

# FULL COUNCIL MEETING

## NOTICE AND AGENDA

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the Council to be held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth on Tuesday, 12 December 2023 at 7.30 pm.

1. **Election of Chair** (Pages 11 - 14)
2. **Election of Vice Chair**
3. **Apologies for Absence**
4. **MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING** (Pages 15 - 20)

To confirm, as a correct record, the minutes of the Full Council meeting, held on 17 October 2023 and to be signed by the Chair.

5. **Chair's Announcements**
6. **Petitions Received Under Procedure Rule 18**
7. **QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC RECEIVED UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 15**

***Question 1 from the Public, Pandora Vaughan-Melly***

- 6a) Why is Oxhey Fields ('The Playing Fields/The Old Golf Course') being considered as a site for cattle or other animals under the 'ecology diversification' heading? This idea was tabled at a 3RDC meeting covering the Greenspace Action Plan in November 2023 (Minutes not yet available).

In brief, this is land used to a great extent by dog walkers, both dog owners and those walking dogs for others (commercial walkers). To put livestock on this area, and to contain them - as was suggested at the meeting - through the use of barbed wire is unsafe for both the stock and the dogs being walked, which are almost all running freely off-lead, being the exercise that high-energy and large dogs require on a daily basis.

Because the amenity is in use by a great many dogs throughout the day, it is not safe to add livestock to the mix, and it would not be well-received by the many owners/walkers who make frequent use of the land which has been available to them for this purpose for many years. The proposed site is also next to a main road - the A4123 - and were the livestock to escape, either through panic or malicious or

accidental release, then they and any other road users could suffer horrible injuries.

I have further objections to livestock on Oxhey Fields, not least the churning of a heavy clay subsoil, but hopefully it will be decided by 3RDC council that Oxhey Fields is an unsuitable site for livestock.

**Written response:**

*There are no immediate plans to graze cattle or other livestock at this location and should this be actively considered for this location at a future date, local residents and other interested parties would be consulted.*

**Question 2 from the Public, Resident of Three Rivers**

- 6b) Why has this bridge been repaired first in 2023 and is now being completely replaced for over a 1.2 million pound?

**Written response:**

This matter is fully explained in the publicly available reports which can be found on the Council website at:

<https://moderngov.threerivers.gov.uk/documents/s4089/CIL%20Spending%20Applications%20-%20Pedestrian%20Bridge%20Aquadrome%20Rickmansworth.pdf>

and

<https://moderngov.threerivers.gov.uk/documents/s4090/Enc.%201%20for%20CIL%20Spending%20Applications%20-%20Pedestrian%20Bridge%20Aquadrome%20Rickmansworth.pdf>

**Question 3 from the Public, Resident of Three Rivers**

- 6c) Is it known when Village Green Status (VGS) for Oxhey Fields will be implemented? Residents would like to know that development will never be permitted on this land, which would be protected by VGS, now and in the future.

**Written response:**

There is no definitive date. Hertfordshire County Council are the assessment and awarding authority in connection with Town & Village Green applications. In our most recent contact with HCC (7 November 2023), TRDC Officers were advised that the application is next in the list of pending applications and the investigating Officer should be in touch in the first half of next year.

The protections offered by the Town & Village Green status, reinforce existing restrictions and controls upon the land and those included within the local Planning Policy, such as the land forming part of the Green Belt.

8a) Budget monitoring report – 30 September 2023

Recommendation:

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

8b) Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan Update, Climate Change, Leisure and Community Committee

Recommendation:

1. Approve the revised Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy 2023-2027 (“the Strategy”);
2. Recommend the Strategy to Council for adoption; and
3. Note the updates arising from the Climate Change and Sustainability Action Plan.

8c) Adaptation and Resilience Risk Register

Recommendation:

1. That Members approve the Adaptation and Resilience Risk Register and recommend to Council on 12th December 2023 for adoption.
2. Note that the actions arising from the register will form part of service plans.
3. The finance and budgetary risk register should add a direct reference to the adaptation and resilience risk register.

8d) Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy 2023-26

Recommendation:

1. That the Policy and Resources Committee recommend the policy to Council.
2. That public access to the report be immediate.
3. That public access to the decision be immediate.

8e) Safeguarding Children and Adults Policy 2023

Recommendation:

1. That Policy and Resources Committee adopts the new Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy 2023-2026 and recommends to Council on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
2. That public access to the report be immediate.
3. That public access to the decision be immediate.

8f) Three Rivers Community Strategy 2023-28

Recommendation:

1. That the Policy and Resources Committee recommend adoption of the Strategy to Council.
2. Council adopts this strategy for Three Rivers District Council.
3. That public access to the report be immediate.
4. That public access to the decision be immediate.

[Agenda for Policy and Resources Committee on Monday, 13th November, 2023, 7.30 pm - Modern Council](#)

**9. 2024/25 COUNCIL TAX BASE**

(Pages  
21 - 32)

This report details the Authority's council tax base for 2024/25 which must be approved between 1 December 2023 and 31 January 2024.

**10. MEMBERS ALLOWANCE SCHEME RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL**

(Pages  
33 - 44)

That Council consider its response to the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel, summarised below and set out in full in the Panel's report:

- i. That member allowances be increased by 5%

- ii. The relativity of the Special Responsibility Allowances to the Basic Allowance remain unchanged.
- iii. The Dependant Carers Allowance remains at £12.50 per hour.
- iv. Mileage rates remain at 52.2p per mile.
- v. A benchmarking exercise on the cost of employing professional carers is completed prior to the 2024/25 decision making cycle to ensure that the Dependent Carers Allowance meet Living Wage requirements.
- vi. The IRP give consideration to the possibility of index linking members' allowances in future years during their deliberations in 2024.
- vii. The IRP give consideration to the possibility of introducing a Co-optees allowance during their deliberations in 2024.
- viii. That the new rates for Members' Allowances be implemented from 1 April 2024.

**11. Local Authority Housing Fund Update and Proposed Transfer of Land** (Pages 45 - 62)

**12. PLANNING COMMITTEE CHANGE OF MEMBERSHIP**

To note that Councillor Andrea Fraser has replaced Councillor Ian Morris on the Planning Committee.

**13. Questions to the Leader, Lead Members and reports from Lead Members** (Pages 63 - 84)

**14. Written reports from, and Questions to the Chairs of Audit, Planning, Licensing and Regulatory Services Committee.** (Pages 85 - 86)

**15. MOTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11**

**Councillor Sara Bedford, seconded by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, to move under Notice duly given as follows:**

**Motion 1**

Voter identification

Council notes that:

1. The Elections Act 2022 requires voters to present an approved form of Photo ID at a polling station in order to vote. 2. There is little evidence that voter fraud is a systematic issue in UK elections, with only 4 convictions resulting from allegations of in-person voter fraud \_ out of 58 million votes cast at the 2019 General, Local, European and Mayoral Elections combined. 3. In the 2021 local elections just one caution for election fraud was issued by the police.

Council agrees with the comments made by the Electoral Commission in September 2022 that the new rules could not \_be delivered in a way which is fully secure, accessible and workable\_, pointing out that 7.5% of voters do not hold an acceptable form of ID and over 1000 voters were denied the opportunity to vote during Voter ID trials in the 2018 and 2019 local elections.

Council is deeply concerned that the requirement to provide Photo ID presented a barrier for residents in Three Rivers to exercise

their right to vote, and that these barriers disproportionately affect ethnic minority, low income, disabled, LGBT+, elderly and young voters.

Council notes:

1. The acceptable forms of ID listed by the Government are weighted towards more affluent and older voters who are more likely to possess passports, driving licences or older persons bus passes, whilst forms of photo ID most likely to be held by younger people have been excluded.
2. The Electoral Commission's research showed that, of those that didn't vote in May 2023, 1 in 25 gave Voter ID as a reason.
3. Whilst the number who came to a polling station in Three Rivers without identification is relatively low, it still represents a proportion of the electorate who were inconvenienced or disenfranchised by the Government-imposed requirements.
4. The comments of Jacob Rees-Mogg to the National Conservatism Conference, admitting the attempt of the Conservative government to \_gerrymander\_ elections using voter ID.

Council therefore instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Cabinet Office to express the Council's continued opposition to Voter ID and its damaging effects on democracy, and to demand that this section of the legislation is repealed immediately.

**Councillor Chris Lloyd, seconded by Councillor Sara Bedford, to move under Notice duly given as follows:**

## **Motion 2**

Prostate Cancer UK 'Boys need bins' campaign

Council notes Prostate Cancer UK's campaign of \_Boys need bins, which highlights the growing numbers of those who suffer with incontinence issues as a result of prostate treatment.

Prostate Cancer UK cites that 1 in 8 men will get prostate cancer and that 1 in 3 men over 65 are estimated to have a urinary incontinence problem. Council believes that it is important to make life more comfortable and dignified for those who suffer such problems.

Council supports the provision of sanitary bins in all toilets so that waste products can be disposed of in a discreet and hygienic manner.

Council therefore requests that council officers design and implement a programme to provide sanitary bins, in council owned or managed male toilets by the end of the current financial year, and

encourages partners to do likewise.

**Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, to move under Notice duly given as follows:**

### **Motion 3**

Council notes with disappointment that despite the decision of the July Council Gagan Mohindra Member of Parliament for Southwest Herts has still not apologised and withdrawn the misleading and inaccurate statement they made regarding the developments in the Green Belt and an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and again calls on them to put the record straight.

**Councillor Sara Bedford, seconded by Councillor Jon Tankard and Councillor Louise Price, to move under Notice duly given as follows:**

### **Motion 4**

Council notes the twin threats to our rivers from the Conservative government's failure to act on sewage discharges by privatised water companies, together with the recent pronouncement by the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities of the government's intention to remove regulations regarding nutrient neutrality.

Council believes that both Conservative policies will add to the pollution of our precious waterways, seas and oceans and the habitats that depend on them.

Council further believes that extensive building in our Green Belt is also a threat to local habitats, and that whilst the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities has brought forward this plan to amend the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, he has not sought to introduce an amendment to change the Standard Methodology or enable Local Planning Authorities to safeguard Green Belt land.

Council therefore calls for:

1. The immediate end to the threats to our waterways by a commitment to keep rules on nutrient neutrality and the retention of the entire Habitats' Directive.
2. A speeding up of the Environment Agency's largest ever criminal investigation into potential widespread breaches of environmental permit conditions at wastewater treatment works by all water and sewerage companies.
3. A reduction in the amount of sewage which can legally be discharged into waterways and the sea.
4. Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, backed by primary legislation to enable the safeguarding of valuable Green Belt land.

Council therefore calls for the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities, and the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs stating the council's views on these matters.

**Councillor Oliver Cooper, seconded by Councillor Philip Hearn, to move under Notice duly given as follows:**

**Motion 5**

Three Rivers District Council rejects Liberal Democrat party policy, adopted on 25th September, to reintroduce housing targets that are binding on local areas and increase them by 27%.

**Councillor Philip Hearn, seconded by Councillor Oliver Cooper, to move under Notice duly given as follows:**

**Motion 6**

Three Rivers District Council notes its desire for better-informed public debate on the most important issues affecting local residents.

Three Rivers District Council notes the misleading communications on a recent leaflet distributed by the district councillors for Chorleywood South & Maple Cross which claimed that the Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan was developed and proposed by "consultants for Hertfordshire County Council".

This is false, as the very first line of the Local Cycling Walking & Infrastructure Plan states, "This document is the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan for Watford Borough Council (WBC) and Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) developed with these two local authorities and in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) as the Highway Authority".

Three Rivers District Council's leading role in developing the plan has also been made clear in multiple statements issued by the Lead Member through official communications and in officers' report to the Infrastructure, Housing, & Economic Development Committee in October 2022.

Three Rivers District Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the district councillors for Chorleywood South & Maple Cross setting out the facts, seek assurances that they will not repeat misleading facts again, and request a retraction and a public apology for misleading residents within 5 working days of this motion being passed.

**Councillor Oliver Cooper, seconded by Councillor Reena Ranger, to move under Notice duly given as follows:**

**Motion 7**



Three Rivers District Council recognises the paramount importance of national security and is grateful to all who serve or have served to keep the United Kingdom and the world safe and free.

Three Rivers District Council is proud that the district is home to Northwood Headquarters, the principal headquarters of the British armed forces. Northwood is also home to five operational commands, including NATO Allied Maritime Command: NATO's principal establishment in the UK.

Northwood HQ is the residence of 850 service personnel and staff and is the workplace of over 2,500, making it one of the biggest single employment sites for the armed forces in the country.

Northwood HQ contributes significantly not just to the residential and working populations, but to the identity of Three Rivers.

While Three Rivers District Council is a signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant, every council in the country has and the content of the Covenant is now a legal requirement, so this does not represent the significance of Northwood HQ or our commitment to the armed forces.

Northwood HQ is not mentioned in the council's new strategic vision and is mentioned only cursorily on Three Rivers District Council's website, whereas it should be front of mind for the council.

Other authorities with large military establishments – such as Colchester, Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Rushmoor (Aldershot) – have made declarations officially designating their councils as garrison or naval towns or cities as badges of pride in their important contributions to our national defence.

Three Rivers District Council therefore follows their lead in declaring that it is an Armed Forces Community. Three Rivers District Council further commits to ensure recognition of Northwood HQ – and its pride that Three Rivers is home of the UK's military command – is woven into our strategy and public identity as a council.

**Councillor Narinder Sian, seconded by Councillor Chris Mitchell, to move under Notice duly given as follows:**

### **Motion 8**

This Council notes the statement from Secretary of State Michael Gove that the government plans to remove the 'Nutrient Neutrality' requirement for Natural England to advise councils not to approve housing schemes that will add to nutrient pollution in already damaged rivers and waterways.

This Council believes this would be a retrograde step which will further damage our already struggling waterways. The associated £280m 'offsetting' funding is an open acknowledgement that scrapping these rules will increase pollution. The amount is a drop in the ocean and, as Feargal Sharkey has pointed out, 'you can't offset a dead river'. Further, this plan transfers responsibility and costs of dealing with

pollution from profitable developers to the public.

This Council believes that instead of allowing housebuilders to pollute, Government should require water companies and housebuilders to invest in upgrading the infrastructure needed as a prerequisite to development whilst continuing to enforce mitigation schemes. We further believe that with the right investment and appropriate regulation of all sources of pollution to our waterways, from treatment works to agriculture, communities can have both high-quality affordable homes and healthy waterways.

We call on the Leader of the Council to write publicly to the Secretary of State and to our MPs to express the Council's views.

**NOTE: Exclusion of Public and Press**

If Council wishes to consider any items in private, it will be necessary for the following resolution to be passed:

“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 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.”

(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.)

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

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*Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive*