

Questions from Members 20/10/2026

Full Council
PART I
Questions from Members
(ADCCC)

	Priority One
1.	To the Leader of the Council Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Cheryl Stungo
	What progress has been made on the redevelopment of the Barton Way site in Croxley Green, including the current timetable, and are there any outstanding issues that could delay the scheme?
	Progress is being made across all three key workstreams which need to be completed before redevelopment can begin. Firstly, heads of terms have been agreed in principle with Croxley Green Parish Council for the lease of the new ground floor community space. The Parish Council is now appointing its own external advisers to assist with the preparation of the lease, and both councils will continue to work closely together to finalise the arrangement and ensure it aligns efficiently with the wider build programme. Secondly, positive progress is also being made with Hertfordshire County Council on the surrender and re-grant of the library lease. This is an important element of the scheme, as the revised lease arrangements will enable the release and redesign of the rear car park area, delivering improvements for both the library and the wider redevelopment project. The third key strand relates to the discharge of the planning pre-commencement conditions. Chime Housing, the Council's development partner, is actively progressing the work required to satisfy these conditions and ensure the scheme remains within the planning permission's two-year implementation period. Once the pre-commencement conditions have been formally discharged, the existing building can be demolished and the site transferred to Three Rivers Homes Limited, allowing construction to commence. In terms of timetable, the project remains focused on progressing these enabling activities as quickly as possible so that development can begin following discharge of the planning conditions. At present, there are no significant issues preventing progress; however, completion of the lease arrangements with both Croxley Green Parish Council and Hertfordshire County Council, together with the formal discharge of the planning conditions, remain critical milestones that must be achieved before the scheme can move into the construction phase.
2.	To the Leader of the Council Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Mike Sims
	How much money has been spent actual or accrued thus far on the aborted local government re organisation and can we be assured that this will be funded by central government and not TRDC council taxpayers?

	The financial cost incurred across Hertfordshire on preparing for local government reorganisation is £1.450m so far. On the basis of the decision to implement four unitary authorities in Hertfordshire, the Government allocated funding of approximately £4,518,000 to Hertfordshire. This is made up of £378,000 during the initial submission phase of the programme and £1.035 million per unitary council (consisting of £900,000 per unitary authority to support the transition, plus a minimum of £135,000 per unitary authority to support leadership capacity and continuity and Adults, Children's and public health). The amount of government funding received by the council to date for the LGR programme is £378,000. Three Rivers made provision for reorganisation costs by way of an earmarked reserve. The balance of the reserve stands at £1M with no allocations as yet made from the reserve. You will have seen the recent letter I circulated to all councillors, signed by myself and the other ten Hertfordshire council leaders, calling for Government support in this regard. In particular, we have asked for dedicated Government funding to meet the unavoidable costs of maintaining the Local Government Reorganisation programme, following the Government's decision to pause the process until a date which, at present, remains unknown. Like any other councillor, I do not wish to see resources diverted away from the excellent services provided by Three Rivers District Council in order to fund additional costs arising from this delay.
3.	To the Leader of the Council Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Stephen Cox
	The democratic process and the law requires a declaration in the prescribed form as to election expenses by both the candidate and agent for a District Council Election and candidate only for a Parish Council Election within a limited time period. Why then has Mr Taylor Smith, a candidate in two elections in South Oxhey, failed to adhere to those deadlines in order that filed paperwork may be inspected as is permitted and what has this authority done about its absence?
	Thank you for raising this matter- it is very serious indeed. As I understand this is matter for the Police. The council, in line with legislation will take appropriate action in any case of this nature which ultimately leads to reporting to the police.
4.	To the Leader of the Council Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Debbie Morris
	At the start of the August bank holiday weekend, large swathes of protected ancient woodland were unlawfully destroyed in Eastbury. Local councillors and police were powerless to stop the destruction because of the absence of an out-of-hours service operated by Three Rivers District Council, which could have taken enforcement action or applied for injunctive relief. Many councils in Hertfordshire and throughout the country provide an emergency service to tackle other urgent enforcement issues, but Three Rivers does not. The absence of such a provision puts our public spaces and safety at risk.

	It is well known that unlawful activities such as those just seen usually commence at the start of a weekend – particularly a long weekend – in areas where local authorities do not operate an out-of-hours service. Given this, will Three Rivers set up this out-of-hours service now, or contract to share services with one or more other councils that offer it?
	Senior Officers were made aware of this incident involving the removal of trees and site clearance over the August Bank Holiday weekend. I am aware Police were called to attend the site but unfortunately had no relevant powers in this situation. Immediately following their return to work on Tuesday 1 September both Planning and Tree Officers visited the site to assess and the Forestry Commission were informed. Hertfordshire CC Highways have also been involved but are unable to take any further action around the access point at this time. These types of unlawful activities/works are not common in Three Rivers. This is the 3rd incident of out of hours works in the last 3 years involving tree removal or other unauthorised site incursions. The need for an out of hours enforcement service, given its resource requirement and subsequent cost, is questioned and in any event given what occurred may not have resulted in any immediate action the Council could take. There is currently no budget provision for an out of hours service.
	Priority Two
	To the Lead Member for General Public Services, Councillor Paul Rainbow from Councillor Narinder Sian
	Officers have advised that the main difficulty in tackling unauthorised parking on The Green is not the absence of potential legal powers, but the lack of practical enforcement resources. Could the Lead Member therefore update Council on what options are being explored to help manage the problem, including preventative measures, improved signage, physical measures and working with the Police?
	As you may be aware Leisure and Natural Infrastructure Officers considered a range of options and submitted a CIL bid to Croxley Green Parish Council for composite bollards. This was subsequently rejected by the Parish Council. Stone Boulders were then agreed by the Parish Council. Boulders were installed in the summer of 2025. Following a request from the Parish Council, boulders were removed from the entrance to Providence Hall and Croxley Guild of Sport, Elmcote Way and Copthorne Road – they currently remain outside The Artichoke and The Coach and Horses Public House pending further instruction. Options are being considered, however any physical structure that is installed to prevent parking on The Green will require permission from the Secretary of State through a S38 application and may require planning permission from the Local Planning Authority. In addition, any structure will need to factor in long term maintenance to ensure that it is both environmentally and financially sustainable.

	With regard to alternative measures such as those used in response to anti social behaviour the statutory guidance under the Crime and Policing Act 2026 is that agencies should have evidence that the conduct is genuinely having a detrimental effect on people's quality of life, rather than merely being something, people find annoying. It also cautions against using the power of enforcement including Community Protection Notices to stop behaviour which is not actually causing ASB. The Community Partnerships team have no current complaints with regard to parking on The Green. Police have confirmed that they also have no current issues or concerns with regards to parking at this location.
6.	To the Leader of the Council Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Mike Sims
	What percentage of TRDC employees live in the Three Rivers area and what percentage of their working week thus far in 2026 was spent working from home?
	Our HR system does not hold the data on whether employees live within district or outside of district as this is not a requirement of employment. All employees are covered by the agile working policy that requires employees to be in the office on average one day per week, other than where the nature of the job requires otherwise such as frontline depot employees. Our Agile Working policy is a key recruitment tool that recognises the skills shortage in key areas and the cost of living in district. It has been instrumental in recruiting top performing and highly quality staff for long periods of employment in what is a very competitive market so close to London.
7.	To the Lead Member for Resources, Regeneration and Economic Development, Councillor Louise Price from Councillor Joan King
	Between January 2020 and the September 2024 how many private houses were given planning permission in Three Rivers, likewise how many social rented, affordable and shared ownership properties and further, how many of each tenure have been constructed in that time period?
	During this period there were 1145 dwellings granted planning permission (gross), 248 of those were affordable dwellings. 240 affordable dwellings were completed in total in the same period (data from SmartsHerts): 42 social rented dwellings 137 affordable rented dwellings 3 Intermediate housing dwellings 58 shared equity dwellings
8.	To the Lead Member for Sustainability and Climate Change Councillor Aidan Bentley from Councillor Cooper

	Under section 211 of the Town & Country Planning Act, it is a criminal offence to remove trees in Conservation Areas without first notifying the council and allowing the council the opportunity to place a Tree Preservation Order. Under section 213, there is a duty to replant trees that are removed without prior notification. However, Three Rivers does not enforce this, leading to many cases where trees are illegally removed and not replaced: removing one of the strongest protections that our 22 Conservation Areas have. How long has Three Rivers been failing to implement this statutory requirement and will it now change its practice to enforce this?
	If a tree in a Conservation Area is removed, uprooted or destroyed in contravention of section 211 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the landowner has a duty to plant a replacement tree of an appropriate size and species, in the same place, as soon as they reasonably can. The duty also applies if a tree in a Conservation Area is removed because it is dead or dangerous. The council does take enforcement action where trees in Conservation Area are removed illegally and enforces replanting where this occurs. The protection of trees has not been removed from the district's Conservation Areas. If a tree is removed in contravention of section 211, the council will investigate and take enforcement action, including replanting, where appropriate. In a recent enforcement case pursued by the Council, the owner of The Court on Rickmansworth Road, was fined over £16,000 and replanting is being enforced. The Council also now advises tree owners in writing that the duty to replant applies where a tree in Conservation Area is dead or dangerous, and is removed, and will enforce replanting where appropriate.
	Priority Three
9.	To the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Chris Mitchell
	What progress is being made on the Council's asset transfer programme ahead of Local Government Reorganisation, and what steps are being taken to ensure that agreed community assets can be transferred or secured for the benefit of local communities before the new unitary authority arrangements come into effect?
	The council is working on an Asset Transfer Policy to put in place the principles upon which any scheme would operate. Once this is formally in place the Council will be able to provide feedback on the expressions of interest received from Parish Councils to allow the development of detailed business cases for transfers and the subsequent formal approval route.

10	To the Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Mike Sims
	Mill Stream residents are concerned that officers do not fully understand their concerns regarding the removal of the Bury Weir and the potential loss of water flow leading to the loss of a significant historical and natural resource. This is also a concern leading up to its removal as it has the potential for further failure during the intervening period. Almost all Cllrs from the CCL Committee have had a tour of the Mill Stream and it is vital that relevant officers have the same tour and thus understanding of the Mill Stream. Will the Leader of the council instruct officers to attend a tour as so far they have declined all invitations to do so?
	I understand why residents feel strongly about the Bury Weir and the Mill Stream, and I appreciate the effort that has gone into sharing those concerns. I know that a number of councillors have walked the site with you. Officers have considered the invitations to visit the site and are grateful for them. Based on the information and technical advice available, they are satisfied that they have the information they need at this stage. While they do not currently believe a site visit is necessary, that does not mean residents' concerns are not being listened to. Those concerns continue to form an important part of the Council's consideration of the project. However, I believe it would be appropriate, in due course, once work on the National Lottery bid has been completed, which must remain the focus of officers' attention for the time being, to arrange a dedicated meeting and walkabout with you to ensure that all the issues you have raised have been fully considered. I know officers are satisfied that they have already done so, but it is always sensible to double-check matters where residents have expressed significant concerns. I will therefore ask that such a meeting be arranged at an appropriate time.
11	To the Lead Member for Regulatory Services, Councillor Paul Rainbow from Councillor Stephen Cox
	How content or otherwise is the Lead Member that bin collections have improved at Forfar House and Erskine House, what measures have contributed to any improvement and what else, in anything, remains to be implemented or considered to improve arrangements?
	Whilst there have been some improvements to refuse collection arrangements at Forfar House and Erskine House, I would not consider the position fully resolved at this stage. A number of operational measures have been explored, including parking restrictions intended to improve vehicle access to the service road. Discussions between Council officers and CHIME indicate that there is still no final or agreed solution in place, and further improvements are required. CHIME, as the housing management organisation responsible for the sites, continues to review the arrangements and is providing its own assessment of the current position. Council officers remain engaged with CHIME regarding ongoing access and contamination issues and the impact these have on collection services.

	The Council's waste collection service will continue to work with CHIME, but the long-term effectiveness of the arrangements is dependent on site management issues being addressed and sustainable solutions being implemented by CHIME. There does remain scope for further improvement and discussions are continuing regarding the most appropriate way forward.
12	To the Lead Member for Community Engagement, Public Safety and Housing, Councillor Steve Drury from Councillor Vicky Edwards
	In the first three months of the year, crime in Abbots Langley Parish had fallen 16% compared to the same months in 2025 and fallen by 21% compared to the same months in 2024. However, that trend has completely reversed since Abbots Langley's neighbourhood police were moved to be based in Rickmansworth. In the three months since for which public data is available, crime has instead risen by 16% compared to the same months in 2025 and risen by 19% compared to the same months in 2024. This reversal is even more pronounced for anti-social behaviour, which has doubled compared to pre-move trends. Anti-social behaviour tends to rise when police visibility decreases, as has been the case since our police began to be based in Rickmansworth. Given this, what representations has Three Rivers made to Hertfordshire Constabulary to reverse its decision to centralise all Neighbourhood Policing Teams in a single station for the whole district?
	The Community Safety Partnership meets regularly to work together on joint initiatives in Three Rivers, including anti-social behaviour which is one of the priorities. Our Anti-Social Behaviour Action Group also meets bi-monthly to work in partnership on cases of ASB. If residents are experiencing anti-social behaviour, it can be reported directly to Three Rivers District Council. Reports can be made using the Council's online ASB reporting form which is a trusted channel for reporting. In addition one of our officers attends most daily morning briefings so they are aware of any emerging issues and will raise any issues brought to their attention with senior Police Officers. We have recently launched a new ASB reporting app. This can help officers build a comprehensive picture of ongoing issues, identify recurring patterns of behaviour and gather evidence that may support informal interventions or, where appropriate, formal enforcement action. There is also a range of useful information available to residents through the Three Rivers District Council – ASB Toolkit. While there has been an increase in recorded ASB between April and June 2026, this should be viewed in the context of longer-term trends, as crime levels remain broadly consistent with those recorded in the same months in previous years. Council officers continue to work closely with Hertfordshire Constabulary to address issues as they arise, with trends and any necessary action or preventative work discussed through the Community Safety Coordinating Group.

	Three Rivers remains a safe place to live and has one of the lowest crime rates within the county and the country. We continue to work with the police and operational matters are dealt with by Hertfordshire Constabulary. The Chief Inspector committed to give an update on the changes in Policing arrangements for the Abbots area at the Abbots Local Area Forum on 13th October. At the time drafting this answer that meeting has not taken place. As always, I will raise any concerns with the Chief Inspector.
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