

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Full Council held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Tuesday, 21 October 2025 from 7.30 - 10.00 pm

Present: Councillor Stephen King , Councillor Tony Humphreys,

Ian Campbell, Oliver Cooper, Harry Davies, Steve Drury, Vicky Edwards, Elinor Gazzard, Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE, Rue Grewal, Philip Hearn, Lisa Hudson, Khalid Hussain, Raj Khiroya, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Abbas Merali, Chris Mitchell, Debbie Morris, Sarah Nelmes, Louise Price, Kevin Raeburn, Paul Rainbow, Reena Ranger, Ciaran Reed, Andrew Scarth, Narinder Sian, Mike Sims, Cheryl Stungo, Jon Tankard, Chris Whately-Smith and Anne Winter

Officers in Attendance:

Joanne Wagstaffe – Chief Executive Officer
Kimberley Grout – Associate Director, Corporate, Customer and Community
Lucy Smith – Committee and Electoral Services Manager
Nargis Sultan – Deputy Monitoring Officer and Deputy Chief Legal Officer

77 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ian Morris, Stephen Cox, Joan King, Christopher Alley, Andrea Fraser and Tom Smith.

78 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the meeting held on 8 July 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

A Councillor queried publication for the minutes; officers confirmed they were available on the Council's website.

79 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair reminded Members of housekeeping arrangements and livestreaming protocols. The chair expressed sadness at the death of former Chairman Roy Clements, a long-standing Member and Conservative Group Leader, and led a minute's silence in his memory.

Councillors Chris Lloyd and Reena Ranger paid tribute to Mr. Clements' service to the Council and community.

The Leader moved, under Rule 6.2, the order of business be varied to allow Motion 2 Local Government Reorganisation motion to be considered before Item 9. This was agreed by general assent.

80 PETITIONS

No petitions were received.

81 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

Five questions were received in advance and were published with written responses on the Council website. The Chair permitted supplementary questions.

Question 1 – Angela Horan (10 Gade bank, Croxley Green)

The Lead Member for Community Safety and Housing provided an updated written response correcting a typographical error and reported that a closure order on the property had been granted on 17 October 2025. The Lead Member outlined several actions the Council would undertake, including a review of licensing powers, Article 4 direction, resident engagement mechanisms, and creation of a public HMO Register, all to be reported to Policy and Resources Committee by January 2026.

Angela Horan raised concerns about residents lived experience and requested measurable outcomes. The Lead Member reiterated that the action would proceed with updates provided in writing.

Question 2 – Helen McVane (10 Gade Bank, Croxley Green)

Helen McVane asked whether the Council would consider apply for a banning order against the landlord of 10 Gade Bank due to poor management and regulatory breaches. The Lead Member advised that the council could apply for such an order to the First Tier Tribunal and would explore that option as appropriate.

Question 3 – Sarah Linhart (10 Gade Bank, Croxley Green)

The questioner was not present.

Question 4 – Mustafa Abdelhussain

The questioner was not present.

Question 5 – Kirsti Eraneva and Graeme Dibb (Boulders on the Green)

Graeme Dibb referred to a motion passed at the Climate Change and Leisure Committee on 15 October 2025 to review the installation of boulders on the green in Croxley Green. He asked that a reasonable timeframe to be agreed for a site meeting with ward councillors to appraise alternative options and sought assurance that such a meeting would take place without delay.

The Chair ruled that this was not a supplementary question and permitted a response for clarification. Councillor Lloyd confirmed that the Committee had resolved to hold a site meeting with ward councillors and residents. He advised that the responsible officer was currently unavailable due to illness, but the matter would proceed “sooner rather than later” once officers returned. Councillor Lloyd undertook to liaise with Councillor Mitchell, the resident’s association, and the parish council to arrange the meeting and reiterated his wish not to delay the process.

82 POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

82a THREE RIVERS EQUALITY FORUM

Members debated concerns regarding representation, terminology and political balance however the forums inclusive, non-decision-making nature was emphasized, it was further confirmed that additional community organisations could be invited, hybrid meetings were permitted, and the forum was willing to consider appointing a Vice Chair from outside of the administration.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst proposed the recommendations as set out in the report and were seconded by Councillor Nelmes.

On being put to the vote the Council declared the motion as Carried with 22 votes For, 10 votes Against and 1 Abstention.

RESOLVED:

- Council provides any feedback or suggestions for membership to the Forum.
- Council agrees to the draft Terms of Reference for the Equalities Forum.
- That public access to the report be immediate.
- That public access to the decision be immediate.

82b FINAL SERVICE PLANS 2025-28

Councillor Giles-Medhurst proposed the recommendations in the report and seconded by Councillor Nelmes.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst introduced the item and explained that the draft plans had been examined in detail by each relevant service committee before being reviewed by Policy and Resources Committee. They set out how every service area would deliver priorities in the Council's Corporate Framework including key performance indicators, service volumes and links to strategic and operational objectives. The Leader noted that the plans were presented in a new, clearer format to show the relationship between corporate priorities, environmental targets and individual service commitments. They would be published on the Council's website alongside quarterly performance data once adopted.

Councillor Cooper proposed amendments which were ruled out by the monitoring officer as non-compliant with the constitution. Upon discussion members agreed that the proposals made by Councillor Cooper that had been ruled out would instead first go to the relevant service committees, where officers could advise and then to Policy and Resources. Councillor Cooper accepted the clarification.

Members queried funding opportunities through the National Lottery and asked that any successful bids be reported back to Members. Some members queried the realism of certain performance targets, particularly the planning – appeal success rate and housing delivery numbers and raised concerns whether the targets represented statutory minimal or genuine aspirations of the administrations.

On being put to the Council the substantive motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of the Council, the vote being 22 For, 0 Against and 11 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

- To consider and agree the final service plans 2025-2028.

82c BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2025

The motion was proposed by Councillor Louise Price (Lead Member for Resources, Regeneration and Economic Development), seconded by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst.

Some Members queried unspent social housing decarbonization grant, it was clarified that eligibility restrictions had limited expenditure. Clarification was sought on reserve movements, and a response would be provided in writing.

On being put to the Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of the Council, the voting being 22 For, 0 Against and 11 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

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

Post Meeting Note: A detailed report on the social housing decarbonization grant was circulated to all members.

82d TREASURY MANAGEMENT - END OF YEAR REPORT 2024/25

The item was proposed by Councillor Price and seconded by Councillor Giles-Medhurst.

Members sought clarification on oversight of the property investment portfolio and on movements in the Capital Financing Requirement. Written Explanations were promised.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of the Council by General Assent.

RESOLVED:

- The committee notes the Treasury Management End-of-Year Report.

83 LABOUR GROUP REPRESENTATIVE FOR LOCAL PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE

The item was proposed by Councillor Giles-Medhurst and seconded by Councillor Nelmes.

On being put to the vote the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of the Council by General Assent.

RESOLVED:

- A change to Labour Group Representative from Councillor Stephen King to Councillor Stephen Cox.

84 LEAD MEMBER REPORTS

Written reports were received and taken as read. Lead Members presented brief oral updates.

- Leader of the Council (Cllr Giles-Medhurst OBE): Reported on Hertfordshire Leaders' discussions on local-government reform, absence of the SW Herts MP from those meetings, and progress on the Heat Exchange Network feasibility study linked to the Abbots Langley data-centre proposal.
 - Councillor Grewal asked whether the results of the online consultation on local government reform would be published before submission to Governments. The Leader confirmed that over 7500 responses had been received and full data, including free text comments and level analysis, would be incorporated in the submission and made public.
 - Councillor Edwards asked what steps had been taken in regard to antisocial behaviour around Shannon House. The Leader replied that officers from Housing and Community Safety were actively engaged with the housing association managing the block, that enforcement and safeguarding teams have undertaken joint visits. An Action plan covering security, waste storage and tenant liaison is being implemented. Updates will be circulated when actions are completed.

- Lead Member for Resources, Regeneration and Economic Development (Councillor Price): No further update.
 - Councillor Grewal asked if the Council had sufficient resource in place to deliver a clean and timely audit. The Lead Member responded that work had already begun with outsourced Audit team from Azets.
- Lead Member for Sustainability and Climate Change (Councillor Tankard): Reported national award short listing for Community Energy work and correspondence with Government Ministers on ECO4 Eligibility.
- Lead Member for Leisure (Councillor Lloyd): updated that 5643 pantomime tickets had been sold and encouraged residents to increase physical activity.
 - Councillor Cooper asked about the boulders on the green and whether an application had been made to install the boulders. The lead member replied that this would be discussed with the parish council and residents and a written answer would be provided.
 - Councillor Sian asked about play areas, the condition of equipment, refurbishment priorities and timescales, and whether ward members/residents will be consulted. The Lead member explained that a borough wide play audit is underway to update condition data and risk ratings.
- Lead Member for General Public Services (Councillor Nelmes): Reported delivery of 87 home energy upgrades and further government grant allocations for efficiency improvements.
- Lead Member for Community Engagement, Public Safety and Housing (Councillor Drury): Invited members to propose sites for new defibrillator installations.
 - Councillor Mitchell asked whether the council could explore the immediate Article 4 directions for Gade Bank. The Lead Member replied positively indicating that work would continue.

85 QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER AND LEAD MEMBERS

Written questions and responses were published prior to the meeting. The Chair reminded Members that supplementary questions could be asked within the time limit set by Council Procedure Rule 16.

- (a) Councillor Stungo asked whether cleaning materials for Barton Way building be stored elsewhere to make room for the parish clerk office. The Leader of the Council confirmed that the ground floor plans were agreed in conjunction with the parish council and officers will inspect what is feasible.
- (b) Councillor Edwards asked whether the Leader would accept that motorways and roads performing the function of containing sprawl and take steps to collect evidence to protect green belt sites next to motorways as grey belt. The Leader of the Council responded that this question had been answered at both Local Plan Sub Committee and then in writing.

The time limit of the meeting had been reached, and no further questions were taken.

The Leader confirmed that any member who did not have time to ask their supplementary question during the meeting could submit it in writing to the Leader or the relevant Lead Member, who would provide a written reply within ten working days.

86 MOTIONS

The Local Government Reorganisation motion was amended before the meeting. Proposed by Councillor Giles-Medhurst and seconded by Councillor Nelmes

Council notes the requirement of the Government to put before its different options for new unitary government in Hertfordshire. Council notes that three options are to be presented to the government based on joint working with the 11 authorities and the Police and Crime Commissioner.

Given this and in the interests of local accountability and community links believes the most suitable option for Three Rivers is the three unitary options. That would involve Three Rivers, Watford and Dacorum (including Bushey Divisions) which would mean a current population of 386,013 rising most likely to 463,000 by 2045 with 72 elected councillors (three per County Council Division).

That this Council undertakes an indicative vote regarding this, whilst noting that this is an Executive Decision to indicate the preference on the submission of the options of 2, 3 or 4 Unitaries that will be submitted by all the Herts Leaders to the Secretary Of State. Council notes that the Secretary of State will make the final decision, but that council expects the SoS to agree to a consultation on three submissions submitted by the Herts Leaders.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst introduced the motion and explained that the Council was not making a binding decision but giving a view to informing Hertfordshire's collective response. The Government required an indication of preference between two, three or four unitary models and a directly elected mayor. The Leader reiterated that the final decision would rest with the Secretary of State.

Some Members expressed concern at the lack of detailed information and financial data and questioned the adequacy of resident consultation. Several Members regarded the process as rushed, politically driven or undemocratic, noting that the full public consultation results had not been circulated. Others emphasized the importance of protecting SEND provision, maintaining local representations, and ensuring reorganization served residents rather than party interests. While some speakers criticized the process, some acknowledged that if a view had to be given, the three unitary option was the most practical of the models proposed.

The Motion was put to an indicative recorded vote and the Chair of the Council announced the councillors votes as follows:

For option 2 (0),

For option 3 (13) Councillors Davies, Giles-Medhurst, Humphreys, King, Mitchell, Nelmes, Raeburn, Scarth, Sian, Stungo, Tankard, Whatley-Smith and Winter,

For option 4 (0)

Abstain (20) Councillors Campbell, Cooper, Drury, Edwards, Gazzard, Grewal, Hearn, Hudson, Hussain, Khirya, Lloyd, Major, Martin, Merali, Morris, Price, Rainbow, Ranger, Reed and Sims.

Motion 1 Misinformation and Fake news

This item was not reached.

Motion 3 Improving Oversight and Accountability of HMOs in Three Rivers – Withdrawn

Motion 4 – Save the Aquadrome

This item was not reached.

Motion 5 – Raising our flag in Three Rivers

This item was not reached.

Motion 6 – Celebrating our heritage

This item was not reached.

Motion 7 – Restore Chorleywood's Parish Council Elections

This item was not reached.

Motion 8 – Boulders at the Green
This item was not reached.

CHAIRMAN