

**Questions from
the public
24/02/2026**

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE 26 JANUARY 2026

PART I

Questions from the public

Question to the Leader of the Council Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Barry Grant Three Rivers Joint Residents Association

Did TRDCs Local Plan ever come close to achieving the 80% of government target that could, feasibly, have been acceptable by the Inspectorate / Government under early submissions and what factors prevented TRDC submitting its Local Plan under the old NPPF system?

The 2021 Regulation 18 Part 1 & Part 2 Local Plan almost met the then standard method figure in full. The Regulation 19 Local Plan recommended at Local Plan Sub-Committee in November would meet 85% of standard methods. However, this contained sites that Members did not think were acceptable.

The council did not submit a Local Plan under an earlier version of the Local Plan as following the 2021 Regulation 18 full draft plan the decision was made to pursue a low growth plan. The low growth version of the plan was not submitted under the 2023 version of the NPPF as officers advised that the level of growth contained in the plan was too low and was extremely unlikely to be successful at examination. This was not purely based on failing to meet needs in terms of quantum of housing but due to low overall housing numbers we would be failing to meet the acute needs for affordable housing and specialist accommodation set out in the council's evidence base for the Local Plan.

It is worth noting that although neighbouring authorities such as Dacorum and St Albans rushed forward to submit their Local Plans under the 2023 NPPF, they were meeting the old standard method in full whereas we were proposing under 50% of the old standard method. Similarly, Harrow rushed forward to submit their Local Plan under the old system, but they met the London Plan target in full. None of these are comparable to Three Rivers as they all went forward with levels of growth that had a realistic chance of success at examination.

Question to the Leader of the Council Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Jon Bishop Chorleywood Residents Association

What is TRDCs strategy for ensuring its Local Plan has a reasonable chance of being accepted by the Inspectorate?

The council has produced extensive evidence in support of the Local Plan. This is being shared with the Minister of State for Housing and Planning, and we will await their decision on how to proceed with the Local Plan. In the meantime, a holding direction is in place preventing us from proceeding to Regulation 19 publication of the plan.

Once the council is informed of the Minister's decision, we will be able to prepare a strategy accordingly.

Question to the Leader of the Council Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Gary Ansell Kings Langley & District Residents Association

What contingency plans does TRDC have, should the Inspectorate come back and state the Government's housing target must be met in full?

As set out in my response to the previous question. The council is providing the Minister with the evidence supporting its Local Plan. If the Minister uses their powers of intervention, then the planning powers are taken away from the local planning authority. As such, the decisions made on how much development and where it should go will be made by the Minister and not the council.

Question to the Leader of the Council Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Sue Webb Lemonfield Group

Given that 15 Chichester Way was approved only for a rear extension to a single family home, with no internal alterations declared on the plans, yet is now being converted into a six family home, with no internal alterations declared on the plans, yet is now being converted into a family home, with no internal alterations declared on the plans, yet is now being converted into a six-family home, with no internal alterations declared on the plans, yet is now being converted into a six-bedroom HMO with multiple en-suites and kitchens, what steps will the Council take to: (1) investigate this apparent undeclared change of use, (2) prevent occupation until full planning, building control and fire safety compliance is proven; and (3) urgently introduce an Article 4 Direction to stop unregulated HMO conversions in residential streets like ours?

The change of use of a building from its use as a dwellinghouse ("C3" of the Use Class Order) to its use as an HMO that is to be occupied by six or less

residents, is currently automatically granted planning permission by virtue of Class L of Part 3, Schedule 2 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (“the GPDO”).

Therefore, this legislation removes the requirement for an owner of a property to apply for planning permission from the council to convert a property into an HMO that is to be occupied by six or less residents.

Following reports from local residents, I asked Officers from the council's Residential Environmental Health team to visit the property to investigate the circumstances of the work being conducted. During their visit it was confirmed to them by the owner of the property that works are being conducted to convert the property into a HMO for six residents. However, the property was not occupied at that stage, and the work was ongoing.

The owner confirmed to the Officers that he did not intend to operate an HMO from the property, and he would be selling the property on the open market once the conversion was completed.

As the HMO will be for 5 or more residents, the property will be required to apply for a HMO licence from the council. It is important to note that the HMO licensing procedure focuses on a property's adherence with the relevant legislation that governs this type of accommodation and the additional amenity standards adopted by the council. In some cases, Officers will also seek professional guidance from our partners, including Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue, before granting a licence. It is important to note that any compliance with building control legislation is not monitored by Officers of the council, but by Hertfordshire Building Control. In some cases, any person carrying out controllable work to their property may choose to appoint an independent building control inspector.

For clarity, no HMO licence application for this property has been received by the council at this time.

As per the report presented to members of the council's Policy and Resources Committee on 26 January 2026, it is Officers professional opinion that the council does not have the sufficient evidence required at this time to introduce

an Article 4 direction over the whole of the district, or part of the district. However, Officers will keep this under review and if circumstances change, they will consider the council's position.

I have attached a link to the agenda for the Policy and Resources Committee on 26 January 2026 below -

<https://moderngov.threerivers.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CIId=1140&MIId=1833>

