

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Full Council held in the Watersmeet Theatre, High Street, Rickmansworth, WD3 1EH, on Tuesday, 27 January 2026 from 7.30 - 9.20 pm

Present: Councillors Stephen King, Councillor Tony Humphreys,

Ian Campbell, Oliver Cooper, Stephen Cox, Steve Drury, Vicky Edwards, Elinor Gazzard, Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE, Rue Grewal, Philip Hearn, Lisa Hudson, Khalid Hussain, Raj Khiroya, Joan King, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Abbas Merali, Chris Mitchell, Debbie Morris, Ian Morris, Sarah Nelmes, Louise Price, Kevin Raeburn, Paul Rainbow, Reena Ranger, Ciaran Reed, Andrew Scarth, Narinder Sian, Mike Sims, Tom Smith, Cheryl Stungo, Jon Tankard, Chris Whately-Smith and Anne Winter

Officers in Attendance:

Joanne Wagstaffe – Chief Executive Officer
Alison Betts – Associate Director for Finance and S151 Officer
Jonathan Boyle – Principal Lawyer and Deputy Monitoring Officer
Matthew Barnes – Principal Planning Solicitor
Lucy Smith – Committee and Electoral Services Manager

106 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Alley, Davies, Fraser, and Councillor Hudson who arrived at 20:24. Councillor Tankard left the chamber at 20:45.

107 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

108 REGULATION 19 PUBLICATION DOCUMENT AND SITE ALLOCATION

At 8.00pm, the Chair adjourned proceedings to observe a minute's silence in recognition of Holocaust Memorial Day.

Members paid tribute to the victims of the Holocaust and subsequent genocides, and reflected on the importance of remembrance and education. The Leader and other Members spoke briefly about the significance of the day, the Council's participation in commemorative events, and the need to challenge antisemitism, intolerance and hatred in all its forms.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, moved the recommendations out in the agenda relating to the publication of the Local Plan Regulation 19 Policies.

The Council were advised that approval would enable the document to be published for statutory Regulation 19 consultation, followed by submission to the Planning Inspectorate, subject to delegated authority for minor modifications.

In moving the motion, the Leader outlined the extensive work undertaken by officers and external consultants over several years, including Green Belt review, sustainability appraisal, transport evidence and repeated public consultations. Members were advised that the proposed Local Plan sought to balance housing need, infrastructure provision and Green Belt protection retaining approximately 73% of the District as Green Belt and proposing 7,027

dwellings, equating to approximately 56% of the Government's standard method housing target.

Members debated the robustness of the evidence base, the likelihood of the Local Plan being found sound at examination, and whether a lower housing figure should have been pursued earlier under previous national planning policy frameworks. Differing views were expressed regarding the classification of land as Green Belt or grey belt, the consequences of failing to adopt a sound Local Plan, and the risk of increased speculative development in the absence of an adopted plan.

Several Members spoke in support of the proposed policies, citing the need for affordable housing, appropriate housing mix, infrastructure delivery, sustainability standards and certainty for residents. Other Members raised concerns regarding policy viability, potential impacts on development costs, and whether certain policy requirements could affect householders seeking minor development.

The Leader of the Council Announced that an amendment at Policy and Resources Committee had been accepted and would be incorporated into the policy wording.

“Part 1 – HOU1 – Housing Mix and Type (page 38).

iv. The proportions of homes to be built to the above standards should be applied to the housing mix of the development in terms of size and type in consultation with the council's housing department to ensure that developments provide a mix of sizes and types adapted of wheelchair users that reflects local need.”

Councillor Edwards proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Reed to Policy HOU4.

“Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

5.59 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople have particular accommodation needs that require additional consideration. To ensure that members of these communities are able to access decent and appropriate housing with access to services including health and education, the council must make provision for accommodation to meet identified needs.

5.60 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) sets out the Government's planning policy for traveller sites and should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework.

HOU4 - Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

1) The council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (July 2025) sets out that there is a need for 37 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers who meet the definition set out in the PPTS and a need for 6 plots for Travelling Showpeople who meet the planning definition set out in the PPTS.

2) When considering planning applications for sites for Gypsies and Travellers or Travelling Showpeople, a criteria based approach will be used. The following criteria will be taken into account:

a) Avoid areas at risk from all sources of flooding, or affected by environmental hazards that may affect residents' health or welfare;

b) Avoid causing an adverse impact on areas of recognised wildlife, heritage or landscape importance, and on the openness of the Green Belt with improvements sought;c) Have reasonable access to local services and facilities, including shops, schools and healthcare; d) Be well located to the highway network, with safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access to the site;

- e) Sites should be suitably designed and the layout include sufficient space to accommodate the proposed number of caravans, provision of day rooms, space for tourer caravans, landscaping, SuDs mitigation, Biodiversity Net Gain, vehicles and ancillary areas as appropriate. Adequate on-site facilities for parking, storage, waste collection, play and residential amenity should be provided;
- f) The site must be capable of being adequately serviced by drinking water, utilities and sewerage disposal facilities;
- g) The size and scale of the site, alone or in combination with other nearby traveller sites, respects the size and density of the local settled community and does not dominate the nearest settled community;
- h) Provide adequate levels of privacy and residential amenities for occupiers and not have an adverse impact on the amenities of any nearby occupiers; including being able to achieve a reasonable level of visual and acoustic privacy for both people living on the site and those living nearby;
- i) The site must be capable of being adequately serviced by drinking water, utilities and sewerage disposal facilities; and
- j) The circumstances of the applicant and their need for pitches on the application site;
- 3) Existing Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites will be safeguarded unless there is no longer a need for their retention, or they are no longer viable.”

Councillor Giles-Medhurst indicated that above items except g) had been accepted at the Policy and Resources Committee and that as mover of the motion he was happy to accept all of the above including the now revised item g).

The Chair provided procedural clarification regarding the status of amendments considered at the Policy and Resources Committee and the application of Rule 22 of the Council's Constitution. As Full Council was the following working day to Policy and Resources Committee it was not possible for due notice to be given. However ten Members of the Council were required to support the amendment. With a show of hands, Councillors Campbell, Cooper, Edwards, Hearn, Merali, D Morris, Ranger, Reed, Sian and Sims supported the amendment.

On being put to the vote, the Chair announced the amendment CARRIED with the voting being by general assent.

The Council considered the Local Plan Regulation Part 2: Site Allocations Document.

Members debated individual site allocations, with particular reference to Green Belt impact, infrastructure capacity, sustainability, transport constraints and the interaction of site allocations with the amended policy framework. Concerns were raised regarding specific sites in Abbots Langley, Chorleywood, Maple Cross, Bedmond and other locations, including the potential cumulative impact of development and the classification of land as grey belt.

Councillor Cooper proposed an amendment, seconded by Councillor Edwards:

“Remove the allocation of the following sites:

- *H5 (ACFS9b, Little How Croft)*
- *H10 (CFS7, land south of the M25)*

- *H12 (CFS56, Church Hill Road, Bedmond)*
- *H15 (CFS13, land at Oxhey Lane, Watford Heath)*
- *H16 (CFS14, land north of Oxhey Lane, Carpenders Park)*
- *H17 (NCFS11, Grange Wood, Carpenders Park)*
- *H20 (CFS16, Chorleywood station car park)*
- *H32 (CFS65, Bucknalls Lane)*
- *H36 (CFS26c, west of Kings Langley estate)*
- *H37 (NSS20, land adjacent to the RES site, Egg Farm Lane)*
- *H41 (EOS7.0, land to the south of Shepherds Lane and east of M25)*
- *H53 (CFS47c, Adams Nurseries, Sarratt)”*

As this amendment was identical to a previous amendment heard at Policy and Resources Committee the previous evening, Rule 22 applied. Ten Members of the Council were required to support the amendment. With a show of hands, Councillors Campbell, Cooper, Edwards, Hearn, Hudson, Merali, D Morris, Ranger and Reed. As only 9 Members were in support of the amendment, the amendment was not put to the vote.

Following the procedural ruling of Rule 22, Councillor Cooper proposed an alternative amendment, seconded by Councillor Edwards:

“That Site Allocation H10 be removed from the Regulation 19 Local Plan Part 2: Site Allocations document prior to publication and submission.”

The Leader of the Council advised that the matter had already been debated at length and moved the amendment to the vote.

On being put to the vote, the Chair declared the amendment LOST with the voting being For 9, Against 22, Abstentions 2.

Councillors Giles-Medhurst, Nelmes, Drury, Price, Lloyd and Whateley-Smith requested a recorded vote on the substantive motion.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and declared by the Chair as CARRIED with the voting as follows:

For, Councillors, Cox, Drury, Gazzard, Giles-Medhurst, Grewal, Humphreys, Hussain, Khuroya, J King, S King, Lloyd, Major, Martin, Mitchell, I Morris, Nelmes, Price, Raeburn, Rainbow, Scarth, Sian, Sims, Smith, Stungo, Whateley-Smith and Winter (26)

Against (0)

Abstentions, Councillors, Campbell, Cooper, Edwards, Hearn, Hudson, Merali, D Morris, Ranger and Reed (9)

CHAIRMAN