



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

COUNCIL MEETING

30 January 2018

7.30 pm

Town Hall, Watford

Contact

Caroline Harris

legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk

01923 278372

For information about attending meetings please visit the council's website.

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22 January 2018

Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Borough of Watford to be held on Tuesday, 30th January, 2018 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 17 October 2017 to be submitted and signed.

4. Official Announcements

5. Mayor's Report (Pages 4 - 7)

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

7. Petitions presented under Council Procedure Rule 12.0

8. 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.

9. Watford Borough Council's Scheme of Remuneration 2018-22 (Pages 8 - 43)

Report of Democratic Services Manager

10. Financial Planning

Report of Director of Finance

Report of Cabinet 22 January 2018 (to follow)

11. Corporate Peer Challenge: Final Report (Pages 44 - 90)

Report of Cabinet 4 December 2017

12. Council Pay Policy Statement (Pages 91 - 116)

Report of the Interim Head of Human Resources

13. Compulsory Training (Pages 117 - 122)

Report of Standards Committee 21 November 2017

14. Motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13.0

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

Manny Lewis, Managing Director

Elected Mayor's Report- January 2018

Partnership Work:

Everyone Active

I'm pleased that Everyone Active were successful in their bid for the new contract for the leisure centres. Since Everyone Active took over our leisure centres in 2008, they have provided Watford with a first class service that makes the Borough Council a profit. In particular, I'm pleased that Everyone Active will be offering a cheaper service than other competitors, especially free swimming at the Watford Central Leisure Centre every Sunday from 2pm until 5pm starting in June 2018. Meanwhile, 11- to 15-years-olds will also be able to attend free Gym Active sessions that will be offered across various dates and times. There will be significant improvements made to Watford Woodside, with an extended gym being added, new changing rooms and a new toning suite. I thank Cllr Peter Taylor and officers for their work in helping secure this contract. Hopefully this is what our town needs to get active!

Veolia

At Cabinet in December we took the decision to increase the fixed penalty notice charges for those committing fly tipping. The Fixed Penalty Charges are increasing from £200 to £300, with that charge being reduced to £150 if it is paid within 10 days. We know that most people who are issued with a fixed penalty notice are much less likely to continue to fly tip. We're sending a clear message that people can't simply get away with this. If residents spot fly tipping, I would urge them to report it directly to Veolia at watford.gov.uk/flytipping. I'd also like to thank Veolia staff who have been working throughout December to make sure our bins were collected and streets kept clean despite some difficult icy weather conditions.

Duty to cooperate

I have had several productive meetings with my colleagues in our neighbouring councils about Hertfordshire's future housing needs. Most councils, including in Watford, are being asked by central government to significantly increase their housing numbers. In Watford that might mean double the number that we are currently planning to build which would have a significant impact on our local schools, transport links and doctors surgeries. Working with our neighbours is going to be key if we are going to be able to deliver this without impacting negatively on our local infrastructure.

Watford Community Housing Trust

We have been doing some fantastic partnership work with Watford Community Housing to try and deliver genuinely affordable housing in the town through the Hart Homes Partnership scheme. I'm also pleased that work will start soon on the Watford Community Housing project in the Meriden Estate, which is one of the most ambitious projects the borough has seen in recent years to provide much needed affordable homes for social rent. I look forward to seeing the scheme develop.

Community Events

Although this is my last few months as Mayor, I still have the privilege of attending many events across our community seeing some of the fantastic work some of our community groups do. Here are just a few events that I have attended:

I visited the Laurance Haines Primary School in West Watford in December to see them receive the Marjorie Boxall Quality Mark Award from the Nurture Group Award. This is a major national award and they deserve the recognition for the work they have been doing to help create a nurturing environment for their pupils. In particular they've been praised for the work they do to help the difficult transition period from preschool to school.

I met with volunteers from Signpost, my chosen Mayor's charity, to present them with their cheque from my Christmas card appeal. I found out more about their work locally in helping give our local young people the help and support they need.

I was honoured to attend the Milad Parade that took place in the centre of Watford this month. It is fantastic that Watford has such a vibrant and diverse community where we can share and respect all faiths and religions.

I have been invited to speak at various church services, including the Stanborough Ministry and Wellsprings

Finally, a massive congratulations to Watford band Rak-Su for winning the 2017 X Factor. The whole town is very proud of you.

Big Events

Cassiobury Fireworks

This went off without a hitch in November, with one of the largest crowds we ever had for the Cassiobury Fireworks. I'm proud that we host one of the largest free of charge firework displays in the country.

The Big Skate

It was good to see the Big Skate event return to the top of the High Street again in time for the Christmas period. This event was very popular and working closely with Watford BID we have minimised any potential disruption the rink could have caused to local businesses on the High Street.

The Big Word Fest

This will be returning to Watford in March 2018 with more details to be announced shortly. Hopefully this will be a great chance to engage people from across the town to celebrate literature.

Major Projects

High Street Improvements

Work started on the changes to the High Street on the 8th January, with parts of the High Street being shut off to vehicles until the works are completed in September ahead of the completion of the Intu Extension. The works will involve reducing cars on the High Street by the introduction of moving bollards, the creation of more disabled parking by Church Street, improving cycle ways and create a better street scape. All of these changes should make the High Street greener, safer and more attractive to shop in.

Intu Extension

I met with Vicki Costello, General Manager of Watford Intu in December and am pleased to report that this project is coming on leaps and bounds, with the Imax cinema now starting to take shape. The Extension is still on time to be opened later this year, with major retailers

on board and a new state of the art Imax cinema in the town centre. This will bring a huge amount of business to the town as well as footfall to our high street

Metropolitan Line Extension Update

I and senior officers of the Borough Council met with Deputy Mayor of London Jules Pipe, in December to discuss this project and show him round Watford so he can see for himself the benefit the extension would bring to the town. He was very impressed by what he saw and how serious the planning was for this project. We are expecting an announcement about funding for this plan very soon.

West Herts Hospital Trust

I was delighted that after careful management and hard work from staff that West Herts Hospital Trust has come out of special measures, two years after being placed in them by the CQC. This is a great achievement. However, there is still work to do. This is a now an opportunity to crack on with bringing the hospital facilities into the 21st century. We will support them as a Borough Council with this in whatever way we can.

Agenda Item 9

PART A

Report to: Council
Date of meeting: 30 January 2018
Report of: Democratic Services Manager
Title: Watford Borough Council's Scheme of Remuneration 2018-22

1.0 **Summary**

- 1.1 At the Full Council meeting of 29 January 2014 the members remuneration scheme was set for four years, 2014-18.
- 1.2 As per The Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003 four years is the maximum duration for an allowance scheme before requiring review. Also according to the regulations the council must seek recommendations from an Independent Members Remuneration Panel (IMRP) in respect of the allowances scheme.
- 1.3 In 2017 the IMRP met four times:
- 13 July 2017 – to establish the timetable and identify information required
 - 11 September 2017 – to hear submissions
 - 29 October 2017 – further analysis of submissions and finalising of panel recommendations
 - 2 November 2017 – Finalisation of report
- 1.4 The report of the review is attached as appendix B. The appendices to the report are available upon request.

2.0 **Risks**

2.1

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (<i>Treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer</i>)	Risk Rating (the combination of severity and likelihood)
Any increase in Members' remuneration would impact on future years budget	Increased budget	The quadrennial review means the scheme will be set for four years which allows for budget planning	Treat	4
Not achieving appropriate level of remuneration	Could discourage participation in the democratic process and not attract a diverse range of high calibre candidates	Members to have regard to the advice of the IMRP regarding the level of allowances	Treat	2

3.0 **Recommendations**

- 3.1 To consider and respond to the specific recommendations of the IMRP as set out in Appendix B to the report and detailed in paragraph 4.3
- 3.2 To decide if council wishes to adopt the dependency allowance scheme as set out in Appendix C
- 3.3 To agree a scheme for 2018-22 subject to the council being able to request an interim review before the end of the four year period. There may also be a need for a brief referral to the Panel after May if a new Mayor proposes changes to the political structure that isn't provided within the Panel's existing report .
- 3.4 That each Panel member be paid £800 and that the Chair be paid £1200 as a one off payment to cover the four year period 2018-22

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Caroline Harris,
Democratic Services Manager
telephone extension: 8372 email: caroline.harris@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Carol Chen Head of Democracy and Governance

4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 Background

4.1.1 The IMRP has been in existence since 2000 and has met annually to consider the operation of the Members' Remuneration Scheme.

4.1.2 Members' allowances at Watford have been frozen since 2003. The Elected Mayor's salary has been frozen since 2010.

4.1.3 All four members of the IMRP are independent of the Borough Council. Hazel Bentall and Barry Mathiason have been members since 2010 and 2012 respectively. Lee Walsingham and Gill Crowson were both appointed in 2013. Lee Walsingham was appointed as Chair of the Panel in 2013 and 2017.

4.2 Information considered by the Panel

4.2.1 Submissions and background information

The IMRP received written and personal submissions from the Liberal Democrat and Labour groups, the Mayor and Managing Director. The Panel were also provided with the first and most recent IMRP reports, comparison data with other authorities, the relevant regulations and current scheme. They were also given links to the self-assessments completed by councillors.

Following their first meeting the Panel requested role profiles which had been made available for their previous review. These were circulated to relevant councillors to check for any updates and then provided to the Panel.

4.3 Panel's recommendations

A copy of the panel's final report is attached as appendix B. The appendices referenced in the report are available on request.

4.3.1 **Elected Mayor's salary**

It is the Panel's recommendation that the Mayor's salary should remain unchanged for the period 2018/19 and from then linked to local government pay increases from 1 April 2019.

4.3.2 The Panel commented that the comparisons showed the salary was competitive against similar roles although it was felt that in future there should be a mechanism to allow increases in line with public sector pay awards. The current Mayor's salary is £65,738, a 2% increase (the current local government employers' pay offer) from April 2019 would mean a salary of £67,048.

4.3.3 The Panel also commented that the salary should remain unchanged subject to local government pay increases from April 2019 and subject to any amendments needed to resolve issues related to pension contributions.

4.3.4 **Elected Mayor's Pension**

It is the Panel's recommendation that there should be a contribution for pension payments added to the Mayor's salary equivalent to the employer's pension contributions made in the local government pension scheme.

It should be shown there is a pension contribution as part of the salary in the allowance scheme.

In respect of the current Mayor there should be back pay of pension contributions from October 2015 to May 2018 (the period since the Council stopped contributing to the Mayors pension) at the prevailing employer pension's contribution rate during this period.

4.3.5 That the Elected Mayor should receive a pension was recommended by the 2000 IMRP and agreed by Council in February 2001. Due to changes in government legislation in 2015 previously agreed pension payments to the Mayor stopped and it was agreed to review the position. This IMRP Report clarifies that a payment of salary equivalent to the pension contribution is now the appropriate way to deal with the issue. HR and Finance will make this calculation.

4.3.6 **Travel allowance for the Elected Mayor**

It is the Panel's recommendation that this should remain unchanged.

4.3.7 The Elected Mayor's travel allowance is set at £500 per year. This is kept under review by Democratic Services to ensure it reflects the Mayor's annual spend.

4.3.8 Level of Basic Allowances

It is the Panel's recommendation that whilst it was not recommending an immediate increase in the basic allowance, it should in future be linked to local government pay settlements and be increased accordingly. It was felt this should come into effect in April 2019.

4.3.9 The panel considered that although the basic allowance had been frozen since 2003 it still remained competitive and did not appear to have had a detrimental effect on attracting new councillors. However, it should be linked to local government pay settlements from April 2019.

4.3.10 The current basic allowance is £7,209, a 2% increase would mean a basic allowance of £7,353.

4.3.11 Special Responsibility Allowance

It is the Panel's recommendation that whilst it was not recommending an immediate increase in SRA, it should in future be linked to local government pay settlements and be increased accordingly. It was felt that this should come into effect in April 2019.

4.3.12 The Panel was of the opinion that an immediate increase was not required but it should be linked as outlined above from April 2019.

4.3.13 The impact of a 2% increase would be:

Roles	Current SRA	Increased SRA
Portfolio Holder	£10,815	£11,031
Chairs of scrutiny Chairs of DMC & Licensing Chair of Audit	£7,930	£8,089
Cabinet member without portfolio Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Chair of Functions (pro rata) Chair of Chief Officer Pay Panel (pro rata)	£2,884	£2,942

4.3.14 **Chairman and Vice Chairman Allowances**

It is the Panel's recommendation that the Chairman's allowance should be increased to £4,000 and the Vice Chairman's allowance should be increased to £2000

4.3.15 The current Chairman and Vice Chairman allowances have been frozen for a significant period of time. The Panel considered that the costs to the individuals in these roles had risen significantly. The current Chairman's allowance is £2,720 plus basic rate of tax reimbursement, the current Vice Chairman's allowance is £1,330 plus basic rate of tax reimbursement.

4.3.16 The Panel proposes that as the allowance is recommended to be increased the mention of basic tax reimbursement should be removed.

4.3.17 **Group Leaders Allowance**

It is the Panel's recommendation that the cap at £2,000 should be removed

4.3.18 Currently the group leaders are paid £100 per group member and this is capped at £2,000. The Panel were of the opinion that a larger number of group members meant more complex responsibilities and so recommended removing the cap.

4.3.19 **Travelling and subsistence allowances**

It is the Panel's recommendation that these payments should remain unchanged.

4.3.20 **Co-optees Allowance**

It is the Panel's recommendation that these payments should remain unchanged.

4.3.21 **Care of Children and Dependents**

It is the Panel's recommendation that council officers should draw up a scheme for implementation based on:

- **Use of national minimum wage**
- **It should require receipts**
- **Not be allowable for family members/members of the household, unless at the discretion of the Monitoring Officer**

4.3.22 At the Panel's request officers drew up a draft suggested scheme (appendix C).

4.3.23 The Panel considered that the proposal would not have a significant budget impact but would increase inclusivity for a number of councillors.

4.4 New Elected Mayor

As the Council is aware there are Mayoral elections this year and should a new Mayor wish to create any new posts within the allowance scheme then the council could consult the IMRP via e-mail and bring their recommendations before Council to consider.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

5.1.1 If all recommendations are agreed this would mean the allowance scheme would cost £455,672. This is making the assumption that the number of SRA posts remains at the current level and that the link to the local government pay settlement starts in April 2019. The current members allowances and civic allowances budgets total £443,180. This means a difference of £12,492. This has been included in the budget papers, along with future years costs to take into account potential increases

5.1.2 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the additional figures have been built into the 2018/19 budget proposals which are a separate paper on this agenda.

5.2 **Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)**

5.2.1 The Regulations state that “a scheme may make provision for an annual adjustment of allowances by reference to such index as may be specified by the authority and where the only change made to the scheme in any year is that effected by such annual adjustment in accordance with such index that the scheme shall be deemed not to have been amended.” It goes on to say that the index must not be relied upon for longer than a period of four years.

5.2.2 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that whilst Council has to have regard to the views of the IMRP when setting members allowances it is free to decide what levels of allowance it wishes to set. Under the Council’s code of conduct members are permitted to vote on their own allowances despite these being a pecuniary interest.

5.3 **Equalities/Human Rights**

5.3.1 As required by the regulations councillors should have regard to the recommendations of the IMRP. The basic allowance must be the same for all members. Council should have regard to the IMRP’s recommendations in establishing an allowance scheme which does not deter people from standing for office and recognises the commitment and responsibility of councillors.

- 5.4 **Staffing**
- 5.4.1 None
- 5.5 **Accommodation**
- 5.5.1 None
- 5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**
- 5.6.1 None
- 5.7 **Sustainability**
- 5.7.1 None

Appendices

- Appendix A – Current Scheme of Members Remuneration
- Appendix B – IMRP report 2017
- Appendix C – draft dependency allowance scheme

Background Papers

The following background papers were used in the preparation of this report. If you wish to inspect or take copies of the background papers, please contact the officer named on the front page of the report.

- Report of IMRP 2000
- Council report January 2014
- Local Authority Regulations 2003

File Reference

- None



Watford Borough Council
Members Allowances Scheme
(Scheme from 1st April 2014)

For further information contact:
Caroline Harris, Democratic Services Manager
01923 278372 or legalanddemocratic@watford.gov.uk

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Introduction

The Borough Council is required by law to adopt and publish a scheme of allowances following consideration of recommendations made by an independent panel.

Watford Borough Council's Independent Remuneration Panel has been in existence since 2000 and meets on an annual basis. In 2014 it carried out a quadrennial review. The scheme as set out below is for the year until 31 March 2018 and reflects the amounts agreed at Council. (see Appendix 1.)

1. Basic Allowance

This allowance is paid to all Councillors (except the directly elected Mayor)

The basic allowance is intended to compensate councillors for the time and effort spent attending committee meetings, carrying out ward representation work, costs incurred on telephone calls, postage, stationery, travel within the Borough, caring for dependents and for occasions where they may be required to use annual leave/flexi to take time off from their regular employment.

The basic allowance is reviewed by the Independent Members Remuneration Panel annually who make recommendations to Council.

1.1. Payment dates

1.1.1. For a Councillor elected to office following a Local Government election, payments will be dated from the fourth day after the date of the election or the date of making the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, whichever is later.

1.1.2. For a Councillor elected to office at any other time, payment will be from the date of making the Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

1.1.3. Payments of allowances and expenses are made to Councillors on 15th of each month. If the 15th falls on a non working day payment will be made on the nearest working day prior to the 15th. Payment will be made in installments of one-twelfth of the annual amount due.

1.1.4. If a Councillor holds office for less than a full calendar month a pro rata payment will be made.

1.2. Renunciation

- 1.2.1. A Councillor may, by giving notice in writing to the Managing Director or Monitoring Officer, elect to forego the whole or part of an entitlement to a Basic allowance under this Scheme

Where such a declaration is made, it remains in force until a further notice in writing is given to the Managing Director or Monitoring Officer to withdraw it.

1.3. Overpayment

- 1.3.1. If a Councillor leaves office before the end of their term and an overpayment has been made, the Councillor will receive a letter from the Monitoring Officer requiring them to pay the money back to the Council.

1.4. Withholding of Allowance

- 1.4.1. In accordance with The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003: "That where a member is suspended or partially suspended from his responsibilities or duties as a member for an authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part, the part of the basic allowance payable to him in respect of the period for which he is suspended or partially suspended may be withheld by the authority"

2. Special Responsibility Allowance

Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) is paid to Councillors with significant additional responsibilities. Where an individual holds more than one of the positions listed they will only receive the highest allowance (apart from Group Leader allowance which is paid in addition)

2.1. Offices and roles

Portfolio Holder
Chair of Overview and Scrutiny
Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny
Chair of Budget Panel
Chair of Development Control Committee
Chair of Licensing Committee
Cabinet Member Without Portfolio

Chair of Audit Committee
Chair of Functions (pro rata)
Chair of Chief Officer Pay Panel (pro rata)
Group leaders

2.2. Dates from when the SRA will take effect:

- 2.2.1. Portfolio Holder and Cabinet member without portfolio - from the date the Monitoring Officer is formally notified by the Elected Mayor of the names of Portfolio Holders
- 2.2.2. Chairs of Overview and Scrutiny, Budget Panel and Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny - from when they are appointed Chair/Vice Chair at Annual Council.
- 2.2.3. Chair of Development Control Committee or Licensing Committee – from when they are appointed Chair at Annual Council.
- 2.2.4. Chair of Audit Committee - from when they are appointed at Annual Council.
- 2.2.5. Chair of the Chief Officer Pay Panel - for the month in which the Panel meets and any subsequent months as necessary.
- 2.2.6. Chair of Functions Committee - for the month in which the committee meets and any subsequent months as necessary.
- 2.2.7. Group Leaders - from notification of the Group at Annual Council (up to a maximum of £2000 pa)

2.3. Renunciation of Special Responsibility Allowances

A Councillor may, by giving notice in writing to the Managing Director or Monitoring Officer elect to forego the whole or part of an entitlement to a Special Responsibility Allowance under this Scheme.

Where such a declaration is made, it remains in force until a further notice is given in writing to the Managing Director or Monitoring Officer to withdraw it.

2.4. Payment arrangements

2.4.1. Payments of SRAs will be made with basic allowance

2.4.2. Payments of SRAs are made in 12 installments, unless it is a pro-rata payment.

2.5. Overpayment

2.5.1. If an overpayment is made of the SRA, it will be recovered either through a deduction from the basic allowance payment until the overpayment is recovered in full or in the event that deduction from the basic allowance not being sufficient to recover the overpayment the Councillor will receive a letter from the Monitoring Officer requiring them to pay the money back to the Council.

2.6. Withholding of Allowance

2.6.1. In accordance with The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003: "That where a member is suspended or partially suspended from his responsibilities or duties as a member of an authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part, the part of the special responsibility allowance payable to him in respect of the responsibility or duties period from which he is suspended or partially suspended may be withheld by the authority"

3. Elected Mayor's Salary

3.1 The Elected Mayor's salary is currently frozen.

4. Travel and Subsistence

4.1. Basis for Payment

Travel and subsistence is payable for meetings, training and conferences which a Councillor is attending as part of their responsibilities or because they have been nominated/appointed by the Council. Travel allowance is only payable where the event takes place outside the Borough of Watford. Subsistence allowance is only payable where meals are not provided.

4.2. Allowances which may be claimed

4.2.1. Travel

Car mileage, motorcycle and bicycle allowances rates are shown in appendix 1.

4.2.2. The Elected Mayor will receive an annual travel allowance of £500. For the avoidance of doubt no mileage may be claimed from home to the Town Hall and back. Records will be maintained of the Elected Mayor's travel during the year in order to ensure the level of allowance is correct and to answer any Freedom of Information Act requests. The Elected Mayor may claim subsistence separately under the conditions set out below.

4.2.3. Second class rail fare may be claimed plus charges for seat reservations on production of receipts. If payment is made directly by the Council on behalf of the councillor no separate allowance is payable

4.2.4. Other public transport services can be claimed on production of receipts.

4.2.5. Taxis should only be used when no other option is available and with accompanying receipts.

4.2.6. Air travel will be considered if it is cheaper or the time saving considerable. It should be booked through the Member Development and Civic Officer .

4.2.7. Subsistence

Councillors can claim daytime or overnight subsistence where it has not already been paid for by the Council or is not provided by the event/meeting organisers. Councillors may claim up to the maximum amounts listed in Appendix 1 on production of receipts for the time periods set out below: For the avoidance of doubt, should the submitted receipt total less than the maximum payment allowed under the scheme, the councillor will only receive reimbursement to the value of the receipt.

4.2.8. Breakfast allowance – payable where the Member is absent from home for more than 4 hours before 11am.

- 4.2.9. Lunch allowance – payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours including the lunchtime period between 12 noon and 2pm.
- 4.2.10. Tea allowance – payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours including the period 3-6pm.
- 4.2.11. Evening meal allowance – payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours ending after 7pm.
- 4.2.12. Overnight accommodation if necessary and not already paid for by the Council
- 4.2.13. Meals on trains – where main meals (i.e., breakfast, lunch or dinner) are taken on trains during a period for which there is an entitlement to a day subsistence allowance, the reasonable cost of the meal may be reimbursed in full.

4.3. Submission of claims

- 4.3.1. Claims for travel and subsistence must be made within **1 month** of the duty being undertaken, if possible by the end of the financial year if the claim period crosses the end of March.
- 4.3.2. Payment outside that period can only be made if there are exceptional circumstances which prevented the claim being submitted within the required time limit.
- 4.3.3. Claims must be made on a fully completed claim form which is signed and supported by receipts (where appropriate). **If a valid receipt is not provided payment of the claim will not be met.**
- 4.3.4. Travel and subsistence claims will be paid through payroll. All forms should be returned to the Member Development and Civic Officer to be checked and signed off.
- 4.3.5. A public record is available for all claims and the totals claimed by each Member are published annually on the Council's website.

4.4. Overpayment

- 4.4.1. If an overpayment occurs this will be deducted from the next expenses claim the Councillor makes or from the Councillor's allowance.

5. Co-optees

5.1. Roles

A Co-optee will be paid an annual allowance (set out in Appendix 1) for serving in the following roles:

- 5.1.1. Independent Member of the Standards Committee
- 5.1.2. Independent Member of the Independent Members Remuneration Panel. The Chair of the Independent Members Remuneration Panel receives a higher annual payment in recognition of additional responsibility to produce the final report on behalf of the Panel.

5.2. Payment date

- 5.2.1. Co-optees on the Standards Committee will be paid at the end of financial year.
- 5.2.2. Co-optees on the Independent Members Remuneration Panel will be paid on production of the final report.
- 5.2.3. The allowance will be paid in 1 installment.

5.3. Renunciation

A Co-Optee may, by giving notice in writing to the Managing Director or Monitoring Officer, elect to forego the whole or part of an entitlement to a Co-Optee's Allowance under this Scheme.

Where such a declaration is made, it remains in force until a further notice in writing is given to the Managing Director or Monitoring Officer to withdraw it.

5.4. Withholding of allowance

- 5.4.1. In accordance with The Local Authorities (Members Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003: "That where a member is suspended or

partially suspended from his responsibilities or duties as a member of an authority in accordance with Part III of the Local Government Act 2000 or regulations made under that Part, any co-optees' allowance payable to him in respect of the responsibilities or duties from which he is suspended or partially suspended may be withheld by the authority"

6. Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council

- 6.1. The allowance for the Chairman and Vice Chairman is paid directly to the Councillor and is intended to be used to purchase clothes (if necessary), stock for the Parlour bar, the purchase of raffle tickets and tickets to events etc. when attending official engagements.
- 6.2. The allowance is paid annually following the election of Chairman and Vice Chairman at Annual Council.
- 6.3. As the allowance is taxable, the amount includes an additional element to cover basic tax.

7. Communications Allowance

- 7.1. All Councillors will receive a communications allowance towards their line rental and broadband costs.
- 7.2. As with other allowances they may elect to forego the allowance by notifying the Monitoring Officer or Managing Director in writing. Where such a declaration is made, it remains in force until a further notice in writing is given to the Managing Director or Monitoring Officer to withdraw it.

Appendix 1

Members Allowance Rates from 1st April 2014

1. Basic Allowance

£7209 per annum (band 1)

2. Special Responsibility Allowances

Role	Band	Basic	SRA	Total
Portfolio Holder	2.5	£7,209	£10,815	£18,024
Chairs of Scrutiny Chairs of Development Management & Licensing Chair of Audit Committee	2a	£7,209	£7,930	£15,139
Cabinet Member without portfolio Vice Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Chair of Functions (pro rata) Chair of Chief Officer Pay Panel (pro rata)	2	£7,209	£2,884	£10,093
Group leaders				£100 p.a. per group member – maximum payment of £2,000

3. Co-optees' Allowances

£200 per annum

£300 per annum for Chair of Independent Members Remuneration
Panel

4. Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Council

£2,720 Chairman of the Council plus tax reimbursement at standard
rate

£1,330 Vice Chairman of the Council plus tax reimbursement at
standard rate

5. Elected Mayor

The Elected Mayor's salary is £65,738, plus an annual travel allowance
of £500.

6. Travel allowances

With receipts where applicable

Rail	2nd class fare plus charges for seat reservations	Actual Cost
Public services	Normal fare	Actual Cost
Taxis	To be used when no other option is available	Actual Cost
	Per mile	
Motor cycle		24p
Motor vehicle (First 10,000 miles)		40p
Cycle		20p

7. Subsistence rates

Members may claim **up to** the amount specified below for the time period away from home, if no meals or refreshments are provided at the meeting or event which the Member is attending or already included in any accommodation charges paid for by the council. All claims **must** be supported with receipts.

	Up to
Breakfast Allowance Payable where the Member is absent from home for more than 4 hours before 11am	£7.21
Lunch Allowance Payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours, including the lunchtime period between 12 noon and 2pm	£9.95
Tea Allowance Payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours including the period 3pm - 6pm	£3.94
Evening Meal Payable where the Member is away from home for more than 4 hours ending after 7pm	£12.33
Overnight Accommodation To cover overnight accommodation	£105.05
Meals on Trains Where main meals (i.e. breakfast, lunch or dinner) are taken on trains during a period for which there is an entitlement to a day subsistence allowance, the reasonable cost of the meal may be reimbursed in full.	

8. Communications allowances

£12 per month

Independent Members Remuneration Panel

**Final Report submitted to
Watford Borough Council**

November 2017

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Introduction

The role of the Independent Members Review Panel [IMRP], under the Local Authorities [Members Allowances] [England] Regulations 2003, is to make recommendations to the Council as to the responsibilities or duties in respect of which allowances should be available and the amount of such allowances. In doing so, the IMRP is able to look at various elements of the Members' Allowance Scheme and, as Watford has an elected Mayor, the allowances and salary, and pension requirements of this position is also part of our review.

We received some written and personal submissions from the Liberal Democrat and Labour Groups plus the Mayor and Manny Lewis, the Managing Director. We also had access to comparative data from a number of other Councils to draw current comparison to analyse Mayoral Salaries, Councillor Expenses and Allowances and this did provide some insight into salaries and allowances in other Councils throughout the UK. Whilst it was acknowledged that this information did not give any definitive answers it was useful in enabling the panel to compare levels of allowances and the Mayoral salary and to contribute towards our final decisions.

We were also provided with the 2014/2015/ 2016 Watford Borough Council Members end of year self-assessments which had been completed by almost all Councillors and this gave us an insight into the roles covered, levels of activity and commitment during that period.

All four panel members were involved in the 2014 report and two of the four panel members were involved in the 2012 review, so it was felt that the panel had a good mix of previous experience and continuity to make effective decisions. The main remit of the panel was to review all the information available to it and to consider it in the wider context of both the business of the council and economic decisions facing it in the coming years. As recommended by previous panels our brief was to undertake a four year review, although the panel still questions whether recommendations could be fairly delivered for the entire term, taking into account current uncertainties in the economy particularly, with the unknown effect of Brexit.

The recommendations are made in good faith and without prejudice.

The IMRP would like to thank all those who took the time to submit personal or written submissions. The Panel would also like to commend Caroline Harris, Democratic Services Manager & Paul Bateman Member Development and Civic Officer for their invaluable support throughout the process.

Finally, I would like to thank the rest of the panel for their excellent contributions throughout the process.

Lee Walsingham

Lee Walsingham
Chairman
Independent Members' Remuneration Panel

Remit & Panel Members

Remit

The Independent Remuneration Panel is appointed under the Local Authorities [Members Allowances] [England] Regulations 2003, to make recommendations to the Borough Council as to the responsibilities or duties in respect of which allowances should be available and the amount of these allowances. The Independent Members Remuneration Panel [IMRP] has been in existence since 2000 and whilst initially it met annually to consider the operation of the members' remuneration scheme and to make any recommendations on any proposed changes if appropriate, the previous and this review are for four year terms.

The Panel

Lee Walsingham [Chair]
Hazel Bentall
Barry Mathiason
Gill Crowson

All members of the panel are independent of the Borough Council. The number [4] is consistent with previous years. All members previously sat on the previous panel with two members having also sat on earlier panels.

Areas to be reviewed

The panel have been asked to undertake a four year review of the following:

- a) Elected Mayor's salary
- b) Travel allowance for the Elected Mayor
- c) Mayoral pension Contributions & future level of pension
- d) Level of basic allowance
- e) Special responsibility allowances
- f) Travelling and subsistence allowance
- g) Co-optees' allowances
- h) Care of Children and dependants

Information and Submissions

Information Available

The following documents were made available to the panel before meeting:

- a) Terms of reference
- b) Authority comparisons
- c) First IMRP report 2000

- d) IMRP report 2013
- e) Council Resolution 2014
- f) Committee information
- g) Current Scheme
- h) Members Diaries
- i) Role Profiles
- j) Councillors estimated Hours
- k) Members' Self Assessments 2012 - 2016
- l) Committee Information
- m) Local Authority Members Allowances

The panel has met four times:

13 July 2017 – to establish timetable, identify information required.

11 September 2017 – to review requirements, to receive written & personal submissions from Manny Lewis, Dorothy Thornhill, Liberal Democrat Group Cllr Peter Taylor & Cllr Watkins, Labour Group Cllr Nigel Bell

29 October 2017 - further analysis of submissions and finalising of panel recommendations

2 November 2017 – Finalisation of report for submissions.

Submissions

Submissions were made in writing by the Liberal Democrat Group (LD) [Appendix 1], plus a written submission from Rt. Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government. In a written response to the government's position on the provision of pension provisions to elected mayors The Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government, stated that although formal membership of local government schemes was not allowable as the Mayor was an office holder not an employee, other forms of financial provisions should be made to compensate for this.[See Appendix 2]. There was also a written submission from Managing Director - Manny Lewis regarding Mayor Thornhill's pension [See Appendix 3], whilst personal submissions were given by Peter Taylor [LD], Mark Watkins [LD], & Nigel Bell [Lab] & Dorothy Thornhill, Elected Mayor of Watford & Manny Lewis.

The Liberal Democrat Group's written submission expressed the view that **basic allowances and those for special responsibilities** should continue to be frozen at current levels. They considered that this represents a fair balance between the need for restraint and providing certainty for councillors on the level of allowances they will receive for carrying out their duties.

The Group was still of the view that the past and current level of allowances has made a difference in attracting a more representative range of councillors.

In respect of the **Group Leaders** allowance, they currently receive £100 per group member, but this is capped at £2000. It was felt that the more members in the group, the more complex the responsibilities became and that there was no logic to a cap and that the allowance should just be based on numbers in the group.

In respect of the **Chairman's** allowance this has been frozen for several years at £2720 but because of the nature of the expenditure required in representing Watford at events, (and recent experience suggested that post holders could be out of pocket), the suggestion was that this should be raised to £4,000.

In respect of the **Mayor's salary** it was still thought that the level of MP's salaries was a good guideline, although because of previous voluntary salary freezes there was no longer a direct link, it was nevertheless a useful guideline. It was felt that to ensure that the widest range of candidates would consider undertaking the Mayor's role that the Mayor's salary should be maintained at its current levels but rise in line with local government awards

In respect of the Mayor's pension it had been previously been established that the Mayor should receive a pension but a change in legislation in 2015 meant that these payments could not continue and were stopped.

In the current climate of all individuals receiving pensions it was felt that this was not acceptable and that other provisions should be made to compensate for these lost payments.

[See appendix 1]

In their verbal submission Cllr's Taylor & Watkin's emphasised the key points in their written submission and answered a number of questions from the panel.

Labour Group Leader Cllr Nigel Bell said that typically members devoted 25 hours per week to their duties in his verbal statement & stated that he felt **the remuneration scheme should stay largely unchanged**, feeling that an increase was not justified.

He felt that the basic allowance was reasonable, as was Portfolio Holders and Chairs Special Responsibility Allowances. He did feel that there was **a case for the introduction of a Dependent Carers Allowance.**

He felt that **Chairman's & Vice Chairman's allowances should remain unchanged** and that the cap on the **Group Leaders allowance should remain unchanged**

Cllr Bell considered that the **Mayoral salary** was not justified and should be about £40,000 as per Chair of Hertfordshire County Council. He did however feel that **the Mayors salary should be pensionable.**

In her presentation to the panel, **Mayor Dorothy Thornhill** stated that she felt that the role of Chairman had had been allowed to evolve and she felt that the nature of the role should be reviewed.

In respect of Group Leaders this was a particularly significant role in a Mayoral Authority and the larger the group, the more difficult it was to manage.

She believed that there should be some link between the Mayor's salary & MPs and that it was important that the Mayor's salary was set for the full term of office.

Mayor Thornhill gave the panel an overview of actions taken in respect of her pension contributions and presented a written response from Sajid Javid MP which in precis is detailed below [letter can be seen in Appendix 2]:

In a written response to the government's position on the provision of pension provisions to elected mayors Rt Hon Sajid Javid MP, Secretary of State for Communities & Local Government, stated that although formal membership of local government schemes was not allowable as the Mayor was an office holder not an employee, other forms of financial provisions should be made to compensate for this. [See Appendix 2]

Manny Lewis presented a written submission to give clarification on the facts around Pension contributions for Mayor Thornhill and attended the meeting to give any clarification required by the panel, and his responses to queries were very helpful in reaching a conclusion on this matter.

[Full submission see Appendix 3]

The panel found the submissions of great benefit in ascertaining the overall views of each party, and in getting a more thorough understanding of the roles and current responsibilities under review.

The panel felt that the personal submissions were of particular value as they enabled questions to be asked and immediate answers obtained to deal with any points which needed clarification.

For further supporting information see Appendix 5 Minutes of IMRP meeting 11 September 2107

Considerations and Conclusions

The panel deliberated on all submissions given, plus the wide ranging information provided by Caroline Harris & Paul Bateman, and other factors such as the current economic climate , potential prospects for the general & local economy over the next four years, plus the degree of uncertainty being created by Brexit negotiations..

Quadrennial Review

Although it was agreed that this should be a four year review, the panel have some concerns about this considering the economic climate and how it may change over the next four years.

Whilst the Panel feels that any recommendations made now should fully reflect the economic climate of the past few years, it is very difficult to predict how the economy will change particularly in years three and four of this review period.

The panel suggests that its findings should be examined after two years and if there are significant changes in the economy, particularly in the area of pay and inflation, an interim review should be considered by the Council at that time.

Mayoral Salary

On reviewing the duties of the role and hearing the submissions made, the Panel firmly agreed that the role needs a competitive remuneration to attract future candidates of the right calibre and gravitas, and this is particularly relevant with a new Mayor due to be elected in 2018.

The link to MP's salaries has some relevance as a guide but as this is now set by an independent panel, this was no longer appropriate as it could potentially lead to a significant increase outside the Borough Council's and its electorate's control. Currently the Mayor receives £65,738 whilst a backbench MP receives £74,000.

The panel again thought that there should be no direct link to a backbench MP's salary, although it is a figure that should be taken into consideration in any future reviews of the Mayor's salary.

Comparisons show that the salary is still competitive against similar roles, although it was felt that in future there should be some mechanism to allow some level of increase in line with public sector pay awards.

It is the panel's recommendation that the Mayor's salary should remain currently unchanged [subject to any amendments needed to resolve issues related to pension contributions] and should remain unchanged for the period 2018 /19 and from then be linked to local government pay increases.

Pension Payments for the elected Mayor

Due to changes in government legislation agreed pension payments to the Mayor ceased in 2015, Prior to this the Mayor had been entitled to either be part of the Local Government Pension Scheme or opt to join a private pension scheme, which the Mayor had chosen to do. Changes to legislation removed the rights for the Mayor to receive these pension contributions from October 2015.

Whilst these contributions had been agreed as part of the Mayor's terms and conditions, on taking legal advice the council felt that these payments could no longer be maintained and were stopped. It was agreed in 2015 that this situation should be reviewed. There are two key issues to consider, firstly whether there was a case to raise the salary to compensate for the loss of pension benefits. Secondly, if this was the case whether retrospective payments covering 2015 to 2018 should be made to the Mayor.

In considering this, the panel took careful consideration of all submissions made with particular emphasis on the information supplied by Manny Lewis [Appendix 4] plus the letter received from Rt. Hon. Sajid Javid [Appendix 2]

It is the panel's recommendation that there should be a contribution for pension payments added to the Mayor's salary equivalent to the employer's pension contributions made in the local government pension scheme.

It should be shown that that there is a pension contribution as part of the salary in the allowance scheme.

In respect of the current Mayor there should be back pay of pension contributions October 2015 to May 2018 at the prevailing pensions contribution rate during that period.

Travel Allowance for the elected Mayor

It is the panel's recommendation that the Mayor's travel allowance should remain currently unchanged.

Amount currently being received £500

As receipts for this allowance are submitted, it is recommended that these should be reviewed annually to ensure expenditure has not significantly changed in relation to the allowance being paid.

Levels of basic allowance

Whilst the level of basic allowance at £7,209 has not been increased since 2003 this figures is still seen as relatively competitive, and does not appear to have any detrimental effect on attracting new councillors.

It was the Panel's opinion that whilst it was not recommending an immediate increase in the basic allowance, it should in future be linked to local government pay settlements and be increased accordingly. It was felt that this should come into effect in April 2019

Special responsibility allowance

Following the information provided to the panel it was not felt that any immediate increase was required for these allowances.

It was the Panel's opinion that whilst it was not recommending an immediate increase in SRA , it should in future be linked to local government pay settlements and be increased accordingly. It was felt that this should come into effect in April 2019

Chairman & Vice Chairman

Both the roles have had their allowances frozen for several years whilst costs involved to incumbents has risen significantly.

It was the Panel's opinion that:

- ***Chairman – increase allowance to £4,000 [currently £2720 plus basic tax reimbursement at standard rate]***
- ***Vice Chairman – increase allowance to £2000 [currently £1330 plus basic tax reimbursement at standard rate]***
- ***That mention of basic tax reimbursement at standard rate should be removed.***

Group Leaders Allowance

In respect of the Group Leaders allowance, they currently receive £100 per group member, but this is capped at £2000. **It was felt that the more members in the group, the more complex the responsibilities became and that there was no**

real logic to the current cap of £2000 and that the allowance should now be paid at £100 per group member irrespective of the number of members

Travelling & subsistence allowance

It is the Panel's recommendation that these payments should remain unchanged.

These reflect actual costs incurred and should remain linked to council staff allowances and the panel could see no reason for these to be changed.

Co-optees' allowances

It is the Panel's recommendation that these payments should remain unchanged.

Care of Children and Dependants

It was felt that following the submissions made that the introduction of some form of allowance would be beneficial to broaden the appeal of the councillor's role.

It is the Panel's recommendation that council Officers should draw up a scheme for implementation based on:

- ***Use of national minimum wage***
- ***It should require receipts***
- ***Not be allowable for family members/ members of the household, unless at discretion of the Monitoring Officer***

For draft suggested Carers plan see Appendix 5

Following discussions, it was established that the introduction would not have a significant impact on budget spend, but would ensure increased inclusivity for a number of councillors to allow attendance at certain events by being able to take advantage of these allowances.

SUMMARY OF PANEL'S RECOMMENDATIONS

- **ELECTED MAYOR'S SALARY** - should remain currently unchanged [subject to any amendments needed to resolve issues related to pension contributions] should remain unchanged for the period 2018 /19 and from then linked to local government pay increases.
- **ELECTED MAYOR'S PENSION**. - there should be a contribution for pension payments added to the Mayor's salary equivalent to the employer's pension contributions made in the local government pension scheme. It should be shown that there is a pension contribution as part of the salary in the allowance scheme. In respect of the current Mayor there should be back pay of pension contributions October 2015 to May 2018 at the prevailing pensions contribution rate during this period.
- **TRAVEL ALLOWANCE FOR THE ELECTED MAYOR** - This should remain unchanged.
- **LEVEL OF BASIC ALLOWANCES** - whilst it was not recommending an immediate increase in the basic allowance, it should in future be linked to local government pay settlements and be increased accordingly.
- **SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY ALLOWANCES** - whilst it was not recommending an immediate increase in the basic allowance , it should in future be linked to local government pay settlements and be increased accordingly .
- **CHAIRMAN & VICE CHAIRMAN** - **Chairman** – increase allowance to £4,000 [currently £2720 plus basic tax reimbursement at standard rate]
Vice Chairman – increase allowance to £2000 [currently £1330 plus basic tax reimbursement at standard rate]
Mention of basic tax reimbursement at standard rate should be removed.
- **GROUP LEADERS ALLOWANCE** – The allowance should be paid at £100 per group member irrespective of the number of members.
- **TRAVELLING AND SUBSISTENCE ALLOWANCES** - These should remain unchanged.
- **CO-OPTEE'S' ALLOWANCES** - These should remain unchanged.
- **CARE OF CHILDREN AND DEPENDANTS** - Council Officers should draw up a scheme for implementation based on use of national minimum wage. It

should require receipts. It should not be allowable for family members/
members of the household, unless at discretion of the Monitoring Officer

Dependant Carers' Allowance WBC DRAFT

An allowance for elected members who incur expenditure for the care of children or dependants whilst undertaking Approved Duties.

The sums claimed must not exceed the actual sum paid up to maximum hourly amounts set out below;

The carer must be at least 16 years old. The carer cannot be related to the member who is making the claim. The Monitoring Officer can exercise discretion if there are exceptional circumstances.

All claims must be submitted on a form supplied by the Monitoring Officer and accompanied with receipts.

Childcare

Dependants' Carers' Allowance up to a maximum hourly rate according to the National Minimum Wage dependent upon the age of the carer;

- Under 18 - £4.05 per hour
- 18 – 20 - £5.60 per hour
- 21 – 24 - £7.05 per hour
- 25 and over - £7.50 per hour

Adult Care

Dependants' Carers' Allowance up to a maximum hourly rate of £15 per hour.

Agenda Item 11

Report to Council – 30 January 2018

Report of Cabinet – 4 December 2017

Cabinet met on 4 December 2017. The minutes are published on the Council's website.

The following Members were present at the meeting:

Present: Mayor Thornhill (Chair)
Councillor Taylor (Deputy Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Client Services)
Councillor Collett (Portfolio Holder for Community)
Councillor Johnson (Portfolio Holder for Property and Housing)
Councillor Sharpe (Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development)
Councillor Watkin (Portfolio Holder for Resources and Customer Service)

Non Cabinet Members: Councillor Nigel Bell (Labour)

The following was a recommendation to Council:

47 Corporate Peer Challenge Final Report

Cabinet received a report of the Managing Director

The Mayor introduced the report and explained it would also be going to Full Council. The feedback had been good; particularly that staff liked working for the council and the encouragement to share best practice with other organisations. There was also sensible challenge in the report around having the right skills in place to deliver the council's ambitions.

The Managing Director described the review as the equivalent of a CQC inspection or OFSTED. It was the sector's way of reviewing how well a council was performing. The peer review found Watford's performance to be in the top 10% of district councils in the country. The feedback concluded that the council was bold, progressive and ambitious. Areas for improvement included enhancing capacity and skills which was recognised and being addressed through the People Strategy. The council was also aware of the need to join up the Medium Term Financial Strategy with Watford 2020 and the Commercial Strategy to become more integrated. It was recognised that the council's partners were very supportive and engaged and that they had offered to be ambassadors for the council. The Local Government Association was not aware of the level of creativity at Watford which other districts would benefit from and there

should be opportunities for two way learning across the district network.

Councillor Taylor thanked the Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications for the level of detail included in the preparation for the peer challenge.

RESOLVED –

that Cabinet:

1. notes the final Corporate Peer Challenge report and recommends the report to Council
2. notes that the Corporate Peer Challenge actions based on the recommendations will be incorporated into the council's strategic planning at both corporate and service planning level.
3. notes that the Corporate Peer Challenge team will re-visit Watford next year to assess progress against the team's recommendations

*PART A

Report to: Cabinet
Date of meeting: 4 December 2017
Report of: Managing Director
Title: Corporate Peer Challenge: final report

1.0 SUMMARY

- 1.1 In September 2017, Watford Borough Council invited an external team from other local councils to Watford to independently review how we work and the outcomes we are achieving for the town and our local communities. This Corporate Peer Challenge was led by the Local Government Association (LGA) as part of their sector-led improvement programme and is something that all councils are encouraged to participate in.
- 1.2 The Corporate Peer Challenge team comprised a council leader from another district local authority and three local government chief officers (one of whom is a retired chief executive) and a programme leader from the LGA. They were on site at the council from 12 – 14 September but undertook a significant amount of off-site work including reviewing a range of relevant information and a position statement (Appendix A) that we provided in advance. During their visit the team spoke with over eighty people both within the council and from our external partners and stakeholders. This was to ensure they could get a comprehensive overview of the council, how we do business, our performance and, ultimately, our readiness for the future and challenges ahead.
- 1.3 Initial feedback was received on the last day of the review to an audience of staff and members and the team’s final report was received in November 2017 (Appendix B).
- 1.4 The challenge team’s findings were extremely positive for the council and Watford. The organisation’s high performance and strengths were recognised as were the outcomes it is achieving for the town in line with its bold and progressive vision.
- 1.5 As part of the review, the team was asked to focus on future areas for improvement and where the council could learn from best practice. This was particularly around managing Watford’s place-shaping and economic development agenda and best practice engagement with communities. The team’s recommendations are on pages 2 and 3 of the report. These will be used as the basis for an action plan that the council build into its overall corporate planning over the next 12 months, in advance of the team returning to Watford to assess the progress made.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(Treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating (the combination of severity and likelihood)
Failure to address the recommendations of the Corporate Peer Challenge	Organisation does not benefit from the opportunities and challenges identified by the Corporate Peer Challenge Team do not find progress on return in 12 months	Robust improvement plan that is reflected within the Corporate Plan and service plans	Treat	4

3.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Cabinet to:

- 3.1 Note the final Corporate Peer Challenge report – Appendix B and to recommend the report to Council.
- 3.2 Note that the Corporate Peer Challenge actions based on the recommendations will be incorporated into the council’s strategic planning at both corporate and service planning level.
- 3.3 Note that the Corporate Peer Challenge team will re-visit Watford next year to assess progress against the team’s recommendations

4.0 Implications

4.1 Financial

- 4.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the Corporate Peer Challenge recognised that the council shows prudent budget management and that the Financial Review Board provided good scrutiny of the council’s financial resources. The council has been bold and progressive in a time of declining budgets and there are still challenges ahead. Recommendations include better integration of the Medium Term

Financial Strategy with the council's transformation programme, commercialisation and people and digital strategies.

4.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

4.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that, in line with agreed procedure, the Corporate Peer Challenge report be presented to the next Council meeting (January 2018).

4.3 Staffing

4.3.1 The Corporate Peer Challenge team recognised that staff are the council's biggest asset. Staff were positive about working for the council and enthusiastic and committed to Watford as a place. Of particular note was the council's low and impressive sickness rate, the collaborative working style across the organisation and that staff feel valued and their efforts recognised.

Contact Officer:

For further information please contact: Manny Lewis, Managing Director

Telephone extension: 8185

Email: manny.lewis@watford.gov.uk

APPENDIX A. Watford Borough Council: Corporate Peer Challenge. Position Statement. September 2017

APPENDIX B. Watford Borough Council: Feedback Report



Watford Borough Council LGA Corporate Peer Challenge

12- 14 September 2017



WE ARE WATFORD

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1. Welcome to Watford

On behalf of the councillors and staff at Watford Borough Council we welcome the peer challenge team to our borough.

Our borough motto is 'be bold' and we hope that, through this peer review, we demonstrate we are a council that thrives on challenges and are making the most of our opportunities to ensure we deliver the positive outcomes for our town that we know are important to our diverse and vibrant communities.

In 2010, we set ourselves the goal of building Watford's reputation as a town to be proud of. We firmly believe that, whilst similar towns and urban areas, have struggled over the past decade, the council's vision and commitment to invest in the borough's future means that it is, today, well-placed to continue to thrive and grow. We do not under-estimate the challenges of our 'bold and progressive' agenda for Watford both in terms of the [ambitious programme of work](#) we aim to deliver by 2020 but also in ensuring that we build our communities' understanding of what we have set out to achieve.

We face a number of issues common to local authorities across the country: significant financial constraints, with more reduction in our budget to come, demand for homes far outstripping supply, rising housing costs, high levels of homelessness, local concerns about growth in the borough and how we continue to deliver economic prosperity which benefits all our residents and communities. Our bold thinking has delivered new ways of meeting these challenges but we want to continue to build on our success and make sure we have the right solutions for Watford.

We recognise we have both a great opportunity but also a significant responsibility as place makers. We are creating new communities that will bring thousands of new families to Watford over the next 20 years and our decisions today are part of the legacy we will pass to future generations who will live, work and visit our town. Successful place making will not only depend on our ability to ensure infrastructure and services keep pace with this growth. We need to work with our communities to enable them to do more for themselves, improve engagement and we need to continue to successfully leverage other organisations and bodies to help us deliver.

At the same time we need to shape our organisation and prepare our staff for the next phase in our transformation journey. We are well set, having being awarded [IIP Gold last year](#), but know that our organisation will need to be more agile, customer-focused, digitally savvy and commercially-minded, which is where our [Watford 2020 programme](#) comes in. This aims to deliver over £1million of savings or additional income to support our future financial plans, building on the [£5million we have achieved since 2010](#).

Our position statement sets out some of our recent achievements but also an honest and realistic assessment of areas that need further focus. We believe that now is the right time to present our council for external challenge: firstly to help make sure there is on-going improvement and continued success; secondly as Watford will have a new elected Mayor in 2018 for the first time in 16 years, there is no better time to have a review of how we have done and what more we need to do.



Baroness Dorothy Thornhill
Elected Mayor of Watford



Manny Lewis
Managing Director

2. Our strategy

- 2.1 Watford had its first election for Mayor in 2002. At that time, the council was in chaos with a legacy of problems and no clear plans on how to improve. It had had received three public interest reports and was the only council in the country to have its accounts disclaimed for two years running. We had received a warning from the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister about our performance on planning applications (the government was about to step in) and a best value capacity inspection classed us as one of the highest spending, poorly performing councils in the country with some of the lowest satisfaction rates. The council had suffered from too much focus on its “nice to do’s” at the expense of its internal infrastructure and getting the basics in order. Staff sickness was running at around 15 days, our leisure, community and parks facilities were shabby and out of date, we had no plans for how to manage our housing stock to meet our tenants aspirations for better quality homes and our residents were deeply dissatisfied – we were in the bottom quarter nationally for people’s satisfaction with their council.
- 2.2 The first phase was to turnaround a failing council and create a high performing organisation. The council changed its leadership and put in a strong politically-led portfolio management system based on quarterly performance reviews and invested strongly in direct services such as through the delivery of two new leisure centres on time and to budget. In 2007, we were one of the first council’s in the country to put themselves forward for a second Comprehensive Performance Assessment. We were now judged to be a ‘good’ council that had taken on board the lessons from just five years earlier and had made considerable improvement. We were praised for our strong political and managerial leadership that promoted a culture of openness and support, which recognised innovation and learning. Our accounts were in good shape with a strong medium term financial strategy in place that meant the council had consistently set the lowest, or amongst the lowest, council tax rises in the county. Outcomes for the community were clear with improving parks, approval from our housing tenants for stock transfer to an innovative ‘gateway’ model, which would help deliver better quality homes, over £20 million secured for new, state of the art leisure facilities and plans underway to regenerate the town centre by improving our cultural offer. Local priorities such as street cleansing and recycling were prioritised and the change in the council’s relationship with its communities was recognised with better resident satisfaction ratings.
- 2.3 In 2008 it was clear that the Council had consolidated its service management to a very high level, the challenge was then how could the town facilitate its long term economic prosperity as well as reposition its image and reputation outside of Watford. The council had over £100m of property assets but had not captured the benefits, it had good performance but not a fully engaged workforce and Watford was still held back by an unfair negative reputation for being a characterless, unattractive place.
- 2.4 Our second phase focus was to address these big issues. The council appointed a chief executive with a regeneration background and set about a programme of leadership on the key issues, harnessing the strength of the private sector and public sector partners. In the phase from 2008 - 2016:
- The ‘Watford for You’ portal was grown to promote the town’s economic, cultural and visitor offer, chaired through a partnership with the Watford and West Herts Chamber of Commerce and John Lewis
 - The cultural leaders forum was established to catalyse a change in our art and events strategy, building on the culture led renewal of the top of the town, with an ambitious outdoor events

programme supported by the Arts Council, diversifying away from the dominance of the night time economy in the town centre

- The Colosseum concert hall was renewed
- The joint venture with Kier to form a local asset backed vehicle was formed
- The lease agreement with Orion to deliver a 500 unit residential led mixed use scheme was signed
- The development agreement to create a new 1.4 million sq.ft. retail and leisure destination was signed
- The indoor market was relocated to a newly-constructed eye catching setting
- The funding and delivery agreement for the extension of the Metropolitan line to Watford Junction, creating two new stations, was signed although the new Mayor of London is reviewing the cost.
- The Joint Venture with the Watford Community Housing Trust to deliver social and affordable homes was established
- The Property Investment Board to trade low value capital assets for higher yield investments was established and has already secured over £1m in increased revenue to the council
- Watford Commercial Services, the council's own trading company was formed
- Grounds maintenance, street cleansing and refuse collection was outsourced to Veolia, saving the council £594k per annum.
- The council's community centres were transferred to the third sector, bringing in new investment and generating savings.
- The council renewed its allotments by investing £800k of new money to bring them up to an unprecedented standard and achieved 8 green flags for its parks
- The council established and has successfully maintained the Developers Forum and Big Business Connect to engage with the private sector and this has produced significant reputational and investment benefits.
- The council has maintained strong, harmonious community relations notwithstanding rapid population growth and a rapidly changing demography
- The council has achieved IIP Gold and
- Successfully enabled the town centre BID and procured free town centre wifi

2.5 The council strategy in phase two has been characterised by moving towards a commissioner of services rather than a direct deliverer, embracing the private sector to provide improved services at a reduced cost, creating joint ventures to generate significant commercial returns, regenerating brownfield sites to create new communities and working with businesses and partners to transform the image of the town. The pace of growth and change is challenging for both the organisation and our community but is consistent with being a bold and progressive council.

2.6 As a result the council has made over £5million worth of savings whilst protecting and enhancing front line services overall, acting early on change management from 2010, it has a strong balance sheet, healthy reserves and is well on track to achieve a balanced budget in this medium term.

2.7 The third phase of the Council's strategy is the current one: 2017-2020. It builds on our success in embracing the private sector by setting out a renewed commercial approach; it focuses on the customer to further improve and integrate our services and it creates a digital strategy to enable full transformation. We have branded this as Watford 2020, whilst developing a new people strategy and refreshing the way we work. We would welcome the peer challenge team's assessment of our progress and further ambitions.

3. Knowing our borough

- 3.1 Watford is a [vibrant and diverse borough](#), located in the south-west of Hertfordshire. It is one of ten districts within the county and, as a major regional centre located just within the M25, it is Hertfordshire's most significant town and plays a vital role in its economic prosperity as a successful commercial hub and is a desirable place in which to live, work, study and enjoy leisure time.
- 3.2 The borough has a strong local, regional and national profile, although it covers an area of just 8.3 square miles – so it packs a lot of activity within a relatively small borough boundary. Whilst it does not have a common boundary with London, in terms of its regional profile and its young and diverse population, the borough has much in common with the energy and dynamism of the capital. However, one of Watford's key strengths is that retains its own strong identity, with a long and varied history as a market town and a much-loved premier league football team.
- 3.3 The borough has excellent transport links with mainline rail connections to London, the Midlands and the North, underground and overground connections to London, its north-west suburbs and the rural Chilterns, community rail connections to St Albans, coach services to Heathrow airport, bus services to Luton airport and convenient road connections via the M1, M25 and A41. These will be enhanced by the Metropolitan Line Extension (MLX), which will provide two new underground stations and significantly improve the east / west links across the town as well as to the wider rail and underground network. Its location, just 20 minutes travelling time from London, means it faces the pressures of being part of the London commuter belt such as high levels of traffic congestion, high house prices and limited land available for development.
- 3.4 Watford is the centre of a sub-region serving around 500,000 people, living within a 20 minute travelling time catchment. The town centre attracts visitors to enjoy its broad retail offer and vibrant night time economy, and recent initiatives such as the public realm enhancements, New Watford Market and comprehensive events programme have enabled the High Street to fare comparatively well during a challenging period for town centres across the UK. The forthcoming £100m redevelopment of the former Charter Place shopping centre by [Intu](#), due for completion in 2018, also demonstrates the town centre's continued attractiveness to the market as one of the premier retailing destinations nationally.



Figure 1: Watford's location in the region



Figure 2: Watford's centre, including the High Street area

3.5 Our population

Watford is predominantly an urban borough with a population of 96,800 (ONS mid-year 2016). Given the area of the borough, this size of population means it is the most densely-populated district authority area within England.

3.6 The profile of Watford's population differs significantly from the rest of the county. It is highly diverse and, more in line with London authority areas, saw a substantial increase in diversity between Census returns in 2001 and 2011 when the non-White British population rose from 21% to 38%. The town continues to welcome a diverse range of nationalities and community cohesion remains one of our key strengths, with new arrivals establishing themselves alongside longer-standing communities. Around 150 languages are spoken as the main language in Watford homes (Hertfordshire County Council's annual school census 2016). This diversity is also reflected in national insurance registrations to adult overseas nationals (Department of Work and Pensions statistics), which consistently show new arrivals to Watford remain high with the greatest number of people currently coming from Eastern Europe and the Asian sub-continent

3.7 Watford is also a young town. Like most areas its residents are living longer but, unlike the rest of Hertfordshire and the majority of the Eastern region, it has a high birth rate and continues to be somewhere that is predominantly made up of younger families and households. Watford has the fourth highest percentage population of 0-4 year olds in the Eastern region and the sixth highest 0-14 year olds. In comparison, Watford has the third lowest percentage population of 65+ in the region. The figure below shows how the distribution of Watford's population across age ranges differs from the profile of the UK, particularly in terms of a concentration of population below 45 years.

Watford population distribution mid-2016

UK population distribution mid-2016

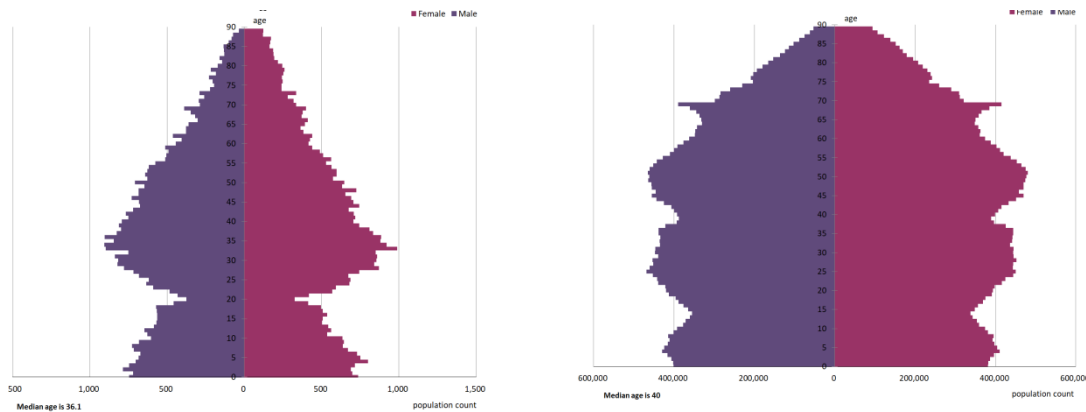


Figure 3: Watford’s population distribution mid-2016

- 3.8 The borough’s population has increased by around 7% since the 2011 Census compared with just under 4% for Great Britain overall and around 5% for the Eastern region. This growth is projected to continue. Government projections show that Watford will reach a population of 100,000 by the end of 2017 (ONS sub-national projections) and just under 110,000 by 2024. This increase represents a 14.7% increase in population from 2014-2024, higher than the projection for England overall (10%) and more in line with projections for London authority areas.
- 3.9 Our MOSAIC profiling of the borough enhances our understanding of our population and provides valuable context for our future plans and decision-making. Watford’s MOSAIC profile reinforces our understanding of the diversity of our population, its overall youth and also reflects the significance of the private sector rental sector in our housing market.

MOSAIC GROUP	Group/Type Name	MOSAIC DESCRIPTION	Number of households in Watford	Watford Percentage	UK Percentage
1 J40	Career Builders	Singles and couples in their 20s and 30s progressing in their field of work from commutable properties	4508	11.69%	1.59%
2 J44	Flexible Workforce	Young renters ready to move to follow worthwhile incomes from service sector jobs	3123	8.10%	1.26%
3 D14	Cafés and Catchments	Affluent families with growing children living in upmarket housing in city environs	2837	7.35%	1.31%
4 I36	Cultural Comfort	Thriving families with good incomes in multi-cultural urban communities	2794	7.24%	1.37%
5 H35	Primary Ambitions	Forward-thinking younger families who sought affordable homes in good suburbs which they may now be out-growing	2391	6.20%	1.96%

Figure 4: Watford’s MOSAIC profile (2016)

- 3.10 Watford has experienced a substantial rise in housing prices and costs over the last five years (currently average house prices are around £450,000 almost twice as high as for the UK overall average of £220,000 and way above the East of England average of around £300,000; average rental costs are £1,390 per month compared to £915 for the East of England – home.co.uk figures-August 2017) making it an extremely attractive area for investment. This has impacted on housing affordability (the median annual salary for Watford residents is around £33,000), which is a key issue for the borough, and, in combination with our increasing population, has led to considerable and growing pressure for new housing development. This has also resulted in a sharp rise in the number of our residents living in private sector rental accommodation, which is shown by our MOSAIC profile, where our top two types are characterised by living in rental properties.

3.11 Our economy

The town is currently home to around 4,500 businesses with a good mix of company size and sector, with many international HQ’s and a higher than average start-up success rate, and a range of businesses in between. There is representation from financial and professional services sectors,

pharmaceutical, health sciences, creative media, manufacturing and retail and leisure industries, amongst many others.

- 3.12 The number of jobs in the borough is 84,000. Nearly half of these (47%) are part-time, which reflects the number of jobs within the borough in the retail, restaurant and bar and support services sectors. The borough also has a higher proportion of professional / technical professions than seen at a regional and national level. Overall, the borough's job density (jobs per head of population aged 16-64) is very high at 1.43 compared with 0.81 for the Eastern region and 0.87 for Great Britain. The Job Seekers Allowance and benefit claimant rates are relatively low – 0.9% and 7.8% respectively. (Data from NOMIS).
- 3.13 A key driver for our place shaping agenda is to retain employment opportunities within the town and to provide the flexible developments that meet the needs of current and future Watford businesses. At the same time, we know that access to the right workforce is critical for business success so we want our employment areas to be connected to good quality housing or linked through well-planned infrastructure and transport links.
- 3.14 Whilst the borough remains a prosperous place to live and do business there remain small pockets across the town where we know our residents are finding it harder to thrive. In national terms, our areas of deprivation are not comparable to other urban areas but we recognise the challenge of ensuring that Watford's prosperity does offer better economic opportunities for all our residents.
- 3.15 We see 'knowing our communities' as a fundamental part of our future planning for the council and the town. We are currently undertaking a project with our partners in the police to map our communities, including understanding what the information tells us about what type of place we will be in 5-10 years, which we see as critical to effective planning and decision making. This will be supported by focused engagement with key identified communities to build a fuller picture of their attitude to life in Watford and their aspirations for the future. This is a pilot project for Hertfordshire and has received funding from the Police and Crime Commissioner as they are keen to see other areas take a similar in-depth and longer-term approach to community safety.

4. Our leadership of Watford

- 4.1 Since 2002, the Council has been led by a Liberal Democrat directly elected mayor, [Baroness Dorothy Thornhill MBE](#). It is just one of three district councils in the country to have adopted the elected mayoral system. For Watford, this political leadership has been the driving force behind the council's achievements over the last 15 years, providing strong community leadership, clear direction on what needs to be done and offering our residents an important democratic link to the council. Next year, the borough will hold its fifth mayoral election and, as Baroness Thornhill has indicated she will not be standing for re-election, the town will have a new mayor from May 2018.
- 4.2 The elected Mayor model has also provided clear leadership and direction for the council's key partnerships, which means Watford has a strong voice and effective advocacy when issues arise of importance to the town and our residents. This is demonstrated in areas such as ensuring Watford retains the main acute hospital provision for south-west Hertfordshire, the delivery of the Metropolitan Line Extension, highlighting issues impacting the town like the housing crisis at government level and representing Watford in both public and private sector strategic partnerships. The Mayor chairs the borough's Local Strategic Partnership One Watford, which now incorporates Watford's community safety partners, and brings together leaders from the town's key organisations who all have a role in shaping the borough.
- 4.3 The council recognises the importance and effectiveness of partnership delivery and has a good track record of exploring options which both guarantee the quality of services and generate real cost savings to the authority. This has impacted across a range of service delivery. We were an early adopter of the shared service model, partnering with neighbouring Three Rivers District Council for IT, HR, Finance and Revenues and Benefits from 2009. This brought a combined savings of £1.5million per annum to both authorities but, as the model has matured, it has also evolved and the services are now delivered through a 'lead authority model'. One benefit of this has been the greater flexibility it has given the services and, for example, our HR service has pursued commercial opportunities, which currently achieve £125k of income by providing external services to fee paying clients. A joint management board between Three Rivers and Watford oversees the shared services.
- 4.4 Through its community leadership role, the council has provided the catalyst for bringing together key partners who, through their combined expertise, energy and commitment, can support our ambitions for the town. They are often in a better position than a local authority to exert the right levels of influence across their chosen sector and can also help unlock funding where this is appropriate. We have had particular success in partnership working that supports our place shaping agenda. Our [Developers Forum](#) is an opportunity for those companies and businesses that are making investment decisions about the town to come together to share experiences and to better understand how their input is contributing to the bigger picture in Watford. We have also used it as an opportunity to consult them on some key areas for their business needs such as local planning policy and how this impacts their investment plans. Our [Big Business Connect forum](#) brings together 35 of the borough's biggest companies. As champions of Watford as a place to do business, there is a lot we can learn from them in terms of retaining and attracting business and building the partnerships that mean they are ambassadors for the town is something we see as vitally important to our success. Some of our key town-wide initiatives have been led by this forum such as the plans in progress to renew Watford Junction and Clarendon Road and Skillmakers (a skills brokering service for employers led by the college).
- 4.5 One of the key decisions we made over five years ago was to put Watford's cultural offer at the heart of our regeneration and place-shaping story. This was a bold decision at the time of a world-wide recession. However, we knew Watford has some great cultural assets. By building on these, and the wealth of creative talent within the borough, we firmly believed this would encourage growth of our creative sector and those in associated businesses such as restaurants and bars and, overall, enhance the borough's reputation as a great place to work, live and visit. Bringing together the town's key cultural players in our Cultural Leaders' group has made a real impact in the town.

With their professional guidance we have created a hugely successful [Big Events programme](#), which has animated our town centre throughout the year but particularly during the summer and Christmas periods.

4.6 As a district council our relationships with Hertfordshire County Council and other county level partners are critical. The county council plays a central role in supporting our ambitions for schools, transport, health and parking infrastructure improvements. We are currently working with them, as well as Watford BID, Intu Watford, Lang O'Rourke and Project Centre, to develop an [improvement programme](#) for the main section of our High Street. This will create a high-quality, safer environment for pedestrians as well as significantly reducing the number of cars using the area to improve the look and feel of the area.

4.7 The [Hertfordshire LEP](#) recognises the value of our place shaping plans for Watford and the benefits they will bring not just to the town but the county overall. We have benefited from significant LEP investment, including £6m for our [Watford Riverwell](#) regeneration project and £1.5m for our Watford Business Park project and remained fully engaged with the LEP's economic vision and plans for Hertfordshire. We have been bold to take a lead role in working with the Department for Transport, the LEP and Hertfordshire County Council to gap fund the original cost of the metropolitan line extension, with the council committing £13m and leveraging private sector contributions.

4.8 **Case Study: Watford Riverwell**

When looking for a solution to reinvigorate one of the town's most significant regeneration projects, Watford Borough Council established an innovative public / private sector LABV (known as Watford Health Campus Partnership LLP) that also provided our local hospitals Trust with a vehicle to bring forward its plans for the Watford General Hospital site.

This initiative took place against the back drop of the economic downturn in 2010 when private sector development partners were particularly cautious about where they took on long-term investments.

The council had significant land assets on the development site and wanted to retain a strong influence on how the scheme developed. This included ensuring that the Trust's aspirations for a new access road, backed by Department of Health money was delivered as well as making sure the council's vision of new homes, jobs and community facilities came to fruition. Simply selling the land to the private sector to develop out was not a route the council felt appropriate for the scheme. Whilst a more challenging solution, the LABV has proved a major success and, seven years on, the decision to join with the private sector, Kier Property, who has brought the right level of expertise as well as private sector financing, has proven the right one for Watford. The new road is built, cutting important journey times for emergency vehicles, the first employment zone, Trade City, is completed and planning permission has been granted for the first homes on site. The council will benefit from positive financial returns on its investment, which are supporting its medium term financial planning, whilst helping to shape what will be a vibrant and attractive new community in the west of the borough. In 2017, the partnership marked the scheme's progress and its move to delivery phase with the launch of the Watford Riverwell brand.

4.9 Our town centre plays a vital role in the economic prosperity and wellbeing of the town. It provides a significant number of our employment opportunities and is the engine that drives our local economy as well as the town's identity. We recognised that, whilst the council had an important role to play in improving the town centre and coordinating the agencies that all work to keep it safe, clean and vibrant, that the best lead for achieving this is the business sector itself. Working with our businesses, we pursued creating a Business Improvement District (BID) and, following a successful ballot in October 2015, [Watford BID](#) launched in April 2016. Through the additional BID levy, it is able to respond to town centre business needs and provide the focus required to keep Watford's place as one of the top retail centres in the country (we aim to be top 20 once the Intu redevelopment is complete in 2018). The BID now leads on the Purple Flag town accreditation for the management of the night time economy, which Watford has achieved since 2012.

4.10 **Case study: Community Protection Group**

As a major regional entertainment and retail centre, Watford experiences a range of community safety challenges that are not experienced elsewhere in Hertfordshire. Thousands of people visit the town each day and we know from statistics that this does impact on our levels of crime and anti-social behaviour. At the same time, we are experiencing many of the community safety issues faced by areas across the country including the impact of people suffering from mental health problems and other vulnerability related issues.

We have a strong track record of tackling our community safety issues through effective and coordinated partnership and agency working. This goes well beyond bringing together the council and the police and extends to other key partners whose input is essential in making a difference who meet regularly as part of Watford's Community Protection Group. Round the table and making a positive contribution to the borough's community safety work are: mental health services, housing providers, schools and colleges, Families First as well as third sector homeless organisations based in the town. The inclusion of mental health services is not something achieved in every area and is making a real difference to the outcome-led solutions Watford is able to put into action.

- 4.11 Watford's Mayor and Cabinet model has provided an effective and productive framework for member / officer working relationships at Watford. The clear lines of decision-making and accountability have been critical to the council's achievements. Currently, the Mayor is supported by a Cabinet of [five portfolio holders](#) who work closely with the [Leadership Team](#) to develop and deliver the council's agenda.
- 4.12 As well as the Mayor and Cabinet, political leadership is provided by [36 councillors](#) all from two of the three main political parties (portfolio holders are amongst these 36 elected members). Watford currently has [25 Liberal Democrat councillors](#), [11 Labour councillors](#) and no Conservatives). A recent Boundary Commission review recommended the number of councillors remained at 36 given the borough's current population and projected population growth.
- 4.13 We have an active and involved [scrutiny function at Watford](#). As well as an Overview and Scrutiny Committee we have the following standing panels, an Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel, Budget Panel and Community Safety Task Group. In addition each year stand alone task groups are set up to review specific areas to recommend policy improvements to Cabinet.
- 4.14 A reflection of the politically more- inclusive approach is that the Budget Panel is chaired by a member of the opposition and Call-In is also chaired by an opposition member (the vice chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee). The chairs and vice chairs of our scrutiny committees are fully involved in shaping the committees' work programme each year and we have recently introduced an 'outcomes' section to the programme. In addition, the Mayor (as chair of Cabinet) has, by convention, allowed the opposition leader to attend Cabinet and ask questions directly to Cabinet members and our 'questions to the Mayor' at full Council are open and transparent with opposition members able to ask questions without prior notice. The Chairman of the council is rotated by length of service across all political parties.
- 4.15 Cohesive officer leadership is provided by the council's Leadership Team comprising the Managing Director, Deputy Managing Director (Place Shaping and Corporate Performance), Director of Finance and 7 heads of service (two are from our Three Rivers lead authority – Finance and Revenues and Benefits). Leadership Team is responsible for advising Cabinet and implementing its decisions as well as providing management to the council's 210 members of staff.
- 4.16 Our [constitution](#) is reviewed annually by our cross party Constitution Working Party, which considers suggestions for any change made by members or officers. The working party will make recommendations to Council. Procurement rules are also considered by the working party.
- 4.17 We have recognised that our strategic risk management is an area where we need to improve and give more focus. Whilst we have a [corporate risk register](#) that is overseen by [Audit Committee](#) and

we expect all our programmes and projects to be supported by actively managed risk registers, we know that there is work to do to embed a risk management culture more effectively, especially as we adopt a more commercial approach. We are revisiting this with a Leadership Team workshop in September, which will also start our corporate thinking on our risk appetite going forward

5. Setting our ambitions and priorities

- 5.1 Each year through our corporate planning we review our ambitions and priorities for the borough and for the organisation. Through this review we ‘sense check’ our vision and priorities as well as our organisational values to understand if they are still providing the drive and direction for the council, based on our understanding of Watford, emerging opportunities and challenges and what we know is important to our residents.
- 5.2 Our current framework was developed in 2016 and strongly reflects how we see our role as a council. It makes clear that ‘more of the same’ is not an option, given some of the issues we face but also the significant opportunity we have to do things differently in the face of continuing pressure on our finances. **Bold** and **progressive** lie at the heart of our ambitions for the town and the council and clearly demonstrate that we have positively embraced our challenges. We recognise that we need to be more creative, innovative and entrepreneurial and champion new ways of working that will transform Watford and deliver our ambitions.
- 5.3 Supporting our corporate vision, the council has identified five priority areas of work. Each of these reflects areas that we know need additional focus and resource to 2020. By choosing these and setting out what we need to do to deliver outcomes that make a real difference we are sending a well-defined message to our residents and staff about what is important for Watford over the next three years. It is also the means by which we assess our own performance – have we delivered what we have said we would do and with our focus on programme and project management through the [Programme Management Board](#), we have strong governance in place to ensure we deliver ‘on time and on budget’.
- 5.4 Through our [Corporate Plan](#) we highlight the importance of seizing every opportunity that comes our way to deliver new homes, create jobs and opportunities for our residents and to make economic growth work for Watford so that our residents can benefit and share in our borough’s success. We make clear that we need to support and encourage housing growth but in sustainable locations with appropriate infrastructure in place (working to the ‘i’ before ‘e’ principle – infrastructure before expansion). In this way we can protect the town’s character and residential areas. We set out the challenge of securing our finances to protect services we know are important to residents whilst also ensuring we listen and respond to our community in a way that meets their needs. The corporate priorities are to:
1. Identify ways to manage the borough’s housing needs
 2. Champion smart growth and economic prosperity
 3. Provide for our vulnerable and disadvantaged communities
 4. Deliver a digital Watford to empower our community
 5. Secure our own financial future
- 5.5 We involve our staff as we review and refresh of our corporate framework and corporate plan to ensure there is good organisational understanding and ownership of our agenda. The corporate plan is also a key part of the service planning, which then links through to our PDR process with staff using it to inform their personal objective setting and to prompt discussions with their manager. This year we have also produced an [‘at a glance’ corporate plan](#), which identifies our priority areas of work on just one sheet of paper and assigned icons to each priority to support better staff recall. Our [core brief](#) and weekly staff e-newsletter [Wat’s Up](#) are used to reinforce our priorities and through our council magazine [‘About Watford’](#), social media channels and website we also communicate and engage with our communities on the work we are doing to deliver our priorities.

- 5.6 Through our [community survey](#) we regularly test our residents' views of the council and aspirations for the town. However, we have recently reviewed our engagement approach as we want to go beyond the more traditional ways of engaging through surveys and focus groups. This is particularly important for us, given that we have a young population, many of whom are recent arrivals in Watford and whose communications preferences are online and digital. We are looking to create online communities using the approach adopted by multi-national companies to understand their customers.
- 5.7 We recognise that keeping on track and making sure we deliver on our promises is critical to the council's reputation and to ensuring we are not slipping on budgets or milestones. We have established a Programme Management Board, chaired by the Managing Director, which meets monthly to review our major projects. Each project manager is responsible for [reporting to Board](#), for reporting on the benefits realised by their projects and, importantly, the lessons learned for the rest of the organisation. We have strengthened our programme and project management capability with the creation of a Programme Management Office and have a renewed focus on corporate and service performance with the appointment of our Deputy Managing Director who has this within his remit. Performance information is considered regularly by both officers and members. Leadership Team receives monthly and quarterly 'managing the business' information, which also forms part of our scrutiny arrangements with in-house services reporting to [Overview and Scrutiny Committee](#) and outsourced services to [Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel](#). At the latter, our outsourced partners (including those services shared with Three Rivers District Council) are regularly invited to update members on how they are performing and the quality of their outcomes they are achieving for Watford.
- 5.8 Our focus on better performance has seen significant improvements in our Benefits performance. In 2013/14 our new claims result was over 31 days and change of circumstances over 15 days. At the end of 2016/17 and with significant changes to the service led by the head of service and Portfolio Holder we are now at 18 days and 10.5 days respectively. This focus has also had a considerable impact on the subsidy we would otherwise have lost in relation to payments classified as local authority error. We now receive 100% subsidy (confirmed for the second year running).
- 5.9 **Case Study – leadership in priority setting**
Through the [Mayoral manifesto](#) the council has clear direction of where it will need to bring forward plans and investment decisions. Whilst Watford is an urban borough, it benefits from a number of parks and open spaces, including the nationally renowned [Cassiobury Park](#). These 'green lungs' across the town are a strong part of the town's identity and extremely important in a densely populated borough where, due to the nature of the housing, not all residents have access to outdoor space. Over her period in office, the Mayor has prioritised investment in parks and open spaces, which has included a £4.8million programme of improvements to every play area within the borough and a £6.6 million investment in Cassiobury Park, with council funding matched by HLF and Big Lottery funding, and over £800,000 investment in our allotment sites. The impact of this investment on our town and on the health and wellbeing of our residents is significant. Parks and open spaces consistently achieve over 90% satisfaction rating and this year we have celebrated achieving 11 green flag awards. This includes a green flag for one of our allotment sites, which is one of only 21 in the country and the only one in the Eastern region. It is also the highest number of awards in Hertfordshire, which is a real achievement for the most urban district in the county.
- 5.10 Whilst we recognise the importance of setting the right vision and priorities we also know that successful delivery requires our people to bring the right attitudes and behaviour to their work, which is why we reviewed our values as part of our corporate framework. Talking to our staff, we discovered that the 'bold' value had extremely strong resonance. They felt motivated by having the permission to step outside of the usual ways of working, think the unthinkable and make things happen. Staff also responded to having a value that encourages them to work creatively and innovatively, so we included 'progressive' to capture this Watford staff behaviour.

This will be essential to ensuring the success of our Watford 2020 programme, our major transformation programme that will fundamentally change how the council functions.

- 5.11 The vision for our [Watford 2020 programme](#) is to deliver a 'customer-focussed, digitally-enabled, commercially-minded council, demonstrated by:
- High-performing services that will provide an excellent customer experience and will be designed from the customer's perspective.
 - Services that will be digital by design, exploiting opportunities provided by existing and emerging technology to deliver significant efficiencies.
 - An innovative, bold and entrepreneurial organisation that is in continually challenging ourselves to reduce costs, generate income and improve performance.
- 5.12 We have set an ambitious timetable for the programme, with recommendations for a new operating model to be in place by March 2018. We expect this to be transformational, with the council of 2020 looking very different from the organisation today. It will inform and drive our approach to being a more commercial organisation building on where we have already identified opportunities to raise income through marketing and selling services.
- 5.13 Alongside our move to improve the council's digital offer, we are transforming the town through better digital infrastructure. Our first offer was free town centre [wi-fi](#). This went live in summer 2016 and currently has 68,000 subscribers; it forms an important part of our 'Watford's open for business' campaign. In addition, our agreement extended free wi-fi to the town's community centres and sheltered accommodation to improve digital inclusion for some of our more vulnerable residents. We have also introduced roof top broadband capability in the town centre so that our businesses, particularly our SMEs have cheaper broadband access.
- 5.14 **Case study – the Internet of Things and LoRaWAN comes to Watford**
- 'LoRaWAN' is a low powered wireless network which Watford Borough Council have installed across the town with the help of Digital Catapult, a government funded organisation responsible for improving digital infrastructure across the UK. LoRaWAN provides a new, low cost platform to support the 'Internet of Things' (IoT), a concept which allows devices to talk to each other to provide real time information and data. Unlike Bluetooth or 4G technologies, the network itself is both wide ranging and low energy meaning that relatively few supporting gateways are required and associated devices can be battery operated for periods up to ten years, removing the need for costly cabling or other infrastructure. When deployed across an entire town, as in Watford, the network can start to provide some real benefits. For example, bins can let you know when they are full, parking bays can tell you how long vehicles have been parked and pest traps can let you know when they have been activated – all of which means that a council officer only has to visit the location when action is needed.
- Whilst there are many conceptual uses of the technology, these can only operate when a network is in place and, currently, the UK trails behind other countries. However, Watford is one of the first Local Authorities to work with Digital Catapult, taking the bold step to implement its own LoRaWAN network across the borough to support the IoT and enabling us to do things differently and more efficiently. Our current network is a two year trial to prove concept but, after this period, we will have the opportunity to commercialise the network, which could have real income generation implications for the council.
- We are currently running two trials – one for our electric charging bay points and another to measure bus stop layover times and pollutions levels in the High Street. However, we are hoping to support many more trials over the two year trial period and our local college and partner, West Herts College, is including LoRaWAN in their 2017/2018 curriculum, using the network to provide their students with an unrivalled opportunity to learn about the new technology and develop devices to use it. The network will also provide a foundation for ideas generation during the internal Service Innovations tranche of the Watford 2020 programme, encouraging staff to consider the way in which LoRaWAN can be used to improve and transform the delivery of their service.

Our digital town agenda is another area where we have recognised the value of partnership working. We established a Digital Watford Board last year to provide direction and governance to support plans to improve the digital connectivity of the borough and recognised that there were key partners whose influence and innovation would play an important role. West Herts College, Watford UTC, Watford and West Herts Chamber of Commerce, Watford Bid and Hertfordshire County Council are now all on the Board and contributing to the future success of a digital Watford.

6. Our financial plans

- 6.1 Like all local authorities, the council continues to face significant financial pressure. Since 2010 the council has achieved significant savings of circa £5million. This was achieved through two major programmes – [service prioritisation](#), which explored where savings and income could be generated across all our service areas- and our Future Council programme, which significantly reduced our senior management costs and generated savings through service redesign and moving towards a commissioning authority. This resulted in the outsourcing of our waste, recycling, streetcare and parks services to Veolia, which has proven a highly successful partnership for Watford since 2013.
- 6.2 Our [Medium Term Financial Strategy \(MTFS\)](#) is our key financial planning document. It is monitored through the year and is reviewed through discussion with our members. Our Finance Digest is produced five times a year. This is shared with budget holders, and discussed at Leadership Team then scrutinised by our Budget Panel and discussed at Cabinet. With the news in 2015 that our Revenue Support Grant will reduce from £2.5million to nil by 2019/20, we established a Finance Review Board, which is an officer and member forum, chaired by the Mayor to ensure that, whilst we make the savings necessary to deliver our financial strategy, our budget remains priority led.
- 6.3 The Finance Review Board considers the council’s financial sustainability beyond the current MTFS and brings together both revenue and capital. It also includes the implications of projects which are being planned and identifies their impact on the financial position. The documents include details of each of the significant projects and/or programmes and easily identify their impacts, splitting them into capital and revenue.
- 6.4 Underlying features of our MTFS include:
- £1million worth of savings from our Watford 2020 programme. This will be achieved through a number of strands of the programme, including our emerging commercial strategy. Whilst we have taken some steps to being a more commercially-minded organisation, we know there is a lot more we need to do. We have established a trading company, Watford Commercial Services Limited, which will allow us to pursue business opportunities outside of the constraints that apply to local government.
 - To support the commercial agenda the council has built a cost model, which will allow services to cost the price of their services for trading. This will also allow decisions to be made on the type of cost recovery to be adopted for each traded service. Some services may opt for full cost recovery and others may opt for delivering a ‘contribution’ to our overheads. This will be considered on a case by case basis and will easily identify if the proposed pricing will generate a return for the Council.
- 6.5 **Case study – Managing our housing crisis to support our financial position**
- Watford’s proximity to London and the overall attraction of the town as a place to live has meant that we are facing a perfect storm of issues that are seriously impacting on local people’s ability to access affordable housing. Rising house prices and rental costs, reduced government support for individuals and families in housing need and limited land for development mean that Watford has seen a significant increase in demand on our housing services.
- Analysis shows that the primary reason for people presenting as homeless is the ending of private sector tenancies (this is an even bigger cause of homelessness in Watford than in the London area) as landlords find they can demand, and achieve, higher rents. Local housing allowance is far below the average rental cost in Watford and so we have seen an increasing number of local people presenting as homeless and, in many cases, unable to afford Watford rental costs. This has seen our temporary accommodation numbers surge – reaching over 220 last year – and, without the right intervention and more innovative solutions, we were facing some very costly solutions to ensure we meet our homeless duties. This was having a direct impact on the council’s finances. Over the last 12 months we have put in place new ways of working to help tackle the borough’s housing problems and reduce the impact on our budget. These are:

Harts Homes

In January 2017, the council, in partnership with Watford Community Housing Trust, formed a ground-breaking joint venture (Hart Homes Watford Limited and Hart Homes Watford Development LLP) to help tackle the borough's housing crisis by developing much-needed affordable homes. As one of the first such joint ventures between a local authority and a housing association, the new entities offer a pioneering approach to addressing housing need. By working in partnership, the two organisations will be able to access additional sources of funding for new homes and make more effective use of their land, helping to enhance Watford's housing infrastructure by delivering modern homes fit for 21st century living. The newly formed entities aspire to deliver more than 500 new homes over the next five years. The first development has involved a transfer of council land to the Hart Homes Watford Limited to deliver both temporary and affordable accommodation. The development was granted planning permission in early 2017 and will see 36 residential apartments and 40 dwellings for temporary accommodation. The apartments include a mixture of one- and two-bedroom homes, the majority of which will be available for affordable rent. Work has now started on site with completion due in spring 2018. The development is being built via the LLP but will be managed long term by Hart Homes (Watford) Ltd with the Council having nomination rights and full access to the temporary accommodation.

Hart Homes (Watford) Development LLP is the first project the council has taken forward under our new trading company Watford Commercial Services Limited, which has a 50% interest in the LLP.

The council has senior officers on the boards of both these joint vehicle companies.

Modular housing

With demand for temporary accommodation exceeding the council's current supply, we are quite often forced to use more expensive options (such as bed and breakfast) to support the increasing number of people who have presented themselves as homeless as a result of rapidly rising rent or unaffordable mortgages.

We have recently approved plans for our first modular homes, which can be constructed relatively quickly and will provide a flexible solution to the need for quality and well-designed temporary accommodation. 11 units will be delivered through this first initiative, which will make a significant impact on our current temporary accommodation numbers (212) and reduce the cost to the council.

7. Our capacity to deliver

- 7.1 Watford recognises that a skilled and motivated workforce is vital to the organisation achieving its ambitions and priorities. Alongside this, we know our members need to be equipped to guide the council through what will be a significant period of change. Whilst we have had to make savings, we recognised the importance of continued training and development for both staff and members and so have protected our training budgets.
- 7.2 An integral part of this investment has been our innovative 'STEP' personal development programme, which was designed in-house and has run across all levels of the organisation, increasing the skills and confidence we need to respond to the fast moving environment in which we work. In particular, all managers are expected to undertake the STEP programme as it clearly sets the standard that we expect from our senior staff.
- 7.3 The STEP programme was one of the many strengths recognised in our IIP Gold assessment in 2016, which also noted that many staff said that their job at Watford was the best they had ever had and the council the best employer they had worked for. This is correlated through our annual PDR process (which was also recognised as excellent by the IIP assessors). All staff are asked to consider both motivation and job satisfaction – scoring between 0 and 10). For 2015 the scores were: 7.63 for motivation and 7.43 for satisfaction. Our sickness absence rate is currently (June 2017) 4.83 days per employee. Tackling sickness absence has been a key indicator for our organisation, showing that senior staff are managing their teams effectively and that staff are motivated to be at work. This current result shows a 20.5% improvement on last year and benchmarks favourably with other district authorities.
- 7.4 We have a long established approach to devolved and empowered management. We hold an [Extended Leadership Team \(ELT\)](#) meeting each quarter, which brings together heads of service and our 'section heads', which are the next tier of management. The sessions are led by the Managing Director whilst the agenda covers priority areas of work requiring collective discussions and decision-making. We also see it as an important opportunity for networking away from the office and so always commit a portion of the day to allow informal discussions and catch up. Similarly, we hold a [Managers Forum](#) twice a year for our next tier of managers which includes a development session, often provided by external providers as well as key organisational updates and networking.
- 7.5 We celebrate success with our staff throughout the year. In January, we introduced the '[star of the month](#)' award, where we recognise members of staff who have made an 'above and beyond the call of duty' contribution to their work and delivering our corporate priorities. We also hold an annual '[We Make Watford Awards](#)', which is another opportunity to thank our staff for their hard work. This is sponsored by some of our key partners who also attend the celebration.
- 7.6 Our approach to managing change has been directed by our [Managing Change Framework](#), developed by our staff. We will always support any significant organisational change with a dedicated communications and engagement programme to ensure staff feel involved and have the opportunity to feedback and share their views. Our current Watford 2020 programme is underpinned by a full communications and engagement plan, with a range of channels identified to ensure staff are engaged and feel able to influence the programme and proposed changes. One of these will be a refreshed Employee Council (which has a mix of union and non-union staff) that will act as a 'pulse group' to test our thinking and how the transformation is impacting our staff.
- 7.7 Our recent LGA HR peer review has provided an important improvement framework for our organisational development. This is timely as it coincides with the roll out of our Watford 2020 programme. Our 'People Strategy' is a key supporting strategy and will be critical to driving the cultural change we are looking for to embed our new operating model and ways of working. Through our strategy we will also address how we attract and retain the talent we need as an authority including how we 'develop our own', which is an area where we have already had successes, and ensure we can be agile in terms of deploying our staff to where we need resource.

We are engaging with staff throughout the development of the strategy and have held a series of workshops through the summer to empower our staff to contribute to, and shape, our approach.

7.8

Case study: Contract management and relationship forum

Since 2013, we have built our expertise and knowledge around contract and client management to reflect the changing focus of our service delivery from direct to commissioned services. Whilst, in some circumstances, we had the opportunity to recruit this expertise and knowledge, we recognised, for future organisational resilience, we needed to embed effective contract and relationship management across our services. An initial audit showed that we had staff in many areas and at all levels undertaking a client function but they needed to be equipped to do so more effectively. In 2014, we established our [Contract Management and Relationship Forum](#), led by a head of service, with the remit of promoting better ways of managing contracts and working commercially. Now over 70 staff meet on a quarterly basis to network, share best practice and discover how to achieve cost savings, higher values and quality through a more business-like approach to contract management. Those attending include staff from our neighbouring authority, Three Rivers, who saw value in what Watford is achieving. A peer review on our progress last year by an associate of the East of England Local Government Association found we were well ahead of other councils and that our approach was innovative. The assessors were so impressed they nominated Watford for an International Association of Commercial and Contract Management (IACCM) Excellence in Contract Management Award, which we won.

7.9

Our members complete an annual self-assessment, which reviews their work in the previous year and sets targets for the next 12 months. Our cross party member development group sets training priorities and emerging training needs for the year ahead. All our members are now equipped with surface pros and so, from the start of the municipal year (May), we were able to go 'paperless' for our council meetings. We know we need to make our council meetings more accessible and will be introducing webcasting of full council and development management committee.

7.10

Unlike many district councils, the council has retained a substantial budget for commissioning services from the voluntary and community sector. This is in recognition of the important role the sector plays in our community and that they are often better placed to deliver services where they have more expertise and insight into the needs of service users. Our most recent [commissioning framework](#) identified the priority areas of need for the borough we sought to achieve through commissioning services (infrastructure support to the voluntary and community sector, enabling people with physical mobility problems to access services in the town centre, advice services, arts and culture, community centres and sport activities) and invited service proposals from the voluntary and community sector (VCS). We currently commission services from Watford & Three Rivers Trust (W3RT), Shopmobility, Watford Citizens Advice, Watford Palace Theatre and five VCS community centre

8. Our focus on place shaping

- 8.1 Watford is a borough with a strong identity and a cohesive and vibrant community. It has now established an enviable reputation as a great place to live, do business and visit but we know that this current success has required a strong vision, decisive action and targeted investment, which, as we shape our town for the future will need to continue.
- 8.2 We also know that place shaping comes with significant challenges particularly in a borough that has limited development space but where there is strong demand for residential, business and retail space. But it also opens up outstanding opportunities for the town, which we are working closely with both the private and public sector to progress.
- 8.3 Directing the spatial element of our place shaping is our [Local Plan Core Strategy](#), which was approved in January 2013. In this we set down our principles for sustainable growth within the borough, which we focused within a number of [special policy areas \(SPAs\)](#). These SPAs are identified for planned regeneration because they are in need of improvement and have access to sustainable transport links. In this way, we aim to protect the character of our current residential areas and the character and identity of the town overall.
- 8.4 The SPAs are, therefore, the focus for our major regeneration projects, which we have estimated will bring around £1.5 billion of investment to the town over the next decade. These projects are a central part of our place shaping as they will deliver the majority of our housing need, which is currently set at 570 new homes per year, although we will be testing this through the next phase of our local plan. Delivering this level of housing in our borough is a challenge. Our boundaries are tight and the duty to cooperate has not yet impacted sufficiently to enable us to work with neighbouring authorities to effectively meet our housing targets. The projects will also deliver new infrastructure, including new primary schools (we have so far directly facilitated three schools), improved public transport links, cycling, pedestrian improvements and enhanced public realm.
- 8.5 Our portfolio of major projects transforming our town are of various complexity and are being delivered through a range of different vehicles, bringing together the private and public sector financing and influence. As well as the Watford Health Campus Partnership LLP (delivering Watford Riverwell), the Intu redevelopment and our housing projects we are working to deliver the following schemes:
- 8.6 **Ascot Road**
We have developed the supplementary planning document: [‘Skyline Watford’s Approach to Taller Buildings’](#), which sets out our approach to determining planning applications for taller buildings. In terms of place shaping we believe that where appropriately located and, if well-designed, they can enhance the skyline and provide iconic landmarks. In July 2017, planning approval was granted for our first iconic tall building at Ascot Road – a 23 storey mixed use building offering 485 residential units including 170 affordable units, retail space surrounded by community areas and extensive landscaping. This building meets our skyline criteria; it stands at the western gateway to the borough and, in our view, is a good example of a well-designed tall building that sets a high standard for other developments.
- 8.7 **Watford Junction**
Watford Junction station is the key gateway to the town but both the station and the surrounding area are in significant need of regeneration. As the area where many people experience the borough for the first time or, for those who commute in or visit on a regular basis, it is far from showcasing what Watford has to offer. However, in place shaping terms it also provides some of our biggest challenges. It is a site on which we do not have land ownership, which means we have to play a critical role in bringing together the public and private sector organisations with an interest in the site including Hertfordshire County Council, London Midland, Network Rail, HSBC and Redrow Plc and to understand their aspirations alongside our own.

Our shared vision for the site includes a new neighbourhood and gateway to the town, an improved train station and commercial centre and high quality public realm, which we have shared with our community.

8.8 **Clarendon Road**

Over the years, Clarendon Road has established itself as the borough's main area for office accommodation and is where some of the town's largest employers are located. However, much of the office space is dated and does not meet the needs of 21st century business. For us this meant there was a risk of losing some of the town's major business players and the employment and prosperity they bring to Watford. We knew to keep Clarendon Road thriving, we needed to invest in developing a different approach to its future prospects. This has involved revisiting the mix of uses to allow residential and community infrastructure as well as office accommodation, should this mix bring forward an acceptable development. This infrastructure includes a two form entry primary school.

The new TJX Europe head office (operators of TK Maxx) was granted planning approval in Clarendon Road at the end of July. This is focused around a group of three distinct buildings including an iconic 12-storey building, which will act as an impressive gateway to the area as well as providing additional retail and green space. This not only launches the transformation of Clarendon Road it is also a vote of confidence in Watford as a great place for business.

8.9 **Watford Business Park**

This is a 67 acre industrial site and is an important location for many of our local businesses. However, it has low density employment and is generally out-dated and in need of refurbishment. The council owns the freehold of the land but there are a range of different leasing arrangements across the site. We are currently looking to assemble the land and bring forward a strategy for securing a private sector partner to work with us on re-development.

8.10 **Building understanding of the impact of our transformational plans**

Understanding the impact of our transformational plans and other major planning applications on our townscape is a vital part of effective place making. We have introduced a number of mechanisms to help test the coherence of the proposals in advance of the decision making process:

- **Major application review forum:** this is an opportunity for developers to present their proposals to the council at pre-application stage. The forum is made up of members and officers and provides direct feedback to developers at a stage when they can review their proposals
- **Major projects board:** this is a cross-party meeting where updates on major projects are shared and next phases of delivery discussed
- **PPAG and HPAG:** Planning Policy Advisory Group (PPAG) and Housing Policy Advisory Group (HPAG) are cross party forums that enable members to scrutinise and comment on local plan policies and housing policies
- **Watford town model:** we have invested in a 3D model of the town that allows us, and developers, to generate their plans so that they can be assessed for how they will fit into the current, local environment. This has been particularly helpful during our debate on tall buildings as we were able to show members and other stakeholder just how a variety of heights would appear against the borough's skyline
- **The Watford vernacular:** we are working to develop an agreed understanding of the look and design of our new developments so that they contribute to and enhance the character of the borough. This arose from a scrutiny task group on conservation areas where members identified a need to establish better understanding of what good design should look like for Watford. The next step will include a further workshop to explore their feedback to officers.

- 8.11 We know that economic prosperity remains a top priority for our residents and businesses, but we are also aware that growth, particularly where it means new housing, is not greeted with the same enthusiasm. One of our major place shaping challenges is to work with our community to build better understanding of our approach and the benefits of growth to the town and to our communities. We believe we are taking an effective, proactive approach to shaping Watford. We know the consequences there would be for the town if we did not have a sound Local Plan in place and definite plans for where sustainable growth can happen. Where we haven't been so effective is getting these messages across to our residents and building a more shared consensus of the town's future.
- 8.12 Whilst we know we need to improve how we engage with our communities on place shaping, we do have some positive examples of working well with local residents as we develop plans. The new road that was built as the first phase of Watford Riverwell runs through the edge of a much-loved local park. The council approached the active park friends' forum and other interested residents to work with them and local councillors to review the plans for the road. This empowered our community to shape the design, layout and mitigation elements, turning what could have been a very negative response to the new infrastructure. We are currently running a similar forum with our community regarding the relocation of our town centre skate park to a park location and incorporating additional leisure and sports activities elements. The proposal has not met with universal approval but through the engagement, which is being led by a Portfolio Holder, issues have been aired and addressed in advance of the planning application being submitted. Suggestions from our community have been included within the proposals and, overall, the engagement has helped create greater community ownership for the new facility. The scheme is being funded through £4million of council investment and will deliver not only a new skate boarding facility but also facilities for BMX, mountain biking and scooting (all popular activities in the borough) as well as a café, community room and toilets for the park.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1 Through this position statement we have aimed to provide an honest and balanced assessment of Watford Borough Council and the achievements we have delivered for our town and communities. Whilst we believe we have a lot to be proud of, we are realistic that we cannot be complacent and continually need to challenge how we are performing and how we are responding to what will certainly continue to be a rapid range of change for local government. Our main goal is always to ensure we are delivering the right outcomes for Watford, particularly in terms of how we are shaping the town for the future. We believe we have an outstanding track record of not just planning but also for delivery and are confident that we can build the long term relationships that are at the centre of effective, high quality place shaping.
- 9.2 We have commissioned a peer challenge to support us on our journey and are looking forward to bringing this statement to life when the team visits Watford and welcome hearing your findings and recommendations on how we can enable further success for the town.



WELCOME TO WATFORD

Watford Borough Council

Watford Town Hall
Watford WD17 3EX

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Corporate Peer Challenge **Watford Borough Council**

12 – 14 September 2017

Feedback Report

1. Executive Summary

Watford Borough Council is a high-performing, bold and progressive council with a lot of ambition for the future. A strong partnership between the Mayor and the Managing Director has ensured a stable and sound platform for delivering services and has created a strong legacy for post-May 2018 when the current Mayor intends to step down. The peer team felt that some further detail was needed on the council's future to provide clarity for the incoming Mayor and suggest that a clear roadmap for the council after May 2018 would help to capitalise on the council's current position and go some way to future-proofing key strategies. The peer team's view is that this could be achieved quite quickly and would help to create a successful next step in the council's journey.

The council benefits from mature officer and member relationships that are based on mutual trust and respect. This was seen at different levels within the organisation. The peer team found staff to be positive about working for the council and enthusiastic and committed to Watford as a place. Staff felt valued and appreciated the recognition that they received through the staff awards that took place both monthly and annually. Whilst the peer team found that officers and members shared the same vision for the future it was thought that more could be done to articulate this to all stakeholders at all levels including staff, the community, businesses and residents. An integrated communications plan would simplify this and enable consistent messaging to stakeholders. The council's move to work with a communications expert on messaging shows that they are moving in the right direction.

Watford Borough Council has good self-awareness and understands the communities, economy and geography of the borough and leadership of place role. This is demonstrated through its partnerships and projects with other key place stakeholders e.g. working with the business community to attract new businesses to Clarendon Road, and providing support and networks to make their transition smoother. The Council sees Watford as being more than a commuter town for London – an economic driver in itself and for the county of Hertfordshire. An example of this is the project that the council is working on with Transport for London and the extension of the Metropolitan tube line in Watford, which would provide better transport links to key business and retail areas.

The peer team were impressed with the ambition of the council with this and other projects. However, it is important that the council assesses whether it has the right skills and capacity in place currently to deliver these projects to time and specification, and to recognise the demand that they place on the senior leaderships' time. The peer team suggests that some further thought is given to whether there is sufficient resilience within the organisation given the number and variety of projects being undertaken both internally and externally by the council. One way of building this resilience and capacity is to utilise the willingness of partners. The private and public partners that the peer team spoke with were keen to support the council with their future plans for the Borough.

The council is committed to financial planning for the future and a good appetite towards risk has been developed. This is supported by a good planning / borrowing approach

but the Council will need to be vigilant to ensure savings capture is achieved in its transformation and income generation programmes.

To support the external ambition for the place, the council is undergoing an internal transformation programme. It is important that the council is able to integrate all of its plans to ensure that there is a holistic council – wide programme that incorporates the council's work on transformation, commercialisation, medium-term financial strategy and the people and digital strategies. Following this the council might wish to pull together a 'state of the borough' narrative to help secure buy in from partners to support the council's future plans and ambitions.

To deliver such a big internal change programme there needs to be strong and visible leadership from the senior leadership team. Whilst it was clear that this was happening currently the peer team felt that more could be done. This needs to be a priority in the coming months and will be essential in developing a future culture for the organisation and for driving change and maintaining the pace and rigour to keep the programme on track. This could prove difficult due to the parallel ambitious place-shaping projects that are also being delivered by the council. To be successful at both the peer team believe that the council should invest in and develop the right capacity and resilience needed to deliver on both their internal change programme and their external place shaping programme.

It is clear that Watford Borough Council has achieved a lot of successes over the past few years and has a lot of positive stories to tell. More could be done to promote this. Whilst it is understandable for the council to have been focused internally over the past decade, it now needs to think about what it has to offer regionally and sub-regionally. WBC should take this opportunity to look outwards and shout about and share what they have done. The council is seen as punching above its weight in terms of the partnerships and investment projects for the size of the place. There are a number of recommendations within this report that the peer team hope will help the council move to the next stage of its vision and future plans.

2. Key recommendations

There are a range of suggestions and observations within the main section of the report that will inform some 'quick wins' and practical actions, in addition to the conversations onsite, many of which provided ideas and examples of practice from other organisations. The following are the peer team's key recommendations to the Council:

1. Develop capacity and skills to deliver and sustain your ambitious programme to keep pace and rigour
2. Develop communications strategies to articulate vision to residents, commuters, businesses and partners
3. Prioritise visibility of leadership on internal transformation
4. Integrate transformation, commercialisation, MTFs, people and digital strategies etc. into one coherent whole = holistic council-wide change programme
5. Consider the Council's role in owning management and delivery of housing supply

6. Create a roadmap for post May 2018 and future proof key strategies e.g. finance, asset management
7. Build on the willingness of partners to develop the future Watford agenda
8. Be more outward looking - shout & share your success
9. Decide what culture you want for 2020 and beyond

3. Summary of the Peer Challenge approach

The peer team

Peer challenges are delivered by experienced elected member and officer peers. The make-up of the peer team reflected your requirements and the focus of the peer challenge. Peers were selected on the basis of their relevant experience and expertise and agreed with you. The peers who delivered the peer challenge at Watford Borough Council were:

- Alan Goodrum, LGA Associate Peer
- Councillor Keith House, Leader of Eastleigh Borough Council
- Chris Trail, Strategic Director, Charnwood Borough Council
- Tom Blackburne-Maze, Service Director, Milton Keynes Council
- Emily Coulter – Officer, East Hertfordshire District Council
- Ami Beeton – Challenge Manager, LGA

Scope and focus

The peer team considered the following five questions which form the core components looked at by all Corporate Peer Challenges cover. These are the areas we believe are critical to councils' performance and improvement:

1. Understanding of the local place and priority setting: Does the council understand its local context and place and use that to inform a clear vision and set of priorities?
2. Leadership of Place: Does the council provide effective leadership of place through its elected members, officers and constructive relationships and partnerships with external stakeholders?
3. Organisational leadership and governance: Is there effective political and managerial leadership supported by good governance and decision-making arrangements that respond to key challenges and enable change and transformation to be implemented?

4. Financial planning and viability: Does the council have a financial plan in place to ensure long term viability and is there evidence that it is being implemented successfully?
5. Capacity to deliver: Is organisational capacity aligned with priorities and does the council influence, enable and leverage external capacity to focus on agreed outcomes?

In addition to these questions, you asked the peer team to provide feedback on:

- Watford's place-shaping & economic development agenda
- Community Engagement

The peer challenge process

It is important to stress that this was not an inspection. Peer challenges are improvement focused and tailored to meet individual councils' needs. They are designed to complement and add value to a council's own performance and improvement. The process is not designed to provide an in-depth or technical assessment of plans and proposals. The peer team used their experience and knowledge of local government to reflect on the information presented to them by people they met, things they saw and material that they read.

The peer team prepared for the peer challenge by reviewing a range of documents and information in order to ensure they were familiar with the Council and the challenges it is facing. The team then spent three days onsite at Watford Borough Council, during which they:

- Spoke to more than 90 people including a range of council staff together with councillors and external partners and stakeholders.
- Gathered information and views from more than 42 meetings, visits to key sites in the area and additional research and reading.
- Collectively spent more than 180 hours to determine their findings – the equivalent of one person spending more than 4.5 weeks in Watford Borough Council.

This report provides a summary of the peer team's findings. It builds on the feedback presentation provided by the peer team at the end of their visit on 14th September 2017. In presenting feedback to you, they have done so as fellow local government officers and members, not professional consultants or inspectors. By its nature, the peer challenge is a snapshot in time. We appreciate that some of the feedback may be about things you are already addressing and progressing.

4. Feedback

4.1 Understanding of the local place and priority setting

Watford Borough Council has good self-awareness and understanding of place and context. The peer team found that a broad consensus on the future direction and vision for Watford was held by members, officers and partners. It was evident to the peer team that council has clear objectives and a direction of travel. This coupled with honest, open relationships and a track record of doing what it says it is going to do led the peer team to view the council as being effective and place-led.

The council has done some good work to get partner buy in for their place-based change agenda centred around building a new Watford. This has been carried out through high level meetings and discussions with strategic partners. Having the right partners on board has enabled key support to some of the projects and the council's growth agenda which is vital in ensuring opportunities and benefits for local people e.g. health, economic and housing benefits from the Watford Riverwell regeneration project and economic benefits from the revitalisation of Clarendon Road.

The peer team found evidence that the council has a positive approach to working with partners to make sure that the best options and services available are delivered to residents. Examples of imaginative and innovative delivery vehicles used by the council include the council's shared services arrangement with neighbouring authority Three Rivers District Council, as well as third party contractors, joint vehicle and place partners.

The peer team felt however that further work could be done to cascade and share council priorities down to strategic partners on a more operational level. When talking to some business partners it was clear that they had good relationships with the senior leadership of the council but this did not filter down the organisation. If partners had a contact point within the organisation outside of the leadership team, it could mean that the council would be more open and accessible, creating resilience and capacity.

Watford Borough Council has a mixed economy approach to delivering services for its residents and customers. It maintains generally good relationships with service providers that are mature and allow for the sharing of information and flexibility when needed. An example of this is the contract with Veolia for Waste, Streets and Parks where a number of beneficial changes have been made since 2013.

The council has a strong focus on growth and regeneration for the place and there is a strong partnership board that has been set up to manage regeneration that works well currently. It is important that plans and strategies are reviewed regularly and future proofed. Regeneration is a long term business and as with most

initiatives the council needs to ensure that they stay relevant and not become outdated. It is important that pace and rigour are maintained and that buy in both politically and from partners is maintained. The officers of the council need to be ready for a change in ways of working when the current mayor steps down (as she has indicated that he intends to do in May 2018) and plan for any support and briefing that her successor will need.

The peer team found that the council has a healthy appetite for risk. This is demonstrated through the council's approach to working with partners and delivering services differently. The Riverwell project is a good example of this. There are some risks associated with this project, given the scale of the Northern Development Zone and key relationship with the NHS, but they are seen to be proportionate by the peer team.

Watford Borough Council has a reputation for delivering projects to time and is known for getting things done. The peer team feel that the council needs to be aware of the complexity of delivering on a number of large projects. There is a need for intensive programme management and senior leadership to manage the different stake holder group and this absorbs a lot of capacity. With the council's own transformation and change programme underway, the peer team recommend that the council looks at building further capacity to manage and deliver on the regeneration projects that are already in train.

The council has benefitted from stable finances over recent years through prudent budget management so the administration has not yet had to make some of the more difficult decisions other local authorities have had to consider, for example fortnightly collections, putting up council tax significantly, or charging for garden waste. These issues are going to become more prevalent as funding decreases. The peer team suggest that a conversation with members and the community is needed to understand what views are held about future priorities, what council tax is for and what it should cover. This will help with planning for post-2018 and help to build a new era and legacy for the new mayor.

4.2 Leadership of Place

There is a sense of pride about Watford as a place from members and officers at Watford Borough Council. The Mayor and Managing Director are seen to be great ambassadors of the town and are known for their leadership in managing the growth of Watford and preventing decline. This is supported by the view from the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) who recognised Watford Borough Council as being progressive and positive for the county. Both the Mayor and the Managing Director are described as engaging, credible and easy to work with. There is an opportunity for the leadership team to step up to leading on a sub-regional level basis. WBC would benefit from looking outwards to the local government sector and sharing their successes with other local authorities. They have a lot to be proud of.

Having good relationships with stakeholders and partnership bodies has meant that the council has achieved good buy in and support for key projects. Partners described the council as a 'finely tuned and lean machine that is delivering an ambitious plan for growth and regeneration'. The regeneration board is a good example of the council working well and holding its place at the table. Partners are confident and comfortable for the council to lead on key projects. The extension of the Metropolitan tube line (MXL) is a key project for the LEP and it was evident to the peer team that the strong relationship between the council and the LEP has meant a united approach when dealing and negotiating with London Underground and the Greater London Authority. The peer team believe that the council should consider their options if the extension project does not go ahead.

The council has good relationships with its business community. The representatives that the peer team met found the council's leadership to be place-focussed. Examples of this include the support to new businesses and the Big Business Connect event which was hosted by the council. This initial support and activity is important for new businesses but partners suggested that more could be done to follow on from this. If the council was to strengthen its follow up support businesses would be willing to work with and help to deliver new initiatives e.g. reinvigorating the chamber of commerce and the business growth forum.

There was also a willingness from the business community to support the council in articulating its communications and PR around the vision for the place. The peer team believe that Watford Borough Council should utilise the support and skills offered by its partners in areas where it does not traditionally have the capacity or skills itself.

The business community representatives saw the Mayor as being a great driver and influencer able to get things done. Again there was some concern about the change in Mayor post May 2018 and this suggests that some further communications with external partners in anticipation of the changes would be welcomed. Partners view the council as ambitious and progressive and want to add value to help put Watford on the map.

However, some partnerships do need strengthening in order that the council can maximise its skills and resources. The council has a strong community wellbeing agenda for its citizens. The view of the peer team is that the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) is mature and robust. There is a single plan and shared ownership of roles. To be even more effective further work needs to be done to engage operational managers from public health and social services into the Community Safety Partnership. This view was held by a number of senior managers within the council. Getting this buy-in would mean that the CSP would be able to deliver more support to residents and the community, and be more proactive and preventative rather than just reactive.

Another example is around commercial activities. The council needs to embed its approach to commercialism with partners to get their support. The first step for this is to gain some clarity on what commercialism means for the council and for the community, and then articulate the shared understanding to strategic partners.

Some high level discussion between members and senior officers will aid this and a communication piece should be planned to cascade the message to staff, members and other stakeholders.

4.3 Organisational leadership and governance

The Mayor and Managing Director have a strong partnership which is based on trust and respect. Leadership within the organisation is both visible and accessible. This is appreciated by staff and creates a positive working environment. This is then mirrored by supportive and mature member/officer relationships throughout the organisation. Staff and partners are slightly apprehensive about the changes post-May 2018 when a new Mayor will be elected. The council does have a robust governance framework in place which should help to support this transition period but the peer team think that some thought should be given to how the softer changes are managed in terms of ways of working and accessibility / visibility of the new mayor.

The peer team found evidence of good member-led strategic forums for policy development that have helped to create an open and positive culture for discussions about the future. Further to this, the senior leadership team have two away days a year with the cabinet to plan and take stock, and cabinet members meet monthly with their respective heads of service.

The vision and future plans for the organisation were understood and supported by staff who were keen for the transformational and culture change. Embedding the messages and direction within the organisation is going to be a big job, and communications and messages will need to continue to be managed and thought through to achieve a shared understanding. The peer team felt that officers and members are ready to embrace this change and saw evidence of good communications to staff on the change agenda. The peer team met with a number of staff supporting the transformation programme and were impressed by their commitment and enthusiasm for change and this was reflected throughout the organisation. The council needs to harness this support and enthusiasm over the coming months and use it to keep the pace for change on track.

There is a supportive culture at the council and development opportunities for officers and members are seen as important. The peer team spoke to officers who said that they feel valued and believe that the council is a good place to work. The peer team heard about supportive and informative management forums that ensured staff were aware of key issues. The people and digital strategies are going to be important for the council going forward and the peer team felt that they need to keep pace with the transformation programme and the culture change for 2020. They will be fundamental in looking at agile working and organisation and team development.

A cross-party working group for member development has also been set up to look at and support the training needs of members. It is clear to the peer team that the administration has looked at succession planning and were preparing for the future. There was no evidence of political in-fighting within the organisation but instead a shared commitment to the place. This was seen through the agreement on a strong community wellbeing agenda for the borough.

The peer team found good examples of where scrutiny had worked well and has provided supportive challenge to the council. The scrutiny role is seen as open and effective and cabinet will listen to scrutiny members views even if it doesn't agree. Good practice has been seen through the outsourced services panels where scrutiny has been used for oversight, governance and challenge to providers. The council has been proactive in learning from when things have gone wrong e.g. the ICT contract failure and has used these lessons when managing subsequent contracts. The council has also consistently addressed poor performance in the organisation and improved outcomes and ways of working as a result. The peer team found evidence that this approach had been used to deal with staff, contracts and shared service arrangements. To make this approach more robust the peer team suggest that the council's service plans be integrated into the performance management process. This will help the council to monitor more closely and intervene at an earlier stage if needed.

The transformation programme that the council is undertaking is ambitious and real and the right thing for the council's next phase. The peer team did have some concerns around capacity, especially at a senior level. To be successful in delivering this programme the council needs to sustain visible leadership at a high level. The Mayor and the Managing Director need to front the programme but equally they have important roles delivering on all of the ambitious external projects. The peer team suggested that the council reflects on the capacity it thinks it needs to deliver all of the programmes successfully and how and where it can build extra capacity and resilience within the organisation. There are going to be a number of crunch points over the next couple of years and the Managing Director will need some support to deliver the complex external projects on time and in budget. It will be essential for members and officers to have a visible leader delivering the internal change programme.

4.4 Financial planning and viability

Watford Borough Council is in a sound financial position and has worked hard to ensure a good level of service delivery to residents and the community. This has been aided by some successful historic investment decisions for the borough. The council has a prudent approach to reserves and borrowing, but as funding regimes continue to change and pressures increase, the council will need to continue to monitor these closely. To date the council has managed change well and has not had to use 'salami slicing' to identify savings. To help maintain this position the peer team suggested that a refresh of the financial strategy is needed, including improved profiling and forecasting. This would allow the council to more closely

specify saving and income realisations earlier on which would provide a clearer financial picture for the council as it moves forward.

The council has a shared financial service with Three Rivers District Council. Sharing across two authorities has built some resilience by sharing management responsibilities and rotating staff and reduced costs. Watford Borough Council also benefits from having a diversified investment portfolio. The peer team thought the council could benefit from reviewing the advice it gets for its investment portfolio to ensure that it reaps as much benefit as it could and invests appropriately to realise long-term income and support regeneration. The council also needs to ensure that it has effective client capacity and ambition for future asset management/property acquisitions.

Due to the prudent approach to reserves and borrowing, the council has not yet had to make any real difficult political decisions about council tax or charging for services e.g. there is no business plan to show the possible cost implications of charging for garden waste. This approach appears to have been welcomed by residents to date, but as previously mentioned needs to be looked at in the future as funding regimes change and residents wants and needs evolve.

Excellent leadership at the council has allowed for bold and progressive spending on ambitious and place-shaping projects for the area. Provision has been made in terms of a central contingency pot that allows the authority to plan for any issues that arise. The council has an ambitious yet realistic capital programme. The capital budget is big at £80-100 million with a further £20 million waiting for approval. This money is well scrutinised by a financial review board. A consistent approach to procurement and contract management is needed across the council's projects so that it can make sure that it is getting value for money. Strategic partners would welcome a financial challenge discussion to fully understand what the council's future role will be in projects and service delivery. For example the financial agreement with the NHS about the Riverwell project needs to be developed and agreed.

In moving forward with transformation the council needs to ensure that key plans and strategies are all aligned and integrated. Financial planning for the organisation needs to be clearly linked to the transformation programme and the council's objectives for change e.g. becoming more commercial. If the council was to look at these in isolation there is a danger that they will not complement each other and pose a risk to the programme. It is also important that members have the opportunity to consider and discuss the service implications of transformation and the effects this may have on service users.

4.5 Capacity to deliver

The council has committed, engaged and positive staff. They were found to be supportive of the council's leadership and plans for the future and were seen by the peer team as the council's biggest asset. Watford Borough Council is a friendly place to work and staff were engaged and motivated by future challenges facing the council. The council benefits from a low and impressive sickness absence rate

of 4.68 days. Return to work interviews are carried out to assess and provide appropriate support to staff. Watford Borough Council has been awarded with Gold Investors in People status.

Staff have access to a range of training and development programmes as well as the chance to build on and learn new skills. Training budgets have been protected to enable the council to 'grow staff' and this approach is supported by managers e.g. the Step up Programme. Practical skills development is also evident. An example of this are the cross cutting projects that the Heads of Service pick up alongside their substantive service delivery role. By developing staff skill sets the council is building resilience within the workforce. However the peer team felt that the council needed to recognise that this could cause a capacity issue for some and as a result service delivery could be affected.

It was clear that the council benefits from a collaborative working style that was demonstrated at senior member and officer level and subsequently filtered down throughout the organisation. This approach has maximised the council's ability to move forward and be progressive in its approach and its external thinking. However the peer team suggest that the council further test the understanding of staff about new ventures and approaches to ensure that there is a shared ownership and perception of what this approach means for services and for the future ambitions of the council. An example of this is commercialisation. The view of this varied between senior officers and officers lower down in the organisation. The service level agreements for HR as a trading service need to be developed to increase clarity on opportunity costs and any potential income that may be received. The council needs to ensure that the business case is robust and viable and to do this it may need to look at whether it currently has the right skill sets to do this. To ensure that commercialisation is developed beyond 'quick-wins' the council may wish to consider recruiting a dedicated resource to lead on delivering and embedding commercialisation within the organisation.

The council shares some services with neighbouring authority Three Rivers District Council. This arrangement has not always been smooth but both councils have worked on achieving a positive one team culture. Staff really care about delivering these services and are keen to belong to the arrangement and to improve the existing performance indicators for revenues and benefits. Performance indicators are monitored regularly at the Executive Leadership team attended by heads of service, the deputy managing director and the managing director.

The peer team found examples of the council having an emphasis on picking the right partner to work with rather than just the right deal. This has enabled the council to manage and negotiate contracts and work with partners to deliver good services to residents. The partnerships in place with Veolia and Kier are examples of this. The council does need to do some forward thinking in advance of the end of the Veolia contract and consider what type of waste service will be appropriate and match with future council aspirations. A full scale review would support this.

As the council is undergoing a significant change programme, the peer team recommend strengthening the programme and project management process in

key areas. There is some current good practice e.g. commissioning, re-tendering as well as the equality impact assessment tools used for the leisure contract but there are some gaps in practical skills and there didn't always seem to be the space for officers to reflect after the implementation of a project. A clearer process on evaluating ideas will help the council with future projects. The peer team believe that the risk for Watford 2020 and the transformation programme is that ambition exceeds the capacity of the organisation. Having the right skills and processes in place will help with capacity but the council also needs to be future proofing its skills and process needs so that it can continue to be a forward, bold, progressive and efficient council for the future.

It is really important that the council gets the ICT right for the transformation programme. The organisation is aware of the IT issues following insourcing and has taken steps to resolve this including a new IT manager with experience of the private sector. Going forward it will be beneficial for the council to have universal operating systems that talk to each other.

The customer service element of the transformation programme will be important and customers need to buy into the journey and plans. Part of this will be making the council more open and accessible to customers both physically and digitally. The current town hall and customer services area does not fit with the council's ambitions for the future. The building is not conducive to agile working, collaboration, hosting partners or developers. The council might wish to consider moving to a more fit for purpose building for the long-term.

4.6 Watford's place shaping & economic development agenda

The council has a strong commitment to place shaping and economic development with many examples of this already mentioned within the report. As a geographical area, Watford is one of the smallest council areas within the country and is mostly urban but with a number of award winning green spaces e.g. Oxhey and Cassiobury parks for residents. This also includes the free Harwoods and Harebreaks "adventurous playgrounds" that have been built for younger residents of the borough and are accessible to all.

The developments that have been undertaken are bold and progressive in a time when many councils are battling with a decline in their budgets. This has been strengthened by the fact that regeneration plans and ambitions of the council are understood and shared by strategic partners. Support for the arts remains strong, as does the council's commitment to environmental quality and events in the town centre. However, a watching brief may be needed for managing the growth and the ambitious plans for the place. The peer team feel that there could be a risk if growth and regeneration are not managed in a sustainable way. Pace, rigour and capacity will be key to delivering these objectives successfully. This also builds on the earlier point made about internal resilience and capacity within the council. The peer team suggest that the council reflects on how it can manage its

resources so that any concerns or issues raised by partners can be dealt with quickly and effectively at all levels.

The peer team understood that managing growth was a key priority to the council and its partners. Some bold decisions have been made e.g. Watford Riverwell mentioned earlier. The decision that was taken on moving the allotments for the success of the project was not an easy one for affected residents but does demonstrate the wider more strategic vision of the council and the strength of relationship between councillors and their constituents.

There were some issues that the peer team felt more discussion was needed between the community and some councillors, for example the lack of ownership around housing supply. This is a big issue and one that the council needs to be able to deliver on. Some conversation with different stakeholders will help the council to articulate its position and for everyone involved to understand any possible solutions.

Another example of place shaping is the positive relationship that the council has with Intu who manage a substantial retail venue for the town. Working in partnership with Intu and the successful Business Improvement District the council has supported a varied and exciting cultural programme for residents and communities including a temporary beach, a varied theatre schedule and free screenings of films over the summer. One demographic that didn't seem to be as engaged with the offer of the place are commuters. There are a number of big companies with offices on Clarendon Road as well as other sites around the town. The peer team think more thought could be given to how this important group are encouraged to stay in town after work and see it as a place for leisure and relaxation as well as work.

4.7 Community Engagement

The peer team found that community satisfaction was high which was expressed in the last engagement survey with 90% of respondents expressing this. The peer team believe that this is partly down to the role and visibility of the Mayor who is seen as the 'Mayor of the town' rather than the Mayor of the council. Elected Members were also key to the current engagement strategy with councillors seen to be taking on more of an engagement role than officers. Whilst this has worked well it is a more informal approach, the council needs to check that formal engagement routes are robust and in place. Having said this, there is evidence of some good examples of community engagement e.g. engagement of users and non-users re the leisure contract and the engagement work carried out at the Oxhey Park forum discussing and agreeing proposals for the development of the area for all parts of the community. The peer team were encouraged by the council's recognition to make this approach more consistent through their plans to work with private partners to increase communications with residents, businesses and other users. The peer team believe this will allow the council to be more proactive with decision making and provide more legitimacy for it.

As mentioned previously, communications need to be strengthened on the agenda and the priorities of the council. It can be difficult to communicate growth as a good story for all demographics, however the peer team thought that both officers and members needed to be braver and demonstrate greater leadership around the implications and benefits of growth to the community. Using partners as ambassadors of place could help the council with this objective. The relationship with the local press is not as strong as it could be and the council could reflect on how to improve this. An effective communications plan could help counteract any negative communications. Greater use of social media could help to promote outcomes and quick wins for partnership work.

A further suggestion from the peer team is to be very clear about how the community survey results have fed into the corporate priorities and what action will be taken as a result. The community need to know that they are being listened to and that their views are valued and contributing to the place-shaping agenda. A strengthened feedback loop should help the council in demonstrating to residents that it is listening to them and understands their views. It would also enable the council to review its services to deliver in a way that meets the communities' needs.

It is also important that a community element is built into the council's transformation programme. The peer team suggest that this can be beneficial on two counts: firstly, to ensure that the new digital strategy is appropriate and accessible for users, and secondly to reflect and understand what skills and capacity the community have to help deliver future council priorities and objectives. This would also help in creating further resilience for the council.

Finally, the peer team suggest that the council works with partners to create an effective community engagement plan for the future. The council may wish to look at other organisations plans to see what can be learned from others successes in this area. The LGA can help to facilitate this if required.

5. Next steps

Immediate next steps

We appreciate the senior managerial and political leadership will want to reflect on these findings and suggestions in order to determine how the organisation wishes to take things forward.

As part of the peer challenge process, there is an offer of further activity to support this. The LGA is well placed to provide additional support, advice and guidance on a number of the areas for development and improvement and we would be happy to discuss this. Rachel Litherland, Principal Adviser and Gary Hughes, Principal Adviser are the main contacts between your authority and the Local Government Association (LGA). Their contact details are: Email rachel.litherland@local.gov.uk and gary.hughes@local.gov.uk

In the meantime we are keen to continue the relationship we have formed with the Council throughout the peer challenge. We will endeavour to provide signposting to examples of good practice and further information and guidance about the issues we have raised in this report to help inform ongoing consideration.

Follow up visit

The LGA Corporate Peer Challenge process includes a follow up visit. The purpose of the visit is to help the Council assess the impact of the peer challenge and demonstrate the progress it has made against the areas of improvement and development identified by the peer team. It is a lighter-touch version of the original visit and does not necessarily involve all members of the original peer team. The timing of the visit is determined by the Council. Our expectation is that it will occur within the next 2 years.

Next Corporate Peer Challenge

The current LGA sector-led improvement support offer includes an expectation that all councils will have a Corporate Peer Challenge or Finance Peer Review every 4 to 5 years. It is therefore anticipated that the Council will commission their next Peer Challenge before 2022.

PART A

Report to: Full Council
Date of meeting: 30 January 2018
Report of: Interim Head of Human Resources
Title: Council Pay Policy Statement

1.0 **Summary**

- 1.1 The Council's success relies on the talent and contribution of its workforce enabling and ensuring it meets its objectives. The Council's Pay Policy Statement seeks to ensure the Council is able to attract, recruit, retain and engage the right people in order to achieve this.
- 1.2 The Pay Policy Statement pulls together all the elements that make up the Council's financial reward practices. It provides assurances of our consistency, fairness and transparency and gives clarity to all our stakeholders about how and what our people are rewarded for. It defines the level and elements of remuneration for Chief Officers in accordance with the requirements of section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.3 The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to publish its position on 1 April each year in relation to specific areas of chief officers pay as follows: - remuneration levels, all other payments, incremental progression, performance related pay, bonus payments, redundancy, severance/ compensation, and retirement payments, and the Council's policy on the re-engagement of chief officers. This Pay Policy Statement sets out the Council's position in these areas. The report is the same as in previous years with updated staffing and pay rate information.
- 1.4 The recommendation of the Hutton Report into "Fair Pay in the Public Sector" as recognised by the Government in the Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency, was that a pay ratio of the salary of the Chief Executive compared to the median average salary in the organisation should be published. This is set out in Section 19 of the Pay Policy Statement, which shows the ratio to be 1:4.6. The Council does not have a policy on maintaining or reaching a specific pay multiple but is conscious of the need to ensure that the salary of the highest paid employee is not excessive but is consistent with the needs of the

Council as expressed in this policy statement.

- 1.5 The Hutton report raised concerns about multiples in the order of 1:20 or higher between the lowest and highest paid employees in local authorities. The Council's current lowest to highest ratio is 1.7, which, is considerably lower. The lowest pay in use by Watford Borough Council is within Band 3 paying £9.28 per hour including LW. This is above the national living wage.

2.0 **Risks**

2.1

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(Treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating (the combination of severity and likelihood)
Non-Compliance with requirements of the Localism Act 2011	Reputation/Fine	Agree and publish to time	Treat	2

Recommendations

- 3.0 That Council approve the Council Pay Policy Statement.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Nicola Houwayek, Interim Head of HR
telephone extension: 8133 email: nicola.houwayek@watford.gov.uk

Report approved by: Nicola Houwayek, Interim Head of HR

4.0 **Implications**

4.1 **Financial**

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

4.2 **Legal Issues** (Monitoring Officer)

4.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that it is a requirement of the Localism Act 2011 that this be reported annually to Council.

4.3 **Equalities/Human Rights**

4.3.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149, it is considered that as this is not a new policy and the data does not indicate any equalities issues that no updated EIA is required.

Appendices

- Pay Policy Statement 2018

Background Papers

- No papers were used in the preparation of this report

File Reference

None



**COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT
JANUARY 2018**



1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Council's success relies on the talent and contribution of its workforce enabling and ensuring it meets its objectives. Our Pay Policy seeks to ensure the Council is able to attract, recruit, retain and engage the right people in order to achieve this.
- 1.2 The Pay Policy pulls together all the elements that make up the Council's reward practices. It provides assurances of our consistency, fairness and transparency and gives clarity to all our stakeholders about how and what our people are rewarded for. It defines the level and elements of remuneration for Chief Officers, and all Senior staff, in accordance with the requirements of section 38(1) of the Localism Act 2011.
- 1.3 The Localism Act 2011 requires the Council to publish its position in relation to specific areas of chief officers pay as follows : - remuneration levels, all other payments, incremental progression, performance related pay, bonus payments, redundancy, severance/ compensation, and retirement payments, and the Council's policy on the re-engagement of chief officers. This Pay Policy statement sets out the Council's position in these areas.
- 1.4 The Council employs 207 officers, which represents a full time equivalent, based on a 37 hour week, of 187.72.
- 1.5 The gross salary expenditure for the Council for the financial year 2017/2018 is estimated to be £11,244,390.
- 1.6 Best practice recommends the Council consults a remuneration committee on all proposals relating to pay and reward for Senior Officers thus ensuring openness and accountability. This responsibility is delegated by Full Council to the Chief Officer pay panel.
- 1.7 This policy will be reviewed and approved annually by Full Council, and may be accessed via the Council's external web site.

2.0 SCOPE OF THE POLICY

- 2.1 The policy applies to all Chief Officers.
- 2.2 The definition of Chief Officers (as set out in section (43(2)) of the Localism Act 2011 is not restricted to Heads of Paid Service and Directors. It also includes all other Senior Managers (statutory and non statutory officers) who report directly to them and to their direct reports termed as Deputy Chief Officers. That is the Head of Paid Service (Managing Director), Deputy Managing Director, Heads of Service and Section Heads.
- 2.3 Council post holders who fall within the definition of Chief Officers are as defined within the Councils Constitution and are shown in the following table:

Head of Paid Service	Managing Director
	Deputy Managing Director – Place Shaping & Corporate Performance
Director of Finance	Director of Finance (Three Rivers District Council)
Heads of Service	Head of Democracy and Governance (Monitoring Officer) Head of Community and Environmental Services Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications Head of Human Resources Head of Service Transformation Head of Finance (Three Rivers District Council) Head of Revenues and Benefits (Three Rivers District Council)
Section Heads/Deputy Chief Officers	Section Heads and other managers that report directly to Officers outlined above.

See organisation structure chart in appendix 1.

- 2.4 The remuneration of the Managing Director, Deputy Managing Director and Heads of Service was last determined by the Chief Officers' Pay Panel in 2016.
- 2.5 The Council's Director of Finance/ Section 151 Officer, Head of Finance and Head of Revenue & Benefits are directly employed by Three Rivers District Council and remunerated in accordance with Three Rivers District Council Chief Officer pay rates for Directors/senior managers.
- 2.6 The remuneration of the Managing Director (MD), Deputy Managing Director and Head of Service posts was subject to an external Pay and Grading review that was conducted by the Local Government Association (LGA), in 2016.
- 2.7 Pay bands are attached as appendices 2 and 3
- 3.0 TERMS AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**
- 3.1 The Council's Chief Officers, i.e. the MD, Deputy MD, Director of Finance, and Heads of Service are engaged on Joint National Council (JNC) national terms and conditions of service.
- 3.2 The Council's Heads of Service and Section Heads/ Deputy Chief Officers, i.e. those who report directly to Heads of Service, are engaged on National Joint Council (NJC) national terms and conditions.

- 3.3 It should be noted that different national negotiating machinery applies across the senior management team.

4.0 PRINCIPLES

- 4.1 The Pay Policy reflects the aspirations of the Council's strategic road map and defines the Council's approach to managing reward that is guided by the following principles:
- 4.2 All Council officer jobs are job evaluated using an analytical job evaluation scheme to allocate points to posts and establish relativity between all posts in the organisation.
- 4.3 The Council reviews appropriate external pay market information to ensure remuneration levels are consistent with Local Government, provide value for money for the taxpayer, and support the Council to remain competitive as an employer in areas of skills shortage.
- 4.4 If appropriate, market factors are applied to hard to fill posts. Where applied these supplements are reviewed annually in accordance with the market factor policy.
- 4.5 The MD receives a spot salary the level of which was reviewed in 2013. The Deputy MD also receives a spot salary which was set in 2016.
- 4.6 Cost of living inflation increases for Chief Officer pay scales are awarded in accordance with the Joint National Council for Chief Executives and Chief Officers (JNC). Chief Officers are remunerated according to the pay scale applicable to their job, within a four grade pay model. Each grade has four incremental spinal column points, with the exception of Grade 11 posts which has nine (see appendix 2). Progression within each grade is time based, subject to satisfactory performance and where appropriate awarded annually to the top of the grade, effective from 1 April.
- The independent reviews conducted by LGA of 2013 and 2016 ensured that the pay scales of Chief Officers are comparable to rates of pay for similar jobs in similar sized local authorities in the outer London and Home Counties area.
- 4.7 Deputy Chief Officers, i.e. Section Heads are remunerated within the top three grades of an eleven grade pay model. Each grade has five incremental spinal column points, (see appendix 3).
- 4.8 The remuneration of a Chief Officer or Deputy Chief Officer on appointment will be at a point on the relevant pay scale for the job appropriate to their experience and salary level in the previous job.
- 4.9 It is not the policy of the Council to award bonuses to its Chief Officers.
- 4.10 The Council is committed to the principle of fairness; is clear about what people are being paid for, and is consistent, systematic and transparent when applying reward practices. Pay models have been developed based upon appropriate pay market information and ensure that the ratio of pay levels between the highest paid officer and the median/ mean average/ low paid earnings in the Council remains consistent and is not distorted as a result of pay awards.
- 4.11 The Council's lowest paid employees are those post holders whose jobs are graded in the lowest pay band, which is Band 3 in an 11 band pay model. Jobs are evaluated using the Local Government Job Evaluation scheme.
- 4.12 Resignation. The Chief Officer's last entitlement to pay will be the last day of service, taking into account notice period and any period of pay in lieu of notice.

Redundancy or early termination in the interests of the service and Pension Benefits of Chief Officers will be made in accordance with the Council's Redundancy and Early retirement and early termination compensation policies.

5.0 EQUALITIES

5.1 The Council is committed to equality of opportunity. All members of staff will be treated fairly based on ability, performance and contribution irrespective of their employment or contractual status and personal circumstances, i.e. part time, fixed term. The Council monitors equalities data and this policy shall be applied fairly, consistently and equitably for all employees irrespective of race, gender, disability, age, offending past, caring or dependency status, religion or belief, sexual orientation, marital or civil partnership status, pregnancy or maternity or gender identity and it is incumbent on those managing this policy to ensure that this is the case.

6.0 GRADING

6.1 Chief Officers – MD, Deputy MD and Heads of Service

6.2 **Job Evaluation** – posts were job evaluated by the LGA Senior manager job evaluation scheme.

6.3 Deputy Chief Officers - Section Heads

6.4 **Job evaluation** – All posts are job evaluated using the Local Government Job Evaluation Scheme (LGJES). The scheme is used to evaluate all non Chief Officer posts in the Council, ensuring relativity between all Council posts covered by NJC terms and conditions. The job evaluation policy should be consulted for further information.

6.5 **Pay model** - The pay model is presented in appendix 3

6.6 **Labour market information** - The Croner Reward Job Evaluation system and the Croner Market Pay analysis for Public Services provides the source of comparative pay information for all officer posts in hard to fill and areas of skills shortages within the Council. Market supplements currently apply to the following Deputy Chief Officer roles and are reviewed annually in accordance with the Market Factor policy –

Head of Housing

Development Management Section Head

Regeneration & Property Section Head

Parks, Open Spaces and Projects Section Head

6.7 All other posts in the Council

6.8 All other officer posts are job evaluated using the Local Government Job Evaluation Scheme (LGJES), and graded within one of the pay Bands in the 11 grade pay model in appendix 3. No Council post is

graded below Band 3, and minimum pay is £17,072 plus £840 London weighting allowance, (see 8.1 below). Where appropriate posts attract a market supplement and the market forces payments policy should be consulted for further information.

6.9 Market factor supplements apply to the following non Chief Officer posts in the Council

Senior Solicitor

Principal Solicitor

LLPG & GIS Officer

Property Team Manager

7.0 INCREMENTS

7.1 Posts receive annual time based increments effective on 1 April until remuneration reaches the top of the grade.

7.2 On appointment, all posts will normally be remunerated at the lowest incremental spinal column point within the grade, (unless 4.8 applies above).

7.3 The Council will apply the annual cost of living percentage increment as negotiated by the NJC national agreement to the values of incremental spinal column points as appropriate. A 1% pay increase was awarded on 1 April 2017.

8.0 ADDITIONAL PAYMENTS

8.1 London Weighting (LW) – is the inner fringe London Weighting Allowance and is negotiated as part of the national framework. LW is an additional payment that is made to all officers in the Council, and the rate is negotiated nationally by NJC.

8.2 Chief Officers' Travel Allowance (TA) - £300 per annum is a local allowance paid to all Chief Officers /Heads of Service. The TA payment is intended as compensation for travel around the Borough of Watford and Three Rivers District for which business mileage may not be claimed.

8.3 The Head of Paid Service receives additional payment for duties as Clerk to the West Herts. Crematorium, and fees for Returning Officer duties during elections as and when appropriate.

9.0 PERFORMANCE RELATED PAYMENTS AND BONUSES

9.1 The Council does not operate a performance related payments scheme.

10.0 LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME (LGPS)

10.1 All officers are eligible to join and contribute to the Local Government Pension Scheme. Officer contribution rates are a percentage of their earnings. Levels of contribution are stated by the scheme, and are based on the whole time equivalent value of all contractual pay excluding any travel allowance payments. The employer's contribution to the scheme is 19%.

10.2 The table below provides the proposed Member contribution table for 2017.

Pay Bands	Contribution Rates
Up to £13,500	5.5%
£13,501 - £21,000	5.8%
£21,001 - £34,000	6.5%
£34,001 - £43,000	6.8%
£43,001 - £60,000	8.5%
£60,001 - £85,000	9.9%
£85,001 - £100,000	10.5%
£100,001 - £150,000	11.4%
Over £150,000	12.5%

10.2 The normal retirement age for the LGPS is State Pension Age, or age 65 (whichever is the higher).

10.3 With the exception of early retirement for the reason of permanent ill health (to which no age restrictions apply), the earliest age an officer can retire and receive pension benefits is 55.

10.4 Early retirement may be granted in the following circumstances:

Early termination of employment for the reason of redundancy

On ill health grounds

On compassionate grounds

Efficiency of the service

Request to go

10.5 The Council's Redundancy, early retirement and early termination compensation, pension discretions should be consulted as appropriate for further information.

11.0 REDUNDANCY

11.1 In the event of redundancy, i.e. where a post to be vacated would not be replaced, the Council pays a discretionary redundancy payment by applying a 2.2 multiplier to each week's redundancy pay, thus providing up to a maximum of 66 weeks' pay based on contractual pay.

11.2 Officers aged 55 and above will retire in this circumstance and have access to their accrued pension benefit.

11.2 The Council does not augment additional pension membership; however the Officer may elect to purchase additional LGPS pension membership with the discretionary payment. Full details are specified in the Council's Redundancy policy and this should be accessed for full details.

12.0 EARLY RETIREMENT FOR THE REASON OF ILL HEALTH

12.1 To qualify an officer must be confirmed by the Council's Medical Adviser as being permanently unable of discharging the duties of their employment because of ill health or infirmity and have a reduced likelihood of obtaining gainful employment before reaching age 65.

13.0 EARLY RETIREMENT ON COMPASSIONATE GROUNDS

13.1 To qualify an officer would have to have a compelling hardship or difficulty that would most usually be due to caring responsibilities.

14.0 SEVERANCE – EARLY TERMINATION OF EMPLOYMENT IN THE INTEREST OF EFFICIENCY TO THE SERVICE.

14.1 There may be situations that are initiated by management to facilitate organisational change where a post to be vacated would be replaced. The Early Retirement and Early Termination Compensation policy applies and should be consulted.

14.2 Where appropriate, the Council will make a discretionary severance/ compensation payment by applying a 2.2 multiplier to each week's severance pay, thus providing up to a maximum of 66 weeks' pay based on contractual pay.

14.3 Officers aged 55 and above will retire in this circumstance and have access to their accrued pension benefit.

14.4 The Council does not augment additional pension membership; however the Officer may elect to purchase additional LGPS pension membership with the discretionary payment. Full details are specified in the Council's redundancy policy and this should be accessed for full details.

15.0 EARLY PAYMENT OF PENSION BENEFITS ON REQUEST TO LEAVE (ASK TO GO)

15.1 Criteria

Initiated by the employee who must be aged 55 or above. Employee submits a written request to the Head of Service stating grounds and case for consideration and first approval.

The Head of Service and Head of Human Resources will then submit a report for approval by the Managing Director.

The rationale for agreement will include Improvement in organisational efficiency e.g. needs of job, new skills required, need to work in different ways, improved productivity.

An assessment of the strain on the pension fund in relation to the benefit obtained by the Council will be conducted. The strain cost would normally need to be recovered within 2 years of the retirement.

The post will be replaced

15.3 **Benefits**

Under 55

- Not available

Over 55

- Actuarially reduced accrued pension benefits
- No added years are awarded by the Council

The Early Retirement and Early Termination Compensation policy applies and should be consulted.

16.0 **FLEXIBLE RETIREMENT**

16.1 This is subject to agreement by the Council, providing an option for an officer to continue in employment post Local Government Pension Scheme retirement age and to take some or all of their Local Government Pension that is due to them whilst continuing to work on reduced hours or reduced pay. The benefit for the Council is the ability to retain skills, knowledge and experience.

16.2 An abatement of pension will apply if the pay for the new post plus the LGPS pension they receive exceeds the value of the salary for the post from which they retired. London Pension Fund Association (LPFA) should be consulted for advice.

The Early Retirement and Early Termination Compensation policy and flexible retirement policy applies and should be consulted.

17.0 **RE-EMPLOYMENT POST SEVERANCE OR REDUNDANCY**

17.1 The re-employment of officers who were granted early retirement, are receiving their Local Government pension, or have received a severance/ compensation payment, or a redundancy payment is discouraged. The following criteria should be considered. Refer to the Council's policy for early retirement/ early termination compensation for further information.

- What is the nature of the work to be undertaken?
- How similar is the work to that formally undertaken by the individual?
- Is it work that the individual could have been redeployed to?
- The work should be a specific project or task where the skills/ knowledge set required is unique to that individual

- The work should be such that it could not be undertaken by anyone else currently employed in the Council

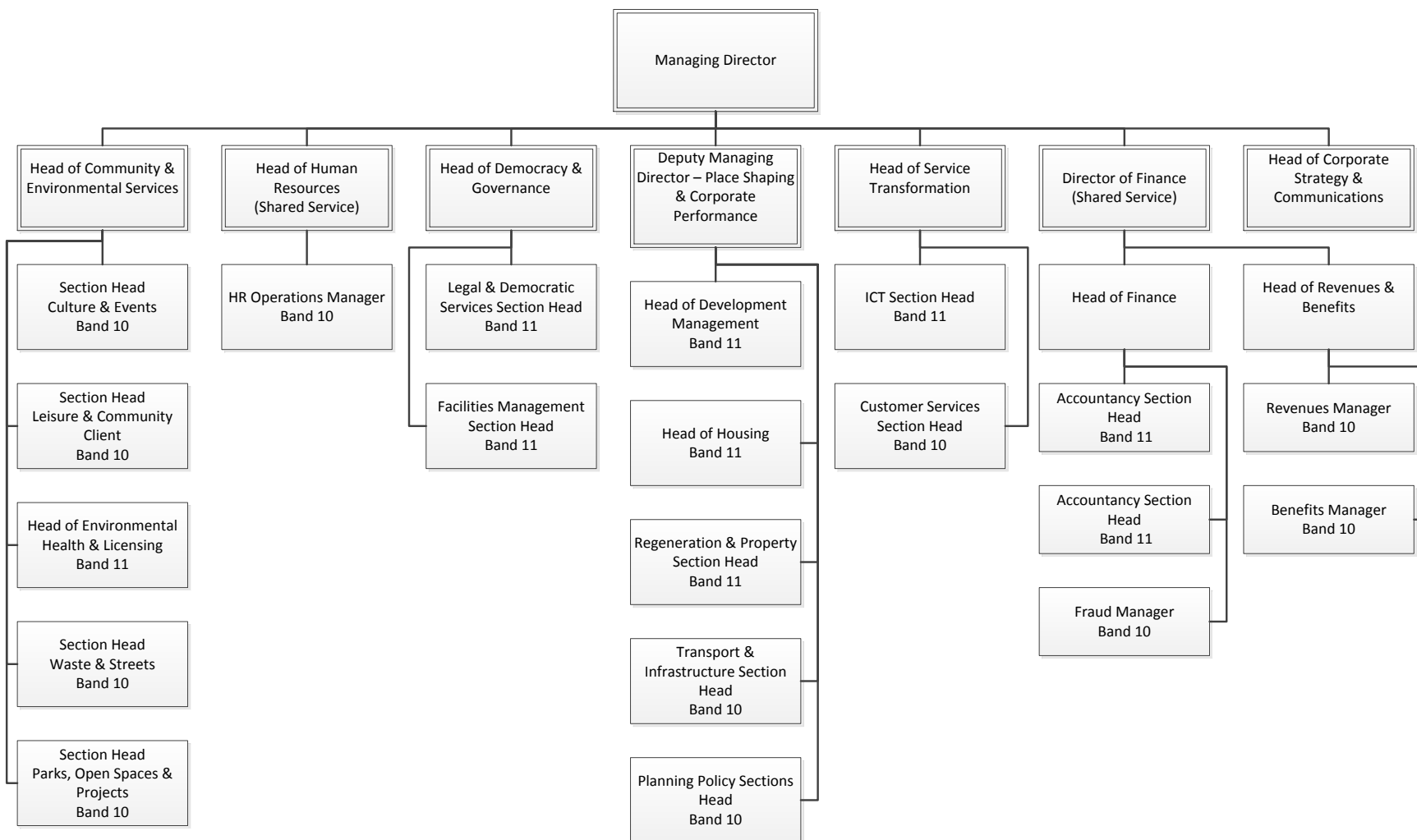
18.0 OFFICERS WHO HAVE RETIRED AND ARE IN RECEIPT OF PENSION

- 18.1 If an officer is in receipt of their Local Government Pension and returns to work for the Council an abatement of their pension will apply if the pay for the new post plus the LGPS pension they receive exceeds the value of the salary for the post from which they retired. LPFA should be consulted for advice.
- 18.2 Flexible retirement subject to agreement by the Council provides an option for an officer to continue in employment post retirement age and to take some or all their pension working on reduced hours or reduced pay. The flexible retirement policy should be accessed for full information.

19.0 PAY RELATIVITY AND LOWER PAID STAFF

- 19.1 The Council is committed to the principle of fairness when setting pay levels for all officers. All jobs are job evaluated meaning each has an analytical score providing its relative value in the organisation and each job is linked to a defined pay model.
- 19.2 The Council defines its lowest paid staff as those whose posts are graded on the lowest grade in the pay model. Pay rates are based on whole time equivalent salaries.
- 19.2 The mean average earnings in the Council are £31,543 giving a ratio with the highest paid officer of 1:4.4. The median earnings in the Council are £30,153 giving a ratio with the highest paid officer of 1:4.6. The lowest earnings in the Council are £19,586 giving a ratio with the highest paid officer of 1:7.
- 19.3 The lowest pay band on the pay model (Band 1) is not in use by Watford Borough Council whose lowest remunerated post is within band 3 paying £9.28 per hour including LW. This is above the national living wage.
- 19.4 Cost of living pay increases in the Council are awarded consistently in line with those negotiated nationally by NJC. An analysis of pay awards for the previous 5 years is provided at appendix 4.

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Job Description - Managing Director		
Corporate Accountabilities	Management Accountabilities	Personal Accountabilities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting the delivery of the Mayor's and the Council's strategies and policies. • Assuring understanding, acceptance and support for the Mayor's Executive role • Transacting the Mayor's, Cabinet and Council decisions • Advising the Mayor • Advising Members • Managing the Officer/Political interface • Aligning corporate values with Political direction • Aligning strategic direction, corporate planning and resource allocation • Budget strategy • Defining / delivering priorities • Structural and Cultural change • Supporting Strategic Partnerships • Leading on performance management • Corporate values • Strategic Direction • Officer/Member interface • Advising Members • Defining/delivering priorities • Structural and cultural change • Budget strategy • Management standards • Strategic Partnerships <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring effective communication – up, down and outwards 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carrying the Mayor and Cabinet agenda through the Management Team • Articulating the Mayor and Cabinet agenda in corporate and service objectives • Delivering these objectives • Giving managerial leadership at all times • Managing the corporate and service management matrix • Alignment of cross-cutting programmes with substantive plans • Setting management standards • Setting the tone and style • Ensuring good communications - up, down and outwards • Challenging departmental absurdities • Resolving conflict • Management of Executive Directors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appraisals • Agreement of objectives • Reviewing performance • Conflict resolution • Service integration • Direction of cross cutting programmes • 'Setting the tone'/style • Tight/ loose management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being a personal aide and confidant to the Mayor. • Leading by example • Promotion of Watford • Promotion of good public relations • Enhancing Watford's influence locally, regionally, nationally and overseas. • Enhancement of personal external profile • Personal accountability for civil emergencies. • Specific 'cross functional' projects or accountabilities <p>major physical developments</p> <p>complex procurement</p> <p>e-government</p> <p>regionalism</p> <p>cultural change</p> <p>local strategic partnership</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR and representation of Watford Borough Council • Good external relations • Enhancement of external profile of Watford Borough Council • Personal development



Job Description / Person Specification

Job Title:	Deputy Managing Director (DMD)
Service/ Department:	Place Shaping & Corporate Performance
Salary band:	TBC (pending Hay evaluation)
<p>Purpose of Role:</p> <p>The Deputy MD's key role is to lead the development and delivery of Watford's overarching spatial vision and strategic programmes. The post will develop, commission and lead the Council's place functions securing a wide range of economic growth outcomes. The DMD will undertake the role of programme executive for key major projects ensuring integrated, joined up delivery that fully reflects the Council's strategic priorities. A significant strategic requirement for this role will be to help shape a new vision for partnership working, engaging with the full range of stakeholders to develop and implement delivery solutions. The DMD is also the Council lead for corporate performance, driving continuous improvement and supporting the achievement of upper quartile performance.</p>	
<p>Key Accountabilities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leadership of delivery of innovative solutions and initiatives that secure smart growth and economic prosperity • Integration of Housing, Property, Planning, Public Realm & Transport services to shape the Town's development in a smart, coherent way in line with the Core Strategy • Working with the Mayor, Portfolio holders and members, help translate political objectives and place based priorities into a coherent, joined up programme of action • Through a mix of external reviews, benchmarking, market testing, target setting, work with the Mayor, the Cabinet and Leadership Team to identify the key areas for service improvement and efficiency savings • Provide strong visible leadership across the Council and with partners which builds a culture of high performance, inspires people and supports the delivery of the Council's strategic objectives • Maximise external funding into major projects and manage Place budgets and resources ensuring they are allocated effectively in order to achieve corporate goals • Act as Deputy to the Managing Director, making a high level contribution to the corporate leadership of the Council • Leadership roles on Joint Venture companies, Property Investment Board and Asset Management Group 	
<p>Responsibilities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Area of Impact: £3b Town wide public & private sector investment programme • People and Organisation Management – direct line management responsibility for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Section Head, Housing ○ Section Head, Planning Policy ○ Section Head, Development Management 	

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Section Head, Regeneration & Property ○ Section Head, Transportation & Infrastructure <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Finance and budgetary control: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Capital Programme ○ Major Project funding ○ Service Revenue Budget
<p>Key Performance Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Managing the Business Corporate KPIs ● Planning performance KPIs ● Major project programme milestones
<p>Key Relationships:</p> <p>The Mayor, Portfolio Holders, Members, Leadership Team, Section Heads, Delivery Partners, Local Strategic Partners, Herts County Council, Herts District Chief Executives, Development sector</p>
<p>Important Notes Relating to Duties:</p> <p>In dealing with any form of contract or tendering procedures on behalf of the councils, the holder of this post is personally responsible for ensuring that s/he:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Is familiar with the relevant requirements of the Council's constitution, Contracts procedures, Rules and Financial Procedure Rules, Officer Code of Conduct and other management guidance that may be given from time to time; - Complies with these formal requirements and related procedures; and - Seeks advice from a more senior officer or an officer with specialism in subject area if in any doubt about the proper course of action.

Person Specification
<p>Knowledge:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A clear understanding of the key components for successful regeneration, including investment conditions and funding regimes, developer requirements, inward investment, planning issues, access to funding and the current policy environment. ● A clear understanding of the issues facing the Watford within its socio-economic, business, cultural and political environment ● Evidence of relevant, continuing professional development in leadership & business management
<p>Skills</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Demonstrable track record of working within a fast paced and performance orientated culture. ● Strong track record of leading, motivating and managing teams to achieve outstanding results. ● Ability to work under pressure and deliver results within a changing environment.

- Evidence of sound judgement in decision making, creative problem solving and flexibility.
- High level relationship management skills, including developing and maintaining successful strategic and delivery partnerships.
- Ability to work with senior politicians, understanding political priorities and the skills to translate them into corporate action
- Excellent communication and presentation skills, with the ability to communicate ideas, issues, systems and procedures successfully at all levels to a variety of audiences.
- Excellent analytical skills, able to interrogate trends and performance data and draw conclusions to influence future service delivery

Experience

- Senior leadership experience in fast moving externally facing organisation with a track record of successful change management and team development
- Significant experience in leading capital investment programmes and/or place based initiatives sufficient to assess programme design, programme delivery and delivery options.
- Substantial experience of implementing project management, governance and performance management regimes.
- Experience of securing major service improvement year on year
- Experience of managing multidisciplinary teams and successfully maintaining a culture of corporate, joined up working

How we work: our generic behaviours/attitudes framework against which our performance is measured

Clusters	Key Themes	Level needed* (1 – 4)
We deliver results	Manage performance	4
	Manage resources	4
	Manage change	4
We set an example	Fairness	4
	Integrity	4
	Accountability	4
	Image	4
We develop and grow	Personal development	4
	Challenge	4
	Innovation	4

We work together	Working with customers and colleagues	4
	Communication	4
	Leadership	4

How to map the 'How we work' levels to posts

Payband	Up to Band 5	Band 6 - 9	Band 10 + / Chief Officers
Do not manage staff	1 or 2	2	4
Manage staff	3	3	4

Politically Restricted Posts

Under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 (as amended), posts that are either specified under that Act or posts that are defined as sensitive under the Act because the post holder is required to either give advice on a regular basis to the executive or any committee of the Council, or speak on behalf of the Council on a regular basis to journalists or broadcasters are 'Politically Restricted'. This means that the post holder is restricted in terms of public political activity. For further information with regard to this please contact Human Resources.

This post is politically restricted.

Job Share:

Job share will not be considered for this post.

Equal Opportunities:

The Council fully supports the terms of The Equality Act 2010. We are an equal opportunities employer and do not discriminate on any grounds. We want a diverse workforce which reflects our community and welcome applications from everyone regardless of age, disability, sex, race, religion or belief, sexual orientation, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity and marital or civil partnership status.

We are also committed to improving opportunities for people with disabilities, and are a registered 'Two Ticks' employer. If you have a disability and demonstrate that you fulfil the essential person specification criteria for the role on your application form, you will be invited for an interview. If you feel that you could carry out this post with some adjustments, please let us know. If you require particular arrangements made for interview etc (e.g. signing, access), please indicate this on your application form.

Job description:	Name	Date
Written by (Manager)	Manny Lewis	June 2016
Reviewed by (Human Resources)	Cathy Watson	June 2016

Job Description – Director of Finance (employed by Three Rivers District Council)

Job Title:	Director of Finance		Post Reference No:
Post Number:			RG0101
Service/ Department:	Corporate Resources and Governance	Section:	Finance
Grade:	Chief Officer		
Location:	You will normally be based at Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth and Watford Town Hall, Watford or any such other place of employment within the remit of the service as may be required.		
Hours per week:	37 hours per week. The post holder is expected to work the hours required to meet the demands of the role.		
Driver's licence requirements:	Casual. The post holder will be expected to travel as necessary to achieve the requirements of the role.		
Responsible to:	Joint reporting to Chief Executive Three Rivers District Council and Managing Director, Watford Borough Council		
Responsible for:	Direct management responsibility for Finance and Revenue and Benefits; relationship role for Human Resources and ICT (which are directly managed by Watford)		
Purpose of Role:			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To act as Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council statutory, section 151, Officer providing advice to members and senior management on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Financial Planning Financial Control Financial reporting • To lead and manage the Finance and Revenue and Benefits Service 			
Important Notes Relating to Duties:			
<p>In dealing with any form of contract or tendering procedures on behalf of the councils, the holder of this post is personally responsible for ensuring that she/he:-</p> <p>Is familiar with the relevant requirements of the councils' constitutions, Contracts procedures, Rules and Financial Procedure Rules, Code of Official Conduct and other management guidance that may be given from time to time;</p> <p>Complies with these formal requirements and related procedures; and</p> <p>Seeks advice from a more Senior Officer if in any doubt about the proper course of action.</p>			

KEY ACCOUNTABILITIES

- To act as the joint statutory section 151, Officer to both Councils, ensuring an even spread of time is available to each Authority. In this role you will provide key strategic and financial advice to both authorities whilst recognising that they are separate and independent bodies and may well have different aims and priorities.
- To play a key role in the successful achievement of major regeneration projects at both authorities.
- To provide accurate medium term financial strategies to both authorities to enable future service delivery to be planned in a controlled environment.
- To identify opportunities to realise efficiency savings over the short and medium term which could include in house re-structuring or potential outsourced, partnership arrangements.
- To play an active role in guiding and advising the Senior Management Teams and key elected Members in achieving the vision of best performing authorities.
- To chair and coordinate the Management Team meetings
- To oversee the operation of Revenues and Benefits and Financial Services to both authorities. This role will necessitate a continuous review of both services to ensure that they remain fit for purpose, provide value for money and strive to be 'best in class' service providers. Every opportunity should be taken to harmonise processes within the overall constraint that the two authorities may wish to apply different policies.
- To be a lead client officer for the Internal Audit Service provided by Herts. County Council and the provision of an ICT outsourced service (Capita);
- To provide impartial advice to elected members at all key decision taking and scrutiny committees.
- To represent both councils at countywide and national forums.
- To undertake any other duties, commensurate with the grade and seniority of the post, as may reasonably be required.

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS:

- The budget process, including account closing, budget setting, Council tax levy and external audit is completed on time and within specified procedures;
- Accurate, timely and detailed budget information is provided for members and senior management
- Achievement of sustainable budgets for both Councils
- On going review of cost base for both Councils, achieving increased value for money

Job Description – Head of Service

<i>Corporate Accountabilities</i>	<i>Management Accountabilities</i>	<i>Personal Accountabilities</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring customer focus through high quality service delivery • Maintaining capacity • Specific support for corporate projects • Specific delivery of corporate priorities • Advising Members • Service standards and policies • Communications up, down and outwards • Liaison and integration • External partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research and intelligence • Service and substantive plans • Budgetary planning • Organising: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Structure and staffing • Systems and operational efficiency • Quality assurance • Controlling: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance management • Budget monitoring • Staff control and discipline • Leading: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Managerial leadership • Professional leadership • Motivation of staff • Staff training and development • Resourcing: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service budgets • Achieving best value 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PR and representation of Watford • Good external relations • Major service projects • Service innovation • Enhancement of professional profile and promotion of Watford • Personal development

Appendix 2

Chief Officer pay structure - Watford Borough Council - 1st April 2017

New Band (incorporating a 1% pay increase)	Spinal Column Point	New Basic Salary
Heads of Service(incorporating a 1% pay increase)	1	68,309
	2	69,415
	3	70,908
	4	72,513
Heads of Service + (incorporating a 1% pay increase)	1	70,835
	2	71,578
	3	73,675
	4	75,092
Director of Finance (incorporating a 1% pay increase)	1	77,631
	2	80,375
	3	82,987
	4	85,664
	5	88,592
	6	91,572
Deputy Managing Director	Spot Salary	100,000
Managing	Spot Salary	137,821
Director (no award)		

Appendix 3

Pay Scale for Watford Borough Council 2017-18

Band	SCP	Per hour ex LW	Per week ex LW	Per mth ex LW	p.a. ex LW	Basic (Inc LW)
Band 1	6	£7.78	£287.94	£1,251.17	£15,014	£15,854
	7	£7.83	£289.88	£1,259.58	£15,115	£15,955
	8	£7.90	£292.39	£1,270.50	£15,246	£16,086
	9	£7.97	£294.86	£1,281.25	£15,375	£16,215
Band 2	10	£8.09	£299.43	£1,301.08	£15,613	£16,453
	11	£8.19	£303.15	£1,317.25	£15,807	£16,647
	12	£8.36	£309.21	£1,343.58	£16,123	£16,963
	13	£8.55	£316.27	£1,374.25	£16,491	£17,331
	14	£8.70	£321.83	£1,398.42	£16,781	£17,621
Band 3	15	£8.85	£327.41	£1,422.67	£17,072	£17,912
	16	£9.03	£334.06	£1,451.58	£17,419	£18,259
	17	£9.21	£340.83	£1,481.00	£17,772	£18,612
	18	£9.37	£346.55	£1,505.83	£18,070	£18,910
	19	£9.72	£359.51	£1,562.17	£18,746	£19,586
Band 4	20	£10.07	£372.63	£1,619.17	£19,430	£20,270
	21	£10.44	£386.21	£1,678.17	£20,138	£20,978
	22	£10.71	£396.24	£1,721.75	£20,661	£21,501
	23	£11.02	£407.88	£1,772.33	£21,268	£22,108
	24	£11.38	£421.19	£1,830.17	£21,962	£22,802
Band 5	25	£11.74	£434.54	£1,888.17	£22,658	£23,498
	26	£12.13	£448.73	£1,949.83	£23,398	£24,238
	27	£12.53	£463.61	£2,014.50	£24,174	£25,014
	28	£12.94	£478.76	£2,080.33	£24,964	£25,804
	29	£13.45	£497.69	£2,162.58	£25,951	£26,791
Band 6	30	£13.90	£514.40	£2,235.17	£26,822	£27,662
	31	£14.34	£530.62	£2,305.67	£27,668	£28,508
	32	£14.76	£546.29	£2,373.75	£28,485	£29,325
	33	£15.20	£562.36	£2,443.58	£29,323	£30,163
	34	£15.63	£578.28	£2,512.75	£30,153	£30,993
Band 7	35	£15.96	£590.40	£2,565.42	£30,785	£31,625
	36	£16.38	£606.05	£2,633.42	£31,601	£32,441
	37	£16.84	£623.02	£2,707.17	£32,486	£33,326
	38	£17.33	£641.26	£2,786.42	£33,437	£34,277
	39	£17.90	£662.37	£2,878.17	£34,538	£35,378
Band 8	40	£18.37	£679.75	£2,953.67	£35,444	£36,284
	41	£18.86	£697.68	£3,031.58	£36,379	£37,219
	42	£19.34	£715.46	£3,108.83	£37,306	£38,146
	43	£19.82	£733.31	£3,186.42	£38,237	£39,077
	44	£20.31	£751.34	£3,264.75	£39,177	£40,017
Band 9	45	£20.76	£768.22	£3,338.08	£40,057	£40,897
	46	£21.26	£786.78	£3,418.75	£41,025	£41,865

	47	£21.75	£804.85	£3,497.25	£41,967	£42,807
	48	£22.24	£822.72	£3,574.92	£42,899	£43,739
	49	£22.71	£840.40	£3,651.75	£43,821	£44,661
Band 10	50	£23.20	£858.45	£3,730.17	£44,762	£45,602
	51	£23.69	£876.54	£3,808.75	£45,705	£46,545
	52	£24.18	£894.64	£3,887.42	£46,649	£47,489
	53	£24.67	£912.90	£3,966.75	£47,601	£48,441
	54	£25.17	£931.33	£4,046.83	£48,562	£49,402
Band 11	55	£25.67	£949.66	£4,126.50	£49,518	£50,358
	56	£26.19	£968.90	£4,210.08	£50,521	£51,361
	57	£26.69	£987.58	£4,291.25	£51,495	£52,335
	58	£27.19	£1,005.99	£4,371.25	£52,455	£53,295
	59	£27.70	£1,024.80	£4,453.00	£53,436	£54,276
Band 11 Extended Pay Band*					£54,660	£55,500
					£56,160	£57,000
					£57,660	£58,500
					£59,160	£60,000

NB: London Fringe Weighting Allowance: £840 per annum

*Progression to these pay points is discretionary and subject to sign-off by the Senior Officer Pay Panel

Essential Car User (where applicable): Lump sum allowance

Up to 999 cc: £846.00 per annum

1000 cc and above: £963.00 per annum

Stand by duty allowance (where applicable) : £27.90 per session

Appendix 4

Summary of JNC/ NJC national pay awards previous 5 years

2013 1.0% pay award

2014 No national or local pay award

2015 2.2% pay award

2016 1.0% pay award

2017 1.0% pay award

* note that there are no posts in the Council that are remunerated below spinal column point 15 – (£9.28 inc LW).

Current National Living wage rate (over 25s):

Living wage £7.50 per hour (increasing to £7.83 in April 2018)

Current National Minimum Wage Rates:

25 years+	£7.50 per hour (increasing to £7.83 in April 2018)
21-24 years	£7.05 per hour (increasing to £7.38 in April 2018)
18 – 20 yrs	£5.60 per hour (increasing to £5.90 in April 2018)
16 – 17 yrs	£4.05 per hour (increasing to £4.20 in April 2018)
Apprentice*	£3.50 per hour (increasing to £3.70 in April 2018)

*applies to under 19, or in the first full year of apprenticeship. Apprentices aged 19 or over in their second year of apprenticeship must receive the national minimum wage or national living wage rate their age entitles them to.

Report to Council – 30 January 2018

Report of Standards Committee – 21 November 2017

Standards Committee met on 21 November 2017. The minutes are published on the Council's website.

The following Members were present at the meeting:

Present: Councillors Bashir, Dhindsa, Martins, Scudder and Williams

The following was a recommendation to Council:

4. Compulsory Training

The Democratic Services Manager introduced the report and explained that the committee were asked to consider recommending to council that annual training would be compulsory for Development Management and Licensing Committees rather than every four years as was the current practice. Following the annual scrutiny survey it had also been suggested that scrutiny training be compulsory. The Member Development Group had considered this and suggested every two years.

The Head of Democracy and Governance commented that particularly with regards to Development Management there were regular changes in the law along with new guidance and policies. The senior managers in this area considered that annual training would be more beneficial to members in order to keep knowledge current.

The committee discussed the report and felt that the training should include updates on what had been happening in the town both for development management and licensing over the previous year. Officers reassured the committee that if the proposals were agreed at Council then the dates for the training would be set well in advance to give members plenty of notice.

The Committee felt that scrutiny was an important part of the council's work and that regular training would be beneficial.

RESOLVED:

1. To recommend to council annual compulsory training for those councillors sitting or

substituting on the Development Management and Licensing Committees.

2. To recommend to council compulsory training for those councillors sitting or substituting on scrutiny committees which should be renewed every two years.

PART A

Report to: Standards Committee
Date of meeting: 21 November 2017
Report of: Democratic Services Manager
Title: Compulsory Training for Members

1.0 **Summary**

1.1 Currently there is a requirement for members that in order to sit on or substitute on the Development Management and Licensing committees members are required to have received training.

1.2 Currently members must refresh their training every four years. It is suggested due to the pace of change that the training is refreshed annually.

2.0 **Risks**

2.1

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(Treat, tolerate, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating (the combination of severity and likelihood)
Councillors do not have training	Insufficient numbers to sit on the committee	More than one compulsory training date will be offered with as much advance notice as possible	Treat	6

3.0 **Recommendations**

- 3.1 For members to agree and recommend to council annual compulsory training for those councillors sitting or substituting on the Development Management and Licensing Committees.
- 3.2 To recommend to council compulsory training for those councillors sitting or substituting on scrutiny committees which should be renewed every two years.

Contact Officer:

For further information on this report please contact: Caroline Harris,
Democratic Services Manager
telephone extension: 8372 email: caroline.harris@watford.gov.uk

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

4.0 **Detailed proposal**

- 4.1 Development Management Committee
 - 4.1.2 Currently members are required to have received development management training in order to be able to sit or substitute on the development management committee (DMC).
 - 4.1.3 The training lasts for four years presently.
 - 4.1.4 Due to electing by thirds it means that development management training tends to be run annually in order to cover any new councillors. It is proposed to make development management training compulsory annually. The annual training would cover development management basics, probity issues, viability and look back over the year to see what issues have arisen. The pace of change in recent years in both planning legislation, government guidance and case law would support the case for an annual refresh for members.
 - 4.1.5 The Member Development Group considered training for the Development Management Committee and recommended that training should be compulsory annually to keep up with changes in legislation.
- 4.2 Licensing Committee
 - 4.2.1 Currently members are required to have received licensing training in order to be able

to sit or substitute on the licensing committee. This includes the licensing act and training covering taxis.

- 4.2.2 Members are strongly encouraged by officers to renew their training every four years.
- 4.2.3 Again, due to electing by thirds, licensing training tends to be held every year in order to include any newly elected councillors. The licensing committee is the largest committee with 15 members in order to provide sufficient members to attend licensing sub-committees.
- 4.2.4 It is proposed to make training compulsory annually to ensure that members are up to date with current legislation and any developments that may have happened during the year. Sex establishment training may only be required every three years but this could be incorporated into that year's training when the policy is due to be reviewed.
- 4.2.5 The Member Development Group considered training for the Licensing Committee and recommended that training should be compulsory. They suggested a mix of internal and external training providers and the licensing training should include elements about place shaping.
- 4.3 Scrutiny training
 - 4.3.1 Scrutiny training is run annually and for the last two years has been provided by the Committee and Scrutiny Officer.
 - 4.3.2 It was suggested in the annual scrutiny survey that:
"Scrutiny is vital, but I reflect whether all members realise its importance, and actually understand what it is. I know that there has been scrutiny training in the past, but wonder whether like certain other committees, attendance at training should be a prerequisite of being on a scrutiny panel, particularly O&S and OSSP."
 - 4.3.3 The Member Development Group considered scrutiny training and recommended that it should be compulsory for members to undertake scrutiny training in order to sit on a scrutiny committee and that this should be renewed every two years.
 - 4.3.4 The Member Development Group also recommended specific training for scrutiny chairs and particularly task group chairs so that they know what is expected and can ensure that the task group remains focused on the scope.
- 4.4 Compulsory training
 - 4.4.1 The Managing Director has said that any compulsory training sessions should be run over two dates as not all members may be available on one day. Group Leaders should also be consulted on any compulsory training.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

5.1.1 There is a training budget for member development of £10,000pa. If external training providers are used for each compulsory session (run on two dates) this will take up a proportion of the training budget. However, providers will be compared to obtain the best price and some training will be able to be delivered in-house by officers.

5.1.2 The Head of Finance comments that costs should be contained within existing budgets in the first instance. If extra budget is required, then a budget growth bid will need to be made at budget setting.

5.2 **Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)**

5.2.1 The Head of Democracy and Governance comments that it is recognised good practice for members to be required to have training for Development Management and Licensing before they participate in those committees. Any decision to increase the regularity of such training will need to be approved by council.

5.3 **Equalities/Human Rights**

5.3.1 More than one date will be offered for compulsory training. Training is generally held in the evening as it is recognised that a large number of members work and would be unable to attend in the day. As much notice as possible will be given to members of the forthcoming dates.

4.4 **Staffing**

4.4.1 N/A

4.5 **Accommodation**

4.5.1 N/A

4.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

4.6.1 N/A

4.7 **Sustainability**

4.7.1 N/A