

WELWYN HATFIELD COUNCIL  
COUNCIL MEETING – 26 JULY 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 Lynn Chesterman

“Following the debacle of £100,000 of taxpayers money being spent on electric charging points in the Borough (none of which are accessible to wheelchair users) we now have the issue of the disabled parking bays in Stonehills. This was a joint venture with HCC but there is a serious issue with the disabled bays. Wheelchair users are unable to use them as they cannot transfer from their car to their chair as there are no dropped kerbs Would the Leader please agree that this is an issue that needs to be rectified soonest?”

2. Question to the Leader from Councillor Frank Marsh

“I have been made aware that there are an increasing number of occurrences where the Council Environmental services department are duplicating maintenance and repair work, an example of this is in my own ward when old broken fencing was replaced in Digswell Park Road which was a good job done, only for it to be removed with additional old fencing six months later. Now there is no fencing, a complete waste of money and resources.

How and why has this been allowed to happen and is this symptomatic across the Borough?”

3. Question to the Leader from Councillor Margaret Birleson

“As revealed in a recent FOI request submitted to the Housing Ombudsman, Welwyn Hatfield has seen more private tenant complaints than anywhere else in the east of England over the past five years.

How many complaints has this Council received from its own housing stock and of those what are the main themes?”

4. Question to the Leader from Councillor Michal Siewniak

“Since becoming a councillor, I have been contacting the Council Officers, pretty much on a daily basis. Most of the time, Officers respond quickly, and with relevant information, which is great as it enables me, and my fellow Cllrs, to get back to my resident with an update and manage their expectations.

I understand that during the pandemic, many of us had an opportunity to work from home. The hybrid model is important as it also gives us an opportunity to strike the right work-life balance. However, due to these exceptional circumstances, many of our more vulnerable residents have struggled to get hold of Council and at times, Council Officers.

As a Council, I know that we want to "champion" residents' engagement and ensure that we always put our community first. It is absolutely critical. With this in mind, I would like to ask the following question. What is the Council tangibly doing

to ensure an excellent access to our services, on and off-site? I also wonder whether the 'service level agreement' for responding to councillor's and residents queries, has been implemented?"

5. Question to the Leader from Councillor Max Holloway

"There has been an increase in complaints about antisocial behaviour caused by speeding cars, scooters, and motorbikes in residential streets and outside schools.

This is an accident waiting to happen, causing nuisance to residents and great concern among parents and carers who are understandably concerned about the welfare of both their own children but also those potentially involved in this behaviour.

Would the Leader confirm what direct interaction this Council has had with relevant authorities to tackle this nuisance behaviour, to keep our residents safe on the road and pavements?"

6. Question to the Leader from Councillor Russ Platt

"As councillors, I am sure that we have all received comments or complaints about overgrown hedges, hedge maintenance, unkempt hedges, hedges encroaching onto footpaths or lack of clearing up after hedge maintenance.

I understand that where hedges are on public land and footpaths, maintenance was contracted from county to Welhat. Can the council confirm what the approach is regarding hedge maintenance? Is it still the case that they are responsibility of Welhat BC and if so, what is the schedule that should be kept to for maintenance and cutting, and is this being achieved?"

7. Question to the Leader from Councillor Kieran Thorpe

"Can the Leader of the Council confirm how much money the Council has spent on the Local Plan Process since 2010?"

8. Question to the Leader from Councillor Lucy Musk

"In recent weeks I have been contacted by some residents who for their mental and physical health and based on recommendations from their own GPs need to be moved. Does the portfolio holder for Health and Housing agree with me that the current policy of a medical assessment is and I quote 'a desktop exercise' good enough?"