
Policy and Resources Committee MINUTES

**Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on
Monday, 8 September 2025 from 7.30 - 10.00 pm**

Present: Councillors Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE Councillor Sarah Nelmes

Oliver Cooper, Stephen Cox, Steve Drury, Vicky Edwards, Rue Grewal, Philip Hearn,
Chris Lloyd, Chris Mitchell, Louise Price, Reena Ranger and Jon Tankard

Also in Attendance:

Officers in Attendance:

External in Attendance:

PR124 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

None received.

PR224 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on Monday 21 July were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair of the meeting.

PR324 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

PR424 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Price declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 10a due to being a Councillor for Chorleywood Parish Council.

Councillor Hearn declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 10a due to his spouse being a Councillor for Chorleywood Parish Council.

PR524 THREE RIVERS HOUSE SOLAR PANELS ARRAY EXTENSION

The Committee considered reports on the installation of solar PV arrays at both Three Rivers House and South Oxhey Leisure Centre. Officers reported that the capital budget for net zero projects had been ring fenced and competitive tenders had been received. For Three Rivers

House, Chiltern Solar was the recommended installer at a cost of £50, 813 (Excluding VAT) with a payback period of 7.4 years.

For South Oxhey Leisure Centre, the recommended scheme was larger (145kw) at a cost of £102,902 (Excluding VAT) with a payback period of 4.9 years. Electricity would be sold to the leisure operator under the terms of contract.

Members expressed strong support for both schemes, noting their contribution to sustainability objectives and the financial case. Questions were raised on cost assumptions, payback periods, and future proofing in light of local government reorganization. Officers confirmed that multiple bids had validated the costings and that future occupancy of Three Rivers House was secure. Issues relating to possible government grant support were discussed. Concerns about the wider cost of energy and use of public funds were noted.

The motion was put to the vote and was carried unanimously.

PR624 THREE RIVERS EQUALITY FORUM

The Committee considered draft terms of reference following Council's earlier decision to replace the Equalities Sub-Committee with an Equalities Forum.

Members welcomed the wider engagement of community groups but raised questions about inclusivity, representation of minority groups, and terminology.

Amendments were proposed to replace references to members with "invitees" to clarify the non-decision making nature of the forum. To remove reference permitting the forum to make recommendations directly to Full Council. To review working regarding "leadership" to clarify the forum's advisory role and for officers to check references to equity and ensure alignment with statutory duties on equality.

Members agreed that agendas would be set by the Chair and Vice-Chair, with groups able to suggest items in advance.

Subject to the amendments above, the motion was put to the vote with 9 votes in favour and 4 abstentions, the motion was carried.

PR724 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2025

The Interim Head of Finance presented the report setting out the Council's financial position. The forecast revenue variance was £3,000 favourable against a net budget of £15.105m. Variances included increased planning subscription costs, adjustments to shared services with Watford BC and increased rental income from tenants at Three Rivers House. Capital budget remained at £14.829 for 2025/26, including rephased sums. Collection rates for council tax and business rates were ahead of target.

Members discussed sustainability allocations, the use of carry forwards, and risks associated with recycling costs and volatile energy markets. Clarification was provided on Penalty Charge Notices (PCN) income trends with recent data showing increased enforcement activity. Members requested that recommendations in future include full figures within the minutes for ease of reference

The motion was put to the vote with 9 votes in favour and 4 abstentions the motion was carried.

PR824 SARRATT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DECISION NOTICE

The Committee considered the report relating to the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan, which had successfully passed independent examination. The referendum area would be the parish of Sarratt, as recommended by the examiner. The Council was required to make arrangements for the referendum in accordance with statutory provisions. Officers confirmed that the referendum would be held on 06 November 2025 subject to Committee approval.

Members noted the extensive community work undertaken in preparing the plan and welcomed the role of volunteers and the parish council. It was emphasized that neighbourhood plans form an important part of the statutory development plan and give local residents greater influence over planning decisions affecting their area.

Questions were raised about the referendum area and timing. Officers confirmed that, in accordance with the examiners recommendation, the referendum would be the parish of Sarratt and the referendum would be held in line with statutory requirements. Members sought reassurance that sufficient resources were in place to administer the referendum. Officers confirmed this and noted that electoral services had made necessary preparations. The importance of clear publicity and guidance for electors was highlighted ensuring that residents understood the role of the plan and the implications of their vote.

The motion when put to the vote was unanimous.

PR924 AV SYSTEM PROCUREMENT EXEMPTION

The Committee considered a report on the procurement of new audio-visual (AV) software to support hybrid meetings. A competitive procurement exercise had been undertaken with Auditel providing the lowest cost option. The contract included comprehensive training for committee staff and super users to ensure knowledge was retained across teams. Members queried the retention period for livestreamed meetings. Officers clarified that the current six month limits are due to Microsoft Teams protocols and Council Policy. A change to longer retention would require a policy amendment. Past use of Youtube had proven unreliable as meeting could be blocked without notice.

The motion was put to the vote and with 9 votes in favour and 4 abstentions the motion was carried.

PR1024 SOUTH OXHEY LEISURE CENTRE SOLAR PANELS BUSINESS CASE

This item was discussed with Three Rivers House Solar Panel Array.

When put to the vote the motion was carried by general assent.

PR1024a COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Committee considered whether to undertake a Community Governance Review (CGR) in relation to Chorleywood Parish Council. Chorleywood Parish Council formally requested a CGR to align its elections with other parish elections in May 2027 and consider including currently unparished areas such as Stag Lane, Shepherds

Lane, Heronsgate and Loudwater. The request was supported by Chorleywood Resident's Association and others. The matter was brought forward under constitutional provisions allowing ten Members to request consideration within six months of a previous decision.

The Committee received an address from Chorleywood Parish Councillor Jon Bishop highlighting boundary issues including Loudwater, properties on the south side of Stag land and west side of Shepherds Lane, likely to have been excluded due to historic boundary drawing along road centre lines. It was highlighted that many residents in those areas use the Chorleywood facilities such as the common and so should have a say in parish matters. It was noted that the areas were too small to justify their own parish council in a future unitary context. It was also highlighted that Chorleywoods next parish election is due in May 2026, a year earlier than other Three Rivers parishes. Aligning with the other parishes was argued to avoid recruiting candidates and uncertainty about parish roles during local government reorganization and to retain experienced councillors through the main period of change and reduce costs by coinciding with the new unitary elections.

Some Members expressed support for aligning election cycles and addressing anomalies in parish boundaries but concerns were raised over costs to residents in affected areas and the principle of deferring elections. Officers clarified the statutory CGR process: two stages of consultation, draft and final recommendations to Full Council, consultations to last a minimum of six weeks. Residents views would be determinative in each area.

Councillor Cooper proposed an amendment to the Terms of Reference;

"That the Community Governance Review timeline should reflect the May 2026 elections rather than deferring Chorleywood Parish election to May 2027."

The amendment was put to the vote with 4 votes in favour and 9 against, the amendment fell.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and carried with 9 votes in favour and 4 against.

PR1124 WORK PROGRAMME

The Work Programme was noted.

PR1224 OTHER BUSINESS - IF APPROVED UNDER ITEM 3 ABOVE

PR1324 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair moved, duly seconded, the following motion:

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

PR124 OTHER BUSINESS - IF APPROVED UNDER ITEM 3 ABOVE

The minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 08 March 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair of the meeting when possible to do.

The minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 08 March 2021 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair of the meeting.

CHAIR