

Lead Member Reports 24/02/2026

Full Council
24 February 2026

Report from the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst

Corporate Peer Review

We had our first **Corporate Peer Review** since 2019.

It has been a positive process, engaging with staff and Councillors, and I am very pleased indeed that it found our Council to be a.

“Successful, financially stable, well regarded and effective district council’ and that “Three Rivers is a well-run, financially stable council.”

The review highlighted that that our Committee System creates the opportunity for all members to be engaged. That our Parish Councils are well supported and valued and that Three Rivers is a good place to work with a collegiate, proud, communitive and welcoming environment.

I was especially pleased to see that the peers see the council benefits from strong statutory financial leadership and governance arrangements, including effective oversight by the Section 151 Officer and Audit Committee. That we have robust budget monitoring, financial reporting, and risk management processes provide confidence in the council’s financial control environment. Furthermore, the peers said our medium-term financial planning is embedded, supporting structured financial management during a period of sector uncertainty and organisational change.

Of particular note was that they said that the council operates efficiently with financial discipline, reflecting a strong organisational financial culture, positioning the organisation well to contribute positively to financial sustainability within any future unitary authority.

Clearly like any review there are areas to improve and we will work through all the recommendations especially as to what is required with Local Government Reform.

We are in fact already focusing some of our resources to deliver improvements and increase our capacity to deliver more in our proposed budget.

Council Budget

Next month residents across Three Rivers will receive their annual council tax bills. I know no one enjoys receiving bills — and it’s worth remembering that only around 10% of your total bill goes towards funding Three Rivers District Council services.

Thanks to careful and responsible financial management, we have avoided cuts to any services. In fact, we are continuing to respond to residents’ requests for improvements. I am also conscious that, with the possibility of a new large unitary authority being created in April 2028, some local priorities could risk being pushed aside. That is why we are acting now to invest in the things that matter most to our communities.

We are therefore proposing an additional £1 million over the next two years to enhance services right across the district. This extra funding will support a wide range of

projects, including a major programme to celebrate and protect our district's heritage, as well as improvements to our much-loved parks.

We are also looking to introduce a new management programme dedicated to cultivating, maintaining, and caring for our trees — an investment in both our environment and our future. Alongside this, we will be completing several new parking projects to improve the experience for motorists across the district.

In recent years, the council has carried out Conservation Area Appraisals for historic parts of the district, including Rickmansworth and the Church End area of Sarratt. In this budget, we propose accelerating that work to cover more areas, ensuring we can better protect their unique character from future developments that may be harmful.

I also hope we can launch a town improvement project for Rickmansworth, reinvigorate our district wide litter picking initiative, and increase investment in upgrading footways and alleyways.

These budget proposals will go before a meeting of the Full Council on 24 February.

Local Plan

Naturally, I am very disappointed that the Minister has paused the progression of our Local Plan that was agreed by Full Council with no votes against it, on 27 January.

We will work collaboratively and constructively with the Minister of Housing, Local Government and Communities on this, as indeed have officers over many months on developing this final plan. Officers have been having regular meetings with officials and had no indication of the Ministers planned intervention until the letter was received, indeed there was a every indication that we were doing the right thing by gathering all the evidence required to submit to the Planning Inspectorate as required.

All the paperwork, running to thousands of pages and any other supporting documentation will have been submitted before we get to the Council meeting.

I have written to the Minister to outline the issues and constraints under which Three Rivers Local Plan was developed and to invite him to visit the district and see these for himself.

Whilst I accept that the figure agreed by Council of 7,027 (56%) for the 15 year plan period until 2041 is below what the government would like, I have asked the Minister to consider our evidence to support this seriously.

I have pointed out two big constraining factors:

One of these is the unavailability of brownfield sites with fewer than 700 dwellings being available on such sites. The second is the fact that 76% of Three Rivers is Green Belt. This means that we would need to plan for over 10,000 new homes on Green Belt land in a semi-rural district in order to meet the standard method housing target. This would irrevocably change the character of the district. Our independent Stage 4 Green Belt Review has indicated that 7 large areas of district are of fundamental strategic importance to the purposes of the Green Belt, and if released for significant development would fundamentally undermine the purposes of the Green Belt. The

report shows that in most cases these undermine more than just one purpose of the Green Belt.

Notwithstanding that, we are indeed showing in our plan there should be significant amounts of development in both the Green Belt, and those areas now classed as Grey Belt, that are also available, suitable and accessible. This includes a significant large development in the Maple Cross village area of some 1,500 dwellings, along with other larger sites of 520 and 400 homes.

I do recognise that the standard method provides a local housing need that should be the minimum number of homes to be planned for, however we also acknowledge that the Planning Practice Guidance expands on this and sets out that authorities should use the standard method as the starting point when preparing the housing requirement in their plan, unless exceptional circumstances justify an alternative approach. As you know, I and the Council believe that the constrained nature of Three Rivers District provides the exceptional circumstances for deviating away from the standard method figure. When considering the NPPF as a whole, as it is intended to be read, we must consider impact on the Green Belt, flood risk, heritage assets as well as whether potential sites are in a sustainable location or at least a location that can be made sustainable. These factors amongst others mean that it is not possible to meet the standard method local housing need figure without going against other policies in the NPPF which would ultimately result in a poorly planned area and irreparable damage to the district.

I am pleased that the above view has been backed in writing by other group leaders on the Council who have written to the Minister in support of our approach and plan and urging him to allow us to progress to Regulation 19 Submission. I further note that view is also backed up in writing by the Three Rivers Joint Residents Association who have also written and Parish Councils.

It is very unusual to have not only cross-party and non-party support but also support from residents groups and Parishes for this approach and our Plan and I do hope the Minister will take note if this.

Local Government Reform

The consultation is underway on the potential options for our area. Irrespective of your views I urge you to respond and encourage others to do so. The closing date is 26 March. We expect to know the Government decision in the early Summer

Irrespective of that I continue to be engaged at the Herts Leaders Group, which I chair, on preparations for this and our officers continue to spend a considerable amount of time on this.

Other bits and pieces

In recent months I attended and spoke at:

The Watford Rural Area Forum, a meeting with the Three Rivers Joint Parishes

Had the honour of being presented by her Royal Highness, Anne, the Princess Royal with the Officer of the Order of British Empire award (OBE). I was delighted to have

been accompanied by my two children Christina and Andrew and my husband Cllr Kevin Raeburn.

Attended the celebration of Three Rivers Museum in achieving its "accredited status."

Attended the Holocaust Memorial Event and Flag Raising at Three Rivers House.

Discussed with County Officers the progress on the progress new controlled crossing at Church Street, Rickmansworth.

Visted Warner Bross, Leavesden Studios.

Report from the Lead Member for General Public Services, Councillor Sarah Nelmes

Waste Services

- Transparency notice for MRF contract now expired – no objections
- Emails/letters gone/going out in relation to the new garden waste charges
- Waste Compositional Analysis during February across Herts

Fleet and Fleet Maintenance

- Vehicle Maintenance contract being evaluated
- The large mechanical sweeper that was allegedly involved in a RTA has been return to the depot and is awaiting and independent inspection before being return to service. The smaller sweeper is also off the road.
- One more RCV to be delivered in April

Animal Inspection and Licensing

- Kennel discussion on-going. Recently visited one but it is quite far away but we may need to consider it. Continuing discussion with WBC on providing the service on our behalf

Environmental Enforcement

- EEO attended court for fly tipping cases – both pleaded guilty – sentencing in March. Will give more details in due course.

Bereavement Services

- Officer retiring in May – Advert out and 16 applications received. Due to interview 4
- Plot box (a new IT system) working well
- Motion tabled by Cllr Merali – Discussed at Battlers Wells meeting and report to follow, along with the rules and regs report as both interlink
- Public Health Funeral report going through the committee process at the moment

Parking

- **School Mead** - parking schemes will be implemented 27/2/26
- **Chorleywood** - decision report has been finalised and reviewed internally
- **Ricky West Review** – consultation results are being reviewed with a further Councillor meeting scheduled for 3/3/2026
- **Rickmansworth Carpark review** – the council is awaiting data from carpark surveys to make further recommendations
- **Rickmansworth Controlled Parking Zone review** – Initial plans have been drafted and will be reviewed once carpark data is received
- **Gosforth** – this scheme has been agreed for implementation and implementation documents are being prepared
- **Silk Mill Road Area** – consultation was held 16/1/26 -to 6/2/26 with 53.4% support for a permit scheme, this will proceed to a detailed design which is in development

- **Various Schemes** – we are currently preparing the consultation documents for this now that Silk Mill Road has been removed as a separate project
- **Community Way Car Park** – officers are investigating survey options to present to Councillors
- **Barnhurst Path Verge Hardening** – this work has been agreed, and materials are now being ordered for completion

Wider Transport

- **High Elms Lane** – officers have engaged with councillors and are beginning further engagement with stakeholders on transport proposals for the lane
- **Ebury Way Improvements** – officers are drafting plans for path improvements at the Rickmansworth end
- **Springwell Avenue Path** – officers are drafting plans for path improvements in the path between Springwell Avenue and Eastwick Crescent
- **LEVI** – the County Council are progressing on-road EV chargepoints with consultation with the district council. Initial site designs are being reviewed by officers
- **ORCS** – final sites are in the completion phase
- **Beryl Bikes** – officers have visited the proposed Beryl locations for the expansion, and the current Croxley scheme a councillor consultation on the proposals is being prepared

Report from the Lead Member for Resources, Regeneration and Economic Development, Councillor Louise Price

Finance and Budget Updates

The key area of work within my Portfolio is on the budget for 2026/27 and beyond. The final settlement was received on the 9th of February 2026. The 2026/27 settlement is the first year of the 'Fair Funding' settlement. Fair funding moves resources to more deprived areas of the country and is used to set the level of business rate income the council can retain. The Government has put in place transitional protection for areas such as Three Rivers that lose resources due to fair funding, however, the Government changed the way the base position is calculated between the provisional and final settlement. We were pleased that the Government provided extra resources to mitigate this change for 2026/27. Less pleasing was the lateness of the settlement and uncertainty that now exists over 2027/28 and 2028/29.

The budget elsewhere on the agenda allows investment for enhancing services and projects across Three Rivers over the next two years without compromising the sustainability of our finances.

The council's current Corporate Framework comes to an end in 2026. Whilst work continues in collaboration with the other Hertfordshire authorities on Local Government Reorganisation (LGR), it is important that a new Council Plan is adopted by the council in this interim period. Over the past 8 months we have been working on developing the new council plan including the new aims. These are:

- Healthy, safe and thriving communities,
- A green and sustainable future
- A prosperous and vibrant district
- A well – run council.

We have done this through a large amount of research and data, engagement with all staff, use of the resident's survey and working with members through the committee process.

The Council Plan 2026-2029 aims to set out a clear vision for the future of the district, built around the strategic aims. These will run like a golden thread through all areas of the council's work, shaping and directing all the services that we provide. The development of the council plan and service plans forms part of the budget setting process as well. Delivery of the plan will be achieved by aligning our service plans and team objectives with these aims, ensuring their delivery.

On the 19th February 2026, the auditors presented their final report to Audit Committee. This outlined the considerable progress that has been made in building back the audit position following the nationwide issues around local authority audit and the introduction of the back stop. In my previous report, I was able to reflect on the positive value for money opinion we had received.

From a property perspective we continue to make progress in delivering houses as part of the Government's Local Authority Housing Fund project. We are currently in the process of completing the purchase of additional homes and the Budget allows for phase 4 of the programme.

Project and Property Updates

South Oxhey

As Members will be aware, the council was in negotiations with the Directors of the Carpenders Park & South Oxhey Labour Club, with the aim of agreeing the purchase and effective surrender of the leasehold interest in the William Morris Hall. Due to the local strength of feeling and negative reaction to the proposed closure of the William Morris Hall, the Directors have decided to withdraw from the proposed sale and will continue trading from the premises.

At the request of Hertfordshire Constabulary, Officers are also currently exploring suitable locations to place a knife amnesty bin in South Oxhey. An initial location within the Station Approach area has been declined, as that area is yet to be formally adopted by Hertfordshire County Council. Officers are looking at place a bin in a more discreet location within the car park to the rear of the Station Approach retail units.

Local Authority Housing Fund

I am pleased to report that prior to the Christmas break the council managed to secure the required number of substitute properties, which will provide suitable accommodation during the construction at the 3no. garage sites.

With respect to LAHF3, of the 12no. properties to be secured, the first purchase completed on 6 February, with the next due to complete in the next week or so. A further six properties are now 'legal instructed', a further two have recently been inspected which are being reviewed.

In addition to the earlier rounds of LAHF, Three Rivers have also been offered £997,500 by MHCLG as grant funding to acquire a further 4no. properties, 2no. would be for temporary accommodation, 1no. would be a resettlement property and 1no. would be large resettlement property (4-bed plus). The match funding has reverted to the same 40:60 (MHCLG:TRDC) split as it was in rounds 1 & 2.

Three Rivers House – Ground Floor Letting

The lease completed just before Christmas and the fit-out works have begun. The premises will be used as consulting rooms and back-office accommodation, providing local healthcare services to residents of Three Rivers. Harrow Health who will be delivering those services aim to be in occupation by around the middle of April 2026. The letting further cements Three Rivers House as public sector hub, providing local authority, police and healthcare services from a single location for now and into the future.

Barton Way Building, Croxley Green

It is understood that the planning application will be determined by Planning Committee on 26 February 2026. Negotiations are still ongoing with respect to the rent payable by Croxley Green Parish Council for the occupation of the ground floor, but Officers are confident in reaching an agreement soon. Discussions have also been held with colleagues from Hertfordshire County Council with respect to the lease of the library and

the shared use of the car park to the rear – where the development proposed to make a series of improvements to the car park itself.

The former Pavilion PH, South Oxhey

As Members may be aware, just before the Christmas break the leaseholder decided to erect a fence and an unlocked gate between the car park and the access route to the South Oxhey Bowls Club, MUGA and Scout Hut. Initial interactions with the leaseholder have not determined why he chose to erect the fence and gate without seeking landlords consent first. A meeting was arranged in January, but the leaseholder pulled out at the last moment. Officers are attempting to arrange further meeting, which will look to cover a broader range of issues, including the current state of the premises.

Bullsland Hall, Chorleywood – Lease Surrender

Chorleywood Parish Council have agreed terms with a potential tenant to operate a day care facility from the premises. A draft underlease has been prepared that entitles TRDC to a share of rental income received by the Parish Council – in addition the use of Bullsland Hall as a Polling Station has also been reserved. We anticipate that this matter should complete within the next 4 weeks.

Thank you to officers for their assistance in compiling this report.

Report from the Lead Member for Sustainability and Climate Change, Councillor Jon Tankard

Chess Citizen Science Event – 2 December 2025

I attended the Chess Citizen Science event in Chesham on 2 December 2025, organised by the River Chess Smarter Water Catchment.

The event included speakers from Infinity Water, Thames Water, and a demonstration of Smart Buoys used for river monitoring.

Ecological Status of the River Chess

The River Chess is currently classified as having **Moderate Ecological Status**, primarily due to elevated phosphorus levels. Encouragingly, there are now active measures in place to address this issue.

Update on Chesham Sewage Treatment Works (STW)

Thames Water provided an update on improvements at Chesham STW:

- **Increased Treatment Capacity:**
Capacity has increased from 240 litres per second to 353 litres per second. This equates to a Population Equivalent of 36,996 people. With the population of Chesham and surrounding villages estimated at 28,500, this provides additional capacity for approximately 8,466 people.
- **Storm Overflow Events:**
During the storm event from 1–2 December, Chesham STW did not discharge. In contrast, Maple Cross STW discharged into the River Colne for 17 hours (9–10 December).

Following further heavy rainfall, Chesham STW discharged on 18 December for 4 hours 15 minutes.

Since September:

- Chesham STW has discharged for 6 hours 15 minutes. Equivalent to 2 Olympic sized swimming pools of sewage.
- Maple Lodge STW has discharged for 363 hours 39 minutes. Equivalent to 1,815 Olympic swimming pools

This comparison highlights the relatively lower discharge frequency at Chesham.

Groundwater Infiltration Concerns

Thames Water continues to line foul water sewer pipes across the district. However, a Chess Stream volunteer noted that the Chesham sewer network currently absorbs approximately **30 megalitres of groundwater per day**, effectively acting as a land drain.

While this reduces groundwater levels, it can contribute to storm overflows. As sewer lining progresses and infiltration reduces, groundwater levels may rise. This is already visible in areas such as the subway at St Mary's Way and could increase local flood risk if not carefully managed.

Phosphate Reduction Measures

Chesham STW has now introduced **phosphate stripping** of treated water.

This has reduced downstream phosphate readings from an average of 2 mg/l to approximately 0.25 mg/l — a significant improvement.

Phosphates in rivers act as fertilisers, encouraging excessive growth of algae and aquatic plants. This process, known as eutrophication, can:

- Deplete oxygen levels
- Block sunlight
- Kill fish
- Create “dead zones”
- Harm biodiversity
- Produce toxic algal blooms that affect human and animal health

Historically, much of the phosphate load has come from treated sewage. While chemical stripping is effective, longer-term solutions may include reducing phosphate dosing in drinking water systems (currently used to mitigate lead contamination from historic pipework). Infrastructure upgrades could reduce the need for this in future.

What can you do?

Although the continued efforts of Three Rivers Officers have undoubtedly helped move this forward, you can strengthen and support this work by volunteering. The Chess Smarter Water Catchment is currently looking for volunteers. Improving river health takes time, and collecting data within the community is essential to achieving lasting results.

One key initiative is **NOSES Day (Nutrient Ongoing Scrutiny Evaluation Surveys)**, which helps build a strong and reliable evidence base.

Volunteer opportunities include:

- Modular river surveys
- REDD counting (identifying trout spawning nests)
- Biofilm sampling

You can find out more or get involved here:

<https://chesssmarterwatercatchment.org/about-the-project/get-in-touch/>

You can also volunteer with the Chess Stream Volunteers, who run training courses aligned with Citizen Science surveys. I will be attending a Riverfly Monitoring course in April and look forward to overseeing a stretch of one of our beautiful local rivers. If you are interested in joining this summer, please feel free to contact me.

Why the River Chess is an Ideal Study Site

The River Chess provides a unique opportunity for monitoring because it splits upstream of Chesham STW:

- One branch flows past and downstream of the treatment works
- The other branch (the Small Chess) bypasses it

This creates a natural “side-by-side” comparison, allowing clearer evaluation of both the STW’s impact and the effects of surrounding land management.

Reliable data is essential. It enables water authorities to engage constructively with landowners about how land management practices may be affecting the river — and how improvements can support regeneration.

A Broader Environmental Context – China’s Emissions Progress

There are also encouraging developments internationally.

China’s CO₂ emissions have likely plateaued or declined since March 2024, potentially reaching their 2030 peak target ahead of schedule.

Key developments include:

- **Renewable Energy Expansion:**
In the first nine months of 2025, China added 240 GW of solar and 61 GW of wind capacity. Solar and wind generation met approximately 90% of increased electricity demand.
- **Sectoral Shifts:**
 - Transport oil demand fell by 5% in Q3 2025 due to rapid electric vehicle adoption.
 - Emissions from steel and cement have declined due to a slowdown in real estate construction.
 - Increased chemical production has partly offset reductions elsewhere.
- **2035 Commitment:**
China has pledged to reduce total greenhouse gas emissions by 7–10% from peak levels by 2035 — its first absolute reduction target.

This demonstrates that even a large, fast-growing economy (with GDP growth of around 5% in 2025) can pursue sustainable strategies while continuing economic development. Investment in renewable energy reduces reliance on fossil fuels and the long-term costs associated with them.

Sustainability, climate change and energy efficiency

Carbon Offsetting Principles for Hertfordshire:

Carbon Offsetting approach document will be drafted this year.

Warm Homes Local Grant (2025-2028):

27 live applications from Three Rivers residents so far - these are progressing through the customer journey.

5 Three Rivers installations completed and currently undergoing lodgement with Trustmark, and a further 2 booked. Several more properties have been surveyed and are awaiting final quotes for approval.

Early marketing to generate new applications for year two of the scheme (which starts 1st April 2026) will be undertaken in February and March via letter, email and social media.

Grand Union Community Energy contracts:

Sustainable Streets has received four applications via the online form, but no new group has started the programme yet. Information about Sustainable Streets will be shared in the Carpenders Park Residents Association magazine, Chorleywood Magazine Spring Edition, and the council's January Greener Living e-newsletter. The Community Energy services contract is underway.

What, Where and When?

GUCE officer is currently planning a retrofit "open home" where residents will have the opportunity to visit a home that has been retrofitted and ask the homeowner questions etc. and a "renewables roadshow" event in Croxley Green in Q2 2026 which will enable residents to listen to presentations on heat pumps and solar panels, meet with installers to book surveys for quotes etc.

If this event is successful, GUCE will plan another one, potentially in Chorleywood later in the year.

Who?

These events are targeting "able to pay" households that have the means to self-fund retrofit to their homes.

Hertfordshire Retrofit Strategy

When & What is it:

A countywide strategy to increase uptake of domestic retrofit across Hertfordshire. The next stage has commenced to develop governance to deliver the strategy and oversee the procurement and operations of the one stop shop.

What is being done:

Ellie Nathan will be representing TRDC on the Hertfordshire Retrofit Steering Group. HCCSP have secured £40,000 funding from Hertfordshire Growth Board and have requested £2000 from each local authority to support the first phase. An application is being submitted to the MCS Foundation for further funds to deliver the Strategy.

A priority action for the Steering Group is to recruit an officer to coordinate the delivery of the Retrofit Strategy countywide.

Investment Readiness Service (IRS) Grant – Business Case Creation for the Solar Car Park Canopies

When:

In March 2025 the council were awarded a £75k grant from the Greater South East Net Zero Hub as part of their Investment Readiness Service. The project will complete in March 2026. The business cases are expected – Rose Garden, SOLC and WPLC:

What are we doing:

This project has completed for TRDC with no action on the three car parks as the financial proposition is not strong enough. However they are not forgotten and if the funding landscape changes, particularly for William Penn this will be reviewed. The Net Zero Hub are very pleased with the model created, and have asked Phil Whiting to use the remaining £3,500 to model car parks in Watford. With the model this analysis is not very cheap and quick. If a number of car parks are found to be almost viable, then a joint procurement could bring the costs down considerably. Hence this project will not progress unless significant grant funding becomes available.

SOLC Roof Top Solar:

When: .

Installation 12th-21st January, handover 28th January

What Are We Doing?

- Completed and should have started generating electricity.

Three Rivers House Roof Top Solar

When: Target for installation March '26

What are we doing? Services contract completed, waiting co-signing by TRDC

Next Steps: Waiting for install date confirmation

Cavity Wall Insulation for Three Rivers House and Watersmeet

When: TRH March 2026 to follow the solar PV installation utilising the same scaffolding. Watersmeet – 26-28th January – completed and awaiting signing off by building control.

What are we doing:

The contract with Carbon Rewind, who won the tender for £64,875 has been signed and deposits paid.

Co-ordinating Chiltern Solar and Carbon Rewind for the installation programme for efficiencies on scaffolding and condense disruption.

Funding:

A mix of internal budgets are being used. Our application to the Theatre fund was unsuccessful.

Batchworth Depot Solar Array Extension

When: Approved at Policy and Resources Committee 26th January 2026

What are we doing: Appointing the contractor – date to be set.

we need: Nothing

Energy Plan:

When: Currently and in the coming 6 months

What: Officers are developing an Energy Plan

What are we doing: Still drafting the plan and collating the evidence base into visual outputs.

Environmental Forum

When

Wednesday 18th March – location and time TBC, likely Chorleywood or Abbots Langley at 7pm.

What are we doing?

Theme is due to be transport, supported by our Transport Officer Tom Rankin, based in either Abbots Langley or Chorleywood
Awaiting approval at next Full Council to amend TOR.

Proposed Data Centre and Heat Network

are we doing:

's high level techno-economic feasibility study will complete in April 2026.

Heat Networks

are we doing: Hertfordshire has several key characteristics that make it highly attractive to data centre developers. The Herts Growth Board is going to consider how to manage this strategic opportunity.

Business Solar and Battery Grant

Grant was approved at JLT 6th January 2026, and Policy and Resources Committee 26th January 2026. Grant to launch after Full Council on 25th February 2026.

We propose to launch a grant for SMEs to encourage the installation of solar and batteries. Grant will be up to £3,000 and will require at least 75% match funding from the recipient. We will be targeting the industrial estates, and applicants will be required to complete our business energy survey to help contribute to the Three Rivers Energy Plan. Due diligence will be in place to prevent fraud.
Grant will end to spend up to £50,000 of the climate change budgets, 26/26 and 26/27

Enabling businesses to install renewable energy will improve their energy security, reduce their bills and improve their resilience to future price rises, save carbon, reduce pressure on the grid, and with the battery storage aid the utility companies in flexing the grid. In addition, it should unlock over £200,000 worth of investment in the district which will help support the local economy.

we need: your engagement with the Communications team to sign off the press release and film a short video with James Bagley (Comms) announcing the grant for promotion.

councillors can do: tell and engage with local businesses about this, and let's get the applications coming in.

Solar and Heat Pump campaigns

Start: February 2026

Twin campaigns to promote solar and heat pump installations to residents and businesses, particularly in the able to pay group. Campaign materials are being developed by an external designer, with waste vehicle banners being installed in February, social media images, posters,

logo etc which can be used across the District, and possibly with partners for a fee are to follow. These will target the 'able to pay' and support the actions in the upcoming Energy Plan as well as current Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan.

councillors can do: tell and engage with residents and local local businesses about this.

We Tree and Woodlands (inc Tree Protection)

Tree Protection

- A new TPO to protect trees on land to the east of Oxhey Lane is currently being prepared in response to an outline planning application.

TRDC Tree management

- Ash Die Back – The annual inspection of high priority areas commenced during July 2025. Officers have identified works at fell dead and dying Ash trees at Chorleywood House Estate in the vicinity of the dell and dell pond, and at Carpenters Wood.
- Tree safety inspection of higher risk areas (for inspection on an 18-month cycle) – A local consultancy, Maydencroft, have been appointed to carry out these inspections, due for completion by Feb 2026. Inspections are currently ongoing, to date no urgent safety works have been identified.
- Tree Officers have started the inspection of trees for safety, in lower risk areas of TRDC land (inspected on 36-month cycle) this financial year. A third of areas will be inspected each year to complete the cycle. Inspections are currently ongoing, to date no urgent safety works have been identified.
- Pond Wood, South Oxhey – CMS, working in partnership with TRDC are developing a management plan for Pond Wood in South Oxhey. The public engagement session on-site on the 16th September had very little engagement but was generally supportive. A draft plan for the site has been received and is currently being reviewed by officers. The plan was due to go to March CCL Committee but will now go to June committee to enable enough time for consultation on the draft plan. **No update**
- Woodland management works – Officers are currently planning woodland management works for the winter. Projects include; Sycamore thinning has been postponed to autumn 2026 and hedge laying works are scheduled for February at Leavesden Country Park; hedge laying and hedge restoration works at Carpenters Wood have been completed; Conifer thinning works at Oxhey Woods have been completed. Thinning works at Catamoles Wood, Chorleywood House Estate have begun and are almost complete.
- Standard trees have now been planted across the district and the Miyawaki woodland at South Oxhey Playing Fields has been completed. Small numbers of additional replacements are due be planted in the next few weeks.

River Restoration and Management

Hydrological Study:

When: To be shared within public engagement on wider project

Where: For Rickmansworth Aquadrome.

What it is: The hydrological study helps us understand the movement of water in, across and out of the site.

What it's doing: It will inform design of infrastructure interventions at the site.

The Glade Bridge

When: Feasibility in progress

Where: The Glade, off Riverside Drive, Rickmansworth

What it is: Project to replace a dilapidated pedestrian wooden bridge

What it's doing: The bridge crosses the river facilitating access to and from the canal tow path.

What we're doing about it:

- Following the first planning submission and subsequent objections from the Environment Agency (EA), Officers have sought amended designs from the contractor which would alleviate the EA's concerns.
- Upon receipt of these designs, planning submission will be continued. Once a decision has been reached upon the planning permission and costings are understood for the project further guidance from JLT will be sought.

Biodiversity Policy Update including Biodiversity Duty Reporting

When: Must be published before 26th March 2026

Where: District Wide, the report will be discussed at Full Council

What it is: An update to the Biodiversity Policy adopted in July 2024 Full Council including meeting a legislative obligation of the Environment Act to ensure local authorities have due regard for biodiversity.

- Following its adoption in July 2024, this is an update on the Three Rivers Biodiversity Policy and includes the council's first Strengthened Biodiversity Duty report.
- Biodiversity Duty is a statutory requirement as per the Environment Act. The Government Guidance set the timeline that the first duty report must be published by 26th March 2026. This date is 12 weeks following the completion of the reporting period of 1st January 2026.
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What it's doing: This will include an updated Biodiversity Policy; acknowledgement of the Herts Local Nature Recovery Strategy; reporting on BNG within the District and how the council is considering biodiversity within several strategies/policies.

What we're doing about it: Officers will publish the council's strengthened Biodiversity Duty report following approval by Full Council.

Air pollution and noise pollution

Noise Pollution

Residential Environmental Health continue to see a significant amount of noise and smoke nuisance complaints made by residents to the council. This includes complaints from development/building

sites within the district. Officers will always consider the use of formal enforcement powers, however, in the first instance, Officers will attempt to work with the parties involved to achieve an informal resolution.

It is important to note that whilst the upcoming colder months tend to see a reduction of smoke complaints from residential addresses, this period usually sees an increase in complaints of burning of building waste on constructions sites. Officers will attempt to prioritise these complaints over this period and try to take action quickly on this type of burning.

Future Reports	Committee	Date of Meeting
Environmental Forum Terms of Reference,	CCL	14/01/26
Batchworth Depot Solar Panel Extension	JLT	06/01/26
SME Solar and Battery Grant Proposal	JLT	06/01/26
Batchworth Depot Solar Panel Extension	P&R	26/01/26
SME Solar and Battery Grant Proposal	P&R	26/01/26
Key Meetings		Date of Meeting

William Penn Leisure Centre | Solar PV Performance Update | November 2025

Headlines

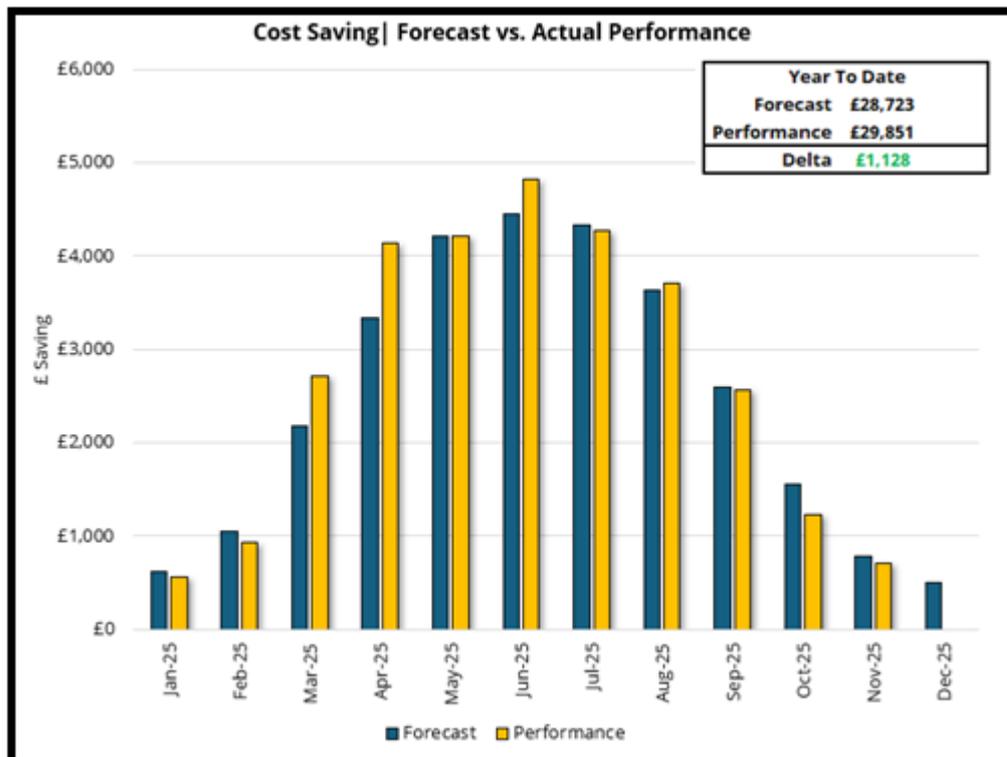
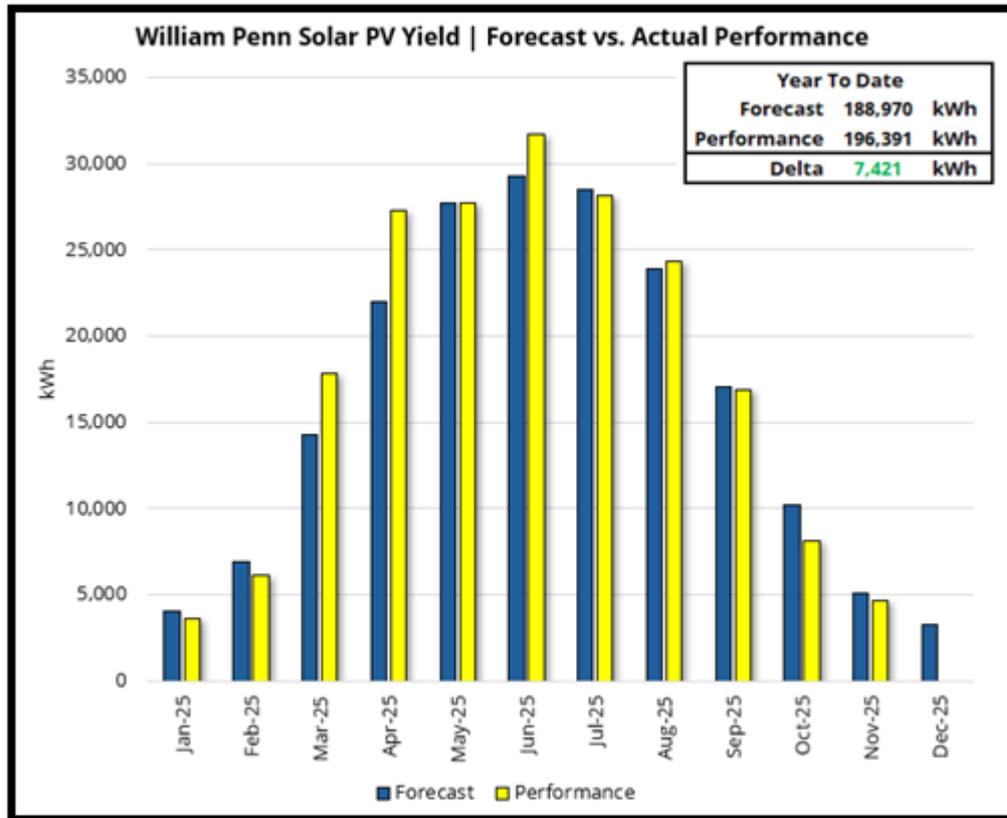
1. The solar PV system has been operational since the 28th of November 2024.
2. Since being switched-on it has generated the following benefits:

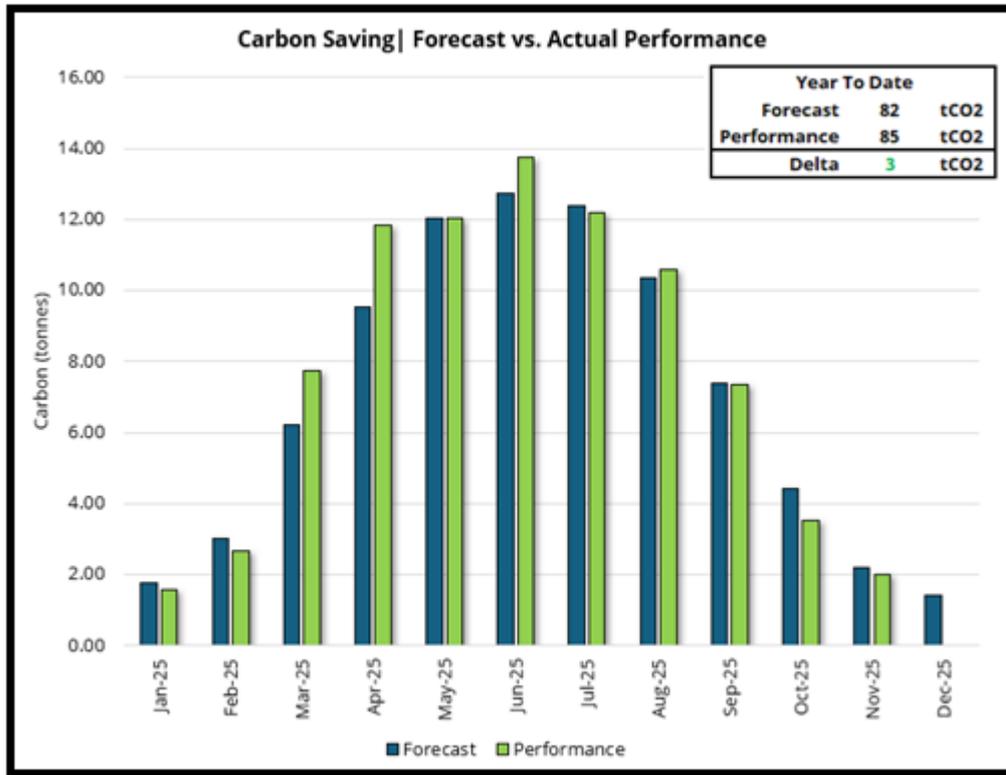
£31,680 saved in electricity costs	
94.97 tonnes of carbon saved	130 equivalent trees planted
199.93 megawatt-hours of electricity generated	70 equivalent homes powered for a year

3. The solar PV system has an embodied carbon footprint of 130 tonnes and the current payback position is 73%.

Actual Performance vs. Forecast | 2025

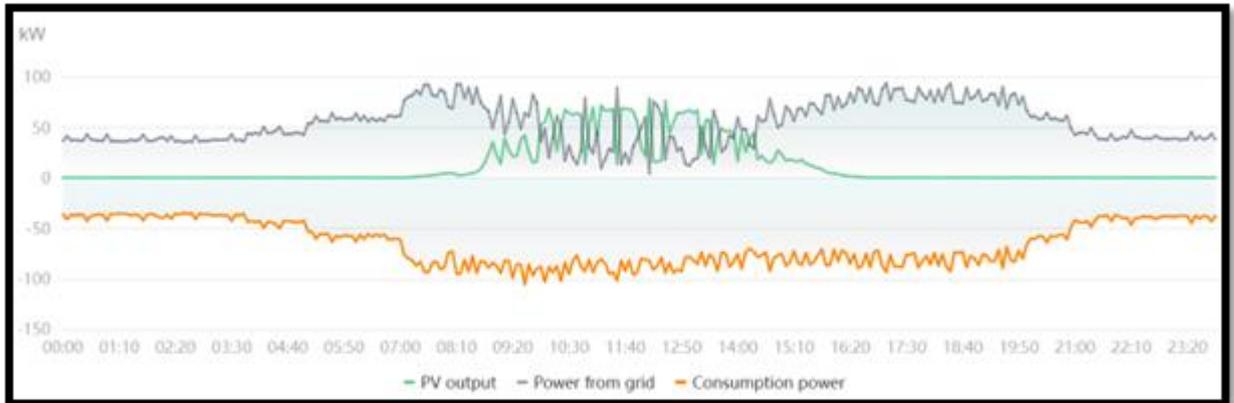
1. After underperforming by -1% in September and -22% in October, the solar PV system underperformed by -10% in November resulting in an overperformance of +4% for 2025 to date.





2. In November the solar PV system provided, on average, 9% of the leisure centres electricity consumption over a 24-hour period, compared with 15% in October.

3. On Sunday the 2nd of November, the solar PV system generated 297 kilowatt-hours of electricity which represented 19% of the leisure centres electricity consumption over a 24-hour period.



Sunday 2nd November 2025

Lead Member report from the Lead Member for Leisure, Councillor Chris Lloyd Watersmeet

Panto:

- Beauty and the Beast panto 2025 sold 15,179 tickets (145 down on previous year, but slightly up on income due to ticket price increase)
- Peter Pan the 2026 panto is on sale with just under 4100 tickets on reserve.
- Panto civic night date will be confirmed soon.

Box office/Marketing:

- The membership scheme has 138 members.

Capital works:

- Electrical Works Contractor has been appointed with works taking place around events. Primary works to be completed by end of March, with additional external works to take place over the next 6 months.
- Fire door replacement contractor has been appointed with works taking place around events and expected to be completed by end of March.
- Cavity wall insulation was successfully installed at Watersmeet during 27-29 January 2026.
- Solar panels on the pitched aspect of Watersmeet roof is not being progressed following based on advice following inspection by structural engineer. Watersmeet already has solar panels on the flat part of the roof.
- Capital investment that will need to be considered in the next 3 years include:
 - Auditorium air conditioning (subject to outcome of survey report)
 - Replacement of motorised theatre access equipment
 - Replacement of theatre sound system, speakers and subs
 - Replacement of stage winch and hemp flying system

Staffing:

- A new staff structure is in place, and we are currently recruiting to the new Theatre Manager position anticipating the person will be in post in April, subject to successful recruitment. The previous General Manager has moved to a new role of Building & Technical Manager as of 1 January 2026.

Leisure Section

Leisure Assets

Open Spaces

Management Plans for 2025/2026

- Croxley Hall Woods Management plan approved
- Prestwick Road Meadows – Report due to go to March committee
- Stone’s Orchard and The Green Management Plan – Approved at Climate Change and Leisure 14th January 2026.
- Scotsbridge – A briefing document has been consulted on . Date for close of consultation 9th January 2026 .

The Glade Bridge

- Work is progressing on the project,

- issues with the EA.
 - They have objected to the planning application
 - Granted permission of the FRAP.
- Officers are currently liaising with planning colleagues on the best course of action
- Scope of the project is currently changing and costs likely to increase.

Leisure Management Contract:

- Worked together with Geo Green Power to install solar panels on South Oxhey Leisure Centre roof. Installation completed in **January**.
- Golfpod driving range for Rickmansworth Golf Course
 - Nearing completion regarding legal work for sub leasing / license arrangements.
 - Golfpod anticipates commencing construction works in March 2026 with 8 weeks required for installation.
- We continue to offer Free Swims and Gym .

Leisure Development

Artistsmeet

- Jan - Mar: Laura Santry (Thursday 19 March, 5.30pm - Closing Reception) <https://yellobelliart.bigcartel.com/about>
- Apr – June: Stephanie Singer (Thursday 9 April, 6pm – Opening Reception)

Play Rangers

- The Play Ranger team are on their winter break returning on Monday 28 February 2026.

Sport and Physical Activity Strategy

Online consultation for residents around activity habits and participation will be available until 18th Jan. As of 9th Jan there have been 71 responses. This will feed into the update of the due to come to committee in June 2026. <https://haveyoursay.threerivers.gov.uk/sport-and-physical-activity-strategy-consultation>

North Pole Safari Christmas Trail

Families enjoyed a free festive adventure throughout December at Rickmansworth Aquadrome and Leavesden Country Park. At Leavesden Country Park 1541 people took part and walked 6,160,001 steps, with the busiest day being 14/12/2025. At Rickmansworth Aquadrome 1337 people took part and walked 5,344,001 steps, with the busiest day being 27/12/2025.

Parkrun

I attended

- Attended South Oxhey 500th Parkrun on 3rd January 2026. 392 people attended – which is a record. Other local Parkruns cancelled due to the weather.
- Attended Hollywell King George V Playing Fields Parkrun started on 24th January 2026
- I will attend the 9th Anniversary of Rickmansworth Parkrun on 7th March 2026.
- Please contact me if you would like to run , jog , walk or volunteer at Parkrun.
- In March I will do my 350th Parkrun and also my 350th Volunteering at Parkrun.

Hertfordshire Community Foundation

I am running the London Marathon and 3 marathons in May for the Hertfordshire Community Foundation who support local charities in Herts.

Capital Programme

Ebury Play Area

Verbal update at the meeting.

Barton Way Play Area refurbishment

Timetable for next steps are:

- Works have started on site and should have complete in early march due to poor weather.
- Thank you to Croxley Green Parish Council for £30,000 funding from their local CIL pot towards the project.

Natural Infrastructure and Projects (cross portfolio with Cllrs Tankard and Nelmes)

Aquadrome Programme

NLHF main application- WWW bid

- Development Phase (£787,315.40) - Officers have successfully reported Q1 and Q2 progress to the National Lottery. This phase will be completed on 31 August 2026
- RSK are now focusing on generating the site wide plans and detailed designs (aka master plan), stakeholder engagement, and the next stage of the Hydrology study.
- The Rickmansworth Aquadrome Site Wide Asbestos Works for the Aquadrome Project- site pick, remediation and services have been awarded to RSK following the tender process.
- The Accessibly Audit was awarded to Accessibility and Inclusion, who have completed a two-day site visit before they present their recommendations.
- Officers continue to work towards submitting the Delivery Phase bid in November 2026 for approximately £4m. If successful, this funding will be confirmed for a start date of March 2027 to April 2030.

Comms

- The Community Engagement officer has begun a series of activities aimed to meet the public. Recent events include a stand at the Aquadrome during each Tuesday in December, Watersmeet Christmas Fair and the Seniors Forum.
- MyNews – January copy covers planning for the woodland path and an introduction to the Community Engagement Officer January drop-in sessions at the Aquadrome on Wednesday afternoons.
- Comms have recently shot a video with Cllr Giles-Medhurst to explain the Development and Delivery phases of the National Lottery project explaining that work will begin on the ground from March 2027.
- The web page is regularly updated and has been moved to a more prominent place on the Parks and Open spaces page.
- The Aquadrome webpages have received 2,896 visits in total from October to early December

Lead Member report for the Lead Member for Community Engagement, Public Safety and Housing, Councillor Steve Drury.

Firstly, many thanks to all the Officers and staff members who contributed to the peer review week. We had some first-class feedback from the review team for all the areas of the Council.

Early in February there was a detailed briefing with Officers within Housing Services with regard to HMOs in the district, due to the ongoing issues that have come forward since the Gade Bank problem. It was agreed that an HMO Licensing Policy will come to a subsequent Policy and Resources Committee that will set out what Officers will consider following any application for an HMO license and will confirm to keep members more aware of applications in their ward. Officers were clear that based upon the current evidence held by the council that an Article 4 direction could not be implemented within the district at this time, however, Officers would keep this under review and take any action if required.

As of 6 February 2026, the Council had 50 households in temporary accommodation, all of whom are within district bar one household, who cannot be housed within Three Rivers for safety reasons.

As of 6 February 2026, the council has 118 homelessness applications and, as of the same date, we have 947 live applications on the council's Housing Register. These figures are lower than in the December report to Council, apart from a small increase (2) in households in temporary accommodation.

The Renters Rights Act implementation dates have been released by central Government and Officers are working through the changes to prepare the council for the additional statutory obligations listed within this legislation. The first of these implementation dates will take place on 1 May 2026, and this will see the abolition of Section 21 'no fault' and Assured Shorthold Tenancies. An Officer report came to JLT on 16 February 2026 setting out these changes, and I will update council if anything further needs reporting.

The Healthy Hubs were singled out by the Peer Review Team as being innovative and a first-class initiative. They were closed over the Christmas period but are now back up and running in South Oxhey, Abbots Langley and Mill End, along with the Health Bus offering help and advice to the public.

With regard to my previous Lead Member Report to Council, the Defibrillator project is almost ready to be rolled out. An agreement with Hearts for Herts is about to be finalised, whereby we will be granting £13k to the charity, who will match this and they will cover the costs of maintenance, installation and bleed kits. They will also run training sessions for the public in the areas where the new defibrillators will be placed.

We are purchasing 10 new units in phase one, and I thank the members who asked for these for their wards. The majority of these will be placed in public locations and I would encourage any Councillors who feel that their ward needs one to get in touch so we can move forward to phase two. I have another briefing on 24th February, if anything comes out of that, I will update verbally.

Following my Lead Member briefing with Housing Services, I had a briefing with the Community Safety team and the Police, where I was updated on issues across the

district. The closure order for Gade Bank was not required to be renewed as there are to be changes to the way the property is to be used. We now have a Litigation officer in post, who has had experience working for the CPS. The crime figures for Three Rivers are still very low, and I thank the Police and our officers for their efforts in maintaining this.

