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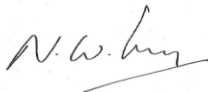
Please ask for:  
Alison Marston

9 November 2021

Dear Councillor

You are requested to attend a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL to be held on Wednesday 17 November 2021 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

Yours faithfully



Corporate Director  
Public Protection, Planning and Governance

**AGENDA**  
**PART 1**

1. **MINUTES**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 16 September 2021 (previously circulated).

2. **APOLOGIES**

To receive apologies for absence, if any.

3. **PETITIONS**

The Mayor will receive petitions (limited to the first three petitions presented).

4. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

A period of thirty minutes will be made available for questions to be put by Members of the public to Members of the Cabinet on matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Borough.

5. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

To note declarations of Members' disclosable pecuniary interests, non-disclosable pecuniary interests and non-pecuniary interests in respect of items on the Agenda.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive any announcements from the Mayor, Leader of the Council, Member of the Cabinet or the Head of Paid Service.

7. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS (Pages 3 - 4)

For a period of up to thirty minutes, a Member of the Council who has given prior notice in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15, may ask (a) the Mayor, (b) the Leader of the Council or (c) a Member of the Cabinet a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Borough.

The questions received for this meeting are attached. A Member asking a question may ask, without giving notice, one supplementary question of the Member to whom the first question was asked. The supplementary question must arise directly out of the reply.

8. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CABINET

To consider a recommendation from the meeting of the Cabinet on 3 November 2021:-

(a) Council Tax Support Scheme (Pages 5 - 10)

9. NOTICES OF MOTIONS (Pages 11 - 12)

To consider notices of motions submitted under Procedure Rule 16 in such order as the Mayor shall direct. The motions received for this meeting are attached.

10. URGENT MATTERS

To consider any matters of urgency subject to the agreement of the Mayor in accordance with Procedure Rule 5.1(s).

Circulation: The Mayor and Members of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council  
Corporate Management Team  
Press and Public (except Part II Items)

**If you require any further information about this Agenda please contact Alison Marston, Governance Services on 01707 357444 or email – [democracy@welhat.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@welhat.gov.uk)**

# Agenda Item 7

Part I  
Item No: 7

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING – 17 NOVEMBER 2021

## COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE NO. 15 QUESTIONS – QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

Notice of the following questions has been received in accordance with Council Procedure Rule No 15:-

1. Question to the Leader from Councillor Russ Platt

“I understood this council was proud of its openness and transparency, however we have still not had confirmation the internal report into the housing compliance problems will be made public. Can the leader confirm that when the report is eventually complete it will be published?”

2. Question to the Leader from Councillor Lucy Musk

“Welwyn Hatfield Council often promotes great causes around improving the lives of local residents. However does the leader agree with me that the Council made an error in not being part of the 'Purple Tuesday 2021' programme to improve the customer experience for disabled people in Welwyn Hatfield?”

3. Question to the Leader from Councillor Ayesha Rohale

“At the last council meeting, in response to my question, there was a statement which suggested a notification system flagging properties in need of checking statutory compliance had only just been implemented. Since this is a really basic task, could the administration explain why such a system was not in place previously?”

4. Question to the Leader from Councillor Tamsin Jackson-Mynott

“As at the last council I was not provided with a satisfactory answer, I want to ask again, in the light of the focus on fire risk assessments after the loss of so many lives in the Grenfell disaster, how is it possible for the Council to have failed to notice that statutory fire risk assessment testing had not taken place on 90% of council properties?”

5. Question to the Leader from Councillor Paul Zukowskyj

“We were told at the last council meeting that, other than Fire Risk Assessments, the statutory checks (electrical, asbestos, water) for all outstanding properties would be complete within two weeks. I am informed the council failed to meet that target. Has the regulator for Social Housing been informed and were they content with this council missing a target yet again?”

6. Question to the Leader from Councillor Frank Marsh

“The council’s failure to deliver statutory checks on council properties is clearly an issue that needs the continued full attention of this council and it’s members, however to date no scrutiny of the issues has been scheduled and a single, very limited, report has been presented to the Housing Panel. I would still like to know when there will be an honest question and answer session for councillors with senior officers, past and present portfolio holders and including members of the cabinet.”

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WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
COUNCIL – 17 NOVEMBER 2021

Recommendation from the Cabinet on 3 November 2021:-

47.1 Council Tax Support Scheme (Forward Plan Reference FP1064)

Report of the Chief Executive on the Council Tax Support Scheme for 2022/23.

(1) The Decision Taken

RESOLVED:  
**(unanimous)**

Cabinet recommends to Full Council that our localised council tax support scheme continues in 2022/23 to help people on low/no income to receive a reduction on their council tax.

(2) Reasons for the Decision

The Council's localised council tax support scheme is based on reduction of 25% in council tax liability whilst still protecting some vulnerable groups. This means a claimant's assessed entitlement is calculated on 75% of the council tax bill.

Our scheme fully protects pensioners and families with children under 5 and those in receipt of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) (formerly disability living allowance) so that they continue to receive the same level of protection, and do not have to pay anymore council tax than they paid under the old council tax benefit system. This protects claimants with a disability premium, severe disability premium, child disability and families with young children.

Other claimants have an additional 25% to pay compared to the former council tax benefits scheme.

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WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
CABINET – 3 NOVEMBER 2021  
REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

LOCALISED COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME – 2022/23

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The Council's Council Tax Support Scheme replaced council tax benefits from April 2013. Our scheme was based on a broad framework agreed as part of a consultation undertaken with Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner and other interested parties.
- 1.2 Much of the old council tax benefits scheme was retained within our local support scheme and we have continued to protect pensioners, disabled claimants, and claimants with children under five. This was achieved by calculating council tax support on 75% of the council tax liability and not 100%, and this was applied to working age claimants.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet that it is our intention in 2022/23 to continue with the same council tax support scheme that Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council rolled out in 2021/22. Consultation has taken place with Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner on our intention to continue with the same scheme. Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner are in agreement with our approach and Hertfordshire County Council had no comments to make on the scheme.

**2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 Cabinet recommends to Full Council that our localised council tax support scheme continues in 2022/23 to help people on low/no income to receive a reduction on their council tax.

**3 Explanation**

- 3.1 The Council's localised council tax support scheme is based on a reduction of 25% in council tax liability whilst still protecting some vulnerable groups. This means a claimant's assessed entitlement is calculated on 75% of the council tax bill.
- 3.2 Our scheme fully protects pensioners and families with children under 5 and those in receipt of Personal Independence Payments (PIP) (formerly disability living allowance) so that they continue to receive the same level of protection, and do not have to pay anymore council tax than they paid under the old council tax benefit system. This protects claimants with a disability premium, severe disability premium, child disability and families with young children.

- 3.3 Other claimants have an additional 25% to pay compared to the former council tax benefits scheme.

### **Implications**

#### **4 Legal Implication(s)**

- 4.1 The Local Government Finance Act 2012 came into force on 31 October 2012, amended the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and imposed a duty on local billing authorities to introduce a localised council tax reduction scheme by January 2013. The scheme aligns with Universal Credit and support work incentives and avoids disincentives to move into work. For pensioners there is no change in their level of awards and local authorities are required to consider ensuring support for other vulnerable groups.

#### **5 Financial Implication(s)**

- 5.1 Based on the latest data available, the expenditure on the 2021/22 council tax support scheme currently stands at £7.9m. Our expenditure increased following the COVID-19 pandemic but is slowly starting to reduce.
- 5.2 The impact of the increased cost will likely lead to a collection fund deficit. Usually this deficit would be repayable in the following financial year, but the government is allowing councils to spread the cost of the deficit over the next three financial years.
- 5.3 The forecast cost of the council tax support scheme for future years is met from within the collection fund through a reduction to the budgeted tax base, which is approved in January each year. The cost therefore has to be estimated prior to the setting of the tax base which will then inform the Council Tax Resolution.
- 5.4 The council will need to estimate the costs for 2022/23 as part of its setting of the tax base in January 2022, and the impact of these estimates will form part of the budget setting process. The accuracy of this estimate will depend on the wider economic conditions outside the Council's control.

#### **6 Risk Management Implications**

- 6.1 The key financial risk related to our council tax support scheme is the possible loss of council tax revenue if less well-off residents are unable to pay. This is mitigated by assuming an element of non-collection within the tax base but a greater level of non-collection, or increase in demand for support, would need to be met by the major preceptors and this Council would need to find its share.
- 6.2 If demand is higher than estimated the collection fund will go into deficit and if demand is lower than estimated this would result in a surplus.

#### **7 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)**

- 7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications with the recommendation in this report.

#### **8 Procurement Implication(s)**

- 8.1 There are none.



**9 Climate Change Implication(s)**

9.1 The proposals in this report will not impact on greenhouse gas emissions.

**10 Human Resources Implication(s)**

10.1 There are none.

**11 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)**

11.1 Those people who are on a means tested benefit required to meet their basic living needs could also be in receipt of council tax support which they require to meet their council tax liability. Any changes to the council tax support they receive could cause financial hardship.

**12 Communication and Engagement Implication(s)**

12.1 There has been liaison with Hertfordshire County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner on our council tax support scheme proposal.

**13 Link to Corporate Priorities**

13.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priority: Our Council and promoting equality and fairness.

**14 Equality and Diversity**

14.1 An Equality Impact Assessment was not completed because this report does not propose changes to the existing policy or the development of a new service-related policy.

Name of author	Farhad Cantel
Title	Client Support Services Manager
Date	October 2021

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WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL  
COUNCIL – 17 NOVEMBER 2021

## NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 16

To consider the following notice of motions submitted under Procedure Rule 16:-

**1. The following motion has been submitted by Councillor Kieran Thorpe and will be seconded by Councillor Pankit Shah:-**

This Council notes

- There are an increasing number of reports coming to Councillors from resident living in properties affected by mould
- Mould within properties can impact on the health of children and adults.
- That this issue affects many properties this Council owns and manages
- That Welwyn Hatfield Council currently has a policy of not replacing windows in homes, that are not deemed to be a priority to be looked through, when the seals have failed. This includes windows in bedrooms including those occupied by children.
- Properties with windows not properly sealed are not energy efficient.
- That windows not properly sealed from the elements can be a key contributor to mould occurring in properties.

This Council resolves

- To request that the Cabinet Housing Panel urgently review the "Window Repairs and Replacement" policy with specific regard to the replacement of 'priority' windows.
- To recognise the scale of the issue of mould within domestic homes in the Borough, and give serious consideration to the findings of a current investigation looking into this.

**2. The following motion has been submitted by Councillor Paul Zukowskyj and will be seconded by Councillor Jane Quinton:-**

This council has agreed to declare a Climate Emergency.

This council notes that there is an emerging consensus that electric vehicles are the most likely future solution to private transport decarbonisation.

This council further notes the current lack of infrastructure in the public and developing private realms to support the use of this form of sustainable transport. Particularly concerning is a lack of requirement for residential property developers to supply more than a single EV charging point, no matter the scale of the development proposed.

This council believes new developments must have at least 25% of car park spaces in a development fitted with EV charging to be considered 'sustainable' in future and the remaining 75% must be capable of being retro-fitted, including having sufficient electrical supply capacity already in place. The council will look to refuse planning permission for developments failing to meet these requirements on the basis they are not 'sustainable' in terms of being prepared to address the climate emergency.

This council therefore agrees to advise developers and members of the Development Management Committee alike that 25% EV charging spaces are required except in exceptional circumstances and that a failure to plan for that proportion or better may well result in an application being refused on the grounds it is not providing suitably sustainable infrastructure.

The Council will furthermore ensure consideration of these, and more ambitious, parking requirements are given sufficient attention when preparing a future Climate Change SPD, Parking SPD or other Planning and Parking Policy documents as appropriate.”