

# **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE**

## **NOTICE AND AGENDA**

For a meeting to be held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth on Monday, 29 January 2024 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Policy and Resources Committee: -

**Councillors:**

Sarah Nelmes (Chair)  
Jon Tankard  
Paul Rainbow  
Chris Lloyd  
Andrew Scarth  
Steve Drury  
Keith Martin

Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Vice-Chair)  
Philip Hearn  
Abbas Merali  
Oliver Cooper  
Stephen Cox  
Chris Mitchell

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*Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive  
Friday, 19 January 2024*

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public on agenda items at the Policy and Resources Committee meetings. Details of the procedure are provided below:

For those wishing to speak:

Members of the public are entitled to register and identify which item(s) they wish to speak on from the published agenda for the meeting. Those who wish to register to speak are asked to register on the night of the meeting from 7pm. Please note that contributions will be limited to one person speaking for and one against each item for not more than three minutes.

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 be given the right to speak on that item at the next meeting of the Committee.

Those wishing to observe the meeting are requested to arrive from 7pm.

In accordance with The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 any matters considered under Part I 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 Legislation and the laws of libel and defamation.

**1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence.

**2. MINUTES**

(Pages 5  
- 12)

To confirm, as a correct record, the minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 4 December 2023.

**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.

**5. FINANCIAL PLANNING - REVENUE SERVICES**

(Pages  
13 - 44)

To consider a report of the Director of Finance recommending that the Committee recommend to Full Council the updated revenue budget for 2023/24; proposed revenue budget for 2024/25; and the indicative revenue budget for 2025/26 & 2026/27, all of which form the Council's Medium-Term Financial Plan.

**6. FINANCIAL PLANNING - CAPITAL STRATEGY AND THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY**

(Pages  
45 - 74)

To consider a report of the Director of Finance recommending that the Committee recommend to Full Council the Capital Strategy and Treasury Management Policy over the medium term (2024/25 to 2026/27).

**7. COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2020/25**

(Pages  
75 - 96)

To consider a report of the Director of Finance recommending that the Council approved the implementation of a revised Council tax reduction scheme that with effect from 1 April 2024.

**8. FINANCIAL PLANNING - RECOMMENDATIONS**

(Pages  
97 - 102)

To consider a report of the Director of Finance recommending that the Committee recommend to Full Council at its meeting on 20 February 2024 the Council's Revenue and Capital budgets and Treasury Management Policy for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27 (medium-term).

**9. HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2023-2028 - FINAL DRAFT**

(Pages  
103 -  
178)

To consider a report by the Strategic Housing Manager reviewing the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017-2022; and a final draft of the Council's proposed Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028.

10. **PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION ON STANDARDS PROCEDURE** (Pages 179 - 194)

To consider a report by the Associate Director, Legal and Democratic Services, recommending that the Council revise its current Member Complaints Procedure to bring it in line with good practice as recommended by the Local Government Association (LGA).

11. **PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION ON RECORDING OF PRIVATE MEETINGS** (Pages 195 - 230)

To consider a report by the Associate Director, Legal and Democratic Services, recommending that a provision should be added to the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations and the Member Code of Conduct which prohibits the audio and/or visual recording of private meetings (including private video and telephone calls) unless the prior consent of those attending has been obtained.

12. **WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 231 - 236)

To consider a draft version of the Committee's Work Programme and make any comments on the Work Programme before it is updated.

13. **OTHER BUSINESS - IF APPROVED UNDER ITEM 3 ABOVE**

14. **EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

If the Committee wishes to consider any 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 item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under Paragraph [insert paragraph number] 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@threeivers.gov.uk](mailto:committeeteam@threeivers.gov.uk)

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**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE  
MINUTES  
THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**At a meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Monday, 4 December 2023 from 7.30 - 9.05 pm**

**Present:** Councillors

Sarah Nelmes (Chair)  
Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Vice-Chair) (Economic Development and Planning Policy)  
Paul Rainbow (Public Services)  
Chris Lloyd (Leisure)  
Andrew Scarth (Housing, Public Health and Wellbeing)  
Keith Martin (Resources)  
Steve Drury (Community Partnerships)  
Oliver Cooper  
Philip Hearn  
Chris Mitchell

**Officers in Attendance:**

Alison Scott: Director of Finance  
Stephen Rix: Associate Director, Legal & Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)  
Cameron MacLean: Interim Senior Committee Manager

**PR15/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Stephen Cox.

**PR16/23 MINUTES**

The Committee –

1. Noted<sup>1</sup> the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Committee held on 5 October 2023.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst, seconded by Councillor Scarth, moved an amendment to the minutes, as follows.

**Item 5: Local Plan Regulation 18 – Part 4 Consultation**

Page 8: Subheading “Amendment 5”

That the last sentence under this subheading, *viz.*

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<sup>1</sup> Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12: Paragraph 41 –

(1) Minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of the local authority shall... be signed at [the] next meeting of the authority...

*“Following discussion of the proposed amendment, the Chair declared that the amendment was carried by general assent.”*

be amended to read:

*Following discussion of the proposed amendment, the **Lead Member, having consulted officers, accepted the wording be changed. There was no dissent to this.***

Councillor Cooper stated that he could not agree to the amendment without having first heard the audio recording of the meeting. Therefore, he proposed that consideration of the minutes be deferred.

The Chair stated that Councillor Cooper would be provided with a copy of the audio recording.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst stated that he did not wish to defer consideration of the minutes.

The Chair then put the proposed amendment to the minutes to a vote, the results of which were, as follows:

For the amendment:	7
Against:	2
Abstentions:	1

In response to a question by the Chair, Councillor Mitchell stated that he did not require to be provided with a copy of the audio recording of the meeting.

On a vote to accept the minutes, as amended, the results were, as follows:

For the Motion:	8
Against:	2
Abstentions:	0

## **NOTED**

2. Approved the minutes of the meeting of 13 November 2023 and authorised the Chair to sign them as a correct record.

## **PR17/23 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair stated there were a number of “Items of Other Business” which she had agreed that the Committee should consider in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 30, Urgent Items, as follows:

a) Discretionary Fees and Charges

Reason for Urgency: approval by Full Council on 12 December 2023 was required if certain of the proposed fees & charges were to be implemented in January 2024.

b) Variation to Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO): Public Consultation

Reason for Urgency: to comply with statutory requirements regarding publication of the revised PSPO to allow enforcement action to be taken, if necessary.

- c) Proposed Expansion of the Watford Borough Council Beryl Bike Scheme into Croxley Green

Reason for Urgency: to allow negotiations to take place within the prescribed time limits for reaching agreement.

- d) Safe & Legal Routes Consultation

Reason for Urgency: to comply with the deadline set by central government for receipt of responses to the consultation.

#### **PR18/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **PR19/23 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY**

The Committee considered a report by Derek Hatchard, Procurement Manager, detailing the new Procurement Strategy to support the Council Corporate Framework and the Council's key objectives.

Mr Hatchard presented the report. In so doing, he noted that there were some minor amendments to the report that was before the Committee.

In the subsequent discussion, the following points were made.

- a) Regarding quality and cost, and measures to prevent cost overruns, it was stated that evaluation criteria were used to determine value-for-money and these criteria were weighted accordingly. Measures to prevent cost overruns included the creation of project and management boards and risk registers.
- b) Regarding construction projects, these were done through "Housing Joint Ventures", and Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) deferred to the framework adopted by Watford Community Housing (WCH) for construction projects, as well as national construction contract forms to manage risk.
- c) The Procurement Strategy, along with the Rules of Procedure, set out in the Council's Constitution [Part 4 – Contracts Procedure Rules], would outline how risk and financial controls were to be implemented within the overall management and delivery of any project.

As there were no more questions, the Chair moved that the Committee approve the recommendations set out in the report.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously): That the Committee –

1. Approve the Procurement Strategy ("the Strategy"); and
2. Recommend to Full Council that it adopt the Strategy.

#### **PR20/23 OTHER BUSINESS - if approved under item 3 above**

To consider the following items of "Other Business".

## PR21/23 DISCRETIONARY FEES AND CHARGES

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Finance setting out a Schedule of Proposed Fees and Charges effective from 1 January 2024, set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and a Schedule of Fees and Charges effective from 1 April 2024, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

Alison Scott, Director of Finance, presented the report. In so doing, she made a few amendments to the report that was before the Committee.

In the subsequent discussion, the following points were made.

- a) In response to increases by central government in statutory Planning fees, officers would review whether to introduce fees for submitting a Planning Pre-application.
- b) Regarding the proposed 25% increase in some of the parking fees, it was noted that parking fees had not been increased since 2016 and that had fees been increased in line with inflation, the increase over the period would have been 28%.
- c) The Council's Parking Reserve was governed by statutory provisions and was currently operating at a deficit. The proposed measures would go some way to balancing the Council's Parking Reserve.

The Chair noted that, where there was a proposed increase in the cost of any service, an attempt had been made for the users of that service to meet the increased cost rather than spreading the cost across all service users.

An annual increase in parking fees in line with inflation would have been difficult and costly to administer. If agreed, the proposed parking fees would still be less than the fees charged by neighbouring boroughs for resident parking.

- d) Regarding Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) in relation to Fly Tipping and Domestic Duty of Care, it was proposed that these should be increased by 10% which would round up the numbers to administratively easy to manage numbers.
- e) Cycling and walking as alternative modes of transport were to be encouraged. However, for some residents, being able to use a car was vital and, therefore, the proposed increase in parking fees could be a lot of money for some people.
- f) Regarding nappy sacks, it was noted that the service included not only the provision of plastic sacks but the cost of residual bin collection charges.
- g) In response to the proposal that, given the small number of persons caught fly tipping, there be a discount for early payment of a fine in respect of fly tipping, it was noted that, in line with a lot of FPNs, the early payment of fines significantly reduced administrative costs and avoided potentially protracted and costly enforcement action and court proceedings.

The Chair noted that, given the nature of the offence, it would be appropriate to give further consideration as to whether it was appropriate to offer a discount for prompt payment of a FPN for fly tipping.

In response to proposed amendments to the recommendations in respect of the percentage increase in FPNs for Fly Tipping and Domestic Duty of Care, and the proposed discount for early payment of a FPN in respect of fly tipping, it was **AGREED** that these be the subject of further discussion with a view to making

amendments to the Council's budget, once the budget had been approved, if necessary.

In response to a motion by Councillor Lloyd, seconded by Councillor Drury, to approve the recommendations set out in the report, the Chair put the motion to a vote, the results of which were, as follows.

For the Motion: 7  
Against: 2  
Abstentions: 0

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee recommend to Full Council that it approve the Fees and Charges set out in the Schedules at:

1. Appendix 1 [of the report], to be effective from 1 January 2024; and
2. Appendix 2 [of the report], to be effective from 1 April 2024.

**FURTHER RESOLVED:** To note that, under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2019, the Council will be charging s. 106 monitoring fees from 1 January 2024, as follows –

1) Affordable housing financial contribution with no review mechanism:	£280
2) Affordable housing financial contribution with review mechanism:	£540
3) Affordable housing on-site contribution with review mechanism [0 to 25 dwellings]:	£720
4) Affordable housing on-site contribution with review mechanism [26+ dwellings]	£820
5) Amendment to TRO to restrict ability to purchase parking permit:	£870
6) Other non-financial obligations:	£350

Where there was more than one obligation, the highest fee to be paid in full, and 50% of any subsequent fee(s).

## **PR22/23 VARIATION TO PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO) PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESULT**

The Committee considered a report of the Environmental Strategy Manager recommending, after a public consultation exercise, amendments to the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) which designated areas throughout the district where there were restrictions in relation to dogs.

Alison Scott, Director of Finance, presented the report.

The Chair noted that the recommended changes to the PSPO were in response to a request by Watford Rural Parish Council to add an area to the schedule of areas covered by the PSPO; a recommendation that another area be removed from the schedule; and the results of the public consultation which supported the proposed changes.

In the subsequent discussion, the following points arose.

- a) No objection had been received from Watford Rural Parish Council to the proposed removal of The Mead, Carpenders Park, from the schedule of designated areas.
- b) The reason for removing The Mead, Carpenders Park, from the schedule was that it was no longer used as a playground and, therefore, there was no requirement to place a restriction on dogs in this area.

In response to a motion by Councillor Lloyd, seconded by Councillor Scarth, to approve the recommendations set out in the report, the Chair put the motion to a vote.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously): That, to provide consistency with dog exclusion areas throughout the district the Committee approve -

- 1. The addition of the Greenfields Avenue, Carpenders Park Children's Play Area to the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) schedule excluding dogs from the area; and,
- 2. The Children's Play Area at The Mead, Carpenders Park be removed from the PSPO schedule excluding dogs from the area; and
- 3. That public access to the report be immediate.

**PR23/23 PROPOSED EXPANSION OF THE WATFORD BC BERYL BIKE SCHEME INTO CROXLEY GREEN**

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Regulatory Services setting out a proposal by Watford Borough Council (WBC) to extend the existing Beryl Bike scheme into Croxley Green.

Alison Scott, Director of Finance, introduced the report.

In the subsequent discussion, the following points arose.

- a) When the scheme had started, WBC had been required to put up capital funding to purchase the bikes. Accordingly, the capital costs were for the purchase of e-bikes and a small amount for marking out bays for the e-bikes.
- b) The e-bikes were deemed to be revenue neutral as the cost to use the bikes covered the running costs of the scheme. If, at the end of the pilot scheme, the Council did not wish to proceed with the project, the Council then had the option of selling the e-bikes back to Beryl or keeping the e-bikes.
- c) There was evidence that there was demand for the bikes in Croxley and, if the scheme was extended, then bikes could be taken from other areas and left in Croxley without the user incurring a penalty for not returning the bike to an area covered by the scheme. If the pilot scheme was successful, consideration could be given to extending the scheme to other areas.
- d) Regarding costs, the Council was joining an established scheme with an established ridership. Demand for the scheme to be extended to Croxley was evidenced by the number of bikes that were taken from elsewhere and left in Croxley Green, the users preferring to pay the £10 fine rather than return the bikes to an area within the scheme.

The Council had been informed by WBC and Beryl that e-bikes, unlike ordinary pedal bikes, were self-funding. In turn, WBC and Beryl had been informed that

the Council had no revenue funding available for this project, only capital funding.

- e) Regarding the operation of the scheme and potential costs to Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and WBC in operating and managing the scheme, it was noted that the newer bikes had GPS tracking and there were virtual docking stations. Consequently, whenever there had been issues with bikes not being returned, WBC reported that Beryl had been quick to respond to addressing these issues and that fines were issued for bikes which had been abandoned.
- f) The effect of taking e-bikes from one area to another meant that docking stations for e-bikes could have both WBC and Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) e-bikes at those docking stations.
- g) It would be helpful if Members could be given advance notice on how the traffic markings for the e-bikes were to be laid out at each location. Also, there was the potential for people to use the e-bikes to commute from Croxley station, along Mill Lane and across Croxley Common Moor.
- h) Beryl was committed to checking docking stations throughout the day to ensure there was an even distribution of bikes across the docking stations, and to collect abandoned bikes. In addition, the bikes were collected in the evening for recharging.
- i) As this was a pilot, the stands and markings for the e-bikes would be minimal in nature until such time as the pilot project was completed. Thereafter, it was possible that more substantial stands might be provided.
- j) Electric scooters did not form part of the pilot project and TRDC was not one of Transport for London (TfL) trial areas for e-scooters. At present, the Committee was being asked to agree, in principle, to the pilot project. The precise locations for the e-bikes, which was the subject of discussions with discussions with landowners and residents, had yet to be decided.
- k) It was proposed that Byewaters area be included within the pilot scheme.

At this stage of the proceedings, the Chair stated that she did not want to go into the detail of the scheme as all that was being sought at this stage was approval, in principle, to the scheme. Therefore, she proposed that the Committee move to the recommendations set out in the report.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously): That the Committee:

1. Agree that the Council enter into arrangements with Watford Borough Council (WBC) and Beryl Bikes to deliver a pilot e-bike scheme working at a capital cost of £45,000.
2. Delegate authority -
  - a) On final sites within the areas outlined in the report to the Head of Regulatory Services in consultation with the Lead Member for General Public Services and Ward Councillors; and
  - b) For approving and entering all required contractual arrangements to implement the pilot e-bike scheme to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Lead Member for General Public Services.
3. Agree that Officers pursue a future CIL [Community Infrastructure Levy] application for the capital monies.

4. That public access to Appendix 2: Part 2 [of the report], be denied until the scheme was implemented.

#### **PR24/23 SAFE & LEGAL ROUTES CAP CONSULTATION**

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Housing Manager detailing the current consultation by the Home Office on the potential capacity of the Council to support individuals arriving through safe and legal migration routes in 2025.

Jason Hagland, Strategic Housing Manager introduced the report.

It was confirmed that it was proposed that the Council was prepared to house people in need subject to receipt of government funding.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst, seconded by Councillor Scarth, moved that the Committee accept the recommendations as set out in the report.

**RESOLVED** (unanimously): To –

1. Approve a response to the consultation confirming zero capacity [of Three Rivers District Council (“the Council”) to support individuals arriving through safe and legal migration routes] for 2025;
2. Inform the Home Office that if additional [Home Office] funding was to be provided to the Council [to support individuals arriving through safe and legal migration routes], this would be considered [by the Council]; and
3. That any decision on a joint response [from all the local authorities in Hertfordshire, and Hertfordshire County Council] be delegated to the Chief Executive of the Council, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

**CHAIR**



## POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 29 JANUARY 2024

### PART I - NOT DELEGATED

#### 5. FINANCIAL PLANNING – REVENUE SERVICES

(DoF)

##### 1 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the Policy and Resources Committee to recommend to the Council the updated revenue budget for 2023/24, proposed revenue budget for 2024/25 and indicative revenue budget for 2025/26 and 2026/27. These budgets form the Council's Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP).
- 1.2 The report includes the budget monitoring information for the period to November 2023. The key changes from the original budget that was set in February 2023 are linked to inflation, including the pay ward and cost of fuel and utilities, and the legacy impact of COVID-19 on income levels from the leisure management contract.
- 1.3 Local government finance reforms, including the business rate reset and 'Fair Funding' will not occur within the current parliament so will be implemented from 2025/26 at the earliest. The future of New Homes Bonus and other government grants remains uncertain but has once again been maintained for 2024/25. The introduction of the funding guarantee from 2023/24 and retained for 2024/25 means that new homes bonus has less impact as the funding guarantee is net of this amount. From 2024/25, district councils were expected to receive an additional source of income as a result of the introduction of 'producer pays' charges in relation to waste, however, these reforms have been postponed. Funding for future years is subject to considerable uncertainty and the forecast represents a best estimate at this time,
- 1.4 The 2023 revaluation of non-domestic properties undertaken by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) has resulted in significant increases to the rateable value of business premises within the district. Due to the likelihood of appeal, this increases the likelihood of volatility within the retained business rates for 2023/24 and 2024/25 which will be managed through the Collection Fund Reserve.
- 1.5 The impact of increases in Fees and Charges agreed by full Council in December 2023 has been applied to the base budget. The increase in fees and charges is forecast to generate additional income of £278k in 2024/25, including the additional garage income agreed at the same meeting,. Officers have been asked to identify efficiency savings as part of period 8 budget monitoring. Many of these have a full year effect and the impact of these efficiency savings and the increase in fees and charges results in an £581k saving in 2024/25. The detail of both the fees and charges and efficiency savings is set out in Appendix 1.
- 1.6 The continued uncertainty about the level of resources available to the Council in future years is only part of the picture. In common with all Councils, businesses and households there is also significant uncertainty about the costs that will be incurred over the MTFP due to pervasive and persistent inflation. The Council holds a sufficient level of reserves to manage the uncertainty around both funding and expenditure across the MTFP.
- 1.7 Officers have prepared a three-year Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) base budget for 2024/25 to 2026/27 which includes a revised estimate for the current year.

## MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 to 2026/27

Funding	2023/2024					2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Original	Original Budget plus Carry Forwards from 2022/23	Latest Budget	Previous Forecast	Latest Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
Council Tax Base (No.)	39,545.20	39,545.20	39,545.20	39,545.20	39,545.20	39,850.80	40,249.30	40,651.80
<b>Council Tax Base Increase (%)</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.77	0.99	0.99
Band D Council Tax (£)	194.55	194.55	194.55	194.55	194.55	200.37	206.36	212.53
<b>Council Tax Increase - TRDC (%)</b>	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.99	2.99	2.99
Council Tax (£)	(7,693,519)	(7,693,519)	(7,693,519)	(7,693,519)	(7,693,519)	(7,984,905)	(8,305,846)	(8,639,727)
Parish Precepts (£)	(2,386,783)	(2,386,783)	(2,386,783)	(2,386,783)	(2,386,783)	(2,434,520)	(2,483,220)	(2,483,220)
<b>Total Taxation (£)</b>	<b>(10,080,302)</b>	<b>(10,080,302)</b>	<b>(10,080,302)</b>	<b>(10,080,302)</b>	<b>(10,080,302)</b>	<b>(10,419,425)</b>	<b>(10,789,066)</b>	<b>(11,122,947)</b>
Business Rates (£)	(2,679,928)	(2,679,928)	(2,679,928)	(2,679,928)	(2,679,928)	(2,818,907)	(2,795,000)	(2,795,000)
Collection Fund Surplus (£)	(44,341)	(44,341)	(44,341)	(44,341)	(44,341)	84,870	0	0
New Homes Bonus Grant (£)	(18,480)	(18,480)	(18,480)	(18,480)	(18,480)	(100,025)	(95,000)	(95,000)
Government Funding (£)	(534,444)	(534,444)	(534,444)	(534,444)	(534,444)	(479,000)	(370,000)	(370,000)
Dividend (£)	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)
<b>Total Grant Funding (£)</b>	<b>(3,327,193)</b>	<b>(3,327,193)</b>	<b>(3,327,193)</b>	<b>(3,327,193)</b>	<b>(3,327,193)</b>	<b>(3,363,062)</b>	<b>(3,310,000)</b>	<b>(3,310,000)</b>
<b>Total Taxation &amp; Grant Funding (£)</b>	<b>(13,407,495)</b>	<b>(13,407,495)</b>	<b>(13,407,495)</b>	<b>(13,407,495)</b>	<b>(13,407,495)</b>	<b>(13,782,486)</b>	<b>(14,099,066)</b>	<b>(14,432,947)</b>

Financial Statement - Summary	2023/2024					2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Original	Original Budget plus Carry Forwards from 2022/23	Latest Budget	Previous Forecast	Latest Forecast	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	£		£		£	£	£	£
<b>Committee - Net Cost Of Services</b>								
General Public Services and Economic Development	3,886,824	3,977,542	4,151,941	4,430,734	4,430,734	4,032,313	4,024,782	4,024,782
Climate Change, Leisure and Community	2,441,726	2,499,295	2,536,877	2,579,417	2,579,417	2,372,875	2,372,875	2,372,875
Policy and Resources	5,026,223	5,368,708	5,477,536	5,863,330	5,863,330	5,799,818	5,743,092	5,743,092
<b>Period &amp; Variances</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(113,577)</b>	<b>(572,906)</b>	<b>(560,632)</b>	<b>(299,241)</b>
<b>Growth Bids</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>178,804</b>	<b>319,951</b>	<b>319,951</b>
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>11,354,773</b>	<b>11,845,545</b>	<b>12,166,354</b>	<b>12,873,481</b>	<b>12,759,904</b>	<b>11,810,904</b>	<b>11,900,068</b>	<b>12,161,459</b>
<b>Other</b>								
Parish Precepts	2,386,783	2,386,783	2,386,783	2,386,783	2,386,783	2,434,520	2,483,220	2,483,220
Interest Payable & Borrowing costs	682,989	682,989	682,989	573,639	573,639	698,989	698,989	698,989
Interest Received	(670,000)	(670,000)	(670,000)	(780,000)	(780,000)	(660,000)	(660,000)	(660,000)
<b>Period &amp; Variances</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(361,574)</b>	<b>(83,383)</b>	<b>56,277</b>	<b>42,777</b>
<b>Sub-Total</b>	<b>2,399,772</b>	<b>2,399,772</b>	<b>2,399,772</b>	<b>2,180,422</b>	<b>1,818,848</b>	<b>2,390,126</b>	<b>2,578,486</b>	<b>2,564,986</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>13,754,545</b>	<b>14,245,317</b>	<b>14,566,126</b>	<b>15,053,903</b>	<b>14,578,752</b>	<b>14,201,030</b>	<b>14,478,554</b>	<b>14,726,445</b>
<b>Income from Council Tax, Government Grants &amp; Business Rates</b>	<b>(13,407,495)</b>	<b>(13,407,495)</b>	<b>(13,407,495)</b>	<b>(13,407,495)</b>	<b>(13,407,495)</b>	<b>(13,782,486)</b>	<b>(14,099,066)</b>	<b>(14,432,947)</b>
<b>(Surplus)/Deficit Before Use of Earmarked Reserves</b>	<b>347,050</b>	<b>837,822</b>	<b>1,158,631</b>	<b>1,646,408</b>	<b>1,171,257</b>	<b>418,544</b>	<b>379,488</b>	<b>293,498</b>
<b>Planned Use of Reserves:</b>								
Economic Impact Reserve	0	0	0	0	(182,840)	(147,587)	(147,587)	0
<b>(Surplus) / Deficit to be funded from General Balances</b>	<b>347,050</b>	<b>837,822</b>	<b>1,158,631</b>	<b>1,646,408</b>	<b>988,417</b>	<b>270,957</b>	<b>231,901</b>	<b>293,498</b>

Movement on General Fund Balance	2023/24					2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Original	Original Budget plus Carry Forwards from 2022/23	Latest Budget	Previous Forecast	Latest Forecast	Latest	Latest	Latest
	£		£		£	£	£	£
Balance Brought Forward at 1 April	(4,966,958)	(4,966,958)	(4,966,958)	(4,966,958)	(4,966,958)	(3,978,541)	(3,707,584)	(3,475,683)
Revenue Budget (Surplus)/Deficit for Year	347,050	837,822	1,158,631	1,646,408	988,417	270,957	231,901	293,498
<b>Closing Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(4,619,908)</b>	<b>(4,129,136)</b>	<b>(3,808,327)</b>	<b>(3,320,550)</b>	<b>(3,978,541)</b>	<b>(3,707,584)</b>	<b>(3,475,683)</b>	<b>(3,182,185)</b>

Movement on Economic Impact	2023/24					2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Original	Original Budget plus Carry Forwards from 2022/23	Latest Budget	Previous Forecast	Latest Forecast	Latest	Latest	Latest
	£		£		£	£	£	£
Balance Brought Forward at 1 April	(1,617,617)	(1,617,617)	(1,617,617)	(1,617,617)	(1,617,617)	(1,434,777)	(1,287,190)	(1,139,603)
COVID-19 Impact for Year	0	0	0	0	182,840	147,587	147,587	0
<b>Closing Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(1,617,617)</b>	<b>(1,617,617)</b>	<b>(1,617,617)</b>	<b>(1,617,617)</b>	<b>(1,434,777)</b>	<b>(1,287,190)</b>	<b>(1,139,603)</b>	<b>(1,139,603)</b>

Total Reserves Impact	2023/24					2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Original	Original Budget plus Carry Forwards from 2022/23	Latest Budget	Previous Forecast	Latest Forecast	Latest	Latest	Latest
	£		£		£	£	£	£
Balance Brought Forward at 1 April	(6,584,575)	(6,584,575)	(6,584,575)	(6,584,575)	(6,584,575)	(5,413,318)	(4,994,774)	(4,615,286)
Impact for Year	347,050	837,822	1,158,631	1,646,408	1,171,257	418,544	379,488	293,498
<b>Closing Balance at 31 March</b>	<b>(6,237,525)</b>	<b>(5,746,753)</b>	<b>(5,425,944)</b>	<b>(4,938,167)</b>	<b>(5,413,318)</b>	<b>(4,994,774)</b>	<b>(4,615,286)</b>	<b>(4,321,788)</b>

<b>Total Reserves</b>	<b>(6,237,525)</b>	<b>(5,746,753)</b>	<b>(5,425,944)</b>	<b>(4,938,167)</b>	<b>(5,413,318)</b>	<b>(4,994,774)</b>	<b>(4,615,286)</b>	<b>(4,321,788)</b>
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## 2 Details

### 2023/24 Forecast Position

- 2.1 The original net revenue budget for 2023/24 plus carry forwards from 2022/23 was £13.754m. The latest forecast budget is £15.054m (approved by Council on 12 December 2023). The table below shows the approved changes to date and the variances reported for this period (end of November) to give a forecast outturn position of £14.579m. The key reasons for the improved position for this period are increased investment income earned on cash reserves as a result of continuing high interest rates and the saving in employers' contributions as a result of the actuarial valuation.

Revenue Budget 2023/24	£000
<b>Original Net Revenue Budget</b>	<b>13,754</b>
Carry Forward from 2022/23 (Year end report July 2023)	491
Original Budget Plus Carry Forwards from 2022/23	<b>14,245</b>
Variances previously reported	<b>809</b>
Previous Forecast	<b>15,054</b>
Supplementary Estimates reported this Period	(153)
Variances to budget reported this Period	(322)
<b>Forecast Outturn Position</b>	<b>14,579</b>

- 2.2 At the end of November, Services show an estimated favourable variance of (£0.475m). The budget will be changed to reflect this outturn forecast if approved at Council. Details of the Supplementary Estimates and Variances to budgets, along with budget virements in the period are contained in Appendices 1-3.
- 2.3 The table below shows the net direct expenditure budgets, actuals to date, forecast outturn and variance for each service committee.

Committee	2023/24 Revenue Account - General Fund Summary							
			(C)	(A)		(B)	(B-A)	(B-C)
	Original Budget	Original Budget Plus 2022/23 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget	Previous Forecast	Net Spend to Date	Latest Forecast	Supplimentary Estimates and Variances	Variation to Latest Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
General Public Services & Economic Development	3,886	3,977	4,152	4,431	1,350	4,738	307	586
Climate Change, Leisure & Community	2,442	2,499	2,537	2,579	851	2,691	112	154
Policy & Resources	5,026	5,369	5,477	5,863	6,238	5,330	(533)	(147)
<b>Total Service Budgets</b>	<b>11,354</b>	<b>11,845</b>	<b>12,166</b>	<b>12,873</b>	<b>8,439</b>	<b>12,759</b>	<b>(114)</b>	<b>593</b>
Corporate Costs (Interest Earned/Paid) and Parish Precepts	2,400	2,400	2,400	2,180	1,867	1,819	(361)	(581)
<b>Net General Fund</b>	<b>13,754</b>	<b>14,245</b>	<b>14,566</b>	<b>15,053</b>	<b>10,306</b>	<b>14,578</b>	<b>(475)</b>	<b>12</b>

2.4 The main items that contribute to the net favourable services variance of £0.114m are set out in the following table:

		£000
1.	2023/24 Pay Award and Restructure of Services	489
2.	Salary Contingency (applied to services in 1. Above)	(519)
3.	Reduction in Pension deficit following tri-annual valuation	(200)
4.	Hertfordshire Building Control – Reduction in income due to transfer of service to Hertfordshire Building Control	106
5.	Reduction in income from Private Hire Drivers and Vehicles due to declining number of applications	27
6.	Car Parking Maintenance – Essential repairs following annual inspection	17
7.	Increase CIL 5% income budget to match Senior CIL officer salary	(29)
8.	Migration to Cloud no longer required	(20)
9.	Single Homelessness Grant budget removed as Grant now replaced with Homelessness Prevention Fund Grant	19
10.	<b>Other</b>	<b>(4)</b>
	<b>Total</b>	<b>(114)</b>

The £0.361M favourable variance on Corporate Costs is due to additional interest income being earned as a result of continued higher interest rates.

2.5 The forecast for Revenue Reserves at the end of 2023/24 is shown at Appendix 4.

**2024/25 to 2026/27 - The Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP)**

2.6 Looking ahead over the next three years, the MTFP has been prepared against the continued backdrop of uncertainty about government funding, rising demand for services and increasing expectations from stakeholders for levels of service provision.

2.7 The Provisional Local Government Settlement, which provides details of central government funding to local authorities, was published on 18 December. This was a one year settlement providing detailed funding information for 2024/25 only. This means that grant funding beyond 2024/25 remains uncertain. Further detail is provided in section 4 below.

2.8 The MTFP includes a budget to provide for a 4% pay award in 2024/25 and 2% in future years, in addition to the costs of applying increases in the real living wage. The formal pay award for 2023/24 has been agreed and implemented and future year pay awards will be subject to negotiation. There is a risk that the pay award could be higher as the increase to cost of living is well above the BoE target. However, any increase will need to be balanced against affordability for the sector, and Government public sector austerity targets, as any pay award will need to be funded from existing budgets.

2.9 Services have worked hard during the budget setting process to keep budget growth to a minimum and remain within their budget limits without affecting service delivery. Unavoidable growth relating to policy commitments and statutory or contractual requirements has been included in the base budgets.

2.10 Appendix 5 shows the cumulative impact of all the variances reported for the current period (end of November) that affect all years. Where variances flow through into future years these have been incorporated into the Medium Term Financial Plan for the financial years 2024/25 to 2026/27. The effect of all variances on the Council's (surplus)/deficit for the year and the resulting forecast general fund balance over the medium term is shown below:

<b>Movement on General Fund</b>	<b>2023/24 Forecast Outturn £000</b>	<b>2024/25 Indicative Budget £000</b>	<b>2025/26 Indicative Budget £000</b>	<b>2026/27 Indicative Budget £000</b>
Balance at 1 April	(4,967)	(3,978)	(3,707)	(3,475)
(Surplus)/deficit for year	988	271	232	293
Balance at 31 March	<b>(3,978)</b>	<b>(3,707)</b>	<b>(3,475)</b>	<b>(3,182)</b>

2.11 It is recommended that a balance of at least £2.000m should be retained in the General Fund to enable the Council to manage unexpected cost pressures or shortfalls in income. The Council has an additional earmarked reserve, the Economic Impact Reserve (EIR), to manage risk. This is forecast to be £1.435m at the end of March 2024 and is available to manage future economic downturn or loss of business rates. It is assumed that £0.478m will be utilised from the EIR over the MTFP to manage the reduction in income from the leisure management contract following the reprofiling of the management fee to reflect the legacy impact of COVID-19 on activity levels. In future years the re-phased management fee will be above that assumed in the original bid such that this shortfall is recovered over the life of the contract.

2.12 The long term use of reserves to offset deficits is not sustainable or prudent. However, the forecast indicates that general balances will remain well above the risk assessed level of £2.000m over the MTFP period after taking account of meeting the budgeted deficit from general balances in 2024/25, 2025/26 and 2026/27.

## **Fees, Charges and Rents**

- 2.13 The Council set its fees and charges for 2024/25, effective from 1 January 2024, on 12 December 2023.

## **Funding the Revenue Budget**

- 2.14 The overall Council Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) indicates a budget requirement (net expenditure) for 2024/25 of £13.970m. This will be funded from a number of sources, which are detailed in the following paragraphs.
- 2.15 On 18th December 2023 the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) issued the provisional local finance settlement for 2024/25. The provisional settlement was for a single year only and confirmed the continuation of new homes bonus and the 3% funding guarantee for district councils.
- 2.16 The provisional settlement confirmed the referenda limit for the district council element of council tax as 3% or £5 (whichever is the greater). The District Councils' Network had been calling for a £10 referenda limit for districts.
- 2.17 The Government has confirmed that no changes will be made in respect of the business rate reset or 'fair funding' until the next Parliament meaning that 2025/26 is the earliest implementation date. In reality, given consultation requirements and that local government finance reform is unlikely to be a priority for any new government, 2026/27 would be a more realistic date.
- 2.18 The Provisional Settlement is subject to consultation which closes on 16 January 2024 with the final settlement expected in February 2024.

## **Business rates**

- 2.19 Business rates are collected by the Council, and the proceeds are shared between the District and County Council, and also with central Government to fund services. There is an element of risk and reward involved in the Business Rates scheme, which is designed to incentivise Councils to promote business growth within their areas. The Council expects its share of business rates to be £2.595m in 2024/25 (including £0.600m in retained growth) with a further £0.224m received in Section 31 grant. The section 31 grant compensates local government for the freezing of the Business Rates Multiplier in line with the standard Consumer Price Index (CPI). The business rates retention scheme is volatile and estimating the outturn is complex due to factors such as appeals, demolitions, new builds, occupation and reliefs.
- 2.20 Alongside the delay to the implementation of the Fair Funding Review, the Government has also postponed the planned business rate reset, originally planned for implementation in 2019/20 to after the current parliament. When implemented, this is likely to reduce the amount of growth that can be retained in the local share.
- 2.21 2023 saw the revaluation of non-residential properties by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) for business rate purposes. The impact on Three Rivers was the highest in the country with a 59.5% increase in the business rate base. The Council is working with Local Government Futures to manage the appeal risk to business rate resources and maximise income. The impact of appeals is mitigated by the business rate funding floor and any impact will be managed through the collection fund reserve. A prudent view if business rate growth has been taken this year and any additional resources from business rates, Once the final 2024/25 reconciliation is undertaken will be taken to the Collection Fund reserve to mitigate both appeals and future funding risks.

## **Unringfenced Government Grant**

- 2.22 New Homes Bonus (NHB) is a non-ring-fenced grant relating to the number of new homes delivered in a local authority area that may be used at the discretion of the Council for either capital expenditure or to support the revenue account (or combination). For 2024/25, based on the

provisional settlement, the Council expects to receive £0.200m, split 50:50 between the revenue budget and capital programme. The government has confirmed that this is a one-off allocation and does not attract legacy payments. The future distribution of NHB remains uncertain following a consultation on the future of NHB during 2021/22 and a restated commitment from DLUCH to review ahead of the 2024/25 settlement. A prudent estimate has been included in the MTFP for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

- 2.23 For 2024/25 Revenue Support Grant (RSG) of £0.079m will be received by Three Rivers.
- 2.24 For 2023/24 the government announced a new Funding Guarantee grant so that no local authority would see an increase in core spending power that is lower than 3% before taking into account council tax level decisions. A grant of £0.400m will be received by Three Rivers in 2024/25.

### **Council Tax for 2024/25**

- 2.25 The Council needs to set a budget that gives an acceptable level of council tax and is balanced in the medium to long term using the resources at its disposal.
- 2.26 A council tax increase of 2.99% has been assumed for 2024/25. The Council expects to collect £7.984m of council tax income in 2024/25. A one percentage increase in the council tax rate generates approximately a £79,849 increase in Council Tax revenue.
- 2.27 The Localism Act 2011 introduced a power for local electorates to approve or veto excessive council tax rises. The Local Government Financial Settlement sets the limit above which any authority will be required to hold a council tax referendum. This was increased for 2023/24 and 2024/25 to 3% or more or more than £5 (whichever is the greater) from the previous limit of 2% or more or more than £5.
- 2.28 A council tax increase of 2.99% is therefore included in the draft budget for 2024/25. Given the pressure on local government finances, the 3% or £5 limit has been maintained for future years. .
- 2.29 The government assessment of core spending power assumes local authorities will increase Council Tax by the maximum amount available without triggering a referendum.

### **Council Tax Base**

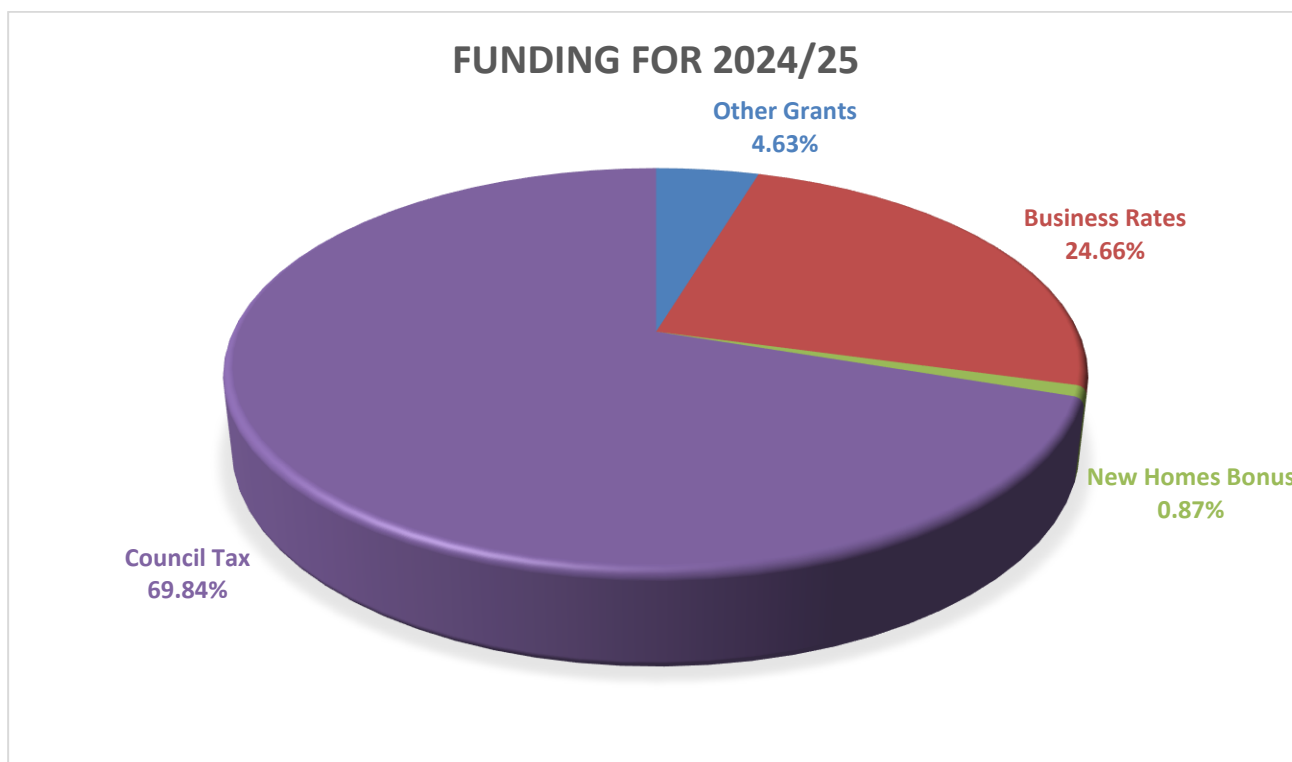
- 2.30 The Council Tax base for 2024/25 was set at the Council meeting on the 12 December 2023 and totalled 39,850.8 assuming a collection rate of 99%. This is a 0.77% increase to the 2023/24 tax base and is predominantly due to additional dwellings.
- 2.31 A further increase of 1.0% is assumed for tax base growth in 2025/26 and 2026/27 in the MTFP. Despite this being higher than growth in 2023/24 and 2024/25, this remains a prudent estimate and is lower than the assumptions for growth included in the MTFP prior to COVID-19 when annual growth of 1.5% was expected.
- 2.32 Where amounts of Council Tax collected exceed the estimates made, the surplus is shared between the relevant major precepting authorities (Hertfordshire County Council, Three Rivers District Council and Hertfordshire Police & Crime Commissioner). In the same way, where amounts collected are lower than the estimates made, the deficit is shared between the relevant precepting authorities and recovered in the following year. To reduce risk for the Parish Councils, surpluses or deficits are not paid or charged to them.

### **Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

- 2.33 Proposals for a revised Local Council Reduction Scheme are being brought forward alongside the budget reports. The replacement scheme has been designed to be simpler for residents in receipt of universal credit and cost neutral in terms of council resources.

## Collection Fund

- 2.34 There is a statutory requirement to account separately for Council Tax and Business Rates. The Collection Fund has been established to achieve this. The Fund records all transactions such as the yield, exemptions, discounts, provisions for bad debts, payments to major preceptors to Central Government and takes into account collection rates.
- 2.35 The Council Tax setting process requires an estimate of the surplus or deficit at 31 March 2023 on Council Tax and Business Rates. The balances are distributed to the Council as the Billing Authority, the major preceptors and Central Government. For 2024/25, a deficit of £0.085m in relation to Council Tax will be recovered from Three Rivers as a result of increases to the provision and slower than forecast tax base growth in 2023/24.
- 2.36 The chart below shows the value and proportion of each funding stream that supports the Council's revenue account for 2024/25.



## Draft Revenue Estimates and General Fund Balance

- 2.37 Under Section 25 of the Local Government Act 2003, the Council's Chief Finance Officer (designated officer under section 151 of the Local Government Act 1972) must report to Council on the following matters:
- the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations, and
  - the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

The Director of Finance will make this report available alongside the final budget proposals to be considered by Council at its meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2023

## 3 Options/Reasons for Recommendation

- 3.1 The recommendation below enables the Committee to make recommendations to the Council on 20 February 2024 concerning the Council's budget.



#### **4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

4.1 The recommendations in this report contribute to the process whereby the Council will approve and adopt its budget under Article 4 of the Council's Constitution.

#### **5 Equal opportunities, Environmental, Community Safety, Customer Services Centre, Communications, Health & Safety & Website Implications**

5.1 See agenda item 8. Financial Planning Recommendations.

#### **6 Financial Implications**

6.1 Financial implications are set out in the main body of the report.

#### **7 Legal Implications**

7.1 The provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (LGFA 1992) set out what the Council has to base its budget calculations upon regarding council tax and requires the Council to set a balanced budget having regard to the advice of its Chief Finance Officer (section 151 Officer). The setting of the budget is a function reserved to Full Council in accordance with Part 2, Article 4.02 of the Council's Constitution and the Policy and Resources Committee must therefore forward its recommendations on the budget to Full Council.

7.2 Section 30(6) LGFA 1992 provides that the Council has got to set its budget calculations before 11 March in the financial year preceding the one in respect of which the budget is set although, it is not invalid merely because it is not set on or after 11 March. However, it is important that the Council sets its 2024/25 budget by 11 March 2024 as any delay in setting council tax may leave the Council vulnerable to legal proceedings requiring it to set the tax.

#### **8 Staffing Implications**

8.1 The proposed budget focuses on management of existing vacancies and does not result in any change in number of permanent employees.

#### **9 Risk Management Implications**

9.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy. Financial and budgetary risks are shown at Appendix 6.

9.2 In the officers' opinion none of the risks detailed in Appendix 6, in isolation, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks that will be included and managed via the Corporate Services Service Plan. The effectiveness of treatment plans are reviewed by the Audit Committee.

#### **10 Recommendation**

10.1 That the report be noted.

Report prepared by: Sally Riley – Finance Business Partner

Checked by: Alison Scott – Director of Finance

#### **Background Papers**

Reports and Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee and Council

***The recommendations contained in this report DO NOT constitute a KEY DECISION but contribute to the process whereby the Council will approve and adopt its Strategic, Service and Financial Plans under Article 4 of the Council's Constitution***

Appendices

- Appendix 1 Service Committees Supplementary Estimates at end of November 2023/24 to 2026/27
- Appendix 2 Service Committees Variances at end of November 2023/24 to 2026/27
- Appendix 3 Service Committees Virements at end of November 2023/24 to 2026/27
- Appendix 4 Reserves
- Appendix 5 Service Committees Medium term Financial Plan 2024/25 to 2026/27
- Appendix 6 Financial and Budgetary Key Risks

SERVICE COMMITTEES' SUPPLEMENTARY ESTIMATES AT END OF NOVEMBER 2023/24 TO 2026/27

General Public Services and Economic Development			2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	£	£	£	£
Land & Property Info Section	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	(4,836)	(10,268)	1,044	21,746
Development Management	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	33,150	36,158	43,967	16,880
	Income	Increase CIL 5% income budget by £29,670 to match Senior CIL officer salary, an increase in statutory Planning Fees of £150,000 for future years and to start charging for Monitoring S106 agreements of £6,000	(29,670)	(185,670)	(185,670)	(185,670)
Director Community & Env Servs	Employees	Post removed from establishment following restructure of senior management.	(130,211)	(130,118)	(130,118)	(130,118)
Associate Director Economy, Infrastructure & Planning	Employees	Post established following restructure of senior management.(currently vacant)	0	107,769	107,769	107,769
Development Plans	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	13,514	13,633	15,054	16,929
Hertfordshire Building Control	Employees	Post removed from establishment following transfer of service to Hertfordshire Building Control.	(64,744)	(64,744)	(64,744)	(64,744)
	Income	Reduction in income received due to transfer of service to Hertfordshire Building Control	106,567	106,567	106,567	106,567
GIS Officer	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	2,448	2,946	2,946	2,946
<b>Total Economic Development &amp; Planning Policy</b>			<b>(73,782)</b>	<b>(123,727)</b>	<b>(103,185)</b>	<b>(107,695)</b>
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
			£	£	£	£
Housing Service Needs	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	27,828	10,889	24,831	48,216
Homelessness General Fund	Supplies and Services	Reduction in Grants and Contributions budget due to the use of Homelessness Prevention Grant funding	0	(20,000)	0	0
Env Health - Residential Team	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	6,000	6,113	6,113	6,113
<b>Total Housing Public Health and Wellbeing</b>			<b>33,828</b>	<b>(2,998)</b>	<b>30,944</b>	<b>54,329</b>

Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Decriminalised Parking Enf Spa	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied.	5,965	5,965	5,965	5,965
	Income	Increase in fees & Charges for Permit fees following full council decision.	0	(22,750)	(22,750)	(22,750)
Associate Director Customer & Community	Employees	Budget applied following restructure of senior management structure.	89,450	92,826	96,205	96,205
Refuse Domestic	Income	Increase in fees & Charges for Special Commercial fees following full council decision.	0	(3,830)	(3,830)	(3,830)
Trade Refuse	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. Some posts moved to Waste Management.	(120,576)	(120,576)	(120,576)	(120,576)
	Income	Increase in fees & charges of 9% following full council decision.	0	(81,215)	(81,215)	(81,215)
Garden Waste	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied	41,022	40,902	41,452	41,452
Clinical Waste	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied.	2,847	2,847	2,847	2,847
	Income	Increase in fees & Charges for Clinical Waste Collection fees following full council decision.	0	(9,975)	(9,975)	(9,975)
Environmental Protection	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	(14,707)	(14,135)	(13,418)	(13,418)
Waste Management	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. Some posts moved from Trade Refuse.	268,541	266,658	266,658	266,658
Street Cleansing	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied.	43,165	43,176	43,176	43,176
<b>Total Public Services</b>			<b>315,707</b>	<b>199,893</b>	<b>204,539</b>	<b>204,539</b>
<b>Total General Public Services and Economic Development</b>			<b>275,753</b>	<b>73,168</b>	<b>132,298</b>	<b>151,173</b>

<b>Climate Change, Leisure and Community</b>						
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Corporate Climate Change	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied.	3,353	3,360	3,360	3,360
Animal Control	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied.	2,990	3,042	3,042	3,042
	Income	Increase in fees & charges for Other Licences following full council decision.	0	(805)	(805)	(805)
Cemeteries	Income	Increase in fees & Charges for Burial fees, Burial Rights fees and Memorial Fees following full council decision.	0	(19,570)	(19,570)	(19,570)
Trees and Landscapes	Income	Increase in fees & Charges for Hire of Grounds following full council decision.	0	(600)	(600)	(600)
<b>Total Sustainability and Climate</b>			<b>6,343</b>	<b>(14,573)</b>	<b>(14,573)</b>	<b>(14,573)</b>

Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Watersmeet	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	21,193	35,681	36,727	37,790
	Income	Increase in fees & Charges for Lettings and Hall Hire fees following full council decision.	0	(14,850)	(14,850)	(14,850)
Playing Fields & Open Spaces	Income	Increase in fees & Charges for Football fees following full council decision.	0	(3,750)	(3,750)	(3,750)
Play Rangers	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	4,365	5,236	5,236	5,236
	Income	To introduce a registration fee of £5 per child per year for play ranger session following full council decision	0	(5,168)	(5,168)	(5,168)
Leisure Development	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	35,829	38,207	40,635	41,819
Play Development - Playschemes	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account changes in pay elements.	0	5,044	5,044	5,044
	Income	Increase Playscheme rates following full council decision	0	(13,141)	(13,141)	(13,141)
Sports Devel - Sports Projects	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account changes in pay elements.	0	2,585	2,585	2,585
Leisure & Community Services	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements following restructure of service.	(85,171)	(85,190)	(85,190)	(85,190)
Grounds Maintenance	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	88,284	96,374	96,374	96,374
<b>Total Leisure</b>			<b>64,500</b>	<b>61,028</b>	<b>64,502</b>	<b>66,749</b>
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Citizens Advice Bureau	Supplies and Services	Budget reduced to align CAB ringfenced Service Accommodation budget with rent charged	0	(15,000)	(15,000)	(15,000)
Community Safety	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	13,072	17,128	22,109	26,039
Community Partnerships	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	(1,003)	(261)	1,115	1,115
Licensing	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied .	6,918	6,920	6,920	6,920
	Income	Increase in fees & charges for Vehicle Licences - Private Hire following full council decision.	0	(6,875)	(6,875)	(6,875)
Community & Leisure Grant	Supplies and Services	Budget reduced due to lack of demand for Arts on Prescription Project (£6,500) and securing alternative funding for Roundabout Transport (£6,000)	0	(12,500)	(12,500)	(12,500)
<b>Total Community Partnerships</b>			<b>18,987</b>	<b>(10,588)</b>	<b>(4,231)</b>	<b>(301)</b>
<b>Total Climate Change, Leisure and Community</b>			<b>89,830</b>	<b>35,867</b>	<b>45,698</b>	<b>51,875</b>

Policy and Resources			2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	£	£	£	£
Performance Mgt & Scrutiny	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied.	2,932	2,946	2,946	2,946
Debt Recovery	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	27,314	24,968	28,562	32,170
	Income	Increase in Shared Service income due to 2023/24 pay award and future years realignment	(16,662)	(32,983)	(39,580)	(41,781)
Associate Director of Strategy, Partnerships & Housing	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	4,643	4,820	8,749	8,749
Finance Client	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements following restructure of service.	52,197	118,517	119,945	121,389
	Income	Increase to Shared Service income due to new S151 Officer arrangements with Watford Borough Council and future years realignment	(42,592)	(99,084)	(100,504)	(101,935)
ICT Client	Employees	Budget removed as salary costs now forms part of Shared Service Agreement	(65,350)	(65,350)	(65,350)	(65,350)
	Third Party Payments	Increase in Shared Service payment to Watford Borough Council as salary costs now part of Shared Service Agreement	27,176	27,176	27,176	27,176
Salary Contingency	Employees	Allocation of 2023/24 Pay award to individual service lines for all years plus impact of vacancies in 2023/24.	(518,624)	(387,715)	(469,622)	(250,388)
<b>Total Resources</b>			<b>(559,621)</b>	<b>(741,491)</b>	<b>(816,517)</b>	<b>(587,431)</b>
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
			£	£	£	£
Customer Service Centre	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	58,531	63,227	73,048	75,708
Customer Experience	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied.	4,208	4,255	8,188	8,188
Communication	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	(2,371)	(1,437)	(1,437)	(1,437)
Legal	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	(5,734)	(5,728)	(5,079)	(4,414)
Committee Administration	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements following restructure of service.	9,810	11,826	13,794	15,758
Elections & Electoral Regn	Employees	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements following restructure of service.	(23,033)	(20,643)	(18,675)	(16,711)
<b>Total Leader</b>			<b>41,411</b>	<b>51,500</b>	<b>69,839</b>	<b>77,092</b>
<b>Total Policy and Resources</b>			<b>(518,210)</b>	<b>(689,991)</b>	<b>(746,678)</b>	<b>(510,339)</b>
<b>TOTAL All Committees</b>			<b>(152,627)</b>	<b>(580,956)</b>	<b>(568,682)</b>	<b>(307,291)</b>
<b>TOTAL Revenue Supplementary Estimates for Period 8 (November) For approval</b>			<b>(152,627)</b>	<b>(580,956)</b>	<b>(568,682)</b>	<b>(307,291)</b>

## SERVICE COMMITTEES' VARIANCES AT END OF NOVEMBER 2023/24 TO 2026/27

General Public Services and Economic Development						
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Land & Property Info Section	Supplies and Services	Subsistence budget no longer required	(100)	(100)	(100)	(100)
<b>Total Economic Development &amp; Planning Policy</b>			<b>(100)</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>(100)</b>	<b>(100)</b>
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme	Premises	Full budget not required this financial year	(3,000)	0	0	0
Homelessness General Fund	Grants	Budget removed for Single Homelessness grant as it has now been replaced by the Homeless Prevention Fund	19,150	19,150	19,150	19,150
<b>Total Housing Public Health and Wellbeing</b>			<b>16,150</b>	<b>19,150</b>	<b>19,150</b>	<b>19,150</b>
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Roads Repairs & Maintenance	Premises	Essential repairs totalling £17,000 required following annual inspection	17,000	0	0	0
Depot Batchworth	Income	Increase in Rent-Building budget to reflect the income being received	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)
<b>Total Public Services</b>			<b>16,000</b>	<b>(1,000)</b>	<b>(1,000)</b>	<b>(1,000)</b>
<b>Total General Public Services and Economic Development</b>			<b>32,050</b>	<b>18,050</b>	<b>18,050</b>	<b>18,050</b>
Climate Change, Leisure and Community						
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Energy Efficiency	Supplies and Services	Full grants and contributions budget no longer required	(5,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)
<b>Total Sustainability and Climate</b>			<b>(5,000)</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Licensing	Income	Reduction in income reported of £20,000 for Drivers-Private Hire and £7,000 for Vehicles-Private Hire due to declining number of applications	27,000	0	0	0
<b>Total Community Partnerships</b>			<b>27,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Climate Change, Leisure and Community</b>			<b>22,000</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>

Policy and Resources						
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
ICT Client	Supplies and Services	Migration to Cloud budget no longer required	(20,000)	0	0	0
Internal Audit Client	Third Party Payment	Additional budget required due to under accrual from 2022/23	5,000	0	0	0
<b>Total Resources</b>			<b>(15,000)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Policy and Resources</b>			<b>(15,000)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

<b>TOTAL All Committees</b>			<b>39,050</b>	<b>8,050</b>	<b>8,050</b>	<b>8,050</b>
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Corporate Costs						
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Interest Earned	Income	An extra £350,000 is expected on Investment interest and £44,191 on pre-emption sites	(394,191)	-	-	-
Interest Paid	Expenditure	Revenue Provision for Capital budget updated to values in MRP Schedule	32,617	16,617	16,617	16,617
<b>Total Corporate Costs</b>			<b>(361,574)</b>	<b>16,617</b>	<b>16,617</b>	<b>16,617</b>
<b>TOTAL Revenue Variances to be Managed in year for Period 8 (November) For noting only</b>			<b>(322,524)</b>	<b>24,667</b>	<b>24,667</b>	<b>24,667</b>



## SERVICE COMMITTEES VIREMENTS AT END OF NOVEMBER 2023/24 TO 2026/27

General Public Services and Economic Development			2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	£	£	£	£
Public Health	Supplies and Services	To spend ringfenced COMF funding of £100,000 and Public Health Money of £55,000	155,000	0	0	0
	Income	Receipt of ringfenced COMF funding of £100,000 and Public Health Money of £55,000	(155,000)	0	0	0
Homelessness General Fund	Supplies and Services	To spend ringfenced Rough Sleepers Grant	36,000	0	0	0
	Income	Receipt of ringfenced Rough Sleepers Grant	(36,000)	0	0	0
Housing Needs Service	Supplies and Services	Budget transferred to Environmental Health Residential Team to contribute towards the costs of clearance of an empty property	(3,000)	0	0	0
Enc Health - Residential Team	Supplies and Services	Transferred from Housing Service Needs to Environmental Health Residential Team to contribute towards the costs of clearance of an empty property	3,000	0	0	0
<b>Total Housing Public Health and Wellbeing</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Development Management	Supplies and Services	To spend income received from appellant for aborted appeal	11,582	0	0	0
	Income	income received from appellant for aborted appeal	(11,582)	0	0	0
<b>Total Economic Development and Planning Policy</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Hertfordshire Fly Tipping	Supplies and Services	To spend money transferred from Fly Tipping earmarked reserves	6,660	0	0	0
	Income	Transfer from Fly Tipping earmarked reserves	(6,660)	0	0	0
<b>Total Public services</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total General Public Services and Economic Development</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
Climate Change, Leisure and Community			2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	£	£	£	£
Community Development	Supplies and Services	To Spend Household Support Fund Grant	55,000	0	0	0
	Income	Receipt of Household Support Fund Grant	(55,000)	0	0	0
<b>Total Community Partnerships</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Corporate Climate Change	Supplies and Services	To Spend Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Grant	30,000	0	0	0
	Income	Receipt of Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Grant	(30,000)	0	0	0
Trees and Landscapes	Supplies and Services	Use of S106 monies is no longer required	(19,832)	0	0	0
	Income	Use of S106 monies is no longer required	19,832	0	0	0
<b>Total Sustainability and Climate</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Climate Change, Leisure and community</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

Policy & Resources			2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
Miscellaneous Income & Expenditure	Income	Support Service Income Capital budget virement from Asset Management Property	(226,590)	(226,590)	(226,590)	(226,590)
Miscellaneous Properties	Premises	Budget virement to Garages, Shops and Maintenance	(7,000)	0		0
Asset Management Property	Income	Support Service Income Capital budget virement to Miscellaneous Income & Expenditure	226,590	226,590	226,590	226,590
Garages & Shops Maintenance	Premises	Budget Virement from Miscellaneous Properties	7,000	0		0
<b>Total Resources</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Policy and Resources</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>TOTAL Virements for Period 8 (November) For approval</b>			<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>

## RESERVES

Category	Opening Balance 01/04/2023 £	Net Movement in Year £	Closing Balance 31/03/2024 £	Purpose
<b>General Reserves</b>				
General Fund	(4,966,958)	988,417	(3,978,541)	Working balance to support the Council's revenue services. £2M is a suggested prudent minimum
Economic Impact (EIR)	(1,617,617)	182,840	(1,434,777)	To support the funding of unexpected/unplanned Council expenditure as a result of fluctuations in the economy.
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>(6,584,575)</b>	<b>1,171,257</b>	<b>(5,413,318)</b>	
<b>Capital Reserves</b>				
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	(7,472,714)	(1,578,911)	(9,051,625)	Developers contributions towards Infrastructure
Capital Receipts	0	(51,390)	(51,390)	Generated from sale of Council assets
Grants & Contributions	(1,095,321)	(1,011,545)	(2,106,866)	Disabled Facility Grants and other contributions
Reserve for Capital expenditure	0	0	0	Reserve set aside for supporting capital expenditure
<b>Total Capital</b>	<b>(8,568,035)</b>	<b>(2,641,846)</b>	<b>(11,209,881)</b>	
<b>Other Earmarked Reserves</b>				
New Homes Bonus	(222,787)	0	(222,787)	Government grant set aside for supporting capital expenditure
Section 106	(1,489,612)	(265,741)	(1,755,353)	Developers contributions towards facilities
Leavesden Hospital Open Space	(769,124)	0	(769,124)	To maintain open space on the ex hospital site
Abbots Langley - Horsefield	(809,667)	0	(809,667)	Developers contributions towards maintenance of site
Environmental Maintenance Plant	(123,595)	0	(123,595)	Reserve to fund expenditure on plant & machinery
Building Control	(243,290)	0	(243,290)	To provide against future losses and/or borrowing against Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd
Commercial Risk Reserve	(6,948,354)	0	(6,948,354)	To manage timing of cashflows and risks in relation to commercial ventures
Collection Fund Reserve	(3,059,242)	0	(3,059,242)	To manage timing differences on the Collection Fund
HB Equalisation	(79,356)	0	(79,356)	To provide against future deficits on the Housing Benefit account
Grants & Contributions	(1,244,951)	0	(1,244,951)	Revenue Grants earmarked for use in future years
<b>Total Other</b>	<b>(14,989,978)</b>	<b>(265,741)</b>	<b>(15,255,719)</b>	
<b>Total All</b>	<b>(30,142,588)</b>	<b>(1,736,330)</b>	<b>(31,878,918)</b>	

SERVICE COMMITTEES - MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2023/24 to 2026/27

General Public Services and Economic Development											
Housing, Public Health and Wellbeing	Original Budget 2023/24	Original Budget Plus 2022/23 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2023/24	Previous Forecast 2023/24	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2023/24	Variance @ P8	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Officer Comments
	£		£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Housing Services Needs	501,198	501,198	501,198	501,198	338,332	526,026	24,828	523,344	537,286	560,671	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. £3,000 Budget Virement to Environmental Health Residential Team to contribute towards the costs of clearance of an empty property
Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme	5,110	5,110	5,110	5,110	0	2,110	(3,000)	5,110	5,110	5,110	Full budget not required this financial year
Homelessness General Fund	(176,770)	(176,770)	(176,770)	(257,020)	(638,325)	(237,870)	19,150	(177,620)	(157,620)	(157,620)	Variance to be managed of £19,150 for Single Homelessness grant as it has now been replaced by the Homeless Prevention Fund. Income and Expenditure budgets of £36,000 required for Ringfenced Rough Sleepers grant. Reduction in Grants and Contributions budget of £20,000 for 2024/25 due to the use of Homelessness Prevention Grant
Housing Associations	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(2,500)	(5,000)	0	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	Income will be received by year end
Refugees	0	0	0	0	10,286	0	0	0	0	0	Transfer from reserves at year end
Env Health - Residential Team	70,097	70,097	70,097	70,097	36,706	79,097	9,000	77,427	77,427	77,427	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. £3,000 budget virement from Housing Service Needs to Environmental Health Residential Team to contribute towards the costs of clearance of an empty property
Public Health	0	0	0	0	(149,535)	0	0	0	0	0	Income and Expenditure budgets of £100,000 required for Ringfenced COMF funding and £55,000 Public Health Money
<b>Total</b>	<b>394,635</b>	<b>394,635</b>	<b>394,635</b>	<b>314,385</b>	<b>(405,036)</b>	<b>364,363</b>	<b>49,978</b>	<b>423,261</b>	<b>457,203</b>	<b>480,588</b>	

Page 32

Economic Development and Planning Policy	Original Budget 2023/24	Original Budget Plus 2022/23 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2023/24	Previous Forecast 2023/24	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2023/24	Variance @ P8	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Land & Property Info Section	6,987	6,987	6,987	38,987	42,336	34,051	(4,936)	(10,497)	(6,716)	13,986	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. Variance to be managed of £100 as Subsistence budget no longer required
Street Naming & Numbering	7,130	7,130	7,130	7,130	5,841	7,130	0	7,130	7,130	7,130	Budget will be spent
Development Management	263,664	274,664	263,614	262,114	158,838	265,594	3,480	110,943	118,752	91,665	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. Increase CIL 5% income budget by £29,670 to match Senior CIL officer salary, an increase in statutory Planning Fees of £150,000 for future years and to start charging for Monitoring S106 agreements of £6,000. Income and Expenditure budgets of £11,582 required for income received from appellant for aborted appeal
Director Community & Env Servs	130,211	130,211	130,211	130,211	0	0	(130,211)	0	0	0	Post removed from establishment following restructure of senior management structure
AD Economy Infrastructure & Planning	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	107,769	107,769	107,769	New post added to structure following restructure of senior management structure
Development Plans	298,293	326,793	337,843	337,843	278,972	351,357	13,514	324,504	325,925	327,800	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Hertfordshire Building Control	(4,323)	(4,323)	(4,323)	(4,323)	27,612	37,500	41,823	37,500	37,500	37,500	Post removed from establishment following transfer of service to Hertfordshire Building Control. Reduction in income received due to transfer of service to Hertfordshire Building Control
HS2 Planning	0	0	0	0	109	0	0	0	0	0	Awaiting income from HS2
GIS Officer	50,161	50,161	50,161	50,161	33,070	52,609	2,448	53,999	53,999	53,999	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
<b>Total</b>	<b>752,123</b>	<b>791,623</b>	<b>791,623</b>	<b>822,123</b>	<b>546,778</b>	<b>748,241</b>	<b>(73,882)</b>	<b>631,348</b>	<b>644,359</b>	<b>639,849</b>	

Public Services	Original Budget 2023/24	Original Budget Plus 2022/23 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2023/24	Previous Forecast 2023/24	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2023/24	Variance @ P8	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Decriminalised Parking Enf	92,369	137,087	230,668	230,668	5,562	236,633	5,965	169,165	169,165	169,165	2023/24 Pay Award applied. Increase in Fees & Charges following full council decision.
Car Parking-Maintenance	96,690	96,690	110,466	110,466	109,262	127,466	17,000	110,466	110,466	110,466	Variance to be managed of £17,000 due to essential repairs required following annual inspection
Dial A Ride	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	20,000	40,000	0	40,000	40,000	40,000	Budget will be spent
Sustainable Travel Schemes	1,500	8,000	8,000	8,000	1,826	8,000	0	1,500	1,500	1,500	Budget will be spent
Associate Director Customer & Community	0	0	0	0	51,501	89,450	89,450	92,826	96,205	96,205	Budget applied following restructure of senior management structure
Refuse Domestic	(23,370)	(23,370)	(22,390)	(22,390)	(15,381)	(22,390)	0	(26,220)	(26,220)	(26,220)	Increase in fees and charges following full council decision
Refuse Trade	(37,465)	(37,465)	(30,091)	(30,091)	(416,099)	(150,667)	(120,576)	(231,882)	(231,882)	(231,882)	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. Some posts moved to Waste Management. Increase in fees & charges following full council decision.
Better Buses Fund	93,359	93,359	101,762	101,762	101,769	101,762	0	101,762	101,762	101,762	Budget will be spent
Recycling General	750	750	750	750	(6,469)	750	0	750	750	750	Budget will be spent
Garden Waste	(595,543)	(595,543)	(577,888)	(577,888)	(976,897)	(536,866)	41,022	(536,986)	(536,436)	(536,436)	2023/24 Pay Award applied. Income is received at the beginning of the financial year and expenditure against the income is made throughout the year. Budget will be spent
Clinical Waste	(31,678)	(31,678)	(31,468)	(31,468)	(80,760)	(28,621)	2,847	(38,596)	(38,596)	(38,596)	2023/24 Pay Award applied, increase in fees & Charges following full council decision.
Recycling Kerbside	(318,613)	(318,613)	(318,613)	9,930	(43,690)	9,930	0	(318,613)	(318,613)	(318,613)	Budget will be spent
Abandoned Vehicles	250	250	250	250	140	250	0	250	250	250	Demand led service
Public Conveniences	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	2,400	3,600	0	3,600	3,600	3,600	Budget will be spent
Hertfordshire Fly Tipping	0	0	0	0	6,658	0	0	0	0	0	Income and Expenditure budgets of £6,660 to spend money transferred from Fly Tipping earmarked reserves at year end
Environmental Protection	389,553	389,553	389,553	389,553	254,270	374,846	(14,707)	375,550	376,267	376,267	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Depot-Batchworth	35,380	35,380	35,380	35,380	32,238	34,380	(1,000)	34,380	34,380	34,380	Increase in Rent-Building budget to reflect the income being received
Waste Management	2,360,909	2,360,909	2,393,329	2,393,329	1,764,200	2,661,870	268,541	2,560,250	2,560,250	2,560,250	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. Some posts moved from Trade Refuse.
Street Cleansing	632,375	632,375	632,375	632,375	397,316	675,540	43,165	676,721	676,721	676,721	2023/24 Pay Award applied.
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,740,066</b>	<b>2,791,284</b>	<b>2,965,683</b>	<b>3,294,226</b>	<b>1,207,846</b>	<b>3,625,933</b>	<b>331,707</b>	<b>3,014,923</b>	<b>3,019,569</b>	<b>3,019,569</b>	
<b>Total General Public Services and Economic Development</b>	<b>3,886,824</b>	<b>3,977,542</b>	<b>4,151,941</b>	<b>4,430,734</b>	<b>1,349,588</b>	<b>4,738,537</b>	<b>307,803</b>	<b>4,069,532</b>	<b>4,121,131</b>	<b>4,140,006</b>	

Climate Change, Leisure and Community											
Community Partnerships	Original Budget 2023/24	Original Budget Plus 2022/23 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2023/24	Previous Forecast 2023/24	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2023/24	Variance @ P8	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Citizens Advice Bureaux	303,340	303,340	303,340	303,340	129,645	303,340	0	288,340	288,340	288,340	Future Years budget reduced to align ringfenced CAB Service Accommodation budget with rent charged
Community Development	4,500	4,500	4,500	4,500	(79,280)	4,500	0	4,500	4,500	4,500	Income and Expenditure budgets of £55,000 to spend ringfenced Household Support Fund Grant
Community Safety	217,274	228,774	228,774	228,774	221,735	241,846	13,072	235,231	240,212	244,142	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Community Partnerships	209,387	209,387	209,387	209,387	128,806	208,384	(1,003)	211,042	212,418	212,418	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Env Health - Commercial Team	209,790	209,790	209,790	209,790	97,369	209,790	0	209,790	209,790	209,790	Budget will be spent
Licensing	(66,261)	(66,261)	(66,261)	(66,841)	(64,426)	(32,923)	33,918	(66,585)	(66,585)	(66,585)	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance to be managed due to reduction in income reported of £20,000 for Drivers-Private Hire and £7,000 for Vehicles-Private Hire due to declining number of applications. Increase in fees & charges following council decision
Community & Leisure Grant	80,000	80,000	67,000	65,000	24,500	65,000	0	67,500	67,500	67,500	Future years budget reduced due to lack of demand for Arts on Prescription Project (£6,500) and seeking alternative funding for Roundabout Transport (£6,000)
<b>Total</b>	<b>958,030</b>	<b>969,530</b>	<b>956,530</b>	<b>953,950</b>	<b>458,349</b>	<b>999,937</b>	<b>45,987</b>	<b>949,818</b>	<b>956,175</b>	<b>960,105</b>	

Leisure	Original Budget 2023/24	Original Budget Plus 2022/23 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2023/24	Previous Forecast 2023/24	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2023/24	Variance @ P8	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Leavesden Country Park	0	0	0	0	592	0	0	0	0	0	S106 funded expenditure will be transferred at year end
Community Sports Network Csn	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Community Arts	11,400	11,400	17,900	17,900	4,614	17,900	0	11,400	11,400	11,400	Budget will be spent
Watersmeet	5,406	5,406	8,787	8,787	(146,461)	29,980	21,193	26,393	27,439	28,502	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. Increase in fees & Charges following full council decision
Leavesden Ymca	(35,000)	(35,000)	(35,000)	(35,000)	(28,658)	(35,000)	0	(35,000)	(35,000)	(35,000)	Income is received quarterly.
Oxhey Hall	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)	(2,263)	(3,000)	0	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)	Income is received quarterly.
Museum	(700)	(700)	(700)	(700)	(700)	(700)	0	(700)	(700)	(700)	Budget met
Playing Fields & Open Spaces	97,731	97,731	97,731	97,731	47,172	97,731	0	93,981	93,981	93,981	Increase in fees & Charges following full council decision.
Play Rangers	56,495	56,495	56,495	56,495	41,619	60,860	4,365	56,484	56,484	56,484	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. To introduce a registration fee of £5 per child per year for play ranger service in line with full council decision.
Comm Parks & Sust Project	24,200	24,200	24,200	24,200	20,087	24,200	0	24,200	24,200	24,200	Budget will be spent
Aquadrome	16,550	16,550	44,615	71,735	50,376	71,735	0	39,615	39,615	39,615	Budget will be spent
Leisure Venues	(479,640)	(479,640)	(479,640)	(479,640)	(412,023)	(479,640)	0	(514,893)	(514,893)	(514,893)	Budget will be spent
Leisure Development	519,504	519,504	519,504	519,504	314,461	555,333	35,829	557,807	560,235	561,419	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Play Development - Play schemes	42,940	42,940	42,940	42,940	28,952	42,940	0	34,843	34,843	34,843	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account changes in pay elements. Increase Playscheme fees and charges in line with full council decision.
Sports Devel-Sports Projects	45,550	45,550	52,050	52,050	26,987	52,050	0	48,135	48,135	48,135	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account changes in pay elements.
Leisure & Community Services	121,355	121,355	121,355	121,355	26,405	36,184	(85,171)	36,087	36,087	36,087	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements following restructure of service.
Grounds Maintenance	735,553	735,553	741,689	741,689	471,822	829,973	88,284	840,028	840,028	840,028	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,158,344</b>	<b>1,158,344</b>	<b>1,208,926</b>	<b>1,236,046</b>	<b>442,982</b>	<b>1,300,546</b>	<b>64,500</b>	<b>1,215,380</b>	<b>1,218,854</b>	<b>1,221,101</b>	



Sustainability and Climate	Original Budget 2023/24	Original Budget Plus 2022/23 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2023/24	Previous Forecast 2023/24	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2023/24	Variance @ P8	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Energy Efficiency	19,500	19,500	19,500	19,500	100	14,500	(5,000)	9,500	9,500	9,500	Full grants and contributions budget no longer required
Sustainability Projects	3,000	3,000	3,000	3,000	0	3,000	0	3,000	3,000	3,000	
Corporate Climate Change	98,085	144,154	144,154	144,154	(114,557)	147,507	3,353	102,262	102,262	102,262	2023/24 Pay Award applied. Income and Expenditure budgets of £30,000 required for Ringfenced Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund Wave 2.
Innovate UK	0	0	0	0	3,866	0	0	0	0	0	Innovate UK Grant claimed retrospectively as per grant conditions
Pest Control	80,755	80,755	80,755	80,755	39,991	80,755	0	12,755	12,755	12,755	Budget will be spent
Environmental Maintenance	25,970	25,970	25,970	43,970	32,351	43,970	0	25,970	25,970	25,970	Budget will be spent
Animal Control	62,305	62,305	62,305	62,305	45,129	65,295	2,990	64,490	64,490	64,490	2023/24 Pay Award applied. Increase in fees & charges following full council decision.
Cemeteries	(208,623)	(208,623)	(208,623)	(208,623)	(173,318)	(208,623)	0	(228,193)	(228,193)	(228,193)	Increase in fees and charges following full council decision.
Trees And Landscapes	244,360	244,360	244,360	244,360	115,676	244,360	0	243,760	243,760	243,760	£19,832 income and expenditure budgets for use of S106 monies are no longer required. Increase in fees & Charges following full council decision.
<b>Total</b>	<b>325,352</b>	<b>371,421</b>	<b>371,421</b>	<b>389,421</b>	<b>(50,762)</b>	<b>390,764</b>	<b>1,343</b>	<b>233,544</b>	<b>233,544</b>	<b>233,544</b>	
<b>Total Climate Change, Leisure and Community</b>	<b>2,441,726</b>	<b>2,499,295</b>	<b>2,536,877</b>	<b>2,579,417</b>	<b>850,569</b>	<b>2,691,247</b>	<b>111,830</b>	<b>2,398,742</b>	<b>2,408,573</b>	<b>2,414,750</b>	

Policy & Resources											
Resources	Original Budget 2023/24	Original Budget Plus 2022/23 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2023/24	Previous Forecast 2023/24	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2023/24	Variance @ P8	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Corporate Management	150,680	212,980	212,980	242,980	77,569	242,980	0	150,680	150,680	150,680	Budget will be spent
Major Incident Planning	106,833	106,833	106,833	106,833	54,682	110,329	3,496	113,107	113,904	114,728	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. Removal of Emergency Planning budget as service will now be in house
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	0	0	0	0	(151,779)	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent
West Herts Crematorium	0	0	0	0	519,189	0	0	0	0	0	All spend will be recharged to West Herts Crematorium
Miscellaneous Income & Expend	(114,910)	(114,910)	(114,910)	(114,910)	(667,416)	(341,500)	(226,590)	(341,500)	(341,500)	(341,500)	Support Service Income Capital budget virement from Asset Management Property
Non Distributed Costs	255,000	255,000	255,000	255,000	1,176	55,000	(200,000)	57,000	59,000	59,000	Reduction in Pension deficit following tri-annual valuation
Director Of Finance	66,703	66,703	66,703	66,703	49,048	90,322	23,619	128,735	132,966	132,965	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. Shared Service income reduced due to new S151 Officer arrangements with Watford Borough Council
Miscellaneous Properties	(77,433)	(77,433)	(62,743)	(122,743)	(140,008)	(129,518)	(6,775)	(77,208)	(77,208)	(77,208)	2023/24 Pay Award applied. £7,000 Budget virement to Garages, Shops and Maintenance
Office Services	214,810	214,810	198,810	184,810	82,464	184,810	0	192,810	190,810	190,810	Reduction in postage budget due to all non-statutory bulk mail outs being sent by email
Asset Management - Property Services	411,755	419,755	438,055	437,255	440,435	700,645	263,390	692,079	693,260	694,542	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. £1,300 Publication budget no longer required. £226,590 Support Service Income Capital budget virement to Miscellaneous Income & Expenditure
Finance Services	487,002	487,002	518,002	518,002	420,803	556,216	38,214	440,080	435,772	439,212	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements following restructure of service. Shared Service income reduced due to new S151 Officer arrangements with Watford Borough Council
Council Tax Collection	387,937	387,937	387,937	367,937	395,081	378,603	10,666	329,467	330,179	330,880	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. Increase in Shared Service income due to 2023/24 pay award and future years realignment
Benefits & Allowances	748,587	748,587	748,587	702,587	667,592	735,131	32,544	681,913	685,248	687,432	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. - Removal of Agency budget for future years. Increase in Shared Service income due to 2023/24 pay award and reduced in future years due to removal of agency budget
NNDR	58,898	58,898	58,898	58,898	38,045	61,241	2,343	60,005	60,005	60,005	2023/24 Pay Award applied. Increase in Shared Service income due to 2023/24 pay award and future years realignment
Revs & Bens Management	39,453	39,453	39,453	39,453	37,752	42,152	2,699	41,969	41,969	41,970	2023/24 Pay Award applied. Increase in Shared Service income due to 2023/24 pay award and future years realignment
Fraud	81,149	81,149	77,149	77,149	74,338	86,746	9,597	86,746	86,746	86,746	2023/24 Pay Award applied.
Garages & Shops Maintenance	(1,169,030)	(1,169,030)	(1,169,030)	(1,169,030)	(753,180)	(1,162,030)	7,000	(1,300,150)	(1,300,150)	(1,300,150)	Budget Virement of £7,000 from Miscellaneous Properties. Increase in fees and charges for garage rentals
Chief Executive	204,612	354,612	354,612	354,612	150,977	363,754	9,142	213,754	213,754	213,754	2023/24 Pay Award applied.

Resources	Original Budget 2023/24	Original Budget Plus 2022/23 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2023/24	Previous Forecast 2023/24	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2023/24	Variance @ P8	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Investment Properties	(890,089)	(890,089)	(929,794)	(929,794)	(617,539)	(929,794)	0	(950,499)	(982,225)	(982,225)	Budget will be spent
Performance Mgt & Scrutiny	50,903	50,903	50,903	50,903	26,125	53,835	2,932	53,849	53,849	53,849	2023/24 Pay Award applied.
Debt Recovery	233,506	233,506	233,506	233,506	170,960	244,158	10,652	226,406	223,403	224,810	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. Increase in Shared Service income due to 2023/24 pay award and future years realignment
Associate Director Strategy, Partnerships & Housing	100,609	100,609	100,609	100,609	67,729	105,252	4,643	109,178	113,107	113,107	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Three Rivers House	359,260	359,260	359,260	359,260	324,993	359,260	0	359,260	359,260	359,260	Budget will be spent
Basing House	(10,140)	(10,140)	(10,140)	(10,140)	8,415	(10,140)	0	(10,140)	(10,140)	(10,140)	Rent charged quarterly
Oxhey Drive	10,250	10,250	10,250	10,250	8,645	10,250	0	10,250	10,250	10,250	Budget will be spent
Wimbledon	(200,000)	(200,000)	(200,000)	(200,000)	(673,961)	(200,000)	0	(200,000)	(500,000)	(500,000)	
Officers' Standby	6,140	6,140	6,140	6,140	6,140	6,140	0	6,140	6,140	6,140	Budget fully spent
Vacancy Provision	(180,000)	(180,000)	(180,000)	0	0	0	0	(180,000)	(180,000)	(180,000)	Vacancy saving achieved
Finance Client	21,108	21,108	(5,892)	(5,892)	43,143	3,713	9,605	14,898	14,906	14,919	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements following restructure of service. Increase to Shared Service income due to new S151 Officer arrangements with Watford Borough Council and future years realignment
Business App Maintenance	257,875	257,875	257,875	257,875	220,227	257,875	0	257,875	257,875	257,875	Budget will be spent
ICT Client	721,551	755,551	755,551	741,551	418,922	683,377	(58,174)	683,377	683,377	683,377	Salary budgets removed and Increase in Shared Service payment to Watford Borough Council as salary costs now forms part of Shared Service Agreement. £20,000 Migration to Cloud budget no longer required
Internal Audit Client	55,968	55,968	55,968	51,688	38,404	56,688	5,000	55,968	55,968	55,968	Variance to be managed in year of £5,000 due to under accrual from 2022/23
Council Tax Client	(126,879)	(126,879)	(126,879)	(126,879)	0	(126,879)	0	(126,879)	(126,879)	(126,879)	Budget will be spent
Benefits Client	(470,660)	(470,660)	(470,660)	(470,660)	2,819,721	(470,660)	0	(470,660)	(470,660)	(470,660)	This holds the housing benefits payments and recovery from DWP and further grants from DWP relating to the provision of benefits. There is timing difference between payments made to claimants and income received from Government.
Nndr Cost Of Collection	(107,090)	(107,090)	(107,090)	(107,090)	0	(107,090)	0	(107,090)	(107,090)	(107,090)	This is received at year end
Fraud Client	2,690	2,690	2,690	2,690	1,121	2,690	0	2,690	2,690	2,690	Budget will be spent
Insurances	373,220	373,220	489,995	489,995	502,913	489,995	0	373,220	373,220	373,220	Budget will be spent
Debt Recovery Client Acc	(6,140)	(6,140)	(6,140)	(6,140)	(1,450)	(6,140)	0	(6,140)	(6,140)	(6,140)	Budget will be spent
Benefits New Burden	0	0	0	0	(62,353)	0	0	0	0	0	
Benefits DHP	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Actioned at year end
Benefits Non Hra	1,020	1,020	1,020	1,020	(248,686)	1,020	0	1,020	1,020	1,020	Actioned at year end
HR Client	334,113	334,113	334,113	334,113	195,576	334,113	0	334,113	334,113	334,113	Budget will be spent
Salary Contingency	175,000	175,000	175,000	518,624	0	0	(518,624)	712,285	905,378	1,124,612	2023/24 Pay Award applied .
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,564,261</b>	<b>2,818,561</b>	<b>2,912,621</b>	<b>3,307,165</b>	<b>4,545,813</b>	<b>2,732,544</b>	<b>(574,621)</b>	<b>2,618,608</b>	<b>2,486,857</b>	<b>2,715,942</b>	

Leader	Original Budget 2023/24	Original Budget Plus 2022/23 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2023/24	Previous Forecast 2023/24	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2023/24	Variance @ P8	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Register Of Electors	36,800	36,800	36,800	36,800	6,878	36,800	0	36,800	36,800	36,800	Budget will be spent
District Elections	76,320	76,320	76,320	76,320	142,870	76,320	0	76,320	76,320	76,320	May 2023 Election costs to be recharged
Customer Service Centre	876,087	876,087	876,087	876,087	500,876	934,618	58,531	949,303	959,124	961,784	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Democratic Representation	307,838	307,838	321,766	321,516	223,000	321,516	0	321,516	321,516	321,516	Budget will be spent
Customer Contact Programme	6,000	80,635	80,635	80,635	35,653	80,635	0	6,000	6,000	6,000	Budget will be spent
Customer Experience	87,324	87,324	87,324	87,324	58,463	91,532	4,208	95,468	99,401	99,401	2023/24 Pay Award applied.
Communication	322,645	336,195	337,035	337,035	183,483	334,664	(2,371)	324,697	324,697	324,697	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Legal Practice	407,881	407,881	407,881	407,381	261,915	401,647	(5,734)	402,049	402,698	403,363	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Committee Administration	194,741	194,741	194,741	186,741	121,495	196,551	9,810	207,249	209,217	211,181	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements following restructure of service.
Elections & Electoral Regn	146,326	146,326	146,326	146,326	132,927	123,293	(23,033)	125,815	127,783	129,747	2023/24 Pay Award applied . Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements following restructure of service.
Parish Elections	0	0	0	0	6,311	0	0	0	0	0	Costs from May 2023 election to be recharged to Parishes
County Elections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Parliamentary Elections	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Referendums	0	0	0	0	(150)	0	0	0	0	0	
Police Commissioner Election	0	0	0	0	13,347	0	0	0	0	0	May 2021 Election claim currently with Cabinet Office
<b>Total</b>	<b>2,461,962</b>	<b>2,550,147</b>	<b>2,564,915</b>	<b>2,556,165</b>	<b>1,687,068</b>	<b>2,597,576</b>	<b>41,411</b>	<b>2,545,217</b>	<b>2,563,556</b>	<b>2,570,809</b>	
<b>Total Policy and Resources</b>	<b>5,026,223</b>	<b>5,368,708</b>	<b>5,477,536</b>	<b>5,863,330</b>	<b>6,232,881</b>	<b>5,330,120</b>	<b>(533,210)</b>	<b>5,163,825</b>	<b>5,050,413</b>	<b>5,286,751</b>	
<b>Total All Committees</b>	<b>11,354,773</b>	<b>11,845,545</b>	<b>12,166,354</b>	<b>12,873,481</b>	<b>8,433,038</b>	<b>12,759,904</b>	<b>(113,577)</b>	<b>11,632,099</b>	<b>11,580,117</b>	<b>11,841,507</b>	

Corporate Costs	Original Budget 2023/24	Original Budget Plus 2022/23 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2023/24	Previous Forecast 2023/24	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2023/24	Variance @ P8	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27	Officer Comments
	£	£	£		£	£	£	£	£	£	
Interest Earned	(670,000)	(670,000)	(670,000)	(780,000)	(612,616)	(1,174,191)	(394,191)	(760,000)	(660,000)	(660,000)	An extra £350,000 is expected on Investment interest and £44,191 on pre-emption sites
Interest Paid	682,989	682,989	682,989	573,639	93,030	606,256	32,617	715,606	715,606	715,606	Revenue Provision for Capital budget updated to values in MRP Schedule
Parish Precepts	2,386,783	2,386,783	2,386,783	2,386,783	2,386,783	2,386,783	0	2,434,520	2,483,220	2,483,220	Paid half yearly in April & September
<b>Total Corporate Costs</b>	<b>2,399,772</b>	<b>2,399,772</b>	<b>2,399,772</b>	<b>2,180,422</b>	<b>1,867,197</b>	<b>1,818,848</b>	<b>(361,574)</b>	<b>2,390,126</b>	<b>2,538,826</b>	<b>2,538,826</b>	

<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>13,754,545</b>	<b>14,245,317</b>	<b>14,566,126</b>	<b>15,053,903</b>	<b>10,300,235</b>	<b>14,578,752</b>	<b>(475,151)</b>	<b>14,022,225</b>	<b>14,118,943</b>	<b>14,380,333</b>	
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Growth Bids	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27
Community Safety - Reinstate Budget for PCSO's	72,256	72,256	72,256
Customer Contact Programme - CRM	0	62,453	62,453
Asset Management Property - Repairs and Maintenance	106,548	185,242	185,242
Revenue impact of Capital Growth Bids	0	39,660	26,160
<b>Total</b>	<b>178,804</b>	<b>359,611</b>	<b>346,111</b>

<b>Net Budget</b>	<b>14,201,029</b>	<b>14,478,554</b>	<b>14,726,444</b>
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Funding Changes	Forecast 2024/25	Forecast 2025/26	Forecast 2026/27
New Homes Bonus	(100,025)	(95,000)	(95,000)
Council Tax	(10,419,425)	(10,789,065)	(11,122,947)
Council Tax Collection Fund Deficit	84,870	0	0
Business Rates Pooling	0	(300,000)	(300,000)
Business Rates	(2,818,907)	(2,495,000)	(2,495,000)
Revenue Support Grant	(79,000)	(70,000)	(70,000)
Funding Guarantee	(400,000)	(300,000)	(300,000)
Services Grant	0	0	0
Dividend	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(13,782,487)</b>	<b>(14,099,065)</b>	<b>(14,432,947)</b>

FINANCIAL AND BUDGETARY KEY RISKS

APPENDIX 6

Date risk added to register	Risk ref	Risk owner	Category	Risk description	Comment	Likelihood score (inherent)	Impact score (inherent)	Inherent risk score	Risk controls	Risk control owners	Likelihood score (residual)	Impact score (residual)	Residual risk score	Risk direction	Action plan	Action plan owners	Action plan completion dates
Sep-15	FIN07	Director of Finance	Strategic	The Medium term financial position worsens.	In that the general fund balance falls below the minimum prudent threshold and capital funding is insufficient to meet the capital programme. This appears as item no.8 in the Council's strategic risk register.	4	4	16	The Council has a robust financial management framework which includes regular budget monitoring reports to committees; Budgetary and Financial Risk Register reviewed and updated as part of the budget monitoring process; identification of budgetary pressure when reviewing the medium term financial plan during the budget setting process; Audited Statement of Accounts, including Annual Governance Statement. Currently the 2019/20 annual accounts are awaiting sign off from the external auditors and 2020/21 annual accounts are well progressed.	Head of Finance	3	2	6	➔	Regular budget monitoring reports to committees; Budgetary and Financial Risk Register reviewed and updated as part of the budget monitoring process; identification of budgetary pressure when reviewing the medium term financial plan during the budget setting process which includes a risk assessment for the prudent level of general balances and an assessment of financial resilience with reference to the CIPFA Financial resilience index.	Heads of Service/ Head of Finance	Continuous
Apr-06	FIN08	Director of Finance	Budgetary	The pay award exceeds estimates included in the MTFP resulting in unplanned and unsustainable use of reserves.	The Council's 3 year Medium term Financial Strategy includes forecast pay awards for the next three years. The 2023-24 pay award has now been agreed at the level included in the current budget monitoring. Inflation is beginning to come down reducing pressure on next years	3	3	9	Maintain reserves to guard against risk. Early identification of new pressures through Budget Monitoring.	Head of Finance	3	2	6	⬇	The Council's 3 year Medium term Financial Strategy includes forecast pay awards for the next three years. The Council maintains reserves to guard against risk including setting a prudent minimum level for general balances. Early identification of new pressures through Budget Monitoring enable the Council to take steps to bring the budget back into balance.	Head of Finance	Continuous
Apr-06	FIN09	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Other inflationary increases exceed estimates included in the MTFP resulting in unplanned and unsustainable use of reserves.	Other than contractual agreements, budgets are cash limited where possible and budget managers are expected to manage increases within existing budgets.	3	3	9	Monitor future inflation projections. Actively manage budgets to contain inflation. Maintain reserves.	Service Heads/Head of Finance	3	2	6	➔	Monitor future inflation projections. Actively manage budgets and contracts to contain inflation. The Council maintains reserves to guard against risk including setting a prudent minimum level for general balances. Early identification of new pressures through Budget Monitoring enable the Council to take steps to bring the budget back into balance.	Head of Finance	Continuous
Jan-15	FIN10	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Interest rates increase or decrease resulting in significant variations in estimated interest income (investments) or interest expense (borrowing)	The Council remains cash positive so is experiencing a short term benefit from higher interest rates. Over the longer term rates are expected to come down allowing the Council to borrow for future capital projects.	3	2	6	The Council has a Treasury Management Strategy which is reviewed annually. The Council is looking to lend out over a longer period to maximised the benefit from temporary higher rates..	Head of Finance	3	2	6	➔	The Audit Committee receives two reports per year on Treasury Management activity and interest income and expenditure is monitored through the Budget Monitoring Report.	PIB	Continuous

Date risk added to register	Risk ref	Risk owner	Category	Risk description	Comment	Likelihood score (inherent)	Impact score (inherent)	Inherent risk score	Risk controls	Risk control owners	Likelihood score (residual)	Impact score (residual)	Residual risk score	Risk direction	Action plan	Action plan owners	Action plan completion dates
Apr-06	FIN11	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Inaccurate estimates of fees and charges income and / or estimates of cost of delivering chargeable services result in budgetary pressure.	A budget pressure is created due to income shortfalls or increased expenditure	3	2	6	Budget levels realistically set and closely scrutinised	Service Heads/Head of Finance	2	2	4	➔	Fees and charges, including and surplus or loss are monitored through budget monitoring with key income streams reported to CMT.	Service Heads	Continuous
Apr-06	FIN12	Director of Finance	Budgetary	The Council loses the ability to recover VAT as a result of exceeding the partial exemption threshold resulting in budgetary pressure.	If the council's expenditure on functions for which it receives income that is exempt for VAT purposes exceeds 5% of its total vatatable expenditure, then the Council may lose its ability to recover VAT on all of its exempt inputs. This is mitigated by close monitoring of exempt supplies and prudent VAT planning. The Council elects to tax on development schemes.	2	4	8	VAT Planning and opt to tax on schemes. VAT advisers employed.	Head of Finance	1	4	4	➔	Partial Exemption Review is undertaken annually with support provided by the Council's external tax advisors, PS Tax. The Council continue to opt to tax land where appropriate.	Head of Finance	Continuous
Dec-13	FIN13	Director of Finance	Budgetary	The estimated cost reductions and additional income gains set out in the MTFP are not achieved resulting in an unplanned and unsustainable use of reserves.	Savings identified and included in the budget will be monitored as part of the budget monitoring process. See fees and charges above. MTFP agreed for next three years.	2	3	6	Service Heads to take responsibility for achieving savings. Budget monitoring to highlight any issues to allow corrective action to be taken.	Service Heads/Head of Finance	2	2	4	➔	Budget process to clearly identify savings to be achieved and ensure clarity over responsibility over delivery. Savings to be challenged.	Head of Finance	Continuous
Apr-06	FIN14	Director of Finance	Budgetary	The Council is faced with potential litigation and other employment related risks	The Council has no material outstanding litigation cases.	2	3	6	Council procedures are adhered to	Solicitor to the Council	1	3	3	➔	Adherence to council procedures to be monitored and procedures maintained.	Solicitor to the Council	ongoing

Date risk added to register	Risk ref	Risk owner	Category	Risk description	Comment	Likelihood score (inherent)	Impact score (inherent)	Inherent risk score	Risk controls	Risk control owners	Likelihood score (residual)	Impact score (residual)	Residual risk score	Risk direction	Action plan	Action plan owners	Action plan completion dates
Dec-13	FIN18	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Business Rates Retention fluctuates impacting on the amount of funding received by the Council.	From April 2020 the system was due to be subject to reset and increase to 75% retention resulting in a loss of growth. This has been further postponed to 2025/26. However, the significant revaluations for 2023 introduce additional risk of appeals which could result in a reduction to income.	3	4	12	Maintain reserves against risk.	Head of Finance	3	3	9	➔	Hertfordshire CFOs continue to work with LG Futures to assess the impact on individual Councils in Hertfordshire and the impact on the ability to create a business rate pool for 2024/25. The scale of appeals is still unknown but this is likely to become clearer over the next 24 months as transitional relief reduces for businesses impacted by the increases in rateable value.	Director of Finance	Continuous
Jul-16	FIN20	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Failure of ICT systems	The Council's integrated Financial Management System (FMS) is held on an ICT platform. If this were to fail then potentially there will be a loss of functionality occurring during any downtime.	3	2	6	System migrated to latest version. Payments system updated.	Head of Finance	1	2	2	➔	Monitor reliability	Head of Finance	Continuous
Mar-18	FIN21	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Property Investment	The Property Investment Board manage its property portfolio in order to secure additional income to support its general fund.	2	3	6	Portfolio to be actively managed to maintain income levels. Income to be reviewed regularly when MTFP is updated.	Head of Property Services	1	3	3	➔	PIB to assume responsibility for ongoing oversight.	Head of Property Services	Continuous
Sep-18	FIN23	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Commercial Investment	The Council has limited options to further improve self sustainability through commercial investment following changes to the the Prudential Code for Capital Finance and changes to PWLB borrowing regulations. Currently there is a	3	2	6	Oversight mechanisms to be put in place to ensure oversight by PIB or similar mechanism. Council to determine approach to risk and level of income dependency within budget.	Head of Finance	2	2	4	➔	Monitor new developments. Investments overseen by the cross party Shareholder and Commercial Ventures Panel.	Head of Property Services	Continuous
Nov-19	FIN 24	Director of Finance	Service	Loss of Key Personnel	As the Council becomes more complex in its financial arrangements, key skills become more important.	3	4	12	Improve depth of skills and knowledge. Bring in temporary additional resources as necessary.	Head of Finance	1	3	3	➔	Following a revision of job descriptions, minor amendments to the structure, and a successful recruitment campaign during 2022/23, the Finance team is currently fully staffed. All staff have an annual Personal Development Review which contains smart objectives including objectives related to career development and identification of training needs and opportunities.	Chief Executive/ Director of Finance	Continuous



## POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 29 JANUARY 2024

### PART I - NOT DELEGATED

#### 6. FINANCIAL PLANNING – CAPITAL STRATEGY AND THE TREASURY MANAGEMENT POLICY (DoF)

##### 1. Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the Policy and Resources Committee to recommend to the Council its capital strategy and treasury management policy over the medium term (2024/25 to 2026/27). This report is the second of four that is covered under the recommendations report at **Item 8** on this agenda.

##### 2. Details

2.1 The capital strategy (the Strategy) is designed to give a clear and concise view of how the council determines its priorities for capital investment, decides how much it can afford to borrow and sets its risk appetite. It is intended to give a high level overview of how capital expenditure, capital financing and treasury management activity contribute to the provision of services along with an overview of how associated risk is managed and the implications for future financial sustainability.

2.2 The framework the government uses to control how much councils can afford to spend on capital investment is known as the Prudential Framework. The objectives of the Prudential Code, which sets out how this framework is to be applied, are to ensure that local authorities' capital investment plans are:

- affordable, prudent, and sustainable,
- that treasury management decisions are taken in accordance with good professional practice, and
- that local strategic planning, asset management planning and proper option appraisal are supported.

2.3 This capital strategy sets out how the Council will achieve the objectives set out above.

##### **Capital Investment Programme – Expenditure**

2.4 Capital Investment is the term used to cover all expenditure by the council that can be classified as capital under legislation and proper accounting practice. This includes expenditure on:

- property, plant and equipment,
- heritage assets,
- investment properties., and
- loans to subsidiaries and joint ventures

2.5 Property, plant and equipment includes assets that have physical substance and are held for use in the production or supply of goods and services, for rental to others, or for administrative purposes. They are expected to be used during more than one financial year. Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of these assets is capitalised on an accruals basis, provided that the Council is likely to benefit from the future economic benefits or service potential and the cost of the item can be measured reliably. Expenditure on repairs and maintenance is charged to the revenue account when it is incurred.

2.6 Heritage Assets are held with the objective of increasing knowledge, understanding and the appreciation of the Council's history and local area.

- 2.7 Investment properties are those that are used solely to earn rentals and/or for increases in value. The definition is not met if the property is used in any way for the delivery of services or production of goods or is held for sale.
- 2.8 Detailed accounting policies in relation to assets and capital expenditure may be found in the annual statement of accounts.
- 2.9 **Appendix 1** shows the 2023/24 revised capital budget and draft capital budgets for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27. The appendix contains the title, description and officers' comments relating to the progress of the 2023/24 schemes. A summary of the proposed capital programme is set out in the following table:

Capital Investment Programme	Forecast Year End 2023/24 £000	Proposed Budget 2024/25 £000	Proposed Budget 2025/26 £000	Proposed Budget 2026/27 £000
General Public Services & Economic Development	3,027	1,861	1,792	1,792
Climate Change, Leisure & Community	1,518	1,258	793	793
Policy and Resources	1,419	1,053	778	827
Major Projects	13,957	0	0	0
<b>Total Capital Investment</b>	<b>19,921</b>	<b>4,172</b>	<b>3,363</b>	<b>3,412</b>

- 2.10 The 2023/24 programme has decreased from the latest approved budget by **£0.101m**. This includes re-phasing of a scheme into 2024/25, budget savings and a Capital Contribution from Lawn Tennis Association (LTA). The schemes that contribute to this variation to budget are as follows:
- Princess Trust budget no longer required (£0.010m)
  - Community CCTV full budget not required this year (£0.005m)
  - TRH Whole Life Costing rephased into 2024/25 (£0.135m)
  - South Oxhey Playing Fields – LTA Capital Contribution £0.049m
- 2.11 The £13.937M for major projects relates to Council decisions to purchase the Foxgrove Path pre-emption site from Hertfordshire County Council to allow the delivery of affordable housing in partnership with Watford Community Homes and the Local Authority Housing Fund projects to accept grant funding from the Government to support the delivery of additional homes through Three Rivers Homes Ltd.
- 2.12 Variances to the medium term capital programme which have been identified up to the end of November and are shown in detail at **Appendix 2**.
- 2.13 Following the re-phasing, the capital programme for 2023/24 now totals **£19.921m**. The services capital programme included in MTFP shows schemes totalling **£4.172m** in 2024/25; **£3.363m** in 2025/26 and **£3.412m** in 2026/27.
- 2.14 The larger capital schemes over the next three financial years include:
- Disabled Facility Grants - £1.758m
  - Waste and Recycling Vehicles - £2.400m
  - Replacement Grounds Maintenance Vehicles – £1.620m
  - Garage Improvements - £0.450m

2.15 There is a proposal for three new schemes for 2024/25:

- Watersmeet Electrical - £0.144m
- Car Park Restoration - £0.235m
- GIS – £0.013m

### **Capital Investment Programme – Funding**

2.16 The Capital Investment Programme can be funded from a variety of sources. Explanations of the funding sources are set out in the following paragraphs.

2.17 Government Grants & Other Contributions: These are grants for specific purposes which may be available from the Government, e.g. Disabled Facility Grants. The Council can also attract partnership funding from other local authorities and agencies e.g. Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP). The Council has also benefited in the past from other funding such as lottery grants.

2.18 Section 106 Contributions: These are contributions from developers to the public services and amenities required for the development. These have been in part replaced by the Community Infrastructure Levy. Current Section 106 monies are guaranteed.

2.19 Capital Receipts Reserve: Capital receipts are derived when selling assets such as land. The main receipt relates to the arrangements made when the Council sold its housing stock to Thrive Homes Ltd in 2008; the Transfer Agreement included a Right to Buy (RTB) Sharing Agreement whereby the Council is entitled to a share of the post-transfer receipts from RTB sales and a 'VAT Shelter Agreement' whereby the Council benefits from the recovery of VAT on continuing works carried out by Thrive. The current MTFP forecasts that this reserve will be fully utilised to support the capital programme.

2.20 Revenue Contributions: Revenue balances from the General Fund may be used to support capital expenditure.

2.21 New Homes Bonus Reserve: New Homes Bonus is a grant relating to the number of new homes delivered in a local authority area. There are no government restrictions on whether this is capital or revenue, nor is there any ring-fence imposed. It is anticipated that there would be a reduction in the amount received from 2023/24 onwards.

2.22 Borrowing: The Council is allowed to borrow to support its capital expenditure as long as this is prudent, sustainable, and affordable. The Council has borrowed to support the new leisure centre provision in South Oxhey. Where the Council decides to borrow to fund capital expenditure the annual cost of borrowing is included within the revenue budget.

2.23 The capital programme includes an assessment of likely available resources to finance capital expenditure and includes assumptions regarding capital receipts, which have been estimated at £1.100m per year.

2.24 **Appendix 3** shows the sources of capital funding proposed over the period 2023/24 to 2026/27, including the funding generated in each year and balances carried forward at the end of each year. The funding for the proposed capital programme is set out in the table on the following page:

Funding	Forecast Year End 2023/24	Proposed Budget 2024/25	Proposed Budget 2025/26	Proposed Budget 2026/27
	£000	£000	£000	£000
Grants	5,157	586	586	586
Reserves	333	100	95	95
Capital Receipts	1,100	1,000	1,000	1,000
Section 106 and CIL	1,146	320	0	0
Borrowing	12,185	2,166	1,707	1756
<b>Total Funding Applied</b>	<b>19,922</b>	<b>4,172</b>	<b>3,388</b>	<b>3,437</b>

2.25 Borrowing in 2023/24 arises predominantly as a result of the major projects and will be repaid in line with repayments made by Watford Community Housing and Three Rivers Homes Ltd. As MRP is charged in line with these principle repayments there is no impact on the revenue account.

**Appendix 4** shows details of all Section 106 contributions currently received and available to use.

### Future Investment

2.26 Future Investment Schemes will be assessed on the basis of a full business case which will include full resourcing for the project and an assessment of affordability. Priority areas for future capital investment are:

- Schemes that generate a financial surplus for the Council; and in particular those that increase the supply of housing locally (for example through the joint ventures with Watford Community Housing and Thrive).
- Schemes that generate revenue budget savings for the Council.
- Schemes that allow the Council to benefit from future economic regeneration potential within the local area; especially those that attract additional investment into the local area from regional or national agencies.
- Schemes that provide additional or improved services to the Council's residents, in line with the Council's Strategic Plan.

2.27 The Council will continue to seek opportunities to work in partnership with others to promote economic development and the provision of housing within Three Rivers wider economic area. Current partners include Countrywide Properties for the South Oxhey scheme, along with Watford Community Homes and Thrive Homes as the two major local registered social providers.

2.28 The Council has established Three Rivers Commercial Services to allow it to work more closely with providers and exploit future commercial opportunities. The Council currently has two joint ventures with Watford Community Housing, Three Rivers Development LLP and Three Rivers Homes Ltd.

### 3. Treasury Management

3.1 The Council is required to operate a balanced budget over the medium term which, after allowing for contributions to and from reserves, broadly means that cash raised

during the year will meet cash expenditure. Part of the treasury management operation is to ensure that this cash flow is adequately planned, with cash being available when it is needed. Surplus monies are invested in low risk counterparties or instruments commensurate with the Council's low risk appetite, providing the requisite liquidity before considering investment return.

- 3.2 The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (**Appendix 5**) details the policies, practices, objectives and approaches to risk management of its treasury management activities, which is to be monitored by the Audit Committee. The Council's investment strategy's primary objectives are safeguarding the repayment of the principal and interest of its investments on time, and then ensuring adequate liquidity, with the investment return being the final objective. The strategy allows the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Lead Member, the delegated authority to approve any variation to the Treasury Management Strategy during the year with the objective of maximising the Council's returns without significantly increasing risk. This could include use of other investment instruments such as Government bonds or Gilts.

#### **4. Prudential Indicators**

- 4.1 All Local Authorities are required to set prudential indicators for the forthcoming year and following years before the beginning of the forthcoming year. The indicators must be set by full Council.
- 4.2 The prudential indicators fall into two main categories of 'Prudence' and 'Affordability'. The indicators for Prudence are further separated between those relating to the Council's capital expenditure plans and those relating to levels of external debt.

##### **Prudence – Capital Expenditure**

- 4.3 The Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) is the total historic outstanding capital expenditure which has not yet been paid for from either revenue or capital resources. It is essentially a measure of the Council's underlying borrowing need. Any capital expenditure, which has not immediately been paid for, will increase the CFR. An increase in the CFR does not necessarily mean that the council will borrow externally to fund the increase. The Council manages its cash balances as a whole and may choose to use internal cash (generated by holding reserves and through timing differences between income and expenditure).

- 4.4 The table below sets out the Council's estimates of capital expenditure over the medium term financial planning period and the estimated impact on the Council's CFR.

	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Forecast	Estimate	Estimate	Estimate
	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Total Proposed Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>19,921</b>	<b>4,172</b>	<b>3,363</b>	<b>3,412</b>
Capital Financing:				
Grants	(5,157)	(586)	(586)	(586)
Reserves	(333)	(100)	(95)	(95)
Capital Receipts	(1,100)	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)
Section 106 and CIL	(1,146)	(320)	0	0
<b>Total Funding</b>	<b>(7,736)</b>	<b>(2,006)</b>	<b>(1,681)</b>	<b>(1,681)</b>
Gap	12,185	2,166	1,682	1,731
MRP	(0.172)	(0.374)	(0.460)	(0.527)
Opening CFR	25.786	37.799	39.964	41.186
<b>Closing CFR</b>	<b>37.799</b>	<b>39.964</b>	<b>41.186</b>	<b>42.390</b>

Note the opening CFR is subject to restatement following the conclusion of the outstanding external audits.

#### Prudence – External Debt

- 4.5 There are two limits on external debt: the 'Operational Boundary' and the 'Authorised Limit'. Both are consistent with existing plans and the proposals in the budget report for capital expenditure and financing, and with approved treasury management policy statement and practices.
- 4.6 These prudential indicators ensure that over the medium term, net borrowing (borrowings less investments) will only be for a capital purpose. Gross external borrowing should not, except in the short term, exceed the total of CFR in the preceding year plus the estimates of any additional CFR for 2023/24 and next two financial years. This allows some flexibility for limited early borrowing for future years but ensures that borrowing is not undertaken for revenue purposes.
- 4.7 The Operational Boundary is the limit beyond which external borrowing is not normally expected to exceed. In most cases this would link directly to the authority's plans for capital expenditure, its estimates for CFR and its estimate of cashflow requirements for the year for all purposes. The Council may need to borrow, this limit represents a contingency should the need arise. The additional headroom allows the Council to externalise borrowing currently covered by utilising cash reserves – should interest rates reduce.

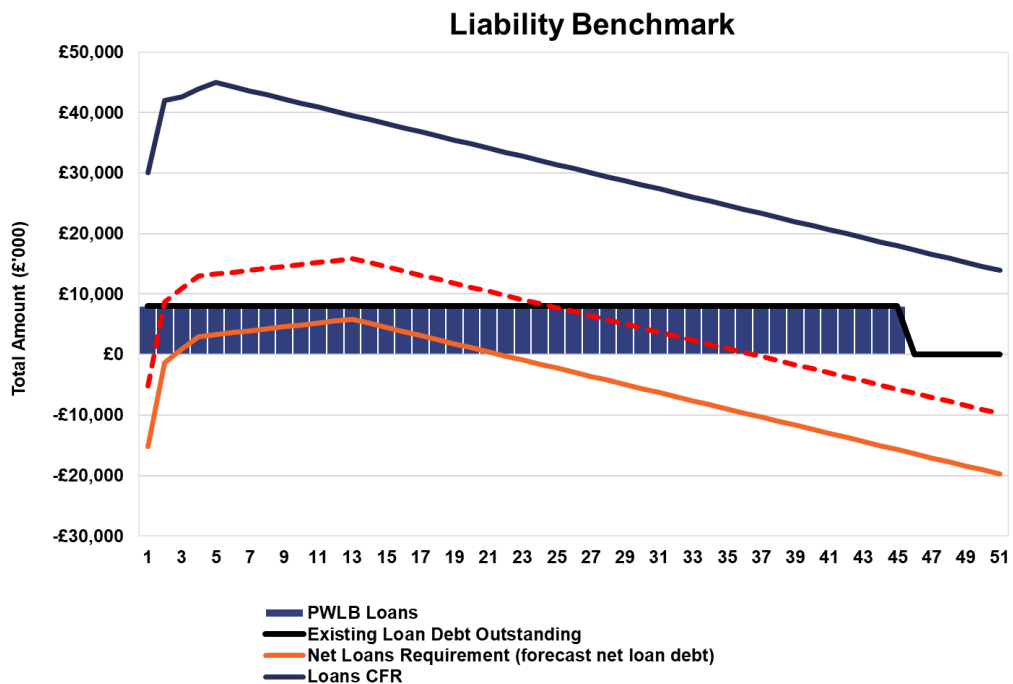
Operational Boundary	2023/24 £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/25 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
Borrowing	8.000	20.000	25.000	25.000

4.8 The Authorised Limit for External Borrowing controls the overall level of borrowing and represents the limit beyond which external long and short term borrowing is prohibited, and this limit needs to be set or revised by the Council. It reflects the level of borrowing which, while not desired, could be afforded in the short term, but is not sustainable in the longer term. It is the expected maximum borrowing need with some headroom for unexpected movements. This is the statutory limit determined under section 3 (2) of the Local Government Act 2003.

Authorised Limit	2023/24 £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/25 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
Borrowing	25.000	25.000	25.000	25.000

### Treasury Management Indicator – The Liability Benchmark

4.9 The Treasury Management Code of Practice requires local authorities to calculate their Liability Benchmark. The benchmark includes a projection of external debt required over the long term to fund the organisation’s approved budgets and plans compared to the Forecast of total borrowing outstanding. The benchmark should be used to evaluate the amount, timing and maturities needed for new borrowing in relation to the organisation’s planned borrowing needs in order to avoid borrowing too much, too little, too long or too short.



### Affordability

4.10 The fundamental objective in the consideration of the affordability of the authority’s capital plans is to ensure that the level of investment in capital assets proposed means that the total capital investment of the authority remains within sustainable limits.

4.11 In considering the affordability of its capital plans, the authority is required to consider its forecast financial position, including all of the resources currently available to it and estimated for the future, together with the totality of its capital, borrowing and investment plans, income and expenditure forecasts and risks.

- 4.12 The following indicators provide an indication of the impact of the capital investment plans on the Council's overall finances.

#### **Financing costs to net revenue stream**

- 4.13 This indicator identifies the trend in the cost of capital, (borrowing and other long-term obligation costs net of investment income), against the net revenue stream. The net revenue stream is the Council's core funding of Council Tax, Business rates, and unringfenced central government grants. Investment income includes interest from Treasury Management activities and interest from loans to joint ventures and subsidiaries.

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
Net Cost of Capital	0.050	(0.206)	0.038	0.038	0.038
Net Revenue Stream	11.496	14.579	13.973	14.251	14.499
<b>Ratio %</b>	<b>0.4%</b>	<b>-1.4%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>	<b>0.3%</b>

#### **Net income from commercial investment to net revenue stream**

- 4.14 This indicator is intended to show the financial exposure of the authority to the loss of income.
- 4.15 Net income from commercial investments comprises net income from financial investments (other than treasury management investments), together with net income from other assets held primarily for financial return, such as commercial property.

	2022/23 Actual £m	2023/24 Forecast £m	2024/25 Estimate £m	2025/26 Estimate £m	2026/27 Estimate £m
Commercial Investment Income	1.100	0.930	0.950	0.982	0.982
Net Revenue Stream	11.496	14.579	13.973	14.251	14.499
<b>Ratio %</b>	<b>9.6%</b>	<b>6.3%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>	<b>6.9%</b>	<b>6.8%</b>

### **5. The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Strategy and Policy Statement**

- 5.1 The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is designed to pay off an element of the capital spend which has not already been financed from existing revenue or capital resources. The Council is required to make prudent provision, by way of a charge to the revenue account, which means that the repayment of debt is enabled over a period that is reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits.
- 5.2 The Council is also able to increase the rate it reduces its CFR by undertaking additional voluntary payments (voluntary revenue provision - VRP) in addition to any MRP; this is not currently the Council's policy.
- 5.3 Government Regulations require the Council to approve a MRP Statement in advance of each year. The Council's MRP policy statement is at **Appendix 6**.



- 5.4 Three Rivers District Council's process is to produce for approval by the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, a business case for each scheme intended to be unfunded from other resources. This will clearly show the level of MRP which is proposed to ensure that the repayment of any debt can be made in a period commensurate with the period over which the expenditure provides benefits or makes returns.
- 5.5 Where the Council decides to borrow to fund capital expenditure the annual cost of borrowing is included within the revenue budget.

## **6. Skills and Knowledge and Professional Advice**

- 6.1 The Council has a shared service with Watford Borough Council for the provision of the finance function allowing access to a greater range of professional skills than would otherwise be available if each council had a separate team. The council uses external advisers on all major projects.
- 6.2 The Council contracts with Link Asset Services for the provision of Treasury advice. Link Asset Services provide non-regulated advice on the management of the council's cash flows, investments and borrowings and a markets information service. The Council's VAT advisers are PSTax.

## **7. Risk**

- 7.1 Financial risks are closely monitored as a separately identifiable part of the corporate risk management framework. The Council's risk appetite is evolving as it becomes involved in a wider range of major property lead investments both within its economic area linked to regeneration and more widely for income generation purposes.
- 7.2 The Council takes advice from its professional advisers to both identify and mitigate the key risks it faces and ensures that all decisions are made with an understanding of the risks involved.
- 7.3 Whilst recognising the importance of generating income to support services, the Council will ensure that its external income is actively managed to safeguard the future financial sustainability of the council. In this respect it will continue to seek to balance income from its commercial investment activities against its overall level of risk and the amount of reserves available to mitigate this risk.
- 7.4 In assessing the risk of its commercial investments the Council will consider the level of risk inherent in the income stream, the security held, its ability to realise assets or other security should the need arise and the level of income received from commercial investments compared to the total income of the council.

## **8. Options/Reasons for Recommendation**

- 8.1 The recommendations at agenda Item 11 enable the Committee to make recommendations to the Council on 20 February 2024 concerning the Council's budget.

## **9. Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

- 9.1 The recommendations in this report contribute to the process whereby the Council will approve and adopt its strategic, service and financial plans under Article 4 of the Council's Constitution.

**10. Equal Opportunities, Legal, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Customer Services Centre and Communications, Health & Safety & Website Implications**

10.1 None specific.

**11. Financial Implications**

11.1 As contained in the body of the report.

**12. Risk Management Implications**

12.1 There are no risks to the Council in agreeing the recommendation below.

**13. Recommendation**

13.1 That the report is noted.

Report prepared by: Sally Riley- Finance Business Partner  
Report Checked by: Alison Scott - Director of Finance

**Background Papers**

Reports and Minutes of;

- The Policy and Resources Committee
- Council

**Appendices**

1. Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27 - Expenditure
2. Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27 - Variances
3. Capital Investment Programme 2023/24 to 2026/27 - Funding
4. Section 106 Balances 2023/24
5. Treasury Management Strategy Statement
6. Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Strategy and Policy Statement

***The recommendations contained in this report DO NOT constitute a KEY DECISION but contribute to the process whereby the Council will approve and adopt its Strategic, Service and Financial Plans under Article 4 of the Council's Constitution***

## CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2023/24 to 2026/27 – EXPENDITURE

General Public Services & Economic Development										
Housing, Public Health & Wellbeing	Original Budget 2023/24 £	Latest Budget 2023/24 £	P8 Spend To Date £	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance £	Latest Budget 2024/25 £	Proposed 2024/25 £	Proposed 2025/26 £	Proposed 2026/27 £	Comments
Disabled Facilities Grant	586,000	780,325	429,878	780,325	0	586,000	586,000	586,000	586,000	Budget will be spent
Home Repairs Assistance	2,000	2,000	0	2,000	0	2,000	2,000	2,000	2,000	Demand Led service, no applications received to date
<b>Sub-total Housing, Public Health &amp; Wellbeing</b>	<b>588,000</b>	<b>782,325</b>	<b>429,878</b>	<b>782,325</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>588,000</b>	<b>588,000</b>	<b>588,000</b>	<b>588,000</b>	

Economic Development & Planning Policy	Original Budget 2023/24 £	Latest Budget 2023/24 £	P8 Spend To Date £	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance £	Latest Budget 2024/25 £	Proposed 2024/25 £	Proposed 2025/26 £	Proposed 2026/27 £	Comments
Princes Trust-Business Start-up	10,000	10,000	0	0	(10,000)	10,000	0	0	0	Budget no longer required. SLA no longer in place as Princes Trust can no longer deliver the service
Listed Building Grants	2,500	2,500	0	2,500	0	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	Demand Led service, no applications received to date
Integration of Firmstep to uniform Licensing applications	0	4,775	0	4,775	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent
<b>Sub-total Economic Development &amp; Planning Policy</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>17,275</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7,275</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>	<b>12,500</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>2,500</b>	<b>2,500</b>	

Public Services	Original Budget 2023/24 £	Latest Budget 2023/24 £	P8 Spend To Date £	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance £	Latest Budget 2024/25 £	Proposed 2024/25 £	Latest Budget 2025/26 £	Proposed 2025/26 £	Latest Budget 2026/27 £	Proposed 2026/27 £	Comments
Cycle Schemes	20,000	24,564	0	24,564	0	25,000	0	25,000	0	25,000	0	Future Years Budget virement to Transport and Infrastructure
Disabled Parking Bays	2,500	2,500	0	2,500	0	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	2,500	Budget will be spent
Waste Plant & Equipment	25,000	40,610	11,479	40,610	0	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	Budget will be spent
Waste Services Depot	0	56,541	0	133,541	77,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	£77,000 budget virement from Waste & Recycling Vehicles budget unspent in 2023/24 to facilitate the construction of a vehicle maintenance building in order to meet regulatory requirements.
EV Charging Points	460,000	460,000	0	460,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	There are ongoing discussions regarding an EV charging scheme in some of the Council's car parks and a potential to secure some external funding towards the costs. Discussions have been lengthened by the high costs of a power supply to the proposed charging infrastructure due to absence of an adequate electrical supply to many of our car parks. An update will be provided at the next budget monitoring cycle.
Controlled Parking	50,000	161,234	47,443	161,234	0	50,000	0	50,000	0	50,000	0	Future Years £25,000 Budget virement to Transport and Infrastructure and £25,000 budget no longer required
Parking Bay & Verge Protection	95,000	102,482	0	102,482	0	40,000	0	40,000	0	40,000	0	Future Years Budget virement to Transport and Infrastructure
Highways Enhancement	30,062	30,062	0	30,062	0	50,000	0	50,000	0	50,000	0	Future Years Budget virement to Transport and Infrastructure
Replacement Bins	115,000	92,190	82,229	92,190	0	115,000	115,000	115,000	115,000	115,000	115,000	Budget will be spent. Planned replacements and new properties.
Bus Shelters	0	51,594	51,594	51,594	0	4,344	0	9,000	0	9,000	0	Future Years Budget virement to Transport and Infrastructure
Waste & Recycling Vehicles	858,000	1,070,413	220,099	993,413	(77,000)	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	800,000	Procurement of vehicles underway. Update will be provided at next budget monitoring cycle. Delays caused by uncertainty around government changes and lead in times for new vehicles. £77,000 budget virement to Waste Services Depot to facilitate the construction of a vehicle maintenance building.
Retail Parades	30,000	28,200	0	28,200	0	30,000	0	30,000	0	30,000	0	Future Years Budget virement to Transport and Infrastructure
Car Park Restoration	35,000	41,001	0	41,001	0	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	35,000	Survey has been carried out which has identified significant works in M&S and Denham Way Car Parks. There is insufficient budget to cover these works in year and a business case has been submitted to enable the works to be carried out. See Growth Bid below. Further Capital works will be required at Chorleywood Cemetery, Talbot Road West and Bury Lane no later than 2025-26.
Estates Paths & Roads	20,000	20,000	10,376	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	Survey is currently being undertaken which will identify a programme of works required
Energy Performance Certificate	2,300	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
TRDC Paths & Alleyways	25,000	56,335	14,973	56,335	0	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	Survey currently being undertaken to establish condition, this will enable a programme of works to be developed
Transport and Infrastructure	0	0	0	0	0	0	199,344	0	204,000	0	204,000	Future Years creation of a single programme which will allow for in-year prioritisation by General Public Services and Economic Development Committee and delivery of a coherent programme. Budget virements from Parking Bay & Verge Protection £40,000, Bus Shelters £9,000, Cycle Schemes £25,000, Highways Enhancements £50,000, Retail Parades £30,000 and Controlled Parking £25,000.
<b>Sub-total Public Services</b>	<b>1,767,862</b>	<b>2,237,726</b>	<b>438,193</b>	<b>2,237,726</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1,221,844</b>	<b>1,022,500</b>	<b>1,226,500</b>	<b>1,226,500</b>	<b>1,226,500</b>	<b>1,226,500</b>	
<b>Total General Public Services &amp; Economic Development</b>	<b>2,368,362</b>	<b>3,037,326</b>	<b>868,071</b>	<b>3,027,326</b>	<b>(10,000)</b>	<b>1,822,344</b>	<b>1,613,000</b>	<b>1,827,000</b>	<b>1,817,000</b>	<b>1,827,000</b>	<b>1,817,000</b>	

Climate Change, Leisure & Community										
Community Partnerships	Original Budget 2023/24 £	Latest Budget 2023/24 £	P8 Spend To Date £	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance £	Latest Budget 2024/25 £	Proposed 2024/25 £	Proposed 2025/26 £	Proposed 2026/27 £	Comments
Capital Grants & Loans	0	0	0	0	0	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	
Community CCTV	6,000	11,720	0	6,000	(5,720)	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	Full budget not required this financial year
<b>Sub-total Community Partnerships</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>11,720</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>6,000</b>	<b>(5,720)</b>	<b>26,000</b>	<b>26,000</b>	<b>26,000</b>	<b>26,000</b>	
Leisure	Original Budget 2023/24 £	Latest Budget 2023/24 £	P8 Spend To Date £	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance £	Latest Budget 2024/25 £	Proposed 2024/25 £	Proposed 2025/26 £	Proposed 2026/27 £	Comments
Denham Way MUGA	0	30,000	30,450	30,000	0	0	0	0	0	Project Complete
Barton Way MUGA	0	2,449	2,248	2,449	0	0	0	0	0	Project Complete
Aquadrome	22,500	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Aquadrome Bridge Replacement	0	0	0	0	0	320,524	320,524	0	0	Project due to commence 2024/25
Leavesden Country Park Gate	0	191,256	26,367	191,256	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent
Watersmeet Electrical	23,000	26,234	24,034	26,234	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent
South Oxhey Playing Fields	468,750	457,330	469,135	506,498	49,168	0	0	0	0	Capital Contribution from Lawn Tennis Association
Watersmeet Projector	80,000	80,000	53,320	80,000	0	0	0	0	0	Minor peripheral work to be completed. Update to be given at next budget monitoring cycle
Scotsbridge-Chess Habitat	8,190	8,190	0	8,190	0	0	0	0	0	Project being led by Countryside Management Service in partnership with the Environment Agency
Open Space Access Improvements	60,000	75,390	35,196	75,390	0	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	Budget will be spent
Improve Play Area-Future Schemes	115,000	120,680	6,223	20,680	(100,000)	120,000	120,000	120,000	120,000	£50,000 budget virement to Lincoln Drive Play Area and £50,000 budget virement to Fearney Mead Play Area
Aquadrome-Whole Life Costing	11,000	11,000	1,718	11,000	0	11,000	11,000	11,000	11,000	Budget will be spent
Replacement Ground Maintenance Vehicles	264,000	264,000	0	264,000	0	540,000	540,000	540,000	540,000	Update will be provided at next budget monitoring cycle due to the length of time required to build the vehicles
Watersmeet-Whole Life Costing	20,000	20,000	17,049	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	Budget will be spent
Pavilions-Whole Life Costing	11,000	11,000	4,230	11,000	0	11,000	11,000	11,000	11,000	Many of the Pavilions are coming to end of life - a full review of usage is underway; budget may need to be rephased once the outcome is known.
Outdoor Fitness Zones	27,200	160,532	160,532	160,532	0	0	0	0	0	Project Complete
Fearney Mead Play Area	0	0	0	50,000	50,000	0	0	0	0	Budget virement from Improve Play Areas - Future Schemes
South Oxhey Playing Fields	0	0	0	50,000	50,000	0	0	0	0	Budget virement from Improve Play Areas - Future Schemes
<b>Sub-total Leisure</b>	<b>1,110,640</b>	<b>1,458,061</b>	<b>830,502</b>	<b>1,507,229</b>	<b>49,168</b>	<b>1,082,524</b>	<b>1,082,524</b>	<b>762,000</b>	<b>762,000</b>	
Sustainability & Climate	Original Budget 2023/24 £	Latest Budget 2023/24 £	P8 Spend To Date £	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance £	Latest Budget 2024/25 £	Proposed 2024/25 £	Proposed 2025/26 £	Proposed 2026/27 £	Comments
Cemetery-Whole Life Costing	5,000	5,000	170	5,000	0	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	Planned works at Woodcock Hill
<b>Sub-total Sustainability &amp; Climate</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>170</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	<b>5,000</b>	
<b>Total Climate Change, Leisure &amp; Community</b>	<b>1,121,640</b>	<b>1,474,781</b>	<b>830,672</b>	<b>1,518,229</b>	<b>43,448</b>	<b>1,113,524</b>	<b>1,113,524</b>	<b>793,000</b>	<b>793,000</b>	

Policy & Resources										
Leader & Resources	Original Budget 2023/24 £	Latest Budget 2023/24 £	P8 Spend To Date £	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance £	Latest Budget 2024/25 £	Proposed 2024/25 £	Proposed 2025/26 £	Proposed 2026/27 £	Comments
Professional Fees-Internal	157,590	157,590	0	157,590	0	157,590	157,590	157,590	157,590	Actioned at year end
Election Equipment	6,000	14,510	8,125	14,510	0	6,000	6,000	6,000	6,000	Budget will be spent
Street Lighting Replacement	0	126,735	42,275	126,735	0	0	0	0	0	Works are progressing and on target
Members' IT Equipment	79,210	31,306	31,306	31,306	0	0	0	0	48,780	All equipment now purchased and distributed, no further spend expected this financial year or until 2027/28 or 2028/29
Rickmansworth Work Hub	28,606	28,606	25,406	28,606	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent
ICT-Managed Project Costs	330,000	330,000	0	330,000	0	240,000	240,000	60,000	60,000	Budget will be spent
Hardware Replace Prog	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	40,000	40,000	
Garage Improvements	150,000	142,709	20,211	142,709	0	150,000	150,000	150,000	150,000	Budget will be spent
ICT Website Development	14,870	14,870	0	14,870	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent
ICT Hardware Replacement Prog	66,200	59,584	3,850	59,584	0	114,824	114,824	45,000	45,000	Budget will be spent
TRH Whole Life Costing	170,000	527,907	261,674	392,907	(135,000)	170,000	305,000	170,000	170,000	£135,000 budget rephased into 2024/25 for Air conditioning works scheduled for spring/summer
Basing House-Whole Life Costing	90,000	59,830	17,924	59,830	0	60,000	60,000	60,000	60,000	Works to the toilets underway and due for completion December 2023
Business Application Upgrade	20,000	20,000	0	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	90,000	90,000	Budget will be spent
Three Rivers House Transformation	0	15,585	0	15,585	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent
Property Information System	0	24,481	16,612	24,481	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent
<b>Sub-total Leader &amp; Resources</b>	<b>1,112,476</b>	<b>1,553,713</b>	<b>427,383</b>	<b>1,418,713</b>	<b>(135,000)</b>	<b>918,414</b>	<b>1,053,414</b>	<b>778,590</b>	<b>827,370</b>	

Major Projects										
	Original Budget 2023/24 £	Latest Budget 2023/24 £	P8 Spend To Date £	Forecast Outturn 2023/24 £	Variance £	Latest Budget 2024/25 £	Proposed 2024/25 £	Proposed 2025/26 £	Proposed 2026/27 £	Comments
South Oxhey Initiative	0	6,934	0	6,934	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent
South Oxhey Initiative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	
Property Investment Board	0	3,607,038	3,605,111	3,607,038	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent
Local Authority Housing Fund	0	10,343,225	50,000	10,343,225	0	0	0	0	0	Full Council have approved the transfer of 3 garage sites for development of 16 new build properties and the acquisition of the remaining 8 properties is ongoing.
<b>Sub-total Major Projects</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>13,957,197</b>	<b>3,655,111</b>	<b>13,957,197</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	
<b>Total Policy &amp; Resources</b>	<b>1,112,476</b>	<b>15,510,910</b>	<b>4,082,494</b>	<b>15,375,910</b>	<b>(135,000)</b>	<b>918,414</b>	<b>1,053,414</b>	<b>778,590</b>	<b>827,370</b>	
<b>Total Capital Programme</b>	<b>4,602,478</b>	<b>20,023,017</b>	<b>5,781,237</b>	<b>19,921,465</b>	<b>(101,552)</b>	<b>3,854,282</b>	<b>3,779,938</b>	<b>3,363,590</b>	<b>3,412,370</b>	

Growth Bids	2023/24	Latest Budget 2024/25 £	Proposed Budget 2024/25 £	Proposed Budget 2025/26 £	Proposed Budget 2026/27 £
Car Park Restoration	0	0	235,000	0	0
GIS	0	0	13,500	0	0
Watersmeet Electrical	0	0	144,100	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>392,600</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Budget</b>		<b>0</b>	<b>4,172,538</b>	<b>3,363,590</b>	<b>3,412,370</b>

## CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2022/23 to 2025/26 VARIANCES

Description	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £	2026/27 £
<b>General Public Services &amp; Economic development</b>					
Princess Trust - Business Startup	Budget no longer required. SLA no longer in place as Princes Trust can no longer deliver the service	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)	(10,000)
Waste Services Depot	£77,000 budget virement from Waste & Recycling Vehicles to facilitate the construction of a vehicle maintenance building	77,000	0	0	0
Waste & Recycling Vehicles	£77,000 budget virement to Waste Services Depot to facilitate the construction of a vehicle maintenance building.	(77,000)	0	0	0
Parking Bay & Verge Protection		0	(40,000)	(40,000)	(40,000)
Bus Shelters	Remove a number of individual lines within Capital Programme as current amounts are historic and result in a high level of re-phrasings in order to create sufficient pots to deliver programmes. Creation of a single programme which will allow for in-year prioritisation by General Public Services and Economic	0	(4,344)	(9,000)	(9,000)
Cycle Schemes	Development Committee and delivery of a coherent programme. Giving a saving of £25,000 per year.	0	(25,000)	(25,000)	(25,000)
Highways Enhancements		0	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)
Retail Parades		0	(30,000)	(30,000)	(30,000)
Controlled Parking		0	(50,000)	(50,000)	(50,000)
Transport and Infrastructure		0	179,000	179,000	179,000
<b>Total General Public Services &amp; Economic Development</b>		<b>(10,000)</b>	<b>(30,344)</b>	<b>(35,000)</b>	<b>(35,000)</b>
<b>Climate Change, Leisure &amp; Community</b>					
Improve Play Areas - Future Schemes	£50,000 budget virement to Lincoln Drive Play Area and £50,000 budget virement to Fearney Mead Play Area	(100,000)	0	0	0
Lincoln Drive Play Area	Budget virement from Improve Play Areas - Future Schemes	50,000	0	0	0
Fearney Mead Play Area	Budget virement from Improve Play Areas - Future Schemes	50,000	0	0	0
South Oxhey Playing Fields	Capital Contribution from Lawn Tennis Association	49,168	0	0	0
Community CCTV	Full budget not required this financial year	(5,720)	0	0	0
<b>Total Climate Change, Leisure &amp; Community</b>		<b>43,448</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Policy &amp; Resources</b>					
TRH Whole Life Costing	Budget rephased into 2024/25 for Air conditioning works scheduled for spring/summer	(135,000)	135,000	0	0
<b>Total Policy &amp; Resources</b>		<b>(135,000)</b>	<b>135,000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Total Variances for Period 6 (November) 2023</b>		<b>(101,552)</b>	<b>104,656</b>	<b>(35,000)</b>	<b>(35,000)</b>

## CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2023/24 to 2026/27 FUNDING

Capital Programme	2023/24			2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
	Original Budget	Latest Budget	Outturn Forecast at P8	Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	£	£	£	£	£	£
<b>Balance Brought Forward</b>						
Govt Grants: Disabled Facility Grants	(1,063,531)	(1,063,531)	(1,121,582)	(1,179,633)	(1,179,633)	(1,179,633)
Section 106 Contributions	(1,489,612)	(1,489,612)	(1,489,612)	(1,539,656)	(1,539,656)	(1,539,656)
Capital Receipts Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
Future Capital Expenditure Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus Reserve	(222,787)	(222,787)	(222,787)	0	0	0
<b>Total Funding Brought Forward</b>	<b>(2,775,930)</b>	<b>(2,775,930)</b>	<b>(2,833,981)</b>	<b>(2,719,289)</b>	<b>(2,719,289)</b>	<b>(2,719,289)</b>
<b>Generated in the Year</b>						
Govt Grants: Disabled Facility Grants	(586,000)	(723,315)	(723,315)	(586,000)	(586,000)	(586,000)
Section 106 Contributions	0	(265,832)	(265,832)	0	0	0
Capital Receipts Reserve	(1,100,000)	(1,100,000)	(1,100,000)	(1,000,000)	(1,000,000)	(1,000,000)
Future Capital Expenditure Reserve		0	0	0		
New Homes Bonus Reserve	(110,247)	(110,247)	(110,247)	(100,025)	(95,000)	(95,000)
<b>Total Generated</b>	<b>(1,796,247)</b>	<b>(2,199,394)</b>	<b>(2,199,394)</b>	<b>(1,686,025)</b>	<b>(1,681,000)</b>	<b>(1,681,000)</b>
<b>Use of Funding</b>						
Govt Grants: Disabled Facility Grants	586,000	665,264	665,264	586,000	586,000	586,000
Section 106 Contributions	0	215,788	215,788	0	0	0
CIL Contributions	929,779	929,779	929,779	320,524	0	0
Capital Receipts Reserve	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,100,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
Local Authority Housing Fund	0	4,491,613	4,491,613	0	0	0
Future Capital Expenditure Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus Reserve	333,034	333,034	333,034	100,025	95,000	95,000
Borrowing	1,653,665	12,287,539	12,185,987	2,165,989	1,682,590	1,731,370
<b>Total Use of Funding</b>	<b>4,602,478</b>	<b>20,023,017</b>	<b>19,921,465</b>	<b>4,172,538</b>	<b>3,363,590</b>	<b>3,412,370</b>
<b>Balance Carried Forward</b>						
Govt Grants: Disabled Facility Grants	(1,063,531)	(1,121,582)	(1,179,633)	(1,179,633)	(1,179,633)	(1,179,633)
Section 106 Contributions	(1,489,612)	(1,539,656)	(1,539,656)	(1,539,656)	(1,539,656)	(1,539,656)
Capital Receipts Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
Future Capital Expenditure Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
New Homes Bonus Reserve	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Funding Carried Forward</b>	<b>(2,553,143)</b>	<b>(2,661,238)</b>	<b>(2,719,289)</b>	<b>(2,719,289)</b>	<b>(2,719,289)</b>	<b>(2,719,289)</b>
<b>Total Expenditure Capital Investment Programme</b>	<b>4,602,478</b>	<b>20,023,017</b>	<b>19,921,465</b>	<b>4,172,538</b>	<b>3,363,590</b>	<b>3,412,370</b>



## SECTION 106 BALANCES 2022/23

TA4950 - Reserves	Balance at 1 April 2023	Movement In year		Balance at 31 March 2024
		Contribution FROM	Contribution on TO	
0159 - Resv-S106-Maint-Crox Common Mr	(0.24)	0.00	0.00	(0.24)
0166 - Resv-Env Maint Commuted Sums	(31,965.42)	0.00	0.00	(31,965.42)
0169 - Leavesden Hospital Open Space	(769,123.50)	0.00	0.00	(769,123.50)
0171 - Resv-S106 Huntonbury Village	(55,616.43)	0.00	0.00	(55,616.43)
0173 - Resv-S106 Green Lane	(19,832.04)	0.00	0.00	(19,832.04)
0177 - Resv-S106 Tanners Hill Amenity	(59,890.25)	0.00	0.00	(59,890.25)
0190 - Resv-S106 Oxhey Nu Oaklands Av	(132.41)	0.00	0.00	(132.41)
0193 - Resv-S106 Horsefield - Abbots Langley (Op SP)	(809,666.94)	0.00	0.00	(809,666.94)
0196 - Resv-S106-Traffic Reg Orders	(26,549.85)	(4,000.00)	0.00	(30,549.85)
0197 - Resv-S106-Happy Man Berry Lane	(6,151.61)	0.00	0.00	(6,151.61)
0198 - Resv-S106-Gade View	(28,444.60)	0.00	0.00	(28,444.60)
0227 - S106 Long Island Ex'ge (TRO)	(2,042.89)	0.00	0.00	(2,042.89)
0238 - S106 Leavesden Country Park	(0.65)	0.00	0.00	(0.65)
0246 - S106 Hayling & Holmside Rise (Op Sp)	(105.09)	0.00	0.00	(105.09)
0259 - S106 - Swan House, Homestead Road (AH)	(88,538.92)	0.00	0.00	(88,538.92)
0260- S106 - Former Pocklington House site, Eastbury Avenue (AH)	(446,030.20)	0.00	0.00	(446,030.20)
0261 - S106 - 10 Harrogate Road (AH)	(29,980.10)	0.00	0.00	(29,980.10)
0262 - S106 - 6 Berkeley Close, Abbots Langley (AH)	(67,669.00)	0.00	0.00	(67,669.00)
0263 - S106 - 28 Chapel Close (AH)	(41,948.33)	0.00	0.00	(41,948.33)
0264 - S106 - Threshing Barn, Bullsland Farm, Bullsland Lane (AH)	(282,898.60)	0.00	0.00	(282,898.60)
0265 - S106 - 165-167 Hampermill Lane (AH)	(122,512.50)	0.00	0.00	(122,512.50)
0267 - S106- Petherick Pastures, Bucks Hill (AH)	(91,970.66)	0.00	0.00	(91,970.66)
0268 - S106 - Bell PH, 117 Primrose Hill, Kings Langley (AH)	(35,000.00)	(53,450.26)	0.00	(88,450.26)
0269 - S106 - 228 Gosforth Lane (AH)	(24,207.21)	0.00	0.00	(24,207.21)
0270 - S106 - Forge Mews, Church Street (AH)	(28,125.00)	(14,947.39)	0.00	(43,072.39)
0271 - S106 - The Old Chapel, Mallard Road, Abbots Langley (AH)	0.00	(33,213.32)	0.00	(33,213.32)
0272 - S106 - Maple Lodge Close, Maple Cross (BNG)	0.00	(160,220.84)	0.00	(160,220.84)
<b>Total</b>	<b>(3,068,402)</b>	<b>(265,832)</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>(3,334,234)</b>

Three Rivers District Council

APPENDIX 5

# Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023/24

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. This document sets out the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS).
- 1.2. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) defines treasury management as: "the management of the local authority's investments and cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks".
- 1.3. The TMSS supports the delivery of the Council's Capital Strategy and provides additional detail on how the Council manages its Treasury Management Activity.
- 1.4. The TMSS details the policies, practices, objectives and approaches to risk management of its treasury management activities, which is to be monitored by the Audit Committee. The primary objectives of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement are:
  - Security - Safeguard the repayment of the principal and interest of its investments on time
  - Liquidity - Ensure adequate liquidity to meet obligations as they fall due
  - Yield - Investment return is the final objective and is considered after security and liquidity requirement have been satisfied.
- 1.5. This statement is reviewed and approved annually by Council alongside the Council's budget, Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and Capital Strategy.
- 1.6. The Director of Finance in consultation with the Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services has delegated authority to approve any variation to the Strategy Statement during

the year with the objective of maximising the Council's returns without significantly increasing risk.

## **2. Risks**

- 2.1. The key Treasury Management risks are set out in the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice ("the TM Code"). The following paragraphs set out these risks and how they are managed:

### **Liquidity Risk**

That the Council may not have the cash it needs on a day to day basis to pay its bills.

This risk is managed through forecasting and the retention by the Council of an adequate working capital balance. In addition, through the Public Works Loan Board and other organisations, the Council is able to access short term borrowing, usually within 24 hours.

### **Interest Rate Risk**

That the costs and benefits expected do not materialise due to changes in interest rates.

This risk is managed through the placing of different types and maturities of investments, the forecasting and monitoring of the interest budget (with assistance from the Council's retained advisors).

### **Exchange Rate Risk**

That losses or gains are made due to fluctuations in the prices of currency.

The Council does not engage in any significant non-sterling transactions.

### **Credit and Counterparty Risk**

That the entity holding Council funds is unable to repay them when due. This risk is managed through the maintenance of a list of authorised counterparties, with separate limits to ensure that the exposure to this risk is limited.

## **Refinancing Risk**

That the loans taken by the Council will become due for repayment and need replacing at a time when there is limited finance available or interest rates are significantly higher.

The timing of loan maturities is monitored along with interest rate forecasts. Officers ensure that due dates are monitored and seek advice from the Council's advisors about when to raise any finance needed.

## **Legal and Regulatory Risk**

That the Council operates outside its legal powers.

This risk is managed through the Council's training and development of Officers involved in Treasury Management, the independent oversight of Internal and External Audit, and the advice (for example on the contents of this strategy) taken from the Council's Treasury advisors.

## **Fraud, Error and Corruption**

The risk that losses will be caused by impropriety or incompetence.

This risk is managed through the controls in the Council's financial procedures. For example, the segregation of duties between those making investment decisions and those transferring funds.

## **Market Risk**

That the price of investments held fluctuates, principally in secondary markets.

The majority of the Council's investments are not traded, but where they are (e.g. Property investment portfolio) the main investments' value comes from the income they generate which is generally long term and secure.

### **3. Treasury Indicators: Limits to Borrowing Activity**

- 3.1. There are two limits on external debt: the 'Operational Boundary' and the 'Authorised Limit'. Both are consistent with existing plans and the proposals in the budget report for capital expenditure and financing, and with approved treasury management policy statement and practices. These indicators are set out in the Capital Strategy.
- 3.2. The key difference is that the Authorised Limit cannot be breached without prior approval of the Council. The Operational Boundary is a more realistic indicator of the likely position. The difference between the authorised limit and operational boundary for borrowing is that the authorised limit includes a head room for borrowing for future known capital needs now. The Authorised Limit represents the limit beyond which borrowing is prohibited, and needs to be revised if necessary by members.

### **4. Borrowing Strategy**

- 4.1. The Council's treasury team maintains a cashflow forecast and works its liquidity requirements within this forecast; it may, on rare occasions, be necessary to borrow short-term for cashflow purposes. This will be in the form of short term debt or overdraft facilities and is normally for small amounts for minimum durations. As this is based on need and has a defined repayment period it is not normally included within the limits set above.
- 4.2. The Council will not borrow more than or in advance of its needs purely in order to profit from the investment of the extra sums borrowed. Any decision to borrow in advance will

be within forward approved Capital Financing Requirement estimates and will be considered carefully to ensure that value for money can be demonstrated (ie: the cost of holding does not outweigh the benefits of early borrowing) and that the Council can ensure the security of such funds. Any associated risks will be approved and reported through the standard reporting method.

## **5. Investment Policy**

- 5.1. The Council's investment policy has regard to the statutory Guidance on Local Government Investments and TM Code. The Council's investment priorities are security first, liquidity second, then yield.
- 5.2. Investment instruments identified for use in the financial year are listed below under the 'Specified' and 'Non-Specified' Investments categories. Counterparty limits will be as set through the Council's Treasury Management Practices Schedules and are detailed at Annex A.
- 5.3. As part of its diversification of investments, the Council has invested some of its core funds (ie: funds not immediately required for cashflow reasons) in longer-term investment property instruments. These are in the form of individual assets directly owned by the council. Although the Council has no current investments or plans to invest in pooled property funds, these are an option that could be considered in the future. All property investments are controlled through the Property Investment Board (PIB) and each investment is subject to its own business case and appraisal before a decision to invest is taken and before any Council funds are committed.
- 5.4. During 2020/21 the Council made a small Money Market Fund investment with Royal London Asset Management to diversify placement of some longer term cash. It is intended to continue to make use of this fund during 2024/25.

## **6. Creditworthiness policy**

- 6.1. The Council will ensure:
  - It maintains a policy covering both the categories of investment types it will invest in and the criteria for choosing investment counterparties with adequate security, and monitoring their security. This is set out in the Specified and Non-Specified investment sections below.
  - It has sufficient liquidity in its investments. For this purpose it will set out procedures for determining the maximum periods for which funds may prudently be committed. These procedures also apply to the Council's prudential indicators covering the maximum principal sums invested.
- 6.2. The Director of Finance will maintain a counterparty list in compliance with the following criteria and will revise the criteria and submit them to Council for approval as necessary and will provide an overall pool of counterparties considered high quality.
- 6.3. Credit rating information is supplied by our treasury consultants on all active counterparties that comply with the Council's criteria. Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria would be omitted from the counterparty (dealing) list. Any rating changes, rating watches (notification of a likely change), rating outlooks (notification of a possible longer term

change) are provided to officers almost immediately after they occur and this information is considered before dealing.

## 7. Counterparty Categories

7.1. The Council uses the following criteria in choosing the categories of institutions in which to invest:

- **Banks 1 - Good Credit Quality**

The Council will only use UK banks or foreign banks trading in the UK in sterling denomination and which meet the Rating criteria.

- **Banks 2 – The Council’s Own Banker**

For transactional purposes, if the bank falls below the above criteria, it will be included, although in this case balances will be minimised as far as possible in both monetary size and time within operational constraints.

- **Bank Subsidiary and Treasury Operations**

The Council will use these where the parent bank has the necessary ratings outlined above and the parent has provided an indemnity guarantee.

- **Building Societies**

The Council will use all Societies which meet the ratings for banks outlined above.

- **Specific Public Bodies**

The Council may lend to Public Bodies other than Local Authorities. The criterion for lending to these bodies is that the loan has been approved by Council.

- **Money Market Funds AAA Rated**

The Council may lend to Money Market Funds in order to spread its investment risk.

- **Local Authorities**

A limit of £5m per authority will be applied.

- **Debt Management Deposit Account Facility**

A Government body which accepts local authority deposits.

- **Council Subsidiaries (non-specified)**

The Council will lend to its subsidiaries subject to approval of a business case by the Portfolio Holder, in consultation with the Director of Finance. Business cases must be accompanied by an independent assessment of viability, and be subjected to regular monitoring by the Director of Finance.

7.2. Further details of counterparty categories and limits are set out Annex A Schedule of Specified and Non-Specified Investments.

7.3. The Council will also consider investment in property in accordance with its Property Investment Strategy. All property investments will be dependent on a standalone business case being proven.

## **8. The Monitoring of Investment Counterparties**

- 8.1 The credit rating of counterparties is monitored regularly. The main rating agencies (Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's) provide credit ratings for financial institutions. The Council receives credit rating information (changes, rating watches and rating outlooks) from Capita Asset Services Treasury Solutions as and when ratings change, and counterparties are checked promptly. The Council considers minimum short term ratings as key criteria in the choice of creditworthy investment counterparties; F1+, P-1 and A-1+ are the highest short term credit ratings of Fitch, Moody's and Standard & Poor's respectively. Minimum Short Term Ratings, where given, must be met for all categories.
- 8.2 On occasion ratings may be downgraded when an investment has already been made. The criteria used are such that a minor downgrading should not affect the full receipt of the principal and interest. Any counterparty failing to meet the criteria will be removed from the list immediately by the Director of Finance, and if required new counterparties which meet the criteria will be added to the list.
- 8.3 For non-specified investments (e.g. e-f above) the progress of the entity against the approved, independently verified business case will be monitored by the Director of Finance.

## **9. Use of Additional Information Other Than Credit Ratings**

- 9.1 Additional requirements under the Code of Practice require the Council to supplement credit rating information. Whilst the above criteria rely primarily on the application of credit ratings to provide a pool of appropriate counterparties for officers to use, additional operational market information will be applied before making any specific investment decision from the agreed pool of counterparties. This additional market information (for example Credit Default Swaps, negative rating watches/outlooks) will be applied to compare the relative security of differing investment counterparties.

## **10. Time and Monetary Limits Applying to Investments**

- 10.1 The time and monetary limits for institutions on the Council's Counterparty List summarised in the table below, are driven by the above criteria. These limits will cover both Specified and Non-Specified Investments.

## **11. Exceptional Circumstances**

- 11.1 The criteria for choosing counterparties set out above provide a sound approach to investment in "normal" market circumstances. Whilst Members are asked to approve this base criteria above, under the exceptional current market conditions Director of Finance may temporarily restrict further investment activity to those counterparties considered of higher credit quality than the minimum criteria set out for approval. These restrictions will remain in place until the banking system returns to "normal" conditions. Similarly, the time periods for investments will be restricted.
- 11.2 Examples of these restrictions would be the greater use of the Debt Management Deposit Account Facility (DMO) – a Government body which accepts local authority deposits,



money Market Funds, and strongly rated institutions. The credit criteria have been amended to reflect these facilities.

**12. Investment Strategy**

12.1 In-House Funds - investments will be made with reference to the core balance and cashflow requirements and the outlook for short-term interest rates (i.e. rates for investments up to 12 months).

12.2 Investment Treasury Indicator and Limit - total principal funds invested for greater than one year. These limits are set with regard to the Council’s liquidity requirements and to reduce the need for early sale of an investment, and are based on the availability of funds after each year-end.

Treasury Indicator & Limit	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	2026/27
Maximum Principal Sums invested for greater than one year (excluding property investment and loans to Council subsidiaries).	£10m	£10m	£10m	£10m

**13. Investment Risk & Security Benchmarking**

13.1 These benchmarks are simple guides to maximum risk and so may be breached from time to time, depending on movements in interest rates and counterparty criteria. The purpose of the benchmarks is that officers will monitor the current and trend position and amend the operational strategy to manage risk as conditions change. Any breach of the benchmarks will be reported, with supporting reasons in the Mid-Year or Annual Report. The benchmarks are as follows:

**Security:**

Security of the investments is measured by credit ratings, which is supplied by the three main credit rating agencies (Fitch, Moodys and Standard & Poors). Where investments are made to Council subsidiaries (non-listed), the security is measured through a business case with independent viability assessment.

**Liquidity:**

The Council set liquidity facilities/benchmarks to maintain:

- Authorised bank overdraft - nil.
- Liquid short term deposits of at least £0.5m available with a week’s notice.

The Council has the benefit of instant access to its funds on the general account with Lloyds.

**Yield:**

The Council benchmarks the yield on its operational cash against SONIA (the Sterling Overnight Index Average). This is a measure of market rates for actual returns on

overnight cash deposits. Performance against this indicator will be reported in the reports produced at mid-year and year-end.

#### **14. Reporting Requirements**

- 14.1 The Audit Committee has the responsibility for the scrutiny of Treasury Management policies and practices and receives the Treasury Management Policy for review prior to approval by Council.
- 14.2 An annual report on the performance of the Treasury Management function, including the effects of the decisions taken and the transactions executed in the past year, and on any circumstances of non-compliance with the organisation's treasury management policy is considered by Council following the end of the financial year
- 14.3 Council also receives a Mid-Year Treasury Management Report setting out activity to 30 September.

#### **15. Policy on the Use of External Service Providers**

- 15.1 Link Asset Services are the appointed external advisors. The Council recognises that responsibility for treasury management decisions remains with the Council at all times and will ensure that undue reliance is not placed upon our external service providers. It also recognises that there is value in employing external providers of treasury management services in order to acquire access to specialist skills and resources. The Council will ensure that the terms of their appointment and the methods by which their value will be assessed are properly agreed and documented, and subjected to regular review.
- 15.2 The Council will also, from time to time, procure specialist advice for ad-hoc pieces of work; this will be procured in accordance with the Council's normal procedure rules.

#### **16. Member and Officer Training**

- 16.1 In order to ensure that Members and Officers are sufficiently trained and qualified to monitor and manage the Council's Treasury Management activity, the following measures are in place:
  - Ensuring that officers attend suitable courses and seminars to keep their technical knowledge up to date;
  - Keeping up to date with CIPFA publications on Treasury Management;
  - Regular briefings both by email and face to face with the Council's Treasury advisors;
  - Reports and briefing sessions to Members on major changes to Treasury policies and strategies.

Non Specified Investment Category	Limit (£ or %)
<p><b>Any bank or building society</b> that has a minimum long term credit rating of A (or equivalent), for deposits with a maturity of greater than one year (including forward deals in excess of one year from inception to repayment).</p>	£5m
<p><b>The Council's own banker</b> if it fails to meet the basic credit criteria.</p>	In this instance balances will be minimised as much as possible
<p><b>Building Societies not meeting the basic security requirements</b> under the specified investments.</p> <p>The operation of some building societies does not require a credit rating, although in every other respect the security of the society would match similarly sized societies with ratings. The Council may use such building societies which were originally considered Eligible Institutions and have a minimum asset size of £5,000m, but will restrict these types of investments to £2m for up to six months.</p>	£2m
<p><b>Specific Public Bodies</b></p> <p>The Council can seek Member approval to make loans to other public bodies for periods of more than one year.</p>	£10m
<p><b>Loans to Council Subsidiaries</b></p> <p>The Council will lend to its subsidiaries subject to approval of a business case by the Portfolio Holder, in consultation with the Director of Finance. Business cases must be accompanied by an independent assessment of viability, and be subjected to regular monitoring by the Director of Finance.</p>	£10m limit for any single loan
<p><b>Other unspecified investments</b></p> <p>The strategy allows the Portfolio Holder, in consultation with the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Lead Member, the delegated authority to approve any variation to the Treasury Management Strategy during the year which may be brought about by investigating the opportunity to invest for greater than one year and also to invest in other investment instruments i.e Government bonds, Gilts and investment property with a view of to maximising the Council's returns without significantly increasing risk. This allows the addition of further unspecified investments, subject to conditions which will be generally similar to (e).</p>	£10m

Institution Type	Minimum Short Term Ratings			Schedule 1 (A) – UK Banks & Building Societies			
	Fitch	Moody's	S&P				
The Council's own Bankers	F1m	P-1	A-1	If Council's own bankers fall below the minimum long term criteria for UK banks, cash balances will be managed within operational liquidity constraints and balances will be minimised as much as possible.			
Wholly Owned Subsidiaries of UK Clearing Banks - Parent Ratings	F1	P-1	A-1	Long Term Credit Rating: AA(F), Aa2(M), AA(S&P)	Long Term Credit Rating: Single A (All agencies)	Long Term Credit Rating: Lower than A (All agencies)	Long Term Credit Rating: Lower than A
Partially Owned Subsidiaries of UK Clearing Banks - Parent Ratings	F1	P-1	A-1				
UK Building Societies (Credit Rated)	F1	P-1	A-1				
UK Building Societies (Unrated)				Assets over £15bn	Assets over £5bn	Assets of £2.5bn	Assets of £1bn
	<b>Maximum Amount / Duration:</b>			<b>£10m 364 Days</b>	<b>£10m 6 Months</b>	<b>£10m 3 Months</b>	<b>£10m 1 Month</b>

## Schedule 1 (B) – Other Entities

Specific Public Bodies	As approved by Members – up to £10m for up to 10 years
Debt Management Deposit Facility (UK Government)	Unlimited – this is the Council’s Safe-Haven Deposit facility with the UK Government
Money Market Funds (AAA Rated)	£10m per fund
Municipal Bond Agency	As approved by Members
UK Local Authorities	<p>A Maximum of £5m applies per Authority.</p> <p>The Council can invest in all UK Local Authorities whether rated or not.</p> <p>The Council will not lend to an authority which is subject to a s.114 notice without member approval.</p>

Page 73

Notes:

1. F1+, P-1 and A-1+ are the highest short term credit ratings of Fitch, Moody's and Standard and Poor's respectively.
2. Minimum Short Term Ratings - Where given, these must be met, for all categories (except RBS Group).
3. Building Societies - A Building Society has to meet either the ratings criteria or the assets criterion to be included in the category, not both.
4. Maximum amount is the maximum, in total, over all investments, with any one institution (with the exception of RBS Group).

### Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Strategy and Policy Statement

The Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) is designed to pay off an element of the capital spend which has not already been financed from existing revenue or capital resources. The Council is required to make prudent provision, by way of a charge to the revenue account, which means that the repayment of debt is enabled over a period that is reasonably commensurate with that over which the capital expenditure provides benefits.

The Council is also able to increase the rate it reduces its CFR by undertaking additional voluntary payments (voluntary revenue provision - VRP) in addition to any MRP; this is not currently the Council's policy.

Government Regulations require the Council to approve a MRP Statement in advance of each year. The following is the Council's MRP statement:

From 1 April 2008 for all unsupported borrowing (including PFI and finance leases) the MRP policy will be:

- **Asset life method** – MRP will be based on the estimated life of the assets, in accordance with the regulations (this option must be applied for any expenditure capitalised under a Capitalisation Direction) (option 3)

This option provides for a reduction in the borrowing need over the asset's estimated life.

No MRP provision is made in respect of investments or payments to the joint ventures as such investments are intended to be time-limited and allow for the repayment of debt. For finance leases the council will charge MRP to its General Fund each year dependant on the life of the underlying asset.

Three Rivers District Council

# Policy and Resources Report

29<sup>th</sup> January 2024

PART I

**COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2024/25**  
**(DoF)**

**1 Summary**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to recommend that the Council approves the implementation of a revised Council Tax Reduction Scheme with effect from 1st April 2024.
- 1.2 Each year the Council is required to review its Council Tax Reduction Scheme in accordance with the requirements of the schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and to either maintain the scheme or replace it.
- 1.3 Council Tax Reduction (CTR) was introduced from 1 April 2013 when it replaced the Central Government funded Council Tax Benefit regime. From its inception, the funding available to the Council from government has reduced year on year.
- 1.4 It is now essential that the Council make changes to the CTR scheme for working age applicants in order to reduce the significant administrative burden placed on the Council by the introduction of Universal Credit and also to provide a scheme which is less reactive to change and provide more supportive to those households on the lowest incomes.
- 1.5 The changes proposed affect only applicants who are of working age and the scheme for pension age applicants is not affected in any way. The rules for all pension age applicants are prescribed by Central Government.
- 1.6 This report recommends that the Council adopts a new scheme for working age applicants with effect from 1 April 2024 in respect of the 2024/25 financial year.

**2 Details**

- 2.1 Council Tax Reduction (CTR) was introduced by Central Government in April 2013 as a replacement for the Council Tax Benefit scheme administered on behalf of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP).
- 2.2 The current Council Tax Reduction scheme administered by the Council is effectively divided into two, with pension age applicants receiving support under the rules prescribed by Central Government, and the scheme for working age applicants being determined solely by the local authority.
- 2.3 Pensioners, subject to their income, can receive up to 100 per cent support towards their Council Tax. The Council has no power to change the level of support provided to pensioners and therefore any changes to the level of CTR can only be made to the working age scheme.
- 2.4 When Council Tax Reduction was introduced in 2013, for working age applicants, the Council broadly adopted the previous means tested Council Tax Benefit scheme as the basis of awarding support. The current scheme allows up to 100% support but restricts any reduction to a Band D level (basically if an applicant lives in a premises which are in a Band E,F,G or H, the calculation is



based on a Band D Council Tax level), the scheme also makes deductions for non-dependants.

- 2.5 Other than the change outlined in 2.5, slight changes have been made to bring the scheme into line with either Housing Benefit or Universal Credit. These have been relatively minor and a more fundamental change is now required.

#### **The main issues with the current scheme**

- 2.6 There are a number of issues with the current scheme that will need addressing if the system is to continue to provide effective support to low-income taxpayers and also if the Council is able to provide the service in an efficient manner. The main issues are as follows:

- The introduction of Universal Credit for working age applicants which would mean an increased number of changes in entitlement per year – typically between eight and twelve under the current scheme;
- The desire for a much needed simplification of the scheme for claimants to understand, allowing claimants to estimate their entitlement and be clear on how the discount they receive will change with changes in income; and
- The opportunity to contain, or even, reduce the administrative burden caused by administration of multiple changes and the impact on collection rates.

- 2.7 It should also be noted that the DWP are also moving all existing Income Based Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support and Tax Credit cases across to Universal Credit by 2024 with the remaining cases (Income Related Employment and Support Allowance) moving to Universal Credit by 2028. In effect, this move will increase the number of Universal Credit cases in the District by almost 30%.

#### **The recommended approach for the 2024/25 Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

- 2.8 In view of the problems being experienced with the current scheme, it is recommended that a new approach be taken from 2024/25. The new approach fundamentally redesigns the scheme to address all of the issues highlighted and in particular;

- The targeting support available to the poorest households;
- The problems with the introduction of full-service Universal Credit; and
- The significant increase in administration costs due to the high level of changes received in respect of Universal Credit;

- 2.9 The new scheme has been completed and a full consultation has been completed with the public and the major precepting authorities in line with legislative requirements.

- 2.10 The Council has received favourable responses to the new approach from the major preceptors and in the case of the public consultation, a majority positive response has been received in respect of all of the changes proposed. In addition to the formal consultation meetings have been held with the Citizens' Advice Bureau and Watford and Three Rivers Trust.

2.11 If the recommendations are accepted by the Council, the new scheme will take effect from 1 April 2024.

2.12 The recommended new scheme has a number of key features as follows:

- Targeted support shall be given to those households on the lowest of incomes than in the current scheme; and
- The current means - tested schemes will be replaced by a simple income grid model as shown below:

Reduction %	Single	Single plus 1 dependant	Single plus 2 dependants	Couple	Couple plus 1 dependant	Couple plus 2 dependants
Weekly Income levels						
100%*	£0.00 to £110.00	£0.00 to £220.00	£0.00 to £275.00	£0.00 to £165.00	£0.00 to £220.00	£0.00 to £275.00
75%	£110.01 to £165.00	£220.01 to £275.00	£275.01 to £300.00	£165.01 to £220.00	£220.01 to £275.00	£275.01 to £300.00
50%	£165.01 to £220.00	£275.01 to £330.00	£300.01 to £385.00	£220.01 to £275.00	£275.01 to £330.00	£300.01 to £385.00
25%	£220.01 to £275.00	£330.01 to £385.00	£385.01 to £440.00	£275.01 to £330.00	£330.01 to £385.00	£385.01 to £440.00
0%	Over £275.00	Over £385.00	Over £440.00	Over £330.00	Over £385.00	Over £440.00

2.13 The following paragraphs provide more detail on the operation of the new scheme:

- The highest level of discount will be at a maximum level of liability (100%), Band 1, and all current applicants that are in receipt of a ‘\*passport benefit’ such as Income Support, Jobseeker’s Allowance (Income Based) and Employment and Support Allowance (Income Related) will receive maximum discount;
- The Band D restriction will remain as at present;
- All other discount levels are based on the applicant’s and partner’s, (where they have one) net weekly income;
- The scheme allows for variation in household size with the levels of income per band increasing where an applicant has a partner, and / or dependants;
- There will be no charges made where an applicant had non-dependants living with them. This is a significant change and means that the administration of the scheme will be more straightforward whilst also protecting low-income families where adult sons and daughters for example remain at home;
- Where applicants or their partner (if they have one) are working, allowing an earnings disregard. This will be a standard disregard of up to £25 for a single applicant and £50 for couples or lone parents.

- g) Disability benefits such as Disability Living Allowance and Personal Independence Allowance will continue to be disregarded;
- h) Where any applicant, their partner or dependant child (ren) are disabled, a further disregard of £60 per week will be given, thereby maintaining the current level of support to those with disabilities;
- i) Carer's Allowance and the Support Component of Employment and Support Allowance will be disregarded;
- j) Child benefit and Child Maintenance will be disregarded;
- k) An amount in respect of the housing element, limited capability for work / work related element, child care element, disabled child element. and carer's element within universal credit will be disregarded;
- l) The total disregard on war pensions and war disablement pensions will continue;
- m) Extended payments will be removed;
- n) The capital limit of £8,000 will be retained but with no tariff (or assumed income) being applied. Any applicant who has capital above that level will not qualify; and
- o) Allowing for backdating of reduction up to a maximum of 12 months.

#### **How the new scheme will address the problems with the current Council Tax Reduction**

- 2.14 With the simplicity of the proposed new scheme and by taking a more 'Council Tax discount approach', it will address the problems associated with the increased administration caused by failings in the current scheme and Universal Credit as follows:
- 2.15 The scheme will require a simplified claiming process. All applicants will see a significant reduction in the claiming process and, where possible, Council Tax Reduction will be awarded automatically. For Universal Credit applicants any Universal Credit data received from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) will automatically be treated as a claim for Council Tax Reduction. Where information is received from DWP, the entitlement to Council Tax Reduction will be processed automatically without the need to request further information from the taxpayer.
- 2.16 The new scheme will avoid constant changes in discount, the need for multiple changes in instalments and therefore assist claimants by avoiding constant changes in instalments that can lead to them falling behind with payments. A side impact of this will be to assist the Council in maintaining the high collection rates.

#### **Transition to the new scheme and the Exceptional Hardship Scheme**

- 2.17 The council will need to instigate a full communications strategy to ensure all applicants are aware of the changes. This will use all channels available including a letter in council tax bills. The council will also engage with third parties such as the CAB and W3RT as well as offering face to face opportunities to discuss changes either through the visitor centre at Three Rivers House or sessions delivered through the Healthy Hubs.

2.18 Inevitably, with any change in scheme, there will be some winners and losers although the proposed scheme has been designed to protect the most vulnerable. From modelling based on current values approximately 2,109 applicants will receive either the same or more support and only 177 will receive a reduced level of assistance.

2.19 To mitigate this, the new scheme will contain additional provisions to protect individuals who experience exceptional hardship. Where any applicant is likely to experience exceptional hardship, they will be encouraged to apply for an exceptional hardship payment. The Council will consider all applications for exceptional hardship on an individual basis, taking into account available income and essential outgoings. This approach will enable individual applicants to be dealt with in a fair and equitable manner. The Exceptional Hardship Scheme will form part of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme and fall to be paid through the Collection Fund.

### **3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations**

3.1 The alternative to introducing a new scheme for Council Tax Reduction from 2024/25 is to leave the existing scheme in place. This would be a short-term option; lead to continuation of increasing costs of administration; and in the longer term, significantly affect the collection of Council Tax and the effectiveness of the scheme to support households within the Council's area.

### **4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

4.1 The recommendations in this report amend the Council's Council Tax Support Scheme to allow the Council to better support the most vulnerable residents within the district. The changes outlined will help the Council maintain its council tax collection rates.

#### **Financial, Legal, Staffing, Equal Opportunities, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications**

None specific.

#### **Financial Implications**

4.2 The new scheme has been designed to be budget neutral and the financial implications are included within the revenue budget report contained within this agenda. The council tax support scheme impacts on the council tax base set by the council each year.

### **5 Legal Implications**

5.1 It is a legal requirement for the council to agree a Council Tax Reduction Scheme before the start of each new financial year.

### **6 Staffing Implications**

6.1 There are no direct staffing implications of these proposals but they are expected to allow the service to achieve the reduction in its agency staff budget within the revenue budget for 2024/25 and beyond

## **7 Equal Opportunities Implications**

7.1 **The move to the new scheme will either have a neutral or positive affect to the majority of working age claimants.** From initial modelling 377 applicants will receive more support than under the previous scheme.

7.2 As with all changes however there will be up to 177 applicants who may receive less support than previous. In all those cases, further support will be available through the Council's Exceptional Hardship Fund.

7.3 A full EIA is included at item 8 with the budget recommendations..

## **8 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

8.1 There are no climate change implications.

## **9 Community Safety Implications**

9.1 none

## **10 Public Health implications**

10.1 none

## **11 Customer Services Centre Implications**

11.1 Customer services staff will be trained in the new scheme and assist in dealing with queries relating to the implementation of the new scheme.

## **12 Communications and Website Implications**

12.1 A full communications strategy will be implemented making use of all media channels to publicise the change to the scheme,

## **13 Risk and Health & Safety Implications**

13.1 The subject of this report is covered by the Revenue and Benefits service plan(s). Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

## **14 Recommendation**

14.1 This report allows the recommendations in Item 11 to be made in respect of adopting the new CTSS scheme. This allows for the introduction of a new income banded / grid scheme for working age applicants with effect from 1 April 2024

Report prepared by: (Jane Walker, Head of Revenues and Benefits)

### **Data Quality**

Data sources:

Revenues and Benefits system

Data checked by:

Jane Walker, Head of Revenues & Benefits.

Data rating: Tick

<b>1</b>	<b>Poor</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Sufficient</b>	
<b>3</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>x</b>

**Background Papers**

**APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS**

**Appendix A – consultation analysis**




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# Three Rivers District Council - Council Tax Reduction Scheme 2024/25 Consultation

## 2. Background to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme consultation

1. I have read the background information about the Council Tax Reduction Scheme: This question must be answered before you can continue.				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		100.00%	45
2	No		0.00%	0
			answered	45
			skipped	20




## 3. Part 1 - Introducing an income banded scheme for all working age applicants which will provide up to 100% support

2. Do you agree with introducing an income-based banded discount scheme as shown above?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		54.17%	13
2	No		37.50%	9
3	Don't Know		8.33%	2
			answered	24
			skipped	41

3. If you disagree please explain why. You can also use this space to let us know if you have any alternative suggestions.				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	11
			answered	11
			skipped	54

## 4. Part 2 - Removing Non Dependant Deductions

#### 4. Do you agree with this proposal?




Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		50.00%	11
2	No		27.27%	6
3	Don't Know		22.73%	5
			answered	22
			skipped	43

5. If you disagree please explain why. You can also use this space to let us know if you have any alternative suggestions.

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	5
			answered	5
			skipped	60

#### 5. Part 3 - Disregarding certain elements of Universal Credit




#### 6. Do you agree with this proposal?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		59.09%	13
2	No		18.18%	4
3	Don't Know		22.73%	5
			answered	22
			skipped	43

7. If you disagree please explain why. You can also use this space to let us know if you have any alternative suggestions.




Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	5
			answered	5
			skipped	60

6. Part 4 - Where applicants or their partner (if they have one) are working, a standard disregard of up to £25 per week will be applied for single applicants and up to £50 per week for couples or lone parents.

8. Do you agree with this proposal?			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		65.00% 13
2	No		15.00% 3
3	Don't Know		20.00% 4
		answered	20
		skipped	45

9. If you disagree please explain why. You can also use this space to let us know if you have any alternative suggestions.			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00% 4
		answered	4
		skipped	61

7. Part 5 - Any new claim or change in circumstances will be applied on a daily basis

10. Do you agree with this proposal?			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		76.19% 16
2	No		4.76% 1
3	Don't Know		19.05% 4
		answered	21
		skipped	44




11. If you disagree please explain why. You can also use this space to let us know if you have any alternative suggestions.			
Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00% 1

11. If you disagree please explain why. You can also use this space to let us know if you have any alternative suggestions.

answered	1
skipped	64

8. Part 6 - Backdating reduction (up to a maximum of 12 months from the date of claim) where circumstances show that the applicant would have been continuously eligible for the period in question had they applied at that time.

12. Do you agree with this proposal?




Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes 	71.43%	15
2	No 	14.29%	3
3	Don't Know 	14.29%	3
		answered	21
		skipped	44

13. If you disagree please explain why. You can also use this space to let us know if you have any alternative suggestions.

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	4
		answered	4
		skipped	61

9. Part 7 - Protecting people with a disability by disregarding PIP, ESA (Support Component) and DLA.

14. Do you agree with this proposal?




Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes 	71.43%	15
2	No 	14.29%	3
3	Don't Know 	14.29%	3
		answered	21
		skipped	44

15. If you disagree please explain why. You can also use this space to let us know if you have any alternative suggestions.

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	5
		answered	5
		skipped	60

#### 10. Part 8 - Protecting families by continuing to disregard Child Benefit and Child Maintenance

16. Do you agree with this proposal?




Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes 	65.00%	13
2	No 	15.00%	3
3	Don't Know 	20.00%	4
		answered	20
		skipped	45

17. If you disagree please explain why. You can also use this space to let us know if you have any alternative suggestions.

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	100.00%	3
		answered	3
		skipped	62

#### 11. Part 9 - Disregarding Carer's Allowance

18. Do you agree with this proposal?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes 	70.00%	14
2	No 	10.00%	2
3	Don't Know 	20.00%	4

**18. Do you agree with this proposal?**




answered	20
skipped	45

**19. If you disagree please explain why. You can also use this space to let us know if you have any alternative suggestions.**

Answer Choices	Response Percent	Response Total
1   Open-Ended Question	100.00%	1
	answered	1
	skipped	64

**12. Part 10 - Protecting War Pensioners by continuing to disregard War Pensions or War Disablement pensions in full**

**20. Do you agree with this proposal?**

Answer Choices	Response Percent	Response Total
1   Yes 	65.00%	13
2   No 	15.00%	3
3   Don't know 	20.00%	4
	answered	20
	skipped	45

**21. If you disagree please explain why. You can also use this space to let us know if you have any alternative suggestions.**

Answer Choices	Response Percent	Response Total
1   Open-Ended Question	100.00%	2
	answered	2
	skipped	63

**13. Part 11 - Maintaining the Capital Limit at £8,000 but removing the assumed income from capital (or 'tariff' income) from the calculation of Council Tax Reduction**

22. Do you agree with this proposal?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		60.00%	12
2	No		15.00%	3
3	Don't know		25.00%	5
			answered	20
			skipped	45

23. If you disagree please explain why. You can also use this space to let us know if you have any alternative suggestions.				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	3
			answered	3
			skipped	62



14. Part 12 - Removing the Extended Payment provision.

24. Do you agree with this proposal?				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		77.78%	14
2	No		11.11%	2
3	Don't know		11.11%	2
			answered	18
			skipped	47

25. If you disagree please explain why. You can also use this space to let us know if you have any alternative suggestions.				
Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00%	2
			answered	2
			skipped	63

15. Part 13 - Providing an Exceptional Hardship Scheme

**26. Do you agree with this proposal?**

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		84.21% 16
2	No		10.53% 2
3	Don't know		5.26% 1
		answered	19
		skipped	46

**27. If you disagree please explain why. You can also use this space to let us know if you have any alternative suggestions.**

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00% 3
		answered	3
		skipped	62


**16. Your comments and suggestions on the proposed Council Tax Reduction Scheme**

**28. Please use this space to make any other comments on the proposed scheme or any alternative suggestions you have.**

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question		100.00% 6
		answered	6
		skipped	59

**17. About you**

**29. Are you completing this form on behalf of an organisation or group?**

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes		0.00% 0
2	No		100.00% 19
		answered	19
		skipped	46





If yes, please tell us the name of the organisation/group and add any other comments you wish to make.


Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Open-Ended Question	0.00%	0
No answers found.			
		answered	0
		skipped	65

## 18. Questions for Individuals



30. Do you live in the Three Rivers District Council area?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes 	94.74%	18
2	No 	5.26%	1
		answered	19
		skipped	46





31. Do you pay Council Tax?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes 	100.00%	19
2	No	0.00%	0
		answered	19
		skipped	46







32. Are you currently receiving Council Tax Reduction?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Yes 	21.05%	4
2	No 	78.95%	15
		answered	19
		skipped	46


### 33. How would you describe your gender?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	I prefer not to say		10.53%	2
2	Female		63.16%	12
3	Male		21.05%	4
4	I describe myself in another way		5.26%	1
			answered	19
			skipped	46




### 34. Which of the following age ranges do you fall into?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Prefer not to say		5.26%	1
2	16-24		0.00%	0
3	25-34		15.79%	3
4	35-44		5.26%	1
5	45-59		31.58%	6
6	60-74		31.58%	6
7	75 or over		0.00%	0
8	75-84		10.53%	2
9	85+		0.00%	0
			answered	19
			skipped	46





### 35. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group?

Answer Choices			Response Percent	Response Total
1	Prefer not to say		26.32%	5
2	Arab		0.00%	0
3	Asian or Asian British: Indian		0.00%	0
4	Asian or Asian British: Pakistani		0.00%	0
5	Asian or Asian British: Bangladeshi		0.00%	0

### 35. Which of the following best describes your ethnic group?

6	Asian or Asian British: Chinese		0.00%	0
7	Any other Asian Background		0.00%	0
8	Black or Black British: Caribbean		5.26%	1
9	Black or Black British: African		0.00%	0
10	Any other Black Background		0.00%	0
11	Mixed Heritage: White and Black Caribbean		0.00%	0
12	Mixed Heritage: White and Black African		0.00%	0
13	Mixed Heritage: White and Asian		0.00%	0
14	Any other Mixed Background		0.00%	0
15	White British		63.16%	12
16	White Irish		0.00%	0
17	Any other White Background		5.26%	1
			answered	19
			skipped	46




### 36. What is your religion/belief?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total	
1	Prefer not to say		26.32%	5
2	Buddhist		0.00%	0
3	Christian (includes Church of England, Catholic, Protestant and all other Christian Denominations)		47.37%	9
4	Sikh		0.00%	0
5	Jewish		5.26%	1
6	Muslim		0.00%	0
7	Hindu		0.00%	0
8	Other		0.00%	0
9	No religion		21.05%	4

### 36. What is your religion/belief?

answered	19
skipped	46

### 37. Which of the following best describes your sexual orientation?

Answer Choices		Response Percent	Response Total
1	Prefer not to say 	31.58%	6
2	Bisexual 	5.26%	1
3	Gay or lesbian	0.00%	0
4	Straight/Heterosexual 	63.16%	12
5	Other	0.00%	0
		answered	19
		skipped	46

## POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 29 JANUARY 2024

### PART I - NOT DELEGATED

#### 8. FINANCIAL PLANNING - RECOMMENDATIONS

(DoF)

##### 1. Summary

1.1 This report enables the Committee to make its recommendations on the Council's Revenue and Capital budgets and Treasury Management Policy for the period 2024/25 to 2026/27 (medium term) to Council on 20 February 2024.

##### 2. Details

###### Context

2.1 The Committee is reminded that each Financial Planning report on this agenda needs to be considered before the recommendations on this report are agreed.

###### Revenue Budget

2.2 The Committee should agree the revenue budget as amended for any growth or additional savings it proposes to add.

###### Capital Strategy and Investment Programme

2.3 The Committee should agree the level of capital investment for 2024/25 to 2026/27 having regard to any balances it wishes to see carried forward.

##### 3. Options/Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 The recommendation below enables the Committee to make recommendations to the Council on 20 February 2024 concerning the Council's corporate framework, service and financial plans.

##### 4. Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

4.1 The recommendations in this report contribute to the process whereby the Council will approve and adopt its strategic, service and financial plans under Article 4 of the Council's Constitution.

##### 5. Equal Opportunities Implications

5.1 The Equality Impact Assessment Relevance Test is attached at Appendix 1.

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

5.2 Services changes arising from the budget will be subject to individual Equality Impact Assessments.

##### 6. Financial Implications

6.1 The key financial implications for the Council are:-

- Officers recommend a minimum prudent revenue balance of **£2,000,000** in the light of the financial and budgetary risks.
- The general fund balance at 31 March 2027 is forecast to be **£3,182.185**.
- A 2.99% **increase** in its Council Tax charge for 2024/25 to 2026/27
- Capital balance is estimated to be **£2,719,289** at 31 March 2027.

## 7. Legal Implications

7.1 The provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (LGFA 1992) set out what the Council has to base its budget calculations upon regarding council tax and requires the Council to set a balanced budget having regard to the advice of its Chief Finance Officer (section 151 Officer). The setting of the budget is a function reserved to Full Council in accordance with Part 2, Article 4.02 of the Council's Constitution and the Policy and Resources Committee must therefore forward its recommendations on the budget to Full Council.

7.2 Section 30(6) LGFA 1992 provides that the Council has got to set its budget calculations before 11 March in the financial year preceding the one in respect of which the budget is set although, it is not invalid merely because it is not set on or after 11 March. However, it is important that the Council sets its 2024/25 budget by 11 March 2024 as any delay in setting council tax may leave the Council vulnerable to legal proceedings requiring it to set the tax.

## 8. Risk Management Implications

8.1 The Committee should recommend that the financial and budgetary risks identified be incorporated into service plans as appropriate.

## 9. Recommendations

9.2 That the Policy and Resources Committee notes that the Administration will publish its final recommendations on Financial Planning 2024/25 to 2026/27 five working days prior to the Council meeting on 20 February 2024 and present them at this meeting.

## Appendices

### Appendix 1 Equality Impact Assessment Relevance Test

Report prepared by:

Sally Riley - Finance Business Partner

Alison Scott – Director of Finance

Background Papers:

2023/24 Budget Monitoring Reports

Fees & Charges Reports to Council for 2024/25

2024-27 Financial Planning Report

## Form A – Relevance Test

**Function/Service Being Assessed:** Financial Planning 2024/25

**Officer completing form:** Alison Scott

**Date of completion:** 11 January 2024

### 1. Populations served/affected:

Universal (service covering all residents)?

Targeted (service aimed at a section of the community –please indicate which)?

### 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)?:

1 – Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation

2 – Advancing equality of opportunity

3 – Fostering good relations

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

Yes

No

Which equality categories are affected?

Race

Age

Sexual Orientation

Disability

Sex

Religion

Gender reassignment

Marriage / civil partnership

Maternity / Pregnancy



### 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 (specify which categories)
- No (specify which categories)

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
- No

### 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)

- Yes
- No

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

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**Policy and Resources Committee  
Monday 29 January 2024**

PART I

**Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 - Final Draft  
(ADSPH)**

**1 Summary**

- 1.1 To provide the Committee with a review of the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017-2022 and a final draft of the Council's proposed Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028, post public consultation.
- 1.2 The final draft of the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 can be found in Appendix One. The review of the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017-2022 can be found in Appendix Two. The action plan linked to the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 can be found in Appendix Three.

**2 Details**

- 2.1 The Council is statutorily required to produce a Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- 2.2 The Council's previous Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, adopted in 2017, expired at the end of 2022. Therefore, following a review of this strategy, a new strategy for 2023-2028 has been produced.
- 2.3 The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 links to the Council's Corporate Framework 2023-2026, which sets out the Council's vision to make Three Rivers 'a great place to live, work and visit'.
- 2.4 The strategy supports this vision by ensuring that Three Rivers is a district where people have access to good quality housing and where our most vulnerable residents are supported.
- 2.5 The strategy outlines three key objectives for the Council in the area of Housing, over the period of the next five years, these are as follows -
  - 2.5.1 To prevent and relieve homelessness.
  - 2.5.2 Support our most vulnerable customers into permanent, suitable and sustainable accommodation.
  - 2.5.3 To improve the standard of housing across the district.
- 2.6 To ensure the delivery of these objectives, an action plan (Appendix Three) has been developed to run alongside the strategy.

- 2.7 Housing is a dynamic environment; therefore, this action plan will be a live document that will enable Officers to react quickly to any changing priorities or significant legislative reform.
- 2.8 The action plan will be reviewed annually, with reports of our progress against the plan provided to the relevant Committee.
- 2.9 Following agreement at Policy and Resources Committee on 13 November 2023, a public consultation on the proposed Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 was launched.
- 2.10 Although a 4-week public consultation on the proposed strategy was all that was required, extra time was allocated to the consultation to account for the festive period. Therefore, the consultation opened on 24 November 2023 and closed on 1 January 2024
- 2.11 The consultation was administered by the Council's Communications team using the 'haveyoursay' platform.
- 2.12 A Communications Strategy for the public consultation was developed that included the consultation being promoted on the Council's website and our various social media channels. A press release was drafted to release to the public when the consultation opened, and an additional budget was provided by Housing Services to boost the promotion of the strategy on our social media channels.
- 2.13 The consultation received 43 visits to the consultation page and 13 contributions.
- 2.14 The first part of the consultation focused on the proposed vision outlined within the draft strategy, to make Three Rivers a district where our residents feel supported, by ensuring that –
- 2.14.1 Three Rivers is a district where people have access to good quality housing.
- 2.14.2 Three Rivers is a district where the most vulnerable residents, including those who are victims of domestic abuse, are supported.
- 2.14.3 Three Rivers is a district where people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, can access permanent and suitable accommodation.
- 2.14.4 Three Rivers is a district where rough sleeping, or the risk of rough sleeping, is eliminated.
- 2.15 All 13 contributors to the consultation confirmed that they either 'strongly agreed' or 'tend to agree' with the four points above, therefore, we have not made any amendments to our vision post consultation.
- 2.16 The second part of the consultation focused on our three proposed objectives, as listed in 2.5. The results were as follows –
- 2.16.1 To prevent and relieve homelessness – 13 x Strongly Agree or Tend to Agree.
- 2.16.2 Support our most vulnerable customers into permanent, suitable, and sustainable accommodation. – 13 x Strongly Agree or Tend to Agree.
- 2.16.3 To improve the standard of housing across the district. - 13 x Strongly Agree or Tend to Agree.

- 2.16.4 Our proposed objectives received full support in our consultation, therefore, we have not made any amendments to these objectives post consultation.
- 2.17 The third part of the consultation focused on the actions contained in our proposed action plan.
- 2.18 The action plan is set out in three sections, each of which is attached to one of our proposed objectives.
- 2.18.1 All 13 contributors to the consultation confirmed that they either 'strongly agreed' or 'tend to agree' (or stated don't know or not applicable) with the following actions in the action plan –
- Ensure the flexible use of the Council's Homelessness Prevention Fund
  - All tenants of our registered providers threatened with eviction are prevented from homelessness wherever possible.
  - Ensure staff are aware of new trends which will predict our busier periods to enable them to prepare sufficiently.
  - Better understanding of rough sleeping in the district.
  - Promotion of homelessness prevention services.
  - All customers to be referred to any support services they require.
  - Correct and up to date information is always available to customers.
  - New Hope to provide the Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEPP) provision.
  - The Council's Housing Allocations Policy to remain up to date with legislative updates.
  - Revamp of the current Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (RDGS).
  - Increase the level of mediation work and home visits to households.
  - Efficient use of the Council's Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) properties
  - Efficient use of the Council's Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP) properties.
  - Vulnerable customers housed in the Council's temporary accommodation to be provided support.
  - A single homeless pathway for adults with complex needs, who are homeless or at risk of homelessness, to be established in Three Rivers.
  - Maximise funding opportunities.
  - RSI-6 funding granted by DLUHC to continue to provide a Housing Navigator post within Housing Services.
  - Support victims of domestic abuse.

- Oversee the integration of a Domestic Abuse Caseworker within the Housing Service.
  - Improve awareness of conditions in the private housing sector.
  - Improve standards in the private rented sector.
  - Clear guidance for discharging our homeless duties into the private rented sector.
  - Establish a protocol for dealing with complaints of housing disrepair, specifically those relating to damp and mould.
  - Adoption of a Housing Enforcement Policy.
  - Ensure we are fully prepared for when the Renters (Reform) Bill becomes an Act of Parliament.
  - Encourage our Registered Providers and developers to build net zero homes, promote sustainable living and make space for nature within any development in the district.
  - Ensure that Private Rented Sector (PRS) landlords within the district are aware and fully informed of the funding opportunities available to them to make significant improvements to the standard of their properties.
- 2.19 Only six actions in the proposed action plan did not receive full support from our contributors, with one or two contributors disagreeing with the proposed actions as follows –
- 2.19.1 Implement a cost-of-living homelessness prevention project.
- 2.19.2 Work in partnership with Planning Policy and Regulatory Services to ensure the ongoing delivery of affordable housing in the District.
- 2.19.3 Review the target for housing and the affordable housing provision within this plan, following the adoption of the new Local Plan.
- 2.19.4 Further allocation of Accommodation for Ex-Offenders (AfEO) funding awarded.
- 2.19.5 Enable people to remain in their homes and ensure they are appropriate for their needs.
- 2.19.6 Establish a Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) monitoring programme.
- 2.20 Although the above six actions in our action plan did not receive full support from our contributors, it is clear that the vast majority of our contributors strongly agreed, or tended to agree with these actions, therefore, we have not made any amendments to these actions.
- 2.21 There was a small number of comments made by the contributors on the strategy and these have been considered.
- 2.22 Following these comments and comments from Members at the Policy and Resources Committee on 13 November 2023 and the General Public Services and

Economic Development Committee on 16 January 2024, the following changes have been made in the final version of the strategy –

- 2.22.1 The simplification of some language and/or acronyms used.
- 2.22.2 An action has been added to the action plan under Objective 2. Action 2.10 will ensure the Council's Housing Solutions Manager will undertake ongoing professional development in the form of regular training on the Council's responsibilities as signatories of the Armed Forces Covenant. This will ensure that the Council is aware of any updates to our responsibilities to this cohort at an early stage and can fulfil these as required.
- 2.22.3 A further action has been added to the action plan under Objective 2. Action 2.11 will see the Council's Strategic Housing Manager undertake a review of the Service's policies and procedures to ensure that the Council is undertaking best practice with regard to our responsibilities as signatories of the Armed Forces Covenant. This review will be completed in 2024 and if any changes are required, they will be presented to this Committee.

### **3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations**

- 3.1 The final draft of the strategy is being presented to the Committee for approval.
- 3.2 The adoption of a Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy will ensure that the Council remains compliant with our statutory obligations.

### **4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.
- 4.2 The recommendations in this report relate to the achievement of the following performance indicators. -
  - 4.2.1 HN01 – Maximum number of households living in temporary accommodation on the last day of the quarter.
  - 4.2.2 HN03 – Maximum number of households in temporary accommodation throughout the year.
  - 4.2.3 HN06 – Promote access to the private sector lettings in order to prevent and relieve homelessness.
  - 4.2.4 HN11 – Percentage of households prevented or relieved from homelessness.
- 4.3 The impact of the recommendations on this/these performance indicator(s) is:

The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 will ensure that the Council continue to attempt to reduce the number of households in temporary accommodation and ensure we are taking action to consistently prevent or relieve the homelessness of our customers.

The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 details the importance of increasing the Council's access to the private rented stock available within the district.

**Financial, Legal, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications**

**5 Financial Implications**

- 5.1 The action plan that has been produced as part of the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 contains several actions to be implemented. Specific actions on this plan have been included to address the expensive cost of temporary accommodation.

**6 Equal Opportunities Implications**

- 6.1 An Equal Opportunities Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached as an Appendix to this report.

**7 Environmental Implications**

- 7.1 The Strategy aims to encourage developers and Registered Providers to increase the delivery of net zero homes, to promote sustainable living and make space for nature within any proposed development.
- 7.2 The Strategy will ensure that private sector landlords within the district are aware and fully informed of the funding opportunities available to them to make significant improvements to the standard of their homes.
- 7.3 An Environmental Impact Assessment has been completed and is attached as an appendix to this report.

**8 Public Health implications**

- 8.1 The Strategy will contribute to the prevention of deterioration of health and wellbeing issues that can be attributed to poor housing condition by improving the overall standard of housing across the district.

**9 Communications and Website Implications**

- 9.1 Communications will be utilised to promote the adoption of the Policy at the appropriate time. Once adopted, the new strategy will be uploaded to the Council's website and a press release will be drafted.

**10 Customer Service Centre, Community Safety, Staffing, Legal Implications**

- 10.1 None specific.

**11 Risk and Health & Safety Implications**

- 11.1 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.
- 11.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Housing Services service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).



<b>Nature of Risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Suggested Control Measures</b>	<b>Response</b> <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	<b>Risk Rating</b> <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
The Council fails to adopt a Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy	The Council would not be meeting its statutory obligation.	Committee to approve the final Strategy.	Tolerate	2
A significant increase in the use of non-Council owned temporary accommodation	An increase in the budget required for temporary accommodation costs.	Mitigating actions contained within the Strategy's action plan.  Committee to approve the final Strategy	Treat	6

11.3 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.

Very Likely ↓ Likelihood	<b>Low</b> 4	<b>High</b> 8	<b>Very High</b> 12	<b>Very High</b> 16
	<b>Low</b> 3	<b>Medium</b> 6	<b>High</b> 9	<b>Very High</b> 12

	<b>Low</b> 2	<b>Low</b> 4	<b>Medium</b> 6	<b>High</b> 8
	<b>Low</b> 1	<b>Low</b> 2	<b>Low</b> 3	<b>Low</b> 4
<b>Impact</b>				
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%))

11.4 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.

**12 Recommendation**

**12.1 That:**

For Committee to approve the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028.

For Committee to agree to delegate the annual review of the action plan to be presented to the General Public Services and Economic Development Committee.

Report prepared by: Jason Hagland, Strategic Housing Manager,  
jason.hagland@threeivers.gov.uk

### **Data Quality**

Data sources: 'haveyoursay' Platform

Data checked by: N/A

Data rating:

<b>1</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>N/A</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Sufficient</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>High</b>	<b>N/A</b>

### **Background Papers**

None

### **APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS**

**Appendix One - The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028**

**Appendix Two - The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017-2022 Review**

**Appendix Three - The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 Action Plan**

**Appendix Four – Equalities Opportunities Impact Assessment**

**Appendix Five – Environmental Impact Assessment**

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# Housing, Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028

*Three Rivers  
'tackling  
homelessness'*



**HOMELESSNESS**



**AFFORDABLE  
HOUSING**

# Contents

	Page
<b>Introduction</b>	3
<b>Foreword</b>	4
<b>About Three Rivers</b>	5 - 9
<b>Local Population</b>	5
<b>Homelessness in Three Rivers</b>	9 - 13
<b>Our vision</b>	14
<b>Our objectives</b>	15
<b>Continue to prevent and relieve homelessness</b>	16
<b>Support our most vulnerable customers into permanent, suitable, and sustainable accommodation</b>	17 - 18
<b>Improve the standard of housing across the district</b>	19
<b>How we deliver our objectives</b>	20

# Introduction



## **This strategy** supports the council's vision

Our Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028, developed through consultation with partners, stakeholders and residents, presents the key objectives relating to the delivery of housing and housing-related services in the district over the next five years.

This strategy links to the Council's Corporate Framework 2023-2026, which sets out the council's vision to make Three Rivers **"a great place to live, work and visit"**.

This strategy supports the council's vision by ensuring that Three Rivers is a district where people have access to good quality housing and where our most vulnerable residents are supported.

The development of this strategy has been considered in conjunction with the context and priorities expressed through other key strategies. This includes the relationship to the Community Strategy, Strategic Plan, Local Development Framework (LDF), Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), the Council's Local Investment Plan, and other key housing documents such as the Tenancy Strategy and Housing Allocations Policy.

As a non-stock holding authority, we deliver homes and housing services with the support of a range of partners. This strategy provides a framework for everyone involved in Three Rivers housing; registered providers, charities, private developers, investors, regulators, private landlords, neighbouring local authorities, and, of course, our residents and local councillors.

This strategy does not stand alone. Its aims and objectives are interrelated with a wide range of plans and strategies led by the council and its external partners. Delivery of the strategy's objectives will require contributions from a range of agencies and organisations. To make the best use of resources and to learn from best practice we will continually build on and develop relationships with our partners.

# Foreword



## **Housing** plays an important part in wellbeing

As the Lead Member for Housing, I understand the importance that housing plays in the wellbeing of our residents. Ensuring there is a range of housing types is important for individuals and families across the district, from supported housing and affordable rentals to starter homes and larger family homes. It also builds strong neighbourhoods and inclusive communities and supports the economic prosperity of the district.

This strategy has been developed in partnership with our key stakeholders including registered providers, landlords, local residents, as well as our elected councillors. It follows the theme of the Council's Corporate Framework in which the vision for the council is that the district should be a great place to live, work and visit.

During the last few years, we have seen more households struggling during the Covid-19 Pandemic and following on from this, the increase in the cost-of-living crisis with rising food prices and high energy bills. We have seen house prices and rents rise, leaving more households needing help to access housing and, sadly, increasing numbers of homeless people including families suffering from the effects of war in Ukraine.

The strategy articulates the priorities for tackling the challenges we have identified in the years ahead and demonstrates our collective approach to housing across the district with the council as the lead, working in partnership with registered providers, developers, private landlords and residents.

Whilst we face challenges ahead, I am confident that we can build on our excellent partnerships and work with stakeholders to utilise their experience and achieve better housing choices and outcomes for our residents.

*Councillor Andrew Scarth  
Lead Member for Housing,  
Public Health & Wellbeing*



# About Three Rivers

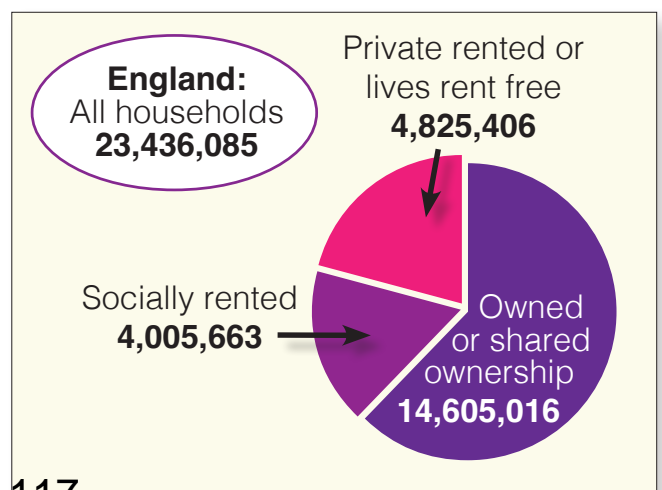
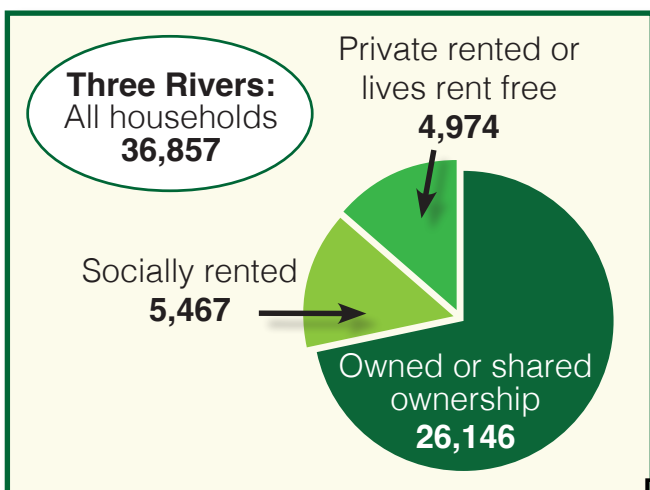
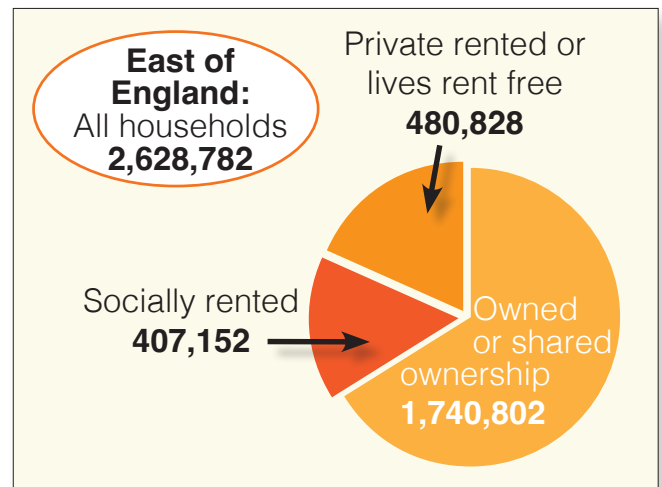


## Local population within the country

The population of Three Rivers in 2011 was 87,300 and has increased by 7.4% to 93,800 in 2021. This is higher than the overall increase for England (6.6%).

According to the 2021 Census, the tenure split of the district compared to the East of England and England as a whole, can be seen in the graphics provided on this page.

Levels of home ownership in the district are slightly higher than the regional and national rates, whilst private renting is lower than both the regional and national rates. This is likely to be a result of the district being generally quite affluent and may reflect the high price of rental costs, forcing those on a lower income to look beyond Three Rivers to source affordable housing.

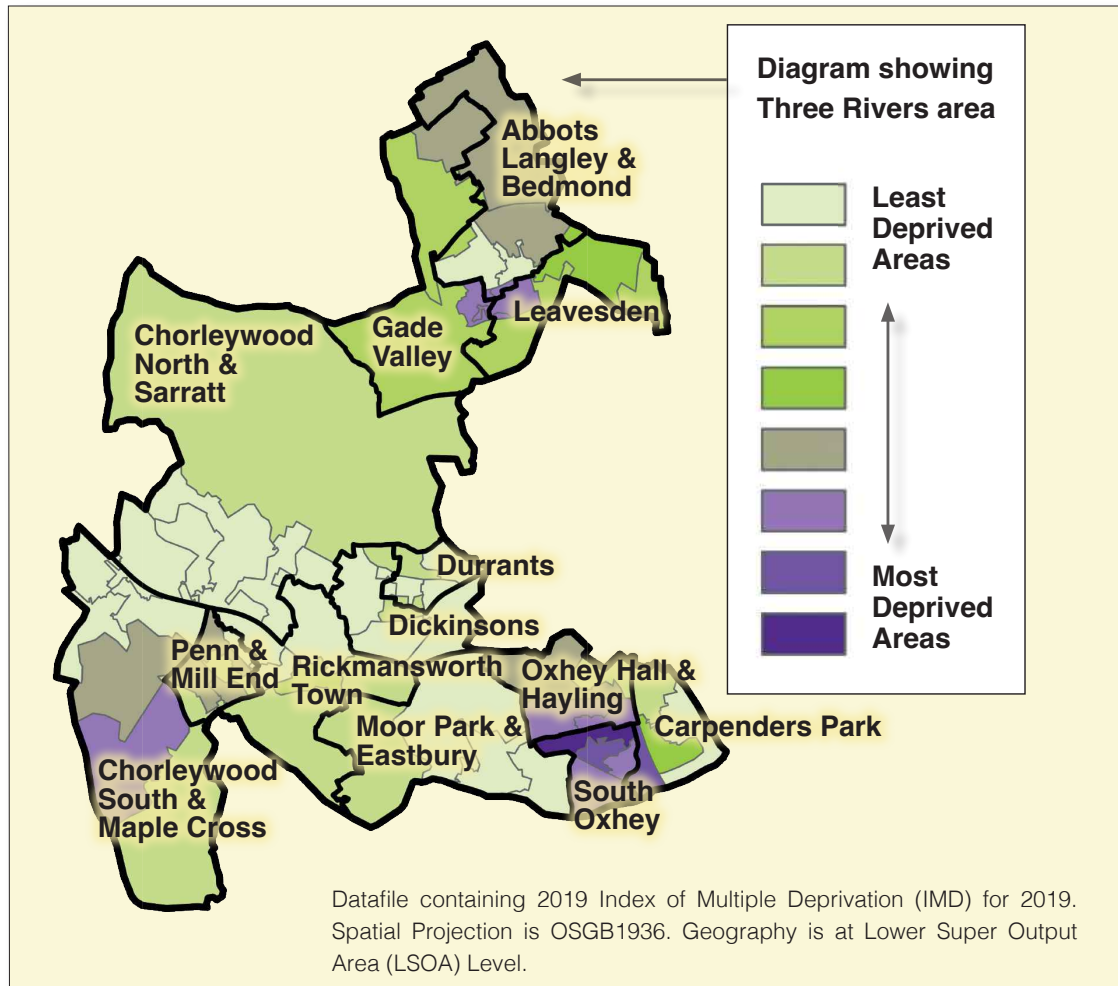


# About Three Rivers



## Local demographic of Three Rivers.

The 2019 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) scores within Three Rivers are extremely polarising, reflecting an overall affluent district with some significant pockets of deprivation as shown in the image below.



# About Three Rivers



## Local demographic of Three Rivers

Residents in the most deprived areas of the district are more likely to be renting, this includes those tenants in social housing provided by our registered providers. As expected, residents in the least deprived areas of the district are far more likely to be property owners.

Data indicates that residents in South Oxhey are likely to have fewer education and employment opportunities, experience greater barriers to accessing services and have lower household incomes than in other parts of the district.

With private rented sector market rents significantly higher than Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and private landlords and estate agents increasingly reluctant to let properties to those residents who are benefit dependant or low-income households, residents in South Oxhey are more likely to require housing advice and assistance from the council, if threatened with homelessness from their current property.

# About Three Rivers



## Local Housing Allowance shortfalls

in different areas of the district and the district as a whole.

Local Housing Allowance shortfall	£502	£653	£904	£1,612
<b>South Oxhey<sup>1</sup></b>				
Average rent	£1,300	£1,650	£2,200	£2,995
Local Housing Allowance shortfall	£552	£653	£1,154	£1,765
<b>WD3 Postcode<sup>1</sup></b>				
Average rent	£1,350	£1,650	£2,450	£3,148
Local Housing Allowance shortfall	£502	£503	£704	
<b>WD5 Postcode<sup>1</sup></b>				
Average rent	£1,300	£1,500	£2,000	
Local Housing Allowance shortfall	£402	£553	£854	£1,515
<b>WD19 Postcode<sup>1</sup></b>				
Average rent	£1,200	£1,550	£2,150	£2,898
Local Housing Allowance shortfall	£402	£478	£904	£1,017
<b>Kings Langley<sup>1</sup></b>				
Average rent	£1,200	£1,475	£2,200	£2,400
Local Housing Allowance shortfall	£252	£303	£354	£892
<b>Three Rivers<sup>2</sup></b>				
Average rent	£1,050	£1,300	£1,650	£2,275

<sup>1</sup> Median rent charges taken from Home.co.uk as at 26 September 2023

<sup>2</sup> ONS median monthly rents recorded between 1 April 2022 – 31 March 2023

The image above provides the average rent and Local Housing Allowance (LHA) shortfalls.

Access to housing is a fundamental part of achieving a good quality of life in which stable

relationships, good health and education, and rewarding work can be achieved.

House and rental prices across the district are high and there is a growing and ageing population which presents further housing challenges.

# Homelessness in Three Rivers



## Review of homelessness

2017 - 2022

The background to this strategy is the Review of Homelessness 2017-2022 carried out in mid-2023. This review and its findings can be found in Appendix A.

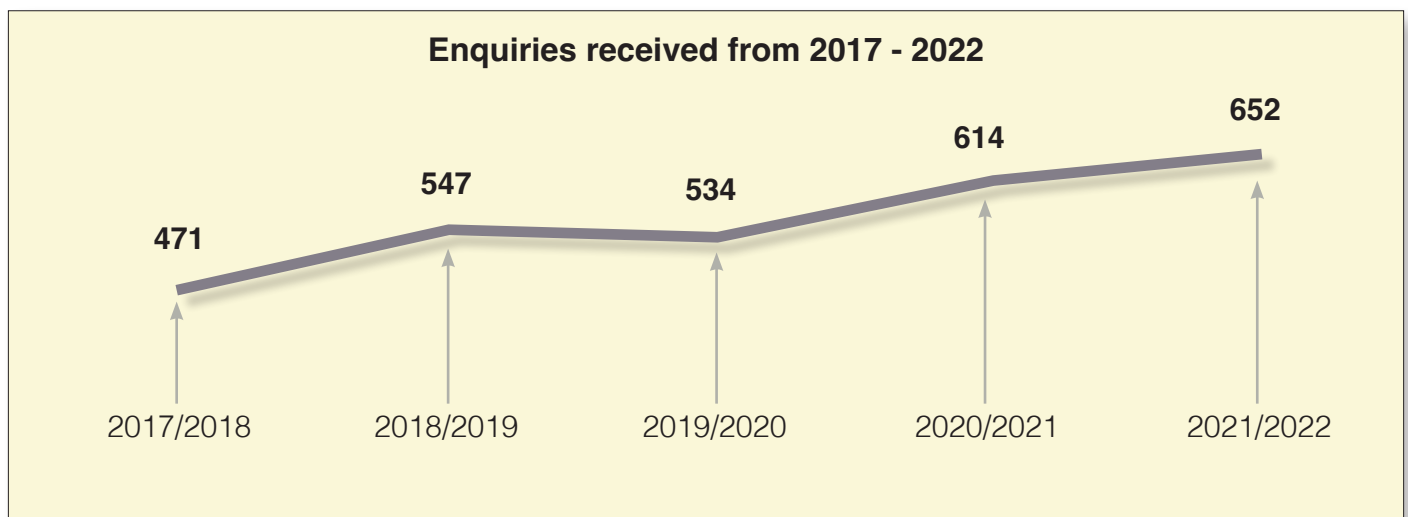
As per the graph below, overall demand on the Housing Service has increased by 50% since 2017.

Following the government's intervention during the Covid-19 pandemic and the council's response to these interventions, a significant increase in enquiries can be seen post 2019/20.

This increase has continued into the post pandemic period, which can likely be attributed to the pressure these interventions placed on families living in crowded households and the economic circumstances that have faced the country following the Covid-19 pandemic.

Although there is not a documented rough sleeping problem within the district, during the 'Everyone In' directive by central government, an underlying problem with those who are at risk of rough sleeping was identified within the district. These individuals are often only prevented from rough sleeping by 'sofa surfing' with friends and family members who are willing to accommodate them for short periods.

We acknowledge this underlying problem and have placed actions within our action plan to minimise the extent of this problem and support these individuals into long-term accommodation.





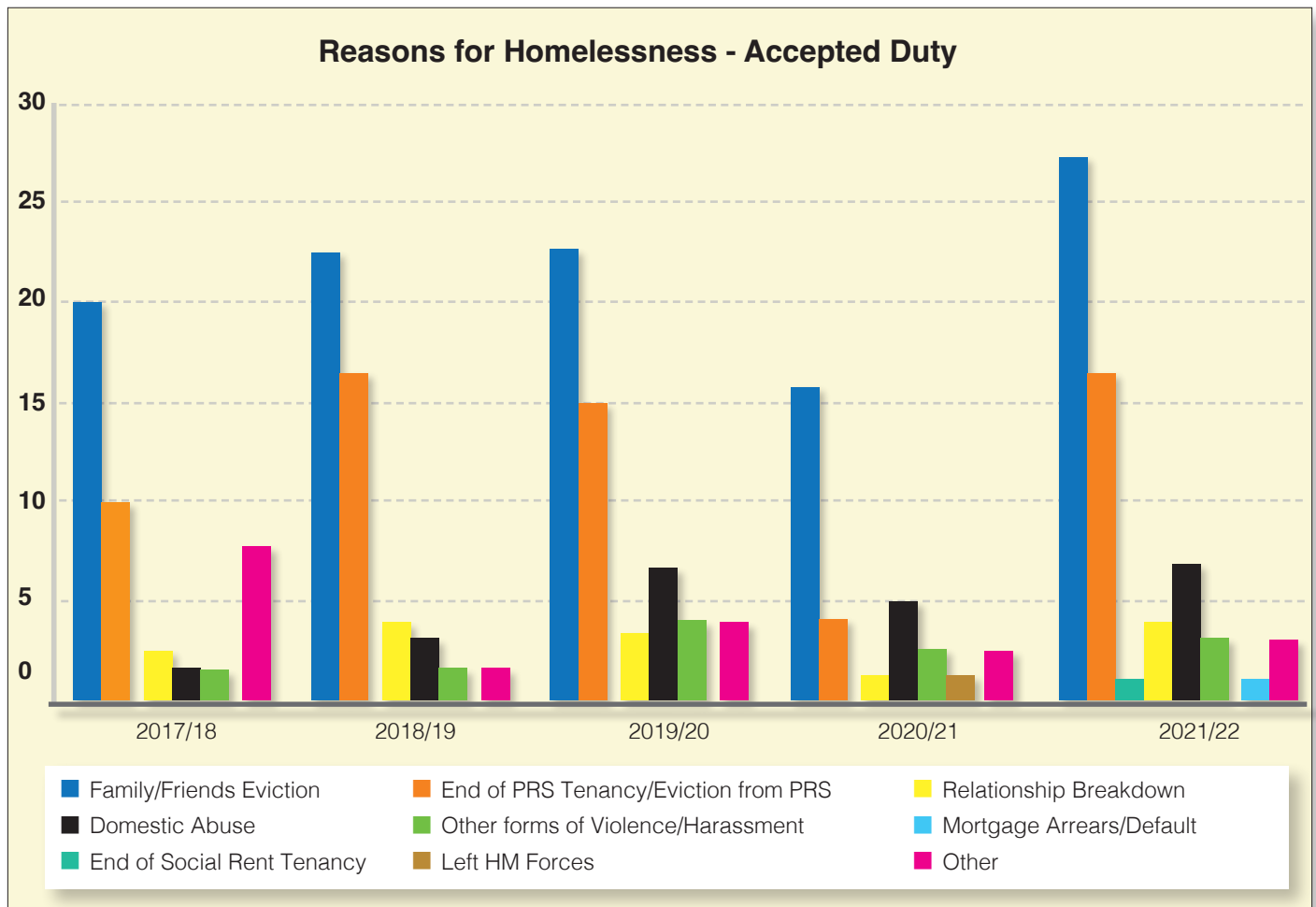
# Homelessness in Three Rivers



## Review of homelessness

2017 - 2022

Due to the worsening of the cost-of-living crisis during the intervening months between the completion of our review and the publishing of this document, we have seen a continuation of the rising number of homeless applicants approaching the council for housing advice and assistance.



# Homelessness in Three Rivers



## Review of homelessness

2017 - 2022

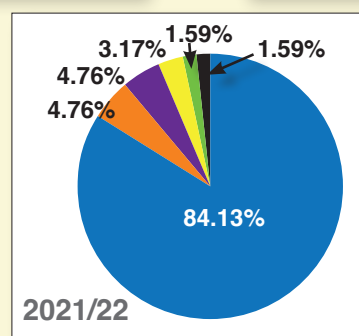
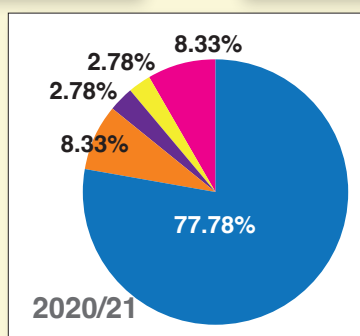
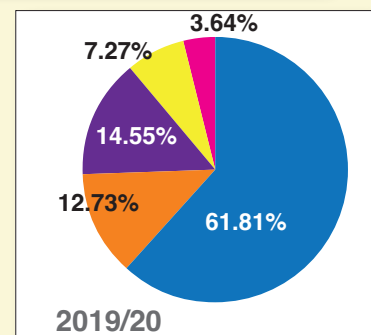
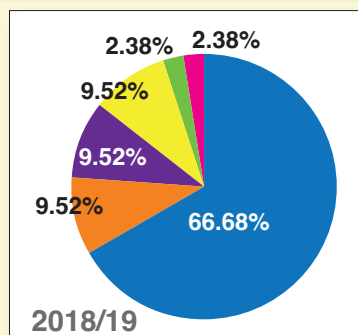
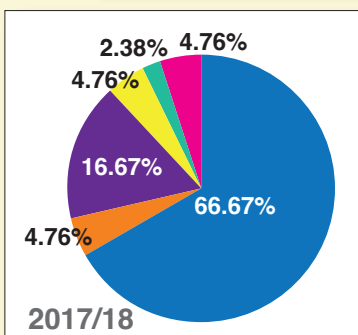
Data indicates that the primary reason for the council to accept the homelessness duty towards a household is due to an eviction by a family member (parents/extended family) or friend. This is followed closely by the eviction of a household from a property in the private rented sector.

In 2021/22, 41% of circumstances in which the council accepted a homelessness duty

towards a household, has been following an eviction from the parental (or family) home. We acknowledge that this represents a substantial majority of all acceptances in this period and, therefore, recognise that significant work to minimise this figure needs to be prioritised by the council.

### Reasons for Priority need

- Dependent Children
- Mental Disability/Mental Health
- 16/17 year olds
- Domestic Abuse
- Pregnant
- Physical Disability
- Emergency
- Other



# Homelessness in Three Rivers



## Review of homelessness

2017 - 2022

We aim to focus on early prevention work with these customers that are being evicted from parental accommodation and have included this within the action plan.

In 2021/22, 27% of circumstances in which the council accepted a homelessness duty towards a household, has been following an eviction from a privately rented property. Despite this already being the second highest reason for the acceptance of a homelessness duty towards a household, due to the ongoing cost-of-living crisis and the increasing rental costs in the district, the council expect this figure to increase considerably.

We recognise that increasing the access to the private rented sector within the district for our customers and residents remains a significant priority and have included this within our action plan.

During the last five years, the percentage of accepted cases that fall into the above categories has remained relatively steady, although years 2019/20 and 2021/22 saw a notable increase from 2019/20 of accepted cases granted a priority need due to the household containing dependent children.

The council accept that those households who have made a homelessness application that are subsequently determined to have a priority need and offered interim accommodation due to the household containing dependent children, is largely out of our control.

However, we are confident that the focus on increased prevention work within the Housing Service will reduce our need for these customers to be provided temporary accommodation in the first instance.

External trends indicate that the council should prepare for homelessness approaches from households that are likely to have a priority need due to other factors, which is highly likely to increase.

Whilst changing the legal definition of a victim of domestic abuse, the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 has ensured that any victim of domestic abuse is granted an automatic priority need for interim accommodation, following a homelessness application to any local authority. Therefore, the council expect this number to rise substantially and has placed actions within this plan to provide ongoing support to these vulnerable individuals.



# Homelessness in Three Rivers



## Review of homelessness

2017 - 2022

The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and the interventions taken by central government have had a lasting impact on the mental health of the general population. Therefore, the council need to be prepared to deal with an increase of customers engaging with our Housing Service that are significantly vulnerable due to the deterioration of their mental health. This will be further impacted by the ongoing difficulty for many people to access mental health support.

Ukrainian guests who arrived in our district as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, will be seeking more permanent and long-term accommodation and the closure of the hotels that have been accommodating Afghan refugees will ensure that the council will have increasing contact with vulnerable refugees. The council will continue to work with their partners, including Hertfordshire County Council and the Refugee Council, to ensure these customers receive the required level of support.

# Our Vision



## Three Rivers:

A district where residents feel supported.

### We want Three Rivers to be a district . . .



. . . where people have access to good quality housing.

. . . where the most vulnerable residents, including those who are victims of domestic abuse, are supported.



. . . where people who are homeless, or at risk of homelessness, can access permanent and suitable accommodation.

. . . where rough sleeping, or the risk of rough sleeping, is eliminated.



# Our Objectives



To realise our vision, this strategy has **three** key objectives.



To prevent and relieve homelessness.

our  
three key  
objectives



Support our most vulnerable customers into permanent, suitable and sustainable accommodation.



Improve the standard of housing across the district.

# To prevent and relieve homelessness



## Working towards identifying further prevention opportunities

It is widely recognised that homelessness is not just a lack of housing. It never occurs in isolation and, almost without exception, is closely related to poor physical or mental health, unemployment, or poverty. It affects the most vulnerable within our communities and impacts public services beyond the council's housing team.

Since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017, we have achieved positive results for our customers and increased the prevention of homelessness significantly, as represented in the figures provided in this strategy. However, the council is aware that this essential work undertaken by officers needs to be built upon and that further prevention opportunities are required to be identified.

Although Three Rivers is a largely affluent district, our customers are not immune to the current cost-of-living crisis affecting the country and it is predicted that due to this cost-of-living crisis, approaches to the council for housing advice and assistance will increase.

We will continue to make the best use of the Homelessness Prevention Grant, provided by central government, and to ensure that Three Rivers District Council are preventing

homelessness of their customers in the first instance.

However, if that is not successful, we will ensure that we work with their customers to enable them to access affordable, suitable and sustainable accommodation to relieve their homelessness.

### What we aim to do



**Implement a cost-of-living homelessness prevention project in partnership with our registered providers and private landlords in the district**



**Housing Options Officers to visit every household that is at risk of eviction from family/friend's at an early stage to identify any prevention opportunities**



**Ensure the council is prepared for the introduction of the Renters (Reform) Bill**



# Support the most vulnerable



**Support** our most vulnerable customers into permanent, suitable and sustainable accommodation.

There are several reasons why the council may refer to a customer as especially vulnerable, these may include customers who are suffering a mental health illness or physical illness, customers who are victims of domestic abuse or customers who have fled war and persecution in foreign countries that have been granted asylum in the United Kingdom. This also may include customers who have experienced one or more of the above, and who are now suffering from alcohol or substance addiction, as a result of their experiences.

The lasting impact of the Covid-19 pandemic cannot be ignored. The measures taken throughout that period, the effect these have had on the mental health of the population and the now considerable waiting times for people to receive mental health treatment, are likely to have a significant impact on all services over the coming years.

The Centre for Mental Health estimates that 10 million people in the United Kingdom (8.5

million adults and 1.5 million children) will require mental health support as a direct impact of the pandemic, during the next three to five years.

The council also anticipate increasing engagement with vulnerable refugees who have fled their home country in recent times, including those who have travelled to the United Kingdom as part of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, or those who have fled Afghanistan.

On occasion, due to the support needs they require, some vulnerable customers are not suitable for housing within general needs properties, nor are they able to maintain a tenancy in the private sector without significant support. Therefore, the council must make the best use of the available stock that it has and ensure that it is suitable for these customers. At the same time, it should utilise their partners in the care and support sector, to provide ongoing wrap-around.

# Support the most vulnerable



**Support** our most vulnerable customers into permanent, suitable, and sustainable accommodation.

Support for these individuals and support them into accommodation that is permanent, suitable, and sustainable, eliminating the chances of repeat homelessness.

## What we aim to do



Efficient use of the council's Next Steps (NSAP) and Rough Sleeper (RSAP) Accommodation Programme properties



Work in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council to establish the single homeless complex needs pathway



Maximise any potential funding opportunities available for this cohort



Oversee the integration of a Domestic Abuse Caseworker within the Housing Service, aiming to support victims of domestic abuse and ensure they are aware of all support available to them



Ensure vulnerable customers who are placed by the council in temporary accommodation are provided with support

# Improve the standard of housing

**We aim** to improve the standard of housing across the district.

We aim to improve the standard of existing homes in the district and tackle issues around access to private renting for their residents and customers. This will include encouraging the Registered Providers and developers to build net zero homes that promote sustainable living in the district. Also, to support landlords in the private rented sector, ensuring they are aware of the opportunities available to them to take advantage of the government funding available to bring their properties up to a safe, livable standard.

We are not a stock holding authority and have a low level of social housing available within the district; therefore, often rely on the private rented sector to provide safe and suitable accommodation for residents and those engaging with the Council's Housing Service.

This forced reliance in the private rented sector can be problematic, as the gap between the cost of rent locally compared to the Local Housing Allowance available to residents is significant.

Furthermore, economic pressure in the United Kingdom which has led to an extraordinary increase in mortgage rates for landlords has had a knock-on effect on rental prices in the district, with several landlords raising the rent to reflect the rise in their interest rate, or in some cases, exiting the sector completely, reducing the amount of privately rented properties available.

We aim to develop stronger partnerships with private landlords within the district to increase

access to properties for customers and to encourage landlords to ensure that any property for rent is of a safe and suitable standard. Our objective aims to ensure that the standard of housing, in all tenures, is improved across the district.



## What we aim to do



**Encourage registered providers and developers to build net zero homes, promote sustainable living and make space for nature within any development in the district**



**Draft and implement a new Housing Enforcement Policy**



**Revamp the Council Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme to provide increased access to PRS properties for customers engaging with the Council's Housing Service**

# How will we deliver these objectives



**The strategy** has been developed to ensure the delivery of our objectives.

An action plan (contained in Appendix B) that is aligned with this strategy has been developed to ensure the delivery of the three current objectives.

Housing is a dynamic environment; therefore, we anticipate new challenges and issues to arise during the five years of this strategy. This may include legislative reform or a significant shift in priority for the country, as witnessed in 2022 with the launch of the Homes for Ukraine Scheme or the closure of hotels that were accommodating Afghan refugees.

To enable us to react quickly to any changing priorities or important legislative reform, this action plan will be a live document that officers will monitor over the period of the strategy to ensure that the objectives are being met in the appropriate timelines. The action plan will be flexible and enable us to change our objectives at any time, should it be required.

We will, however, continue to review our action plan annually and make any changes to our approach or policies in response to the changing environment over a long-term period.

An effective approach to homelessness and its prevention involves a partnership approach between the council and all other local statutory and voluntary agencies operating in this field. We intend to continue to utilise these partnerships to improve the housing opportunities of our customers, aim to grow these partnerships throughout the term of this strategy and foster new partnerships that will benefit our customers when the opportunity presents.



# *Three Rivers 'tackling homelessness'*



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Three Rivers District Council

# **Appendix Two Review of Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017-2022**

## Contents

<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Objective One – Prevent And Relieve Homelessness .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Objective Two – Increase The Supply Of Accommodation, Including Temporary Accommodation .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Objective Three – Improve The Standard Of Housing Across The District.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Homelessness Reduction Act and The Extent And Nature Of Homelessness In Three Rivers 2017-2022 .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>The Housing Allocations Policy And The Allocation Of Permanent Accommodation Via The Council’s Housing Register .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>The Response To And The Impact Of The COVID-19 Pandemic On Housing Services .....</b>	<b>18</b>
<b>What can be expected over the next five years? .....</b>	<b>23</b>

## Introduction

Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) has a statutory duty to produce an updated Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy to take effect in 2023.

A review of the previous strategy for the period of 2017-2022 provides the evidence and forecasting on which the new strategy will be based. The primary objectives of this review are to;

- Understand the extent of homelessness and the primary reasons it occurs in our District.
- Assess how the Council performed against its previous strategy and identify any likely future trends.
- Identify the Council's and our partner's response to homelessness in the district to highlight any gaps and overlaps that may impact service efficiency.
- Improve the service in the prevention and relief of homelessness.

Since publishing the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017-22, there have been notable changes to the housing landscape across the country that have directly affected homelessness.

Rental prices in the district continue to be a significant barrier for our residents to access the private rented sector and according to the Office of National Statistics (ONS) Private Rental Market Statistics April 2021 – May 2022, TRDC are currently the highest of any local authority in the East of England (Equal with St Albans, Hertsmere, and Epping Forest).

Property purchase in the district continues to be difficult for many residents, with a particular barrier for first time buyers and those on low incomes.

Unsurprisingly, the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic had a significant impact on the resources of the Council's Housing Service and this impact and the response to the pandemic will be discussed in depth later in this review.

The Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 has transformed how local authorities respond to a homelessness application, with a significant focus on preventing and relieving a customer's homelessness. The impact of this legislation on the Council's Housing Options service will be discussed below.

Contained in the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017-2022 was an action plan that listed several actions that the Council would undertake over the period of the strategy, to deliver the objectives set out within the strategy. Each action contained in this plan has been reviewed below to assess how the Council has performed against the strategy and to assess if some actions are required to be carried forward to the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 Action Plan.

## **Objective One – Prevent And Relieve Homelessness**

### **1.1 Ensure we are fully prepared for the implementation of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.**

After receiving Royal Assent on 27 April 2017, the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 came into force on 3 April 2018. Resourcing and structure were fit for purpose for this date and continue to be. All staff were fully trained on new procedures and continue to receive ongoing training to ensure they are aware of any updates in legislation.

### **1.2 Ensure all Herts Authorities provide a consistent service to homeless customers.**

Processes to ensure the consistent treatment of customers across the County are agreed and in place across the ten district and borough councils of Hertfordshire and remain under review at all times. Partnership working between the authorities is highlighted by the Hertfordshire Heads of Housing meeting that is conducted bi-monthly.

### **1.3 Ensure partners are aware and prepared for the new responsibilities of the Duty to Refer.**

Awareness sessions regarding the Duty to Refer were delivered to all partners and consistent referral pathways have been finalised across Hertfordshire. Housing Options Officers monitor the Council's dedicated Duty to Refer inbox and offer feedback to partners regarding improvements in the referral process.

### **1.4 Ensure that the new computer system is easily accessible and full information is given to enable customers to apply for housing online.**

Minor software issues were encountered during the launch of the new software, however, these were quickly rectified. Home Connections continues to supply the Council's housing software and all homelessness applications and applications to the Council's Housing Register are received electronically. Any customers unable to complete an online application receive support to do so from staff members.

### **1.5 Ensure staff are aware of the trends which will predict our busier periods to enable them to prepare sufficiently.**

Trend monitoring that has been undertaken by the Council's Housing Development Officer has given the Service the ability to predict our busier periods. However, over the period of this strategy, there was significant intervention or changes in priority from the Government, most importantly the interventions related to the COVID-19 pandemic, that made the prediction of busier periods difficult. The emergence of the cost-of-living crisis post the COVID-19 pandemic means that trends are likely to significantly shift, therefore, this action will be carried forward to the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 Action Plan.



## **1.6 Make sure rough sleepers are aware of their options and ensure there are no rough sleepers in Three Rivers**

Housing Services continue to operate a Homelessness Forum quarterly with partners across the district and County. COVID-19 Working with our partners within this forum produced a protocol for dealing with rough sleepers within the district.

Procedures have been adopted within the Housing Service that ensure that any report of a customer who is sleeping rough is responded to by Housing Options Officers. Officers will visit an area where a rough sleeper, or any sign of a rough sleeper, has been reported in an effort to speak to the individual and provide them with housing advice and assistance.

Following a successful bid for funding from the Government's Rough Sleeping Initiative fund, the Council have appointed a Housing Navigator, who is dedicated to working with single customers with complex needs, who have a housing need. This includes customers who are at risk of or have been, rough sleeping. This support includes tenancy management or supporting the customer into training or employment opportunities.

## **1.7 Better understanding of rough sleeping in the district.**

A mapping exercise is underway to identify any hotspots in the district. The Housing Development Officer will be undertaking additional training on the use of Geographic Information System (GIS) mapping to allow a more detailed analysis of any trends that may appear. Analysis of potential hotspots will continue, therefore, this action will be carried forward to the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 Action Plan.

## **1.8 All tenants of Registered Providers (RP's) threatened with eviction are prevented from homelessness wherever possible.**

Over the last five-year period there has been a significant improvement in the communication that Housing Services has with RPs in our district regarding their tenants who are at risk of homelessness. This has increased the amount of early intervention work to prevent the homelessness of these customers. This can be highlighted with the utilisation of the Council's allocation of funding via the Rent Arrears Support Scheme.

The Council meets monthly with the largest RP in the district, Thrive Homes, to discuss ongoing issues with nominations, works on void properties and upcoming developments. Meetings are conducted with other RPs on an ad-hoc basis if any issues arise.

A protocol between the Council and RPs, for their tenants at risk of homelessness was not completed because of resources being redirected as part of the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Therefore, this action will be carried forward to the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-28 Action Plan.

## **1.9 Achieve Gold Standard from the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS).**

The NPSS was dissolved and so this form of accreditation was removed from use, therefore was not able to be achieved.

#### **1.10 Plans are in place to deal with customers at an early stage.**

Adopted procedures ensure the Housing Service encourage homelessness applications at the point that the customer feels threatened with homelessness, rather than sticking to the strict 56-day period as stated within the legislation.

The Service works in partnership with the Council's Revenues and Benefits Department, who signpost customers to the Housing Service when they have received an application from a customer for a Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP). This enables the Service to work with customers who may be at threat of homelessness before any crisis.

Post the COVID-19 pandemic, the Service launched a Rent Arrears Support Scheme in partnership with RPs to identify any customer threatened with homelessness as a result of rent arrears and prevent these individuals from homelessness.

#### **1.11 Housing Allocations Policy to incorporate recent government updates.**

The Council adopted a new Housing Allocations Policy in 2021 and updated this Policy in 2022, ensuring the Council's adherence to any legislative updates and updated guidance.

#### **1.12 Raise awareness of homelessness with young people.**

Housing Services continue to allocate £7,000 annually to Herts Young Homeless (HYH) for provision of their youth homelessness services in the district. HYH have delivered their 'Home Truths' sessions on youth homelessness to multiple schools across the district, raising youth awareness of the realities of homelessness and the support available to people if they find themselves in this circumstance.

#### **1.13 Herts Police know what to do if they come across someone homeless in the district.**

Training on housing and homelessness was delivered to Hertfordshire Police by the Head of Housing Services. Updates to the Police continue to be provided through the monthly Anti-Social Behaviour Action Group (ASBAG) meeting and the Homelessness Forum.

#### **1.14 Follow guidance issued by the Government in its Rough Sleeping Strategy**

To ensure that wider homelessness issues are considered as part of the overall health and wellbeing agenda, two representatives from the Hertfordshire district and borough Councils sit on the Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Board who are tasked with the representation of all of the local authorities in Hertfordshire.



## **Objective Two – Increase The Supply Of Accommodation, Including Temporary Accommodation**

### **2.1. To ensure that sufficient temporary accommodation is provided by the Council.**

Significant investment from the Council into its own supply of temporary accommodation has resulted in three developments being completed between 2019-2020, resulting in the availability of an additional 29 units.

The development in Rickmansworth Town Centre which provides 17 one-bedroom properties, was completed, and tenanted in September 2019. Two additional developments, both in South Oxhey and each comprising of six, two-bedroom flats, were completed and tenanted in December 2020.

### **2.2. Increase the supply in affordable housing in the district.**

Changes in UK Government policy and legislation caused a delay in the Council adopting a new Local Plan. As a result of this, Housing Services were unable to review the target for housing and the affordable housing provision within this plan. The Council expect to adopt a new Local Plan in 2025, therefore this review will take place following this and has been taken forward on the new Action Plan for the 2023-2028 Strategy.

### **2.3. Empty Homes to be brought back into use, increasing the supply of accommodation.**

Work was undertaken by Housing Services to identify and engage with the owners of empty homes in the district to encourage them to bring their properties back into use, however, this work was impacted due to a lack of resources as staff were redirected as part of the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Council continue to work with owners of empty homes to try to bring them back into use.

### **2.4. Encourage landlords to let their properties through the Council's Housing team.**

Following the appointment of a Private Housing Coordinator in early 2018, Housing Services have successfully increased the use of the private sector for homeless households in the district.

In 2017/18 the number of properties acquired for the Council's Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme was 1, with 3 properties on the scheme re-let to homeless households.

In 2021/22 alone, the number of properties acquired for the Council's Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme had increased to 13 properties and 5 properties on the scheme were re-let. In addition to this, Housing Services secured the let of 17 properties in the private rented sector for homeless households, outside of the Council's Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme. This demonstrates a remarkable increase.

However, it is acknowledged, that due to the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing cost-of-living crisis, there has been a significant decrease in obtaining properties in the private sector for the use of homeless households in 2022. Therefore, Housing Services will complete a review of our current Rent Deposit

Guarantee Scheme that will be included in our new 2023-2028 action plan.

**2.5. Support at least one customer with complex needs into suitable accommodation.**

Following the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) offered Local Authorities to complete funding applications to assist them in the housing of single adults with complex needs, who had been rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping.

In partnership with Watford Community Housing (WCH), Housing Services were successful in securing funding for the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP) and the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP).

This funding enabled WCH to purchase ten self-contained properties in the district, for which the Council maintains full nomination rights, for the dedicated housing of customers in these circumstances. Using grant money, these properties were furnished and wrap around support provided by New Hope Trust.

The first five of these properties (NSAP) were tenanted in August 2021 and the following five properties (RSAP) were tenanted in November 2022.

**2.6. The Council prioritises customers who have the greatest need to be in or close to the district when offering temporary accommodation (TA)**

Housing Services published a Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy in December 2018. A subsequent review and update of this policy took place in June 2021. All offers of temporary accommodation made under relevant housing legislation are made with relevance to the parameters set out in this Policy that can be found on the Council's website.

## **Objective Three – Improve The Standard Of Housing Across The District**

### **3.1. Improve awareness of conditions in the private sector housing.**

The commission of a private sector housing stock condition survey across the district was postponed as result of resources being redirected as part of the Council's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This will be carried forward and undertaken as part of the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 Action Plan.

### **3.2 To improve standards in the private rented sector.**

This action was dependent on the development of an action plan following action 3.1, therefore will be carried forward and undertaken as part of the Council's Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 Action Plan.

### **3.3 Work with landlords to ensure a ready supply of good quality private rented accommodation.**

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, Housing Services ran a bi-annual Three Rivers Landlords Forum in partnership with the National Residential Landlords Association (NRLA) (formally National Landlords Association). These forums were well attended and hosted speakers from a number of different organisations that would provide advice to landlords on multiple issues facing them, most importantly any updates or new legislation and obligations in relation to safety precautions in their properties. These forums were postponed throughout the pandemic, however, have recently restarted, with our first Three Rivers Landlords Forum post pandemic taking place in October 2022.

### **3.4 Ensure Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) fulfil legal requirements.**

At the time of this review, Housing Services licensed 15 HMOs located in the district. A public register of these properties is located on the Council's website. Officers in the Residential Environmental Health team are often required to provide advice for customers enquiring about the potential use of their property as a HMO and are tasked with investigating any report of unlicensed premises. Residents are encouraged to report any suspicion of a property operating as an unlicensed HMO in the district via the Council's website.

### **3.5 Ensure service is aware of and prepared for the change in regulations of HMOs.**

The Council website was updated by Officers to ensure that the requirements for the new HMO regulations were clear for all customers. All 15 properties licensed by the Council have been licensed in accordance with the latest legislation.

### **3.6 Clear guidance for discharging of homeless duties into the private rented sector.**

Housing Services published a Private Rented Sector Offer Policy in October 2018. A subsequent review and update of this policy took place in November 2021). Any offer of private rented accommodation, that will discharge any homelessness duty held to that customer as per relevant housing legislation, are made with relevance to the parameters set out in this Policy that can be found on the Council's website.

### **3.7 Enable people to remain in their homes and they are appropriate for their needs**

To provide a better service for customers and a 'one-stop shop' for the provision of Disabled Facility Grants (DFG), the Council contracted The Building Control (Hertfordshire) Company to undertake this service from April 2019.

Rather than a customer liaising with the Council's Residential Environmental Health team regarding their application for a DFG, they will instead liaise with Herts Building Control. However, the final decision on the award of a DFG will still be made by the Council. Herts Building Control, having assessed the application, will make their recommendation to the Council on the approval or not of a grant and the financial value. It will then be for the Council to either agree or disagree with their recommendation.

Predictably, grant approvals were at a low level throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, however, they have since then they have increased to levels higher than prior to the pandemic.

## Homelessness Reduction Act and The Extent And Nature Of Homelessness In Three Rivers 2017-2022

### Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

When implemented on 3 April 2018, the Homelessness Reduction Act made significant changes to how Housing Services approached the homelessness of our customers, placing significant importance on the prevention and the relief of homelessness.

The Act amended the statutory definition of homelessness from being homeless or threatened with homelessness within 28 to 56 days and created three stages (duties) to a homeless application;

- Prevention Duty (when an applicant is threatened with homelessness within 56 days)
- Relief Duty (when an applicant actually becomes homeless, this duty lasts for 56 days)
- Main Duty (a decision is required once the 56-day relief period has ended)

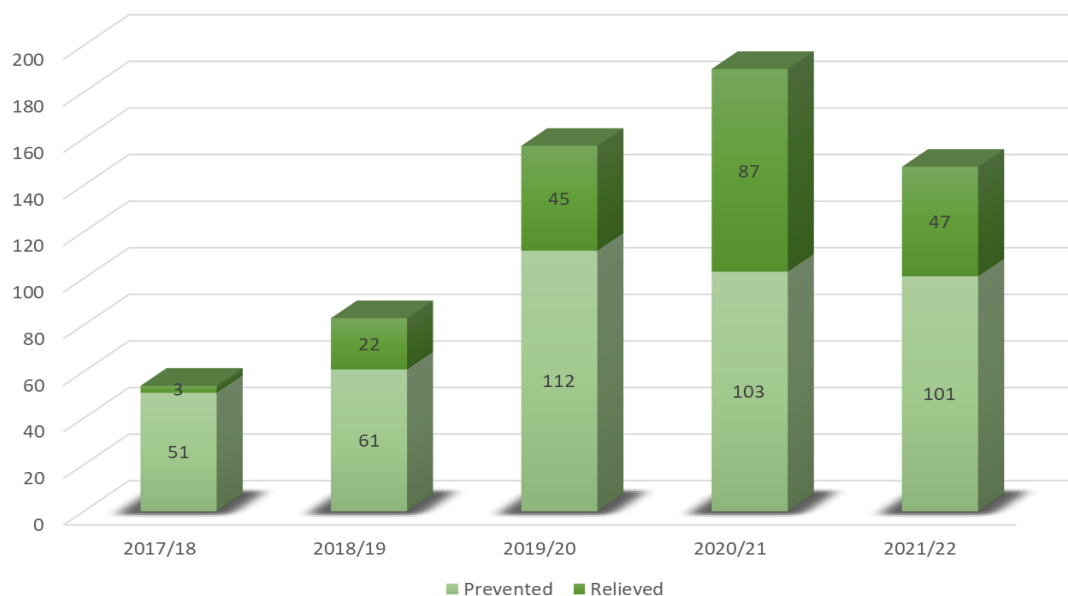
It was anticipated that the changes implemented by this Act, specifically the increase in the statutory definition from 28 days to 56 days, would see an increase in housing advice enquiries or homelessness applications.

As per the Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2017-2022 Action Plan, the Service was tasked with being prepared for the implementation of this Act and ensuring all members of the Housing Service were fully trained in this Act and any new processes adopted by the Service.

This training was delivered to all staff in Housing Services prior to April 2018 and new procedures in the process of a homelessness application were prepared by management.

The following graph demonstrates the success of Housing Services in the implantation of this Act, ultimately contributing to an enhanced service for our customers.

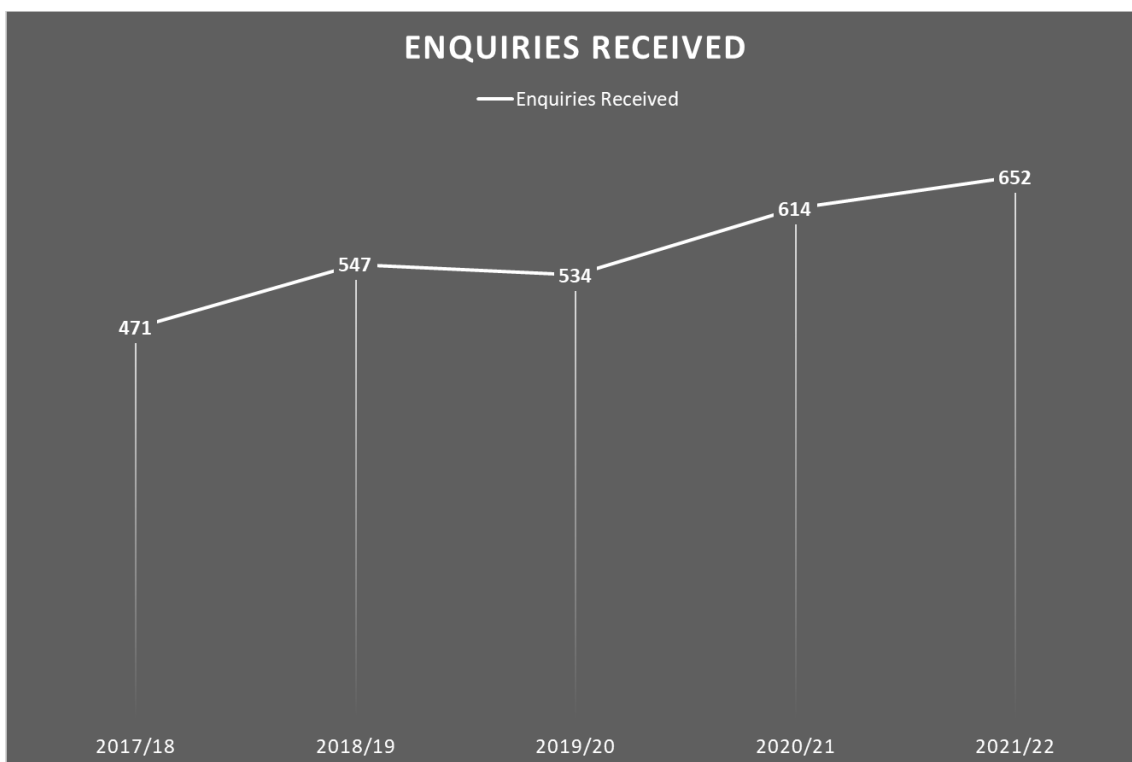
**Prevention & Relief of Homelessness**



The success by the service in the implementation of the Act should also be looked upon even more favourably, considering the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic throughout this period and how this significantly affected the way that Officers work and the relationships they were able to build with our partners and customers. The resilience of the service should be noted.

### Extent of Homelessness

The below graph sets out the total number of enquiries received from customers by the Service over this period of review.



It is important to note that not all enquiries received by the Service will result in a customer making a homelessness application to the Council.

Often customers will approach the Service for housing advice or assistance on their current circumstances. Enquiries by a customer to the Service that do not result in a homelessness application to the Council are logged as Housing Advice cases. These enquiries may result in a homelessness application at some point in the future, however, that is not always the case as a customer may resolve their own future housing need.

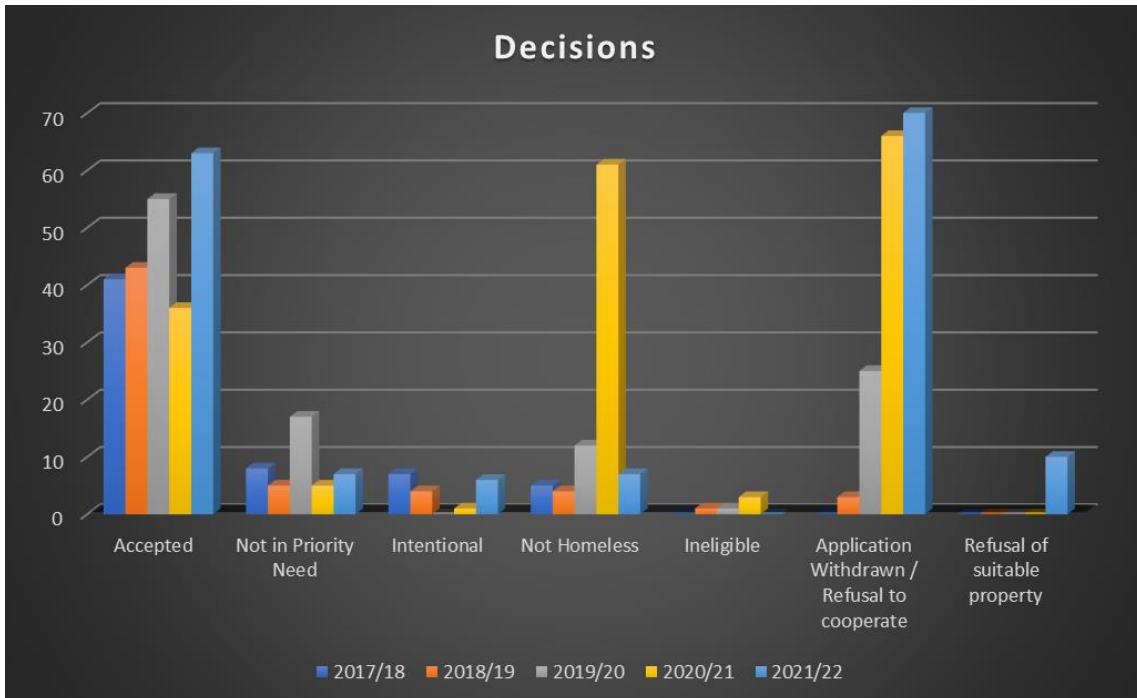
Enquiries received by the Service in 2017/18 reached a total of 471, with this number increasing steadily to a total of 652 in 2021/22, although a slight drop can be seen between 2018/19 to 2019/20. This drop in enquiries to the Service in this period can likely be attributed to the Government's introduction of legislation enforcing a ban on evictions, as part of their response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Despite this slight drop between 2018/19 to 2019/20, the above graph shows a significant increase in enquiries received by the Service from 2017 to 2022.

Should an enquiry to the Service result in a homelessness application to the Council, the

customer will be allocated a dedicated Housing Options Officer who is tasked with investigating the customer’s homelessness and providing a decision.

The below graph sets out these decisions made on homelessness applications by the Service over the period of the strategy:

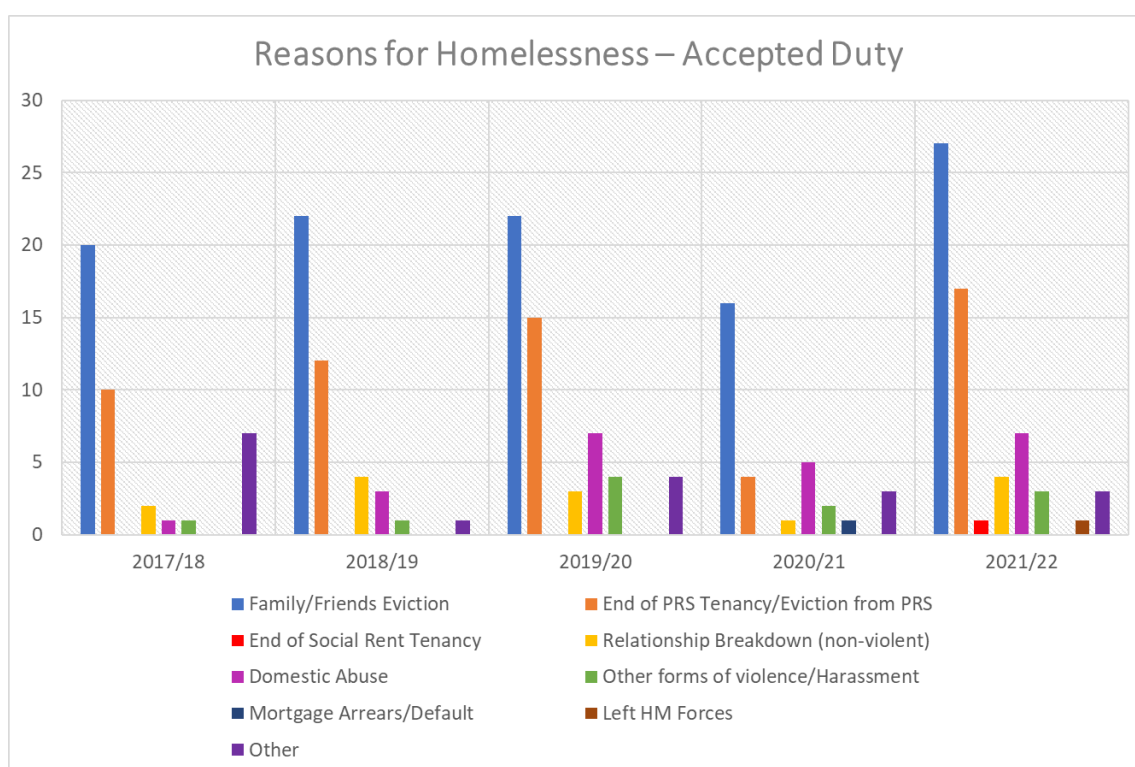


Similar to the increase in the total number of enquiries the Service has received over the period of this strategy, the above graph demonstrates a significant increase in decisions made by the Service from 2017/18 to 2021/22.

It is important to note the high number of Not Homeless decisions made by the Service in 2020/21 and the lower number of accepted homeless cases within this period.

This increase in Not Homeless decisions and the reduction in the acceptance of homeless cases made in this period can once again likely be attributed to the Government’s introduction of legislation enforcing a ban on evictions for a significant period, as part of their response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Reasons for Homelessness



In a change from the period 2013-2016, where it was the second most common reason for homelessness behind eviction from the private rented sector, parental eviction is the now most common reason for homelessness in the district, with 32% of all customers being homeless for this reason.

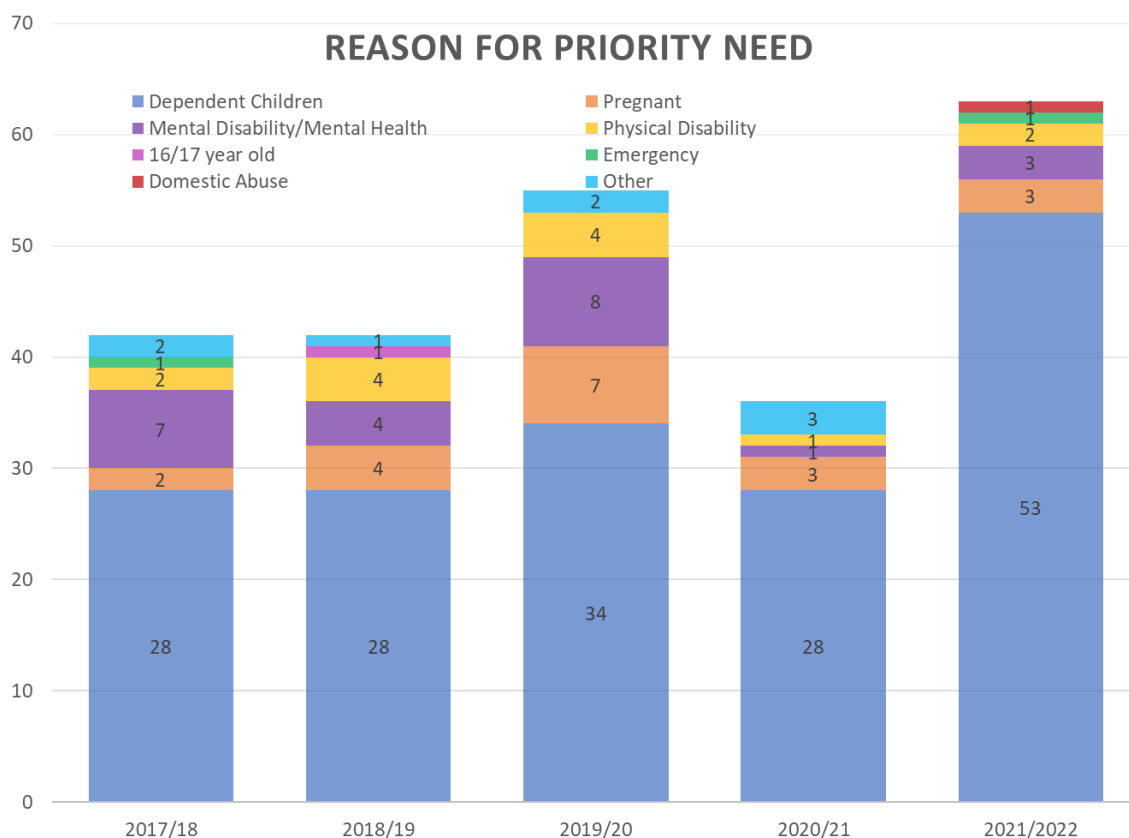
This figure is raised to 45% of all homelessness cases in the district between 2017 and 2022 if you include eviction from other family and friends.

It is likely that the reason for this could be attributed to the COVID-19 pandemic and the pressure that lockdowns caused, confining families to share small spaces and increasing tensions in multi-generational households, causing damage in the relationships of family members that could not be repaired. Ultimately resulting in the complete breakdown of a relationship, causing parents to issue their children notice to leave the property.

Homelessness that can be attributed to an eviction from a property in the private rented sector is now the second most common reason for homelessness in the district. A significant increase in this reason for eviction can be seen between a low level in 2019/20 to a much higher level in 2021/22, this represents yet another impact of the Government's introduction of legislation enforcing a ban on evictions, as part of their response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

However, this reason for homelessness continued to remain high moving into 2021/22, therefore, there is likely other reasons for this increase. The high rental costs in the district, that have increased post COVID-19, coupled with the low level of local housing allowance (LHA) available to customers in the district may explain this.





The reasons for priority need of those accommodated in temporary accommodation by the Council have remained consistent over this period. As expected and similar to previous years, the significant majority, 80%, of all customers accommodated were those with dependent children or pregnant at the time of application.

All other reasons for priority need of our customers has remained steady over this period, with no real pattern emerging. However, with the introduction of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021, that declares any victim of domestic abuse to have a priority need, we do expect an increase in the years to come.

#### The use of temporary accommodation

Month	Council Owned	Nightly Let Accommodation	B&B	Other	Total
Apr-17	18	52	2	19	91
Jul-17	38	31	1	2	72
Oct-17	38	26			64
Jan-18	39	12		1	52
Apr-18	38			12	50
Jul-18	33			12	45
Oct-18	37	1		11	49
Jan-19	36			11	47
Apr-19	40			12	52
Jul-19	41	3		13	57
Oct-19	56			5	61
Jan-20	51	4		6	61
Apr-20	40	13	4	7	64

<b>Jul-20</b>	37	12	2	2	53
<b>Oct-20</b>	32	3		3	38
<b>Jan-21</b>	49	2		3	54
<b>Apr-21</b>	47	5			52
<b>Jul-21</b>	52	4		2	58
<b>Oct-21</b>	44			4	48
<b>Jan-22</b>	47	2			49

Following a commitment from Members, the Council made a significant investment in its own supply of temporary accommodation, resulting in three developments being completed between 2017- 2022, adding the availability of an additional 29 units located in the district.

The development, located in Rickmansworth Town Centre providing 17 one-bedroom properties, was completed and tenanted in September 2019. Two additional developments, both in South Oxhey and each comprising of six, two-bedroom flats, were completed and tenanted in December 2020. These three new developments, along with the existing scheme in South Oxhey, are all managed by Watford Community Housing.

The Council no longer rely on the use of bed and breakfast or hotel accommodation and the use of expensive nightly let accommodation, or block booked accommodation located a significant distance from the district has been significantly reduced. In most situations, customers are provided with clean, safe and well-maintained temporary accommodation that is located in the district, close to family, schools, employment and support networks, however, in some cases the council are forced to use clean, safe and well-maintained temporary accommodation located out of the district.

With funding assistance from Hertfordshire County Council, New Hope Trust provide support to 20 of our most vulnerable households in temporary accommodation. The tenancy sustainment team at New Hope Trust support our customers in temporary accommodation that may require assistance, including help with claiming the correct amount of housing benefit, budgeting advice or referrals to support services.

## **The Housing Allocations Policy And The Allocation Of Permanent Accommodation Via The Council's Housing Register**

The Herts Choice Homes Scheme that had been operating in Three Rivers since December 2008, ended in 2018. This meant that residents in the district were no longer able to bid for properties that were located outside of the district, via the Council's Housing Register. In most circumstances, priority for these properties was awarded to applicants who held a local connection to the local authority area that the property was located in, therefore the end of this Consortium did not result in a significant loss in available properties for our residents.

Following the end of the Herts Choice Homes Consortium and following a procurement process, the Council changed the housing software that is used by officers and customers from Locata to Home Connections. This was done to coincide with the launch of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 in March 2018. Significant work was undertaken by officers to ensure the transition to the new software was done in a secure and efficient manner to minimise any effect on customers.

Housing Services were able to work in conjunction with Home Connections to produce a custom application form for both the Council's Housing Register and a homelessness application, to enable the Service to best capture the information that is required at the time of an application.

The Council's Housing Allocations Policy required updating following the end of the Herts Choice Homes Consortium and to reflect multiple legislative updates, including the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

Understandably, work on this project was delayed by Housing Services' response to the COVID-19 pandemic, however following consultation with residents and partnership organisations, the Council's Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee approved the Housing Allocations Policy 2020 on 16 March 2021.

It is important to note that a significant change that was made to the Policy was the introduction of composite needs. Composite needs recognise that a customer may have two separate housing needs of equal priority, which can result in having an overall greater housing need than a customer with just one housing need. Composite needs require one of the housing needs awarded to be a medical priority.

In the previous Policy, customers with a gross income of over £35,000 per annum were considered to have the financial means to resolve their own housing need, therefore they did not qualify to join the Council's Housing Register. To reflect the increasing costs of accessing the private rental sector in the district, especially larger family sized accommodation, a change was made to these figures to incorporate the bedroom need.

The following table now applies with regards to the gross household income per annum that a customer can have, before they will be considered to be able to resolve their own housing and not qualify to join the Council's Housing Register;

One Bedroom Need	£34,560.00
Two Bedroom Need	£45,396.00
Three/Four Bedroom Need	£61,200.00

The figures listed were achieved by taking a snapshot at the time of the current average rental price in the district, of each property size and multiplying that by 36. A significant portion of High Street Estate Agencies use this calculation as part of their financial referencing procedure to set the minimum annual household income figure.

The Housing Allocations Policy continues to prioritise applicants according to their assessed need, from those with an urgent need to move placed in a Band A, to those with a low medical need to move or lacking one bedroom in their current accommodation placed in a Band D. Those with no housing need and only eligible for sheltered or older person's accommodation are placed in a Band E.

To assist with customer clarity, officer efficiency and to ensure the Council complied with relevant and up to date legislation, a further update to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy was agreed by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee in November 2022.

#### **General Needs Lets through the Housing Register-**

	<b>Studio/1 bed</b>	<b>2 Bed</b>	<b>3 Bed</b>	<b>4 Bed</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>2018/19</b>	50	44	8	1	<b>103</b>
<b>2019/20</b>	77	80	30	2	<b>189</b>
<b>2020/21</b>	89	21	7	1	<b>118</b>
<b>2021/22</b>	83	42	12	-	<b>137</b>

The significant increase in properties let via the Councils Housing Register in 2019/20 can be explained by the number of large developments that included a provision of social housing, that were finished in the district throughout that period. This included Phase 3 of the South Oxhey Regeneration Scheme.

With the exception of 2019/20, the lack of lettings of larger, family sized (three or four bedroom) accommodation is noticeable.

## The Response To And The Impact Of The COVID-19 Pandemic On Housing Services

On 23 March 2020, the Prime Minister, announced the first lockdown of the United Kingdom, as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

This outbreak in the spring of 2020 prompted an unpredicted public health response from the UK Government, local authorities and the voluntary sector to protect the vulnerable rough sleeping population.

Although agile/flexible working practices were already in the process of being investigated and adopted by the Council, as a result of this lockdown, the Council Offices were closed and officers in Housing Services were forced to work from home on a full-time basis. Normal practices, including the meeting of customers for their initial Housing Options appointment and any sign up of Council-owned temporary accommodation, were forced to be conducted online, requiring a significant change in adopted procedures.

Officers in Housing Services displayed a high level of resilience throughout this period and maintained their commitment to provide our customers with a high level of customer service and understanding, in a period of extreme uncertainty for many.

### 'Everyone In' Directive -

On 26 March 2020, the UK Government asked local authorities in England to 'help make sure that we get everyone in', including those who would not normally be entitled to assistance under homelessness legislation or those who would not normally receive an offer of temporary accommodation provided by the Council, following a homelessness application.

Housing Services were tasked to ensure that people sleeping rough, or in accommodation where it was difficult to self-isolate, were safely accommodated to protect them, and the wider public, from the risks associated with COVID-19. Work was also undertaken by Housing Services, to ensure those that were accommodated throughout the 'Everyone In' directive, were helped into long term accommodation and as few people as possible ended up returning to rough sleeping.

The 'Everyone In' Directive was an enormous challenge for Housing Services and required a significant uplift in the usage by the Council of expensive nightly let accommodation, which is displayed in the table below;

Month	Council Owned	Nightly Let Accommodation	B&B	Other	Total
Jan-20	51	4		6	61
Feb-20	47	4		5	56
Mar-20	41	6	1	6	54
Apr-20	40	13	4	7	64
May-20	38	15	6	4	63
Jun-20	35	18	3	3	59
Jul-20	37	12	2	2	53
Aug-20	39	11	2	2	54
Sep-20	35	7	2	2	46
Oct-20	32	3		3	38
Nov-20	36	1		3	40

Dec-20	40	2	3	45
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On 31 January 2020, there were only four homeless households in temporary accommodation that were housed in nightly let accommodation. Following the 'Everyone In' Directive in late March 2020, the usage of this type of accommodation by the Council increased rapidly, peaking in June 2020, to 18 households.

Usage of nightly let accommodation can often be required by the Council, however, as per the Council's Temporary Accommodation Placement Policy, this accommodation is often sourced in the district, or in the surrounding districts. However, throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, the Council were required to look significantly further afield than previously. This resulted in some households being accommodated for a significant period of time in areas of the country such as Milton Keynes.

Along with the increase in usage of nightly let accommodation by the Council, also displayed in this table is the increase in the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation by the Council. The Council considers the use of Bed and Breakfast accommodation as a last resort, due to the unsuitability of this type of accommodation for a significant percentage of households, however, due to the sheer amount of accommodation that was required by all local authorities across England at this time, the usage of this type of accommodation was unavoidable.

Prior to the 'Everyone In' directive, the Council had not used Bed and Breakfast accommodation since August 2017. It is important to note, that no household with children were accommodated in Bed and Breakfast throughout the COVID-19 Pandemic.

Government statistics state that approximately 15,000 vulnerable people were housed in emergency accommodation by local authorities across England as a result of the 'Everyone In' directive.

### **UK Government 'Eviction Ban'**

The Coronavirus Act 2020, given Royal Assent on 25 March 2020, included temporary measures to protect tenants during the COVID-19 pandemic.

These measures included a stay on any possession proceedings between 27 March and 20 September 2020 and a stay on eviction proceedings between 17 November 2020 and 31 May 2021.

Covered by the stay on possession proceedings between 27 March and 27 September 2020 were a stay on applications for a possession order (including any variations), applications to enforce a possession order by warrant or writ and any appeal of a possession order. The stay on evictions between 17 November 2020 and 31 May 2021, announced on 5 November 2020, meant that it was not possible to execute a warrant or writ of possession or deliver a notice of eviction, except for the most severe cases of anti-social behaviour.

Legislation dictates that the minimum notice period a landlord is required to provide to their tenant when seeking possession of their property is two months. However, in addition to the stay of possession and eviction proceedings, the Coronavirus Act increased minimum notice periods to six months between 29 August 2020 and 31 May 2021. From 1 June 2021 to 30 September 2021, the minimum notice period a landlord was required to provide to their tenant was four months.

The impact of the UK Government's 'Eviction Ban' on Housing Services can be clearly

observed in the temporary accommodation tables displayed on page **19**. In October 2020, the number of households in temporary accommodation dropped to 38, the lowest number throughout this period of review.

By July 2021, the number of households that were accommodated in temporary accommodation was at 58, representing a 53% increase over the nine-month period.

### **Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP)–**

In July 2020, following on from the ‘Everyone In’ directive and the aim to support those temporarily housed into long term accommodation, ultimately ensuring as few people as possible ended up returning to rough sleeping, the next stage of the Government’s COVID-19 Rough Sleeping response was released.

Local authorities in England were invited to apply for the award of financial resources that were needed to undertake this work. In late 2020, Housing Services applied for this grant funding from the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP).

The Council were successful in being granted £513,015 of additional funding, however, as a non-stock holding authority we worked with a Registered Provider in order to receive these funds.

This money was therefore paid directly from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLHUC) to Watford Community Housing (WCH), as our named partner.

This funding was used to facilitate the purchase of five, fully furnished, one-bedroom properties, across the district. Although these properties were purchased by Watford Community Housing, as the local authority that was successful in the application for this funding, the Council maintain 100% nomination rights to these properties. These nomination rights are set out and secured by a Nominations Agreement that is signed by both parties.

These properties are exclusively for the use of single customers who are rough sleeping or who are at risk of rough sleeping, and who have complex support needs. Funding is provided by the grant to provide these customers with intensive support, currently provided by New Hope Trust. The properties are let at affordable rent levels, capped at the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for the district.

As part of this Scheme, customers are granted a two-year assured shorthold tenancy that requires their complete engagement with support from New Hope Trust and other partnership organisations. The goal for this scheme is that at the end of the two-year period, the customer with complex support needs can demonstrate to a social housing provider that they are able to maintain a tenancy and will be able to be nominated for a general needs property, via the Council’s Housing Register. Once a customer has moved on to general needs accommodation, the property will be let to another customer who has been rough sleeping or who is at risk of rough sleeping.

The first tenants of these five properties were accommodated in these properties in August 2021.

### **Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP) -**

Following the success of the Next Steps Accommodation Programme (NSAP), in October 2021 the UK Government invited Local Authorities to apply for further funding as part of the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme (RSAP).



Housing Services applied for grant funding from the Rough Sleeping Accommodation Programme (RSAP), in partnership with Watford Community Housing (WCH). Similarly to the NSAP Scheme, as a non-stock holding authority, we worked with a Registered Provider in order to receive any funding if successful.

Contained in this application for funding was a commitment from the Council, that it would commit £100,000 of Section 106 monies to this project, should the bid be successful. We were successful in being awarded £410,286 which was paid directly from DLUHC to WCH as our named partner. These funds, in addition to the contribution from the Council, were used to facilitate the purchase of a further five, one-bedroom, fully furnished properties across the district.

Although, once again, these properties were purchased by WCH, as the Council was successful in the application for this funding and with the Council's contribution of Section 106 monies, the Council maintain 100% nomination rights to these properties. These nomination rights are set out and secured by a Nominations Agreement that is signed by both parties.

Similar to the NSAP Scheme, these properties are exclusively for the use of single customers who are rough sleeping or who are at risk of rough sleeping, or who have complex support needs. Funding is provided by the grant to provide these customers with intensive support, currently provided by New Hope Trust. The properties are let at affordable rent levels, capped at the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) for the district.

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The first tenants of these five properties were accommodated in these properties in December 2022.

As a direct result of the successful funding applications submitted by Housing Services for both the Next Steps Accommodation Programme and the Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme, in addition to the Section 106 monies contributed by the Council, there are now ten properties available throughout the district that are available for use by customers that have been rough sleeping, or at risk of rough sleeping, who have complex needs that mean that placement into a general needs property, via the Council's Housing Register, is unlikely.

These properties were not only a resource that was invaluable to Housing Services and customers who were placed into temporary accommodation as a result of the 'Everyone In' directive immediately post the COVID-19 pandemic but will continue to be an invaluable resource for the future for this cohort of customers and a significant part of our commitment to support our most vulnerable customers into permanent and suitable accommodation.

#### **Rent Arrears Support Scheme-**

Following the announcement of the UK Government's support package for vulnerable renters in October 2021, the Council were awarded a grant of £59,137. This grant funding



enabled Housing Services to set up a Rent Arrears Financial Support Scheme, to support low-income renters with COVID-19 related rent arrears to avoid eviction or to find a new home where necessary in order to prevent homelessness.

Housing Services worked in partnership with Registered Providers, private landlords and residents, in order to identify those low-income renters, who were in danger of eviction due to rent arrears accrued as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic and target the funding provided to those who were most in need.

The information that was required from customers before any payment was approved by Housing Services was set out in the Council's COVID-19 Rent Arrears Financial Support Scheme 2021/22 Policy, approved by the Council's Policy and Resources Committee on 6 December 2021. As per this Policy, any funding that was provided was paid directly to the landlord of the tenant at risk of homelessness and following this, the tenant was referred to Citizens Advice for financial advice to ensure that they do not accumulate further rent arrears in the future.

Using the full allocation of this funding, Housing Services prevented the homelessness of 29 households across the district.

## **What can be expected over the next five years?**

### **Impact of the UK's Cost of Living Crisis**

The phrase 'cost of living crisis' refers to the fall in real disposable income currently affecting the population of the United Kingdom. It is generally agreed that the current cost of living crisis started in late 2021 and most economists predict that this sharp increase in the rate of inflation across the country will remain until at least the end of 2024.

The rate of inflation in the UK is at its highest point within the last three decades, currently sitting at 10.7% as of November 2022. This has predominantly been caused by the response to the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact that Russia's invasion of Ukraine has had on gas and electricity prices and to a lesser extent, supply chain issues that have been caused due to the UK's withdrawal from the European Union.

Due to the pressures that these increased costs will place on households within the district, we can safely assume that there will be a direct impact on the number of homelessness applications the Council will receive from people who are simply unable to afford to remain in their current accommodation beyond the end of 2024.

Due to this rise in inflation, on 15 December 2022, the Bank of England increased the base interest rate to 3.5%, in March 2022 this base interest rate was at a record low of 0.10%. Not only will this have a significant impact on the owners of property within the district, inevitably causing some to default on their current mortgage and approach the Council for advice or assistance with their homelessness, but the Council expect this to have a considerable impact on landlords in the district.

Following this exceptional interest rate increase and the expected further increase in interest rates, the Council expect landlords in the district to either continue to increase the rent to reflect these costs or look to sell their properties as they are no longer able to afford to continue to be a landlord. Both will cause an increase in the number of homelessness applications received by the Council, however, the latter will also directly affect the amount of private rental stock in the district that is available to the Council to assist with discharging our relevant housing duties towards our customers.

### **Impact of the COVID-19 Pandemic on the Mental Health of our customers**

Numerous studies commissioned by a variety of different organisations have clearly indicated that the COVID-19 pandemic has adversely affected the mental health of the population of the UK. It has been estimated that up to 10 million people in England will require new or additional mental health support as a result of the pandemic. The Council is mindful that this will include our customers and any potential applicants to the Council's Housing Service.

Results from a survey launched in April 2021 by the mental health charity Mind, which received almost 12,000 responses, indicate that around a third of adults and young people stated that their mental health has deteriorated since the first lockdown in March 2020.

Of the people who responded to this survey that are currently on benefits, 58% of these stated that their mental health was currently poor and 9 out of 10 young people stated that the loneliness they experienced as a result of the lockdown implemented by the UK Government has worsened their mental health.

It is also important to note that Mental Health services throughout the country are experiencing a significant backlog in the treatment of people requiring support for their

mental health, therefore, it is highly likely that the Housing Service will see an increase in the number of vulnerable individuals contacting the Council for housing advice or assistance.

The Housing Service must be ready to deal with an increasing amount of vulnerable customers who are experiencing mental health issues. This will be exacerbated by the current lack of treatment options and the potential for any self-medication as a result of this delay that may cause an impact in other areas of our customer's circumstances. This includes rough sleeping, substance addiction or criminal behaviour.

### **Homes for Ukraine**

As of 19 December 2022, there have been 149 guests confirmed to have arrived in the district as part of the UK Government's Homes for Ukraine Scheme.

Although the Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimate that 25% of all Homes for Ukraine sponsors intend to house their Ukrainian guests for a period of six months or fewer, this is a national survey and the Council is unable to determine what percentage of guests staying in Three Rivers will be affected.

It is anticipated that Hertfordshire as a whole will have an increase in homelessness applications from guests on this Scheme as some sponsors look to end their offer of accommodation at the six-month mark and beyond. This will inevitably lead to an increase in homelessness applications to the Council from guests that are currently housed in Three Rivers as part of this scheme, meaning an impact on the case load of officers and demand for temporary accommodation.

### **Asylum Dispersal**

In April 2022, the UK Government announced a new full asylum dispersal system to be overseen by the Home Office. It was stated that this has been created to form a new, fairer asylum dispersal system. The Home Office have since issued regional allocations for the UK as a whole. These have been based on an illustrative planning number of 100,000 asylum seekers in dispersed and core initial accommodation by December 2023. The regional allocation for Hertfordshire was 801 bed spaces, with 68 of those being allocated to Three Rivers.

Private contractors to the Home Office will be responsible for the procurement of these bed spaces from the private rented sector throughout our district. This may lead to a significant impact on the number of private rented sector properties in the district available to the Council. Some landlords in the district may prefer to let their property to the Home Office over the Council, due to the financial package that the Home Office are able to offer.

In addition to the impact on the Council's ability to procure private rental properties, it is also expected that there will be a future impact on the Council's Housing Options service. It is likely that when individuals/families are placed in the district, whilst their claim for asylum is being assessed, they will likely make ties to the district. If their asylum claim is approved, they will be eligible for housing assistance.

Following the approval of an individual/family asylum claim they will be evicted from the asylum dispersal accommodation and following this, it is highly likely a homelessness approach will be made to the Council.

This will result in a further impact on the demand for temporary accommodation provided by the Council and an impact to the caseload of officers.

### **Afghan Refugees**

Operation Pitting, a British military operation tasked with extracting Afghan nationals (and their families) who had assisted the British military forces throughout their occupation of Afghanistan, was announced on 13 August 2021 by Central Government in response to the fall of Kabul to the Taliban.

Since this operation, and in the following months, Afghan refugees who have arrived in the UK have been housed in 'bridging hotels' provided by the Home Office. Although none of these hotels have been located in Three Rivers, there were two located in Hertfordshire, one in Hertsmere and the other in Dacorum.

In April 2023, guests in these hotels were provided with notice from the Home Office that this accommodation would be coming to an end by August 2023. Guests were informed that they would need to source their own accommodation, or if they were unable, they would need to approach a local authority for homelessness advice and assistance.

Central Government have made additional funding available for any local authority that is required to process a homelessness application from a household from this cohort, however, it is likely that should the Council receive any approaches from this cohort there will be additional pressure on the Housing Service in terms of staff resources and temporary accommodation.

Afghan nationals sourcing their own accommodation or having assistance from neighbouring local authorities to do this, will also create additional impact on an already crowded private rented sector market.

### **Private Rented Sector**

Even prior to the predicted future impacts on the private rented sector in the district that have been set out in this review, the private rented sector in the district continues to be largely unaffordable for the many low income and benefit dependent households in the district.

Significant proportions of the district fall under the following postcodes WD3 (Maple Cross, Mill End, Rickmansworth, Croxley Green, Sarratt, Moor Park, Chorleywood, Chandlers Cross), WD19 (South Oxhey, Oxhey, Carpenders Park), WD4 (Kings Langley, Hunton Bridge) and WD5 (Abbotts Langley, Bedmond).

The below table uses figures from home.co.uk which sets out the average monthly rental prices in these post codes at the time of this review, in comparison with the current Local Housing Allowance (LHA) and demonstrates the disparity between the two;

Area	1 Bed	2 Bed	3 Bed	4 Bed
WD3	£1,113.00	£1,692.00	£2,800.00	£2,744.00
WD19	£1,250.00	£1,916.00	£2,150.00	£2,732.00
WD4	£1,244.00	£1,653.00	£2,000.00	£3,100.00
WD5	Nil Available	£1,198.00	£2,150.00	Nil Available
Local Housing Allowance (LHA)	£797.81	£997.27	£1,296.45	£1,695.33

Although the average monthly price for a rental property can be slightly misleading in our district, as some properties will be closer to the level of the Local Housing Allowance and others will be extremely high in the affluent areas of the district, nonetheless the above shows the significant and worrying difference between the Local Housing Allowance and the monthly price of rental properties in the district.

The Housing Service expect this difference to continue to increase as a consequence of the current and ongoing cost of living crisis in the UK.

To highlight this increased disparity, in 2018 the average monthly price of a two-bedroom rental property in the WD3 area was £1271.00 and the Local Housing Allowance at this time was £879.10, representing a difference of £391.90 per month. At the time of this review, the average price of a two-bedroom property in WD3 is £1949 and the current Local Housing Allowance for a property of this size is £997.27, representing a staggering difference of £951.73 per month.

### **Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme**

The Council continue to operate a Private Rented Sector Scheme that is overseen by the Council’s Private Housing Coordinator, a position that was appointed in March 2018, following a period of vacancy.

The Housing Service have had reasonable success in the procurement of private rental properties to join the Scheme over the past five years, especially in the last two years, as demonstrated below;

	<b>2017/18</b>	<b>2018/19</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/21</b>	<b>2021/22</b>
Properties acquired to the RDGS	1	4	4	15	13
Properties re-let on the RDGS	3	7	4	4	5

However, with the changing nature of the private rented sector in the district and the decreasing availability of properties that are suitable for this scheme (equal to, or close to the Local Housing Allowance) it is accepted that the Housing Service will need to review and redesign our Scheme in order to make a competitive offer to landlords in the district.

### **Domestic Abuse Act 2021**

The Domestic Abuse Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 29 April 2021.

The Act ensures that any person that is made homeless due to being a victim of domestic abuse will have an automatic priority need for homelessness assistance. This means that they will be offered temporary accommodation by the Council whilst their homelessness is investigated.

There has been a slight increase in the amount of customers approaching our service over the last five years as a result of being made homeless due to being a victim of domestic abuse (2017/18 – 1 to 2021/22 – 7), however, due to the continued increase in domestic abuse related crimes that are being recorded by the Police and the now automatic priority need granted to any victim of domestic abuse, the Housing Service predicts an ongoing rise in these applications over the next five years.

The Council's Housing Allocations Policy has been updated to reflect this change in legislation and to ensure that the Council will ensure that any customer who is suffering from domestic abuse and engaging with the Council's Housing Options service;

- Are given appropriate priority on the Council's Housing Register
- Are not disadvantaged by any local connection qualifying criteria if they have fled to a refuge in another local authority area, and
- Are not disadvantaged by any local connection qualifying criteria if they have fled from another local authority area

## **Renters Reform Bill**

In June 2022 Central Government published their Fairer Private Rented Sector White Paper that set out the details of its plan for the Renters (Reform) Bill.

Following the publishing of this White Paper, The Renters (Reform) Bill has since been brought forward and has had its first reading in Parliament on 17 May 2023. Central Government have made a commitment to have this bill passed into law before the next general election.

Although some changes to the Bill can be expected as it passes through the Houses of Parliament, at the time of this review the Bill represents a significant change to the sector that aims to transform private renting in England. In its current form, the Bill plans to abolish assured shorthold tenancies (AST) and Section 21 'No Fault' evictions, to provide tenants with more security of tenure and empowering them to challenge unfair rent increases or poor standards in their property, without the fear of eviction.

The Bill will introduce reformed grounds for possession for landlords, so they are able to evict tenants where necessary and aims to make it easier for landlords to repossess their properties where tenants are at fault, including in circumstances of significant antisocial behaviour or repeat rent arrears.

The extent of change that is proposed as part of this Bill will require significant action from the Housing Service. The Council's Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme will require reform and it is anticipated that the introduction of this Bill as legislation will reduce the amount of private rented sector properties in the district available to the Council. A reduction is expected as the reaction from private landlords to the Bill has been largely negative and has contributed, in addition to the current economic climate, to several landlords planning to exit the sector.

## **Resources**

In the short term, the financial resources will be adequate to meet the demand that is predicted, predominantly due to DLUHC recently confirming the UK Government's continuation of the homelessness prevention fund until at least April 2025.

Due to the Council's significant investment in the construction of additional Council owned temporary accommodation stock over the past five years, the Housing Service predict that our temporary accommodation resource will be sufficient to meet the predicted demand.

Further funds will be available should the use of nightly let accommodation be required at any point over the next five years.



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**THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL**  
**HOUSING, HOMELESSNESS AND ROUGH SLEEPING STRATEGY 2023-28**  
**ACTION PLAN**

REF	AIMS	ACTIONS	OUTCOMES	LEADS	TARGET
1.0	<b>OBJECTIVE 1: PREVENT AND RELIEVE HOMELESSNESS</b>				
1.1	Ensure flexible use of the Council's Homelessness Prevention Fund.	Housing Services will continue to review how the grant funding is used to ensure it is targeted in the most appropriate manner.	Grant funding is used efficiently and effectively to prevent and relieve homelessness in the district.	Housing Operations Manager / Strategic Housing Manager	Ongoing
1.2	Implement a cost-of-living homelessness prevention project.	Housing Services to design and fund a Cost-of-Living homelessness prevention project in partnership with Registered Providers.	An increase in homelessness prevention in the district.	Housing Operations Manager / Strategic Housing Manager	2024
1.3	All tenants of Registered Providers (RP's) threatened with eviction are prevented from homelessness wherever possible.	Devise an early identification and intervention protocol with all Registered Providers to highlight factors such as rent arrears, antisocial behaviour, and tenancy sustainment.	Agreed protocol with all RPs so that tenants threatened with eviction for any reason will receive advice and options	Registered Providers and Housing Operations Manager	2024
1.4	Ensure staff are aware of the new trends which will predict our busier periods to enable them to prepare sufficiently	Monitor and analyse the statistics related to the Housing Service	To predict new demands to the Service, specifically related to the ongoing cost of living crisis	Strategic Housing Manager / Housing Development Officer	Ongoing

1.5	Better understanding of rough sleeping in the district.	To develop improved ways of recording and assessing rough sleeping in the district with the use of GIS mapping software. Sightings are to be recorded on a map to identify any hotspot area.	Hotspots and trends identified in the district	Housing Operations Manager and Housing Development Officer	Ongoing
1.6	Promotion of homelessness prevention services	Publicise and promote the Council's homelessness prevention services and encourage customers to contact us early or when at risk of rough sleeping, before any crisis.	Increased early intervention and an increase in homelessness prevention	Housing Operations Manager/ Strategic Housing Manager	2024
1.7	All customers to be referred to any support services they require	Update all procedures to ensure that officers refer all customers engaging with the service to any support service they may require (Change Grow Live, MIND, Citizens Advice etc.) in a prompt manner	Increased support for customers	Strategic Housing Manager	2024
1.8	Correct and up-to-date information is always available to customers	Consistently review information on the Council's website in relation to Homelessness is clear, concise and up to date with relevant legislation	Customers are fully informed of advice and assistance the Council can offer. Increased early intervention.	Housing Operations Manager / Senior Housing Options Officer / Communications	Ongoing

1.9	New Hope to provide the Council's Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP) provision.	Explore the possibility of New Hope Trust providing the Council's SWEP Provision.	SWEP beds provided by New Hope Trust in the Haven Centre	Housing Operations Manager	2024
1.10	Housing Allocations Policy to remain up to date with legislative updates	Review of the Council's Housing Allocations Policy to take place in 2026	Housing Allocations Policy to incorporate legislative updates and ensure it contributes to the prevention and relief of homelessness in the district	Strategic Housing Manager	2026
1.11	Revamp of the current Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme (RDGS)	Look at different products/services we can offer as part of our Scheme and ensure the Scheme complies with any guidelines set out in the Renters (Reform) Bill.	Increase the Council's access to PRS Properties	Strategic Housing Manager/ Private Housing Coordinator	2024
1.13	Increase the level of mediation work and home visits to households	Housing Options Officers to visit every household that is a family/friends eviction at an early stage to identify any prevention opportunities.	Minimise the level of family/friends evictions.	Housing Operations Manager	2024
1.14	Work in partnership with Planning Policy and Regulatory Services to ensure the ongoing delivery of affordable housing in the District.	The Housing Development Officer will work in partnership with Planning Officers to ensure any appropriate development offers the Council the required mix of affordable housing requested before	Successful enforcement of Policy CP4 of the Adopted Core Policy.	Housing Development Officer	Ongoing

		any planning application is granted.			
1.15	Review the target for housing and the affordable housing provision within this plan, following the adoption of the new Local Plan.	Ensure that the affordable housing mix requested at any appropriate development is in line with the council's current housing requirements.	The right size and type of affordable housing are built in the district.	Housing Development Officer / Strategic Housing Manager	2025 (or following the Council's adoption of the new Local Plan)
<b>2.0</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE 2: SUPPORT OUR MOST VULNERABLE CUSTOMERS INTO PERMANENT AND SUITABLE ACCOMMODATION</b>				
2.1	Efficient use of the Council's five Next Steps Accommodation Program (NSAP) properties	Continue to nominate vulnerable customers, who will require a level of wrap-around support, to these properties when vacancies arise	NSAP Properties will only be used for vulnerable customers	Strategic Housing Manager / Housing Operations Manager	Ongoing
2.2	Efficient use of the Council's five Rough Sleeper Accommodation Program (RSAP) properties	Continue to nominate vulnerable customers who have been rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping and who will require a level of wrap-around support, to these properties when vacancies arise	RSAP Properties will always only be used for vulnerable customers, who have been rough sleeping or are at risk of rough sleeping	Strategic Housing Manager / Housing Operations Manager	Ongoing
2.3	Vulnerable customers housed in the Council's temporary accommodation to be provided support.	We will work collaboratively with Hertfordshire County Council to enable vulnerable customers in temporary accommodation to be provided with intensive	Vulnerable customers to be supported in temporary accommodation	Strategic Housing Manager / Housing Operations Manager	Ongoing

		support by New Hope Trust (or similar agency)			
2.4	A single homeless pathway for adults with complex needs who are homeless or at risk of homelessness is to be established in Three Rivers.	Work in partnership with the Strategic Partnerships Team at Hertfordshire County Council to establish this pathway in the district	Single adults with complex needs will have a dedicated pathway to support them into long-term settled accommodation	Housing Operations Manager	2023/24
2.5	Maximise funding opportunities	Building upon recent success (NSAP, RSAP, RSI), use established relationships with partners to identify funding streams and opportunities to bid for any funding dedicated to new initiatives for this cohort of customers.	Any potential funding granted, following a successful bid, is used to fund more long-term accommodation opportunities for vulnerable customers.	Strategic Housing Manager	Ongoing
2.6	RSI-6 funding granted by DHLUC to continue to provide a Housing Navigator post	The Housing Navigator provides intensive support to our vulnerable customers. Funding for the Council's Housing Navigator ends in 2025, therefore a bid for further funding will be completed at this time	If funding is granted, the Housing Navigator post will be funded until 2028	Housing Operations Manager / Strategic Housing Manager	2025
2.7	Support victims of Domestic Abuse	Fulfil our duties in relation to the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and any subsequent legislative updates. Ensure all	Increased support and options for survivors of Domestic Abuse	Housing Operations Manager	Ongoing

		policies and procedures reflect this.			
2.8	Further allocation of AFEO (Accommodation for Ex-Offenders) funding awarded	Funding application to be submitted to DHLUC for further funding to assist in providing long term accommodation to ex-offenders on their release from imprisonment.	More opportunities for long term accommodation options for customers in these circumstances	Housing Operations Manager	Ongoing
2.9	Oversee the integration of a Domestic Abuse Caseworker within the Housing Service.	To support victims of Domestic Abuse and ensure they are aware of all available support available to them.	Victims of Domestic Abuse are fully supported, and the Council is aware of the risks to them.	Housing Operations Manager	2023/24
2.10	Ensure the Council is fulfilling our statutory responsibilities to members and ex-members of the Armed Forces, and their family members.	The Housing Solutions Manager will undertake ongoing professional development in the form of regular training on the Council's responsibilities as signatories of the Armed Forces Covenant.	The Council is aware of any updates to our responsibilities to this cohort at an early stage and can fulfil as required.	Housing Operations Manager/Housing Solutions Manager	2024
2.11	Ensure the Council is undertaking best practice with regard to our responsibilities as signatories of the Armed Forces Covenant.	The Strategic Housing Manager to undertake a review of the Service's policies and procedures.	This cohort is achieving the best possible outcomes available following engagement with the Council.	Strategic Housing Manager	2024
<b>3.0</b>	<b>OBJECTIVE 3: IMPROVE THE STANDARD OF HOUSING ACROSS THE DISTRICT</b>				
3.1	Improve awareness of conditions in the private housing sector	Commission a private sector housing stock condition survey	Better understanding of conditions in the private sector	Strategic Housing Manager	2026
3.2	Improve standards in the private rented sector	Develop and implement an action plan following	Improve conditions and landlord	Strategic Housing Manager	2026/27

		the private sector housing stock survey	knowledge in the private rented sector		
3.3	Enable people to remain in their homes and ensure they are appropriate for their needs	Make the best use of funding from the Better Care Fund regarding Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG)	People living in homes appropriate for their needs.	Strategic Housing Manager / Hertfordshire Building Control	Ongoing
3.4	Clear guidance for discharging our homeless duties into the private rented sector	Review the Private Rented Sector Offer Policy	Properties used to prevent or relieve homelessness are to an acceptable and agreed standard	Strategic Housing Manager	2024
3.5	Establish a Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) monitoring programme	Identify unlicensed HMOs in the district and monitor HMOs that are currently licensed by the Council for adherence to legislative updates.	HMOs in the district to be safe and suitable for customers to occupy	Strategic Housing Manager	2024
3.6	Establish a protocol for dealing with complaints of housing disrepair, specifically those relating to damp and mould	Agree on a protocol to deal with complaints of housing disrepair from tenants in social housing in the district.	Housing Disrepair issues rectified swiftly without the use of formal enforcement powers on partners.	Strategic Housing Manager	2026
3.7	Housing Enforcement Policy	Draft a new Housing Enforcement Policy to provide clear guidelines to Housing Enforcement Officers and customers about our process for dealing with complaints about housing disrepair/ statutory nuisance	Policy adopted by the Council.	Strategic Housing Manager/Housing Development Officer	2024

3.8	Ensure we are fully prepared for when the Renters (Reform) Bill becomes an Act of Parliament	<p>Prepare the Service for significant changes to the sector, ensuring the structuring and resourcing is fit for purpose.</p> <p>Ensure all staff are fully trained in new legislation.</p>	The Service is prepared for the Act.	Strategic Housing Manager	2024
3.9	Encourage our Registered Providers and developers to build net zero homes, promote sustainable living and make space for nature within any development in the district.	Initiate conversations with RP's and developers at the early stage of a proposal.	An increase in net zero homes built within the district over the period of the strategy.	Housing Development Officer	Ongoing
3.10	Ensure that PRS landlords within the district are aware and fully informed of the funding opportunities available to them to make significant improvements to the standard of their properties.	<p>The Climate Change and Sustainability Officer to make presentations to landlords at the Council's ongoing Landlord's Forums.</p> <p>Actively promote these opportunities to any landlord engaging with the Council.</p>	An increase in landlords engaging with the Council using these funding opportunities to improve the standards of their property.	Private Housing Coordinator	Ongoing



## Short Equality Impact and Outcome Assessment (EIA)

EIAs make services better for everyone and support value for money by getting services right first time.

EIAs enable us to consider all the information about a service, policy or strategy from an equalities perspective and then action plan to get the best outcomes for staff and service-users<sup>1</sup>. They analyse how all our work as a council might impact differently on different groups<sup>2</sup>

They help us make good decisions and evidence how we have reached these decisions.<sup>3</sup>

See end notes for full guidance. For further support or advice please contact the Community Partnerships Team

### Equality Impact and Outcomes Assessment (EIA) Template

First, consider whether you need to complete an EIA, or if there is another way to evidence assessment of impacts, or that an EIA is not needed<sup>4</sup>

<b>Title</b> <sup>5</sup>	Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028  Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 Action Plan	<b>ID No</b> <sup>6</sup>	HS002
<b>Team/Service</b> <sup>7</sup>	Housing Services		
<b>Focus of EIA</b> <sup>8</sup>	<p>The Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2023-2028 links to the Council’s Corporate Framework 2023-2026, which sets out the Council’s vision to make Three Rivers ‘a great place to live, work and visit’.</p> <p>The strategy sets out a vision to make Three Rivers a district where our residents feel supported, by ensuring that the district is a place where people have access to good quality housing, where the most vulnerable residents, including those who are victims of domestic abuse, are supported and where rough sleeping, or the risk of rough sleeping, is eliminated.</p> <p>Following a four-week public consultation, the final draft of the strategy outlines three key objectives for the Council over the period of five years –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- To prevent and relieve homelessness.</li> </ul>		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support our most vulnerable customers into permanent, suitable, and sustainable accommodation.</li> <li>- To improve the standard of housing across the district.</li> </ul> <p>To ensure the delivery of these objectives, an action plan has been developed to run alongside the strategy. As housing is a dynamic environment, this action plan will be a live document that will enable Officers to react quickly to any changing priorities or significant legislative reform.</p>
<p><b>Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations</b> <sup>9</sup></p>	
<p>The objectives proposed within the policy and the action plan should positively impact on those with protected characteristics.</p>	
<p><b>Potential Issues</b></p>	<p><b>Mitigating Actions</b></p>
<p>No negative impact to people with protected characteristics arising from the objectives stated in the Policy and the action plan that enables the delivery of these objectives.</p>	<p>Multiple actions within the action plan will have a positive impact on those with protected characteristics.</p> <p>These include increased support for those with mental health disabilities and enabling those with disabilities to remain on their current homes and ensure that these homes remain suitable for their needs.</p>
<p><b>Actions Planned</b> <sup>10</sup></p>	
<p>Further EQIAs will be completed as necessary relating to specific work delivered as a result of this policy and the actions contained within the action plan.</p>	

EIA sign-off: (for the EIA to be final an email must sent from the relevant people agreeing it or this section must be signed)

**Equality Impact Assessment officer:** Jason Hagland - Strategic Housing Manager      **Date:** 04/01/2024

**Equalities Lead Officer:** Shivani Davé, Partnerships Manager      **Date:** 04/01/2024

## Guidance end-notes

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<sup>1</sup> The following principles, drawn from case law, explain what we must do to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act:

- Knowledge: everyone working for the council must be aware of our equality duties and apply them appropriately in their work.
- Timeliness: the duty applies at the time of considering policy options and/or before a final decision is taken – not afterwards.
- Real Consideration: the duty must be an integral and rigorous part of your decision-making and influence the process. • Sufficient Information: you must assess what information you have and what is needed to give proper consideration.
- No delegation: the council is responsible for ensuring that any contracted services which provide services on our behalf can comply with the duty, are required in contracts to comply with it, and do comply in practice. It is a duty that cannot be delegated.
- Review: the equality duty is a continuing duty. It applies when a policy is developed/agreed, and when it is implemented/reviewed.
- Proper Record Keeping: to show that we have fulfilled our duties we must keep records of the process and the impacts identified.

NB: Filling out this EIA in itself does not meet the requirements of the equality duty. All the requirements above must be fulfilled or the EIA (and any decision based on it) may be open to challenge. Properly used, an EIA can be a tool to help us comply with our equality duty and as a record that to demonstrate that we have done so.

<sup>2</sup> **Our duties in the Equality Act 2010**

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As a council, we have a legal duty (under the Equality Act 2010) to show that we have identified and considered the impact and potential impact of our activities on all people with 'protected characteristics' (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership).

This applies to policies, services (including commissioned services), and our employees. The level of detail of this consideration will depend on what you are assessing, who it might affect, those groups' vulnerability, and how serious any potential impacts might be. We use this EIA template to complete this process and evidence our consideration

The following are the duties in the Act. You must give 'due regard' (pay conscious attention) to the need to:

- avoid, reduce or minimise negative impact (if you identify unlawful discrimination, including victimisation and harassment, you must stop the action and take advice immediately).
- promote equality of opportunity. This means the need to: – Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by equality groups – Take steps to meet the needs of equality groups – Encourage equality groups to participate in public life or any other activity where participation is disproportionately low – Consider if there is a need to treat disabled people differently, including more favourable treatment where necessary
- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This means: – Tackle prejudice – Promote understanding

### **<sup>3</sup> EIAs are always proportionate to:**

- The size of the service or scope of the policy/strategy
- The resources involved
- The numbers of people affected
- The size of the likely impact
- The vulnerability of the people affected

The greater the potential adverse impact of the proposed policy on a protected group (e.g. disabled people), the more vulnerable the group in the context being considered, the more thorough and demanding the process required by the Act will be.

### **<sup>4</sup> When to complete an EIA:**

- When planning or developing a new service, policy or strategy

- 
- When reviewing an existing service, policy or strategy
  - When ending or substantially changing a service, policy or strategy
  - When there is an important change in the service, policy or strategy, or in the city (eg: a change in population), or at a national level (eg: a change of legislation)

Assessment of equality impact can be evidenced as part of the process of reviewing or needs assessment or strategy development or consultation or planning. It does not have to be on this template, but must be documented. Wherever possible, build the EIA into your usual planning/review processes.

**Do you need to complete an EIA?** Consider:

- Is the policy, decision or service likely to be relevant to any people because of their protected characteristics?
- How many people is it likely to affect?
- How significant are its impacts?
- Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities?

How vulnerable are the people (potentially) affected? If there are potential impacts on people but you decide not to complete an EIA it is usually sensible to document why.

<sup>5</sup> **Title of EIA:** This should clearly explain what service / policy / strategy / change you are assessing

<sup>6</sup> **ID no:** The unique reference for this EIA. This will be added by Community Partnerships

<sup>7</sup> **Team/Service:** Main team responsible for the policy, practice, service or function being assessed

<sup>8</sup> **Focus of EIA:** A member of the public should have a good understanding of the policy or service and any proposals after reading this section. Please use plain English and write any acronyms in full first time - eg: 'Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)'

This section should explain what you are assessing:

- What are the main aims or purpose of the policy, practice, service or function?
- Who implements, carries out or delivers the policy, practice, service or function? Please state where this is more than one person/team/body and where other organisations deliver under procurement or partnership arrangements.

- 
- How does it fit with other services?
  - Who is affected by the policy, practice, service or function, or by how it is delivered? Who are the external and internal serviceusers, groups, or communities?
  - What outcomes do you want to achieve, why and for whom? Eg: what do you want to provide, what changes or improvements, and what should the benefits be? • What do existing or previous inspections of the policy, practice, service or function tell you?
  - What is the reason for the proposal or change (financial, service, legal etc)? The Act requires us to make these clear.

**<sup>9</sup> Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations**

- Make a frank and realistic assessment of the overall extent to which the negative impacts can be reduced or avoided by the mitigating measures. Explain what positive impacts will result from the actions and how you can make the most of these.
- Countervailing considerations: These may include the reasons behind the formulation of the policy, the benefits it is expected to deliver, budget reductions, the need to avert a graver crisis by introducing a policy now and not later, and so on. The weight of these factors in favour of implementing the policy must then be measured against the weight of any evidence as to the potential negative equality impacts of the policy,
- Are there any further recommendations? Is further engagement needed? Is more research or monitoring needed? Does there need to be a change in the proposal itself?

**<sup>10</sup> Action Planning:** The Equality Duty is an ongoing duty: policies must be kept under review, continuing to give 'due regard' to the duty. If an assessment of a broad proposal leads to more specific proposals, then further equality assessment and consultation are needed.

## POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

29 January 2024

### PART I

#### PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION ON STANDARDS PROCEDURE

##### 1. Summary

The Council's current Member complaints procedure is briefly set out in Part 2, Article 9 of the constitution. It is not a detailed procedure and moreover parts of it are not in accordance with LGA good practice and therefore it is at risk of successful challenge. It is recommended that the Council adopts a LGA compliant full standards procedure.

##### 1 Details

1.1 The Council's current arrangements for handling Member standards complaints are very brief (they are summarised in Article 9) and do not accord with LGA good practice specifically stage 2 of the current process which provides for informal resolution of a complaint by Group Leaders. This is not in accordance with LGA good practice or good practice in other authorities. Below is the link to the relevant LGA guidance:

<https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/guidance-member-model-code-conduct-complaints-handling>

1.2 In summary, the LGA guidance recommends:

1.3 i) an initial jurisdiction test by the Monitoring Officer ('MO') to assess whether the complaint is: against one or more named councillors of the authority or of a parish council the authority is responsible for; the named councillor was in office at the time of the alleged conduct; the complaint relates to matters where the councillor was acting as a councillor or representative of the authority and it is not a private matter; the complaint, if proven, would be a breach of the Code under which the councillor was operating at the time of the alleged misconduct.

1.4 ii) an initial assessment of the complaint by the MO involving the Independent Person which takes into account non-exclusive factors such as: does the complaint contain sufficient evidence to demonstrate a potential breach of the Code? Are there alternative, more appropriate, remedies that should be explored first? Where the complaint is by one councillor against another, a greater allowance for robust political debate (but not personal abuse) may be given, bearing in mind the right to freedom of expression; Is the complaint in the view of the authority malicious, politically motivated, or 'tit for tat'. Whether an investigation would not be in the public interest or the matter, even if proven, would not be serious enough to warrant any sanction; Whether a substantially similar complaint has previously been considered and no new material evidence has been submitted within the current administration; Whether a substantially similar complaint has been

submitted and accepted; Does the complaint relate to conduct in the distant past? This would include consideration or any reason why there had been a delay in making the complaint; Was the behaviour that is the subject of the complaint already dealt with? For example, through an apology at the relevant meeting; Does the complaint actually relate to dissatisfaction with a local authority decision rather than the specific conduct of an individual? And is it about someone who is no longer a councillor or who is seriously ill?

- 1.5 iii) an option for informal resolution where appropriate.
- 1.6 iv) full investigation of the complaint whereby an investigator will interview relevant witnesses and prepare a comprehensive report advising whether there is a potential breach of the Code that should be referred to a standards hearing.
- 1.7 In practice, Member involvement in the process tends to be at the standards hearing if the complaint progresses to that stage. Some authorities have an Assessments Committee that undertakes the decision making at the initial assessment stage, in all or some cases where the MO considers it appropriate.
- 1.8 It is recommended that Council adopts a full standards arrangements procedure as set out in Annex 1 which reflects LGA good practice. This document was co-drafted by the external consultants advising on the constitution and the Monitoring Officer. It is proposed that this would be inserted at the end of Part 4 'Rules of Procedure'. Consequential revisions to Article 9 are set out in Annex 2.

### **Options and Reasons for Recommendation**

- 2.1 There are three options. The recommended option is for the Council to accept the recommendations in this report by adopting the draft standards procedure in Annex 1 and revising Article 9 as detailed in Annex 2. This will ensure the authority is operating a standards procedure that meets good practice and LGA guidance.
- 2.2 The second option is do nothing. This is not recommended as it means the authority is left with a standards procedure that does not meet good practice and is potentially challengeable with the risk of an adverse finding by the ombudsman or Courts.
- 2.3 The third option is to request Officers to amend the draft standards procedure at annex 1 or to draft an entirely different standards procedure. Members may consider minor revisions to annex 1 are appropriate, however it is not recommended that an entirely different standards procedure is adopted as the draft procedure in Annex 1 meets good practice and LGA guidance.

### **3 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

- 3.1 There are no direct policy or budget implications. Full Council will be required to approve the proposed amendments to the constitution.



## **4 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 There are no direct financial implications. The external consultants' costs are part of the wider review of the constitution. The proposed standards procedure will not result in additional costs.

## **5 Legal Implications**

- 5.1 The Localism Act 2011 ('the Act'), section 27 imposes a duty on the authority to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and to adopt a Member code of conduct. Section 28 of the Act sets out what must be in the code of conduct including adherence to the Nolan principles and pecuniary interests.
- 5.2 Sub-section 27(4) of the Act provides that: 'A failure to comply with a relevant authority's code of conduct is not to be dealt with otherwise than in accordance with arrangements made under subsection (6)...' Sub-section 27(6) of the Act provides: 'A relevant authority other than a parish council must have in place (a) arrangements under which allegations can be investigated, and (b) arrangements under which decisions on allegations can be made.'
- 5.3 The draft standards procedure at Annex 1, if adopted, will become the arrangements under which allegations can be investigated, and under which decisions on allegations can be made.

## **6 Staffing Implications**

None, as existing Officer resources will continue to handle Member code of conduct complaints.

## **7 Equal Opportunities Implications**

There are no equal opportunities implications. It is a legal requirement to have arrangements for handling Member standards complaints.

## **8 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

- 8.1 There are no climate or sustainability implications.

## **9 Communications and Website Implications**

- 9.1 If proposed amendments to the constitution are approved the constitution website page will be updated.

## **10 Risk and Health & Safety Implications**

- 10.1 The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
A standards procedure that is compliant with good practice and LGA guidance is not adopted	Potential successful challenge to the procedure resulting in adverse decision of the Ombudsman and/or Courts	Adopt a procedure that is compliant with good practice and LGA guidance	Tolerate	4-6

10.2 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.

<b>Very Likely</b> ----- <b>Likelihood</b> ----- <b>Remote</b>	<b>Low</b> 4	<b>High</b> 8	<b>Very High</b> 12	<b>Very High</b> 16
	<b>Low</b> 3	<b>Medium</b> 6	<b>High</b> 9	<b>Very High</b> 12
	<b>Low</b> 2	<b>Low</b> 4	<b>Medium</b> 6	<b>High</b> 8
	<b>Low</b> 1	<b>Low</b> 2	<b>Low</b> 3	<b>Low</b> 4
	<b>Impact</b>			
	<b>Low</b> ----->	<b>Unacceptable</b>		

**11 Recommendation**

11.1 That the Committee recommends to full Council:

- i) The adoption of the draft standards procedure at Annex 1.
- ii) The revisions to Part 2, Article 9 of the constitution at Annex 2.

Report prepared by: Stephen Rix, Associate Director Legal & Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

**Data Quality**

Data sources: NA

Data checked by:

Stephen Rix

Data rating:

<b>1</b>	<b>Poor</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Sufficient</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>High</b>	

**Background Papers**

None

**Appendices**

Annex 1 – Draft standards procedure

Annex 2 – Proposed revisions to Part 2, Article 9 of the constitution

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## **DRAFT**

### **THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL STANDARDS HANDLING PROCEDURE**

#### **Background**

Under Section 28 of the Localism Act 2011, Three Rivers District Council must have in place “arrangements” under which allegations that an elected or co-opted councillor of the Council or of a town or parish council within the Council’s area (referred to in these arrangements as the ‘subject member’) has failed to comply with the Council’s Code of Conduct can be considered and decisions made on such allegations.

These arrangements provide for the Council to appoint at least one Independent Person whose views must be sought by the Council before it takes a decision on an allegation that it has decided to investigate, and whose views can be sought by the Council at any other stage, or by the subject member against whom an allegation has been made.

The Council has adopted a Code of Conduct for councillors (the Code), which is published on the Council’s website and is available for inspection on request from the Council’s office.

Each town and parish council is also required to adopt a Code of Conduct which should be available on their website.

#### **Initial assessment**

1. All allegations, including those against a town or parish councillor, must be made in writing, ideally by completing the complaints form available on the Council’s website, to the monitoring officer of Three Rivers District Council (MO).
2. Within 5 working days of receipt of the complaint the MO will acknowledge the complaint.
3. The MO will apply an initial filter to an allegation – for example, to check that the complaint is against a councillor, that they were in office at the time of the alleged incident and that the matter would be capable of being a breach of the Code. The Council has no authority to deal with complaints which relate solely to a councillor’s private life or things they do which are not related to their role as a councillor or as a representative of the council. The MO will keep a record of all complaints made including those which do not pass the initial filter.
4. If the MO has a conflict of interest they should refer the matter to the Standards Panel (SP) to take the decision in their place. Circumstances where this would be done include (but are not limited to) where the MO has a

conflict of interest – for example as the complainant, a key witness or where the MO has already advised on matters which are the subject of the complaint; or where the subject member or complainant is a Lead Member. Where this is done, references to the MO in this section should be substituted by SP.

5. The MO may also delegate the decision to the deputy monitoring officer (DMO) where there is a conflict of interest as outlined above.
6. Complaints which identify criminal conduct or breach of other regulations by any person may be referred by the MO to Hertfordshire Police for consideration, or any other regulatory agency. In such cases the MO may pause the consideration of the complaint pending action by the other body.
7. If the MO decides the matter is within scope, they will invite an Independent Person (IP) to give their views on what action should be taken at this stage. Where a matter has not been referred to the SP, the MO will also consult with the chair or vice chair of the SP.
8. The MO will also notify the subject member of the complaint within ten working days unless there are compelling reasons not to, together with a copy of the complaint (or relevant extracts) and a summary of the process to be followed, and invite them to submit any relevant comments. The subject member will be given ten working days to respond from the date of the notification. In parish council cases the MO may also notify the clerk and may ask for relevant factual information. However, the MO, in consultation with an IP, may withhold the complainant's identity if they can be satisfied that there are reasonable grounds for granting confidentiality, for example a belief that the complainant or any witness to the complaint may be at risk of physical harm or intimidation, or that their employment may be jeopardised if their identity is disclosed.
9. At the end of the ten working days from notifying the subject member (regardless of whether any comments have been received from the subject member) the MO will decide one of the following outcomes:
  - a. to take no further action;
  - b. to seek to resolve the matter informally; or
  - c. to refer the matter for investigation.
10. In deciding what action is necessary the MO will consider the following non-exclusive factors:
  - a. does the complaint contain sufficient evidence to demonstrate a potential breach of the Code?;
  - b. are there alternative, more appropriate, remedies that should be explored first?;
  - c. where the complaint is by one councillor against another, a greater allowance for robust political debate (but not personal abuse or "unparliamentary" language) may be given;

- d. is the complaint in the view of the MO malicious, politically motivated, or 'tit for tat'?
  - e. whether an investigation would not be in the public interest or the matter, even if proven, would not warrant any sanction;
  - f. whether the complaint is the same as one which has previously been considered and no new material evidence has been submitted;
  - g. whether the same complaint has been submitted and accepted;
  - h. does the complaint relate to conduct in the distant past (over six months before)? This would include any reason why there had been a delay in making the complaint;
  - i. does the complaint actually relate to dissatisfaction with a Council (or parish council) decision rather than the specific conduct of an individual?; and
  - j. is it about someone who is no longer a councillor or who is seriously ill?
11. All parties (and the clerk for parish cases) will be notified of the MO's decision and there is no internal right of appeal against that decision.
12. A decision notice will be produced as a matter of record but will not be published at this stage though the Council may issue a public statement if details of the complaint are already in the public domain.

### **Informal resolution**

13. Where the MO has decided to seek to resolve the matter informally, they may do one or more of the following:
- a. ask the subject member to submit an apology in writing to the complainant;
  - b. convene a meeting between the subject member and the complainant in order to try to resolve the issue informally;
  - c. notify the subject member's group leader (where they are a member of a political group) and suggest that they may wish to take some internal group action;
  - d. suggest that the subject member undergo relevant training;
  - e. other such action that the MO deems appropriate.
14. The MO will decide on a timeframe within which the informal resolution must be completed to an acceptable standard.
15. If either the subject member or complainant refuses to engage with the informal resolution proposed by the MO, or the MO deems the action taken by the Subject Member insufficient or the informal resolution does not take place in a timely way the MO will decide, in consultation with an IP, whether the case should be closed, whether an investigation is necessary or whether some other action should be taken. If the MO and the IP are not in agreement about how to proceed the case it will be referred to the chair or vice chair of the SP for a decision.

16. The MO will notify the subject member, complainant (and clerk in parish cases) of the outcome of the informal resolution.

## **Investigation**

17. Where a matter is referred for investigation, the MO may carry out the investigation themselves, delegate it to another officer or contract it out to an outside body.
18. The investigation must normally be completed within 3 months of the MO decision to refer the complaint for investigation. If an extension of time is needed the MO will notify the subject member, complainant (and clerk in parish cases) of any extension with reasons.
19. The subject member is notified that they may seek the views of an IP at any stage during the investigation.
20. The complainant is also notified who the IP is and may make a request to the MO to seek the views of the IP. However, such a request will only be granted at the discretion of the IP in consultation with the MO.
21. At any time while the investigation is underway the MO, the subject member or the complainant may ask for an informal resolution. The MO will consult with an IP whether to agree with the request.
22. Before concluding the investigation, a draft report will be produced and the MO (where they have not written the report), IP, complainant and subject member will be invited to comment. Witnesses may also be asked to comment as appropriate on parts of the draft report relevant to them.
23. Where the investigation has not been personally conducted by the MO, the final decision as to the findings of the report will nevertheless be made by the MO unless there is a conflict of interest, in which case the decision will be taken by the DMO.
24. There may be exceptional circumstances when the MO decides that a case should be closed before a draft or final report has been produced due to a significant change in circumstances. This may include, for example that the subject member is seriously ill or is no longer a councillor or other action has led to the matter being resolved. In such cases the MO should consult the IP before deciding that the file be closed. A record of the complaint will be kept on file in the event that the subject member returns to office in the future and a subsequent complaint is lodged against them.
25. At the end of the investigation the MO may conclude:
  - a. that there has been no breach of the Code;



- b. to seek to resolve the matter informally; or
  - c. to refer the matter to the SP for determination.
26. In cases where the MO has concluded that there has been no breach of the Code all parties (and the clerk in parish cases) will be notified of the MO's decision and there is no right of internal appeal against that decision. The MO will report the finding to the chair or vice chair of the SP.
27. Where the MO decides to seek to resolve the matter informally, they shall seek the views of the IP and complainant before concluding whether such an outcome is appropriate. The possible resolutions are those outlined above at paragraph 13. If the subject member or complainant refuses to engage with the informal resolution directed by the MO, the MO deems the action taken by the subject member insufficient or the informal resolution does not take place in a timely way the MO will decide, in consultation with the IP and chair or vice chair of the SP, whether the case should be closed or whether a hearing is necessary. The MO will notify the complainant (and clerk in parish cases) of the outcome of the informal resolution and any further steps.
28. Where the matter is referred for determination, the standards panel will convene within 2 months. The MO will notify the subject member and complainant of the date of the hearing and provide them with a written outline of the hearing procedure.

### **Hearings panel**

29. A matter referred for determination by the MO will be heard by the standards panel.
30. At the start of the hearing the MO will ask the standards panel to consider whether the matter should be heard in public or in private, subject to the normal rules on exempt and confidential information and bearing in mind the public interest. The standards panel will always, however, retire in private to consider its findings and possible action.
31. The views of the IP will be sought by the standards panel and made public before the standards panel reaches its decision.
32. The standards panel may decide:
- a. that there has been no breach of the Code;
  - b. that there has been a breach but to take no further action; or
  - c. that there has been a breach and a relevant sanction should be imposed or recommended.
33. If the standards panel decides that a relevant sanction should be imposed or recommended it may impose or recommend any one or more of the following:
- a. report its findings in respect of the subject member's conduct to Council (or the relevant parish council);

- b. issue (or recommend to the parish council to issue) a formal censure;
- c. recommend to the subject member's group leader (or in the case of ungrouped councillors, recommend to Council) that they be removed from any or all committees or sub-committees of the Council (or recommend such action to the parish council);
- d. recommend to the Leader of the Council that the subject member be removed from positions of responsibility.
- e. instruct the MO to (or recommend that the parish council) arrange training for the subject member;
- f. recommend to Council (or recommend to the parish council) that the subject member be removed from all outside appointments to which they have been appointed or nominated by the Council (or by the parish council);
- g. recommend to Council (or recommend to the parish council) that it withdraws facilities provided to the subject member by the Council for a specified period, such as a computer, website and/or email and internet access; or
- h. recommend to Council (or recommend that the parish council) that it excludes the subject member from the Council's offices or other premises for a specified period, with the exception of meeting rooms as necessary for attending Council, committee and sub-committee meetings and/or restricts contact with officers to named officers only;
- i. if relevant, recommend to the Council that the subject member be removed from their role as Leader of the Council;
- j. if relevant recommend to the secretary or appropriate official of the group that the councillor be removed as Group Leader or other position of responsibility.

34. All parties (and the clerk in parish cases) will be notified of the hearing panel's decision and there is no right of internal appeal against that decision.

35. A decision notice will be published on the Council website within 5 working days of the hearings panel decision.

**Draft**  
**Part 2 - Article 9 of the Constitution**

## Article 9 – The Standards Regime

9.01 In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, the Council will establish a Panel of at least three Members to deal with complaints against Members of the District Council or a parish council in respect of breaches of the Code of Conduct. The Council's detailed arrangements for handling standards complaints are contained in Part 4 titled 'Member Code of Conduct Complaint Procedure Rules.'

### 9.02 **Composition**

The Panel will consist of at least three Group Leaders or their nominated representatives.

9.03 In summary, the following stages make up the full complaints process with a complaint only moving on to the next stage if the criteria is met as detailed in the Member Code of Conduct Complaint Procedure Rules at Part 4.~~When dealing with complaints the following stages be implemented:-~~

Stage 1 - Initial jurisdiction test by Monitoring Officer.

Stage 2 – Initial assessment of complaint by the Monitoring Officer ~~considers complaint~~ in consultation with the Independent Person appointed by the Council.

Stage ~~3~~2 - Monitoring Officer seeks informal resolution and/or full investigation of complaint ~~by Group Leaders (or nominated representatives) and by representative of the Parish Council if complaint involved a Parish Councillor (Clerk Deputy or nominated Member).~~

Stage ~~3~~4 - If a formal Standards Hearing is required, a Panel of at least 3 Members comprising Group Leaders or their nominated representatives ~~(but not those involved in Stage 2 above)~~, will be appointed to consider a report from the Investigating Officer and determine the complaint. If the complaint involves a Parish Councillor, an elected representative of the relevant Parish Council being the Chair or nominated representative ~~(but not the representative involved in Stage 2)~~ will be added to the membership of the Panel. In accordance with the statutory provision, the Panel will consult the Independent Person before it determines the complaint.



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## POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

29 January 2024

### PART I

#### PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION ON RECORDING OF PRIVATE MEETINGS

##### 1. Summary

The Council's constitution contains no provision on the recording of private meetings. It is proposed a provision should be added to the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations and the Member Code of Conduct which prohibits the audio and/or visual recording of private meetings (including private video and telephone calls) unless the prior consent of those attending has been obtained.

##### 1 Details

- 1.1 The recording of a private meeting either openly or covertly, without the consent of those attending, raises several legal complexities including consideration of compliance with the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, data protection law, the right to privacy and the Human Rights Act 1998 and the protections around confidential information. For these reasons it is proposed that the constitution should prohibit this unless the prior consent of those attending the meeting has been obtained.
- 1.2 It is therefore proposed to add the following sentence to paragraph 8.3 of the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations contained at Part 5 of the constitution: 'Video and/or audio recordings of private meetings, private video calls and private telephone calls are not permitted except with the prior consent of all those in attendance' as shown in Annex 1. It is further proposed to amend the Member code of conduct to include the following provision: 'In private meetings, private video calls and private telephone calls including those with Council officers, you should not, or encourage others to, openly or covertly electronically record video and/or audio of the meeting or telephone conversation without the prior consent of those in attendance' as shown in Annex 2.
- 1.3 The proposed amendments seek to ensure that there is compliance with the law in relation to the electronic recordings of private meetings when some or all of those present have not consented to the recording and avoid the risk of legal action against the individual and/or Council.

##### Options and Reasons for Recommendation

- 2.1 There are three options. The recommended option is for the Council to accept the recommendations in this report by adopting the proposed additions to the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations and the Member code of conduct as shown in Annexes 1 and 2. This will help ensure the authority is complying with the law on the recording of private meetings.

2.2 The second option is do nothing. This is not recommended as it means the authority and/or Member and/or Officer is left open to the risk of legal challenge in the event of an unauthorised recording of a private meeting.

2.3 The third option is to request Officers to amend the proposed amendments to Annexes 1 and 2.

### **3 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications**

3.1 There are no direct policy or budget implications. Full Council will be required to approve the proposed amendments to the constitution.

### **4 Financial Implications**

4.1 There are no direct financial implications.

### **5 Legal Implication**

5.1 The Localism Act 2011 ('the Act'), section 27 imposes a duty on the authority to promote and maintain high standards of conduct by members and to adopt a Member code of conduct.

5.2 Section 28 of the Act sets out what must be in the code of conduct including adherence to the Nolan principles and pecuniary interests. Sub-section 28(3) states that sections 29 to 34 of the Act, which relates to pecuniary interests, do not limit what may be included in a relevant authority's code of conduct, but nothing in a relevant authority's code of conduct prejudices the operation of those sections. Sub-section 28(5) provides that a relevant authority may—(a) revise its existing code of conduct, or (b) adopt a code of conduct to replace its existing code of conduct.

5.3 The Council adopted the LGA Model Code of Conduct in May 2021. The Council has absolute discretion to vary its Code of Conduct so long as it complies with the provisions in section 28 of the Act. The proposed amendments to the Code comply with section 28.

### **6 Staffing Implications**

There are no direct staffing implications.

### **7 Equal Opportunities Implications**

There are no direct equal opportunities implications. It is a legal requirement to have a Member code of conduct.

### **8 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications**

8.1 There are no direct climate or sustainability implications.

### **9 Communications and Website Implications**

9.1 If proposed amendments to the constitution are approved the constitution website page will be updated.



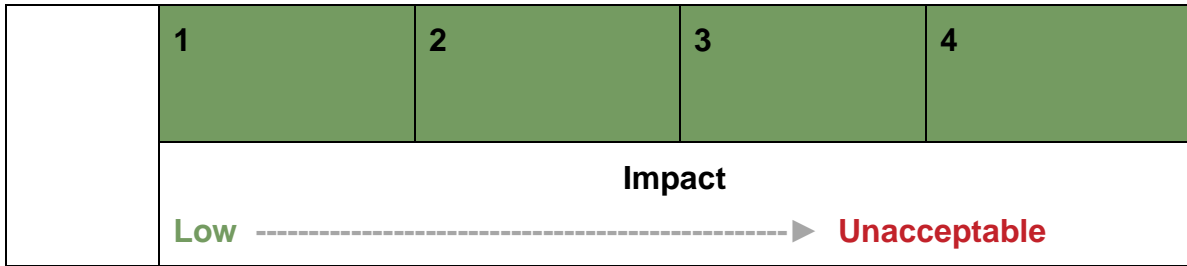
## 10 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

10.1 The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	Risk Rating <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
An individual records a private meeting without consent.	Potential successful challenge to that individual and/or the Council via an adverse decision of the Ombudsman and/or Courts and/or Information Commissioner .	Adopt constitutional provisions that prohibit recordings of private meetings unless the recording is authorised.	Tolerate	4-6

10.2 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.

<b>Very Likely</b> <i>Remote</i> Likelihood ↓	<b>Low</b> 4	<b>High</b> 8	<b>Very High</b> 12	<b>Very High</b> 16
	<b>Low</b> 3	<b>Medium</b> 6	<b>High</b> 9	<b>Very High</b> 12
	<b>Low</b> 2	<b>Low</b> 4	<b>Medium</b> 6	<b>High</b> 8
	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>	<b>Low</b>



**11 Recommendation**

11.1 That the Committee recommends to full Council:

- i) The adoption of the additional wording to the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations detailed at Annex 1.
- ii) The adoption of the additional wording to the Member Code of Conduct detailed at Annex 2.

Report prepared by: Stephen Rix, Associate Director Legal & Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)

**Data Quality**

Data sources: NA

Data checked by:

Stephen Rix

Data rating:

<b>1</b>	<b>Poor</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Sufficient</b>	<b>X</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>High</b>	

**Background Papers**

None

**Appendices**

Annex 1 – Proposed Amendments to the Protocol on Member/Officer Relations

Annex 2 – Proposed Amendments to the Member Code of Conduct

# Part 5

## Codes and Protocols

**DRAFT Part 5 - Protocol on Member/Officer Relations**

**1. Introduction and Principles Underlying Member-Officer Relations**

- a) The purpose of this Protocol is to set out the respective roles and responsibilities of Members and Officers, and to guide them in their dealings with each other in such a way as to ensure high standards of good governance across the Council. It is designed to support continued harmonious professional relationships between Members and Officers working collaboratively. This protocol is compatible and complimentary to the Council's Member Code of Conduct and Code of Conduct for Employees.
- b) This Protocol does not cover every situation that may arise in the relationships between Councillors and Officers, but aims to address the more common issues that are likely to arise and may cause difficulties and to provide guidance which may be applied more generally.
- c) All staff are employees of and accountable to the whole Council and covered by employment legislation. The Council engages in national and local bargaining on pay and conditions.
- d) This Protocol is subject to the other provisions of the Council's Constitution, the Code of Conduct for Members, the Officer Code of Conduct, the various Standing Orders, Financial Regulations and the Schemes of Delegation to Officers, all of which will prevail over this Protocol if there is any conflict.

**2. Productive relationships are built on mutual respect, openness, trust and competence**

- a) Mutual respect between Members and Officers is essential to good local government. Councillor/officer relationships are to be conducted in a positive and constructive way. It is important, therefore, that any dealings between Councillors and officers should observe standards of courtesy and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position to seek or exert undue influence on the other party.
- b) Dealings between Members and officers should observe reasonable standards of courtesy. Members have the right to criticise reports put before them but should not criticise officers personally either verbally or in writing (including email and social media). In order to maintain effective working relationships and the reputation of the Council Members and Officers they should treat each other with respect at all times and particularly at Committee meetings or in any public forum.
- c) Members should be aware that officers are constrained in the response they may make to public comment from Members and should not abuse officers in public or through the press nor seek to undermine their position by abuse, rudeness or ridicule. This in no way reduces Members' proper right and duty to criticise the reports, actions and work of a department or section of the Council where they believe such criticism is merited. Members need to be aware that it is easy for officers, particularly junior Officers, to be overawed and feel at a disadvantage in their dealings with Members. Such feelings can be intensified where Members hold official and/or Political office. If

Members believe they have reason to criticise the work of an individual junior Officer, the proper approach should be through the manager of the section or Head of Service of the relevant service.

- d) Where officers feel they have good cause to criticise a Member or call their actions in to question, an approach by the relevant Chief Officer to the Member's Group Leader is a sensible first step.
- e) A Member should not request an officer to do anything that they are not empowered to do, nor to cease any action which the officer is properly taking or proposes to take, nor to undertake work outside normal duties or outside normal hours, nor to provide information to which the Member is not entitled. Advice on the appropriateness of such requests is available from either the Chief Officer or the Associate Director Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer).

### 3. Roles of Members

#### ***All Members will:***

- a) Effectively represent the interests of their constituents in their ward by carrying out individual casework, taking into consideration the needs and wellbeing of all residents.
- b) Provide community leadership and engagement.
- c) Undertake regulatory, quasi-judicial and statutory duties.
- d) Sit on a range of Member-level bodies as well as Council meetings, and assist in reaching informed and balanced decisions, and developing and reviewing Council policy.
- e) Be part of the decision-making process for the development of the strategic policy and financial framework for the operation of the Council.
- f) Represent the Council on a variety of partnerships and external bodies.
- g) Maintain the highest standards of conduct and ethics and not bring the Council into disrepute.

### 4. Roles of Officers

#### **4.1 *Officers should:***

- a) Maintain political neutrality
- b) Serve all Members of the Council fairly
- c) Avoid close familiarity with Members
- d) Be polite in their dealings with Members
- e) Deal with Members' enquiries efficiently and promptly

- f) Report to their Line Manager or Head of Service if they feel a Member has asked them to deal with a matter outside of Council procedure or policy

Officers should not:

- g) Allow their own personal or political opinions to interfere with their work
- h) Raise personal matters to do with their jobs directly with Members
- i) Not improperly disclose information received from an elected Member to another Political Party.

#### **4.2 Officer responsibilities:**

- a) Staff are responsible for day-to-day managerial and operational decisions and the provision of professional advice to all parties in the decision-making process (full Council and all Committees) and to enable Councillors to perform their duties.
- b) They are responsible for maintaining an effective system of record keeping of decisions.
- c) Officers may also represent the Council on partnership and external bodies.
- d) The roles of Head of Paid Service (Chief Executive), Director of Finance (Chief Finance Officer/S151 Officer) and Associate Director Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer) are defined in statute.
- e) In the course of their work Officers sometimes meet with and/or negotiate with various individuals and bodies concerned with Council business. As a general rule it will not be appropriate for Members to attend. If Officers believe it is necessary/appropriate for Members to attend, then this should be agreed with the Chief Executive or Director of Finance (Chief Finance Officer/S151 Officer) or Associate Director
- f) Occasionally it is appropriate to have a political perspective at such meetings and, if the Chief Executive, Director of Finance (Chief Finance Officer/S151 Officer) or Associate Director so decides, the Lead Member will be invited and may invite other appropriate Members to attend.
- g) If it is necessary to advise Members of issues arising there will be a report to the Information Bulletin. Committees should not receive reports for noting only.

#### **5. Relationship between Chair of the Council and Officers**

- a) There should be a close and professional working relationship between the Chair of Council and Head of Service they work with. Such relationships, however, should never be allowed to become so close, or appear to be so close, as to bring into question an officers ability to deal impartially with other Councillors and other Political Groups.
- b) The Chair of Council Chairs meetings of Full Council and carries out the civic and ceremonial duties of the Council.

- c) The Chair of Council is entitled to officer support in preparation for and at Council meetings. This support will be primarily from the three statutory officers.
- d) The Chair of Council is provided with administrative assistance in order to discharge the civic and ceremonial responsibilities efficiently and effectively.

**6. Relationship between the Leader and Lead Members and Officers**

- a) There should be a close and professional working relationship between the Leader, Chairs of a Committee or Lead Member and the Heads of Service and Senior Officers they work with. Such relationships, however, should never be allowed to become so close, or appear to be so close, as to bring into question an officers ability to deal impartially with other Councillors and other Political Groups.
- b) The primary Officer support for the Leader and Lead Members is through the Senior Leadership Team.
- c) In situations where one Political Group has an overall majority but the Policy and Resources Committee is made up of Members from more than one Political Group, the Senior Leadership Team will also support the Members who do not form the Administration.
- d) If a Chief Officer (Member of Senior Leadership Team) needs to inform the Leader of the Council or a Lead Member of an important confidential matter, that Member should authorise the Chief Officer to inform the appropriate Spokesperson or Group Leader of the other parties. Failing authorisation, the matter will remain confidential to the Chief Officer and Member unless the Chief Executive considers that it is necessary and in the best interests of the Council to provide that information to the other parties.
- e) When a Chief Officer takes the initiative to provide general information to the Leader of the Council or a Lead Member, that information will be supplied to the other appropriate Spokespeople and Group Leaders as soon as possible.
- f) If a Lead Member, Spokesperson or Group Leader has asked for a brief from a Chief Officer, concerning a particular line being considered in connection with an agenda item, it would not be necessary or usual for the Lead Member, Spokesperson, Group Leader or the Chief Officer to provide a copy to any Member of the other Political Groups on the Council, nor to acknowledge that such a brief had been prepared.
- g) In summary, the prevailing philosophy will be that when a Chief Officer takes the initiative to give general information to individual Lead Members, the Chief Officer will provide such information to the counterparts in the other Political Groups.
- h) When individual Councillors, regardless of Political Group, seek advice from a Chief Officer, that advice will be given in confidence to them and it will be maintained by the Chief Officer until the Councillor agrees it can be released.

**7. Relationships between Chairs and Members of Committees and Officers**

- a) There should be a close and professional working relationship between the Chairs of a Committee and Committee Members and the Heads of Service and Senior Officers they work with. Such relationships, however, should never be allowed to become so close, or appear to be so close, as to bring into question an officers ability to deal impartially with other Councillors and other Political Groups.
- b) The primary Officer support for the Committees is Service Heads. That is the staff directly responsible to Chief Officers.

- c) The confidentiality provisions indicated above for the Leader and Lead Members also apply to the Chairs of Committees and the Officers who advise them.

## **8. Relations at Work**

### **8.1 General contact between Members and Officers**

- a) Initial contact by Members should usually be at Head of Service level other than on routine matters where Members may contact junior Officers directly.
- b) Members are elected to represent the interests of their constituents but they should not seek special treatment for any individual or group and should declare any special relationship they have with the constituents concerned.

### **8.2 Members should not encourage an Officer to take any action that is:**

- a) Against procedure or policy
- b) A breach of the code of conduct for employees
- c) In conflict with Council procedure rules or financial regulations
- d) Capable of being interpreted as intimidation or bullying or do anything which is outside their duties and responsibilities.

### **8.3 During Meetings**

- a) Members and Officers should always show respect and be polite to each other during meetings. Members and Officers should not talk over each other, interrupt or be abusive or use unacceptable language. **Video and/or audio recordings of private meetings, private video calls and private telephone calls are not permitted except with the prior consent of all those in attendance.**

## **9. Procedure to be Followed When Taking Delegated Action in Consultation with Members of the Council**

- a) Apart from matters which are clearly delegated to Officers and in respect of the determination of planning applications, delegated action in consultation with Members can only be taken by Officers in any of the following situations.
- b) Where this is provided for in the Council's Scheme of Delegation to Officers.
- c) Where a Committee or Sub-Committee has specifically authorised delegation to the Officer in consultation with nominated Members.
- d) If any Member nominated by the Committee or Sub-Committee is absent, the Leader of the Political Group they represent must be consulted.



**10. Procedure for consultation**

Either:

- (a) Consultation must be in written form explaining the proposed action/decision and the reasons therefore, with the Member responding with their agreement or otherwise in writing to the Officer before any action is taken; or exceptionally.
- (b) Where an urgent decision is required Officers may, in the first instance, seek agreement by telephone or e-mail in the manner as in (a) above. Consultation should, where possible, be with the Chair of Council first followed by the other Members.

**11. Opposition to officer delegation**

- a) If the Member(s) consulted under this arrangement is opposed to the Officer's suggested action/decision and agreement cannot be reached, then the matter must be reported to the appropriate Committee or Sub-Committee for determination unless the matter is considered by the Chief Executive or Director of Finance (Chief Finance Officer/S151 Officer) or Associate Director to be so urgent that it cannot wait to be determined.

**12. Reports of officer delegation**

- a) An official record must be kept by the Committee Team recording the action/decision taken in consultation with Members under this procedure together with supporting papers where necessary. The record shall be available for inspection by Members at the subsequent meeting of the Committee or Sub-Committee.

**13. Implementation and co-ordination**

- a) The co-ordination of this procedure and the dispatch of any correspondence shall be the responsibility of the Committee Team.

**14. Briefings on Committee Business**

- a) Formal joint briefings will be arranged for the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees to consider the business to be transacted at each meeting as set out on the agenda.
- b) The Chairs may use discretion to invite other appropriate Chairs or Vice-Chairs or Spokespeople of other Groups, to attend such briefings.
- c) Any Political Group not holding the Chair or Vice-Chair of a Committee may request a briefing on the business to be transacted at the Committee meeting. Such a request should be made by the Committee Spokesperson or Group Leader to the Committee Manager

who will make appropriate arrangements with the Chief Officer(s) concerned. The Chairs of the Committee concerned shall be informed that such a briefing is to be given.

- d) These briefing sessions will be comparatively short.

**15. Officer relationships with party groups**

- a) In addition to the formal arrangements described above, the Senior Leadership Team will meet with the Leader and Lead Members on a regular basis to advise generally on matters of policy which may become the subject of discussion by the Council or any committee, to review progress on the implementation of Council decisions and to consider any management problems on which the Senior Leadership Team wishes general guidance.
- b) It should be noted that the national conditions of service for all Local Government Officers provide that no officer shall be called upon either to advise any Political Group of the Council or to attend any meeting of any such Group.
- c) The conditions for Chief Executives allow local arrangements to the contrary to be made but only with the agreement of the Chief Executive and with adequate safeguards to preserve Political neutrality in relation to the affairs of the Council.
- d) All Political Groups may request a private and confidential briefing including, but where appropriate going beyond, the provision of written information, on matters of policy which are or may become the subject of discussion by the Council or any Committee or which constitute important background information for the efficient and effective conduct of local government. All such requests must be made by the Leader or Deputy Leader of the Group concerned to the Chief Executive. If such a request is approved by the Chief Executive, a similar invitation will be given to the other Political Groups.
- e) At the discretion of the Chief Executive and other Senior Officers, the Senior Leadership Team are prepared to provide such advice and assistance on the understanding that they will make their presentation, answer questions on it and then leave. Group Members should reserve Political comment and discussion until after the departure of the staff involved.

**16. Members in their Ward Role and Officers**

- a) In order to fulfil their community leadership role, Members should be provided with support and access to information and reports affecting matters in their Ward.
- b) The Committee Section staff and other officers, as necessary, will support the Chairs of the Forums in making arrangements for a Local Area Forum but will not clerk the meetings. Officers are not expected to attend these meetings.

The following facilities are available for Members.

- c) The Members' Room is located on the first floor. Access to the Members' Room can be gained by use of the identity card. There is also a kitchen which Members may use.
- d) The Members' Room contains a computer, meeting table, break-out areas, work stations and surface pro chargers. Members can use the printers/photocopiers located on the first floor in the staff area. These facilities are available at no charge for Council business, but Party Political business or personal use should be declared to the Chief Executive and will be recharged.

**17. Conduct outside of work**

- a) At official civic events Members and Officers should dress and behave in a manner in keeping with the occasion and their position.
- b) Any Member representing the Council at a civic or ceremonial event must represent the Council in a corporate rather than a Political manner.

**18. Members and Officers and Contracts**

- a) A Member shall not issue any order in respect of any works which are being carried out by or on behalf of the Council, or claim by virtue of their membership of the Council any right to inspect or to enter upon any land or premises which the Council has the power or duty to inspect or enter.

**19. Councillor Access to Documents and Information**

- a) Any Member of the Council may report complaints to the appropriate Member of staff by telephone, e-mail or in writing (see the directory on the Council Intranet) or seek answers from them to questions of a routine nature.
- b) Any Member of the Council may ask the appropriate Chief Officer for written factual information about a service/service area. Such requests will be met subject to any legal constraint and the paragraph below.
- c) If the Chief Officer considers that the information requested could only be provided at unreasonable cost, the Chief Officer shall inform the Member. If the request is not withdrawn the Chief Officer shall seek direction from the Leader or the appropriate Lead Member as to whether it should be provided, and inform the Member accordingly. It remains the prerogative of a Councillor to raise such a request through the Committee, or Council whereon decisions can be taken in the light of available resources and agreed priorities.

- d) The rules concerning access to information by Councillors is set out fully in Part 4 of the constitution, Access to Information Procedure Rules.

**20. Other individuals who are Members of Council bodies**

- a) Such individuals are entitled to be treated by staff in the same manner as Councillors while in the performance of their duties for the Council.

**21. Dealing with the Media**

**21.1 The Council’s media protocol is in the Council Constitution**

**Press releases**

- a) All Council press releases will be drafted and issued by officers who will operate within the existing legal framework on publicity. All press releases will include a direct email address for the Communications team. Press releases will be sent to the Leader of the Council and relevant Lead Member for comment and final approval by the Chief Executive or Director of Finance (Chief Finance Officer/S151 Officer) or Associate Director before issue. Council press releases should be issued by the Communications team and copied to all Members at the same time.
- b) Any request for information or questions asked by the press, websites, radio or television should initially be referred to the Communications team.
- c) Officers may speak directly to the media with the agreement of the Communications team and after consultation with either the Leader of the Council, relevant Lead Member, Chief Executive or Director of Finance (Chief Finance Officer/S151 Officer) or Associate Director
- d) All Council press releases will include only the Communications Team contact details.
- e) Press releases should be published on the Council website and removed or updated if they become out of date.
- f) If the Leader or Spokesperson of any Political Group wishes to issue a press statement in a group capacity, use may be made of Council facilities, e.g. typing, printing and distribution facilities, on a rechargeable basis by prior arrangements with the Chief Executive. Chief Officers may be requested only to provide factual information to assist in the preparation of such statements.
- g) The Chair of the Council has a special role in public relations and will reply on the appropriate headed notepaper, being guided by the Communications team who will collate responses from appropriate officers and will consult the Chief Executive when necessary. A copy of all such correspondence will be held on file.
- h) Council press releases reporting the work of the Chair of the Council must be approved by the Chair of Council before issue.

**22. Website and Social Media**

- a) Advice on use of social media is available on request from the Chief Executive. In particular, Members should note the following principles.
- b) Where a Member uses a social media account both as a Member and as an individual, Members should make it clear in which capacity they are posting. Members are expected to communicate politically. However, there is a difference between communicating on behalf of the Council and blogging as a private citizen. Online activity is subject to the Member Code of Conduct wherever a Member gives the impression that they are acting as a Councillor, whether or not the Member is in fact acting in an official capacity.
- c) Members should comply with the general principles of the Member Code of Conduct in what they publish and what they allow others to publish and in particular the following provisions of the Code:
  - Treat others with respect. Avoid personal attacks and disrespectful, rude or offensive comments.

- Comply with equality laws.
- Refrain from publishing anything received in confidence.
- Do not bring the Council, or your Councillor role into disrepute.

- d) The Council's social and news media are co-ordinated by the Communications team. Any major announcements made through these channels that have not been approved in press release form should be agreed with the Communications team and include consultation with the Council Leader and relevant Lead Member.
- e) The Council's websites will be checked regularly by the Communications team to ensure that all information is up to date.

### **23. Reporting elections**

- a) The Council will comply with the Government's recommended Code of Practice on Local Government Publicity in regards to publicity restrictions prior to elections.
- b) Local media representatives will be invited to attend election counts. Media representatives must comply with all count rules and must be accompanied by a Council communications officer at all times.
- c) Filming, photography and audio recording are forbidden on the election count floor. The Communications team can arrange for photographs or filming to be made outside of the count floor or before or after the count. The Council may supply stock images to the media as an alternative.
- d) Media representatives may interview Members, Candidates, Agents and Council Officers on the count floor with their agreement, where this does not disrupt the count.
- e) Media representatives may publish on websites and social media direct from the count floor.
- f) Appropriate Purdah Guidance will be issued to all Members prior to the election period.

### **24. Correspondence**

- a) Correspondence between Officers and Members should tend to be on a formal basis especially where the Officer is below Head of Service level. Casual conventions undermine the differentiation of roles and the absence of a recognised etiquette may tend to confuse less experienced Officers and Members.

- b) For example, if writing to a Member it should begin ‘Dear Councillor .....’. Careful consideration in accordance with this Protocol should be given as to whether or not to copy the communication to anyone else and, if so, to whom. It should be readily apparent to all parties why and to whom any particular copy was sent. Special care is needed when dealing with Chairs, Spokespeople or Leaders.
- c) Inevitably email is less formal so even more care is needed about what is sent or forwarded and to whom, to ensure that this protocol is observed.
- d) Members may write to whoever appears to be the appropriate Officer but it is often better to write to the Chief Officer, especially if more than one department is involved in a single problem. Chief Officers are responsible for ensuring that their staff send adequate replies but, if a Member directs a letter to a specific member of staff, it has to be accepted that the individual may only know part of a wider story and so unwittingly give misleading information.
- e) Members and officers must act at all times in a way which is compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation, the Data Protection Act 2018 and with associated legislation. This entails ensuring that all personal data which is processed by Councillors, either in their own capacity as data controllers or on the Council’s behalf, is processed subject to relevant limitations and safeguards.
- f) It is an essential part of the etiquette towards Members that officers reply promptly and fully to Members’ correspondence. Acknowledgements should be sent unless a full answer can be given within two weeks of receipt and full replies must be sent as soon as possible.
- g) Much correspondence from Members is in the form of details about a problem experienced by a (Ward) resident and/or a letter from the resident. In the majority of cases the reply should take the form of a letter to the resident, copied to the Member, and beginning ‘I received an enquiry on your behalf on (date) from Councillor ..... about .....’. Occasionally it will be more appropriate to write to the Member giving confidential details to permit a response.
- h) No Member should correspond with Council Tax payers, ratepayers or other groups, organisations or individuals on behalf of the Council. That is a job for officers. If a Member conducts such correspondence as an individual Councillor, it is important to ensure that the person receiving the letter is aware of that distinction. This is especially true if the Member holds a position as Leader of the Council, Lead Member, Chair, Vice-Chair or Spokesperson of a Committee as the public can be easily confused about status. Similar arrangements should apply to meetings.
- i) Any Member who considers they have a justifiable exception to this rule should obtain the agreement of the Chief Executive before writing.

**25. Review**

- a) The protocol should be operated with flexibility according to circumstances. The Group Leaders and the Chief Executive will periodically review the operation of these guidelines and are available to try to resolve problems which may arise in these areas from time to time.

**26. What do you do if you have a concern**

- a) Occasionally a relationship between a Councillor and an officer may break down or become strained. It is usually preferable to resolve this informally, but sometimes this may not be possible, and it is important for Councillors and officers to know how to pursue any complaint or grievance.
- b) If a Councillor wishes to complain about the actions of an officer, they should raise it with the relevant Chief Officer in the first instance. If the Councillor is not satisfied with the response, they may take the matter up with the Chief Executive. Where the complaint relates to the Chief Executive it should be raised with the Associate Director Legal and Democratic , in their capacity as the Council’s Monitoring Officer.
- c) If an Officer has a grievance about the conduct of a Councillor, they should take the matter up with their Chief Officer. If the Officer is not satisfied with the response, they may take the matter up with the Associate Director Legal and Democratic (Monitoring Officer). These provisions do not affect an officer’s right to make a formal complaint under the Code of Conduct for Members.



**DRAFT** This model code was adopted by Annual Council on 25 May 2021 **and amended by full Council on 20 February 2024**



## **Local Government Association**

### **Three Rivers District Council Amended Version of the Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020**

#### **Joint statement**

The role of councillor across all tiers of local government is a vital part of our country's system of democracy. It is important that as councillors we can be held accountable and all adopt the behaviors and responsibilities associated with the role. Our conduct as an individual councillor affects the reputation of all councillors. We want the role of councillor to be one that people aspire to. We also want individuals from a range of backgrounds and circumstances to be putting themselves forward to become councillors.

As councillors, we represent local residents, work to develop better services and deliver local change. The public have high expectations of us and entrust us to represent our local area; taking decisions fairly, openly, and transparently. We have both an individual and collective responsibility to meet these expectations by maintaining high standards and demonstrating good conduct, and by challenging behaviour which falls below expectations.

Importantly, we should be able to undertake our role as a councillor without being intimidated, abused, bullied or threatened by anyone, including the general public.

This Code has been designed to protect our democratic role, encourage good conduct and safeguard the public's trust in local government.

## **Introduction**

The Local Government Association (LGA) has developed this Model Councillor Code of Conduct, in association with key partners and after extensive consultation with the sector, as part of its work on supporting all tiers of local government to continue to aspire to high standards of leadership and performance. It is a template for councils to adopt in whole and/or with local amendments.

All councils are required to have a local Councillor Code of Conduct.

The LGA will undertake an annual review of this Code to ensure it continues to be fit-for-purpose, incorporating advances in technology, social media and changes in legislation. The LGA can also offer support, training and mediation to councils and councillors on the application of the Code and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) and the county associations of local councils can offer advice and support to town and parish councils.

## **Definitions**

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, a “councillor” means a member or co-opted member of a local authority or a directly elected mayor. A “co-opted member” is defined in the Localism Act 2011 Section 27(4) as “a person who is not a member of the authority but who

- a) is a member of any committee or sub-committee of the authority, or;
- b) is a member of, and represents the authority on, any joint committee or joint sub-committee of the authority;

and who is entitled to vote on any question that falls to be decided at any meeting of that committee or sub-committee”.

For the purposes of this Code of Conduct, “local authority” includes county councils, district councils, London borough councils, parish councils, town councils, fire and rescue authorities, police authorities, joint authorities, economic prosperity boards, combined authorities and National Park authorities.

## **Purpose of the Code of Conduct**

The purpose of this Code of Conduct is to assist you, as a councillor, in modelling the behaviour that is expected of you, to provide a personal check and balance, and to set out the type of conduct that could lead to action being taken against you. It is also to protect you, the public, fellow councillors, local authority officers and the reputation of local government. It sets out general principles of conduct expected of all councillors and your specific obligations in relation to standards of conduct. The LGA encourages the use of support, training and mediation prior to action being taken using the Code. The fundamental aim of the Code is to create and maintain public confidence in the role of councillor and local government.

## **General principles of councillor conduct**

Everyone in public office at all levels; all who serve the public or deliver public services, including ministers, civil servants, councillors and local authority officers; should uphold the [Seven Principles of Public Life](#), also known as the Nolan Principles.

Building on these principles, the following general principles have been developed specifically for the role of councillor.

In accordance with the public trust placed in me, on all occasions:

- I act with integrity and honesty
- I act lawfully
- I treat all persons fairly and with respect; and
- I lead by example and act in a way that secures public confidence in the role of councillor.

In undertaking my role:

- I impartially exercise my responsibilities in the interests of the local community
- I do not improperly seek to confer an advantage, or disadvantage, on any person
- I avoid conflicts of interest
- I exercise reasonable care and diligence; and
- I ensure that public resources are used prudently in accordance with my local authority's requirements and in the public interest.

## **Application of the Code of Conduct**

This Code of Conduct applies to you as soon as you sign your declaration of acceptance of the office of councillor or attend your first meeting as a co-opted member and continues to apply to you until you cease to be a councillor.

This Code of Conduct applies to you when you are acting in your capacity as a councillor which may include when:

- you misuse your position as a councillor
- Your actions would give the impression to a reasonable member of the public with knowledge of all the facts that you are acting as a councillor;

The Code applies to all forms of communication and interaction, including:

- at face-to-face meetings
- at online or telephone meetings
- in written communication
- in verbal communication
- in non-verbal communication
- in electronic and social media communication, posts, statements and comments.

You are also expected to uphold high standards of conduct and show leadership at all times when acting as a councillor.

Your Monitoring Officer has statutory responsibility for the implementation of the Code of Conduct, and you are encouraged to seek advice from your Monitoring Officer on any matters that may relate to the Code of Conduct. Town and parish councillors are encouraged to seek advice from their Clerk, who may refer matters to the Monitoring Officer.

## **Standards of councillor conduct**

This section sets out your obligations, which are the minimum standards of conduct required of you as a councillor. Should your conduct fall short of these standards, a complaint may be made against you, which may result in action being taken.

Guidance is included to help explain the reasons for the obligations and how they should be followed.

### **General Conduct**

#### **1. Respect**

##### **As a councillor:**

**1.1 I treat other councillors and members of the public with respect.**

**1.2 I treat local authority employees, employees and representatives of partner organisations and those volunteering for the local authority with respect and respect the role they play.**

Respect means politeness and courtesy in behaviour, speech, and in the written word. Debate and having different views are all part of a healthy democracy. As a councillor, you can express, challenge, criticise and disagree with views, ideas, opinions and policies in a robust but civil manner. You should not, however, subject individuals, groups of people or organisations to personal attack.

In your contact with the public, you should treat them politely and courteously. Rude and offensive behaviour lowers the public's expectations and confidence in councillors.

In return, you have a right to expect respectful behaviour from the public. If members of the public are being abusive, intimidating or threatening you are entitled to stop any conversation or interaction in person or online and report them to the local authority, the relevant social media provider or the police. This also applies to fellow councillors, where action could then be taken under the Councillor Code of Conduct, and local authority employees, where concerns should be raised in line with the local authority's councillor-officer protocol.

### **Three Rivers District Council amended the LGA Model Code of Conduct in February 2024 with the insertion of the following provision.**

In private meetings, private video calls and private telephone calls including those with Council officers, you should not, or encourage others to, openly or covertly electronically record video and/or audio of the meeting or telephone conversation without the prior consent of those in attendance.

## **2. Bullying, harassment and discrimination**

**As a councillor:**

**2.1 I do not bully any person.**

**2.2 I do not harass any person.**

**2.3 I promote equalities and do not discriminate unlawfully against any person.**

The Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS) characterises bullying as offensive, intimidating, malicious or insulting behaviour, an abuse or misuse of power through means that undermine, humiliate, denigrate or injure the recipient. Bullying might be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident, happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or phone calls, happen in the workplace or at work social events and may not always be obvious or noticed by others.

The Protection from Harassment Act 1997 defines harassment as conduct that causes alarm or distress or puts people in fear of violence and must involve such conduct on at least two occasions. It can include repeated attempts to impose unwanted communications and contact upon a person in a manner that could be expected to cause distress or fear in any reasonable person.

Unlawful discrimination is where someone is treated unfairly because of a protected characteristic. Protected characteristics are specific aspects of a person's identity defined by the Equality Act 2010. They are age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation.

The Equality Act 2010 places specific duties on local authorities. Councillors have a central role to play in ensuring that equality issues are integral to the local authority's performance and strategic aims, and that there is a strong vision and public commitment to equality across public services.

### **3. Impartiality of officers of the council**

**As a councillor:**

#### **3.1 I do not compromise, or attempt to compromise, the impartiality of anyone who works for, or on behalf of, the local authority.**

Officers work for the local authority as a whole and must be politically neutral (unless they are political assistants). They should not be coerced or persuaded to act in a way that would undermine their neutrality. You can question officers in order to understand, for example, their reasons for proposing to act in a particular way, or the content of a report that they have written. However, you must not try and force them to act differently, change their advice, or alter the content of that report, if doing so would prejudice their professional integrity.

### **4. Confidentiality and access to information**

**As a councillor:**

#### **4.1 I do not disclose information:**

- a. given to me in confidence by anyone**
- b. acquired by me which I believe, or ought reasonably to be aware, is of a confidential nature, unless**
  - i. I have received the consent of a person authorised to give it;**
  - ii. I am required by law to do so;**
  - iii. the disclosure is made to a third party for the purpose of obtaining professional legal advice provided that the third party agrees not to disclose the information to any other person; or**
  - iv. the disclosure is:**
    - 1. reasonable and in the public interest; and**
    - 2. made in good faith and in compliance with the reasonable requirements of the local authority; and**
    - 3. I have consulted the Monitoring Officer prior to its release.**

#### **4.2 I do not improperly use knowledge gained solely as a result of my role as a councillor for the advancement of myself, my friends, my family members, my employer or my business interests.**

#### **4.3 I do not prevent anyone from getting information that they are entitled to by law.**

Local authorities must work openly and transparently, and their proceedings and printed materials are open to the public, except in certain legally defined circumstances. You should work on this basis, but there will be times when it is required by law that discussions, documents and other information relating to or held by the local authority must be treated in a confidential manner. Examples include personal data relating to individuals or information relating to ongoing negotiations.

## **5. Disrepute**

**As a councillor:**

### **5.1 I do not bring my role or local authority into disrepute.**

As a Councillor, you are trusted to make decisions on behalf of your community and your actions and behaviour are subject to greater scrutiny than that of ordinary members of the public. You should be aware that your actions might have an adverse impact on you, other councillors and/or your local authority and may lower the public's confidence in you or your local authority's ability to discharge your/its functions. For example, behaviour that is considered dishonest and/or deceitful can bring your local authority into disrepute.

You are able to hold the local authority and fellow councillors to account and are able to constructively challenge and express concern about decisions and processes undertaken by the council whilst continuing to adhere to other aspects of this Code of Conduct.

## **6. Use of position**

**As a councillor:**

### **6.1 I do not use, or attempt to use, my position improperly to the advantage or disadvantage of myself or anyone else.**

Your position as a member of the local authority provides you with certain opportunities, responsibilities, and privileges, and you make choices all the time that will impact others. However, you should not take advantage of these opportunities to further your own or others' private interests or to disadvantage anyone unfairly.

## **7. Use of local authority resources and facilities**

**As a councillor:**

### **7.1 I do not misuse council resources.**

### **7.2 I will, when using the resources of the local or authorising their use by others:**

- a. act in accordance with the local authority's requirements; and**
- b. ensure that such resources are not used for political purposes unless that use could reasonably be regarded as likely to facilitate, or be conducive to, the discharge of the functions of the local authority or of the office to which I have been elected or appointed.**

You may be provided with resources and facilities by the local authority to assist you in carrying out your duties as a councillor.

Examples include:

- office support
- stationery
- equipment such as phones, and computers
- transport
- access and use of local authority buildings and rooms.

These are given to you to help you carry out your role as a councillor more effectively and are not to be used for business or personal gain. They should be used in accordance with the purpose for which they have been provided and the local authority's own policies regarding their use.

## **8. Complying with the Code of Conduct**

### **As a Councillor:**

**8.1 I undertake Code of Conduct training provided by my local authority.**

**8.2 I cooperate with any Code of Conduct investigation and/or determination.**

**8.3 I do not intimidate or attempt to intimidate any person who is likely to be involved with the administration of any investigation or proceedings.**

**8.4 I comply with any sanction imposed on me following a finding that I have breached the Code of Conduct.**

It is extremely important for you as a councillor to demonstrate high standards, for you to have your actions open to scrutiny and for you not to undermine public trust in the local authority or its governance. If you do not understand or are concerned about the local authority's processes in handling a complaint you should raise this with your Monitoring Officer.

### **Protecting your reputation and the reputation of the local authority**

## **9. Interests**

### **As a councillor:**

**9.1 I register and disclose my interests.**

Section 29 of the Localism Act 2011 requires the Monitoring Officer to establish and maintain a register of interests of members of the authority .

You need to register your interests so that the public, local authority employees and fellow councillors know which of your interests might give rise to a conflict of interest. The register is a public document that can be consulted when (or before) an issue arises. The register also protects you by allowing you to demonstrate openness and a willingness to be held accountable. You are personally responsible for deciding whether or not you should disclose an interest in a meeting, but it can be helpful for you to know early on if others think that a potential conflict might arise. It is also important that the public know about any interest that might have to be disclosed by you or other councillors when making or taking part in decisions, so that decision making is seen by the public as open and honest. This helps to ensure that public confidence in the integrity of local governance is maintained.

You should note that failure to register or disclose a disclosable pecuniary interest as set out in **Table 1**, is a criminal offence under the Localism Act 2011.

**Appendix B sets** out the detailed provisions on registering and disclosing interests. If in doubt, you should always seek advice from your Monitoring Officer.



## **10. Gifts and hospitality**

**As a councillor:**

- 10.1 I do not accept gifts or hospitality, irrespective of estimated value, which could give rise to real or substantive personal gain or a reasonable suspicion of influence on my part to show favour from persons seeking to acquire, develop or do business with the local authority or from persons who may apply to the local authority for any permission, licence or other significant advantage.**
  
- 10.2 I register with the Monitoring Officer any gift or hospitality with an estimated value of at least £25 within 28 days of its receipt.**
  
- 10.3 I register with the Monitoring Officer any significant gift or hospitality that I have been offered but have refused to accept.**

In order to protect your position and the reputation of the local authority, you should exercise caution in accepting any gifts or hospitality which are (or which you reasonably believe to be) offered to you because you are a councillor. The presumption should always be not to accept significant gifts or hospitality. However, there may be times when such a refusal may be difficult if it is seen as rudeness in which case you could accept it but must ensure it is publicly registered. However, you do not need to register gifts and hospitality which are not related to your role as a councillor, such as Christmas gifts from your friends and family. It is also important to note that it is appropriate to accept normal expenses and hospitality associated with your duties as a councillor. If you are unsure, do contact your Monitoring Officer for guidance.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A – The Seven Principles of Public Life**

The principles are:

#### **Selflessness**

Holders of public office should act solely in terms of the public interest.

#### **Integrity**

Holders of public office must avoid placing themselves under any obligation to people or organisations that might try inappropriately to influence them in their work. They should not act or take decisions in order to gain financial or other material benefits for themselves, their family, or their friends. They must disclose and resolve any interests and relationships.

#### **Objectivity**

Holders of public office must act and take decisions impartially, fairly and on merit, using the best evidence and without discrimination or bias.

#### **Accountability**

Holders of public office are accountable to the public for their decisions and actions and must submit themselves to the scrutiny necessary to ensure this.

#### **Openness**

Holders of public office should act and take decisions in an open and transparent manner. Information should not be withheld from the public unless there are clear and lawful reasons for so doing.

#### **Honesty**

Holders of public office should be truthful.

#### **Leadership**

Holders of public office should exhibit these principles in their own behaviour. They should actively promote and robustly support the principles and be willing to challenge poor behaviour wherever it occurs.

## Appendix B Registering interests

Within 28 days of becoming a member or your re-election or re-appointment to office you must register with the Monitoring Officer the interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 1 (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests)** which are as described in "The Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012". You should also register details of your other personal interests which fall within the categories set out in **Table 2 (Other Registerable Interests)**.

**"Disclosable Pecuniary Interest"** means an interest of yourself, or of your partner if you are aware of your partner's interest, within the descriptions set out in Table 1 below.

**"Partner"** means a spouse or civil partner, or a person with whom you are living as husband or wife, or a person with whom you are living as if you are civil partners.

1. You must ensure that your register of interests is kept up-to-date and within 28 days of becoming aware of any new interest, or of any change to a registered interest, notify the Monitoring Officer.
2. A 'sensitive interest' is as an interest which, if disclosed, could lead to the councillor, or a person connected with the councillor, being subject to violence or intimidation.
3. Where you have a 'sensitive interest' you must notify the Monitoring Officer with the reasons why you believe it is a sensitive interest. If the Monitoring Officer agrees they will withhold the interest from the public register.

### Non participation in case of disclosable pecuniary interest

4. Where a matter arises at a meeting which directly relates to one of your Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in **Table 1**, you must disclose the interest, not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest, just that you have an interest. Dispensation may be granted in limited circumstances, to enable you to participate and vote on a matter in which you have a disclosable pecuniary interest.
5. Where you have a disclosable pecuniary interest on a matter to be considered or is being considered by you as a Cabinet member in exercise of your executive function, you must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest and must not take any steps or further steps in the matter apart from arranging for someone else to deal with it

### Disclosure of Other Registerable Interests

6. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to one of your Other Registerable Interests (as set out in **Table 2**), you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting but otherwise must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

## Disclosure of Non-Registerable Interests

7. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **directly relates** to your financial interest or well-being (and is not a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest set out in Table 1) or a financial interest or well-being of a relative or close associate, you must disclose the interest. You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation. If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.
8. Where a matter arises at a meeting which **affects** –
  - a. your own financial interest or well-being;
  - b. a financial interest or well-being of a relative, close associate; or
  - c. a body included in those you need to disclose under Other Registrable Interests as set out in **Table 2**

you must disclose the interest. In order to determine whether you can remain in the meeting after disclosing your interest the following test should be applied

9. Where a matter **affects** your financial interest or well-being:
  - a. to a greater extent than it affects the financial interests of the majority of inhabitants of the ward affected by the decision and;
  - b. a reasonable member of the public knowing all the facts would believe that it would affect your view of the wider public interest

You may speak on the matter only if members of the public are also allowed to speak at the meeting. Otherwise you must not take part in any discussion or vote on the matter and must not remain in the room unless you have been granted a dispensation.

If it is a 'sensitive interest', you do not have to disclose the nature of the interest.

10. Where you have a personal interest in any business of your authority and you have made an executive decision in relation to that business, you must make sure that any written statement of that decision records the existence and nature of your interest.

### Table 1: Disclosable Pecuniary Interests

This table sets out the explanation of Disclosable Pecuniary Interests as set out in the [Relevant Authorities \(Disclosable Pecuniary Interests\) Regulations 2012](#).

<b>Subject</b>	<b>Description</b>
<b>Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation</b>	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain. [Any unpaid directorship.]
<b>Sponsorship</b>	Any payment or provision of any other financial benefit (other than from the council) made to the councillor during the previous 12-month period for expenses incurred by him/her in carrying out his/her duties as a councillor, or towards his/her election expenses. This includes any payment or financial benefit from a trade union within the meaning of the Trade Union and Labour Relations (Consolidation) Act 1992.
<b>Contracts</b>	Any contract made between the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the

	<p>councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (or a firm in which such person is a partner, or an incorporated body of which such person is a director* or a body that such person has a beneficial interest in the securities of*) and the council —</p> <p>(a) under which goods or services are to be provided or works are to be executed; and</p> <p>(b) which has not been fully discharged.</p>
<b>Land and Property</b>	<p>Any beneficial interest in land which is within the area of the council.</p> <p>'Land' excludes an easement, servitude, interest or right in or over land which does not give the councillor or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners (alone or jointly with another) a right to occupy or to receive income.</p>
<b>Licenses</b>	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer</p>
<b>Corporate tenancies</b>	<p>Any tenancy where (to the councillor's knowledge)—</p> <p>(a) the landlord is the council; and</p> <p>(b) the tenant is a body that the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were spouses/civil partners is a partner of or a director* of or has a beneficial interest in the securities* of.</p>
<b>Securities</b>	<p>Any beneficial interest in securities* of a body where—</p> <p>(a) that body (to the councillor's knowledge) has a place of business or land in the area of the council; and</p> <p>(b) either—</p> <p>(i) the total nominal value of the securities* exceeds £25,000 or one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that body; or</p> <p>(ii) if the share capital of that body is of more than one class, the total nominal value of the shares of any one class in which the councillor, or his/her spouse or civil partner or the person with whom the councillor is living as if they were</p>

	spouses/civil partners has a beneficial interest exceeds one hundredth of the total issued share capital of that class.
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\* 'director' includes a member of the committee of management of an industrial and provident society.

\* 'securities' means shares, debentures, debenture stock, loan stock, bonds, units of a collective investment scheme within the meaning of the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 and other securities of any description, other than money deposited with a building society.

**Table 2: Other Registrable Interests**

You have a personal interest in any business of your authority where it relates to or is likely to affect:

- a) any body of which you are in general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
- b) any body
  - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
  - (ii) any body directed to charitable purposes or
  - (iii) one of whose principal purposes includes the influence of public opinion or policy (including any political party or trade union)

## Appendix C – the Committee on Standards in Public Life

The LGA has undertaken this review whilst the Government continues to consider the recommendations made by the Committee on Standards in Public Life in their report on [Local Government Ethical Standards](#). If the Government chooses to implement any of the recommendations, this could require a change to this Code.

The recommendations cover:

- Recommendations for changes to the Localism Act 2011 to clarify in law when the Code of Conduct applies
- The introduction of sanctions
- An appeals process through the Local Government Ombudsman
- Changes to the Relevant Authorities (Disclosable Pecuniary Interests) Regulations 2012
- Updates to the Local Government Transparency Code
- Changes to the role and responsibilities of the Independent Person
- That the criminal offences in the Localism Act 2011 relating to Disclosable Pecuniary Interests should be abolished

The Local Government Ethical Standards report also includes Best Practice recommendations. These are:

**Best practice 1:** Local authorities should include prohibitions on bullying and harassment in codes of conduct. These should include a definition of bullying and harassment, supplemented with a list of examples of the sort of behaviour covered by such a definition.

**Best practice 2:** Councils should include provisions in their code of conduct requiring councillors to comply with any formal standards investigation and prohibiting trivial or malicious allegations by councillors.

**Best practice 3:** Principal authorities should review their code of conduct each year and regularly seek, where possible, the views of the public, community organisations and neighbouring authorities.

**Best practice 4:** An authority's code should be readily accessible to both councillors and the public, in a prominent position on a council's website and available in council premises.

**Best practice 5:** Local authorities should update their gifts and hospitality register at least once per quarter, and publish it in an accessible format, such as CSV.

**Best practice 6:** Councils should publish a clear and straightforward public interest test against which allegations are filtered.

**Best practice 7:** Local authorities should have access to at least two Independent Persons.

**Best practice 8:** An Independent Person should be consulted as to whether to undertake a formal investigation on an allegation, and should be given the option to



review and comment on allegations which the responsible officer is minded to dismiss as being without merit, vexatious, or trivial.

**Best practice 9:** Where a local authority makes a decision on an allegation of misconduct following a formal investigation, a decision notice should be published as soon as possible on its website, including a brief statement of facts, the provisions of the code engaged by the allegations, the view of the Independent Person, the reasoning of the decision-maker, and any sanction applied.

**Best practice 10:** A local authority should have straightforward and accessible guidance on its website on how to make a complaint under the code of conduct, the process for handling complaints, and estimated timescales for investigations and outcomes.

**Best practice 11:** Formal standards complaints about the conduct of a parish councillor towards a clerk should be made by the chair or by the parish council, rather than the clerk in all but exceptional circumstances.

**Best practice 12:** Monitoring Officers' roles should include providing advice, support and management of investigations and adjudications on alleged breaches to parish councils within the remit of the principal authority. They should be provided with adequate training, corporate support and resources to undertake this work.

**Best practice 13:** A local authority should have procedures in place to address any conflicts of interest when undertaking a standards investigation. Possible steps should include asking the Monitoring Officer from a different authority to undertake the investigation.

**Best practice 14:** Councils should report on separate bodies they have set up or which they own as part of their annual governance statement and give a full picture of their relationship with those bodies. Separate bodies created by local authorities should abide by the Nolan principle of openness and publish their board agendas and minutes and annual reports in an accessible place.

**Best practice 15:** Senior officers should meet regularly with political group leaders or group whips to discuss standards issues.

***The LGA has committed to reviewing the Code on an annual basis to ensure it is still fit for purpose.***

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## POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 29 JANUARY 2024

### PART I - DELEGATED

#### 9. 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 There are no specific risk management implications in this report.

##### 5. Recommendation

5.1 That the Committee agrees the items included in the Work Programme.

#### **Report prepared by:**

Cameron MacLean, Interim Senior 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
4.	Street Trading Policy following consultation		13 November 2023	To receive a report	Written report	Head of Regulatory Services	To consider the recommendations
7	Housing Delivery Test Action plan		4 December 2023	To receive a report	Written report	Head of Planning Policy and Conservation	To consider any recommendations
9	Review of Strategic Risks		4 December 2023	Written Report	Written Report	Emergency Planning and Risks Manager	To consider the recommendations
10	Draft Service Plans 2024-27		13 November/ 4 December 2023	To receive a report	Written report	Director of Finance/Head of Finance/Head of Community Partnerships	To receive a report
11.	Financial Planning 2024-2027		29 January 2024	To receive a report	Written Report	DoF and Service Heads	To recommend the budget to Council
12.	P10 Budget Monitoring Report		11 March 2024	To receive a report	Written report	Finance Business Partner	To make any recommendations to Council

**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
13.	Appointment to the P&R Committee sub-committees		10 June 2024	To receive a report	Written report	Committee and Elections Manager	To receive a report.
14.	Member Training		15 July 2024	To receive a report	Written report	Committee and Elections Manager	To consider any recommendations
15.	Budget Monitoring Report (Period 4)		9 September 2023	To receive a report	Written report	Head of Finance/ Finance Business Partner	To make recommendations to Council
16.	Calendar of meetings 2026/27		9 September 2024	To receive a report	Written report	Committee and Elections Manager	To recommend the calendar to Council
17.	Public space protection order report following public consultation		27 January 2025	To receive a report following the public consultation	Written Report	Head of Community Services	To make a recommendation to Council

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
18	Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) once the Government have reviewed CIL		<p><i>CIL will still be reviewed alongside the Local Plan but only at the point where policies and sites have been formally agreed as CIL has to be based on the effects of the policies and relate to the allocated sites.</i></p> <p><i>It is currently anticipated that a report will be due in 2025. This of course depends on the progress on the Local Plan.</i></p>	To receive a report	Written report	DCES/Head of Planning Policy and Projects	To consider any recommendations
19	Article 4 Direction		Tbc – date in 2023	To receive a report	Written report	Head of Planning Policy and Conservation	To consider any recommendations
20	Parking Management Policies/Parking Infrastructure Plan		Date to be confirmed	To receive a report	Written report	Head of Regulatory Services/Senior Transport Officer	To consider recommendations

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
21	CORPORATE FRAMEWORK 2026-2029		To be confirmed	To receive the corporate framework for 2026-2029	To receive a report	Head of Community Partnerships	To make recommendations to council

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