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## **Policy and Resources Committee MINUTES**

**Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Monday, 1 December 2025 from Times Not Specified**

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

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

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### **Officers in Attendance:**

Joanne Wagstaffe – Chief Executive Officer

Kimberley Grout – Associate Director, Corporate, Customer and Community, Monitoring Officer

Emma Sheridan – Associate Director for Environment

Lucy Smith – Committee and Electoral Services Manager

Jason Hagland – Head of Strategic Housing

Phil King – Head of Data Protection and Resilience

Rebecca Young – Head of Strategy and Partnerships.

### **PR124 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillor Tankard and Mitchell with Councillor Sian substituting.

### **PR224 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS**

There were no items of other business.

### **PR324 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **PR424 FEES AND CHARGES 2026/27**

The Committee considered the report on Fees and Charges for 2026/27, with an introduction provided by officers.

#### **Enclosure 1 Parking and Associated Fees**

Some Councillors raised concerns regarding the proposed increase to long-term parking tariffs, expressing concern that the justification was insufficient and that incremental increases could lead to a cycle of displacement parking on residential roads. Clarification was sought as to whether analysis had been undertaken, particularly in areas without controlled parking zones.

Officers explained the rationale for differentiation between short-term and long-term parking, the operational issues arising from mixed tariffs on the same site, and the forthcoming introduction of a parking app. It was confirmed that 24-hour parking charges had not been increased since 2018 and remained favourable in comparison with neighbouring providers. Free parking arrangements were confirmed to remain unchanged where they were currently in place.

Members discussed commuter parking pressures, the impact of increased charges near railway stations, and displacement parking. Officers advised that parking schemes and surveys were ongoing in Rickmansworth and surrounding areas, with the potential for mixed use car parks and further parking controls where support by residents.

#### Ground Hire and Filming Fees

Members queried increases to ground hire fees, including benchmarking and the level of increase. Officers confirmed that fees had been benchmarked against neighbouring authorities and that discounts were available for community groups, charities and voluntary organisations. Clarification was provided on filming charges and the introduction of an administration fee to cover officer time where enquiries did not proceed to hire.

#### Commercial Waste, Fly-Tipping and Enforcement

Members raised concerns regarding commercial waste charges, fly-tipping enforcement rates, fixed penalty notices, and comparisons with neighbouring authorities. Officers advised that a further detailed report would be brought addressing fly tipping, enforcement and benchmarking. The rationale for early payment discounts was explained as a means of avoiding court proceedings and associated costs.

#### Biodiversity Net Gain and Other Fees

Officers confirmed that Biodiversity Net Gain monitoring fees had been benchmarked and that the Council was an early adopter, with a review planned once further comparative data was available.

#### Enclosure 2 Licensing and Pavement Licenses

Members discussed pre-application fees for planning, the balance between charges for large developers and householders, and the use of bespoke negotiated fees for major developments. Officers confirmed that bespoke arrangements were in place for large residential and commercial schemes and undertook to provide further clarification in writing.

Concerns were raised regarding pavement licence fees being set at the statutory maximum. Officers agreed to review the feasibility of more flexible or weekend-only licensing arrangements and report back.

#### Enclosure 3 Cemeteries

Members queried hardship support for funeral costs. Officers explained that the majority of funeral costs were incurred through funeral directors rather than burial or cremation fees. Public Health Funerals and support available through the Council's bereavement officer were outlined.

#### Enclosure 4 Garages

Officers confirmed that garage fees reflected inflationary increases only and that high occupancy levels were being maintained. It was confirmed that charges were set on a cost-recovery basis only.

## Enclosure 5 Garden Waste

Assurance was sought and provided that garden waste charges were set on a cost-recovery basis and did not generate profit.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst moved the recommendation as set out in the report.

On being put to the Committee, the motion was declared CARRIED by the chair, the voting For 8, Against 4.

RESOLVED:

That:

- Council is recommended to approve the Fees and Charges set out in the schedule at Appendix 1 to be effective from 12 January 2026
- Council is recommended to approve the Fees and Charges set out in the schedule at Appendix 2 to be effective from 1 April 2026
- Council is recommended to approve the Fees and Charges set out in the schedule at Appendix 3 to be effective from 1 April 2026
- Council is recommended to approve the Fees and Charges set out in the schedule at Appendix 4 to be effective from 1 April 2026
- Council is recommended to approve the Fees and Charges set out in the schedule at Appendix 5 to be effective from 1 April 2026

## **PR524 STRATEGIC RISK REGISTER 2025**

The committee considered the revised Strategic Risk Register, including the addition of risks relating to Local Government Reorganisation and Green Belt protection.

Members questioned medium-term financial sustainability, staff retention, Local Plan risks, and the scope of the register in relation to community-wide versus corporate risks.

Officers confirmed that financial risks were monitored through the budget process, supported by reserves, and that the annual audit report had provided assurance on financial sustainability. Staff morale and retention were reported to be stable, with coordinated communications in place across Hertfordshire.

Members discussed whether strategic risks should extend beyond the life of the current authority. Officers advised that the register reflected risks to the current organization, with future risks to be addressed by any successor authority following LGR.

On being put to the Committee, the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being For 8, Abstentions 4.

RESOLVED:

That:

- Policy and Resources Committee agree the revised Strategic Risk Register (Appendix A), including the additional strategic risks identified.

- The Committee agrees to give delegated Authority to Associate Director of Corporate, Customer and Community to authorise minor changes to the register, such as terminology, clarification, or administrative corrections with no significant impact.

## **PR624 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW 2025**

The committee considered the outcome of the public consultation on proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Policy.

The Lead Officer outlined that the Housing Allocations Policy governs how social and affordable rented accommodation is allocated through the housing register. Members were advised that, following approval by the General Public Services Committee, a six-week public consultation had been undertaken, which closed on 26 August 2025. The consultation had generated significantly higher engagement than previous exercises, with over 150 responses received, and overall support for the proposed changes.

Members welcomed the improved level of engagement and expressed support for the principle of updating the policy. Particular discussion focused on the provisions relating to serving and former armed forces personnel. Members acknowledged the importance of recognizing service to the country, while also balancing the needs of households in temporary accommodation, victims of domestic abuse and other high priority applicants.

Concerns were raised that Band C priority for some armed forces applicants may not adequately reflect exceptional circumstances, particularly for those with a strong local connection prior to service or those who had sustained serious injury. Reference was made to approaches adopted by other authorities. Officers advised that Band B was primarily reserved for households in urgent housing need, including those owed the main homelessness duty, and that any change to banding could have implications for those applicants. Officers confirmed that the current proposal reflected consultation responses and officer recommendation, but that further review could be undertaken.

Members also discussed wording within the policy relating to scheduled home visits required to verify application prior to an offer of accommodation. Concern was expressed that the proposed wording could be overly rigid in cases where applicants were unable to attend due to unforeseen circumstances. Officers advised that this wording could be amended to allow reasonable flexibility without requiring further consultation.

The following changes were agreed unanimously:

- Section 2.2.2 – Armed Forces Exemptions.
  - The inclusion of “Adult children of serving Armed Forces members who need to move out of family accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence.”
- Section 3.7 Home Visits
  - A customer may be visited at their home prior to an offer to confirm their circumstances. Visits can be scheduled, requested at short notice, or conducted unannounced. If a customer is unavailable for a scheduled visit, the accommodation offer could be subject to reconsideration. If a customer does not have any settled accommodation, a visit may be made to the address provided on the application form. These visits are essential, with access granted to all areas of the property as part of this verification process. Whilst having regard to the Council’s adherence to the relevant Nominations Agreement, Officers commit to providing any customer with reasonable opportunity to facilitate a scheduled home visit before any offer of accommodation could be reconsidered.
- It was also agreed by Members that the council’s Strategic Housing Manager would bring a report to a subsequent Policy and Resources Committee that will consider the

award of a Band B priority on the Council's Housing Register to an Armed Forces veteran who, prior to their service, held a local connection to the district.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst moved the recommendations as set out in the report.

On being put to the Committee, the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair by General Assent.

RESOLVED:

That:

For Committee to review, provide comment if required and agree the recommended changes to the council's Housing Allocations Policy for adoption.

### **PR724 SERVICE PLANS 2025-2028 PROPOSED AMENDMENTS**

The committee considered the report detailing proposed amendments to the Service Plans for the period 2025-28.

Members were advised that the Service Plans had previously been approved by Council and that the amendments before the Committee reflected updated information, policy developments and operational considerations. Officers explained the rationale for each proposed amendment, including matters relating to the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Charging Schedule, Fly Tipping mitigation, Aquadrome related proposals, and trade waste services.

Members debated the timing and prioritization of a review of the CIL Charging Schedule noting the relationship between CIL, Section 106 agreements and the Local Plan timetable. Concerns were expressed that delays to the Local Plan could postpone the implementation of a revised charging schedule, with potential implications for infrastructure funding. Officers advised that work on a revised charging schedule would commence once the necessary budget provision had been agreed and that the timetable needed to be realistic and achievable.

Members also discussed proposed amendments relating to fly-tipping and trade waste services. Officers advised that the Council's approach to fly-tipping would be subject to further detailed reporting and that the trade waste service was currently operating on a cost neutral basis, primarily serving schools, charities and other eligible organisations. It was confirmed that officers did not consider the inclusion of trade waste expansion as a project within the Service Plan to be justified at this time.

Councillor Oliver Cooper proposed the following amendment:

"To bring forward the timetable for completion of the CIL Charging Schedule review from 2026/78 to 2025/26."

On being put to the vote the amendment FELL, the voting being For 4, Against 8. However, the Chair reiterated that the CIL charging regime had been included in the service plan.

The Chair proposed the acceptance of the amendments as detailed in the agenda pack except for amendment 3 whereby a subsequent amendment was raised.

Amendment 1 within the report was put to the vote and declared CARRIED by the Chair, with the voting being unanimous.

Amendment 2 within the report was put to the vote and declared CARRIED by the Chair, with the vote being unanimous.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst proposed an amendment to Amendment 3.

“To progress physical improvements including works to paths and access with an intention to move the project forward rather than leave it open ended.

Environmental and safety considerations such as ensuring works complied with flood risk requirements with officer led assessments and permits where required.

A requirement that asbestos considerations be explicitly built into the Aquadrome works at Service Plan level.”

Following discussion, the Chair proposed that, rather than adopting the amendment in full, officers be requested to review the matters raised and bring forward appropriate proposals or reports through the relevant governance processes where necessary. This approach was agreed by general assent.

Amendment 4 within the report was put to the vote and declared CARRIED by the Chair, with the voting being For 8, Against 4.

Amendment 5 within the report was put to the vote and declared CARRIED by the Chair, with the voting being For 8, Against 4.

## **PR824 SERVICE PLANS 2026-2029**

The Committee considered the draft Service Plans for the period 2026-2029. Members were advised that the Service Plans set out the Council’s strategic objectives, key actions and performance measures for each service area over the three year period, and that the draft plans were bring presented to committees as part of the annual planning and budget setting cycle.

Members discussed the interaction between the service plans, the medium term financial plan and the emerging Local Plan, noting the importance fo ensuring that priorities, resources and delivery timescales remained aligned. Particular reference was made to infrastructure planning, CIL, and the need to ensure that future service delivery reflected anticipated development pressures.

Members noted that the service plans will go to Service Committees and then to Full Councils.

On being put to the Committee, the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being by General Assent.

RESOLVED:

That:

That:

- Policy and Resources provide any comments or suggested amends to the 2026–2029 service plans. Final service plans will be approved by Council in conjunction with the budget.

Committee Decision on Public Access:-

1. Public access to report - immediate

- Revenues and Benefits

- Finance
- Committee, Elections and Legal
- Property and Major Projects
- Planning Policy and Conservation (Local Plan/Right To Build Register)
- Customer Experience (excluding Watersmeet)
- Strategy and Partnerships (Corporate Services)
- Regulatory Services (CIL, Land Charges)

**CHAIR**