



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

COUNCIL MEETING

13 October 2020

7.30 pm

Town Hall, Watford

Contact

Sandra Hancock

democraticservices@watford.gov.uk

01923 278377

For information about attending meetings please visit the [council's website](#).

Publication date: 5 October 2020

Updated: 8 October 2020

5 October 2020

Councillor

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Council of the Borough of Watford to be held on Tuesday, 13 October 2020 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 14 July 2020 to be submitted and signed.

4. Official Announcements

5. Mayor's Report (Pages 4 - 10)

Report of the Elected Mayor

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

7. Questions by Members of the Public under Council Procedure Rule 11.0

8. Petitions presented under Council Procedure Rule 12.0

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

10. West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee – Loan Agreement (Pages 11 - 17)

Report from Cabinet held on 7 September 2020

11. Local Development Scheme (Pages 18 - 38)

Report of the Spatial Planning Manager

12. Appointment of Second Independent Person to assist with Standards complaints
(Pages 39 - 41)

Report of the Group Head of Democracy and Governance

13. Scrutiny Annual Report 2019/20 (Pages 42 - 49)

Report of the Senior Democratic Services Officer

14. Neighbourhood Locality Fund Annual Report 2019/20 (Pages 50 - 53)

Report of the Democratic Services Manager

15. Joint Committee for the Hertfordshire Growth Board (To Follow)

The report will follow once considered by Cabinet on 5 October 2020.

16. Motions submitted under Council Procedure Rule 13.0

The following motion was proposed by the Elected Mayor and seconded by Councillor Nigel Bell.

Watford Council thanks every member of staff for the outstanding efforts over the past few months in responding to the coronavirus pandemic.

We are opposed to any plan to create a single unitary council for the whole of Hertfordshire. This is the wrong time to be focusing on local government reorganisation and would take decision making away from local residents, and result in one council trying to serve a large area with 1.2 million people.



Donna Nolan, Managing Director

Agenda Item 5

Elected Mayor's Report – October 2020

I was saddened to hear last month of the passing of former councillor for Holywell, Jackie Connal. Jackie was a wonderfully warm and friendly person who cared so much for this town. She worked hard supporting the Fair Trade movement, Watford Museum, and was part of our Dementia Friends group. I will miss her and my thoughts and prayers are with her family and many friends.

Similar to my report for the last Full Council in July, this one will likely be heavily focused on our town's ongoing recovery from Covid-19, and how we balance this against meeting the more general targets we have set ourselves for this term.

COVID-19 Response

Community Protection

Throughout the summer months cases across the country appeared to be relatively stable, but we have seen a slight increases in cases in recent weeks, with other areas of the UK facing local lockdowns. As I write we are fortunate that case numbers in Watford and Hertfordshire more generally, remain relatively low, but given the current national trend it is vital more than ever that we continue to follow guidelines around maintaining social distancing, wearing face coverings and ensuring we thoroughly and regularly wash our hands. There have had a few cases of positive tests in local businesses and each business has worked closely with us to contain the virus and thus don't pose any ongoing risks to residents.

I am so proud of Watford being chosen to pilot the local track and trace scheme in support of the National track and trace scheme. The Environmental Health Team in Watford has done such a great job throughout the pandemic of keeping our communities safe and being granted this pilot scheme illustrates the confidence that we can all have in their work.

I am pleased to report the introduction of Watford's Confidence Mark for Taxis and Minicabs, an initiative which has since been picked up by Hertfordshire County Council and is being rolled out across the County. The scheme provides free online training for specialist infection control to ensure that taxi and minicabs continue to provide safe services for residents during the ongoing pandemic. Over 50 people have already taken part in the training in Watford which is great to hear, and I sincerely hope that it will make people feel more comfortable when travelling and confident that every precaution is being taken to maintain their safety. The taxi and minicab business, like many others, was hit hard by the

lockdown measures earlier this year, so by providing this extra training we are able to help this industry get back on its feet as people return to some form of normality.

Community engagement

Throughout the pandemic I have continued hosting regular Facebook Live Q and A sessions with guest panellists helping me to answer questions from local residents. These sessions have been well received in the community and it has been a great way of maintaining a presence even with the various restrictions that have been in place.

Unfortunately due to Covid-19 we saw the cancellation of this year's Herts Pride, which is an annual celebration of LGBTQ* life and a great opportunity for our County to celebrate diversity and equality in the community. But with the help of Cllr Aga Dychton, we were able to show the pride spirit of the town can withstand even a global pandemic and we raised the pride flag outside the Town Hall in August. While I know that there would have been disappointment from many about the cancellation of Herts Pride, I am glad that so many across the borough took the opportunity to celebrate in new and innovative ways this year, including by participating in the Herts Pride Zoom Quiz which was aiming to raise money to put on an even bigger Pride event when it returns next year.

Throughout the pandemic we have seen a great sense of community in Watford, with people coming together, forming new volunteer groups and supporting the most vulnerable in our Borough. In August I had the pleasure of visiting Hand on Heart to see the great work they have been doing as a part of their Back to School Campaign. School children were among some of the most adversely affected during the pandemic, so with the help of a group of volunteers Hand on Heart prepared and delivered hundreds of backpacks containing school supplies to some of the most vulnerable children in Watford. It was great to see the work that Hand on Heart have been up to, and meet the families that have been volunteering their time to help others.

Whilst so much charitable work has been ongoing during these difficult times, there was one person who stood out for her hard work in raising money for Mount Vernon Hospital. In August I was joined by Chairman Cllr Aga Dychton to award local resident Olivia Alcorano, aged 7, with a certificate of commendation for raising over £3000 for Mount Vernon Hospital. Olivia learnt to cycle during lockdown, and since has been cycling 5 miles a day to raise money. This was an outstanding contribution to the local community and it was great to meet Olivia and present her with this award. Olivia is a true inspiration to our community and a reminder that we are all capable of meeting personal challenges and supporting others during these difficult times.

Delivering my Manifesto and Working for the Town

Sustainability in Watford

Last year at Council we unanimously passed a motion to declare a climate emergency, committing us to be net carbon neutral by 2030 and there has been lots of work going on in that area since. However, conscious that this is not something the Council can do by itself, with the help of Cllr Ian Stotesbury and Cllr Tim Williams, we launched the Sustainability Forum. We held an online Sustainability Forum event over the summer and it was a great opportunity to hear from residents about what initiatives they want to see and get their ideas on making Watford a more sustainable place to live.

Since launching the Beryl bikes scheme in March this year we have seen a tremendous amount of support for the bikes and over 60,000 rides have been taken. It is great to see there is a real appetite for sustainable transport in our town, and it is essential if we are to meet our environmental commitments as a borough. We are also fortunate to be the first town in the UK to introduce approximately 60 pedal-assisted electric bikes available to hire, which are great for longer journeys and also make the scheme more accessible to all.

In addition to improving air quality across Watford, the Beryl Bike scheme was a great platform for a new fund-raising campaign, Ride for Watford. We partnered with local software innovator PLM Central Ltd so that every trip on a Beryl Bike during the campaign resulted in a 50p donation to Watford Helps Covid-19 Charities Appeal. Additional donations were also able to be made via text and from Beryl. An amazing 5,676 rides and 18,925km were recorded during the ride-to-donate initiative, resulting in £2,806 being raised for the appeal.

I would like to thank Watford FC Goalkeeper Ben Foster, and Cllr Glen Saffrey for their hard work on making this project such a success.

Protecting our town's heritage

I am delighted that Watford Museum has once again opened its doors, welcoming back members of the public on a limited basis since 1st August. I was lucky to visit for the reopening and saw the fantastic displays they currently have.

A few weeks ago I was fortunate enough to visit Frogmore House, owned by St William Homes LLP, where restoration works have now been completed by Giles Quarme Architects. The project was particularly difficult because it was not on Council land, but we are committed to preserving and enhancing Watford's heritage, meaning all partners involved have worked incredibly hard to ensure this Grade II* listed building is preserved for years to come.

I am also pleased to report the completion of the All Saints Church Wall restoration project along Horseshoe Lane, Leavesden. The restoration was carefully planned and executed, taking into consideration use of appropriate materials, styles and appearance to make sure the original aesthetic of the wall was preserved. The church holds great historical importance, being designed by renowned architect Sir George Gilbert Scott in 1853, and it is wonderful to see the wall's full glory restored. It is extremely important that we look after our heritage so that future generations can continue to enjoy it, and figures like Sir George Gilbert Scott can be remembered and celebrated.

Watford Junction

Works are nearly complete on the first stage of improvements to Watford Junction Station; refurbishing the forecourt outside the station aims to create an improved 'gateway' to the town centre. With the refurbishment we are looking to create a safe, pedestrian-friendly environment, with more open, multifunctional space featuring new paving, lighting, planting, seating and signposting. There will also be the start of a heritage trail through the town centre and a new Beryl bike-share bay for the front of the station.

Over the summer one of the more noticeable changes was introduced in the form of freestanding letters spelling out 'WATFORD'. These new letters provide a focal point in the forecourt and will hopefully encourage people to take photos and promote the town widely on social media. In order to facilitate these improvements, bike parking has been moved from the forecourt to a secure, 300-capacity facility, just off the car park entry road.

Improvements to leisure facilities

One of my key manifesto commitments when I was elected in 2018 was to support the continued improvements of leisure facilities in Watford. The opening of Oxhey Activity Park and Tasty Bean Café at the end of the summer was a resounding success, especially vital this year as it became apparent that people need opportunities to get outside and enjoy nature now more than ever. There is a whole range of new facilities at Oxhey, with something for everyone to enjoy, including a state of the art skate park, a bike trail, an adventure playground and new habitats aimed at improving biodiversity. Given the external circumstances at the moment we have also hired marshals to make sure that people are being responsible when using these facilities, including maintaining social distancing and not gathering in large groups.

I am also pleased to report back on the improvement works at Garston Park which, although smaller than Oxhey, has some equally great new facilities. We have updated the children's play area, including accessible equipment, built a new skate park, installed table tennis facilities and improved walkways and entrances for enhanced access. It is so important to

have such great free-to-use facilities in our town, and I hope that children and adults alike can continue to make use of these wonderful green spaces.

Watford has, for the fifth year running, been granted more Green Flag awards than any other district in Hertfordshire, with 12 parks and open spaces being recognised by the Green Flag Award Scheme. The awards are a confirmation that the hard work we put into our open spaces is being noticed, with our parks being recognised for meeting the highest environmental standards and having excellent visitor facilities.

The 2020 Green Flag status parks are: Cassiobury Park, Woodside Playing Fields, Cheslyn House and Gardens, Waterfields Recreation Ground, Callowland Recreation Ground, Orchard Park, Oxhey Park, St Mary's Churchyard, Goodwood Recreation Ground, Paddock Road Allotments, North Watford Cemetery, and Harwoods Recreation Ground.

I was delighted to preside over the opening of the West Herts Sports Club Phase 1 Development. The improvement to the facilities include a new multi-use games area, new cricket nets, an extended car park, new grounds equipment and storage shed, as well as an improved irrigation system for the cricket pitch and tennis courts. This facility is an asset to the local community, and is only the first phase of ongoing developments. I really enjoyed chatting with members of the club, and hearing about how well their many teams are doing, including the popularity of cricket among young people in the town.

I would like to thank Cllr Tim Williams for his work as Portfolio Holder for Parks and Sustainability, and Veolia for their continued support on these projects.

Changes to waste collections

In September we saw the start of a new waste and recycling collection service in Watford, including introducing a new weekly food waste collection, moving non-recyclable waste to fortnightly collection, and a small annual charge for green waste collection. The aim of the new scheme is to increase overall recycling in the Borough, and take into account the cuts equating to 70% of central government funding. Whilst garden waste collection is a discretionary service we have taken the decision to introduce a charge as there are many residents who do not actually use the service. On the other hand, feedback from residents showed a willingness to recycle more, on the condition that it was collected more regularly. Having seen that food waste makes up around 30% of the waste previously thrown away in the black bin, the logical solution was to push this form of individual recycling, allowing for it to be turned into either electricity or compost.

While there will always be some confusion and uncertainty when changing recycling collections, the way we have managed this with a grace period has allowed for a relatively

smooth transition. As another manifesto commitment, I am very pleased to report on the overall success so far of this new scheme, and hope that it will continue to improve recycling rates in Watford.

Planning laws success

At the last Full Council I reported that the government had changed planning rules on windowless flats following the campaign of Watford Liberal Democrats. Since then we have seen further success by way of another change in planning rules; the government have now announced that new homes built using permitted development powers must meet space standards. Nobody should be forced to live in cramped conditions, and this is a step in the right direction to ensuring that. However, there is still a long way to go to reform our planning system so that local communities have more power and can decide what is best for their area. We must be able to insist on safe, decent and affordable homes and make sure that people have the services that they need, before new developments are agreed.

Watford Liberal Democrats will be looking to continue the success of challenging terrible planning laws by stopping the current plans to allow an additional two storeys to be allowed on buildings without prior planning permission.

WhatsApp Business Pilot

I am excited to announce Watford Council's partnership with WhatsApp. This partnership aims to support the small business community with the UK's first WhatsApp High Street. The initiative will enable small businesses in Watford to promote their business on the WhatsApp Business app, and help them to easily connect with their customers at this difficult time. This is a first of its kind pilot programme in the UK, working initially with 12 businesses on Market Street to overcome some of the business challenges presented by Covid-19. Local businesses are vital to our economy, bringing jobs and so much character to our town. We are committed to working with them to ensure Watford's economy succeeds as we start to open up after a difficult period of lockdown.

Digital skills and new technology are at the heart of our plans for the borough, which is why we are helping local businesses to adapt their ways of working too.

West Herts Hospital Transformation

I welcome the decision taken by West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust (WHHT) and Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group (HVCCG) Boards to move ahead with their ambitious plans to transform the Watford General site, and deliver considerable improvements at Hemel Hempstead Hospital and St Albans City Hospital.

I have consistently championed proposals that will ensure improved hospital facilities across West Hertfordshire, and spoke in favour of the plans at the meeting of the Boards on 1st

October. The transformation project will provide better facilities for all across West Herts and much more quickly than any of the alternatives proposed. These last few months have placed huge strain on our health services, and just highlights the urgency in which quality health services are needed.

Big screen events

Despite our social lives being largely upended throughout the pandemic, we have still found ways to have fun within the community. Throughout August, Big Screen Events were held at Woodside, King George V, and Knutsford Playing Fields, allowing families to get together and watch films in the open air. The free event that is usually held in the town centre was well adapted to allow for social distancing measures and make use of our green spaces. I know these have been tough times for everyone, but it was really good to see so many people enjoying the opportunity to get out and enjoy the films being shown.

Report to Council – 13 October 2020

Report of Cabinet – 7 September 2020

Cabinet met on 7 September 2020. The minutes are published on the council's website.

The following members were present at the meeting:

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

Also present: Councillor Bell, Labour Group Leader
Councillors Dychton and Ezeifedi

Officers: Managing Director
Interim Director of Finance
Group Head of Democracy and Governance
Executive Head of Corporate Strategy and Communications
Interim Head of Regeneration and Property
Mayor's Political Assistant
Democratic Services Manager

The following included recommendations to Council.

27. **West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee – Loan Agreement**

Cabinet received a report of the Interim Director of Finance requesting Council approval for the council to enter into a loan facility agreement on behalf of West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee together with the other member authorities with Dacorum Borough Council.

Councillor Watkin, Portfolio Holder for Resources, explained that officers were seeking permission for the council to underwrite one-fifth of the loan to Dacorum Borough Council. The funding would be used towards a new crematorium in Hemel Hempstead.

Councillor Collett noted that the demand for cremations had been rising before coronavirus. It was necessary to become more creative and flexible with services.

RESOLVED –

1. that Cabinet recommends to Council that Watford, as one of the member authorities of the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee, signs a loan facility agreement between Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council as borrowers, with Dacorum Borough Council as lender, for £6 million to part fund a new Crematorium in Hemel Hempstead, subject to all the other 4 borrowing authorities passing similar resolutions;
2. that Cabinet recommends to Council that Watford also signs a Deed of Contribution and Indemnity with all five partner authorities of the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee, namely Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough, subject to all the other member authorities passing similar resolutions;
3. that Cabinet recommends that Council notes that in agreeing to 1 and 2 above that Watford are underwriting one fifth of the £6 million loan facility, should the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee default on repayment of the loan.
4. that delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance to agree the final terms of the loan and indemnity agreements.

Part A

Report to: Cabinet

Date of meeting: Monday, 7 September 2020

Report author: (Shared Services) Director of Finance

Title: WEST HERTS CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE – LOAN AGREEMENT

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 To seek Council approval for Watford as one of the authorities that make up the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee (WHCJC), to enter into a loan facility agreement on behalf of the WHCJC together with the other member authorities with Dacorum Borough Council (also a member authority) for a loan facility of £6 million as part funding towards a c.£8 million development of a new crematorium in Hemel Hempstead.
- 1.2 Also to seek Council approval to sign a Deed of Contribution and Indemnity with all five member authorities of the WHCJC and thereby underwriting one fifth of the loan should the WHCJC default on repayment of the loan.

2.0 Risks

- 2.1 Key risks were identified and discussed in the business case which was considered and approved by the WHCJC.
- 2.2 The business case also included various financial modelling and appraisals, the project budget also includes contingency funding to mitigate the risk of increased costs.
- 2.3 Subject to funding approval, a full competitive tender process will be undertaken to appoint a suitably experienced development partner.
- 2.4 The project is being managed by Watford Borough Council as lead authority for the WHCJC.

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Cabinet recommends to Council that Watford, as one of the member authorities of the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee, signs a loan facility agreement between Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council as borrowers with Dacorum Borough Council as lender for £6 million to part fund a new Crematorium in Hemel Hempstead, subject to all the other 4 borrowing authorities passing similar resolutions;
- 3.2 That Cabinet recommends to Council that Watford also signs a Deed of Contribution and Indemnity with all five partner authorities of the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee, namely Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough subject to all the other member authorities passing similar resolutions; and

- 3.3 That Cabinet recommends that Council notes that in agreeing to 3.1 and 3.2 above that Watford are underwriting one fifth of the £6 million loan facility should the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee default on repayment of the loan.
- 3.4 That delegated authority be given to the Director of Finance to agree the final terms of the loan and indemnity agreements

Further information:

alison.scott@threerivers.gov.uk

Report approved by: Alison Scott

4.0 Detailed proposal

- 4.1 The WHCJC is a statutory Joint Committee of five local authorities: Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Alban's City and District Council, Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council with the responsibility for managing crematorium services for the five councils.
- 4.2 The WHCJC is currently responsible for the operation of one Crematorium, West Herts Crematorium in Three Rivers that has been serving the local community since 1959.
- 4.3 The WHCJC has been operating the West Herts Crematorium successfully for many years and it makes an annual return to the five member authorities of £250k, whilst also setting aside surplus funds for reinvesting in the crematorium.
- 4.4 The operation of crematoria is a competitive market and in light of competition by private operators in the local area the WHCJC commissioned a feasibility study to examine the possibility of building a new second Crematorium in Hemel Hempstead. The following is an extract from the resulting business case:

"The demand for cremations has risen considerably in recent years with this trend set to continue as the UK's ageing population grows in size, with the proportion of those aged 65 and above predicted to significantly increase in future years. In 2017 cremations accounted for 77 % of all funerals in the UK.

The increasing demand for cremations has been identified by the private sector as a lucrative business opportunity and has resulted in the majority of new crematoria being built and run by private sector businesses in recent years.

WHCJC is still at risk of losing its catchment through increased competition because it has no further expansion space, therefore limiting its ability to meet growing demand for more flexible, creative services, and it would also lose the opportunity to serve a wider area."

- 4.5 WHCJC therefore agreed that a further Business Case should be produced examining:
- The financial projections and implications of building a new second crematorium in Hemel Hempstead
 - Pricing models and their commercial viability
 - The likely demand at both sites and the impact this would ultimately have on WHCJC
 - The strategic options for financial consideration

- 4.6 An options appraisal was carried out as part of the further Business Case examining the benefits and dis-benefits of the following three delivery models, assessing each option against a list of criteria reflecting the objectives of WHCJC:
- Option 1 - Do nothing
 - Option 2 - Build a new second crematorium in Hemel Hempstead
 - Option 3 - Look for an alternative site for building a second crematorium
- 4.7 Based on the scoring, the options appraisal concluded that option 2 to build a new second crematorium at the Hemel Hempstead site was the recommended option. The project was viable and WHCJC had the capability and resources to successfully deliver the project. The benefits outlined below could be delivered and significantly outweighed the expected dis-benefits and it was therefore considered worth the investment.
- 4.8 The Business Case concluded that building a new crematorium at the Hemel Hempstead site by WHCJC would be commercially viable, would allow WHCJC to improve and enhance the services provided to residents at both sites whilst increasing their resilience and capacity to meet future service demands.
- 4.9 Having considered the business case the WHCJC agreed to pursue option 2 and have since been progressing this option.
- 4.10 The cost of the development is close to £8 million and is to be funded partly by the accumulated surpluses of the WHCJC and by way of a £6 million loan facility from Dacorum Borough Council who own the land in Hemel Hempstead where the Crematorium is to be built.
- 4.11 As the WHCJC has no legal capacity in its own right it requires each of the member authorities to agree to take on responsibility for the loan as each would be liable in the event of a default. As the taking on of this loan is not in the capital programme it requires Council approval. The Cabinet could decide not to recommend that the Council agree the loan, which must be supported by all five partner authorities otherwise the project cannot proceed.
- 4.12 As this is a competitive market and Hemel Hempstead is not currently well served with a local Crematorium this could severely impact on the market share of the WHCJC should a competitor open a new facility in the local area.
- 4.13 The proposal enables a new second crematorium to be built whilst ensuring the strongest financial position for WHCJC.
- 4.14 Since the WHCJC agreed to pursue option 2 a loan agreement between Dacorum Borough Council and the other member authorities of the WHCJC has been drawn up. Agreement to enter into a loan facility agreement now requires formal approval by the four member authorities who will be entering into it as the WHCJC has no legal capacity to take on the loan itself. Also as Dacorum Borough council is providing the loan it cannot enter into a loan agreement with itself. In order to ensure that Dacorum as a member of the WHCJC also has responsibility for repaying the loan it has agreed with the four other member authorities to enter into a Deed of Contribution and Indemnity. By agreeing to enter into a Loan Agreement and a Deed of Contribution and Indemnity, each council is underwriting a one fifth share of the £6 million loan and would be liable for up to £1.2 million should the WHCJC default on the loan. Cabinet is requested to recommend that the Council approve that Watford enter into a Loan Agreement and a Deed of Contribution and Indemnity, on the proviso that each of the other member authorities also pass similar resolutions
- 4.16 It is also recommended that the Director of Finance be given delegated authority to approve the final terms of both agreements.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the financial implications are set out in the report.

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that as WHCJC does not have legal capacity in its own right each of the member councils that are on the WHCJC must individually approve of entering into this arrangement. They will also have liability for the loan.

5.2.2 As stated in the report Dacorum cannot enter into a loan agreement with itself so the loan will be taken out by the other four councils but Dacorum is signing a separate indemnity agreement with the other councils.

5.2.3 Watford is acting as lead authority in relation to the development of the new crematorium.

5.2.4 As this loan is not currently in the capital programme it needs to be approved by Council.

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

5.3.1 A full equalities impact assessment is being compiled by the project manager of the lead authority, Watford Borough Council. The EIA will cover all five local authority areas party to the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee.

Data Protection Impact Assessment

5.3.2 Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

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

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.

New Crematorium in Hemel Hempstead Business Case, Watford Borough Council, lead authority for the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee

Agenda Item 11

Part A

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: 13 October 2020

Report author: Spatial Planning Manager

Title: Local Development Scheme: Timetable for the New Watford Local Plan

1.0 Summary

1.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out the subject, scope and timetable for the preparation of Development Plan Documents. The LDS includes the Local Plan which will set out the growth strategy, policies to guide planning decisions and identify sites for development within Watford.

1.2 The LDS, adopted in March 2019, has been revised to update the timetable for the different stages of preparing the new Local Plan leading to its anticipated adoption in February 2022. The revised LDS will cover a period from 2018 to 2022 and supersedes the timetable set out in the current LDS which has slipped during 2020.

1.3 The Local Development Scheme is a legal requirement. It provides certainty for the council, external stakeholders and the community about how the Local Plan will be prepared.

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
Local Development Scheme not kept up to date	Challenged by Planning Inspector at the Local Plan examination. Local community not	Engagement with Members and corporate officers about progress on the Local Plan and compliance with the set timetable.	Treat	6

	kept informed of progress on the Local Plan.			
--	--	--	--	--

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 That council adopts the revised Local Development Scheme.
- 3.2 That, minor updates to the revised Local Development Scheme can be made by the Head of Planning and Building Control in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Regeneration and Development.

Further information contact:

Contact: Jack Green, Spatial Planning Manager

Email: Jack.green@watford.gov.uk

Telephone extn: 8093

Report approved by: Ben Martin, Interim Head of Planning and Building Control

4.0 Detailed proposal

- 4.1 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) sets out what the Local Plan will cover and the timetable for its preparation. It is a public document and one that is referred to in the examination process. The proposed LDS is set out as Appendix A to this report.
- 4.2 The proposed LDS presented is a revised version of that adopted in November 2019. This is to update the timetable reflecting circumstances that have arisen in 2020, including the Covid-19 pandemic, that have led to slippage in the Local Plan timetable. The primary changes made to the document include the timetable for adoption of the new Local Plan to February 2022 with the Regulation 19 consultation (Final Draft Local Plan) taking place in January 2021 (page 12, Appendix A). Other additions include reference to updating the Statement of Community Involvement (page 5, Appendix A) and citing the Infrastructure Delivery Statement (page 5, Appendix A).
- 4.3 At examination, an independently appointed Planning Inspector will consider whether the Local Plan document being examined has been prepared in accordance with the latest LDS. This forms part of the assessment of soundness. It is therefore important that the scope and preparation timetable are both accurate

and achievable, given available resources, and potential changes to those resources.

- 4.3 The proposed LDS sets out a timetable for completing the new Local Plan. This will replace the Local Plan Part 1 Core Strategy adopted in 2013 and any remaining “saved” policies from the Watford District Plan 2000 adopted in 2003.
- 4.4 Local Plans are required to be no older than five years to be considered up to date. The Watford Local Plan (Core Strategy) adopted in 2013 no longer meets this requirement. Additionally, local authorities are required to work constructively and collaboratively when preparing a new Local Plan. Work has already begun on the evidence to inform the Local Plan review including several jointly commissioned studies with other authorities in the South West Hertfordshire area. Additionally, Watford and the other South West Hertfordshire authorities have agreed to work collaboratively on a Joint Strategic Plan to address cross boundary issues related to future growth.
- 4.5 The LDS sets out a timetable for a review of the Local Plan to ensure it remains up to date. It is anticipated the new Local Plan will be adopted in February 2022.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

- 5.1.1 The Interim Head of Finance comments that there are no direct financial implications. Costs will be associated with publicising the adoption of the revised Local Development Scheme. These will be in the form of officer time.

5.2 **Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)**

- 5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that s15(8) Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act requires the Council to revise its LDS at such time as it considers appropriate and s15 (9A) to publicise the up to date text of the scheme; any amendments to the scheme and up to date information regarding non – compliance with the timetable.

5.3 **Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection**

- 5.3.1 Having had regard to the council’s obligations under s149 of the Equality Act 2010, it is considered that No equalities impact has been identified in relation to the scope

and preparation timetable of the Local Plan. The Local Plan documents will be subject to equalities impact assessment as they are prepared.

5.4 Data Protection Impact Assessment

5.4.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

5.5 Staffing

5.5.1 The team currently has the staff resources available to deliver the Local Plan to the time table set out in the Local Development Scheme.

5.6 Sustainability

5.6.1 Progressing the Local Plan will help the council to make decisions on planning applications to help achieve sustainable development. The Local Plan documents themselves will be subject to separate sustainability appraisals.

6.0 Appendices

- Appendix A: Local Development Scheme: Timetable for the New Watford Local Plan

7.0 Background papers

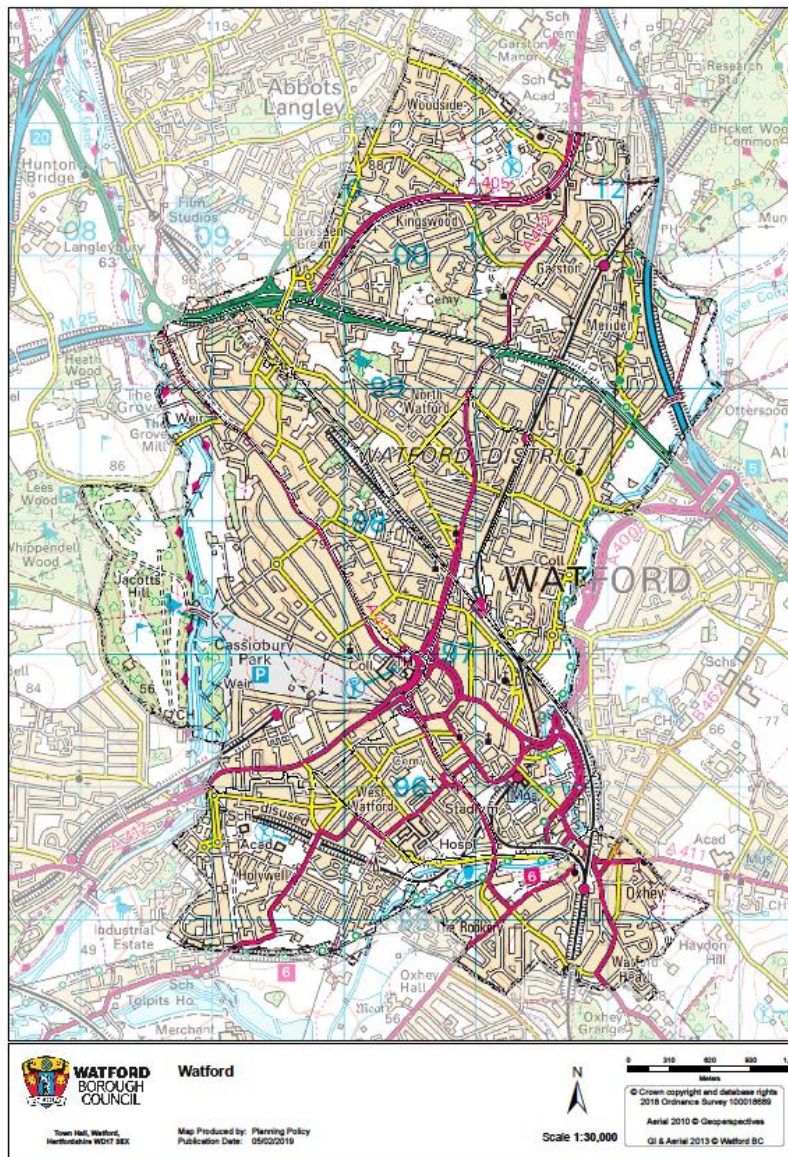
7.1 No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Local Development Scheme
Timetable for the New Watford Local Plan
October 2020

watfordlocalplan.co.uk



Watford Local Plan Coverage



Summary Timetable

Notification	December 2016
Issues and Options consultation	September – October 2018
First Draft Local Plan consultation (Preferred Options)	September – October 2019
Publication	January 2021
Submission	June 2021
Examination	July 2021 – December 2021
Adoption	February 2021

Contents

What is the Local Development Scheme?	1
Current Development Plan	1
Watford Local Plan Documents	2
Other Development Plans Covering Watford Borough	2
Strategic Planning and the Duty to Cooperate	3
Joint Working	3
South West Hertfordshire Strategic Plan	4
Future Development Plan	4
Local Plan Review	4
Neighbourhood Plans	4
Other Documents to be Prepared	5
Statement of Community Involvement	Error! Bookmark not defined.
Authority Monitoring Report	5
Supplementary Planning Documents	5
Community Infrastructure Levy	5
Risk Assessment	7
Preparing a Development Plan Document	10
Key stages of preparation	11
Preparation Schedule	12
Timeline for the Review of the Local Plan	12
Evidence Base	12
Sustainability Appraisal	13
Soundness	13
Resources	14

What is the Local Development Scheme?

Local authorities are required to prepare and maintain a Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS sets out the three year timetable for the new Local Plan. This document updates the timetable set out in the previous LDS which was adopted in 2016 and will be reviewed on a regular basis.

The LDS includes a summary of the content and geographical area covered by each document, the timetable for their preparation and subsequent review. The requirement for an LDS is set out in the [Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act](#) (2004), as amended by the [Localism Act](#) (2011). It states that the scheme must specify the local development documents which are to be development plan documents and include:

- the subject matter and geographical area to which each development plan document is to relate
- which development plan documents (if any) are to be prepared jointly, with one or more other local planning authorities
- any matter or area in respect of which the authority have agreed (or propose to agree) to the constitution of a joint committee under section 29
- the timetable for the preparation and revision of development plan documents and
- such other matters as are prescribed.

Progress on the Local Plan will be monitored through the local authority's monitoring report and inform future versions of the document. These updates will be made available on the council's website.

Current Development Plan

The preparation of a local plan is guided by the National Planning Policy Framework (Revised 2018). This national guidance includes a presumption in favour of sustainable development when preparing plans and making planning decisions.

The development plan includes all of the adopted planning documents that set out policies and proposals for the development and how land is to be used in the borough. This includes those prepared by Watford Borough Council, Hertfordshire County Council and neighbourhood plans prepared by neighbourhood groups.

The development plan guides planning decisions and ensures these are rational and consistent, having regard to material considerations. Development plans require updating to ensure decisions are made based on up to date planning policies and that future needs are appropriately planned for.

Watford Local Plan Documents

The Watford Local Plan consists of several development plan documents (Figure 1).

Figure 1. Watford Local Plan Documents



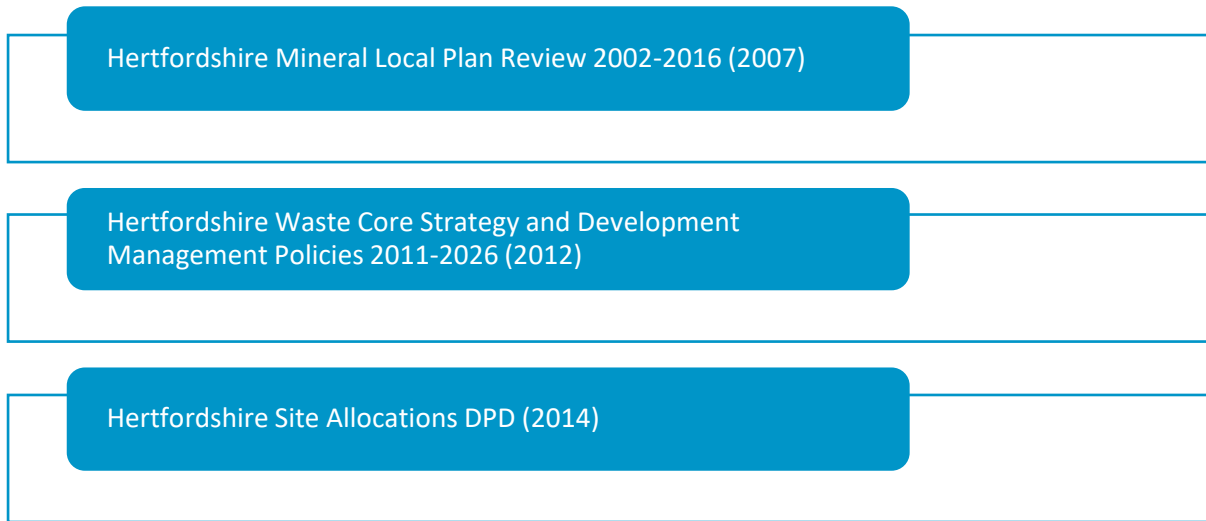
The revised National Planning Policy Framework (2018), and accompanying National Planning Policy Guidance (NPPG) are material considerations but do not form part of the Development plan.

Local Plan - Part 2 Site Allocations and Development Management Policies 2006-31 was intended to include more detailed policies and allocations to deliver the vision set out in the Core Strategy. However, the council resolved not to progress the Local Plan Part 2 but to instead switch to the preparation of a new Local Plan. A new Local Development Scheme and timetable have therefore been prepared to reflect this change.

Other Development Plans Covering Watford Borough

In addition to documents that Watford has prepared and adopted, there are other Development plan documents prepared by Hertfordshire County Council that form part of the Watford Development Plan (Figure 2).

Figure 2. Hertfordshire County Council documents forming part of the Watford Local Plan



Strategic Planning and the Duty to Cooperate

The ‘duty to cooperate’ was brought in through the Localism Act (2011). To make plans more effective, it requires local planning authorities and other relevant bodies and organisations to work collaboratively and constructively to discuss cross-boundary issues when development plan documents are being prepared.

Joint Working

The Local Development Scheme sets out a commitment and timetable for the preparation of the Local Plan. In addition to Watford, neighbouring authorities are also preparing their respective local plans.

Watford shares a variety of cross boundary issues with neighbouring areas. Collaborative working to discuss shared issues and constructively consider how these can be addressed through coordinated development has improved, and continues to do so, over time. Watford has also been working collaboratively with other partners to support development including the Local Enterprise Partnership.

Figure 3. Area covered by the South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan



South West Hertfordshire Joint Strategic Plan

The local authorities of Dacorum, Hertsmere, Three River, St Albans and Watford, with the additional involvement with Hertfordshire County Council, have come together and agreed to work on the South West Hertfordshire Joint Spatial Plan (JSP). This plan will identify key strategic issues in the area and set out a growth strategy for the South West Hertfordshire area.

Preparation of the Joint Strategic Plan will take place alongside the local plans being undertaken by each respective council and will provide a platform to consider the growth challenges in the wider South West Hertfordshire area can be addressed in the long term.

Future Development Plan

Local Plan Review

Since the Watford Core Strategy was adopted in 2013. There have been many changes in the planning system.

The National Planning Policy Framework was revised in 2018 and requires local authorities to have an 'up to date' local plan. This is when the local plan is less than five years old and makes provision for the housing required during this time span. Local plans are also expected to identify land for development to cover a period of 10 years.

In 2018, the Government amended national guidance on how to calculate housing need. This is a standard methodology that is to be used by all local authorities to set out the number of homes required over the next ten years and over the period covered by the local plan.

The Core Strategy set out a housing target of 260 dwellings per year to 2031. This was based on the East of England Plan requirements. In 2016, the South West Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment identified a need for 577 dwellings per year.

The review will result in a new local plan which will include strategic planning policies, development management policies and site allocations. These will be set out in a single document and will be represented on the Policies Map.

Neighbourhood Plans

Neighbourhood Plans were introduced through the Localism Act (2012) and subsequent regulations such as [The Neighbourhood Planning \(General\) Regulations 2012](#) and the [Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017](#). The area and issues covered by a neighbourhood plan are identified and set out by the neighbourhood planning group. Neighbourhood plans once adopted become part of the development plan. They are a material consideration when making planning decisions. As of February 2019, there were no neighbourhood plans in the borough.

Statement of Community Involvement

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted by the council in November 2019. The document sets out how the council will involve and engage with the community during the preparation, monitoring and review of development plan documents and planning applications.

Following the circumstances related to the pandemic affecting the Local Planning Authority, the Statement of Community Involvement will be revised to set out how the Local Planning Authority will engage with the community where face to face meetings and events are not possible or advised.

Other Documents to be Prepared

Authority Monitoring Report

Each year the council publishes a monitoring report (AMR). It covers the year from the start of April of the preceding year to the end of March. The AMR compares the progress of local plan preparation to the timetable in the LDS. It also assesses the effectiveness of local plan policies, the significant effects, and reports that monitor data for the borough.

The AMR will therefore act to flag up both policy changes which may be required, and whether a review of the preparation timetable is necessary.

Supplementary Planning Documents

Supplementary planning documents (SPDs) provide additional detail and guidance to support policies in the development plan. These documents are subject to public consultation and are a material consideration when making planning decisions. However, they cannot be used to set out new policies.

Community Infrastructure Levy

The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a mechanism to gather financial contributions generated by new development to provide new infrastructure, both locally and strategically. The CIL Charging Schedule was adopted by Watford in 2015. It sets out the standard charge that particular types of new development are required to pay. The CIL will be kept under review to ensure it appropriately reflects development requirements and viability considerations critical to the Local Plan.

Infrastructure Funding Statements

Infrastructure Funding Statements are prepared annually and set out the funds received by the Local Authority that have been generated by new development, through CIL or section

106 agreements. The statement sets out the projects, or types of infrastructure, that have been allocated or accrued funds to deliver infrastructure.

Risk Assessment

Risk	Likelihood	Impact	Mitigation
Changes in national policy and regulations which require a significant alteration to emerging plan content.	High	Medium	Highlight issues and concerns through responses to Government consultations. Access external support from agencies such as the Planning Advisory Service (PAS).
Preparation of Local Plan and/or the Joint Strategic Plan fails to meet key project milestones.	High	Medium	Achieving key milestones is integral for the continuity of a project and to progress work that is to follow. This can be mitigated through good project management, project coordination through shared resources and setting out clear objectives with regular dialogue between authorities. Can be supported by joint working on evidence bases.
Preparation of evidence base documents is delayed.	High	Medium	The evidence base is critical to underpin approaches and policies set out in the Local Plan. Delays can adversely affect progress on the Plan and compromise the overall timetable for completion. This can be mitigated by good project management of internal projects and external consultants and anticipating the potential ramifications of delays on other aspects of the Local Plan when being prepared.
Failure to agree critical cross boundary strategic planning issues with prescribed Duty to Co-operate bodies.	Medium	Medium	Strategic issues are important to consider so development can be brought forward effectively to benefit the local and wider area. This will require continued and regular engagement with key stakeholders and retaining an up to date evidence base.

Unexpected issues and quantity of consultation responses.	Medium	High	Consultations are important to gain views and ideas about the draft Local Plan as it is prepared. To reduce the potential for unexpected issues arising it will be important to have an up to date and robust evidence base and work with stakeholders and neighbouring authorities to address issues appropriately. Temporary staff could be employed, however, this will have budgetary issues.
Loss of staff, experience and continuity.	Medium	High	Staff resources and their continuity are important to progress the Local Plan which can take several years to complete. Loss of staff can be mitigated through the appointment of temporary staff and commissioning of consultants although this has budgetary issues. Undertaking exit interviews can help to clarify and understand issues. The Local Development Scheme timetable will be monitored and amendments can be considered.
Delays to decision making process	Medium	High	Decision making can accelerate and delay the preparation of the Local Plan. The potential for delays can be reduced by keeping key stakeholders and parties informed of progress. On-going officer and Member training related to key planning issues will help with understanding of the Local Plan and clarifications through legal advice can be obtained when necessary. Good project management will be required and the arranging 'special' meetings for Cabinet and Full Council if required.

Emerging neighbourhood plans	Low	Low	Neighbourhood plans do not have a predictable nature for where they could arise in Watford or what their timetable may be. These will require staff resources and it will be important to have a clear and consistent approach to supporting neighbourhood planning groups. From the outset, dialogue with neighbourhood planning groups will need to highlight the importance of being consistent with the Development Plan.
Pressure on financial resources	Medium	High	Preparing a Local Plan will incur financial costs. Reducing funding pots and competing priorities are increasing the pressure on financial resources available to support the production of a local plan. This can be mitigated by being proactive to identifying costs early in the project, ensure a coordinated approach between council officers, teams and elected Members to make effective use of resources available and deliver mutually inclusive corporate objectives. Commissioning evidence bases jointly with neighbouring authorities can improve efficiency and reduce cost. Access grant funding and other external financial sources of finance can supplement in-house funding.
Capacity of Planning Inspectorate (PINs) and other statutory consultees	Medium	Medium	The latter stages of the Local Plan require the involvement of the Planning Inspectorate as part of the examination process. Delays can be mitigated with on-going dialogue with the Planning Inspectorate and key stakeholders.

Local Plan found 'unsound'	Medium	High	An unsound Local Plan can result in significant delays. To minimise the potential for this taking place a Preparation of a quality evidence base that is robust and up to date. To mitigate the potential for an unsound Plan will require working collaboratively with external stakeholders, statutory consultees, and neighbouring authorities as part of the Joint Strategic Plan. Additionally, obtain legal advice when required.
Legal challenge	Medium	High	Obtain legal advice when required and ensure documents supporting the Local Plan are robust.

Preparing a Development Plan Document

The stages to prepare a development plan document are set out in the Figure 3. References to 'Regulations' relate to The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012.

Key Stages of Preparation

Starting Point	Consultation on the scope of the sustainability appraisal
Identification of the scope and information content of the sustainability appraisal followed by a consultation with statutory consultees.	
Regulation 18	Informing stakeholders about undertaking a new local plan
Notifying those bodies or persons specified in the Regulations (The Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 that we intend to prepare a local plan; the subject of that document, and inviting representations on what such a document should contain. Responses will inform the local plan document.	
Regulation 18	Public participation in the preparation of the development plan document
Optional consultation on the early draft of the local plan to further inform content to be contained in the document.	
Regulations 19 and 20	Publication of the development plan document
The local plan, as intended for submission to the Secretary of State, will be published for formal consultation.	
Regulation 22	Submission of the development plan document to the Secretary of State
The local plan is submitted for independent examination by a planning inspector, along with all comments received at the publication stage, supporting evidence bases and the sustainability appraisal.	
Regulation 24	Independent examination
An independent inspector is appointed by the Planning Inspectorate to assess the soundness of the submitted plan. The inspector will take all comments received into account.	
Regulation 25	Inspectors examination report
The Planning Inspector will release a report setting out recommended changes and if the development plan document should be adopted.	
Regulation 26	Adoption
The council formally adopts the local plan as part of the development plan.	

Preparation Schedule

Title	Watford Local Plan	
Subject Matter	The Local Plan will set out the overall spatial strategy, strategic development priorities and objectives, site allocations, criteria based policies and a monitoring framework to guide development in Watford to 2036.	
Status	Development Plan Document	
Geographic coverage	Watford Borough	
Timetable	Issues and Options consultation	September - October 2018
	First Local Draft Plan consultation (Preferred Options)	September - October 2019
	Publication of the Local Plan (Final Draft Local Plan)	January 2021
	Submission for examination	June 2021
	Examination	July 2021 - December 2020
	Inspectors report	January 2022
	Adoption	February 2022

Timeline for the Review of the Local Plan

2018					2019					2020																						
A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D				
	▲												●										◆						+	■		
2021										2022																						
J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D	J	F	M	A	M	J															
◆					+	■							+	★																		

- ▲ Local Plan Issues and Options consultation
- Draft Local Plan consultation
- ◆ Publication of Local plan consultation
- +- Examination Hearings
- ★ Inspectors Report
- ★ Adoption

Evidence Base

Development plans and planning policies need to be based on a robust evidence base. During the preparation of the development plan the studies and surveys will need to be carried out. These will be undertaken by the council and through the commissioning of consultants.

Sustainability Appraisal

Development plan documents are subject to a Sustainability Appraisal, which includes fulfilling the requirements for the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) EU Directive. This Directive will continue to be adhered to by the UK Government post Brexit. The purpose of an SA is to assess the economic, environmental and social impacts of a strategy or proposal and provide additional information about the potential implications of alternative strategies as planning policies evolve. The process runs alongside the preparation of development plan documents.

Soundness

Local authorities are required to prepare a plan that it considers to be 'sound'. This requirement is tested by an independent planning inspector as part of an Examination in Public. To satisfy the tests of soundness the National Planning Policy Framework (paragraph 35) requires a local plan to be:

Positively prepared:

providing a strategy which, as a minimum, seeks to meet the area's objectively assessed needs; and is informed by agreements with other authorities, so that unmet need from neighbouring areas is accommodated where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development;

Justified:

An appropriate strategy, taking into account the reasonable alternatives, and based on proportionate evidence

Effective:

Deliverable over the plan period, and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic matters that have been dealt with rather than deferred, as evidenced by the statement of common ground and

Consistent with national policy:

Enabling the delivery of sustainable development in accordance with the policies in this Framework.

Resources

It is anticipated that sufficient in-house resources will be available for preparing the development plan documents.

The need for an external consultant to fulfil our Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment requirements is ongoing. When required, external consultants may be commissioned to prepare background evidence base studies to support the Local Plan.

Part A

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: Tuesday, 13 October 2020

Report author: Group Head of Democracy and Governance

Title: Appointment of Second Independent Person to assist with Standards complaints

1.0 Summary

- 1.1 At its meeting on 17 March 2020 council considered a report from the Standards Committee on the review by the Committee for Standards in Public Life on standards in local government.
- 1.2 Council agreed to implement recommendation seven in the review which was that it should have at least 2 Independent Persons and authorised that the council seek a second Independent Person.
- 1.3 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance has interviewed Mr Nigel Gates and is recommending that he be appointed as the second Independent Person

2.0 Risks

2.1

Nature of risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (treat, tolerate, terminate or transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of severity and likelihood)
The council does not appoint	The council fails to comply with the review recommendations	That the appointment be made	treat	1

3.0 Recommendations

- 3.1 That Nigel Gates be appointed as the second Independent Person.

Further information:

Carol Chen
 carol.chen@watford.gov.uk
 Tel: 01923 278350

4.0 **Detailed proposal**

- 4.1 Council agreed at its meeting of the 17 March 2020 to seek a second Independent Person. The role is to act as an advisor to the Monitoring Officer and the Standards Committee in relation to action to be taken in response to complaints about breaches of the code of conduct for councillors.
- 4.2 To date the council has only had one Independent Person. The Committee for Standards in Public Life has recommended that local authorities should have a minimum of two, in the case of absence.
- 4.3 The boroughs, districts and county of Hertfordshire have a register of people who are already an Independent Person and who have indicated a willingness to be available to assist other councils. Mr Nigel Gates was on that register.
- 4.4 Mr Gates is currently the Independent Person for Three Rivers District Council and has been involved in working with its Standards Committee since the inception of the standards regime. He is a retired lecturer having previously worked for the University of Hertfordshire and been involved in the Lecturers Union dealing with complaints about teaching staff at a national level. He is therefore very experienced in understanding the sensitivity and importance of dealing with complaints and is also familiar with the code of conduct for councillors.
- 4.5 It is recommended that he be appointed as the councils second Independent Person.

5.0 **Implications**

5.1 **Financial**

- 5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that the councils remuneration scheme provides a payment of £200 per annum to this position

5.2 **Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)**

- 5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that it is a requirement of the standards legislation that the council has an Independent Person and that they be consulted in relation to complaints about councillors under the code of conduct.

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

5.3.1 Having had regard to the council's obligations under s149 Equality Act 2010, it is considered there are no implications.

Having had regard to the council's obligations under the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018, it is considered that officers are not required to undertake a Data Processing Impact Assessment (DPIA) for this report.

Background papers

No papers were used in the preparation of this report.

Agenda Item 13

Part A

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: 13 October 2020

Report author: Senior Democratic Services Officer

Title: Scrutiny annual report 2019-20

1.0 Summary

1.1 The constitution requires that a report be presented to Council annually on the work of scrutiny during the preceding year. This report describes the work and process of the council's scrutiny committees and task groups during 2019-20.

2.0 Risks

2.1 There are no risks identified from this report.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That Council notes the annual scrutiny report for 2019-20.

Further information:

Ishbel Morren

democraticservices@watford.gov.uk

Tel: 01923 278375

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

4.0 Scrutiny at Watford Borough Council in 2019-20

4.1 Scrutiny Structure

4.1.1 New scrutiny arrangements were agreed by Full Council on 19 March 2019, effective from May 2019. These retained the Overview and Scrutiny Committee and one Finance Scrutiny Committee (formerly Budget Panel) and made provision for up to three time limited task and finish groups per year (see figure 1 below).

4.1.2 Issues previously considered by the Outsourced Services Scrutiny Panel and the Community Safety Partnership Task Group were added to Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programme.

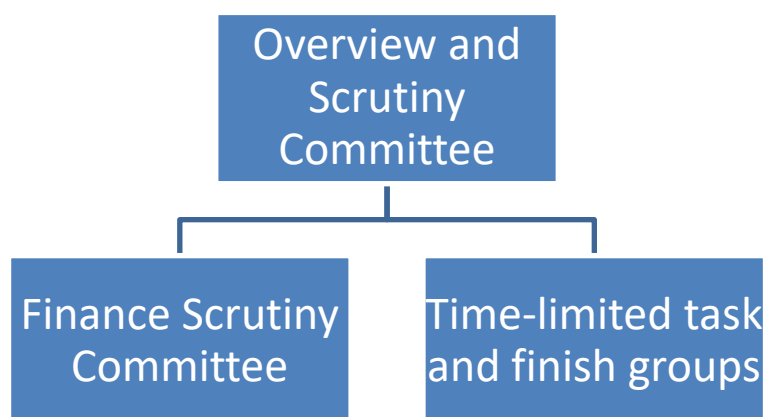


Figure 1

4.1.3 During the year, three task groups were set up to review suggestions submitted separately by an officer (Watford Colosseum Task Group), the Mayor (Mental Health Task Group) and Deputy Mayor (Health Services for the Deaf Task Group).

4.1.4 Also in May 2019, the Government issued new statutory guidance on overview and scrutiny. The guidance was reviewed by officers to ensure that the council's scrutiny function was operating in accordance with the policies and practices set out in the document. Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted that the council was required to have regard to the guidance.

4.2 **Councillor attendance at scrutiny**

4.2.1 During 2019-20, 22 out of the 30 non-executive councillors attended at least one scrutiny meeting or one of the three scrutiny task and finish groups organised during the year.

4.2.2 Four portfolio holders attended a scrutiny committee or task group meeting to respond to questions on behalf of the Executive.

4.3 **Scrutiny Training**

4.3.1 At Council on 30 January 2018 it was agreed that scrutiny training would be compulsory for those councillors sitting or substituting on scrutiny committees or participating in scrutiny task and finish groups. The scrutiny training would be in addition to the brief introduction given to new councillors at their induction. Training must be repeated every two years.

4.3.2 Eleven councillors attended the compulsory training session run by the Senior Democratic Services Officer in June 2019. An additional one-to-one training session was arranged with one councillor later in that month.

4.3.3 Finance Scrutiny Committee held one bespoke training session. This took place at the first meeting in June and set out the role of the Finance Scrutiny Committee.

4.4 Overview and Scrutiny Committee

4.4.1 Membership

The scrutiny committee comprised nine councillors:

Councillor Amanda Grimston (Chair)

Councillor Jagtar Singh Dhindsa (Vice chair)

Councillors Dawn Allen-Williamson, Rabi Martins, Bilqees Mauthoor, Maggie Parker, Glen Saffery, Jessica Stiff and Matt Turmaine

Other attendees included:

Councillor Karen Collett, portfolio holder responsible for Community to answer questions

Councillor Keith Crout, substitute

Councillor Stephen Johnson, portfolio holder responsible for Housing and Property to answer questions

Councillor Mo Mills, substitute

Councillor Jennifer Pattinson, substitute

Councillor Nasreen Shah, substitute

Councillor Richard Smith, substitute

Councillor Mark Watkin, portfolio holder for Resources and Customer Services to answer questions

Councillor Hall, Chair of Scrutiny at Broxbourne Borough Council came to Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 27 February 2020 to observe scrutiny at Watford Borough Council.

4.4.2 Committee's work programme for 2019/20

Following the introduction of the new scrutiny arrangements from May 2019, Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work programme broadened considerably. The committee met on eight occasions during the year. No Executive key decisions were called in. The following items were discussed:

- **West Hertfordshire Hospitals Redevelopment** – future hospital services in West Hertfordshire and the implications for Watford General Hospital.
- **Performance updates** – quarterly reviews on the council's performance across its services
- **Rough sleeping in Watford** – rough sleeper numbers in Watford and the steps being taken by the housing service with its partners to resolve the issue.

- **Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities** – government’s statutory guidance on scrutiny, published on 7 May 2019.
- **Scrutiny task and finish groups** – establishment and completion of three scrutiny task and finish groups reviewing issues relating to Watford Colosseum, Mental Health and Health Service for the Deaf.
- **Small Grants Fund Review Year 3 2018-19** – allocation of small grants in the period April 2016 to March 2019 and proposed changes to the fund, including increasing the maximum grant from £2,000 to £3,000, introducing some match funding and amending the permitted frequency of applications from the same organisation.
- **Voluntary Sector Commissioning Framework Year 3 and the funding period 2016-19** – review of the framework against key performance indicators.
- **HQ Theatres and Hospitality** – performance of the Watford Colosseum Management Contract during year 8 (September 2018 – August 2019) and information on the closure of the Colosseum at the end of 2019 due to issues with the ceiling in the main auditorium.
- **Leisure Centre Contract – SLM** – outcomes, initiatives and projects delivered through the Leisure Centre Management Contract during year 1 (June 2018 – June 2019), including Cassiobury paddling pools and splash pads.
- **Waste, streets and parks contract with Veolia** – end of year 6 contract performance with particular reference to improved street and environmental cleanliness, levels of litter, detritus, graffiti and fly-posting.
- **Revenues and Benefits** – processing and collection rates for the service together with a review of changes brought in as part of the Watford 2020 transformation programme.
- **Previous review update: Watford Community Housing** – review of the task group’s recommendations and progress on implementation.
- **Watford 2020 Programme updates** – quarterly updates on progress.
- **Executive Decision Progress report** – details of all proposed key decisions and those key decisions taken by the Executive and officers, including information about any consultations with the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

- **Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee** – updates on the work carried out by the Health Scrutiny Committee. Full details of the Health Scrutiny Committee are available on the [County Council's website](#).
- **Updates from Finance Scrutiny Committee** – as required from the Finance Scrutiny Committee chair in response to scrutiny members' questions.

The reports and minutes for Overview and Scrutiny Committee are available on the [council's website](#).

4.4.3 Due to the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic, Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 19 March 2020 was cancelled. At this meeting it had been intended to consider the Community Safety Partnership. This item was moved to the first meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the new municipal year which took place (virtually) on 18 June 2020.

4.5 **Finance Scrutiny Committee**

The scrutiny committee comprised:

Councillor Matt Turmaine (Chair)
 Councillor Peter Kloss (Vice chair)
 Councillors Dawn Allen-Williamson, Nigel Bell, Jane Johnson, Asif Khan, Rabi Martins, Jennifer Pattinson and Glen Saffery

Other attendees included Councillor Mark Watkin (portfolio holder responsible for Resources and Customer Services) and Councillor Mauthoor.

Finance Scrutiny Committee met on five occasions during the year. The following items were discussed:

The final outturn for 2018/19. Finance Scrutiny Committee considered in particular: budget variances for major projects, the council's reserves and the risks associated with staff vacancies. The minutes of the discussion were forwarded to Cabinet.

Property Investment Board. The committee received a presentation on the current activities of the Property Investment Board.

Financial planning. Members reviewed the council's proposed budget and paid particular attention to borrowing related to major projects, the charging policy, details of the capital programme and the anticipated budget gap.

The Finance Digest Budget Monitor was also reviewed regularly by the committee.

Details of the committee's agendas and minutes are available [here](#).

4.6 Task Groups

4.6.1 Mental Health Task Group

The task group met on three occasions between June and September 2019 to consider a scrutiny suggestion from Mayor Taylor to look at current mental health provision in the borough and consider what more Watford Borough Council could do to support those living with mental health difficulties. Membership comprised Councillors Dawn Allen-Williamson, Amanda Grimston, Rabi Martins, Bilqees Mauthoor and Glen Saffery (Chair).

Three main activities were agreed by the task group:

1. Undertake a review of organisations dealing with mental health issues in the borough to understand the extent of current provision and identify any gaps;
2. Carry out a basic survey of these organisations to provide an overview of their roles and activities, identify any areas not covered and seek feedback on best practice that could be adopted; and
3. Understand the role of the council's Mental Health Champion and how he/she interacts with other mental health champions across Hertfordshire.

The task group's final report and recommendations were presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in October 2019. It was forwarded to the Health and Wellbeing Forum, which subsequently accepted the task group's recommendations and has been working on their implementation. A copy of the report was also passed to the Mayor and Portfolio Holder for Community.

4.6.2 Watford Colosseum Task Group

The task group proposal came from the Head of Community and Environmental Services and met in September and October 2019. Membership comprised Councillors Keith Crout, Amanda Grimston, Rabi Martins, Richard Smith (Chair) and Maggie Parker.

Dealing with issues of commercial sensitivity, the task group considered responses from private sector theatre operations in a direct market engagement exercise designed to inform an innovative approach to the development of a service specification and potential changes to the Watford Colosseum. This was intended to follow refurbishment works taking place during March to November 2021.

The task group's final report and recommendations were considered by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in December 2019. These were agreed in full.

4.6.3 Health Services for the Deaf Task Group

The task group's work took place in January and February 2020. The task group proposal was submitted by Councillor Karen Collett following concerns raised at a meeting with Watford Deaf Club. The membership was Councillors Steve Bolton, Aga Dychton, Amanda Grimston, Glen Saffery (Chair) and Richard Wenham.

The task group held an initial meeting with Watford Deaf Club to learn about deaf residents' experiences in accessing health services. This was followed by an evidence day attended by representatives of local health services.

The task group's final report and recommendations were presented to Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting in June 2020. It was then forwarded to the Chairman of Hertfordshire County Council's Health Scrutiny Committee who has indicated that the recommendations will be taken forward as part of a county-wide review.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 The Shared Director of Finance comments that there are no financial implications in this report.

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

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

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

5.3.1 There are no equalities, human rights or data protections implications as a result of this report.

5.4 Staffing

5.4.1 There are no staffing implications as a result of this report.

5.5 Accommodation

5.5.1 There are no accommodation implications as a result of this report.

5.6 **Community Safety/Crime and Disorder**

5.6.1 The council has a statutory duty to scrutinise the local crime and disorder partnership. Consideration in 2019/20 was delayed due to the impacts of the coronavirus pandemic. It was carried out by Overview and Scrutiny Committee at the earliest opportunity after the Government imposed lockdown in June 2020.

5.7 **Sustainability**

5.7.1 There are no sustainability implications as a result of this report.

Appendices

None

Background papers

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

- Reports and minutes of scrutiny committees, panels and task groups (all are available on the [council's website](#))

Agenda Item 14

Part A

Report to: Council

Date of meeting: Tuesday, 13 October 2020

Report author: Democratic Services Manager

Title: Neighbourhood Locality Fund Annual Report 2019/20

1.0 Summary

1.1 This document provides the annual report for the Neighbourhood Locality Funds in accordance with the fund's protocol. It includes information about the overall budget and types of projects the wards have supported during 2019/20.

2.0 Risks

2.1 There are no identified risks as a result of this report.

3.0 Recommendations

3.1 That the Neighbourhood Locality Fund annual report be noted.

Further information:

Alan Garside

alan.garside@watford.gov.uk

Tel: 01923 278374

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

4.0 Detailed proposal

4.1 In 2019/20 each ward was allocated a budget of £3,000. This was the same amount as in the previous year.

4.2 The wards spent a total of £29,174.93, equating to 81.04% of the overall budget. This is broken down by ward as follows –

Ward	Number of projects	Expenditure
Callowland	2	£1,740.00
Central	6	£2,911.00
Holywell	5	£2,999.97
Leggatts	0	£0.00

Ward	Number of projects	Expenditure
Meriden	3	£3,000.00
Nascot	5	£2,695.00
Oxhey	3	£1,405.00
Park	4	£2,920.00
Stanborough	6	£3,000.00
Tudor	3	£2,958.58
Vicarage	5	£2,929.40
Woodside	6	£2,931.79

4.3 The Democratic Services Officer has reviewed the different types of expenditure and identified the most popular, including the amount spent and the percentage this equated to in relation to the overall budget, in specified groups. Details of these groups are as follows -

- Environmental improvements (£9,690.38 equalling 26.9% of the budget).
- Local community groups and organisations (£4,487.00 equalling 12.46% of the budget).
- Youth groups including scouts (£3,149.20 equalling 8.75% of the budget).
- Schools and play groups (£2,633.00 equalling 7.31% of the budget).
- Sports groups (£2,100.00 equalling 5.83% of the budget).
- Community clean up and skips (£2,069.16 equalling 5.75% of the budget).
- Charities and charitable donations (£1,900.00 equalling 5.28% of the budget).
- Highways improvements (£1,611.79 equalling 4.62% of the budget).
- Resident's groups (£965.00 equalling 2.68% of the budget).
- Churches (£590.00 equalling 1.64% of the budget).
- Monies not spent (£6,825.07 equalling 18.96% of the budget).

4.4 **Comparison of expenditure with 2018/19**

4.5 There was a significant increase in the amount of the overall budget allocated to environmental improvements. This increased from 9.86% of the budget in 2018/19 to 26.9% in 2019/20. Whilst the ten projects conducted were identical in number to the second highest allocated group in 2019/20 (that is local community groups and organisations with 12.46% of the budget); the environmental projects tended to be larger in scale, such as in the case of tree planting and landscaping.

4.6 Similarly to 2018/19, there was a further reduction in the overall budget allocated to community clean ups and skip hire. This reduced from 13.90% of the budget in 2018/19 to 5.75% in 2019/20. There were also reductions in budgets allocated in respect of highways improvements and sports groups which saw reductions of 12.31% and 5.37% respectively. Most other groups remained fairly static with just small increases or reductions in monies allocated.

5.0 Implications

5.1 Financial

5.1.1 The Interim Head of Finance comments that expenditure has been incurred within budget and has been legitimately spent in accordance with the fund's protocol.

5.2 Legal Issues (Monitoring Officer)

5.2.1 The Group Head of Democracy and Governance comments that there are no legal implications. All Neighbourhood Locality requests are seen by the Group Head of Democracy and Governance.

5.3 Equalities, Human Rights and Data Protection

5.3.1 There are no risks associated with equalities or human rights as a direct result of this report.

5.4 Staffing

5.4.1 There are no staffing implications as a direct result of this report.

5.5 Accommodation

5.5.1 There are no accommodation implications as a direct result of this report.

5.6 Community Safety/Crime and Disorder

5.6.1 There are no community safety or crime and disorder implications as a direct result of this report.

5.7 Sustainability

5.7.1 There are no sustainability implications as a direct result of this report.

Appendices

None.

Background papers

- Applications and expenditure sheets for the individual wards and projects.

