

Council
10 July 2017

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL held on Monday 10 July 2017 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors L.Sparks (Mayor)
B.Fitzsimon (Deputy Mayor)

T.Bailey, J.Beckerman, H.Beckett, D.Bell, D.Bennett,
J.Boulton, S.Boulton, H.Bower, L.Brandon, J.Broach,
H.Bromley, M.Cook, M.Cowan, J.Cragg, I.Dean,
J.Dean, J.Fitzpatrick, G.Hayes, C.Gillett, M.Holloway,
K.Holman, S.Johnston, T.Kingsbury, M.Larkins,
T.Lyons, P.Mabbott, G.Michaelides, T.Mitchinson,
N.Pace, M.Perkins, H.Quenet, B.Sarson, P.Shah,
N.Taylor, F.Thomson, K.Thorpe, R.Trigg, J.Weston,
P.Zukowskyj

OFFICIALS Chief Executive (R.Bridge)
PRESENT: Executive Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) (N.Long)
Executive Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) (K.Ng)
Head of Law and Administration (M.Martinus)
Governance Services Manager (G.R.Seal)
Governance Services Officer (S.Hulks)
Communications Officer (C.Bishop)

16. APOLOGIES:

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors R.Basch, M.Birleson, N.Chapman, A.Chesterman, L.Chesterman, S.Markiewicz and S.Roberts.

17. MINUTES:

The Minutes of the annual meeting held on 22 May and the special meeting on 12 June 2017 were confirmed as correct records and signed by the Mayor.

18. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS:

Notice of the following questions by Members had been received:-

18.1. Question to the Leader from Councillor John Fitzpatrick

“Following the tragedy of the Grenfell Fire in London, this Council issued a statement to the public stating that the cladding on Queensway House in Hatfield was not the same as that used on Grenfell. There was a very strong implication that the cladding was therefore safe.

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What changed to require the cladding to be tested on June 26th?"

Answer

The question was answered by Councillor J.Dean (Leader of the Council).

"In the immediate aftermath of the most terrible fire at Grenfell Tower, the Government issued an instruction for local authorities and housing associations to identify whether the cladding used in their own tower blocks was the same product as used in Grenfell Tower, and details of the manufacturer were duly released. Where the same product was used, landlords were instructed to inform the Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) immediately.

The Council established that the cladding system at Queensway House was not the same and this was validated by the contractor, Mulalley, who installed the cladding in 2012. The Council issued a statement to this effect.

In keeping with the Council's desire from the outset to take the most robust approach possible, and to be transparent and accountable, samples of the three types of cladding used on Queensway House were in fact sent for testing on 29th June 2017. Confirmation was received last Friday in an email from DCLG that the submitted panels are not ACM cladding (Aluminium Composite Material) and therefore would not be tested.

The Council has kept everyone informed at all stages of this process, and this has included a number of letter drops to Queensway House residents. The letter drops have given up to date information to residents and provided contact details should they wish to speak to Council officers."

Councillor Fitzpatrick asked if information for Council properties in general could be provided.

Councillor Dean replied yes of course, we will keep everyone in touch with what we want to do and the Council would continue to do all in its power to make our residents as safe as we can.

18.2. **Question to the Leader from Councillor Malcolm Cowan**

"Will the Leader give the Council the latest situation on fire and associated issues at Queensway House, in particular if he will be recommending that the Council install a sprinkler system throughout?"

Answer

The question was answered by Councillor M.Perkins. (Deputy Leader and Executive Member, Planning, Housing and Community).

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“A meeting with Council officers and senior fire safety inspectors from Hertfordshire Fire Service took place on Thursday 29th June which made suggestions in respect of some remedial items. These are being amalgamated into the existing Fire Risk Assessments action plan which is being implemented.

Council officers met again with senior Hertfordshire Fire Service officers at Queensway House on 6th July to further discuss a range of fire protection measures. Following this, we will be providing them with a report confirming the level of fire resistance of certain aspects on the building construction.

We will continue to work collaboratively with the Fire Service in respect of any works required – and this may include sprinkler systems.

It is expected that general recommendations in respect of fire safety in residential tower blocks will be made by the Government both in the short term and following the findings of the public enquiry. We will of course act on any recommendations that follow.

Members and residents will be kept fully informed on progress.”

Councillor Cowan asked if the insulation was fire-proof and if the policy was to stay put.

Councillor Perkins replied that everything will be reviewed and at all times taking advice from the fire service.

18.3. Question to the Leader from Councillor Glyn Hayes

“Over the last three weeks there has been a noticeable build up of rubbish in and around Hatfield town centre including the roads and underpasses.

Can the Leader please confirm Hatfield town centre is still in receipt of a cleaning programme and if we are, is there a reason for the obvious deterioration in the level of service?”

Answer

The question was answered by Councillor H.Bromley (Executive Member, Environment).

“It goes without saying that our street cleansing programme is an important frontline service and that there is a robust cleansing schedule put in place in Hatfield Town Centre.

The level of service has not reduced and this is an ideal opportunity to highlight to all Members, a number of changes that we have introduced recently. For example, an additional cleansing resource has been put in the town centre every morning to deal with any clear ups or overflowing litter bins from overnight. We also have a town centre operative working all day in the town centre until

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6.00pm. The sweeper machine is being used in the town centre five days a week and new recycling banks have been added to the Commons car park to try and reduce fly-tipping in this area. Furthermore, Serco will also be washing a number of streets with new equipment to remove chewing gum and bird droppings from within Hatfield Town Centre.

It is important to note, that all Serco operatives continue to be monitored by their supervisors and managers and that the Council has a dedicated Community and Environment Officer for Hatfield Town Centre, who routinely inspects this area and works with local businesses to advise them of their waste responsibilities and to take enforcement action, where necessary.

Can I remind everyone, that if any Member has a concern, about anything, then they should contact our contact centre and let the portfolio holder know, as it happens, rather than wait for the next Council meeting.”

Councillor Hayes asked for the date when these changes came about to be clarified.

Councillor Bromley replied that the changes happened in the last few weeks and compliments had been received.

18.4. Question to the Leader from Councillor Tom Bailey

“Does the Leader agree our staff deserve a pay rise significantly above 1% and should the Government provide funds to help meet the cost?”

Answer

The question was answered by Councillor D.Bell (Executive Member, Resources).

“The pay and conditions of service for Council employees are agreed nationally in accordance with agreements made by the National Joint Council for local government services. The National Employers consult with local authorities on pay across the workforce and how we can meet the challenge of the Government’s proposed level of the National Living Wage over the next few years.

Members will recall that, in 2016/17, we made a substantial contribution in the region of £2.2M to fund the pension scheme deficit, and there is an ongoing obligation for the Council to pay £1.1M per annum for the next three years to reduce the pension fund deficit further. We recognise that the Local Government Pension Scheme is an extremely valuable benefit for Council employees and are currently sustaining the cost of the scheme in spite of significant Government grant reduction.”

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18.5. Question to the Leader from Councillor Helen Quenet

“Is the Council aware that according to the Hertfordshire County Council Environment, Planning and Transport Cabinet Panel we need £50,000 per new home to pay for adequate infrastructure. How much per home are we getting from the consent granted to Spenhill at Broadwater Road, Welwyn Garden City?”

Answer

The question was answered by Councillor A.L.Perkins (Deputy Leader and (Executive Member, Planning, Housing and Community).

“Hertfordshire County Council has calculated that £50,000 is the amount needed per home to pay a county-wide estimated infrastructure bill of £4-5 billion to 2031.

The planning system is clear however that planning contributions should be based on development viability which in the case of Spenhill relates to about £9,700 per dwelling.”

Councillor Quenet said there seems to be quite a gap and since there were concerns about the adequacy of local infrastructure would the figure be reviewed.

Councillor Perkins replied that the planning permission was granted on this basis which would include £4.2M on highway works, some £3M on education and in excess of £400,000 on general medical services plus the provision of other services.

19. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CABINET:

The Council considered recommendations from the Cabinet meeting on 6 June 2017:-

19.1. Release of Section 106 Funding - Refurbishment of a Changing Pavilion

The Cabinet noted the release of the Section 106 funding of £124,036.14 from Crest Nicholson Operations Limited from their partial redevelopment of the Sir Frederic Osborn School playing fields under the terms of the relevant Deed of Variation and agreed to allocate it towards a full refurbishment of the existing changing pavilion within the King George V playing fields in Welwyn Garden City.

The Cabinet recommended to the Council that this sum be reflected in the current year’s capital programme and budget.

It was moved by Councillor T.Kingsbury, seconded by Councillor J.Dean and

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RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet's recommendation be approved and this sum be reflected in the current year's capital programme and budget.

19.2. Food Safety Service Plan 2017/18

The Cabinet considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 April 2017 on the adoption of the Plan.

It was a requirement of the Food Standards Agency that each local authority drew up and implemented a food safety service plan which was approved by Members.

It was clarified that the display of "scores on the doors" for food business premises was optional, but that the Council had put to the Food Standards Agency that it should be compulsory.

It was moved by Councillor B.Sarson, seconded by Councillor J.Dean and

RESOLVED:

That the Food Safety Service Plan for 2017/18 be adopted.

19.3. Health and Safety Service Plan 2017/18

The Cabinet considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 5 April 2017 on adoption of the Plan for 2017/18.

The plan set out the Council's arrangements for enforcing Health and Safety at Work legislation over the forthcoming year 2017/18 in accordance with the requirement of section 18 of the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 to have a detailed service plan.

It was moved by Councillor B.Sarson, seconded by Councillor J.Dean and

RESOLVED:

That the Health and Safety Service Plan 2017/18 be adopted.

20. LOCALISM ACT - APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSONS:

Report of the Monitoring Officer seeking the Council's agreement to appoint a panel of three independent persons to advise the Standards Committee, Standards Sub-Committee and Statutory Officers Disciplinary Panel.

It was moved by Councillor R.Trigg, seconded by Councillor J.Dean and

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RESOLVED:

That the appointments of Ian Jobson, Donna Modeste' and Eranda Wickramasinghe as Independent Persons under Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 for a term of five years commencing on the date after this meeting be approved.

21. APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO SCHOOL GOVERNING BODIES:

The Council was invited to appoint representatives to serve on the Holwell Primary, Ludwick Nursery and Holy Family Catholic Primary School Governing Bodies in 2017/18 as the current representatives were unable to continue.

Nominations were made for the Ludwick Nursery and The Holy Family Catholic Primary School, but a nomination for Holwell Primary School was not made at this time.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Councillor H.Beckett be appointed as Council representative to the Ludwick Nursery School Governing Body.
- (2) That Councillor T.Lyons be appointed as Council representative to the Holy Family Catholic Primary School Governing Body.

Meeting ended 8.05pm
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