

Full Council

Barton Way Redevelopment Project

9 December 2025

FULL COUNCIL

PART I

BARTON WAY, CROXLEY GREEN – REDEVELOPMENT PROJECT

(DoF)

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report seeks the endorsement of Full Council to approve the redevelopment of the former British Red Cross (BRC) building situated at Barton Way in Croxley Green.
- 1.2 This proposal seeks approval to demolish the existing building, transfer the site to Three Rivers Homes Limited (TRHL) and construct a 3-storey property which provides 8no. affordable homes, and grants a lease of the ground floor community meeting space and offices to Croxley Green Parish Council (CGPC).
- 1.3 To support the development viability of this scheme, Officers are also seeking approval to the commitment of £1m of s.106 'off-site' affordable housing funding which the Council has collected from other development schemes in accordance with planning policy.
- 1.3.1 The proposed scheme will provide much needed new, affordable homes and will be offered to eligible people with a live application on the council's Housing Register. In addition, the scheme will provide a new administrative office for CGPC and a community space for use by local residents and community groups.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that Full Council:
 - 2.1.1 Endorse the removal of the Asset of Community Value (ACV) status from the site;
 - 2.1.2 Approve the transfer of the former British Red Cross building and site to Three Rivers Homes Limited, to facilitate the redevelopment of the site;
 - 2.1.3 Agree to the contribution of £1m (one million pounds) in s.106 affordable housing funding from the commuted affordable homes pot to be committed towards this development;
 - 2.1.4 Authorise the grant of a lease of the ground floor of the new development to Croxley Green Parish Council. The exact length of lease and rental levels are to be agreed between the parties.
 - 2.1.5 Delegates any variations or amendments in connection with recommendations 2.1.1 to 2.1.4 (inclusive) as may be necessary to the Chief Executive and Director of Finance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Resources, Infrastructure and Economic Development.

Report prepared by: Justin Wingfield, Head of Property Services & Major Projects

3 Summary

- 3.1 The former British Red Cross (BRC) building is located at the junction of Barton Way and Community Way in Croxley Green. It occupies a prominent village-centre location and is adjacent to the library. A plan of the site is included at **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2 The building was constructed in 1965 and was occupied by the BRC under lease until November 2024. Funding from the building came from the former Rickmansworth Urban District Council and Hertfordshire County Council. A local community scheme raised funds for the fitting out of the building. The use of the hall by community groups was in terminal decline and after the Covid pandemic BRC cease all community rentals leaving only the Welcome Club, as a recognised user within the original lease as the sole user of the community space normally for one afternoon a week. As a condition of the surrender of the lease back the BRC made alternative arrangements for the Welcome Club.
- 3.3 Following the departure of the BRC, the Council permitted the Welcome Club to temporarily store equipment until February 2025, at which point the premises became vacant. The site has long been identified as suitable for housing redevelopment, and it is fair to say that public opinion has not always been supportive of such proposals. Initially Croxley Green Parish Council expressed an interest in purchasing the building and refurbishing it for their use.
- 3.4 Following discussions with Officers, the Leader of the Council presented a proposal to Croxley Green Parish Council in October 2024, with the idea that the Parish Council could occupy the whole of the ground floor, with part used as the Parish Council's Offices and part being used as community space, operated by the CGPC, with housing on the upper floors. CGPC expressed support for this option, with the Parish Chairman describing such an option as a "*Win, win*" for the area. The proposal was endorsed at the Full Parish Council meeting of 21 November 2024.
- 3.5 In order to determine the communities' view on such a proposal, an initial residents meeting hosted by the Croxley Green Residents Association took place on 11 December 2024 where the Council Leader and Parish Chair jointly presented the proposal to residents with outline designs. The residents present positively supported this approach and it was decided to develop a scheme that would satisfy the needs of the community and the respective Councils' ambitions.
- 3.6 A formal public engagement event was held at Croxley Green Library on 14 July 2025, and this preceded a two-week exhibition held in the Parish Council's offices. Officers are pleased to report that public opinion regarding the proposed development was generally positive and the exercise helped to dispel many myths and rumours that had been circulated about the Council's plans.
- 3.7 Utilising the feedback from the public, the Parish Council and other stakeholders, the proposals, have been tailored to meet local needs. It is proposed to lease the entire ground floor to Croxley Green Parish Council (CGPC), including a community hall, with kitchen facilities and a new Parish Council Office. On the first and second floors, 8no. affordable flats will be constructed with their own independent access and parking provisions. A copy of the plans as submitted with the recent Planning Application can be found at **Appendix 2**.

- 3.7.1 The proposals for the site involve satisfying a number of key requirements which are reliant on Full Council approval. The following section of the report sets out these requirements in further detail.

4 Key Requirements

- 4.1 Asset of Community Value – The former Red Cross building is currently listed as an Asset of Community Value¹. This essentially means that when the owner intends to dispose of the site, they must first notify the nominating party, in this instance, CGPC are the nominating party. Officers understand that CGPC are unlikely to exercise the option to invoke a moratorium period, as they will not want to delay to the process, however such decision will need to be taken by their Full Council, when the ACV process is triggered.
- 4.2 Triggering the ACV process, effectively provides the nominating party with an initial 6-week moratorium period in which to consider whether they wish to submit an offer. If they decide to submit an offer, they can then request a further 6 months moratorium to prepare their bid. It should be noted however, that even if a bid is submitted by the nominating party, the seller is not obliged to accept the offer.
- 4.3 The Council could decide that it would prefer to demolish the premises before it transfers the site to Three Rivers Homes Limited. This would not remove the ACV listing from the site, but the allocation can be removed after the nominated premises have been demolished.
- 4.4 The Council would prefer to agree with the Parish Council that they decline to express an interest in acquiring the property, as this will help to avoid delays and enable the scheme to move forward much more quickly. Officers will continue to work with CGPC to ensure that the project's progress is not unduly delayed.
- 4.5 Property Transfer –The Council plans to transfer the asset to Three Rivers Homes Limited. When doing so, TRDC is duty bound to consider 'best value' criteria, this is to ensure that the asset is not being disposed of at an undervalue.
- 4.6 To support the decision-making process the Council has obtained an independent valuation to establish several valuation bases, which include the market rent of the completed ground floor, the value of the scheme with policy-compliant affordable housing, and also as planned, with 100% affordable housing. These valuation bases demonstrate the viability of the scheme.
- 4.7 The key valuation basis for the proposed transfer is the market value of the existing asset with an approved planning permission for the proposed development, this establishes the benchmark for the value of the asset being transferred into the joint venture. The Valuer has confirmed that the site, based upon the proposed development, currently has a negative value. This means the land will need to be transferred at 'nil' value, to support the viability of the proposed scheme.
- 4.8 From the extensive preparatory work leading to the submission of the planning application, it is clear that the development viability of the scheme is marginal, this is largely due to the voluntary option to pursue a 100% affordable housing allocation for the development, rather than just the minimal policy compliant approach, the value is further influenced by the provision of the community and

¹ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a797ea4e5274a6846909fcd/Community_Right_to_Bid_-_Non-statutory_advice_note_for_local_authorities.pdf

office uses on the ground floor, where previously 50% of the ground floor was earmarked for additional residential units.

- 4.9 The valuation does confirm that the finished scheme will indeed have a positive capital value, but the addition of external funding is key to the viability of this project.
- 4.10 Affordable Housing (s.106) Contribution – As Members may be aware, the Council's planning policy requires developers to provide affordable housing provision on all residential development sites where there is a net gain of at least one or more dwelling; however, for smaller schemes of between one and nine dwellings, the Council may accept a commuted (financial) payment in lieu of on-site affordable housing. These commuted sums are ring-fenced and used exclusively to deliver or facilitate affordable housing elsewhere in the district, which may include supporting Registered Providers, offering grants or loans, acquiring land, or directly delivering new affordable homes.
- 4.11 It is proposed that £1m (one million pounds) of retained s.106 commuted funding is committed to the development of the Barton Way scheme to support the delivery of 8no. affordable homes, which will be offered as 'general needs' housing via the council's Housing Register.
- 4.12 If the Council fails to commit these commuted sums in a reasonable period, developers can in fact recover their contributions. It is therefore prudent to ensure that the commuted sums proposed are used for the benefit of local residents.
- 4.13 Grant of lease to CGPC – As outlined in Section 3, the site's redevelopment has been contentious in the past. The Parish Council has consistently advocated for keeping a community use on the former Red Cross site, and after extensive negotiations between TRDC and CGPC, it has been agreed that the Parish Council will lease the entire ground floor of the new building. CGPC plans to relocate its offices there and manage the integrated community space.
- 4.14 It is therefore necessary to grant the Parish Council a long-term lease, to ensure that the space remains open and accessible to local residents and interested parties. It is likely that the lease will be for a term of 99 years, at a rent to be agreed between both parties.

5 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 5.1 As explained in section 4, these key requirements form part of the simple option to pursue disposal and development of the former Red Cross site. The options simply become a binary choice to either endorse the decision and proceed with the development, or not.
- 5.2 The Council's decision to redevelop the former BRC building was in part influenced by the former Tenant's intention to surrender their lease. The redevelopment is driven by severe pressure on the local housing market: Three Rivers is the 17th most expensive authority in England², and the high cost of housing is reflected by a distinct population dip of residents aged 20–34 who live in the District, compared with national average. This suggests that younger

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<https://www.ons.gov.uk/file?uri=/economy/inflationandpriceindices/datasets/ukhousepriceindexmonthlypricestatistics/19november2025/ukhousepriceindexmonthlypricestatistics.xlsx>

people are being priced out of the district, limiting their ability to rent or buy locally.

- 5.3 Local housing need further highlights the issue, as at 21 November 2025 the District currently has 112 live homelessness applications and 48 households in temporary accommodation. Delivering additional affordable housing would help relieve this pressure, enable more permanent solutions for families and individuals, and reduce the significant costs of temporary accommodation.
- 5.4 There has been a strong lobby for retaining a community use at this location. Whilst usage dropped following the pandemic, the Welcome Club did continue to use the site for two hours every week. It is anticipated that with the Parish Council operating the community space, not only will it complement other local venues, but it will provide a new, conveniently located local centre, with enhanced facilities.

6 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 6.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets, supporting the delivery of the Council's Corporate Framework and key objectives, namely: *'support and enable sustainable communities'*; *'responsive, responsible and local leadership'* and *'support our ambition for net carbon zero and ensure a climate resilient district'*.
- 6.2 The commitment of s.106 is consistent with our Local Plan policies and supports the delivery of our statutory housing duties. In line with these objectives—and to further the Council's wider corporate commitments outlined above—the transfer of the asset will be carried out in accordance with statutory 'best value' guidance.

7 Financial Implications

- 7.1 As outlined above, the proposed redevelopment of this asset will be undertaken by Three Rivers Homes Limited, a company jointly owned by Three Rivers District Council and Clarendon Living Limited, a subsidiary company of Watford Community Housing.
- 7.2 The Council, for its contribution intends to transfer the existing site into the company and will allocate £1m from the s.106 affordable (commuted) fund to support the delivery of the 8no. new affordable homes.

8 Legal Implications

- 8.1 The Localism Act 2011 gives the Council a general power of competence to do anything an individual may do although this is expressly subject to any statutory limitations that predate the commencement of that Act.
- 8.2 The relevant provision where a Council proposes to dispose of land is Section 123(2) of the Local Government Act 1972 ("LGA") which allows a Council to do so provided a disposal (other than by way of short lease) is for the best consideration reasonably obtainable, otherwise the consent of the Secretary of State is required.
- 8.3 The transfer for which this report seeks authority does satisfy the requirements, and it is supported by an independent valuation, which makes clear that the value of the site, with the benefit of planning permission, is valued at 'nil'.

- 8.4 In deciding whether to approve this disposal Members should be aware of their fiduciary and best value duties in terms of the prudent and responsible stewardship of the Council's assets and resources.

9 Equal Opportunities Implications

9.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	Yes
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	No

- 9.2 Impact Assessment - The Equality Impact Assessment concludes that the Barton Way redevelopment is expected to have an overall positive impact by delivering eight affordable homes and a new community hall, improving access to housing and local facilities for a wide range of residents. The scheme particularly benefits younger adults, families and vulnerable groups facing housing need or homelessness pressures. Most protected characteristics are not negatively affected, though temporary construction impacts such as noise, dust and reduced accessibility may affect older people, disabled residents, and expectant parents. These impacts are considered manageable with appropriate mitigation. The assessment emphasises the need for accessible design and inclusive management of the new community space to ensure all groups, including those with additional vulnerabilities, can benefit fully from the development.

10 Staffing Implications

- 10.1 There are no direct staffing implications related to this proposal.

11 Environmental Implications

- 11.1 Any environment implications in connection with this project will be addressed through any Planning, statutory and legislative requirements.
- 11.2 Wherever possible Three Rivers Homes Limited will try to exceed Building Regulation standards to minimise the environmental impact of the proposed development and maximise the energy efficiency of the completed scheme.

12 Community Safety Implications

- 12.1 There are no community safety implications related to this proposal.

13 Public Health implications

- 13.1 There are not considered to be any public health implications related to this proposal.

14 Customer Services Centre Implications

- 14.1 There are no customer services centre implications related to this proposal.

15 Communications and Website Implications

- 15.1 The project to redevelop the former Red Cross Building has had a long gestation period and the former building is viewed by some in the local community as an important community facility. Members & Officers have been keen to engage the local community in the process and have periodically produced updates on the Council's website, and in July 2025, the Council held a public engagement session, so that local residents could see what was proposed for the site.
- 15.2 It remains Members & Officers intentions to provide continuing updates, in partnership with Croxley Green Parish Council, to ensure local residents are kept informed of progress with the project, and how they may benefit from its use upon completion.


16 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 16.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.
- 16.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Property Services service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of likelihood and impact)
Full Council does not endorse the proposed redevelopment of the site.	The scheme stops and agreements with Croxley Green Parish Council & Three Rivers Homes Limited cease.	Explore possibility to satisfy Full Council concerns and address or terminate scheme.	Terminate	Low
Parish Council exercises ACV rights / delays ACV process	Project delayed; increased costs; reputational risk	Obtain written confirmation from CGPC of non-interest	Treat	Medium
Demolition and transfer sequencing causes delays or cost increases	Increased demolition costs; delays to transfer; potential deterioration of site	Clear programme and sequencing plan; site surveys; early tendering; budget	Transfer	Medium

		contingency		
Worsening development viability due to market or cost inflation	TRHL may require additional subsidy; stalled project; reputational criticism	Re-check viability prior to contract; fixed-price construction contracts; value engineering options	Transfer	High
Planning permission refused or onerous conditions impact the scheme	Project delay; additional design costs; reduced scheme affordability	Closely align proposals with Local Plan; promptly address conditions	Treat	Medium –High
Failure to sign-off final lease terms with Croxley Green Parish Council	Delays to practical completion; risk of unlet ground floor; reputational criticism	Continued engagement between parties and referral to Councillors; share independent valuation for rent	Treat	Low–Medium
Delivery risk within Three Rivers Homes Limited	Delay to project; cost overrun; reputational damage	Assess TRHL capacity; regular monitoring of delivery; contingency plans; contractor pre-qualification	Transfer	Medium
Construction-phase risks (contractor failure, H&S incidents, supply-chain)	Delays; cost overruns; H&S incidents; regulatory intervention	Contractor vetting; robust H&S plans; site inspections; contract management ; contingency planning	Transfer	Medium –High

16.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

Very Likely  Likelihood Remote	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
	Impact Low -----> Unacceptable			

Impact Score

- 4 (Catastrophic)
- 3 (Critical)
- 2 (Significant)
- 1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

- 4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
- 3 (Likely (21-79%))
- 2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
- 1 (Remote (≤5%))

- 16.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

The remainder are therefore operational risks. Progress against the treatment plans for strategic risks is reported to the Policy and Resources Committee quarterly. The effectiveness of all treatment plans are reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

Data Quality

Data sources:

- Property Valuation – Braiser Freeth (November 2025)
- Council Planning & Housing Policy

Data checked by:

Jon Boyle - Principal Lawyer (Property) & Deputy Monitoring Officer

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	
3	High	✓

Background Papers

None

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 – Site Location Plan

Appendix 2 - Redevelopment Plans

