
**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
MINUTES
THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL**

At a meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Monday, 4 December 2023 from 7.30 - 9.05 pm

Present: Councillors

Sarah Nelmes (Chair)
Stephen Giles-Medhurst (Vice-Chair) (Economic Development and Planning Policy)
Paul Rainbow (Public Services)
Chris Lloyd (Leisure)
Andrew Scarth (Housing, Public Health and Wellbeing)
Keith Martin (Resources)
Steve Drury (Community Partnerships)
Oliver Cooper
Philip Hearn
Chris Mitchell

Officers in Attendance:

Alison Scott: Director of Finance
Stephen Rix: Associate Director, Legal & Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)
Cameron MacLean: Interim Senior Committee Manager

PR15/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Stephen Cox.

PR16/23 MINUTES

The Committee –

1. Noted¹ the Minutes of the Special Meeting of the Committee held on 5 October 2023.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst, seconded by Councillor Scarth, moved an amendment to the minutes, as follows.

Item 5: Local Plan Regulation 18 – Part 4 Consultation

Page 8: Subheading “Amendment 5”

That the last sentence under this subheading, *viz.*

¹ Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12: Paragraph 41 –

(1) Minutes of the proceedings of a meeting of the local authority shall... be signed at [the] next meeting of the authority...

“Following discussion of the proposed amendment, the Chair declared that the amendment was carried by general assent.”

be amended to read:

*Following discussion of the proposed amendment, the **Lead Member, having consulted officers, accepted the wording be changed. There was no dissent to this.***

Councillor Cooper stated that he could not agree to the amendment without having first heard the audio recording of the meeting. Therefore, he proposed that consideration of the minutes be deferred.

The Chair stated that Councillor Cooper would be provided with a copy of the audio recording.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst stated that he did not wish to defer consideration of the minutes.

The Chair then put the proposed amendment to the minutes to a vote, the results of which were, as follows:

For the amendment:	7
Against:	2
Abstentions:	1

In response to a question by the Chair, Councillor Mitchell stated that he did not require to be provided with a copy of the audio recording of the meeting.

On a vote to accept the minutes, as amended, the results were, as follows:

For the Motion:	8
Against:	2
Abstentions:	0

NOTED

2. Approved the minutes of the meeting of 13 November 2023 and authorised the Chair to sign them as a correct record.

PR17/23 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chair stated there were a number of “Items of Other Business” which she had agreed that the Committee should consider in accordance with Council Procedure Rule 30, Urgent Items, as follows:

a) Discretionary Fees and Charges

Reason for Urgency: approval by Full Council on 12 December 2023 was required if certain of the proposed fees & charges were to be implemented in January 2024.

b) Variation to Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO): Public Consultation

Reason for Urgency: to comply with statutory requirements regarding publication of the revised PSPO to allow enforcement action to be taken, if necessary.

- c) Proposed Expansion of the Watford Borough Council Beryl Bike Scheme into Croxley Green

Reason for Urgency: to allow negotiations to take place within the prescribed time limits for reaching agreement.

- d) Safe & Legal Routes Consultation

Reason for Urgency: to comply with the deadline set by central government for receipt of responses to the consultation.

PR18/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

PR19/23 PROCUREMENT STRATEGY

The Committee considered a report by Derek Hatchard, Procurement Manager, detailing the new Procurement Strategy to support the Council Corporate Framework and the Council's key objectives.

Mr Hatchard presented the report. In so doing, he noted that there were some minor amendments to the report that was before the Committee.

In the subsequent discussion, the following points were made.

- a) Regarding quality and cost, and measures to prevent cost overruns, it was stated that evaluation criteria were used to determine value-for-money and these criteria were weighted accordingly. Measures to prevent cost overruns included the creation of project and management boards and risk registers.
- b) Regarding construction projects, these were done through "Housing Joint Ventures", and Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) deferred to the framework adopted by Watford Community Housing (WCH) for construction projects, as well as national construction contract forms to manage risk.
- c) The Procurement Strategy, along with the Rules of Procedure, set out in the Council's Constitution [Part 4 – Contracts Procedure Rules], would outline how risk and financial controls were to be implemented within the overall management and delivery of any project.

As there were no more questions, the Chair moved that the Committee approve the recommendations set out in the report.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the Committee –

1. Approve the Procurement Strategy ("the Strategy"); and
2. Recommend to Full Council that it adopt the Strategy.

PR20/23 OTHER BUSINESS - if approved under item 3 above

To consider the following items of "Other Business".

PR21/23 DISCRETIONARY FEES AND CHARGES

The Committee considered a report by the Director of Finance setting out a Schedule of Proposed Fees and Charges effective from 1 January 2024, set out in Appendix 1 of the report; and a Schedule of Fees and Charges effective from 1 April 2024, as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

Alison Scott, Director of Finance, presented the report. In so doing, she made a few amendments to the report that was before the Committee.

In the subsequent discussion, the following points were made.

- a) In response to increases by central government in statutory Planning fees, officers would review whether to introduce fees for submitting a Planning Pre-application.
- b) Regarding the proposed 25% increase in some of the parking fees, it was noted that parking fees had not been increased since 2016 and that had fees been increased in line with inflation, the increase over the period would have been 28%.
- c) The Council's Parking Reserve was governed by statutory provisions and was currently operating at a deficit. The proposed measures would go some way to balancing the Council's Parking Reserve.

The Chair noted that, where there was a proposed increase in the cost of any service, an attempt had been made for the users of that service to meet the increased cost rather than spreading the cost across all service users.

An annual increase in parking fees in line with inflation would have been difficult and costly to administer. If agreed, the proposed parking fees would still be less than the fees charged by neighbouring boroughs for resident parking.

- d) Regarding Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs) in relation to Fly Tipping and Domestic Duty of Care, it was proposed that these should be increased by 10% which would round up the numbers to administratively easy to manage numbers.
- e) Cycling and walking as alternative modes of transport were to be encouraged. However, for some residents, being able to use a car was vital and, therefore, the proposed increase in parking fees could be a lot of money for some people.
- f) Regarding nappy sacks, it was noted that the service included not only the provision of plastic sacks but the cost of residual bin collection charges.
- g) In response to the proposal that, given the small number of persons caught fly tipping, there be a discount for early payment of a fine in respect of fly tipping, it was noted that, in line with a lot of FPNs, the early payment of fines significantly reduced administrative costs and avoided potentially protracted and costly enforcement action and court proceedings.

The Chair noted that, given the nature of the offence, it would be appropriate to give further consideration as to whether it was appropriate to offer a discount for prompt payment of a FPN for fly tipping.

In response to proposed amendments to the recommendations in respect of the percentage increase in FPNs for Fly Tipping and Domestic Duty of Care, and the proposed discount for early payment of a FPN in respect of fly tipping, it was **AGREED** that these be the subject of further discussion with a view to making

amendments to the Council's budget, once the budget had been approved, if necessary.

In response to a motion by Councillor Lloyd, seconded by Councillor Drury, to approve the recommendations set out in the report, the Chair put the motion to a vote, the results of which were, as follows.

For the Motion: 7
Against: 2
Abstentions: 0

RESOLVED: That the Committee recommend to Full Council that it approve the Fees and Charges set out in the Schedules at:

1. Appendix 1 [of the report], to be effective from 1 January 2024; and
2. Appendix 2 [of the report], to be effective from 1 April 2024.

FURTHER RESOLVED: To note that, under the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) Regulations 2019, the Council will be charging s. 106 monitoring fees from 1 January 2024, as follows –

1) Affordable housing financial contribution with no review mechanism:	£280
2) Affordable housing financial contribution with review mechanism:	£540
3) Affordable housing on-site contribution with review mechanism [0 to 25 dwellings]:	£720
4) Affordable housing on-site contribution with review mechanism [26+ dwellings]	£820
5) Amendment to TRO to restrict ability to purchase parking permit:	£870
6) Other non-financial obligations:	£350

Where there was more than one obligation, the highest fee to be paid in full, and 50% of any subsequent fee(s).

PR22/23 VARIATION TO PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER (PSPO) PUBLIC CONSULTATION RESULT

The Committee considered a report of the Environmental Strategy Manager recommending, after a public consultation exercise, amendments to the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) which designated areas throughout the district where there were restrictions in relation to dogs.

Alison Scott, Director of Finance, presented the report.

The Chair noted that the recommended changes to the PSPO were in response to a request by Watford Rural Parish Council to add an area to the schedule of areas covered by the PSPO; a recommendation that another area be removed from the schedule; and the results of the public consultation which supported the proposed changes.

In the subsequent discussion, the following points arose.

- a) No objection had been received from Watford Rural Parish Council to the proposed removal of The Mead, Carpenders Park, from the schedule of designated areas.
- b) The reason for removing The Mead, Carpenders Park, from the schedule was that it was no longer used as a playground and, therefore, there was no requirement to place a restriction on dogs in this area.

In response to a motion by Councillor Lloyd, seconded by Councillor Scarth, to approve the recommendations set out in the report, the Chair put the motion to a vote.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That, to provide consistency with dog exclusion areas throughout the district the Committee approve -

1. The addition of the Greenfields Avenue, Carpenders Park Children's Play Area to the Public Spaces Protection Order (PSPO) schedule excluding dogs from the area; and,
2. The Children's Play Area at The Mead, Carpenders Park be removed from the PSPO schedule excluding dogs from the area; and
3. That public access to the report be immediate.

PR23/23 PROPOSED EXPANSION OF THE WATFORD BC BERYL BIKE SCHEME INTO CROXLEY GREEN

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Regulatory Services setting out a proposal by Watford Borough Council (WBC) to extend the existing Beryl Bike scheme into Croxley Green.

Alison Scott, Director of Finance, introduced the report.

In the subsequent discussion, the following points arose.

- a) When the scheme had started, WBC had been required to put up capital funding to purchase the bikes. Accordingly, the capital costs were for the purchase of e-bikes and a small amount for marking out bays for the e-bikes.
- b) The e-bikes were deemed to be revenue neutral as the cost to use the bikes covered the running costs of the scheme. If, at the end of the pilot scheme, the Council did not wish to proceed with the project, the Council then had the option of selling the e-bikes back to Beryl or keeping the e-bikes.
- c) There was evidence that there was demand for the bikes in Croxley and, if the scheme was extended, then bikes could be taken from other areas and left in Croxley without the user incurring a penalty for not returning the bike to an area covered by the scheme. If the pilot scheme was successful, consideration could be given to extending the scheme to other areas.
- d) Regarding costs, the Council was joining an established scheme with an established ridership. Demand for the scheme to be extended to Croxley was evidenced by the number of bikes that were taken from elsewhere and left in Croxley Green, the users preferring to pay the £10 fine rather than return the bikes to an area within the scheme.

The Council had been informed by WBC and Beryl that e-bikes, unlike ordinary pedal bikes, were self-funding. In turn, WBC and Beryl had been informed that

the Council had no revenue funding available for this project, only capital funding.

- e) Regarding the operation of the scheme and potential costs to Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and WBC in operating and managing the scheme, it was noted that the newer bikes had GPS tracking and there were virtual docking stations. Consequently, whenever there had been issues with bikes not being returned, WBC reported that Beryl had been quick to respond to addressing these issues and that fines were issued for bikes which had been abandoned.
- f) The effect of taking e-bikes from one area to another meant that docking stations for e-bikes could have both WBC and Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) e-bikes at those docking stations.
- g) It would be helpful if Members could be given advance notice on how the traffic markings for the e-bikes were to be laid out at each location. Also, there was the potential for people to use the e-bikes to commute from Croxley station, along Mill Lane and across Croxley Common Moor.
- h) Beryl was committed to checking docking stations throughout the day to ensure there was an even distribution of bikes across the docking stations, and to collect abandoned bikes. In addition, the bikes were collected in the evening for recharging.
- i) As this was a pilot, the stands and markings for the e-bikes would be minimal in nature until such time as the pilot project was completed. Thereafter, it was possible that more substantial stands might be provided.
- j) Electric scooters did not form part of the pilot project and TRDC was not one of Transport for London (TfL) trial areas for e-scooters. At present, the Committee was being asked to agree, in principle, to the pilot project. The precise locations for the e-bikes, which was the subject of discussions with discussions with landowners and residents, had yet to be decided.
- k) It was proposed that Byewaters area be included within the pilot scheme.

At this stage of the proceedings, the Chair stated that she did not want to go into the detail of the scheme as all that was being sought at this stage was approval, in principle, to the scheme. Therefore, she proposed that the Committee move to the recommendations set out in the report.

RESOLVED (unanimously): That the Committee:

1. Agree that the Council enter into arrangements with Watford Borough Council (WBC) and Beryl Bikes to deliver a pilot e-bike scheme working at a capital cost of £45,000.
2. Delegate authority -
 - a) On final sites within the areas outlined in the report to the Head of Regulatory Services in consultation with the Lead Member for General Public Services and Ward Councillors; and
 - b) For approving and entering all required contractual arrangements to implement the pilot e-bike scheme to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Lead Member for General Public Services.
3. Agree that Officers pursue a future CIL [Community Infrastructure Levy] application for the capital monies.

4. That public access to Appendix 2: Part 2 [of the report], be denied until the scheme was implemented.

PR24/23 SAFE & LEGAL ROUTES CAP CONSULTATION

The Committee considered a report of the Strategic Housing Manager detailing the current consultation by the Home Office on the potential capacity of the Council to support individuals arriving through safe and legal migration routes in 2025.

Jason Hagland, Strategic Housing Manager introduced the report.

It was confirmed that it was proposed that the Council was prepared to house people in need subject to receipt of government funding.

Councillor Giles-Medhurst, seconded by Councillor Scarth, moved that the Committee accept the recommendations as set out in the report.

RESOLVED (unanimously): To –

1. Approve a response to the consultation confirming zero capacity [of Three Rivers District Council (“the Council”) to support individuals arriving through safe and legal migration routes] for 2025;
2. Inform the Home Office that if additional [Home Office] funding was to be provided to the Council [to support individuals arriving through safe and legal migration routes], this would be considered [by the Council]; and
3. That any decision on a joint response [from all the local authorities in Hertfordshire, and Hertfordshire County Council] be delegated to the Chief Executive of the Council, in consultation with the Leader of the Council.

CHAIR