

MOTIONS

25/02/2025

Submitted under procedure rule 11

Motion 1: First Homes and Local Connection Test

Proposed by Cllr Oliver Cooper seconded by Cllr Christopher Alley

Three Rivers District Council notes the unaffordability of people buying their first home in the area.

While the cost of renting in the district is 47% higher than the national average, the cost of buying in the district is 99% higher than the national average.

This makes it particularly vital to ensure that affordable housing to buy that is secured as part of planning permissions is prioritised for local residents.

As the primary form of affordable housing tenure for ownership, and without involving shared ownership, First Homes is the best way to deliver affordable housing for people to get on the housing ladder.

However, Three Rivers' First Homes policy does not prioritise local residents with a Local Connection Test so that those homes benefit local people.

As a result, these discounted homes can be snapped up by people from outside the area. This entirely defeats the point of the policy and leaves local people priced out of buying their first home and kept renting or living with their parents.

Three Rivers District Council therefore commits to prioritise local homes for local people by amending its First Homes statement to include a Local Connection Test.

2. Oxhey Jets Football Club

Proposed by Cllr Stephen Giles-Medhurst, seconded by Cllr Chris Lloyd

Council recognises the importance and significance of Oxhey Jets Football Club (OJFC) not only for South Oxhey but the wider Three Rivers community. Council reaffirms its commitment to retain OJFC on its current site and the continued support from Three Rivers Council in that endeavour and thanks TRDC officers for their hard work in supporting OJFC.

Council agrees that TRDC will continue to press HCC for clarity on their future intentions for the now closed 3G pitch, grassed areas and woodland area which falls outside of the lease negotiations with Oxhey Jets.

Council is of the view strategic planning of this site should be for the benefit of South Oxhey residents by enhancing its leisure provision and notes that the emerging local plan protects that area for such use.

3. Vaping

Proposed by Cllr Chris Lloyd, seconded by Cllr Anne Winter

Council notes with concern:

1. The increased use of vaping products by children in the UK. Recent data from the ASH Smokefree GB Youth Survey 2022 found that the prevalence of vaping amongst 11–18-year-olds is increasing – from 4% in 2021 to 8.6% in 2022 – and a significant number of children buy these vaping products directly from newsagents or supermarkets.
2. The increased number of local authorities who have recently had to take enforcement activity against shops illegally selling vaping products to youngsters.
3. The marketing of certain vaping products – with bright coloured packaging and flavours such as bubble gum – that might appeal to children.
4. The significant increase in availability of disposable and single-use vaping products which are cheaper and easier for children to access.
5. The high volume of single use vapes being disposed of in general waste.
6. An increase in fires at UK waste plants due to damaged and highly flammable batteries and the increased costs this causes.
7. The delay in the Government bringing forward legislation to act on the outcomes of last year's consultation on smoking and vaping.

Council acknowledges the role vaping products may play in aiding adults to stop smoking, and that vaping products carry a small fraction of the risk, and exposure to toxins, that are associated with cigarettes. However, vaping is not risk-free; particularly for those who have never smoked.

Vaping products contain nicotine, and research shows that most children who use them have never smoked. Council recognises the Local Government Association has raised concerns about the sale of vaping products to children.

Council calls for vaping products to be regulated in a similar way as tobacco products, with plain packaging and a requirement for products to be kept out of sight behind shop counters. Council calls for legislation to be brought forward in the current parliamentary session to:

1. Ensure vaping products are in plain packaging and kept out of sight behind the counter.
2. Make age-of-sale signage on vaping products mandatory.
3. Ban free samples of vaping products being given out to people of any age.
4. Ban the sale of single-use vaping products in the UK.

Council commits to not allowing the sale of vaping products in any Three Rivers District Council run premises.

Council therefore instructs the Chief Executive to write to both the Secretary of State for Health and Social Care and Secretary of State for Environment, to express the Council's demand for the greater regulation of vaping products detailed in this motion and ban on the sale of single use vapes.

4. Roadbuilding

Proposed by Cllr Giles-Medhurst, seconded by Cllr Louise Price

Council notes the issues faced by residents on new housing developments, where unadopted roads leave residents at the mercy of residual landowners, especially as regards street lighting, signage and general maintenance, as well as additional service fees on top of Council Tax payments.

Council therefore calls upon Hertfordshire County Council alleviate this burden on local residents and ensure more roads built to adoptable standards are adopted across the District and instructs the Chief Executive to write to both the Chief Executive and Leader of Hert County Council. Council notes the issues faced by residents on new housing developments, where unadopted roads leave residents at the mercy of residual landowners, especially as regards street lighting, signage and general maintenance, as well as additional service fees on top of Council Tax payments.

Council therefore calls upon Hertfordshire County Council alleviate this extra "tax" burden on local residents and roads built to adoptable standards across the District and instructs the Chief Executive to write to both the Chief Executive and Leader of Hert County Council requesting that Herts County Council reviews its current policy that leaves some residents at a disadvantage and subject to the whims of residual landowners.

5. Sewage and Waterways

Proposed by Cllr Jon Tankard, seconded by Cllr Chris Lloyd

Council notes the twin threats to our rivers from the Conservative government's failure to act on sewage discharges by privatised water companies, together with the recent pronouncement by the previous Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities of the then-government's intention to remove regulations regarding nutrient neutrality. Council believes that both Conservative policies will add to the pollution of our precious waterways, seas and oceans and the habitats that depend on them.

Council further believes that extensive building in our Green Belt is also a threat to local habitats, and that whilst the then-Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities had brought forward this plan to amend the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, he had not sought to introduce an amendment to change the Standard Methodology or enable Local Planning Authorities to safeguard Green Belt land.

Council therefore calls for:

1. The immediate end to the threats to our waterways by a commitment to keep rules on nutrient neutrality and the retention of the entire Habitats' Directive.
2. A speeding up of the Environment Agency's largest ever criminal investigation into potential widespread breaches of environmental permit conditions at wastewater treatment works by all water and sewerage companies.
3. A reduction in the amount of sewage which can legally be discharged into waterways and the sea.
4. Changes to the National Planning Policy Framework, backed by primary legislation to enable the safeguarding of valuable Green Belt land. Council therefore calls for the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government, and the Secretary of State for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs stating the council's views on these matters.

6. Aquadrome Path

Proposed by Cllr Mike Sims, seconded by Cllr Oliver Cooper

Three Rivers District Council notes the great benefit that local residents across the district derive from the Aquadrome.

The Aquadrome's Woodland Path along the River Colne has been closed since February, causing significant harm to residents.

While other councils have repaired similar damage within weeks – and Three Rivers has in other places – it has not done so in the Woodland Path.

Furthermore, the council's administration didn't even inform councillors of its plans for seven months and only did so after direct demands from Rickmansworth Town councillors that its reopening be debated and voted on by councillors.

The absolute minimum cost estimate now presented of £198,000 for the council's repair work is a material amount and should be included in accounts and budget monitoring reports, presented to councillors, and subject to scrutiny.

Three Rivers District Council notes that residents of Rickmansworth and Moor Park & Eastbury pay significant additional Council Tax to Three Rivers to maintain the Aquadrome due to the Council's decision to declare it a 'special expense', yet their representatives have not been consulted or updated.

Three Rivers District Council therefore commits to opening the Woodland Path as soon as practicable.

Three Rivers District Council furthermore commits to publishing its full plans for the Aquadrome no later than 3 days after this motion is passed, to be debated at the next meeting of the Climate Change, Leisure, and Housing Committee.

7. Armed Forces Community

Proposed by Cllr Oliver Cooper, seconded by Cllr Reena Ranger

Three Rivers District Council recognises the paramount importance of national security and is grateful to all who serve or have served to keep the United Kingdom and the world safe and free.

Three Rivers District Council is proud that the district is home to Northwood Headquarters, the principal headquarters of the British armed forces. Northwood is also home to five operational commands, including NATO Allied Maritime Command: NATO's principal establishment in the UK.

Northwood HQ is the residence of 850 service personnel and staff and is the workplace of over 2,500, making it one of the biggest single employment sites for the armed forces in the country.

Northwood HQ contributes significantly not just to the residential and working populations, but to the identity of Three Rivers.

While Three Rivers District Council is a signatory of the Armed Forces Covenant, every council in the country has and the content of the Covenant is now a legal requirement, so this does not represent the significance of Northwood HQ or our commitment to the armed forces.

Northwood HQ is not mentioned in the council's new strategic vision and is mentioned only cursorily on Three Rivers District Council's website, whereas it should be front of mind for the council.

Other authorities with large military establishments – such as Colchester, Plymouth, Portsmouth, and Rushmoor (Aldershot) – have made declarations officially designating their councils as garrison or naval towns or cities as badges of pride in their important contributions to our national defence.

Three Rivers District Council therefore follows their lead in declaring that it is an Armed Forces Community. Three Rivers District Council further commits to ensure recognition of Northwood HQ – and its pride that Three Rivers is home of the UK's military command – is woven into our strategy and public identity as a council.

In accordance with Council Procedure rule 11(5), the following motion has been referred directly to the Policy and Resources Committee for consideration:

8. Reviewing the boundary of Croxley Green

Proposed by Cllr Chris Mitchell, seconded by Cllr Steve Drury

This Council notes that:

1. Croxley Green has historically maintained a distinct and cohesive parish identity. However, demographic, infrastructural, and administrative changes may necessitate a reassessment of the existing parish boundaries.
2. At its meeting on 30th January 2025, Croxley Green Parish Council formally resolved to:
 - Request a boundary review with Sarratt.
 - Ask District Ward Councillors to present a motion to Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) to initiate this process.
 - Engage in consultation with Sarratt Parish Council on this matter.

This Council believes that:

1. Parish boundary reviews should reflect local identity, community needs, and efficient governance.
2. According to Local Government Boundary Commission guidance, a review can be initiated in two ways:
 - A petition from Croxley Green and Sarratt Parish Councils (signed by at least 7.5% of voters).
 - A motion proposed at a TRDC meeting by a District Councillor.
3. The most effective approach is for TRDC to proactively commence the review process, ensuring an inclusive consultation with residents and both Parish Councils.

This Council therefore resolves to:

1. Formally initiate a Community Governance Review of the parish boundary between Croxley Green and Sarratt.
2. Refer this decision to the Policy and Resources Committee on 10th March 2025 to establish a clear consultation process, timeline, and criteria for the review.
3. Engage with both Parish Councils and local residents to ensure an open and transparent process.

