

Watford Borough Council

Member Self- Assessment 2018/19

Oxhey Ward

Self-Assessment of: Councillor Iain Sharpe

1. Year elected:
1991

2. Reasons for becoming a councillor:
I wanted to make sure that Watford remains a good place to live in, and for people to visit and work in, especially to protect and enhance the build environment. I believe strongly in local democracy and the need for councillors to hold public bodies accountable to the public. In addition, I am a committed Liberal Democrat and believe the party has strong policies for open government, responding to the concerns of local residents, and providing quality services at a reasonable cost to taxpayers.

3. Roles in the Council:
Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Development, Development Management Committee, Highways Forum (Chair), Major Projects Board (Chair) Planning Policy Advisory Group (Chair)

4. Membership of outside bodies:
Hertfordshire Infrastructure and Planning Partnership (comprising planning portfolio holders for all Hertfordshire districts and Hertfordshire County Council.)

5. Training & Development undertaken (Councillor's training record is listed):

Development management training – main training event and ongoing sessions following Development Management Committee meetings.

Training session on the Residential Design Guide.

GDPR

I have also participated in various training and discussion events organised by the Local Government Association at the twice yearly Liberal Democrat conference, particularly in the fields of planning, housing and environmental issues.

6. Attendance Record:

89%

Your work with Constituents and in the Community.

Please tell us about the work in your ward and for the council:

My main focus this year as cabinet member has been on progressing the Local Plan, which is crucial to shaping the future of the town and ensuring that as far as possible, Watford Council and Watford residents remain in charge of their own destiny rather than suffering 'planning by appeal'.

This has meant regular meetings of the Planning Policy Advisory Group to look at a range of policy areas, identify a chosen policy direction and develop a coherent plan that ensures Watford's continuing success as a town. The aim is that we will go out to consultation on the plan in the autumn.

Other activities I have engaged in this year include:

- As cabinet member I have been responsible for approving other parking projects and consultations, including in Central and Callowland wards, liaising with the local councillors, as well as various other local parking schemes.

- Liaising with officers and ward colleagues to consult residents on whether to introduce parking controls in Oxhey ward and attending drop-in sessions to answer residents' questions

- Responsible for introducing at cabinet consultation plans for regenerating and improving the northern part of the town centre (around the town hall)
- The successful public realm improvements in the High Street were within my portfolio and I oversaw the work of officers in ensuring that this work was carried out to complement the opening of the intu extension in Watford.
- As a member of the Development Management Committee, I have been involved in taking decisions on significant planning applications, where necessary challenging officer recommendations and trying to ensure that the council makes correct planning decisions.
- As chair of the Major Projects Board I have ensured there is full scrutiny of the major schemes and developments happening across the town.
- Taking up various individual issues raised by residents, from reporting highway faults to dealing with instances of anti-social behaviour.
- Attended meetings of the steering group overseeing the proposed activity centre for Oxhey Park North.
- Kept in touch with local residents through regular newsletters, occasional email updates, holding street stalls in Oxhey.
- Taken part in community events such as the Oxhey Park volunteer clean up sessions and supported local community projects and groups via the neighbourhood budget.

7. Providing vision

Key activities include:

- Contributing to the council's corporate plan through discussions with senior officers, the mayor, cabinet members and councillors.
- Promoting via planning policy etc. work towards a strong local economy and sustainable neighbourhoods.
- Addressing the need to provide new homes, including affordable homes through our planning policies

- Willingness to take difficult decisions (e.g. over sites such as Riverwell) for the greater good of the town, especially in trying to meet the need for new homes.
- Participation in regular meetings with senior management to further the council's policy goals.

8. Managing Performance

- Regular meetings with the head of service and quarterly reviews to monitor performance of services within my cabinet portfolio.
- Taking up complaints and concerns raised by local residents and being willing to challenge questionable performance by the council where necessary.
- As part of cabinet regular meetings with leadership team to monitor council's performance on key priorities.

Objective(s) for 2019/20

- Complete Oxhey parking consultation indicating the preferred option for residents.
- Ensure that we continue on schedule with the local plan
- Deliver Clarendon Road environmental improvements
- Continue to keep Oxhey residents informed about local issues

Iain Sharpe, 11 August 2019