

Special Council
23 October 2018

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL

Minutes of a special meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL held on Tuesday 23 October 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, S.Boulton, H.Bower, J.Broach, H.Bromley,
J.Caliskan, M.Cook, J.Cragg, S.Elam, C.Gillett, G.Hayes,
P.Hebden, M.Holloway, T.Jackson-Mynott, S.Kasumu,
T.Kingsbury, M.Larkins, R.Lass, TM.Lyons, P.Mabbott,
S.Markiewicz, G.Michaelides, T.Mitchinson, L.Musk,
N.Pace, H.Quenet, S.Roberts, B.Sarson, P.Shah,
JP.Skoczylas, F.Thomson, K.Thorpe, S.Thusu, J.Weston,
S.Wrenn

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 (M.Lowe)
Communications Officer (N.Burrows)

32. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors M.Birleson, J.Boulton, A.Chesterman, L.Chesterman, M.Cowan, J.Fitzpatrick, S.Glick, K.Holman, A.Rohale and P.Zukowskyj.

33. MINUTES

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

34. LEADER OF THE COUNCIL - COUNCILLOR MANDY PERKINS

The Council observed a minute's silence in memory of Mandy following the very sad news of her death on 29 September 2018.

Mandy's husband David was at the meeting and the Council extended their sympathy and condolences to David and his family on their loss which they shared with them.

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The Mayor paid her own tribute to Mandy and then invited Councillors to make their tributes, starting with Group Leaders.

Councillors paid tribute to Mandy and words were also read out from Members who could not be present at the meeting.

35. PROPERTY INVESTMENT

Report of the Corporate Director (Resources, Environment and Cultural Services) asking the Council to agree to add £8M to the capital programme for the current year for the purchase of properties suitable to replicate the Weltech Business Centre operation model.

The existing Weltech Business Centre in Welwyn Garden City hosted 49 businesses and had been a success. It was designed to support start-ups and small businesses. All units were fully let and the Council had from time to time had to turn businesses away.

It therefore acted as a spur to business development within the Borough, as well as producing a return for taxpayers through the rental income generated.

The success of the Weltech facility meant that the Council was interested in replicating the facility elsewhere in the Borough. Such an investment would make a significant positive contribution to economic development within the Borough and the return generated for the General Fund would help support the services the Council provided to residents.

At present, there was not a capital budget for an additional Weltech-style facility. This meant that, were a suitable investment of this nature to present itself, a Special Council meeting would have to be convened to approve any specific investment. Due to the tight timescales involved in commercial property acquisition, this could put the Council at a disadvantage in the bidding process.

The Special Cabinet meeting held immediately before this meeting had recommended that an amount of £8M be added to the 2018/19 capital budget for the purposes of replicating the Weltech facility elsewhere in the Borough (Minute 63 refers).

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

RESOLVED:
(unanimous)

That the Council agrees that £8M be added to the current year's capital programme for the purchase of properties suitable to replicate the Weltech Business Centre operation model as recommended in the report and by the Special Cabinet meeting held immediately before this Special Council meeting.

Meeting ended 8.13pm
GS