

ANNUAL COUNCIL

NOTICE AND AGENDA

For a meeting to be held on Tuesday, 20 May 2025 at 7.30 pm at Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth.

Members of the Annual Council:-

Councillors:

Christopher Alley
Oliver Cooper
Ian Campbell
Stephen Cox
Harry Davies
Steve Drury
Vicky Edwards
Andrea Fraser
Elinor Gazzard
Stephen Giles-Medhurst
Rue Grewal
Philip Hearn
Lisa Hudson
Tony Humphreys
Khalid Hussain
Raj Khiroya
Joan King
Stephen King
Chris Lloyd
David Major

Keith Martin
Abbas Merali
Chris Mitchell
Debbie Morris
Ian Morris
Sarah Nelmes
Louise Price
Kevin Raeburn
Paul Rainbow
Reena Ranger
Ciaran Reed
Andrew Scarth
Narinder Sian
Mike Sims
Tom Smith
Cheryl Stungo
Jon Tankard
Chris Whately-Smith
Anne Winter

*Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive
Date Not Specified*

4. Minutes of the Previous Meeting (Pages 5 - 24)

To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meetings of
7 January 2025 and 25 February 2025

5. Apologies for absence

9. To appoint the Deputy Leader and Lead Members (Pages 25 - 28)

The Leader to advise the Council in relation to:

- a) The appointment of the Deputy Leader

- b) The appointment of Lead Members and their portfolio areas

For Council to then make the appointments.

10. Review of Political Proportionality and Appointment of Committees (Pages 29 - 38)

To appoint the committees of the Council for the ensuing year, to determine the number of Members on each committee and to review the political proportionality of the committees.

11. Appointment of members to committees (Pages 39 - 46)

In accordance with the allocation of seats, as determined at Item 8 above, and having regard to the nominations of the political groups (to be laid on the table), to appoint members to the following committees for the 2025/26 municipal year:

- a) Policy & Resources Committee
- b) General Public Services & Community Engagement Committee
- c) Climate Change and Leisure Committee
- d) Planning Committee
- e) Licensing Committee
- f) Regulatory Services Committee
- g) Audit Committee
- h) Council Tax Setting Committee

12. Nomination of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of Committees (Pages 47 - 50)

To appoint Chairs and Vice-Chairs to the Committees established at Item 8 above.

13. Appointments to outside bodies (Pages 51 - 58)

To appoint council representatives to outside bodies

14. Appointment of Sub-Committees and other bodies of Council (Pages 59 - 70)

To appoint the following Sub Committees of the Council and to appoint the membership thereof having regard to the nominations of the political groups, as laid on the table:

- a) Local Plan Sub Committee
- b) Appointments Committee
- c) Appeals Committee
- d) Investigatory & Disciplinary Committee

15. Appointment of the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the Local Area Forums (Pages 71 - 78)

Council considered the proposed appointments to the

positions of Chair and Vice-chair of the Local Area Forums for the ensuing municipal year.

16. Batchworth Neighbourhood Development Plan: Result of Referendum

17. Recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee: Constitution Amendments - Code of Conduct and debt write-offs (Pages 79 - 96)

This report proposes two amendments to the Council's constitution related to updates to the LGA Model Code of Conduct and providing a delegation to the Director of Finance to write off irrecoverable debts.

18. Notification of Election Results

To note the results of the District Council By-Elections on 19 March 2025 for Abbots Langley and Bedmond, Ian Campbell Conservatives and 1 May 2025 for Durrants Ward, Paul Rainbow Liberal Democrats

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

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public on agenda items at the Annual Council 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.

The meeting may be livestreamed and an audio recording of the meeting will be made.

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Public Document Pack Agenda Item 4

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

At an Extraordinary meeting of the Full Council held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Tuesday, 7 January 2025 from 7.30 - 9.40 pm

Present: Councillors Councillor Raj Khiroya, Councillor Tony Humphreys, Christopher Alley, Oliver Cooper, Stephen Cox, Steve Drury, Vicky Edwards, Andrea Fraser, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Elinor Gazzard, Philip Hearn, Lisa Hudson, Stephen King, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Abbas Merali, Debbie Morris, Chris Mitchell, Louise Price, Kevin Raeburn, Reena Ranger, Ciaran Reed, Andrew Scarth, Narinder Sian, Mike Sims, Tom Smith, Jonathon Solomons, Cheryl Stungo, Jon Tankard and Anne Winter

Officers in Attendance:

Leah Mickleborough, Interim Committees and Elections Manager
Stephen Rix, Associate Director, Legal and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)
Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive

External in Attendance:

6 members of the public

42 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sara Bedford, Harry Davies, Rue Grewal, Khalid Hussain, Joan King, Ian Morris, Sarah Nelmes, Kevin Raeburn and Chris Whatley-Smith.

Councillor Tom Smith had given apologies that he would be arriving late to the meeting.

The Chair noted that Councillor Sarah Nelmes had suffered an accident and asked Council to join him in wishing her well in her recovery.

43 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

Following this item, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst proposed a motion without notice, seeking to suspend Council procedure rules 11(6) and 16(6) which would, in his view, allow full and extensive debate on agenda item 3 which otherwise would not be debated.

The Chair asked Council whether this could be agreed by consent, to which Councillor Oliver Cooper confirmed that whilst his group would not object to the suspension of rule 11(6), they could not support the suspension of rule 16(6) and he was seeking for a separate vote on each suspension.

Given that the matter could not be resolved by general assent, the motion was seconded by Councillor Chris Lloyd who requested it be taken straight to the vote. As the motion was yet to be debated, the Chair called on Councillor Oliver Cooper who indicated his desire to speak.

Councillor Cooper re-confirmed his support for the suspension of rule 11(6) but felt the suspension of rule 16(6) was undemocratic. He reminded Council that rule 16(6) was common to many Council constitutions, and in his view, an integral part of Council procedure; that if members disagreed with a motion, then they should vote against it.

With no further members wishing to speak, the motion without notice was put to the vote and **CARRIED** with 18 votes in favour and 11 against.

44 MOTIONS

The Chair called on Councillor Oliver Cooper to present his motion.

Councillor Cooper felt his motion was the most important decision to be made in the history of the Council. In his view it provided a choice between protecting the green belt, through submitting a local plan based on the low growth option pursued by the council, or a local plan that was based on the housing targets set by the government.

He reminded Council of how the emerging National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) had established higher housing targets, which particularly impacted the Three Rivers area, and made it more challenging to use provisions in the NPPF allowing Councils to protect green belts. He identified several development sites that the Council had both included in the draft local plan, and considered for inclusion, and informed Council that these sites would not be sufficient to meet the government's housing targets.

He reminded Council that since it met on 12 December to agree the Local Development Scheme, the final version of the NPPF had been published. This provides Councils the opportunity to submit plans based on the previous NPPF until 12 March, rather than January, as had been anticipated. He felt that the amendments to the Council's decision in December, which had been rejected, could have provided the Council with a way to submit the local plan in March had they been taken forward.

In conclusion, he emphasised that the years of work the Council had invested in the local plan should not be wasted and the Council put at the mercy of the government's policies and housing targets.

The Chair called on Councillor Vicky Edwards to second the motion. In doing so, Councillor Edwards emphasised the urgent need to submit the local plan under the previous NPPF and the potential impact of the new government housing targets, which she felt would have a terrible impact on the district. She explained the 5 criteria in the new NPPF that would have to be met to protect the green belt, which she felt was a high bar to achieve, and the only safe route for the Council was to submit the current draft local plan by 12 March.

Councillor Ciaran Reed indicated to the Chair that he wished to propose an amendment. With the general assent of Council, the Chair adjourned the meeting to allow for Councillor Reed's proposed amendment to be circulated to members for consideration.

The meeting adjourned from 7:54pm to 8:04pm

Councillor Reed explained that the amendment sought to remove the requirement to produce further documents that he felt would be unnecessary ahead of the local plan submission, most notably the Gypsy and Traveller Site Assessment. He referred to other councils which had submitted their local plans for examination with a commitment to submitting the Gypsy and Traveller Site Assessment at a later date. Agreement of the amendment would give the best chance to submit a local plan by 12 March, even if work needed to be undertaken at a later date.

Councillor Philip Hearn seconded the amendment and reserved his right to speak.

The Chair invited members to debate the motion.

Councillor Oliver Cooper spoke in support of the amendment. He cited the case of Maidstone Borough Council, as well as other Councils, who had submitted their local plans for examination without up to date Gypsy and Traveller policies. He believed there may also be other policy documents that were not necessary prior to submission, and the amendment delegated officers to make this determination.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst spoke against the amendment. He believed that the other authorities that had submitted plans without an up-to-date Gypsy and Traveller Site Assessment had done so in different circumstances. He reminded Council that since the low growth option had been brought forward, some sites had been withdrawn so a new sustainability assessment was required, and furthermore, the Council's officers had been clear that failure to submit a complete plan would mean that the Planning Inspector would automatically find it unsound. He drew Council's attention to the timeframes involved, and to achieve submission of the local plan by 12 March would require the regulation 19 consultation to start within 2 weeks.

Councillor Cooper requested his right of reply. The Chair considered that as Councillor Cooper had already spoken to the amendment, he would move to the vote.

With 11 votes in favour, and 18 against, the amendment **FELL**.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst indicated he wished to propose an amendment. With the general assent of the Council, the Chair adjourned the meeting to allow for Councillor Giles-Medhurst's proposed amendment to be circulated to members for consideration.

The meeting adjourned from 8:15pm to 8:25pm. Councillor Tom Smith joined the meeting at 8:30pm.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst introduced his motion. He started by referring to the 15,000 homes that had been mentioned previously in the meeting as the new growth target, and indicated that this was an 18 year target, whereas the local plan was over a 16 year period and plan preparation would be taken into account.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst confirmed his belief the Council had received clear legal and professional expertise that if the plan was submitted in March, it would be immediately rejected as it was deficient. He referenced organisations he had spoken to that accepted the plan was inadequate at present, and he believed that the best way to protect the green belt was to obtain further evidence to demonstrate the exceptional circumstances as had been agreed by Council in December.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Chris Mitchell, who reserved his right to speak.

The Chair invited members to debate the motion.

Several members raised concerns over the timeframe that the existing plan had taken to be developed, and that it had not been submitted ahead of the new NPPF being produced. They referenced previous statements made by the Council and Councillors about wanting to protect the green belt and timeframes put forward for the local plan which had not been achieved.

In response, it was highlighted that the Council had to respond to changing national planning policy as the local plan was developed, and listen and respond to comments made in feedback.

Reference was made to sites within the green belt that Councillors were concerned would come forwards, particularly if the Council did not have an agreed local plan which could lead to speculative proposals being submitted by developers. On the other hand, it was argued,

obtaining further evidence to support the green belt under the new NPPF rather than submitting a defective plan at this stage could help the Council more in the long-term. Whilst there were clear divisions as to how the Council could best protect the green belt, there was consensus of the need to work together to do so.

Councillor Chris Mitchell, exercising his right to speak, noted that he wished the motion was the way forwards, but that for him the best way to protect the green belt was to proceed with the decision from December. The programme of work had to be accelerated and closely monitored in order to submit a robust local plan.

Councillor Oliver Cooper responded to the amendment. Whilst he did not support it, he recognised the importance of clear timeframes and monitoring of these if the amendment was passed. He emphasised that whilst officers can advise Councillors on the way forward, ultimately it is for Councillors to determine and his view, the Council's leadership had not delivered.

The amendment was put to the vote and with 18 votes in favour and 11 votes against, was **CARRIED**

The debate returned to the substantive motion, as amended.

Concern was raised that the new timeline within the amended motion would lead to the council committing to the housing targets within the new NPPF. This was disputed, in that the intention was to obtain further evidence to enable the council to submit a plan based on the low growth model. Funding would be included within the Council's forthcoming budget to support the work required, and the Council may be eligible for grant funding.

Councillor Ciaran Reed left the meeting from 9:25pm to 9:26pm

Concern remained amongst Councillors as to whether the new timelines would be achieved, and how residents, whom the Councillors were representing, would feel about the situation and the level of Councillor responsibility for it. Arguments were made as to whether the green belt would be more likely to be protected through a plan being submitted in March, or through obtaining further evidence and submitting a plan on revised timelines.

During debate, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst raised a point of personal explanation to clarify that some members were in receipt of special responsibility allowances, and not salaries. Councillor Oliver Cooper raised a point of order that a personal explanation must relate to something that Councillor has previously said. The Chair requested for Council to resume debate.

In his right of reply, Councillor Oliver Cooper reminded Council that the current local plan was adopted in 2013, and the Council has consistently failed to achieve a 5 year land supply which placed it at risk from speculative development. He felt had his proposals in October to accelerate the timetable for submitting the local plan be adopted, it might now have been possible to do so. In concluding, he re-iterated the importance of the green belt and committed to working to support policies to protect it.

The Chair put the motion, as amended, to the vote and with 19 votes in favour and 11 against, it was **CARRIED**

The meeting closed at 9:40pm

CHAIRMAN

Addendum 1: Amendment proposed by Councillor Ciaran Reed, seconded by Councillor Philip Hearn:

After the third bullet, add a new paragraph that reads: “This Council also notes the approach taken by Maidstone (which passed Examination), Harrow (which is due for Submission), and other councils to separate parts of the plan that had yet to be completed into a separate Development Plan Document. This allows them to be completed later, provided they are then subject to a further Regulation 19.”

In the numbered list, add a new first point that reads: “1) Separate from the Low Growth Option of the draft Local Plan the Gypsy & Traveller site allocations and any other works that in the opinion of officers cannot be completed in time for Regulation 19 or submission; to begin work on separate Development Plan Document or separate Development Plan Documents including those elements; and to make any such amendments to the Low Growth Option that are required to refer to that separate Development Plan Document or those separate Development Plan Documents;”

As a result, the amended motion would read:

Three Rivers District Council notes that the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has unprecedented consequences for Three Rivers’ Green Belt.

Most importantly, the new NPPF requires councils to revise Green Belt boundaries and makes housebuilding targets mandatory for Local Plans submitted under it.

By contrast, under the previous NPPF (dated 20th December 2023), there was no requirement to review the Green Belt boundary and housebuilding targets were not mandatory. This allowed councils to propose significantly less building on the Green Belt than implied by the Standard Method: as Three Rivers proposed until 10th December.

The new NPPF, published on 12th December 2024, differs from the previous draft dated 30th July 2024 in several crucial ways. **These requires and allows a change of approach by Three Rivers.**

- The new Standard Method has been increased to 839 dwellings a year. That is 1,750 dwellings higher than the July draft NPPF over the 18-year plan period and 3,600 higher than the previous Standard Method over the plan period. It is three times as high as the Low Growth Option, requiring over 10,000 more homes over the Local Plan period than had been proposed.
- Paragraph 146 of the new NPPF makes it more difficult than the July 2024 draft did for councils to argue that they should not review Green Belt boundaries. It now says that the Green Belt must be considered for allocation unless it would (new words emphasised) “fundamentally undermine the purposes (*taken together*) of the *remaining* Green Belt”. As a result, fundamentally undermining only one purpose is not sufficient to exempt sites, as Three Rivers had presumed.
- Paragraph 234(b) of the new NPPF allows councils to opt to have Local Plans examined under the previous NPPF provided they are submitted for Examination before 12th March 2025, not 12th January 2025 as Three Rivers had presumed.

This Council also notes the approach taken by Maidstone (which passed Examination), Harrow (which is due for Submission), and other councils to separate parts of the plan that had yet to be completed into a separate Development Plan Document. This allows them to be completed later, provided they are then subject to a further Regulation 19.

In light of this, Three Rivers both must and can change its approach to avoid the new Local Plan being examined under the revised NPPF.

Three Rivers District Council therefore resolves to:

1. Separate from the Low Growth Option of the draft Local Plan the Gypsy & Traveller site allocations and any other works that in the opinion of officers cannot be completed in time for Regulation 19 or submission; to begin work on separate Development Plan Document or separate Development Plan Documents including those elements; and to make any such amendments to the Low Growth Option that are required to refer to that separate Development Plan Document or those separate Development Plan Documents;
2. Conduct a Regulation 19 consultation on the Low Growth Option draft Local Plan over a period of six weeks to close before 28th February 2025, and to delegate to officers authority to decide the details including dates for which that opens, but in any event to open at the earliest date practicable;
3. Instruct and delegate authority to officers to conduct all works necessary to:
 - a. conduct the Regulation 19 consultation above; and
 - b. submit the Local Plan to examination by 12th March 2025 and to comply with paragraph 234(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework, so that it is examined under the previous National Planning Policy Framework dated 20th December 2023;
4. Amend the Local Development Scheme to reflect the above, namely to conduct a Regulation 19 consultation in January-February 2025 and submit to examination by 12th March 2025;
5. Instruct and delegate authority to officers to complete compilation of the evidence base and any further work required for the Low Growth Option to be examined;
6. Delegate to officers authority to procure external advice or other work to complete the above; and
7. Approve a supplement to the budget of a maximum of £250,000 in the financial year 2024-25 to complete the above, to be removed from unearmarked reserves, and for all unspent monies to be returned to unearmarked reserves.

Addendum 2: Amendment Proposed by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, seconded by Councillor Chris Mitchell:

(Wording to be removed shown as struck through; new wording to be added in bold font)

Three Rivers District Council notes that the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) **as did the previous NPPF** has ~~unprecedented~~ consequences for Three Rivers' Green Belt. ~~Most importantly, the new NPPF requires councils to revise Green Belt boundaries and makes housebuilding targets mandatory for Local Plans submitted under it. By contrast, under the previous NPPF (dated 20th December 2023), there was no requirement to review the Green Belt boundary and housebuilding targets were not mandatory. This allowed councils to propose significantly less building on the Green Belt than implied by the Standard Method: as Three Rivers proposed until 10th December. The new NPPF, published on 12th December 2024, differs from the previous draft dated 30th July 2024 in several crucial ways. These requires and allows a change of approach by Three Rivers.~~

· The new Standard Method has been increased to 839 dwellings a year **from 739**. That is **13,312** ~~1,750 dwellings higher than the July draft NPPF over the 18~~ **16-year plan period and 3,600 higher than the previous Standard Method over the plan period.** It is three times as high

as the Low Growth Option, requiring ~~over around 10,000~~ **9,000** more homes over the Local Plan period than had been proposed.

- Paragraph 146 of the new NPPF **says** ~~makes it more difficult than the July 2024 draft did for~~ councils to argue that they should not review Green Belt boundaries. It now says that the Green Belt must be considered for allocation unless it would (new words emphasised) clear ~~“fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt”~~. As a result, ~~fundamentally undermining only one purpose is not sufficient to exempt sites, as Three Rivers had presumed.~~ **“Exceptional circumstances in this context include, but are not limited to, instances where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means. If that is the case, authorities should review Green Belt boundaries in accordance with the policies in this Framework and propose alterations to meet these needs in full, unless the review provides clear evidence that doing so would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt, when considered across the area of the plan.”** Officers have confirmed that this will require more evidence work to be more robust than the previous review but consider this remains still the best way to protect our Green Belt by looking at suitable sites that are then fed into the green belt review as only then would we know the impact on the remaining green belt thus enabling the removal of sites that undermine the remaining green belt.

- Whilst Paragraph 234(b) of the new NPPF allows councils to opt to have Local Plans examined under the previous NPPF provided they are submitted for Examination before 12th March 2025, not 12th January 2025 ~~as Three Rivers had presumed.~~ In light of this, Three Rivers both must and can change its approach to avoid the new Local Plan being examined under the revised NPPF. **However, the clear officer and legal advice in light of the NPPF changes a proposal to submit by the 12th March is not feasible and unachievable and would incur unbudgeted expenditure.** The proposed Low Growth option has now, due to changes to site requirements to meet planning policies and the withdrawal of sites with reduced numbers, means the number proposed would be circa 4,000. In addition, the new requirement to find 41 gypsy pitches and 6 for travelling show people, would mean that a Regulation 19 submission with all the legally required paperwork would not be able to be submitted, along with the 6 weeks statutory consultation, and to be a legally sound plan as required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. That would mean that the plan would be found as ‘unsound’ at examination making the Council liable for additional costs and HM Government intervention and a likely requirement to produce a plan within 18 months fully meeting the new NPPF.

- Council also notes that the Three Rivers Joint Residents’ Association and the Can’t Replace Green Space group both support the Council’s current position and that it is impractical to now submit the low growth Regulation 19 and that the agreed way forward at the Council meeting on 10th December as detailed below is best approach to protecting our Green Belt.

Three Rivers District Council therefore resolves to:

1. ~~Conduct a Regulation 19 consultation on the Low Growth Option draft Local Plan over a period of six weeks to close before 28th February 2025, and to delegate to officers’ authority to decide the details including dates for which that opens, but in any event to open at the earliest date practicable;~~ **Confirm the decision of the December 10th Council Meeting.**
2. Instruct and delegate authority to officers to conduct all works necessary to:
 - a. ~~Conduct the Regulation 19 consultation above;~~ and b. ~~submit the Local Plan to examination by 12th March 2025 and to comply with paragraph 234(b) of the National Planning Policy Framework, so that it is examined under the previous National Planning Policy Framework dated 20th December 2023;~~ **work on the best way to protect Three Rivers Green Belt, and thus produce a plan with a lower number than required under the new NPPF, and to undertake the following updated work , and any other, work in support of that namely :**
 - Green Belt review

- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) work
- Sustainability assessment
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
- Whole Plan Viability Assessment
- Transport Assessment
- Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study update
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Urban Capacity Study Update
- New call for sites
- Gypsy and Traveller sites

3. ~~Amend the Local Development Scheme to reflect the above, namely to conduct a Regulation 19 consultation in January-February 2025 and submit to examination by 12th March 2025;~~ **Confirm the current Local Development Scheme but that officers now work towards a timescale to amend this so that the Council might be in a position to have a Regulation 19 for public consultation no later than 7th November 2025 so to avoid the Christmas break.**

4. Instruct and delegate authority to officers to complete compilation of the evidence base and any further work required; ~~for the Low Growth Option to be examined~~

5. Delegate to officers' authority to procure external advice or other work to complete the above; and

6. ~~Approve a supplement to the budget of a maximum of £250,000 in the financial year 2024-25 to complete the above, to be removed from unearmarked reserves, and for all unspent monies to be returned to unearmarked reserves.~~ **Note that the administration provided an additional £200,000 in the current year's budget for the extra Local Plan work and will budget for a similar or larger figure in next year's budget in February, as required, as well as bidding for the £70,000 towards its Green Belt review for which it is eligible under the agreed Local Development Scheme but would not be if a regulation 19 was submitted.**

7. **As soon as possible, set a target growth figure that can be justified by the draft evidence and have a reasonable chance of being adopted.**

8. **To establish a detailed programme for delivery of this important work.**

- **Establish clear deadlines for individual studies to ensure they are ready before November 2025**
- **Develop and publish a detailed timeline for completing each step of the plan.**
- **Set up a series of Local plan sub committees to review and monitor the programme, and set dates for agreement at P&R and Full council meetings**

So that the motion now reads:

Three Rivers District Council notes that the new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) as did the previous NPPF has consequences for Three Rivers' Green Belt.

- The new Standard Method has been increased to 839 dwellings a year from 739. That is 13,312 over the 16-year plan period. It is three times as high as the Low Growth Option, requiring around 9,000 more homes over the Local Plan period than had been proposed.
- Paragraph 146 of the new NPPF says “Exceptional circumstances in this context include, but are not limited to, instances where an authority cannot meet its identified need for homes, commercial or other development through other means. If that is the case, authorities should review Green Belt boundaries in accordance with the policies in this Framework and propose alterations to meet these needs in full, unless the review provides clear evidence that doing so would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt, when considered across the area of the plan.” Officers have confirmed that this will require more evidence work to be more robust than the previous review but consider this remains still the best way to protect our Green Belt by looking at suitable sites that are then fed into the green belt review as only then would we know the impact on the remaining green belt thus enabling the removal of sites that undermine the remaining green belt.
- Whilst Paragraph 234(b) of the new NPPF allows councils to opt to have Local Plans examined under the previous NPPF provided they are submitted for Examination before 12th March 2025, not 12th January 2025. However, the clear officer and legal advice in light of the NPPF changes a proposal to submit by the 12th March is not feasible and unachievable and would incur unbudgeted expenditure. The proposed Low Growth option has now, due to changes to site requirements to meet planning policies and the withdrawal of sites with reduced numbers, means the number proposed would be circa 4,000. In addition, the new requirement to find 41 gypsy pitches and 6 for travelling show people, would mean that a Regulation 19 submission with all the legally required paperwork would not be able to be submitted, along with the 6 weeks statutory consultation, and to be a legally sound plan as required under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. That would mean that the plan would be found as ‘unsound’ at examination making the Council liable for additional costs and HM Government intervention and a likely requirement to produce a plan within 18 months fully meeting the new NPPF.
- Council also notes that the Three Rivers Joint Residents’ Association and the Can’t Replace Green Space group both support the Council’s current position and that its impractical to now submit the low growth Regulation 19 and that the agreed way forward at the Council meeting on 10th December as detailed below is best approach to protecting our Green Belt.

Three Rivers District Council therefore resolves to:

1. Confirm the decision of the December 10th Council Meeting.

2. Instruct and delegate authority to officers to conduct all works necessary to work on the best way to protect Three Rivers Green Belt, and thus produce a plan with a lower number than required under the new NPPF, and to undertake the following updated work, and any other, work in support of that namely:

- Green Belt review
- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) work
- Sustainability assessment
- Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA)
- Whole Plan Viability Assessment
- Transport Assessment
- Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study update
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan
- Urban Capacity Study Update
- New call for sites
- Gypsy and Traveller sites

3. Confirm the current Local Development Scheme but that officers now work towards a timescale to amend this so that the Council might be in a position to have a Regulation 19 for public consultation no later than 7th November 2025 so to avoid the Christmas break.

4. Instruct and delegate authority to officers to complete compilation of the evidence base and any further work required;

5. Delegate to officers' authority to procure external advice or other work to complete the above; and

6. Note that the administration provided an additional £200,000 in the current year's budget for the extra Local Plan work and will budget for a similar or larger figure in next year's budget in February, as required, as well as bidding for the £70,000 towards its Green Belt review for which it is eligible under the agreed Local Development Scheme but would not be if a regulation 19 was submitted.

7. As soon as possible, set a target growth figure that can be justified by the draft evidence and have a reasonable chance of being adopted.

8. To establish a detailed programme for delivery of this important work.

- Establish clear deadlines for individual studies to ensure they are ready before November 2025
- Develop and publish a detailed timeline for completing each step of the plan.

- Set up a series of Local plan sub committees to review and monitor the programme, and set dates for agreement at P&R and Full council meetings

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Full Council MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Tuesday, 25 February 2025 from Times Not Specified

Present: Councillors Councillor Raj Khiroya, Tony Humphries, Oliver Cooper, Stephen Cox, Harry Davies, Steve Drury, Vicky Edwards, Andrea Fraser, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Elinor Gazzard, Philip Hearn, Khalid Hussain, Joan King, Stephen King, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Abbas Merali, Chris Mitchell, Sarah Nelmes, Louise Price, Kevin Raeburn, Reena Ranger, Ciaran Reed, Andrew Scarth, Narinder Sian, Tom Smith, Cheryl Stungo, Jon Tankard, Chris Whately-Smith and Anne Winter

Kimberley Grout, Associate Director, Corporate and Community Services
Leah Mickleborough, Interim Committee and Elections Manager
Stephen Rix, Associate Director, Legal and Democratic Services
Alison Scott, Director of Finance
Emma Sheridan, Associate Director for Environment
Jo Wagstaffe, Chief Executive

External in Attendance:

6 members of the public

45 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Chris Alley, Rue Grewal, Lisa Hudson, Debbie Morris, Ian Morris, Mike Sims and Jonathon Solomons

46 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interest were received.

47 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

Members considered the minutes of the meeting of 10 December 2024. In relation to minute 35b, Councillor Oliver Cooper confirmed that the amendment had been proposed by himself and seconded by Councillor Philip Hearn. Also in relation to minute 35b, Councillor Stephen Cox requested an amendment so that the minute reflected that Councillor Joan King, as a disabled councillor, had gone to use the toilet and therefore could not vote. This was seconded by Councillor Stephen King.

Both amendments, and the minutes, were agreed by general assent.

48 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair noted the recent events he had attended, most notably the moving Holocaust Memorial Service. He reminded members of his forthcoming charity quiz night at Watersmeet on 9 May.

The Chair then turned to note the sad passing of 3 former councillors and 2 officers, and asked members to pay tribute to their contributions to the Council.

Councillor Chris Whately-Smith spoke regarding former Councillor Richard Peutherer. Councillor Peutherer had represented the Langleybury ward, and then Abbots Langley until 2010 when he retired from the Council. He was well known and respected in the local community and always put the needs of local residents and community first.

Councillor Chris Lloyd talked to the service of former Councillor Hilda Brew, who he reflected was a trailblazer in the community and the council. A keen golfer, Councillor Brew organized the first Three Rivers Calendar and between 1983 and 1984 served as the first female Chair of Three Rivers Council.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst spoke of former Councillor Richard Struck's 35 years of public service representing Moneyhill, Maple Cross and West Hythe. Councillor Struck had served on the Council's executive committee and a year as Council leader but could not attend his final council meeting, having been stranded abroad due to a volcanic eruption.

Councillor Andrew Scarth reflected on the fond memories many officers had of building surveyor Ross Pettifer. He noted that Ross's dedication to service had shone to the end, and it was a very sad loss to the Council and his family.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes spoke of Paul White, barrow beat officer for Croxley. He was well known to councillors and the local community, and with great fondness by his colleagues.

Councillor Oliver Cooper and Stephen Cox, on behalf of their groups, echoed the sentiments made by the Councillors who had spoken, reflecting that each individual had shown true dedication to public service.

The Chair invited Council to hold a minutes silence in their memory.

49 PETITIONS

No petitions had been received for the meeting.

50 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

In introducing the item, the Chair confirmed that the representative of Eastbury Residents Association was unable to attend the meeting, however a revised response to their question had been circulated to members and would be attached to the minutes of the meeting.

The Chair then invited Michael Charnock to ask his question in relation to the cost of parking permits at Moneyhill Parade, to which Councillor Sarah Nelmes responded. In response, Michael Charnock queried why the parking permit was so expensive at £530, and when it would reduce to the minimum £50. Councillor Nelmes confirmed it would not be possible to answer the points raised that evening, but that a further response would be given in writing.

The Chair invited Rachel Clarke to ask her question on a tribute to Barbara Owen OBE. Councillor Chris Lloyd, in response, confirmed he was aware of the significant contribution made by Barbara Owen, and, in response to a supplementary question regarding the length of time to resolve the issue, that he would happily meet with Rachel Clarke to discuss the matter further the week after the Council meeting.

51 FINANCIAL PLANNING

The Chair reminded the meeting of the requirements of Council procedure rule 17 and called on the Leader to introduce the administration's budget proposal.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst proposed the Liberal Democrat group budget, and that due to sound financial management, his group budget would not require cuts to services, redundancies or reduced operations. He set out what he believed to be some of the key positive elements of the budgets including funding for local transport, leisure services, parking, housing, council tax support and carbon reduction measures. He noted that the budget included funding to support the local plan delivery and local government reorganisation.

During his presentation, Councillor Giles-Medhurst set out the financial implications including the level of council tax proposed and the level of reserves. He thanked officers for their support and members of the Labour and Green Groups for their suggestions. Addressing the conservative budget proposals, Councillor Giles-Medhurst raised concern that the full revenue impact of proposals had not been considered; a lower increase in council tax would result in a permanent reduction in the revenue available to the Council and the use of reserves as proposed in their budget would not be sustainable.

The proposed budget was seconded by Councillor Sarah-Nelmes.

Councillor Oliver Cooper was invited to present the Conservative budget proposals. In doing so, he outlined what he considered to be a clear distinction in the position between the two parties and proposals and the policy ideas within their budget which he felt delivered a greener environment, made the council more efficient and helped preserve the built environment. This included additional CCTV cameras and funding to support initiatives that could reduce burglaries and environmental crime, and proposals to invest in conservation areas and specific car parking schemes alongside other initiatives he felt would make the district cleaner and safer.

Councillor Cooper set out proposals to improve Council service efficiency, most notably through the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI); he noted his concern that the Council may be spending disproportionately in areas such as communications. He felt that the Liberal Democrat budget proposals represented a position to charge tax and spend money, rather than to invest in service efficiency.

The proposed budget was seconded by Councillor Philip Hearn.

The Chair invited members to debate the budgets.

Councillor Chris Mitchell thanked the Conservative group for putting forward an alternative, and noted that many of the ideas were worthy of consideration. He expressed concern regarding the sustainability impact of AI, which could impact on the Council's net zero ambition, and raised concern regarding the potential of the fair funding review negatively impacting on the council's financial position.

Councillor Stephen Cox focused on the disabled facilities at Three Rivers House, and noted that neither budget included proposals for improving these. Other members expressed support for improving the facilities even though that had not been included in the present budget proposals.

Several members discussed the proposals within the Conservative budget to help fund community safety initiatives including CCTV. On the one hand, some members considered that Three Rivers was generally considered a safe community, with low levels of crime, that the council should not fund safety equipment for those individuals who could afford it and the revenue implications of CCTV had to be considered. On the other hand, some members felt that there were specific areas with burglary and crime and initiatives should be supported to reduce this.

Members also considered the Conservative proposals related to environmental crime. The potential benefits of an environmental crime task force were considered, which could be self-funding to reduce issues such as persistent fly-tipping. On the other hand, the council had a good track record of dealing with fly-tipping where it occurred.

Discussion took place regarding the proposals for AI. Some members noted the merits of this proposal, in that it could create service efficiencies, but on the other hand some members were concerned the proposals had not been fully developed, for example whether potential redundancy costs had been considered.

Consideration was given to the environmental considerations in both budgets; to what extent the budgets had factored in biodiversity and how the £500k included in the Liberal Democrat budget for carbon net zero projects would be spent.

During the debate, a wide range of other points were also considered including (but not limited to) how car park utilization could be improved; the funding of conservation areas; the impact of Hertfordshire County Council proposals on the Three Rivers Council budget.

At the conclusion of her speech, Councillor Louise Price called for the question to be put. Whilst the Chair indicated he felt sufficient debate had occurred, members generally dissented with the proposal and the debate continued.

During the debate, the meeting adjourned from 8:50 to 9:01 to provide members a comfort break.

Once debate had concluded, the Chair called on Councillor Cooper to summarize the debate from the perspective of his budget proposals. Councillor Cooper recognised the budget would utilise reserves, but this would be done with the intention of transforming the organisation, making it fit for the long term. He welcomed supportive comments made to the Conservative budget and ideas within it but raised concern that there was not sufficient recognition of some of the issues within the community which his groups budget sought to address.

The Chair then called on Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst to give his reply to the budget debate. He recognised that some of the Conservative proposals had merit, but they needed fully costing. He contradicted information provided regarding communications budgets, and provided a number of examples where he believed that the proposals within the Conservative budget could not be achieved within the costings provided or did not accord with the current service performance.

The Chair called for a recorded vote on the budget proposals.

Conservative budget proposals:

For: Councillors Cooper, Edwards, Fraser, Hearn, Merali, Ranger, Reed (7)

Against: Councillors Davies, Drury, Gazzard, Giles-Medhurst, Humphreys, Hussain, Khiroya, Lloyd, Major, Martin, Mitchell, Nemes, Price, Raeburn, Scarth, Smith, Tankard, Whately-Smith, Winter (19)

Abstentions: Councillors Cox, J King, S King, Sian, Stungo (5)

The Conservative budget fell.

The Chair called for the recorded vote on the Liberal Democrat Budget:

For: Councillors Cox, Davies, Drury, Gazzard, Giles-Medhurst, Humphreys, Hussain, Khiroya, J King, S King, Lloyd, Major, Martin, Mitchell, Nemes, Price, Raeburn, Scarth, Sian, Smith, Stungo, Tankard, Whately-Smith, Winter (24)

Against: Councillors Cooper, Edwards, Fraser, Hearn, Merali, Ranger, Reed (7)

The Liberal Democrat budget was carried.

52 SPECIAL EXPENSES

The Chair called on the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, to propose the special expenses. The Leader confirmed that this was a technical calculation and encouraged the Council to support the proposals.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes seconded the proposal.

The Chair called for debate on the item. Concern was raised by some members in relation to the proposals for the Batchworth Community Council area, most notably the special expenses charged for Watersmeet and the Aquadrome. It was felt that the Watersmeet venue was too reliant on public subsidy, and reviewing the operating model could result in the venue becoming more viable. In terms of the Aquadrome, it was felt that the facility attracted a much wider range of visitors and a usage study should be undertaken to evaluate the benefit to the whole District, rather than expecting Batchworth residents to support the cost.

In concluding the debate, Councillor Giles-Medhurst reminded members that the Watersmeet venue had previously been operated by a commercial vendor who had ceased trading, hence it had been taken back in-house.

The Chair called for the recorded vote on special expenses:

For: Councillors Cox, Davies, Drury, Gazzard, Giles-Medhurst, Humphreys, Hussain, Khiroya, J King, S King, Lloyd, Major, Martin, Mitchell, Nelmes, Price, Raeburn, Scarth, Sian, Smith, Stungo, Tankard, Whately-Smith, Winter (24)

Against: Councillors Cooper, Edwards, Fraser, Hearn, Merali, Ranger, Reed (7)

The motion was carried.

53 COUNCIL TAX - DISTRICT ELEMENT

In proposing this item, the Leader of the Council confirmed this was a technical calculation arising from the adoption of the Liberal Democrat budget earlier in the evening. Councillor Sarah Nelmes seconded the motion.

With no members wishing to debate the item, the Chair called for the recorded vote:

For: Councillors Cox, Davies, Drury, Gazzard, Giles-Medhurst, Humphreys, Hussain, Khiroya, J King, S King, Lloyd, Major, Martin, Mitchell, Nelmes, Price, Raeburn, Scarth, Sian, Smith, Stungo, Tankard, Whately-Smith, Winter (24)

Against: Councillors Cooper, Edwards, Fraser, Hearn, Merali, Ranger, Reed (7)

The motion was carried.

54 SETTING OF COUNCIL TAX, 2025-26

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, as proposer, confirmed to Council that the final budget vote summarised all previous votes taken that evening. The motion was seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes.

With no members wishing to debate the item, the Chair called for the recorded vote:

For: Councillors Cox, Davies, Drury, Gazzard, Giles-Medhurst, Humphreys, Hussain, Khiroya, J King, S King, Lloyd, Major, Martin, Mitchell, Nelmes, Price, Raeburn, Scarth, Sian, Smith, Stungo, Tankard, Whately-Smith, Winter (24)

Abstained: Councillors Cooper, Edwards, Fraser, Hearn, Merali, Ranger, Reed (7)

The motion was carried.

55 COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2025

Due to the time left in the meeting, the Chair determined to bring forward this item as it had to be adopted by the council and then called Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst to move the report. Councillor Giles-Medhurst confirmed this was a statutory document setting out the Council's pay policies. The proposal was seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes.

In debate, a member raised the roles subject to market supplement and that it would be useful to review these.

With no further members wishing to comment, the Chair called on the vote and the motion was carried by general assent.

56 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

56a ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STRATEGY - PUBLIC CONSULTATION FEEDBACK

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst was called on to propose the report. In doing so, he reflected on the extensive debate that had already taken place at previous committee meetings, and hoped the Council could move to adopt the report. This was seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes.

A member highlighted that at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting it had been agreed to bring forward an action plan at a future meeting alongside the strategy, and sought confirmation this was still the case.

Councillor Vicky Edwards raised concern that electric vehicle charging spaces would be allocated for exclusive use by electric vehicles, and may sit empty at other times. Councillor Edwards therefore proposed an amendment to the strategy to add, after 5.1: "Spaces next to rapid or ultra rapid chargers are generally expected to be reserved for electric vehicles. However, other spaces - such as fast chargers - should not be reserved solely for electric vehicles, to minimise the loss of parking spaces to users of other vehicles"

This was seconded by Councillor Oliver Cooper, who requested a further amendment to include the words "where possible". This was agreed by the proposer of the motion. The amendment was circulated to members and read out by the committee officer.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst spoke against the amendment, raising concern that Hertfordshire County Council may not provide funding for charging schemes if this clause was included within the strategy.

The amendment moved to a vote; with 7 votes in favour and 24 against, the amendment fell.

The Chair called for a vote on the substantive motion and with 24 votes in favour, and 7 abstentions, the motion was carried.

56b AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Chair called on Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst to move the motion. Councillor Giles-Medhurst reminded members the motion had been discussed at Policy and Resources Committee, and the amendments recommended at that meeting had been circulated to group leaders to comment on prior to the meeting of Councillor. The motion was seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes.

In light of the time remaining in the meeting, the Chair asked Councillors to move the item to the vote and with 24 voting in favour, and 7 against, the motion was carried.

As the time had reached 10:30pm, the Chair closed the meeting. Remaining items of business would be dealt with in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 6(3)

CHAIR

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Appointment Deputy leader Lead

Annual Council
20 May 2025

For Council to appoint the Deputy Leader and Lead Members as follows:

	Areas of Responsibility	Nominee
Lead Member Resources, Regeneration and Economic Development	<p><i>P&R</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finance • Audit • Revenues & Benefits • Assets • Policy & Corporate Support • ICT • Procurement & Contracts <p><i>Regeneration and Economic Development</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development • Regeneration • Town & village town centre improvement • Brownfield Register • Building Control • Conservation areas and local listing • Community Infrastructure Levy • Development Management policy • Heritage • Land Charges • Land Drainage • Listed Buildings • Neighbourhood Planning • Right to Build Register • Rickmansworth Town Project Board 	<i>Louise Price</i>
Lead Member for Sustainability and Climate Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainability, climate change and energy efficiency • Woodlands • Trees • Air pollution and noise pollution • Environmental Forum • River improvements and management. 	Jon Tankard
Lead Member for Leisure	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leisure development and facilities • Open spaces • Play areas and play development • Sports development and 	Chris Lloyd

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> facilities Arts development and facilities Leisure grants Leisure based health programmes. 	
Lead Member for Community Engagement, Public Safety and Housing.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Housing Policy Homelessness and Housing Advice Housing and Disabled Facilities Grants Management of Traveller sites Private Housing and Houses in Multiple Occupation Residential Environmental Health Temporary accommodation Public Health Strategy Wellbeing Strategy Community Safety 	Steve Drury
Lead Member for General Public Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Refuse & Recycling Highways (TRDC projects only) Transport TRDC funded bus routes Electric Vehicle Charging LCWIP Cycling Parking Animal and pest control Cemeteries and crematorium 	Sarah Nelmes
Leader	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local Plan 	To be appointed under agenda item 6

Review of POLITICAL PROPORTIONALITY AND establishment OF Annual Council 20 May 2025

ANNUAL COUNCIL

PART I

Review of Political Proportionality and Appointment of Committees

ADLDS

1 Summary

- 1.1 The purpose of this review is to undertake the annual review required to establish the Council's committees, establish the number of seats on each Committee and assign the seats to political groups

2 Details

- 2.1.1 Although the Council did not have whole of District elections in May 2025, the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 requires that the Council reviews the political balance on its committees at its annual meetings.
- 2.1.2 The political balance was last considered by the Council in September 2024. Since that time, the Council had by elections in both the Abbots Langley and Durrants Ward.
- 2.1.3 When making previous calculations on the political balance, the Council decided whether and where to allocate seats to independent members. The independent members have now formed a group, so must be taken into account when determining entitlements to seats on committees.
- 2.1.4 This review has to be conducted in line with both the 1989 Act and the Committee and Political Group Regulations 1990. They require the Council to ensure:
- i. That not all the seats on the body to which appointments are being made are allocated to the same political group;
 - ii. That the majority of the seats on each committee are allocated to a particular political group if the number of persons belonging to that group is a majority of the authority's membership;
 - iii. Subject to (1) and (2) above, when allocating seats to a political group, the total number of their seats across all the ordinary committees of the Council, must reflect their proportion of the authority's membership; and
 - iv. Subject to (1) to (3) above, that the number of seats on each committee is as far as possible in proportion to the group's membership of the authority.
- 2.1.5 In making calculations, the proportion that each political group forms of the total membership of the Council is applied to the total number of seats on each committee. Fractional entitlements of less than one half are rounded down and entitlements of one half or more are rounded up. So that this process of rounding does not result in disproportionate advantage to one political group, the aggregate membership of all the ordinary committees must also be in line with

the proportions on the Council. Ordinary Committees are those appointed by Council to make decisions.

2.1.6 As no group on the Council has a majority, it is principles iii and iv that are critical. This calculation, which needs to be made in accordance with the Council's constitution, along with the appointment to committees, is included at Appendix A to this report.

2.1.7 In addition, changes have been requested to the composition of Committees, which are set out below:

a) Equalities Sub-Committee

2.1.7.1 The Equalities Sub-Committee meets periodically to consider how the Council is managing its equalities duty, and to consider how the District as a whole is supporting those with protected characteristics.

2.1.7.2 Increasingly, external partners are engaged in the forum through providing presentations on their work, demonstrating the benefits of co-ordinated partnership working.

2.1.7.3 With this in mind, it is proposed to change the Equalities Sub-Committee to become an equalities forum, in a similar way to the seniors forum or environmental forum. This is not to diminish the work of the committee but instead to place partners on a more equal footing to participate in meetings and enable joint commitment to outcomes from the meetings for the benefit of the whole of the District.

2.1.7.4 If agreed, Council will be asked to appoint members to the Equalities Forum at the appropriate point in the meeting, rather than the Equalities Sub-Committee. Whilst this will be done, as required, in a politically proportionate way, it does not impact upon the calculation of the political balance.

b) Constitution Sub-Committee

2.1.7.5 The constitution sub-committee is convened to consider in greater detail proposed amendments to the Constitution. Except for minor amendments, which are delegated to the Monitoring Officer to make, only the Council can make amendments to the Constitution. Any amendments proposed by the constitution sub-committee are considered by the Policy and Resources Committee before being referred to Council.

2.1.7.6 More recent amendments to the constitution have been subject to review by the Policy and Resources Committee directly, before consideration by Council.

2.1.7.7 A request has been received by officers to not convene the sub-committee, and instead any constitutional amendments (excluding minor changes) moving forwards will be referred to the Policy and Resources Committee directly then to Council.

2.1.8 The Constitution sub-committee, as required, was appointed to in a politically proportionate way. However, as it was not a decision making body, this change does not impact upon the calculation of the political balance.

Policy and Resources Committee

2.1.9 The number of seats on this committee was amended in September 2024 to take into account the number of lead members and the political proportionality

of the Council at the time. As it is proposed to reduce the number of lead members, it is similarly proposed to reduce the number of seats on this committee.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The council is required to review the political balance at its annual meeting. It must be done in a way that, as far as practicable, achieves the 4 criteria set out at paragraph 2.1.2 above; to do otherwise would require no member to vote against the proposal.
- 3.2 Officers have performed calculations, as set out in Appendix A and B, to determine the proposed political balance reflecting the changes set out above. Council is now requested to agree this, and in subsequent agenda items, appoint members to these committees.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

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

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

None specific.

5 Legal Implications

- 5.1 The calculation of the political balance must be conducted in accordance with the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 and the Local Government (Committee and Political Group) Regulations 1990. This report also takes into account other legislative requirements, e.g. the Licensing Act 2003.
- 5.2 Failure to agree the appointment of committees in a politically balanced way would significantly impact the Council's ability to operate and make decisions.

6 Recommendation

- 6.1 Council agrees to appoint the committees with the membership and political proportionality as shown in Appendix A
- 6.2 Council agrees to appoint the Sub-Committees with the membership and political proportionality as shown in Appendix B
- 6.3 Council agrees:
 - a. To replace the Equalities Sub-Committee with an Equalities Forum
 - b. To not convene or make appointments to the Constitution Sub-Committee

- c. To authorise the Monitoring Officer to make any consequential amendments to the constitution arising from this report and other changes agreed by Council at the meeting.

Appendix A: Appointment of Committees, membership of committees and calculation of political proportionality

Appendix B: Appointment of Sub-Committees, membership of sub-committees and calculation of political proportionality

Review of Political Proportionality

Appendix A: Composition of Committees, 2025/26

Political Party	Conservative	Green	Labour	Lib Dem	Independent	Independent	Total
Council Composition (Groups)	12	3	3	19	2	0	39
Proportional Allocation *	30.77%	7.69%	7.69%	48.72%	5.13%	0.00%	100.00%

Committee	Seats Available	Conservative	Green	Labour	Lib Dem	Independent	Independent	Total
Council Tax Setting Committee	7	2	1	1	3	0	0	7
Planning Committee	11	4	1	1	5	0	0	11
Regulatory Services Committee	9	3	1	1	4	0	0	9
Licensing Committee	9	3	1	1	4	0	0	9
Policy and Resources Committee	11	2	1	1	6	1	0	11
Climate Change and Leisure Committee	9	3	1	1	4	0	0	9
General Public Services and Public Engagement	9	3	1	1	4	0	0	9
Audit Committee	9	3	1	1	4	0	0	9
TOTAL	74	23	8	8	34	1	0	74
Percentage		31%	11%	11%	46%	1%	0%	100%

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Review of Political Proportionality

Appendix A: Composition of Committees, 2025/26

Committee	Seats Available	Conservative	Green	Labour	Lib Dem	Independent	Total
Council Tax Setting Committee	7	2	1	1	3	0	7
Planning Committee	11	4	1	1	5	0	11
Regulatory Services Committee	9	3	1	1	4	0	9
Licensing Committee	9	3	1	1	4	0	9
Policy and Resources Committee	13	4	1	1	6	1	13
Climate Change and Leisure Committee	9	3	1	1	4	0	9
General Public Services and Public Engagement	9	3	1	1	4	0	9
Audit Committee	9	3	0	0	4	2	9
TOTAL	76	25	7	7	34	3	76
Percentage		33%	9%	9%	45%	4%	100%

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Appointmen Members committe

Annual Council
20 May 2025

Group Leaders have nominated the following members to sit on Committees for 2025/26:

Committee	Seats	Conservative	Green	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Independent
Policy and Resources	11			Stephen Cox	Steve Drury Stephen Giles-Medhurst Chris Lloyd Sarah Nemes Jon Tankard Louise Price	
Planning	11			Stephen King	Steve Drury Chris Lloyd Chris Whateley Smith Harry Davies Elinor Gazzard	
Planning (named substitutes)					Stephen Giles-Medhurst Sarah Nemes Louise Price Keith Martin Tom Smith	
Licensing	9			Stephen Cox	Raj Khiroya Andrew Scarth Anne Winter Harry Davies	
Regulatory Services	9			Stephen Cox	Rak Khiroya Andrew Scarth Anne Winter	

					Harry Davies	
General Public Services and Community Engagement	9			Stephen King	Steve Drury Sarah Nemes Paul Rainbow Kevin Raeburn	
Climate Change and Leisure	9			Joan King		
Audit	9				Tony Humphreys Anne Winter Harry Davies Khalid Hussain	
Council Tax Setting	7			Stephen Cox	Stephen Giles-Medhurst Sarah Nemes Louise Price	

Appointmen Members committe

Annual Council
20 May 2025

Group Leaders have nominated the following members to sit on Committees for 2025/26:

Committee	Seats	Conservative	Green	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Independent
Policy and Resources	11	Oliver Cooper Vicky Edwards Philip Hearn Reena Ranger		Stephen Cox	Steve Drury Stephen Giles-Medhurst Chris Lloyd Sarah Nelmes Jon Tankard Louise Price	
Planning	11	Debbie Morris Oliver Cooper Andrea Fraser Philip Hearn		Stephen King	Steve Drury Chris Lloyd Chris Whateley Smith Harry Davies Elinor Gazzard	
Planning (named substitutes)		Ian Campbell Vicky Edwards Reena Ranger Mike Sims			Stephen Giles-Medhurst Sarah Nelmes Louise Price Keith Martin Tom Smith	
Licensing	9	Ciaran Reed Andrea Fraser Debbie Morris		Stephen Cox	Raj Khiroya Andrew Scarth Anne Winter Harry Davies	
Regulatory Services	9	Ciaran Reed Andrea Fraser		Stephen Cox	Rak Khiroya Andrew Scarth Anne Winter	

		Debbie Morris			Harry Davies	
General Public Services and Community Engagement	9	Christopher Alley Ian Campbell Lisa Hudson		Stephen King	Steve Drury Sarah Nelmes Paul Rainbow Kevin Raeburn	
Climate Change and Leisure	9	Mike Sims Abbas Merali Reena Ranger		Joan King		
Audit	9	Ciaran Reed Lisa Hudson Mike Sims			Tony Humphreys Anne Winter Harry Davies Khalid Hussain	
Council Tax Setting	7	Oliver Cooper Philip Hearn		Stephen Cox	Stephen Giles-Medhurst Sarah Nelmes Louise Price	

Appointment Chairs and Vice-

Annual Council
20 May 2025

For Council to appoint the Chairs and Vice-Chairs as follows:

Policy & Resources Chair	Stephen Giles-Medhurst
Policy & Resources Vice Chair	Sarah Nelmes
General Public Services and Community Engagement Chair	Sarah Nelmes Steve Drury
General Public Services and Community Engagement Vice Chair	
Planning Chair	Chris Whately-Smith
Planning Vice Chair	Elinor Gazzard
Climate Change and Leisure Chair	Jon Tankard Chris Lloyd
Climate Change and Leisure Vice Chair	
Licensing Chair	Harry Davies
Licensing Vice Chair	Raj Khiroya
Regulatory Services Chair	Harry Davies
Regulatory Services Vice Chair	Raj Khiroya
Audit Chair	Tony Humphreys
Audit Vice Chair	Anne Winter
Council Tax Setting Committee Chair	Stephen Giles-Medhurst
Council Tax Setting Committee Vice Chair	Sarah Nelmes
Local Plan Sub-Committee Chair	Stephen Giles-Medhurst
Local Plan Sub-Committee Vice Chair	Louise Price
Shareholder and Commercial Ventures Scrutiny Panel Chair	Stephen Giles-Medhurst
Shareholder and Commercial Ventures Scrutiny Panel Vice Chair	Louise Price

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Appointment Members Outside

Annual Council
20 May 2025

For Council to appoint members to the following outside bodies and roles:

Body	Number of seats to be filled	Nominee(s)
East of England Local Government Association - Reserved to Leader	1	Stephen Giles-Medhurst
Chilterns Conservation Board	1	Louise Price
Denham Aerodrome Consultative Committee	1	Raj Khiroya
Herts Waste Partnership	2 (one to be a substitute member)	Sarah Nelmes Sub: Stephen Giles-Medhurst
LGA General Assembly - Reserved to Leader	2 (one to be a substitute member)	Sarah Nelmes Sub: Stephen Giles-Medhurst
Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust Ltd	1	Elinor Gazzard Sub: Jon Tankard
Herts County Council Health Scrutiny Committee	2 (one to be a substitute member)	Tony Humphries Sub: Steve Drury
Three Rivers Museum Trust	1	Keith Martin
Moor Park Mansion Heritage Foundation Trust	4 (1 per group)	Cheryl Stungo Andrew Scarth Stephen King
New Agreement Traffic Management Act 2004 Adjudication Joint Committee- PATROLAJC	2 (One to be a substitute member)	Sarah Nelmes Sub: Stephen-Giles Medhurst
Abbots Langley Community Centre-Management Committee	1	David Major
Hertfordshire Police and Crime Scrutiny Panel	2 (one to be a substitute member)	Rue Grewal Andrew Scarth Sub: Tony Humphries
Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant	1	Sarah Nelmes

Herts Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP)	2	Chris Mitchell Jon Tankard (Sub Chris Lloyd)
Herts Growth Board	2 (one to be a substitute member)	Stephen Giles- Medhurst Sub: Sarah Nelmes
South Oxhey Community Board (run/organised by Countryside/Home Group)	1	Rue Grewal
South West Herts Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG)	2 (one to be a substitute member)	Stephen Giles- Medhurst Sub: Louise Price
Watford and Three Rivers Trust (observer rep required)	1	Keith Martin Narinder Sian
Seniors' Champion	1	
Young Persons' Champion	1	Jon Tankard
Member Training Champion	1	Sarah Nelmes

Appointment Members Outside

Annual Council
20 May 2025

For Council to appoint members to the following outside bodies and roles:

Body	Number of seats to be filled	Nominee(s)
East of England Local Government Association - Reserved to Leader	1	Stephen Giles-Medhurst
Chilterns Conservation Board	1	Louise Price
Denham Aerodrome Consultative Committee	1	Raj Khiroya
Herts Waste Partnership	2 (one to be a substitute member)	Sarah Nelmes Sub: Stephen Giles-Medhurst
LGA General Assembly - Reserved to Leader	2 (one to be a substitute member)	Sarah Nelmes Sub: Stephen Giles-Medhurst
Hertfordshire Building Preservation Trust Ltd	1	Elinor Gazzard Sub: Jon Tankard
Herts County Council Health Scrutiny Committee	2 (one to be a substitute member)	Tony Humphries Sub: Steve Drury
Three Rivers Museum Trust	1	Keith Martin
Moor Park Mansion Heritage Foundation Trust	4 (1 per group)	Cheryl Stungo Andrew Scarth Stephen King Reena Ranger
New Agreement Traffic Management Act 2004 Adjudication Joint Committee- PATROLAJC	2 (One to be a substitute member)	Sarah Nelmes Sub: Stephen-Giles Medhurst
Abbots Langley Community Centre-Management Committee	1	David Major
Hertfordshire Police and Crime Scrutiny Panel	2 (one to be a substitute member)	Rue Grewal Andrew Scarth Sub: Tony Humphries

Hertfordshire Armed Forces Covenant	1	Sarah Nelmes
Herts Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP)	2	Chris Mitchell Jon Tankard (Sub Chris Lloyd)
Herts Growth Board	2 (one to be a substitute member)	Stephen Giles- Medhurst Sub: Sarah Nelmes
South Oxhey Community Board (run/organised by Countryside/Home Group)	1	Rue Grewal
South West Herts Strategic Planning Members Group (SPMG)	2 (one to be a substitute member)	Stephen Giles- Medhurst Sub: Louise Price
Watford and Three Rivers Trust (observer rep required)	1	Keith Martin Narinder Sian
Seniors' Champion	1	
Young Persons' Champion	1	Jon Tankard
Member Training Champion	1	Sarah Nelmes

Appointment Sub- Other

Annual Council
20 May 2025

For Council to appoint the following members:

Committee	Seats	Conservative	Green	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Independent
Local Plan	9			Stephen King	Stephen Giles-Medhurst Chris Lloyd Sarah Nelmes Louise Price	
Shareholder Scrutiny Panel	9			Stephen King	Stephen Giles-Medhurst Keith Martin Sarah Nelmes Louise Price	

Appointments and Appeals Committees:

To be constituted as 7 members, being 3 Liberal Democrat, 2 Conservative, 1 Green and 1 Labour, to be nominated by group leaders if meetings are convened

Standards Committee:

To be nominated as per the constitution if convened

Other organisations and bodies:

		Nominee(s)	Substitute
Three Rivers Community Safety Partnership Board	1		
Three Rivers Local Strategic Partnership	2	Stephen Giles-Medhurst Sarah Nelmes Steve Drury	
Community Safety Board (Police and Crime Commissioner Board)	1	Steve Drury	
Environmental Forum	7	Cheryl Stungo All Lib Dems can attend	
Environmental Forum Chair	1	Jon Tankard	
Environmental Forum Vice-Chair	1	Chris Lloyd	
Equalities Forum	7		
Equalities Forum Chair	1	Kevin Raeburn	
Equalities Forum Vice-Chair	1	Anne Winter	

Seniors' Forum	1		
Youth Council	One Member from each Group	Narinder Sian Jon Tankard Stephen Cox	
Internal Complaints Panel		To be notified on as required basis	
Staff Employer Forum		To be notified on as required basis	
South Oxhey Community Board (run/organised by Countryside/Home Group)	1		



Appointment Sub- Other

Annual Council
20 May 2025

For Council to appoint the following members:

Committee	Seats	Conservative	Green	Labour	Liberal Democrat	Independent
Local Plan	9	Oliver Cooper Vicky Edwards Philip Hearn		Stephen King	Stephen Giles-Medhurst Chris Lloyd Sarah Nelmes Louise Price	
Shareholder Scrutiny Panel	9	Abbas Merali Oliver Cooper Ian Campbell		Stephen King	Stephen Giles-Medhurst Keith Martin Sarah Nelmes Louise Price	

Appointments and Appeals Committees:

To be constituted as 7 members, being 3 Liberal Democrat, 2 Conservative, 1 Green and 1 Labour, to be nominated by group leaders if meetings are convened

Standards Committee:

To be nominated as per the constitution if convened

Other organisations and bodies:

		Nominee(s)	Substitute
Three Rivers Community Safety Partnership Board	1		
Three Rivers Local Strategic Partnership	2	Stephen Giles-Medhurst Sarah Nelmes Steve Drury	
Community Safety Board (Police and Crime Commissioner Board)	1	Steve Drury	
Environmental Forum	7	Cheryl Stungo All Lib Dems can attend All Conservative Members	
Environmental Forum Chair	1	Jon Tankard	
Environmental Forum Vice-Chair	1	Chris Lloyd	
Equalities Forum	7		
Equalities Forum Chair	1	Kevin Raeburn	
Equalities Forum Vice-Chair	1	Anne Winter	

Seniors' Forum	1		
Youth Council	One Member from each Group	Narinder Sian Jon Tankard Stephen Cox Ciaran Reed	
Internal Complaints Panel		To be notified on as required basis	
Staff Employer Forum		To be notified on as required basis	
South Oxhey Community Board (run/organised by Countryside/Home Group)	1		



Appointment Chairs of local Area

Annual Council
20 May 2025

For Council to appoint the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the following local area forums:

Area		Nominee 1	Nominee 2
Chorleywood and Sarratt	Chair	Louise Price	
	Vice-Chair	Harry Davies	
Rickmansworth	Chair	Sarah Nelmes	
	Vice-Chair		
Abbots Langley	Chair	Elinor Gazzard	
	Vice-Chair	Jon Tankard	
Croxley Green	Chair	Steve Drury	
	Vice-Chair	Chris Mitchell	
Watford Rural	Chair	Rue Grewal	
	Vice-Chair	Andrew Scarth	

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Appointment Chairs of local Area

Annual Council
20 May 2025

For Council to appoint the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the following local area forums:

Area		Nominee 1	Nominee 2
Chorleywood and Sarratt	Chair	Louise Price	
	Vice-Chair	Harry Davies	Vicky Edwards
Rickmansworth	Chair	Sarah Nelmes	Andrea Fraser
	Vice-Chair		
Abbots Langley	Chair	Elinor Gazzard	
	Vice-Chair	Jon Tankard	Vicky Edwards
Croxley Green	Chair	Steve Drury	
	Vice-Chair	Chris Mitchell	
Watford Rural	Chair	Rue Grewal	
	Vice-Chair	Andrew Scarth	

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**Policy & Resources Committee
Monday 10 March 2025
Annual Council
Tuesday 20 May 2025**

PART I

Proposed Amendments to the Constitution (ADLDS)

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report proposes two amendments to the Council's constitution related to updates to the LGA Model Code of Conduct and providing a delegation to the Director of Finance to write off irrecoverable debts.

2 Details

Member code of conduct

- 2.1 On 25 May 2021 the Council adopted the LGA Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020. On 20 February 2024 the Council amended this by adding a section at page 5 on recording of private meetings which provides:
- 2.2 '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.'
- 2.3 The LGA revised its Model Councillor Code of Conduct 2020 on 17 May 2021 (Appendix 1) and this revised version was not adopted by full Council on 25 May 2021. It is therefore proposed that Council adopts this updated version with the incorporation of the prohibition on recording of private meeting as detailed in paragraph 2.2.

Write-offs of irrecoverable debts

- 2.4 The Council's constitution permits the Section 151 officer (Director of Finance) to write off debts between £501 and £3,000 per individual account, for Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit overpayment and Sundry Debts. There is no provision relating to debts that exceed this amount when the debt is irrecoverable e.g. due to bankruptcy, insolvency and administration. It is therefore proposed to insert the following delegation between 11.11.3 and 11.11.4 in the scheme of officer delegation contained in Part 3 of the constitution:
- 2.5 The Section 151 Officer in consultation with the Lead Member for Finance is authorised to write off debts over £3,000 per individual account, for Council Tax, Business Rates, Housing Benefit overpayment and Sundry Debts when the debt in the opinion of the Section 151 officer is irrecoverable.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1.1 The recommendations were considered by the Policy and Resources Committee in March. At the meeting, the proposed amendments were supported with the expectation that should any debts above £3k be written off using the delegation provided, this would be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee as part of the regular budgetary reports.

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 do not impact on the achievement of specific performance indicators.

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

None specific.

5 Recommendation

That:

Council approves the proposed constitutional amendments set out in paragraph 2.3 and 2.5.

Report prepared by: Stephen Rix, Associate Director Legal & Democratic (Monitoring Officer) stephen.rix@threeivers.gov.uk

Background Papers

Three Rivers Council Constitution, available on the Council's website

Local Government Association

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

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, intimidatory 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.

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 authority 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 £50 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 the financial interest or wellbeing of 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 or close associate; or
 - c. a financial interest or wellbeing of a body included 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 (referred to in paragraph 8 above) **affects** the 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 an Other Registerable Interest or Non-Registerable 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]

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](#).

Subject	Description
Employment, office, trade, profession or vocation	Any employment, office, trade, profession or vocation carried on for profit or gain.
Sponsorship	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.
Contracts	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>
Land and Property	<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>
Licenses	<p>Any licence (alone or jointly with others) to occupy land in the area of the council for a month or longer</p>
Corporate tenancies	<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>
Securities	<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 have 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 must register as an Other Registrable Interest :

- a) any unpaid directorships
 - b) any body of which you are a member or are in a position of general control or management and to which you are nominated or appointed by your authority
 - c) any body
 - (i) exercising functions of a public nature
 - (ii) 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)
- of which you are a member or in a position of general control or management

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.