
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, 11 March 2024 from 7.30 - 9.10 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)
Steve Drury (Community Partnerships)
Jon Tankard (Climate Change & Sustainability)
Keith Martin
Philip Hearn
Abbas Merali
Oliver Cooper
Chris Mitchell

Officers in Attendance:

Joanne Wagstaffe	Chief Executive
Alison Scott	Director of Finance
Kimberley Rowley	Head of Regulatory Services
Stephen Rix	Associate Director, Legal & Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer)
Jason Hagland	Strategic Housing manager
Marko Kalik	Head of Planning Policy & Conservation
Phil King	Data Protection and Resilience Manager
Emma Sheridan	Associate Director, Customer & Community
Justin Wingfield	Head of Property & Major Projects
Rebecca Young	Head of Strategy & Partnerships
Shilpa Manek	Senior Committee Officer

PR37/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Cox and Merali.

PR38/23 MINUTES

The Committee approved the minutes of the meeting held on 29 January 2024 and authorised the Chair to sign them as an accurate record subject to checking the vote from PR29/23, point b. The results in the minutes of 9 For and 3 Against were correct.

PR39/23 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

PR40/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest received.

PR41/23 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

The Committee considered a report presented by the Head of Planning Policy and Conservation, Marko Kalik.

The report was seeking approval of a revised Local Development Scheme (LDS) to bring the Local Plan timetable in line with the Government's transitional arrangements for submitting Local Plans through the current system following the update to the National Planning Policy Framework in December 2023. The change would ensure that the Local Plan remained on course for 2026 Adoption as currently set out in the Council's extant LDS, dated December 2022. The Council was required to prepare and regularly review a LDS under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

It was suggested that the submission be brought forward to February/March 2025, to which the Head of Planning Policy and Conservation clarified that based on the consultation, the results would go forward to the Inspector and there could be a potential to move forward the submission.

Councillor Cooper proposed that, as highlighted in Appendix 2 of the report, the publication date remained as September/October 2024 and the Submission to Secretary of State be amended to February/March 2025, instead of May/June 2025, with an aim for presenting to Full Council in February 2025. This was seconded by Councillor Chis Lloyd. This was AGREED Unanimously.

RESOLVED: that the Policy & Resources Committee adopted the Local Development Scheme as set out in Appendix 2 subject to an amendment to the date of submission to the Secretary of State from May/June 2025 to February/March 2025.

PR42/23 ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION

The Committee were presented a report providing notification that the Secretary of State had issued an amended Article 4 Direction which would come into force on 29 March 2024, restricting Class MA Permitted Development Rights that came not effect from 1 August 2021. Class MA related to change of use from Class E (commercial, business and services) to Class C3 (residential).

The Council were in the process of serving notice, which involved publicising the Article 4 Direction through the Watford Observer, the Council website and putting up site notices within each of the areas subject to the Article 4 Direction, to keep the public informed.

The report was presented by Marko Kalik, Head of Planning Policy and Conservation.

It was highlighted to the Committee that as the amended Article 4 Direction had been issued by the Secretary of State and had now come into force, there was no requirement by the Council to consult on the changes to the Article 4 Direction and the changes did not need to be agreed by Members. The report was to inform Members only and to note.

RESOLVED: that the Policy & Resources Committee noted the report.

PR43/23 REVIEW OF STRATEGIC RISKS

The Policy and Resources Committee were presented a report on the Review of Strategic Risks, detailing the progress against the risk treatment plans for the strategic risks relating to the priorities identified in the Corporate Framework 2023-2026.

The report was presented by Phil King, Data Protection and Resilience Manager.

It was reported that there were currently eight risks on the Strategic Risk Register. The Strategic Risk Register had been reviewed by the Corporate Management Team and some amendments had been suggested, as stated in the report.

The Policy and Resources Committee are recommended to agree the revised Strategic Risk Register in Appendix A.

A point was raised about what the planning was for an emergency, was there any business continuity in place for not having access to the building. The Committee were informed that there was good business continuity in place with the shared services with Watford Borough Council and daily IT back-ups to the previous day. Each service area did their own service planning with their operational risk registers. There was a corporate business continuity plan in place which was tested regularly.

A further point was raised about the impact rating of 4 was reached for the Failure to deliver net-zero carbon commitments. It was explained that this would have a reputational risk to the Council. The risk management scoring matrix was included in the report for Members to view.

Councillor Keith Martin explained that the report was looking at the key Strategic Risks and their impact on the Council's Strategic Objectives.

A vote was carried out where 9 Members voted For and 2 Members Abstained.

RESOLVED: that the Policy and Resources Committee AGREED the revised Strategic Risk Register.

PR44/23 BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 31 JANUARY 2024

The Budget Monitoring Report to 31 January 2024 was presented to the Policy & Resources Committee by Alison Scott, Director of Finance. The report showed the financial position over the three-year medium term based on the Council's actual financial performance at the end of period 10 (31 January 2024) set against the latest budget.

There was an increase in utility bills considering there was a cost saving of £15K. This was due to a number of factors including Ukraine and Russia, this was the first year of using the new system of thermostating and since some of the building was used by the Police and heated 24/7, this had an effect on costs. The savings of the new system would be seen next year.

A vote was carried out where 9 Members voted For and 2 Members Abstained.

RESOLVED: that the Policy and Resources Committee AGREED that the report be presented to Council to agree:

- That the revenue budget virements as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.

- That the revenue budget supplementary estimates as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.
- That the revenue variances to be managed as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be noted.
- That the capital variances as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.

PR45/23 YMCA WOODLANDS CAFE EXPANSION RELEASE OF S106 FUNDS

The Committee considered a report by the Associate Director, Customer & Community recommending that the Policy and Resources Committee approve the report to be presented to the Climate Change, Leisure and Community Committee Agree the recommendation of the proposed request to use £60,000 (£20k from S106 funding and £40k from UKSPF funding) to support the expansion and renovation of the Woodlands Café into the adjacent building formerly used by the Leavesden Cycle Hub.

The report was presented by Emma Sheridan.

Members were content with the recommendation, which would make the café more attractive for many more users and profitable for the YMCA. The split of funding was a much better way to support the expansion.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst proposed to move the Officers recommendation. This was seconded by Councillor Andrew Scarth.

RESOLVED: That the Committee Unanimously AGREED that the report be presented to the Climate Change, Leisure and Community Committee to Agree the recommendation of the proposed request to use £60,000 (£20k from S106 funding and £40k from UKSPF funding) to support the expansion and renovation of the Woodlands Café into the adjacent building formerly used by the Leavesden Cycle Hub.

PR46/23 RENEWAL OF SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT FOR PROVISION OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH (COMMERCIAL) SERVICE BY WATFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL (WBC)

The Head of Regulatory Services, Kimberley Rowley, presented the report looking for approval to renew a service agreement for a further five years. In May 2019, Three Rivers District Council had delegated its Environmental Health (Commercial) Service to Watford Borough Council for a period of five years. This service was due to cease in April 2024.

It was highlighted that the date in the recommendation needed to be amended to read 1 May 2024.

RESOLVED: that the Policy and Resources Committee Unanimously AGREED that the Environmental Health (commercial) service is continued to be delegated to Watford Borough Council with effect from 1 May 2024 for a period of 5 years at an initial service cost of £198k subject to an annual increase in line with % increase in pay rises ii) All further work to complete this extension to the existing SLA is delegated to the Director of Finance in consultation with the Lead Member for Resources.

PR47/23 PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR OFFER POLICY - UPDATE

The Committee received an update on the Private Rented Sector Offer Policy. The Policy set out when the Council would make a private rented offer to a homeless applicant. The policy had been last reviewed in 2021 and therefore, a review of the policy had been undertaken and the policy had been updated.

The report was presented by Jason Hagland, Strategic Housing Manager.

The policy had required four minor amendments.

RESOLVED: that the Policy and Resources Committee agreed the recommendation to APPROVE the updated Private Rented Sector Offer Policy.

PR48/23 LOCAL AUTHORITY HOUSING FUND

The Committee considered a report by the Head of Property and Major Projects, Justin Wingfield. The Committee agreed to stay in Part I as Members had noted Appendix 1, which was in Part II. The Head of Property and Major Projects was recommending the Committee to

- a) Note the update report and the current progress of the LAHF scheme in the District.
- b) Approve the acquisition of up to 11 no. of new build dwellings as discussed within the report and the confidential Appendix.
- c) Approve the settlement of the ground rent obligation of the Leaseholder.
- d) Delegate the details of the proposed acquisition and settlement of the Ground Rent obligation to the Chief Executive and Director of Finance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Resources.
- e) Note the intended use of the allocated capital programme funds to be invested into the LAHF scheme.

The report provided a further update following a report to Full Council on 20 February 2024, which had sought authority to grant delegations to the Policy and Resources Committee.

The Committee asked about the deadlines for spending the funding and it was clarified that the funds needed to be allocated, which they were.

RESOLVED: that the Policy and Resources Committee Unanimously AGREED the following:

- a) **To note the update report and the current progress of the LAHF scheme in the District.**
- b) **To approve the acquisition of up to 11 no. of new build dwellings as discussed within the report and the confidential Appendix.**
- c) **To approve the settlement of the ground rent obligation of the Leaseholder.**
- d) **To delegate the details of the proposed acquisition and settlement of the Ground Rent obligation to the Chief Executive and Director of Finance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and Lead Member for Resources.**
- e) **To note the intended use of the allocated capital programme funds to be invested into the LAHF scheme.**

PR49/23 CONTRACT AWARD FOR PROFESSIONAL COMMUNICATIONS, BRANDING AND MARKETING SERVICES

The Committee considered a report by Emma Sheridan, Associate Director Customer and Community, seeking approval to award a contract for Communication and Design Professional Services.

To enable officers to deliver a number of critical projects that fulfil objectives of the Councils Corporate Framework, they need access to a range of diverse and specialist services in the field of communications, branding and marketing to support the work of in-house officer teams. The Council procures these services under a variety of framework agreements which it can draw upon as and when required, one such Framework is the ESPO framework.

The Associate Director, Customer and Community's recommendation to the Committee was to Approve contract award of the Communications, Branding and Marketing Consultancy Support contract to Contractor 1 and Delegate authority to the Associate Director Legal and Democratic Services to complete and sign the associated contract.

Members asked the percentage of the contract of the National Heritage Lottery Funding and of Revenue and Members noted it was one quarter of revenue and three quarters of the lottery funding.

RESOLVED: that the Policy and Resources Committee unanimously AGREED the Officers recommendation to Approve the contract award of the Communications, Branding and Marketing Consultancy Support contract to Contractor 1 and Delegate authority to the Associate Director Legal and Democratic Services to complete and sign the associated contract.

PR50/23 WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered a report recommending that the Committee agree the items included in the Committee's Work Programme, which was attached, in draft document form, as an appendix to the report.

Members asked for the covering report and the appendix to be merged into one report.

RESOLVED: that the Committee approved the items listed in the Work Programme.

CHAIR