

FULL COUNCIL - FEBRUARY

ACTION POINTS FOR PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Date of meeting	Action point	PH responsible for action	Response / Investigation Ongoing
23/02/22	Councillor Allen asked, further to the written response of his question from the last meeting, can the Portfolio Holder advise of the Council's response to the Network Rail Tender for a development partner as they state they received a warm pre-application response from the local Council. The Portfolio Holder advised that pre-application discussions were confidential but he will look into this and see what can be shared.	Cllr Anderson	<p>Further to discussion at Council I'm getting in touch to arrange a briefing on the Station Gateway proposal.</p> <p>It is still very early in the development of the scheme but we can of course update Members on what we know. Although it might seem a little way off but can I suggest the following dates:</p> <p>Tuesday 22 March 7pm Wednesday 30 March 7pm</p> <p>This will allow us to obtain an update from the developer and prepare the necessary information in time for the briefing.</p> <p>I propose to conduct this via Teams, which I hope this is acceptable.</p> <p>Please let me know if either date would work and I'll make the arrangements.</p> <p>Alex Robinson Interim Group Manager - Planning and Development</p>

23/02/22	Councillor England thanked the Trees and Woodlands Team for all their hard work in the clean-up of the recent storm. He then asked what was being done about the missing 200+ street champions who hadn't collected their equipment. Cllr Barrett confirmed that emails were sent monthly to those who hadn't collected equipment but as it was a voluntary scheme we can only encourage people to join. Councillor England advised he was happy to engage directly with those in his ward who haven't collected equipment if that would help. Councillor Barrett replied he would need to confirm if personal data can be released to Councillor England for this.	Cllr Barrett	Reflecting further on your offer to encourage registered non active Street Champions, it would be a breach of GDPR for the Council to share any contact information with a third party. Therefore I must decline your offer.
23/02/22	Councillor Symington referred to the commitment with Hertfordshire County Council for a cleaner Hertfordshire and queried if there was a formal agreement, and if so, how is it defined, is there specific KPIs? She used street cleaning and litter picking as examples. Councillor Barrett advised he would need to come back to her on the KPI data.	Cllr Barrett	Ongoing.
23/02/22	Councillor Freedman queried if we were legally able to stagger rent and service charge increases throughout the year rather than one firm increase in order to assist our residents. The Portfolio Holder advised it hadn't been looked at but she would need to investigate the legal ramifications.	Cllr Griffiths	The concept of an annual increase in charges for services is a generally accepted across the economy and the majority of sectors and services. The rationale for this is both to provide a system that is consistent and reliable for the end user whilst also ensuring maximum efficiency in implementing annual changes. It is generally accepted that annual increase in personal income/salaries is implemented at the start of the financial year and hence increases in rent and service charges at that point aligns effectively. Rent increases are aligned by the Rent Standard and so increase by CPI from September the previous year and they are therefore aligned with unemployment benefits and tax rebates.

			<p>In terms of pragmatism the rent is set and approved once a year and the billing for the whole year is then set up on the rent billing system and communicated to tenants so that DD's and other mechanisms for paying the rent are set up. Gradual monthly incremental changes are likely to cause confusion as well as issues around management of rental accounts and payments.</p> <p>In addition this would raise other issues such as how much would we charge new tenants that move in mid-year? The end of year rate, or a monthly rate that goes up incrementally? Which rate do we use to assess the affordability on the current year rent levels? The likelihood is that income and benefits will not change throughout the year yet rental costs would continually increase.</p> <p>The main issue in regards to the proposal is that the council could decide to move to incremental increases but it is likely to be very expensive to operate, confusing for residents and out of sync of the rental sector, which would in itself confuse residents.</p>
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