
Policy and Resources Committee MINUTES

**Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on
Monday, 23 June 2025 from 7.30 - 10.00 pm**

Present: Councillors Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE

Oliver Cooper, Stephen Cox, Steve Drury, Vicky Edwards, Rue Grewal, Philip Hearn,
Chris Mitchell, Louise Price, Reena Ranger, Jon Tankard, Chris Whately-Smith and
Tom Smith

Also in Attendance:

Officers in Attendance:

Joanne Wagstaffe – Chief Executive
Ludmilla Iyavoo – Interim Deputy Chief Legal Officer (Litigation and Licensing)
Kimberley Grout – Associate Director, Corporate, Customer and Community (Interim
Monitoring Officer)
Marko Kalik – Head of Planning Policy and Conservation
Aaron Roberts – Senior Planning Policy Officer
Lucy Smith – Committee and Election Manager

External in Attendance:

PR124 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Chris Lloyd, for whom Chris Whately-Smith attended as a substitute, Councillor Steve Drury, for whom Councillor Tom Smith attended as a substitute.

PR224 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

PR624 REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION

Members received a verbal update on the policies included within the Regulation 18 consultation document and the implementation of amendments that had been proposed at previous Local Plan Sub Committees.

Members expressed concern with the Regulation 18 consultation being discussed in part 2 with the exclusion of the press and public and felt that the item had already been consulted on and is therefore already a matter of public record. It was noted that following the resolution of

the Local Plan Sub Committee, the restricted documents in part 2 would become public documents following the conclusion of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting.

It was noted that consultants from Edgars Limited had offered to attend the meeting virtually, but members decided against this as answers could be sought before Regulation 18 was brought to Full Council.

Members queried amendments with a focus on exemptions to householder applications as this had been discussed at a previous Local Plan Sub Committee but had not been taken forward into the report. Officers clarified that advice had been sought from the Consultants from Edgar Limited and that the suite of net zero policies had been amended to clarify that only policies C and E were relevant for householder applications. Members were reminded that there would be further chance for amendments following the consultation.

Some members felt that Policy XA should be amended to state net zero should be sought where it is technically viable to achieve and householder applications should be able to skip off setting if it would be unviable. Members noted this had not been taken forward following discussion in the previous Local Plan Sub Committee. Members also queried the affordability of a whole building approach where the planning application may just focus on a part of the building and the cost to the applicants.

Committee Members expressed concern on the cost consequences for homeowners of significantly older properties, such as properties in the Victorian era or with thatched roofs and the requirement to retrofit the entire house. Concern was also raised in respect of the policies being found sound at the examination stage. Officers clarified that advice had been sought from consultants Edgars Limited and bioregional and amendments had been taken forward from the Local Plan Sub Committee with the advice from consultants. Members were reminded that for full answers to be given to technical questions Officers would require time in advance to draft responses.

Members queried whether independent legal advice had been sought regarding the policies outlined. It was noted that expert advice had been sought through the consultants from Edgar Limited, it was further noted that advice from other councils undertaking Regulation 19 may be sought and plans would be adjusted accordingly.

Members thanked the Head of Planning Policy and Conservation and Councillor Jon Tankard for their contribution to the work on Regulation 18. The standards proposed in the policies would mean consistency throughout the district towards working to Net Zero. Councillor Mitchell proposed that the policies go to consultation.

Members debated Policy XE with focus on the requirement to have considered the environmental policy before submission of a planning application. Some Members felt that properties with a negative contribution to Conservation Areas should be defined within the respective Conservation Area Appraisal and properties that have a negative contribution to Conservation Areas should be demolished and rebuilt as there would still be a potential to have a negative contribution following retrofit. Officers clarified that it would be a political decision to decide whether demolishing and rebuilding to enhance the built environment, or the protection of the environment is more important.

The Committee debated the merits of including a policy proposing retrofitting and the refurbishment of a property over demolition, with demolition being a last resort. A feasibility assessment for demolition had been suggested. Members further raised concerns that demolition can be more harmful to the environment than a house with a minor negative contribution.

Councillor Cooper proposed an amendment;

“Buildings can be demolished where the building has been identified in a Conservation Area appraisal as making a negative contribution to that Conservation Area or otherwise does harm to a heritage asset and where demolition would reduce that harm”

The amendment was seconded by Councillor Edwards.

The amendment was put to the vote and with 4 votes in favour and 9 against, was **DEFEATED**.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and with 9 votes in favour and 4 against, it was **RESOLVED**

To approve the policy as set out in the appendices.

PR324 AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION

Members received a verbal report on the proposed amendments to the constitution. The committee heard that full council had not completed all business on the agenda for the past six years. In the past two years members had submitted over five hundred written questions with the quantity of questions rising per meeting. The time taken to for officers to draft replies to technical questions equated to 144 days of work if spread throughout the year. On most occasions reports from members on the full council agenda had not been reached due of the surplus of questions. Members discussed holding an extra Full Council meeting to focus on questions asked, however it was noted any councillor could request an extraordinary Full Council meeting however this had not been done.

Members queried whether officers or Lead Members were answering the questions to the Lead Members and Chairs of Committees. It was noted that technical questions were answered in draft by officers and approved by Lead Members, but questions of a political nature were left solely to Lead Members to respond to.

Concerns were raised that Lead Members did not respond to questions sent directly to them. Members discussed the variety of questions asked, it was noted that over 420 questions had been asked by the Conservative Group which was well in excess of the Labour Group and the Green Group. 7 of the question put forward to the Tuesday 8 July Full Council were repeat questions from February and December Full Council meetings.

The Committee discussed whether the limit to questions based on political party would be fair due to the Conservative Group having covered more wards than the other opposition parties. It was noted that the amendments were to bring consistency to all political groups.

Members expressed concern that the constitutional changes were not in keeping with other local authorities' constitutions and would have become the most restrictive in regard to questions. Some members stated their displeasure at being restricted due to other party's use of the constitutional arrangements however noted it would be appropriate to change the constitution. The abruptness of the report was queried by members and clarified that constitutional changes required approval from Full Council and had to be approved at Policy and Resources to be taken to Full Council.

Other issues faced in Full Council had been the amendments tabled in the middle of the meeting which had been proposed with no advance notice. Amendments are required to be in advance of the meeting, before 5pm however late amendments were allowed until 6pm on the day of the meeting.

Members raised the possibility of a constitution sub committee meeting to discuss ensuring the correct balance between questions, councillors and wards had been struck, however it was noted that the Constitution Sub Committee had been disbanded, and constitutional amendments would require agreement from Full Council. It was suggested an amendment to the structure of the agenda with questions to be set at the end of the agenda. Motions and other items to be moved to the top of the agenda.

Members queried the lack of debate in regard to petitions and it was clarified until a petition is presented, the subject matter is unknown to both councillors and officers and the Lead Member had responded and the procedure had always been the same. Should the petition had been included in the agenda, the petition would be debated but had the agenda not been included, the petition would not be debated as the relevant information is not known.

It was noted that members could make suggestions in conjunction with other groups to be put forward at full council.

The recommendations were proposed by Councillor Giles-Medhurst and Seconded by Councillor Price and put to the vote, with 9 votes in favour and 4 against, it was **RESOLVED** That Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Full Council to approve the constitutional amendments as set out in paragraphs 3.4.1 to 3.4.19. Petitions 18(1) be amended from Proper Officer to Monitoring Officer.

PR424 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

PR524 REGULATION 18 CONSULTATION

Members received a verbal update on the changes made to the Regulation 18 report following the Local Plan Sub Committee. Officers had begun to use a new scoring matrix with the following categories, Potentially Suitable, Some Concerns and Significant Concerns. It was noted that input from Hertfordshire Highways had not been received at present.

NCFS33: Oxhey Park Golf Centre had been put forward by the lease owner however the land was owned by Three Rivers District Council. Members had a strong view that the site is unavailable and so it should not form part of the consultation. Officers presented the option to put the site in a separate category on the report or add to the data centre with text explaining that the site was excluded from the consultation. Concerns were raised in regard to NCFS21: Land South of Scots Hill, the site was deemed Potentially Suitable however an electricity pylon was located in the northwest corner of the site as well as cables running through the site from north to south. It was agreed that this site should be listed as Some Concerns rather than Potentially Suitable.

The committee noted that following Full Council the survey was due to be published on the 14 of July however this would be dependent on any amendments proposed by Full Council. The consultation was due to last the statutory six weeks. Members were requested to raise questions before Full Council which would allow Officers to prepare responses.

Members raised concerns surrounding the number of dwellings under review and Officers clarified that the current consultation was not to decide whether to proceed or not with the sites but to collect evidence to assess suitability. If officers did not continue with the consultation, other sites and landowners could raise concerns that Three Rivers District Council had ruled them out prematurely. Officers could not rule out sites without valid planning reasons.

Use of a discounted list was debated by members and officers; it was noted that officers had and that other site specific studies such as heritage impact assessments would be undertaken on the newly submitted site and feedback sought from statutory consultees.

Councillor Cooper proposed an amendment to the report:

“That the following sites be discounted from consultation, and to be listed within the consultation solely as discounted:

NCFS1 – Chequers House, Chequers Lane

NCFS2 – Fortune Farm, High Elms Lane

NCFS3 – The Old Dairy, Chequers Lane

NCFS4 – High Elms Manor

NCFS6 – Land to the east of Watford Road
NCFS8 – Land off St Albans Lane, Bedmond
NCFS9 – Land to the north-west of Woodstock, Bedmond
NCFS10 – Great Westwood Park
NCFS11 – Grange Wood, Carpenders Park
NCFS12 – Lane East of Oxhey Lane, Carpenders Park
NCFS13 – Catlips Farm
NCFS14 – Homefield Road
NCFS17 – North Hill Farm
NCFS18 – Land to the east of Sarratt Lane
NCFS19 – Land adjacent to 60 Harthall lane
NCFS22 – Nine of Herts Golf Club and surrounding land
NCFS24 – The Island, Rickmansworth
NCFS27 – Green End Farm, Sarratt
NCFS28 – Ravenswood, Sarratt
NCFS29 – New Model Farm, Sarratt
NCFS30 – Sarratt Lodge, Sarratt Green
NCFS31 – Land to the south-east of Poles Hill
NCFS32 – Land to the south-west of Bragmans Lane
NCFS34 – Land south of Chalfont Lane (employment)
NCFS35 – Land north of Little Green Lane”

Councillor Hearn seconded the proposed amendment.

Members were reminded that the sites were not being put forward for development but for consultation on whether the sites were appropriate. Sites would be put forward for development during Regulation 19 following review of the consultation. It was discussed that Officers disregarding sites without justification would have opened the council to the risk of investigation.

The Committee debated the proposed amendment and the creation of a new category for discounted sites. Some members felt discounted was appropriate terminology. Other members raised concerns about discounting sites without having followed the consultation process and without information being received from the Green Belt Assessments and other assessments at the time.

Concerns were raised that the Council was following the new National Planning Policy Framework rather than the previous framework and some members felt that the sites listed would not have been appropriate under the previous framework.

The amendment was put to the vote and with 4 votes in favour and 9 against, was **DEFEATED**.

The substantive motion was put to the vote and with 12 votes in favour and 4 against, it was **RESOLVED**

That the Policy and Resources Committee:

- Approves and recommends to Full Council the Regulation 18 Consultation document in Appendix 1.
- Grants delegated authority to the Head of Planning Policy and Conservation in consultation with the Lead Member for the Local Plan to make any minor changes that are required prior to the documents being published for consultation.

Note: Councillor Ranger left the room at 21:28 and re-entered at 21:30.

CHAIR

