
General Public Services, Community Safety & Infrastructure MINUTES

**Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on
Tuesday, 23 July 2024 from 7.30 - 8.23 pm**

Present: Councillors

Sarah Nelmes (Chair), Christopher Alley, Oliver Cooper, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Joan King, Sarah Nelmes (Co-Chair), Kevin Raeburn and Andrew Scarth (Co-Chair), Narinder Sian, Elinor Gazzard and Raj Khiroya.

Officers in Attendance:

Tom Rankin
Alison Scott
Michelle Wright
Rebecca Young
Sharon Keenlyside

1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Lisa Hudson, Louise Price and Steve Drury with the substitutes being Councillors Elinor Gazzard and Raj Khiroya.

2 MINUTES

The minutes of the General Public Services and Economic Development Committee, held on 19 March 2024 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

3 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Giles-Medhurst, Raeburn, Scarth and Nelmes declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6 by virtue of owning, or having the use of, an electric vehicle.

5 COMMUNITY SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2023-2024

Michelle Wright, Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager, presented the report and highlighted the agreed priorities for last year and the current year.

Members highlighted paragraph 2.7.1 of the report regarding the Herts Mind Network Community Support Service and asked if any steps had been taken regarding this service. Officers explained that there had been problems with staff leaving and recruitment, as many were on short-term contracts, which caused fluctuations in the service. With more funding,

staff numbers have increased and were very committed. It was anticipated that staff would not be an issue this year.

A Member highlighted paragraph 2.73 of the report concerning the joint initiative between the Council and Housing Associations around fly tipping and raised concerns about many instances of fly tipping around Leavesden and the safety issues this posed for young children playing. Officers agreed that it would be good to have conversations about this with the Housing Associations involved if Members passed on specific details. Officers highlighted the problems of hoarding and mental health issues and the work taking place regarding this. Officers were trying to look at these problems in different ways to solve them with the skip day being a great initiative around the hoarding issues.

Members raised concerns about the online watch link (OWL). Once signed up to the new service, there had been problems with accessing the site. Officers explained to the Committee that they had received emails from the public who had been unable to sign up. These had been sent to the Police and contacts in Herts Connected. Once feedback had been received, it would be fed back to Members.

A Member highlighted Priority 4 – Motor Vehicle Crime, and the risks of theft caused by contactless keys. Officers explained that there were ongoing police operations taking place in regard to that risk and remains one of Three Rivers CSP priorities. Members discussed the use of faraday pouches to mitigate the risks and the use of collective faraday pouches in communities to lower car insurance costs. The Chair suggested sending out information on mitigating car theft risk through the Comms Team.

A Member asked what was being done regarding the problem of shoplifting. Officers explained that there were hotspots around the district that police and CSP were aware of. There was a dedicated police officer dealing with this and advice was provided to shopkeepers on how to reduce risks. This was also a Three Rivers CSP priority. Advice included keeping the shop front clear and transparent and putting higher value goods away from the door. Shops were encouraged to employ security guards and install more CCTV cameras. Local PCSO's build up relationships with youths that hang around the shops.

A Member asked where Trading Standards or the Police had taken action against a license holder or future applicant, if this was taken into account in licensing decisions. The Chair commented that she would refer the question to the Licensing Committee for an answer to that query.

A Member asked how the Council supported the recruitment and training of Special Constables.

Officers informed the Committee that they would investigate if there was anything taking place and if any support was required. Officers explained that the Council provided funding for PCSO's and worked closely with them on a number of joint initiatives to target ASB and crime. A Member asked if there was a way to make it easier for local residents to request CCTV, as part of the strategy and informed officers that a local Councillor had requested application forms for residents but had not received any. Officers apologised and explained that they had not been informed regarding the outstanding forms but would send them to the Councillors who requested them, along with instructions on how to put the application in.

RESOLVED:

- i. That public access to the report be immediate.
- ii. That public access to the decision be immediate

Tom Rankin, Sustainable Transport Officer, presented the report and explained that the Electric Vehicle (EV) Strategy follows on from Hertfordshire County Councils' (HCC) EV Strategy, published in 2023. It also builds upon Three Rivers District Council's (TRDC) updated Climate and Sustainability Strategy published in 2024.

The Strategy mainly focused on the delivery of publicly available chargers and priority had been given to town centre car parks, business car parks and on-street parking. A mixture of fast and rapid chargers had been proposed.

All costs were expected to be covered by Government funding and contributions from the charging point operators.

A Member enquired about the timescales for the roll out of EV chargers. The officer explained that the National On-Street Residential Charging Point Scheme (ORCS) was currently in the contractual stage with the possibility of installation later this year.

A Member asked about the infrastructure costs of the fast chargers and infrastructure chargers. The officer explained that all car parks were subject to the Designated Operating Cost (DOC). Some car parks had been effectively ruled out due to the DOC cost. Charging point holders were beholden to provide 98% uptime and open-source data as to when a charger was available or no longer working. Therefore, if travelling to a charger, it was assured to be working and available.

A Member raised a question concerning paragraph 5.5 of the Strategy regarding LEVI grant funding and ORCS grant funding. The officer explained that the priority had been to focus on car parks near residential areas or areas where people would be visiting to benefit the maximum amount of people. Work was also taking place on high street parking which involved the Highway Authority, HCC, which was where the LEVI fund was best suited to. LEVI was stricter in terms of the requirements for on-street parking. It was also a larger pot of money. The priority was to make use of the Council's funding where it had the most influence and could be used to best effect. This was the Council's own car parks in highly populated areas. It also makes EV charging more viable for the operator.

A Member asked how much the ORCS grant was and if the Council regretted not bidding on it before the £200,000 cap. The Chair said that she would provide a written response to the question.

A Member commented that a total of 92 chargers was not a very ambitious quantity particularly when compared to neighbouring Local Authorities. The officer explained that the Council had blended funds to make the chargers as cost effective as possible. There was a significant contribution from the operators themselves as the Council had opted for a concession contract. Therefore, the EV chargers were good value for money for the residents. The geographical location of the chargers was important and whether they were rapid chargers. In some areas of the district there were high levels of off-street parking where residents were able to install their own chargers. HCC had a mapping tool which identified areas without off-street parking and these areas were a priority for chargers and that would be supported by the LEVI Fund. The Council had been allocated approximately 130,000 chargers as part of the LEVI Fund.

A Member requested that disabled parking was not removed to accommodate the EV chargers near to buildings.

The officer explained that there were no proposals to remove disabled bays and EV chargers were being offered in disabled bays. As a Council it was critical to not only consider the availability of chargers but also those required for people with mobility issues.

A Member commented that there were many supermarkets in the area that provided EV charging.

A Member asked when the consultation period would begin. The officer said that it would be imminent and confirmed that it would not run wholly through the school holiday period.

RESOLVED: that the General Public Services, Community Safety and Infrastructure Committee

- i. approved the draft EV strategy for a 6-week period of public consultation,
- ii. agreed for the final strategy to be presented to a future GPSSCI Committee and subsequent P&R Committee for consideration and adoption.

7 WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: that the Work Programme was noted.

CHAIR