

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL
COUNCIL MEETING – 15 MARCH 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 Councillor Samuel Kasumu, Executive Member Environment and Climate Change from Councillor Stanley Tunstall

“I recently attended a meeting with many allotment holders in my ward of Panshanger at Moneyhole park, where concerns were raised about the increase in allotment fees.

Recognising these are tough economic times for councils across the country. And bearing in mind no alternative budget was proposed by any of the opposition councillors at earlier budget meetings or the full council where the budget was voted on – with the Lib Dem leader saying his “party had ideas but did not want to share them”

I would like to ask the portfolio holder for the rationale behind the increase in allotment fees.”

2. Question to Councillor Fiona Thomson, Executive Member, Housing from Councillor Teresa Travell

“Councils across the country are being criticised for not building enough social housing. Can the Housing Portfolio Holder explain what Welwyn Hatfield Council is doing to address the need for social housing?”

3. Question to the Leader from Councillor Sandreni Bonfante

“We have seen a rise in LGBT hate crimes both nationally and locally. What is the Council doing to make sure vulnerable members of our community are safe?”

4. Question to the Leader from Councillor Gemma Moore

“Can the Leader of the Council give examples of how Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council encourages greater participation in democratic and civic processes of residents from minority backgrounds?”

5. Question to the Leader from Councillor Russ Platt

“I note that in the Welwyn Hatfield Council ‘Principles of Good Governance’, Principle D, entitled ‘Determining the Interventions Necessary to Optimise the Achievement of the Intended Outcomes’, states that the council demonstrates this by (and I quote), ensuring the achievement of social value through service planning and commissioning.

This is in line with the Public Service (Social Value) Act 201, that enables local authorities to seek contributions, separately to S106, with regard to economic, social and environmental well-being in connection with public services contracts and planning approval.

I was subsequently unable to determine or locate a Welhat Social Value policy document, and upon enquiring about this was informed that to the best of their knowledge this was not in existence.

Could the leader of the council confirm if the council does have a social value policy and if it does not, how does it ensure the achievement of social value through service planning and commissioning, as clearly stated in the Principles of Good Governance?”

6. Question to the Leader from Councillor Paul Zukowskyj

“This council consists of members from more than just the current governing party, yet the publicity photos produced by the council almost invariably exclude opposition councillors, a recent example being the Council organized careers fair at the Fielder Centre. A reader could be forgiven for believing the ‘council’ was actually exclusively ‘Conservatives’, a situation not helped when, as the leader of the opposition, I was not even invited to the event, let alone joining in the photo.

In the likely scenario of the current administration not surviving the upcoming local election, will the current leader be content to be similarly excluded from ‘council’ events?”

7. Question to the Leader from Councillor Michal Siewniak

“Some years ago, WHBC decided to remove the community chest funding, a scheme which enabled councillors to support a wide range of activities across the district. In spite of current financial constraints and challenges, does the Leader agree that re-introducing this programme, even as a pilot, could help councillors to be even better connected with groups and communities in Welwyn Hatfield which they represent?”