, under the Council's Code of Conduct, all Councillors had been given a dispensation to enable them to consider and vote on minute number 56 as all Members had pecuniary interests in that item.

50 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 October 2016 were submitted and signed.

51 **Official Announcements**

Graham Taylor OBE

The Chairman invited the Mayor and Councillor Bell, leader of the Labour Group to speak about Graham Taylor.

The Mayor said that she felt it was important that Council should mark the death of Graham Taylor, who had been made a Freeman of the Borough in 2001. She was aware that he was proud to be a freeman of the town. He had been a friend of the town. He had lived locally and his children had attended local schools. Although he had worked away from Watford at times, his heart remained here. The funeral was to be held at St Mary's Church.

The Mayor added that Graham Taylor had ensured that Watford Football Club had become a family friendly club that included a family enclosure. His legacy included Watford Community and Sports and Education Trust, which carried out good work in the community.

The Mayor stated that Graham Taylor had been a true friend of the town and would be sorely missed.

Councillor Bell echoed the Mayor's comments. He had been an example of decency. He had put the town on the map for the right reasons.

Council stood and observed a minute's silence in memory of Graham Taylor.

Christmas Card Competition

The Chairman stated that Knutsford School had provided some great designs for his Christmas card competition. He had attended their assembly to give out the prizes to the talented winners.

Chairman's Charity Quiz

The Chairman informed Council that he would be holding a charity quiz on 14 March in the Colosseum. Details had been included in the latest Members' Bulletin. He asked members to start thinking about their teams.

Surface Pros

The Chairman commented that he was pleased to see members using their surface pros. He advised that there would be a members' workshop on Thursday 9 February. As part of the council's Digital Watford priority, members would be working with less paper. He reminded members that if they needed any help they could contact the IT helpdesk or speak to the Democratic Services team.

Councillor Martin Greensmyth, Mayor of Broxbourne Borough Council

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Greensmyth, Mayor of Broxbourne Borough Council, to Watford.

Nick Fenwick, Deputy Managing Director Place Shaping and Corporate Performance

The Chairman also welcomed Nick Fenwick, the council's new Deputy Managing Director.

52

Mayor's Report

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

The Chairman invited Members to indicate whether they wished to ask a question of the Mayor. Councillors Barks, Turmaine, J Johnson, Asif Khan, Grimston and Dhindsa indicated that they wished to ask questions.

- a) Councillor Barks commented that it had been noted in several newspapers about the metropolitan line and its funding. Also it had not been on the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan's funding plan for the next few years. He asked the Mayor if she could provide an update and help ensure this vital development went ahead, bringing benefit to Watford.

The Mayor responded that it was important this had been raised. Otherwise people only had information through rumours, gossip or the newspaper, it was important that she explained what she understood was happening. She added that she needed to add a caveat that it was to the best of her knowledge. She confirmed that the metropolitan line extension was not in the Mayor's current plan and as a result people started questioning the reason it had not been included. She understood that the reason was connected to the considerable increase in construction costs. It was not yet clear how that funding gap would be met. She believed that this was why the rumours had started. It was not included in the plan as

the scheme was not fully funded. However, she had not heard anything official.

The Mayor added that there were also rumours that the construction work had stopped. She understood that the first section of work had been completed. The next phase would be the construction of the viaduct. She had not heard any reasons why this would not be going ahead.

The Mayor stated that the scheme had had cross party support for decades. One of the first letters she wrote on becoming Mayor was to Ken Livingstone, the Mayor of London at that time. She asked about his plans for the Croxley Rail Link, the original name for the scheme. All members understood the significance it would bring to the town.

The Mayor reiterated that there was a shortfall in the funding. It was understood that Transport for London would be making a bid to the Government's growth fund. The council was concerned by the rumours. The Managing Director would represent the council at a meeting of the partners on Friday. There were plans to lobby and ensure Mayor Khan's administration was aware of the scheme's benefits. She asked the Labour councillors to do the same. The Mayor added that she had written to the Deputy Mayor for Transport, Val Shawcross suggesting a meeting at City Hall. On Wednesday the Mayor would be meeting Richard Harrington MP to discuss what he could do at the Department for Transport.

The Mayor finished by saying that she hoped it was rumours. There were known facts, the construction costs, which made people question what was happening. She stated this was a good scheme, millions had already been spent. Businesses in the town would be lobbying very hard for the scheme to go ahead.

- b) Councillor Turmaine referred to the new kitchen caddies and recycling. Labour supported recycling initiatives and the work the last Labour Government did on environmental issues.

Councillor Turmaine said that he had been surprised to see a railway story in the Watford Observer on 6 January about the Liberal Democrat's campaign about re-zoning. This had first been presented to Watford residents on 20 November, two months before the latest story. He asked the Mayor whether she had any other old stories she wanted to recycle to the press.

The Mayor responded that the recycling stories would be about the administration's achievements since taking over from the Labour

administration in 2002 and would continue to be recycled in the next 12 months. She said that all members should be working together and the story about the metropolitan line extension had provided the opportunity for the story. It was important to highlight the zoning issues now, before the two new stations had their zones set. It was pointing out the unfairness of the current zoning system. With the right kind of pressure it would result in the right decision for the town.

- c) Councillor J Johnson asked the Mayor if she could explain how Watford would meet its housing targets with people moving out of London and wanting to live in Watford; whilst still protecting the parks and green spaces.

The Mayor commented that there was an assumption the council could reject developments. The Minister had spoken last week at the Local Government Association and his message had been 'delivery, delivery, delivery'. There was a housing crisis and all councils would be called on to deliver more and it was likely to be 30% more than the current housing targets. District councils within Hertfordshire had met to discuss housing targets. The new Housing and Planning Bill that was coming forward, would strengthen powers for developers and make councils impotent about what they could do.

The Mayor stated the Liberal Democrat Group was very clear about this matter. It was recognised that homes were needed for those on the council's waiting list, older children still living at home and for those paying extortionate rents. The council did and would meet its housing targets. However there was increasing concern that the infrastructure required to meet the demands would not be there. The approach would be for infrastructure before expansion, which she hoped would get cross party support.

The Mayor said that she wanted to acknowledge the sterling work carried out by the Development Management Committee balancing its quasi-judicial role with the needs of the town and residents' views. She referred to the application for Caledonian Court which had been refused by the committee. The developer had appealed and demanded that it should be considered by the Planning Inspector at a public inquiry. The grounds had been that the council would not be able to meet its increased housing need.

The Mayor stated that her group recognised that Watford was a growing town. They were pleased that people chose to live here, but it was certain that it would not be development at all costs.

- d) Councillor Asif Khan referred to the election of Donald Trump as President of the United States and alternative right groups in Europe. There was a concern about extremism and how mainstream politicians connected to their local communities. His question related to how together they could ensure that there were not areas in the town, which gave succour to far right alternative groups. He said that the Mayor may be aware of certain comments that had appeared in social media, on the Watford Observer website. He had reported an incident to the Police. It was important that the town's politicians worked together to rid this nonsense from politics altogether.

The Mayor replied that she was proud that there were no UKIP or BNP councillors on the council. During the last mayoral election there had been a small spike in racial unpleasantness directed at the Muslim community. She had believed that this was due to a very 'noisy' UKIP candidate. The recent elections, including the referendum, appeared to have given people permission to say things rather than muttering them. This had been obvious to those working in the 'Better Together' campaign; and particularly to her when one woman felt she could approach the Mayor and spit in her face. This had never happened before. As Mayor and councillors, they were all community leaders and should not pander to that type of attitude. It was heard when knocking on doors. She felt all members and colleagues should challenge those comments and state the truth. Everyone should unite around what was not acceptable.

With reference to the Watford Observer website, the Mayor advised that when the Observer was approached they were very responsive and removed any vile comments; she hoped this would continue. It was an unmoderated site. She had spoken to the previous editor about this matter. When the Watford Observer was contacted about comments and the negative impact on the town, action was taken. She referred to the recent comments regarding the Milad procession. She had recently spoken to a councillor from Luton. She was pleased that Watford did not have the same problems that were experienced in that town. Watford had generally good relations with the local community.

- e) Councillor Grimston asked the Mayor whether she agreed that following the opening of the new road to the hospital improvements needed to be made to the car park. She questioned how this might be progressed.

The Mayor said that the most important thing had been done for the protection of the hospital and that was to protect the key bits of land needed for the health campus. The council had done what it could. It was

clear this had been a main factor in keeping Watford as the main site. Ultimately it was now in the hands of the Trust and the Government to show the way forward. The council did not fund the hospital. It was possible the council could look at the car park. Since the road opened it had exposed the state of the car park, even though it had not changed. The surface was uneven and located on a steep slope. The council could bring forward a piece of work for the car park. The council had been behind the hospital 100%. The council would progress talks on the matter to ensure benefits for patients, those visiting the hospital and the football club.

f) Councillor Dhindsa stated that his question had been covered.

53 Questions by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 10.0

No questions had been received.

54 Petitions presented under Council Procedure Rule 12.0

No petitions had been received.

55 Business especially brought forward by the Chairman or the Head of Paid Service which in the opinion of the Chairman should be considered as a matter of urgency.

There was no urgent business.

56 Financial Planning

Council received a report that had been considered at Cabinet on 16 January 2017 and Budget Panel on 10 January 2017. The Cabinet minutes and Council Tax Resolution 2017/18 report were circulated separately to councillors.

The Mayor moved the budget report which was seconded by Councillor Watkin.

Councillor Bell moved an amendment to the budget report, attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes, which was seconded by Councillor Asif Khan. The amendment included the following proposals –

- “ – cutting the costs of mayor’s office – saving £237k
- pegging the Mayor’s salary to the leader of HCC
- freeze council tax – not increased
- remove the council tax subsidised Mayor’s Lib Dem adviser £130k over 3 years
- cut to printing budget – saves £225k over 3 years
- work with children’s play workers to make it self-sufficient over 3 years

- consultants – freeze the costs
 - freeze taxi and cemetery fees – this reverses all increases and leaves income budgets set at 2016/17 level
 - scrap bulky white goods
- Use of reserves to create a £1,000,000 earmarked reserve for the regeneration of St. Albans Road: this will be a transfer from the Economic Impact Reserve “

Members debated the original motion and the amendment.

In accordance with the Local Authorities (Standing Orders) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2014 the votes were recorded as follows –

The amendment was then put to the vote

Those members voting in favour of the amendment

Councillors Bashir, Bell, Connal, Dhindsa, Joynes, Ahsan Khan, Asif Khan, Mauthoor, Shah and Turmaine

Those members voting against the amendment

Mayor Thornhill, the Chairman Councillor Walford, Councillors Barks, Bolton, Cavinder, Collett, Crout, Dychton, Fahmy, Grimston, Hastrick, Hofman, J Johnson, S Johnson, Kent, Laird, Maestas, Rindl, Saffery, Scudder, Sharpe, Steele, Taylor, Watkin and Williams

The amendment was **LOST** by 10 votes to 25. There were no abstentions.

The original motion was then put to Council.

Those Members voting in favour of the original motion:

Mayor Thornhill, the Chairman Councillor Walford, Councillors Barks, Bolton, Cavinder, Collett, Crout, Dychton, Fahmy, Grimston, Hastrick, Hofman, J Johnson, S Johnson, Kent, Laird, Maestas, Rindl, Saffery, Scudder, Sharpe, Steele, Taylor, Watkin and Williams

Those Members voting against the original motion:

Councillors Bashir, Bell, Connal, Dhindsa, Joynes, Ahsan Khan, Asif Khan, Mauthoor, Shah and Turmaine

The original motion was **CARRIED** by 25 votes to 10. There were no abstentions.

RESOLVED –

1. that the proposals recommended by Cabinet on 16 January 2017 be agreed:

a) that the council's net General Fund expenditure for 2017/18 shall be £14,261,936.

b) that the Capital Programme shall be as set out in the Cabinet report.

and in approving these recommendations

c) to have regard to the Director of Finance's assessment of financial risks and the level of balances and provisions required, as set out in the Cabinet report.

2. Setting the amount of Council Tax for Watford borough Council

That Watford Borough Council's Council Tax Base for 2017/18 has been calculated at 32,062.1 in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 made under Section 31B (1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

3. that the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2017/18 in accordance with Sections 31A to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

- | | |
|--|--------------------|
| <i>(A) Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act. (Effectively the gross expenditure and transfers to reserves)</i> | £71,683,952 |
| <i>(B) Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act. (Effectively the gross income and transfers from reserves)</i> | £63,513,246 |
| <i>(C) Being the amount by which the aggregate at 2.3 (A) above exceeds the aggregate at 2.3 (B) above calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act as its Council Tax Requirement for the year</i> | £8,170,706 |
| <i>(D) Being the amount at paragraph 2.3 (C) divided by amount at 2.2 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33 (1) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (at Band D)</i> | £254.84 |

(E)	Council Tax Valuation Bands	Conversion Factor to Band D	Watford's Share (£)
	A	6 / 9	169.89
	B	7 / 9	198.21
	C	8 / 9	226.52
	D	1	254.84
	E	11 / 9	311.47
	F	13 / 9	368.10
	G	15 / 9	424.73
	H	2	509.68

Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at paragraph 2.3 (D) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in Valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year 2016/17 in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands

4. that a report including precepts of both Hertfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire be presented to the Functions Committee on 28 February 2017 to set the total Council Tax.
5. that the continuation of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2017/18 be approved. This will then be subject to a review which will be carried out in 2017/18 with the intention of implementing a new scheme from 2018/19 onwards.
6. that the estimate of surplus and deficit position on the Collection Fund be approved.
7. that the schedule of fees and charges be approved.
8. that the strategy for flexible use of capital receipts be approved.
9. that the increase of the Council's Key Decision Limit to £0.25 million be approved with immediate effect.

10. that the indicative budgets for 2018/19 and 2019/20, the Council's future spending plans which are supported by internal borrowing (see paragraph 6.4 onwards of the main report) utilising the Council's reserves and cash balances, be noted.
11. that the Treasury Management Strategy for 2017/18 be approved.

57 Amendment to the Councils Scheme of Delegation

Council received a report of the Head of Democracy and Governance setting out an amendment to the council's scheme of delegation following the appointment of the Deputy Managing Director Place Shaping and Corporate Performance.

RESOLVED –

1. that the responsibility for Council Functions A2 – A14 and A26 – A34 relating to Town and Country Planning and Development Control be amended to insert the Deputy Managing Director Place Shaping and Corporate Performance.
2. that the responsibility for Council Functions A15 – A25, A35, A37, B39, B40, B41 and I15 be amended to insert the Deputy Managing Director Place Shaping and Corporate Performance.

58 Appointment of Auditors

Council received a report of the Audit Committee held on 7 December 2016 setting out its recommendation regarding the council's requirement to appoint its own external auditor for the audit of the 2018/19 accounts.

RESOLVED –

that for the first round of appointments the council opts into the PSAA Appointing Person arrangement, subject to confirmation of the details of the scheme.

59 Chief Officer Pay Policy

Council received a report of the Head of Human Resources which included the Chief Officer Pay Policy. The policy set out the council's position in relation to specific areas, including remuneration levels, other payments, incremental progression, performance related pay, bonus payments, redundancy, severance/compensation and retirement payments.

RESOLVED –

that the Chief Officer Pay Policy be approved.

60

Motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13.0

Council was informed that one motion had been received.

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Tim Williams and seconded by Councillor Stephen Cavinder

“This Council notes that high speed accidents are regularly occurring along the A405 from its junction with the A41 and its junction with St Albans Road (A412). These accidents are often due to excessive speed along this stretch, and due to its close proximity of many local schools we call upon Herts County Council, as our Highways Authority to:-

- 1) Investigate and implement a safer traffic management scheme along this stretch in particular the junction with Greenwood Drive.
- 2) Investigate and implement a safer lighted pedestrian crossing point at the long-about outside the Woodside Leisure Park.
- 3) Investigate and implement other means of addressing the current level of excessive speed including reducing the speed to 40 mph for the whole stretch, installing Speed Indicator Devices and setting up Speed Camera’s.
- 4) Liaise with the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner in order for the police to attend regularly with speed cameras.

We call upon the Mayor to write to:-

- i) John Wood, Herts County Council’s Chief Executive, to address the excessive speeding along this stretch, to implement a safer crossing point outside the leisure park and to establish a safer traffic management scheme at the junction of the A405 and Greenwood Drive
- ii) David Lloyd, Police Commissioner for Hertfordshire, for the police to attend this stretch of the A405 with speed cameras.”

Members discussed the motion.

On being put to council the motion was AGREED.

RESOLVED –

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Chair

The Meeting started at 7.30 pm
and finished at 9.30 pm



Gap per published MTFS (253) 1,215 1,071

Labour proposals:

Children's Play	250	100	50
Remove Mayoral Office and replace with Leader & Executive	(19)	(109)	(109)
Curb to use of consultants and fix budget	(26)	(26)	(26)
Freeze taxi and cemetery fees	60	85	85
Freeze pest control fees	15	15	15
Freeze graffiti removal fees	0	0	0
Reduce printing budget by 70%	(61)	(82)	(82)
Scrap bulky white goods collection fee	43	43	43
Remove £5 Council tax increase	160	162	164
Sub-total	422	188	140

Use of reserves 169 1,403 1,211 Use of reserves to set balanced budget over medium term

Reserves:

Proposal is to create a £1,000,000 earmarked reserve for the regeneration of St Albans Road; this will be a transfer from the Economic Impact reserve.

Details of the proposals – a balanced Budget

- Cutting the cost of the Mayor's office – saving £237K
- Pegging the Mayor's salary to the leader of HCC
- Freeze council tax – not increased
- Remove the council tax subsidised Mayor's Lib Dem political adviser saving £130K over 3 years
- Cut to printing budget – saves £225k over 3 years
- Work with children's play workers to make it self-sufficient over 3 years
- Consultants – freeze costs
- Freeze taxi and cemetery fees – this reverses all increases and leaves income budgets set at 2016/17 levels
- Scrap bulky white goods collection fee

