

Minutes of the Meeting of **FULL COUNCIL** held at Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth on **Tuesday 21 February 2023** from 7.30pm to 10.33pm

Present:

Councillors Debbie Morris (Chair), Kate Turner (Vice Chair), Sara Bedford, Ruth Clark, David Coltman, Stephen Cox, Steve Drury, Andrea Fraser, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Philip Hearn, Tony Humphreys, Joan King, Stephen King, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Shanti Maru, Keith Martin, Abbas Merali, Chris Mitchell, Sarah Nelmes, Kevin Raeburn, Paul Rainbow, Reena Ranger OBE, David Raw, Ciaran Reed, Andrew Scarth, Roger Seabourne, Jon Tankard, Kate Turner, Alison Wall, Phil Williams and Anne Winter.

CL78/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Matthew Bedford, Rue Grewal, Lisa Hudson, Khalid Hussain, Raj Khuroya, Stephanie Singer, Dominic Sokalski and Martin Trevett

CL79/22 The Chair announced that under Rule 6(2) they had agreed to consider the Part II confidential item 1 – Report on Notley Farm - after item 14. As the Chair they had the authority to do this.

CL80/22 MINUTES

Councillor Stephen Cox moved, seconded by Councillor Ciaran Reed the following amendments to the minutes:

11gg supplementary question:

“Can the Lead member demonstrate mastery of their brief and advise what action was or will be taken in respect of the fact that neither Rickmansworth Town Ward or South Oxhey Ward hit the 92% target and does the Lead Member think that 340 non-responding properties is too many in South Oxhey Ward. What commitment will the Lead Member give that this will be addressed by officers or will I have to go around the streets of South Oxhey to drum up support?”

11 dd supplementary question:

“Can the Lead Member demonstrate mastery of their brief and advise how many of the 12 licenses cover vehicles or drivers who operate from the rank at Carpenders Park station and is the Lead Member aware that they have raised the current rent for their very small office and toilet by £1,000 a year.”

Minute CL70/22

Amend relevant paragraph to:

“Councillor Ciaran Reed moved, seconded by Councillor Philip Hearn, an amendment to the recommendation that the number of Lead Members be reduced from 7 to 5. The Councillors were advised by officers that this would be acceptable. A Member questioned whether this was allowed by the constitution as Lead Member roles are defined in the Council’s Constitution.

Councillor Ciaran Reed was asked to clarify the proposals and which Lead Member roles would be removed out of the 7 and which Lead Members would take on these roles out of the 5 remaining Lead Members. Councillor Ciaran Reed clarified two semi-colons could be removed from Part 6 of the constitution, 8, with the one after 'Leisure' and the one 'Economic Development' to merge 4 roles into 2, with the relevant responsibilities being merged as well. Councillor Ciaran Reed was advised by officers that this would be acceptable as Full Council can change the constitution. A Member questioned officer advice, claiming that constitutional changes required more than an amendment of a report on Member Allowances to be made. Officers corrected the advice to Councillor Ciaran Reed to inform him that the amendment could not be accepted."

e) CIL Spending Applications

Councillor Ciaran Reed was in favour of the proposals. He understood the reasons for the South Oxhey Playing Fields as explained at Policy and Resources Committee but had concerns about the Denham Way Playing Area with the application making a distinction between pre-works and works. The works according to the CIL form completed were due to have started in April but as a result the delay had cost a significant amount of money. Councillor Ciaran Reed asked why works were not started in May and who was responsible for the delay and overspend. Councillor Ciaran Reed emphasised that he had asked these questions previously at the Policy and Resources Committee.

On being put to Council the motion to amend the minutes was declared LOST the voting being 14 For, 17 Against and 0 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 13 December 2022 as presented to Council were signed by the Chair.

CL81/22 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair announced that she had hosted the Holocaust Memorial event on 27 January. The flag was raised in the morning and 75 guests attended the Holocaust Memorial Day event including three MP's who represent Three Rivers. The Chair wished to thank all who came, the Committee Team, Communications Team and IT department who helped to ensure the event ran smoothly.

There will be an event for prospective volunteers tomorrow morning at Moor Park Golf club to raise money and increase awareness for my charity this year 'Pets as Therapy'.

The Big Quiz Night is also coming up on 4th March at Watersmeet which has now sold out.

CL82/22 RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 18

There were none.

CL83/22 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 15

There were none.

CL84/22 FINANCIAL PLANNING

Councillor Keith Martin moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, the recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor Keith Martin advised that the Council continued to provide vital services to residents, businesses and not for profit organisations in the District. This budget continued to achieve this with the increase in Council Tax being less than 2p a day for a Band D equivalent property in the District. It was a statutory requirement for Local Authorities to produce and approve a budget. The Budget had been assessed by Director of Finance and they were satisfied that the Council would have the funds to achieve the objectives set out in the budget.

The Council would continue to seek cost efficiency. There were a number of shared services with Watford Borough Council and, in addition, from 2024/25 Three Rivers would be joining a fuel purchasing consortium with other Hertfordshire Authorities which would save approximately £100,000 a year. There had been 3 main factors which had impacted on the Council's budget for 2023/24, these were:

- Covid
- War in Ukraine
- External political environment – political instability during 2022

The business pooling rate agreement passed in December, but the government had changed the details and the benefits of being in the pool were not provided to the Council and we were likely to lose £200,000.

Councillor Abbas Merali had concerns about the budget increase on the capital expenditure for 2022/2023.

Councillor Chris Mitchell asked about garden waste and why Three Rivers were making £300,000 from this as previously they were advised it was a cost neutral service.

Councillor Chris Lloyd advised that even with the budget constraints Three Rivers were still looking to be spending money on children's play areas and continue to support the Citizens Advice Bureau.

Councillor Phil Williams advised that Three Rivers was one of the best in the Country around environmental issues. With regards to the bins there were figures available.

Councillor Paul Rainbow thanked Officers and Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services on the budget proposals. Work had commenced on the canal towpath which would connect into Dacorum and make a great visitor attraction for the area.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst advised that the budget did show income for the green waste as there was a charge for the service. However, the income did not exceed the cost of running the service as it was running with a deficit. The Councillor discussed the services that were being provided including a shopper on demand bus, canal path improvements, highway improvements and the tree planting scheme were just some of the initiatives funded by the authority.

On being put to the Council the motion on the financial planning was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council, the voting being 17 For; 0 Against and 14 Abstentions.

In accordance with budget setting legislation and Council Procedure Rule 17 a recorded vote was undertaken, the details of which were as follows:

For: Councillors Sara Bedford, Ruth Clark, Steve Drury, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Tony Humphreys, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Sarah Nelmes, Kevin Raeburn, Paul Rainbow, Andrew Scarth, Roger Seabourne, Jon Tankard, Kate Turner, Phil Williams and Anne Winter.

Against: Zero

Abstentions: Councillors David Coltman, Stephen Cox, Andrea Fraser, Philip Hearn, Joan King, Stephen King, Shanti Maru, Abbas Merali, Chris Mitchell, Debbie Morris, Reena Ranger OBE, David Raw, Ciaran Reed and Alison Wall

RESOLVED:

- a) That the 2022/23 revised estimates for the revenue account be agreed giving a balance on the general fund at 31 March 2023 of £3,986,864 (Annex A Appendix 1).
- b) That the draft revenue estimates in respect of the revenue account for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026, subject to the changes agreed, be approved.
- c) That it be noted that £2,000,000 be considered as a prudent minimum balance for the general fund.
- d) That the financial and budgetary risks be agreed and their management monitored by the Audit Committee.
- e) That the existing Council Tax Reduction Scheme is continued for 2023/24 and updated for legislative changes.
- f) That the total capital strategy and investment programme for 2023/24 be agreed at £3,096,420.
- g) That the arrangements for funding the 2023/26 capital strategy and investment programme resulting in an estimated balance of capital resources at 31 March 2026 of £2,759,047 be agreed.
- h) That the Council notes the capital funding available and approves the Policy and Resources Committee's allocation of funds for the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2026
- i) That the Treasury Management Strategy Statement 2023/24 be approved
- j) That the Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement 2023/24 be approved.
- k) That the Council notes the Director of Finance's advice on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the financial reserves.

CL85/22 SPECIAL EXPENSES 2023/24

Councillor Keith Martin moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, the recommendations as set out in the report. Details on special expenses were explained to Members.

Councillor Ciaran Reed raised a concern regarding the allocation of the Aquadrome and Watersmeet and if this had been fairly allocated to the residents of Batchworth.

Councillor Chris Mitchell said that the Special expenses were on the same line as the Parish Council precept and asked if this could be separated this year.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said that the special expenses for Batchworth had been explained at previous meetings but re iterated the reasons for this for the benefit of Members.

Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services agreed to provide a written response to Councillors Chris Mitchell and Andrea Fraser on whether Special Expenses could be provided separately on the Council Tax Bills.

Response provided after the meeting:

Yes, we are able to show the special expenses on a separate line on the 2023/24 annual Council Tax notices.

On being put to the Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council, the voting being 17 For; 0 Against and 14 Abstentions.

In accordance with budget setting legislation and Council Procedure Rule 17 a recorded vote was undertaken, the details of which were as follows:

For: Councillors Sara Bedford, Ruth Clark, Steve Drury, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Tony Humphreys, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Sarah Nelmes, Kevin Raeburn, Paul Rainbow, Andrew Scarth, Roger Seabourne, Jon Tankard, Kate Turner, Phil Williams and Anne Winter.

Against: Zero

Abstentions: Councillors David Coltman, Stephen Cox, Andrea Fraser, Philip Hearn, Joan King, Stephen King, Shanti Maru, Abbas Merali, Chris Mitchell, Debbie Morris, Reena Ranger OBE, David Raw, Ciaran Reed and Alison Wall

RESOLVED:

Confirmed that it will apply the following resolution for special and general expenses for 2023/24:

that the following functions being either those provided equally across the district or incurring minimal expenditure be declared general expenses:-

- allotments;
- litter, salt and dog bins;
- highways, trees and roadside verges;
- seats and shelters;
- youth centres;

- crime prevention;
- land drainage;
- footpath maintenance;
- footpath lighting;
- community arts;
- off-street car park maintenance;
- street naming;
- Dial-A-Ride;
- play-schemes
- cemeteries
- YMCA Woodlands building in Abbots Langley
- The Centre, South Oxhey

that the following functions are declared special expenses:-

- **Woodlands** (apportioned on the basis of acreage) including the ranger at Leavesden Open Space and 50% of the Arboriculture and Landscape Officers' costs
- **Community halls** (including apportionment of Oxhey Hall);
- **Playing fields and open spaces** (excluding water-based activities and maintenance met from commuted sums); based on the Grounds Maintenance contract.
- **Aquadrome** Treated as 50% general expense and 50% special expense apportioned to the Batchworth Community Council.
- **Watersmeet** (all costs except the pantomime charged to the unparished area and Batchworth Community Council as a community hall. The pantomime is treated as a general expense).

CL86/22 COUNCIL TAX – DISTRICT ELEMENT

Councillor Keith Martin moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, the recommendations as set out in the report.

The report explained that the District element of the council tax had been calculated in compliance with relevant legislation.

On being put to the Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council, the voting being 18 For; 0 Against and 13 Abstentions.

In accordance with budget setting legislation and Council Procedure Rule 17 a recorded vote was undertaken, the details of which were as follows:

For: Councillors Sara Bedford, Ruth Clark, Steve Drury, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Tony Humphreys, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Chris Mitchell, Sarah Nelmes, Kevin Raeburn, Paul Rainbow, Andrew Scarth, Roger Seabourne, Jon Tankard, Kate Turner, Phil Williams and Anne Winter.

Against: Zero

Abstentions: Councillors David Coltman, Stephen Cox, Andrea Fraser, Philip Hearn, Joan King, Stephen King, Shanti Maru, Abbas Merali, Debbie Morris, Reena Ranger OBE, David Raw, Ciaran Reed and Alison Wall

RESOLVED:

That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2023/24, in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

- (a) £52,827,695 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by parish councils.
- (b) £42,747,393 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
- (c) £10,080,302 being the amount by which the aggregate (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above.
- (d) £254.91 being the amount at (c) above divided by the council tax base, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including parish precepts).
- (e) £3,536,749 being the aggregate amount of all special items (parish precepts and special expenses)
- (f) £165.47 being the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of the area to which no special item relates.

(g)

Parts of the Council's Area	£
Abbots Langley	274.53
Batchworth	254.60
Chorleywood	265.15
Croxley Green	248.36
Sarratt	261.89
Watford Rural	236.47
Unparished	238.20

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at (f) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to the dwellings in those parts of the Council's area listed above divided by the council tax base, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(h)

Parts of the Council's Area	Valuation Band							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Abbots Langley	183.02	213.52	244.03	274.53	335.54	396.54	457.55	549.06
Batchworth	169.73	198.02	226.31	254.60	311.18	367.76	424.33	509.20
Chorleywood	176.77	206.23	235.69	265.15	324.07	382.99	441.92	530.30
Croxley Green	165.57	193.17	220.76	248.36	303.55	358.74	413.93	496.72

Sarratt	174.59	203.69	232.79	261.89	320.09	378.29	436.48	523.78
Watford Rural	157.65	183.92	210.20	236.47	289.02	341.57	394.12	472.94
Unparished	158.80	185.27	211.73	238.20	291.13	344.07	397.00	476.40

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at (g) above by the proportion in paragraph 3.7.

CL87/22 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX

Councillor Keith Martin moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, the recommendations as set out in the report.

On being put to the Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council, the voting being 31 For; 0 Against and 0 Abstentions.

In accordance with budget setting legislation and Council Procedure Rule 17 a recorded vote was undertaken, the details of which were as follows:

For: Councillors Sara Bedford, Ruth Clark, David Coltman, Stephen Cox, Steve Drury, Andrea Fraser, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Philip Hearn, Tony Humphreys, Joan King, Stephen King, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Shanti Maru, Abbas Merali, Chris Mitchell, Debbie Morris, Sarah Nelmes, Kevin Raeburn, Paul Rainbow, Reena Ranger OBE, David Raw, Ciaran Reed, Andrew Scarth, Roger Seabourne, Jon Tankard, Kate Turner, Alison Wall, Phil Williams and Anne Winter.

Against: Zero

Abstentions: Zero

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that for the year 2023/24 the Hertfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwelling shown below:-

Precepting Authority	Valuation Band							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Hertfordshire County Council	929.57	1,084.50	1,239.43	1,394.36	1,704.22	2,014.08	2,323.93	2,788.72
Hertfordshire County Council Adult Social Care	140.85	164.32	187.80	211.27	258.22	305.17	352.12	422.54
Police & Crime Commissioner	158.67	185.11	211.56	238.00	290.89	343.78	396.67	476.00
Total	1,229.09	1,433.93	1,638.79	1,843.63	2,253.33	2,663.03	3,072.72	3,687.26

That, having calculated the aggregate in each case the Council in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the

following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2023/24 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Parts of the Council's Area	Valuation Band & Charges							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Abbots Langley	1,412.11	1,647.45	1,882.82	2,118.16	2,588.87	3,059.57	3,530.27	4,236.32
Batchworth	1,398.82	1,631.95	1,865.10	2,098.23	2,564.51	3,030.79	3,497.05	4,196.46
Chorleywood	1,405.86	1,640.16	1,874.48	2,108.78	2,577.40	3,046.02	3,514.64	4,217.56
Croxley Green	1,394.66	1,627.10	1,859.55	2,091.99	2,556.88	3,021.77	3,486.65	4,183.98
Sarratt	1,403.68	1,637.62	1,871.58	2,105.52	2,573.42	3,041.32	3,509.20	4,211.04
Watford Rural	1,386.74	1,617.85	1,848.99	2,080.10	2,542.35	3,004.60	3,466.84	4,160.20
Unparished	1,387.89	1,619.20	1,850.52	2,081.83	2,544.46	3,007.10	3,469.72	4,163.66

CL88/22 STRATEGIC CORPORATE AND SERVICE PLANNING 2023-2026

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Phil Williams, the recommendations as set out in the report.

Councillor Ciaran Reed moved, seconded by Councillor Philip Hearn, an amendment to the motion – provided as an appendix to the minutes.

On being put to Council the amended motion was declared LOST by the Chair of Council the voting being 10 For, 21 Against and 0 Abstentions.

On being put to Council the original motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being 21 For, 0 Against and 10 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

Agreed the Corporate Framework 2023-26 and its supporting service plans.

CL89/22 COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2023/24

Councillor Keith Martin moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes the agreement of the Pay Policy Statement.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council agreed to provide a written answer to Councillor Chris Mitchell on whether the lowest paid people would get the planned staff pay increase of 2%.

Response provided after the meeting:

TRDC employees are all paid in-line with the NJC.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

Agreed the Council pay policy statement.

CL90/22 LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst the recommendations as set out in the report.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

1. Approved in principle the entering of the Memorandum of Understanding with Government to obtain LAHF Funding.
2. Delegated to Policy & Resources the agreement of the detailed business cases and the final structure of the bid and agreement of any associated arrangements.
3. Approved the match funding required subject to Policy and Resources agreement of the detailed business case and delegate to Policy and Resources Committee the decision on the final level of match funding subject to the final business case showing the project is cost neutral to the Council.

CL91/22 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING ON 23 JANUARY 2023 ON THE LOCAL PLAN

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes the recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee on the Local Plan.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said this related to Regulation 18 sites for removal. Although originally proposed the sites were no longer available.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

1. Agreed the sites to be removed from the Regulation 18 Sites for Potential Allocation with the addition of the garages at the rear of the Dick Whittington public house in South Oxhey.
2. Agreed the revised dwelling capacities of the Regulation 18 Sites for Potential Allocation
3. That only the sites proposed for removal be made public as agreed by P&R Committee following their meeting on 23 January 2023.
4. The remainder of the report not be made public until publication of the draft Local Plan.

CL92/22 APPOINTMENT OF MONITORING OFFICER

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, the recommendations as set out in the report.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

1. Agreed the appointment of Mr Stephen Rix as Monitoring Officer from 22 May 2023.
2. Agreed that any reference to Solicitor to the Council in the Council Constitution be amended to Chief Legal Officer.

CL93/22 EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair moved, seconded by the Vice Chair, the following motion:

If the Council wished to consider the item in private, it will be appropriate for a resolution to be passed in the following terms:-

“that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being by general assent.

RESOLVED:

Moved into Part ii business.

CL93/22 NOTLEY FARM

This report detailed the Proposed Option Agreement for Council owned land in Abbots Langley.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved, duly seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes the recommendation as set out in the report.

Councillors Reed and Mitchell spoke on the motion.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being by general assent.

RESOLVED:

1. TRDC, as landowner, enters into negotiations with the Land Promoter to agree the most advantageous terms to the Council and its residents for an Option Agreement in connection with the proposed Notley Farm development.
2. Once the negotiations have been concluded, it is further recommended that the final agreed terms for the Option Agreement are presented to Full Council for consideration and approval.
3. That public access to the report be denied until the Option Agreement is concluded.
4. That public access to the decision be denied until Council minutes publication.

Council moved back to the Part i business.

CL94/22 ANNUAL REPORT ON AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

The annual report on amendments to the Council Constitution was received to Council.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

CL95/22 QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER, LEAD MEMBERS, CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES AND REPORTS FROM THE CHAIRS OF THE COMMITTEES AND QUESTIONS ON THE CHAIRS REPORTS

Questions to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council, from Councillor Sara Bedford

16a) As Councillors should be local champions for their communities, can the Council please ensure that all Councillors elected for an area are informed when a major incident or issue occurs, not simply the Lead Members?

Written response: *In accordance with the Council's Emergency Plan, if a major incident is declared or an event occurs, the Leader of the Council, Group Leaders, relevant Lead Members and relevant Ward Members will be informed. If this has not occurred for a particular incident or event, please do let me know and I will find out why not.*

Supplementary question:

Does the Leader agree that information regarding incidents should be shared with Ward Members?

Supplementary response:

Relevant Lead Members and Ward Members should be informed of any major incidents.

16b) *Why was the wreath-laying protocol vastly extended beyond its previous simple guides to preventing unseemly arguments over which Councillor laid the wreath?*

Written response:

The protocol was amended in 2022 in order to make it clear that it related to the laying of wreaths at Remembrance Sunday services and added schools and removed reference to CofE places of worship. Any community group organising a remembrance event and wishing to have a Councillor lay a wreath on behalf of officers and members could approach the Council to ask for it to be added to the list and such a request will be considered at a further review of the protocol and brought to P&R well in advance of November.

16c) *Will the Council look to amend the wreath-laying protocol to ensure that all places of worship and community venues are treated equally, and that those who are asked by community groups to lay wreathes on behalf of the residents of Three Rivers are able to do so?*

Written response:

I think the answer to the previous question covers this, and yes, if within the protocol then in place.

Supplementary question:

Will the Leader ensure that all Members have input into the protocol?

Supplementary response:

Yes Members will be able to give input.

Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council, from Councillor Ciaran Reed

16d) In light of evidence uncovered under an FOI, would the Leader of the Council agree that she has responsibility for presiding over a culture where elected members can be misled or provided with incorrect information? If the Leader of the Council does not have responsibility, then who does?

Written response:

I absolutely disagree that there is any such culture in this Council. I would refer you to the officer/member protocol on this matter and will not make any further comment.

No supplementary question

Question to Councillor Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development, from Councillor Reena Ranger

16e) The residents of Sandy Lodge Way have been asking for two years for the parking restrictions in The London Borough of Hillingdon section of the road (1 hour parking restriction) to be replicated in the Three Rivers section. This council's convoluted consultation questions and processes have left our residents and ward councillors frustrated and this simple request still seems out of reach. Does the lead member find these delays acceptable and what must our residents and ward councillors do to have this request realised?

Written response:

Statutory processes have to be followed in the investigation and implementation of any parking scheme and associated Traffic Regulation Orders. This does require significant consultation with the public and Members, and a number of varying and often opposing views are received which the Officers have to explore prior to determining if a final scheme is delivered.

With specific regard to the Sandy Lodge Way parking scheme the initial response rate was low but Officers extended the consultation period, as requested by Members from March to November 2022, to ensure a robust consultation.

Ward members were written to the again 11 January with the full details of the extended consultation and asked to reply. One ward member said they and others could not reply until the end of January. Ward members were again contacted on 1 February for their views. With no replies they were again written to the 7 February but have still not replied to the full details sent to them on the 11 January. They have now suggested a further different consultation which if carried out will delay any scheme and have to wait until those in the pipeline that have been consulted on and agreed by ward members are implemented. Officer spoke to a Local Ward member on 10

February who agreed to the progression of Sandy Lodge Way parking scheme with external consultants to next stage.

As with other current parking schemes, work has had to be rescheduled due to workloads and other priorities and with the recent departure of the Senior Transport Officer. Notwithstanding this, Officers are currently reviewing the Transport and Parking Projects team work streams and priorities and are investigating how the schemes can be delivered. The post has been advertised and had no suitably qualified experienced candidates to date. Members will be updated as appropriate.

No supplementary question

Question to Councillor Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development, from Councillor Rue Grewal

16f) The latest statistics show that Three Rivers is one of just three Councils in England where the number of public electric vehicle charge points has fallen in the last three years. This is despite the City of Westminster installing 1,300 in that time. Here in Hertfordshire, Welwyn Hatfield has installed 130. Given that nine-fold increase in Welwyn Hatfield, how does the lead member justify his record of reducing the number of charge points in Three Rivers and will he retract his claim that this is due to Hertfordshire County Council's policies

Written response:

TRDC has NOT reduced the number of charging points in Three Rivers and the member is misinformed and incorrect.

There is an uneven geographical distribution of charging devices within the UK and this is not something which is always within the Council's control. Most of the provision of this infrastructure has been market-led, with individual charging networks and other businesses (such as hotels) rather than the Council, choosing where to install devices. Indeed in the last few years a number of providers, including in Three Rivers who originally installed charges have since gone out of business leading in some places to reductions of EV points.

Further it is acknowledged in the government published statistics that there are limitations to the accuracy of the figures in that they are sourced from "zapmap," represent only devices reported as operational at midnight on a given day and cover 95% (not 100%) of publicly accessible devices. The total count of charging devices in the UK (when accounting for privately installed devices) will therefore be higher and we have no way of assessing whether data coverage is better in some geographical areas than others.

That said, it is acknowledged that there is still much work to be done in the District in this area and we continue to work with our colleagues at the County Council who as the Highway Authority have responsibility for on-street charging. It is notable that the County Council's emerging objectives with regards to their EV strategy lean heavily to the promotion of charging at destinations rather than on-street charging, with on-street charging allowed only in exceptional circumstances. Whilst there is a clause in the Department for Transport's ORCS (On street residential charging scheme) funding for off street (car park) charging, there are very specific criteria for this which mean our own Council Car parks are ineligible for these funds. Once the final HCC

Strategy is published, District Councils including Three Rivers, will be in a better position to consider whether the County's approach addresses local need.

What is clear is that HCC has taken a very long time to agree a county wide strategy and has been discussing this since June 2021. The last version of this was presented to County Councillors on 1 November 2022 and the final version as at the now has still not been adopted by HCC and HCC has confirmed at the Highways & Transport Panel on 31 January that it still not sort to undertake a procurement exercise for this that TRDC might be able to opt into to secure on-road charging points, something a lot of our residents want but we cannot progress without HCC approved and adoption of its policies so the delay in that area rest firmly with HCC.

If there are opportunities for a District Council to apply for funding we will consider it.

Supplementary question provided after the meeting which the Chair advised at the meeting would be allowed:

Has this Council ever discussed this matter with the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles or the Energy Saving Trust? Or is the Lead Member simply content to pass up hundreds of thousands of pounds?

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

The Senior Transport Planning Officer, previously in post, was known to have had extensive discussions with the EST specifically around the current EV project, and the Head of Service believes these conversations were also held regularly with OZEV (and its predecessor). We are also in conversation with HCC and other experts on this matter.

Question to Councillor Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development, from Councillor Andrea Fraser

16g) Can you please confirm the commitment to maintain 1 hour free parking in Rickmansworth?

Written response:

The District Council will continue to provide the 1 hour free parking to shoppers to ensure in Rickmansworth that the short-stay car parks are well used and help support local business. As I and other Lead Members have told Council several times before, the 1 hour free parking with just £1 for the second hour means that TRDC remains one of the cheapest, if not the cheapest in Herts and the country, for shopper parking where we do charge to encourage turnover and prevent all day parking.

No supplementary question

Question for Cllr Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Cllr Chris Mitchell

16h) A public consultation was carried out, in July 2022, on the views of the parking which were brought in during 2020 in Croxley Green. The officer in charge has now left the council so can you please confirm when the feedback will be given to the residents?

Written response:

Members were sent the draft report in October, as is the norm, for comment. The results were positive with most support the scheme with a few minor adjustments required. The detailed changes to regulations is being prepared and this will be issued as soon as resources allow.

As with other current parking schemes, work has been delayed and, with the recent departure of the Senior Transport Officer there is no confirmed delivery date of this parking scheme. Officers are currently looking at how the schemes can be delivered and will update members as appropriate.

Supplementary question:

Please could you give a date as to when there will be an update?

Supplementary response:

During the next few weeks there will be a consultation and this one is very close to being concluded.

Question for Cllr Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Cllr Joan King

16i) Can the Leader Member demonstrate mastery of their brief by advising the date by which desperately needed double yellow lines will be installed at road junctions in Oxhey Drive and whether any further consultation is required and note that a supplementary question will demonstrate that the member has not addressed the matter satisfactorily?

Written response:

As already noted work has had to be rescheduled due to workloads and other priorities, and with the recent department of the Senior Transport Officer there is no confirmed delivery date of this parking scheme. Officers are currently looking at how the schemes can be delivered and will update members as soon as possible. We are seeking to engage external consultants to progress this and other projects to enable delivery as soon as possible.

Supplementary question:

Can you provide a date as to when the yellow lines will be installed?

Supplementary response:

The Officers are dealing with this directly and it is at the top of the list. A firm date cannot be given at present.

Question for Cllr Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Cllr Stephen Cox

16j) Can the Leader Member demonstrate mastery of their brief by advising the date by which consultation will be concluded on proposals for waiting restrictions and a residents only parking outside The South Oxhey Leisure Centre scheme in Gosforth Lane and Otley Way will be concluded and note that a supplementary question will demonstrate that the member has not addressed the matter satisfactorily?

Written response:

As already noted work has had to be rescheduled due to workloads and other priorities, and with the recent department of the Senior Transport Officer there

is no confirmed delivery date of this parking scheme. Officers are currently looking at how the schemes can be delivered and will update members as soon as possible. We are seeking to engage external consultants to progress this and other projects to enable delivery as soon as possible.

Supplementary question:

Does the Lead Member accept that this scheme and the one for Oxhey Drive are top priorities?

Supplementary response:

Yes they are top priority and top of the list.

Question for Cllr Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Cllr Stephen Cox

16k) Can the Leader Member demonstrate mastery of their brief by advising the date by which new parking bays will be installed in Birstall Green and Ballater Close and the reason for the delay and note that a supplementary question will demonstrate that the member has not addressed the matter satisfactorily?

Written response:

The verge hardening works are expected to commence in February, as advised by the contractor. This is as programmed as part of the Verge Hardening Programme.

No supplementary question.

Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Sarah Nelmes

16l) Has the Lead Member for Planning Policy had as chance to consider what was in consultation on national planning policy issued on December 22 and what the Council will be required to respond to by 2nd March?

Written response:

I have received an initial briefing from officers on the consultation's contents. Officers are currently working on a response to the consultation to be shared with the Lead Member for Planning Policy prior to being discussed at Local Plan Sub-Committee on the 28 February. Following on from the 28 February Local Plan Sub-Committee final amendments will be made by officers before the response is submitted to the Government.

I have to say there are several aspects that concern me given the headlines promoted by some about both the abolition of "mandatory" housing targets and the protection of the Green Belt.

There is suggested new wording in para 142 "Green Belt boundaries are not required to be reviewed and altered if this would be the only means of meeting the objectively assessed need for housing over the plan period." If we take the proposed NPPF wording at face value: the objectively-assessed housing need is not changed, still based on 2014 calculation but once we have done everything we can in terms of urban land, density, building on top of commercial buildings etc., we are not required to go into Green Belt.

But as far as I can see there is no change to the wording in new para 61 which says that any alternative calculation of housing need must (a) be based on exceptional circumstances (which does "not" include being forced to use Green Belt - that is not exceptional) and (b) "should also reflect current and future demographic trends and market signals" – the 'market signals' bit means we have to consider not only demand from within Three Rivers but also the fact that many people currently want to live in Three Rivers but cannot afford to - that means I suspect any calculation officers will do could end up with a number not very different from 12,624 target had been set by the government.

At best might be marginally lower if we use more up-to-date basis for the calculation.

Plus the provisions around presumption of sustainable development etc. all remain in NPPF (para 79) - so if we are not meeting our housing needs number, developers will be able to go to inspectors and potentially get permission that way anyway.

In other words, as suspected, this could be just a ruse by the government to say "we're not mandating any numbers - up to you, local Councils" while in effect still forcing councils to find space somehow for the whole number - or leave all Green Belt sites at risk via appeals.

Obviously, I wait to see what are adopted policies and irrespective of the above as agreed by all councillors at the December Full Council we will come forward later this year with our own local Plan with our own housing numbers. Under my watch will not put a Local Plan to government with 12,624 housing figures they had mandated we have.

Supplementary question:

Has the Lead Member for Planning Policy had the chance to consider what was in the consultation on National Planning Policy and what the Council will be required to respond to on 2 March?

Supplementary response:

There have been discussions with the Lead Officer, an extensive report has now been published.

Questions to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Philip Hearn

16m) In light of the new measures proposed in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill which clarifies that "local authorities are not required to review Green Belt to deliver homes" can residents be reassured that there will be no changes to the Green Belt boundaries in the upcoming Three Rivers District Council Local Plan?

Written response:

The Member is wrong in that the statement is not yet in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill but in a government consultation issued on 22 December and this not a "fact". The answers to my earlier question covers this in some detail.

The Government is currently consulting on the proposed changes to the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill. The Government needs to consider consultation responses prior to publishing any changes to the National Planning Policy Framework or changes to the Bill itself. Until these changes come into force the Council will be judged against the existing policy and legal framework. The Council has already agreed to consult on an alternative version of the Local Plan with a reduced housing target taking local circumstances into consideration. This alternative approach would result in less impact on the Green Belt.

It should be noted that if the changes being consulted on do come into force, they do not rule out any development in the Green Belt whatsoever. It will be for the Council to consider whether exceptional circumstances exist justifying the need for Green Belt release. In doing so the Council will need to consider affordability in the District and the need to deliver affordable housing, housing for the elderly, and the jobs needed to sustain the local economy, as well as the need to provide infrastructure such as schools and healthcare facilities which would need to be funded by development. The amount of available urban brownfield land available in the District is very limited and failing to provide any development in the Green Belt may lead to detrimental effects for the District and its residents. All of these factors need to be weighed up against the harm caused by Green Belt release and this is done through the plan-making process.

It is also the case that the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and the consultation has been called in by the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee chaired by a Conservative who has expressed unease at the proposed changes. This is likely to delay any changes, if any and thus restrict the ability of the Council to make final decisions.

Supplementary question:

Does the Lead Member have any idea how many homes would need to be built on the Green Belt to prevent a detrimental effect on residents.

Supplementary response:

Not at present, Officers need to do the Green Belt assessment again in order to ascertain a suitable figure.

16n) Submitting planning applications can be a stressful, costly and new process for many of our residents. I am regularly hearing that residents are not getting responses to their questions or are receiving no updates on their applications until just before they are to be decided. What can the Lead Member do to support Planning Officers to be able to improve this?

Written response:

It is recognised that the planning process can be daunting. The Planning Department offer a free householder duty planning service three days a week, where an officer is available to offer brief informal advice to residents regarding householder proposals. We also offer a more formal paid pre-application advice service where a resident can submit plans for review/comment prior to the submission of a formal planning application. Most planning applications are submitted by a planning agent on behalf of an applicant and any contact during the application process would therefore be with the agent. In relation to general enquiries, we aim to acknowledge these within 3 working days and

respond within 10 in accordance with the Councils corporate timeframe for such. Most planning applications are required to be dealt with within a statutory 8 week determination period and it is our practice out of courtesy, to advise planning agents (or the applicant where there is no agent) of the recommendation prior to a decision being issued, however, the nature of the process is such that this is likely to be towards the end of the statutory period. Officers and I are not aware of any formal complaints regarding delays in response times. If there are complaints, please provide details so that this can be investigated further. Indeed if the Member was indeed hearing of such problems I would have expected them to try to resolve them rather than waiting at two weeks (from tabling this question) to ask a question at Council.

No supplementary question

Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Ciaran Reed

16o) Why did the Denham Way CIL application's works not start in April 2022? Did this delay cost this Council £86,750. I attempted to ask the Lead Member this question at P&R, however he was not present and none of his colleagues were knowledgeable enough to answer. I also attempted to ask this question at the last Full Council, however he did not contribute to the discussion on this topic despite it being his responsibility and despite him being present.

Written response:

Firstly, Cllr Reed appears confused. I was present at Policy & Resources on 5 December and indeed spoke on the item on CIL applications. The Minutes and its Post Meeting notes fully explain the position and I am surprised the member has not read this for the detailed explanation and if not happy has not spoken to officers.

Officers have confirmed the original project timescales for this play area, which saw the initial stages of the project commence in April 2022. To clarify, the Denham Way leisure project has followed the agreed project timeline commencing in April 2022. This has included public consultation, a tender process, planning permission, ongoing work with the contractor to finalise designs and costs and an application to HS2 to part fund the project, which was only recently agreed in December 2022. The additional £86,000 required towards the final project costs is purely as a result of unprecedented rises in construction costs, which could not have been predicted.

The additional monies were part of a successful Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) application. The Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) is a charge which allows the Council to raise funds from new developments for use on infrastructure to support the growth of the District. The money collected from the levy is to be used to support development by funding infrastructure that the Council, local community and neighbourhoods need. The Denham Way leisure project is one such project which has successfully applied for CIL funding.

Supplementary question:

The paper stated that work would commence in April 2022, why did the work not start in April?

Supplementary response:

The answer has previously been given, we are still waiting for HS2 funding. The work is phased. The costs have increased as part of the project.

Questions to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Stephen Cox

16p) Can the Leader Member demonstrate mastery of their brief by advising what progress if any has been made in restoring the Pavilion in Green Lane to community use and what powers it has to ensure the building is maintained in a proper condition as it is rapidly becoming an eyesore and note that a supplementary question will demonstrate that the member has not addressed the matter satisfactorily?

Written response:

This has been reported many times to Council as the Member is aware and whilst I know that Cllr Cox is not happy with the answer received many times I cannot change the facts of the matter to suit them. As Members may be aware the Council granted a long lease of the Pavilion building, car park and surrounding land in 1990 to Whitbread. The day-to-day control of the site rests with the Leaseholder and with any plans they may have for the site in future. The Council can only enforce against the Leaseholder in the event of any breach of the repairing obligations. Legal Counsel are of the opinion that the premises remain compliant with the lease. The council will continue to monitor the situation. Please bring any issues to the direct attention of officers as soon as you have any concerns so they act.

Supplementary question:

The Council has let down the Bowls club and the Scouts, neither has received an apology. Will the Lead Member commit that I am advised of the Council's monitoring of the repair situation?

Supplementary response:

The original written answer does answer the question.

Question to Councillor Andrew Scarth, Lead Member for Housing, from Councillor Ciaran Reed

16q) Can the Lead Member explain why this Council has left residents in danger through its apparent failure to investigate and prosecute those responsible for damp and mould in residential properties.

Written response:

Officers will always investigate any issue of housing disrepair that is reported to the Council from residents, including those that relate to excess damp and mould. In all cases, Officers will always attempt to resolve any issue of housing disrepair via informal means by working collaboratively with the landlord and tenant of the property, before the use of formal enforcement powers will be considered. The fact that no issue of housing disrepair reported to the Council by any resident has escalated to the point of formal litigation by the Council towards a landlord in the last three financial years should be seen as a positive sign that Officers are achieving satisfactory resolutions for all parties, before the need for this significant and potentially expensive intervention is required.

Supplementary question:

If there have been no cases that required formal litigation from the Council are we clear what the threshold would be for bringing litigation against a private landlord?

Supplementary response:

I have been working with Officers and housing associations to resolve any issues in an informal way which has proved successful.

Question for Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure, from Councillor Stephen King

16r) Can the Leader Member demonstrate mastery of their brief by advising what is the maintenance regime for trees owned by Three Rivers District Council and note that a supplementary question will demonstrate that the member has not addressed the matter satisfactorily?

Written response:

In 2022 the Council published its new Tree Strategy which sets out its approach to the management and maintenance of TRDC owned trees. The strategy contains details of its tree safety inspection regime, and how it prioritises works to its trees. The strategy also explains the Council's approach to the inspection of damage, subsidence, and nuisance issues in relation to its trees; and its maintenance regimes for newly planted trees. The strategy can be viewed on the Council's website at: [TRDC Tree Strategy 2022](#).

No supplementary question

Questions to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability, from Councillor Jon Tankard

16s) It was with great fanfare and jubilation that this Council, with the support of residents along with over 300 local authorities, that we declared a Climate Emergency in 2019. With the Three Rivers Baseline now confirmed and the Carbon Reduction requirements now assessed, we now realise the actual enormity of this undertaking.

Can you confirm that given this local authorities experience to date in Grant Applications for reducing CO2 projects and the findings of the Skidmore Report, that without major changes to central governments management and major immediate alterations to the NPPF, that with the best will in the world, our proactive and dedicated team of officers and the tenacity of the Three Rivers Residents, that the Goal of Net Zero by 2045 will (if unchanged) remain an impossible goal.

Written response:

Greater certainty of local Government funding is required in order to accurately plan a route to zero both for our own council operations and the wider district. As I have outlined in my response to the earlier question regards the time spent applying for funds, for which we may or may not be successful is a depletion of precious and limited officer time to focus on implementation of measures to progress us down that route. Without certainty it is incredibly difficult for this and other Councils to plan and deliver against our goals. This is, however just one of many issues we face in realising our ambition to enable and inspire the

district to achieve net zero by 2045. As Chris Skidmore's report identifies, only 30% of greenhouse gas emissions reductions required fall within the scope of local authorities, and for us to activate that 30% we absolutely need movement on NPPF and Building Regulations with regards to requirements for net zero developments, sustained investment in improvements for sustainable travel infrastructure, certainty in relation to grid decarbonisation, a funding mechanism to assist able to finance retrofit for our residents, affordable access to investment funds, and the roll out of hydrogen amongst many others things. Three Rivers are working hard to find every opportunity to maximise our chance to keep the 2045 ambition alive. An updated and revised Climate Emergency Sustainability Strategy is in preparation and the emphasis is on doing what we can now given the parameters we find ourselves in, but we are prepared to adapt to an ever changing field in the pursuit of that goal. Dismissing our goals as impossible is not the way forward. We need to remain focused and support all our stakeholders on being equally focussed on the 2045 goal if we are to have any chance of achieving it. Without that drive, without the belief that we can, we most certainly will not.

The government is consulting on changes to the NPPF and is working on further planning reform, however until these changes are adopted into national policy and legislation the Council must work within the existing policy and legal framework.

Supplementary question:

Councillor Jon Tankard requested to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability that a simple SWAT analysis is included within each section of a net zero strategy so that both opportunities and threats to the Councils proposed plan are evidenced, clearly assessed and publicly visible. This will show that there are limitations under the current legislation. The Lead Member to put this to officers.

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

Yes this can be accommodated within the development of the new Sustainability Strategy.

Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability, from Councillor David Coltman

16t) The price of a single brown bin was £40 in 2018 but in 5 years has increased 50% to £60. For how long will prices continue to increase at this rate?

Written response:

Even at £60 the garden waste service is not at full recovery and it is unreasonable to expect those residents who do not have gardens or who do not use the service to subsidise those who do. Given the current high levels of inflation we will have to keep options open as to future rises.

No supplementary question

Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability, from Councillor Shanti Maru

16u) *Why does it take this Council up to 21 days for a damaged or broken bin to be replaced?*

Written response:

During the Covid period we extended the timescale for delivery of replacement bins to 21 days due to the reduction in staff as result of absence due to ill health, safety measures in relation to social distancing and an increase in agency staff. In reality most of the requests for replacement and new bins were dealt with well within these timescales. The information provided on the website has recently reverted back to a delivery timescale of 10 days.

No supplementary question

Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environment, Climate Change and Sustainability, from Councillor Stephen King

16v) *Can the Leader Member demonstrate mastery of their brief by advising to the number of requests for new silver pod food caddies damaged through no fault of the householder and how such damage was caused and note that a supplementary question will demonstrate that the member has not addressed the matter satisfactorily?*

Written response:

In 2022 we delivered or replaced 3,236 kerbside caddies. The reasons for requests were many and varied, for example;

New properties

Damage due to wind, mishandling by resident or crew members

Being used for alternative uses such as storage

Stolen

Attacked by vermin.

Supplementary question:

The written response is not what was asked, please provide an answer.

Supplementary response:

This has already been answered in full.

Question to Councillor Roger Seabourne, Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships, from Councillor Sara Bedford

16w) *Can the Lead Member answer the questions asked as supplementary questions in October 2022, which he refused to answer on the night or afterwards, despite having been advised of them in advance as requested. Original questions summarised: What action has Council taken, including with partners, following the definitions of Antisemitism and Islamophobia adopted at the meeting on 1st September 2020? What has been the results of these actions? How is the success or otherwise of any actions measured? Supplementary summarised: I was hoping to see some data on hate crime across the district regarding incidents of both Islamophobia and Antisemitism. Could such data be supplied to members in a written response please?*

I was also looking to see some more concrete actions in the fight against Antisemitism and Islamophobia. As well as statistics on the incidence of such

crimes, it would be helpful to see some research on how members of our Jewish and Muslim communities felt about their personal safety. Will the Lead Member commit to such research?

Written response:

Original wording of first line: Under Rule 11(7) the Lead Member has asked the Chair of the Equalities sub-committee to answer the question, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst

Revised wording of first line: Under Rule 14(7) the Chair of the Equalities sub-committee will answer the question, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst
Please note the actual written response below has not changed since publication:

In terms of data on hate crime the numbers in Three Rivers are low. The Police have informed us that in the past year there have been 16 crimes recorded with a hate crime classification. Only one of these related to faith and that did not feature islamophobia or anti-semitism. As I'm sure the Councillor will appreciate, it is not possible to share more specific details given the small number of records as this would be contrary to data protection legislation. The Census data as it is being released will provide us with an updated insight into our communities and how they identify. This will enable the Council and its partners to better target support on a variety of services. In terms of feelings of safety the Police have an open ended survey on Echo which is widely promoted in local areas, on social media and through the partnership bulletin. The findings of this are reviewed regularly and inform local policing. In addition the councils own resident's survey includes questions related to community cohesion and safety. This will report results at the end of the year and inform future actions to support and engage with our communities.

It is, of course, the case that any level of hate crime in our district is unacceptable and the Council will continue to work with our partners through the Community Safety Partnership to address these issues both in terms of prevention and in taking appropriate action against the perpetrators of such crimes. In addition, is a sad truth that this type of aggression more often than not goes un-reported. As a leader in the Community Safety Partnership we are working to raise awareness of as well as trust and confidence in reporting processes to encourage more people to come forward when they experience discrimination and criminal hatred so that support can be provided and that action can be taken against perpetrators. To that end the Council's Community Partnerships team working alongside the Three River Hate Crime officers & Hertfordshire Hate Crime Team lead have been working to increase the number and visibility of third party reporting centres. Our Healthy Hubs are now 3rd party reporting centres and our staff at the hubs trained to deal with such reports, on 13 February our staff will be presenting the benefits of becoming a 3rd Party reporting centre to our Local Parish Councils at the monthly Parish Council meeting with their lead officers and officers are working the Watford African & Caribbean Society to establish them as a 3rd Party reporting centre for any of their members currently living within Three Rivers District. This is just a snapshot of the work being done.

The Council also recognises the importance of education is the fight against hate crime. Positive messaging and demonstration of the value that all our communities add to our district both regardless of and often because of their protected characteristics is a core stand of our communications and community engagements programmes alongside awareness raising of the impacts that

discrimination and criminal hatred can have on our communities. Recent examples of this can be seen in the marking of Holocaust Memorial Day last month and the sharing activities as part of Mitzvah Day in November on a very personal level by the Council Chair Cllr Morris, which I attend and was indeed very moved by and I hope can be repeated each year, as well as the celebration of Black History Month in October 2022 and participation in Islamophobia Awareness Month in November. Again this is just a snapshot of the work that is being carried out across the District, and beyond, with our communities.

If there are further actions you feel are being missed, I would be grateful if you could provide specific suggestions. The Head of Community Partnerships and I will be happy to meet with you, if that would be helpful, to discuss what may or may not be possible within the resources currently available. Equally I would be happy to request an update report annually to the Equalities sub-committee on these issues, what further engagement we can undertake.

Question to Councillor Roger Seabourne, Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships, from Councillor Rue Grewal

16x) All Councils are required to have a designated Crime and Disorder Committees to scrutinise and improve the council and partners' response to crime in the area. The Leisure, Environment, and Community Committee is this council's designated Crime and Disorder Committee. When was the last time that the committee considered an item to review or scrutinise the prevention of crime and disorder in Three Rivers

Written response:

On 13 March 2022 the LEC committee considered, under item 5, the provision and maintenance of CCTV cameras within the District. At the same meeting, under item 9 the Committee considered the planned projects, programmes and contracts to support Community Safety and Environmental Protection for 2022-25.

No supplementary question

Question to Councillor Roger Seabourne, Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships, from Councillor Abbas Merali

16y) Many of our residents are suffering from the impact of burglaries. This devastating crime leaves residents feeling unsafe in their own homes. What is the Lead Member doing to address the level of burglaries across the District?

Written response:

I hope the Councillor is not suggesting I should personally deal with burglaries and that the Councillor does in fact know that residential Burglaries are a priority for Hertfordshire Police. Our local Police officers review such crimes daily and ownership of response sits with the Police's Local Crime Unit. Locally the patrol plan informs Police Intervention (overt) and Scorpion (covert) resources who are also provided with information regarding reported crimes on a daily basis. Any patterns or series are identified working with the forces Central Intelligence Bureau (CIB) and their Op Guardian PIER plan specific to Burglary is regularly reviewed, encompassing work in relation to prevention, intelligence and enforcement.

All reported crimes are followed up with any forensic or other lines of enquiry explored. This includes house to house and CCTV as well as 'cocooning' around the premises i.e. visits to surrounding premises for any further potential lines of enquiry and crime prevention advice.

At a local level Three Rivers has 21,390 Neighbourhood Watch members as of 31 Jan 2023 which represents 58% of all households in the district.

During January, the local Safer Neighbourhood Team have sent 59 OWL messages to specific parts of Three Rivers (one message may be sent to a single road as OWL messaging is targeted and they are not all sent to all Neighbourhood Watch members). These messages may relate to burglaries, thefts from or of vehicles, local events, crime prevention suggestions and much more.

Any Neighbourhood Watch member can look at their account at www.owl.co.uk (user name is their email address, they can request a new password if necessary) and within that OWL account they can see local crime information on their 'local' tab. This is a really useful and interesting feature and can help residents understand what is going on in their streets.

In relation to crime prevention and support, this is obviously provided to the victims, and officers work closely with the local NHW coordinator and the strategic crime prevention advisors who are currently planning targeted crime prevention opportunities to complement the engagement work our Safer Neighbourhood Teams already regularly deliver in the community.

This issue is and will remain a priority for local police and the wider Community Safety Partnership.

Supplementary question:

I cannot see any evidence that the Crime and Disorder Committee has met which it is legal bound to meet at least once every 12 months. Why is this the case?

Supplementary response:

I believe the question is answered, there is a statutory responsibility which we have covered by including this in the LEC Committee.

Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared, from Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst

16z) Will the Lead Member confirm how much money the Conservative County Council has withdrawn from Three Rivers to support recycling and its effect % effect on Council tax?

Written response:

There is a budget of £107,720 for the Alternative Financial Model (AFM) in the current financial year. The current forecast is £121,000 for 2022/23. The proposed budget for 2023/24 includes the removal of the income budget of £107,720 across the MTFP reflecting the end of the scheme. The proposed Council Tax Requirement (CTR) for 2022/23 is £10.080m. Of this, £7.694m relates to the district element retained by the Council; with the balance relating to Parish Precepts. The reduction of £107,720 is equivalent to 1.4% of the district element of the proposed CTR for 2023/24.

Supplementary question:

Given the loss of support for recycling in Three Rivers would the Lead Member agree that it that as the County Council has found an extra 12.8 million pounds of extra money from the collection fund. Would it be fair to pay this back to Three Rivers?

Supplementary response:

Yes

Questions to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared, from Councillor Jon Tankard

16aa) At the December 2022 Full Council meeting the proposal to enter into a business rate pool with other councils in Hertfordshire was unanimously approved. This would have seen the residents of Three Rivers benefit from this Council retaining the majority of the increase in local business rates. Actions taken by the UK government have now made that arrangement unviable. How much money has Three Rivers District Council and more crucially the residents of Three Rivers, lost as a result of the government's actions?

Written response:

The 2023 revaluation of business rates by the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) and subsequent tariff for the Hertfordshire Business Rates Pool, set by DLUCH in the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement, resulted in a decision to disband the pool for 2023/24. This was because there was an increased risk that proceeding with the pool could result in a loss of business rate income due to the Council rather than an increase in retained growth. As a result of this decision, the Council has budgeted to retain £200k less in business rate growth in 2023/24. The actual loss can only be known following the reconciliation of business rate income completed at the end of 2023/24. Completion of this calculation would be dependent upon other authorities within the pool sharing relevant information

No supplementary question

16ii) The Mission Zero Report more commonly known as the Skidmore Report, highlights the inefficiency of the central governments 'bidding' process in the allocation for grant funding for projects to assist our route to Net Zero. This is further highlighted in the recent messy and farcical scramble for local authorities to obtain levelling up grants. Can I confirm how much time and associated financial costs have been spent and assembling and submitting Grant Applications and would you not agree that the experience and qualifications of our officers would be better spent implementing the results of these applications rather than have to constantly Assess and Implement an ever changing grant application process?

Written response:

To date TRDC officers estimate that they have spent the following time (totalling approximately 155 officer days) assembling and submitting grant applications over the past year for government sponsored projects to assist our route to NetZero:

Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund: we applied 3 times, and were successful at the third attempt. – total officer time 60 days with an additional technical consultancy cost incurred of £7,560

LAD1B: 2 successful bids - Total officer time 10 days (5 days each) The monitoring by BEIS of this project was extensive and occupies approximately 1 officer day per month.

LAD3: unsuccessful – total officer time 15 days

SHDF Wave 1: successful – Total officer time 20 days with additional extensive support provided from the bid partners Eon and the Housing Associations. The monitoring reporting requirements occupy 1 officer day a month.

SHDF Wave 2: awaiting result - Total officer time 20 days with additional extensive support from partners Thrive (20 days) and Ovo (10 days). If successful the reporting requirements on the implementation on this bid are onerous and anticipated to be double what has been required on current bids (estimated 2 days per month of officer time)

UKSPF: Successful – total officer time 40 days

The bidding for such programmes is becoming increasingly complex with every application and each new scheme, however, achieving the ambitions of this council set out in our climate emergency and sustainability strategy will require further investment, including to cover the cost of decarbonising buildings and operations. The Council cannot fund this alone, given the need to balance this work alongside the needs and demands of all other services. Greater Government investment will be needed if this and other councils across the country are to reach net zero. We currently have no option but to divert specialist officer time from implementation into work to attempt to secure the limited and often short notice, funds that HMG chooses to make available. I am pleased to say that this Council has a good track record of securing such funds and I recognise that with public money there must be robust processes to ensure its best use but yes the current mechanisms that Government has in place do provide an ongoing resourcing challenge for Councils including Three Rivers.

Supplementary question:

This was not a viable use of qualified Officer time. Does the Lead Member agree?

Supplementary response:

Yes.

Questions to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared, from Councillor Sara Bedford

16bb) How many Freedom of Information requests were received by the council for each of the past three years?

Written response:

There were 487 requests received in 2020, 437 in 2021 and 556 in 2022

No supplementary question

16cc) How many of those requests were answered within the 20 day legal deadline?

Written response:

In 2020, 437 were responded to within 20 working days. In 2021, 378 were responded to within 20 working days. In 2022, 499 were responded to within 20 working days.

16dd) How many requests were still outstanding after 30, 60 and 90 days respectively?

Written response: The table below shows the timescales for responding to requests in the last 3 years

	2020	2021	2022
Within 20 working days	437	378	499
Between 21 and 30 working days	22	30	24
Between 31 and 60 working days	22	25	26
Between 60 and 90 working days	1	3	5
Over 90 working days	5	1	2

Supplementary question covering 16cc and 16dd:

Does the Lead Member believe that this record of meeting the legal requirement is good enough?

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

The legal requirement is the baseline that the Council is required to meet, however the Council aims to exceed this wherever reasonably practicable within available resources.

16ee) How many requests the Council refused to answer, and for what reason?

Written response:

One request was declined in 2020 under Section 43 of the Freedom of Information Act (Commercial Interests).

One request was declined in 2021 under Section 31 of the Freedom of Information Act (Law Enforcement)

One request was declined in 2022 under Section 12 of the Freedom of Information Act (Cost/Time Limits).

Supplementary question:

Paragraph 14 of Section 45 of the Information Commissioners Office Code of Practice states that where a public authority is not obliged to comply with the request because it would exceed the appropriate limit to do so “should consider providing an indication of what if any information could be provided within the cost ceiling.” Does the Lead Member believe the Council complies with this requirement or does it simply tell those requesting the information to narrow their search a little bit?

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

Yes, the Council does comply with this requirement. The requirement of the code of practice where a request is refused under section 12 is that the public authority “should consider providing an indication of what, if any, information could be provided within the cost ceiling. The authority should also consider advising the applicant that by reforming or re-focussing their request, information may be able to be supplied for a lower, or no, fee.” The nature and

complexity of requests will vary and it is not always helpful or appropriate for the Council to assume or attempt to guess what information a requester may or may not be most interested in.

Questions to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services, from Cllr Chris Mitchell

16ff) Please will you explain where the negotiations with the Red Cross to surrender the lease to Three Rivers have reached?

Written response:

The lease surrender negotiations have been largely concluded and both parties have instructed their Legal representatives to commence drafting of the contract documentation. It is hoped that the matter will be finalised by June.

Supplementary question:

Thank you for your written reply, however it is misleading. The Red Cross made a national decision to stop running Halls, and then chucked the vast majority of the users out in April 2019. The Hall is still in a usable condition and used by the mobility aids unit every weekday. Will you commit to ensuring that there will always be at least the existing 327.3 Sqm (3,522 sq ft) for community space and a ceiling height in the hall of at least 3.89m (12ft 9 ins).

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

It is too early in the development process to commit to any minimum sizing or dimensions. It has not been determined which community groups may wish to use this space and therefore any specifications or dimensions will take into consideration the likely needs and demands of such groups wishing to use the space.

16gg) Will you commit to consult with the Croxley Green Parish Council and other community groups to consider the options for the future including preserving the existing building as an asset of community value, and bringing it back into full community use as soon as possible?

Written response:

TRDC recognises that the property at Barton Way is listed as an Asset of Community Value. We understand that the use of the premises by the community in recent years has been extremely limited. Indeed recent requests for hire have been declined as it's is no longer considered suitable for such purposes so it is unavailable for public use. It is the intention of this Council to redevelop the property to provide both new affordable homes for local residents and to re-provide space for a modern, fit for purpose community facility that will be accessible to local residents and community groups.

TRDC intend to consult with Croxley Green Parish Council and other community groups to ensure that the community space is made available to, and better utilised by local groups and residents.

No supplementary question

Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services, from Cllr Joan King

16hh) Can the Lead Member demonstrate mastery of their brief by advising what this authority has already done and will do to advertise and assist with the necessity to bring photographic ID in order to vote this year and going forward and note that a supplementary question will demonstrate that the member has not addressed matter satisfactorily?

Written response:

The Communications Team have produced information which currently appears on the Council website, this includes links to the Electoral Commission for information and the link to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate if needed.

A leaflet, with similar information, will be included with council tax bills.

This month Household Notification Letters (HNL's) will be sent to all properties within Three Rivers DC; these letters include information regarding Voter ID and how to apply for a Voter Authority Certificate if one is required.

We will continue to use the Voter ID resource pack from the Electoral Commission for social media

We will boost social media posts by paid adverts in February, March and April

We will update the 40 council notice boards across the district with a different design poster supplied by the Electoral Commission each month in January, February, March, April and May

We will be adding information to our Gov.delivery email newsletters that we send each week

We will also do a social media campaign about voting by post if customers do not wish to show identification on polling day

We will look to provide leaflets for our Healthy Hubs in Abbots Langley, South Oxhey and Mill End

Supplementary question:

How many Voter Authority Certificates requests have been received in the post by Three Rivers, have been completed online by persons in the Three Rivers District, whether this Council issues the certificates and at what cost if any to this Council and what a person must do to receive their certificate when issued.

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

As of 23 February 2023, there have not been any requests for Voter Authority Certificates received in the post, but 17 applications have been completed online. The Council does not issue the certificates, they are issued by Cabinet Office approved printers. The cost to the Council for facilitating the scheme is officer time, with each application taking approximately ten minutes to process. When applying for a Voter Authority Certificate the elector can chose to have it posted directly to them or to collect it from the Council Offices.

Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services, from Councillor Stephen Cox

16ii) Can the Leader Member demonstrate mastery of their brief by advising the number of reports of instances of suspected voter fraud in Three Rivers received by this authority in the last decade and what was done about it and note that a supplementary question will demonstrate that the member has not addressed the matter satisfactorily?

Written response:

None. Instances of electoral fraud are a police matter and should be referred to the police for their investigations. It is for the police to decide if the instance is a

case of electoral fraud. Information can be requested via npcc.foi.request@npfdu.police.uk.

Supplementary question:

Does the Lead Member agree that the requirement for voter ID is a solution looking for a problem?

Supplementary response:

Yes

Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services, from Councillor Joan King

16jj) Can the Leader Member demonstrate mastery of their brief by advising to the number of current staff vacancies and where and how often each has been advertised and note that a supplementary question will demonstrate that the member has not addressed the matter satisfactorily?

Written response:

The vacancies are provided below. Please note that a number of jobs have been advertised on standard job boards. To avoid repeating this information the standard jobs boards are: CV-Library, Fish4Jobs, Indeed, LinkedIn, Monster, Reed, Totaljobs and Jobsite and Webrecruit Jobs

[16jj-question-response](#)

Supplementary question

In the list provided there are 6 positions which are not being advertised with many only recently advertised. When the Council is aware that a staff member is leaving or retiring that is the time to advertise? Why does this not appear to be the case in Three Rivers?

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

Councillor Joan King to provide details to the Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services, Councillor Keith Martin on the 6 posts they were referring to and would get a written response.

Post meeting note: details provided by Councillor Joan King after the meeting with regard to the posts they were referring to are: LA1 Contract Management Support Officer; Housing Apprentice, Waste and Recycling Administrator, Grounds Maintenance Operative, Grounds Maintenance Trainee Operative and Senior News and Communications Officer. Although details were provided in the comments column of the spreadsheet this is not sufficient on why the above posts are not currently being advertised.

Waste and Recycling Administrator – One full time post has now been recruited to however due to internal promotion this has now created a further vacant part time post which is currently being filled by an agency worker whose contract ends at the end of June. This post will be advertised in April to coincide with end of the temporary contract.

Grounds Maintenance Operatives – These roles were advertised 3 times unsuccessfully in June, July, October 2022 on TRDC Website, job centre. We aim to advertise again shortly whilst assessing salary levels and possible market supplements.

Grounds Maintenance Trainee Operative – This position was filled however the post holder did not confirm their suitability for the post during the probation

period and therefore they did not progress into permanent employment. The service is considering re advertising the post.

With specific regard to the LA1 Contract Management Support Officer – the future of LA1 at TRDC is currently uncertain and on this basis the role has not been advertised/filled. The work of the role has been temporarily covered by the existing staff including support from the CSC.

The Senior News and Communications Officer post is currently being advertised and due to close on 5 March. The post was initially advertised internally during October 2022 but received no applicants. It was then advertised externally during December-January and following interviews in late January no offers were made. The post was not advertised at the time of publication of the Full Council agenda whilst the role profile was being reviewed for suitability and the service was considering the most appropriate next steps. Housing Apprentice- This post requires significant supervision from Officers to ensure the ongoing professional development of the apprentice. This supervision was not able to be provided throughout the period the Office was not open to staff, post the COVID-19 pandemic. Following a restructure in Housing Services in 2022, a Senior Housing Options Officer post was established who will directly line manage the Housing Apprentice and be responsible for their development. Housing Services are in conversations with West Herts College regarding this post and hope to advertise shortly.

Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services, from Councillor Stephen King

16kk) Can the Lead Member demonstrate mastery of their brief by advising why, when I asked the then Lead Member last February to demonstrate mastery of their brief and name the off-shore company now benefiting from rents on retail units at Station Approach, that I appear to have received no answer, what conclusion I should draw from this and note that a supplementary question will demonstrate that the member has not addressed the matter satisfactorily?

Written response:

Officers provided an updated response to this question at Full Council on 12 July 2022 (question 12tt). A search of the Land Registry database was undertaken in June 2022. A further check of the Land Registry was undertaken on 6 February 2023 which reveals no further details of the ownership are currently available.

Supplementary question:

Insufficient action was taken to find out who this company is. Can the Lead Member contact the developer to find out who the sold the freehold to and who has the responsibility for these shops?

Supplementary response:

I can ask Officers to find who the shops were sold to, but they may no longer be the legal owner.

CL93/22 LEADER AND LEAD MEMBER REPORTS AND QUESTIONS

Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council

First of all I want to express my deep sorrow for the awful loss of life and hardship caused by the earthquake that has hit southern Türkiye and Syria. The Disasters Emergency Committee (DEC) is coordinating the appeal for aid for those effected. <https://www.dec.org.uk/appeal/turkey-syria-earthquake-appeal>

I was deeply disturbed to see that targets for water companies to stop pumping sewage into our rivers has been extended, allowing them to continue for at least 15 more years. Many residents have approached me about this, and like me, they are upset that two of our MPs supported this. Parliament and the Environment Agency need to act to ensure water companies clean up their act much quicker than that.

This year marks 20 years since Section 28, the law which banned the promotion of homosexuality, was repealed. In LGBT+ History Month I'm glad to see a Pride Flag on Three Rivers House. I am delighted that as I council we are recognising the month, working with the Three Rivers Museum on recording the experiences of our LGBT+ residents. We are continuing to sponsor this year's Herts Pride event which brings together huge numbers of people in celebration and recognition.

Residents near the HS2 site are reporting more issues with noise and officers from County and TRDC are working with AlignJV to find a solution. I visited the site last week to get assurance from them that action would be taken to mitigate the problem.

Last month I attended a deeply moving Holocaust Memorial Day event. Many thanks to Cllr Morris and the excellent speakers for the work done to bring to the forefront of our minds the horrors ordinary people were involved in. We must never forget and need to call out when we hear hateful rhetoric about any part of our communities, for that is where it starts.

I will be attending the District Councils Network where one of the key topics to be discussed is what Districts can do to support our residents in troubled time. Many of our residents are really are suffering troubled times at the moment, many of them those public service workers who are so key. The nurses, the carers, the local govt officers. With food inflation at over 16% and fuel prices going through the roof some are having to make impossible choices between food and bills. Continuing below inflation pay rises are hitting the very people we termed 'key workers' during the pandemic, I support their ask for fair pay. We continue to offer up to 100% Council Tax Reduction for those suffering the most hardship and will support all our residents as much as we can.

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/page/costofliving>

Further to the visit to HS2 to discuss noise and vibration issues, I also attended the Maple Cross sewage treatment plant to discuss the priorities and progress in clearing up the river. The Leader wished to thank Joanna Hewitson for her work on the priorities and progress with the Rivers Colne and Chess.

Question from Councillor Ciaran Reed

The Leader mentioned writing to Members of Parliament about the sewage situation. Councillor Reed asked if the Leader would be writing to

Daisy Cooper MP regarding how she voted allowing the continuation of sewage into rivers.

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

Lords Amendment to the Environment Bill

- A proposal from the Lords to the Environment Bill that would have placed legal duties on the companies to reduce discharges was defeated by 265 MPs' votes to 202. A total of 265 MPs voted with the Government to reject the House of Lords proposal to toughen up the approach to the discharge of sewage. Daisy Cooper (Liberal Democrat - St Albans) voted against (and therefore in favour of toughening the approach to the discharge of sewage)
- Further details can be found at <https://votes.parliament.uk/Votes/Commons/Division/1116>

Environmental Targets (Water) (England) Regulations 2022

- On 23 January 2023 a deferred division took place on the Draft Environmental Targets (Water) (England) Regulations 2022
- The second target in respect of water is that the load of total phosphorus discharged into freshwaters from relevant discharges is, by 31st December 2038, at least 80% lower than the baseline ("relevant discharges" means discharges of treated waste water from the sewerage systems of sewerage undertakers at sewage disposal works)
- Daisy Cooper (Liberal Democrat - St Albans) voted against these Regulations which allow the continuation of sewage being discharged into rivers
- Further details can be found at <https://votes.parliament.uk/Votes/Commons/Division/1462>

Councillor Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development

Officers are currently prioritising the delivery of a number of parking schemes. These include the Locally Important Parking Improvements at:

- High Street, Bedmond
- Lemonfield Drive area, Leavesden (including Avalon Close, part of Bucknalls Lane, Chichester Way, Coates Way, Cranefield Drive, Lemonfield Drive, Mutchetts Close and Tudor Manor Gardens)
- Oxhey Drive, South Oxhey
- Rickmansworth West and the Croxley Green Review scheme.

In the absence of a Senior Transport Planner, we are using our Traffic Engineer capacity at Hertsmere Borough Council to progress the Traffic Order for these schemes.

In addition, the Harefield Road, Sandy Lodge Way and Primrose Hill parking schemes are being prepared for discussions with external consultants.

Other current parking schemes, which are at an earlier stage than mentioned above, including the Chorleywood Area Wide review, High Elms Lane, Croxley Green Supplementary, and Gosforth Lane are also being reviewed to determine the appropriate progress route.

Verge Hardening

Works are due to start in coming weeks on 2 schemes in South Oxhey.

Resurfacing

Works are due to start in the coming weeks on the Ebury Way and the Canal Towpath at Kings Langley.

Bus Stops

A replacement bus shelter is scheduled to be installed this spring at Downings Wood, Maple Cross as well as a new bus shelter at a new bus stop in South Oxhey.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure (LCWIP)

Hertfordshire County Council have provided their initial draft for consultation. Receipt of the final consultation documents and date will govern issue of consultation timing.

Councillor Paul Rainbow provided an update to say that two schemes on Lemonfield Drive and Bucknalls Lane were now with Hertsmere and at Traffic Order stages.

Question from Councillor Philip Hearn

When would the Chorleywood parking scheme be resolved?

Response:

Councillor Paul Rainbow advised that all the schemes were going through a process to determine the most successful route.

Question from Councillor Stephen Cox

Is there a location for the bus shelter in South Oxhey?

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

The new bus shelter in South Oxhey is to be located at a new bus stop put in place by HCC on Prestwick Road close to Markeston Green, as shown on the attached plan.



Prestwick Road site
plan 1_500.pdf

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Planning Policy and Infrastructure

Local Plan

The additional Regulation 18 is now out to consultation on the agreed 6 additional sites that the Council is seeking residents' views on.

The results of this consultation along with the earlier Regulation 18 will be considered as the Council draws up its new Local Plan (as agreed at Council in December) for a lower housing number for Three Rivers than one previously imposed by the Government.

Additional publicity on the Local Plan will also go out with the Council Tax billing.

The government consultation on some potential changes to the Leveling Up and Regeneration Bill closes on the 2 March. A report on the Councils response to this will go to the Local Plan Sub Committee on 28 February. I note that the consultation and responses has been called in by the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities Select Committee chaired by a Conservative who has expressed unease at the proposed changes. This is likely to delay any changes, if any and thus restrict the ability of the Council to make final decisions.

Planning

With regards to the Warner Bros application, the Planning Committee resolved to grant planning permission, in December, subject to conditions and the completion of a Section 106 legal agreement following referral to the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State has since confirmed that they are not calling-in the application and it is therefore with TRDC to issue the Decision Notice following the completion of the Section 106. The Section 106 is being progressed and the Decision Notice will be issued upon its completion.

Planning Enforcement have recently issued:

- 4 x Planning Contravention Notices served at the Mulberry Bush to ascertain more information regarding suspected breaches of planning control
- Enforcement Notice served at 12 Claremont Crescent, Croxley Green following an unauthorised hairdressers operating from an outbuilding
- Enforcement Notice served at Land to the rear of Ebury Road, Rickmansworth following unauthorised engineering operations

Other issues

Officers have met with the LEP on screen and media opportunities and their desire to push information out to schools and colleges about job opportunities. The Watford Chamber of Commerce is also engaging with TRDC and local business to help revitalise the Chambers activities in Three Rivers.

I have attended a further meeting of the Rickmansworth High Street Recovery Board and chaired a number meetings of the Shareholder and Commercial Venture Scrutiny Panel, items of which are reported to Council in PART II.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst paid tribute and thanked Geof Muggeridge who would be retiring from the Authority who had been a sterling and stalwart officer of this Council for many years. Geof had been an excellent advocate for this authority and would be missed both for his knowledge, sterling service to TRDC and public service.

Thanks and tribute was also made to Geof Muggeridge by Councillor Stephen Cox.

Question from Councillor Ciaran Reed

You mention in your report about the Mulberry Bush situation and the 4 planning contravention notices, is there a timetable which could be provided

to the people of Sarratt and when will we end the disruption this site has cause the village?

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

There is an ongoing enforcement investigation. There is an extensive planning and enforcement history associated with the site and Officers continue to monitor the site and correspond with local residents given the alleged breaches of planning control.

As part of the current enforcement investigations four Planning Contravention Notices (PCNs) were served on the site owner and interested parties on 9 January 2023. These Notices ask a series of questions to assist in determining if there have been any breaches of planning control. All replies have now been received and are currently being considered by Officers to determine if any further action is required.

We will keep the complainants informed of the enforcement investigation.

Councillor Andrew Scarth, Lead Member for Housing

Firstly, I would like to thank all officers in the Housing team for all they do regarding Housing issues.

There are currently 57 households in temporary accommodation that has been provided by the Council. This figure includes four households that are currently in refuge accommodation, two households that are in contractual lets with a registered provider located in Watford and two households in self-contained nightly lets. The nightly lets that are in use are sensitive lets, one individual has restrictions and cannot reside in our District therefore has been placed in Kingston upon Thames. Another household has been placed in a disabled unit in Ealing.

To ensure the Council's compliance in duties to the residents of Mobile Home sites in the district, a Fit and Proper Person Assessment Policy and a Fit and Proper Fees Policy was agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee on 23 January 2023. Decisions taken with reference to these policies will enable the creation of a Fit and Proper Person Register to be maintained by the Council and will ensure the Council complies with relevant legislation.

In December 2022, the UK Government announced an update to the Homes for Ukraine Scheme, specifically the £350 monthly 'thank you' payments to any hosts on the Scheme was extended from 12 months to a period of 2 years. Once a family has been with a host for 12 months and if they continue to stay with the host beyond this period, these £350 payments will be increased to £500 per month.

As of 6 February, Three Rivers have had 159 Homes for Ukraine guests arrive in the District (121 Adults and 38 Children). It is worth noting that Hertfordshire County Council have reported to Officers that the number of guests moving to the County under this Scheme have slowed down significantly, however this may increase once again should there be an escalation in the conflict as the cold weather begins to warm.

Figures provided by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) indicate that as of 3 January 2023, 459 Ukrainian nationals who were placed within Hertfordshire have now moved on from their host's accommodation. This represents

25.21% of all Homes for Ukraine guests that have arrived in the County. Most have moved into privately rented accommodation within the District (12.36%) and a small amount have moved out of Hertfordshire, however a 9.39% of these individuals have stated that they have returned to Ukraine. To cope with an increase in homelessness across the district from this cohort, HCC have recently announced a proposal for a program to assist Homes for Ukraine guests into privately rented accommodation. This Scheme involves providing the guests with financial assistance that can be put towards any deposit that may be required to secure accommodation. HCC are hoping to launch this program in the coming weeks, and this intervention should lessen the numbers of Homes for Ukraine guests that may present to the Council as homeless.

Due to the lack of an application from a suitably qualified candidate, the Service was not successful in the recruitment of a Senior Housing Enforcement Officer. Discussions are underway between Strategic Housing Manager and Human Resources with regards to the appropriate way to proceed to attract a suitable candidate. The Service are soon interviewing candidates for a vacant Housing Options Officer position, following significant interest in the advertised role.

The Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme properties (5 x one-bedroom properties in district, purchased in association with Watford Community Housing, using grant funding from Homes England and £100,000 of S106 funding from the Council) have all been tenanted, with the final of these properties being filled on 6 February 2023.

Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure

Watersmeet

- Building Fixed wiring work phase one to be completed by end March. Phase two delayed until next financial year due to contractor availability and scheduling around events.
- The Watersmeet loyalty scheme due to launch in February 2023. £30 single, £50 couple. The scheme includes:
 - o 3 free films per year
 - o 10% discount on refreshments
 - o 10% discounts on selected shows
 - o Double discount days (20% off)
 - o A birthday offer
 - o Ticket to the VIP night of panto (panto ticket not included)
- The panto run went well and received good positive feedback from many patrons. Compared to Snow White in 2018 the panto was 600 tickets down, which equates to £4k net income for Watersmeet. Total sales were 14,075. This is likely to be a result from the cost of living and long-term impact of Covid on audiences. Merchandise and bar sales were up by £700 overall compared to 2018.

Leisure

- Temporary bridge closure over River Colne (Pedestrian near the Play Area) – commencing Monday 20 February for a period of up to 4 weeks. Advance notices have gone up and communications to Stakeholders in progress.
- First meeting with Stakeholders of Aquadrome Project in March

- Maple Cross play area in progress

Health

The new Healthy Hub model is establishing well with footfall increasing and new services beginning from January 2023. In 21/22 we had 120 people. We have already had over 300. New model started in September.

Tackling Obesity - Beezee Bodies family workshop is taking place in Carpenders Park Jan – March 2023 to provide advice, healthy lunchbox ideas etc. The next South Oxhey Tackling Obesity Steering Group is on 14 February 2023

Community Event planned for Saturday 18 February 2023 at Mill End Community Centre – focus on health, cost of living and community groups.

Cllr Phil Williams. Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability

Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability

- Regular briefings and meetings with officers, partners and outside bodies have continued

Enable and engage:

- The TRDC Greener Living e-newsletter continues to be sent to residents and businesses to give updates on campaigns and Green news items. If you haven't signed up, please do
- Three Rivers DC in conjunction with others are staging a Sustainable Fashion catwalk show on March 25 at the Memorial Hall in Chorleywood. Please ask for further details.
- The Sustainability team are more than happy to speak and present to community groups in your area, please contact them.
- The pilot scheme, being run by WasteAware and Sustainable Hertfordshire, to reduce avoidable food waste in Three Rivers is now in full swing with visits to schools planned, community events attended, social media posts across our channels, and lots more to come. Posters are going out across our notice boards, we have more events booked in, leaflets will go to targeted street with tips on our 4 steps to save, the campaign is headlining the living greener leaflet due to go out with Council Tax letters this Spring, and artwork is currently being developed to be printed and displayed on a number of our waste vehicles. The campaign is due to go Countywide later this year following analysis of the pilot and a waste compositional analysis in Three Rivers.

#WorthSaving <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-andenvironment/recycling-and-waste/wasteaware-campaigns/worth-saving.aspx>

Energy:

- Local Authority Delivery schemes finished and we installed fully funded retrofit measures to 117 homes in Three Rivers. These schemes saved Three Rivers homes a total of 161 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, which equates to carbon savings of 1.4TCO2 per home upgraded per year
- The Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) funding to retrofit 82 Thrive Homes are due to commence installs imminently.

- TRDC have applied for Wave 2 of SHDF funding and are hoping to win a grant to deep retrofit 139 Thrive homes and 20 neighbouring private homes in South Oxhey, we should find out soon if we were successful.
- Utilising the recently agreed utility funding (ECO4) we have commenced a dedicated scheme in South Oxhey plus a through a Home Energy Support Service all eligible residents have a clear route on how to access these funds for deep retrofit of their properties.
- Further E-learning training is being made available for all staff.
- On the biodiversity side we have planted 700 trees on council land and given away to residents over 2500 trees,
- Three Rivers House retrofit has commenced which will reduce 38 tonnes of carbon annually from our emissions

Waste

- Awaiting Defra to publish the final recycling figures for 2021/22
- Annual garden subscription renewals underway
- Introduced a new process to allow to keep POPs separate
- We'll be giving the fly tipping campaign another push throughout March, as we do every year. Our officers will be sending out reminders to all Hertfordshire Districts and Boroughs. It is 5 years since the campaign was launched.

Environment

- As Lead Member for environmental services I have contacted both of our Conservative MPs and asked them not to follow their party's whip on the continued dumping of untreated sewage into, not only our own internationally important streams and rivers but also into other rivers and onto beaches throughout the country. I asked stand up for the residents of Three Rivers and persuade their ministers to end this disgusting practice immediately.

Councillor Roger Seabourne, Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships

I have continued to have meetings with officers, partners, colleagues from other Districts and the Police and Crime Commissioner's office.

A very successful ASB workshop partnership day was held recently with over 55 representatives of our partners present and the recent meetings of the Local Strategic Partnership and Community Safety Partnership were combined to hold a workshop to help develop our new Community Strategy. There is a popular misconception that "that there is a lot of burglary about". There is not. Our residents have experienced a higher number of burglaries over the last year, but this has come down over the last month. The police are proactively addressing the issue. They are aware of a gang operating in this and other areas of the country, but their ability to apprehend these criminals is made more difficult by the gang frequently focusing on empty properties and the police not knowing that there has even been an offence committed until sometime after the event and then not knowing exactly when, possibly even which day, the crime was committed.

The Police are requesting additional resources from headquarters as and when required. Residential burglary is a priority for the CSP and Burglary and Fraud was the focus of the Community Safety Coordinating Group (JAG) held recently.

Fear and the possible misconception is probably heightened amongst residents due to the cocooning response, where police will go door to door to all neighbours following a burglary to encourage residents to be vigilant and share crime prevention advice, as well as an OWL message going out to residents in the area within a couple of days after a burglary.

The influence of social media cannot be underestimated. As well as the OWL notifications, it is very common for people on the Nextdoor social media site to post if they have been burgled. While this might be a good thing to encourage residents to be safety conscious and vigilant, it does create the impression of having much more burglary than there actually is. Pre social media, it was likely fewer people would have been aware if there had a domestic burglary in their area or even in their own street

Councillor Roger Sebourne gave an update to say he strongly advising people not to post online when they are on holiday thus letting people know that dwellings were empty.

Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services

No written report as all reportable issues are covered by the budget items on the summons.

CL94/22

MOTIONS UNDER COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 11

Councillor Sara Bedford moved, seconded by Councillor Anne Winter, under Notice duly given as follows:

Extending Free School Meals to support health, wellbeing and learning

Council believes that:

1. The government must support the health and wellbeing of children to ensure they are able to make the most of the opportunities which are open to them.
2. Children cannot learn properly if they are undernourished or hungry.
3. Schools are seeing growing evidence of pupils coming to school without having eaten breakfast, unable to pay for school meals or with empty lunchboxes.
4. For a growing number of children, the school dinner is the only proper meal they will eat during a day.
5. The current system of Free School Meals is unfit for purpose and makes it difficult for those in insecure employment to sustain a claim.
6. The growing cost of living emergency makes action to support disadvantaged children urgent.

Council therefore believes that free school meals should be extended to all children in primary education and to all secondary school aged children whose families receive Universal Credit, as well as promoting school breakfast clubs.

Council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Education Select Committee and the three MPs representing areas within the District to ask them to support this policy and to press for its rapid adoption through secondary legislation.

Council believes that identification widely used by young people should be added to the list, including (but not exclusively): an 18+ bus pass, a Young Person's Railcard, a student ID card or NUS card or an 18+ Oyster Card.

Council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to the Cabinet Minister and the three MPs representing areas within the District to ask them to support this policy and to press for its speedy incorporation into the guidance for the next set of elections in May 2023

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being 20 For, 0 Against and 11 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

Extending Free School Meals to support health, wellbeing and learning

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1. The government must support the health and wellbeing of children to ensure they are able to make the most of the opportunities which are open to them.
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Council resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to the Secretary of State for Education, the Chair of the Education Select Committee and the three MPs representing areas within the District to ask them to support this policy and to press for its rapid adoption through secondary legislation.

Motions that were due to be debated 2, 3, 4 and 5 fell under Rule 11(4)

CHAIR

Appendix 1

Corporate Framework

Amendment to Officer Report

2.5.2 Five objectives to aid the Council in Realising this vision. These are to

- Provide responsive, responsible and democratic local leadership
- Expand our position as a great place to do business
- Thriving communities
- Provide sustainable and affordable housing
- Achieve net zero, climate resilience and be environmentally friendly

Amendment to ‘Responsive, Responsible, Local Leadership’, changed to ‘Responsive, Responsible and Democratic Local Leadership. Replace Text with the Following:

The Three Rivers District Council constitution sets out that the Council should be ‘efficient, transparent and accountable to local people.’ To that end, Three Rivers District council commits to ensuring that it provides high quality services, an open culture of tolerance and democratic accountability.

This council recognises the need to be responsive to the local community and must achieve that through measurable targets on matters that impact the ability of residents to access information around and influence the decision-making processes of the council. To that end, the council aims to increase the number of residents viewing council meetings, with new livestreaming to be used to promote understanding of how the council operates and how elected officials behave when making decisions. The council commits to maintain the highest standards of accountability in meetings, protecting and where possible extending the rights of all councillors to ask questions, propose motions and amend policy. This council will strive for greater public involvement and influence in decision making through protecting the current rights and thresholds for petitions, public questions and public contributions in committees. It will further extend public engagement with the democratic processes by aiming to use its resources to increase public participation in consultations, electoral role registration and voter turnout at elections. This council will also review its democratic procedures to ensure that the votes the public cast are meaningful through reviewing the current thirds election system, consider referenda on parishing unparished areas and options for changes to existing ward boundaries. Furthermore, this council commits to using the opportunity that current parliamentary boundary review presents for providing a single MP for Three Rivers to cooperate with whoever is elected to that position for the benefit of residents. These changes all aim to make the council more democratic and responsible to the public it serves.

This council also aims to be more responsible in local leadership. This council recognises the need of residents to contact the council around the services it uses and therefore commits to maintaining in person and online communications channels for residents. This council further aims to decrease waiting times for residents when they contact the council. This council also aims to be more efficient in its leadership, understanding that local government should not be a burden on residents. This council therefore aims to not raise council tax above inflation in any year to help drive better value for money for residents.

Amendments for ‘A Great Place to Do Business’

Amend 'histories' to 'history'.

Replace the final paragraph with:

We will aim to increase the economic prosperity of our area by making Three Rivers attractive to successful businesses and entrepreneurs who create well paid jobs that are sensitive to our natural environment. This council will view our high streets as vital and valuable resources both for the local economy and community. We commit to aiding our highstreets to be vibrant and adapt to the evolving needs and expectations of the community they serve. We will diligently observe our duty to cooperate with all tiers of local government to ensure that residents have ease of travel our high streets.

This council further recognises the need for economic growth to benefit the least wealthy in our society. This council therefore strives to aid job creation to benefit all residents and aid lower economic inequality.

This council will also use its authority to protect areas of economic interest for the benefit of residents. It will look at ensuring that protection for the most vital local economic sites is in-date and the strongest reasonably possible.

Replace 'Sustainable Communities' with 'Thriving Communities'

Keep the first two paragraphs. Replace the third paragraph with the following:

This council commits to ensuring the residents have access to great community assets that are run efficiently. This council aims to provide sustainable futures for the green spaces that it has direct control over, including Leavesden Country Park, the Rickmansworth Aquadrome and other parks that ensure their regeneration whilst preserving their character and environment. This council also commits to cooperate with other tiers of local government for the benefit of maintaining and improving green spaces. Across all publicly accessible green spaces, this council aims to improve both the amount and quality of usage for residents and making them accessible for all residents.

Change 'health prevention' to 'ill-health prevention'.

Add to end

We aim to see an increase in participation, especially at William Penn Leisure Centre, South Oxhey Leisure Centre and Rickmansworth Golf Course. We will continue to measure participation at these sites and enhance the offering available to residents at them through working with our partners.

This council also recognises the roles that independent sports clubs have in our communities, providing excellent examples of non-government organised community activity. We will strive to support them to expand participation for residents through aiding them with sports infrastructure improvements.

This council will also maintain, through working with partners, existing cultural community offerings, such as Watersmeet Theatre. It will further work with local organisations to offer community and cultural events for residents.

This council also believes that communities can only thrive when they are safe. We therefore commit to continuing to work with the Hertfordshire Constabulary to reduce crime in Three Rivers and review how this council can use its authority to make our district safer.

Add New Section 'Provide Sustainable and Affordable Housing'

This council recognises the need to ensure that there is sufficient housing for our ever-growing population.

This council is concerned with the affordability of housing in the area, especially when compared to some other neighbouring authorities. We recognise that this is probably a

driving factor for demographic disparity in the district, with data showing a distinctly lower number of residents being in their late teens and early to mid-twenties.

This council believes that those who have grown up in Three Rivers should be able to afford to live in the district.

This council also acknowledges its role in protecting the housing stock in the area.

This council also believes that Green Belt is a valuable asset that must be protected for the benefit of our residents and environment that should not be eroded.

We therefore commit to building the right homes in the right places to meet the needs of our communities without damaging their identities, placing an unnecessary strain on our infrastructure or causing undue environmental damage.

To achieve these aims, this council commits to swiftly developing a sustainable Three Rivers centric Local Plan. This council aims for that plan not to allocate building on undeveloped Green Belt and to protect the spaces between settlements. We further commit to ensuring that developments are in keeping with the local environment, aesthetic and heritage. This council aims to review existing and create new conservation areas as a part of the overall housing strategy for the district.

We commit to ensuring that housing developments provide significant allocations of affordable housing as well as social housing.

We also aim for the Local Plan to provide housing for all in our community, with a healthy balance that includes starter and retirement homes.

Furthermore, this council commits to ensuring that it all properties, both new-build and existing, in the district are suitable for habitation and safe for residents.

This council strives for physical environments that are clean, green and safe as a critical factor in the sustainability of our communities and housing.

Change title to 'Net Carbon Zero, Climate Resilient & Environmentally Friendly'

Insert after 'proactive approach to waste reduction.' 'We recognise that this is only possible through cooperation with Hertfordshire County Council, who dispose and recycle waste that is collected by this council.' *And replace* 'This will' *with* 'We aim to' *and insert after the first* 'continue' 'to be the top recycling authority in England'. *Insert after* 'through' 'cooperation with Hertfordshire County Council and'.

Insert at end:

This council believes that housing must be sustainable and therefore commits to co-ordinate a domestic decarbonisation programme as a part of supporting existing households reduce their expenditure and their climate impact.

We commit to increase biodiversity in Three Rivers, especially through schemes that promote native British species. We will review our management programmes, especially of grasslands, with biodiversity, as well as community use, at their cores.

We strive to improve the quality of our water ways, working with government and non-governmental organisations. We recognise the importance of waterways, especially the rivers Chess, Colne and Gade as well as the Grand Union Canal, to both the environment and communities of Three Rivers.

We will continue to work with the local community on the environment. We will support positive community environmental project and improve our communication with residents around the environment through better signage of management sites and supporting community events that promote awareness and education on climate related issues.

DRAFT