
Climate Change, Leisure and Community Committee MINUTES

**Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on
Wednesday, 11 October 2023 from 7.30 - 8.37 pm.**

Present: Councillors -

Chris Lloyd (In the Chair)
Steve Drury (Co-Chair)
John Tankard (Co-Chair)
David Major
Abbas Merali
Narinder Sian
Louise Price
Ciaran Reed
Anne Winter
Stephen King

Also in Attendance:

Councillor Chris Mitchell

Officers in Attendance:

Emma Sheridan, Associate Director for Customer and Community
Sally Riley, Finance Business Partner
Joanna Hewitson, Climate Change & Sustainability Strategy Officer
Rebecca Young, Head of Strategy and Partnerships
Charlotte Gomes, Landscapes & Leisure Development Manager
Anita Hibbs: Legal & Democratic Services¹

External in Attendance:

Ben Terry, Watersmeet General Manager
Judy Simpson, Marketing and Campaigns, Three Rivers District Council (TRDC)
Peta Mettam, Chief Officer, Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ciaran Reed (substituted by Councillor Lisa Hudson), and Ian Morris.

2. MINUTES

The Chair noted that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 July 2023 were still to be finalised. He proposed that it would be helpful if, when the minutes were

¹ Minutes drafted by Cameron MacLean, Interim Senior Committee Manager.

finalised, that they be sent to Members of the Committee before the next meeting of Full Council.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Major declared a non-pecuniary interest in Agenda Item No. 8 as he was a Member of the Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service.

4. NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were no "Items of Other Business".

Order of Business

The Chair stated that, as there were speakers from the Citizens Advice Service present at the meeting who were going to address the Committee on Agenda Item No. 8, he proposed, and it was AGREED by the Committee, that Agenda Item No. 8: Citizens Advice Service, be considered after Agenda Item No. 5: Watersmeet Presentation.

5. WATERSMEET PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation by Ben Terry, Watersmeet General Manager, and Judy Simpson, Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) Marketing and Campaigns Manager. providing an overview of Watersmeet, the venue, it's vision and mission; priorities and values; 2022/23 performance; its financial position; tenants and partners; community engagement; participation and accessibility; sustainability and environment; and looking ahead.

In response to questions raised by members of the committee, Mr Terry and Ms Simpson provided the following further information.

- a) The reason for the Council's reduced expenditure of approximately £100,000 on Watersmeet, despite an increased turnover by Watersmeet of approximately £400,000, was because the venue's net turnover included all income including income from private hires and shows that were co-promoted with the Council.

Of the shows that were co-promoted with the Council, the Council took between 20% and 30% of the price of the tickets sold. Therefore, for the Council to be £100,000 better off, the venue's income had to be four or five times more than that. In commercial terms, this represented a profit ratio of approximately 1:5.

- b) All the space available to tenants at Watersmeet was utilised, including renting space for private hires which took place predominantly on Saturdays and Sundays; films included in the Watersmeet film programme were shown on Wednesdays; live events took place on Thursdays; and larger shows took place on Fridays. It was noted that it may be possible to increase the number of weekday bookings to include lunchtime meetings. However, the venue was now as busy as it had been since the height of the Covid pandemic.
- c) Regarding special expenses, it was noted that Watersmeet costs were split between special and general expenses based on the venue's programme, including the use of the venue for private hires by predominantly local residents, which would be classed as a special expense, and, say, the Pantomime, which attracted theatregoers from the whole of the district and beyond, and was, therefore, "distributed" as a general expense.

- d) For the past five years, there had been a contract with Jordan Productions for the annual pantomime. Following a tender exercise, the present contract was with Paul Hogan.
- e) Regarding work experience provided by Watersmeet, it was reported that work experience was provided for anyone from 13 years of age to university students studying backstage theatre arts and/or scenic art. An effort was made to tailor work experience while providing experience of the work of the theatre, including front of house and technical work experience.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chair thanked the officers for their presentation and asked that they convey the appreciation of the Committee to the staff and volunteers at Watersmeet and to the “Friends of Watersmeet” and “Friends of Watersmeet Film Society”.

The Chair also noted that the refurbished accessible toilets would be appreciated by the theatregoing public, particularly as the pantomime was imminent.

It was noted that the Civic Night at the Pantomime would take place on Friday, 15 December after the 6:30 PM performance from about 9.00 PM. in the Colne Room where there would be refreshments and the opportunity to meet members of the cast and to have photographs taken with them on the stage.

Tickets for the Pantomime could be purchased from the box office.

NOTED

6. BUDGET MONITORING (PERIOD 4)

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Finance covering the Committee’s financial position over the medium term (2023-2026) as at Period 4 (end of July).

The report noted that the Period 4 Comprehensive Budget Management report, which sought approval to a change in the Council’s 2023–2026 medium-term financial plan, had been presented to the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 11 September 2023.

It was recommended that Members of the Committee note and comment on the contents of the report.

Ms Sally Riley, Finance Business Partner, presented the report.

In response to questions by Members of the Committee, Ms Riley provided the following information.

- a) Regarding Community CCTV,² for which the original 2023/24 budget was £6000, and the latest 2023/24 budget was £11,720, this was a capital rephasing, that is, at the end of last year, officers would have reported in the outturn report that the service had requested that the monies they had not spent in 2022 be transferred into 2023. This was approved at Full Council in July.

² Page 28: Appendix 2, Annex C

- b) The funding for Oxhey Hall (£3000)³ was rent that had been received for the use of Oxhey Hall.

[Information on who had rented Oxhey Hall would be provided to the Committee Member who had raised the question].

At this stage in the proceedings, the Chair invited Councillor Mitchell, who was not a Member of the Committee, to ask officers about the £20,000 funding in relation to HS2 that had been considered at the previous evening's General Public Services and Economic Development Committee meeting. Officers confirmed that the funding referred to in the report before the Committee this evening was not the same funding referred to in the report considered at the previous evening's General Public Services and Economic Development Committee meeting.

NOTED

7. CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY

The Committee considered the report updating the Committee on the Council's Climate Emergency & Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan.

The purpose of the present report was to outline the results of the consultation on the draft Climate Emergency and Sustainability strategy, which had been agreed at CCLC in March 2023, and to seek adoption of the Final Strategy set out at Appendix 1 of the report.

It was recommended that the Climate Change, Community and Leisure Committee:

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

In the subsequent discussion, Ms Hewitson provided the following information in response to questions by Members of the Committee.

- a) Regarding Paragraph 2.11.6 of the report, which referred to the decision, in view of the overwhelming scientific evidence supporting climatic change caused by humans, not to take into consideration responses to the consultation based on climate change denial, it was noted that this was a very small percentage of all the responses received. Officers were engaged in an information campaign to make residents aware of the causes of climate change.

It was proposed that any information campaign should focus on those residents indifferent to the issue of climate change rather than those residents who were unlikely to change their views with regard to the causes of climate change and who were climate change deniers.

- b) Noting Paragraph 2.11.2 of the report which referred to criticism about the Strategy and Action Plan's lack of SMART and measurable targets, it was noted

³ Page 23: Appendix 2, Annex A

- that there were various dates, including national and local targets, for or achieving net zero greenhouse gas emissions (“net zero”).
- c) To the extent that the 2030 net zero target was aspirational or realistic, it was noted that the 2030 target was optimistic. However, given that the Council had secured £300,000 funding from Innovate UK as one of 21 local authorities selected as a “Fast Follower” to overcome the non-technical barriers to net zero, it was incumbent upon the Council to try to achieve that target by 2045.
 - d) Regarding funding to achieve net zero, it was noted that, as well as local authority and central government funding, there were other sources of funding including working with community organisations, such as Grand Union Community Energy,⁴ which were being set up across the country, as well as working with publicly funded projects. Accordingly, officers were looking at all possible sources of funding.
 - e) To encourage residents to address issues of climate change, Council Members could encourage residents to become part of the “Transition Streets” pilot program which would encourage domestic decarbonisation and more suitable living. It was hoped that the pilot project would have a snowball effect which would draw more households and streets into the programme.
 - f) Regarding responses to the consultation, it was noted that these were detailed in Appendices 2 & 3 of the report.

At this stage in the proceedings, the Chair invited Councillor Mitchell to address the Committee. Councillor Mitchell stated that he endorsed the work being carried out by Ms Hewitson and the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy. He stated that he was concerned about how to measure the effectiveness of the strategy in the wider community and obtaining sufficient funding for the various climate change initiatives.

In response, Ms Hewitson noted that the results of the District Council’s climate change initiatives were reported retrospectively in June of each year. Ms Hewitson informed the Committee that an additional member of staff would be joining her Team in November and, therefore, there would be four officers (not all full-time) in the Team.

Councillor Tankard spoke passionately in support of the Strategy and Action Plan and the work of Climate Change & Sustainability Strategy Team. In so doing, he exhorted Members of the Committee that the various targets and ambitions set out in the Strategy and Action Plan were achievable and that it behoved the Council to do everything necessary to ensure that the various targets and deadlines were met. Therefore, he moved that the Committee approve the recommendations set out in the report. Councillor Drury seconded the motion. On a show of hands, the Chair announced that Members were unanimous in their support for the motion.

RESOLVED: That the Climate Change, Community and Leisure Committee –

1. Approve the revised Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy 2023-2027 and recommend it to the Policy and Resources Committee for adoption; and
2. Note the updates arising from the Climate Change and Sustainability Action Plan.

⁴ A community benefit society whose purpose was to improve local community resilience in the face of increasing energy costs and climate change.

8. CITIZEN'S ADVICE SERVICE

The Chair invited Ms Peta Mettam, Chief Officer, Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service, to present the Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service annual update. Ms Mettam then gave a slide presentation.⁵

In response to questions by Members of the Committee, Ms Mettam provided the following information.

- a) There was no national league table of Citizens Advice Services as each service was an individual limited company and charity with the services provided by each service being determined by the resources available and the needs of the community.

Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service (“the Service”) provided a high level of face-to-face services. There was a rolling audit of the services provided by Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service which was compared with a national standard for Citizens Advice Services, as well as being marked on the quality of the advice provided (Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service having been given a Green rating for the last 12 months in a Red Amber Green (RAG) rolling rating system).

- b) Last year, Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service received funding of approximately £535,000 of which £300,000 was contributed by Three Rivers District Council. The second largest fund was a charitable contribution of £120,000 over a three-year period. With rent rebates, the Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service received approximately £285,000 from Three Rivers District Council.

[Ms Mettam stated that she would provide a copy of the Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service accounts to the Council].

- c) Since Covid, the way in which the Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service managed its telephone advice service had changed and the service was now part of the Herts Advice Line. Statistics in relation to telephone calls to the Service were received from Herts Advice Line which included the number of telephone calls which the Service had not been able to answer.

[Ms Mettam then provided details on the operation of the telephone advice service, the services provided by Herts Advice Line, and the number of calls received by the Herts Advice Line and the Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service].

- d) Language barriers were something that advice workers did encounter, and the Service was signed up with “Language Line” which could be used when clients used the Service’s drop-in service or when they telephoned the Service. Presently, several calls a month were made to “Language Line”. There was also a British Sign Language (BSL) interpreter available who was hosted by Hatfield.

The Chair asked that the slides used by Ms Mettam in her presentation be posted on a Council webpage and that Members be notified where they could find the slide presentation on the Council website.

⁵ The slide presentation can be viewed using the following link: [\[insert link\]](#)

The Chair noted the difference that the Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service made to the lives of local residents. He asked Ms Mettam to convey the thanks of the Committee to the staff and members of three Rivers Citizens Advice Service.

In conclusion, the Chair noted that there had been a reduction in the number of volunteers at the Service. Accordingly, he proposed that Members of the Committee encourage any persons who might be suitable candidates for volunteering with Three Rivers Citizens Advice Service to put their names forward.

Ms Mettam stated that volunteers, because of the cost of training, and to be cost-effective, were requested to make a commitment of at least one day or two half days a week for a minimum of two years if they wished to volunteer for the Service.

NOTED

9. THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2023-28

The Committee considered a report recommending that Three Rivers District Council adopt the Three Rivers Community Strategy 2023-28.

The report recommended that the Climate Change, Community and Leisure Committee:

- a) Refer the Strategy to the Policy and Resources Committee with a recommendation that –
 - The Policy and Resources Committee adopt the strategy; and
 - If adopted, that the Policy and Resources Committee refer the Strategy to Full Council with a recommendation that the Council adopt the strategy.
- b) That public access to the report and the Committee's decision be immediate.

Rebecca Young, Head of Community Partnerships, introduced the report noting, by way of background, that the Council was the lead partner of the Three Rivers Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) which had been established in 2002 to produce the Community Strategy for Three Rivers District Council. As such, the LSP was the overarching Board for all other Three River District Council led partnerships.

The LSP Board was made up of representatives from public, private, voluntary and community sector organisations based in and around the district, and it aimed to build on existing successful partnership working.

Membership of the LSP was set at senior political, board member, or chief officer level, to ensure that its Members had the necessary authority to speak on behalf of their organisations, and to commit the resources required to implement the LSP strategy.

The Council's Strategy and Partnerships Team provided support to the LSP through the management of the LSP and the Community Safety Board (CSP) and their respective subgroups.

Ms Young then summarised the details of the content of the Three Rivers Community Strategy 2023-28 that was before the Committee for approval.

In the subsequent discussion, the following points were raised.

- a) The poor presentation of the Excel spreadsheets in the report was a consequence of the spreadsheets having been reproduced in portrait rather than landscape layout and this was a glitch in the preparation of the papers for publication using modern.gov, the computer software used by the Council to publish agendas and reports.
- b) Of the various documents attached to the report, the final document, "Enc. 2", was the proposed Three Rivers Community Strategy.
- c) It was noted that this was a huge piece of work involving numerous partners and that Three Rivers District Council, as the LSP lead authority, was very much reliant on the support of its partners.

For the sake of clarification, the Chair noted that the document the Committee was being asked to approve was the Three Rivers District Council Community Strategy as set out in the additional document attached to the report entitled "Enc. 2 for Three Rivers Community Strategy 2023-28".

On a motion by Councillor Drury, to approve the report's recommendations, seconded by Councillor Price, the Chair announced, on a show of hands, that Members were unanimous in their support for the motion.

RESOLVED: That –

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

10. SERVICE PLANNING 2024-27

The Committee considered a report by Rebecca Young, Head of Strategy and Partnerships, providing Members of the Committee with the information necessary to allow this the Committee to comment on its draft Service Plans as part of the Council's Strategic, Service and Financial Planning for 2024-27.

It was recommended that the Committee –

- a) Comment on the draft Service Plans attached at Appendix 1 of the report; and
- b) Refer the draft Service Plans to Full Council for approval.

1. Draft Service Plan – Leisure and Landscapes 2024-27

Charlotte Gomes, Landscapes & Leisure Development Manager, introduced the report, noting that it focused on leisure and landscapes projects and was in the same format as the report that the Committee had received last year.

The report contained updates on projects scheduled for 2024 to 2027, the main projects being the Rickmansworth Aquadrome project, UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) biodiversity improvements in parks & open spaces; and the Play Area Refurbishment Programme.

In response to a question by the Chair of the Committee, it was noted that the biggest challenge to implementation of the Leisure & Landscapes 2024-2027 Service Plan was funding, Leisure being a discretionary service⁶.

2. Draft Service Plan – Regulatory Services 2024-2027

It was noted that those parts of the Regulatory Services 2024-27 Draft Service Plan that were relevant to this Committee were those relating to Domestic Environmental Health issues. All other aspects of the report being under the remit of the General Public Services and Economic Development Committee, including Commercial Environmental Health issues.

A Member noted that, on Page 2 of the report, it was stated in the first paragraph that management of the Environmental Health Commercial Service was provided by Watford Borough Council.

Emma Sheridan, Associate Director for Customer and Community, confirmed to the Committee that this was a statutory service and, therefore, Three Rivers District Council was limited in its discretion in the ways in which it provided this service.

3. Draft Service Plan – Strategy & Partnerships 2024-2027

Rebecca Young, Head of Strategy and Partnerships, introduced the Strategy & Partnership 2024-2027 Draft Service Plan, noting that it had previously been known as the Community Services Partnership Plan. Ms Young summarised the various areas covered by the report noting that Emergency Planning, Risk Management, Data Protection and Freedom of Information, now fell under this service.

It was reported that the Draft Service Plan (“the Plan”) had also been submitted to the General Public Services and Economic Development Committee for approval of those parts of the Plan relating to Health workstreams. The remainder of the Plan was for consideration by this Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Committee refer the following Draft Service Plans (“the Plans”) to Full Council with a recommendation that Full Council approve the Plans:

1. Leisure and Landscapes 2024-27;
2. Regulatory Services 2024-2027; and
3. Strategy & Partnerships 2024-2027

11. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report by Rebecca Young, Head of Strategy and Partnerships, providing Members of the Committee with the information necessary to allow this Committee to comment on its draft Service Plans as part of the Council’s Strategic, Service and Financial Planning for 2024-27.

It was recommended that the Committee –

⁶ Discretionary services being those services that an authority has the power, but is not obliged, to provide.

- a) Comment on the draft Service Plans attached at Appendix 1 of the report; and
- b) Refer the draft Service Plans to Full Council for approval.

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In response to a question by the Chair of the Committee, it was noted that the biggest challenge to implementation of the Leisure & Landscapes 2024-2027 Service Plan was funding, Leisure being a discretionary service⁷.

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1. Leisure and Landscapes 2024-27;
2. Regulatory Services 2024-2027; and
3. Strategy & Partnerships 2024-2027

CHAIR