
Policy and Resources Committee MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Monday, 17 November 2025 from 7.30 pm - 9.40 pm.

Present: Councillors

Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE (Chair), Sarah Nelmes, Oliver Cooper, Steve Drury, Vicky Edwards, Philip Hearn, Chris Lloyd, Chris Mitchell, Louise Price, Reena Ranger and Jon Tankard

Also in Attendance:

Councillor Narinder Sian

Officers in Attendance:

Kimberley Grout, Associate Director for Corporate, Customer & Community
Alison Betts, Director of Finance
Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive
Kimberley Rowley, Head of Regulatory Services
Sally Riley, Finance Business Partner
Emma Sheridan, Associate Director for Environment
Anita Hibbs, Committee Officer

PR125 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephen Cox and Rue Grewal.

PR225 MINUTES

The minutes of the Policy & Resources Committee held on 8 September 2025 were confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chair of the meeting.

PR325 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

PR425 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

PR525 LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst introduced the report.

Members debated the LGR options; 2, 3 and 4 unitary authorities, with a focus on public consultation results, financial implications, local representation and service delivery impacts. Several Members expressed concern about the least popular 3 unitary model, regarding its financial viability, social housing issues and geographic understanding. The 4 unitary model is favoured by some due to public preference, community similarities, and potential for better service delivery and local democracy, despite higher payback periods. Other Members advocated for the 3 unitary model as a balanced approach between cost savings and effective management of services. There was also skepticism about the government's role and timing of information release.

The Chair clarified misinformation about the ring-fenced nature of the housing revenue account and emphasised that decisions on management will be made by future elected Members. The Chair also highlighted the challenges of multiple financial models considered for the restructuring, noting the difficulties with the 4 unitary model due to initial deficits and social deprivation concerns. The conversation also touched on the timeline pressures for submitting the proposals, the importance of public consultation on all three proposed models, and the hope that the government respects public opinion in the final decision. There was also mention of recent government changes such as the abolition of Police and Crime Commissioners, and the implications for local leadership roles.

Officers also clarified the legal constraints on using general fund money to support the housing revenue account. They elaborated on the financial mechanism, including land transfers and appropriates at below cost, affecting the housing revenue account, highlighting challenges in policy consistency across different districts if a single council is formed. The differences in budget allocation between Dacorum and Three Rivers were emphasised, particularly regarding social housing expenditure. Officers also reinforced that the housing revenue account is governed by statute, and distinct from the general fund, explaining how affordable housing policies operate differently across districts, with some housing managed in-house and others through housing associations.

Members also highlighted the potential consequences of reducing elected Members in district and borough councils, which could increase the responsibilities and pressure on parish and town councils. There is concern about areas currently lacking such local councils and how they will be integrated into the new system. The handling of Surrey by the government is cited as a cause for worry about similar treatment in Hertfordshire.

Additionally, there was emphasis on the importance of ensuring widespread public awareness, noting that many residents seem uninformed about the issue. The Chair responded by highlighting the ongoing communication efforts, including multiple public meetings, social media videos, and plans for continued outreach.

Members stressed the importance of maximising public participation in the government consultation, urging the Council to respect the option favoured by the majority of respondents to maintain public confidence.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved the recommendation as set out in the report.

On being put to the Committee, the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being For 7, Against 4, Abstentions 0.

RESOLVED:

That Policy and Resources Committee notes the indicative resolution of Full Council on 21 October 2025 and agrees the following:

Either:

- To submit the proposal and identify the two unitary option (2UA) as preferred option.

- To submit the proposal and identify modified three unitary option (3UA modified) as preferred and request that SoS formally modify the proposal by agreeing boundary changes as set out in the proposal.
- To submit the proposal and identify the modified four unitary option (4UA modified) as preferred and request that the SoS formally modify the proposal by boundary changes as set out in the proposal.

PR625 EAST LANE MEMORIAL CLEANING

The Associate Director for Environment introduced the report.

Concerns were raised about the decline of Three Rivers historic assets and the need for a comprehensive check to assess their condition. Members highlighted the importance of preserving these markers due to their historical and community significance, referencing prior restoration efforts funded by grants and section 106 funds. The proposal to clean and repair approximately 500 markers was debated, focusing on the cost, procurement process and the specialised nature of the work. While the quoted price of around £23,000 was considered reasonable by officers, given the specialist skills required, some Members expressed concerns about the limited number of quotes obtained and suggested exploring more cost-effective options, including the possibility of a council-owned equipment. The involvement of the Leavesden Hospital History Society was emphasised, with assurance that the society is actively engaged in the maintenance and preservation efforts.

RESOLVED:

That:

The exemption form is noted.

PR725 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30 SEPTEMBER 2025

The Director of Finance introduced the report.

Members expressed their gratitude to officers on the work they have done. Key topics Members raised include approval and noting of supplementary estimates and capital budgets, urgent maintenance works on the Aquadrome footpath, and discussion on the real living wage impact on contract costs. The officer emphasised that the Council is managing inflation and wage increases through contingency budgeting. Recycling costs and their variability due to market fluctuations were addressed, along with the Council's approach to tracking and forecasting these costs. Investments yields remain strong but there is some optimism due to potential market and regulatory changes, including the end of upward-only rent reviews affecting commercial properties. The Council is proactively managing leases to secure long-term certainty and maximise property value. Confidentiality needs to be maintained around ongoing contract negotiations with outcomes to be reflected in future budget monitoring.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved the recommendation and set out in the report.

On being put to the Committee, the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being For 7, Against 0, Abstentions 4.

RESOLVED:

That:

- The revenue budget virements as set out in Appendices 1 to 3 and noted in paragraph 2.1.4 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.

- The revenue budget supplementary estimates of £0.067m as set out in appendices 1 to 3 and noted in paragraph 2.1.5 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.
- The revenue variances to be managed of £0.001m as set out in appendices 1 to 3 and noted in paragraph 2.1.6 be noted.
- The capital budgets of £11.429m as set out in appendices 1 to 3 and noted in paragraph 2.4.2 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.

PR825 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Chair introduced the report.

Key points Members raised include concerns about the premature timing of the review, given the pending LGR proposals, the importance of consulting residents through referendums or postal ballots to gauge community support, and the complexities involved in aligning election timelines with existing parish councils. There was agreement on the necessity of community involvement and awareness regarding the costs and responsibilities of forming new parish councils. The discussion also highlighted the need to adjust timelines to avoid clashes with other elections and to ensure informed decision-making. Some Members advocated for delaying the review until more information about LGR is available, while others emphasised moving forward with consultations and referendums. Officers provided insights on procedural and legal aspects, including the feasibility of elections and referendums within proposed timelines.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved the recommendation as set out in the report with the amendment for officers to adjust timelines and incorporate a referendum as part of the process.

On being put to the Committee, the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being For 7, Against 0, Abstentions 4.

RESOLVED:

- That Policy and Resources Committee determines whether to undertake a Community Governance Review relating to the specified unparished areas of the district.
- Should the Committee agree to undertake a Community Governance Review, to agree to the terms of reference attached at appendix A.

PR925 CIL SPENDING APPLICATIONS – JUNE 2025

The Chair introduced the report, with the Head of Regulatory Services highlighting the benefits of the Bery Bike scheme.

Beryl Bikes Smidsy LTD T/A Beryl

Concerns were raised about the long-term financial viability, maintenance costs and the operational sustainability of the scheme, especially given that the operator has reported significant financial losses. Questions about usage rates, revenue generation and contingency plans, if the operator ceases to function, were discussed, with reassurance provided that ownership of bikes and docks remains with the Council, and alternative operators could be engaged if necessary. The conversation also touched on the flexibility of site locations, and the potential for future expansion as usage grows.

Rickmansworth Sports Club & Rickmansworth Cricket Club

Key points Members raised include concerns about delays caused by the applicant's framework of funding and match funding, particularly related to VAT costs. Members highlighted that the current policy does not cover VAT where it is not reclaimable, which disadvantages community sports organisations that are below the VAT threshold. This has led to confusion and delays since applicants may use match funding to cover VAT costs but are not credited for it in scoring. In response, the officer explained that delays were also due to the applicant not progressing the application and lacking necessary planning permissions, which led to removal of the storage building element from the project. The VAT policy was justified as focusing CIL funds on tangible infrastructure, but there is some flexibility recognised for funding other project costs.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved the recommendation as set out in the report.

On being put to the Committee, the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair, the voting being by general assent.

RESOLVED:

That:

- Members approve CIL funding for the following schemes detailed in Table 1 of this report and summarised in the table below for 2025/2026:

Applicant & Project Name	Infrastructure	CIL Amount
Beryl Bikes Smidsy LTD T/A Beryl	To provide 36 ebikes and 13 parking locations across Rickmansworth/ South Oxhey & Leavesden/ Abbots Langley Watford border.	£138,000
Rickmansworth Sports Club & Rickmansworth Cricket Club Park Road Rickmansworth WD3 1HU	Infrastructure Improvements.	£167,200

- The final funding and implementation of the 2 agreed projects is delegated to the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Lead Members for Resources and Planning Policy and Infrastructure, to determine to enable the agreed projects to be progressed and implemented.

PR1025 WORK PROGRAMME

Members enquired about whether the Parking Management Policy will include anticipated changes in Chorleywood. Officers clarified that the policy refers to overarching parking management rather than individual parking site schemes. It was noted that an updated two-year programme, including Chorleywood's status is expected in January, along with a comprehensive document consolidating parking policies and decision-making criteria. The Local Plan, which had not been listed on the work programme, will need to be added for the January meeting agenda.

RESOLVED:

To note the Work Programme.

PR1125 OTHER BUSINESS - IF APPROVED UNDER ITEM 3 ABOVE

None

PR1225 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

PR1325 OTHER BUSINESS - IF APPROVED UNDER ITEM 3 ABOVE

CHAIR