

21 Lead Member Reports

Council received the reports of the Leader of the Council and Lead Members.

Further verbal updates were provided by several Lead Members and questions asked thereof, as summarised:

Report from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst

The Leader of the Council provided a verbal update to his report, outlining the introduction of the Beryl Bike scheme, a visit to the Colne Valley viaduct, restoration of wetlands, and the 50th anniversary of Three Rivers District event.

Questions were asked of the Leader's report.

Councillor Debbie Morris asked if, in light of a year having passed since Hamas' 7 October 2023 attacks on Israel, the messaging on hate crime would include reference to antisemitism. In response, the Leader advised that he believed the report referenced a range of characteristics and that he had met with the Police and Crime Commissioner who had confirmed that no antisemitic crime issues of note had occurred within the district.

Councillor Oliver Cooper asked if the Leader could explain why it had taken so long to progress the Local Plan and what the consequences would be for this Council. In response, the Leader of the Council replied that the timeframe had been explained many times at the Local Plan Sub-Committee meetings and extra resources had been put into the Local Plan in the budget in February.

Councillor Steve Drury asked the Leader to comment on that the land north of Little Green Lane, Croxley had been turned down for development and was not in the Local Plan, yet a developer had put out communications across the district with questions and also stating they have been having discussion with Officers at Three Rivers and the County Council. In response, the Leader of the Council responded that any developer could have pre-application discussions with officers.

Councillor Elinor Gazzard asked if the Leader could confirm the position of the Breakspeare School site given it was owned by Hertfordshire County Council as during the recent council byelection the Conservative candidate said she would ensure the site would become a Health Centre once vacated. In response, the Leader replied that he did not know what the county council's intentions were but had written to the Leader of the County Council without response.

Councillor Tom Smith asked the Leader for an update on Rickmansworth Library. The Leader replied that offers had been made to the county council to accommodate the Rickmansworth Library within Three Rivers House and that the county council had

suggested a figure which was not acceptable in terms of the additional cost to Three Rivers District Council and so correspondence had continued.

Written response provided following the meeting:

Officers had entered into discussions with Hertfordshire County Council concerning a possible temporary relocation of Rickmansworth Library to the ground floor at Three Rivers House. Unfortunately, the County Council were unable to make an offer that reflected the market value of the vacant premises, and their highest offer would have actually cost the District Council money. As Members will appreciate, such discussions regarding the value of the offers and what aspects the 'rent' would include cannot be disclosed on the grounds of commercial sensitivity. Such disclosure could potentially influence any future offers for the vacant ground floor and prejudice the District Council's ability to achieve best value.

We understand that the County Council have since decided to temporarily move the Library into the Scout premises on Ebury Road in Rickmansworth.

Councillor Sara Bedford asked the Leader if, in relation to communications published regarding the Vine Health Centre from all parties, he agreed that everyone should check facts before publishing leaflets. In response, the Leader referred to leaflets which had been circulated by various members.

Councillor Reena Ranger asked the Leader to confirm if the figures that he mentioned in relation to the Rickmansworth Library were to cover the costs incurred by Three Rivers District Council to house the library or whether the figures included other costs. The Leader of the Council replied that he would have to check if he could circulate the figures as they were commercially sensitive but that he understood that the costs were to cover utility costs and additional staffing costs.

Written response provided following the meeting:

I refer the member to the answer given to Councillor Tom Smith which outlines the situation regarding the library.

We understand that the County Council have since decided to temporarily move the Library into the Scout premises on Ebury Road in Rickmansworth.

Report from the Lead Member for Resources, Councillor Jonathon Solomons

There was no verbal update from the Lead Member.

Questions were asked of the Lead Member's report.

Councillor Oliver Cooper asked the Lead Member in relation to the contingency held for the Pay Award, the 2024/25 award was much larger than expected and what contingency was being held. In response, the Lead Member responded that he raised this point with the Director of Finance and would provide a written response.

Written response provided following the meeting:

The pay award is reported in the budget monitoring report for period 6 on this agenda along with the contingency. The pay award was agreed at the employers offer and the contingency is sufficient to fund the pay award. The full impact of the pay award on individual budgets will be set out in period 8 monitoring which will be used as the basis for setting the 2025/26 budget.

Report from the Lead Member for General Public Services, Councillor Sarah Nelmes

There was no verbal update from the Lead Member

Questions were asked of the Lead Member's report.

Councillor Stephen Cox asked the Lead Member if she agreed that proposed double yellow lines would worsen the parking issues on Gosforth Lane. The Lead Member responded that that was the reason for the upcoming meeting being called and to deal with both the Environmental Services and Transport team as well as local councillors to come to a solution.

Councillor Debbie Morris asked the Lead Member if there was no update, to provide a written update in relation to two parking schemes, The Woods and East Glade, to ward councillors imminently. In response, the Lead Member advised that she would be looking to prioritise some schemes from the pipeline with councillors.

Councillor Joan King asked the Lead Member what had happened to a report provided several years ago. In response, the Lead Member that this was one of the higher priority schemes.

Councillor Reena Ranger asked the Lead Member if she would consider, given the levels of rainfall in the district, looking at some areas with high leaf fall to sweep more often to help the infrastructure. The Lead Member confirmed that this would take place.

Councillor Philip Hearn asked the Lead Member if, regarding a situation emerging on Common Gate Road, with people parking dangerously on the corner, she would be able to look at the situation there and ask the engineer to lengthen the double yellow line. In response, the Lead Member said that it is an issue that she had already discussed at her briefing last week, and it will be looked at.

Councillor Andrea Fraser asked the Lead Member if the administration would commit to putting up signs in advance to warn people that their gullies would be cleared and to move their cars to alleviate backlog. The Lead Member responded that she would have to provide a written response as she was unsure of the technicalities of this.

Written response provided following the meeting:

I can confirm that officers in the street cleansing team do at certain locations across the district put up signs in advance to warn people that their gullies are scheduled to be cleared so that they can move their cars and park on the other side of the road. It is not possible to do this everywhere, every day, as there is simply not enough officer resource. In addition, officers more frequently than not find that such signage is largely ignored by residents. That said, if you have a specific area/street of concern please do

contact the Waste and Streets Supervisors and we will be happy to try this approach at the relevant location.

Councillor Lisa Hudson asked the Lead Member regarding the renovation of bowling greens if Rickmansworth Bowls Club would be included in these plans. In response, the Lead Member said that there are no plans for the renovation of bowls clubs but there was a maintenance scheme which was ongoing.

Councillor Chris Whately-Smith asked the Lead Member if residents' views were taken into account in considering parking schemes. In response, the Lead Member replied that these were considered when proposals were programmed for completion.

The Leader of the Council asked the Lead Member if she would agree that there was a need to address the High Elms Lane scheme to improve safety in the area. In response, the Lead Member replied that that the High Elms Lane scheme had been consulted on and that the crematorium and road safety would be considered.

Report from the Lead Member for Housing and Public Health, Councillor Steve Drury

There was no verbal update.

Questions were asked of the Lead Member's report.

Councillor Joan King asked the Lead Member where the eight households located outside of Three Rivers were. In response, the Lead Member said they were relatively local: one in Luton; two in Ealing and Aylesbury. The Lead Member said a full written response would be provided.

Written response provided following the meeting:

As of 15 November 2024, there are 11 households (seven singles, four families) placed in temporary accommodation outside the district. These households are placed in the following locations:

4 x St Albans

2 x Aylesbury

2 x London Borough of Ealing

1 x Potters Bar

1 x Luton

1x High Wycombe

Officers will endeavour to move these households back to temporary accommodation within the district, as soon as it becomes available.

Councillor Oliver Cooper asked the Lead Member if he agreed with the Leader of the Council that there is no way to bring enforcement action regarding the conditions at Shannon House at the current time. In response, the Lead Member said that there was nothing that could be done presently but that he had written to the two councils concerned and was writing to the Lead Members of these two councils to ensure they were aware of the conditions.

Councillor Stephen Cox asked the Lead Member how many homes had been provided considering the development of 11 new homes in South Oxhey. In response, the Lead Member said that the 11 new properties would have changed this number and so he would provide a written response.

Written response provided following the meeting:

Officers have confirmed the following figures of delivery for the whole of the South Oxhey regeneration project:

Total Units – 659

Market Housing – 426

Social Rent – 140 (21% of units)

Shared Ownership – 93 (14% of units)

11 of the market housing units were purchased with the Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF) and will now be available at affordable rent (capped at local housing allowance) and will add to the affordable housing provision available across the district.

Report from the Lead Member for Infrastructure and Economic Development, Councillor Louise Price

There was no verbal update.

Questions were asked of the Lead Member's report.

Councillor Philip Hearn asked the Lead Member about concerns regarding the Chorleywood Gardens Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP), namely that the proposals still included a cycle path along the A404, and whether the Lead Member supported such a scheme. In response, the Lead Member replied that there were discussions underway about an extension to the scheme which she supported.

Councillor Reena Ranger asked the Lead Member regarding the step-free access at underground stations if she could confirm the criteria or feasibility assessment was that selected Croxley Station as opposed to somewhere like Rickmansworth. In response, the Lead Member referred the question to the Leader of the Council as he was in the meeting with Transport for London and their advisors. The Leader of the Council advised it was not a decision within Three Rivers District Council's remit.

Councillor Chris Mitchell asked the Lead Member if she could explain the ongoing discussions with Hertfordshire County Council regarding electric vehicle charging and whether there were issues with funding or timing which might delay works. In response, the Lead Member replied that they have gone ahead with Blink Contract to progress electric vehicle charging points and that funding had been secured.

Councillor Ciaran Reed asked the Lead Member about the support of residents for the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) around Chorleywood as compared to sentiment in Chorleywood. In response, the Lead Member replied that the council was listening to the people of Chorleywood and discussing what Chorleywood wants in relation to the scheme.

Councillor Chris Lloyd asked the Lead Member in relation to step-free station access, whether meetings discussed Moor Park and whether reference was made to the feasibility study previously undertaken in Croxley. In response, the Leader of the Council, answering at the invitation of the Lead Member, confirmed that Moor Park was not discussed at the meeting but regarding the previous feasibility study that was done, that they had it, and it was one of the reasons why they were now looking at Croxley.

Councillor Debbie Morris asked the Lead Member when working on the council's economic strategy if she could confirm that smaller centers like Main Avenue in Moor Park along with the industrial estate would be included. In response, the Lead Member replied that she would provide a written response.

Written response provided following the meeting:

When the economic strategy is developed it will look at all types of business across the district. It will not be specific about locations within the district but will look at the district and its relationship to the rest of southwest Hertfordshire.

Councillor Oliver Cooper asked the Lead Member regarding the Chorleywood Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan if she accepted that her view that the Chorleywood route should reach Rickmansworth differed from officers' advice that there was no legal requirement for the route to travel that far. In response, the Lead Member replied that she believed a route between Chorleywood and Rickmansworth should travel along the A404 and that conversations between the county council, district council, and Chorleywood were taking place on the matter.

Councillor Sara Bedford asked the Lead Member why the electric vehicle charging strategy had not been presented to a meeting of the General Public Services, Community Safety and Infrastructure Committee for adoption, as the July report had said it would be. The Lead Member replied that she would provide a written answer.

Written response provided following the meeting:

A draft EV strategy was presented to the General Public Services, Community Safety and Infrastructure Committee on 23 July 2024, the papers for which are available on the council's website.

At this meeting it was agreed to proceed with a public consultation exercise. The results of this consultation and details of a final EV Strategy for adoption are due to be returned to the appropriate committee meetings early in the new year.

Report from the Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships, Councillor Andrew Scarth

There was no verbal update.

Questions were asked of the Lead Member's report.

Councillor Sara Bedford asked the Lead Member if he was concerned about public safety through two policing teams being understaffed. In response, the Lead Member replied that the previous Police and Crime Commissioner did not set aside funds to replace Police Community Support Officers who left the force and that several areas had issues with long-term sickness.

Councillor Philip Hearn asked the Lead Member in relation to the petition made by the residents of Chesnut Avenue who had not received funding for CCTV, would the Lead Member be writing to those residents to make them aware of this. In response, the Lead Member replied that as those were private properties the residents did not have the right to CCTV.

Councillor Andrea Fraser asked how communicating with residents on social media took account of older residents. In response, the Lead Member replied that the Healthy Hubs were another method of communicating with residents.

Councillor Abbas Merali asked the Lead Member if he agreed that given local crime issues, General Public Services, Community Safety and Infrastructure Committee should meet more than once a year. In response, the Lead Member replied that he would provide a written response.

Written response provided following the meeting:

The General Public Services, Community Safety and Infrastructure Committee has already met twice this year and is scheduled to meet twice more this municipal year, a total of four meetings.

Councillor Stephen Cox asked if the Lead Member would accept congratulations for the installation of two CCTV cameras in south Oxhey; which the Lead Member said he would.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst asked the Lead Member, in regard to the issue regarding the lack of Police Community Support Officers which the Leader of the Council has discussed with the Police Crime Commissioner, if he agreed it was right to have raised this with the Police and Crime Commissioner. The Lead Member confirmed that he agreed with this course of action.

Report from the Lead Member for Leisure, Councillor Chris Lloyd

There was no verbal update.

Questions were asked of the Lead Member's report.

Councillor Debbie Morris asked the Lead Member if he could clarify when the Eastbury Play Area works would be taking place. In response, the Lead Member replied that this would depend on the progress of the planning application and weather allowing for works but that ward councillors would be kept updated.

Councillor Oliver Cooper asked the Lead Member about the funding arrangements for the Aquadrome Bridge and whether further bids for additional funding had been sought. In response, the Leader of the Council, answering at the invitation of the Lead Member, replied that he would chase a written response for the member.

Written response provided following the meeting:

Officers investigated funding from Veolia, however, this was not a viable option due to the required timescales and total project cost: "a project that will physically start within four months of being awarded a grant" – due to the bridge project timescale, this would not have been achieved, it would also have failed on this criteria: "a project with a total cost of no more than £350,000". Officers investigated funding options including HS2, however, as we have received AMP money, HS2 confirmed it was not something they would fund. As previously highlighted, the main source of funding was originally to be from the Department of Transport, via Sustrans, however, due to central government reducing the Active Travel budget nationally, this was no longer viable. Other funders would not fund a bridge or have sufficient funding streams for the size of the project.

Councillor Cherly Stungo asked if Lead Member if Croxley Green Ward Councillors could have a briefing concerning the Stone Orchard management plan. In response, the Lead Member said he would be happy to provide this. Councillor Andrea Fraser asked the Lead Member if he could clarify when the original route of the park run would be reinstated. The Lead Member replied that he had been advised that the path was flooded but was in regular contact with the park run organisers.

Councillor Sara Bedford asked the Lead Member about the funding of Aquadrome Bridge works, and whether he was aware of the revenue and capital funding requirements of the works. The Lead Member replied that he was.

Councillor Ciaran Reed asked the Lead Member if he could confirm if risk assessments and asbestos assessments had been undertaken at the two new play ranger sites. In response, the Lead Member replied that he will provide a written answer. **Written response provided following the meeting:**

Risk assessments have taken place at these sites.

Councillor Chris Mitchell asked the Lead Member about the delay to the National Lottery funded hydrological study. The Lead Member replied that this was affecting people in the catchment area and that he hoped the model would be released soon.

Report from the Lead Member for Sustainability and Climate Change, Councillor Jon Tankard

The Lead Member provided a verbal update to their report, outlining the need to start surveying catchment rivers which he would email members about.

Questions were asked of the Lead Member's report.

Councillor Chris Mitchell asked the Lead Member regarding the community energy fund what feedback had been received from the seven events held. In response, the Lead Member said he was awaiting feedback from Grand Union Community Energy.

Councillor Andrea Fraser asked the Lead Member about an additional grant that could have been used in the budget for tree works and whether he would commit to actively seeking more grants. In response, the Lead Member replied that he would provide a written response.

Written response provided following the meeting:

A detailed written response has been provided to Councillor Fraser, but the highlight is that officers were successful in receiving over 70% of a £20,000 grant pot which has been more than sufficient to cover the proposed project which fits with the LCF objectives.

The LCF grant objectives cover:

- A. Remediation of Land,
- B. Reduction of Pollution,
- C. Public Amenities,
- D. Conservation of Biodiversity,
- E. Restoration of Buildings of Religious or Historical Interest and
- F. Administrative Services to another EB.

Councillor Chris Lloyd asked the Lead Member if he would agree that Three Rivers District Council was adept at sourcing grant funding and that the officers should be thanked for that. The Lead Member agreed.

Councillor Oliver Cooper asked the Lead Member a question about grant funding. In response, the Leader of the Council, answering at the invitation of the Lead Member, confirmed that a register of grants secured was available.