

Council
4 February 2019

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL held on Monday 4 February 2019 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, J.Boulton, S.Boulton, H.Bower, J.Broach,
H.Bromley, J.Caliskan, A.Chesterman, L.Chesterman,
M.Cook, M.Cowan, J.Cragg, S.Elam, S.Glick, G.Hayes,
P.Hebden, M.Holloway, T.Jackson-Mynott, S.Kasumu,
T.Kingsbury, M.Larkins, R.Lass, P.Mabbott, S.Markiewicz,
G.Michaelides, T.Mitchinson, L.Musk, N.Pace, H.Quenet,
A.Rohale, B.Sarson, P.Shah JP.Skoczylas, P.Smith,
F.Thomson, K.Thorpe, S.Thusu, J.Weston, S.Wrenn,
P.Zukowskyj

OFFICIALS PRESENT: Chief Executive (R.Bridge)
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)
Head of Property Services (P.Gray)
Head of Resources (R.Baker)
Governance Services Manager (G.R.Seal)
Governance Services Officer (G.Paddan)
Communications Officer (C.Trussell)

48. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M.Birleson, J.Fitzpatrick, C.Gillett, K.Holman, TM.Lyons and S.Roberts.

49. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 November 2018 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Mayor.

50. PETITIONS

The Mayor received a petition to save trees in White Lion Square, Hatfield Town Centre which was presented by Marian Hurle.

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As the petition contained more than 1500 signatures, it was discussed by the Council in accordance with the Petition Scheme.

The report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) provided background information and set out options. The Mayor asked Councillor D.Bell, as the Executive Member to respond to the petition and propose the preferred option.

It was moved by Councillor J.Weston and seconded by Councillor P.Shah that the recommendations in the report be amended and the following option be considered:-

“To take the action the petition requests and make minor (non-material) amendments to the plans to retain all three trees, and to go ahead with the work as soon as possible.”

On being put to the meeting there voted:-
FOR the Amendment – 19
AGAINST the Amendment – 23
And the Amendment was declared LOST

It was then moved by Councillor D.Bell, seconded by Councillor T.Kingsbury and

RESOLVED:
(25 voting for and 14 against with 3 abstentions)

That the Council notes the content of the report and having listened to the presentation of the petition and following discussion responds to the petition by not taking the action requested for the reasons put forward in the report and the subsequent debate including endorsement of a revised proposal as outlined in paragraph 3.7 of the report which included the retention of one of the mature trees earmarked for removal.

51. QUESTION FROM THE PUBLIC

51.1. Question from Rosie Newbigging

“As Labour's Parliamentary Candidate for Welwyn Hatfield, I attended a meeting before Xmas with tenants, leaseholders of Queensway House and their representative Dee Chessum also attended by the Council leader and housing portfolio holder and Labour councillors. The meeting heard from tenants and leaseholders about their deep and legitimate concerns about delays to essential repairs to sort out urgent damp and mould problems, sanitation issues, very serious security risks which have resulted in anti-social behaviour and delays to the fitting of essential fire sprinklers which won't even start to be fitted until September this year more than 2 years after the tragedy of Grenfell Tower. Added to that tenants are without a lift for several months. Their only access to their homes via a stairwell which non tenants have found their way into because of security risks. There are small children living in the block. Does the leader of

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the Council think this is an acceptable way for people to have to live and does he take full responsibility for the abject failure of the Council to ensure that Queensway House is fully fit for human habitation?"

Answer

The question was answered by Councillor N.Pace (Executive Member, Housing and Community) :-

"I am sorry that residents of Queensway House feel concerned about various issues relating to the block. The Council is fully aware of all these concerns and has remained in regular and comprehensive communications with residents about these issues, prior to and since the terrible tragedy of Grenfell Tower.

In relation to concerns about mould and damp in flats we are aware that this has come about since the council, acting directly upon the recommendation of the Herts Fire and Rescue Service, carried out works to infill bathroom windows which opened directly into the communal hallways. Herts Fire and Rescue service made this recommendation when carrying out an inspection of Queensway House as a part of a nationwide response following the Grenfell Tower fire. Whilst the infilling of windows before a new ducted extractor system has been installed may be causing some incidents of condensation in bathrooms, the council's first priority will always be to ensure the safety of residents. Officers have been working with individual residents to help alleviate issues caused by condensation as and when requested by residents, including providing advice and distributing dehumidifying units.

Regarding concerns about sanitation in the block the council has invested in a CCTV survey and full jetting of the soil stack and successfully cleaned and removed limescale which had built up naturally over time. Any individual concerns about sanitation are managed by council officers upon request and the council has clearly communicated contact details for residents who remain concerned.

I am sorry that residents feel there is a security risk to the block. In response to residents' concerns as previously reported to the council, a full maintenance inspection has taken place of the communal entrance doors and remedial works took place to fix the doors. The council has not received any further complaints about the doors since they were repaired in December 2018.

The council has been working hard with the police to address and deal with reported cases of anti-social behaviour. There have been five incidents of anti-social behaviour in communal areas of Queensway House reported to the council over the past eighteen months. Six incidents were reported to the police over the same period. On all of these occasions the incidents were investigated. The council is currently looking at whether the CCTV in the block can be enhanced. The council is fully committed to continue working with residents and partner agencies to tackle these issues and I would encourage anyone who

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witnesses anti-social behaviour taking place to report this to the council and the police.

I appreciate that residents are frustrated over the length of time being taken to install the new lift. The replacement of the lift was included on the council's planned maintenance schedule because it was nearing the end of its life. A series of breakdowns late last year which were well documented prompted the early decommissioning of the lift prior to the installation of the new lift later this month. The council has worked hard to identify residents who are unable to manage stairs while the lift has been out of action. Where this has been the case alternative accommodation has been provided. Where residents remain at Queensway House compensation has been paid and accepted in recognition of the inconvenience caused whilst the lift has been decommissioned.

In addition to fitting the new extractor system to bathrooms following the infilling of the bathroom windows, Members made the decision to retrofit a full block sprinkler system to enhance existing fire protection measures at Queensway House. This decision was taken following the Grenfell Tower tragedy, which has drawn the country's attention to the importance of robust fire prevention and control measures, especially in tower blocks. The retrofitting of a sprinkler system is not currently a legal or regulatory requirement, however as explained above, the council puts the safety of residents at the forefront. The council appreciates that this bespoke product, along with the bathroom extraction system is a significant and complex piece of design and installation work, hence the long time frame in completing it.

The council has taken a comprehensive and diligent approach in managing the various issues of concern raised by residents of Queensway House. It is taking every possible measure to ensure the fire safety of the block, including compliance, demonstrated through the fire risk assessment process.

In conclusion I fully reject the accusation that Queensway House is not fit for habitation and that the Council has failed in its management of the block."

52. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS

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

53. ANNOUNCEMENTS

53.1. Charity Events

The Mayor was pleased to report that her wine tasting evening on 17 December and her quiz night on 18 January 2019 at Campus West raised a total of £1200 for her charity and expressed her thanks for the support received.

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53.2. Banquet and Ball

The Mayor's charity banquet and ball would be held at the Old Palace, Hatfield House on Saturday 23 February 2019. Tickets priced at £60.00 could be purchased via the Council's website or the Mayor's Office.

The Mayor was honoured that the Lord Lieutenant, Mr Robert Voss CBE would be a speaker on the evening.

The Mayor hoped that Councillors would be able to support the event.

53.3. Vandalism at the Fernery

The Mayor said that Members would be saddened and disappointed to learn that the award winning Victorian fernery at Danesbury Park was vandalised at the weekend. Highly offensive symbols and words had been graffitied on the special rocks which comprised the fernery.

The Mayor was sure that all Members would join with her in condemning this disgusting, deplorable and mindless vandalism.

Steps had been taken to cover the graffiti whilst specialist clean up advice was taken owing to the nature of Pulamite rocks.

The matter had been reported to the Police as a hate crime and they were investigating. The Council was going to be working with the Friends of Danesbury group to look at longer term options for additional protection of the site.

53.4. Councillor Paul Smith

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Paul Smith to his first Council meeting.

53.5. Awards to the Council

The Chief Executive was pleased to announce that the Council had been shortlisted in the 'Council of the year' category at the UK Housing Awards 2019 which was a great achievement and he took this opportunity to thank everyone in the housing team for the work they did on a daily basis. This type of national recognition really helped build the Council's reputation which led to Government and other external funders wanting to work with the Council. This came off the back of also being shortlisted a few weeks ago at the TPAS awards (tenant engagement experts) in the 'excellence in tenant communication' category.

54. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

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

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54.1. Question to the Leader from Councillor Pat Mabbott

“I have heard that the Panto at Campus West was well received. Could the leader/portfolio holder give us more details on how well the event went and what sort of response it got from those who attended?”

Answer

The Leader, Councillor T.Kingsbury asked Councillor T.Mitchinson (Executive Member, Leisure, Culture and Communications) to answer :-

“Thank you for your question. I confirm Campus West’s in-house production of ‘Aladdin’ ran for 46 performances in the Hawthorne Theatre from 12 December to 6 January this year. Over 11,600 of the 13,000 seats available were sold and there were 26 complete sell-outs. A healthy surplus was generated when all production costs were accounted for, which contributes towards the running of the Campus West facility.

Very good early reviews in the local media were supported by overwhelmingly positive customer messages received by email and on Facebook and Twitter accounts. Many came from repeat customers who had watched pantos in previous years with their family in the theatre. While it represents a lot of hard work by Campus West staff over the year, for who we give a special thank you, and there is considerable competition from other panto productions in Hertfordshire, we believe it has become an established festive entertainment event for many families in the borough and beyond. As such, there is a public expectation that future pantomime productions will be commissioned and some customers have already asked about 2019.

Subject to the agreement by Cabinet tomorrow night, the 2019 pantomime production of ‘Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs’ will comprise 47 performances from 11 December to 31 December. We are intending to put all tickets on sale at the start of school half term holiday on 15 February.”

54.2. Question to the Leader from Councillor Jaida Caliskan

The Health Minister, Matt Hancock, announced last summer that the NHS will refer patients presenting with mental health difficulties associated with loneliness or worries about debts, benefits or housing issues etc., to exercise or social activity classes instead of prescribing drugs. This policy was reinforced in The NHS Long Term Plan published recently.

Also known as ‘social prescribing’, the idea is to minimise the amount of time GPs and hospitals spend dealing with social rather than medical issues. According to the East and North Hertfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group (“CCG”), this could amount to 20% of a GPs time.

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I was glad to read on the CCG's website that "Hertfordshire GPs lead the way with alternative prescriptions" and to note that local doctors believe that social prescribing can make a real difference to patients' lives.

Congruently, local groups and charities will require additional financial support in order to meet the increase in demand from social prescriptions. In this respect, could the Executive Member for public health confirm;

- i) How much has been invested and budgeted for this scheme to date?
- ii) That the Council will invest in targeted local groups and charities in order to meet the incidental increase in their user base?

Answer

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

"Thank you for your question Councillor Caliskan.

The transfer of responsibility for significant areas of public health under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 from the NHS to local government is one of the most significant extensions of local government powers and duties in a generation. In two tier local government areas, public health work (including health protection, health improvement and work to support the wider determinants of health) is delivered between the County Council and the districts/boroughs.

The Director of Public Health at Hertfordshire County Council took the decision to work directly with all 10 district and Borough Councils in a whole-systems approach to delivering the Public Health Outcomes Framework. This became the basis for the Public Health Partnership, and the funding that came with the offer for an innovative mechanism to deliver public health initiatives between Hertfordshire County Council and Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council.

As a Council we are very aware of the concept of social prescribing and have been working with this approach as part of our partnership work with County Council.

The Council has not been allocated funding specifically for social prescribing, however we have used our funding from HCC (£200,000 over a 4 year period) to support many projects which are based on the social prescribing model.

Some of these projects include: The Shape Up Campaign, Hoarding, Meet and Eat, Mens Sheds and Healthfest.

In addition to the projects listed above, WHBC has been delivering the social prescribing model through the establishment of our Health walks scheme, working with Hertfordshire health walks, the CCG and local GPs to set up and deliver a comprehensive programme of health walks throughout the borough.

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The scheme continues to be extremely successful and popular with our residents.

As well as the previous funding from HCC, the Council offers grants to local organisations, through our Annual Grants and Small Community Grants. Additionally via the Public Health Partnership funding, the Council has supported various community groups eg. JOCA (Welwyn Rugby Club mental health project); Pegasus Football Club Heart Screening; Walking Netball; junior PARK Run.

It remains to be seen how the CCG and NHS will allocate and manage any additional funding as outlined last year and in the recently published NHS Long Term Plan.”

Councillor Caliskan in noting that there was no support for social prescribing in the Council’s corporate priorities or budget papers asked in a supplementary question of clarification if this would be reviewed?

Councillor Thomson said that there was a current process to review the Council’s Strategy and priorities and all options for the next few years.

54.3. Question to the Leader from Councillor Samuel Kasumu

“Can the leader/portfolio holder give us an update on the Splashlands project at Stanborough Park and on the felling of the Lombardy poplar trees in the north car park?”

Answer

The Leader, Councillor T.Kingsbury asked Councillor T.Mitchinson (Executive Member, Leisure, Culture and Communications) to answer:-

“Thank you for your question.

Since Cabinet’s approval of the Splashlands project on 4 December 2018, officers have been busy turning the initial concept into detailed design with the aim to open the facility during the Welwyn Garden City Centenary year 2020. As reported at the last Cross Party Project Board meeting, phase 1 of the project involves the refurbishment of the toilet block and kiosk, the planning application of which was recently submitted. The rest of the Splashlands project is progressing well, and the design will be shared with the public in our engagement events at Campus West in early March. Regular project updates are also provided to the monthly Cross Party project Board meetings.

With regards to the Lombardy poplar trees at Stanborough North, work has been completed to fell and remove over 300 such trees on health and safety grounds.

The council's contractor has confirmed around one-third of the felled trees showed signs of significant disease and decay which was not visible from

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external inspection, so these trees were more vulnerable to breaking and falling without warning. Treated stumps have been left in the ground to continue providing a natural barrier for cars parking there until they can be ground out and replaced with more sustainable trees over the coming autumn and winter period.

I am pleased to report that all removed trees were wood chipped and this has been safely stored on site in Stanborough Park. This will be used for supporting and repairing pathways, embankments and other areas over the coming months as part of our leisure contractor's grounds maintenance works there.

All the mature Lombardy poplar trees that delineated the rows of parking in the north car park were felled week beginning Monday 14 January 2019. Once felled, a percentage were found to have varying degrees of internal decay that was not visible to any condition inspection. All the stumps in the car park have been cut to a height of about 1 metre and poisoned. These stumps will remain throughout the summer and then will be ground out prior to replanting, which will take place between January and March 2020. The trees selected for replanting will be a mix of columnar trees to replicate the impact of the Lombardy poplar on the skyline, alongside more ornamental, wide crowned trees.”

Councillor Kasumu in a supplementary question asked if Councillor Mitchinson thought that the Splashlands project would provide a suitable legacy for the Welwyn Garden City 2020 Centenary and he replied that yes he did.

54.4. Question to the Leader from Councillor Peter Hebden

“I am sure we all welcome the fact that alternative accommodation has been found for the Potential Kids charity. It is heartening that this charity is able to continue, whilst at the same time the Council can commence investment in the business incubator facility at Beaconsfield Court.

Would the leader like to join me in thanking the officers of this Council for their tremendous efforts in assisting the charity?”

Answer

“Thank you for your question.

As many members will be aware, the Potential Kids charity had a temporary arrangement to occupy the space in Beaconsfield Court from the previous owner. Once the Council had purchased the property, officers from Corporate Property, along with the Corporate Director, provided a range of support and assistance to this charity group including:

- Facilitating discussions with Breaks Manor Youth Centre, where their Stay and Play sessions and Potential Girls Group will be based in the future
- Signposted the charity to our Community Grant application process

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- Once alternative accommodation has been found, we also provided help and assistance to the charity group to move their belongings to their new locations free of charge.
- Some temporary storage space was offered free of charge.

I would like to thank all the officers involved as well as Breaks Manor Youth Centre and Leader of Hatfield Town Council in helping the charity group to move to a new location. I am very pleased that Potential Kids can continue to operate in the Borough, and I wish them every success in the future.”

55. BUDGET 2019/20

Report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) setting out the proposals for approval of the 2019/20 budgets for revenue (General Fund and Housing Revenue Account) and capital and also asking the Council to approve the Borough element of the Council Tax for 2019/20 with final approval being sought at the special Council meeting on 25 February 2019.

It was moved by Councillor D.Bell and seconded by Councillor T.Kingsbury that the recommendations in the report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) be approved.

55.1. Amendment

It was then moved by Councillor G.Hayes and seconded by L.Chesterman:-

“That the Council sets up a £100,000 fund from general reserves for local businesses to apply for in order to make changes to their buildings to facilitate disability access. It is envisaged that such grant funding scheme should be set up during 2019/20, with the funding criteria to be agreed by the appropriate Committee as soon as this budget amendment is approved.”

Following discussion and consultation with Officers, Councillor Hayes accepted a revision to his amendment as follows:-

“That the Council sets up a £100,000 **earmarked reserve** from general reserves for local businesses to apply for in order to make changes to their buildings to facilitate disability access. It is envisaged that such a grant funding scheme should be set up during 2019/20, with the funding criteria to be agreed by the appropriate Committee **and based upon advice by Officers** as soon as this budget amendment is approved.”

On being put to the meeting there voted:-

For the Amendment as revised - UNANIMOUS

And the Amendment as revised was declared CARRIED

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The recommendations in the report, as amended, were then put to the meeting and it was

RESOLVED:
(23 voting FOR and 19 AGAINST)

Voting FOR: D.Bell, J.Boulton, S.Boulton, H.Bower, H.Bromley, J.Cragg, B.Fitzsimon, S.Glick, P.Hebden, S.Kasumu, T.Kingsbury, R.Lass, P.Mabbott, S.Markiewicz, G.Michaelides, T.Mitchinson, N.Pace, B.Sarson, P.Smith, F.Thomson, S.Thusu, R.Trigg, S.Wrenn

Voting AGAINST: J.Broach, J.Caliskan, A.Chesterman, L.Chesterman, M.Cook, M.Cowan, S.Elam, G.Hayes, M.Holloway, T.Jackson-Mynott, M.Larkins, T.Lyons, L.Musk, H.Quenet, P.Shah, JP.Skoczylas, K.Thorpe, J.Weston, P.Zukowskyj

- (1) That the Council notes the recommendations from Cabinet, and the Statement of the Chief Financial Officer on the robustness of budgets and adequacy of reserves (Appendix Q).
- (2) That the Council also notes that the following amounts for the year 2019/20 have been set in accordance with regulations made under Sections 31A and 31B of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 as agreed by the Cabinet on 8 January 2019:

	100% TAXBASE	99.40% TAXBASE
Welwyn Garden City	17,197.3	17,094.1
Hatfield	11,663.4	11,593.4
Welwyn	4,645.0	4,617.1
Ayot St Lawrence	70.5	70.1
Ayot St Peter	115.8	115.1
North Mymms	4,409.9	4,383.4
Essendon	433.2	430.6
Northaw & Cuffley	3,075.6	3,057.1
Woolmer Green	531.9	528.7
Total	42,142.6	41,889.6

- (3) That the Council approves the following budget proposals:
 - (1) General Fund
 - (1.1) The proposed General Fund Budget as summarised in Appendix A, and detailed in Appendix B.

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- (1.2) The inclusion of the savings and growth proposals into the budget as detailed in Appendices C and D.
- (1.3) The 2019/20 fees and charges which have been incorporated into the budget proposals, as set out in Appendix E.
- (1.4) The increase in the Council's Band D Tax of £5.16 (2.5%), taking the average Band D Tax to £211.77 for 2019/20.
- (1.5) The Special Expenses Scheme as set out in section 3.6 of the report continue into 2019/20, and the Special Expenses detailed in Appendix P be approved for inclusion in setting the Council Tax for 2019/20.
- (1.6) That the Council sets up a £100,000 earmarked reserve from general reserves for local businesses to apply for in order to make changes to their buildings to facilitate disability access. It is envisaged that such a grant funding scheme should be set up during 2019/20, with the funding criteria to be agreed by the appropriate Committee and based upon advice by Officers as soon as this budget amendment is approved.
- (2) Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
 - (2.1) That dwelling rents are reduced by 1% in accordance with Government legislation, resulting in an average rent of £103.37 per week.
 - (2.2) The continuation of the policy to charge formula rent minus 1% when vacant properties are re-let.
 - (2.3) The Housing Revenue Account budget for 2019/20 as shown in Appendix F.
 - (2.4) The 2019/20 fees and charges which have been incorporated into the budget proposals, as set out in appendix H.
 - (2.5) The Medium Term Financial Strategy to maintain Housing Revenue Account working balances to around 5% of rental income.
- (3) Capital Programme
 - (3.1) The Capital Programme for 2019/20 to 2023/24 as set out in Appendix I.
 - (3.2) The approval of the Capital Financing for the Capital Programme, for 2019/20 to 2023/24 as set out in Appendix J.

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(4) Medium Term Financial Strategy

(4.1) The Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2019/20 – 2021/22 as set out in Appendix L.

(5) Treasury Management Strategy

(5.1) The Treasury Management Strategy for 2019/20 as set out in Appendix M.

(5.2) The Investment Strategy for 2019/20 as set out in Appendix N.

56. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CABINET

The following recommendations from the meeting of the Cabinet on 4 December 2018 and the special meeting on 22 January 2019 were considered:-

56.1. Council Tax Empty Homes Premium

The Cabinet considered new discretionary powers to increase the council tax payable on long term empty properties.

Since 2013, the Council had been able to levy a Council Tax premium of 50% on homes left empty for two years or more. The number of long term empty homes in the Borough had since fallen from 72 to 52, perhaps indicating the use of the premium in incentivising landlords to bring homes back into use.

Taking advantage of this new legislation would help to bring further homes back into use at a time of housing shortages and would provide some additional Council Tax income.

It was moved by Councillor D.Bell, seconded by Councillor T.Kingsbury and

RESOLVED:

That the current council tax 50% empty homes premium be changed as follows:

- 1 April 2019 - 100% premium for properties empty 2 years or more.
- 1 April 2020 - 200% premium for properties empty 5 years or more.
- 1 April 2021 - 300% premium for properties empty 10 years or more.

56.2. Retail Relief Guidelines and Business Rate 2018 Budget Changes

The Cabinet considered the business rate local retail relief scheme, following an announcement on this new form of relief in the 2018 budget and noted the other business rate changes announced in the budget.

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The following business rate changes were announced by the Chancellor in the October 2018 budget:

- Reduce rate bills by one third for retail properties with a rateable value below 51,000, for 2 years from April 2019.
- 100% rate relief for all public lavatories.
- Continue with the £1,500 business rate discount for office space occupied by local newspapers in 2019/20.

It was moved by Councillor D.Bell, seconded by Councillor T.Kingsbury and

RESOLVED:

That Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council's local retail relief scheme, as shown in Appendix A to the report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) to the meeting of the special Cabinet on 22 January 2019 be approved.

57. MOTIONS

The Council considered the following notice of motion submitted under Procedure Rule 50:-

57.1. The following motion had been submitted by Councillor S.Elam and was seconded by Councillor M.Cowan:-

"This Council shares the shock experienced by local residents on hearing of GLL's announcement of their plans to close the Gosling Sports Hall, as well as their disappointment at the minimal notice and lack of consultation with users prior to the decision being announced.

Gosling is WGC's only significant indoor sports facility, having a serious impact on the physical activity and hence the health of the community. The hall is relied on by local schools and sports clubs, several of whom have nurtured Olympic athletes. It is a vital part of our local amenity.

This Council resolves to do all in its power to maintain the future of the existing facilities, and to make very clear to GLL that its behaviour and approach in recent weeks is unacceptable. The Council joins with local campaigners in its insistence that the existing facilities are maintained at least until the completion of WGC's centenary year in 2020, during which several Centenary Events are planned using the Sports Hall.

As the landowner of the site, this Council also pledges to work with GLL, the Gosling Sports Park Trust, user groups and other stakeholders, to develop a long term plan for the entire site, including the ski slope, that offers a continuing, and hopefully growing set of sporting facilities for future generations to enjoy at affordable rates."

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It was then moved by Councillor T.Mitchinson and seconded by Councillor T.Kingsbury that the Motion be amended as follows:-

“This Council shares the shock experienced by local residents on hearing of GLL’s announcement of their plans to close the Gosling Sports Hall, as well as their disappointment at the minimal notice and lack of consultation with users prior to the decision being announced.

Gosling is WGC’s only significant indoor sports facility and closure would have a serious impact upon the opportunities for physical activity and hence the health of the community. The hall is relied on by local schools and sports clubs, several of whom have nurtured Olympic athletes. It is a part of our local amenity.

This Council resolves to ask the Leader of the Council to continue to exert pressure on GLL to work with the Save Gosling group to avoid the closure of Gosling Sports Hall.”

On being put to the meeting there voted:-

FOR the Amendment – 23

AGAINST the Amendment – 18

And the Amendment was declared CARRIED

The Motion as amended was then put to the meeting:-

And was carried UNANIMOUSLY.

57.2. The following Motion without notice submitted under Procedure Rule 58(d) for referral to the Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee was moved by Councillor G.Hayes and seconded by Councillor L.Musk :-

“That the Council increases its tree planting programme by 25% against the number of felled trees within the Borough and to factor in like for like projected CO2 absorption rates over the following timespan:-

10 Years, 25 Years and 50 Years.”

On being put to the meeting there voted:-

FOR the Motion – 18

AGAINST the Motion – 23

And the Motion was declared LOST.

Meeting ended 10.40pm
GS