

## THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

**At a meeting of the Local Strategic Partnership Board held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Thursday, 26 September 2024 from 10.00 am – 11.41 am.**

**Present:** Councillors

Sarah Nelmes (Chair)  
Andrew Scarth  
Andrea Fraser

**Officers in Attendance:**

Shivani Dave, Partnerships Manager  
Michelle Wright, Community Safety & Safeguarding Manager  
Kimberley Grout, Associate Director – Corporate, Customer & Community  
Joanna Hewitson, Climate Change & Sustainability Officer  
Jemma Duffell, Community Safety Officer  
Anita Hibbs, Committee Officer

**External in Attendance:**

Paraic McKenna, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)  
Karen Stephanou, Watford FC Community, Sports and Education Trust  
Peta Mettam, Citizens Advice Service Three Rivers (CASTR)  
Brad Hughes, Parmiter's School, (representing SW Herts Secondary Schools)  
Keith Harland, Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service  
Andrew Palfreyman, Hertfordshire Constabulary  
Karen Watkin, Home Start  
Kips Green, Services for Young People  
Martin Kean, NHS Hospitals  
Jo Barrett, Thrive Homes  
Ross Elliott, Watford FC Community, Sports and Education Trust  
Penny Metcalf, Watford Community Housing  
Phoebe Allsopp, OPCC  
Bob Jones, Watford & Three Rivers Trust  
Jamie Farrelly, Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service

### **LSP10/24 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTIONS**

The attendees introduced themselves individually.

### **LSP11/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Tamara Valmas, Peter Cogan and Elspeth MacKenzie

Councillor Sarah Nelmes substituting for Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst

### **LSP12/24 MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING, NOT OTHERWISE ON THE AGENDA**

The minutes of the Local Strategic Partnership Board meeting, held on 18 July 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

## **LSP13/24    HOT TOPICS**

Brad Hughes from Parmiter's School highlighted pressing issues faced by secondary schools in Hertfordshire, particularly regarding the support for students with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND). The speaker noted a significant challenge in the availability of SEND provision, which adversely affects both SEND and mainstream students. Additionally, the increasing mental health needs among students and the pressure on external services were emphasised as critical concerns. The speaker also pointed out a national crisis in school attendance, although local schools are performing better than national averages.

Paraic McKenna from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) emphasised the organisation's commitment to enhancing support for Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) following a recent inadequate rating from Ofsted. HCC has allocated an additional £5-7 million annually to improve services and has set an interim target to process at least 60% of EHCP requests within statutory timeframes. In the first quarter, HCC successfully processed 67% of requests on time, outperforming national and regional standards. The speaker also announced the arrival of the new CEO, Angie Ridgewell, who will be engaging with stakeholders to further support these initiatives.

Peta Mettam from Citizens Advice Service outlined the ongoing efforts related to energy management and climate change initiatives at CASTR. She specifically mentioned a project at Abbots Langley, where collaboration with the church has led to a commitment to a net zero program. Additionally, the speaker highlighted the recent funding secured from national citizens advice, which aims to enhance energy efficiency training for staff. This training includes energy-saving strategies, emission reduction techniques, and guidance for clients on accessing grants to minimise property energy wastage. The speaker also touched on the importance of smart meters and insulation as part of their mandatory training and initiatives.

Shivani Dave, Partnerships Manager provided an update regarding the current situation of the Rickmansworth and South Oxhey Food banks. She reported a significant decrease in donations over recent months, which has forced the foodbanks to purchase more food to meet rising demand. The officer emphasised the need for increased communication and promotional efforts to boost donations and suggested the possibility of initiating a partnership with local schools to encourage community support, similar to a harvest festival initiative.

## **LSP14/24    CLIMATE CHANGE**

Joanna Hewitson, Climate & Sustainability Officer delivered a presentation on the importance of collective action in addressing climate change, highlighting the efforts made by the council since declaring a climate emergency in 2019. The officer outlined the updated strategy aiming for net zero emissions for their estate by 2030 and for the district by 2045. Key initiatives include improving public sector emissions, retrofitting homes, and securing funding for sustainable projects such as solar panel installations. The officer emphasised the need for community involvement and the challenges faced in achieving these ambitious goals, particularly regarding funding and skills shortages in the retrofit sector. The presentation concluded with an overview of future plans, including a bid for funding from the National Lottery to further support community-driven climate action.

Keith Harland from Hertfordshire Fire & Rescue Service stressed the importance of being informed about the installation of solar panels on buildings, particularly larger structures. The speaker expressed concerns regarding the potential risks posed to fire service personnel if they are unaware of solar panels during emergency responses. The speaker emphasizes the need for notification when solar panels are installed on significant buildings, to ensure safety protocols can be adjusted accordingly. The speaker acknowledged that while solar panels are generally safe, the lack of communication can create significant hazards during fire incidents.

There was a request for a registration process. **Action – Shivani Dave** to circulate contact details.

Paraic McKenna from Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) outlined the council's recognition of the urgent realities of climate change and their extensive responsibilities in addressing it. They declared a climate emergency in 2019 and established a comprehensive strategy with nine ambitions aimed at embedding sustainability across operations. Key partnerships have been formed with local councils and schools to enhance cooperation in carbon reduction, biodiversity, and transport sustainability. Initiatives include the installation of air purifiers in schools, tree planting efforts, and flood mitigation projects. The council actively collaborates with regional climate forums and local partners to implement effective strategies against climate change, emphasising the need for a coordinated response to the ongoing climate crisis.

The Board discussed the responsibilities of developers in funding local initiatives related to housing and infrastructure. Board members inquired about whether developers contribute to a fund that supports community projects, particularly in the context of building flats or housing. The Chair acknowledged the question and mentioned the importance of section 106 funding and community infrastructure levies, noting that while there are funds available, they are not strictly ring-fenced for specific projects. The Chair further elaborated on the role of the local planning authority in setting rules for new developments, including requirements for electric car charging infrastructure.

Joanna Hewitson, Climate Change & Sustainability Officer emphasised the importance of the existing local plan, which is currently based on a 2013 framework. The officer highlighted ongoing efforts to develop the next local plan with the assistance of consultancy services aimed at enhancing sustainability policies. The officer discussed the connection between carbon offsetting and funding for carbon offset projects through section 106 agreements, indicating that these projects are crucial for infrastructure and mitigation efforts. However, the officer expressed concerns about the effectiveness of the local plan as a tool for achieving these goals, noting that the process is somewhat uncertain and dependent on various external factors. The officer also spoke about the success of the 'Your Tree, Our Future' program, which provides free trees to the community. The officer expressed a desire to involve local housing associations and schools in tree planting efforts, particularly in underserved areas that would benefit from more greenery. The officer reflected on previous attempts to collaborate with community housing and emphasised the need for better communication and outreach to ensure broader participation. The officer suggested organising a meeting with HCC officers to strategies on how to enhance community involvement before the program concludes, highlighting the importance of creating shaded areas and enhancing the local environment through collective efforts. It was also suggested that that this should be included on the agenda for the LSP meeting next year. **Action – Shivani Dave.**

Ross Elliott, Watford FC delivered a presentation on the recent efforts of the organisation to enhance its sustainability practices, highlighting the introduction of sustainability as a focus area within the last year. The speaker outlined the organisation's involvement in over 20 community projects in Hershey and London, emphasising the need to improve their sustainability score, which currently stands at 38%. They are redesigning their sustainability policy to involve all members of the organisation and have established eight sustainability themes aligned with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The presentation included the challenges of collecting accurate data for their carbon footprint, the introduction of initiatives to reduce food waste and single-use plastics, and the need for ongoing adaptation to climate change. The speaker reflected on the organisation's progress and the steps needed to further integrate sustainability into their operations.

Jo Barrett from Thrive Homes delivered a presentation that outlined the organisation's approach to sustainability, focusing on the Environmental, Social, and Governance (ESG) framework. The speaker talked about the adoption of the Good Economy's sustainability

reporting standard tailored for social housing, emphasising the importance of a common language for comparison among housing associations. The presentation highlighted the integration of 48 sustainability measures across various business strategies, aiming to embed sustainability practices organisation wide. The speaker reflected on the first two years of reporting, noting initial successes but also recognising areas needing improvement, particularly in material sourcing, climate risk management, and water management. The speaker also shared insights on carbon emissions, identifying scope three emissions as the largest contributor, largely influenced by how customers heat their homes. The organisation aims to enhance energy efficiency in its properties, targeting EPCC standards by 2030 and developing net-zero ambitions. Additionally, the speaker mentioned compliance with statutory energy and carbon reporting requirements due to the organisation's size.

Andrew Palfreyman from Hertfordshire Constabulary delivered a presentation on the current sustainability initiatives and operational improvements within the police constabulary. The constabulary employs around 2,500 officers and staff, focusing on reducing carbon emissions and enhancing operational efficiency. Key points included the transition to electric vehicles, the installation of solar panels, and the implementation of efficient energy practices in their buildings. The speaker highlighted the importance of staff engagement in these initiatives and mentioned specific efforts such as reducing single-use plastics, promoting biodiversity through relaxed mowing practices, and managing beehives at headquarters. The constabulary aims to work closely with suppliers to ensure sustainable practices and is exploring further opportunities to enhance their environmental impact.

Martin Kean from Restarts delivered a presentation on the NHS's significant carbon footprint, which accounts for 6% of the UK's total emissions. The speaker emphasised the urgency for the NHS to achieve net-zero carbon emissions by 2040 amidst financial constraints. The presentation outlined the NHS's green plan, ratified in 2022, focusing on eight key themes, with adaptation being the least developed area. The speaker also highlighted the increasing risks of flooding and overheating in UK hospitals, with alarming statistics indicating that 10% of hospitals are at risk of flooding and 90% are at risk of overheating. The speaker called for collaboration among local partners to address these challenges, suggesting the need for shared risk assessments and frameworks to enhance business continuity and resilience in the face of climate change.

Board members discussed on enhancing emergency planning and risk management across local authorities. They highlighted the broad scope of the risk and resilience manager's role, emphasizing the importance of including medical considerations. Also mentioned their work on an emergency plan, suggesting a follow-up to discuss collaboration. Board members also discussed the creation of risk registers among local boroughs and the need for synergy in emergency planning. They stressed the necessity of a connected plan among stakeholders due to the simultaneous impact of emergencies on multiple organisations. They also raised concerns about local authority preparedness, particularly regarding resource sharing during power outages.

## **LSP15/24    CONNECTING THREE RIVERS**

### Terms of Reference

Shivani Dave discussed the refresh of the terms of reference for the board, emphasising a shift from a formal committee style to a more informal approach that welcomes contributions from non-board partners. Key changes include the addition of new members such as Ros Nerio from the South West Herts Health and Care partnership and the intention to reach out to parish councils for representation. Karen Watkin from Home Start raised concerns about adequately representing all charitable organisations in the region, highlighting the need for broader representation while acknowledging their small charity's role. The conversation focused on collaboration and ensuring that all voices, especially from parish councils and smaller charities, are included in the board's discussions and decisions.

Karen Stephanou from Watford FC Community, Sports and Education Trust expressed a desire for Watford FC Community, Sport and Education Trust to be added to the list. **Action – Shivani Dave.**

The Board agreed the terms of reference unanimously.

**LSP16/24 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS/THEMES**

LSP Workplan

**LSP17/24 DATES FOR FUTURE MEETINGS**

12 December 2024  
19 March 2025

**CHAIR**