
Connecting Three Rivers (formerly Local Strategic Partnership and Community Safety Board) MINUTES

**Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on
Wednesday, 19 March 2025 from 10.00 am - 12.01 pm.**

Present: Councillors

Councillor Andrew Scarth in the Chair

Officers in attendance:

Kimberley Grout, Associate Director – Corporate, Customer & Community
Rebecca Young, Head of Strategy & Partnerships
Shivani Davé, Partnerships & Inclusion Manager
Michelle Wright, Community Safety & Safeguarding Manager
Anita Hibbs, Committee Officer

External attendance:

Phoebe Allsopp, OPCC
Michael Nadasdy, County Community Safety Unit
Bob Jones, Watford & Three Rivers Trust
Enoch Kanagaraj, One Vision
Paraic McKenna, Hertfordshire County Council (HCC)
Peter Cogan, Watford Community Housing
Elizabeth Borg, Community Learning Partnership
Shirish Chauhan, Three Rivers Chamber
Andrew Palfreyman, Hertfordshire Constabulary
Karen Watkin, Home Start
Jo Barrett, Thrive Homes
Clive Saunders, Watford African Caribbean Association
Esther Moors, West Herts Hospitals NHS Trust
Debbie Stone, Intensive Family Support Team
Collette Garland, Intensive Family Support Team
Stephanie Villeneuve, Hertfordshire County Council

1 INTRODUCTION AND APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from, Peta Mettam, Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Brad Hughes, Keith Harland and Tina Barnard.

Attendees were welcomed to the meeting and introduced themselves.

2 MINUTES AND ACTIONS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Local Strategic Partnership Board meeting, held on 12 December 2024 were confirmed as a correct record.

3 OPEN FOR CONTRIBUTION

Shivani Davé advised the board regarding the conclusion of the financial year and the second year of the Three Rivers Community Strategy. The officer emphasised the importance of reflecting on the actions and priorities that have taken place within each organisation as part of this strategy, and requested board members to be vigilant for upcoming messages that will require feedback on these actions and encouraged them to share this information with their teams as necessary.

Paraic McKenna provided an overview of the quarter 3 performance at Hertfordshire County Council (HCC), focusing on adult and children's care services. Key points included a significant increase in referrals for adult care services, nearly 20% higher than pre-Covid levels, and a 10% increase in children's social care referrals. Progress was noted in education, employment and training for children and young people, with an emphasis on improving turnaround times for education health care plans. Despite challenges, such as budget constraints and rising mental health needs, the Council is working to enhance service accessibility. Additionally, the impact of Covid – 19 on school attendance and the increasing number of children missing education were highlighted as ongoing issues.

Rebecca Young advised the board that the funding for the complex needs service, provided by Herts Mind Network, had been extended for another year, and emphasised the importance of this support for the community in Three Rivers.

Elizabeth Borg spoke about the series of family art courses funded by Step Two Skills, aimed at engaging parents, carers and their children during the Easter holidays. The courses offered provide a supportive environment for children, particularly those who are neurodivergent or facing social challenges, such as bullying or reluctance to leave their homes. The speaker highlighted the importance of these activities in helping young people regain social interaction and routine, especially after periods of isolation. Additionally, there was mention of collaborative to re-integrate home educated young people into social activities, preparing them for potential return to school.

The board discussed the availability of district comparison reports, particularly in relation to educational services for young people. Enoch Kanagaraj enquired about the existence of such reports, to which Paraic McKenna responded by confirming the existence of various comparison reports and mentioned the need for more detailed discussion to clarify which specific services should be focused on.

Karen Watkin addressed the board and spoke about the services provided by Home Start, including empowering parents, assisting with referrals, and helping older children transition into school. The speaker reassured that their team has the capacity to take on new referrals, and stressed that their services are designed to address the pressures faced by families, and encouraged the board to signpost families in need of support.

Jo Barrett enquired about the trends of educational disconnection across various age groups, specifically focusing on whether this is prevalent among young people or spans all age groups. Paraic McKenna responded by noting that disconnection appears to be particularly significant in later years of education, and suggested a more detailed look at these trends to better understand the situation and how it affects different age groups.

Debbie Stone highlighted the increasing number of primary school aged children waiting for diagnosis, particularly for ADHD and ASD, and the impact of reduced timetables on families. Collette Garland added that a pilot program in Dacorum has revealed significant dropout rates, especially among girls around the age of 13, who often become disaffected.

In response to a question raised around demographic differences related to the data on young girls who become disaffected, Paraic McKenna stated that a deeper understanding of this issue is needed, and offered to collect data on demographics and regional spread.

4 WATFORD GENERAL HOSPITAL

Esther Moors provided an overview of the current status and future plans for Watford General Hospital, St Albans Hospital and Hemel Hempstead Hospital. The speaker outlined the process for developing the new hospital at the Watford, including the need for enabling schemes to fully clear the new hospital site. The St Albans site is in the delivery phase, with new operating theatres, a community diagnostic centre and a car-park underway. Meanwhile, the Hemel Hempstead site is in the early business case stage, with a new health hub now being considered as a potential option.

Board members enquired about the expected opening date for the new hospital in Watford, to which Esther Moors responded that the government website showed a start date onsite between 2032 and 2034. The Trust was keen to commence works at the earliest opportunity and a three to four year main works building programme is anticipated, depending on the start date. In response to a question, the speaker confirmed that the Watford Hospital site is the preferred future location for Mount Vernon Hospital emphasising the need for it to be located alongside an acute hospital to enhance cancer care services. The speaker also confirmed that the new hospital will be built on designated land, minimising the need for interim service relocations, and mentioned future development considerations for the site, including retaining land for Mount Vernon and potential for further development.

Enoch Kanagaraj advised the board that there is an upcoming community event featuring an interview with Toby Hyde, Chief Strategy and Collaborative Officer at West Herts Teaching Hospital. The event is on 27 March 2025, 6pm at the Leavesden Hub, and the speaker encouraged board members to attend the event, emphasising the importance of community participation in understanding the hospital's strategies and collaborations.

5 THREE RIVERS VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Bob Jones provided an overview of the voluntary sector, highlighting various types of organisations such as registered charities, community interest companies (CIC) and community amateur sports clubs (CASC). The speaker also highlighted the mission of Watford and Three Rivers Trust (W3RT), which focuses on building comm connections and addressing a wide range of social needs.

In response to a question raised regarding recommendations for the Voluntary, Community, Faith, and Social Enterprise sector (VCFSE) alliance's involvement with the board; the speaker mentioned ongoing efforts such as regular updates on the alliance's work that are provided at the Herts Community Leaders Forum and the various charities that are involved. It was suggested that a presentation on the alliance's work would provide a comprehensive overview for board members.

The conversation also touched on the future of unitary councils and their implications for W3RT. The Chair responded by stating that it's too early to discuss this topic it and should be postponed for a later meeting.

6 THREE RIVERS CCTV

This item was Part II.

7 LOCAL CRIME TRENDS AND STRATEGIC PRIORITIES 2025-2026

Andrew Palfreyman provided an update on the strategic assessment of crime within Hertfordshire, focusing on various crime categories such as robbery, burglary, theft, violence against women and girls, hate crime and antisocial behaviour. The speaker explained how the risk matrix informs tactical options for crime prevention and community safety initiatives. Key priorities included maintaining community trust, engaging with local communities and implementing technology such as Power BI for data analysis. The speaker emphasised collaborative problem solving and community engagement as vital strategies to reduce crime rates and improve safety in the area, highlighting specific initiatives and ongoing challenges.

Michael Nadasdy confirmed that the full CCSU Strategic Assessment for the county will be sent out tomorrow along with an infographic, and the priorities that Andrew was talking about align with those included in the infographic.

The Community Safety & Safeguarding Manager elaborated on the community safety priorities for 2025-2026, mentioning the Antisocial Behaviour Action Group (ASBAG), and the Community Safety Coordinating Group's role in creating the annual action plan. The officer also talked about a recent community safety conference, attended by various partners, emphasising the importance of collaboration in shaping the action plan. The officer mentioned that she plans to meet with the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) office to align the strategy with the broader crime plan, and advised of the upcoming changes in the PREVENT programme; including new referral processes for PREVENT, adjustments to channel panels and exploration of local initiatives for community engagement.

Concerns were raised about unreported statistics related to antisocial behaviour and violence against women. Andrew Palfreyman acknowledged the lack of specific data but mentioned the presence of community engagement officers who may have insights.

The conversation shifted to the issue of fly tipping, and it was suggested that the possibility of installing CCTV cameras could help prevent that and catch offenders. Andrew Palfreyman responded positively, indicating that while camera installation would require assessment due to technical considerations, they are committed to taking action against such offenses in collaboration with the Council.

Karen Watkin highlighted the need for better engagement with volunteers regarding the data collected on families, particularly those affected by domestic abuse. She noted that a significant portion of their families are women who serve as primary caregivers, and many face challenges related to domestic violence and antisocial behaviour. They proposed organising a session to educate volunteers on the data and available support services. Andrew Palfreyman indicated that his team, including a detective inspector and sergeants, is prepared to facilitate such engagement to enhance community support and awareness. Rebecca Young suggested involving the Community Safety Officer, Jemma Duffell, who leads on initiatives related to domestic abuse.

Elizabeth Borg emphasised the importance of integrating PREVENT into adult community learning courses. The speaker highlighted that the demographic of learners typically does not include those at risk of radicalisation but stressed the necessity of making learners aware of potential risks. The speaker enquired about the specific risk levels in the Three Rivers area compared to the rest of Hertfordshire. The Community Safety & Safeguarding Manager advised that the risk in Three Rivers is extremely low, noting the absence of referrals in recent months. The discussion also touched on obtaining information regarding Watford's risks, however, the officer advised that she is not able to comment on Watford's statistics at present.

Concerns have been raised regarding the lack of proper data on hate crime incidents and the need for the public to come forward to report such crimes. The importance of understanding the different types of hate crimes being reported was also highlighted. The Partnerships and Inclusion Manager responded by referencing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) conducted for Hertfordshire that provides detailed data on hate crimes, suggesting that this information could help improve community trust and reporting mechanisms.

Action – Shivani Davé to provide the link to the Hate crime JSNA.

The assessment can be accessed here:

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/jsna/jsna-documents.aspx?searchInput=Hate%20crime&page=1&resultsPerPage=10&view=card&categoryfilters=0/1/22/285/286/287/292>

8 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER UPDATE

Phoebe Allsopp provided an update on the policing crime plan required for the PCC to publish within their first year. The final version of the plan was agreed upon at the latest PCC panel meeting, which includes five key priorities: preventing and deterring crime, strengthening local policing, protecting people from violence and exploitation, bringing offenders to justice, and improving public services. Additionally, the PCC has launched a community safety fund focused on preventing crime and violence against women and girls, with decisions on bids expected soon. A Youth Commission has also been established to gather young people's opinions on community safety, while domestic abuse prevention efforts continue through the Chrysalis Centre programme, funded for an additional year.

9 COUNTY COMMUNITY SAFETY UNIT DRUG AND ALCOHOL STRATEGY UPDATE

Michael Nadasdy provided an update, outlining the development of a new five-year drug strategy that aligns with the government's ten-year plan to address drug related issues. The strategy aims to tackle drug supply chains through robust enforcement, improve access to treatment for individuals with substance use and mental health issues, and prevent young people from engaging in substance use. The speaker talked about the importance of stakeholder consultation in service design, and the commitment to understanding the experiences of service users and their carers.

The Chair expressed his gratitude towards Debbie Stone, acknowledging her contributions, as this marked her last meeting.

CHAIR