

## **CABINET**

**8 July 2024**

Present: Mayor Taylor (Chair)  
Councillor A Dychton (Deputy Mayor)  
Councillors A Dychton, J Pattinson, K Rodrigues, G Saffery,  
I Stotesbury and T Williams

Also present: Councillor N Bell, Opposition Group Leader

Officers: Chief Executive  
Chief Finance Officer  
Associate Director of Customer and Corporate Services  
Associate Director of Environment  
Associate Director of Housing and Wellbeing  
Contract Manager Waste Recycling and Market  
Environmental Health Manager (E)  
Housing Supply Manager  
Democratic Services Manager

### **12 Apologies for absence**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Khan, Chair of Finance Scrutiny Committee.

### **13 Disclosure of interests (if any)**

Councillor Pattinson informed Cabinet that she had an interest in minute numbers 18 and 19, as she had been appointed to the Board of Watford Community Housing by the Mayor. Prior to the start of minute number 18 Councillor Pattinson left the room and returned after the completion of minute number 19.

### **14 Minutes of previous meeting**

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 June 2024 were submitted and signed.

### **15 Conduct of meeting**

The Mayor advised that he intended to go through the agenda as published, including the two late reports.

**Fortnightly recycling proposal and supporting policy**

It was noted that this item had been deferred from the previous meeting due to the Parliamentary election being called following the publication of the agenda for the June meeting.

Cabinet received a report of the Waste and Recycling Service Delivery Leads, which set out the option to move from a weekly collection of dry recycling to fortnightly.

The Mayor invited Councillor Williams to introduce the report.

Councillor Williams explained that it was with a heavy heart he introduced this report. However, due to the sustained underfunding of local government it was necessary to review all possibilities to save expenditure. This had included the services provided by Veolia. He informed members that the move from weekly to fortnightly collections of dry recyclables would produce a saving of £110,000 each year. He advised that eight out of 10 councils within Hertfordshire already collected dry recyclables on a fortnightly basis. Watford was one of the last in the county to change to fortnightly collections. Some councils were changing other waste collections to every three weeks. This decision would align the council with 80% of other councils. He noted that collections had been monitored and it had been recorded that 70% of collections were less than 50% full. If any residents were concerned there would be options available including requesting a larger bin and, in some cases a second one.

The Waste, Recycling and Venues Lead informed members that the government had provided councils with additional funding to roll-out food waste collection further. All new blocks of flats were being given food waste recycling caddies from the start. The funding would also cover the extension of food waste recycling to all flats by 2026.

Councillor Williams assured members that the decision to make this recommendation had not been taken lightly. He thanked the council's officers and the Veolia team for compiling the detailed report before Cabinet.

The Mayor echoed his thanks to the teams for their work on this matter. The Mayor invited Councillor Bell to ask questions.

Councillor Bell noted that Councillor Williams had referred to an annual saving of £110,000. He asked whether any other options had been considered that may save a similar amount. He added that it was necessary to make sure that those living in flats had access to recycling facilities.

The Mayor stated that every aspect of council expenditure had been reviewed. He commented that the main issue for flats was food waste.

Councillor Williams responded that those residents living in high rise flats would continue to receive weekly collections. It was only the low-level flats that would be affected by this decision. He added that 25% of residual waste was food waste. The level of residual waste could be reduced if food waste was disposed of in the correct way. Further communication with residents was required.

The Mayor invited Cabinet to vote on the recommendations contained in the report.

Resolved –

1. that the frequency of recycling collections be moved to fortnightly effective from October 2024. To effect low rise properties (houses and flat blocks of 5 or less) only.
2. that the decision on the implementation of fortnightly recycling and any changes to the garden waste collection policy and terms and conditions be delegated to the Cabinet Member for Neighbourhood Services and the Mayor in consultation with the Associate Director for Environment and Communities.
3. that blocks of 6 or more flats to continue to receive a weekly collection of dry recycling.
4. that an Implementation Group, comprising the Mayor, Portfolio Holder, WBC Officers from the Service, Communications, and Veolia, be established to oversee the service change.
5. that the service change to be supported by the Enterprise Programme Management Office (EPMO).
6. that the change be accompanied by a new bin policy:

#### **Watford Borough Council – Recycling Bin Policy**

1. Households of 4 or more permanent residents are entitled to an additional 240 litre recycling bin. Available on application.
2. Households who currently have a 140 litre recycling bin are entitled to swap it for a 240 litre recycling bin. Available on application.
3. All residents are allowed to put out additional side recycling if clearly marked or in a clear sack (presented next to their recycling bin on collection day).

4. Extenuating circumstances of applicants who fall outside of the criteria in this policy will be considered at the council's discretion.

Excludes households with access to communal recycling facilities.

Excludes blocks of flats with 6 or more properties.

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### **Watford Borough Council Air Quality Action Plan 2024-2029.**

Cabinet received a report of the Environmental Health Manager – Environment, which provided an Air Quality Action Plan.

The Mayor invited Councillor Stotesbury to introduce the report.

Councillor Stotesbury started by thanking the Environmental Health Manager, Associate Director for Housing and Wellbeing and other officers for their work contained in the detailed report. He informed members that there were two Local Air Quality Management Areas in Watford, both of which had not exceeded the maximum concentration levels. Monitoring would continue until 2026 to ensure the concentrates stayed below the maximum. Councillor Stotesbury highlighted the action plan and some of the measures that had been put in place that helped towards reducing the concentrates.

Councillor Dychton added that the high focus on the green agenda ensured there was good air quality for residents.

Councillor Bell welcomed that the figures were down in the two areas. He asked for clarification on the actions taken to keep the levels down. He also asked whether there were any issues in other locations, for example St Albans Road.

The Environmental Health Manager explained that the council monitored 32 locations across the borough. Traffic counts were carried out and queuing times in the worst locations.

Councillor Stotesbury added that the council had a statutory duty but it went beyond that requirement. The council worked with other groups across the community to ensure improvement in air quality.

The Mayor asked for clarification on how members would be kept updated on the action plan.

The Environmental Health Manager responded that officers had to produce an annual report for Defra, which could be made available to members. The

Associate Director added that those actions contained in the Delivery Plan would be reported as part of the quarterly update to Cabinet.

In response to a question from Councillor Bell, the Environmental Health Manager explained that if other areas were identified as exceeding the levels it would be necessary to declare Air Quality Management Areas and an action plan drawn up.

The Mayor asked Cabinet to vote on the recommendation in the report.

Resolved –

That the action plan attached as Appendix A top the report be approved.

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### **Relocation of New Hope service from 64 Rickmansworth Road**

Cabinet received a report of the Housing Enabling and Development Manager which asked members to recommend to Council that the remaining capital receipt from the sale of the 64 Rickmansworth Road was ringfenced for additional social and temporary accommodation.

The Mayor invited Councillor Rodrigues to introduce the report.

Councillor Rodrigues informed members that the Housing team was looking at all options to increase affordable private sector accommodation and social housing. He explained that the property in Rickmansworth Road was not the most suitable accommodation for New Hope. Following a decision to sell the property, it was recognised that they would require alternative accommodation. The second part of the recommendations was to ringfence the capital receipt. There would be schemes coming forward in the next few months, which would provide an opportunity to invest to save for the council. The report would need to be presented to Council for approval.

Councillor Bell advised he supported the proposal, as it would help the homeless. He recognised that New Hope needed more space.

The Mayor commented that the proposal made sense and asked Cabinet to vote on the recommendations in the report.

Resolved –

1. that Cabinet recommends that Council provides a capital grant of £160,000 to Watford Community Housing. This grant to be used to secure an

alternate property for New Hope to deliver services currently delivered from 64 Rickmansworth Road.

2. that Cabinet recommends that Council allocates the remaining capital receipt from the sale of 64 Rickmansworth Road to secure additional housing units. The sum allocated to be no greater than the total capital receipt profit, less the £160,000 committed to Watford Community Housing.

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### **Approval of s.106 Expenditure to Deliver Social Rented Housing .106**

Cabinet received a report of the Housing Enabling and Development Manager which was proposing a recommendation to Council for approval of a contribution of the commuted sums to secure the delivery of five social rented homes.

The Mayor invited Councillor Rodrigues to introduce the report.

Councillor Rodrigues stated that the increase in the number of affordable homes was important for the council. He advised that it was recommended that commuted sums were used to support the proposal to secure the delivery of social rented units at the private development in Sydney Road. The sum of £375,000 would support the conversion of five units. He explained that the Mayor had delegated authority to approve the use of commuted sums and had agreed to this proposal. However, it required Council approval to make the capital grant to Watford Community Housing. He praised the work the Housing Team was doing to improve the housing situation in Watford.

Councillor Bell commented that he supported the proposal.

The Mayor invited Cabinet to vote on the recommendation to Council.

Resolved –

That Cabinet recommends that Council, as part of the Capital Programme, approves a contribution of £375,000 of the commuted sums to secure the delivery of five Social Rented homes on the site known as ‘Land to rear of 1-43 Sydney Road and 7-9 Sydney Road (Humphreys)’.

Please note this recommendation from Cabinet is not eligible for call-in as the report is referred to Council on 16 July 2024 for a decision.

**Finance Monitoring Report 2023/24 - Year end**

Cabinet received a late report of the Chief Finance Officer setting out the Finance Monitoring report for the year end of 2023/24.

The Mayor informed members that the report had been presented to Finance Scrutiny Committee at its recent meeting and would be going forward to Council on 16 July. He had agreed it could be presented this evening. He invited Councillor Rodrigues to introduce the report.

Councillor Rodrigues explained that the report set out the council's budget to the end of the Financial Year 2023/24. It would still be the subject of review by the auditor. He outlined some of the highlights from the report, including the increased demand for council services, the recruitment freeze and procedure for posts that filling and information about budget savings.

The Mayor thanked the Chief Finance Officer and her team for the compiling the information in the report and its appendices. He invited the Chief Finance Officer to make additional comments.

The Chief Finance Officer responded that Councillor Rodrigues had covered the key points in the report. She added that there had been some good news regarding funding during the year which had helped.

The Mayor invited Cabinet to vote on the recommendations as set out in the report including the referral to Council.

Resolved –

1. that the 2023/24 revenue year end position as summarised at section 4.1 and detailed in Appendix 1 and the year end position are noted.
2. that the 2023/24 capital year end position as summarised at section 4.5 and shown in detail in Appendix 4.
3. that Cabinet recommends to Council to approve the revised capital investment programme of £42.451m for 2024/25, £10.510m for 2025/26 and £4.528m for 2026/27, including rephasing of £6.760m capital budgets from 2023/24 into 2024/25 onwards as set out in Appendix 4.
4. that Cabinet recommends to Council to approve the Revenue Virements for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix 7.

## **New Refugee Resettlement Framework Agreement – Tender evaluation and recommendation**

Cabinet received a late report of the Housing Services Strategic Lead which sought a decision from Cabinet to appoint suppliers to provide refugee resettlement services.

The Mayor invited Councillor Pattinson to introduce the report.

Councillor Pattinson firstly thanked the officers for the work they had put into this agreement. It would be available to all Hertfordshire local authorities to use. The framework would ensure that those individuals and families seeking refuge in this country would receive the support they needed from the right organisations in order to feel welcomed and settled in Hertfordshire. The Hertfordshire resettlement programme responded to a number of refugee resettlement schemes. The report summarised the tender evaluation process and made a recommendation of a provider. The current arrangement expired on 31 May 2024. The new agreement would cover four years and commence on 1 August. The Chief Finance Officer had commented that the proposal met the council's value for money duty.

The Mayor commented this could be a contentious issue, but he believed the residents of Watford wanted everyone to play their part.

Councillor Stotesbury stated that he had two Ukrainian refugees staying with him. He had seen the importance of this work. He had also worked with refugees from Afghanistan. He noted that Watford Borough Council had taken point on this matter for the whole of Hertfordshire. He was pleased the council was championing it locally, but if anyone had any concerns they should speak to the councillors or council.

As there were no questions about the restricted document, the Mayor invited Cabinet to vote on the recommendations.

Resolved –

1. that the recommendation to award contained in Appendix 1 – Part B section of the report be accepted.
2. that Cabinet agrees the council's governance and call-in period to be completed as soon as possible (by 22/07/2024) and allow final contracts to be agreed.



Mayor

The Meeting started at 7.00 pm  
and finished at 7.45 pm