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Contact:  
democracy@welhat.gov.uk

4 March 2025

You are requested to attend a meeting of the WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL to be held on Wednesday 12 March 2025 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 4<sup>th</sup> & 25<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (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 - 6)

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 :

(a) FP2113 Community Infrastructure Levy Adoption

To receive a recommendation from the Cabinet meeting which took place on the 4<sup>th</sup> March 2025: [Agenda for Cabinet on Tuesday 4th March 2025, 6.30 pm – Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council](#)

The report for this agenda item can be found at agenda item 7 of the below link:

[Public reports pack 18022025 1930 Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel.pdf](#)

10. NOTICES OF MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 16 (Pages 7 - 8)

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.

11. REVIEW OF POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY (Pages 9 - 12)

To receive a report of the Monitoring Officer on the review of political proportionality.

12. MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2025/26 - 2028/29 (Pages 13 - 14)

To receive a report of the Assistant Director of Legal & Governance on the Members Allowance Scheme 2025/26-2028/29.

13. PURCHASE OF A PROPERTY IN WELWYN HATFIELD

**Report to follow**

14. URGENT MATTERS

To consider any matters of urgency subject to the agreement of the Mayor in

accordance with Procedure Rule 5.1(s).

15. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Council is asked to resolve:

That under Section 100(A)(2) and (4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be now excluded from the meeting for Item 17 on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of confidential or exempt information as defined in Section 100(A)(3) and Paragraph 3 (private financial or business information) of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act (as amended).

In resolving to exclude the public in respect of the exempt information, it is considered that the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**PART 2**

16. PURCHASE OF A PROPERTY IN WELWYN HATFIELD

**Report to follow**

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

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WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025

## 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 Executive Member for Leisure and Community from Councillor Fitzsimon**

I have been told that Mill Green Museum is closing during the week and will no longer be open during the summer holidays for families and local residents to enjoy. Additionally, I understand that the holiday training project for young people to support them in preparing for the world of work and independence through experience of working in catering and hospitality at the Miller's kitchen won't be taking place.

Could the portfolio holder reassure members and residents that these rumours aren't true and Mill Green Museum will continue to remain open for families and residents to enjoy?

**2. Question to the Executive Member for Housing from Councillor Kingbury**

The redevelopment of Queensway House has been due to take place for several years. Whilst I understand there may be issues with decanting leaseholders, this surely could have been resolved by now. Can the portfolio holder update us on the situation and when the things will move forward?

**3. Question to the Leader, and Executive Member for Economic Development & Climate Change from Councillor Mitchinson**

As it is essential for the council to maximise revenue to protect vital services could the relevant portfolio holder tell us how many retail units are owned by the council in the borough, how many are currently vacant, such as the former carpet shop in WGC town centre, and what measures are being taken to secure tenants as soon as possible?

**4. Question to the Leader of the Council from the Councillor Platt**

A year or so ago the Joint Administration launched the HEART vision for the community. As we know, Local Govt is full of acronyms and buzzwords, so can the Leader give examples of how this vision is more than one of these, and if (and how) the 5 areas of HEART have been implemented to benefit WelHat residents?'

**5. Question to the Executive Member for Environment from the Councillor Panter**

In previous year, there have been complaints about the grass cutting over the spring period. Can the portfolio holder for Environment please tell us what has been put in place this year to improve the situation?

**6. Question to the Leader of the Council from the Councillor Hobbs**

Since 2010, local government has endured central government funding cuts of more than 50%. Although the current Labour Government's recent increases in local government spending are a positive development there is still a huge demand on local government. Between 2010 and 2020, councils lost 60p out of every £1 they have received from central government.

Research by UNISON has shown that councils across England, Wales and Scotland are facing a collective funding shortfall of more than £4bn by the financial year 2024/25 and a cumulative funding gap of £8bn by 2025/26.

Since 2010, the local government workforce has endured years of pay restraint with the majority of pay points losing at least 25 per cent of their value since 2009/10. Staff have endured the worst cost of living crisis in a generation.

At the same time, workers have experienced ever-increasing workloads and persistent job insecurity. Across the UK, 900,000 jobs have been lost in local government since June 2010 – a reduction of more than 30 per cent.

In addition, local government has arguably been hit by more severe job losses than any other part of the public sector. There has been a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three-quarters of the local government workforce.

Recent research by UNISON shows that if the Government were to fully fund the unions' 2025 pay claims, (such as the pay claims submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite) around half of the money would be recouped thanks to increased tax revenue, reduced expenditure on benefits and tax credits, and increased consumer spending in the local economy.

Will the Leader and Deputy Leader of the council write to the Chancellor to acknowledge the pay rises that local government workers deserve, and to explore reimbursing local councils to fund such pay increases?

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING – 12<sup>th</sup> March 2025

## 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 Skottowe, and will be seconded by Councillor Musk**

In light of the accelerated timetable for Local Government Reorganisation as set out by the Government which is likely to see the abolition of the Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council and the introduction of directly elected Mayors and Unitary Authorities by May 2028, the Council recommends that a democratically elected Parish/Town council is established for Welwyn Garden City and a review of the other Parish or Town Councils in the Borough be conducted. This would allow greater democratic control over local assets and keep their governance truly local. The Council should aim to have this set up by 30<sup>th</sup> April 2028 (or at least before this council is abolished).

This Council resolves to produce an initial report setting out how and when a Community Governance Review should be started, addressing the setting up of new Parish/Town councils where appropriate and detailing the process of asset transfer between the existing Borough Council and the new and existing Parish/Town Councils. This should be presented to cabinet as soon as possible thereafter during 2025.

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## Part I

Main author: Gavin Ramtohal

Not Ward Specific

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
COUNCIL – 12 MARCH 2025  
REPORT OF THE MONITORING OFFICER

## REVIEW OF POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY

### **1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Members of a review of political proportionality in light of a vacancy that has arisen due to the resignation of Simon Goldwater. Simon Goldwater resigned as a Liberal Democrat Member on 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025.

### **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 Members note that the vacancy does not change the current political proportionality on Committees; and
- 2.2 That the allocation of seats be as set out in Schedule 1 to this report.

### **3 Explanation**

- 3.1 Political proportionality was last reviewed at Council on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2025 following the change to the Conservative Party as reported to Council.
- 3.2 At the start of February 2025, the Liberal Democrat Group's proportion of seats across all Committees was 33.3% based on 16 elected Members. Following the review, and as a result of the vacancy due to resignation, the proportion of Liberal Democrat Group's seats across all Committees is 31.91% based on 15 elected Members.
- 3.3 Based on the proportions as set out in paragraph 3.2, the recommendations in this report reflects no change to the allocation of seats on Committees in February 2025. The current allocation of seats on Committees remains proportionate to each political group's membership of the Council.
- 3.4 The Council has a legal duty to secure the balance of the different political groups on the authority.

### **Implications**

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

- 4.1 Section 15 and Schedule 1 of the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committees and Political Groups) Regulations 1990 set out the Council's legal duty to reflect the overall political composition of the Council in the appointment of Members to Committees.

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

- 5.1 None

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

- 6.1 None

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

7.1 None

**8 Procurement Implication(s)**

8.1 None

**9 Climate Change Implication(s)**

9.1 None

**10 Human Resources Implication(s)**

10.1 None

**11 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)**

11.1 None

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

12.1 The Council's email distribution lists and website have been updated to reflect the vacancy.

**13 Link to Corporate Priorities**

13.1 The subject of this report is linked to a statutory requirement under the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and Regulations.

**14 Equality and Diversity**

14.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has not been carried out in connection with the proposals that are set out in this report. It is considered that there are no differential impacts.

Name of author	Gavin Ramtohal
Title	Assistant Director (Legal & Governance, Monitoring Officer)
Date	18 February 2025





## Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council membership

Seats on Council	February 2025		March 2025	
	Seats	Percentage	Seats	Percentage
Conservative	11	22.92%	11	23.40%
Liberal Democrats	16	33.33%	15	31.91%
Labour	20	41.67%	20	42.55%
Independent	1	2.08%	1	2.13%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>100.00%</b>	<b>47</b>	<b>100.00%</b>

## Committee Proportionality Ratios

Committee	Feb 2025	Feb 2025	March 2025	March 2025
	Seats	Ratio	Seats	Ratio
Estates Management Appeals Panel	9	2:3:4:0	9	2:3:4:0
Audit Committee	5	1:2:2:0	5	1:2:2:0
Cabinet Housing Panel	12	3:4:5:0	12	3:4:5:0
Cabinet Planning and Parking Panel	12	3:4:5:0	12	3:4:5:0
Grants Board	9	2:3:4:0	9	2:3:4:0
Community Cabinet Panel	7	2:2:3:0	7	2:2:3:0
Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel	7	2:2:3:0	7	2:2:3:0
Overview and Scrutiny	12	3:4:5:0	12	3:4:5:0
Development Management	12	3:4:5:0	12	3:4:5:0
Licensing	12	3:4:5:0	12	3:4:5:0

### Key:

<b>Conservative</b>	
<b>Liberal Democrat</b>	
<b>Labour</b>	
<b>Independent</b>	

### Notes:

This is the list of Committees included in the calculations for political proportionality. Groups will also have seats on other bodies not shown in this list.

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## Part I

Main author: Kyle Houston

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WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
COUNCIL – 12<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2025  
REPORT OF THE ASSISTANT DIRECTOR OF LEGAL & GOVERNANCE

### MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES SCHEME 2025/26 – 2028/29

#### **1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report considers the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) at their meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025. This followed the approaching conclusion of the Member Allowance Scheme for 2021/22–2024/25.

#### **2 Recommendation**

- 2.1 That Council agrees the recommendation of the IRP and approves the continuation of the current Member Allowance scheme as set out in section 3 of the report, payable with effect from the beginning of the Municipal year 2025/26.
- 2.2 That Council note that the proposed amendments would end in May 2029.

#### **3 Explanation**

- 3.1 Council agreed the recommendation to introduce the Member Allowance Scheme 2021/22 – 2025/26 at the Full Council meeting on 26<sup>th</sup> July 2022.
- 3.2 The IRP panel previously met in early 2024 to consider the Special Responsibility Allowance (SRA) for the Chairs of the Community Cabinet Panel, Climate Biodiversity Cabinet Panel and they also reviewed the SRA for the Standards Committee Chair at the same time. All of the IRP recommendations were adopted by Full Council in February 2024.
- 3.3 The IRP convened on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2025 to create a new four-year rolling scheme to run from 2025/26.
- 3.4 In this meeting, Panel members queried whether any substantial changes how committees functioned, and it was confirmed there had been no material changes since they met in 2024.
- 3.5 Therefore, the Panel decided that the design of the Member Allowance Scheme 2021/22 – 2024/25 should continue to be implemented with a yearly CPI index (capped at 4%) for the municipal years of 2025/26 – 2028/29.

#### **Implications**

#### **4 Legal Implications**

- 4.1 Each council must set members' allowances in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Authorities (Members' Allowances) (England) Regulations 2003. Before an authority makes or

amends a scheme, it has a legal duty to have regard to the recommendations made by its IRP.

4.2 The IRP must form at least 3 members, none of whom is a councillor of the authority nor would be so disqualified from being a councillor. The current IRP consist of 5 members who meet these criteria.

4.3 The council must ensure that any IRP recommendations and agreed members' allowance schemes are duly publicised in accordance with the statutory requirements.

## **5 Financial Implications**

5.1 It is proposed that the Member Allowance Scheme for 2025/26 – 2028/29 be implemented in line with the IRP's recommendations. The scheme would see allowances increase by 2.3% for 2025/26, in line with the October 2024 CPI inflation. The continuation of the scheme includes the provision of a 4% annual cap on increases if CPI is greater than this.

5.2 The 2025/26 budget already includes provision for these proposed increases.

## **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 human resources implications arising from this report.

## **11 Health and Wellbeing Implication(s)**

11.1 There are no health and wellbeing implications arising from this report.

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

12.1 There are no communications and engagement implications arising from this report.

## **13 Link to Corporate Priorities**

13.1 The report links to the successful running of the council, and all its services, which will assist in the delivery of all corporate priorities.

## **14 Equality and Diversity**

14.1 An Equalities Impact Assessment was not completed because this report does not propose changes to existing service-related policies or the development of new service-related policies.