

# QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

25/02/2025

Questions to lead members and chairs,  
including responses

The Questions received have been numbered and ordered as follows. The responses to the questions follows in order after the table of questions.

Number	From	Topic
<b>Questions to the Leader</b>		
1	Sarah Nelmes	Local Government Reform
2	Sarah Nelmes	Local Plan update
3	Sarah Nelmes	Community group position on local plan
4	Sarah Nelmes	CIL refusal in Abbots Langley
5	Sarah Nelmes	CIL allocations in Abbots Langley
6	Elinor Gazzard	Shannon House, Kings Langley
7	Elinor Gazzard	Use of Three Rivers Image
8	Louise Price	County Council additional costs
9	Keith Martin	County Council position on elections
10	Keith Martin	Cost of Council meeting on 7 January
11	Oliver Cooper	Correspondence on Rickmansworth Library
12	Oliver Cooper	Rejecting Three Rivers House for Rickmansworth Library
13	Oliver Cooper	Potential rent for Rickmansworth Library
14	Oliver Cooper	Potential profit from Rickmansworth Library
15	Oliver Cooper	G&T site assessment
16	Oliver Cooper	Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study
17	Oliver Cooper	Infrastructure Delivery Plan
18	Oliver Cooper	Provision of SANG
19	Oliver Cooper	SHLAA evidence base
20	Oliver Cooper	Urban Capacity study
21	Oliver Cooper	Low Growth option
22	Oliver Cooper	Preparedness of Evidence base
23	Oliver Cooper	Local Plan update
24	Oliver Cooper	Local Housing Need
25	Oliver Cooper	Joint residents association opposition
26	Oliver Cooper	Public consultation responses
27	Oliver Cooper	Constitution review
28	Vicky Edwards	Abbots Langley neighbourhood plan
29	Vicky Edwards	Submission of local plan
30	Vicky Edwards	Potential for speculative development
31	Vicky Edwards	Bedmond site CFS54
32	Vicky Edwards	Site of new secondary school
33	Vicky Edwards	Need for new primary school
34	Vicky Edwards	Flooding at Causeway car park
35	Vicky Edwards	Flooding at Causeway car park
36	Vicky Edwards	Flooding at Causeway car park
37	Vicky Edwards	Flooding at Causeway car park
38	Vicky Edwards	Flooding at Causeway car park
39	Ciaran Reed	Responsibility for local plan
40	Philip Hearn	Future housing growth in Maple Cross
41	Chris Mitchell	Red Cross Site in Croxley Green

42	Stephen Cox	Disability Discrimination
<b>Community Safety</b>		
43	Chris Alley	Crime and Disorder Act Committee
44	Chris Alley	Crime and Disorder Act Committee
45	Mike Sims	High-risk businesses
46	Mike Sims	Action in respect proceeds of crime
<b>General Public Services</b>		
47	Reena Ranger	Sorting of bins
48	Abbas Merali	Garden Waste Fees
49	Vicky Edwards	Fly tipping outcomes
50	Oliver Cooper	Parking Management Plan
51	Philip Hearn	Commuter Parking Scheme
52	Philip Hearn	Common gate road parking
53	Chris Mitchell	Community Way Croxley Green parking
54	Narinder Sian	PSPO enforcement
55	Cheryl Stungo	Poor parking
<b>Housing and Public Health</b>		
56	Joan King	Homelessness and rough sleeper figures
<b>Infrastructure and Economic Development</b>		
58	Reena Ranger	Savethehighstreet recommendations
59	Andrea Fraser	Savethehighstreet recommendations
60	Oliver Cooper	Electric vehicle charger grant
57	Stephen King	Henbury Way car park charger
<b>Leisure</b>		
61	Mike Sims	EA information for Aquadrome
62	Chris Alley	Cricket pitch in South Oxhey
63	Debbie Morris	Eastbury Park toddler swing
64	Debbie Morris	Eastbury Park toddler swing
65	Debbie Morris	Eastbury Park basket swing
66	Debbie Morris	Eastbury Park play tunnel
67	Debbie Morris	Eastbury Park planters
68	Narinder Sian	Whitney Beds nature reserve boardwalk
69	Cheryl Stungo	Signs at croxley green play grounds
<b>Resources</b>		
70	Chris Mitchell	Air source heat pump
<b>Planning Chair</b>		
71	Vicky Edwards	78 Gallows Hill
72	Andrea Fraser	97 Rickmansworth High Street
73	Abbas Merali	Automated planning notifications
74	Philip Hearn	Fire at the Court, Rickmansworth – urgent question

## Questions to the Leader of the Council

From Sarah Nelmes	
1	<p>Could the Leader of the Council please update us all on the issue of Local Government reform in Hertfordshire and what has gone on since the last Council meeting?</p>
	<p>Since the last Council meeting the English Devolution White Paper 2024 was published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) on 16 December and sets out the government's plans around devolution, funding and local government reorganisation.</p> <p>There are two key areas:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Devolution which is the transfer of powers and funding from national to local government.</li><li>2. Reorganisation is the process in which the structure and responsibilities of local authorities are reconfigured. The Government have set out plans to move away from the current two-tier system of district and county councils.</li></ol> <p>The aims and proposals for reorganisation include establishing Unitary councils which should serve populations of at least 500,000 within existing boundaries. And establishing Strategic Authorities sitting above, with eventually an elected Mayor, which should serve populations of 1.5 million or more.</p> <p>A White Paper Working Group has been established by Hertfordshire Leaders Group and the Chief Executives Coordinating Group to formulate the proposals for local government reorganisation and devolution. Hertfordshire has confirmed that the May 2025 elections will go ahead (in some areas these have been postponed). Interim plans should be submitted by 21 March 2025 and full proposals by 28 November 2025.</p> <p>As you are aware the Leader of the County Council made public statements that he wanted a single mega Herts wide unitarity Council. That view was opposed by all 10 District and Borough Councils. Although not such early bid was made its clear from statements made by the Leader of the County Council at various events I have been present that remains his view, and is one I am opposed to.</p>
2	<p>Could the Leader of the Council update us on the timeline, progress and commissioning work on the Local Plan and the agreed Councils commitment made on 7<sup>th</sup> January to NOT PUT IN plan that meets the government's housing target of 13.303 homes over 16 years?</p>

	<p>At the 7 January extraordinary meeting of Full Council it was agreed that officers would work to publishing the Regulation 19 draft Local Plan by the 7 November. A key piece of evidence being undertaken is an additional Green Belt Review, that the NPPF allows us to undertake if we have not submitted a Regulation 19, which will consider the impact of development that would fundamentally undermine the purpose of the Green Belt in Three Rivers. This work is expected to demonstrate that it will not be possible to deliver the housing numbers in full without undermining this function of the Green Belt Officers and I are of the clear view that should allow us to present, with other evidence we are required to collect, that the government's housing target is not achievable in Three Rivers without so doing, I thus expect a plan with a lower figure at the end of this process as I have made clear many times despite the misinformation being circulated by others including our MP.</p>
3	<p>What is the position of the Three Rivers Joint Residents' Association and the Can't Replace Green Space action group on our Local plan?</p>
	<p>Both the Three Rivers Joint Residents' Association and Can't Replace Green Space action group understand the Council's reasoning for amending the Local Plan timetable and support, a bet reluctantly, the Council's approach going forwards.</p> <p>Indeed, this is the TRJRA statement:</p> <p><b><u>Housing Plans for Three Rivers – Update from the Three Rivers Joint Residents' Association</u></b></p> <p>The Government has recently revised its National Planning Policy Framework, significantly increasing housing targets for many councils. For Three Rivers, this results in a new mandatory target of 15,000 new homes over 18 years—a 30% increase on the previous advisory number.</p> <p>The deadline for councils to submit a draft Local Plan under the old framework is 12th March 2025. After discussions with council leaders, officers and local political parties, it has become clear that the previous proposal of 4,800 homes over the plan period would now be considered unacceptable, even under the old framework. To adjust to a higher level (around 8,000 homes) that might be acceptable would require substantial updates to supporting evidence, which cannot be completed in the available time.</p> <p>Under the new framework, councils are now required to allocate space for housing on Green Belt land if they cannot meet their targets through other means.</p> <p><b>What happens next?</b></p> <p>Three Rivers District Council will commission a new Green Belt review to assess whether and where boundaries could be adjusted without excessively damaging the overall Green Belt, which could provide evidence to reduce the overall housing target.</p>

Residents will have the opportunity to give their views on the revised plan during a public consultation later this year.

Whilst the JRA is extremely disappointed by this turn of events and its potential impact on our area, we accept that the Council has no choice other than to work within the Government's framework.

We will continue working to ensure that any plans balance housing needs with protecting our local environment and community character. We will issue further updates as matters progress.

(Three Rivers Joint Residents' Association [TRJRA] is an umbrella organisation covering Residents' Associations across the district.)

And the **Can't Replace Our Green Space** action group said:

Housing Plans for Three Rivers – What You Need to Know

The Government has recently updated its National Planning Policy Framework, introducing higher and mandatory housing targets for councils. For Three Rivers, this means planning for 13,312 new homes over 16 years (832 a year)—roughly a 12% increase on previous, non-mandatory targets.

Although councils have until 12th March 2025 to submit a draft Local Plan under the old framework, it has become clear that a “low growth” option of up to 5,000 homes is not feasible under the new rules and would be rejected meaning the council would be told to deliver a new plan for 13,000 homes within 18 months. A “medium growth” plan of around 8,000 to 9,000 homes would require significant updates to key evidence, which cannot realistically be completed within the available timeframe. In addition a draft report shows the need for an additional 47 gypsy and traveller pitches following further changes by the government. The Council will need see how this can be accommodated.

A key change is that councils may now allocate housing in the Green Belt if they cannot meet targets through other means. Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) has said that wants to protect as much Green Belt as possible so is commissioning a Green Belt review to determine whether and where boundaries might be adjusted as well as assessing sites developers have proposed that cause high harm. This review will identify areas where changes would undermine the Green Belt's fundamental purpose and , along with other new reports on Open Space and Sports, Urban Capacity, sustainability and infrastructure delivery, could enable the council to argue it cannot meet the housing figure and help retain the Green Belt and reduce the allocated numbers.

What happens next?

TRDC will proceed with the Green Belt review and reassess potential housing sites. This process will provide a clearer picture of how many homes can realistically be included in the draft Local Plan. A public consultation is expected by the end of the year, giving residents the opportunity to share their views before the plan is finalised.

This is a complex and challenging issue, but we support TRDC in this approach and its commitment to balancing the need for housing with

	protecting the character of our local area. We will continue to provide updates as this process moves forward.
4	Have any CIL ( Community Infrastructure Levy) applications ever been refused for projects in the Abbots Langley Parish area and how many applications have been received ?
	No CIL spending applications have been received or refused for Abbots Langley Parish area.
5	Can the leader please detail what CIL ( Community Infrastructure Levy ) monies have been allocated to projects fully or partly in the Abbots Langley Parish area and what CIL money have been provided to the Parish Council that it may use ?
	<p>The Council have allocated strategic CIL monies to projects in and potentially affecting the Abbots Langley Parish area:</p> <p>Permanent Enlargement of Breakspeare School £901,574. This is the relocation from Abbots Langley to Croxley Green but affects the area of Abbots Langley Parish</p> <p>Electric Vehicle Charging Points throughout the district including Abbots Langley parished area. Total funding £460,000</p> <p>Mobile CCTV Cameras to be placed throughout the district as necessary. This could include Abbots Langley Parish £76,716</p> <p>Grand Union Canal Towpath Upgrade – Phase 6: £109,824.00</p> <p>The 15% Parish Council funds allocated to date is £426,970</p>
<b>From Elinor Gazzard</b>	
6	Does the Leader of the Council agree with me that deliberately misleading residents repeatedly over the legal position of planning permission and actions that this Council can take over Shannon House, Kings Langley is not only dishonest but tantamount to peddling fake news for their own ends, but also offensive to officers involved and brings into question the integrity of the said councillors?
	Yes I do. And I find it personally offensive that some councillors, who really should know better repeatedly questioned the professionalism of our officers and their knowledge of the law from their own layperson position. I do believe this amounts to peddling fake news and even worse is an attentat to stir up hatred of those who might be in a less fortunate position than many and are being housed at Shannon House by their home councils. Whilst I would urge such councillors to stop

	spreading fake news and information as if it is true I no doubt from the since a change of the Conservative leadership locally this, and I expect fake new will continue.
7	Do you think the Council should investigate and seek to protect the image of the Council from the misuse of its name by a certain party who publishes links to a web page saying 'threerivers.team', so it implies it's from Three Rivers Council?
	Yes I do. I understand a number of residents , including ones from your own ward have contacted you and said they thought such unsolicited emails were from the Council. I would advise such residents to block such emails and if unsolicited report them to the Data Commissioner. I am concerned that there is clear attempt to misused the Three Rivers named and that it undermines the official council emails. I will rase with the Monitoring Officer to investigate.
<b>From Louise Price</b>	
8	At a time when family and council finances have been hammered after fourteen years of Conservative Party rule, both nationally and at county level, is it true that Conservative-run Herts County Council has imposed extra costs on Three Rivers District Council? If so, what are these costs and how can they possibly be justified?
	Yes there are a number of additional costs such as £45,500 Land charges fees over 3 years. . It's the same way as HCC some years back refused to pay the going rate for highway verges maintenance that we undertook as an agency agreement so we had to have it back to them.
<b>From Keith Martin</b>	
9	Following the government's announcement that district councils are to be abolished, is it true that the Conservative administration running Herts County Council has tried to deny our residents the democratic right to vote in the May 2025 County Council election? If that is true. do you agree that any party deliberately trying to stop everyone who is eligible, from voting, has stooped to a new and unprecedented low? Lastly, do you agree that the people who, if true, should feel most appalled are Conservative Party voters?
	Yes, and Yes On December 17 <sup>th</sup> the Conservative Leader of HCC made his view clear that there should be a single Herts Unitary Council for Herts was in favour of cancelling elections in May and they would be a waste of money. This was also reported in the LGC and that Herts was one of three councils considering requesting postponing these elections.
10	Councillor Oliver Cooper (COC) called an extraordinary council meeting in January 2025. It was clear from the reaction of the three other political parties that they thought COC was wasting everyone's time by calling the meeting. Of more concern is the potential waste of the hard-earned money of our residents resulting from COC's action. Can the Leader please tell me how much the meeting cost, taking into account the time spent by Officers in preparing for the meeting holding it and post-meeting time spent by Officers?



	<p>As you highlight, officer time is taken when an extraordinary meeting is called including preparation and issue of the agenda, dealing with queries from members, the press and public, preparing the room, briefings for members, attending the meeting and preparing the minutes. This can be significant and mean other work has to be deferred or deprioritised. As the officers involved are primarily salaried employees, the additional costs involved is not great but I am grateful for the time they spent and giving up their evenings for this meeting, as I am grateful for all members who took the time to attend and contribute to the debate that evening.</p>
	<p><b>From Oliver Cooper</b></p>
11	<p>The Leader of the Council told me on 10<sup>th</sup> December that he had emailed the Leader of Hertfordshire County Council on 9<sup>th</sup> September “chasing” the county council to ask why use of Three Rivers House as a temporary home for Rickmansworth Library had not been agreed and no progress had been made since 24<sup>th</sup> July.</p> <p>In fact, Hertfordshire County Council had been chasing Three Rivers District Council, including an email on 6<sup>th</sup> September asking Three Rivers for an update, two weeks after Hertfordshire submitted an offer to Three Rivers.</p> <p>Why did the Leader of the Council mislead the council by pretending that he was chasing Hertfordshire County Council, when he knew it was the other way around?</p>
	<p>Officers are responsible for any direct negotiations between the District &amp; County Council's. I do not understand the suggestion of any misleading statements. From the exchange of emails I am aware of, Officers were in regular contact between the 12 August 2024 and the 11 October 2024 when negotiations concluded.</p>
12	<p>The Leader of the Council told me on 10<sup>th</sup> December that “an offer to occupy the vacant ground floor at Three Rivers House [to temporarily house Rickmansworth Library] was rejected by Hertfordshire County Council.”</p> <p>However, correspondence between the two councils shows that, on the contrary, Three Rivers District Council’s Property Board rejected an offer by Hertfordshire County Council. Three Rivers told Hertfordshire on 22<sup>nd</sup> August that they “find it difficult to even consider [Hertfordshire’s] offer”, and then told the county council on 9<sup>th</sup> September that this offer had indeed been refused.</p> <p>Why did the Leader of the Council mislead the council by pretending that the delay was due to Hertfordshire refusing an offer from Three Rivers, when he knew it was the other way around?</p>
	<p>The facts are clear. The initial offer made by Hertfordshire County Council was so derisory that it could not have been recommended. In addition, it was requested that the rent was also inclusive of all utility</p>

	<p>costs, service charges, parking permits, insurance costs and additional opening hours of Three Rivers House. The County Council were asked to provide an offer that reflected market value and the costs of the additional services. Such an offer was not forthcoming, and the County Council decided to make arrangements to occupy premises elsewhere.</p>
13	<p>The Leader of the Council told me on 10<sup>th</sup> December that he had emailed Hertfordshire County Council at 6:16am on 9<sup>th</sup> September asking why “no progress had been made” on housing Rickmansworth Library temporarily in Three Rivers House.</p> <p>The answer was clear in an email sent by Three Rivers to Hertfordshire County Council at 10:55am, when Three Rivers said Hertfordshire needed to pay more rent for the space than it had offered, because “[Three Rivers] are not a registered charity.”</p> <p>This came three weeks after Three Rivers asked Hertfordshire County Council on 20<sup>th</sup> August for full market rent for the premises, claiming the need to receive the highest rent possible (“best consideration”).</p> <p>On 16<sup>th</sup> September, Hertfordshire committed to paying all of Three Rivers marginal cost as well as offset some of Three Rivers’ fixed costs. Given the space was and has remained unused, that would have meant that Three Rivers actually made a profit. However, even this was refused by Three Rivers, which replied on 19<sup>th</sup> September with a higher rent demand than Hertfordshire could accept.</p> <p>Why did the Leader of the Council mislead the council by claiming that Three Rivers was not seeking to make a profit from the library, when the correspondence expressly shows that the council did try to make a profit?</p>
	<p>I did not mislead anyone, the misleading is being down by the Leader of the opposition on this and other subjects as is evidenced by facts. The Council has an obligation to the taxpayers of the District to ensure that it manages its assets in accordance with best value principles. The proposal received from Hertfordshire County Council would actually have cost the District Council money. It is not the Council’s responsibility to subsidise the operation of the Library in Rickmansworth.</p>
14	<p>Does the Leader of the Council recognise that it is morally unacceptable for Three Rivers to try to profit from a fire at Rickmansworth Library, as happened last year and as he tried to cover up in the last full council meeting</p>
	<p>The operation of Libraries is a County Council function, with which they have dedicated service budgets. It is not the District Council’s responsibility to subsidise other elements of the public sector or give away the use of its assets for free.</p>

15	When did the Leader first realise that the Gypsy and Traveller site allocation would not be complete for submission in February/March, when he said in July that it would be?
	The question is factually incorrect. The draft report for the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment was scheduled for September 2024 with initial data expected to be provided in August. The study is reliant on fieldwork engaging with the Gypsy and Traveller community which is reliant on successful communication with the community. This fieldwork took longer than expected with initial findings provided to the Council in October 2024. It was reported to the October Local Plan Sub-Committee, that you were present at, that additional work would be required to consider how to accommodate the identified need. As such, as soon as officers were aware that additional work would be required it was communicated to Members.
16	When did the Leader first realise that the Open Space, Sport, and Recreation Study update would not be complete for submission in February/March, when he said in July that it would be?
	The Question is factually incorrect. The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study was complete for February/March submission. Sport England had asked for an update to the study to be commenced as soon after submission as possible. As the submission date has changed the study is now being prepared prior to submission.
17	When did the Leader first realise that the Infrastructure Delivery Plan would not be complete for submission in February/March, when he said in July that it would be?
	The question is factually incorrect. The Infrastructure Delivery Plan was completed on time and ready for February/March submission, however it will now need to be updated to take account of changes to sites and overall level of growth in the updated Local Plan.
18	When did the Leader first realise that the provision of a SANG for sites falling in the zone of influence of the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC would not be complete for submission in February/March, when he said in July that it would be?
	<p>The question is factually incorrect. Following comments received on the Regulation 18 Part 4 consultation Officers met with Natural England to discuss SANG requirements on sites that fell into the Zone of Influence for the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation in July. A site visit to Leavesden Country Park was then undertaken with Officers and representatives from Natural England. The Horses Field was considered the most appropriate location to meet SANG standards, however following further investigation a route has not been identified that meets the criteria in full.</p> <p>Ultimately, the SANG work would have been ready for February/March submission. Initial findings are that there is no suitable SANG site which would have meant that we would have had to remove two sites</p>

	from the low growth option resulting in further reducing total number of new homes being planned for to an even more unrealistic level.
19	When did the Leader first realise that the updates to the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment evidence base would not be complete for submission in February/March, when he said in July that it would be?
	The question is factually incorrect. The SHELAA was complete and ready for February/March submission, however this will need to be updated with any new sites coming in and to factor in changes to national policy and updated evidence.
20	When did the Leader first realise that the Urban Capacity Study Update would not be complete for submission in February/March, when he said in July that it would be?
	The question is factually incorrect .The Urban Capacity Study was already complete and was not being updated for February/March submission. As such, I never stated an update would be undertaken for February/March submission.
21	When was the Leader first persuaded that the Low Growth Option would have been unsound, when he said in July that it would be sound?
	The question is factually incorrect . Officer advice was AFTER the publication of the draft NPPF on 30 July 2024 . The July Local Plan Sub-Committee meeting was on 16 <sup>th</sup> July before the draft NPPF was published , so I assume the members memory is failing him if he has forgotten that as he was present...
22	How many times and on what dates did the Leader check on the level of preparedness of the Gypsy and Traveller site allocation; the Open Space, Sport, and Recreation Study update; Infrastructure Delivery Plan; the provision of a replacement SANG site for development in the zone of influence of the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC; the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment evidence base; and the Urban Capacity Study Update?
	Officers both in private meetings, conversations and at Local Plan sub Committee meetings have kept me fully abreast of the of the sterling work they have been doing on the Local Plan and it's a pity of the Leader of the opposition is always seeking to undermine and belittle that work.

	<p>The Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study, Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment, and Urban Capacity study were all complete and ready for February/March submission.</p> <p>Initial SANG work was complete and we could have removed two sites on the basis of not having a suitable SANG site available. This therefore would not have affected the date of submission.</p> <p>As soon as the findings on the Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment were provided to the Council the need to consider sites was reported to Members.</p>
23	<p>From 2017 to date, £3 million has been recorded as spent by Three Rivers on Development Plans. How much of that was spent on the Local Plan?</p>
	<p>£925,000 was spent specifically on the Local Plan budget during this period. This figure does not include Officer salaries which are split across Local Plan work and other policy matters such as neighbourhood planning, monitoring, and conservation. I am aware that yet again the Leader of the Opposition has misled the public on the costs in publications with his and other Conservative Councillors names on it. I have no problem with the true figures showing how this council is working to ensure it has a robust plan being published not invented ones.</p>
24	<p>The Leader of the Council told the Policy &amp; Resources Committee on 27<sup>th</sup> January that he ticked the box on the application form for the Green Belt Review Fund that committed the council to “increase their Local Housing Need”. The council’s currently identified Local Housing Need is 11,232 over the next 18 years – over twice the level that the previous draft Local Plan proposed – and it has committed to increase it beyond that. How much higher does the Leader intend to go?</p>
	<p>No I did Not – that is untrue I never said I ticked anything, Councillors, as the Leader of the Opposition should know, being an experienced councillor from another place will know councillors do not sign or “tick forms” bidding for government support.</p> <p>The Green Belt Review itself will help the Council decide what level of growth can be accommodated in order to ensure there is enough housing for future generations whilst balancing this against other constraints such as green belt.</p> <p>Is the Leader of the Opposition saying we should not undertake such a Green Belt review that will help protect our area and not bid for available government funds for to assist it as his question implies?</p>
25	<p>At the Local Plan Sub-Committee meeting on 17<sup>th</sup> October, the Joint Residents’ Association said that it opposed withdrawing the Local Plan, saying, “We do support this lower option.” It said, “There is a</p>

	<p>chance we can get this Low Growth plan to Examination – and it does, under the current rules, stand a decent chance of getting approved.”</p> <p>The JRA correctly predicted – as Conservative councillors did – that the implementation of the new rules could be delayed into early 2025, recommending, “If the NPPF is delayed for long enough, about the end of February, we would say go ahead with the Low [Growth Option] and submit to Exam.” The deadline was indeed after the end of February (12<sup>th</sup> March).</p> <p>Does the Leader of the Council accept that the Joint Residents’ Association opposed withdrawing the Low Growth Option from submission before February/March at the October Local Plan Sub-Committee, in line with Conservative councillors’ proposal at that meeting and contrary to this Council leadership’s?</p>
	<p>No. The Joint Residents’ Association position is clear it supports the Council’s approach. I refer to the answer to Question 3 which I know the Leader of the opposition does not like.</p>
26	<p>Can the Leader please provide a full list of responses that Three Rivers has submitted to public consultations in the last five years, excluding consultations on planning and licensing applications?</p>
	<p>It is not reasonable to review and take up potentially 1,000 of staff hours in satisfying the whim of the Leader of the opposition and divert staff from vital work to undertake a 5 year review, across the wide range of Council services, on the the wide range of consultations undertaken by government bodies, other public sector bodies and other parties who may undertake consultations which we responded to and to provide the full response. If members have a query relating to a specific consultation and whether the council responded to it, then a response can be provided.</p>
27	<p>How much did the council’s constitutional review cost? Does the Leader of the Council consider that good value for money when the Constitution Sub-Committee hasn’t met since September 2023?</p>
	<p>The review work undertaken by Hoey Ainscough has cost £16,500 to date over the course of several years beginning in 2022. Their work remains very useful and as highlighted at the recent meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee. I have tried, via officers, to convene several informal meetings of the Leaders and /or Deputies over several months since July last year onwards ( we had one meeting that failed to attend) . Unlike the Labour and Green Leaders, you have failed to respond to requests and suggested dates for such meetings as an informal way of aggreging mutual changes. This had worked very successfully with your predecessor who was open minded and willing to engage and was always the best way forward to ensure that we could agree on changes. It is disappointing that you failed respond to repeated requests to agree dates. If you’re not willing to discuss in this informal way so we might all agree then there</p>

	will be just formal Constitution Sub-Committee's or indeed reports direct to Policy & Resources. to enhance our constitution.
	<b>From Vicky Edwards</b>
28	When does the Leader of the Council expect the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan to be submitted under Regulation 15?
	The Parish Council have recently completed their Regulation 14 consultation and Three Rivers are providing comments on the Regulation 14 version of the Neighbourhood Plan in their capacity as the Local Planning Authority. Once the Parish Council has considered all comments from the consultation and from the Local Planning Authority, they will update their Neighbourhood Plan accordingly. It is for the Parish Council to decide when they will formally submit the plan under Regulation 15 to the Local Planning Authority. In the meantime, Three Rivers Officers are available to assist the Parish Council with any queries and are happy to provide comments on the draft Neighbourhood Plan if the Parish Council wishes prior to submission.
29	Prior to the publication of the new National Planning Policy Framework on 12 <sup>th</sup> December 2024, the Leader of the Council referred to the draft version of Paragraph 146 as the "get out of jail clause" which would enable the council to avoid allocating green belt land to meet Labour's housing targets in full. Now that Paragraph 146 has been enacted but places an even <i>higher</i> bar than originally proposed to avoid allocating green belt land to meet housing targets in full, does the Leader wish he had progressed the Low Growth Local Plan back in October 2024, as was requested by the Conservative Group and the Joint Residents' Association?
	No, the low growth Local Plan would, as advised by professional legal and planning experts, be most likely have been rejected at examination for being unsound as it failed to even come close to meeting the housing need and the new stricter rules on the government target for the area. Taking a plan to examination that would only be thrown out would result in the Council being in the exactly the same position in terms of housing numbers but having spent significantly more money to get to that position. We would have had a plan rejected several, if not many months down the line and at the end would have left the Council being required, as outlined in answers, to earlier questions to come up with a plan that would have been required to meet the new NPPF but WITHOUT the ability to use para 146 to defend our Green Belt. On top of that this longer period would have increased the risk of speculative planning applications being successful at appeal due to further delays to the Local Plan. The proposal from yourself and others would have been a false dawn and hope which you and others were clearly advised was unsound, impracticable and indeed unacceptable and lead to residents being misled.
30	Has the failure of Three Rivers District Council to submit a draft Local Plan for Examination by 12 <sup>th</sup> March 2025 made it more likely that

	<p>speculative planning applications coming forward in respect of sites which had not been included in the Low Growth Local Plan – such as those in Bedmond, Carpenders Park, and near Croxley last month – will be granted planning permission?</p>
	<p>No, as had the Council submitted the low growth local plan it is extremely likely it would be rejected at examination for being found unsound as it was so far from meeting the development needs of the area. This would leave the Council at risk of speculative development for a longer period of time as going to examination and then having the plan rejected would leave the Council in the same position as it is in now, only a year or 18 months in the future.</p>
31	<p>A housing development of 64 homes has been proposed to the south of Bedmond on site CFS54. This site was designated in the council's Local Plan process in 2020 as a "Potential Contingency Residential Site". The developer suggests that this assessment and designation by the council adds weight in favour of delivering a housing development on this site. Does the council agree?</p>
	<p>This site was not included in the Regulation 18 consultation and in any event the weight attributed to sites at any Regulation 18 stage of the local plan is minimal, especially if they are not proposed for allocation. It is only when a Local Plan reaches Regulation 19 that sites are given more weight, and then only when the Planning Inspector considers the plan to have a realistic chance of success at examination. Like yourself I was present at the recent exhibition and raised a number of concerns about this site not least its lack of a direct footway link into Bedmond, the inability to cross the Bedmond Road to the Hemel bound bus stops and the accessibility general</p>
32	<p>The Leader of the Council is campaigning for a new secondary school to be built in Abbots Langley. As the Lead Member for the Local Plan, the Leader is himself responsible for identifying and allocating sites as part of its Local Plan making process. Accordingly, please can the Leader confirm where he is proposing that a new secondary school for Abbots Langley be built?</p>
	<p>I have merely pointed out that Hertfordshire County Council have themselves identified a need for a new secondary School in the Abbots Langley area but so far, as they are required to do, identify a site for such. It is the legal responsibility of the education authority as confirmed by the County Council officers, for themselves to propose a site maybe alongside a proposed development.</p> <p>I would have thought that being an Abbots Langley parish resident, that you would support this need and indeed you yourself could suggest a possible site to your County Council colleagues from the same party.</p>



	<p>Three Rivers and the County Council remain in close contact in pressing the County Council to find an appropriate site for a secondary school in the Abbots Langley area. This site can come forward either by the County Council putting forward a site of their own or through a site being provided by a developer as part of a larger strategic development site. Final decisions on sites have not yet been made, Members will consider site options in preparation for Regulation 19 Publication of the Local Plan</p> <p>You may recall that I have offered to meet with you at least three times to discuss issues in Abbots Langley of mutual concern, like this, so that we can work together for our community but each time you have declined to so. My door, or rather a coffee offer, remains open , as it is with other councillors. Perhaps you would like to take that up?</p> <p>.</p>
33	<p>Hertfordshire County Council has secured land at Woodside Road so that it has an option to build a primary school if required. The Leader of Three Rivers District Council has stated that it is 'wrong' that HCC have no immediate plans to build one. However, five of the nearest primary schools are struggling with viability due to being under-subscribed.</p> <p>Bedmond Academy allocated just 12 out of 30 of its reception places in 2024, Mount Pleasant Lane 19 of 30, St Catherine of Siena 23 of 30, Leavesden Green 47 of 60, and Coates Way 25 of 30. Accordingly, why does the Leader of Three Rivers District Council want a new primary school to be built in the area when it is obvious it will negatively impact local primary schools, likely causing one or more of them to close?</p>
	<p>You refer to a recent publication where I have been reminding residents that Herts County Council not only opposed the 2014 Local Plan site allocation but supported a development on Woodside Road saying that a primary school was required here to meet needs. As a result, the now Fraser cress development site was allocated and the access built to meet the requirements of new school and the land then "sold" to HCC for £1 fur a the said primary school in 2016. Residents here thus thought that the school would be built when purchasing properties- how mistaken were they almost 10 years later.</p> <p>Does the member not consider it wrong that the HCC having persuaded the inspector to allocate a site for housing and a school that its failure of HCC to deliver on its promise that is the issue?</p> <p>Future growth will increase the need for school places across the District. New primary schools will ensure any increased pupil yield is accommodated and having schools in the community rather than ones that parents are having to drive their children too so both better for a climate change and sustainability position.</p>

34	<p>The surface water from Causeway car park has been flooding into the homes and gardens of residents in Standfield and flooding the Causeway car park to Standfield footpath for many years because the drain which takes the water from the car park to a soakaway in Dellmeadow is blocked.</p> <p>Three Rivers claim that it is responsible for the drains, gullies and interceptors within the confines of Causeway car park, but that other landowners through whose land the drain passes are responsible for the sections of the drain on their land. However, the council has not provided any evidence of a positive covenant or contract to support this assertion.</p> <p>As such, aside from any statutory power granted to the council by the Public Health Act 1961 to resolve drainage issues, could the Leader of the Council please explain why it considers that the owners of 13 and 15 Standfield – and possibly other homeowners on the road through whose land the drain passes – are responsible and/or have an obligation to repair a drain which appears to carry water only from Causeway car park?</p>
	<p>Considering the legal sensitivities involved, including references to local property owners and the potential for legal proceedings, it is not appropriate for the Council to comment on this matter.</p> <p>However, I am aware that you have been provided with detailed and extensive information for senior council officers regarding the legal position on this. This is contrary to your most recent statements.</p> <p>In addition, I understand the Council has carried out over many months extensive investigation on this and it's section of the drain is not blocked.</p>
35	<p>Three Rivers claims that it is not responsible for the drain outside the confines of Causeway car park. If that is correct, could the Leader please explain what right Three Rivers is relying on to discharge the surface water from the car park into the drain and outside the perimeter of the car park towards Standfield?</p>
	<p>I refer to the answer to question 34.</p>
36	<p>It is likely that the drain between Causeway car park and the soakaway was built around the same time as Standfield which suggests that Three Rivers has or had been using the drain to discharge its water for at least 20 years. Any such easement granted to Three Rivers (as dominant owner) to use the drain pursuant to such use would provide Three Rivers with a right ancillary to the easement to enter the land of homeowners of Standfield (as the subservient owners in relation to the easement) to carry out such repairs as are reasonably necessary [see the case of <i>Jones v Pritchard</i> [1908] 1 Ch 630]. The residents of Standfield in respect of the sections of the drain</p>

	<p>on their land are not obliged to make any repairs to a drain which carries water only from Causeway car park subject to contrary agreement.</p> <p>An easement will not usually include an ancillary right which obliges the dominant owner to keep the subject of the easement in repair, i.e. the drain. However, the flooding from Causeway car park constitutes a private nuisance to residents pursuant to the rule in <i>Rylands v Fletcher</i> [1861–1873] All ER 1. In such circumstances Three Rivers is liable for the damage due to the want of repair caused by flooding to residents' properties.</p> <p>Accordingly, why has Three Rivers chosen not to rely on its ancillary right of repair to resolve the flooding issues despite having been aware of the flooding for at least five years?</p>
	<p>I refer to the answer to question 34.</p>
<p>37</p>	<p>Three Rivers has a statutory power to repair drains and to remedy stopped up drains pursuant to Section 17 of the Public Health Act 1961. The purpose of this section is to enable local authorities to act quickly to resolve blockages which may cause a detriment to public health.</p> <p>Where it appears to a local authority that a drain, private sewer, water-closet, waste pipe or soil pipe on any premises is stopped up the authority may give notice in writing to an owner or occupier of the premises to remedy the defect within 48 hours from service of the notice (s17 (3)). If the notice is not complied with, then the local authority has the power to carry out the work necessary to remedy the defect (s17 (4)).</p> <p>Where expenses are incurred under subsection 4 then the court may inquire whether any requirement in the notice was reasonable and whether the expenses ought to be borne wholly or in part by some person other than the defendant (s17 (6) (b)). The court considering the issue may make such order concerning the expenses or their apportionment as appears to the court to be just.</p> <p>It is obvious upon a plain reading of the section and the Court of Appeal decision in <i>Rotherham Borough Council v John Anthony Dodds</i> [1986] 1 W.L.R. 1367 which considered the operation of Section 17 (4), that section 17 does not assign ownership or other responsibilities for a drain. In particular, <i>Rotherham</i> makes clear that the service of a Section 17 notice does not necessarily mean being adjudged liable to pay for any repairs. The starting point for the recovery of expenses “<i>was to be the person on whom the section 17 notice had been served, leaving him to relieve himself of any financial burden by way of the provisions of subsection (3) [which is now subsection 4].</i>”</p>

	<p>Three Rivers has sent initial notification letters to the owners of numbers 13 and 15 Standfield explaining their alleged obligation to address any blockages or defects causing the drainage issue.</p> <p>However, for the reasons set out above, section 17 notices are inappropriate in circumstances in which Three Rivers has a right of repair in respect of the drain and is also obliged to fix the drain as the flooding is causing a nuisance (see previous question). It is extremely unlikely that any court would find Standfield homeowners liable in such circumstances and would consider that Three Rivers should be responsible for the cost of the repairs.</p> <p>Accordingly, why is Three Rivers pursuing residents on Standfield to fix the drain rather than repairing the drain itself which it has a right and is obliged to do?</p>
	I refer to the answer to question 34.
38	Does Three Rivers consider that using its statutory powers under the Public Health Act 1961 against homeowners of Standfield in circumstances in which it is obliged to repair the drain constitutes an abuse of power?
	I refer to the answer to question 34.
<b>From Ciaran Reed</b>	
39	Who is responsible for this council having failed to produce a Local Plan by the end of February, as had previously been promised by the Leader throughout 2024 and as the Council committed to on 9 <sup>th</sup> July?
	Following changes to national planning policy it was agreed by Members, following Officer advice, that publication of the Regulation 19 plan should be delayed. This was to avoid the plan being rejected at examination for being unsound, delaying further a plan that meet residents needs and costing the council probably 100,000 of pounds expenditure on a such a move. I refer to the many earlier questions and answers on this such as No 3,29, 30.
<b>From Philip Hearn</b>	
40	What is the Leader's thoughts on the number of houses and flats that Maple Cross will be taking in the Local Plan. Will it be closer to 1,000 or 2,000?
	Decisions on sites are yet to be made for the Regulation 19 Local Plan through the Local Plan process so no one can guess this at this stage, although I doubt that will stop you inventing a fake figure.
<b>From Chris Mitchell</b>	
41	Former Red Cross site in Barton Way, Croxley Green
	Following our discussions and agreement I am delighted that the District and Parish Councils are collaborating on the future of the former Red Cross site on Barton Way in Croxley Green. I now

	<p>understand that more detailed discussions are in progress to agree a heads of terms.</p> <p>Can you please commit to ensuring that the funding package for the new development will ensure best value for the council tax payers in Croxley Green and Three Rivers. This may be achieved by the use of different funds including CIL funds. This would aim are ensure that the lease terms for the community space is as reasonable as possible and aim at peppercorn rents along the lines of the lease for Tanners Wood hall in Abbots Langley. What is the plan and timetable going forward? Which committees will consider the proposals and make any decisions?</p>
	<p>The current situation is that a set of draft heads of terms has been prepared and is being discussed between the District &amp; Parish Council. It is too early to confirm the final agreement, but whatever happens, both parties will need to satisfy their 'best value' duties.</p> <p>The next steps will be for the parties to agree to the heads of terms. Following that stage, draft designs will be updated to reflect some minor changes to the ground floor layout, which will shortly be followed by a Pre-App submission and then a public engagement exercise will be held to showcase the proposals.</p> <p>From a Council decision-making process, it is likely that this matter will be considered at a Policy &amp; Resources Committee meeting, with reference to Full Council, if it is considered necessary.</p>
<p><b>From Stephen Cox</b></p>	
42	<p>Is the Leader aware that I wrote to the Chief Executive on 8 January with a formal complaint regarding disability discrimination, but whilst I have had an acknowledgement of said complaint on 15 January, that now almost a month later at the time of writing, I have not received an answer to my complaint and that is disappointing. Further, does he believe all forms of discrimination to be wrong wherever it occurs?</p>
	<p>I firmly agree that ALL discrimination is wrong. That is why I have supported the Council in adopting an equalities, diversion and inclusion policy, and I would encourage all members to review our recently published information report which is available on the website at <a href="#">Equality and diversity   Three Rivers District Council</a>, showing the progress we are achieving against our policy.</p> <p>Regarding your specific issue, I understand you are having on- going correspondence with the Chief Executive.</p>

## Questions to the Lead Member for Community Safety

<b>From Chris Alley</b>	
43	<p>The General Public Services, Community Safety, and Infrastructure Committee is defined as the council's Crime &amp; Disorder Committee under the Police and Justice Act 2006. Despite this, the Lead Member claimed on 10<sup>th</sup> December that the council scrutinised crime and disorder through the Three Rivers Community Safety Partnership. Will the Lead Member confirm that this does not include any councillors other than Lead Members and its meetings are not open to the public, and so does not constitute scrutiny of their decisions, as is required by the Police and Justice Act?</p>
	<p>The Community Safety Partnership (now merged with the Local Strategic Partnership and known as Connecting Three Rivers) nominated representatives are Cllr Andrew Scarth and Cllr Sarah Nelmes. The nominations were agreed at Annual Council on 21 May 2024.</p> <p>Connecting Three Rivers is open to the public however where there is sensitive information related to crime and disorder this will be discussed in a closed meeting for responsible authorities only.</p> <p>The General Public Services, Community Safety and Infrastructure Committee may examine the activities of partners but only in so far as these relate to the partnership. This is defined in the Terms of Reference. The Committee can invite members of the Responsible Authorities, Connecting Three Rivers, to review certain projects or decisions if it chooses to. The Annual Community Safety Partnership Report forms part of our duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, Regulations 2006 to scrutinise crime and disorder.</p>
44	<p>Will the Lead Member confirm all dates that committees have discharged duties as Three Rivers' Crime and Disorder Committee under the Police and Justice Act 2006 in the last five years?</p>
	<p>Prior to 2023, this responsibility fell under the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee. They would undertake periodic work such as reviewing anti-social behaviour policies, PSPO's (public space protection orders) and service / work programmes related to community safety.</p> <p>When this role was transferred to the Climate Change, Leisure and Community Committee in 2023, it was agreed to formalise this into an annual report on the work of the Community Safety Partnership (as is practice at many Councils)</p> <p>The Community Safety Annual report has been taken to Committee on: 23<sup>rd</sup> July 2024 General Public Services, Community Safety and</p>

	<p>infrastructure Committee 5<sup>th</sup> July 2023 Climate Change Leisure and Community Committee (prior to structure changes Community Safety and Partnerships was under this committee)</p> <p>Some additional examples include: Anti-Social Behaviour: 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024 General Public Services Community Safety and infrastructure Committee 13 October 2021 Leisure, Environment Community Committee</p> <p>CCTV 13<sup>th</sup> March 2024 – Climate Change Leisure and Community Committee 15<sup>th</sup> October 2024 General Public Services and Community Safety and infrastructure Committee</p> <p>Hate Crime 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020 – Leisure, Environment Community Committee</p>
<b>From Mike Sims</b>	
45	<p>What steps is TRDC taking to ensure high-risk businesses, such as nail bars and barbers, are not used by organised crime groups to facilitate criminality in the district?</p>
	<p>The council including the Community Safety and Licensing teams work with Trading Standards and the Police ensuring businesses trade according to legislation. We support our partners in delivering interventions and initiatives such as test purchase operations, enforcement actions and raising awareness about Modern Slavery and the duty to notify. Tackling organised crime is led by the Police.</p>
46	<p>Can the Lead Member explain why, unlike dozens of other district councils – especially near London – no reports by Three Rivers District Council have led to cash forfeitures or asset confiscations in the last decade? What is he doing to ensure Three Rivers assists in combatting the misuse of the proceeds of crime?</p>
	<p>The Proceeds of Crime Act may be used in any criminal offence where financial gain has occurred. For planning enforcement investigations this will be where a defendant is generating an income from their offending, or will end up with a valuable asset as a result. Officers identify whether a particular case involving non-compliance with an enforcement notice involves financial gain or benefit and this is discussed with the legal department. Only a limited number of cases involving non-compliance end up at the prosecution stage and not all involve financial gain.</p>

## Questions to the Lead Member for General Public Services

<b>From Reena Ranger</b>	
47	<p>We were told in 2020 that the council still sorts waste from street bins by hand. Is this still the case, and surely there's a better way to increase recycling from street bins – such as dedicated recycling bins in our main centres?</p>
	<p>This is no longer the case; street waste is not hand sorted due to the health and safety risks this presents to our staff. When segregated public waste / recycling bins have been in use in the past much of the waste in the recycling bins has been deemed unacceptable for recycling due to contamination.</p>
<b>From Abbas Merali</b>	
48	<p>Since December 2022, the fee charged by the council for a garden waste service has gone up by 4.5 times as fast as the rate of inflation. What estimate has the council had made of the impact of yet another increase in the charge for garden waste?</p>
	<p>Information on budgets, receipts and subscriptions to the garden waste collection service is reported to members through the budget monitoring reports that are taken to committees and this council. The service continues to be very popular with residents.</p>
<b>From Vicky Edwards</b>	
49	<p>Three Rivers issues a Fixed Penalty Notice or secures a conviction in connection to just 2% of reported fly-tipping incidents. This is considerably below the 6% average across the East of England and 12% in Broxbourne. Does the Lead Member think this is acceptable and what is she doing to increase this rate</p>
	<p>Education is the Council's primary focus. By educating the public around correct waste disposal this reduces the waste that is available to would-be fly tippers. Three Rivers is a member of the Hertfordshire Fly Tipping Group and their #SCRAPflytipping campaign continues to be used locally, and nationally in the fight against fly tipping. The Council is working with and through the Herts Waste Partnership in their annual push of this campaign during March and issues regular reminders on this topic across multiple communication channels.</p> <p>The figures quoted in the question do not provide the context of the available resource and number of enforcement officers within each Council. The Council has two Environmental Enforcement Officers (EEOs) for whom the investigation of fly-tipping is just one aspect of a much wider role remit. EEOs provide education and issue Fixed Penalty Notices when appropriate and take cases forward for prosecution only when, with legal advice, it is the most appropriate enforcement option. Preparing a legal case is a lengthy process and a number are in process at the current time.</p>
<b>From Oliver Cooper</b>	



50	How much is the Parking Management Plan that was approved on 14 <sup>th</sup> January 2025 expected or budgeted to cost to deliver?
	<p>The 2025-2027 Parking Management Programme, agreed at the General Public Services, Community Safety and Infrastructure Committee on 14 January 2025, commits to the parking schemes the Council will investigate over the period of the Programme. There is no commitment to any schemes being implemented at this stage, with a number of schemes having to be the subject of public consultation.</p> <p>The annual capital budget for the Parking Management Programme is £25,000. Other revenue budgets may also need to be utilised but no schemes have been costed at present. Any schemes identified to be progressed that are not within the identified annual budgets will be reported in the usual manner.</p>
<b>5</b>	<b>From Philip Hearn</b>
51	<p>Cllr Cooper and I tabled a proposal in December for a commuter parking scheme in the Ferry Car Park in Chorleywood. As we proposed, this would have saved 35 residents up to £1,000 a year, while making Three Rivers almost £2,000 a month: which can be reinvested in other parking schemes. We withdrew this amendment in good faith when the Lead Member promised to introduce a scheme “early in the New Year”. Yet as of 4<sup>th</sup> February, proposals haven’t even been discussed. When will the Council introduce a commuter parking scheme in Ferry Car Park?</p>
	<p>Due to changes required to a Traffic Regulation Order and consultation requirements no scheme could have been introduced early in the New Year, however, it was agreed to investigate.</p> <p>Officers have begun initial assessment of the car park usage and have already consulted with the Parish Council. Ward Councillors have been invited to a meeting to discuss proposals on 7 February. Any changes to Ferry car park will require amendments to the Traffic Regulation Order which requires a statutory public consultation period.</p>
52	<p>I am pleased that following my requests, the new parking scheme covering Chorleywood Bottom, Common Gate Road, and Clements Road was updated to tackle the dangerous parking that has emerged on Common Gate Road. Whilst I appreciate this required an extra public consultation, which ended on 27<sup>th</sup> January, local residents have been waiting many years for this scheme to be implemented. When can residents expect these new changes to take effect?</p>
	<p>The wider Chorleywood scheme is being progressed and it is expected to be implemented this summer, but this timescale could be affected by public consultation responses.</p>
	<b>From Chris Mitchell</b>
53	<p>We are pleased to see that a review is being carried out on the car parking in a number of our public car parks, including Community Way in Croxley Green. There are a number of different types of users who use the car park, and we do not want to see genuine local users being financially hit by any changes. We are aware that some people may travel for outside Croxley Green and use the car park for commuting. This does need to be dealt</p>

	<p>with. Please can we carry out a full consultation, including people who work in the local businesses who park all day for free there. Also, the 2 free hours for parking is essential and these slots have worked well. Can we please keep these available</p>
	<p>Changes to Community Way car park will require amendments to the Traffic Regulation Order which requires statutory public consultation. There are a number of different users of this car park which will have to be considered as any scheme develops. At this stage it is not known what type of restrictions or charges will be proposed, this will form part of the investigations. Regard will be had to other parking fees and charges in the District.</p>
<p><b>From Narinder Sian</b></p>	
54	<p>Effectiveness of Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) in Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour and Nuisance from Dogs</p> <p>Given the ongoing concerns from residents about irresponsible dog ownership, including dog fouling on pavements and wildlife being attacked in our nature reserves, can the Council explain what steps are being taken to ensure the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) is effectively enforced?</p> <p>Data obtained via FOI reveals that only six Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) have been issued for breaches of the PSPO since 2017, with no further enforcement actions or prosecutions recorded. Does the Council believe this level of enforcement is adequate, and what measures will be introduced to strengthen the protection of our public spaces, particularly in light of new grazing initiatives in our nature reserves?</p> <p>The Council has recently consulted on an extension of and variations to the current PSPO relating to dog control in public. A report will come to March Committees for approval to extend the Order. For the majority of dog owners the existence of the PSPO, supplemented by education is sufficient to achieve compliance and education over enforcement is our focus where possible. At present enforcement action is largely reactive rather than proactive as the council has limited resources in this area which just one Animal Welfare and Licensing Inspector, whose role covers a wide range of tasks, including statutory functions. The proposed amendments to the PSPO would introduce new controls to protect grazing stock.</p>
<p><b>From Cheryl Stungo</b></p>	
55	<p>Residents have raised concerns about a number of local issues, including persistent problems with parking across dropped kerbs, which obstructs access for wheelchair users, pushchairs, and those with mobility challenges.</p> <p>Could the council provide an update on what steps are being taken to address these specific local concerns, particularly in terms of enforcement, public awareness, and any potential measures to prevent parking across dropped kerbs?</p>

	<p>The Council can issue Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) to drivers who obstruct dropped kerbs when this is reported. Full details of dropped kerb enforcement are on the website with contact details for our parking enforcement provider.</p> <p>Obstruction of a pavement, such as a car parked so that a wheelchair user cannot pass, cannot be enforced by Three Rivers District Council. This is a police matter and should be reported to them accordingly.</p>

## Questions to the Lead member for Housing and Public Health

<b>From Joan King</b>	
	<p>Can the Lead Member advise how many homeless people are there in this local authority's area and of those, how many are sleeping rough?</p>
	<p>As of 6 February 2025, the Council has 147 live homeless applications, broken down as follows -</p> <p>14 households have new applications that are currently being assessed.</p> <p>62 households (42% of applications) are owed a prevention duty by the Council. This means the Council has a duty to take reasonable steps to prevent the household from becoming homeless. The Council encourages households to contact us at their earliest opportunity, if they are threatened with homelessness, to allow us to maximise their options, and prevent the household from becoming homeless.</p> <p>18 households (12% of applications) are owed a relief duty by the Council. Therefore, the Council has a duty to take reasonable steps to relieve the household from homelessness.</p> <p>9 households are due a decision on their application and 44 households (30% of applications) are owed a main housing duty by the Council, therefore the Council has a duty to take reasonable steps to find them alternative accommodation.</p> <p>All 147 Households are allocated to Housing Options Officers, who work alongside the households throughout the process and provide them with support, help and guidance.</p> <p>The Council currently has 1 verified rough sleeper in the district. The Council's Housing Navigator has been working alongside outreach workers from New Hope Homeless Charity to try and engage with this individual, however, they have refused any help or support. The Council has been back to the location where the rough sleeper was sited, however the individual had moved on.</p> <p>The Council's Housing Service will continue to encourage residents to report any sightings via streetlink and we will aim to visit the location of the sighting within 24 hours in the working week.</p>

## Questions to the Lead Member for Infrastructure and Economic Development

<b>From Reena Ranger</b>	
58	<p>Cllr Price replied to me on 8<sup>th</sup> October refusing to release the recommendations made by SaveTheHighStreet.org, saying it was only a “wish list from local businesses and High Street traders”. Her predecessor, Cllr Giles-Medhurst, claimed in July 2023 that they were not even “suggestions”, let alone recommendations. However, this is not true.</p> <p>A Freedom of Information request shows that both SaveTheHighStreet.org and Three Rivers described the list of 29 recommendations that the Lead Member refused to release as “recommendations”. Why did two successive Lead Members for this field, including the Leader, feel entitled to mislead this council by pretending these weren’t recommendations and then not acting on them?</p>
	<p>As part of a project undertaken by the SavetheHighStreet organisation in 2022, they hosted a conference with local businesses and stakeholders, in which they shared a series of findings and recommendations from a Local Champions survey they had undertaken. These findings and recommendations reflected the concerns of local traders. They were never formally adopted by Three Rivers DC and no resource has been committed apart from acknowledging they will form part of the Economic Strategy work.</p>
<b>From Andrea Fraser</b>	
59	<p>Of the 29 recommended actions made by SaveTheHighStreet.org ahead of the 2022 SaveTheHighStreet conference, how many and which have been completed?</p>
	<p>With reference to the answer provided above, these recommendations have never formed part of a Three Rivers Work Programme. They will be considered as part of the Economic Strategy work.</p>
<b>From Oliver Cooper</b>	
60	<p>On 14<sup>th</sup> January, the Lead Member claimed that it was only “with hindsight” that the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme could be used to fund EV chargers in car parks. But the guidance was updated in April 2021 and expressly said that bids would be accepted for car parks. On what basis did the Lead Member conclude that the grant was not available for that purpose, when the guidance expressly said it could be and other councils concluded it could be?</p>
	<p>As advised at previous Committee meetings, the specialist Officer advice received previously on the availability of grant funding for</p>

	<p>electric vehicle charging was that public car parks were not eligible. Further external advice updated this position and the process to implement off street electric vehicle chargepoints in our car parks with external funding (ORCS) was initiated in late 2023.</p>
	<p><b>From Stephen King</b></p>
57	<p>Can the Lead Member advise the date of physical work to install electronic charging points at the Henbury Way car park and the likely date of completion of the works and note that ward councillors have requested additional yellow lines at the junctions of the car park and Henbury Way to improve visibility for users.</p>
	<p>Work began in early February 2025 on the installation of Electric Vehicle Charging Points in Henbury Way Carpark. The work is expected to be completed in March 2025.</p> <p>Officers are investigating the request for parking restrictions at the entrance and exit of the carpark as part of the Gosforth Lane parking scheme.</p>

## Questions to the Lead Member for Leisure

<b>From Mike Sims</b>	
61	<p>Please can the Lead Member provide a list of dates on which Three Rivers has asked the Environment Agency for an update on its production of a hydrological survey regarding the Aquadrome?</p>
	<p>As has been explained to Cllr Sims on a number of occasions and in great detail, the Environment Agency are not producing a hydrological study regarding the Aquadrome; this council has commissioned that work itself. The Environment Agency are developing a new <i>flood model</i> for the Upper River Colne. Officers have asked the EA for an update on the release of their flood modelling of the Upper River Colne on the following dates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 2 April 2024</li> <li>• 10 April 2024</li> <li>• 22 May 2024</li> <li>• 1 July 2024</li> <li>• 29 July 2024</li> <li>• 2 August 2024</li> <li>• 5 September 2024</li> <li>• 18 September 2024</li> <li>• 17 October 2024</li> <li>• 22 October 2024</li> <li>• 5 November</li> <li>• 20 November 2024</li> <li>• 2 December 2024</li> <li>• 19 December 2024</li> <li>• 14 January 2025</li> <li>• 3 February 2025</li> </ul>
<b>From Chris Alley</b>	
62	<p>Will the Council commit to opening a cricket pitch in South Oxhey Playing Fields?</p>
	<p>There is currently no budget allocated and therefore no plans to introduce a formal cricket pitch in South Oxhey Playing Fields. As has been previously discussed in this chamber the playing fields are available for residents and visitors to enjoy for informal cricket and this has been supported with the introduction of cricket markings on the new multi-use games area. More formal cricket provision is located at Bushey Cricket Club, 800m away from the playing fields and I would encourage those interested in more formal cricket to support their local club.</p>
<b>From Debbie Morris</b>	
63	<p>The partial refurbishment of Eastbury Recreation Ground Play Area, Moor Park &amp; Eastbury ward's only public play area, was scheduled for completion by mid-December 2024. When contractors left the site then, a flat swing had been fitted instead of a toddler swing. Why? If the responsibility for the mistake lies with the contractor, why have the council not pursued the contractor to return promptly to install the correct swing?</p>
	<p>The flat swing has been installed as a temporary provision whilst waiting the delivery and installation of the toddler swing.</p>

64	When will the toddler swing at the Eastbury Recreation Ground Play Area finally be fitted?
	The toddler swing will be replaced at the same time as the contractor returns when working on another site in the district. It is anticipated that this will be in April. A single visit by the contractor will avoid unnecessary costs and provide Best Value.
65	The basket swing at the Eastbury Recreation Ground Play Area has been removed and not replaced (as of 29 January). I have been advised that the delay in replacing it is for cost-savings reasons. How much are the costs savings projected to be and when will the basket swing be reinstated?
	The swing, which was removed for safety reasons, will be replaced at the same time as the contractor returns to install the toddler swing. A single visit by the contractor, at a time when they will already be in the district working on another site, will avoid unnecessary costs and provide Best Value. The costs avoided are estimated to be £1579.85.
66	Why is there no replacement play equipment for the play tunnel and mound surreptitiously removed from the Eastbury Recreation Ground Play Area, thereby depriving our youngest residents of some valued play equipment in a small playground with not much equipment anyway?
	Changes to the playground were made following comprehensive consultation and engagement with the local community, including extensive involvement and input from the local children, including Eastbury Farm school, who use the park. There was nothing surreptitious about the changes.
67	Why have additional plant beds been created within and around the Eastbury Recreation Ground Play Area without additional council resources being allocated to maintain them to an acceptable level? Attending twice a year will be insufficient.
	<p>A bi-annual (summer and winter) cut and weed of shrub beds is part of the standard Grounds Maintenance programme for all council parks and open spaces. This does not mean that it is not possible to undertake additional work that may be needed at specific locations at other times, but additional work above and beyond the annual programme will be undertaken on a need basis. The need is assessed in line with other service priorities and adopting a risk-based approach given the limited staff and budget resources available.</p> <p>Formal plant beds have not been created within Eastbury Play Area. Instead, informal planting has been included to enhance the play experience for children and provide additional opportunities for increasing biodiversity. Through the consultation process, the children shared the importance of bringing nature into their play and this is reflected in the final design.</p>
<b>From Narinder Sian</b>	
68	Whithey Beds Nature Reserve
	Whithey Beds Nature Reserve is a valuable local green space, providing important biodiversity and recreational benefits to our community. However, the boardwalk at



	<p>the reserve is in need of replacement to ensure continued safe access for visitors and to protect the sensitive wetland habitat.</p> <p>Given that Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds are intended to support local infrastructure improvements, could the council explore the possibility of allocating CIL funding towards replacing the boardwalk at Whitney Beds Nature Reserve?</p>
	<p>The boardwalk could not legitimately be considered “strategic infrastructure” due to the low number of visitors and lack of safe access to the site. As such is it not eligible for CIL funding.</p> <p>The new management plan for the Withey Beds is on the work programme for the Climate Change, Leisure and Housing Committee in July 2025. Within the management plan it has been recommended that the boardwalk not be repaired until such time as external grant funding can be identified and secured. The cost of replacement is estimated to be in excess of £160,000.</p>
<p><b>From Cheryl Stungo</b></p>	
	<p>Signage At Entrance To Recreational Grounds</p> <p>Many entrance signs to Croxley Green’s recreation grounds are unclear, damaged, or covered in graffiti, making it difficult for residents and visitors to locate and use these spaces.</p> <p>Clear signage would make these areas more welcoming, improve safety, encourage community use, and enhance their overall appearance. Well-maintained signs reflect community pride and support public health by promoting outdoor recreation.</p> <p>Could the council review and replace signage where needed at Stone’s Orchard, Weston Wood, Baldwins Lane Playing Fields, Dickinson Square Open Space, and Barton Way recreation ground?</p>
	<p>Officers regularly clean, maintain and review signage across the district in line with Management Plans, reports of damage and wider improvement projects for council parks and open spaces. Replacement signage is, however, subject to available budgets and staff capacity to undertake the work.</p>

## Questions to the Lead member for Resources

<b>From Chris Mitchell</b>	
70	<p>Three Rivers property team changed the heating system from gas to a air source heat pump system in 2023. The initial energy costs appeared to show almost a doubling. I did request this was looked into and was told it would be reviewed after a year's operation and the installer were to carry out an review of the overall system.</p> <p>Please can you update on us on the energy use and costs compared with the old system. Also to supply the report that should have been carried out on the system installed and if there is a problem that needs to be rectified.</p>
	<p>Councillor Mitchell, thank you for your question. To ensure we fully respond to your question, I have asked that Officers make contact with you in order to provide you with necessary information and data that you seek. The Head of Property Services &amp; Major Projects will contact you within the next 5 working days, so that you can discuss this matter in more detail.</p>

## Questions to the Chair of the Planning Committee

<b>From Vicky Edwards</b>	
71	<p>What assessment did the council make before 25<sup>th</sup> November 2024 to include 78 Gallows Hill Lane on its List of Locally Important Buildings?</p>
	<p>The Council has not previously considered 78 Gallows Hill Lane for inclusion on its List of Locally Important Buildings. The Council is now considering including the site on the List.</p> <p>For previous planning applications in 2021 and 2022 comments were provided by the conservation officer who advised that 78 Gallows Hill Lane had some local history but not significant and should be treated as a non-designated heritage asset for the purposes of planning applications. As such, it would be afforded the same protections as buildings on the List of Locally Important Buildings as these are classed as non-designated heritage assets in terms of planning policy. Inclusion on the List will therefore not make any material difference in terms of planning applications, however it is best practice to include non-designated heritage assets on the List.</p>
<b>From Andrea Fraser</b>	
72	<p>The tattered and unsightly scaffolding sheeting at 97 Rickmansworth High Street has dominated views in the town centre for over a year. I complained about it in May last year, and Cllr Cooper asked in July for Three Rivers to use its powers to issue a section 215 Improvement Notice. The Chair of the Planning Committee replied to Cllr Cooper that wasn't necessary as the improvements were being made. In December, in answer to a further, exasperated question, the Chair of the Planning Committee claimed it would be removed in the "early to mid part of December".</p> <p>However, it's February, those improvements haven't happened, and it is worse than ever. If the notice had been issued in December – let alone May or July – it would be fixed now. Why has Three Rivers chosen to run down our High Street by not issuing an Improvement Notice under section 215, and will it now issue one to compel the land-owner to remove this eyesore?</p>
	<p>As with the majority of planning enforcement investigations, officers have sought to negotiate with the owner in an attempt to avoid formal enforcement action. This is in line with the 'Section 215: Best Practice Guidance' document. In this instance, the owner provided officers with reassurances that the scaffolding sheeting would initially be repaired and later removed by Christmas. In January, the owner denied the scaffolding company entry to replace the damaged sheeting, following discussions with officers. Consequently, despite efforts to improve the condition of the sheeting with the owner, officers served a Section 215 notice (10 February 2025) which requires the owner to replace the damaged sheeting with new sheeting by 14 March 2025.</p>

<b>From Abbas Merali</b>	
73	<p>Will the Council commit to sending automated notifications concerning enforcement of planning breaches to subscribers to email notifications and to councillors alongside planning applications, to improve awareness of actions taken?</p>
	<p>It is not considered that automated notifications are currently required. When formal enforcement action is undertaken in the district, all complainants, relevant ward councillors and parish (if required) are notified by officers. Most enforcement notices are also required to be displayed on the planning register. This is available to view via the Planning Online facility, whereby anyone can search for notices issued between two specific dates. Additionally, by utilising the Planning Online facility, members of the public and councillors can view all enforcement cases, as well as filtering searches by ward, parish, date and notice type.</p>
<b>From Philip Hearn</b>	
74	<p>On the night of 8-9th February, a fire destroyed most of the grade II-listed local landmark, The Court, Rickmansworth Road, WD3 5SG.</p> <p>Will the Chairman of the Planning Committee confirm that Three Rivers will resist the delisting of the Court or any part of it?</p> <p>In other notable cases, councils have required the brick-by-brick restoration of a demolished heritage asset, such as the Carlton Tavern in London, the Crooked House in Staffordshire, and the Punch Bowl Inn in Lancashire. Will the Chairman of the Planning Committee confirm that Three Rivers will issue an Enforcement Notice requiring the Court to be rebuilt to its pre-fire state, brick-by-brick?</p>
	<p>In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 14(3), this question was submitted and accepted as an urgent question after the deadline for ordinary questions was passed. A written response will be provided within 5 working days and circulated to members.</p>

