

# LEAD MEMBER REPORTS

25/02/2025

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

It's that time of year when council tax bills start arriving. I know it's never a welcome sight – another bill! I am acutely aware of the ongoing challenges of the cost of living, and this is something we must consider. Although your bill comes from Three Rivers Council about 90% of what we pay goes to other organisations, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), the Police and Crime Commissioner and in most cases a Parish Council. Over 77% goes to HCC which provides adult social care, highways maintenance, children's services

At Three Rivers the 10% we collect helps cover your local services such as collecting bins (around 6 million of them every year!), street cleaning, maintaining parks, play areas, car parks and open spaces, dealing with planning and licensing applications, housing applications, providing support for community groups – and so much more.

We always strive to keep any rise of the council tax as low as we possibly can, whilst providing you with those first-class services you expect. However, each year our costs increase, including an extra £63k for National Insurance increased costs this year - equivalent to a 1% of the Council tax we collect. Our sound policies and investments mean however no cuts in services or staff and instead continued new investments into our communities.

As leader, I am immensely proud of what this council has achieved, and the employees that make it all possible. The council tax we all pay helps to make all this possible, keeping Three Rivers a great district in which to live, work and visit.

Since the December Council meeting government has annexed a the most radical reform of local government since 1973 that is it comes to past will see the end of Three Rivers Council as we know it and a larger unitary Council. Along its badged as removing a two – tier set up with the creation of a combined Mayoral Authority above the new unitary we will still have that, and indeed with our parish council councils we will still have three tiers!

Reorganization will cost money, lots of it and can be hugely disruptive to the services we provide. Its certainty taking up a lot of mine and the Chief Executive time in meetings with the other 10 Council leaders and officers.

I am working with other leaders across all four political colours. All Borough and District level are united – No single mega unitary council of 1,2M growing to 1.3m or more in he few years. A lot of research and background evidence is now being put together to come up with what the leaders think might be the best solution given the government requirements and the almost strict requirements to keep to existing council boundaries. At this stage I cannot say what will be the proposal, which the government might reject but there is a clear view that that must be at least 2 or 3 smaller unitary councils to cover the whole of Herts. A lot of discussions are ongoing. Once I have something to share I will.

Thus is a summary of some of things I have done as Leader:

- Attended the Holocaust Memorial Day event and flag raising on 27th January along with representatives of our communities.
- Attended Herts Growth Board and numerous Herts Leaders meetings to discuss the future economic growth of Herts and local government organisation.
- Hosted the meeting with the Parish Councils to discuss issues of mutual concern and updating on key issues including the Local Plan.
- Officially reopened the refurbished and upgraded William Penn Leisure Centre - you may have seen the gym video of me trying it all out!
- Met with the MOD to hear of their development plans for Northwood HQ.
- Toured the district looking at key improvements, speaking with residents, from South Oxhey, Chorleywood & Abbots Langley
- Secured a site meeting with Herts County Council, parents, the Head and others at Breakspeare School, Abbots Langley to discuss safety and road crossing concerns.
- Met with the Police & Crime Commissioner for Herts to discuss Policing issues and crime in Three Rivers.
- Attended the Herts Growth Board Parliamentary Reception and this the opposite to plug our great employment prospects in Three Rivers
- Ensured the Council formally objected to the proposed changes to the opening hours at the Waterdale Household waste site and the move to on-line booking only.

**Report from the lead member for General Public Services, Councillor Sarah Nelmes**

**Parking:**

**Rickmansworth West (Moneyhill Parade) – Scheme complete**

Refreshing of lining works are awaiting confirmed date from contractor. Additional out of hours enforcement is currently in place, to be reviewed end of this month.

**Harefield Road – Scheme complete**

New parking restrictions will come into effect from 28 February 2025. Lines and signs work to be implemented throughout February.

**Primrose Hill – In progress**

Current public consultation, ends on the 7 February 2025, at which point Officers will analyse the responses to determine next steps.

**High Elms Lane – In progress**

Officers have further engaged with the schools and crematorium. Officers are expecting to launch a scheme with public consultation shortly in time for any approved scheme to be implemented before the new school year.

**Chorleywood – In progress**

The Common Gate Road consultation finished on the 27 January. Results are being reviewed prior to the wider scheme progressing to statutory public consultation.

**Gosforth Lane – In progress**

Plans are being redrafted following feedback from Ward Councillors. Following agreement of the draft plans the scheme will go to statutory public consultation.

**Skidmore Way – In progress**

Following a public consultation, which received a low level of response, Officers are determining next steps. Officers are consulting with Thrive to understand their concerns about parking in the area.

**School Mead – In progress**

Traffic Regulation Orders are being prepared for the existing and new parking spaces. This will be the subject of public consultation shortly.

**Langleybury Lane – On hold**

On hold - pending outcome of new development

**Parsonage Close – On hold**

On hold - pending outcome of new development

**New Schemes (2025-27 Parking Management Programme, due to commence 1 April 2025):**

### **Ferry Carpark Changes – In progress**

Officers have begun initial assessment of the carpark usage and have had discussions with the Parish Council. Ward Councillors have been invited to a meeting to discuss any proposals on 7 February. Changes to Ferry Carpark will require amendments to the Traffic Regulation Order which requires a statutory public consultation period.

### **Community Way Carpark Changes – In progress**

Officers have begun initial assessment of the carpark usage and consultation with the Parish Council. Changes to Community Way Carpark will require amendments to the Traffic Regulation Order which requires a statutory public consultation period.

### **Review of restrictions on Garden Road and Breakspeare Road, Abbots Langley – In progress**

Officers have started initial discussions with traffic consultants about a review of these restrictions.

### **Various schemes including Silk Mill Road**

Not yet started

### **Review of the Controlled Parking Zones and council car parks in Rickmansworth**

Not yet started

### **Waste:**

- 2 x 12 tonne RCV's due to be delivered this week. This is the last of a batch of 7 RCV's.
- Orders to be placed for 4 x 26 tonne RCV's, 1 x 7.5 tonne and 1 x new body to be mounted on free issue chassis this week. This will complete vehicle capital programme until 2027-2028.
- Work commencing on Commercial food waste service
- Continuing to assess options on new vehicle maintenance contract commencing July 2026

## **Report from the Lead member for Housing and Public Health, Councillor Steve Drury**

### **Housing report**

At my latest briefing on 4<sup>th</sup> February, I was given the following housing figures, We have 147 households who have a homeless application with the council, of which, 44 of these are owed a full housing duty.

We have 65 households in temporary accommodation

5 placements are "out of district" in nightly accommodation, 1 of which is deemed unsafe within

3 Rivers District.

1410 households are on the Council's housing needs register.

Housing Service is beginning to prepare for the three- yearly review of the council's Housing Allocation policy. It sets out how the council will allocate social housing across the district and sets out who is eligible and the priorities they will be given for the council's Housing Register.

Any proposed changes to the policy will be presented to CC,L and Housing committee to seek approval for a public consultation on any changes to the existing policy, eventually ending up with the P&R committee for approval.

### **Health report**

Most recent briefing was 28<sup>th</sup> January, and was due another earlier today 25/2 which I may have had to cancel due to travelling. On a Monday evening at William Penn LC there is a regular indoor football game and then a chat with everyone on Mental health issues, it's called "ManOn" and is run in conjunction with WFC's community trust, it's very well attended and I have put myself in the firing line by going down there to take part shortly.

Have visited the Healthy Hub in Mill End which is held on a Tuesday at Berry Lane Methodist Church, a good day to visit as the lunch club was taking place so was busy.

Healthy Hub in S/Oxhey had to be moved for 10 days as there was works going on in the library, but it's back up and running now.

66 people have completed our health survey 40 referrals have been made and 182 incidents of signposting have taken place.

Capital Grants have been agreed, between Group Leaders and Director of Corporate, Customer and Community whereby, £7000 was allocated to Leisure and Natural Infrastructure and £13000 to Strategy and Partnerships.

The S/Oxhey food bank has moved to Carpenders Park Methodist Church but only has limited storage space, so any ideas would be welcomed. In its first week 15 people were provided with food parcels. TRDC are now distributing 'Warm in Winter' bags, and up to the end of January have given away over 40 bags.

## **Report the Lead Member for Infrastructure and Economic Development, Councillor Louise Price.**

I would like to thank Officers for their help in preparing this report.

### **Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP)**

Following ongoing discussions, the LCWIP is being revised to be presented to committee for adoption later this year and is expected to commence the committee process in late spring 2025. It will then be required to be adopted by Hertfordshire County Council. Once the plan is adopted it will assist in securing funding for cycling and walking routes. Routes will undergo further evaluation on specific interventions.

### **Electric Vehicle Charging Points**

The carpark Electric Vehicle project, funded by ORCS and CIL, is being delivered currently. Work has begun in several carparks with the project expected to be delivered within the agreed timelines with the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV).

The LEVI fund, which is managed by Hertfordshire County Council, is expected to release their tender for Charging Point Operators to apply in the first half of 2025 with installations expected in 2026.

### **Beryl Bikes (Bike share scheme)**

Officers are entering initial discussions on what an expansion of the bike share scheme trial could look like into other areas of Three Rivers district. Officers are also seeking to secure funding for additions to a bike share scheme as part of major planning applications to support the rollout into new neighbourhoods.

## **Economic Development**

At Planning Committee on Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2025, Members resolved to approve the planning application at Land to the East of Langleybury Lane And Including Langleybury House Estate, Langleybury Lane, Langleybury for the creation of a film hub and associated works (planning ref. 22/1945/FUL) subject to conditions and a section 106 agreement (and subject to referral to the Secretary of State as a departure from the Local Plan).

In resolving to approve the application members considered there were substantial economic benefits. These include the proposal delivering:

- Approximately 845 direct jobs and 695 indirect jobs during operation of the development, and an estimated £93.3 million increase in Gross Value Added (GVA) when fully built out and operational. These figures do not include employment and GVA associated with the construction works.
- The Propellor Stages are estimated to deliver an anticipated 882 paid placements (feature films) and 92 paid placements (short films etc). Placements are students or people seeking a career change sourced through an educational provider or other such provider.

## Report from the portfolio holder for Leisure, Councillor Chris Lloyd

### Watersmeet Report for February Council 2025

#### Panto:

- Jack and the Beanstalk played to 15,325 customers. A number came back to see it again. Up 1,830 tickets on previous year.
- Beauty and the Beast panto 2025 is on sale.
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#### Box office/Marketing:

- The membership scheme has 59 members.
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#### Capital works:

- The electrical tender has been extended by another 2 weeks, following low interest. Following guidance and contacts from a specialist company we have now been able to create extra leads and are hoping to have at least 4 other companies attend site in the next week to undertake quotes. There is a possibility that this project will extend into April. Revised anticipated project timeline:
  - Tender Close: Friday 14<sup>th</sup> February
  - Appoint: Friday 21<sup>st</sup> February (Subject to bids)
  - Works commence: Monday 10<sup>th</sup> March for 1 week As planned.

#### Artistmeet:

- The new year exhibition is up and is running to the 27<sup>th</sup> March. The exhibition after this will be for the Watersmeet 50 years.
- 50 Year exhibition launch date likely to be the evening directly before May full council.

#### Shows and Events:

- Preparation for the Watersmeet 50 years is well underway, and the venue's first event will have taken place on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February with a film also celebrating 50 years - Saturday night Fever!
- There will be a Watersmeet 50 Year celebrations presentation on the Wednesday 12th March at CCLH committee

### Leisure Report – Feb 2025

#### Leisure Assets

Open Spaces - Management Plans Croxley Common Moor and the Withey Beds management plans due to go to July committee.

The majority of comments were in relation to the removal of the boardwalk at the Withey. Officers had a meeting with CMS to look at alternatives. The suggestion was posed that we replace the viewing platform and 80m of the boardwalk which would take people to the dipping platform which is fairly central in the fen. This would cost approx. £60k and would be sourced from external funding only. Officers propose to update the management plan to reflect this suggestion but there would not be further consultation on the proposal. The positive of keeping this length of boardwalk would allow for continuation of relevant surveys. Without any boardwalk it would be difficult for access to the site to undertake surveys etc.



## Management Plans for 2025/2026

Prestwick Road Meadows – new management plan to be drafted  
Stone's Orchard and The Green Management Plan –The writing of the management plan is in process.

## Grazing – 2025

4 year grazing contract has been tendered and in the process of being awarded. We will have multiple graziers across the District as we have currently had. Grazing costs have increased in Three Rivers and we hope to be able to increase the countryside stewardship grant that we apply for to support this, when we are invited to do so. There are no current timescales on when this could be.

## Draft Play Space Strategy 2025-2030

Consultation has taken place via the Have Your Say platform for adults as well as in 10 primary schools. 697 children took part and fed back information on their favourite play spaces, equipment they love and what they like doing in play areas. The vast majority of respondents support the strategy, a final version of which will come to the CCLH Committee in March

Green flag – Applications for 2025 have been submitted for Leavesden Country Park and Rickmansworth Aquadrome.

## Leisure Management Contract

Closure to the teaching pool at WPLC from the 24/02 to the 28/02, due to pool filters being upgraded.

## Leisure Development

### Artistsmeet

- Jan- March (6 January – 31 March 2025) Exhibition by local artist Artist Hilary Allwright in progress. Hilary's paintings are in Acrylic and stem most recently from seascapes and how waves form creating an enormous array of tones. She uses sharp colour when creating large studies of flowers. As well as acrylic, her work includes a variety of mediums such as, watercolour, oil, pastel and charcoal. Worth visiting which I did with my wife.
- April – June exhibition: Celebrating 50 years of Watersmeet – Probably date for exhibition is before full council meeting on 20 May.
- July – September exhibition: Herts Open Studios

### Play Rangers

Play Rangers will return from their winter break on Monday 24 February (after half term).

Term time sessions run every weekday between 4-6pm in parks and open spaces across the district.

A social media campaign and flyers to all primary schools will aid promotion of this.

The Easter timetable will include sessions at Baldwins Lane, King George V and Manor House Grounds.

## Sports Development

We are awaiting the response from our application to Hertfordshire Crime Reduction through Sport for funding a 12-month community sports project in Abbots Langley.

## Playscheme

Officers are beginning the planning and preparation for Easter 2025 playscheme including staffing, training and updating policies and procedures.

We have applied to the HAPpy grant for £4,000 to support delivery of places for those receiving Free School Meals. The funding is subject to continued central government support.

## Natural Infrastructure and Projects

### Aquadrome Programme

#### Pedestrian Bridge

- o FRAP has been approved by the EA and work is underway on site, with the contractors making good progress.

- o The old bridge was removed this weekend (15/16th February) and work commenced on the groundworks ready for the new bridge to be installed in March.

- o The whole Riverside Drive site will remain closed due to landscaping works, tied in with the enhanced work to the play area. Anticipated completion remains before Easter.

- o Staff member visited St Joan of Arc alongside Beaver Bridges to talk to the children about the new bridge. Positive feedback and comments from the school on social media.

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#### NLHF main application- WWW bid

New bid currently being developed. This is a huge piece of work and officers plan to submit this month. The bid has a focus on nature Recovery and Visitor Experience. The total development phase bid is currently being worked on and awaiting quotations before confirming the final cost. Development phase is currently estimated at £5.5 million, which includes 25% contingency and inflation set at 3.5%.

#### Fishing Swims

- o Works, developed in partnership with the fishing club commenced on site on the 10 February

#### Communications

- o Three Storyboards are now on site. These explain what is happening at the Aquadrome and directs people to the newly developed website.

- o MyNews – February edition details the Natural Heritage Networks project outcomes along with the importance of understanding the hydrology of the site. This will now be a rolling monthly feature.

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#### The Bury Grounds Biodiversity Project -

- o On site temporary signage is due to be installed upon arrival, this will be accompanied by additional information on the council's website
- o 50 trees were planted by volunteers to complete the first stage of the project, funded by Grundon through the Landfill Communities Fund. A press release is being prepared for this, and officers are compiling a completion report.
- o Officers are investigating the potential of suspending car parking within Bury Lane carpark to facilitate a works compound (including welfare) and parking for the contractors. With aim to reduce the impact on the carpark an alternative is also being considered with the compound being placed within the site. This will be for a period of approximately 7 weeks.
- o While the works are taking place the path on the southern side of the river channel will need to close to allow the team to safely work. This is a minor detour, and signage/online communications will notify the public.

Chorleywood House Estate – Chorleywood Chilterns Chalk Stream Project  
Chilterns Chalk Streams project is liaising with all landowners on concept plan including TRDC before progressing the plan.

#### River Chess at Scotsbridge Playing Fields

- o The Council has been awarded a total of £58,417.00 from the Chess Smarter Water Catchments project to complete habitat and bank improvements upstream of the channel realignment project. The FRAP has now been approved by the EA, due to the timescales in relation to salmonids and the presence of water voles this now requires the project delivery to take place in a short window Winter/Spring window.
- o River Realignment Project – TRDC is seeking guidance from hydrologists to advise on the initial design and to assist in approximating a commuted sum figure. This guidance will also be sought at detailed design stage.

#### Capital Programme

Leavesden Country Park – Entrance Widening – Awaiting additional permit approval from HCC Highways with a view for pedestrian island, kerb dropping and tarmac works to take place. Feedback received from HCC on 7 Feb with request for updated technical drawing which is due to be submitted this week for final technical approval. Now aiming for work in March 2025.

#### Play Area Capital Programme - Eastbury and Ebury Play Areas:

Works to Ebury Play Area will take place as part of the Rickmansworth Aquadrome Bridge project, with the play area becoming the compound for the works.

Eastbury play area – toddler swing seat and basket swing seat to be installed when contractor on site at Ebury play area.

## **Report from the Lead Member for Sustainability and Climate Change, Councillor John Tankard**

The Hertfordshire State of Nature report reveals that between 1970 and 2022, at least 76 species are known to have become extinct in Hertfordshire, this equates to more than three species every two years. Many more species populations are declining and becoming threatened within the county. This is often due to habitat loss or deterioration and makes the work being done throughout the district invaluable.

Opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement within council owned land gives us the opportunity to not only boost biodiversity but also engage with our local communities. The diversification of species and habitat structures also benefits the district in its resilience to the changing climate, for example planting trees that can withstand wetter conditions or periods of drought. Similarly, all three of our rivers are chalk rivers, globally rare habitats that are in sub-optimal condition, multiple opportunities for river restoration (aiming to return chalk river characteristics to these artificially modified channels) are being planned and delivered.

It has now been a full year since the initial implementation of mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). A major step in the right direction, legislation that is being recognised worldwide in the opportunity it presents to bolster biodiversity. However, delivery is difficult. There is a nationwide deficit of skilled ecologists able to complete the surveys and complex statutory metric. The process is incredibly time consuming with complicated legal agreements required to secure the net gain and then monitor it for 30 years. For when the BNG is to be completed off-site, there is a lack of receptor habitat sites available with only 43 on the national register (as of 14.02.2025). Paired with convoluted guidance, it is unfortunate that this legislation that holds so much potential, seems to have been rushed (despite delays) resulting in its implementation taking place before it had been sufficiently thought through. Since 1 April 2024 planning permission has been granted for 482 applications. Of those, 11 are subject to mandatory net gain. The remainder are subject of the exemptions set out in the BNG Regulations

As part of evidence work on the emerging Local Plan the amount of BNG required from new developments will be tested through the Whole Plan Viability Assessment. This study will test the impact on viability of requiring a BNG of more than 10%. This will be considered against the viability impacts of other policy areas such as energy efficiency, the need for specialist accommodation for the elderly and affordable housing. The findings of the study, along with other evidence base studies, will inform the policy decisions in the Local Plan.

TRDC Officers are currently finalising an SLA for ecology (including BNG) services with the county council to ensure access to qualified ecologists (with resilience in service provision) beyond 2024/25 and ensuring high quality, expert advice on planning applications subject to BNG. Other parts of the country and indeed developers may not yet have access to such advice impacting on the quality and time taken to make or agree applications

It is hugely important that, in line with the biodiversity gain hierarchy we try where possible to maintain and provide biodiverse habitats in-situ. This

promotes more green space within local developments with all the benefits that brings with it, such as:

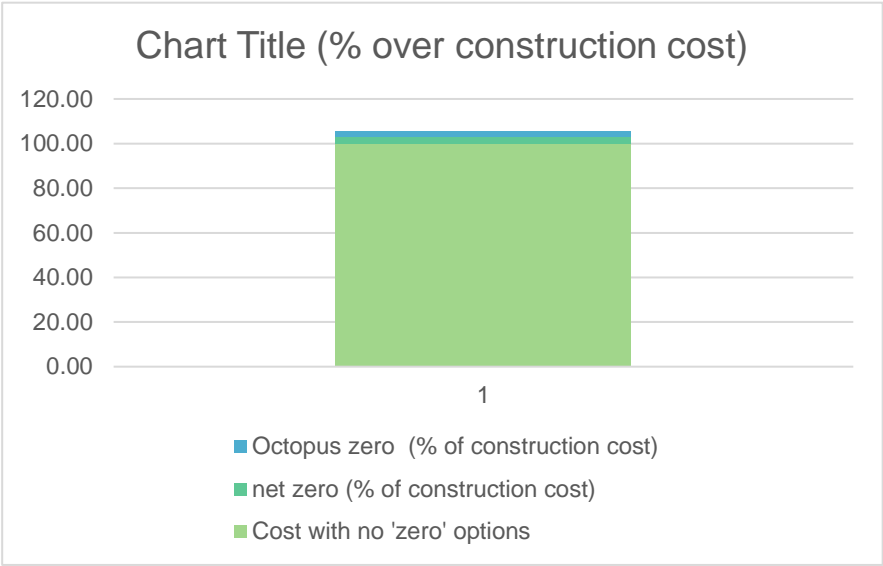
Mental Health	Walkable green and blue space allows areas of reflection, birdsong is a known mood manager, insects entertain young and old minds alike and the rotation of seasons noting the passage of time, and the insect and reptile mutations, such as tadpoles to frogs. The ability to walk out of one's home, sit down and reflect provides significant wellbeing.
Physical Health	Physical Health – Getting out and walking / running / cycling, reduces stress, reduces cardiovascular disease, promotes mobility for older age, a goal we all strive should for.
Summer Cooling	Vegetation cools the air, if the vegetation on the site can be set within the prevailing wind of proposed development, this will induce summer cooling. Tree lined streets provide shading over hard landscape reducing the heat build-up during the day and subsequent nocturnal heat release at night. Furthermore, tree canopies crossing roads, provide nature bridging, providing transfer from one side of the street to the gardens of the other for small birds and mammals. Hedging to front garden boundaries, adds a further depth and cooling to the residential landscape.
Flood Prevention	Ground absorbs water, the roots drink the water, and the tree canopy holds the water following rain, there is a surprising amount of water withheld from ground contact by the droplets held in the branches. The more vegetation on the ground (the longer the grass) then the more water is prevented being in the immediate run off which causes storm surge (walking through thigh high grass following rain).
Carbon sequestration	local carbon is absorbed and held within the green spaces and whilst each reduction is minor, over a country wide program, the communal effect is huge.
Pollution	Certain trees, such as Hawthorn, are described as sticky, whilst they do not physically feel sticky, they do hold onto pollutants, which are later washed into the ground by rain, thus reducing the amount of air borne pollutants accessing lungs providing an established effect on mortality within the urban context.
Outdoor Play Areas	localised wild places feed young minds and assist in the mindfulness for the young developing minds.
Noise Reduction	vegetation on the residential boundaries, once again will assist noise reduction from busy roads and aid mindfulness

So given the immediate and secondary benefit of Bio Diversity Net Gain to the

residential population, the positive financial benefit to insurance costs through better control of climate change and the damage we are already witnessing, the reduction of dependency on the NHS through poor physical health, the benefits to mental health and well-being, there is a clear argument for BNG, being local and on site, in order to improve the lives of residents, The real question is, is 10% enough? This is something that will be tested through our whole plan viability work whereby we will consider the impacts of increasing the BNG requirements on the viability of the local plan when considered against competing areas such as affordable housing. One potential emerging trend however, was highlighted by a discussion Councillor Mitchell and I had with a Carbon Neutral housing developer, was that can be cheaper and easier to reduce of the number of properties on a development plot, than to pay for off-site BNG

What am I doing as Lead Member?

- Councillor Mitchell and I attended the innovation centre at Octopus Energy with HCCSP, and despite being highly sceptical to the sales pitch, we were amazed (practically fainted and had to be revived with smelling salts!) at the simplicity of achieving a Net Zero heating strategy, and one which reduces loads to the GRID.
- Next weekend I am attending a meeting with Surfers Against Sewage investigating a methodology to get the River Chess certified as Bathing Quality, to ensure government monitoring of water quality.
- I am working with Abbots Langley Parish to define a strategy to end the use of Single Use Plastic within the community, by positive education of residents, and local business participation.
- Abbots Langley Parish Council has begun its Nature Recovery Strategy by requesting residents feedback what 'flora and fauna' they experience when walking around the Parish to allow a build-up of 'on the ground' baseline. This is a progressive exercise, and we will be looking to citizen science type projects as we progress and methodology to help assist us.
- GUCE community heating system using heat from boreholes for a Gade Valley Community Heating Strategy, is ongoing and has progressed passed the first feasibility study, which is great news, watch this space.
- Attended Pollinator meetings organised by the local Friends of the Earth groups at both Croxley and Watford, fantastic to see a great volume of local volunteers with an active passion to prevent the decline of local biodiversity and promote sustainability.
- Following this meeting myself and councillor Mitchell are attending a site in Suffolk, visiting a developer who claims to be able to demonstrate that not only are Zero Carbon, Zero Bill and above BNG requirements standards possible, they are also financially viable. The graph below demonstrates the extra over costs of implementing the two standards. What is not clear is the impact this will have on affordable housing requirements. I look forward to finding out more about it when I visit (For example at an average cost of £3,000 per m<sup>2</sup>, 130m<sup>2</sup> house = £390,000 standard construction costs, zero carbon an additional £11,000 and zero bill an additional £10,000.) The graph below demonstrates the load on the overall cost.



## Sustainability, climate change and energy efficiency

**SHDF (Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund) Wave 2:** As of 14th January: 99 properties physically complete and remaining 18 properties due to complete in next month or so, depending on weather. Project on track to complete fully by end of March 2025.

**GBIS scheme with E.ON** (fully funded cavity wall insulation): Exploring personalised offers to blocks of flats with unfilled cavities in Rickmansworth, though mixed tenures in apartment blocks makes these difficult to treat.

This scheme is likely to be superseded by the [Warm Homes Local Grant](#) which is more generously funded and multi-measure and will open for delivery from April 2025.

**Community Energy Fund (CEF):** The Solar Canopy Feasibility study on 7 council-owned car parks has completed. The report is being progressed to the CCHL Committee on March 12<sup>th</sup>

### **Fast Followers project(s):**

**Transition Streets:** 2 new streets started in October (Russel Road in Moor Park, and Dove Park in Chorleywood). Officers are also exploring potential to run a TRDC staff Transition Streets group before the Fast Followers project ends in June.

**Community Energy:** Maple Cross School potentially viable for community-funded solar; GUCE are finalising modelling and calculations for this. TRDC will present any proposal for the school to HCC as a test case for community-funded solar panels for schools..

**The Retrofit One Stop Shop:** Remainder of project focus on overcoming barriers to retrofit for “able to pay” demographic and planning to scale the service beyond Fast Followers and to align with the broader Retrofit Strategy for Hertfordshire which the MCS Foundation are developing.

**Involve "Community Conversations" initiative has launched.** Councillors were informed of this in December Members Bulletin and by direct email in January. Currently promoting the opportunities to residents and community groups via direct emails, newsletter features, posters, social media posts, and more. Participants will come together over four days in February and March to take part in training, have conversations in their communities, and share back what they hear. The results will influence the council's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy and Action Plan, and future community-oriented sustainability projects.

Involve are leading the delivery of this initiative from start to finish, with marketing support from TRDC, and 1-2 climate change officers allowed to observe the in-person sessions (but not participate). This is funded by Innovate UK via the Fast Followers programme.

### **Local Area Retrofit Accelerator (LARA)**



The climate change team are actively contributing the development of a retrofit strategy for Hertfordshire funded by the South East Energy and Hub and co-ordinated by MCS Foundation. .

### **Climate Action Fund – National Lottery Bid**

Officers have submitted an Expression of Interest bid for £1.5m funds from the Lottery's Climate Action Fund. The National Lottery Climate Action Fund aims to help communities tackle climate change and to be environmentally sustainable. It is anticipated it will take six to eight months from application to final decision notification.

Our proposal featured two distinct (but connected) projects called Community Action Project and Community Gardens Project which align three themes: empowering people, changing places and building communities.

### **Decarbonisation of Core Council Buildings**

#### **William Penn Solar Panel funded by the Swimming Pool Support Fund**

The solar panels were commissioned on 28<sup>th</sup> November. To date £826 has been saved, and yesterday (13.1.25) 12% of the daily consumption was provided by PV.

#### **Business Energy Efficiency Grants**

Contracts have been issued to 10 of the 12 SMEs to install low carbon measures. Installations will complete by March 31<sup>st</sup>.

## **Woodlands and Tree Protection**

### **TRDC Tree management**

- Ash Die Back – Inspection of high-risk areas of Ash Die Back have been completed. Many areas appear reasonably healthy, however priority locations for works include Chorleywood House estate, The Aquadrome and Pheasants and Soloman's Wood.
- Oak Processionary Moth – A small number of reports of OPM have been received this year. Officers are targeting removal works to areas where OPM is present at low level in tree canopy. HCC have developed a brief to produce OPM guidance for Councils in Hertfordshire and aim to appoint a consultant to produce the guidance later this year,

### **Biodiversity**

**Local Nature Recovery Strategy** –My thanks to the small number of councillors who engaged with the recent workshop on the LNRS. There will be further opportunities to engage with the LNRS.

### **The Bury Grounds Biodiversity Project –**

- The first phase of the project has been completed with two periods of tree works (aiming to diversify the woodland, protect heritage features and promote public access) and the planting of 50 trees, some in the woodland some in the garden.
- The next phase is due to commence soon as improvements are made to Taylors Cut (river channel) aiming introduce some chalk river characteristics to this artificial channel.
- Temporary on-site signs, social media and the council website will provide information.

#### **Hydrological Survey - no update**

- Officers still await the EA flood modelling to complete this work, once available the project will resume using AMP funding, expected completion by Autumn 2025.

#### **NLHF main application for Aquadrome**

- The new Expression of Interest (EOI) was accepted, and officers are working on the bid with planned submission in February 2025

#### **Water Restoration Fund -**

- Still awaiting the decision from DEFRA on the funding application for approximately £600,000 to improve the lake water by de-shading the lakes and introducing a new algae system including a high technology nanobubbles aeration system. .

#### **Hedgerow Restoration Romily Drive**

- A 100m section of hedgerow is due to be restored as part of the UKSPF work and identified in the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit.
- This work has been postponed allowing the ground to dry out and the standing water to recede. Work is still expected to complete this financial year.

### **Cemeteries and crematorium**

#### **Ground Conditions Woodcock Hill**

- We have an issue with subsidence in Section P section and as such it is only being used it for single depth burials and ashes interments from the middle of the section to the tree line. Double or treble depth burials are going into Section R.

#### **Provision of graves**

- For 2024 we averaged 9 burials a month. The size of coffins is increasing, and this will be something we have to look at in the future as our plots will need to get bigger reducing the number of graves that can fit into the Cemetery.

#### **Memorial testing**

- Contractors have been appointed to undertake repair works to 27 memorials at Chorleywood Road Cemetery and 9 memorials at Woodcock Hill later in the Spring (April)

Future Reports	Committee	Date of Meeting
Feasibility Study on Community Energy funded car park canopies Climate Action Plan Update	CCHL CCHL	12 <sup>th</sup> March 2025 12 <sup>th</sup> March 2025

## **Report from the Lead Member for Community Safety, Councillor Andrew Scarth**

It remains, as ever, a busy time in the community safety portfolio and I'm pleased to be able to provide some of the highlights since the previous Council meeting:

- There is a new on-line platform for customers with regards to Anti-social Behaviour (ASB), very customer focused using self-help tools
- An ASB App is being developed to enable customers to report and record ASB.
- The Anti-social behaviour satisfaction survey now includes a QR to give residents a choice of ways to respond to the service
- Cuckooing, Personal Safety and White Ribbon campaigns have taken place
- The Strategy and Partnerships team have secured funding and the purchase of 9 CCTV cameras
- New Community Safety Clinics to include the ASB Service run at the Healthy Hubs and our temporary accommodation
- A host of Community Safety engagements with police and partner agencies
- Delivery of Prevent and Domestic Abuse training for staff
- Charity walk to raise money for Herts Domestic Abuse Helpline took place in December at Leavesden Country Park.
- Secured funding for MIND to deliver the Community Support Service
- Community Safety Conference for partners 13 February 2025
- Working on the Community Safety Partnerships Strategic Priorities for 2025-2026
- The South Oxhey Foodbank relocated in January to the Carpenders Park and South Oxhey Methodist Church. This foodbank is run by Watford Foodbank.
- The council received £50,000 of Household Support Fund (HSF) from Hertfordshire County Council. This is being distributed to partner organisations within the district providing direct support to residents. The Foodbox Project is a HSF funded project, and has so far provided support to 78 households for up to 6 months.
- The annual Equality Duty Information Report has been published on the councils website, providing information on the range of initiatives undertaken by the council to achieve it's equality objectives.
- A closed event to mark the 80<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz was held at Three Rivers House followed by the raising of the Holocaust Memorial Day Flag. Representatives from Ark Synagogue (in Northwood), GATE Herts, political Party Leaders and the Chair and Hertfordshire Constabulary were invited to attend.

