THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Three Rivers House
Northway
Rickmansworth
Herts WD3 1RL

Policy and Resources Committee
MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Thursday, 8 October 2026 from 19.30

Present: Councillors Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE Councillor Louise Price

Christopher Alley, Aidan Bentley, Oliver Cooper, Steve Drury, Vicky Edwards, Andrea Fraser, Shelley Gormley, Paul Rainbow, Narinder Sian, Kavan Trivedi and Mike Sims

Officers in Attendance:

Jonathan Boyle – Monitoring Officer
Adam Ralton - Development Management Manager
Joanna Hewitson – Climate Change Manager
Emma Sheridan – Associate Director for Environment
Alison Betts – Associate Director for Finance
Charlotte Gomes – Head of Leisure and Natural Infrastructure
Mandy Baker – Customer Service Manager
Carl Harris – Digital Services Manager

PR124 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Stephen Cox and Chris Lloyd. Councillor Shelley Gormley attended as substitute for Councillor Chris Lloyd.

PR224 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 01 June and 09 July 2026 were confirmed as a correct record.

PR324 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

PR424 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None pecuniary interests were declared by:

Councillors Louise Price and Raj Khiroya as Councillors of Chorleywood Parish Council,

Councillor Narinder Sian as Councillor of Croxley Green Parish Council,

Councillor Andrea Fraser as Councillor of Batchworth Community Council and

Councillors Stephen Giles-Medhurst and Aidan Bentley as Councillors of Abbots Langley Parish Council

PR524 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2026

The Associate Director for Finance introduced the first budget monitoring report for 2026/27. The report addressed inflation and pay award provisions, temporary accommodation budgets, and the Aquadrome urgent decision. Members were advised that council tax and business rates collection remained broadly on target.

Members raised concerns about the scale of forecast variances and the medium-term reserve position, particularly potential pressures on commercial investment income. Officers explained that the Council remained cash positive and held a commercial risk reserve of £9.242 million. Questions were also raised regarding the occupation and financial performance of the acquired properties, transitional protection and section 13A council tax relief following judicial review proceedings, income forecasts, the management of vacant posts and the South Oxhey parking study, Officers confirmed that further written information on property occupancy would be provided and that the parking capital allocation awaited the outcome of the study.

Proposed by Councillor Giles-Medhurst and seconded by Councillor Price. On being put to the vote, the recommendation was declared CARRIED by the Chair with the voting being, 9 votes For and 5 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

- That the revenue budget virements as set out in Appendices 1 to 3 and noted in paragraph 4. 1. 4 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.
- That the revenue budget supplementary estimates of £0.272m as set out in appendices 1 to 3 and noted in paragraph 4.1.5 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.
- That the revenue variances to be managed of £0.128m as set out in appendices 1 to 3 and noted in paragraph 4.1.6 e noted.
- That the capital budgets of £0.277m as set out in appendices 1 to 3 and noted in paragraph 4.4.2 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.

PR624 PLANNING COMMITTEES AND THE NATIONAL SCHEME OF DELEGATION OF PLANNING FUNCTIONS

The Head of Development Management introduced the proposed constitutional changes necessary to implement the National Scheme of Delegation from 3 October 2026. Members discussed the distinction between Schedule 1 and Schedule 2 applications, the gateway test and the reduction in applications capable of being determined by Planning Committee.

Mr Jon Bishop addressed the Committee on behalf of the parish councils within the district. He sought a change to Appendix 4 to permit parish councils to request that eligible Schedule 2 applications to be considered for the gateway test, subject to the same evidential requirements applicable to councillors. Officers confirmed that this was not prohibited by the regulations and noted that Appendix 5 might also require a consequential change.

An amendment was proposed to allow parish councils to submit such requests, through the insertion of a new paragraph (c) into Appendix 4 and consequential re-lettering, with associated constitution wording to be revised as necessary.

Proposed by Councillor Giles-Medhurst and seconded by Councillor Price, the amendment was unanimously AGREED.

The Committee considered a proposal for an addition non decision-making Member representation meeting, drawing on arrangements being considered by the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea. Members discussed the opportunities to hear local representations as well as the administrative resources, frequency of meetings and predetermination risks.

Officers undertook to examine the proposal and its implication and to prepare material for discussion between group leaders before Full Council on 20 October 2026. Members also raised questions about the classification of houses of multiple occupation, petitions and Schedule 2 categories including section 106 and section 73 applications, which officers agreed to review.

The Chair also proposed that the recommendations include an introductory statement recording the Council's objections to the removal of elements of elected member oversight, notwithstanding the statutory need to implement the scheme.

Proposed by Councillor Giles-Medhurst and seconded by Councillor Price. On being put to the vote, the revised recommendations were declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being 9 votes For and 5 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That Policy and Resources recommend to Council:

- To agree the process and procedure detailed in Appendix 4, with minor amendments delegated to the Director of Finance and Head of Regulatory 2 Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning and the Chair of the Planning Committee.
- To agree the required changes to the constitution and as detailed in Appendix 5 to enable the new regulations, process and procedures to be implemented, including:
- Define the nominated officer(s)/member(s).
- Define Own Interest.
- Receipt of a petition can no longer trigger a committee call-in.
- Set the maximum number of Planning Committee at 13. and any other changes required with minor amendments delegated to the Director of Finance and Head of Regulatory Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Planning and the Chair of the Planning Committee:
    - To delegate authority to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Head of Planning Policy and Conservation to update the Statement of Community Involvement to align with the changes to the constitution, together with such other necessary changes
    - That public access to the report be immediate.
    - That public access to the decision be immediate

Note: Councillor Fraser let the Chamber at 8.50pm and returned at 8.52pm.

PR724 BUSINESS SOLAR PANEL GRANT

The report outlined limited take up of the existing £50,000 grant scheme, with the £3,000 maximum award insufficient to overcome upfront installation costs. Proposals were presented to increase the maximum award to £6,500 with 50% match funding, extend eligibility to community buildings and not for profit facilities, and extend the scheme to March 2028.

Members discussed the appropriate size of the grant and whether business rates' relief might provide an alternative means of support. Officers undertook to consider that suggestion, noting potential budget control and administrative implications.

Proposed by Councillor Bentley and seconded by Councillor Giles-Medhurst. On being put to the vote, the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being For 9, Against 5.

RESOLVED:

That:

- Policy and Resources Committee approve the revised terms of the Solar PV and Battery Grant Scheme:
    - Increasing the maximum grant available from £3,000 to £6,500 per eligible small and medium enterprises, with a requirement for 50% match funding
    - Extending eligible organisations to include community buildings, in addition to eligible small and medium enterprises
    - Extending the duration of the grant scheme until March 2028

PR824 AQUADROME PROJECT - MATCH FUNDING REQUEST

The report sought a recommendation to Full Council for an additional £165,000 capital allocation towards the Aquadrome Project in the event that a Community Infrastructure Levy funding application was unsuccessful. Officers clarified that the intended funding split was 74% National Lottery Heritage Fund and 26% match funding. Without this additional contribution, works to Footpath 65 (the causeway between Bury Lake and Stockers Lake) could be at risk.

Members discussed the Lottery bid, existing funding commitments, phasing and contingency arrangements, as well as concerns regarding asbestos and the management of the site. Officers confirmed that the National Lottery Heritage Fund was aware of the asbestos and had supported the investigation work. The additional council contribution would not be committed before the funding outcome was known.

Proposed by Councillor Giles-Medhurst and seconded by Councillor Bentley. The recommendations when put to the vote were declared CARRIED the voting being by general assent.

RESOLVED:

That:

- The Policy and Resources Committee recommends to Full Council that £165,000 of capital funds be allocated to be used as match funding towards the Aquadrome Project as detailed at point 1.5 and between points 3.7 and 3.10, should a funding application to the Community Infrastructure Levy be unsuccessful.
- That public access to the report be immediate.
- That public access to the decision be immediate.

PR924 CEMETERY RULES AND REGULATIONS

The Committee considered a revised set of cemetery rules and regulations following consideration by the General Public Services and Community Engagement Committee. Officers confirmed that the amendments requested by that Committee had been incorporated. Members noted the importance of handling cemetery matters sensitively.

Proposed by Councillor Rainbow and seconded by Councillor Giles-Medhurst. On being put to the vote, the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being by general assent.

RESOLVED:

That:

- The Committee approves the revised Cemetery Rules and Regulations attached at Appendix A.
- The Committee authorises officers to implement the revised Cemetery Rules and Regulations and publish them on the Council's website.
- The Committee approves the removal or cutting back of trees identified as causing damage to memorials or requiring significant maintenance, with works being carried

out sensitively and, wherever practicable, following communication with affected families.

- The Committee approves the removal of redundant and unsafe benches and confirms that in circumstances where the Council wishes to replace a bench in an existing location, replacement memorial benches will be permitted only by the Council and installed only by the Council in accordance with the Council's current policy. The Council will make every effort to contact the family of the memorialised prior to bench removal.

PR1024 CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE STRATEGY 2026-29

Officers introduced the proposed Customer Experience Strategy 2026-2029, building on the preceding strategy and placing additional emphasis on inclusion, accessibility and customer outcomes. Members welcomed elements of the strategy but sought more measurable performance indicators, including call answering, accessibility outside office hours, customer feedback and baseline data.

Officers explained the Council's approach to customer contact channels and advised that the chatbot had handled 742 transactions over approximately six months, with a reported deflection rate of 33%. Officers agreed that additional information on call metrics and channel performance could be included.

Proposed by Councillor Giles-Medhurst and seconded by Councillor Price. The recommendations when being put to the vote were declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being by general assent.

RESOLVED:

That:

- Policy & Resources Committee agree and adopt the Customer Experience Strategy 2026-2029.

PR1124 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Committee considered the first stage consultation responses and proposals to progress to the second stage of the Community Governance Review. Mr Jon Bishop addressed the Committee on Chorleywood Parish Council warding arrangements and the potential effect on Heronsgate. A written representation from Gareth Williams, Clerk to Watford Rural Parish Council, was read to the Committee in relation to the proposals for Penn, Mill End, Maple Cross and West Hyde.

Discussion considered local identity, viability and size of prospective parish councils, the representation of Heronsgate, ward boundaries and naming, and the future of local government reorganization. Members expressed differing views on whether Penn and Mill End should form a parish with Maple Cross and West Hyde, whether separate parish councils should be consulted upon, and whether merging Mill End with Batchworth should be an option.

The Chair revised the proposals to include further consultation on the names of parish wards, and an opportunity for parish councils to submit proposed changes to parish ward boundaries, subject to the very short timetable for producing consultation maps. The Chair also included separate parish council options for Penn and Mill End and for Maple Cross and West Hyde as alternatives to the combined parish proposal. The Heronsgate proposal and other recommendagtions in the report remained otherwise unchanged.

Proposed Councillor Giles-Medhurst and seconded by Councillor Price. On being put to the vote, the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being 8 votes For and 6 Against.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee agree the following draft recommendations and to move to stage 2 of the consultation:

- *Little Green Lane:* To change the ward boundary around the proposed development site north of Little Green Lane from Sarratt Parish Council to Croxley Green Parish Council.

- *Penn and Mill End, Maple Cross and West Hyde:*

    - To reconsult on the parish options available.
- *Heronsgate:* To prepare a mapped single-member Hersongate parish ward within Chorleywood Parish, without increasing the overall number of Chorleywood Parish Councillors by moving 1 Councillor from the Chorleywood South Ward to the new Heronsgate Ward as discussed at the Policy and Resources Meeting on 09 March 2026.

- To make no other changes to existing parish boundaries, parish wards, parish names, parish status or councillor numbers at this stage, except for changes consequential upon recommendations 2.1.1 to 2.1.3.

- To proceed to the second stage of consultation on the draft recommendations once the required maps, electorate forecasts and implementation information have been prepared.

PR1224 WORK PROGRAMME

The work programme was noted.

PR1324 OTHER BUSINESS - IF APPROVED UNDER ITEM 3 ABOVE

CHAIR