

COUNCIL

19 March 2019

Present: Councillor R Martins (Chairman)
Councillor A Khan (Vice-Chair)
Councillors P Taylor, S Bashir, N Bell, S Bolton, S Cavinder,
K Collett, J Connal, K Crout, J Dhindsa, A Dychton, J Fahmy,
A Grimston, K Hastrick, M Hofman, P Jeffree, J Johnson,
S Johnson, P Kloss, R Laird, B Mauthoor, M Parker, G Saffery,
D Scudder, N Shah (for minute numbers 63 to 77), I Sharpe,
R Smith, N Steele, I Stotesbury, M Turmaine, D Walford,
M Watkin and T Williams

Also present: Mavis Tyrwhitt and Norman Tyrwhitt, Freemen of the
Borough

Officers: Managing Director
Head of Democracy and Governance
Deputy Managing Director and Director of Place Shaping and
Corporate Performance
Democratic Services Manager
Interim Communications and Engagement Manager
Mayor's Political Assistant
Committee and Scrutiny Officer

63 Attack in Christchurch, New Zealand

At the start of the meeting the Chairman asked all councillors, officers and guests to remain standing. He asked everyone to join him for a minute's silence to remember those who had died in the attacks on two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand.

64 Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hamid and Mills.

65 Disclosure of Interests

There were no disclosures of interest.

66 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meetings held on 23 January (Extraordinary Council) and 29 January 2019 were submitted and signed.

67 **Official Announcements**

Past Mayor Sybil Tuckwood

The Chairman stated that the council was saddened to hear that Sybil Tuckwood had passed away. She had been Civic Mayor in 2001/02 and Mayoress for Sheila Rosser in 1997/98 during the Borough's 75th Charter Anniversary year.

The Chairman invited Councillors Bell and Williams to speak.

Councillor Bell said that Sybil Tuckwood had been a councillor for Woodside and then Meriden. He was sure many would remember her. When she was Mayor homelessness had been her theme for the year and she had chosen New Hope Trust and the GROW as her charities. She was a distinctive figure with an unmistakeable voice, a well-liked person who was always smiling. He wished to pay tribute to a great character.

Councillor Williams commented that he endorsed everything Councillor Bell had said. Sybil was a much respected councillor, Mayoress and Mayor. He had first become aware of Sybil when she was Mayoress to Sheila Rosser as Mayor. They had both brought great fun to the roles with beaming smiles. They had deserved an encore which happened a few years later when Sybil became Mayor and Sheila was her Mayoress. He quoted her comments about the Sanctuary, part of New Hope Trust, when she had become Mayor. Words that were still relevant today. She would be greatly missed. He asked Councillor Bell to pass on his group's condolences to Sybil's family. Her passing was a tremendous loss for Watford.

The Chairman added that he wished to express his and the council's condolences to Councillor Crout on the loss of his partner Jerry. The thoughts of everyone were with him at this time.

The Chairman asked everyone present to stand and join him in a minute's silence of remembrance.

Councillors standing down

The Chairman invited Councillor Collett to speak.

Councillor Collett said that firstly she wished to acknowledge the Chairman and the way he had conducted himself with respect and dignity throughout his year.

Councillor Collett stated that she wanted to say goodbye to fellow councillors who were standing down at the end of this municipal year. They had been a wonderful group of councillors. There were two people she wished to single out. Councillor Jackie Connal was elected to the council on the same day as her and Jackie had become a dear friend, not just a colleague. Jackie had been a great supporter of Fairtrade, Watford Museum and her constituents. She was a kind and loving woman. She said to Jackie that she would be missed. She had been a marvellous councillor.

The next person Councillor Collett wanted to speak about was Councillor Stephen Cavinder, her fellow ward councillor who she would miss. He had been like a rock for her. They were often seen together. He was the type of councillor who loved his community. As Portfolio Holder he had driven her to different events and meetings. He loved meeting new people. He had attended all the diversity events and was a great supporter. Whenever she took him to an event he would join that group. He was a great organiser who organised the Liberal Democrat group. Everyone needed someone like Councillor Cavinder in their life. Stephen was a great role model for all councillors. He would be dearly missed.

Councillor Collett thanked all retiring councillors for their work.

Councillor Bell added that on behalf of the Labour Group he wished to pay tribute to Councillor Jackie Connal. He still expected her to attend future events. Everyone wished her well for the future.

Related Party Transactions

The Chairman reminded councillors that some of them had a related party transaction form that needed to be completed and returned to the Head of Democracy and Governance this evening.

Chairman's Charity Fund Raising Quiz, Reception and Donations

The Chairman thanked everyone who attended his recent events or gave a donation. Over £5,000 had been raised for his charities.

68

Mayor's Report

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

The Mayor stated that it had been a privilege to work with the Chairman, Councillor Martins during his first year as Elected Mayor. They had been to numerous community engagements together. He concurred with his deputy's comments about the councillors standing down, all of whom would be missed especially 'Aunty' Jackie.

The Chairman invited Members to indicate whether they wished to ask a question of the Mayor. Councillors Bashir, Turmaine, Williams, Smith, Dhindsa and Cavinder indicated that they wished to ask questions.

- a) Councillor Bashir referred to the Watford Junction situation and the car park exit. The report included a reference to possibly opening up the exit on to St Albans Road; the exact location was not clear. He wondered whether consideration could be given to an exit via The Range.

The Mayor said that as councillors were aware there had been roadworks in that area. Often when people were stuck in traffic jams they started tweeting, including to him. Discussions had been held with highways. The existing exit on to St Albans Road had been used at times but it required marshalls to be on duty. The council was in discussion with various people about the redevelopment of that whole site. He agreed that the current situation with the car park was not good enough. There was a masterplan and one of the key aspects was improvements to pedestrian access with a new footbridge to Watford Junction, opening up access to Tudor ward. It would require significant investment from Homes England and meetings had been held to try and progress this. The council recognised there needed to be an improvement.

- b) Councillor Turmaine said that efforts were welcomed to reduce anti-social behaviour in the town. However he wished to raise concerns about reported increase in drug dealing and petty crime in West Watford, both by residents and local business owners. He asked the Mayor whether he was aware of the situation and if it was related to policing work being undertaken in the town to reduce levels of crime in the town centre. In addition he enquired if the Mayor would raise it during his discussions with the Police.

The Mayor advised that he was aware of anti-social behaviour and drug dealing in the area. Chater School had contacted him about issues in the area. He had been in contact with the school and there had been an improvement. There was increased policing across the town. It was the number one issue he always raised with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Chief Inspector. He asked them about increasing the capacity of the local police service. He advised that he had been informed of

complaints when people dial 101 and the length of time to get a response. He stressed that the level of crime in Watford was very low. The town centre was seeing a significant increase in policing but he did not want this to disperse the problem further out from the centre and therefore there was an increase in policing across the town.

The Mayor added that the following day he would be holding a Facebook Live session and had invited the Chief Inspector along to respond to questions with him.

- c) Councillor Williams referred to a motion in November 2004 by Jill Jenkins and seconded by himself. The motion urged the council to support Fairtrade and become a Fairtrade town. He was aware that the town's Fairtrade status was due for renewal later this month. He asked the Mayor to confirm that Watford Borough Council continued to support the Fairtrade ethos throughout the town.

The Mayor responded that he was happy to endorse Fairtrade. The Fairtrade Foundation did a great deal of work to ensure that people across the world received a good price for their products as well as investment in their health and education. He wished to pay tribute to the Chairman and Councillor Connal for the work they had done for Fairtrade in the town. Councillor Connal had contributed to getting the council to change its policy and ensure that Fairtrade products were available. The group did fantastic work and he was always happy to attend their events. He considered it important the council continued to support Fairtrade.

- d) Councillor Smith commented about Watford Central Leisure Centre. Whilst he had been there for a meeting he had a plastic water bottle. When he had finished with it he had noticed that there were no facilities in any of the public spaces to recycle it. He asked the Mayor if he agreed that the council should encourage companies who it outsourced its premises and facilities to, to have easily accessed recycling facilities.

The Mayor agreed and that there were a number of schemes being put in place. The Portfolio Holder for waste was working on Watford becoming a plastic free town. More water fountains were to be provided in parks, Cassiobury Park and Oxhey Park. These were in addition to on-street recycling; progress was being made in the High Street. The council was working with its partners including SLM, Everyone Active.

- e) Councillor Dhindsa said that he was pleased the council had agreed to spend £400,000 on St Albans Road. In the Labour amendment to the budget this year, the group asked for money for Vicarage Road and

Whippendell Road. He asked the Mayor if he could advise when the council would be spending money on Vicarage Road and Whippendell Road. Both roads looked very tired. Vicarage Road was a gateway to Watford for the premiership football club.

The Mayor replied that he would welcome working with Councillor Dhindsa. He felt that Callowland had benefitted from a proactive councillor who had held many meetings with officers and himself in order to work out a plan for moving forward and discussing with local officers. The council had excellent officers, including the Transport and Infrastructure Section Head who was very keen to work with councillors.

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Dhindsa to come forward and have the discussions. He wanted all of the major roads across the town to be roads that everyone could be proud of.

- f) Councillor Cavinder referred to a motion tabled by Councillor Williams in January 2017 requiring the county council to address safety concerns about the traffic using the A405. Following this he had attended County Hall to present a petition on behalf of the local residents. Despite a feasibility study by Kingswood Residents Association, paid for through a grant from the Police and Crime Commissioner, and continual lobbying at County Hall the county council had ignored concerns. He added that the county council was in the process of making some subtle changes at the entrance and exit to the Vue Cinema complex. The changes were hardly noticeable and would have little effect. He asked if the Mayor would join him in condemning this outrageous and unnecessary use of taxpayers' money and to ask the county council to address the safety concerns that local residents continued to experience.

The Mayor said he wished to pay tribute to Councillors Cavinder and Williams who had campaigned on this issue for a long time. He commented that residents regularly raised highways issues with him. There appeared to be a clear disconnect between the county council and local residents on highways matters, including this location and the Dome roundabout. Residents had a strong view that something should happen, often supported by the local council and councillors, but there seemed to be an intransigence or inflexibility by the county council to make these changes. He agreed with Councillor Cavinder about the £70,000 spent near the Vue Cinema. It was difficult to work out what that money had been spent on and appeared to be a waste of taxpayers' money. Ultimately the county council needed to listen to local residents and be prepared to respond.

69 **Questions by Members of the Council under Council Procedure Rule 10.0**

No questions had been received.

70 **Questions by Members of the Public under Council Procedure Rule 11.0**

No questions had been received.

71 **Petitions presented under Council Procedure Rule 12.0**

No petitions had been received.

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

There was no urgent business.

73 **Corporate Plan 2019/2020 including revised corporate priorities**

Council received a report from the Cabinet meeting held on 11 February 2019 which had considered the council's new Corporate Plan and priorities.

RESOLVED –

that the Corporate Plan 2019/20 be approved.

74 **Council Tax - Changes to long term empty homes premium**

Council received a report of the Revenues Manager which had originally been considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 11 February 2019.

RESOLVED –

that the proposed changes to the Council Tax long term empty homes premium be adopted with effect from 1 April 2019.

75 **Council Pay Policy Statement**

Council received a report of the Head of Human Resources including the Council Pay Policy Statement February 2019.

RESOLVED –

that the Council Pay Policy Statement be approved.

76 **Local Development Scheme: Timetable for the Watford Local Plan Review 2018-2021**

Council received a report of the Spatial Planning Manager which included the Local Development Scheme timetable.

RESOLVED –

1. that the Local Development Scheme be adopted.
2. that, minor updates to the Local Development Scheme can be made by the Deputy Managing Director in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development.

77 **Constitution Review**

Council received a report of the Democratic Services Manager which provided the results of the constitution review carried out by Councillor Bolton. The proposals had been discussed at Constitution Working Party on 5 February 2019.

RESOLVED –

1. that Major Projects Board be renamed as Major Projects Forum.
2. that the number of meetings of the Major Projects Forum be reduced from four to three per year.
3. that the terms of reference for Major Projects Forum be amended as set out in Appendix B to the report.
4. that the Highways Forum be abolished.
5. that the revised terms of reference for the Planning Policy Advisory Group be approved, as set out in Appendix C to the report.
6. that Planning Policy Advisory Group be scheduled to take place quarterly.
7. that the revised terms of reference for the Housing Policy Advisory Group be approved, as set out in Appendix D to the report.

8. that the Licensing Committee and Licensing Committee (Licensing Act 2003) be combined into one Licensing Committee to cover all areas of Licensing.
9. that Budget Panel be renamed Finance Scrutiny Committee, retaining a membership of nine councillors.
10. that Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel and Community Safety Partnership Task Group be abolished and their work to be covered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
11. Overview and Scrutiny Committee to meet nine times per year to cover its increased remit.
12. that three non-politically balanced task groups be set up per year, chaired by different councillors.
13. that a Health and Wellbeing Forum be established with a membership of nine to be appointed at Annual Council.
14. that a Sustainability Forum be established with a membership of nine to be appointed at Annual Council.
15. that the following bullet point be added to the Constitution to help to clarify what negates a motion when an amendment is proposed
 - An amendment must not:
 - 1) be a direct negative of a motion or
 - 2) seek to introduce into the motion a new issue unrelated to the subject dealt with in the motion.
16. that the revised role profile for the Chairman be agreed, as set out in Appendix A to the report.
17. that a new way of selecting the Vice Chairman of the Council be adopted as set out in paragraph 5.11.4.3 of the report.
18. that the revised Contract Procedure Rules be approved, as set out in Appendix E to the report.
19. that Digital Watford Board be abolished.
20. that the Leader of the Main Opposition Group be allowed a supplementary question during the Mayor's report at Full Council meetings.

Motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13.0

Council was informed that three motions had been received.

Motion 1

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Asif Khan and seconded by Councillor Karen Collett

“Charter Against Modern Slavery

This council believes that modern slavery is one of the great evils of our time and that it needs to be stamped out. In order to do this, and reflect the views of the people of the town, we will sign the charter against modern slavery as mentioned below.

Watford Borough Council will:

1. Train its corporate procurement team to understand modern slavery through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply’s (CIPS) online course on Ethical Procurement and Supply.
2. Require its contractors to comply fully with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, wherever it applies, with contract termination as a potential sanction for noncompliance.
3. Challenge any abnormally low-cost tenders to ensure they do not rely upon the potential contractor practising modern slavery.
4. Highlight to its suppliers that contracted workers are free to join a trade union and are not to be treated unfairly for belonging to one.
5. Publicise its whistle-blowing system for staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
6. Require its tendered contractors to adopt a whistle-blowing policy which enables their staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.
7. Review its contractual spending regularly to identify any potential issues with modern slavery.
8. Highlight for its suppliers any risks identified concerning modern slavery and refer them to the relevant agencies to be addressed.
9. Refer for investigation via the National Crime Agency’s national referral mechanism any of its contractors identified as a cause for concern regarding modern slavery.
10. Report publicly on the implementation of this policy annually.”

Members debated the motion.

On being put to Council the motion was **AGREED**.

RESOLVED –

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7. Review its contractual spending regularly to identify any potential issues with modern slavery.
8. Highlight for its suppliers any risks identified concerning modern slavery and refer them to the relevant agencies to be addressed.
9. Refer for investigation via the National Crime Agency's national referral mechanism any of its contractors identified as a cause for concern regarding modern slavery.
10. Report publicly on the implementation of this policy annually.

Motion 2

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Matt Turmaine and seconded by Councillor Jagtar Singh Dhindsa

“The Windrush generation of migrants came to the United Kingdom on the Empire Windrush between 1948 and 1971. Hundreds of thousands of people have made their homes here to build a better life and contribute to our country.

In 1971 they were granted indefinite leave to remain. However, as a result of government legislation in 2012, children who had come to the UK but had no documentation were subject to administrative chaos and considered to be appropriate for deportation.

The injustice that some of the Windrush generation have been subject to, through no fault of their own, has come to the fore again with the recent deporting of people and the Commons Public Accounts Committee accusing the government of complacency in dealing with this issue and that it had “failed to take ownership.”

Immigration into the UK and specifically from the Windrush generation, has brought massive benefits to our National Health Service, public services and the economy in general.

This council agrees to write to the Home Secretary via the Elected Mayor to:

Oppose the criminalisation of Windrush families.

Introduce support for the Celebrate Windrush Day.

Call on government to hold a public enquiry into the treatment of Windrush victims.

Offer support and signposting to any Watford residents impacted by the crisis.”

Members debated the motion.

On being put to Council the motion was **AGREED**.

RESOLVED –

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Offer support and signposting to any Watford residents impacted by the crisis.

Motion 3

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Sharpe and seconded by the Mayor

“Watford Borough Council:

Welcomes the recent announcement by West Hertfordshire Hospitals Trust reiterating its position in favour of retaining acute and emergency services at Watford General Hospital and potentially providing new and improved clinical facilities at the hospital, benefitting NHS patients in Watford and across West Hertfordshire.

Reiterates its view that Watford General Hospital is the best, most accessible and sustainable location available in West Hertfordshire for providing these services, with good public and private transport links and located within an urban area.

Opposes continued attempts to promote an alternative site for these services, believing that this fruitless quest will merely delay much-needed improvements, inevitably involve relocation to a less-accessible site and mean the decline of Watford General Hospital.

Recognises that its past co-operation with the hospital has played a significant part in retaining acute and emergency services at Watford General Hospital, including:

- Construction of Thomas Sawyer Way, which has improved emergency response times and ensured the hospital is more accessible to patients and staff living outside Watford.
- Use of council land to enable hospital improvements – leading to the recent grant of planning permission for a new car park serving the hospital, which in turn enables the existing car park land to be used for improved hospital facilities.

Without such decisions the retention of an acute and emergency hospital in Watford would have been in jeopardy.

Reiterates its commitment to working with West Hertfordshire Hospitals Trust and other relevant NHS bodies to enable to provision of better healthcare facilities at Watford General Hospital.

Notes the £350 million cap on new investment across West Hertfordshire but believes this should be increased to provide the level of improvements needed by local NHS patients.

Calls upon Watford's MP and the government to find ways of providing additional investment to ensure there are lasting, high-quality services at Watford General Hospital."

Councillor Bell moved the following amendment to the original motion; it was seconded by Councillor Bashir

"To remove the last paragraph of the motion and insert –

This Council unanimously calls on our Conservative M.P. to demand that his Conservative Govt. show that austerity is over (as Theresa May said it was) by providing the full funding needed for a world class hospital here in Watford."

Councillor Sharpe accepted the amendment into the motion.

Members debated the substantive motion.

On being put to Council the substantive motion was **AGREED**.

RESOLVED –

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Notes the £350 million cap on new investment across West Hertfordshire but believes this should be increased to provide the level of improvements needed by local NHS patients.

This Council unanimously calls on our Conservative M.P. to demand that his Conservative Govt. show that austerity is over (as Theresa May said it was) by providing the full funding needed for a world class hospital here in Watford.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.30 pm
and finished at 9.25 pm