

Council  
19 September 2018

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL held on Wednesday 19 September 2018 at 7.30pm in the Council Chamber, Council Offices, The Campus, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

PRESENT: Councillors B.Fitzsimon (Mayor)  
R.Trigg (Deputy Mayor)

D.Bell, M.Birleson, J.Boulton, S.Boulton, H.Bower,  
J.Broach, H.Bromley, J.Caliskan, A.Chesterman,  
L.Chesterman, M.Cook, M.Cowan, J.Cragg, S.Elam,  
C.Gillett, S.Glick, G.Hayes, P.Hebden, M.Holloway,  
K.Holman, T.Jackson-Mynott, S.Kasumu, T.Kingsbury,  
M.Larkins, R.Lass, TM.Lyons, G.Michaelides,  
T.Mitchinson, L.Musk, N.Pace, M.Perkins, H.Quenet,  
S.Roberts, A.Rohale, B.Sarson, P.Shah, JP.Skoczylas,  
F.Thomson, K.Thorpe, S.Thusu, J.Weston, S.Wrenn,  
P.Zukowskyj

OFFICIALS Chief Executive (R.Bridge)  
PRESENT: Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) (K.Ng)  
Corporate Director (Public Protection, Planning and Governance) (N.Long)  
Corporate Director (Housing and Communities) (S.Russell)  
Monitoring Officer (M.Martinus)  
Governance Services Manager (G.R.Seal)  
Governance Services Officer (G.Paddan)  
Communications Officer (C.Bishop)

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22. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.Fitzpatrick, P.Mabbott and S.Markiewicz.

23. MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

Councillors L.Chesterman and P.Zukowskyj declared non-pecuniary interests in items on the Agenda as appropriate as Members of Hertfordshire County Council.

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25. ANNOUNCEMENTS

25.1. Anglia in Bloom

The Chief Executive announced that the Borough was awarded Silver in the city category for its horticultural achievement, environment responsibility and community involvement in both Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield at the annual “Anglia in Bloom” awards.

Welwyn’s Victorian Fernery also won the Conservation Award following the work by Friends of Danesbury Local Nature Reserve and Landscape and Ecology Officers to restore it to its former glory. The Chief Executive thanked the Community and Environment and Landscape and Ecology teams for helping the Council achieve this through their hard work in managing and maintaining these aspects of the local environment and planting.

25.2. Indian Curry Night

The Mayor announced that her charity curry night would be held at the Red Indian restaurant in Wignores North, Welwyn Garden City town centre on Tuesday 13 November at 7.00pm. Tickets priced at £20 could be booked with the restaurant to be paid for on the night.

26. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

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

26.1. Question to the Executive Member (Leisure, Culture and Communications) from Councillor Sunny Thusu

“This was the second year of the BIG Summer programme of events for young people in Welwyn Hatfield during the summer holidays. I understand a host of activities were arranged and that they were well received. Could the portfolio holder confirm the number of events, how many youngsters took advantage, give an example of what was on offer and give his thoughts as to the success of BIG Summer 2018?”

**Answer**

The question was answered by Councillor T.Mitchinson Executive Member (Leisure, Culture and Communications) :-

“Thank you for your question and I am delighted to report that Big Summer 2018 was a resounding success. The Big Summer campaign provides information and widely promotes local activities that are taking place in the borough for children and young people to enjoy. It is inclusive and community focused – providing a wide range of activities for children of all ages up to 19 years.

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This year's Big Summer, which took place between 1 to 19 August, saw over 6000 young people take part in over 350 activities which were run by the council and more than 30 partners across the Borough

The team are still collating detailed information from partners, but the feedback so far has been hugely positive and I can report that there were nearly 10,000 clicks on the online Activity Calendar, which set out what was happening and when, and that the council has had great feedback from people who attended our events including Animal Cracker, SkateFest, Crazy Golf, Play Rangers, Wellies in the Woods, Xplora and events at Mill Green Mill and Museum - which attracted 1,000's of young people between them.

To give you an idea of the diversity of the campaign examples are:

Play Rangers - a daily two hour free fun and active session, which took place in seven different locations around the borough for boys and girls aged between 6 and 12 years. Each week had a different theme, such as Multi sports or arts 'n' crafts.

Wellies in the Woods - free sessions for children aged 18 months to 5 years at How Dell, Hatfield. These sessions build confidence in den building, wildlife exploration, natural art and much more

BIG Summer Presents provided taster sessions, including a five foot skate ramp, professional BMX and skateboarder demos and workshops, plus soft play and face painting for the little ones, among other activities!

Without doubt BIG Summer 2018 was even more successful than 2017 and partners are already keen to be a part of the 2019 campaign."

26.2. Question to the Leader from Councillor Helen Quenet

"I'm aware the County Council and the LEP have expressed significant concern over the economic and workforce impacts of Brexit, particularly highlighting the very serious problems a no-deal Brexit will present to delivering County Council services. In contrast this council seems to have little idea of the consequences and impacts on Borough council service delivery for Welwyn Hatfield residents, let alone have civil emergency plans in place or even be aware if these might be needed.

Can the Leader of the Council therefore please update us on the Borough Council plans that have been drawn up for the various forms of Brexit including what economic impact are we to expect locally for the different Brexit scenarios?"

**Answer**

"Thank you for your question.

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I would like to thank Councillor Quenet for this important question and subject. Can I please first start by saying that the statement that the council has little idea of the consequences or impact to the area is not correct or fair.

Prior to the summer holidays, I discussed the impact of Brexit on the area with the Chief Executive and we agreed that he would work with officers to pull together information and evidence on the impact to, 1, our communities and residents; 2, our businesses and economy; and 3, the council (e.g. finance, regulation to name a couple). Once officers have carried out this work this will be shared with councillors at appropriate meetings for discussion and understanding, as well as any actions we may need to take as a council.

We will also see Brexit as an entry on our risk register in the next update of this, as well as updating or business continuity and emergency plans in preparation for when we leave the EU.

I am sure we all appreciate that this a complex area which needs time to carry out the necessary analysis so we can all work together for the good of our communities, residents and businesses.”

In a supplementary question, Councillor Quenet asked when we could expect to see a detailed plan with a response for residents as Brexit was only six months away and in the worst case could be a catastrophic event for the Country.

The Leader replied that this was being looked at and taken very seriously. At the moment there was no idea what would happen, but it may be clearer in the next few weeks and the Leader did not agree with spreading fear. Members would give Officers the time and wherewithal to make proper decisions and not kneejerk reactions.

26.3. Question to the Deputy Leader from Councillor Lynn Chesterman

“More private landlords are refusing to take residents who are supported by benefits and the rise in Welwyn Hatfield residents in temporary accommodation (including the use of bed and breakfast for the first time) has resulted in our staff carrying case loads of 2.5 times what they should be responsible for. Would the Portfolio Holder or Leader please inform the Council as to whether they have written to the appropriate Secretary of State to raise concerns at the effects that this dire situation has on our residents and staff?”

**Answer**

The question was answered by Councillor T.Kingsbury (Deputy Leader):-

“Thank you for raising this important issue. As members will be aware the Homeless Reduction Act, a new piece of legislation which enjoyed cross party parliamentary support, was introduced on 1 April 2018. This Act – which aims to help prevent homelessness at an earlier stage, introduces new duties for the

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council, in terms of the help and advice that must be provided to people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.

Our housing needs team was restructured in preparation for this Act and additional resources have been made available. However we do have some vacancies in the team, as well as new members of staff who are not yet carrying full caseloads, which has meant that staff presently have higher caseloads than the ideal.

Processes have been streamlined to improve efficiency and to focus our energies on prevention of homelessness. Whilst caseloads are presently higher than we would like, this is in part a result of adapting to the new legislation and the fact we have staff vacancies. Once all posts are filled, the average caseload should reduce. However we are monitoring this closely, providing staff with appropriate support and, if required, additional resources will be invested in this area.

Our main aim is to increase the supply of affordable housing and we have now delivered more than 200 affordable homes via our Affordable Housing Programme, this is in addition to new affordable homes provided via the planning system. We have recently commissioned a company to review our Housing Revenue Account land and assets to identify further opportunities to deliver more affordable homes.

We are also investing in a number of initiatives to increase our supply of local temporary accommodation – including the proposed Night Shelter, making use of empty properties that are awaiting redevelopment, extending our open market purchase programme and introduction of a private sector leasing scheme

In May this year, the council supported representations made to the Secretary of State (Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) via Grant Shapps MP, about homelessness and the impact on local families. Concerns were raised at that time about the gap between Local Housing Allowance and local rental market levels, which makes the private rented sector difficult to access for families who are in receipt of benefit;

The government minister confirmed that to help the council tackle homelessness locally, the flexible homeless support grant, which has been made available in 2017/18 and 2018/19 is to be paid for a third year in 2019/20. This is great news as we will receive just over £280K. This grant has so far helped fund our Housing First project, which provides an outreach and advice service for people who are rough sleeping, as well as a shared house, with specialist support; enhanced our 'spend to save' fund, which enables us to prevent homelessness and, as recently agreed by Cabinet, invest in the proposed Night Shelter. We also plan to use these funds to improve access to the private rented sector via a private sector leasing scheme, which is currently being developed."

Councillor Chesterman asked in a supplementary question if despite all the prevention work those families in temporary accommodation with children were

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given much hope as temporary accommodation was not normally suitable for them.

In response, the Deputy Leader said that he would be happy for the Council to write to the Minister.

26.4. Question to the Leader from Councillor Samuel Kasumu

“The examination of our borough’s draft Local Plan by the government-appointed inspector has been underway for some time now.

Under the legislation, as I understand it, the ultimate authority to determine whether or not our Local Plan is “sound” lies with the government-appointed inspector, and not with the Council itself.

Given this, would the leader be able to outline the sanctions from central government that this Council could potentially face, if, by the end of the process, we were unable to agree a “sound” Local Plan with the inspector?”

**Answer**

“It is the role of the examination inspector to decide whether our submitted local plan is ‘sound’ or has been made sound by virtue of modifications. He will inform the Council whether the plan has been found sound by concluding the public examination and writing an Inspector’s Report. It is then a matter for the Council to adopt the plan through the normal CPPP, Cabinet and Full Council decision-making process.

If the inspector concludes that the plan is ‘unsound’ or cannot be made sound, then he will either terminate the examination or issue his Inspector’s Report advising that the plan is unsound and cannot be made sound. It would then be a matter for the Council to decide what to do next – (1) seek to prepare a revised plan that responds to the issues which the inspector judged to be unsound, (2) contemplate a strategic plan in partnership with neighbouring authorities, as is now encouraged by the NPPF or (3) operate under the NPPF policy framework, which includes a standard methodology for calculating housing need and the housing needs test.

In practice the consequence of an unsound plan is that the Council will have to determine its housing requirement using the new NPPF standard methodology and might have to add 20% to its five year housing land supply due to historic under-supply. This means that the Council would have to contemplate the approval of more brownfield and green belt planning applications and can probably expect speculative planning applications for sites that are not currently favoured in the submitted local plan. From November 2020, where delivery falls below 75% of the housing requirement, there would also be a strong presumption in favour of approving all housing applications unless there would be significant and demonstrable adverse impacts.

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A number of councils around the country have received warning letters from the Government about their failure to progress a local plan. St Albans were threatened with the prospect of their plan-making powers being transferred to the Government, to the Planning Inspectorate, to consultants appointed on their behalf, or to Herts County Council. This remains a very real threat to Welwyn Hatfield if our Local Plan were to be found unsound.

The Government has also threatened to not pay out the New Homes Bonus on occasions where housing applications are refused by the Council but granted on appeal.

In all cases it is likely that the borough would end up facing a higher housing requirement, speculative planning applications for brownfield and green belt sites, costly planning appeals if they were refused and uncoordinated growth and infrastructure provision, as well as potentially having its plan-making powers transferred to Herts County Council.”

In a supplementary question, Councillor Kasumu asked if it was in our interests to seek cross-party co-operation in our next submission to the Inspector and the Leader agreed that it was.

26.5. Question to the Leader from Councillor Siobhan Elam

“Under the Government's Syrian Vulnerable Persons Relocation Scheme launched in 2015, this Council has, to date, received and housed two Syrian families. Can the Leader of the Council please tell us if WHBC have any plans to receive additional Syrian families to bring it in line with the numbers so far received by other Boroughs across Hertfordshire?”

**Answer**

“Thank you very much for your question.

Following the request from the government for councils to help with the resettlement of Syrian refugees, the council agreed to house 10 people. We met our commitment and I am pleased to inform members that the families that have been relocated here in Welwyn Hatfield have settled in really well and that the relocation scheme has been a great success.

We have very recently agreed to house a third family, who have links to the local area; we are in discussions with the East of England Region about this currently and as soon as a suitable property has been identified a timeframe for the family's arrival will be agreed.

Separate to this I have asked officers to bring a report to the Cabinet meeting in November, providing an update on what we have done to help so far and for Cabinet members to consider what more help we can offer.”

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In a supplementary question, Councillor Elam asked for clarification of our intention to help up to ten families and when that commitment would be fulfilled.

The Leader said that we would make sure we have the right properties for the right people and work with parties to get the best possible outcome.

26.6. Question to the Leader from Councillor Glyn Hayes

“Sickness due to stress is on an upward trend across the Country. What is our current level of sickness due to stress and has it increased over the last five years?”

**Answer**

The Leader asked Councillor F.Thomson, Executive Member (Governance and Public Health) to answer:-

“Stress related absence equated to 5% of all absences over the last 12 months (August 2017 to August 2018). We only have automatically generated records on absence reasons since February 2017 when a new monitoring system was introduced. Stress related absences were recorded as 4.44% in the year February 2017 to March 2018. However it should be noted that not all stress related absences are work related. The Council has in place risk assessments, and an active employee health and wellbeing programme, which includes mental health. The council is proud to be a signatory to the charter for employers who are positive about mental health and also has a mental health champions group of which I am a member. As a responsible employer we also provide an employee assistance programme offering support, guidance and counselling to all members of staff. If an employee has a stress related absence, they are automatically referred to the Council’s occupational health adviser to guide managers on what support and/or adjustments can be offered to the employee.”

In a supplementary question, Councillor Hayes asked what support there was for members of staff covering the extra workload.

Councillor Thomson said that there was an active employee assistance programme and employees could talk to Managers about their workloads.

26.7. Question to the Leader from Councillor Max Holloway

“With Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual or Transgender related hate-crime on the rise and one in five LGBT people experiencing a hate crime incident within the last 12 months, does the Leader agree that not taking part in London or Hertfordshire Pride, and failing to acknowledge pride or any form of LGBT recognition is a missed opportunity? In fact there has been no mention of any form of LGBT issue awareness on the Council's social media since 2015. Would she please be able to tell me what plans are in place, both internally and externally to address this?”

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**Answer**

The Leader asked Councillor T.Kingsbury, Deputy Leader to answer:-

“The council is committed to providing equality of opportunity for everyone we provide services to and to the people we employ and do business with.

We are proactive in making sure that new services are assessed, to ensure we are not discriminating against the different groups in our community.

We hold a wide of range of inclusive events across the borough and through wide promotion of these events we encourage everyone to participate, including people from our LGBT community.

Engaging with residents and the community and getting involved in events are objectives within the council’s Equality Policy and in the proposed new Single Equalities Scheme, which has been brought to council tonight, for approval.

Our Equality Steering Group regularly invites representatives from the different groups within our community to meetings, so that we can agree how we can work together to support their activities, and promote and participate in their events. The Equality Steering Group would be very happy for members of our LGBT community to get in touch with us so that we can get involved.

In relation to your query about the promotion of recent Pride events we have included Herts Pride in our events calendar on the council’s website and also highlighted it on our events page. We have also re-tweeted about this to our 7,500 Twitter followers.

Following your recent suggestion to officers that we get involved in Herts Pride, arrangements have already been made to address this through the Equalities Steering Group with a view to having greater involvement in next year’s event.”

26.8. Question to the Leader from Councillor Malcolm Cowan

“Has this Council’s performance on enforcement changed since I asked about this at the previous meeting?”

(**Note:** As this question could not be asked within the allotted time the Mayor stated that a written answer would be circulated to all Members.)

**Answer**

The following written answer was given by Councillor S.Boulton, Executive Member (Planning and Delivery) :-

“The planning enforcement team has 535 recorded cases at present (compared with 553 when last reported). Some cases have been closed and some new breaches have been reported in that time.

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- 69 cases are due for imminent closure (compared with 49 when last reported).
- 9 cases are related to highway banners, which are a matter for Herts Highways (compared with 11 when last reported).
- 30 cases are in the legal process and waiting for a decision (compared with 29 when last reported)
- 12 cases are Category 1 matters related to listed buildings, protected trees and trees in conservation areas (compared with 10 when last reported)
- 163 are estate management cases. This remains the same as when last reported.

The enforcement team currently has three posts; a principal, a senior and an assistant. The Principal post has been vacant for the majority of the summer and the remaining officers have worked hard to provide a good quality service in the meantime. The new Principal Officer started on 10 September. An agency officer who was appointed to help tackle the caseload will leave on 21 September. This equates to a caseload of 178 cases per officer. These numbers appear comparable to other Herts authorities.

It is hoped that the arrival of the new Principal Officer and a workshop with councillors in early October to discuss the Planning Enforcement Plan will identify ways to establish clear expectations and priorities, to help deal with cases swiftly and effectively.

It should be pointed out that the caseload ultimately relates to people not understanding or observing planning and estate management rules when carrying out development.”

Supplementary written question from Councillor Cowan:-

“You say people not understanding or observing planning and estate management rules. How will members of the public understand the rules when they see a neighbour doing something that may appear questionable and it taking nine months, as in some cases I have reported, for investigation to even start, let alone reach a conclusion and enforcement action actually happen? And is this helped by Officers giving up to three years for applicants to undertake work to correct a breach? And what publicity will the Council undertake in the next few months to better educate residents as to what the rules are?”

Written answer to the supplementary question from Councillor S.Boulton:-

“The simple challenge is the volume of breaches. Planning and EMS enforcement is a discretionary activity. Government guidance also strongly encourages negotiation in the first instance and enforcement action as a last resort. Officers seek to tackle what they believe to be the most serious breaches, taking account of the rules of the planning system and the estate management scheme. We have a member workshop on 10 October to discuss

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the EMS review process. We have a member workshop on 15 October to discuss enforcement and a refresh of the Planning Enforcement Plan. I hope that these events will help to clarify priorities, expectations and capacity. The EMS workshop will report that Officers have appointed consultants to prepare a design guide and hope to introduce application fees in order to fund a dedicated EMS team that will deal with applications and have much more capacity to tackle breaches. This review process will include a letter to all Welwyn Garden City households, the launch of a new website and regular contact with estate agents, planning agents and others, to ensure they are aware of the Scheme, the design guide and the dedicated team who are available to offer guidance.”

27. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CABINET

The following recommendations from the meeting of the Cabinet on 4 September 2018 were considered:-

27.1. Equality Scheme 2018-21

The Cabinet considered a proposed revised Equality Scheme for the Council.

The equality scheme was a statutory requirement under the Equalities Act 2010 which placed a duty on local authorities to publish information on how services impacted on users, how policies and procedures were assessed to make sure they were non-discriminatory, how equality objectives were being met and how stakeholders were consulted in developing the approach to equality and diversity.

The proposed scheme met these requirements and importantly it included an action plan on how the Council would deliver on its five equality objectives as introduced in the Equality Policy approved by the Cabinet in January 2018.

The action plan would be reviewed at each Equality Steering Group meeting with annual updates being provided to the Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The proposed revised scheme had also been considered at the meeting of the Social Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 10 September 2018.

It was moved by Councillor T.Kingsbury, seconded by Councillor M.Perkins and

RESOLVED:

That the new Equality Scheme, as endorsed by the Cabinet, be approved.

27.2. Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Eligibility Criteria Consultation

The Cabinet considered a recommendation from the meeting of the Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel on 9 August 2018 on the proposed introduction of local eligibility criteria and fees for registration on the Register for self-build and custom housebuilding.

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The Cabinet noted the results of the public consultation on the proposed introduction of a local eligibility test and agreed that local eligibility criteria for entry onto the Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding Register be introduced to take effect from 31 October 2018.

The Council had a duty to maintain a self-build register for people/associations who wanted a serviced plot of land in the Borough to build their own home and to grant permission for sufficient land suitable to meet demand on the self-build register with performance over a rolling three-year period to be reported to the Government.

The Council was allowed to introduce a local eligibility test which looked at people's local connections and financial solvency and a fee to enter/remain on the register.

The criteria for the local connection test were residency in the Borough for five plus years, close family living in the Borough for ten plus years, employment in the Borough for twelve plus continuous months with a permanent sixteen hour plus contract or being a former member of the armed forces and the financial test was sufficient resources to purchase a plot of land in the Borough.

It was moved by Councillor M.Perkins, seconded by Councillor T.Kingsbury and

RESOLVED:

That the Council approves:-

- (1) the introduction of a fee of £25 for new applicants to enter onto the register to take effect from 31 October 2018.
- (2) the introduction of a fee of £25 for a new association to enter onto the register plus £10 for each individual within the association excluding the lead individual to take effect from 31 October 2018.
- (3) the introduction of an annual fee of £15 for individuals to remain on Part 1 of the register to take effect from 31 October 2018.
- (4) the introduction of an annual fee of £15 for each association plus £10 for each individual within that association to remain on Part 1 of the register to take effect from 31 October 2018.
- (5) the fees to be subject to review twelve months after their introduction.

### 27.3. Introduction of General Procurement Board

The terms of reference for the new General Procurement Board previously appointed by the Cabinet were considered and agreed.

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The terms of reference of this new Standing Board would be listed in the section on Responsibility for Executive Functions in Part 3 of the Constitution.

It was moved by Councillor D.Bell, seconded by Councillor M.Perkins and

RESOLVED:

That the Constitution be accordingly amended where necessary to take account of the terms of reference of the General Procurement Board.

28. MATTER ARISING FROM COMMITTEE

The following recommendation from the meeting of the Standards Committee on 3 September 2018 was considered:-

28.1. Surveillance Update 2018

The Standards Committee received an update on the Council's policy and use of surveillance powers. The Council had powers to investigate a range of criminal offences and like all local authorities it could utilise powers to undertake surveillance to assist with those investigations in certain prescribed circumstances.

It was noted that since the last inspection there had been one investigation and magistrates had granted the authorisation for surveillance.

The Committee had accepted the revised policy.

It was moved by Councillor F.Thomson, moved by Councillor M.Perkins and

RESOLVED:

That the revised Surveillance Policy, as recommended by the Standards Committee, be adopted and that the Constitution be updated to designate the Licensing Team Leader as an additional 'Authorising Officer' for the purposes of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, as amended.

29. HIGH VIEW DEVELOPMENT

Report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) on approval of an additional capital budget for this project.

The Council was working in partnership with Lovell to deliver a £45M regeneration programme in High View which would transform the heart of South Hatfield.

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The proposed High View development aimed to deliver an attractive local centre to bring people to live and work in and visit the area. Subject to planning approval, it was set to deliver around 150 new homes (including houses and flats), new commercial units and a new local health centre.

The project was currently at the detailed design stage and Lovell had asked whether the Council would wish to provide an additional fire protection measure to the flats by installing a sprinkler system.

The Special Cabinet meeting held immediately before this Council meeting had approved the installation of a sprinkler system for the flats contained in the High View development for the reasons outlined in the report and subject to consideration by the Council of the required budgetary provision.

It was moved by Councillor D.Bell, seconded by Councillor M.Perkins and

RESOLVED:

That an additional capital budget of £207,000 be added to the High View Development Programme to enable the installation of a sprinkler system as recommended by the Special Cabinet meeting held immediately before this Council meeting.

30. WELWYN HATFIELD MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME

The Chief Executive presented the recommendations on the review of the level of Members' allowances to be paid for 2018/19 with effect from 1 July 2018 from the meeting of the Independent Remuneration Panel held on 5 September 2018.

This was on the basis of considering an annual increase in line with this year's national pay agreement for staff which was the approach which had been agreed by the Council.

In accordance with this adopted convention the Panel had recommended to the Council to increase Members' Allowances by 2%.

The cost of the recommended increase could be contained within the current overall annual budget for Member allowance payments.

The Panel had also recommended to the Council the introduction of a new Care Allowance for childcare for children up to 14 years of age and dependent care for official duties defined as attendance at evening meetings of the Council, Committees (to include Cabinet, Committees, Panels and Boards) and Outside Bodies where the Member was the Council's appointed representative.

Following discussion of the Panel's recommendations, it was moved, seconded and

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RESOLVED:  
(22 voting FOR, 15 AGAINST and 8 ABSTENTIONS)

- (1) That the increase in the level of Members' Basic and Special Responsibility Allowances to be paid with effect from 1 July 2018, as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel, be not accepted and no change be made so that the allowances remain at the 2017/18 amounts.
- (2) That a Care Allowance be introduced with effect from 20 September 2018 as recommended by the Panel, subject to an amendment so that it may be claimed for attendance at daytime and not just evening meetings.  
(UNANIMOUS)

31. NOTICES OF MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 50

To consider the following notice of motion submitted under Procedure Rule 50:-

31.1. The following motion had been submitted by Councillor P.Zukowskyj and was seconded by Councillor M.Cowan:-

"This Council is delighted to note the 'suspension' of the Police and Crime Commissioner's bid to take over Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Service.

However, this Council also notes with concern the promotion in the local plan calling for housing sites on both Welwyn Garden City and Hatfield fire station sites by Hertfordshire County Council.

This Council therefore resolves to write to Hertfordshire County Council reaffirming it will adamantly oppose any reduction in fire service in Welwyn Hatfield irrespective of which person, body or organisation proposes such a reduction, and also write to the county councillors for Welwyn Hatfield requesting their assurance that they will oppose any reduction."

On being put to the meeting the Motion was carried **UNANIMOUSLY**.

Meeting ended 9.30pm  
GS