

# FULL COUNCIL

Tuesday, 8 October 2024 at 7.30 pm

## SUPPLEMENTARY PAPERS

The following papers have been added to the agenda of the above meeting.  
They were not available when the agenda was originally published.

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*Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive*

**3. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS** (Pages 3 - 8)

To confirm as being a correct record the minutes of the ordinary meeting of the Full Council held on 9 July 2024 and the extraordinary meeting held on 9 September 2024, and for them to be signed by the Chair.

**Note:** amendment to minute 11 – Questions to the Leader and Lead Members

**8. LEAD MEMBER REPORTS** (Pages 9 - 34)

To receive written reports from the Lead Members on activities falling within their remit since the last meeting of Full Council.

**Note:** amendments to the report from the Leader of the Council

**9. QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER AND LEAD MEMBERS** (Pages 35 - 96)

To receive the answers to questions submitted to the Leader and Lead Members.

**Note:** questions and responses reordered so as to group by Lead Member.

**General Enquiries: Please contact the Committee Team at**  
[committeeteam@threerivers.gov.uk](mailto:committeeteam@threerivers.gov.uk)

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# Public Document Pack Agenda Item 3

## THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

**At a meeting of the Full Council held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Tuesday, 9 July 2024 from 7.30 - 10.00 pm**

**Present:** Councillors: Raj Khiroya (Chair), Christopher Alley, Oliver Cooper, Stephen Cox, Harry Davies, Elinor Gazzard, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Philip Hearn, Lisa Hudson, Tony Humphreys, Khalid Hussain, Joan King, Stephen King, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Abbas Merali, Chris Mitchell, Debbie Morris, Sarah Nelmes, Louise Price, Kevin Raeburn, Ciaran Reed, Andrew Scarth, Narinder Sian, Tom Smith, Jonathon Solomons, Cheryl Stungo, Jon Tankard, Chris Whately-Smith and Anne Winter

### **Officers in Attendance:**

Stephen Rix, Associate Director of Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)  
Anita Hibbs, Committee Officer

### **1        APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ian Morris, Reena Ranger, Steve Drury, Rue Grewal, Mike Sims, and Andrea Fraser.

### **2        MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

In response to a question, the Chair confirmed that an amended set of minutes had been published on the council's website and were proposed for agreement at the meeting.

**RESOLVED:** To confirm, as being a correct record, the minutes of the meeting of Full Council, held on 20 February 2024 and Annual Council, held on 21 May 2024 and for them to be signed by the Chair.

### **3        APPOINTMENTS OF THE DEPUTY LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND LEAD MEMBERS**

The Chair announced that he had accepted the item of urgent business to allow for the Council to agree replacements to the positions of Deputy Leader and two Lead Member roles. The nominations were proposed by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst and seconded by Councillor Louise Price.

In response to a question about the vacancies on committees, officers confirmed that in-year changes to committee could be made outside of Council meetings by the group leaders notifying the Monitoring Officer of changes to their group's appointments, but where vacancies existed which required a review of the Council's proportionality, such appointments would require a report to be agreed by the Council which set out the revised proportionality for its agreement.

#### **RESOLVED:**

1. To appoint Councillor Sarah Nelmes as Deputy Leader of the Council.
2. To appoint Councillor Steve Drury to the position of Lead Member for Housing and Public Health.
3. To appoint Councillor Jonathon Solomons to the position of Lead Member for Resources.

#### **4 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chair announced that he had attended a range of events since the last meeting of the Council, including an event celebrating International Children's Day and the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire's garden party. The Chair further announced that he would add the objective of feeding the needy and hungry to his charitable aims for the year alongside the commitment to raise money to support those with ovarian cancer

#### **5 PETITIONS**

There were no petitions.

#### **6 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC**

There were four questions from the public with written answers provided. There was one supplementary question on question four, to which the Lead Member responded to say they he supported all sports being played in the district and would be happy to discuss the matter further.

#### **7 POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS**

##### **7a LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

The recommendations within the report were moved and seconded.

Council debated the proposed timeline for submission of a local plan.

In debate, an amendment was moved and seconded such that the date for approval of the plan should be changed to 10 December 2024 for submission in January 2025. The amendment was put to the vote and lost.

**RESOLVED:** On the recommendation of the Policy and Resources Committee, to agree the Local Development Scheme as set out in Appendix 2.

##### **7b BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 31 JANUARY 2024**

The recommendations within the report were moved and seconded.

**RESOLVED:**

1. That the revenue budget virements as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.
2. That the revenue budget supplementary estimates as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.
3. That the revenue variances to be managed as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be noted.
4. That the capital variances as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.

## **7c BUDGET OUTTURN 2023/24**

The recommendations within the report were moved and seconded.

Council debated the long-term financial health of the authority, the forecast changes to interest rates which may affect future returns on investments, the continuation of the delivery of services by the authority in recent years, and the in-house delivery of refuse collection and recycling services.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. That the favourable revenue year end variance after carry forwards of £0.419m be noted.
2. That the capital year end position as summarised in paragraph 2.11 and Appendix 3 be noted.
3. To approve to carry forward the unspent service budgets from 2023/24 to 2024/25 which total £0.277m to enable completion of projects as detailed at Appendix 2.
4. To approve the rephrasing of capital projects from 2023/24 to 2024/25 detailed at Appendix 4.

## **7d THREE RIVERS BIODIVERSITY POLICY AND BNG UPDATE**

The recommendations within the report were moved and seconded.

An amendment to the recommendations was moved and seconded to add within section 5 – other relevant associated policies – of the biodiversity net gain policy the phrasing: ‘Three Rivers District Council will seek to fully map all riparian rights, duties and biodiversity net gain opportunities within the district and publish this information freely available online’.

In debate on the amendment, members debated its implication on the council’s budget and that the county council was the lead authority for flooding. The amendment was put to the vote and not carried.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. To note the content of the report.
2. To approve the adoption of the Three Rivers Biodiversity Policy.
3. To approve the use of the Maple Lodge BNG S106 funding being used on Three Rivers District Council owned land as identified in section 6 (Including: Beechen Wood, Coombe Hill Road open space, Berry Lane & Mead Place).
4. To agree in principle for Council owned and maintained land to be considered as potential receptor sites with the final decision on individual receptor sites to be delegated to the Leisure, Climate Change and Community Committee.

## **7e LEISURE AND NATURAL INFRASTRUCTURE CONTRACTS 2024**

The recommendations within the report were moved and seconded.

**RESOLVED:** That where external funding is identified in Appendices A and B, the Director of Finance be authorised to increase budgets in respect of the additional funding received.

## **8 LOCAL AREA FORUMS - PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO TERMS OF REFERENCE AT ARTICLE 10 OF THE CONSTITUTION**

The recommendations within the report were moved and seconded.

An amendment to the recommendations was moved and seconded to clarify to which Local Area Forum the unparished areas would be allocated, namely Article 10.01 such that it would read:

Chorleywood and Sarratt (including the unparished area west of the M25)  
Rickmansworth (including the unparished area west of the M25)

The amendment was accepted by the mover and seconder and the recommendations, as amended, put to the vote and carried.

### **RESOLVED:**

1. To consider the proposed amendments on local area forums detailed at Annex 1.
2. To approve the proposed amendments on local area forums at Annex 1, subject to the amendment of Article 10.01 to clarify the allocation of unparished areas.

## **9 CIL SPENDING REQUESTS 2024/2025**

The recommendations within the report were moved and seconded.

Members spoke in support of the applications and debated the funding arrangements for the pedestrian bridge and the dates on which commitments had been made by various bodies to provide funding for the bridge.

**RESOLVED:** To approve CIL funding for the following scheme detailed in Table 1 of the report.

## **10 LEAD MEMBER REPORTS**

Council received the reports of the Leader of the Council and Lead Members.

The Leader of the Council provided a verbal update on two matters:

1. that a further £55,000 had been provided to the authority through tranche four of the Household Support Fund and commended officers for their work in securing this funding; and
2. that the planning permission refusal of the Abbots Langley data centre application which had been appealed would be considered by the Secretary of State, but that the council had appointed counsel to defend the council's position on the matter.

Further verbal updates were provided by several Lead Members and questions asked thereof.

## **11 QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER AND LEAD MEMBERS**

Council considered the written questions and responses which had been published on the council's website ahead of the meeting.

Various supplementary questions were asked following the questions to the Leader of the Council. In response to the supplementary questions, the following summary points were made:

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst congratulated Councillor Abbas Merali on his performance at the general election of 4 July 2024.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst explained that officers had been working hard to develop planning policies which protected the green belt, that it would be for the Planning Committee to determine applications, and that he was opposed to an arbitrary figure of houses to be built imposed upon the district by HM Government.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst explained that the council's code of conduct referenced the Seven Principles of Public Life [Nolan Principles] and that the constitution would be reviewed.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst advised that he hoped to hold an informal meeting of group leaders and their deputies toward the end of July 2024 to discuss changes to the constitution.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst explained that Local Area Forum meetings were open to the public, including to parish, district, and county councillors, and that membership of each Forum was made up of each district councillor from the wards which constituted each Forum, and it was for those members to agree to the dates, times, and formats of each meeting.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst explained that he was not aware of any definitive statement that the development of the Chorleywood car park would not take place, but that the figures within the Local Plan would be indicative, as they were for all sites identified within the plan.

As the time limit for the close of the meeting had been reached during this item, no further supplementary questions were asked.

## **12 REPORTS OF, AND QUESTIONS TO COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

Council received the reports of and questions to committee chairs.

## **13 MOTIONS**

The motions listed within the agenda were not moved prior to the closure of the meeting.

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## **Report from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst**

have had a series of meetings with various community leaders over the last few months.

This includes a helpful meeting with MP Gagan Mohindra and Jon Bishop from the Three Rivers Joint Residents Association to discuss Three Rivers' approach to the Local Plan. We all agreed that the 13,300-figure proposed in the new Labour government National Planning Policy changes is unacceptable and the figure we have consulted on represents the best outcome for our area. However, we accept that the proposed changes are likely to make getting the lower figure through the government inspector impossible. Given this, briefings for group leaders and the TRJRA have been held and further ones planned prior to the next Local Plan subcommittee to consider the best way forward to protect our valuable green belt.

I have met and discussed policing issues with the Police and Crime Commissioner. I have offered the use of our social media to promote any anti-crime initiatives. We have also been able to host a police drop in at Three Rivers House.

The Chief Executive and I have met with the Leader of Herts County Council and the acting Chief Executive. I will soon be meeting with the new Herts County Council Chief Executive. Issues discussed and indeed ones I have had to follow up due to the low rate of progress include:

- Fire damage at Rickmansworth Library and our offer to accommodate the library at Three Rivers House.
- Constant delays in getting the licences and permits to ensure the Croxley Beryl Bike scheme should go ahead. Officers have been working on this since March!
- The lease arrangements for Oxhey Jets.
- Delays in highways permits for finalising the entrance work at Leavesden Country Park.
- The future use of the Breakspere school site in Abbots Langley once the school is relocated.

I am pleased officers have worked collaboratively with Oxhey Jets and I was pleased to meet with and discuss as well as provide assurances of our council's support direct to John Elliot.

I have met with the South Oxhey councillors and Watford Rural Parish Council clerk to discuss issues the Village Green Status at South Oxhey Playing Fields to ensure all parties are happy with HCC progressing this.

I have had meetings with other council leaders via the Herts Growth Board and those in the South West Herts to discuss our joint responses to the government's latest devolution offers. Whilst nothing has been ruled out, the clear view of all leaders was not in favour of a directly elected Mayor. Equally there was strong support for the current model of co-operation and engagement but much more detail and in particular what powers and financial support would come with any devolution deal. Much is unknown.

I have undertaken SKY TV News interviews regarding the proposed Data Centre in Abbots Langley that has been "called in" to be decided by the Deputy Prime Minister,

and also over our difficulty in allocating land for the high level of housing development proposed by the new government.

Peace and tolerance are something the whole world has been fighting for, for many decades, and while progress has been made, there is still some way to go.

Three Rivers may be a small district council but is a diverse and welcoming area that celebrates inclusivity where everyone, regardless of race, sexual orientation, or gender

identity, feels valued and respected. We are committed to ensuring that everyone, no matter who they are and where they are from, feels safe, respected and a valued member of the community. We support awareness months, organisations and events, such as Herts Pride, to celebrate diversity and remind people of the ongoing fight for equality.

As a sign of our respect and to show our unwavering support and ongoing commitment to diversity, inclusion and equality we often raise flags at Three Rivers House, the council's head office.

In September, it was an honour to join the Chair of Three Rivers in raising the Ukrainian flag to mark 33 years since Ukraine declared independence from the Soviet Union. Brave Ukrainians are fighting and dying to stand up for their rights against Putin's aggression, and we here at Three Rivers stand tall and strong with Ukraine. Slava Ukraini!

In November, we likewise will remember all those who have given their lives from the United Kingdom so we may have our freedom and democracy.

I am also thankful to our residents for saying no to hate. Last month, the country witnessed horrific violent incidents from thugs in the wake of the Southport stabbings. Although there were no riots in Three Rivers and Hertfordshire, we stood up to those who sought to disrupt our peace and safety. Love will conquer hate.

Hate Crime Awareness Week will soon be approaching, and the council will be putting messaging out on what a hate crime is and the devastating effects it can have on victims. I was pleased to be part of the video promoting this. Love not hate.

Cllr Stephen Giles-Medhurst

Leader, Three Rivers Council and Local Plan Lead

Liberal Democrat Councillor, Leavesden Ward (District and Abbots Parish)

## **Report from the Lead Member for Resources, Councillor Jonathon Solomons**

Having recently become Lead member for Policies and Resources, I've worked with Director of Finance Alison Scott to better understand the responsibilities and state of play and am glad to be able to provide my first report.

There are main areas I would like to report on for you:

1) The budget management report shows overall the budget is expected to come in within the figure originally set at Council in February, highlighting just how good a job the TRDC team has done at managing and understating financial impacts.

The council continues to benefit from higher interest rates as it remains cash positive with interest rates expected to fall later in the year.

2) The Pay Award for 2024/2025 has not been agreed and negotiations are likely to continue into the Autumn. The latest employers offer of £1,290 or 2.5% was agreed by the GMB but rejected by Unison and Unite who are currently balloting members on strike action. A central contingency is held for the pay award, so your council is demonstrating correct financial governance for mitigating risk.

3) The Council has received an additional £2.2M of Local Authority Housing Fund money in round 3 to provide a minimum of 5 additional temporary accommodation units and 3 resettlement properties. This will be reflected in the next budget monitoring round.

4) The Chancellor will announce her budget on October 30 with a single year Spending Review also taking place in October. It is expected that this will lead to a single year local government finance settlement in November.

5) The Local Government Sector continues to call for the certainty that multi year finance settlements can bring and it is hoped that the Government will return to rolling three year settlements following the next Spending Review which is expected to cover more than one year.

6) The Council is continuing to work with other Hertfordshire authorities and Local Government Futures on the potential for business rates pooling for 2025/26 following MHCLG's (Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government) recent call for applications.

Finally, I would like to put on record my thanks to previous Lead Member Matthew Bedford who has done a great job in helping steer progress of this committee and its responsibilities.

TRDC is widely acknowledged as one of the better run councils and that is clearly down to Matthew's work, the committee councillors who hold the committee to account to be on the right path and Alison Scott and her team's huge amount of work to cover an amazing amount of data points so that we have a budget that works, maintains services, minimises cost to residents and provides contingency to mitigate risk.

Alison has been great at helping me get up to speed with this and it's clear to me that TRDC is in safe hands.

## **Report from the Lead Member for General Public Services, Councillor Sarah Nelmes**

### On parking matters updates are as follows:

**Rickmansworth West** – The final scheme has been agreed and works are on order. It is anticipated the scheme will be implemented by the end of the calendar year.

**Chorleywood** – the consultation responses on the detailed design have been sent to our Traffic Engineer consultant and a report is awaited to decide on the next steps.

**Harefield Road, Rickmansworth** – Following the last consultation it has been determined to progress a final scheme with minor amendments following objections from residents in Heron Closs and Moss Close. This is currently being prepared.

**Primrose Hill, King Langley** – The statutory ‘Notice of Proposals’ consultation for the Traffic Regulation Order will be advertised in November (subject to approval from HCC) with scheme implementation due later this year.

**High Elms Lane, Garston** – given ongoing concerns regarding traffic congestion and poor parking along High Elms Lane an informal consultation exercise commenced prior to the summer holidays. The responses from this consultation are being analysed.

**Gosforth Lane, South Oxhey** – following some junction improvements around Gosforth Lane Officers have been discussing further parking restrictions in the locality with Ward Councillors. A detailed design is awaited from the Traffic Engineer.

**School Mead Verge Hardening, Abbots Langley** - Following the granting of planning permission for application 24/0426/FUL on 23 May 2024, and with agreement from the landowner, works to improve parking arrangements at this important local shopping parade commenced on 23 September 2024 and will take approximately 8 weeks to complete. The works will be completed in stages to ensure that any disruption is kept to a minimum and to maintain availability of parking spaces during the construction period. These improvements are being delivered through the District Council’s Verge Hardening Programme to protect hardened verges that are being damaged by parked vehicles.

Excellent progress being made on EV charging projects and Beryl Bikes and work progresses on the W2CG link and step free access – more details in my colleague’s report

### On waste services updates as follows:

The Christmas collection calendar is out and the easter proposal is in discussion, including proposal to work Saturday BEFORE Easter, as was the case last year. This gives the frontline staff the opportunity to have a proper break.

We continue to have issues with the Managing agents of some blocks where work continues to find resolution, more detail on some specific issues in response to questions.

Simpler Recycling proposal from the previous Government, especially, on Trade Food waste collection, continue to be worked through. There are undoubtedly resource issues where proposals will come forward shortly.

The Herts Waste Partnership is now in Final Draft and will come to Committee later this month.

On Grounds maintenance the last cut of the year has been made and the new season tasks have commenced, including:

- Hedge cutting
- Clearance of leaves
- Clearance of garage areas and alleyways
- Renovation of bowling greens

We have now got a mechanical composter – this will mix different green waste types and, over time will, result in a compost that can be used on bedding and council owned land.

Annual tree/bulb planting at Woodcock Hill cemetery planned for early November.

On Animal Inspection and Licencing, the new officer is proceeding well and her training in partnership with City of London continues.

## **Report from the Lead Member for Housing and Public Health, Councillor Steve Drury**

### Housing

Have had briefings with officers who keep me updated on households in temporary accommodation, and as of September 26<sup>th</sup> this figure was 74. Most of whom were housed within the district. We currently have 8 households located outside 3 Rivers, one of which is for reasons of safety.

We have 132 active homelessness applications, 41 of which the Council have accepted "duty of care"

With regard to staffing, there is 1 post being advertised internally but other than this, we have a full compliment, which is good to note.

The 11 new properties in S/Oxhey, which we have purchased, should have been signed off last week and then we can move forward and fill them.

We have had SIAS's audit review back and the Council should applaud officers who have been awarded the highest grade for homelessness service for our residents.

The Council have written to the two London Boroughs who have residents temporarily housed in Shannon House, in Abbots Langley, where we, and the police have some concerns, we have had replies from said Councils who are, with us, trying to improve the outlook for the temporary tenants. I have been asked to write to the lead members of the 2 Boroughs, to make sure that they are aware of our concerns at member level.

My thanks to Jason and Deborah and all the staff in the housing dept for all their hard work for our residents.

### Health

Our Healthy hubs are seeing more people than earlier in the year which is a good thing, this has seen our A/Langley hub move in with the CAB which is more accessible for some, the Comms team are putting together a video for the hubs. We are working with HCC Carers to launch a carers café in January and there is to be a "taster" session in S/Oxhey healthy hub in December. £8000 has been allocated towards Health Inequalities from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, which will go towards venue hire in Oxhey and funding for A/Langley hubs. £35000 has been given to TRDC by Public Health for place based health inequalities. There was an event arranged in partnership with W3RT and The Grove- Unity in the Community- where almost 400 tickets were booked for the free event.

The MillEnd/Maple Cross forum took place on 16<sup>th</sup> September and S/Oxhey, OxheyHall, Carpenders Park took place yesterday. New terms of reference have been produced for these forums.

I had a meeting ,arranged by Shivani Dave, with Sarah Perman, Director, Public Health HCC, early in September to go through what the County wish to achieve with regard to the health of the people of Hertfordshire and Three rivers in particular, it was very satisfying to learn that our staff are held in high regard by HCC for their innovation and hard work with regard to health. On 18<sup>th</sup> October I have been invited to a briefing by Integrated Health Board to be updated on various health and care organisations

available in Hertfordshire and West Essex, information about the healthcare needs of residents and an update, on the priorities for health improvement in our local area.



## **Report from the Lead Member for Infrastructure and Economic Development, Councillor Louise Price**

I would like to thank Officers for their help in preparing this report.

**Beryl Bikes** – There have been considerable delays due to Hertfordshire County Council Highways licensing and contractual discussions. However, the contract between TRDC and Beryl has now been signed, enabling the scheme to launch in early October 2024. The highways licence has now also been finalised and signed by Beryl and Hertfordshire County Council. Line painting is due to take place on 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024 for four bays, and they will go live shortly after. Bikes will be delivered to the bays during the week commencing 30<sup>th</sup> September 2024. The fifth and final bay at Croxley Library will follow on later.

**Local Cycling Walking and Infrastructure Plan** – an update report on the progress of the LCWIP is due at the October General Public Services, Community Safety and Infrastructure Committee following the consideration of over 1500 comments submitted as part of the public consultation last year and we finally have the Hertfordshire County Council report, who have led on this. There was significant concern from residents over the proposals in Chorleywood and Officers have recently met with the Parish Council, the Chorleywood Residents' Association and Ward Councillors to discuss further. We are clear that those proposals in Chorleywood that do not have public support will not be progressed.

**EV Charging project** – TRDC has signed the contract with Blink (our chosen Charge Point Operator). The next step is to work with Blink's installation team to enable the work to be completed with the least disruption. Information on final implementation timescales is awaited from Blink, but implementation will commence later this calendar year. There are also ongoing discussions with Hertfordshire County Council regarding the spending of the LEVI fund on further EV charging infrastructure in TRDC.

**Step-Free Access at underground stations** - Officers met with representatives from Transport for London recently following the announcement that further stations are to be considered as part of the step-free access programme. It has been confirmed that Croxley station will undergo an assessment for step-free access feasibility. The report will be published early next year. We have also raised the need for step-free access at Rickmansworth.

### **Economic Development**

Work has started on drafting a new economic development strategy for the Council. This will initially bring together all the work the Council is currently doing to support our business community through work on planning, sustainability and development and other key pieces of work.

## **Report from the Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships, Councillor Andrew Scarth**

### **Community Partnerships & Health**

Strategy and Partnerships Team held a Disability Confident Event, at “The Making of Harry Potter” studios, in partnership with the Chambers of Commerce, DWP, Hertfordshire County Council, Mission Employable and Sunnyside Rural Trust. The event had 57 attendees and received positive feedback.

The Connecting Three Rivers Fund is now open for applications, and this will close on 31 October. The LSP’s Advisory Board will review applications with decisions aiming to be made by the end of November. This Fund is linked to the donations platform which is now live.

The week commencing 23 September was National Inclusion week – a news story was shared on the TRDC website and promoted on social media to demonstrate the work undertaken by the council in relation to Inclusion.

The Household Support Fund will be extended to end of March. The Strategy and Partnerships Team is working on reviewing need with partner organisations to develop a proposal for expenditure of the September – March funding.

A new cost of living checklist is available on the council website, to encourage residents to explore all financial support available to them.

Tablets are being introduced to the Healthy hubs, to allow residents to access the council website and limited other health and wellbeing related sites to improve accessibility.

Frailty Task and Finish Group has had its initial meeting and will be exploring a whole systems approach to preventing the development of frailty.

### **Community Safety**

The Youth Action Panel continues to support the No More Service in delivering support to young people at risk or involved in youth crime. TRDC has a designated worker and currently supports 22 young people.

Promotional work and awareness raising continues through educating residents on criminal exploitation and cuckooing. Youth education continues this year following the successful youth violence programme earlier in the year, this will see the ‘Crucial Crew’ deliver a programme for children around the dangers of Drugs.

“16 Days of Action” begins 25<sup>th</sup> November and will include:

White Ribbon Day - 25<sup>th</sup> November – White Ribbon flag will be raised, the Three Rivers White Ribbon video will be launched and a stand will be in the office for staff to learn more about domestic abuse and Violence Against Women and Girls.

'Orange The World' – 27<sup>th</sup> November – Watersmeet will be lit Orange to mark the day. We will also create a collage of all staff dressed in Orange to support the elimination of Violence Against Women and Girls.

Fund raising day – 4<sup>th</sup> December – A plan to raise money for Herts Domestic Abuse Helpline is being developed by staff

Domestic Abuse training – there will be 3 training sessions held over the 16 days. This will be open to all staff and cover topics such as what is domestic abuse and spotting the signs. All staff and councillors to be encouraged to attend.

Personal safety campaign – to be launched as part of 16 days, colourful information booklet sharing all the digital and face to face services available in Three Rivers to support all residents who need it. Each service will be highlighted throughout 16 days.

Application for funds to purchase new cameras has been submitted, and if successful should be in place at the beginning of the new year. 2 cameras each for area South Oxhey, Abbots Langley and Rickmansworth and an additional two cameras to be deployed around the district as needed.

Police continue to work with high targeted premises – In the last qtr. there were 61 reported shoplifting incidents, 32 were at the Co-op at Delta Gain. Police are advising Co-op of security measures.

Three Rivers Community Safety team organised a District wide Prevent training event on 4<sup>th</sup> September, over 60 professionals from around the district attended and the feedback was incredibly positive.

## **Report from the Lead Member for Leisure, Councillor Chris Lloyd**

### Watersmeet Report

#### Panto:

- 2024 pantomime of Jack and the Bean stalk is now on sale. We currently have 5205 reserved tickets which is the local schools who have been booking, and 1502 sold tickets. Panto VIP night to be Friday 13 December @ 6:30pm. I have bought my tickets.
- 2025 Pantomime title will be confirmed in late November/early December 2024.

#### Other

- Replacement of electrical infrastructure works were carried out in August.
- Christmas Market will be on Saturday 16 November.
- Membership Scheme - Currently we have 61 memberships sold. These are: 24 joint and 37 singles.  
<https://www.watersmeet.co.uk/watersmeet.co.uk/membership>
- Link to the website - <https://www.watersmeet.co.uk/>
- 2025 will be the 50th anniversary of Watersmeet.
- The Watersmeet Annual Review 2023/24 presentation is coming to 16 October Climate Change Leisure and Housing Committee

### Leisure Report

- Attended the Living Long Better event on 7<sup>th</sup> September at University of Hertfordshire
- Attended Domestic Abuse and Violence against Women Girls Conference in at the Fielder Centre in Hatfield on 17<sup>th</sup> September. One of the workshops had speakers from the English Football League.
- Will attend Friday 11<sup>th</sup> October - Hertfordshire Clubs Conference 2024 in Hatfield
  
- Parkrun
  - The High Sheriff has visited all the Parkruns and Junior Parkrun in Three Rivers as part of her plan to visit every Parkrun in Herts. I was there for 4 out of 5 of her visits.
  - 12<sup>th</sup> October – Parkrun at Leavesden to celebrate our 45<sup>th</sup> Wedding Anniversary. You welcome to volunteer , walk , jog or run.
  - [The benefits of parkrun | parkrun UK Blog](#)

### Open Spaces - Management Plans

South Oxhey Playing Fields Management Plan is being updated for 2024 – 2029. And will be presented to the October CCLC Committee meeting.

Next financial year the management plans for Croxley Common Moor and the Withey Beds (off Tolpits Lane near entrance to Moor Park estate) will be reviewed and updated for the period 2025-30.

Stone's Orchard and The Green's Management Plan development is underway and initial consultation on the briefing document will begin in the coming months. Initial conversations with Croxley Green Parish Council has been positive and they will continue to be consulted through the process.

#### Solar Panels at William Penn

The tender for the solar panels on William Penn Leisure Centre has been awarded to a company called Drakes. Planning approval has been received; works will commence on 3<sup>rd</sup> October and are expected to take one month to complete.

#### Leavesden

**YMCA Cafe** –The cafe was opened to the public on 24 August. There has been no *official* opening ceremony.

**Leavesden Hive signage** – The new signage was installed on 27 August. This design should deter any further vandalism.

**Leavesden Country Park – Entrance Widening** – Works are progressing well with normal vehicle access remaining. Works have taken place to repair the wall and install new heritage railings. The new combined automatic gate has been installed. The vehicle access gate can now be controlled remotely, allowing better access for One YMCA deliveries - they remain updated on the works.

The planned closure works to tarmac the new entrance did not take place due to Highways work on College Road. Officers are awaiting additional permit approval from HCC Highways with a view for works to take place overnight. Further updates will be provided once the permit has been approved.

#### National Playday

The Play Ranger team supported the National Play Day event at Leavesden Country Park on Wednesday 7 August. Over 50 families attended the event organised by the Watford and Three Rivers Family Centre team which also included advice stands, face painting and more.

#### Summer 2024

##### Playscheme

We had another successful summer at the Ofsted registered Yorke Mead Playscheme. A total of **1,056** attendances from 215 children. This meant that **88%** of available spaces were taken up.

Visitors included the NHS Mental Health & Wellbeing Service, JD Ballers, Play

Rangers, Crafty Lucy and Keep a Beat. Parent and child feedback was taken across the summer. Below are some of the comments

- *Children “I love playscheme because we get to do lots of fun things and play outside”, “I made new friends and played fun games in the hall”, “the play leaders are kind and helpful”.*
- *Parent “I’m so grateful for playscheme, you’re all amazing and its so lovely to see all the children having such a great time.”*

The Leisure Service secured £9,000 in grant funding to provide spaces for children in receipt of Free School Meals. 39 children were referred and attended a total of **230** days. Daily hot meals were provided by Top Notch Catering. An audit was carried out by the funders, with very positive feedback:

*“The playleaders were very engaged with the children and offer a wide range of activities for different interests, which the children were clearly enjoying. There was a nice bond between the play leaders which created a lot of energy and a great atmosphere. The camp was well organised, with a range of spaces to cater for different activities and they had all the appropriate health and safety measures in place.”*

In addition, the playscheme had 112 ACE bookings. ACE is ‘Accessible childcare for everyone’ (previously the Holiday Referral Scheme). Three Rivers ACE helps families with the cost of holiday play provisions within the Three Rivers area, either via a self-referral (meeting specific criteria) or a professional referral. In addition to the Three Rivers playscheme, families were also able to attend the following provisions across the district for a discounted price via the ACE scheme

- Let Me Play at William Penn Leisure Centre
- JAG at South Oxhey Leisure Centre
- Dynamic Ducks at Rickmansworth Park Primary School
- Junior Playmakers at Warren Dell Primary School
- Get Set 4 Tennis at Denham Way Playing Fields

### Play Rangers

Two new sites were included this summer, Baldwins Lane Playing Fields and Chorleywood House Grounds. In total, the play rangers delivered 70 sessions across 10 different sites with **1,277** attendances across the summer. We now have 418 subscribers to the Play Ranger annual membership. (£5 / year).

### Arts and Culture

#### Cultural Strategy

Work continues on the Cultural Asset Mapping with plans underway to engage with key Stakeholder groups locally. An online Public Consultation is scheduled to commence in October.

## Artistmeet

Croxley Green artist Valeria Michael will have the final exhibition of the year, from 3<sup>rd</sup> October – 31<sup>st</sup> December. There will be no formal Open Reception, but Valeria will be attending the Watersmeet Christmas Market on 15<sup>th</sup> November to talk about her work.

## Aquadrome inspired art and wellbeing events

Bespoke workshops/activities took place this summer, hosted by the Leisure Services Team for the Aquadrome NHN Project. 100 spaces were available, 93 of the 100 available spaces were booked with 84 adults and children attending.

- **Mindful Mosaic workshop**  
Participants has the opportunity to relax and unwind with the art of mosaicking! People could create a nature themed mosaic to take away and display in their gardens or outdoor space.
- **Poster and Storyboard workshop**  
Children and young people worked with Children's Book Illustrator Leanne Coehlo, to create posters and storyboards about the Aquadrome. The artworks were created to help raise awareness of this special nature reserve and to encourage us all to protect it for future generations.
- **Guided Tree and Photography Walk**  
Participants were able to learn more about the fascinating tree species that can be found at the Aquadrome, their characteristics and how they have grown to adapt living within the site whilst learning more about how to effectively photograph these natural wonders.
- **Expressive Writing**  
Enjoying time for contemplation at the Aquadrome, participants were encouraged to use their senses and appreciate the natural environment, before heading inside to read and create their own forms of poetry and written word, inspired by their memories and time on site.
- **Nature in Clay workshops**  
Families enjoyed exploring texture and pattern together, using clay and basic, natural materials you might find on a walk in nature. People created mobiles and decorations they could hang in their home or garden.
- **Summer Photography Display**  
A selection of photographs taken by local residents on our spring Photography Walks could be enjoyed by the community in this temporary display. Landscapes, familiar viewpoints, flora and fauna and animals in their natural habitats have all featured and captured the interest of visitors of all ages.

## Sports Development

### Active Parks

A wide range of outdoor activities took place to celebrate our parks and open spaces over the end of June, July and August. Classes included; Tai Chi, Yoga, Pilates and Strength & Conditioning (using the new equipment) with almost 600 attendances across the 10 weeks of delivery and positive feedback received

### SK8 Jam

Over **100** young people entered the annual skate jam at Croxley Green Skate Park. The event featured competitions for boys and girls. £1,000 was secured from Croxley Green Parish Council to support the event with the competition element managed by Alex Barton of ABC Skateboarding. Council Chairman Raj Khiroya attended to hand out some of the prizes.

## Aquadrome Programme

### Pedestrian Bridge

The first of the bridge closures took place on Monday 23 September to allow for essential tree works in preparation for the bridge. Due to adverse weather conditions, these works have experienced some delays but are due to conclude by the end of September.

The contract for bridge build has been awarded to Beaver Bridges Ltd. with works scheduled to start November 2024. A full Communications plan is in place and being implemented.

The Ebury Way play area consultation completed, and final design agreed.

### Recovery and Resilience funding NHN (National Lottery)

- **Activity programme** –The summer programme has been a resounding success both in terms of activities and attendances
- **Hydrological Study**- The study is underway across the site and will submit an interim report in October. A further delay in the release of the Environment Agency (EA) upper Colne model has delayed the survey completion which is now expected in 2025.
- **Ecological Studies** – The majority of the survey work has now been completed and draft reports are expected in October. An event is being planned for mid-October to inform interested people on the data and what we can learn from this.
- **Monitoring and Evaluation**- the project will draw to a close by the 31 October 2024 and work is underway to prepare the final evaluation report, which is a mandatory part of accepting Lottery funding. This evaluation report will also inform the next stage of the Aquadrome Project.



## Steering Group

The Steering Group meeting of key professionals and partner organisations will meet on 2 October at Rickmansworth Golf Club. Beaver Bridges will attend to present the new bridge design.

## Fishing Swims

Fishing Swims (allocated areas for fishing) around Batchworth Lake are in varying conditions so will need to be specified individually. The specifications will be completed by the end of October and are being developed in partnership with Uxbridge Rovers Angling and Conservation Society.

## The Bury Grounds Biodiversity Project -

The following is a proposed phasing of the project:

### Phase 1

- River Restoration Works - Collaboration agreement signed between Affinity Water and the council facilitating the funding of £108,000.00 and a specialist contractor has been secured. The contractor will design, achieve relevant permitting and then deliver the works. The works will be complete by the end of this financial year.
- Habitat Improvement Works – Through the Landfill Communities Fund Grundon have contributed £14,000.00 to the project for habitat improvements, this will include tree works, tree planting and scrub maintenance. These works to be complete by the end of this financial year.

### Phase 2

- The following works are subject to external funding and hence allocated to phase 2, this phase will commence towards Spring 2025 when capacity allows following the (near) completion of phase 1 and will begin with and be dependent on funding applications.
- Heritage Works – works relating to protecting the heritage of this site and would therefore be a suitable application to the National Lottery Heritage Fund
- Access Improvement Works – the proposed works are supported by Batchworth Community Council who have “ear-marked” £27,000.00 for the path surfacing and interpretation. These proposed works are also suitable to be included in a National Lottery Heritage Fund bid.

### Phase 3

- Delivery of any elements where funding has been secured in phase 2.

## **Play Area Capital Programme**

**Eastbury and Ebury Play Areas:** Plans submitted for Certificate of Lawful Development as a permitted development. Works to Ebury Play Area will take place as part of the Rickmansworth Aquadrome Bridge project. Ebury play area is programmed to be completed early 2025. Works to Eastbury Play area are programmed to take place over Winter.

## Report from the Lead Member for Sustainability and Climate Change, Councillor Jon Tankard

Green spaces within development are good for our social health and can save us money!

### Social Value Toolkit:

The Social Value Toolkit is a practical guide to help organizations measure and optimize their projects' broader societal benefits. By focusing on social, environmental, and economic outcomes, it encourages a more sustainable and equitable approach to development and investment, helping ensure that projects create meaningful benefits for communities.

Social Value is defined through the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (Act) which came into force in January 2013 and requires all public sector organisations (and their suppliers) to look beyond the financial cost of a contract and consider how the services they commission and procure might improve the economic, social and environmental well-being of an area.

Often Architecture is seen as the object, the element, the form. But that is structure, Architecture is the space, volume or void, within or around the solid. Therefore, to look at urban form, one must not only consider the solid, but more importantly the void around. The void between houses, the void between streets, the void between neighbourhoods and the voids between villages and towns, all have an importance in the state of place and character.

Therefore, it is not necessarily the number of houses that we should be counting when considering a design issue, it's how we treat the voids around them.

Landscape can be hard, or it can be soft. In the case of Penal Correction, landscapes are often deliberately hard with Victorian exercise yards being extremely harsh, to remind prisoners of their loss of pleasantries. Whilst rehabilitation areas are generally soft, with natural vegetation, smells and noise. A place for mental healing, a place for pause, a place for reflection and mental repair.

So why, therefore in our allocation of sites, do we not put greater emphasis on the landscape, the spaces and the boundaries of our Urban Spaces, when they are as important as the structures? The Social Value Toolkit aims to do just this with specific Social Value Metrics which can be extrapolated into monetary value. For example typical social value benefits include:

- **Well-being improvements** (e.g., better mental health, physical health).
- **Job creation and economic inclusion.**
- **Reduced social isolation or enhanced social cohesion.**

- **Environmental benefits**, such as carbon reduction or biodiversity enhancement.

**Monetization of Social Value:** Some toolkits aim to assign a financial value to social benefits to make it easier to integrate them into cost-benefit analyses. For example, health improvements might be valued based on reduced healthcare costs or increased productivity.

The below is an example of the 'monetary Values' the Social Value Toolkit suggests can be achieved through some of these metrics:

Measure & description	Proxy Value	Offer	Total value by measure
No. of new local jobs created	£28,213.00	2	£56,426
No. of apprenticeships (weeks)	£168.00	24	£4,032
No. of volunteering hours	£14.43	50	£722
Carbon dioxide saved	£64.66	50	£3,233
Total Social Value			£64,413

\*[https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/District%20Councils%20Social%20Value%20Toolkit%20Final\\_0.pdf](https://www.local.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/District%20Councils%20Social%20Value%20Toolkit%20Final_0.pdf)

Outcome		HACT Social Value Bank financial proxy 2019	Deadweight
Positive Emotions	I feel in control of my life	£15,894	0.27
Connecting	I talk to neighbours regularly	£4,511	0.19
Positive Emotions	I feel a sense of belonging in my neighbourhood	£3,753	0.19
Positive Emotions	I am able to take frequent mild exercise	£3,537	0.19
Participation	I am active in a tenants group	£8,116	0.19
Positive Emotions	I feel relief from depression/anxiety	£36,766	0.27

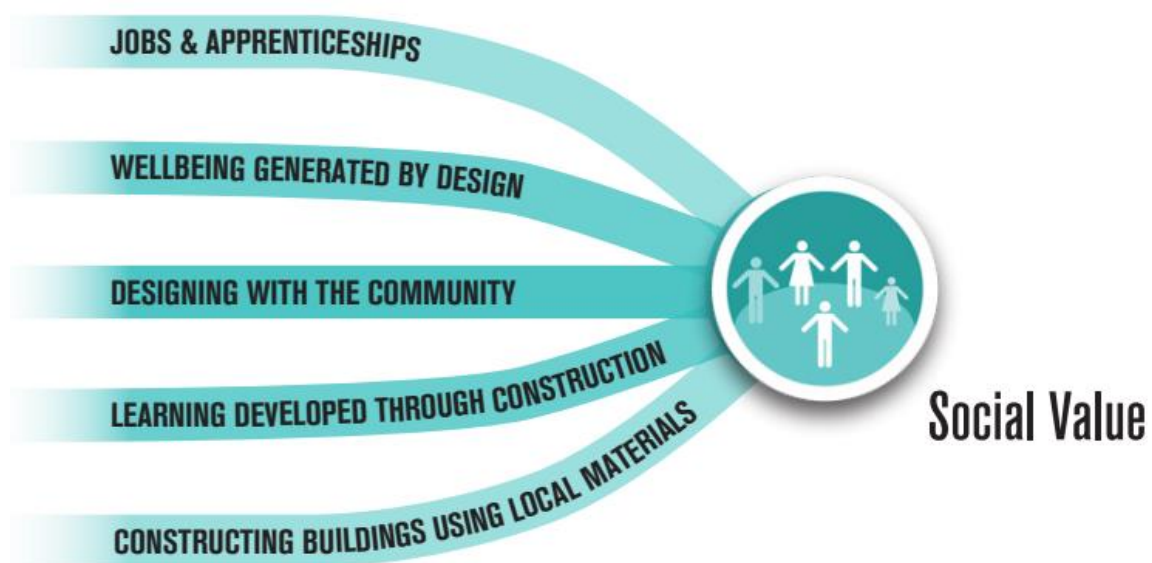
When considering the impact of design in the light of this, we can begin to appreciate the cost of failing to direct and dictate the ongoing and future urban development of Three Rivers, the cost to future generations health, wealth and social wellbeing is directly controlled by the decisions we make today.

Why can't the addition of housing estates onto the residential landscape provide positive contributions by providing green routes through previously impassable obstacles to get to say a train station, school or shops? Enabling residents the physical mobility to move around the landscape unhindered with the benefit of easy access to green space. With approx. 25% of 19 to 21 year olds are suffering some form of mental health conditions promoting such access to green space, known to positively improve mental health, can only be beneficial and ultimately money saving in terms of healthcare.

Why can't these networks also provide the basis of biodiverse corridors, tree canopies, summer vegetation, wildlife habitats which in turn support summer cooling,

absorption zones for rainwater run off to reduce flooding and green routes to link infrastructure without the need for a car journey.

This 'open' space of the site will come at a cost to the developer, but given that their profit will incur costs onto the local infrastructure, and given the SVT can demonstrate examples of how to reduce that burden, surely it's a cost which should be recognised as a real cause and effect' in the design generation of our future landscape in ensuring we deliver a housing landscape, that positively contributes to society in wellbeing, biodiversity. Because as we have seen in the past, potentially the real cost to society, will be ignoring the inclusion of wellbeing, into the design.

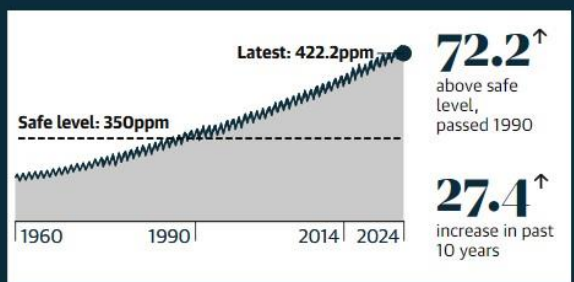


**The most important number of the climate crisis:**

**422.2**

atmospheric CO2 in parts per million, 21 September 2024

Source: NOAA. Chart baseline is 280ppm - the preindustrial average. Safe level a stabilisation scenario set out by IPCC. Daily average CO2 value at Mauna Loa.



## Sustainability, climate change and energy efficiency

**SHDF (Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund) Wave 2:** As of 24<sup>th</sup> September : 29 properties in progress (scaffolded, enabled, and boarding in progress) 4 physically complete, and another 11 due to complete in coming week. Poor weather may hinder progress.

**GBIS scheme with E.ON** (fully funded cavity wall insulation): marketing of scheme will start from October once E.ON produces finalised social media assets. Exploring personalised offers to blocks of flats with unfilled cavities in Rickmansworth, though mixed tenures in apartment blocks makes these difficult to treat.

**Community Energy Fund (CEF):** Solar Canopy Feasibility study on 7 council-owned car parks has commenced. Grand Union Community Energy leading this project with support from TRDC. Community engagement events on the theme of “your vision for the future of energy in Three Rivers” have been organised by GUCE throughout September.

### **Fast Followers project(s):**

**Transition Streets:** Now focusing on recruiting more streets to try the programme. Two new streets are due to start in October (one in Moor Park, and one in Chorleywood). GUCE continuing to attend community events to promote Transition Streets

**The Retrofit One Stop Shop:** Remainder of project focus on overcoming barriers to retrofit for “able to pay” demographic and planning to scale the service beyond Fast Followers.

Roundtable event for TRDC’s Planning (Development Management) team to provide information and a forum for discussion on retrofitting historic, Listed, and Conservation Area homes with experts from the Sustainable and Traditional Buildings Alliance and/or Historic England, held at Three Rivers House on 19<sup>th</sup> September. Feedback being gathered from this currently.

### **Decarbonisation of Core Council Buildings**

#### **Cavity Fill**

Quotes have been received to fill the cavities on TRH (£28,000) and Watersmeet. (£37,000)

A blended approach to funding is pursued including a bid to the Theatre Improvement Fund

#### **William Penn Solar Panel funded by the Swimming Pool Support Fund**

A planning application has been approved for the solar array with works due to commence on 43<sup>rd</sup> October. The design consists of 500 440W solar PV panels and 3 invertors and the structural survey has confirmed this amount can be installed. The quoted cost is £149,996 and can therefore be fully covered by the grant received from the government’s Swimming Pool Support Fund. The solar PV system, as designed, will generate 192,236 kWh and save between 34- 80 tonnes of carbon dioxide per year. The solar PV system is forecasted to offset ~30% of the electricity bill and generate a year 1 saving of £29,355 and £1.2m over 25-years which represents a payback period of 4.34 years.

### **Business Energy Efficiency Grants**

The Business Energy Efficiency Grant was launched in July utilising the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) to help SMEs organisations implement energy-saving measures that will improve energy efficiency and reduce carbon emissions. This will be achieved through the installation of energy efficiency measures and renewable energy technologies to their buildings. Grants of up to £10,000 are available for eligible SMEs to install eligible energy efficiency measures, with further support for energy assessment funding where required. The Expression of Interest (EOI) stage is now closed, with 33 applications received. Further to the EOIs review successful applicants are asked to submit a detailed technical proposal with quotes which will be scored again. The initial deadline for technical proposals is 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2024.

### **Woodlands and Tree Protection**

#### **TRDC Tree management**

- New management plans for Carpenters Wood, and Pheasants and Solomans Wood have been completed and the final versions will be presented to the Climate Change, Leisure and Housing Committee on 16<sup>th</sup> October.
- Works to fell trees due to subsidence issues have been completed on Prestwick Road in Oxhey Woods. Works are scheduled to take place at Bowring Green, Oxhey Woods in early September.
- Ash Die Back – Inspection of high-risk areas of Ash Die Back have been completed. Many areas appear reasonably healthy, however priority locations for works include Chorleywood House estate, The Aquadrome and Pheasants and Soloman's Wood. There is a £25,000 annual budget for works, which Officers are targeting towards areas of highest risk.
- Oak processionary moth – A small number of reports of OPM have been received this year. Officers are targeting removal works to areas where OPM is present at low level in tree canopy. HCC have developed a brief to produce OPM guidance for Councils in Hertfordshire and aim to appoint a consultant to produce the guidance later this year.
- Contractor appointed to undertake tree works around the pedestrian bridge in the Aquadrome. Works scheduled to start on 23rd Sept.
- Contractor has been appointed to undertake tree works at Cassiobridge Play Area and The Bury to support improvement projects at these locations.
- High priority safety works at Chorleywood House Estate / A404 are currently being completed.

#### **Biodiversity**

**Chorleywood House Estate – River Chess:** Options appraisal is still scheduled to take place when possible. Delay resulting from damage due to flooding upstream earlier in the year taking priority. NB. The council are a stakeholder/landowner in the project, not leading it.

**The Bury Grounds Biodiversity Project –**



- An informal engagement event for adjacent residents was held for Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> September from 6pm to 7:30pm meeting within the Bury Grounds. A small but enthusiastic group attended and feedback was positive.
- A river restoration specialist contractor has been commissioned to assist with the design, permitting and construction of the river improvements.

#### **Biodiversity Policy & BNG update -**

- Officers are preparing the specification for the required ecological surveying at the proposed sites for the Maple Lodge S106 BNG money approved to be spent on council owned land at Full Council. The habitat composition and condition surveys will take place spring/summer 2025 to ensure they take place during the optimal survey window.

#### **Aquadrome Programme Pedestrian Bridge**

- CIL funding has been approved and Contract has been awarded to Beaver Bridges Ltd. Works scheduled to start November 2024. Full project team in place including the contractor AHR (Employers agents) and TRDC. Regular meetings to discuss progress both on and off site
- Ebury Way play area consultation completed, and final design agreed.
- Bridge in the design stage.
- Scrub in Water Ski Compound cleared
- Comms in place for the closure of the bridge and play area including on site notices, social media and press releases.

#### **AMP funding**

- Funding received for £510,000 and detailed programme planning for delivery is being developed. This funding needs to be spent within the next three years. This is a biodiversity enhancement project focused along the wet woodland/pinetum area between Bury Lake and the River Colne. It includes a boardwalk in this area through the pinetum, interpretation board, new benches, removal of dilapidated swims, path works and biodiversity enhancements.

#### **Recovery and Resilience funding NHN (National Lottery)**

- **Hydrological Study**- The study is underway across the site and will submit and interim report. A further delay in the release of the EA upper Colne model has resulted in a further delay to the survey completion now expected in 2025.
- **Ecological Studies** – Work for these studies is commencing on site, with full results expected this Autumn.

#### **NLHF main application- WWW bid**

- The new Expression of Interest (EOI) will be submitted in February 2025 reflecting the preliminary findings from the hydrological survey. If successful, the development phase bid will be submitted in May 2025.

### **Fishing Swims**

- Asbestos Surveys have been completed. Full report and recommendations collated.
- Costings for groundworks and pegs being collated with “Beaching” options being reviewed.
- Working with URACS identified the swims that can be removed and to agree design principles for the swims that TRDC will maintain.

## **Air pollution and noise pollution**

### **Noise Pollution**

Residential Environmental Health are seeing an increase in noise and smoke nuisance complaints made by residents to the Council. This is common for this time of year. Whilst Officers will always consider the use of formal enforcement powers, in the first instance, Officers will attempt to work with the parties involved in an effort to achieve an informal resolution.

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## QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

### 1. Question from Councillor Jon Tankard to the Leader of the Council:

Will the party opposite, apologise for the substandard accommodation suffered by the residents of Shannon House in the Gade Valley, a situation rightly identified and condemned by the party opposite in August?

Will they also now accept that the loss of residential rights, in part put upon private development, lost under the 'bonfire' of legislation lauded by the party opposite, enforcing Permitted Development rights in 2013, allowing change of use from Class B1(a) office to Class C3 residential without the need for planning permission and with the limitations placed on the local authority, to only allow assessments of:-

- transport and highways impacts of the development;
- contamination risks on the site;
- flooding risks on the site; and
- noise impacts from adjoining properties

Obviously excluding the basic human rights demonstrated within the Planning limitations set by at least the very basic, design and space standards, and further more directing that such developments will not contribute to the Local Infrastructure to financially assist the already burdened, Local Schools, Doctors and Dentists.

Given the impact and disgust expressed by Architectural, housing and human rights groups when this temporary enforcement was introduced, will they now identify, that to make this enforcement a permanent bypass of the basic human rights for housing in October 2015, was a grave error of judgement, as noted within their August publication, so I request again, having now first hand experience of the disaster of their policies, will they make a public apology to the residents of Shannon House for the direct association their Government brought to the legitimisation of delivery of sub standard accommodation to the poorest in our society.

### **Written response:**

I totally agree the previous Conservative government let residents down allowing for sub-standard accommodation. This Council, as the Conservative group is fully aware, refused prior approval twice for this development on parking grounds and was overruled by the government inspector who accepted the units were sub-standard but could not refuse prior approval on those grounds.

It is deplorable that despite knowing the facts that the Conservatives deliberately misled residents during the recent Council by-election saying this council had “waved through permission“ when it could have refused it.

Application reference 20/0369/PDR was given prior approval by the Planning Inspectorate (PINS) for a change of use from Office (Class B1) to 74 Residential Units (Class C3). At the time of the PINS decision the Planning Inspector was only able to assess proposed development on the basis of:

- (a) transport and highways impacts of the development;
- (b) contamination risks on the site;
- (c) flooding risks on the site; and
- (d) impacts of noise from commercial premises on the intended occupiers of the development.

He had no powers to consider matters such as the occupiers’ living standards and indeed commented in his decision letter:

“I recognise the concerns of interested parties in respect of the quality of accommodation, inadequate living space, excessive density, lack of affordable housing and loss of employment space, but these matters do not fall to be considered under existing legislation relating to prior approval applications for the change of use of office buildings.”

At the time this conversion was condemned by members of both the Parish and District council and concerns were expressed, but the ‘Prior Approval’ nature of the conversion, made it legally unchallengeable.

The rules were changed in 2020 following campaigning by national residential groups (including Three Rivers District Council) and in April 2021 minimum space standards were introduced for office to residential conversions. However, that change to the General Permitted Development Order could not be applied retrospectively and so did not affect the lawfulness of 20/0369/PDR.

Subsequent to the grant of prior approval on appeal, the Council later granted a planning permission for the same development under a S73 application (ref. 23/0343/FUL). The sole purpose of this application was to extend the time for completion of the development from December 2023 for a further 3 years. However, Officers considered only a 6 months extension was acceptable. The development was subsequently substantially complete by January 2024. The development programme could have easily been accelerated further if the S73 application had been refused in April 2023.

**2. Question from Councillor Vicky Edwards to the Leader of the Council:**

The site on which a hyper-scale data centre has been proposed for next to Bedmond Road was previously proposed by Three Rivers for allocation in the 2021 Regulation 18 consultation.

The site was subsequently withdrawn by the promoter, but the promoter has said that: *"It is relevant that the application site (the part proposed for built development) was considered appropriate for removal from the Green Belt. Even if the LPA changes its mind on whether it needs to be released for housing, it might still be appropriate to release the site to meet other development needs such as the need for Data Centres."*

Accordingly, does the Lead Member consider that the site is at more risk of being developed for having been previously proposed for housing by Three Rivers?

**Written response:**

The site was first included in the earlier Regulation 18 consultation as required by the legalisation. It was not included in the later consultations. This need was weighed up against the potential harm of removing the site for development from the Green Belt as evidenced by the Stage 2 Green belt review. The site would have not been included in the final Regulation 18 consultation if it had still been proposed as housing site as it was then rated as a higher harm site.

The Council did not have any evidence justifying the need for a data centre in the District, and so this use was not considered through the Local Plan process.

The need for housing is not related to the need for a data centre and as such it is not considered that inclusion at the first Regulation 18 stage in the Local Plan process increases the risk of the site being developed for this use. Indeed, the Green Belt review is clear evidence of the harm that the development of the site would be either as housing or as a Data Centre. The application for the data centre must be considered on its own merits taking into consideration the evidence provided justifying the need for such development and whether that meets the requirements for 'very special circumstances'.

It should also note that Local Plan preparation and planning applications are separate processes, and that the sites included at Regulation 18 consultation stage would be given minimal weight in a planning application. The site was consulted on, but this does not guarantee inclusion in the final version of the Local Plan.



**3. Question from Councillor Oliver Cooper to the Leader of the Council:**

Does Three Rivers recognise that the Planning Inspector considers – as it did in many cases, such as approving 150 homes and a 50-bed care home on the Green Belt in APP/V1505/23/3326612 – that an evidence base developed for withdrawn Local Plans or withdrawn site allocations is a material consideration even if those allocations are withdrawn?

**Written response:**

Evidence base documents can be material considerations in planning applications where relevant. The council refers to Local Plan evidence such as the Local Housing Needs Assessment and Economic Study in its determination of planning applications as well as the Green Belt assessment.

**4. Question from Councillor Abbas Merali to the Leader of the Council:**

Does the Leader of the Council agree that it is unfortunate that the Council did not get its act together to even get its Local Plan to Regulation 19 stage: leaving Three Rivers vulnerable to this Government's proposed changes to the NPPF and re-imposition of much higher housebuilding targets?

**Written response:**

In preparation of the Local Plan the council has had to grapple with multiple changes to national planning policy, which have affected the potential levels of growth in the district and have therefore resulted in changes in approach. Additional time was taken to prepare a low growth version of the plan as agreed by all parties at Full Council in December 2022. Had the council continued with the draft plan consulted on in 2021 that came close to meeting the standard method housing target then it would most likely would have been adopted by now. However, that would have required the Council to agree to the much higher housing target at the time of 12,600 as promoted by his government. It was clear that the public and indeed this administration that was unacceptable.

The change in government has resulted in a new version of the NPPF being consulted on merely 7 months after the previous 2023 version was published, this speed of turnaround in national planning policy is unprecedented and could not have been foreseen by the Council.

**5. Question from Councillor Oliver Cooper to the Leader of the Council:**

In July's council meeting, the Leader of the Council falsely claimed that the change of use permitted development rights apply to Advertisement Consents, as justification for the permitting ugly shopfronts on Rickmansworth High Street. That is despite changes to permitted development rights not being relevant to Advertisement Consent and the Regulations not having been substantively unchanged since 2007. He then mentions flags – which weren't involved, as pictures of flags are not flags. Why did he mislead the council by making up two obviously incorrect excuses for his inaction in one answer?

**Written response:**

The previous answer was referring to the 'permitted' change of use of the premises.

With regard to the advert, 'deemed consent' is available to premises along the High Street, subject to complying with the conditions of Schedule 2, Part 1, Class 5 of The Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) (England) Regulations 2007. Class 5 permits any advertisement which does not fall within Class 4A or 4B (illuminated adverts) displayed on business premises wholly with reference to any or all of the following: the business carried on, the goods sold or services provided, or the name or qualifications of the person carrying on the business, or supplying the goods or services, on those premises.

In respect of the picture of flags, officers were still investigating whether the 2<sup>nd</sup> fascia, as a result of the images on the sign, was 'deemed consent'.

Importantly, the main fascia sign was changed again following discussions with officers. The sign now in situ benefits from 'deemed consent' and thus does not require express consent from the local planning authority.

**6. Question from Councillor Oliver Cooper to the Leader of the Council:**

Will Three Rivers create or collaborate with neighbouring councils to create a foundation to receive donations or bequests for the benefit of charities or other non-profits in the area?

**Written response:**

We already do and I am surprised Councillor Cooper did not know this. A donations platform called “Connecting Three Rivers” was launched in June this year and is managed by Watford and Three Rivers Trust on behalf of the Local Strategic Partnership. We encourage residents and businesses to donate, in order to support projects that achieve the Community Strategy.

Funds raised will be awarded to organisations through successful applications. The first round is focussing on the following priorities:

1. Promote local employment and volunteering opportunities
2. Tackle and prevent Anti-Social Behaviour and Youth Crime
3. Address and prevent hate crime and promote community cohesion
4. Develop and coordinate the community and voluntary sector.

Donations can be made via [connectingthreerivers.org](http://connectingthreerivers.org)

**7. Question from Councillor Oliver Cooper to the Leader of the Council:**

Did Three Rivers respond to the Government's consultation on imposing VAT on independent schools?

**Written response:**

As this does not directly impact on District Councils Three Rivers has not provided a response.

**8. Question from Councillor Reena Ranger to the Leader of the Council:**

There has been deep concern about action points from committee meetings not being taken up by Lead Members at all or for months until the minutes are published. This defeats the point of having the Committee System. Will the council introduce an Action Sheet after each committee meeting, as occurs for the Planning Committee?

**Written response:**

This would simply duplicate actions decided by the committee already being recorded within the minutes of meetings. The purpose of a committee system is for the council's committees to take decisions collectively, and the matters the committees formally decide recorded as resolutions within the minutes. When an individual member makes a commitment to follow something up outside of a meeting, that is a matter for him/her to follow up on. If the member has a query about a specific action that a lead member has committed to follow up, I encourage her to take the matter up with the lead member directly or an officer rather than drag the matter out and wait for a question at Full Council.

**9. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Leader of the Council**

What does the Lead Member understand are the main advantages of retaining Bedmond as a 'washed over' village within the Green Belt?

**Written response:**

As the question questions the integrity of the lead member, I have no intention of answering it in detail. The information regarding this is in the public domain as the member is well aware.

**10. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Leader of the Council**

What does the Leader understand are the main disadvantages of inseting Bedmond within the Green Belt?

**Written response:**

As the question questions the integrity of the lead member, I have no intention of answering it in detail. The information regarding this is in the public domain as the member is well aware.



**11. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Leader of the Council**

What does the Leader understand are the differences introduced by Paragraph 145 of the NPPF as updated in December 2023?

**Written response:**

As the question questions the integrity of the lead member, I have no intention of answering it in detail. The information regarding this is in the public domain as the member is well aware.

**12. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Leader of the Council**

Several senior staff had been routinely copying emails from opposition councillors to the Council Leader and lead Members in direct contravention of the Member-Officer protocol. Why was this allowed to happen?

**Written response:**

I have not been routinely copied into emails to opposition members as is stated above. I have been copied into emails, as have other members, across say the Abbots Langley Parish area regarding Leavesden Country Park (which is in my ward) that affect the whole Parish, and that practice was recently stopped on the advice of the Monitoring Officer.

**13. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Leader of the Council**

I have been unable to obtain an undertaking that the requirement to maintain the privacy of emails has been shared with all officers. Should this not have happened immediately?

**Written response:**

I understand from the Monitoring Officer that it was not considered necessary to share this with all officers and it was shared with the specific officers concerned. I have no other comment to make.

**14. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Leader of the Council**

How can Members be confident that their correspondence with officers is secure and private?

**Written response:**

I understand this is the subject of ongoing correspondence between you and the Monitoring Officer. I therefore have no other comment to make.

**15. Question from Councillor Chris Mitchell to the Leader of the Council:**

We discussed the issue of the future ownership and control of the Green and Stones Orchard in Croxley Green. As you know the Parish Council does most of the maintenance at no cost to Three Rivers, however they have to pay us to carry out any events. The Parish Council has requested that this is looked into seriously for over 12 years now.

Please can you confirm when a team for us and the Croxley Green Parish Council on the future ownership and control of the Green and Stones Orchard will be set up.

**Written response:**

As I have said I have asked officers to set up an informal meeting to discuss this issue with you and the Parish and away forward as the issue is rather more complex than the question suggests.

## QUESTIONS TO THE LEAD MEMBER FOR RESOURCES

### 16. Question from Councillor Mike Sims to the Lead Member for Resources:

Is there a budget allocated for repair of the Aquadrome path? And if it will cost at an absolute minimum £198,000, why have the Council and the Policy & Resources Committee not been informed, consulted, and asked for consent?

#### Written response:

The 2022 – 2027 Aquadrome Management Plan was approved at the 12 October 2022 Leisure, Environment and Community Committee. The Management Plan's vision is:

'For the Aquadrome to be enhanced, nurtured, and protected. To achieve a balance so nature can flourish, and visitors can connect with and discover beautiful and unique habitats whilst understanding the importance of the environmental heritage of the site.'

This plan was approved on the basis external funding would be secured to deliver this vision.

Three Rivers District Council was recently successful in their funding application of £510,463 to the HS2 Colne Valley Regional Park Panel for habitat and accessibility works to the Wet Woodland and River Colne, including the existing footpath. In addition, the Council were also successful in a funding bid of £161,000 to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Recovery and Resilience project, which focused on scientific based evidence gathering for work to the Aquadrome. This included the commissioning of a Hydrological Study to inform future work.

Budget is therefore available for the work to the path from the funding partner identified above, however this work cannot take place until the hydrological study is complete. Patchwork repairs would be washed away in the coming weeks and months. Any significant work to the path would require a Flood Risk Activities Permit (FRAP) from the Environment Agency and this application will require the evidence from the Hydrological Study.

There is therefore no requirement for the Policy & Resources Committee to be informed, consulted, or consent asked for at this stage.

**17. Question from Councillor Chris Mitchell to the Lead Member for Resources:**

One of our main concerns in Croxley Green is to retain a valuable community space that has been classified as a site of community value. We have had extensive discussions about this and wish to work on a cross-party basis to agree a long term sustainable solution to retaining this on the Red Cross site in Croxley Green. Therefore, please can you confirm when the fair, transparent and reasonable negotiation with Croxley Green Parish Council to reach an agreement will commence, and who will represent Three Rivers?

**Written response:**

As Councillor Mitchell is aware, I've been pushing for transparency for all concerned regarding this issue since June 2023 and am glad that we are now in a position to progress. As Councillor Mitchell will now be aware, since submitting his question he has been invited to attend a meeting on this matter, as the Local Ward Councillor together with the Leader, Deputy Leader and Lead Member for Resources, together with relevant Officers. This will be the next step in engaging in further dialogue with Croxley Green Parish Council.

**18. Question from Councillor Narinder Sian to the Lead Member for Resources:**

At the Croxley Green Local Area Forum on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024, an update from officers was read out by Councillor Chris Mitchell which mentioned the development of 9-10 residential units with ground floor community space. The number of residential units differs from previous numbers provided. Could you please clarify the basis for this recalculation? Have any indicative drawings been prepared to demonstrate how this can be achieved, and if so, are these available for review?

**Written response:**

There has been and remains some flexibility in the designs relating to the potential redevelopment of the former Red Cross Building. The variation to the number of units is based upon seeking maximum development viability of any potential scheme. Each variation has been financially modelled, with indicative drawings prepared where necessary. As indicated in response to Councillor Mitchell's question on this subject, an initial review of proposals will be shared shortly.



**19. Question from Councillor Cheryl Stungo to the Lead Member for Resources:**

At the Croxley Green Local Area Forum on Thursday 5<sup>th</sup> September 2024, an update from officers was read out by Councillor Chris Mitchell which mentioned the housing needs register with over 100 families in Croxley on it,

In previous discussions, the housing officer has been unable to confirm the figure of 100 families from Croxley on the register. This figure appears to be an important part of the decision-making process, and it would be helpful to understand how this figure has been derived and whether more precise data is available.

**Written response:**

As per the Council's Housing Allocations Policy, any application to the Council's Housing Register is only verified at the point of any offer of accommodation, not on application. Therefore, any report on the address of those who have applied to join the Council's Housing Register will only extract information on a customer's current address at the time of application and this information has not been verified. At the time that the Council's Housing Operations Manager provided this figure (July 2023) there was 106 households who had stated their address at the point of application was in Croxley Green, however, there is no way to indicate whether these households still reside within Croxley Green or have moved. Furthermore, if a household that resided within Croxley Green prior to July 2023 had applied for the Council's Housing Register, however, they had not filled in their current address correctly, this would not be included within this figure.

It is important to note that if a household that lives within Croxley Green were to bid on any property that was advertised within that area, they would not have any additional priority over a household that was eligible to bid on that property, who lived in any other area. The local connection required to join the Council's Housing Register and bid on any available social housing properties is a local connection to the district as a whole and households are not restricted to a local connection to certain areas of Three Rivers. For clarity, there are currently 1,415 live applications on the Council's Housing Register.

**20. Question from Councillor Joan King to the Leader Member for Resources**

Does the Lead Member agree with me that the designation of the former Pavilion in Green Lane as an Asset of Community Value is important, but while the building remains closed to the public it is of no use to the community and what action has been or is being taken by this council to ensure that the building is maintained in accordance with the lease conditions?

**Written response:**

Officers continue to review the condition of assets that are subject to covenants to 'keep in repair'. Whilst disclosure of any intended action within a public forum may prejudice the Council's position, as Lead Member for Resources, I am happy to arrange for a meeting between Councillor Joan King, myself and appropriate Officers to discuss this matter.

## QUESTIONS TO THE LEAD MEMBER FOR INFRASTRUCTURE AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

### 21. Question from Councillor Reena Ranger to the Lead Member for Infrastructure and Economic Development:

Three Rivers is yet to publish a report of series of recommendations made by SavetheHighStreet.org in 2022. Will the council publish the report and recommendations immediately?

#### **Written response:**

As previously advised to Full Council the proposals arising from the SaveTheHighStreet.Org work were to identify the issues and suggest how these could be addressed. The survey was in effect a 'wish list' from local businesses and High Street traders, rather than a developed and budgeted work programme. TRDC also recognised that the recommendations included roles for other key stakeholders and interested parties. No work has commenced on these specific recommendations, other than business as usual responses to any graffiti or damaged street furniture. However, the Leader recently announced (July 2024) a new project is set to be launched to look at improving Rickmansworth's High Street. This project will establish a working group with key council officers to both look at potential improvements and bidding for additional funding. This work could consider these previous recommendations.

**22. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Lead Member for Infrastructure and Economic Development:**

What is the cost of installing EV charging points a) in the access road in front of the shops in Abbots Langley High Street and b) in the car park behind?

**Written response:**

The cost to install EV charging points is £107,561.36 for the access road in front of the shops in Abbots Langley High Street and £121,605.12 for the carpark behind.

However, the latter is not considered a viable commercial operation by the councils preferred provider so if the service road were not preceded with it is likely the whole scheme might be withdrawn.

**23. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Lead Member for Infrastructure and Economic Development:**

The parking spaces in the proposed EV. Harbinger spaces are much used as convenient short stay spaces and by disabled drivers because of their easier access in and out of a car. Why, despite this being brought to the attention of two officers has this not been taken into account when planning the spaces?

**Written response:**

As advised in previous correspondence, Officers do not propose to make any changes to the current parking restrictions on the chosen bays. The bays are currently 1-hour maximum stay between Monday and Saturday 8am and 6pm and this will remain the same to enable the regular 'churn' of new visitors to the parade.

Officers have consulted with a Charging Point Operator about implementing 'overstay' fees which is a small payment customers of the EV Chargers would pay if their vehicle reached 100% before they move it. An overstay fee would also help to enable the frequent vacation of cars from these spaces. Officers will monitor the utilisation of the Electric Vehicle chargers and implement an overstay fee if this is needed.

Councillor concerns on the enforcement of the current disabled bays have been raised with the parking enforcement team. If further disabled bays are identified as being required, this would be required to follow the formal parking request process.

**24. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Lead Member for Infrastructure and Economic Development:**

What is the point of having EV charging spaces if they are not going to be subject to enforcement?

**Written response:**

Following Councillor concerns on the Electric Vehicle Charging spaces, some fast-charging bays will not be enforced so as not to penalise drivers during incidences of high parking pressure. This situation will be monitored.

**25. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Lead Member for Infrastructure and Economic Development**

Twenty years ago the Heritage finger pointer signs at the junction of Gallows Hill Lane and Gallows Hill were repaired by this council. Why is the council now refusing to again repair the sign?

**Written response:**

As a District Council, TRDC is not a Highway Authority and as such has no responsibility to place/replace traffic signs. However, it is acknowledged these specific signs are bespoke signs and Officers are currently investigating ownership and responsibility for maintenance. Officers have reported the overgrown verge which hinders the visibility and access to the sign to the County Council but have not yet received any response or update.

## **QUESTIONS TO THE LEAD MEMBER FOR GENERAL PUBLIC SERVICES**

### **26. Question from Councillor Philip Hearn to the Leader Member for General Public Services:**

What will be the impact on traffic as a result of the proposed cycle scheme along Chorleywood Road / Rickmansworth Road / Chenies Road (A404)?

#### **Written response:**

All proposed interventions on the routes within the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan are draft and may be subject to change. The current proposed interventions on the A404 focus on widening of the pavement and junction improvements with minimal traffic impact expected.



**27. Question from Councillor Vicky Edwards to the Lead Member for General Public Services:**

The council has left pupils walking from Abbots Langley to Parmiter's School at risk on the roads by not requiring the provision of a crossing across High Elms Lane, in accordance a condition of planning permission 15/1026/FUL. Three Rivers let the applicant off the hook by approving a report from the applicant arguing it was unnecessary. However, the conclusion of the report was based solely on children from Fraser Crescent and who used the path before the bridleway was opened, and so does not reflect the number pupils from the rest of Abbots Langley which would have shown much higher demand for a crossing. Will the council urgently add the provision of a crossing to its recently completed parking consultation on High Elms Lane and commit to using CIL to fund it to make the walk to school safe for children?

**Written response:**

This is just not the case, TRDC cannot just "add in a crossing" because it wishes to do so. Road safety is the remit of the County Council, and it is they who have the final say on a crossing provision.

The Councillor is wrong to state that the applicant has been let "off the hook" claiming false claiming TRDC argued a pedestrian crossing.

In fact, the planning condition states:

The development shall not be begun until full details of the proposed access arrangements from and to the existing highway network have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details submitted shall include the proposed roundabout junction on Woodside Road, zebra crossing on Woodside Road, upgraded vehicle activated signs on Woodside Road, the extent of vegetation clearance for visibility at the crossing point on High Elms Lane (to the north of the Bridleway) and the proposed bus stop enhancement works on Horseshoe Lane. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details and no dwelling shall be occupied until the approved works have been completed and made available for use, with the exception of the roundabout junction which shall be completed and brought into operation prior to commencement of the residential development.

Reason: This condition is a pre-commencement condition in the interests of highway safety in accordance with Policies CP1 and CP10 of the Core Strategy (adopted October 2011).

These measures are in fact in place as agreed with Herts County Council funded by the required Section 106 so I have no idea why the Council is claiming they are not.

The decision on whether to proceed with a crossing would for Hertfordshire County Council. Any future decision to progress a crossing point along High Elms Lane would for a decision for the County Council. They are aware of the District Council's proposals for a parking scheme.

My colleague, Cllr Stephen Giles-Medhurst, knows a lot about the latest scheme to improve safety at in High Elms Lane and has worked with officers, the schools and the Crem to get an agreed scheme to improve safety for many years. The County Council has been I understand very difficult about this. Indeed, at on the most recent proposals where Cllr Giles-Medhurst suggested a formal crossing from the public footpath from Boundary Way where it joins High Elms Lane. HCC said they would not support such a proposal but have agreed that the TRDC plans, and its funding, include a clearer crossing point. If Cllr Edwards wants more details, I suggest she discusses it with Cllr Giles-Medhurst.

**28. Question from Councillor Oliver Cooper to the Lead Member for General Public Services:**

Three Rivers says it will not consider taxed cars to be abandoned, meaning they can be abandoned in Three Rivers for up to 12 months before TRDC even thinks it has to act. This led to Three Rivers refusing to do anything about a car abandoned on the footpath from Chorleywood village centre to Clement Danes until after term started: forcing at least dozens of Year 7s to walk into a National Speed Limit road on their first day of secondary school. Three Rivers does not appear to have a published abandoned cars policy, as other district councils in Hertfordshire do. Will Three Rivers publish an abandoned vehicles policy that makes clear its responsibilities for removing abandoned vehicles?

**Written response:**

As is clear below the Council DID NOT TAKE 12 months to get an abandoned vehicle removed this appears typical of Cllr Cooper misleading residents.

The council's policy in relation to abandoned vehicle is already published on the Council website on the page titled 'Abandoned and nuisance vehicles' within the Council services, Transport and Streets section:

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/transport-and-streets/abandoned-nuisance-vehicles>

In relation to the case in question far from refusing to do anything about this specific car, officers of this council went above and beyond this council's responsibilities to remove the vehicle. Whilst abandoned vehicles fall under the councils remit for action, dangerous vehicles are in fact the responsibility of the Police and not this council.

In this instance TRDC officers first received a report of this vehicle on Monday 16th September (it having been reported to the council online on Saturday 14th). The council's Enforcement Officer visited on Tuesday 17th and placed a 7-day notice. There were no keeper details on record and the vehicle has a valid MOT.

Whilst this matter would usually fall to the Police to remove as a dangerous vehicle, as despite being aware of it they had not acted, officers requested the council contractor on Thursday 19th September to remove the vehicle which they promptly did on Friday 20th. The Council further had to arrange to store and pay for storage of this vehicle, for 7 days, in case a keeper did come forward. It would have been normal practice to place a 24-hour notice of removal on the vehicle, after the 7 days.

As officers were not able to do so in this instance it was necessary to incur the additional costs in case a keeper comes forward.

Far from refusing to do anything, officers not only acted quickly but did so outside of our usual processes and our responsibilities, to deal with this matter and ensure the safety of young people in our district.

**29. Question from Councillor Rue Grewal to the Lead Member for General Public Services:**

Frequent overflowing of bins creates a vicious cycle where people feel justified in dumping their rubbish. This exacerbates the problem and highlights the failure of management agents who are charging residents service fees while forcing them to live in unacceptable conditions. These conditions are unsightly and pose serious health risks, including spreading disease and attracting rats. What actions does Three Rivers plan to take to address this worsening issue and hold management agents to account for their neglect?

**Written response:**

The issue is not worsening, rather significant improvements have been seen over the past couple of months. Unfortunately, however, there has been a couple of incidents recently where fly tipped waste has caused an overflow. Waste services consistently empty the bins on the scheduled day.

Management agents have, in the main, responded in a timely manner to any reports made by our enforcement team, the most recent having less than a 48 hour turnaround from the waste being reported to council officers and being cleared by the management agent.

Officers will continue to monitor identified areas twice weekly and report any issues onto the management agents to resolve in a timely manner, if a management company fails to act on our reports, then officers will take action under a Community Protection Notice. So far there have not had any incidents where the managing agent has failed to act on our reports and the council has not received any complaints in the past month.

**30. Question from Councillor Narinder Sian to the Lead Member for General Public Services:**

Please provide an update on the implementation of the Beryl Bike scheme in our area.

Hertsmere, who began their engagement with Beryl after Three Rivers District Council, is already live with 27 bays, 40 bikes, and 20 e-bikes. Meanwhile, we have yet to see any significant progress on our own trial.

Since the Full Council Meeting on 11 July 2023, we have been asking for updates on this initiative. Unfortunately, despite assurances that the scheme was imminent, there has been a noticeable lack of progress.

Could you kindly provide clarity on the current status of the scheme and outline what steps are being taken to address these delays? I also hope you can shed light on the reasons behind this continued stagnation and what is being done to resolve it.

**Written response:**

Cllr Stephen Giles-Medhurst who has pushed through this project along with former Cllr Paul Rainbow over the last four years has already provided details to you and other councillors and Croxley Green residents over the reasons for the delays with Herts County Council. Indeed, without his most recent two direct interventions as Leader as officers were not getting replies the scheme would not be able to go live.

The required contract and licences have been signed to enable this scheme to start with a scheduled launch date of the 7 October 2024.

**31. Question from Councillor Narinder Sian to the Lead Member for General Public Services:**

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst's recent comments in the Watford Observer on 14<sup>th</sup> September 2024 (attached) attributes the six-month delay of the Beryl Bike scheme in Croxley to Hertfordshire County Council's bureaucracy.

While there may be challenges in securing agreements, it is troubling that, despite these claims, no clear actions have been communicated to expedite the process.

Given the success of the scheme in Watford and Hertsmere, where HCC agreements are already in place, this ongoing delay raises concerns about the leadership and coordination within our own council.

While Councillor Giles-Medhurst describes this as "bureaucracy gone mad" and blames HCC for the setbacks, it is important to note that he has been working on this project for over three years. His leadership has been a constant throughout the negotiation period, and despite his long involvement, the scheme has still not come to fruition.

Could you kindly provide clarity on what responsibilities Councillor Giles-Medhurst has had in the implementation of the scheme.

**Written response:**

The Beryl Bikes project has been led by officers working closely with our legal team, Beryl Bikes and Hertfordshire County Council. Regular updates have been provided to the Leader (and Lead Member) who has provided support chasing senior officer at HCC to complete the work on the documentation for the project to progress, including raising the matter with the Acting CEO of HCC.

**32. Question from Councillor Stephen King to the Lead Member for General Public Services:**

Can the Lead Member confirm whether the double yellow line at the junction of Henbury Way and Oxhey Drive has been fully painted, is enforceable and the date upon which it was finished, or if it yet to be completed when will it finally be done?

**Written response:**

Attempts have been made to complete the lines; however, motorists have been ignoring the parking suspension signs put in place to enable the contractors to finish them. Officers are chasing the matter with our parking services provider and will aim to get them completed quickly.



**33. Question from Councillor Stephen Cox to the Lead Member for General Public Services:**

Would the Lead Member please advise what progress has been made with Thrive Homes regarding the rubbish bin situation at Erskine House and Forfar House since the answer given at July's Full Council meeting and an update on the actions this council is taking to ensure the bins are collected weekly to prevent overflowing and the obvious threat to public health?

**Written response:**

Progress is being made at these blocks, namely;

1. TRDC has produced significantly sized metal signage that has now been installed in the in the bin areas. Smaller signs are also on order to be placed on the recycling racks.
2. TRDC officers have met with Reps from Thrive to discuss moving of the bin store to the drying area.
3. Coded padlocks have been fitted to the bin store doors this week (one is however already missing).
4. TRDC have commenced charging Thrive for returned visits where refuse vehicles have been unable to gain access.
5. Meetings have been held to discuss potential for traffic restrictions eg yellow lines.
6. TRDC have requested that Thrive have a tree cut back which is restricting access.
7. Meetings continue to be held with Thrive on a quarterly basis. Discussions and emails are exchanged in between meetings to update on progress or discuss issues are they arise.

## QUESTIONS TO THE LEAD MEMBER FOR HOUSING AND PUBLIC HEALTH

### **34. Question from Councillor Oliver Cooper to the Leader Member for Housing and Public Health:**

Why has Three Rivers not included a Local Connections Test in its application of the First Homes policy to ensure local people benefit from local homes for affordable ownership? Will it now commit to include one urgently?

#### **Written response:**

The Council's First Homes position statement was added to the Council's website following the Government's introduction of First Homes through a Written Ministerial Statement. The position statement sets out how the First Homes policy can be applied alongside the Council's existing affordable housing policy. This meets the Government's requirements but has not added any additional requirements such as a local connection test as the evidence to justify further requirements still needed to be prepared. The Council is updating Local Housing Needs Assessment, and this includes a section on First Homes which will inform any changes to the emerging Local Plan policy.

It should be noted that the council's Local Housing Needs Assessment sets out that the district's greatest need in terms of affordable housing is social rent followed by affordable rent. The new consultation draft version of the NPPF is proposing to remove the First Homes requirement. This does not mean the Council cannot require First Homes but the amount required will need to be based on evidence and we need to have that evidence to support it which is what the council is undertaking.

**35. Question from Councillor Rue Grewal to the Lead Member for Housing and Public Health:**

Thrive Homes' disgraceful attitude, incompetence, and failure to resolve issues – including leaving disabled individuals living in squalor – is wholly unacceptable. It is intolerable that we allow Thrive Homes to treat our residents as second-class citizens. What actions does Three Rivers plan to take to address this unacceptable relationship with Thrive Homes? I want to know the specific action plan for holding them accountable and ensuring our residents receive the respect and living conditions they deserve.

**Written response:**

As a registered provider of social housing within England, Thrive Homes is subject to regulation by the Regulator of Social Housing. The regulator is responsible for setting consumer and economic standards for registered providers of social housing and can act if these standards are breached.

The consumer standards include the safe and quality standard, that requires registered providers of social housing to ensure that their tenants properties meet the standards set out in the Decent Homes Guidance.

Whilst the Regulator of Social Housing cannot assist to resolve individual tenant complaints, if any tenant of Thrive Homes is not satisfied with the conditions in their property or believe that Thrive Homes have failed to undertake any required remedial work, they can raise this with Thrive Homes through their complaints process. If the tenant remains unsatisfied following the progression to the end of this complaints process, this complaint can be escalated by the tenant to the Housing Ombudsman.

Following their investigation into an individual tenant complaint, the Housing Ombudsman may formally refer a matter to the Regulator of Social Housing where they believe that their investigation into a case may reveal a wider systemic failing and possible evidence of a breach of the standards set by the Regulator.

If Cllr Rue Grewal has specific examples of what she describes I would expect her to bring to the attention of senior officers or indeed myself so it can be investigated.

## QUESTIONS TO THE LEAD MEMBER FOR LEISURE

### **36. Question from Councillor Andrea Fraser to the Lead Member for Leisure:**

Why are the public not informed of the specific dangers envisaged by people using the Aquadrome path, when doing so is legally required to oust occupiers' liability?

#### **Written response:**

The public were informed through onsite notices and several social media posts that the pathway is closed due to health and safety concerns. In addition, heras fencing has been securely installed to prevent the public from accessing the site with signage on that fencing informing the public that the path is closed.

A statement regarding the pathway is also available on the Council's website:

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/leisure-parks-culture/parks-open-spaces/rickmansworth-aquadrome>

In addition, a detailed note was sent to all councillors explaining the position following a series of mis-information social media posts, and that could have encouraged residents to endanger themselves.

**37. Question from Councillor Mike Sims to the Lead Member for Leisure:**

Why when the footpath at the Aquadrome had to be closed at the beginning of this year were the public and councillors not updated until I tabled a motion for debate several months later?

**Written response:**

In addition to the onsite notices informing the public of the path closure, the public have been updated on many occasions as to the status of the path via social media throughout the winter and spring and updated in a council statement on 5th August 2024. Councillors were, following some social media posts on a local Facebook Group, provided with further information on 12th September 2024.

**38. Question from Councillor Vicky Edwards to the Lead Member for Leisure:**

A planning application has been submitted for Bedmond Sports Pavilion for a substantial part of the facility, including the function room and bar, to be changed into a supervised visitation centre which will be operational six days per week. Does Three Rivers support Abbots Langley Parish Council's decision to close Bedmond Sports and Social Club and end the future of Bedmond FC?

**Written response:**

Whilst this is a matter for the democratically elected Abbots Langley Parish Council to decide I understand that the assumption made “the end the future of Bedmond FC” is just untrue and has no basis in facts the Social Club officially closed in 2017.

I am surprised that Cllr Edwards has not checked the facts with Abbots Langley Parish Council. The following facts have been provided by the Parish Council.

Bedmond Pavilion Timeline of Events

1) The Bedmond Sports and Social Club, under whose banner Bedmond FC (men's seniors' team) played, closed in July 2017 as per a vote taken at its EGM held in April 2017. The club's lease officially ended in January 2018.

2) Private local residents took possession of the property in January 2018. The new occupiers said they were operating under the name of Bedmond Sports & Social Club. The Council assumed the previous leaseholders would legally assign the lease to the occupiers as the new trustees of Bedmond Sports & Social Club and these would then seek a renewal of the lease with the Council. This never occurred.

3) The Council was in discussions with the new occupiers from January 2018 until June 2023, with a pause during the pandemic. During this time, the Council repeatedly offered a lease to the new occupiers. As the Council is not able to sign a lease with individuals, the Council also requested proof of the occupiers' legal registration as Bedmond Sports & Social Club. This was never provided.

4) In May 2023, the Council gave the occupiers a final deadline of June 2023 to provide proof that the club was legally registered as Bedmond Sports & Social Club and was legally able to sign a lease with the Council. This was never provided as the club was never legally registered, therefore, the Council took back possession of Bedmond Pavilion at the end of June 2023.

5) In June 2023, Bedmond FC (men's seniors team) closed stating that they could not continue to operate without the Bedmond Pavilion as a clubhouse. The FA's rules do allow lower division teams to use local pubs as their clubhouse while continuing to use a pitch at another location as a home pitch. It is unknown if this option was investigated.

6) Bedmond Youth FC (under 16s and below) have continued to use Bedmond Playing Fields as their home pitches and have use of the home and away changing rooms, and storage room at Bedmond Pavilion.

7) In July 2024, Council Officers inspected the building and identified significant works were required to make the property safe. Although the original lease with Bedmond Sports & Social Club was a fully self-repairing lease, Officers found the building was in a significant state of disrepair and no repairs had been undertaken and as the club ceased to exist there was no ability to get them to fulfil their obligations. The Council completed the necessary repairs in February 2024.

8) In March & April 2024, the Council received 2 expression of interest applications to lease the newly refurbished building. Applications were considered at the Council's meeting in May 2024 and a decision made to offer an applicant a lease. The lease offered excludes the home and away changing rooms, and the storage area. These have been separately let to Bedmond Youth FC.

The changing rooms, including toilets, and the storage facilities at Bedmond Sports Pavilion have been excluded from the lease negotiations. These facilities have their own dedicated entrances, separate from the main hall, and will remain under Council management.

The changing rooms and storage facilities have been offered to Bedmond Youth FC. Following a grant from Tesco the Council is making for further improvement of the changing rooms. This will improve these facilities for the benefit of the players. Additionally, the Parish Council has agreed with Bedmond Youth FC to increase the number of pitches to be marked out at Bedmond playing fields to 3 junior pitches. This is being done to help meet the needs of the club.

**39. Question from Councillor Chris Alley to the Lead Member for Leisure:**

I asked in July whether Three Rivers Council has looked into dilapidations or liabilities it may have to pay for repairs it has not carried out, once the Sir James Altham 3G pitch has been returned to Hertfordshire County Council in April 2025. No answer was forthcoming, despite it clearly playing a large part in the public discussion and publicity issued by Three Rivers and being a material budget item. Is Three Rivers responsible for dilapidations and how much are they expected to be?

**Written response:**

An answer to this question was provided in writing at Full Council on 9 July 2024. As far as this matter is concerned, the answer remains the same, pending progress on the surrender of the lease of the Sir James Altham site to Hertfordshire County Council.



**40. Question from Councillor Abbas Merali to the Lead Member for Leisure:**

Padel is one of the fastest growing sports in the UK. With its low barriers to entry, it is a great sport to encourage greater participation, promoting physical and mental health well-being. However, there are no padel courts in Three Rivers. Can the Lead Member commit to consider provision of padel facilities, including one in Eastbury Recreation Ground, which lends itself to such a facility?

**Written response:**

As Cllr Merali has previously been advised, in response to his question to the 17 October 2023 Full Council meeting, there is currently no budget or plans to incorporate padel tennis facilities. Such facilities would cost in the region of £75k and although it is fast growing nationally, it is still very niche. Officers will continue to monitor any local demand for the sport and identify any opportunities to incorporate it into the existing programme where external funding becomes available.

**41. Question from Councillor Chris Alley to the Lead Member for Leisure:**

What is the average length of time taken for three rivers to carry out repairs on children's playing areas?

**Written response:**

Time for repair will very much vary dependant on what specifically needs to be repaired. There are several variables including the availability of materials, the level of fix required i.e. basic or requiring more specialist services. All repair work and materials must be to the required BS EN 1176 (play equipment) or BS EN 1177 (safety surfacing) standard. Some items can be repaired immediately, whilst others will take longer.

**42. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Lead Member for Leisure:**

Despite management and some replanting, some of the trees in the orchard on the north side of Leavesden Country Park are in poor condition. Why has consideration not been given to expand and revitalise the orchard, including planting a greater variety of fruiting trees and shrubs. Surely this would support a number of the council's priorities.

Such changes would be welcomed by local residents and funding could be sought from within S106 funds, CIL or the council's own funds.

**Written response:**

Officers from the Trees and Woodlands team have visited the heritage orchard at LCP recently to assess the condition of the trees. Many of the trees are currently heavy with fruit, and whilst this is in many ways positive, this has led in some cases to trees struggling to support the weight and being bent over towards the ground. Officers carried out some formative pruning of the trees last winter, which has reduced this issue, but clearly there is more pruning work required.

Last winter, six replacement trees were planted, and these appear to be doing well, however, several other existing trees have died, so officers will carry out more replacement planting this coming planting season, as per the management plan.

The majority of the trees in the orchard are on dwarfing, or semi-dwarfing root stock, so will always be relatively small trees. The use of these root stocks has become increasingly common as it enables the fruit to be picked much more easily, without the need for ladders. Officers will though look to plant some trees on larger growing root stocks to provide greater landscape benefits.

In the longer term it is intended to explore expanding and revitalising the heritage orchard, including planting a greater variety of fruiting trees and shrubs, however, this is not an action within the current management plan, and Council does not have the resource capacity at this time to make more substantial changes.

## QUESTIONS TO THE LEAD MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SAFETY AND PARTNERSHIPS

### **43. Question from Councillor Chris Alley to the Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships:**

In response to recent crimes and the release of thousands of criminals on to our streets by the Labour government, will TRDC increase resources for more CCTV in areas such as Delta Gain and South Oxhey?

#### **Written response:**

We continue to work closely as a Community Safety Partnership to review the situation in Three Rivers District. With regard to the deployment of CCTV, we have recently applied for Community Infrastructure Levy funding to purchase 8 new CCTV Cameras. CCTV is deployed to areas of the district whereby there is hotspot issues. Several of our shops across the district have issues with shoplifters and the Police have a specialised team managing this, including giving advice, patrol plans, organising furniture within shops and the use of a number of disruption methods.

**44. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Lead Member for  
Community Safety and Partnerships:**

Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Policing Team currently has fewer than half its establishment of police officers and PCSOs. I understand that the situation is little better at Rickmansworth and Oxhey. What representations has the council made to attempt to get a full establishment restored at Abbots Langley and other NPTs?

**Written response:**

The council works closely with the Police and the wider Community Safety Partnership however, the responsibility for the staffing and workforce sits with Hertfordshire Constabulary.

## QUESTIONS TO THE LEAD MEMBER FOR SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

### **45. Question from Councillor Chris Mitchell to the Lead Member for Sustainability and Climate Change:**

Please confirm that we are doing all we can to secure the services of our very good staff in the Sustainability team, as I am aware that the funding for one or two post may be coming to an end.

#### **Written response:**

The current funding arrangement for the Climate Change and Sustainability team is a mix of council funded establishment (permanent) posts (1.5 Part time positions) and grant funded posts (currently 1 FTE post funded until June 2025). An outline business case has been prepared to inform the council's budget considerations which includes a proposal to increase the establishment roles by 1FTE which would if approved by council provide security of tenure to the current postholder whilst still seeking where possible to secure funding externally for resource in this important area of work.

**46. Question from Councillor Cheryl Stungo to the Lead Member for Sustainability and Climate Change:**

I was disappointed with the agenda for the Climate Change, Leisure and Housing Committee meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> July 2024. Despite the Council's declared climate emergency and its stated goal to put the environment at the centre of all its activities, the meeting included only one climate-related agenda item: The Bury Grounds Biodiversity Project.

Given the urgency of the climate crisis and the Council's commitment to addressing it, I expected a broader range of climate-related topics to be discussed.

Housing, which is another key issue in our district, was not covered at all. This is particularly concerning considering housing and sustainability are interconnected, especially when considering the district's responsibility to balance development with climate resilience. We have a shortage of affordable homes and an increasing demand for energy-efficient housing.

Locally, Hertfordshire faces increased flooding risk, rising air pollution levels and growing pressure on green spaces.

I would appreciate being informed about what steps will be taken to ensure more comprehensive discussions on climate and housing in future meetings.

**Written response:**

Climate Change and sustainability is at the core of everything the council does and as such all reports requiring decisions by the committee are supported by a Sustainability Impact Assessment, there is therefore ample opportunity for members to discuss climate and sustainability in relation to any and all matters before any committee, not simply the Climate Change, Leisure and Housing Committee, and indeed Full Council.

In the past 12 months the CCLH Committee has had comprehensive discussions on not only the Bury Biodiversity Project but also the achievements of the 2023-26 Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy and it has considered, discussed and approved an updated Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy for 2024 -27 as well as new action plan for its delivery. The progress of the council's strategy and its associated action plan is reported to the CCLH Committee Biannually with the next report being considered this month.

There was no agenda item from Housing Services at the last Climate Change, Leisure and Housing Committee as there was nothing that required a decision from Committee at that time.



## **QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIR OF THE PLANNING COMMITTEE**

### **47. Question from Councillor Vicky Edwards to the Chair of the Planning Committee:**

Why did the s73 application for Shannon House (23/0343/FUL) not apply a condition requiring its squalid shoebox flats to meet the nationally-described minimum space standard, even though the s73 application was submitted after the change in the law making such minimum space requirements mandatory?

#### **Written response:**

Application 20/0369/PDR gave prior approval for a change of use from Office (Class B1) to 74 Residential Units (Class C3). Imposing a planning condition which secured a lower number of residential units would have required a variation to the description of the development. Section 73 of the 1990 Act does not permit a planning permission to be rewritten.

**48. Question from Councillor Vicky Edwards to the Chair of the Planning Committee:**

Does the council agree with the applicant for Land to the rear of 63 The Crescent (24/1060/RSP) that it benefits from the self-build exemption from CIL?

**Written response:**

No, the development is not considered to comply with the requirements of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) self-build exemption.

**49. Question from Councillor Oliver Cooper to the Chair of the Planning Committee:**

How many First Homes have been built, secured in permissions, or does the Chair expect to be secured in pending applications?

**Written response:**

None to date that officers are aware. I refer to the earlier answer re the evidence being gathered to support such ab allocation.

**50. Question from Councillor Oliver Cooper to the Chair of the Planning Committee:**

The Chair told Cllr Cooper in July that 'minor improvements' had been made to the unsightly tattered scaffold sheeting on the building opposite Three Rivers House. Yet it is now worse than ever. Why has Three Rivers not issued a section 215 notice and why has it done nothing to stop the terrible state of this very prominent building marring Rickmansworth High Street?

**Written response:**

Requests from members to officers have been received about the condition of the scaffolding. As communicated to local ward councillors, officers have recently met with the owner and requested that the sheeting is replaced or repaired as soon as possible to avoid direct action. From discussions with the owner and when considering the extent of works, the scaffolding is likely to be removed in the coming months.

**51. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Chair of the Planning Committee:**

Why was the decision made to change the date of the October planning committee to 7th November? I understand this was not the decision of the planning officers or at their request and has involved the in extra work. This leaves 56 days between committees, which removes the ability of the Local Planning Authority to determine an application as quickly as possible.

**Written response:**

Officers have advised only one 'Extension of Time' for an application has been required because of this change to the committee date, and the applicant agreed to this request.

**52. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Chair of the Planning Committee:**

Why were most members attending compulsory planning training in May 2024 not informed that the threat of designation had been removed, when some non-councillors were informed almost two weeks previously?

**Written response:**

Whilst DLUHC confirmed on 8 May that the Minister is minded not to designate for poor performance, the letter confirmed “Whilst no further action will be taken at this time, we will continue to closely monitor the authority’s performance, and this decision does not preclude the potential for further action should the performance of your authority fail to meet the required thresholds in the future”. Officers continue to monitor performance, and the performance has not improved since receipt of the letter. On that basis, Officers do not consider that the threat of designation has been removed.

**53. Question from Councillor Sara Bedford to the Chair of the Planning Committee:**

Were the trainers informed that the immediate threat had been lifted? If so, why did they emphasise the threat?

**Written response:**

The trainers were advised of the content of the letter. However, it is considered that the threat remains in place.

The letter from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities (now known as Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government) confirmed that decisions made by the authority were being closely monitored and the decision not to take further action did not preclude the potential for further action in the future.

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