

Questions from Members 21/10/2025

First choice questions

	To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Cheryl Stungo
1	<p>I'm pleased that District and Parish Councils are collaborating on the former Red Cross site. However, there has been slippage in the programme, and the shortage of community space is already evident, with TRDC struggling to book November LAF dates.</p> <p>Could the Council provide an update on the final negotiations for the Parish Council's community space rent, ensuring best value for tax payers and a genuine "Community" rate, and outline the plan and timetable going forward so residents can be fully informed?</p>
	<p>The final pre-submission plans for the former Red Cross site have now been shared with the Parish Council to confirm that the ground floor layout meets their requirements. The Architects are completing the necessary reports ahead of the intended submission of a planning application later this month.</p> <p>On the lease arrangements, cost estimates from Watford Community Housing's contractor have been sent to our valuers, to establish a fair commercial rent. This will form the basis for seeking and reaching an agreement with the Parish Council, ensuring best value for taxpayers.</p> <p>A report will be brought to Full Council in December to seek authorisation for the lease to Croxley Green Parish Council, the transfer of the asset into the Joint Venture company, and the release of investment in affordable housing to deliver 8 new homes.</p> <p>Periodic updates are provided on the Council's website to ensure that local residents are aware of the various stages and progress of this matter.</p>
	To the Lead Member of Resources, Regeneration and Economic Development from Councillor Ian Morris
2	<p>Will you establish a landlord–business–council partnership for the privately-owned Delta Gain local centre by 31 January 2026, bringing in the freeholder/agent, ward members and the Residents Association and publish an action plan by 31 March 2026 covering:</p> <p>(a) owner-led commitments on maintenance, lighting/security and refuse storage.</p> <p>(b) council actions on the adopted highway/public realm (signage, bins, planters, deep-clean/jet-wash); and</p> <p>(c) an escalation route, including proportionate use of section 215 "untidy land/buildings" powers where warranted?</p>
	<p>There is no programme or works currently identified for this location and no identified budget to commit to such works. Officers did attempt to work with the freeholder for a capital improvement scheme in this location between 2017</p>

	<p>and 2020 but following development of a scheme and public consultation the freeholder was not willing to engage and the project was abandoned in 2021.</p> <p>Any requests for specific infrastructure improvements on Council owned land can be made to the transport and projects team to consider, or alternatively to Hertfordshire County Council if they are on the public highway. If formal reports are made of untidy land/buildings to the planning enforcement team Officers can investigate under their relevant powers which includes S215 Notices.</p> <p>In terms of Community Safety a CCTV camera has recently been installed at Delta Gain and Officers are monitoring with partners.</p>
	<p>To the Lead Member of Resources, Regeneration and Economic Development from Councillor Joan King</p>
3	<p>Can the Lead Member advise what progress is being made upon installing a disabled toilet near the Penn Chamber on the first floor of Three Rivers House?</p>
	<p>Officers have been progressing this request, though it has presented a number of practical challenges, particularly with the plumbing requirements. Several options were explored, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Repurposing one of the smaller meeting rooms – however, this was not progressed due to the need to retain private spaces in an open-plan working environment. (b) Converting the Members’ kitchen – this area was recently refurbished and the option would result in the loss of a paid refreshment service, which currently generates income. (c) Adapting the Members’ office – access to the necessary soil pipe proved difficult, and the required partitioning would significantly reduce the usable space. (d) Modifying the existing ladies’ toilet on the first-floor – this would involve removing two cubicles. To mitigate the impact, the current men’s toilet would be adapted to provide two unisex cubicles, resulting in the loss of two urinals. <p>After careful consideration and consultation with contractors, officers have identified that adapting the existing ladies’ toilet is the most viable and cost-effective solution. This approach ensures compliance with accessibility standards and meets the needs of the request, while balancing the practical constraints of the building.</p> <p>Officers have worked closely with contractors to ensure procurement rules are followed. The same company undertaking toilet refurbishments in the East Wing (Police/CAB area) will also carry out this work, enabling cost savings through coordinated delivery.</p> <p>Final designs have now been completed, and officers are currently awaiting confirmation of the installation date. The date of the planned installation will be communicated to Councillor Joan King as soon as it is confirmed.</p>

	To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Vicky Edwards
4	<p>I note the advice that the council commissioned to support its new higher-growth Local Plan uses the exact same argument to argue against allocating green belt sites – such as north of Abbots Road and Catlips Farm – as the council relied upon to argue that the data centre site in Abbots Langley was not Grey Belt.</p> <p>The council's consultant's argument in the data centre appeal was that Abbots Langley is part of the built-up area of Watford and, as such, the data centre site contributed to green belt purpose (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas.</p> <p>However, this argument was not accepted by the Planning Inspector, who ruled that the site's containment by the M25 means it is Grey Belt. This argument is now being made again by the council: requiring the Council to persuade the Planning Inspector that the data centre decision was wrong. When the foolishness of trying to make the exact same argument again to the same body under the same rules and expecting a different result was raised at the Local Plan Sub-Committee, it was admitted that the council did not even know if its Green Belt Review consultant had considered the data centre case. Can the council guarantee that the Planning Inspector will not require that such sites should be allocated at Examination, or that the Local Plan will not be thrown out on this basis, exposing all our Green Belt to development?</p> <p>The Inspector decision relating to the data centre was based on the specifics of a single planning application. It does not mean that every site adjacent to a motorway is automatically grey belt, and that similar arguments cannot be made by the council in other locations where specific details may differ. Each planning application must be considered on its own merits as should each potential site allocation.</p> <p>The sites north of Abbots Road and Catlips Farm are unrelated sites to the data centre and should therefore be considered on their own merits. It should also be noted that Green Belt policy is not the only consideration when considering whether sites should be allocated in the local plan. It is inconsequential whether a site is grey belt if it is in an unsustainable location, or if acceptable access cannot be demonstrated. When it comes to plan making and site allocations there is a sequential test set out in national policy. The council should consider previously developed land, then undeveloped grey belt then the remaining Green Belt. As such, when it comes to plan making we will need to consider all our Green Belt sites and how they perform against the fundamentally undermine test.</p> <p>The Green Belt Review is a strategic document that forms part of the evidence for the Local Plan, it can also be used to aid decision making. The strategic nature of the review means that there may be cases where a site that only makes up part of a strategic green belt parcel may be grey belt when assessed on a more granular level than the wider parcel.</p>

Second choice questions

	To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Chris Mitchell
5	<p>Local Government Reform will affect all of Three Rivers, including parish and community councils, which play a vital role in managing local assets. For example, Croxley Green Parish Council already maintains The Green in Croxley Green under a peppercorn contract, showing how parish-level management can be effective but also highlighting the need for clarity and accountability.</p> <p>Will the Council commit to proactive and meaningful discussions with parish and community councils to identify which assets and responsibilities might best transfer under the new arrangements, ensuring clear accountability and that residents' spaces and services continue to be properly cared for?</p>
	<p>As I have told the Parish Councils at my regular events and at the recent engagement on Local Government Reform, TRDC cannot commit to transfer asset responsibilities that will be transferred to a unitary council. Indeed the government has made that clear we will not be permitted to do so.</p> <p>Should LGR happen and shadow authority elected I would assume at this stage the Parishes could make such applications and will be considered accordingly.</p>
	To the Lead Member for Leisure from Councillor Rue Grewal
6	<p>Will you commit to a 12-week youth provision pilot in Carpenders Park starting February 2026, with one weekly evening session plus targeted outreach near the Delta Gain parade and school pick-up times; and will you meet me and the Residents Association by 31 January 2026 to agree the delivery model, partners, safeguarding and success measures?</p>
	<p>There is currently no TRDC budget provision for such a pilot nor available officer resource capacity to deliver one in such a time scale. In addition, Youth Provision is the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council through their Services for Youth Provision – they would be responsible for carrying out any outreach or project based work. There is an evening Youth Service operated by HCC from the nearby South Oxhey Leisure Centre.</p>
	To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Stephen Cox
7	<p>Can the Lead Member advise on planned repairs to existing parking bays following requests from South Oxhey's councillors and it is Labour and not Reform that has pushed for this?</p>
	<p>Thank you for the question and yes I am aware that you and other South Oxhey Councillors have been pressing for work. Through site survey work repairs to existing parking bays in South Oxhey have been identified. These sites are at the Little Oxhey Lane junction/Bramshaw Gardens and existing</p>

	bays outside 8 and 16 Heysham Drive. Works are due to commence in November 2025.
	To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Oliver Cooper
8	<p>The latest Lib Dem leaflet in Abbots Langley says the Government ‘told’ Three Rivers not to submit its Local Plan if it had housebuilding target below the new national targets. This was followed in February by the council voting to accept its ‘Local Housing Need’ is 832 a year, or 13,312 over the next 16 years. Will the Leader confirm that if the low-growth Local Plan had been submitted before 12th March 2025 instead of being aborted, it would not have had to abide by those targets and did not have to review or remove Green Belt protections from any of the district?</p>
	<p>The Local Housing Need figure is calculated by the government’s standard methodology. This is not set by council and does not need to be agreed by the council. There was no vote in Council agreeing the housing targets. Indeed the 7 January Council meeting by its decision rejected the 13,312 housing target by agreeing a motion seeking extra evidence to reject it. I note you and your group voted against getting this evidence which has now proved a good case for protecting areas of Green Belt.</p> <p>In February, the council agreed to publish the Local Housing Needs Assessment, a technical piece of evidence work prepared by independent consultants. This was a South-West Hertfordshire joint study, a previous version of which was successfully scrutinised at examination for Watford Borough Council and forms part of the evidence for both Dacorum and St Albans’ Local Plans. Both of which are currently at examination.</p> <p>The question regarding the low-growth plan has been asked on numerous occasions, and the answer remains the same. Had it been submitted by the 12 March the clear professional officer advice was it was extremely unlikely to have been successful at examination and indeed may have been rejected prior to examination falling so far short of the housing target and having no evidence to support that. It would have left the council in a worse position, having spent hundreds of thousands of pounds of taxpayers’ money to go through an unsuccessful examination process. Once rejected the Council would then have been required to submit a plan for the full 13,312 homes and would then have missed the December 2026 deadline for submitting local plans under the current system, therefore having to start again under the new time, wasting more time and money.</p> <p>It is completely unrealistic to claim that no Green Belt protections would have had to have been removed. That is not the case, there was 0% chance of a plan being successful that didn’t release any Green Belt land. It is also an inaccurate statement as the low-growth version of the plan did propose releasing land from the Green Belt. Indeed, the proposal from yourself, and the Low Growth Plan, at the time for a lower number actually included the release of Green Belt land but I note you have declined to tell the public that.</p>

Third choice questions

	To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Narinder Sian
9	<p>Three Rivers Committed to supporting public EV charging points in council car parks and on street areas. New points were agreed for Community Way car park in Croxley Green, but residents are increasingly frustrated by delays.</p> <p>Could the Council confirm when these charging points will be installed and provide an update on the wider rollout of EV charging across the district to support residents' transition to cleaner transport?</p>
	<p>Community Way car park has been identified as part of the current EV Charging project but there is further work taking place with the Charge Point Operator and its partners to establish a grid connection. Officers expect this work to conclude by the end of the year.</p> <p>Across the district, the district council continues to deliver Electric Vehicle infrastructure in our car parks with five car park sites completed and a further four sites, including Community Way, in progress. The Hertfordshire LEVI project, which focuses on delivering on-street charging points, is currently undergoing tender evaluation with delivery expected to start in 2026.</p>
	To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Rue Grewal
10	<p>Will you lead a joint Highways and Parking Safety Review for Carpenders Park with Hertfordshire County Council, including a ward walkabout with HCC engineers and police by 31st December 2025 and publish by 1st February 2026 a list of agreed "quick wins" and delivery dates covering: pedestrian crossing options around Delta Gain, refreshed road markings/signage, dropped kerbs and tactile paving, targeted parking controls/enforcement, speed-monitoring (SID) placement, and school-route safety; and will you support me to secure HCC funding (for example via the Highways Locality Budget) and use District tools (for example Community Infrastructure Levy for small public-realm items) to deliver the package?</p>
	<p>I do understand the concerns raised but road safety is the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council as the Transport Authority. Parking is delegated to District Councils through an Agency Agreement, but this delegation is for the management of parking demand. District Council schemes, identified through the Parking Management Programme, may identify safety concerns arising from parking but specific parking safety concerns should be addressed by Hertfordshire County Council.</p> <p>You are right to identify that the local county councillor not only has a local highways budget to use for surveys and actions but a direct access to the county councils road safety teams to address concerns.</p>

	<p>Notwithstanding the above, as part of the South Oxhey redevelopment proposals, it has been agreed to undertake a post development parking review to reassess the same streets and areas which were located within a 500m perimeter of the South Oxhey Central development in order to understand current parking demands. This area includes part of Carpenders Park around the station. This study is expected to commence later this year and its findings will inform future work.</p> <p>Of course if the County Council were to come up with suggestions for measures that TRDC could assist with we would be happy to work with them on this.</p>
	To the Lead Member for General Public Services from Councillor Stephen Cox
11	Can the Lead Member provide an update on the planned move of the rubbish bins to Henbury Way to enable bins from Erskine House and Filton House to be emptied more easily?
	Planning permission has recently been granted for a new bin store at Erskine House (planning reference 25/ 0418/FUL). Officers are in correspondence with Thrive regarding the proposed development and are seeking an update on their timescales for implementation. Officers are keen to progress the changes to bin arrangements to improve management of the refuse collection as soon as possible.
	To the Leader of the Council from Councillor Ciaran Reed
12	Will the Lead Member confirm that the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan is a material consideration for planning applications, and that contributions towards improvements on those routes, including identified improvements, would have to be considered to be material benefits of applications?
	The presence of an LCWIP could be a material consideration in the assessment of planning applications. Increased weight will be given to an adopted LCWIP (HCC are still to confirm adoption of the Plan). Any monetary contributions for cycling and walking improvements to facilitate the delivery and implementation of active and sustainable travel networks, and which meet the relevant S106 regulations, would be a material consideration which would be a positive benefit assessed as part of a relevant planning application.

