

Questions from Members

09/12/2025

Councillor Narinder Sian to the Lead Member for Leisure, Councillor Chris Lloyd

1 Barton Way Play Area in Croxley Green is currently being refurbished as part of the council's rolling improvement programme. To ensure transparency for residents and councillors, could the Council please provide a clear account of the financial and procedural details of this project?
Specifically, could the Council provide:

1. The total capital cost of the refurbishment.
2. A breakdown of spending by major cost category, including equipment, installation, safety surfacing, landscaping, design, consultation, project management, officer time and contractor fees.
3. Details of any external funding, contributions or grants supporting the project.
4. Confirmation that procurement and contracting arrangements complied with the Council's financial regulations and standing orders.
5. Any long-term maintenance implications, including expected annual upkeep costs or changes to the maintenance budget.

Could you also confirm whether any further expenditure is expected before the project is completed?

The total capital cost of the refurbishment was £150,000 which included £5,500 for design costs. A breakdown of costs cannot be provided as this is commercially sensitive information. Consultation, project management and officer time is all within existing resources. At this stage in the project, no additional expenditure has been identified.
Croxley Green Parish Council have contributed £30,000 towards the project.
The project was procured following the Council's Contract Procedure Rules and the project will be maintained within existing budgets for play areas.

Councillor Joan King to the Lead Member Steve Drury

2 Will the Lead Member advise, given the on-going reported water leak at Catherine House in South Oxhey, affecting the communal area, which went unrepaired by Riverside Homes, what is the present situation and what pressure have officers brought to bear on the housing association to bring this matter to a successful resolution.

This issue has been reported to the council's Residential Environmental Health team, and the case has been allocated to an Officer.
A representative of the housing provider confirmed on Friday 20 November that the leak has been repaired, the water supply has been restored to the building and that the remedial works required to the area following the leak and leak repair would be carried out.
Officers have requested confirmation of when these remedial works will be undertaken and will continue to follow this up until adequate works are undertaken.

Councillor Vicky Edwards to the Leader of the Council

3. The Leader of the Council claimed in January and in many leaflets and press releases since that the Council was aborting its previous low-growth Local Plan before the new NPPF came into effect so "officers [can] undertake a new review of site" and "officers [can] gather extra evidence" to protect the Green Belt.
Will the Leader confirm that, having reviewed the evidence that his approach to delaying the Local Plan is based on collecting, officers will not propose significantly more building on the Green Belt than the low-growth Local Plan?

	<p>Cllr Edwards being a member of the Local Plan Sub Committee is well aware of the background to this. The professional Fofficer advice was due to the changes in the NPPF there was no chance that the emerging local plan in January would have any chance of being agreed by the Planning Inspector given it lacked additional evidence to support the then new housing numbers proposed. The professional advice was the gather all the extra evidence including a new Green Belt review that might show releasing areas of Green Belt would “fundamentally undermine” it as allowed for in the NPPF to argue for a lower housing number I note on the 7th January Cllr Edwards voted against getting this evidence. If Cllr Edwards and her colleagues view had been followed and the then plan , which had been overtaken by changes in the NPPF had been submitted and as expected thrown out this council, we would have spent hundreds of thousands of pounds of tax-payer money to go through an examination process we were certain to fail. This not only would have cost the council money but also resulted in delays to the process as we would then have to go and do the evidence to justify our plan. So, we would be a year to 18 months behind where we are now. We would therefore have been at risk of speculative development being successful at appeal for a longer period. Also, the failure at examination would also significantly increase the risk of government intervening and a producing a local plan themselves. In that case it would almost certainly be for the full 13,312. Is that what Cllr Edwards wanted? would have been required to submit a full plan forthwith for 13,312 homes with no ability to gather any extra evidence to refute that number. I am pleased no other groups on the Council, nor the Three Rivers Joint Residents’ Association supported the approach taken by Cllr Edwards and her Conservatives colleagues but supported the approach taken by this administration. I have to secretly wonder if this was the Conservative view all along to get our plan thrown out, after all the previous Conservative government had wanted 12,600 homes here- something this side also objected to. The updated evidence needs to be robust and justify decisions on housing growth. In terms of Green Belt evidence, due to the introduction of new policy tests in the updated 2024 NPPF, an updated Green Belt Review needed to be produced. The role of the study was to assist in identifying grey belt and considerations on whether development would fundamentally undermine the purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the NPPF. The purpose of the evidence is not to demonstrate that the Council cannot meet its housing need due to Green Belt constraints, it is to consider potential impact on the Green Belt and inform officer recommendations and Member decisions. The findings of the review in my view, and Cllr Edwards has seen the review, does make a strong and robust case along with other evidence on sustainability, and accessibility why the Council cannot meet its housing need in full and why certain large-scale sites are unacceptable. Given this it is even more disappointing that Cllr Edwards and some of her colleagues have questioned seeking to undermine and indeed disagreed with the expert professional review that the Council will be using. I just hope her lay-person criticisms of it do not undermine the Councils’ case and result in a planning inspector agreeing with her and forcing larger housing numbers on us.</p>
Councillor Rue Grewal to the Lead Member Steve Drury	
4	<p>Residents in Carpenders Park have raised increasing concerns about the number of Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) now operating in the ward, and the lack of clear, accessible information about who is responsible for them and how they are being monitored.</p> <p>Could the Portfolio Holder please confirm:</p>

	<p>1. How many licensed and unlicensed HMOs are currently known to the Council in Carpenders Park, broken down by property type and size.</p> <p>2. How the Council tracks ownership and management responsibility for these HMOs, and what due-diligence checks are carried out on landlords or managing agents.</p> <p>3. What enforcement action has been taken in the past 12 months in Carpenders Park regarding suspected unlicensed HMOs, overcrowding, or safety breaches.</p> <p>4. Where residents can access an up-to-date public register of HMOs - including licence status, ownership details (where legally publishable), and inspection history.</p> <p>5. What proactive monitoring the Council undertakes to identify illegal or unregistered HMOs, and how often this monitoring is carried out in Carpenders Park specifically.</p> <p>Finally, could the Portfolio Holder outline when the next update to the Council's HMO register will be published, so residents have confidence that the information they rely on is current and accurate?</p>
	<p>For clarity, the council currently operate a mandatory HMO licencing scheme. In accordance with Part 2 of the Housing Act 2004, a House in Multiple Occupation (HMO) must be licensed by the council if it is occupied by five or more people, forming two or more separate households, and tenants share facilities such as a kitchen or bathroom.</p> <p>The council are statutorily required to publish a HMO Register of those HMOs that have been granted a licence by the council. This is live document that is updated when any change is required (e.g. when a new HMO licence is granted or renewal of a licence is granted) and is available on the council's website at the following link - https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/environmental-health/houses-multiple-occupation#HMO%20licensing</p> <p>Also contained on the link to the council's webpage above are the matters that Officers will consider when deciding on whether to grant an HMO licence and the amenity standards required by the council.</p> <p>There are currently three properties within Carpenders Park that hold a HMO licence granted by the council (1 x 4 bedroom house, 1 x five bedroom house and 1 x six bedroom house), however, any HMO operating within Carpenders Park that is housing less than 5 residents does not need a licence from the council, therefore, the number of these operating within Carpenders Park is unknown. There has been no enforcement action undertaken on any HMO within Carpenders Park within the last 12 months.</p> <p>The council have recently received an application for a new HMO licence from a landlord for a property located in Carpenders Park. Whilst I am unable to share any details of this application within this response, should you wish, I will ask Officers to provide you with the information regarding this application and any questions you may have.</p> <p>Current resources do not allow for proactive monitoring of any potential unlicensed HMO's operating within the district. However, should residents suspect that an unlicensed HMO is operating within their local area, they are encouraged to report this to the council's Residential Environmental Health team, who will investigate this report and take any relevant action required. The team will also investigate any reports of unsatisfactory housing conditions received by residents of HMOs within the district.</p> <p>As confirmed at Full Council on 21 October 2025, the council have committed to the following actions with regards to HMOs within the district -</p>

Councillor Joan King to the Lead Member	
6	Does the Lead Member agree with me that it is Labour councillors and not Reform that are dealing with parking difficulties on the estate and can they provide an update on the Gosforth Lane Parking Consultation?
	Gosforth Lane parking scheme was formally consulted on earlier this year and initial discussions have taken place with Ward Councillors as to the outcome of this consultation. Officers are now drafting a report for a decision to be made on how to progress with this scheme.
Councillor Ian Campbell to the Lead Member for General Public Services, Councillor Sarah Nelmes	
7	<p>In response to Conservative criticism of the adoption of W17 by this council in its Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan, the council claimed that no specific interventions, such as a dedicated cycle lane up Gallows Hill, were identified for W17. However, Three Rivers' own consultation document in May 2023 included a "proposed cycle track" up Gallows Hill, alongside three pictures that confirm that a "cycle track" means a segregated cycle lane. Can the Lead Member confirm that the Council consulted on a 'proposed cycle track' on Gallows Hill in May 2023?</p> <p><i>The Council Press Releases are correct and were checked by officers unlike the claims in publications you have issue. The press release states that Route 17 is a "desired route" Route 17 was identified as part of the Watford LCWIP and the section within Watford Borough has been developed through to the final stages of the LCWIP with concept designs up to the A41 roundabout. The Three Rivers section north of this has been identified as a route for future consideration acknowledging the importance of the corridor between Watford and neighbouring areas but there was no further development of improvement measures along it as part of the Three Rivers LCWIP. The route remains a desired route but no specific interventions, such as a dedicated cycle lane, have been identified as an intervention on Gallows Hill and therefore were not included in the Three Rivers LCWIP or its consultation. The Watford LCWIP consultation on this route did not show any interventions on the sections in Three Rivers either. Whilst there is reference to the route in Paragraph 4.5 in the Three Rivers LCWIP it does not confirm that it is a priority route. The LCWIP outlines the route for the potential connection it could bring with neighbouring Watford, but it has not been developed further as priority route and therefore remains a 'desired route'. Any interventions on such a route would require consultation by TRDC and Herts County Council and would involve residents. There are no such plans at present.</i></p> <p><i>The LCWIP has now been adopted by the highway authority, Hertfordshire County Council and its adoption was unanimously agreed by all the political parties on the Council. The County Council has confirmed again that there is no proposal for a dedicated cycle lane on Gallows Hill. It is more than unfortunate that you and your fellow councillors still claim falsely that we said are plans to not only plan but to build a cycle lane here when you know this is totally untrue.</i></p>
Councillor Rue Grewal	
8	Given the growing number of complaints from residents across Carpenders Park and wider Three Rivers about excessive, late-night, and industrial-grade fireworks being set off outside permitted times (confirm what these times are) - often causing distress to pets, wildlife, elderly residents, and those with health conditions - can the Portfolio Holder outline what steps

	<p>the Council is taking to strengthen enforcement, improve public messaging, and work with Hertfordshire Police to minimise disruption during peak periods? Specifically, can you confirm:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What current powers the Council is actively using to address noise nuisance from fireworks, and whether the Council will review their effectiveness. 2. What joint action is being taken with the Police to tackle illegal fireworks and anti-social behaviour linked to firework misuse. 3. Whether the Council will commit to a clearer public awareness campaign ahead of key dates (Bonfire Night, Diwali, New Year's Eve) so residents know when fireworks are permitted and how to report breaches. 4. What support is being offered to vulnerable residents - including pet owners, veterans, and those with dementia - when fireworks cause distress or health impacts.
	<p>Whilst the question refers to 'industrial-grade' fireworks, it is important to note that Category F4 fireworks, used for large public displays, are only available for sale to licensed professionals. Therefore, it is assumed that this question is about Category F2 and F3 fireworks, both of which are available for general sale to adult members of the public.</p> <p>The Fireworks Regulations 2004 confirm that fireworks must not be set off between the hours of 11pm and 7am, except for the following -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bonfire Night, where the cut off is 12am • New Years Eve, Diwali and Chinese New Year, where the cut off is 1 am. <p>If the use of fireworks is undertaken outside of these hours, a criminal offence has been committed.</p> <p>As confirmed on the Environmental Health section of the council's website, noise from fireworks can be considered environmental pollution, therefore, can be investigated as a statutory nuisance by the council, using the Environmental Protection Act (EPA) 1990.</p> <p>However, despite the council receiving some complaints over the recent period regarding noise from fireworks, most of these reports have been about the noise from fireworks in a local area and have not been attributed by the reporter/s to a specific address or person, making any action by the council using the powers within the EPA 1990 extremely difficult.</p> <p>I would encourage any member of the public who experiences noise nuisance from fireworks at unsociable times to report this to the council's Residential Environmental Health team and to provide as much detail as possible as to the origin of these fireworks. This will enable Officers to investigate robustly and take any relevant action required.</p> <p>We also work closely as a Community Safety Partnership to encourage all residents to report any Anti-Social Behaviour via 101. No reports of anti-social behaviour during the recent firework period were received directly to the Councils ASB team. The Council also shared information with residents about extra police patrols and firework safety, reminders to let neighbours know in advance to help prepare and keep animals safe. This included sharing police information as well as our own posts. We also share these directly to specific groups dependent on location in addition to our own pages. The Community Safety Partnership will continue to work in partnership with Trading Standards and the Police Licensing Officer.</p> <p>Mental Health and Wellbeing support is also available in Three Rivers for vulnerable residents. This includes the Community Support Service led by Herts</p>

	Mind Network, funded by Three Rivers District Council and Thrive Housing. Our Armed Forces Support pages on the TRDC website contains information about services available for veterans as well.
Councillor Cheryl Stungo for the Lead Member for Leisure, Councillor Lloyd and the Lead Member for Sustainability and Climate Change, Councillor Jon Tankard	
9.	It was good news that the interim bank works the River Chess has been completed to help protect from flooding. What is the status of the proposed works to provide a relief channel. What is the likely timescale for these works and where will the funding come from?
	This is a project led by Hertfordshire County Council on behalf of the Environment Agency and they would need to provide the details requested.
Councillor Joan King to the Lead Member	
10.	Does the Lead Member agree with me that Labour-run Watford Parish Council's summer and winter fun days thanks to all councillors have been, over many years and continue to be, a great success and these community events raising money for charities (this month the Ascend Dig Deep project in South Oxhey and the estate's boxing club) give pleasure to member of the local community and if confirm will the district council be in attendance?
	Clearly any event that encourages community to help raise funds for charities is always good and I thank Watford Rural Parish Council for organising its successful Fun Days. I understand they are well attended and the Healthy Hub is going to be present.
Councillor Oliver Cooper to the Lead Member for Leisure, Councillor Chris Lloyd	
11.	On 20th October, I emailed the council – including the Leader and two Lead Members – noting that the placement of rocks on the Green in Croxley is likely unlawful under the Commons Act. That Act requires landowners to seek consent from the Planning Inspectorate before doing construction works on common land or village greens. I asked the Council for a response, but I have not received a reply. On 21st October, at the last full council meeting, I asked about this orally. I was told I would get a written answer, but I have not received a reply. On 23rd October, the council then told the Watford Observer that it would issue a statement on the subject “later that afternoon”. It does not appear that they received a statement. Instead of replying, the council has resorted with shamed silence. Will the Lead Member now confirm that the council has indeed breached the Commons Act? And if so, and the council ignored its breach when I raised it, what assurance will the council give that it will not unlawfully build on other common land and village greens across Three Rivers, whether in breach of the Commons Act or not?
	The Council has not “undertaken construction works” nor has it “[built] on common land”, it has merely, in collaboration with the Parish Council, replaced existing wooden bollards with natural stone boulders. It is important to note that the purpose of the Commons Land Act is to protect common land and town or village greens, reinforcing existing protections against abuse and encroachment. The consistent illegal parking across The Green is a prime example of such abuse and encroachment of the land. Without the installation of the boulders or any obstacle, the illegal parking would have continued, and the protected land would have continued to deteriorate. In addition, both Croxley Green Parish Council and Three Rivers District Council

	<p>consistently received complaints from local residents about the illegal parking. Since the boulders have been installed, neither council has received any complaints about illegal parking in the areas they have been placed.</p> <p>As background; wooden bollards had previously been installed across The Green to protect the land from illegal parking and consequent erosion. These bollards had deteriorated over time, either by reaching end of life (becoming rotten) or through damage sustained by vehicles consistently hitting them. The boulders were installed to replace those existing bollards. As these bollards had been in place for a number of years, the Council had understood that the boulders could be installed to simply replace these. There are, however, no historical records that show that Common Land permission (Section 38) was applied for or granted in relation to the initial installation of these previous bollards. As such a retrospective Section 38 application will be submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for consideration of the boulders. The application will focus on how the illegal parking was damaging the land, through ongoing encroachment and erosion of the soil and grassland and that the boulders are protecting the land, whilst continuing to allow the public to have a right of access to the common for air and exercise under section 193 of the Law of Property Act 1925.</p> <p>Policy DM11 in the Development Management Policies, Local Development Document sets out that how development on commons within the District will be resisted.</p> <p>Other lands owed and maintained by Three Rivers District Council which are classified as either a Common or a Village Green have approved Management Plans in place. These plans detail how each site will be managed for the benefit of nature and recreation and are discussed and approved through the committee process. They include South Oxhey Playing Fields, Batchworth Heath and Croxley Common Moor.</p> <p>The Green and Stones Orchard will have a new management plan, which is due to be presented and recommended for approval at the Climate Change and Leisure Committee meeting in January 2026.</p>
Councillor Rue Grewal	

	<p>Residents in Carpenders Park regularly report issues such as missed waste collections, overflowing public bins, delayed responses to fly-tipping, a lack of regular street sweeping, particularly in autumn when leaves block drains and overgrown hedges on land managed by the District Council.</p> <p>Residents consistently say they do not receive clear updates or timelines for when these issues will be actioned.</p> <p>Could the Portfolio Holder provide the average response times over the past 12 months for the following services which fall under the remit of Three Rivers District Council:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fly-tipping clearance • Missed waste and recycling collection resolution • Street sweeping, including autumn leaf-fall • Hedge and verge cutting on TRDC-managed land • Overflowing public bins <p>Could you also outline:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The standard lead times and processes for each of these District Council service areas, so residents understand what to expect when they report an issue; 2. How the Council communicates with residents when reports are acknowledged, when updates are provided, and how delays are explained. 3. What steps are being taken to improve communication and service reliability for Carpenders Park residents; and 4. Whether the Council will commit to issuing regular public communication, including through social media, clearly setting out what falls under Three Rivers District Council's responsibility and what falls under Hertfordshire County Council's responsibility, together with the correct reporting lines for each. <p>In a world where so much casework is now raised on social media, clearer and more regular communication would prevent a great deal of frustration and confusion. It would help residents report issues accurately, reduce unnecessary angst online, and ultimately support a calmer, happier and better-informed community.</p>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fly-tipping clearance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Information on our website with timescales: https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/waste-and-recycling/street-care-and-cleaning#Fly-tipping ◦ Work is in progress on this route in relation to back-office processes, which will also include acknowledgement to the customer of their report • Missed waste and recycling collection resolution

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Information on our website with timescales: https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/waste-and-recycling/report-a-missed-collection ○ The submission message when submitting the form states: <i>Thank you for submitting your missed collection information. Your report will be passed to the department and if you have a genuine missed bin report we will return within 48 hours of your report. Please ensure your bin is left on your boundary/normal collection location from the time of reporting your missed collection</i> ○ There is an ongoing project, as part of the Customer Experience action plan to improve the information given to all residents. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Street sweeping, including autumn leaf-fall We have schedules for street sweeping and leaf fall, as laid out below <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on our website: https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/waste-and-recycling/street-care-and-cleaning#contentgroupsection-Dealing%20with%20leaf%20fall • https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/waste-and-recycling/street-care-and-cleaning#Street%20sweeping%20and%20litter%20collection • Littering and full litter bins can be reported online. • Hedge and verge cutting on TRDC-managed land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on our website: https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/transport-and-streets/road-pavement-maintenance • Grass cutting report currently only available through CSC who can signpost to relevant organisation • Overflowing public bins <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information on our website: https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/waste-and-recycling/street-care-and-cleaning • Online form to report <p>In terms of Q4 – Comms regularly post information, links to our websites and links on how to report all Council services. The council shares information to local residents Facebook groups, including ‘CPRA Community Conversations’ and ‘Carpenders Park and South Oxhey Community’ and shares information on the local noticeboard.</p>
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