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## **General Public Services and Community Engagement Committee MINUTES**

**Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on  
Tuesday, 1 July 2025 from 7.30 - 9.58 pm**

**Present:** Councillors Christopher Alley, Ian Campbell, Stephen King, Kevin Raeburn,  
Paul Rainbow, Narinder Sian, Elinor Gazzard, Chris Lloyd and Oliver Cooper

### **Officers in Attendance:**

Kimberley Grout, Associate Director for Corporate, Customer and Community  
Jason Hagland, Strategic Housing Manager  
Emma Lund, Senior Committee Officer  
Tom Rankin, Principal Sustainable Transport Officer  
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services  
Emma Sheridan, Associate Director for Environment  
Michelle Wright, Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager  
Rebecca Young, Head of Strategy and Partnerships

### **External in Attendance:**

Bob Jones, Chief Executive Officer, Watford & Three Rivers Trust

### **1 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sarah Nelmes, Steve Drury and Lisa Hudson.

Councillor Elinor Gazzard substituted for Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Councillor Chris Lloyd substituted for Councillor Steve Drury and Councillor Oliver Cooper substituted for Councillor Lisa Hudson.

In the absence of both the Chair and Vice-Chair, Councillor Lloyd was appointed as Chair for this meeting only.

### **2 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting of the General Public Services, Community Safety and Infrastructure Committee held on 18 March 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

### **3 NOTICE OF URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items of urgent business.

#### **4 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **5 PETITION RECEIVED UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 18**

Christine O'Reilly, the Lead Petitioner, presented a petition which requested that the Council include Fairfield Avenue into the parking permit area being arranged for Gosforth Lane.

Councillor Chris Lloyd responded to the petitioner on behalf of the Lead Member for General Public Services, Councillor Sarah Nelmes, who was not present at the meeting, as follows:

*'Thank you for your petition, and as a committee we are sorry to hear of the issues that you have in parking on Fairfield Avenue. Consideration for adding Fairfield Avenue to the existing Gosforth Lane scheme would fundamentally change the scope of the scheme and heavily delay its progression through the Traffic Regulation Order process. However - and this is why we are grateful you have brought this petition - we will be adding your petition to our parking management request list and will review it for inclusion at the earliest opportunity.'*

*'You have a County Councillor here from your area and also a District Councillor; if the problems continue please do speak to them and they will obviously speak to officers. There are officers here from that team who have heard what you have said.'*

Councillor Lloyd also read the following comments about the petition which had been received from the ward councillor, Councillor Stephen King:

*'As discussed this afternoon, we would like the Gosforth Lane scheme to proceed as soon as possible.'*

*'Problems started when Rickmansworth Sports Cars moved to Oxhey Drive with insufficient parking for customers, resulting in cars being left in surrounding streets. Parking outside the Centre entrance, customers ignore the signs to not park outside, even parking on the bus stop. They block the pavement meaning buggies and wheelchairs cannot use the pavement.'*

*'The petition at the meeting tonight has been brought forward by residents who live in Fairfield Avenue and have continuously been prevented from parking on their drives or in the road near their homes since the redevelopment started. Since the rise in car parking charges at the station car park, commuters are using Fairfield Avenue as a car park.'*

Councillor Lloyd highlighted that serious parking infringements, such as those which prevented buggies and wheelchairs using the pavement, could be reported to the Police, who had previously issued tickets in such circumstances.

Councillor Lloyd also asked officers to look at raising the impact of increased parking charges at station car parks on parking in nearby roads with the relevant rail operating companies, as this was causing issues in a number of areas in the District.

#### **6 PRESENTATION ON THE WORK OF THE WATFORD AND THREE RIVERS TRUST**

The Chair welcomed Bob Jones, CEO of Watford and Three Rivers Trust, to the meeting. Bob Jones gave a presentation which covered the history of the organization, the work which

the Trust did in partnership with the Council, its other areas of work and how it supported the voluntary sector in Three Rivers, and future challenges. Slides from the presentation can be found here: [W3RT presentation - 1 July 2025.pdf](#)

Members asked questions and discussed areas which included: community grants funding and the potential for increasing the funding in order to support more projects; developments in volunteering and how new and more informal ways now exist for people to volunteer; and pressures and gaps in services.

The Committee noted the presentation and the valuable work which the Trust continues to do, and the Chair expressed thanks to Bob Jones, who would shortly be retiring as CEO, for all his work for the Trust over the preceding 20 years.

It was agreed that a presentation or report from the Trust should be added to the Committee's work programme as an annual item.

## **7 VARIATION OF THE PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO) WITH RESTRICTIONS FOR DOGS**

The Associate Director for Environment presented a report which sought agreement to a variation of the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) with restrictions for dogs for the remaining period of the current PSPO (i.e. until 31 March 2028).

Following a statutory consultation, and in response to other engagement exercises with members of the public, it was proposed to change the existing PSPO in relation to: grazing areas covered by the Order; an extension of the dogs on lead requirement at the Aquadrome; the introduction of a dogs on lead requirement in the area around the café at Leavesden Country Park; and the introduction of a dogs on leads requirement on land adjacent to the highway district-wide.

A local resident spoke against the proposal.

In response to the points raised by the speaker, the Associate Director for Environment confirmed that all statutory requirements for the consultation had been met. In addition to consultation with statutory consultees, the consultation had been promoted through the Council's usual media channels, reaching over 8500 followers on Facebook, just under 8000 followers on X, and just over 2000 followers on Instagram. It also went out by direct email to all residents who were registered to receive email updates from the Council (over 1500 residents), with a 58% rate of opening. There had also been face to face engagement at the Aquadrome. The online platform was just one of a number of ways in which the public had been engaged with.

Additionally, it was not unusual to receive a relatively low response rate to legal order consultations. It was generally only those who were opposed to the proposal who would respond.

The Associate Director for Environment reported that the proposals for the Aquadrome had been developed as a result of public engagement feedback during the development of the Aquadrome Management Plan in 2022; feedback received as part of the National Heritage Project; and also as a result of the receipt by officers of direct complaints from members of the public relating to incidents of dogs being out of control, causing a nuisance, or attacking wildlife at the Aquadrome. There was also a need to balance the wider needs of the Aquadrome: a designated nature reserve with protected landscapes and ecosystems and with nationally important species of wildlife requiring protection. There were also risks associated with the unearthing of asbestos at the site by dogs, which would then require

remediation. The PSPO was not seeking to ban dogs from the Aquadrome, but to require owners to act responsibly, keep their dogs on a lead and stick to the path. A number of other local areas were available where dog owners were able to safely and legally exercise their dogs off lead.

In debate some Committee Members echoed the views of the public speaker in relation to the low consultation response rate and the extent to which it reflected public opinion, commenting that it was already an offence within the current PSPO for dogs to be out of control and there was therefore no need to extend the Order. Additionally, the level of Fixed Penalty Notices issued did not represent a real deterrent.

Other Committee Members considered that the proposal represented a fair balance for the wider needs of the site, and for the other users who had requested the restriction.

Councillor Lloyd moved, and Councillor Gazzard seconded, approval of the variations to the current PSPO relating to dog control throughout the District for the remainder of the current PSPO until 31 March 2028, as maintaining the current powers and adding the variations relating to dog control would ensure that there were deterrents and penalties in place for those who failed to behave responsibly. It would aid in balancing the needs of dog owners with the needs of other members of the community, as well as the needs of natural species and ecosystems, and dealing with anti-social behaviour.

Councillor Cooper moved, and Councillor Alley seconded, an amendment to remove the area not around the café in the Aquadrome from the draft PSPO.

A recorded vote was requested.

On being put to the vote the amendment fell, the voting being 3 for (Councillors Cooper, Alley and Campbell) and 6 against (Councillors King, Raeburn, Rainbow, Sian, Gazzard and Lloyd).

On being put to the vote the substantive motion was carried, the voting being 6 for (Councillors King, Raeburn, Rainbow, Sian, Gazzard and Lloyd) and 3 against (Councillors Cooper, Alley and Campbell).

**RESOLVED:**

That the variations to the current PSPO relating to dog control throughout the District for the remainder of the current PSPO until 31 March 2028 be approved.

## **8 COMMUNITY SAFETY ANNUAL REPORT 2024-2025**

The Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager presented the Community Safety Annual Report for 2024-25, which summarized the work of the Community Safety Partnership over the year. The report also set out the community safety strategic priorities for 2025/26 and it was noted that these were the same as last year, with youth crime falling under the umbrella of anti-social behaviour. In introducing the report the Community Safety and Safeguarding Manager referred to a recent visit by the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, who had remarked that the Community Safety Partnership was working well.

Officers confirmed, in response to a question, that the priorities were not ranked: all priorities were of equal importance. They were reviewed annually, based on local crime data and impact on the community. The Community Safety & Safeguarding Manager reported that partnership meetings with the Police took place on a weekly basis, and the priorities were

reviewed throughout the year at the Community Safety Co-ordinating Group and the Community Safety Board.

In relation to the priorities of (1) burglary and (2) theft of and from motor vehicles, the Committee heard that as they were crimes these fell under the statutory obligation of the Police and were police-led priorities. However, the Council worked alongside the Police on them, for example by promoting seasonal social media campaigns, attending events with the Police and Fire Service, and working with Crime Prevention Officers to provide advice and guidance to residents. A Committee Member asked if more work could be done by the Council in relation to these priorities, such as the deployment of forensic liquids and Faraday pouches. Officers responded that they continued to work to identify funding opportunities for additional initiatives.

A Committee Member sought clarification on priority 3 which was titled Robbery (Shoplifting), although these were two separate crimes. Officers responded that this priority related to shoplifting only; however, the title Robbery (Shoplifting) was used within Hertfordshire Constabulary's reporting system.

In response to a question as to whether additional CCTV cameras could be provided, particularly in areas which were crime hotspots or where people felt vulnerable, officers responded that requests for CCTV coverage could be considered by the Community Safety Co-ordinating Group using the current process outlined in the policy.

A Committee Member, as Ward Councillor, referred to concerns about a perceived increase in crime and anti-social behavior associated with Shannon House, including that female residents felt unsafe near Shannon House. Officers requested that details be provided of any incidents of concern so that these could be progressed with the Police. Another Committee Member who lived close to Shannon House and was a local Parish Councillor, commented that she had visited Shannon House several times and spoken to residents who had not reported any concerns, and that she did not feel unsafe. It was understood from the Police that the majority of concerns were between residents of Shannon House and contained within Shannon House.

In response to a question about tool theft, officers undertook to raise this at the Community Safety Partnership, with a view to including it in the action plan.

Committee Members sought information about incidents within their own ward areas and these were responded to by officers.

The Chair moved that the report be noted and this was agreed by general assent.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

## **9 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY REVIEW 2025**

The Strategic Housing Manager presented a report which set out recommended changes to the Housing Allocations Policy (set out in the report and at Appendix 2) and which sought approval for a public consultation on the proposed changes. The Committee heard that since publication of the agenda the government had announced two additional changes required by legislation, both of which related to exemptions from Local Connection criteria for joining the local authority's housing register. One of these (an exemption for victims of domestic abuse) was already covered within the policy; the other (an exemption for care

leavers) would be brought forward following the consultation, along with any other changes announced in the interim.

In response to a Member request, the Strategic Housing Manager undertook to extend the consultation period to six weeks (from four).

A Committee Member drew attention to an inconsistency within the Council's policies regarding the Local Connection Test, which was retained at 5 out of 6 years for the Housing Allocations Policy but was less stringent in relation to First Homes.

In response to a Committee Member's question, the Strategic Housing Manager undertook to provide a written response as to the reason for the Housing Team service standards having been removed from the Council's website.

In response to questions about Armed Forces exemptions, the Strategic Housing Manager advised that Section 2.2.2 now included an exemption for any armed forces veteran, and had also been amended to state that the list of exemption criteria was not exhaustive: the Council's Housing Panel had the ability to grant an exemption to the local connection criteria, on the grounds of exceptional circumstances, to an Armed Forces veteran or family member who may not wholly fulfill one of the listed criteria. The Strategic Housing Manager confirmed that the penultimate bullet point in the Band C section of Appendix A, which referred to members or former members of the Armed Forces who had lived in the district for at least 12 months immediately prior to enlisting, had been included in error and would be removed.

Councillor Lloyd moved, and Councillor King seconded, that the Committee agrees that the recommended changes to the Housing Allocations Policy are progressed to a six week (minimum) public consultation. On being put to the vote this was agreed unanimously.

**RESOLVED:**

That the recommended changes to the Housing Allocations Policy are progressed to a six week (minimum) public consultation.

## **10 APP BASED PARKING PAYMENT SOLUTION**

The Committee received a report which recommended an approach to adopting a phone app-based parking payment solution. The system would be usable at existing 'pay by plate' locations, including council car parks and certain on-street locations.

The Principal Sustainable Transport Officer reported that the proposal sought to address changes in customer preferences and was intended to bring benefits both to the council and to visitors to its car parks. For the consumer it would mean having a system which some might find easier to use, and which removed the need to walk to a physical payment machine. It would allow parking sessions to be extended (even if the session was started on a machine), and there may be potential for customers to be refunded if their parking session was shorter than expected. It would also allow customers to pay for parking in the event of a physical payment machine being out of order. For the council it would allow the avoidance of low utilisation of parking areas in the event of a machine being out of order and may in the future allow for a reduction in the number of physical payment machines thereby reducing the cost of implementing and maintaining parking schemes. The Council could also investigate providing permits or other parking services through the app in future.

Potential dis-benefits had been identified as possible fraudulent activity arising from false QR code stickers directing customers to a fraudulent payment portal. In mitigation it was

proposed not to use QR codes for payment in any parking areas, and for officers to review car park tariff boards to educate visitors about the risk of fraudulent QR codes. There was also a risk to the Council in terms of the cost of implementing the scheme. This had been considered, and it was recommended to use a provider which could match the convenience fee which was leveraged on physical payment machines, meaning that the tariff paid by the user would be the same whichever method was used. A further dis-benefit was the risk of digital exclusion: for this reason it was the intention that the app-based parking payment solution would complement, rather than replace, the existing provision of physical parking machines. Members agreed that retention of parking machines for the foreseeable future was very important in order to avoid the risk of digital exclusion.

A Committee Member disagreed with the proposal not to participate in the National Parking Platform (which allowed any provider to be used within a car park), expressing the view that the platform would be likely to lead to benefits arising from providers competing with each other, and would also allow the purchasing power of the participating councils to be leveraged. Non-participation would also mean that Watford, Dacorum and Three Rivers could each use different providers, meaning that residents would require several different apps.

Officers responded that they were not recommending participation in the National Parking Platform (NPP) at the current time because it would not allow the Council to have any control over the convenience fee which the providers charged. It would also not allow the Council to provide discretionary services such as free parking sessions. Additionally, the NPP was still very new and so it was not known how effectively it would operate. However, it was recommended to plan for future compatibility, and to include a break clause in any agreement with the chosen provider, to allow for participation in the future. Officers considered that, as the service would be new for the Council, and in order to secure best value, a single provider approach was preferable at the current time.

In response to a suggestion that the date for the break clause should be specified, officers responded that the recommendations in the report included delegation to the Director of Finance in conjunction with the relevant Lead Member, to finalise the details and implement the new system. Legal advice would be sought as part of the procurement process to ensure that there was sufficient provision to allow the Council to participate in the NPP in the future if it chose to do so. There was as yet no timescale for the delivery of the service, nor was there clarity about how the NPP would develop. It was therefore not possible to be specific about the timing of the break clause; however, officers would closely monitor the development of the NPP and take legal advice as part of the procurement process.

In response to a Member's question, officers clarified, in relation to the table at section 4.1 of the report, the difference between the two ParkSmarter introductory convenience fees. The 19p per transaction convenience fee was for provision of the service in an introductory area (which was the approach officers were minded to pursue); the 18p rate would be for provision across all parking areas.

A Committee Member recommended the approach of initial provision in a pilot area, to allow for any problems to be addressed prior to a wider roll-out.

Another Committee Member expressed reservations about using a provider which is new to the market, and a lack of projected year on year costs, such as rate increases. Officers responded that this would be looked at in detail as part of the procurement process. It was also requested that officers should discuss with the Lead Member to either bring a further update report to the Committee, or provide a briefing for Members, in due course.

The Chair moved that the recommendations be approved, subject to expansion of recommendations (ii), (iii) and (iv) to include the report sections referenced, with the final wording to be circulated to the Committee prior to publication of the minutes. On being put to the vote this was agreed, the voting being 6 for, 0 against, 3 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That:

- i) Members note the report and approve officers to progress the implementation of an app-based parking payment solution including entering an agreement / contract with a provider;
- ii) Members approve the mitigations shown below (copied from section 2.5 of the report):

*The disbenefits and proposed mitigations of implementing an app-based parking solutions include:*

| <b><i>Disbenefit</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 | <b><i>Mitigation</i></b>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Fraudulent activity associated with parking charges is becoming increasingly common in public car parks across the UK. Criminals are known to utilise stickers with QR codes directing visitors to fraudulent parking payment portals. Adoption of an app-based parking payment solution normalises the use of online payment methods in our parking areas. This may result in a greater risk of visitors becoming victims of fraudulent parking payment methods.</i> | <i>Officers recommend adopting a practise of not offering QR codes for payment across our parking areas. Officers recommend reviewing the tariff boards in car parks to educate visitors on the risks of fraudulent QR codes.</i> |
| <i>Providers levying a transaction fee for paid and/ or free parking transactions could be an additional cost burden on the council or visitors.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | <i>Officers have reviewed this in further detail and accounted for within the recommendation.</i>                                                                                                                                 |
| <i>Visitors experiencing digital exclusion if they are not able to use the app.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | <i>Officers recommend that an app is used to complement rather than replace the existing provision of physical parking machines. Officers do not recommend any immediate reduction in physical parking machines.</i>              |

- iii) Members agree to not pursue the National Parking Platform but plan for future compatibility as outlined below (copied from section 5.2 of the report);

*To ensure the consistency for tariffs for users, this report does not recommend the council pursues joining the National Parking Platform at the stage. However, officers*

*recognise that the industry is likely to move towards this service and would therefore recommend future proofing our parking areas to move to NPP.*

*This includes:*

*Requesting our nationally unique NPP area code and location codes for our parking areas which will be used with the chosen provider.*

*Having a break clause in the contract to allow movement from the chosen provider to the NPP when the council feels this is appropriate.*

- iv) Members agree for officers to progress with procuring an app under the recommendation outlined below (copied from section 5.4 of the report);

*To maintain or reduce the costs incurred by the council, officers recommend that the council consider utilising the 'ParkSmarter' app provided by IPS Group or another provider which can match or exceed this expected cost. The council would seek further procurement advice on completing any agreement.*

- v) Members delegate the final details to progress an app-based parking solution to the Director or Finance in conjunction with the relevant Lead Member, to implement the new system in the current financial year;
- vi) That public access to the report be immediate; and
- vii) That public access to the decision be immediate.

## **11 LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN**

The Principal Sustainable Transport Officer presented the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), a strategic approach to planning active travel networks which align with the national cycling and walking infrastructure investment strategy. The LCWIP also enables Three Rivers District to benefit from government funding to improve walking and cycling routes.

The Principal Sustainable Transport Officer reported that the LCWIP had been subject to public consultation in 2024, with the results brought to the Committee in October 2024 along with proposed changes to routes. These route changes were now reflected in the updated LCWIP. Also included were the results of additional engagement with residents' associations, the Parish Council, and other stakeholders in Chorleywood. The document had been re-formatted to improve accessibility for readers, and sections about the consultation process and feedback had been expanded.

Once approved by the Council, the document would require formal adoption by Hertfordshire County Council, following which any new routes would need to undergo a process of project validation and feasibility studies by Herts Highways officers before being consulted on as detailed designs.

The Principal Sustainable Transport Officer reported that the recommendation in the report required updating, to reflect that the LCWIP would be subject to adoption by Full Council on 8 July.

Councillor Rainbow moved, and Councillor Lloyd seconded, that the Committee approves the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) attached at Appendix A and recommends its adoption by Full Council.

Councillor Cooper moved, and Councillor Alley seconded, an amendment to remove routes 8, 14 and W17 from the LCWIP. A recorded vote was requested. On being put to the vote the amendment fell, the voting being 3 for Councillors Campbell, Alley and Cooper), 6 against (Councillors King, Sian, Rainbow, Raeburn, Gazzard and Lloyd), 0 abstentions.

On being put to the vote the substantive motion was carried, the voting being 6 for, 3 against, 0 abstentions.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee approves the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) attached at Appendix A and recommends its adoption by Full Council.

## **12 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee noted its future work programme.

Prior to the next meeting, officers were asked to add in any other items which were expected during the calendar year, to help the Committee to understand its workload. Where precise timescales were not yet known, items should be allocated to the March meeting and could be moved later if needed.

It was also agreed that that work programme for the former Climate Change, Leisure and Housing Committee should be reviewed to determine whether there were any housing items to be transferred, given that housing now fell within the remit of this Committee.

**CHAIR**