

## COUNCIL

28 January 2020

Present: Councillor A Khan (Chairman)  
Councillor A Dychton (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors P Taylor, N Bell, S Bolton, K Collett, K Crout,  
J Dhindsa, F Ezeifedi, A Grimston, I Hamid, K Hastrick, M Hofman,  
P Jeffree, J Johnson, S Johnson, P Kloss, B Mauthoor, M Parker,  
J Pattinson, G Saffery, D Scudder, N Shah, I Sharpe, R Smith,  
Stanton, J Stiff, I Stotesbury, M Turmaine, D Walford, M Watkin,  
R Wenham and T Williams

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

Officers: Managing Director  
Group Head of Democracy and Governance  
Shared Director of Finance  
Acting Shared Director of Finance  
Democratic Services Manager  
Interim Communications and Engagement Manager

### 46 **Apologies for Absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Allen-Williamson, Bashir, Martins and Mills.

### 47 **Disclosure of Interests**

Council was informed that, under the Council's Code of Conduct, all councillors had been given a dispensation by the Monitoring Officer to consider and vote on minute number 55 as all members had a pecuniary interest in that item.

### 48 **Minutes**

The minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2019 were submitted and signed.

### 49 **Official Announcements**

### **New committee sound system**

The Chairman drew members' attention to the new committee sound system in the Council Chamber. This included webcasting capability which would be used for future meetings. The sound system in the other committee rooms was also being upgraded, with the works due to be completed by the end of February.

### **Holocaust Memorial Event**

The Chairman would be holding a Holocaust Memorial Event on 3 February at 6.30 pm in the Council Chamber. All members were welcome to attend. Dame Helen Hyde would be the guest speaker.

### **Rock and Roll Bingo event**

The Chairman's Rock and Roll Bingo event would take place on 28 February at the Fullerians Rugby Football Club. Tickets were priced £20 and included a curry dinner and the bingo tickets.

### **Neighbourhood Locality Funds**

Members were reminded that Neighbourhood Locality Fund applications should be submitted by the end of February to ensure they were completed by the start of purdah on 20 March. All funding applications should be submitted and signed off through the members' portal.

### **Vote of thanks to Joanne Wagstaffe**

The Chairman congratulated Joanne Wagstaffe on her appointment as Chief Executive for Three Rivers District Council from 3 February. All members joined the Chairman in thanking Joanne for her conscientious work for Watford Borough Council and wishing her well in her new role.

### **Councillor Jessica Stiff**

On behalf of the Council, the Chairman congratulated Councillor Stiff and her husband Phil on the birth of their baby boy, Simeon Oliver Stiff, on 9 December.

### **2020/21 Vice Chairman nominations**

The Chairman would be announcing nominations for the 2020/21 Vice Chairman at the next Council meeting on 17 March. All nominees required a proposer and seconder; Council would be asked to vote for its preferred candidate. The Democratic Services Manager would be circulating further details.

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### **Mayor's Report**

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

The Chairman invited members to indicate whether they wished to ask a question of the Mayor. Councillors Ezeifedi, Smith, Bell and Dhindsa indicated that they wished to ask questions.

- 1) Councillor Ezeifedi referred to the Mayor's comments on government planning rules. She expressed frustration at the powers of the council's Development Management Committee, of which she was a member, and asked whether the Mayor had received a response from the Housing Minister about the extent of council control over local development proposals.

The Mayor explained that Watford was not alone in its concerns about this important issue. Authorities were being compelled to approve significantly tall buildings, including a 68 storey building in Labour-run Croydon and a 75 storey building in Labour-run Tower Hamlets. The government had emphasised the need to use brownfield land, but there had been a marked intensification in developments. The Mayor had contacted Watford's new MP, Dean Russell, to express his concerns.

- 2) Referring to the item about train performance, Councillor Smith asked if the Mayor could update council about proposals to provide step free access at Watford High Street station and, separately, about staffing hours at the station.

The Mayor agreed that step free access was required at Watford High Street station and had raised the issue with the London Assembly. He supported the need for adequate staffing hours at the station which was important to encourage Watford's vulnerable residents, such as the elderly, to use the train service.

- 3) Councillor Bell asked the Mayor when the works on Oxhey North Park would be completed.

The Mayor advised that the park would be opening in the summer and would welcome residents from across the borough. It was hoped that the new sporting infrastructure would encourage greater participation in sport across all parts of the population.

- 4) In a supplementary question, Councillor Bell asked about the plans for the existing Derby Road skate park.

The Mayor stated that plans for the redevelopment of the site had been included in Watford's draft local plan. He noted that the skate park at Derby Road had always been intended as a temporary installation.

- 5) Councillor Dhindsa asked if the Mayor could confirm whether Watford Borough Council was on target with its delivery of housing.

In response, the Mayor confirmed the total completions delivered by the council between 2013 and 2018. This included 41.6% affordable housing units, as a percentage of total completions, in 2017/18. The Mayor noted that the government, following the coalition, had tripled Watford's housing targets.

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

No members' questions had been received.

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

No petitions had been received.

53 **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.

54 **Appointment of Interim S151 Officer**

Council received a report of the Group Head of Democracy and Governance which recommended the appointment of Alison Scott, the current Head of Finance, as the interim Section 151 Officer and Chief Finance Officer (CFO) for Watford Borough Council with effect from 3 February 2020.

It was noted that Three Rivers District Council had agreed to the interim appointment at an Extraordinary Council meeting on 21 January 2020 as the role was being shared between the two councils.

RESOLVED –

1. that with effect from 3 February 2020 Alison Scott becomes the S151 and Chief Financial Officer for Watford Borough Council
2. that the current agreement between Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council under S113 of the Local Government Act 1972 sharing the position of S151 Officer and CFO be amended to reflect the change of post holder.

**Budget and Council Tax Resolution 2020/21**

Council received a report of the Director of Finance including:

- Budget Gap, as recommended by Cabinet on 20 January 2020
- Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2019-23, as recommended by Cabinet on 20 January 2020
- Medium Term Financial Strategy 2019/20 to 2022/23
- Income (Charging Policy) 2020/21
- Capital Strategy 2020/21
- Report of Licensing Committee on 15 January 2020
- Report of Cabinet on 20 January 2020.

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

Councillor Turmaine moved an amendment to the budget report, which was seconded by Councillor Bell. The full amendment was circulated at the meeting (attached to these minutes as Appendix 1).

The amendment called on Council to:

- Fund the income projected from the green waste bin collection charge and remove the proposed charge to residents.
- Support street scene development on Vicarage Road.
- Cease the on-demand bus service and associated app.
- Suspend the cycle hire scheme for at least the current MTFS period.

Councillor Turmaine argued that these actions would support Watford residents better financially and place the council on a more sustainable financial footing than the current budget presented.

Members debated the original motion and the amendment.

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

The amendment was put to the vote.

Those members voting in favour of the amendment:

The Chairman Councillor Khan, Councillors Bell, Dhindsa, Ezeifedi, Shah, Smith and Turmaine.

Those members voting against the amendment:

Mayor Taylor, Councillors Bolton, Collett, Crout, Dychton, Grimston, Hamid, Hastrick, Hofman, Jeffree, J Johnson, S Johnson, Kloss, Parker, Pattinson, Saffery, Scudder, Sharpe, Stanton, Stiff, Stotesbury, Walford, Watkin, Wenham and Williams.

Those Members abstaining:

Councillor Mauthoor.

The amendment was LOST by 25 votes to 7. There was 1 abstention.

The original motion was then put to Council.

Those Members voting in favour of the original motion:

Mayor Taylor, Councillors Bolton, Collett, Crout, Dychton, Grimston, Hamid, Hastrick, Hofman, Jeffree, J Johnson, S Johnson, Kloss, Parker, Pattinson, Saffery, Scudder, Sharpe, Stanton, Stiff, Stotesbury, Walford, Watkin, Wenham and Williams.

Those Members voting against the original motion:

The Chairman Councillor Khan, Councillors Bell, Dhindsa, Shah, Smith and Turmaine.

Those Members abstaining:

Councillors Ezeifedi and Mauthoor.

The original motion was CARRIED by 25 votes to 6. There were 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED –

**1. To agree proposals recommended by Cabinet on 20 January 2020 that Council:**

- a) Resolves in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount calculated by Watford Borough Council as its Council Tax Base for the year 2020/21 is 33,480.7 as outlined in the report.

- b) Approves the continuation of the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2020/21.
- c) Approves the budget (Attachment 1) as laid out in the report, as amended for the decision taken at Council on 20 January, including:
  - the base budget for 2020/21
  - the growth and savings
  - the Capital Investment Programme 2019-23
- d) Approves the schedule of fees and charges & income charging policy
- e) Approves the Capital Strategy for 2020/21,
  - that the Council's operational boundary be £344M
  - that the Council's authorised limit be £350M
 and delegates to the Director of Finance and Portfolio Holder Resources responsibility for agreeing and maintaining the Treasury Management policy.
- f) Agrees to increase the annual Council Tax for a Band D property in 2020/21 by 2.0%. This will apply to all other bands.
- g) Notes the key risks identified and approves their proposed mitigations.
- h) Notes the advice provided by the Director of Finance on the robustness of estimates and the adequacy of reserves.
- i) Notes the indicative budgets for 2021/22 and 2022/23 and the need for further work to close the budget gap.

### **Setting the amount of Council Tax for Watford Borough Council**

- 2. That the Council's net General Fund expenditure for 2020/21 shall be **£15.753 million**.
- 3. That the 2020/21 band D precept is set at £273.59 and other bands and amounts are set in accordance with the table at paragraph 2.3 (E)
- 4. That Watford Borough Council's Council Tax Base for 2020/21 has been calculated at **33,480.7** in accordance with Regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 made under Section 31B (1) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended.

5. That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2019/20 in accordance with Sections 31A to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:

(A) *Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act.  
(Effectively the gross expenditure and transfers to reserves)* **£76,124,408**

(B) *Being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act.  
(Effectively the gross income and transfers from reserves)* **£66,964,423**

(C) *Being the amount by which the aggregate at 2.3 (A) above exceeds the aggregate at 2.3 (B) above calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act as its Council Tax Requirement for the year* **£9,159,985**

(D) *Being the amount at paragraph 2.3 (C) divided by amount at 2.2 above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33 (1) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (at Band D)* **£273.59**

(E)

<b>Council Tax Valuation Bands</b>	<b>Conversion Factor to Band D</b>	<b>Watford's Share (£)</b>
A	6 / 9	182.39
B	7 / 9	212.79
C	8 / 9	243.19
<b>D</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>273.59</b>
E	11 / 9	334.39
F	13 / 9	395.19
G	15 / 9	455.98

H	2	547.18
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*Being the amounts given by multiplying the amount at paragraph 2.3 (D) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5 (1) of the Act, is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in Valuation Band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36 (1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year 2020/21 in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.*

6. That a report including precepts of both the Police Authority and Hertfordshire County Council be presented to the Functions Committee on 26 February 2020 to set the total Council Tax.

56 **Motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13.0**

No motions had been received.

Chair

The Meeting started at 7.30 pm  
and finished at 8.50 pm

## Minute Item 55

DOCUMENT	LABOUR AMENDMENT TO BUDGET COUNCIL
DATE	TUESDAY JANUARY 28 2020

This council believes that there is economic uncertainty in the years ahead, exacerbated by the UK's decision to leave the European Union.

Watford Council's income is dependent on a number of sources, some of which may be subject to high uncertainty in the MTFS period.

Many of Watford's residents will suffer financial loss from paying a green waste bin collection charge, a service that they currently receive through their existing council tax payment.

Further, it will support economic growth in our town to provide attractive street scene environments and it is proposed to support this on Vicarage Road, which receives high footfall traffic for the football stadium.

Therefore, this council agrees to:

- Fund the income projected from the green waste bin collection charge and remove the proposed charge to residents.
- Support street scene development on Vicarage Road.
- Cease the on-demand bus service and associated App.
- Suspend the cycle hire scheme for at least the current MTFS period.

These actions will support Watford residents better financially and place the council on a more sustainable financial footing than the current budget as presented.

Proposed by Councillor Turmaine  
Seconded by Councillor Bell