

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING – 2 FEBRUARY 2022

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 Siobhan Elam

“With the recent announcement, in Welwyn Garden City, of the closure of both Marks and Spencer and Next, there is a danger of decreased customer footfall causing a knock-on effect to other premises and thus seriously threatening the viability of our Town Centre.

In the light of this, has the Council any plans to meet with and discuss the future of the Howard Centre with either the owners, Land Estates Management, or their letting agents, Savills, in order to proactively take steps to minimise the damage that may be suffered?”

2. Question to the Leader from Councillor Paul Zukowskyj

“In April 2021 a resident reported to me concerns about a wall that is part owned by the council. The wall, around six feet high, was in such poor repair loose bricks were clearly resting above head height, presenting a significant health and safety risk to residents, their children and their pets.

I finally received a response in May 2021, nearly a month later. An assessment of works needed was listed.

I chased this in August 2021, to be told that the failure to respond was an oversight and progress was being made, but ownership issues had made things complicated.

In November 2021 I chased again, no response.

In mid-December, I chased again, this time copying the Chief Exec in. She responded saying she had asked senior housing officers to sort it and let me know what was happening as I'd not had a response in November. I got no further response.

On 17th Jan, I wrote to the chief exec again. This time I informed her that if the wall was not at least made safe by the following Friday, 21st Jan, I would attend and do the work myself.

Sometime in the intervening days council staff finally attended to remove the loose brickwork and fence off the damaged wall, making it much safer.

Why does this council apparently need to have the leader of the opposition threaten to undertake basic demolition work themselves after ten months of complete inaction by this council, when the safety of residents, children and pets is at risk?”