

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

VIRTUAL MEETING NOTICE AND AGENDA

For a virtual/remote meeting to be held on Monday, 19 July 2021 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Policy and Resources Committee:-

Councillors:

Sarah Nelmes (Chair)
Matthew Bedford
Stephen Cox
Stephen Giles-Medhurst
Alex Hayward
Paula Hiscocks
Chris Lloyd

Dominic Sokalski (Vice-Chair)
Reena Ranger
Andrew Scarth
Roger Seabourne
Phil Williams
Debbie Morris

*Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive
Monday, 12 July 2021*

“The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 made under the Coronavirus Act 2020 enable Council / Committee meetings to be held in a virtual format and enables remote attendance.

The meeting will start at 7.30pm and will be virtual / remote, in that they will be conducted at no specific location and all participants are at various locations, communicating via audio and online.

The Council welcomes contributions from Members of the public to its discussion on agenda items at Planning Committee meetings. Contributions will be limited to one person speaking for and one against each item for not more than three minutes. Please note that in the event of registering your interest to speak on an agenda item but not taking up that right because the item is deferred, you will automatically be given the right to speak on the item at that next meeting of the Committee. Details of the procedure are provided below:

Members of the public wishing to speak will be entitled to register and identify which application(s) they wish to speak on from the published agenda for the remote meeting. Those who wish to register to speak must do so by notifying the Committee team by e-mail (CommitteeTeam@threerivers.gov.uk) 48 hours before the meeting. The first 2

people to register on any application (1 for and 1 against) will be sent a link so that they can join the meeting to exercise that right. This will also allow the Committee Team to prepare the speaker sheet in advance of the remote meeting to forward to the Chair of the meeting.

In accordance with The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 any matters considered under Part 1 business only of the meeting may be filmed, recorded, photographed, broadcast or reported via social media by any person.

Recording and reporting the Council's meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those doing the recording and reporting to ensure compliance. This will include the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Act and the laws of libel and defamation.

Please note that the meeting is being held virtually. The business of the meeting will be live streamed at –

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

(Pages 5
- 16)

To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 14 June 2021.

3. NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

Items of other business notified under Council Procedure Rule 30 to be announced, together with the special circumstances that justify their consideration as a matter of urgency. The Chair to rule on the admission of such items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest.

Policy

5. MEMBER TRAINING

(Pages
17 - 28)

The purpose of the report is to recommend a framework for Member Training for 2021/22 to the P&R Committee.

To determine that the Council do not sign up to the Member Charter but look to work towards achieving its standards.

6. HOUSING DELIVERY TEST ACTION PLAN

(Pages
29 - 50)

This report is to update Members on the Housing Delivery Test that was published in January 2021, and for Members to approve the revised Action Plan.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires Councils to prepare an action plan where housing delivery has fallen below the housing requirement.

The Action Plan analyses the reasons for the under-delivery of new homes and sets out actions to improve housing delivery within the District.

Resources

7. MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 11

(Pages
51 - 58)

Under Rule 11(6) of the Council Constitution it was agreed by the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair of Council that the following motion be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee. The proposer and seconder of the motion will be invited to the meeting to present the motion under new Rule 11(11).

Proposer: Cllr Alex Hayward, seconded by Councillor Ciaran Reed

In order to maximise transparency and electoral accountability this Council believes that the residents of Three Rivers should all be able to access the meetings of this Council via live streaming and that this Council looks to implement this facility as soon as possible.

A report has been provided as background information to the motion.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

(Pages
59 - 64)

To receive the Committee's work programme.

9. OTHER BUSINESS - if approved under item 3 above

10. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

If the Committee wishes to consider the remaining item in private, it will be appropriate for a resolution to be passed in the following terms:-

“that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under paragraph X of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

(Note: If other confidential business is approved under item 3, it will also be necessary to specify the class of exempt or confidential information in the additional items.)

1. OTHER BUSINESS - IF APPROVED UNDER ITEM 3 ABOVE

To receive any declarations of interest.

General Enquiries: Please contact the Committee Team at
committeeteam@threerivers.gov.uk

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POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**MINUTES**

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth on 14 June 2021 at 7.30pm to 9.30pm.

Councillors present:

Sarah Nelmes (Chair)	Steve Drury (for Cllr Chris Lloyd)
Dominic Sokalski (Vice-Chair) (Resources and Shared Services)	Andrew Scarth (Housing)
Stephen Cox	Reena Ranger
Matthew Bedford (Infrastructure & Planning Policy)	Roger Seabourne (Community Safety and Partnerships)
Alex Hayward	David Raw (substitute for Cllr Debbie Morris)
Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Transport and Economic Development)	Phil Williams (Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change & Sustainability)
Paula Hiscocks	

Other Councillors were in attendance - None

Officers Present: Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive
Geof Muggerridge, Director of Community and Environmental Services
Alison Scott, Shared Director of Finance
Josh Sills, Watersmeet Manager
Alex Laurie, Principal Trees and Landscape Officer
Debra Sandling, Animal Welfare and Licensing Inspector
Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

PR01/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Chris Lloyd and Debbie Morris with the substitute Members being Councillors Steve Drury and David Raw.

PR02/21 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 8 March 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

PR03/21 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Committee were advised that the report for the appointment of the sub-committees (item 5) had been updated since publication at sections 3 and 11 with regard to all Members of Council being able to be Members of the sub-committee. The report had been available for 5 clear working days before the meeting.

PR04/21 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Alex Hayward wished to declare that they would not be putting themselves forward to be a member of the Local Plan sub-committee.

PR05/21 SUB-COMMITTEES OF POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

The report proposed that the Policy and Resources Committee re-establishes the following sub-committees for 2021/22: Local Plan, Constitution and Equalities but not the Covid-19 Response sub-committee. That the Members appointed to all the sub-committees have the following proportional membership: 9, 2 and 1.

The Chair advised that the update to the report related to all Members of Council being able to be Members of the sub-committees which had been discussed by the Constitution sub-committee in September 2020.

It was advised that nominations to the sub-committees could be provided to the Committee Team in the next week.

A Member questioned that there were two proportional membership details in the report of 9, 2 and 1 and 6, 2 and 1 and asked which was correct. The Principal Committee Manager confirmed the correct proportional membership was 6, 2 and 1 making the membership of the sub-committees a total of 9 Members.

On being put to the Committee the recommendations as set out in the report with the amendment to the proportional membership and that all Members of Council can be members of the sub-committee was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being by general assent.

RESOLVED:

That three sub-committees be re-established (Constitution, Local Plan and Equalities) and that Members be appointed with the following proportional membership: 6, 2 and 1 and the Members names to be advised to the Committee Team.

Agreed that all Members of Council can be appointed to the sub-committees subject to Political Proportionality Rules.

That the Covid-19 Response sub-committee is not re-established.

That no decision making powers be delegated to the sub-committees;

That all Members of Council to be substitute Members.

PR06/21 ANIMAL WELFARE ENFORCEMENT POLICY AND ANIMAL WELFARE LICENSING POLICY

The Committee were asked to agree the Animal Welfare Licensing Policy for Three Rivers and the Animal Welfare Enforcement Policy.

A Member asked about the Officers time to undertake the work. The Animal Welfare and Licensing Inspector advised the work was already being done and the reason for the report was to get policies in place as it was prudent to have them.

The Lead Member had read details on the grading of the system and the offer of re-tests for a fee. On the star ratings used by Environmental Health businesses they would have a test and if they failed they would get a list of things which they had to do to get a higher star rating and would be able to implement the changes needed rather than doing everything required before the test. The Animal

Welfare and Licensing Inspector advised that the Council do not have a choice as the star ratings as they are national ratings set by DEFRA and are different to food hygiene ratings. The star rating determines the duration of the persons license which they can appeal against if they think they need to get higher stars over a longer duration of their license but they have to meet all of the higher standards. If they feel they do meet them they can appeal against their star rating and that is where their risk rating form comes in. They also have interim inspections which is all set down in the regulations.

The recommendations on being put to the Committee were declared CARRIED by the Chair of the Committee the voting being by general assent.

RECOMMEND:

Recommends to approve the Animal Welfare Licensing Policy (Appendix A) subject to any comments from the Regulatory Services Committee.

Recommends to approve the Animal Welfare Enforcement Policy (Appendix B) subject to any comments from the Regulatory Services Committee.

PR07/21 THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL - TREE STRATEGY 2022 -2027

The Principal Tree and Landscape Officer advised that the purpose of the report was to summarise the content and implications of the draft Tree Strategy for the District, and recommend that the draft Strategy is released for a period of public consultation (Appendix A – draft Tree Strategy). The draft strategy identified a number of actions the Council would wish to achieve over the next 5 years.

The process was started at the beginning of the year asking for ideas and views which should be included in the strategy. There had then been a period of producing the draft strategy which was now being brought to Committee for agreement for public consultation during August and September. The final strategy would come back to the Committee and the Leisure Committee in November 2021 for agreement with the new strategy in place at the beginning of next year.

Details on what the strategy would cover had been provided in the report. Some actions could lead to the need for additional funding.

A Member had asked in advance of the meeting when a tree was fallen or felled was it left in situ? Also do we ensure it was?

- 1) safe even throughout the decomposition process
- 2) that they allow other vegetation to grow around the area and not stifle new growth.
- 3) are left in a way that is tidy and suitable for the public.

The Principal Tree and Landscape Officer advised:

If any tree that was felled and left on-site, it was left in a safe condition and we instruct contractors to do this. Similarly, if a fallen tree was to be left in-situ, we ensure it was safe and cannot fall any further or present a danger in the future.

The gap left by a fallen or felled tree will allow light into the area and will help stimulate new growth. In addition, many tree species will regrow from a cut stump, or broken limb, so in many cases this will be allowed to happen.

We make an assessment on a case by case basis as to whether it is safe and/or appropriate to leave felled or fallen trees in situ. In urban situations and formal areas all brash and cordwood will normally be removed off site. In woodlands

and semi-formal areas the main stem will normally be left, and in some case the brash will also be left, either stacked or chipped, depending on the situation.

The Member sought clarification on who the Council would send to inspect an area to make sure the contractors had completed what they had said they would do. The Principal Tree and Landscape Officer advised that the team do not currently inspect all the work the contractors carry out but do provide very clear instructions. For larger scale works checks were made to ensure the work was carried out to the standard we would expect. The Council was selective about the contractors used and have a number of contractors locally who have been used for a number of years. We are confident that they will do the work to a high standard.

A Member asked if checks could be done for 1 in 10 works carried out to trees. The Principal Tree and Landscape Officer advised that we could look at having something in place but currently the inspections are carried out on the complexity of the work and the location.

A Member said most of the trees in the District are in public places where Grounds Maintenance Team would be able to monitor them. The Director of Community and Environmental Services said it was no different to other aspects of the Council work where we rely on people to report things to us and we can investigate the problem and look to correct it.

A Member raised the following points on the draft strategy:

On the Appendix Point 22 it talked about best practise and having to inspect the trees based on the level of risk, was there a minimum or maximum to the checks.

Response: The Council currently have a three year inspection cycle and are currently inspecting all the tree stock. As set out in the draft strategy we are looking to change to an 18 month cycle in some areas where there is highest risk and a longer cycle in areas where there is lower risk.

On point 28 it talks about the register/database of trees – was this a public register that was available to Councillors.

Response: The register was currently only for officers however we are looking to have an add on to the current system so that the public may be able to access tree information, search for protected trees in Conservation Areas and find details on who has responsibility for a tree.

On point 31 it talks about a formal and informal system can more detail be provided?

Response: We have a system of formal inspection on a three yearly cycle. We are going to bring in an informal system as well where the Tree Officers will inspect areas of high usage in our open spaces once a year around footpaths, where people congregate and areas of greater risk. Officers were also looking to formalise how we deal with out of hour's tree issues.

At Point 62 it talks about damage, subsidence and nuisance. In many areas there had been extreme wet and extreme dry and a number of oak trees had caused subsidence and wondered if we need to look at a watering schedule in very hot weather. Also on routine inspections do Officers consider trees that they think are worthy of a TPO or in danger of being felled? Could we encourage people to replace a tree they fell although know this cannot be mandatory.

Response: With regard to TPOs it was not something officers do when they inspect trees, the inspections are often carried out as a result of a planning application where the tree maybe under threat and it may result in the tree being given a TPO. If a member of the public said they thought a tree was under threat and it met the criteria for a TPO then Officers could serve one. The drawback of planting larger trees was they do require a lot of maintenance and many years of watering to get them established which was not required with smaller trees. The Grounds Maintenance team have invested in a water system to enable the watering of trees during dry periods. The draft strategy proposes that a member of the Grounds Maintenance team would specialise in establishment work for recently planted trees. When claims are received by the Council with regard to subsidence they are assessed on the value of the tree, its prominence, quality and whether it should be felled or pruning work was required. Where a TPO tree is felled then a condition can require that the tree be replaced. We can make TPO details more widely available on the website. If it is a Conservation Area notification we are unable to condition it but could add a line in the letter encouraging them to replace it.

A Member said it would be good to put communication out about local tree diseases via the e-newsletter so that members of the public can be aware when they are out in the District.

A Member said hedgerows were mentioned in the draft strategy and asked how strict can we be about ensuring that hedgerows are protected and what measures can we take to ensure they are not undermined and do not disappear along our highways/rural roads. In relation to planning conditions, if a developer comes along with their drawings what happens if they do not adhere to them.

Response: In terms of highways, Highways have the powers to undertake works without needing to put in a tree works application for protected trees for highways safety where they have to fell or prune a tree. Hedgerows was slightly different in that the regulations were designed to prevent the removal of hedgerows by their roots. There are forms of hedgerow management which may take away top growth but that was designed to enable the hedgerow to regrow. An offense maybe committed if the hedgerow roots were taken out but the important caveat was that this does not apply when it is a residential curtilage it only applied to hedgerows in the wider countryside.

A Member said if a developer wished to remove an hedgerow to gain access to a development and are required to give notice to develop a site which they may or may not have planning permission for are they required to give notice to the Council.

Response: A hedgerow would need to meet a certain threshold in terms of diversity of species and its length which needs to be 30 metres for it to constitute a hedgerow which could be protected. If they did not submit details in advance they could be committing an offense

The Chair reminded the Committee this was a draft strategy prior to public consultation and did not need to consider every detail at this time.

The Director of Community and Environmental Services advised that in terms of planning conditions sometimes you get planting in the scheme as part of the planning proposal and other times there was a condition requiring a planting scheme to be submitted. In either case these are conditions which are enforceable and if something does die usually within 5 years it must be replaced and that was included in national legislation. If Members and members of the public advise us that something had not been implemented in line with the approved plans within the 5 year period then we can usually enforce this.

A Member raised concern about the consultation period in August and September and asked if there was any way to delay it to middle/late September. The Chair advised that if you delay starting the consultation then you delay the whole strategy being in place.

The Principal Tree and Landscape Officer advised that the consultation period was set but they could see if it could be extended to the end of September. Officers would make clear it included hedgerows and hedges in all communications.

On being put to the Committee the recommendations as set out in the report were declared CARRIED by the Chair of the Committee the voting being by general assent.

RESOLVED:

Approved the draft Tree Strategy for a period of public consultation subject to any comments from the Leisure Environment & Community Committee.

A final version to be presented to the Policy & Resources Committee on 24 November 2021, and the Leisure, Environment & Community Committee on 6 December 2021.

POST MEETING NOTE: the date of P&R Committee should be 1 November 2021

PR08/21 SHAREHOLDER AND COMMERCIAL VENTURES SCRUTINY PANEL

The Peer review which was undertaken in March 2019 identified two actions relating to managing the Councils growing commercial ambitions. There are listed below:

- Review governance and financial oversight in light of a growing commercial agenda
- Create a commercial strategy, directed through a member led commercial board and shareholder function
- As a result the Council has reviewed its governance arrangements for managing the commercial activities of the Council and is proposing to establish a Shareholder and Commercial Venture Scrutiny Panel (the Panel).
- The proposal is that the Panel is established to monitor the performance of, and take decisions on, the Council's existing and potential commercial ventures and other investments. This includes undertaking all functions of the Council as a shareholder under the Companies Act 2006 in relation to those companies or partnerships owned, or part owned, by the Council, except as otherwise specified.
- The Panel will meet quarterly to consider performance information and take decisions regarding commercial ventures and investments, with scope to call additional meetings on as required to deal with emerging business.
- This report sets out the proposed Terms of Reference for the Panel (Appendix 1).

A Member had asked in advance of the meeting if this was a new Committee to be formed as a result of the peer review.

The Director of Finance advised this was one of the recommendations of the peer review.

In response to a question submitted in advance of the meeting on the Property Scrutiny Panel and whether it had met and were there any minutes, the Chief Executive advised that the Property Scrutiny Panel had not met since it was set up in March 2017 as part of our Three Rivers Commercial Services Company and the Housing Joint Venture. The only transaction to go through the Commercial Company was its establishment and the ongoing running of Three Rivers Homes the Joint Venture with Watford Community Housing.

In response to a question on whether there would be full tracking documents on our investments, the Director of Finance advised that the purpose of the panel was to allow Members to go into more detail. The information would obviously require full confidentiality with minutes coming back to P&R Committee.

The recommendations as set out in the report on being put to the Committee were declared CARRIED by the Chair of the Committee the voting being by general assent.

RECOMMEND:

- The Shareholder and Commercial Panel is established and that the Terms of Reference are agreed.
- The Property Scrutiny Panel be abolished.
- To nominate 5 Councillors to the Panel the proportionality being 3, 1, 1 for the 2021/22 Municipal Year with the names to be advised to the Committee Team.

PR09/21 SERVICE RESTORATION REPORT - JUNE 2021

This report set out a summary of the current position of Council services at the time of writing and the plans for restoring services that are currently not operating or only part operating due to Covid restrictions. Heads of Service and Service Managers have provided updates relating to their service area detailed in this report.

At time of writing Step 4 of the Government Roadmap is still expected to come into effect on 21 June. Any changes to the Council's services restoration as a result of changes to the Government Roadmap will be set out in a verbal update at Committee.

A Member asked when bulk waste collections would restart as they could not see it on the list. The Watersmeet Manager advised that bulky waste collections were currently on hold due to a number of staff self isolating and a shortage of agency staff but collections would resume as soon as possible but at present there is no definitive date.

A Member noted that the duty planning service would continue to be undertaken permanently virtually. It was really hard to view plans online and the service should be provided as a face to face service for our residents. The Director of Community and Environmental Services advised that it had been found that the

service was more accessible by being virtual rather than insisting people come to the offices.

In response to Member question regarding livestreaming and virtual meetings the Chair advised it was not legally permitted to hold virtual or hybrid meetings as there was no primary legislation in place to allow this. The Council had responded to the recent Government hybrid/virtual meeting consultation.

A Member referred to the opening hours of the offices for the public and asked what they were pre Covid. It was advised they were 8.45am to 5.30pm. The Member was concerned with the reduced opening hours of 9am and 4pm to be able to see Customer Service staff.

The Director of Community and Environmental Services advised that the majority of our customers came in at lunch time. Face to face appointments would still be possible. This was a change in how we deliver our services which had been progressed over a number of years with more and more services accessible online so people can access our services at home far longer hours. Officers will continue to review the service but this was the first steps.

The telephone service would continue to be available at the same hours but this may be extended going forward. Officers could be available at different hours with the new ways of working.

The recommendation on being put to the Committee was declared carried by the Chair of the Committee the voting being 12 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention.

RESOLVED:

Agreed and approved the approach set out in this report for adoption.

PR10/21 EXEMPTION FROM PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE RULES – INCOME MANAGEMENT

To advise Members that an exemption to the Procurement process was approved by the Chief Executive under the Exceptional Circumstances exemption as permitted by the Council's Constitution.

The recommendation on being put to the Committee was declared CARRIED by the Chair of the Committee the voting being by general assent.

RESOLVED:

Noted the action taken

PR11/21 EXEMPTION FROM PROCUREMENT PROCEDURE RULES – DUMPER TRUCK FOR WOODCOCK HILL CEMETERY

To advise Members that an exemption to the Procurement process was approved by the Director of Community and Environmental Services under the Exceptional Circumstances exemption as permitted by the Council's Constitution.

A Member asked if we were getting any insurance money for the vehicle. The Director of Community and Environmental Services confirmed an insurance claim had been submitted but we had to take the decision to purchase the vehicle as we needed the equipment immediately. If insurance money does come through it would go back into the budget in the normal way. The full circumstances of the theft would be looked into to see what measures could be put in place to try to stop this happening again.

The recommendation on being put to the Committee was declared CARRIED by the Chair of the Committee the voting being by general assent.

RESOLVED:

Noted the action taken.

PR12/21 SUMMARY OF THE FINANCIAL OUTTURN FOR 2020/21

This report shows the outturn position for the financial year ending on 31 March 2021 for both revenue and capital and makes the following recommendations:-

- to carry forward to 2021/22 certain unspent revenue budgets and;
- to rephase those capital budgets that require completion in 2021/22

A key feature of reporting the outturn for the financial year is to compare it against the latest agreed budget which provides an indication of the accuracy and robustness of financial control and the achievement of the strategic objective to manage resources to deliver the Council's strategic priorities and service needs.

The Director of Finance advised on the carried forward requests there was a net underspend of £581k but after carried forward requests there was a net underspend of £133k. There was increased expenditure shown for investment properties in the revenue budget which related to acquisitions or potential acquisitions which haven't yet happened which we would be able to capitalise on this year or in following years but we need to charge them to revenue until they happen. We are carrying forward some money from the capital programme to reflect the other side of those.

A Member had submitted the following questions in advance of the meeting and answers were provided as detailed below:

What was the increased spend on investment properties of £410,000 for?

Response: These are items for which we have budget within the capital programme under the PIB heading, however due to rules around charging expenditure to capital in local government we are not allowed to charge this expenditure to the capital programme until the acquisition of the asset is completed. We, therefore, need to charge these costs to revenue in 2020/21 but can capitalise them in 2021/22, increasing our Revenue Balances by the same amount. The Director of Finance advised that there were two parts to the additional retentions monies. We retained more of the total cost than we would otherwise have done. The £410k was around investment properties work which we are not able to capitalise on until they have been finalised and are going forward. It was a mixture of two things where we have made an acquisition which has not gone through to Council and one around future acquisitions.

What were the extra legal costs of £18,000 for a consultant for?

Response: £11.2k Legal Advice – Counsel Fees relating to Long Pightle Mobile Home Park with regards to the public enquiry due to the refused certificate of lawfulness. An additional £7k for the essential purchase of publications where 2 invoices were in dispute from 2018 and 2019.

Can you explain the increase of £91,825 retention monies for temp accommodation in Rickmansworth?

Response: Due to the delays in completing the Bury additional retention monies were held back from the contractor to allow discussions about the final payment to be completed.

Why has there been a reduced spend in grounds maintenance?

Reduced spend relates to less overtime and reduced repairs and maintenance on the newer vehicles recently purchased.

Could you give more details on the Wildwood Den in Rickmansworth the cost and where it will go?

Response: These were first discussed at Leisure Committee in March 2019. The Wildwood Den relates to Rickmansworth Aquadrome.

Sustainable Travel Schemes £26,160 what has been procured?

Response: The Local Walking and Cycling Strategy has been procured. This work is underway. Every Member has been consulted (March) on the Strategy and any further comments are welcomed.

What area will be looked at for the investigations of local permit workers schemes at a cost of £13,200?

Response: The monies are intended to complete the business permit review agreed by the IHED Committee in August 2019 including increase in parking spaces in Rickmansworth CPZ, work is ongoing. It would be clarified if it was with regard to Rickmansworth west or Rickmansworth town.

Post meeting note: The investigation of a local workers permits scheme in Rickmansworth was agreed for sites in Zone C and Zone A, with investigations continuing in other Zones. These are concentrated in the Rickmansworth Town Ward but extend into the Penn and Mill End Ward. The Rickmansworth West scheme is how Officers refer to another proposed parking scheme which is currently awaiting a detailed design and further consultation.

A Member said the report talked about an increase in retention monies of £91k it was not an increase it was just a re-phasing of that money.

On being put to the Committee the recommendations were declared carried by the Chair of the Committee the voting being 9 for, 0 against and 4 abstentions.

RECOMMEND:

That the favourable revenue outturn variance after carry forwards of **(£133,489)** to be noted.

That the capital outturn as summarised in paragraph 2.6 and Appendix 3 be noted.

Approved to carry forward: the unspent service budgets from 2020/21 to 2021/22 which total **£447,830** to enable completion of projects as detailed at Appendix 2.

Approved the rephasing on capital projects from 2020/21 to 2021/22 which total **£1,364,813** as detailed at Appendix 4.

PR13/21 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee received their work programme.

RESOLVED

That the work programme be noted.

PR14/21 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair moved that if the Committee wishes to consider the remaining items in private, it will be appropriate for a resolution to be passed in the following terms:-

“that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

The Committee agreed the motion by general assent.

PR15/21 PATHWAY FOR CARE

The Committee received a report.

RECOMMEND:

That public access to the report and decision be denied until the matter is resolved.

CHAIR

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POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 19 JULY 2021

PART I – DELEGATED

5. MEMBER TRAINING (CED)

1. Summary

1.1 The purpose of the report is to recommend a framework for Member Training for 2021/22 to the P&R Committee.

1.2 To determine that the Council do not sign up to the Member Charter but look to work towards achieving its standards.

2 Details

2.1 Since 1 April 2021, Member training has been organised as follows:

Licensing Committees, Licensing Act 2003, Taxi Licensing & Scrap Metal Training: 26 May 2021 by a specialist consultant plus an extra sessions with the Legal Officer on 10 June for Members who were unable to attend the original training.

Planning Training: Provided to Planning Committee and Named Substitute Members by a specialist consultant on 19 May 2021 plus 2 extra sessions with the Team Leaders on 21 May and 18 June for Members who were unable to attend the original training.

Further training sessions on the Code of Conduct have been organised for 15 September 2021 to be provided by an outside specialist consultant.

2.2 The individual Member training records for the period from 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 can be found at Appendix 1. Members were asked to provide details to the Committee team of any outside training they attended which had not been organised by the Council. This may have been training received as a County Councillor, Parish Councillor, as a Member of a Community Organisation or as a Member of an Outside body. Where information has been received this is included in the training record.

2.3 The LGA Annual Conference was held virtually this year due to Covid-19 in July. The Leader attended.

Member Attendance at Training

2.4 In some instances the attendance at the training has been disappointing. In order for Officers to understand the reasons why we welcome Members feedback :

- Is the timing of the training not convenient to Members? (Officers try to organise the training in so it runs in the daytime and evening).
- Is there insufficient notice given of the training date? What is the minimum time needed?
- Is the training organised not of interest to Members?

3 Delivery of non-mandatory training 2021/22

3.1 It is proposed that all non-mandatory training will be available through the LGA and the LGA module as referred to in Section 7 below.

4 Mandatory Training

4.1 Planning, Licensing and Regulatory Services training is mandatory and has to be undertaken on an annual basis by all Members of the Committee, newly appointed Members to the Committees and the named substitute Members before being able to attend a meeting of the Committee.

4.2 The Council Constitution reflects the change within the Terms of Reference of these Committees from May 2020.

4.3 Members are asked to give consideration on whether they should be required to complete the following online training modules as is required of Officers:

- Prevent
- Safeguarding Adults at Risk and Safeguarding Children at Risk. This training is considered important so that Members are able to recognise instances where a safeguarding issue might arise.

5 Internal Member Training (Non mandatory)

5.1 Members have previously expressed an interest in receiving training on various aspects of the Council’s roles and responsibilities as a District Council. This type of training can be organised internally as a virtual/remote training session but would need to have sufficient Members sign-up in order for the training to be organised. Examples being (Council Budget, Council Constitution). Group Leaders would be asked to co-ordinate these requests each year.

5.2 Members may wish to consider having the following online training made available to them in the following areas. This online training is mandatory for officers but would be desirable for Members:

Fraud, Anti-fraud, Corruption and Money Laundering Awareness, Code of Conduct, GDPR – General Data Protection Regulation, Information Security and Cyber Crime and Cyber Security

6 Member Charter

6.1 Recommendations from the Peer Review in March 2019 was to consider how an Organisation Development plan is developed for Members and to undertake a skills gap analysis. The details of the recommendations (34 and 35) are provided below.

<p>Recommendation 34 Organisational Development Plan for members and skills gap.</p>	<p>A discussion with members to take place to consider how the OD plan is to be developed and undertake a skills gap analysis. This to take into account the recent P&R report on member training. Also to include number 25 below Member development should ensure that members, chairs</p>	<p>November 2019.</p>		<p>Interim CEO met with LGA 09/19. Legal team contacted EELGA to discuss the Charter for Member Development. Meeting held with South East Employers, who delivers the Charter on behalf of EELGA.</p>
---	--	-----------------------	--	---

	of committees and the Leader have the correct skills to provide the appropriate challenge and oversight to decision making and policy development.			Member Charter – if Members wish to sign up to the Charter training will need to be provided for Members
--	--	--	--	--

Recommendation 35 Prudent to review objective setting for members and share outcome with officers.	Discussion with the group leaders about whether members should have a PDR process and how objectives for members would be set. Consider how these would be shared with officers.	December 2019		See 34 above
---	--	---------------	--	--------------

- 6.1.1 To sign up for the Member Charter there is an upfront cost of £3,000. The Council would then be required to work towards achieving the Charter with assistance, guidance and support provided by SEE. Once awarded the charter lasts for 3 years with an informal review after 18 months. The length of time it would take before the Council is ready for assessment is about 9 months from sign up.
- 6.1.2 Member Charter is driven by Members and would require a Member Development Panel/Committee to show development commitment and leadership on achieving the Charter with cross party support. The Panel/Committee must be seen to drive progress.
- 6.2 On recommendation 35 of the Peer Review the Independent Remuneration Panel (IRP) conducted a piece of work around member job descriptions/person specifications which was discussed at Council on 10 December 2019. Members at the meeting resolved that the Council do not develop any job descriptions.

7 Local Government Association (LGA) Training Provision

New councillor e-learning platform

- 7.1 In response to the continued need to deliver many of the LGA's Councillor development programmes through virtual means, the LGA has redesigned and updated their Councillor e learning platform to provide those undertaking the learning with a better user experience and to allow for better information on what modules are being undertaken by Councillors.
- 7.2 Self-registration is now available on [the new e-learning platform](#). This will allow Councillors to register without needing to manually email the LGA to gain access. It is designed to provide a more up to date learning experience, and the new platform enables you to create a bespoke learning programme, choosing the modules most relevant to the needs of Councillors, from deepening knowledge of local government to the essential leadership skills needed to work effectively with communities. For more information, please visit the [website](#) or email: elarning@local.gov.uk
- 7.3 It is proposed that the Committee Team will do some communications to all Members on the new platform.

8. Budget/Financial Implications

8.1 Members will be aware there are budgetary constraints and some training requests may have to be carried over to the following year.

8.2 The current Member training budget is £5,000 per annum. A breakdown of last year's Member Training budget is provided in Appendix 2. In addition to the budget breakdown provided, £1,600 of the Community Partnerships budget was used for Public Sector Equality Duty training for Members in June 2020.

9. Policy/Budget Implications

9.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budget.

10. Legal, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Customer Services Centre, Website and Risk Management Implications

10.1 Annual Planning, Licensing and Regulatory Services is mandatory to all existing Members on these Committees, any newly appointed Committee Members and any named substitute Members (excluding Licensing Committee where no substitute Members are allowed). The Code of Conduct for Members adopted at Annual Council on 25 May requires that Members undergo training on the Code and it is breach of the Code itself not to undertake the training. It is hoped this will have been completed for all Members by the end of September 2021

11. Recommendation

11.1 To note the Individual Member Training record for 2020/21.

11.2 To agree to continue with the framework for Member Training for 2021/22 as follows:

That the Chief Executive have delegated authority to:

1. Authorise attendance at LGA Leadership and other LGA courses in consultation with the relevant Group Leader.
2. Authorise attendance at other external training courses which are not free in consultation with the relevant Group Leader where there are exceptional circumstances.

11.3 To agree any necessary mandatory online training as required for all Members on Prevent, Safeguarding Adults at Risk and Safeguarding Children at Risk

11.4 Not to sign up to the Member Charter at a cost of £3,000 but look to try to achieve the standard required.

Report prepared by Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager.

Data Quality – Sufficient

Data checked by: James Baldwin, Solicitor to the Council

Background Papers: Report to P&R Committee – July 2020 report.

Appendix 1 – Member Training Records 1 April 2020 to 31 March 2021 for all Members who remained Members from May 2021

Appendix 2 - Member Training budget breakdown 2020/21

Members' training and development 2020-21

Councillor	Type of training	Date
Bedford, Matthew	8X8	22-Apr-20
	Read Planning Slide	07-May-20
	Public sector equality duty	30-Jun-20
	LAF Chair Zoom training	16-Sep-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	Zoom	24-Jul-20
Bedford, Sara	Read Planning Slides	09-May-20
	Public sector equality duty	30-Jun-20
	Public sector equality duty	01-Jul-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	Zoom	24-Jul-20
Clemens, Joanna	Licensing Training with Legal Team	30-Jun-20
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	Public sector equality duty	01-Jul-20
Cox, Stephen	8X8	23-Apr-20
	Read Planning Slides	20-May-20
	Licensing Training with Legal Team	09-Jun-20
	Public sector equality duty	30-Jun-20
Drury, Steve	Licensing Training with Legal Team	09-Jun-20
	Read Planning Slides	20-May-20
	8X8	22-Apr-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	Public sector equality duty	30-Jun-20
Duncan, Donna	Licensing training via video link	03-Jun-20
	8X8	22-Apr-20
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	Public sector equality duty	01-Jul-20
Giles-Medhurst, Stephen	Read Planning Slides	07-May-20
	8X8	22-Apr-20
Hayward, Alex	Public sector equality duty	01-Jul-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	8X8	22-Apr-20
Hiscocks, Paula	Licensing training via video link	03-Jun-20
	8X8	23-Apr-20
	Zoom	22-Jul-20

	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	Public sector equality duty	01-Jul-20
Hofman, Margaret	Read Planning Slides	31-May-20
	LGA Audit Committee	15-Jan-21
	8X8	22-Feb-20
	Guide to understanding financial reporting requirements	08-Sep-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	Public Sector Equality duty	30-Jun-20
Humphreys, Tony	Public Sector Equality duty	01-Jul-20
	Zoom	22-Jul-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	8X8	22-Apr-20
Khiroya, Raj	Read Planning Slides	21-May-20
	8X8	23-Apr-20
	Planning Committee Decision-Making (External)	29-Oct-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	Public sector equality duty	30-Jun-20
King, Joan	8X8	22-Apr-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	Zoom	24-Jul-20
King, Stephen	8X8	22-Apr-20
	Zoom	24-Jul-20
	Read Planning Slides	21-May-20
Lloyd, Chris	Read Planning Slides	20-May-20
	Public sector equality duty	30-Jun-20
	8X8	22-Apr-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	Planning Committee Decision-Making (External)	29-Oct-20
	Zoom	23-Jul-20
Major, David	LGA Code of Conduct	25-Mar-21
Martin, Keith	Public sector equality duty	30-Jun-20
	Read Planning Slides	21-May-20
	Public Sector Equality duty	30-Jun-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21

	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	8X8	22-Apr-20
	Zoom	24-Jul-20
Maru, Shanti	Licensing training via video link	03-Jun-20
	Public sector equality duty	01-Jul-20
	8X8	22-Apr-20
	Zoom	24-Jul-20
	LGA Code of Conduct	25-Mar-21
	Read Planning Slides	21-May-20
Michaels, Alex	8X8	22-Apr-20
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
Morris, Debbie	Public sector equality duty	01-Jul-20
	8X8	23-Apr-20
	Zoom	22-Jul-20
	Licensing Training 1-1 with Jess Sweeney	10-Nov-20
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	Read Planning Slides	20-May-20
Nelmes, Sarah	Read Planning Slides	20-May-20
	Public sector equality duty	30-Jun-20
	LGA Leadership	15-Jan-21
	LAF Chair Zoom training	09-Sep-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	8X8	22-Apr-20
Ranger, Reena	Read Planning Slides	20-May-20
	Public sector equality duty	01-Jul-20
	Zoom	23-Jul-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	8X8	22-Apr-20
Raw, David	Read Planning Slides	29-May-20
Scarth, Alison	Read Planning Slides	07-May-20
	Public sector equality duty	01-Jul-20
	Zoom	22-Jul-20
	LAF Chair Zoom training	07-Sep-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	8X8	22-Apr-20
Scarth, Andrew	Public sector equality duty	30-Jun-20
	8X8	22-Apr-20

	LAF Chair Zoom training	07-Sep-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	Zoom	22-Jul-20
Seabourne, Roger	Licensing training via video link	03-Jun-20
	Public sector equality duty	01-Jul-20
	Zoom	24-Jul-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	LGA Code of Conduct	25-Mar-21
	8X8	23-Apr-20
Singer, Stephanie	Read Planning Slides	07-May-20
	Public sector equality duty	30-Jun-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	Zoom	22-Jul-20
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	8X8	22-Apr-20
Sokalski, Dominic	Licensing Training with Legal Team	30-Jun-20
	Young Councillor (LGA)	27-Mar-21
	8X8	22-Apr-20
Tankard, Jon		
Trevett, Martin	Licensing training via video link	03-Jun-20
	Read Planning Slides	20-May-20
	Public sector equality duty	30-Jun-20
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	8X8	23-Apr-20
Turner, Alex	Licensing training via video link	03-Jun-20
	8X8	22-Apr-20
Turner, Kate	Licensing Training with Legal Team	30-Jun-20
	Planning Training with Officers	11-Nov-20
	8X8	22-Apr-20
Wall, Alison	Public sector equality duty	01-Jul-20
	Zoom	23-Jul-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	8X8	23-Apr-20
Williams, Phil	Climate change	12-May-20
	Read Planning Slides	07-May-20
	8X8	22-Apr-20
	Climate emergency training	30-Apr-20
	Housing Services Training	12-Jan-21
	Housing Services Training	09-Feb-21

	LAF Chair Zoom training	02-Sep-20
	LGA Code of Conduct	24-Mar-21
	Cleaner Greener LG Conference	17-Sep-20

Clr Williams

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Date Entered	Description	Cust/Supp Name	Value
13/07/2020	TCC1452-SERVICE-Licensing Training 3/6/20	Consultant	975.00
16/07/2020	Licensing training - Cllr	Payment from other Council	-75.00
22/07/2020	TCC1476-SERVICE-Licensing training webinar (WBC)	Consultant	125.00
14/09/2020	TCC1487-SERVICE-Financial reporting training - Cllr	CIPFA	175.00
06/10/2020	TLE0846-SERVICE-TRDC- Advice	Consultant	370.00
13/10/2020	TLE0849-SERVICE-advice on council procedure rules	Consultant	175.00
04/02/2021	TCC1525-SERVICE-Leadership Academy Modules 1,2 & 3. - Cllr	Local Government Association (LGA)	600.00
01/03/2021	TLE0864-SERVICE-Inovice no - 40223160 Cllr	Local Government Association (LGA)	335.00
01/03/2021	TCC1520-SERVICE-Chairing Independent Remuneration Panel	Chair of the Panel	300.00
01/03/2021	TCC1505-SERVICE-Planning Decision Making Training Cllrs x2	LGA	99.00
30/03/2021	TLE0877-SERVICE-Training sessions on code of conduct	Consultant	1,000.00

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POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 19 JULY 2021

PART I - DELEGATED

6. HOUSING DELIVERY TEST ACTION PLAN (DCES)

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report is to update Members on the Housing Delivery Test that was published in January 2021, and for Members to approve the revised Action Plan.
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) requires councils to prepare an action plan where housing delivery has fallen below the housing requirement.
- 1.3 The Action Plan analyses the reasons for the under-delivery of new homes and sets out actions to improve housing delivery within the District.

2 Details

- 2.1 The Housing Delivery Test and associated Action Plan for 2020 was agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee on the 15 June 2020.
- 2.2 The Housing Delivery Test is an annual measure of housing delivery which compares 'total net homes delivered' against 'number of homes required' over a rolling three year period. As the Council's Core Strategy was adopted in 2011 it was considered out-of-date (over 5 years from adoption) and as such the Housing Delivery Test calculation was made against government targets based on ONS figures. This resulted in a significant increase from the Core Strategy target of 180 dwellings per year. As such, the Council has been retrospectively judged against a target it was not aware of at the time.
- 2.3 The 2020 Housing Delivery Test Result was published by the Secretary of State in January 2021. Three Rivers scored 54% and in response to this, the Council is required to:
 1. Produce a Housing Delivery Test Action Plan;
 2. Apply a 20% buffer to its 5 year housing land supply calculation; and
 3. Apply the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF.
- 2.4 The Housing Land Supply Update (December 2018) established that the Council was unable to demonstrate a 5 year supply of land for housing. As such, the Council has been required to apply the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' since December 2018¹.
- 2.5 As a result of the previous 2019 Housing Delivery Test measurement of 41%, the Council has already been applying all three of these sanctions and therefore little has changed in practice.

¹ This is because the NPPF requires that the presumption in favour of sustainable development is applied where the local planning authority cannot demonstrate a five year supply of housing sites (footnote 7, paragraph 11, NPPF).

- 2.6 The 2020 Action Plan has now been updated to reflect progress made. By preparing an action plan the Council is positively responding to the challenge of increasing its housing delivery.
- 2.7 The Action Plan analyses the reasons for the under-delivery of new homes and sets out actions to improve housing delivery within the District. The actions identified in the Action Plan aim to stimulate delivery, however action will also be required by others, particularly landowners, housebuilders and registered providers, to respond to this challenge and significantly increase the level of house building.
- 2.8 The Action Plan is attached as Appendix 1 to this report. It contains a summary of relevant policy, analysis of housing delivery, looks at the actions taken by the Council to date and identifies actions the Council should implement going forwards.
- 2.9 Actions identified in the Action Plan:
- Deliver a new Local Plan that responds positively to the challenge of housing need and identifies a sustainable growth strategy.
 - Keep the Local Plan up-to-date, reviewing it every 5 years.
 - Work together with the South West Herts authorities on delivering the Joint Strategic Plan, and considering strategic areas for growth.
 - As part of the Duty to Co-operate, work with its neighbouring authorities to produce a Statement of Common Ground focussing on strategic cross-boundary issues such as housing.
 - Continue to reduce the number of applications determined after the statutory deadline, and continue to offer a proactive pre-application service to support the delivery of housing.
 - Continue dialogue with developers and landowners to monitor build out rates and obtain information on barriers to housing delivery.
 - Review the CIL charging schedule; CIL monies can be used to improve local and strategic infrastructure.
 - Update the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
 - Further joint ventures with housing associations will be explored. This will involve expanding the joint venture with Watford Community Housing and looking into other potential partnerships with housing associations. These joint ventures will help bring forward sites for development and assist in delivering much needed affordable housing.
 - Review land in the Council's ownership and work with external agencies that own land in the District to identify any potential opportunities for housing development.
 - Consider whether it is appropriate to split the Brownfield Land Register into two parts, which would subsequently introduce the permission in principle consent route for sites on Part 2 of the Register.

- Continue to encourage an uplift in density in residential developments where appropriate and introduce minimum density standards through the new Local Plan.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 Paragraph 75 of the NPPF states that “Where the housing delivery test indicates that delivery has fallen below 95% of the authority’s housing requirement over the previous three years, the authority should prepare an action plan in line with national planning guidance, to assess causes of under-delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years.”
- 3.2 The NPPF requires the Council to produce and publish an action plan in response to its failure to pass the Housing Delivery Test. There are no alternative options.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council’s agreed policy and budgets.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 None, the work to prepare the action plan has been undertaken by Officers and the actions will be implemented by Officers as part of their day-to-day duties.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 None, the NPPF requires councils that have failed the Housing Delivery Test to prepare an action plan, although it does not state what the implications will be if the plan is not prepared.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 7.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	No
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	N/A

8 Staffing Implications

- 8.1 None, the work to prepare the action plan has been undertaken by Officers and the actions will be implemented by Officers as part of their day-to-day duties.

9 Environmental Implications

- 9.1 None specific.

10 Community Safety Implications

- 10.1 None specific.

11 Public Health implications

11.1 None specific.

12 Customer Services Centre Implications

12.1 The CSC will be briefed to advise on whom to contact regarding the Action Plan.

13 Communications and Website Implications

13.1 The Action Plan and supporting information will be available on the Council’s website.

14 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

14.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council’s duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

14.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Economic and Sustainable Development service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this plan.

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
That actions from the plan are not implemented by the Council	The NPPF does not state what the implications are if specific actions in the plan are not implemented	Monitor the Council’s performance against the actions stated in the plan	Tolerate	4

14.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Likelihood Very Likely ----- ▼	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12

	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
	Impact			
	Low -----> Unacceptable			

Impact Score

4 (Catastrophic)

3 (Critical)

2 (Significant)

1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

4 (Very Likely (≥80%))

3 (Likely (21-79%))

2 (Unlikely (6-20%))

1 (Remote (≤5%))

14.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

15 Recommendation

15.1 That the Policy and Resources Committee:

- Notes the Housing Delivery Test Result for 2021;
- Agrees the Action Plan and the series of actions that the Council will seek to implement;
- Agrees to the publication of the Action Plan on the Council's Housing Delivery test webpage.

Report prepared by: Lauren McCullagh, Senior Planning Officer

Background Papers

National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019)

Housing Delivery Test: 2020 measurement

Planning practice guidance

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 – Housing Delivery Test Action Plan

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Housing Delivery Test Action Plan

June 2021



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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Access to a decent, safe and secure home is seen as a basic right, but for many, houses are too expensive and the choices of high quality homes are limited. On a simple measure of affordability most parts of the country experience house prices well in excess of the 'affordable' ratio of 4:1, where local average house prices are four times local average income levels. Three Rivers is no different, in fact with an affordability ratio at around 16:1 it is one of the least affordable areas outside London¹.
- 1.2 The Government considers that increasing the supply of housing is key to improving the affordability of housing. Whilst this simplifies a very complex issue, the Government is focused on increasing the supply of new homes across the country by removing barriers to development. In the 2017 Budget, the Government announced that it would enable the housing market to deliver 300,000 homes a year on average by the mid-2020s. This objective to increase the number of new homes is reflected in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, February 2019) and the introduction of the Housing Delivery Test.
- 1.3 Paragraph 75 of the NPPF states that *"Where the housing delivery test indicates that delivery has fallen below 95% of the authority's housing requirement over the previous three years, the authority should prepare an action plan in line with national planning guidance, to assess the causes of under-delivery and identify actions to increase delivery in future years."*
- 1.4 The Housing Delivery Test is an annual measure of housing delivery which compares 'total net homes delivered' against 'number of homes required' over a rolling three year period. As the Council's Core Strategy was adopted in 2011 it is considered out-of-date (over 5 years from adoption). This meant that the calculation was made against the Government's local housing need figures. This resulted in a significant increase from the Core Strategy target of 180 dwellings per year. The standard method for calculating housing need was only introduced by the NPPF in July 2018. As such, the Council was retrospectively judged against a target it was not aware of at the time.
- 1.5 The Housing Delivery Test Result for Three Rivers District Council was published by the Secretary of State in January 2021. Three Rivers District Council scored 54% and in response to this, the Council has produced a Housing Delivery Test Action Plan. By preparing an Action Plan, the Council is positively responding to the challenge of increasing its housing delivery.
- 1.6 The Action Plan analyses the reasons for the under-delivery of new homes and sets out actions to improve housing delivery within the District. The actions identified in this document aim to stimulate delivery, however action will also be required by others, particularly landowners, housebuilders and registered providers, to respond to this challenge and significantly increase the level of house building. This Action Plan should be seen as part of the response, together with those planned by housebuilders, developers, registered providers, land agents, communities and Government Departments.

¹ Office for National Statistics (2021) House price to workplace-based earnings ratio
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquarterandmedian>

- 1.7 It should be noted that whilst this Action Plan seeks to support an increase in housing delivery, it cannot guarantee it. Local planning authorities do not control the operation of the housing market. The Council can focus on providing a supply of deliverable sites to help in meeting the need for new housing, however there may be other factors why sites do not come forward at a particular time which are beyond the Council's control (e.g. financial/commercial decisions).

2. Policy Context

The Housing White Paper

- 2.1 In response to the national housing crisis, the Government published the Housing White Paper 'Fixing our broken housing market' in February 2017. It set out the Government's intentions to reform the housing market and boost the supply of new homes in England. The proposed measures covered planning for the right homes in the right places, how to build homes faster and how to diversify the housing market.
- 2.2 Importantly, it proposed to hold local authorities to account for the number of new homes delivered through the introduction of a new Housing Delivery Test. The test would show whether the number of homes being built is below the required number of homes needed in that area. The test would provide a mechanism for establishing the reasons why there has been under delivery.
- 2.3 The Housing White Paper also addressed the issue of developers' land banking, in other words holding on to land to gain maximum profit by riding increases in land value. This naturally slows the rate of development, making it harder for housing demand to be met and further increasing house prices. This is an example of a practice that can be affected more by external agencies rather than the Council, which has little power to deal with developers who choose to sit on their investments.
- 2.4 The third focus of the Housing White Paper was on the development of brownfield land. The Government believes this will reduce the pressure on the countryside to provide land for housing. The Council supports development on brownfield land through publishing its Brownfield Land Register, however there are few opportunities for brownfield development in a semi-rural District constrained by Green Belt.
- 2.5 Building on the Housing White Paper, the Government published the 'Planning for the right homes in the right places: consultation proposals' in September, 2017. This set out proposals to reform the planning system to increase the supply of new homes and increase the local authority capacity to manage growth. The most significant proposal was for the introduction of a standard method for calculating local authorities' housing need. The standard method would identify the minimum number of homes expected to be planned for. This proposal marked a huge departure from previous government policy which required local authorities to prepare a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) to identify their housing need figure and the types of housing needed in their area.
- 2.6 The Government feels that the standard approach will help simplify an overly complex system. The idea is for local authorities to have a clearly set out housing need that will be much harder

for developers to challenge when compared to the previous range of methodologies being used. This reiterates the Government's support for a plan led system that makes it harder for speculative development to take place. The aim of this is a pattern of development that helps to protect the countryside. It could also be argued, however, that the standard method takes away some of local authorities' ability to be adaptable to local circumstances and needs.

National Policy Context

- 2.7 The Government reinforced its objective to significantly boost the supply of new homes and making the local authority more accountable for delivery in their area by publishing a revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, February 2019), the Housing Delivery Test Measurement Rule Book (July 2018), updated Planning Practice Guidance (PPG, February 2019) and the Housing Delivery Test: 2018 Measurement Technical note (February 2019).
- 2.8 The methodology for calculating the Housing Delivery Test is set out in the Housing Delivery Test Measurement Rule Book². It measures the number of net homes delivered against the number of homes required over a rolling three year period.
- 2.9 The formula for the Housing Delivery Test Calculation is as follows:

$$\text{Housing Delivery Test (\%)} = \frac{\text{Total net homes delivered over three year period}}{\text{Total number of homes required over three year period}}$$

- 2.10 The Council scored 54% in the Housing Delivery Test for 2020. This result means the Council is required to produce an Action Plan as per the requirements of paragraph 75 of the NPPF. The Action Plan analyses the causes of under delivery and demonstrates the Council's commitment to responding positively to the challenge of increasing housing delivery.
- 2.11 The NPPF requires local planning authorities to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing land plus a buffer depending on the circumstances the local authority falls within. The Housing Delivery Test result means the Council is required to apply a 20% buffer to improve the prospect of achieving the planned supply. As a result of the previous 2019 Housing Delivery Test measurement of 41%, the Council has already been applying a 20% buffer to its 5-year supply.
- 2.12 The Housing Delivery test also means that the Council is required to apply the 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' as set out in paragraph 11 of the NPPF. As the Council is unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing, it is already applying the presumption.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.13 The Three Rivers Core Strategy was adopted in 2011 prior to the publication of the NPPF in 2012 and has a housing target of 180 new homes per year. In 2013 the Development Management Policies LDD was adopted, followed by the Site Allocations LDD in 2014.

² Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/housing-delivery-test-measurement-rule-book>

3. Housing Delivery Analysis

- 3.1 This section looks at the causes of the 'under delivery' of new homes in the District and identifies the local and national issues which influence housing delivery. A range of data and intelligence sources have been used to inform this analysis. As part of this process, the Council has engaged with stakeholders to improve its understanding of the issues effecting housing delivery. The analysis of the issues have been used to inform what actions the Council need to take to improve its housing delivery.
- 3.2 Building houses is often a complex process, there may be other factors as to why sites for housing do not come forward that are beyond the control of the Council. It requires a broader approach to be taken to increase the delivery of new homes and the use of other tools available which are beyond the traditional remit of the Local Planning Authority.

Strategic Issues Influencing Delivery

- 3.3 Delivery of market and affordable homes is a key strategic and cross boundary issue for the Council and this is reflected in joint evidence base and Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) work. The Council has a Memorandum of Understanding in place for the JSP and will be looking to have Statements of Common Ground in place with their neighbouring authorities in the near future. The high demand for new homes and a constrained land supply is a shared characteristic across neighbouring authorities and those within the housing market area.
- 3.4 A key component of Local Plan preparation is to take account of any potential shortfalls in existing infrastructure provision, and to plan for any additional capacity that may arise because of future growth. The Council is currently preparing an updated Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) which will set out all of the infrastructure required to deliver the Local Plan. The IDP will set out what mitigation is required as well as identify funding streams and mechanisms required to enable development.

Increased Housing Need

- 3.5 The need for housing has increased significantly since the adoption of the Core Strategy. The Council's local housing need figure is 630 homes per year. This is calculated using the standard method as required by the NPPF. Prior to this, the Council's own evidence, the South West Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, 2016) identified a need of 516 homes per year.
- 3.6 The significant increase in the need for new homes is considerably higher than the Core Strategy housing target of 180 new homes per year. The current spatial strategy in the Core Strategy does not support this increased need for housing and the Council is preparing a new Local Plan to address this.

Local Housing Performance

3.7 It is important to note that the Council had a strong record of delivering housing against the Core Strategy housing target. This is demonstrated in the Council’s Annual Monitoring Reports (AMR) which monitored housing delivery against the Core Strategy housing target.

3.8 The annual net dwellings completed between 2001 and 2018 are shown in Table 2 below. Since 2001, the average number of new dwellings delivered each year up until 2018 was 207. This shows that the Council was consistently delivering above the Core Strategy target of 180 dwellings per annum. This is emphasised by the cumulative delivery figure being 3520 while the cumulative target was 3060, showing an over delivery of 460 dwellings between 2001 and 2018.

Table 2: Housing Delivery Against Core Strategy Housing Target 2001 - 2018

Year	01/02 - 08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12	12/13	13/14	14/15	15/16	16/17	17/18
Completions (Net)	1926	48	107	185	176	142	285	215	144	264
Cumulative Delivery	1926	1974	2081	2266	2442	2612	2897	3112	3256	3520
Cumulative Core Strategy Target of 180 dwellings	1440	1620	1800	1980	2160	2340	2520	2700	2880	3060

3.9 Despite a successful record of delivering above the Core Strategy housing target up until 2017/18, subsequent AMRs have monitored housing delivery against the local housing need figure as calculated by the standard method. 149 homes were delivered in the 2018/19 monitoring year against the standard method target of 620 dwellings and 446 dwellings were delivered in the 2019/20 period against the standard method target of 624 dwellings. In 2020/21, this target figure is 630 dwellings per annum which will again be likely to indicate an underperformance in housing delivery.

Affordability

3.10 In 2017 the mean house price in Three Rivers was £641,706 which is the highest in the South West Hertfordshire Housing Market Area and well above the average in the East of England and in England as a whole. This results in the District having one of the worst levels of affordability in the country coupled with an undersupply of affordable homes.

3.11 The average median income in Three Rivers is similar to the national average; in 2020 it was £29,982³, however the level of average median income required to purchase a new home is

³ Office for National Statistics (2021) House price to workplace-based earnings ratio
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquarterandmedian>

double that required in England. Data from the Office of National Statistics shows a ratio of house prices to income in Three Rivers in 2020 is 16.34⁴. This is on par with the levels experienced in London, with the ratio being higher than in several London Boroughs. This means that accessing the property market in the District is limited for most first-time buyers and even those already established on the housing ladder. Affordability is therefore a significant issue in the District and this is reflected in local housing need.

Affordable Housing Delivery

- 3.12 There are around 17 housing associations (Registered Providers) with stock in the District. Many of these associations holds land in some form, however they do not own significant land that can be effectively developed to meet local housing need on any scale. Where there are development opportunities, these tend to be dependent on the existing stock being redeveloped.
- 3.13 Many of the development opportunities that do arise are constrained or have already been exploited for their housing potential and already been developed. Within the constrained opportunities that do exist in the District, the Council expects development to be policy compliant and include delivery of affordable housing units within every development, subject to viability.
- 3.14 Much of the delivery of new affordable housing in the District comes through Section 106 agreements, where private developers make contributions towards meeting the need for affordable housing locally, which is preferred on site within private development schemes. As a result, the delivery of new affordable housing tends to be through private developers, with only a limited number of additional affordable housing units. This affordable housing is complemented by housing associations effectively re-developing their own sites.
- 3.15 During 2019/20, the AMR recorded that 82 new affordable dwellings were delivered, which is considerably higher than the 22 affordable dwellings completed the previous monitoring year and similar to the 90 affordable dwellings completed in 2017/18. In the 2016/17 monitoring year no affordable units were completed; the delivery of no affordable housing units in the 2016/17 year was due to the Council following national guidance and being unable to require affordable housing on sites of fewer than 10 dwellings. The Council has since reinstated Policy CP4(e) of the Core Strategy.
- 3.16 Three Rivers Core Strategy Policy CP4 requires a contribution towards affordable housing from all developments where there is a net increase in dwellings, this includes affordable housing contributions from small sites (fewer than 10 units). The Council seeks to maximise affordable housing provision and continues to apply Core Strategy Policy CP4 in full. Current evidence concludes that there is a continued pressing need for new additional affordable housing in Three Rivers. Sites falling below the 10 unit and 1,000 sqm threshold should continue to make a valuable contribution towards increasing the number of affordable units in the District. The delivery of affordable housing remains a critical issue.

⁴ Office for National Statistics (2021) House price to workplace-based earnings ratio
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/ratioofhousepricetoworkplacebasedearningslowerquartileandmedian>

Housing Mix

- 3.17 The size of new homes being built in the District has a direct impact on affordability and on the number of new homes being delivered. There has been a historic trend for the delivery of large homes in the District, however in recent years the trend has been the delivery of smaller units. In 2019/20, the AMR reported that 94% of gross new homes completed had 1 to 3 bedrooms and in the previous year it was 79%.
- 3.18 The Local Housing Needs Assessment (LNHA) (2020) provides an up to date source of information regarding the size, type and tenure of homes needed in the District. It concluded that there is a higher need for new homes of 1 to 3 bedrooms in the context of the social/affordable rented tenure and the affordable home ownership tenure. For market housing, the main need is for three-bedroom dwellings, although there is a significantly greater need for 4+-bedroom dwellings in this tenure than is the case for the tenures of affordable home ownership and social/affordable rented. Table 3 below set out the number of bedrooms required to meet identified need. The LNHA also identified an acute need for affordable housing (primarily social rented tenure).

Table 3: Dwelling requirement by number of bedrooms (2020 – 2036)

	1-bedroom	2-bedroom	3-bedroom	4+ bedroom
Market Housing	5%	23%	43%	30%
Affordable Home Ownership	21%	41%	28%	9%
Social/ Affordable Rented Housing	40%	27%	31%	2%

Constraints to Housing Land Supply

- 3.19 One of the key issues affecting the delivery of new homes is the characteristics of the District's land supply and as a consequence it means the available land supply is severely limited. The District is embedded in the Metropolitan Green Belt. It permeates all parts of the District with 77% of the District designated as Metropolitan Green Belt. Green Belt has the highest policy protection and is identified as a constraint for development in the NPPF. The NPPF is clear that Green Belt boundaries should only be altered in exceptional circumstances through the plan making process. The emerging New Local Plan will consider whether there are exceptional circumstances for changes to the Green Belt boundaries potentially enabling more sites to be developed than is currently possible.
- 3.20 In addition, the land in the District has a high nature conservation value. There are a five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) located within the District, and part of the District is within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The District is characterised by extensive green areas including woodland, ancient woodland, common land, farmland, rivers, and parkland. It includes the rivers Chess, Gade and Colne and their floodplains. There are 354 Listed Buildings within the District and 22 Conservation Areas. This combination means the District has a high quality, distinctive landscape with significant landmarks and strategic views. The presence of these landscape and heritage characteristics results in limited development opportunities for delivering new housing on a large scale.

Five Year Housing Land Supply

- 3.21 The AMR 2019/20 sets out the current housing land supply calculation and position⁵. The Council is currently unable to demonstrate a 5-year supply of deliverable housing against the local housing need figure which was 624 dwellings per annum at the time that the AMR 2019/20 was published. It is unlikely that the Council will be able to demonstrate a 5-year housing supply until the new Local Plan is adopted as the existing spatial strategy cannot support delivery against the new housing target of 630 dwellings per year.
- 3.22 The Council is committed to responding positively to the challenge of increasing the delivery of new homes and a number of evidence base studies have been undertaken to review the supply of future housing sites. This includes the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment and Urban Capacity Study. These evidence base studies will be published during the Regulation 18 consultation which is anticipated to take place over the period June – July 2021.

Housing Density

- 3.23 Much of the District is characterised by low density development. The character of the area plays an influential role in the impact on density. New development in settlements that are characterised by low density development should respect the character and appearance of the area. This can lead to more low density development. Good design can potentially help to increase densities in traditionally low density areas.
- 3.24 Until a new Local Plan is in place and given the high demand for new homes and the constrained housing land supply, it will be crucial that new developments coming forward make the most efficient use of land. This approach is supported by NPPF paragraph 123 which states that *“where there is a shortage of land for meeting identified housing need, it is especially important that planning decisions avoid homes being built at low densities, and ensure that developments make optimal use of each site.”*
- 3.25 The NPPF promotes the use of minimum density standards for town centres and other locations that are well served by public transport. The Council will need to consider solutions to accommodate more housing in the District’s urban areas such as increasing density through delivering more flats and smaller homes to increase housing delivery. This is supported by the LNHA (20200) which identified a need for smaller homes (one to three bedrooms) across tenures in order to widen the choices of new homes in the District. The new Local Plan will contain policies requiring higher densities in sustainable locations and will set minimum density standards for other areas.

Viability

- 3.26 The District has some of the highest land values and property prices in the country. Based on a review of viability evidence, viability is not an issue that is preventing developers from delivering new homes in the District. It may affect the number of affordable homes delivered,

⁵ This can be viewed on the Council’s website at: <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/annual-monitoring-report>

however where viability has been raised as a barrier to development, market housing has been delivered in place of affordable housing. As such, overall housing delivery is unaffected.

- 3.27 Affordable housing delivery remains a critical issue, and will be addressed in the emerging new Local Plan, through site allocations requiring full policy compliance at the plan-making stage. This will involve the Council and developers agreeing to fully policy compliant site viability prior to allocation.

Implementation of Planning Permissions and Development Management Performance

- 3.28 Local planning authorities have limited influence on housing delivery once planning permissions have been granted. The timescale for the implementation of a planning permission is generally not considered to be a significant issue within the District, implementation generally occurs within the permission period.
- 3.29 The Council has continued to build relationships with developers, landowners and agents and carry on a dialogue after planning permission is granted. The Council has taken a proactive approach on non-implemented planning permissions by contacting applicants that have received a recent planning permission. A small number of responses were received and pre-commencement conditions were identified as slowing down development. Operational requirements of specific sites were also considered an issue, however this is beyond the Council's control. Overall, no significant barriers to the delivery of the development were raised.
- 3.30 The performance of decision making in the Council's Development Management Service is not considered to be a barrier to delivering new homes. On the whole, planning applications are being processed within the statutory timeframes. In the 2019-2020 monitoring period, 100% of major planning applications were processed within the statutory 13-week period (or within an agreed extension). This is identical to performance in the previous monitoring year and is well above the Council and national target of 60%. For minor applications, where the statutory time period to process an application is 8 weeks (or within an agreed extension), 90% were processed within this timeframe, exceeding the Council's target of 65% and national target of 70%. These statistics demonstrate the speed of decision making by the Planning Service. The timely processing of planning applications is not preventing the granting of planning permissions and in turn the delivery of new homes.
- 3.31 On those sites where planning permission is refused, the Development Management Service's appeals performance is good. The Council has continued to win appeal decisions on sites located within the Green Belt. During 2019-2020, 77% of planning appeal decisions were made in favour of the Council and dismissed. This statistic demonstrates the soundness of decision making by the Planning Service and that unsound decisions are not leading to unnecessary delays and costs to the delivery of new homes.

Infrastructure

- 3.32 The Council has considered whether the current provision of infrastructure in the District is acting as a barrier to the delivery of new homes. For existing planning permissions there are no infrastructure barriers preventing the commencement of sites.

Other barriers to housing delivery

- 3.33 There are number of challenges and barriers to overcome before housing can be delivered and/or purchased. Some may be financial in nature while others are more site specific. These barriers affect both the supply and demand side of housing delivery. The following paragraphs provide a summary of the barriers that have not already been discussed in the paragraphs above.
- 3.34 Site specific constraints include issues such as land contamination, access arrangements, landscape, flood risk and drainage, wildlife and nature, heritage assets. There can also be problems around land ownership and local opposition. The onus is on the developer to deal with these barriers, however the Council will assist where it can.
- 3.35 There are financial issues to be considered such as land value expectations and access to finance for developers and potential home buyers. These barriers are ultimately dictated by the market and are beyond Council's control.
- 3.36 Resources can be a barrier to development. There may be a lack of skills and labour availability, or a shortage of materials. Again, this is down to the market and is considered beyond the Council's control.

4. The Action Plan

- 4.1 This section sets out the actions that the Council has already taken to increase housing delivery and the future actions required to continue this work. The Council is fully committed to working proactively and is utilising the full range of tools and processes at its disposal. It is acknowledged that the delivery of new homes has a wider remit than just planning and requires actions to be undertaken by other Council services including Housing and Asset Management and Property Services.
- 4.2 The need to produce a new Local Plan is recognised as a corporate priority. By boosting housing delivery as well as responding to housing need, the Council can ensure that it delivers more homes in a way that carefully balances the objectives set out in the new Local Plan as well as making a positive contribution towards meeting its identified housing needs.

What has the Council done so far?

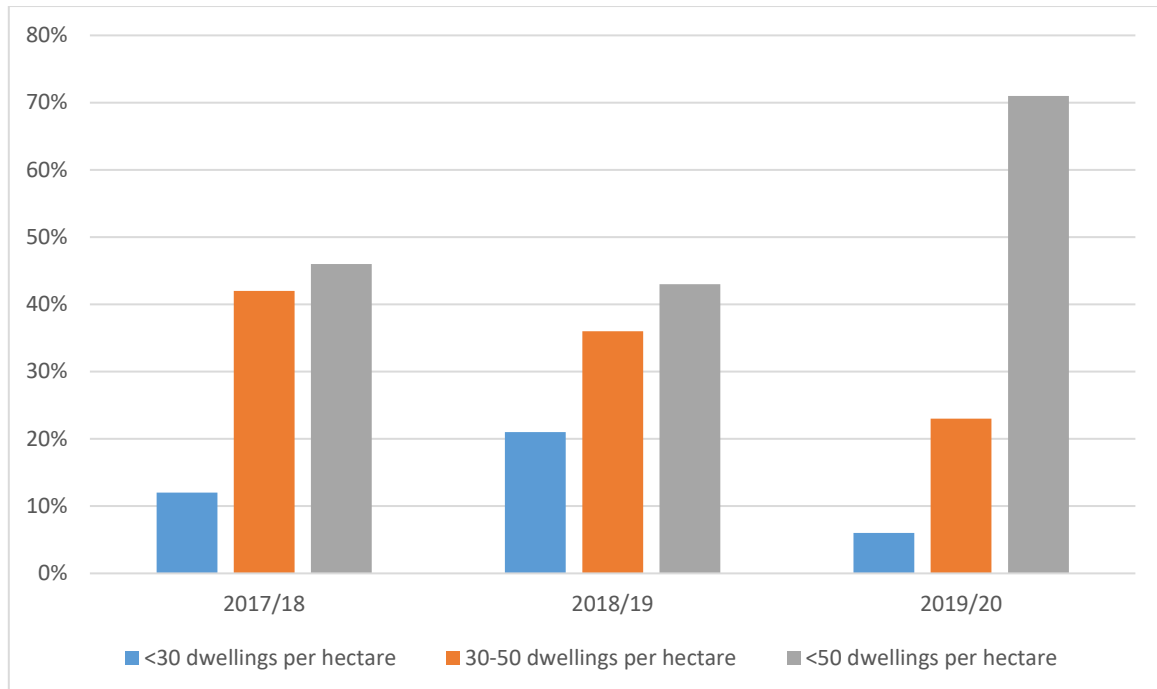
- 4.3 The paragraphs below set out the wide range of positive actions that the Council has already taken to increase the supply of new homes and support the delivery of the housing we need.
- 4.4 The Council has been progressing the preparation of the new Local Plan. The need for a new Local Plan is crucial as it will plan for as much of the identified need for housing as possible. The Local Development Scheme (LDS) has been published online and sets out the timeframe for progressing the new Local Plan.
- 4.5 To support the Local Plan, the Council has undertaken a number of evidence base studies. These include the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment, Edge of

Settlement & New Settlement Scoping Report and Urban Capacity Study. Multiple Call for Sites have been completed to inform these studies as well as communications with landowners and developers. All of evidence base documents will be published during the Regulation 18 consultation which is anticipated to take place over the period June – July 2021.

- 4.6 Applicants, agents and developers who have been granted planning permission have been contacted to find out if there are any barriers preventing the delivery of housing.
- 4.7 The Council is working together with the other four South West Herts authorities on the preparation of a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP). The JSP will look beyond the Local Plan period to 2050 considering strategic housing sites for development. A Strategic Growth Locations Study and accompanying Multi Modal Study (transport) are being undertaken as part of this work.
- 4.8 The Council has continued to develop and streamline its pre-application advice service. The focus has been on reducing the time spent on decision making and reducing the use of planning conditions through early engagement with applicants.
- 4.9 The Council has published a Brownfield Land Register which identifies suitable sites for housing on previously developed land. The Register is updated on an annual basis.
- 4.10 The Council has introduced a Right to Build Register for those seeking to acquire land to build a home themselves in the authority's area. The Register provides the Council with an indication of the demand for self and custom build. The Council will support self-build and custom build development through policies in the new Local Plan.
- 4.11 In 2017 the Council implemented several Article 4 Directions on the District's three strategic allocated employment sites. This removed permitted development rights in relation to the conversion of office space to residential development, providing greater control over the type and location of development.
- 4.12 The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) was adopted in 2015. This is used to fund infrastructure in the District. The adoption of CIL has resulted in the reduction of time spent on negotiating Section 106 Agreements between developers and the Council.
- 4.13 The Council supports the preparation of Neighbourhood Plans, which can potentially support additional growth beyond that set out in the Local Plan.
- 4.14 The Council has entered a joint venture with Watford Community Housing, delivering 33 flats including 15 affordable homes at the Chess development, with other sites in the early stages of being considered for development.
- 4.15 The Council has been considering redevelopment opportunities on sites that are owned by the Council, for example redevelopment of the Council's garage sites.
- 4.16 Since the increase in the Council's housing target, as a result of the standard method, an increase in the housing densities of residential developments coming forward through planning applications has been strongly encouraged. The average density of residential completions is shown in Figure 1 below. Despite a slight decrease between 2017/18 and 2018/19, the trend

over the last three monitoring years has been a significant increase in the number of developments built at greater than 50 dwellings per hectare, with 71% of completions built at greater than 50 dwellings per hectare in 2019/20. In addition, the number of completions built at a density of less than 30 dwellings per hectare decreased between 2018/19 and 2019/20.

Figure 1: Density of Dwelling Completions (2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20)



What more can the Council do?

- 4.17 The Council will continue to positively seek out further opportunities to increase its housing delivery as set out in the paragraphs below and will work closely with the relevant Council services and external organisations to achieve this.
- 4.18 The Council will deliver a new Local Plan that responds positively to the challenge of housing need and identifies a sustainable growth strategy. The Local Plan is expected to be adopted in 2023. The Council will then endeavour to keep the Plan up-to-date, reviewing it every 5 years.
- 4.19 The Council, together with the other South West Herts Authorities will deliver the Joint Strategic Plan considering strategic areas for growth. An Issues and Options consultation on the Joint Strategic Plan is expected to take place in 2022.
- 4.20 As part of the Duty to Cooperate, the Council will work with its neighbouring authorities to produce Statements of Common Ground focussing on strategic cross-boundary issues such as housing.
- 4.21 The Council will continue to reduce the number of applications determined after the statutory deadline, and continue to offer a proactive pre-application service to support the delivery of housing.

- 4.22 The Council will continue dialogue with developers and landowners to monitor build out rates and obtain information on barriers to housing delivery.
- 4.23 The CIL charging schedule will be reviewed and a new schedule adopted in the future. CIL monies can be used for improvements to local and strategic infrastructure to support housing growth.
- 4.24 The Council will review and update the Infrastructure Delivery Plan alongside the Local Plan.
- 4.25 Further joint ventures with housing associations will be explored by the Council. This will involve expanding the existing joint venture with Watford Community Housing and continuing to look at other potential partnerships with housing associations that work in the District. These joint ventures will help bring sites forward for development and assist in the delivery of affordable homes.
- 4.26 The Council will review its land ownership and work with external agencies that own land in the District to identify any potential opportunities for housing development.
- 4.27 The Council will consider whether it is appropriate to split the Brownfield Land Register into two parts, which would subsequently introduce the permission in principle consent route for sites on Part 2 of the Register.
- 4.28 Figure 1 shows that between 2018/19 and 2019/20, there was an increase in the number of completions built at a density of greater than 50 dwellings per hectare. In order to maintain a high level of residential developments built at this density threshold in suitable and sustainable locations, the Council will continue to encourage an uplift in density in residential developments where appropriate and will introduce density standards as part of the new Local Plan.

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 19 JULY 2021

PART I – DELEGATED

7. LIVESTREAMING OF COUNCIL/COMMITTEE/SUB-COMMITTEE MEETINGS (CED)

1 Summary

1.1 A motion was received for full Council on 13 July 2021 as detailed below:

Proposer: Cllr Alex Hayward, seconded by Councillor Ciaran Reed

In order to maximise transparency and electoral accountability this Council believes that the residents of Three Rivers should all be able to access the meetings of this Council via live streaming and that this Council looks to implement this facility as soon as possible.

1.2 Under Rule 11(6) of the Council Constitution the Chief Executive and Monitoring Officer in consultation with the Chair of Council referred the motion to the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 19 July 2021 for discussion and debate and to then report back to Council on 19 October 2021 with a decision on whether to implement livestreaming facilities.

1.3 The definitions for webcasting and livestreaming meetings are:

Webcasting - broadcasting/presenting over the internet (web + broadcast = webcast) which can include pre-recorded material and broadcast to a large audience

Live streaming - online streaming media simultaneously broadcast and recorded online. Often streamed to social media channels.

1.4 This report has been prepared to aid the debate/discussion on the motion and provide some information on livestreaming meetings.

2 Details

2.1 *Virtual meetings and Livestreaming of those meetings*

2.1.1 Prior to the Covid 19 pandemic all Council/Committee/Sub-Committee and Forum meetings were held in person up to March 2020.

2.1.2 Following a change in Government legislation in April 2020, we were able to hold all Council/Committee/Sub-Committee meetings virtually using a variety of platforms (which included 8x8 and Zoom) with all the meetings livestreamed by an external company (with the exception of Part II business).

2.1.3 It is a legal requirement under the Local Government Act 1972 as amended that all public meetings are accessible apart from any Part II confidential business.

2.1.4 All the Council/Committee/Sub-Committee meetings from May 2020 to April 2021 were livestreamed with all the recordings being kept for a year. Details on the livestreaming viewings were included in the Members' Information Bulletin.

2.1.5 From 7 May 2021 the ability to hold virtual Council/Committee/Sub-Committee meetings ceased on expiry of the enabling Regulations and the Council reverted to physical meetings, a legal challenge having been unsuccessful.

- 2.1.6 Counsel's advice on holding virtual Local Area Forum meetings was obtained and was to the effect that (as they have no decision making powers) those meetings could continue virtually.
- 2.1.7 Under the Licensing Act 2003, we are able to hold Licensing sub-committee meetings virtually, this being separate legislation, with the necessary authority. The Council has submitted a response to a recent call for evidence by DCLG which supported the ability to hold virtual meetings. A government response is awaited.

2.2 *Livestreaming meetings in the future*

- 2.2.1 Quotes are being obtained from two companies to livestream our meetings and some information is provided below in the report.
- 2.2.2 Currently, there are no facilities to livestream or webcast meetings from the Penn Chamber to the internet. In order to live stream or webcast meetings the Penn Chamber would need the necessary equipment installed which would need to be linked to the sound system so we could 'track' the speaker with the layout for each meeting programmed into the system. We may also require some upgrade of the control system used in the Penn Chamber to do this but will depend on the technicians view of our existing equipment.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 That officers obtain updated detailed quotes on the livestreaming of meetings but with the need to include any maintenance and support for the system for the Committee to review in September using the following list of requirements:
- To be able to live stream a meeting on a link accessible from the Council's website which could be published with the agenda.
 - To be able to retain a recording of the live stream to be accessible from the Council's website via the link for a year after the meeting.
 - For the cameras within the room to track the participants in the meeting when they are speaking.
 - The live stream should be simple to operate by officers so that it is simple to end a live stream when the meeting concludes or moves into Part 2 session and with a clear ability for a simple return to broadcasting of Part I
 - For the system to comply with the Council's ICT security policies.
 - For there to be minimal staff resource required in operating the system.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.

5 Financial Implications

- 5.1 Two initial quotes were received in April 2021 one being for £46.5k and another for £38k. One of the companies has visited the Council offices and are preparing a formal quote which should be received shortly. Should the project go ahead funding can be found from the Three Rivers House Transformation capital budget of £270k to pay for the installation and equipment.
- 5.2 In addition to the cost of the required equipment there will also be an ongoing cost to support the livestreaming of the meetings and any maintenance required. When formal quotes are received this will be included. This could be funded from the

revenue carry forward of £19k from 2020/21 in the Facilities budget and would need to be built into future years budgets once this reserve was exhausted.

6 Legal Implications

- 6.1 There is no legal requirement to livestream meetings.
- 6.2 If meetings continue to be held in person the requirement for the public to have access to the meeting would be complied with and if the livestreaming was disrupted in any way there would be no legal requirement to ensure it continued to run as we are already legally compliant.
- 6.3 Where a project is valued at between £5K and £50K, there is no requirement for a formal tender process. It would be necessary to advertise the requirement and invite at least three, and usually no more than six, written quotations or tenders demonstrating value for money through a combination of cost and quality.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

7.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	Yes
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	No

7.2 Impact Assessment

Not applicable.

8 Staffing Implications

- 8.1 Consideration will need to be given as to whether additional Committee team staff or Facilities team staff would be needed for livestreaming although we would look to implement a solution which does not require additional staff.

9. Environmental Implications

- 9.2 If the Council did agree to livestream meetings there would be reduced travel by Councillors (non-committee members), Parish Councillors, County Councillors and members of the public to attend meetings as the option to watch live from a computer would be provided therefore this would have a positive benefit to the Council's Climate Change Strategy.

9 Community Safety and Public Health implications

- 9.1 None specific.

10 Customer Services Centre Implications

- 11.1 All CSC staff would be provided with details on the livestreaming of meetings should Council agree to this. A CSC mailbox to be notified when an agenda is published through mod.gov. They will then be aware that the agenda is on the website and

therefore, the livestreaming link will also be available (for all Part I business of the meeting)

11 Communications and Website Implications

- 12.1 If the Council did agree to livestream all Council/Committee and Sub-Committee meetings then the website would be updated to advise accordingly and all agendas would be provided with a livestream link to watch the meeting on publication. All social media channels will also be used to publicise the option to livestream the meeting.

12 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 12.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.
- 12.2 The subject of this report would be covered by the Committee service plan.
- 12.3 There are no risks resulting from this report

13 Recommendation

- 14.1 That officers obtain updated detailed quotes on the livestreaming of meetings but with the need to include any maintenance and support for the system for the Committee to review in September using the following list of requirements:
- To be able to live stream a meeting on a link accessible from the Council's website which could be published with the agenda.
 - To be able to retain a recording of the live stream to be accessible from the Council's website via the link for a year after the meeting.
 - For the cameras within the room to track the participants in the meeting when they are speaking.
 - The live stream should be simple to operate by officers so that it is simple to end a live stream when the meeting concludes or moves into Part 2 session and with a clear ability for a simple return to broadcasting of Part I.
 - For the system to comply with the Council's ICT security policies.
 - For there to be minimal staff resource required in operating the system.

Report prepared by: Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

Data Quality

Data sources: None

Data checked by: James Baldwin, Tracy Langley, Caroline Harris, Emma Tiernan, Nigel Pollard

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	X
3	High	

Background Papers - none

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Equality impact assessment – Form A

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Form A – Relevance Test

Function/Service Being Assessed: Livestreaming of meetings

Officer completing form: Sarah Haythorpe

Date of completion: 5 July 2021

1. Populations served/affected:

Universal (service covering all residents)?

2. Is it relevant to the general equality duty? (see Q and A for definition of 'general duty')

Which of these three aspects does the function relate to (if any)?:

Advancing equality of opportunity

Fostering good relations

Is there any evidence or reason to believe that some groups could be differently affected?

No

Which equality categories are affected? None

3. What is the degree of relevance?

In your view, is the information you have on each category adequate to make a decision about relevance?

Yes

Are there any triggers for this review (for example is there any public concern that functions/services are being operated in a discriminatory manner?) If yes please indicate which:

Yes the ability to be able to livestream a meeting remotely without having to be present at the meeting.

4. Conclusion

On the basis of the relevance test would you say that there is evidence that a medium or high detrimental impact is likely? (See below for definition)

No

Note: if a medium or high detrimental impact has been identified then a full impact assessment must be undertaken using Form B.

Completed forms should be attached as an appendix to the relevant report and a copy sent to the Community Partnerships Unit

Definition of Low, Medium or High detrimental impact.

For any one (or more) equality group the following evidence is found:

	<p>Evidence may come from one or more of the following sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Local service data• Data from a similar authority (including their EIA)• Customer feedback
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stakeholder feedback • National or regional research
High Relevance	<p>The evidence shows a clear disparity (of more than 80% probability) between different sections of the community in one or more of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • levels of service access; • quality of service received; or • outcomes of service.
Medium Relevance	<p>The evidence is unclear (or there is no evidence) if there is any disparity in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • levels of service access; • quality of service received; or • outcomes of service.
Low Relevance	<p>The evidence shows clearly (at least 80% certainty) there is no disparity in terms of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • levels of service access; • quality of service received; or • outcomes of service..

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 21 JULY 2021

PART I - DELEGATED

8. WORK PROGRAMME (CED)

1 Summary

1.1 To agree the Committee's work programme.

2 Details

2.1 Attached, as an appendix to this report, is the Committee's work programme.

2.2 The work programme includes information to Members on the purpose of the item being considered, how the work will be completed, the responsible officer and the outcome expected.

2.3 The work programme is presented for consideration to enable the Committee to make any changes it feels necessary, to review whether reports should remain on the work programme and to provide Members with updated information on future meetings.

3. Policy/Budget Implications

3.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.

4. Financial, Legal, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Customer Services Centre, Website and Risk Management Implications

4.1 None specific to this report.

5. Recommendation

5.1 That the Committee agrees the items included in the work programme.

Report prepared by Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

Background Papers

Policy and Resources Committee Minutes

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A - Committee Work Programme

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POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - WORK PROGRAMME

No.	Item to be considered	Link to Strategic Plan	Date of Next Meeting	Purpose of the Report	How the work will be done	Responsible Officer	Outcome Expected
1.	Performance Report		Reported via MIB	Performance report update	Written Report	Performance and Projects Manager	Report to note, this will be reported via the Members' Information Bulletin
2.	Calendar of meetings 2023/24		13 September 2021	To receive a report	Written report	Principal Committee Manager	To recommend the calendar to Council
3.	Draft Corporate Framework and Financial planning 2022-2025		13 September 2021	To receive a report	Written Report	Director of Finance/Head of Community Partnerships	To consider the recommendations
4.	SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan: Statement of Common Ground SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan: Statement of Community Involvement		13 September 2021	To receive a report	Written report	Head of Planning Policy and Projects	To consider the recommendations
5.	Final version of the Tree Strategy		1 November 2021	To receive the final version of the tree strategy	Written report	Head of Community Services and Principal Landscape Officer	To consider the recommendations

APPENDIX A

No.	Item to be considered	Link to Strategic Plan	Date of Next Meeting	Purpose of the Report	How the work will be done	Responsible Officer	Outcome Expected
6.	Draft Corporate Framework, Draft Service Plans and Growth Bids 2022-2025		6 December 2021			Director of Finance/Head of Community Partnerships	To receive a report
7.	Business Rate Pooling 2022/23		To receive a report	Written Report		DoF	To recommend to Council.
8.	Review of Strategic Risks		To seek approval to enter into a business rates pool with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and a number of other districts within the County for 2020/21.	Written Report	Written Report	Emergency Planning and Risks Manager	To consider the recommendations
9.	Financial Planning 2021-2024 to include Fees and charges		24 January 2022	To receive a report	Written Report	DoF and Service Heads	To recommend the budget to Council
10.	Appoint to the Sub-Committees of P&R		June 2022	To receive a report	Written Report	Principal Committee Manager	To consider the recommendations
11.	Budget Outturn report 2020/21		June 2022	To receive a report	Written Report	Head of Finance	To consider the recommendations

APPENDIX A

No.	Item to be considered	Link to Strategic Plan	Date of Next Meeting	Purpose of the Report	How the work will be done	Responsible Officer	Outcome Expected
12.	Member Training		July 2022	To receive a report	Written report	Principal Committee Manager	To consider any recommendations
13.	Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) once the Government have reviewed CIL		Future meeting	To receive a report	Written report	DCES	To consider any recommendations
14.	Three Rivers Community Interest Company		Future meeting	To receive a report	Written report	Acting Head of Community Partnerships	To consider the recommendations

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