Leaders Report
December 2023

The Chancellor's Autumn Statement appears to have failed to provide any extra funding for councils so making our task of trying to help our struggling residents more difficult although its been suggested that Councils might be permitted to raised its Council Tax higher .

The raising of the Local Housing Allowance is welcome, although in area like this there is actually no private rented accommodation available at that rate.

I recently attended the AGM of Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) and was heartened to see the absolutely fabulous work done by the voluntary sector to support residents in these difficult times. I also welcome the closer links between the Chamber of Commerce and W3RT and the opportunities that will bring to link charities and small Community Interest Companies with professional business advice and access to potential new volunteers. I will shortly be attending the opening of the Lord Lieutenant's new Charities Hub in Leavesden, another fantastic addition to help our voluntary sector.

The government has finally produced their simplified plans for waste reform. After years of lobbying they have pulled back from their plan that every local authority should provide an identical service – that was simply not practical. There are still some very short timescales for some of the service changes needed and limited information on how service changes are to be funded but Defra's recognition that not all areas of the country are the same is welcome.

I am proud that he been accredited for our work with colleagues on Violence against Women and Girls. On 25 November we raised the White Ribbon Flag above Three Rivers House to mark the start of 16 days of activism against gender based violence. I joined a 'Walk with the Cops' on Saturday with other councillors and residents looking round Rickmansworth to look at how women could be made to feel safer, I welcome this initiative and wish I hadn't have to drop out from the walk early – it was a little too ambitious on my new hip!