Three Rivers House
Northway
Rickmansworth
Herts WD3 1RL

Policy and Resources Committee
MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Monday, 21 July 2025 from Times Not Specified

Present: Councillors Councillor Sarah Nelmes

Oliver Cooper, Steve Drury, Vicky Edwards, Chris Lloyd, Chris Mitchell, Louise Price, Jon Tankard, Andrea Fraser, Raj Khiroya, Stephen King, Paul Rainbow and Ciaran Reed

Also in Attendance:

Officers in Attendance:

External in Attendance:

PR124 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Jon Tankard with Paul Rainbow substituting, Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE with Raj Khiroya is substituting, Reena Ranger OBE with Ciaran Reed substituting, Philip Hearn with Andrea Fraser substituting, Stephen Cox with Stephen King substituting, Rue Grewal.

PR224 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on Monday 09 June 2025 and Monday 23 June 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

PR324 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

PR424 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

PR524 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2025-2028

Members received a verbal update on the Communications Strategy The strategy outlines the role of communications, the audiences, channels, and structure of the department. It also outlines the progress made at transforming the department and its strategy since 2019, and what the next steps are for continuing what has been establish as a dramatic departure from the processes and approach that came before.

Some Members raised concerns about the political bias of the Councils Press Releases towards the administration and would welcome non administration groups being featured by the Council more frequently in particular group leaders. A Member highlighted that each other council in the County had under 3 Press releases featuring the Leader of the Council whereas the Council had released 8 Press releases featuring the Leader.

Councillor Cooper raised an amendment to the strategy to be added under ‘Vision’ on page three:

"For the sake of clarity, this Council will abide by the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Government Publicity and any other codes of practice issued under section 4 of the Local Government Act 1986 in full, whether or not this Council has been subject to a ministerial direction."

Some members felt that the Council should abide by the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Government Publicity without the requirement of ministerial direction to ensure impartiality and fairness and bring the Council in line with other councils within the county.

Councillor Cooper called for a recorded vote with Councillor Edwards and Fraser in favour.

For: Councillors Cooper, Edwards, Reed, Fraser, King, Mitchell (6)
Against: Councillors Rainbow, Price, Lloyd, Drury, Khiroya, Nelmes (6)

As the vote was tied, the Vice Chair had the casting vote and voted against causing the amendment to fall.

Councillor Cooper raised a second amendment to add under Actions regarding Objective 1 on pages 7-8

"Reduce the number of press releases issued to the median across Hertfordshire districts and boroughs, and reduce quotes attributed to the Leader and Lead Member, including quoting officers when officers' recommendations are adopted."

Some members felt that due the Council being criticised in the past for not updating the public at frequent enough level that press releases had become an important way to communicate with residents.

The amendment moved to a vote; with 4 votes in favour and 6 against with 2 abstentions, the amendment fell.

Councillor Edwards raised an amendment to add under Actions regarding Objective 1 on pages 7-8

"To expand and improve the council's website including but not limited to:

- adding a Freedom of Information disclosure log to the council's website, so that all Freedom of Information requests and responses to them are published, with information anonymised;
- expanding the number of policies and documents available and accessible on the council' website, so that all policies and frameworks can be easily found online; and
- using the Modern.gov architecture to upload decisions and the forward plan to the council's website, so councillor and the public know what is due to be proposed when."

Officers informed the committee that, with regard to Freedom of Information (FOI), the Councils Scheme of Delegation is currently available on the website. However, producing a full disclosure log would require a significant amount of officer time. It was noted that most policies and documents are available on the website with internal policies available on the intranet.

Some members noted that it is common practice for FOI responses to be published on the Council website. While compiling a disclosure log may take officer time, it could ultimately save time by reducing individual FOI requests if the public can access previously requested information online. It was also noted that the Council website only contains records going back two or three years, and that some historic policies and agendas are no longer accessible.

The amendment moved to a vote; with 4 votes in favour and 5 against with 3 abstentions, the amendment fell.

A member raised a concern over the use of “Council Language” and requested plain English be used in press releases and communicating with the public.

The Vice Chair called for a vote on the substantive motion and with 8 votes in favour and 4 against, the motion was carried.

PR624 CORPORATE COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY AND VEXATIOUS & UNREASONABLE CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Members received a verbal update detailing the Compliments and Complaints Policy and the Vexatious & Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy

The updated Compliments & Complaints Policy ensures greater clarity, consistency, and transparency in how complaints are handled across the council. It aligns with current best practice and recent changes to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) guidance, set out in the Complaint Handling Code. It aims to strengthen accountability and clarifies what constitutes a complaint versus other forms of feedback, service requests, or appeals. The policy also introduces clearer timelines, roles, and escalation routes, improving the customer experience and supporting early resolution.

The Vexatious & Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy replaces the Vexatious & Unreasonable Complaints Policy clarifying the scope of the policy to cover all customer contact not just complaints. It sets out a fair and proportionate approach to managing customer interactions that are persistent, abusive, or disproportionate, which can undermine effective service delivery and impact staff wellbeing.

The proposal was moved by Councillor Mitchell, seconded by Councillor Nelmes and agreed by general assent.

PR724 DRAFT RICKMANSWORTH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Members received a verbal update on the Draft Rickmansworth Conservation Area Appraisal highlighting that the Appraisal was due to go to out to consultation for 6 weeks.

Councillor Andrea Fraser proposed an amendment to amend the proposed Conservation Area statement to:

“Include the areas of the north-eastern end of the High Street, including the Cloisters, and the southern end of Church Street that have proposed for removal from the Conservation Area, and to add an appraisal of those areas, including whether

individual buildings in those areas so re-added make a positive, neutral, or negative contribution."

Some members expressed concerns about removing less attractive buildings, noting that retaining them offers greater control over visually significant gateway areas. The Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan was noted for its emphasis on maintaining town gateways. Officers clarified that while there had been a suggestion to remove The Cloisters, it remains included as a character area for now. Other buildings were proposed for removal due to their lack of historic significance and neutral contribution to the conservation area.

Other members supported the amendment but raised concerns about misinterpretation of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and emphasised that the section includes consider of special characteristics, not solely historical value. Some members felt that the removal of buildings at major gateways like the High Street/Park Road junction, would be unjust as the buildings have a neutral contribution rather than negative and do not dilute the conservation area.

Officers clarified that consultants initially recommended excluding certain spaces but discussions led to their inclusion in the current consultation draft. Consultants believed retaining neutral contributing sites at the edges of the Conservation Area weakened then overall significance but acknowledged that including them would not significantly harm the plan.

A listed building south of the canal (Batchworth Bridge Listing 1100875) not being included within the conservation area. Officers confirmed that as a listed building, the site receives stronger protection than the conservation area plan could offer.

The timing of the public consultation occurring during the holiday period was noted and a suggestion to defer the consultation to December when community engagement would be higher was raised.

The amendment was put to the vote and with 9 votes For, 1 vote Against and 1 Abstention the amendment was carried.

The Vice Chair called for a vote on the substantive motion and was carried by general assent.

PR824 DATA MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Members received a covering report which set out the various policies to be updated. The updated documents aim to ensure compliance with legal obligations, enhance transparency and protect the rights of individuals regarding their personal data.

- Data Protection Policy (update to existing policy)
- Privacy Policy (new)
- Subject Access Request (SAR) Policy (previously contained within the Data Protection Policy)

- Freedom of Information (FOIA) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR) Policy (replaces current FOIA guidance for staff)
- Data Retention Policy (update to existing policy)
- Special Category Personal Data and Criminal Offence Data Policy (new)

Councillor cooper raised an amendment to add under 13. Data Sharing and Transfers on page 8 of the Data Protection Policy:

“In accordance with the Information Commissioner Office's "Guide to International Transfers" dated 29th May 2025 and the EDPS "Guidelines 05/2021 on the Interplay between the application of Article 3 and the provisions on international transfers as per Chapter V of the GDPR" dated 14th February 2023, use of a device by an employee or councillor outside the UK will not be considered a transfer under this or any other council policy, and they shall therefore not be prohibited from accessing or require prior notification or approval to access their emails.”

Officers clarified that while data transfer outside of the UK is not prohibited, all listed policies require adequate safeguards when transferring data internationally. Each request for international access is reviewed on its own merits, considering data protection laws and cyber security risks in the destination country. Notably, Australia is no longer on the approved list due to GDPR considerations. Officers further noted that the IT policy on working abroad builds on an existing policy and is not part of this current data set. Reviews include legal compliance and cyber security implications.

Some members felt that although the EU adequacy framework is understood, councillor access to emails while abroad had been inconsistently applied. Members felt that accessing council emails while overseas via a secure device should not always constitute a formal data transfer and denials of access have occurred without full consideration. Officers clarified that past rejections were appealed and subsequently reviewed, affirming that each case is assessed individually, with cybersecurity risk as a primary concern.

Officers noted that councillors should not correspond with officers via personal email accounts and highlighted that all systems must pass an annual security inspection. It was clarified that verbal communication via phone call while abroad was allowed.

The amendment moved to a vote; with 4 votes in favour and 5 against with 3 abstentions, the amendment fell.

The Vice Chair called for a vote on the substantive motion and was carried by general assent.

PR924 PARKING SERVICES AND PARKING ACCOUNT UPDATE INCLUDING THE PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE PARKING ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT

Members were updated on the Parling Services situation, it was noted that the update seeks an extension to parking services for another 3 years in light of Local Government Reorganisation.

A member requested confirmation that the objective of the review is not to generate a surplus or profit from motorists. Officers clarified that the council is significantly below a surplus and reminded the group of the legal requirement to reinvest any surplus from parking into transportation related services.

Some members felt that generating a surplus cannot be the aim of any parking policy or fee structure, it was stated that setting fees to intentionally make a surplus would be unlawful and suggested all references implying this objective be removed. Officers responded that the parking account is currently in a significant deficit. Any surplus would be incidental, not intentional. Officers agreed to rephrase the wording to reflect that the primary objective of the review is to manage the parking account appropriately.

Members queried the high costs associated with Civil Enforcement Officers and supervisors. Concerns were raised that as the issuing of PCNs declines due to motorists becoming more aware and compliant there would be less need for Civil Enforcement Officers. Another concern raised included whether contracts allowed for cost adjustments if fewer officers were required. Clarification was also sought on third-party payments, particularly if they include consultant fees or infrastructure improvement.

Officers clarified that the current service includes 4 Civil Enforcement Officers and 1 Supervisor, with an overall service supervisor included in the new reported cost of £40,000. Third party payments reflect both the cost of the service delivery and the contractual agreement with the provider. A new piece of work is underway to assess the capacity of current schemes, eligibility for additional spaces, and potential improvements, particularly in Rickmansworth. The paring review will include recommendations on tariffs and will be presented to the committee in due course. Officers emphasised that PCN issuance should be focused on education and compliance.

The proposal was moved by Councillor Nelmes, seconded by Councillor Drury and put to the vote. With 8 votes For and 4 Against, the substantive item was carried.

PR1024 LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

To agree that this in a fit state now to be presented to county

LCWIP is a strategic approach to planning, improve routes for people, walking cycling or wheeling or other modes of transport, can apply for national funding, project run jointly, following adoption goes to HCC for adoption, any changes will be have to undertake a feasibility study. document has been amended on the public consultation, routes have been updated, revisions have been approved by committee in November 2024.

Councillor Chris Mitchell proposed an amendment to the LCWIP, Seconded by Councillor Nelmes

“The final feasibility for route 2 to include consideration of using quieter roads and a full local consultation”

Some members emphasized that consistent and careful wording would be helpful throughout the document. And felt it was legitimate to add a comment that the finer details will be addressed at a later stage.

Officers stated that every route would be part of a future feasibility study, and the routes must align with the guidance within the LCWIP, especially the principle of directness. It may not be possible to consider every alternative route but any consultation during the feasibility stage will be open to all. Officers suggested a caveat to the amendment that officers proceed with careful wording as these routes have been consulted on with the public already, they have already gone through a heavy inspection.

Some members sought clarification on whether the technical work carried out by Hertfordshire County Council, beyond just the design stage, would also be subject to consultation, particularly on roads that have already been consulted on. Officers responded that the LCWIP is a dynamic evolving policy that is reviewed every 4 to 5 years, major changes to routes should not be made solely during the feasibility stage without further public consultation. Small amendments however could be accommodated within the feasibility study.

Officers further clarified that the document outlines priority routes which have already undergone multiple review stages, these routes are intended to provide the most direct paths from point A to B. A detailed feasibility study will still be undertaken but fundamental changes to routes are not anticipated at this stage.

With the amendment to the amendment to apply to all areas of the LCWIP not just Route 2. The amendment was put to the vote and carried by general assent.

A concern was raised by Councillor Edwards regarding the suitability of the proposed route for a priority cycle route W17. Some members were unhappy to designate the route as a priority due to the potential consequences. Which included the implementation of cycling interventions could result in either a one way system or a dedicated cycling route which could lead to bottlenecks, slower car journeys and discourage pedestrians. With this in mind Councillor Edwards raised an amendment to the LCWIP, seconded by Councillor Cooper.

“To remove route W17 from the LCWIP.”

Officers clarified that if the route was removed from the plan now, it would not proceed to the feasibility study, meaning there would be no opportunity to address the concerns. There is no current proposal for a one way system with Three Rivers on this route. If the route were removed, the council would lose leverage for securing developer contributions which are essential for funding and developing cycling infrastructure. Without an approved route, there is no design phase and without design, there is no justification to seek developer funding.

Officers further noted that the Route W17 had not objections lodged against it. The route was also a key connector between Watford and Dacorum.

Some members felt that developer contributions needed more scrutiny. Concerns had been raised about developers using the cycle route as a material consideration in

planning application. It was argued that this could be harmful to the area and not in the public interest, even if perceived as a benefit.

The amendment was put to the vote and with 4 votes For, 7 Against and 1 Abstention, the amendment fell.

Councillor Reed proposed an amendment to the LCWIP, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“To remove routes 8 and 14 from the LCWIP

Concerns were raised for both Route 8 and 14, with route 8 received 96 comments against following consultation and 101 against route 14. There had been developments in the area since the initial consultation, and the conversations currently happening were disconnected from the prior discussions with the public.

Further concerns were raised by some members in regard to Route 8 having significant issues, particularly with a narrower section where cycling provisions would overlap with pedestrian pathways. The concern was raised that this could result in a de facto closure of the pavement which is not supported as it would limit pedestrian access. Concerns were also raised about narrowing lanes in sections of the roads that frequently accommodate large vehicles which would not be feasible. The lack of subsequent public consultation was highlighted; there has been no return to the community for updated feedback after the original consultation.

Issues were raised with Route 14, particularly school access and being a part of the local plan with substantial development scheduled. The route also passed through a quiet lane with limited traffic and there was concern that restricting this road would restrict access to leisure facilities and schools.

Other members expressed strong disagreement with removing the routes, emphasising that removing the routes would prevent scrutiny and further feasibility study and limite the possibility of finding workable solutions. The Parish Council and residents’ association had previously supported the extension of one of the routes. It was noted that objections to the routes may have been influenced by local political campaigns.

A further concern was raised in regard to developer planning gain, as developers may claim planning gain if the routes are included in the LCWIP and secure funding however if the routes are removed, the developer obligations or contributions related to the routes would be lost, which could result in missed opportunities for the development of infrastructure.

Councillor Reed called for a recorded vote with Councillor Cooper and Edwards in favour. The amendment was put to the vote:

For: Councillors Cooper, Edwards, Reed and Fraser

Against: Councillors Rainbow, Price, Lloyd, Drury, Khiroya and Nelmes

Abstain: Councillors King and Mitchell

With 4 votes for, 6 against and 2 abstentions, the amendment fell.

Councillor Fraser raised an additional amendment to the LCWIP, seconded by Councillor Cooper:

“To remove the part of route 2 between the High Street and Solomon’s Hill from the LCWIP.”

Some members expressed concern on the feasibility of amending Route 2 due to the unstable nature of the path including stairs and steep drops which cannot be expanded upon.

The amendment was put to the vote with 4 votes For, 6 Against and 2 Abstentions, the amendment fell.

Councillor Edwards raised a further amendment to the LCWIP, seconded by Councillor Cooper

“To add to the LCWIP a new Priority Walking Area in Abbots Langley, including pedestrian improvements that would not affect vehicular traffic at:

- Tibbs Hill Road, including but not limited to a signalised crossing

- Tibbs Hill Road to Bedmond

- Existing footpaths connecting Tibbs Hill Road to Langley Road, Marlin Square, and the Crescent

- The Crescent and Breakspeare Close, connecting these existing footpaths to Abbots Langley High Street

- Langley Road and the existing footpaths to Wadham Road and Berkeley Close via Trowley Rise

- Abbots Langley High Street, including but not limited to pavement improvements from Hannover Gardens and Breakspeare Place to the village centre, and a pedestrian crossing near Vine House

- Gallows Hill Lane, including but not limited to improvements to bench provision

- Gallows Hill to Station Road, replacing or in addition to footpath under the railway arch

For illustrative purposes, this would cover:

Typical interventions would include:

- Increasing the width of footways

- Public realm improvements, including:

o Prioritised repairs to footways

o Insetting of footpaths away from roads

o Continuous level footways

o Raised tables

- Provision of high-quality street furniture and provision of benches

- Improving of pedestrian facilities at traffic signal junctions, including:

o Additional pedestrian crossings

o Reduction in crossing distances

o Adding pedestrian railings

o Changing ‘staggered’ to ‘straight across’ pedestrian crossings.

- Street lighting improvements

- Decluttering and maintenance

- Dropped kerbs and tactile paving.

- Wayfinding

- Measures to assist with access to/by other modes – i.e. bus stops, stations, disabled parking.”

Some members noted the positives of the LCWIP such as the encouragement of pedestrians within the district, particularly in Carpenders Park and Chorleywood. However it was noted that a priority walking route for Abbotts Langley had not been drafted, which could be a missed opportunity.

Members were reminded that the LCWIP at its current stage had gone through numerous rounds of scrutiny and any substantial amendments may have to be assessed as a review once the plan had been made but work to routes within Abbotts Langley could be undertaken separately to the LCWIP.

Councillor Edwards called for a recorded vote which was supported by Councillors Cooper and Fraser.

For: Councillors Cooper, Edwards, Reed and Fraser

Against: Councillors Rainbow, Price, Lloyd, Drury, Khiroya and Nelmes

Abstain: Councillors King and Mitchell

With the amendment put to the vote with 4 votes For, 6 Against and 2 Abstentions the amendment fell.

The Vice-Chair called for a vote on the substantive motion, seconded by Councillor Price, with 8 votes For and 4 votes Against, the substantive motion was carried.

PR1124 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Members received a verbal report surrounding undertaking a Community Governance Review aiming to parish the two unparished areas within the district.

Some members opposed the timing of the review. Government advice had been that Parish and Community Governance Reviews should not proceed in the context of potential Local Government Reorganisation. A member questioned the rationale behind initiating this process

now, particularly when a prior substantive CGR had included a referendum whereas this does not. Officers noted that the Terms of Reference include the provisions for public consultation.

Officers clarified that the review had been brought forward to clarify governance arrangements across the district, especially given the likely coexistence of parished and unparished areas under any new authority. It was emphasised that this is not an attempt to circumvent LGR, but rather to create consistency and local accountability.
Members raised a concern about unparished areas with significant assets, asking whether these would be disadvantaged in the redistribution of assets if a new governance structure is implemented. Officers clarified that this review would not be about asset transfer but rather about ensuring local representation and influence over community matters.

The Vice Chair moved to a vote to not undertake the CGR at this time but to keep the door open. With 10 votes For, 1 vote Against and 1 Abstention, the recommendations fell.

CHAIR