
General Public Services and Community Engagement Committee MINUTES

**Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on
Tuesday, 13 January 2026 from 7.30 - 8.53 pm**

Present: Councillors Sarah Nelmes (Chair), Steve Drury, Ian Campbell, Lisa Hudson, Stephen King, Chris Lloyd, Paul Rainbow, Narinder Sian and Oliver Cooper

Also in Attendance:

Councillor Abbas Merali

Officers in Attendance:

Shivani Dave, Partnerships and Inclusion Manager
Jason Hagland, Strategic Housing Manager
Emma Lund, Senior Committee Officer
Jennie Probert, Environmental Services Manager
Tom Rankin, Principal Sustainable Travel Planner and Transport Officer
Sally Riley, Finance Business Partner
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Craig Thorpe, Head of Waste and Environment
Rebecca Young, Head of Strategy and Partnerships

23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Kevin Raeburn and Christopher Alley. The substitutes were Councillors Chris Lloyd and Oliver Cooper respectively.

24 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings of the General Public Services and Community Engagement Committee held on 1 July 2025 and 14 October 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

25 NOTICE OF URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

26 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Nelmes declared a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 8 (Community and Voluntary Sector Grant Agreements) as a member of the management committee of Mill End Community Centre where one of the grant recipients was a tenant.

27 PETITIONS RECEIVED UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 18

27a BEDMOND PARKING

Joanne Colledge-Miller, the Lead Petitioner, presented a petition which requested that the Council undertakes a review of parking in Bedmond.

The Lead Member, Councillor Sarah Nelmes, responded as follows:

'Thank you very much for addressing us. I can confirm that Bedmond parking was actually already on the Parking Management Programme request list and definitely your extra comments on it will be taken into account when we get to looking at that parking scheme, so thank you very much.'

28 FIXED PENALTY NOTICES

The Environmental Services Manager presented the report, which had been requested by Members to advise of the current level of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) used by Environmental Enforcement Officers and the reasons behind the levels set.

Councillor Oliver Cooper proposed a motion, seconded by Councillor Hudson, which sought the following amendments to FPN levels in order to increase their levels to the maximum which was allowable by law, with immediate effect:

Offence	FPN	Reduced charge
Abandoning a vehicle	£200	No early repayment discount
Depositing litter	£500	£250
Unauthorised distribution of literature	£150	No early repayment discount
Failure to produce waste carrier registration documents	£300	No early repayment discount
Graffiti and fly posting	£500	No early repayment discount
Waste receptacles (placing the wrong items in your bins)	£60	£40
Failure to produce waste transfer notes	£300	No early repayment discount
Fly-tipping	£1,000	No early repayment discount
Breach of Community Protection Notice	£100	No early repayment discount
Littering from vehicles	£500	No early repayment discount

Domestic duty of care under s34(1) or s34(1A) (i.e. for waste carriers)	£600	No early repayment discount
Domestic duty of care under s34(2A) (i.e. for households)	£600	£336
Nuisance vehicles	£100	No early repayment discount

In proposing the motion, it was asserted that there was no relationship between a high level of FPNs and a lower payment rate. Additionally, raising the levels of FPNs to their maximum would send a clear message regarding the council's tolerance of breaches of the law. Early payment discounts should be available only for those offences which were committed by members of the public accidentally, and not those committed by businesses or committed maliciously or gratuitously.

In response, officers commented that the levels of the FPNs had been developed through a number of years' work within the Herts Waste Partnership. They were considered to be relevant and reasonable, and it was considered that perpetrators were more likely to pay when FPNs were set at a level which was below the maximum. There had been instances of offences going to court where a fine lower than the level of the FPN had been imposed: as an example, the statutory fine for fly-tipping was set at a lower level than the FPN. As a result, increasing the level of FPNs would likely result in a greater number of cases going to court, with associated cost and resourcing implications. The level of FPNs would continue to be monitored and reviewed as necessary.

On being put to the vote the amendment fell, the voting being 3 for and 6 against.

The Chair moved, and Councillor Lloyd seconded, the recommendations as set out in the report. On being put to the vote this was carried, the voting being 4 in favour, 3 against and 2 abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That the General Public Services & Community Engagement Committee agrees that:

1. the Environmental Enforcement FPN levels remain as they are, detailed in Table 1, at the current time;
2. during the next fees and charges process the FPNs for fly tipping (section 33) and Duty of Care (section 34) be set at £450 (reduced charge £350) and remain at that level for at least two years; and
3. during the next fees and charges process all other FPNs remain at their current level, detailed in Table 1 and remain set at that level for at least two years.

29 SERVICE PLANS 2026-2029

The Head of Strategy and Partnerships presented the report, which proposed the draft service plans for 2026-2029 for the service areas which were within the committee's remit. The service plans articulated the council's ambitions, priorities and performance targets and outlined how each service area would contribute to the delivery of the new Council Plan which would launch in April 2026. Each plan incorporated key performance indicators, service volumes, and references to associated strategic, operational and climate resilience risks.

Committee Members' comments on each of the service plans are summarised below:

Planning Policy & Conservation

The timescales for the CIL Charging Schedule and the Local Plan are ambitious but may not be realistic. Could these be reviewed, and clarification provided as necessary?

Conservation Area appraisals: could assurances be provided that there are sufficient resources available and that the service is correctly structured to deliver two appraisals per year?

Regulatory Services

A Committee Member commented that the Regulatory Services Committee had recommended that the impact on the trade of the implementation of the Taxi Policy (e.g. in relation to electric vehicles) should be monitored in the short term, and commented that the wording within the 'Service Purpose and Core Functions' section should therefore be amended to 'Implementation and monitoring of Taxi Policy'. Officers responded that any agreement to monitor or review the policy would more appropriately be included in the policies register.

Strategy and Partnerships

A Committee Member queried that there seemed to be limited reference to crime and disorder within the document. Officers responded that whilst the core functions in relation to crime and disorder were shown, the individual projects which took place under that umbrella were not, as most depended on grants or budgets becoming available. Once funding was secured, details of projects to be progressed were agreed within the Crime and Safety Partnership in partnership with the Police & Crime Commissioner and then included in the Community Safety Action Plan. Officers undertook to include additional context around this, and also Prevent work, within the service plan.

In relation to a query on the increase in the KPI for Number of Legislative Enforcement Actions Taken for ASB (which had increased to 12, where performance in 2024/25 had been 1), officers clarified that this related to actions such as closure orders which were often led by the Police with support from the council. A Committee Member suggested that the KPI could instead focus on the level of involvement rather than the individual number of orders secured. Officers undertook to look at this further and respond to the Member with further information about how the metric was calculated.

Waste and Environmental Protection

In relation to a query on the KPI for Percentage of Household Waste Recycled which showed a reduction from an actual target of 30% in 2024/25 to a target of 28% over the service plan period, officers clarified that this referred to dry recycling only. The majority of the council's recycling performance related to garden waste which was not included in this figure.

A Committee Member suggested, in relation to the workstream to 'remove graffiti with a 24-hour response for offensive and hate related content', that a new workstream should be added to include removal of all graffiti. Clarification was provided that the council responded to any graffiti on its own structures or street furniture but was not responsible for that on private property, structures owned by Hertfordshire County Council, or equipment owned by utility companies. However, in the case of offensive or hate related content the council would consider removal even if located on third party owned property in order to avoid delay. The council's budget and resources did not allow for remediation of non-council property which was subject to graffiti; however, officers continued to work with partners to mitigate the problem. It was noted the majority of graffiti affected structures which were owned by either Hertfordshire County Council or utility companies.

Housing and Residential Services

In response to a query as to whether additional licensing for Houses in Multiple Occupation could be included as a commitment within the service plan, officers responded that following the debate at Full Council in October a report was to be brought to the Policy and Resources Committee setting out options, as well as a HMO Licensing Policy. Officers undertook to add reference to the HMO Licensing Policy within the document.

RESOLVED:

That the General Public Services & Community Engagement Committee comments on the 2026-2029 draft service plans as shown above and notes that the final service plans will be approved by Full Council in conjunction with the budget.

30 COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANT AGREEMENTS

The Partnerships and Inclusion Manager presented the report, which provided information on the organisations and projects which officers proposed to continue to fund, until 31 March 2029, using existing budget already allocated to the Strategy and Partnerships team.

In response to a concern expressed by a Committee Member about deterioration and a lack of preventative services for young people in Abbots Langley, officers responded that funding cuts at the County Council within Services for Young People meant that a youth service had not been provided consistently in Abbots Langley for the last few years. Rather than the existing ad-hoc provision, it was proposed to move towards a model of providing more targeted intervention which was focused on areas of need. This would mean that should an issue be identified in Abbots Langley and come to the attention of the council and the Community Safety Partnership then resource could be allocated, and the same would apply to any other areas of need identified elsewhere in the district. The county council funding cuts meant that all preventative interventions by Services for Young People had now been stopped in favour of a targeted approach.

The Chair moved, and Councillor Lloyd seconded, the recommendations as set out in the report. On being put to the vote these were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the General Public Services & Community Engagement Committee:

1. agrees to continue to match fund a mental health support provision with budget already allocated to Strategy and Partnerships;
2. agrees to an agile and targeted approach across the district for the grant agreement with Services for Young People;
3. agrees to a new grant agreement with Roundabout Transport;
4. agrees to increase funding to Citizens Advice Service Three Rivers from £259,290 to £260,000 from existing budget allocated to Strategy and Partnerships;
5. agrees to enter all contracts and/or grant agreements proposed within this report for three years of any funding allocations under £25,000, subject to the annual budget setting process;
6. agrees to recommend to the Policy & Resources Committee to enter all contracts and/or grant agreements above £25,000; and

7. agrees to recommend to the Policy & Resources Committee to delegate authority to the Associate Director of Corporate, Customer and Community for grant extensions of up to 6 months.

31 PARKING MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME 2025-2027 ANNUAL UPDATE

The Principal Sustainable Travel Planner and Transport Officer presented the report, which reviewed the progress of the current Parking Management Programme and which proposed additions to the programme for the financial year 2026/27.

The committee noted that since the last committee report in January 2025 the following schemes and workstreams had been completed: Harefield Road; High Elms Lane; Primrose Hill (although painting of some double yellow lines remained outstanding); Ferry Car Park; On-Street Traffic Regulation Order; and Off-Street Consolidation Traffic Regulation Order Update.

Schemes and workstreams which were in progress were: the Chorleywood area-wide scheme; Gosforth Lane; School Mead; Various Schemes (an amalgamation of small schemes across the district); Garden Road Review; Rickmansworth Controlled Parking Zone Review; Community Way Car Park; Rickmansworth West; On-Street Traffic Regulation Order Review and Rickmansworth Car Park Review.

Additionally, parallel work was taking place to update the Parking Management Policy and implement the Parking App.

Schemes which were on hold were Langleybury Lane and Parsonage Close.

The new schemes which were proposed for addition to the programme for 2025/27 were: a review of the recently completed High Elms Lane Scheme to ensure that aims are being met; monitoring of usage data for Ferry Car Park (including business permit uptake and data from the new pay by plate system); and to investigate and potentially implement changes to parking restrictions in Popes Road and Hazelbury Avenue in Abbots Langley.

In response to a request that schemes which had been the subject of petitions to the committee over the preceding year (notably Bedmond, Kindersley Way and Gallows Hill Lane) should be added to the programme straight away, the Lead Member for General Public Services and the Head of Regulatory Services responded that all schemes which were suggested required assessment using the council's Parking Prioritisation Procedure. Officers were aware of the petitions which had been submitted, particularly in relation to Abbots Langley. However, the number of schemes which could be added to the programme was limited by officer capacity, and there was not any capacity to add further large scale or area-wide schemes at the current time whilst the programme was mid-way through its two year cycle. A full review of the programme would be brought to the committee in January 2027, prior to which the suggested schemes would be assessed against the scoring criteria. Following a request from a Committee Member, officers undertook to consider how the results of the scoring exercises could be made available to Members.

Officers responded to Members' questions relating to parking management issues within their ward areas. Several Committee Members highlighted problems caused by commuter parking, such as at Cedars Estate, Shepherds Way, Hill Rise and Highfield Way.

Members were invited to submit any further comments or representations relating to the Parking Management Programme to officers. Requests for additions to the programme should be submitted in writing either to Enquiries or TPP.

The Chair moved, and Councillor Rainbow seconded, the recommendations as set out in the report. On being put to the vote these were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the General Public Services & Community Engagement Committee agrees that:

1. Members note the report and approve the proposed additions, as detailed in section 6 of this report, to the Parking Management Programme;
2. officers continue to develop the Parking Management Programme as outlined in this report into financial year 2026/27 with a further full report being brought in early 2027 to determine the 2027-2029 Parking Management Programme;
3. once the programme has been set it shall be adhered to as the current Parking Management Programme, with any significant additions being limited to exceptions to the prioritisation procedure requested by the Lead Member, to be delegated to the Director of Finance;
4. the programme will be progressed in line with all relevant current practice, policy and standards; and
5. decisions on schemes, including the consideration of objections to Traffic Regulation Orders developed through this programme of works and to any items remaining from earlier programmes of works, be delegated to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Lead Member.

32 TRANSPORT CAPITAL PROJECT UPDATES

The Principal Sustainable Travel Planner and Transport Officer presented the report, which provided an update on five capital projects being progressed by the council's Transport and Parking team to support better transport infrastructure within the district. The projects were: a verge hardening scheme in Barnhurst Path, South Oxhey; a project to maintain and improve the highway amenities at High Elms Lane; improvements and repairs to the Ebury Way cycle path and foot path; minor alterations to the adopted highway or adjacent land to safely accommodate the Beryl Bikes expansion; and investigating improvements to the path between Springwell Avenue and Eastwick Crescent in Mill End.

The Chair moved, and Councillor Lloyd seconded, the recommendations as set out in the report. On being put to the vote these were agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the General Public Services & Community Engagement Committee:

1. agrees that officers continue to develop the schemes set out in section 3; and delegates all decisions on the development, expenditure and implementation of these schemes and any additions to this work programme, to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Lead Member for General Public Services and relevant Ward Councillors; and
2. gives delegated authority to the Director of Finance to enter into a contract or funding agreement above the value of £25,000 for the capital programme, subject to capital budget confirmation as part of the medium-term financial planning process.

33 BUDGET MANAGEMENT REPORT P6 - GPS&CE

The Finance Business Partner presented the budget monitoring report for period 6 (to end-September 2025). The report had previously been presented to Policy & Resources Committee on 10 November 2025, where approval had been sought for a change to the council's 2025-28 medium-term financial plan.

The Finance Business Partner highlighted some of the key points of the report as follows:

- There was an unfavourable variance of £258,000 on the revenue budget. Factors which had affected this included the application of the 2025/26 pay award; inflationary increases on contracts; and an increase in the abandoned vehicle budget due to an increase in the number of abandoned vehicles reported.
- A variance of £378,000 was reported in the capital budget. Factors affecting this included the CIL Community Grants agreed by Council in July; rephrasing of the replacement of bins from 2026/27 to 2025/26 due to the number which needed to be purchased; and a virement to Open Spaces for the implementation of pickleball courts.
- In relation to staffing, the previously reported five vacant positions were no longer vacant.
- All income streams were on target to achieve budgeted income levels during 2025/26.

RESOLVED:

That the General Public Services & Community Engagement Committee notes the changes concerning the budget areas within the committee's remit.

34 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted its future work programme.

35 MOTION

Councillor Abbas Merali proposed a motion which sought the committee's agreement to recommend that officers:

1. review the current cemetery and burial service provision to ensure that same-day or within 24-hour burials can be facilitated where required;
2. explore the feasibility of providing weekend and out-of-hours burials to meet the needs of faith communities;
3. consult with local faith leaders and community representatives to identify practical steps that would enable the council to deliver timely and inclusive burial services; and
4. report back within 6 months with recommendations on policy, resourcing, and operational changes needed to implement these measures.

The motion was seconded by Councillor Cooper, on behalf of Councillor Alley.

In addressing the Committee, Councillor Merali drew attention to the religious requirement to bury the deceased as soon as possible, often on the same day or within 24 hours of death, and the impact on grieving families where this could not be accommodated. The committee noted that this religious obligation was important for many of the district's multi-faith communities, including in the traditions of Islam and Judaism.

Councillor Merali highlighted that other authorities had implemented systems to support timely burial and urged the council to adopt a more responsive approach.

In debating the motion, a Committee Member commented that the neighbouring authorities of Watford and Hertsmere had larger populations of faith communities where early burial was a religious obligation. It was recommended that officers should look to work in partnership with those authorities, to find ways to address the situation.

The Chair also recommended that officers should take a wider look at whether there were any other groups where religious burial requirements were not being met. Officers suggested that this might be done through the Equalities Forum.

On being put to the vote the motion was agreed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

That the General Public Services & Community Engagement Committee recommends that officers:

1. review the current cemetery and burial service provision to ensure that same-day or within 24-hour burials can be facilitated where required;
2. explore the feasibility of providing weekend and out-of-hours burials to meet the needs of faith communities;
3. consult with local faith leaders and community representatives to identify practical steps that would enable the council to deliver timely and inclusive burial services; and
4. report back within 6 months with recommendations on policy, resourcing, and operational changes needed to implement these measures.

CHAIR