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Contact:  
democracy@welhat.gov.uk

7 November 2023

You are requested to attend a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL to be held on Wednesday 15 November 2023 at 7.30 pm in the Council Chamber, Campus East, Welwyn Garden City, Herts, AL8 6AE.

**AGENDA**  
**PART 1**

1. **MINUTES**

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 October 2023 (previously circulated).

2. **APOLOGIES**

To receive apologies for absence, if any.

3. **PETITIONS**

The Mayor will receive petitions (limited to the first three petitions presented).

4. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

A period of thirty minutes will be made available for questions to be put by Members of the public to Members of the Cabinet on matters for which the Council has a responsibility or which affect the Borough.

5. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS BY MEMBERS**

To note declarations of Members' disclosable pecuniary interests, non-disclosable pecuniary interests and non-pecuniary interests in respect of items on the Agenda.

6. **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive any announcements from the Mayor, Leader of the Council, Member

of the Cabinet or the Head of Paid Service.

7. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS (Pages 5 - 8)

For a period of up to thirty minutes, a Member of the Council who has given prior notice in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 15, may ask (a) the Mayor, (b) the Leader of the Council or (c) a Member of the Cabinet a question on any matter in relation to which the Council has powers or duties or which affects the Borough.

The questions received for this meeting are attached. A Member asking a question may ask, without giving notice, one supplementary question of the Member to whom the first question was asked. The supplementary question must arise directly out of the reply.

8. MATTERS ARISING FROM THE CABINET

To consider recommendations from the meetings of the Cabinet on 7 November 2023.

(a) FP1189 Council Tax Support

The report for FP1189 Council Tax Support can be found here:  
<https://democracy.welhat.gov.uk/documents/s22626/Item%207%20231107%20Council%20tax%20support.pdf>

(b) Vision and Council Priorities

The report for Vision and Council Priorities can be found here:  
[https://democracy.welhat.gov.uk/documents/s22706/Draft%20Cabinet%20Report\\_Vision%20and%20Priorities%202023\\_2026%201.pdf](https://democracy.welhat.gov.uk/documents/s22706/Draft%20Cabinet%20Report_Vision%20and%20Priorities%202023_2026%201.pdf)

9. NOTICES OF MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 16 (Pages 9 - 10)

To consider notices of motions submitted under Procedure Rule 16 in such order as the Mayor shall direct. The motions received for this meeting are attached.

10. CABINET PANELS (Pages 11 - 16)

Report of the Chief Executive on Cabinet Panels.

11. FAITH COVENANT (Pages 17 - 20)

Report of the Chief Executive on Faith Covenant.

12. URGENT MATTERS

To consider any matters of urgency subject to the agreement of the Mayor in accordance with Procedure Rule 5.1(s).

Circulation: The Mayor and Members of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council  
Senior Leadership Team  
Press and Public (except Part II Items)

**If you require any further information about this Agenda please contact Democratic Services, Governance Services on or email – [democracy@welhat.gov.uk](mailto:democracy@welhat.gov.uk)**

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WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING – 15 NOVEMBER 2023

## 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 of the Council & Executive Member for Climate Change from Councillor Platt**

“In July, the council brought on board it's first climate change officer; a positive and vital step in addressing the climate change emergency that this chamber declared back in 2019.

When talking to residents about this recently I was asked, "What difference will having a climate change officer make?"

Please can the Leader give any examples of impacts that having a climate change officer is making already; and what, if any, procedures, strategies or changes the officer is putting in place that will benefit the council and the borough moving forward?"

### **2. Question to the Leader of the Council & Executive Member for Climate Change from Councillor Kingsbury**

“I note that the new administration has been actively visiting and supporting a number of excellent projects previously initiated by the Conservative administration: One Town Centre, Oak Hill Crematorium, Minster House, and the new lottery, to name just a few. While the two parties now in control did not always fully endorse these initiatives when our group championed them, I am pleased to see the current support for these critical projects, which are so important to the Borough and its residents. Could the Leader please provide any details of prospective projects of comparable scale that the new administration intends to pursue?"

### **3. Question for the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council from Councillor Panter**

“As we approach the cold, wet winter months, I look around our borough and become acutely aware of our homeless brothers and sisters on our streets where I fear the figure reported is not a true figure. You don't need to be sleeping on the streets or a park bench to be homeless!

Then, when I look at the news to hear the Government wanting to evict the homeless from a tent and move them on - I despair - how unloved, un-wanted, and sad that society cannot afford to give the most basic services to humanity I find it truly heart breaking. To confiscate their only means of keeping the wind and rain at bay if they're lucky. This is totally unacceptable! on all levels.

WHBC, and indeed all councils, are having to cope with the financial cost of homelessness, and of those that have fallen on hard times due to the cost-of-living crisis. This is in addition to 3300 families on our waiting list, meaning as many as 8000 plus people roughly the population of Welwyn.

The government grant for homelessness for 2023-24 is already projected to be overspent by around £600k

We desperately must address our housing crisis within the borough; it cannot and will not continue on this trajectory under this joint administration without us taking some direct action to demand that Government funds be made available for social housing, to give safe, most modern, warm, zero carbon homes to those who will never be able to buy within our Borough.

I therefore ask the Leader and Deputy Leader with the Chief Executive of the council to write directly to the prime minister and housing minister and the Levelling Up Minister requesting additional funding but meanwhile, will we declare a Social Housing Emergency in this borough? It is a Social Housing Emergency crisis that demands response.”

**4. Question to the Leader of the Council & Executive Member for Climate Change from Councillor Grewal**

“In the light of the rejection of planning permission for a quarry at Ellenbrook, due to the overwhelming impacts on local roads, nature, residents amenity and health, will the leadership of this council commit to appropriately lobbying Hertfordshire County Council to remove the Ellenbrook Allocation (MAS02) from their Emerging Minerals and Waste Local Plan (2040)?

Will the leadership commit to ensuring sufficient resources, including officer time, are provided to the lobbying effort, including to cover appropriate representation at any Examination in Public?

Will the leadership also commit to writing to Richard Roberts, Leader of Hertfordshire County Council, outlining these commitments and to further emphasise Welwyn Hatfield’s continued opposition to quarrying on what should by now be Ellenbrook Country Park?”

**5. Question to the Leader of the Council and Executive Member for Climate Change from Councillor Watson**

“Humans have already caused irreversible climate change, the impacts of which are being felt in the UK, and across the world. The average global temperature has already increased by 1.2°C above pre-industrial levels and—alongside this—the natural world has reached crisis point, with 28% of plants and animals threatened with extinction. In addition, the UK is one of the most nature-depleted countries in the world as more than one in seven of our plants and animals face extinction, and more than 40% are in decline.

Climate change remains a major concern for our residents with 66% of people in the Country (according to YouGov) expressing they are ‘worried about climate change and its effects’. Alongside this, the popularity of Sir David Attenborough’s Save Our Wild Isles initiative demonstrates public concern that UK wildlife is being destroyed at a terrifying speed.

The Climate & Ecology Bill is a private member’s bill currently before the House of Commons that’s looking to address the challenges that this situation poses by creating a whole-of-government approach to deliver a net zero and nature positive future.

Based on the latest science, the Climate & Ecology Bill aims to align current UK environmental policy with the need to halt and reverse nature loss by 2030, which was goal agreed to at COP15, via the Kunming-Montreal Framework (22 December 2022); and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with the UK's fair share of the remaining global carbon budget to give the strongest chance of limiting global heating to 1.5°C, which was the goal agreed to at COP21, via the Paris Agreement (12 December 2015).

By bridging the gap between the UK Government's current delivery, and what has been agreed at international levels, Britain has a chance to be a world leader on climate and the environment; seizing the opportunities of the clean energy transition, including green jobs and skills; reduced energy bills; and boosting the UK's food and energy security.

Will the Leader of the Council consider supporting the Climate and Ecology Bill?"

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WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL  
FULL COUNCIL MEETING – 15 NOVEMBER 2023

## NOTICE OF MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 16

To consider the following notice of motions submitted under Procedure Rule 16:

**1. The following motion has been submitted by Councillor Kasumu, and will be seconded by Councillor Hellyer:**

“We are all aware of the pressures on council finances. As we strive to optimise our resources, it has become evident that there is a significant opportunity to enhance efficiency, reduce costs, and streamline our operations through a transition from elections by thirds to all-out elections.

Currently, our council operates under a system where a portion of council seats are contested every year, bar one, resulting in annual election-related expenditures and administrative efforts. This approach, while providing regular opportunities for electoral participation, has proven to be costly and resource intensive.

We are all aware of low turnout at local elections. By transitioning to all-out elections, we would consolidate our electoral efforts to once every four years, aligning with the county elections in 2025 and then subsequent county elections. This strategic alignment would not only lead to substantial cost savings by reducing the frequency of elections but would also enhance voter turnout and engagement, as history has shown higher participation rates during consolidated election cycles.

This Council therefore will:

1. **Initiate a Comprehensive Review:** Conduct a thorough analysis of the potential cost savings, logistical considerations, and any legal or procedural implications associated with transitioning to all-out elections.
2. **Engage with the Community:** Launch a robust public engagement campaign to involve and listen to residents’ views on the proposed change, gather their input, and address any concerns or questions they may have.
3. **Develop a Transition Plan:** Based on the findings of the comprehensive review and community engagement efforts, formulate a transition plan outlining the steps, timelines, and resources required to implement all-out elections in alignment with the county elections in 2025.
4. **Ensure Legal and Procedural Compliance:** Legal and election officers to ensure that the transition plan adheres to all applicable laws, regulations, and best practices.
5. **Report Back to Council:** Present the findings, community feedback, transition plan, and any recommendations to the council for further deliberation, modifications if necessary, and final approval within 6 months.”

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## Part I

Main author: Ka Ng

Executive Member: Cllr James

Broach

All Wards

### WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL COUNCIL – 15 NOVEMBER 2023 REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### CABINET PANELS

#### **1 Executive Summary**

1.1 The Council currently have a number of Cabinet panels, namely:

- Campus West Cabinet Panel
- Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel
- Cabinet Housing Panel

1.2 It is recognised by the new Joint Administration that Cabinet Panels should be further enhanced to mirror as much as possible the services under each of the Cabinet members.

1.3 There are two major changes that are being proposed:

- Expanding the remit of the Campus West Cabinet Panel (CWCP) to include Leisure, Youth Partnership, Mill green museum and Roman Baths; Customers, Bereavement Services; Communications; Marketing, Website and Community Outreach. And to rename this panel to Community Cabinet Panel.
- Promote the current Climate Change Member Panel to a Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel. This is to ensure that the council recognises the importance of Climate Change and it would also allow the public to participate at the meeting to some degree (e.g. they could submit public questions).

1.4 These changes were discussed at the Constitution Review Group on 6 September 2023 and it was unanimously agreed to recommend to Full Council for approval.

#### **2 Recommendation(s)**

2.1 Council agrees to expand the remit of the Campus West Cabinet Panel as set out in paragraph 1.3 and to rename this panel to Community Cabinet Panel, with the new terms of reference as shown in appendix A.

2.2 Council agrees to promote the Climate Change Member Panel to a Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel as set out in paragraph 1.3, with the new terms of reference as shown in appendix B.

### **3 Explanation**

#### **Expanding the remit of CWCP and renaming the panel to Community Cabinet Panel**

- 3.1 It is proposed that the Community Cabinet Panel will cover Campus West, Leisure, Youth Partnership, Mill green museum and Roman Baths; Customers, Bereavement Services; Communications; Marketing, Website and Community Outreach.
- 3.2 The proposed terms of reference is shown in appendix A.

#### **Promoting the current Climate Change Member Panel to a Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel**

- 3.3 The proposed terms of reference is shown in appendix B.

#### **Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA)**

- 3.4 All existing Cabinet Panel Chairs currently attract SRA allowance and the amount is the same for all Cabinet Panels (£4279.03 for the current year).
- 3.5 The Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) will need to be called to consider whether the Chairs of the new Community Panel and Climate Change Cabinet Panel should be attracting the same SRA.
- 3.6 Members have also commented whether the Standards Committee Chair SRA should be reviewed, which is currently set at the same level as Cabinet Panel Chairs. It was therefore recommended by the Constitution Review Group that the IRP should consider the SRA for the new Cabinet Panel Chairs and the Standards Committee Chair.

#### **Timescale**

- 3.7 It is anticipated that the recommendation from the IRP will be brought to Full Council for consideration in February 2024, and that the new Cabinet Panels will take effect from the next municipal year. The political proportionality will therefore be determined after May 2024 Election.

### **4 Legal Implication(s)**

- 4.1 If members agree with the recommendations, the Council's Constitution will be updated to reflect the changes set out in this report.

### **5 Financial Implication(s)**

- 5.1 The changes set out in this report may have an impact on the overall members allowance budget, however this will not be known until February 2024 when Full Council considers the outcome of the IRP review on the Special Responsibility Allowance.

### **6 Risk Management Implications**

- 6.1 There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

### **7 Security and Terrorism Implication(s)**

- 7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications arising from this report.

**8 Procurement Implication(s)**

8.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

**9 Climate Change Implication(s)**

9.1 It is anticipated that by promoting the Climate Change Member Panel to a Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel would bring a stronger focus on the Council's work on Climate Change and it would also enhance public participation.

**10 Human Resources Implication(s)**

10.1 There are no direct human resource implications arising from this report.

**11 Communication and Engagement Implication(s)**

11.1 There are no communication and engagement implications arising from this report.

**12 Link to Corporate Priorities**

12.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priority of being a well run council which puts its customers first. The report also links to the successful running of the council, and all its services, which will assist in the delivery of all corporate priorities.

**13 Equality and Diversity**

13.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was not completed as the changes do not impact on policy or service provision.

Name of author	Ka Ng
Title	Chief Executive
Date	2 November 2023

## **Appendix A - Community Cabinet Panel Proposed Terms of Reference**

1. To work on the development of strategies and policies relating to the Council's Community functions and to make recommendations to Cabinet in relation to the adoption of such strategies and policies.
2. To monitor the financial performance of Campus West and Museum Services, with the aim of minimising the public subsidy required to operate the service.
3. To monitor the effectiveness of Campus West and Museum Services at providing community facilities which are well-regarded and provide a diverse range of activities for residents and visitors, generating social value for the Borough.
4. To receive updates on community engagement events across the Borough, with the aim of ensuring maximum accessibility and value for money.

## **Appendix B - Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel Proposed Terms of Reference**

1. To receive information to assist Members in understanding the effects of climate change and the Council's role in adaption to and mitigation from those effects.
2. To work on the development of strategies, policies and action plan relating to climate change and biodiversity make recommendations to Cabinet in relation to the adoption of such strategies, policies, and plans.
3. To monitor the progress of the Climate Change Action Plan with the aim of reducing the Council's carbon emissions, with a target for net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. Leading by example to encourage and engage residents, communities, businesses and other partners to reduce carbon emissions with the aim to be Net Zero as a borough by 2050.
4. To consider the work of other Hertfordshire-wide Climate Change Groups such as Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP)
5. To set and recommend to Cabinet the criteria for grants to be awarded to local organisations to improve their carbon footprint.

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## Part I

Main author: Ka Ng

Executive Member: Cllr James

Broach

All Wards

### WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL COUNCIL – 15 NOVEMBER 2023 REPORT OF THE CHIEF EXECUTIVE

#### FAITH COVENANT

#### **1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The All Party Parliamentary Group on Faith and Society established a set of principles in 2014, formally known as Faith Covenant, to facilitate partnership working between local authorities and faith groups, the aim being to remove some of the mistrust that exists and promote open, practical engagement on all levels. So far, twenty-eight local authorities have formally adopted Faith Covenants.
- 1.2 The Council has received a formal approach from a number of faith groups to consider adopting a Faith Covenant as shown in Appendix A.
- 1.3 The purpose of the report is to seek approval for the council to sign up to a covenant with the faith communities of Welwyn Hatfield which commits both the council and the communities to working together in an open, respectful and collaborative manner for the benefit of the borough.

#### **2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 Council endorses the Welwyn Hatfield Faith Covenant as shown in appendix A.
- 2.2 Council agrees for the Leader to sign the Faith Covenant.

#### **3 Explanation**

- 3.1 The Faith Covenant is built on the following principles:
  - Faith communities are free to practise their beliefs and religious observances, and to raise their voice in public debate and to be respected, within the framework of UK law.
  - Public services and faith-based social action should respect service users from all backgrounds, without discrimination.
  - The voice, participation and solutions that faith communities bring are important. We intend that the active engagement of Faith Groups with our public services will benefit the wider community.
- 3.2 Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council has a good track record of working in collaboration with the faith sector. There is regular engagement with faith groups at a civic level, in events such as Holocaust Memorial Day. At an operational level, work is done with faith groups on community outreach via our Community

Partnership team and that they attend the monthly Welwyn Hatfield Interfaith group meetings.

- 3.3 The adoption of a Welwyn Hatfield Faith Covenant will further strengthen this and positively promote the Council's commitment to working in partnership with the faith sector.

#### **4 Legal Implication(s)**

- 4.1 The proposals will assist the Council in meeting its public sector equality duty to have due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct which is prohibited by the Equality Act 2010; to advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it; and to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

#### **5 Financial Implication(s)**

- 5.1 There are no financial implications apart from officer time to deliver the commitments set out in the Faith Covenant.

#### **6 Risk Management Implications**

- 6.1 There are no risk management implications arising from this report.

#### **7 Security and Terrorism Implication(s)**

- 7.1 There are no security and terrorism implications arising from this report.

#### **8 Procurement Implication(s)**

- 8.1 There are no procurement implications arising from this report.

#### **9 Climate Change Implication(s)**

- 9.1 There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

#### **10 Human Resources Implication(s)**

- 10.1 There are no direct human resource implications arising from this report.

#### **11 Communication and Engagement Implication(s)**

- 11.1 The Faith Covenant strengthens the level of engagement between faith communities and the borough council as well as promoting open, constructive and collaborative partnership working.

#### **12 Link to Corporate Priorities**

- 12.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's commitment of investing in strong, inclusive and supportive communities.

**13 Equality and Diversity**

13.1 The Faith Covenant will strengthen the Council's approach under equality legislation in giving due regard to religion or belief.

Name of author	Ka Ng
Title	Chief Executive
Date	2 November 2023

## **Appendix A – Welwyn Hatfield Faith Covenant**

The Faith Covenant is a joint commitment to a shared set of principles that guide engagement between faith communities and public services.

It aims to promote open, practical modes of working together and to strengthen community cohesion.

The principles are:

- Faith communities are free to practise their beliefs and religious observances, and to raise their voice in public debate and to be respected, within the framework of UK law.
- Public services and faith-based social action should respect service users from all backgrounds, without discrimination.
- The voice, participation and solutions that faith communities bring are important. We intend that the active engagement of Faith Groups with our public services will benefit the wider community.

Both faith groups and public services will commit to working together to:

- Pro-actively build trust/relationships and aim to remove any mistrust between faith groups and public services
- Create opportunities to raise awareness and share learning and knowledge between different faith communities, and within the public services
- Seek opportunities to bring people together to serve the community, particularly the most disadvantaged

Both faith groups and public services will use the Faith Covenant as a tool to develop activity around uniting communities to better serve the residents of Borough of Welwyn Hatfield.

Signatories of the Covenant are invited to gather annually to share their achievements with the broader faith community and public services.