

Local Strategic Partnership minutes – 20 March 2024

Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Three Rivers District Council (Chair)
Debbie Stone, Intensive Family Support Team
Elspeth Mackenzie, Thrive Homes
Phoebe Allsopp, Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner
Paraic McKenna, Hertfordshire County Council
Forogh Rahmani, Herts Growth Board
Tamara Valmas, Homegroup
Shirish Chauhan, Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce
Bob Jones, Watford & Three Rivers Trust (Vice-Chair)
Peter Cogan, Watford Community Housing
Emma Wright, Wenta
Danielle Levy, Herts Mind Network
Keith Harland, Herts Fire & Rescue Service
Andrew Palfreyman, Herts Constabulary
Enoch Kanagaraj, One Vision
Rebecca Young, Three Rivers District Council
Kimberley Grout, Three Rivers District Council
Councillor Steve Drury, Three Rivers District Council
Maria Kyriacou, Integrated Care Board
Caroline Smart, West Herts College
Shivani Dave, Three Rivers District Council
Michelle Wright, Three Rivers District Council
Anita Hibbs, Three Rivers District Council

The group introduced themselves individually.

Apologies for absence:

Lena Brooks, Jo Barrett, Stephen Boulton, Priti Patel, Miranda Gittos, Saffron Johnson, Margaret Gallagher

Minutes:

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2024 were agreed.

Hot topics:

Shivani Dave, Partnerships Manager advised that as of the end of March 2024, the officers who usually cover the Healthy Hub will be moving into new roles. The team is currently recruiting for new staff. Officers from the Customer Service Centre are helping to cover the Healthy Hub in the meantime.

Bob Jones, Watford & Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) announced that ASCEND will formally cease to trade from the end of March 2024 as an independent entity,

however, it will continue to operate from 1 April 2024 as part of Watford & Three Rivers Trust.

Herts Growth Board

A presentation was delivered by Forough Rahmani, Herts Growth Board (HGB) covering the following topics:

- **HGB's Vision for Good Growth**
- **HGB Missions**
- **Principles for Oversight and Delivery of HGB Missions**
- **Proposed Oversight & Delivery Structure**
- **Key Progress to Date**
- **Next steps**
- **Areas for discussion**

Presentation to be inserted

Councillor Nelmes talked about how the council work with the film industry, explaining that one of the works the film office is doing is providing a platform, so that if a production wants a local caterer for example, they can find a local one instead of trying to find one in East London, and also shared some information on how the council work with local universities and further education colleges as well on creating modular apprenticeships for local young people.

The group discussed concerns around barriers to keeping local young people in local jobs in Hertfordshire, such as the lack of joined up nature of the planning system, the willingness of local authorities to deliver social, affordable homes and acknowledge the need for housing.

The Chair stated that housing is indeed an issue but the government's local authority housing fund money is there primarily to be used to help with the housing need for refugees arriving from Ukraine and Afghanistan, and the council try and use as much of this government funding as much as possible.

Forogh Rahmani talked about the challenges and impact on young people as a result of the economic downturn and cost of living crisis, in terms of housing, access to skills and recreational activities, and this is something that we need to be aware of, and for us to see what we can do across Hertfordshire to improve access for all young people.

Forogh advised that Herts Growth Board (HGB) have a Planning Resilience Programme across Hertfordshire, and part of it is about improving capability for planners and trying to attract more people in through apprenticeship and graduate routes and working with universities. HGB are looking at shared services opportunities and piloting something potentially.

In response to a question raised about Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce having done any work with the film office, Shirish Chauhan talked about the lack of public

transport between Rickmansworth and Tolpits Lane, explaining that roads are clogged up during busy times, and no cycle paths available, and the importance of local transport infrastructure to be able to contribute to the sustainability strategy.

Forogh agreed and stressed the importance of setting up a Transport for Herts Strategic Body.

Rebecca Young, Head of Strategy & Partnerships informed the group that the Sustainability Careers Fair is taking place at Watersmeet Theatre in Rickmansworth on 27 March 2027, and further information can be shared with board members.

Wenta

A presentation was delivered by Emma Wright, Wenta covering the following topics:

- **About Wenta**
- **Wenta Services**
- **Wenta Results**
- **Wenta Partners**
- **Wenta Client Insights**
- **Why Partner with Wenta**
- **Action Zero Green Grants**

Presentation to be inserted

In response to questions around funding, Emma Wright advised that a lot of Wenta's partners are funded, mainly through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, some of those are privately funded programmes, and as Wenta are a social enterprise, they have their own income streams that feed back into support programmes. However, the partners also share resources and insights. Emma informed the group that the name Wenta is an acronym for Watford Enterprise Agency.

The closest outreach space for Wenta is in the Watford Business Centre.

Emma further explained that Wenta has worked with West Herts College in the past, and they also provide business advisors to schools and colleges if there is a request. Wenta promote their services by working with partners as much as possible, but also through word of mouth and via search engines and working with schools, colleges, local authorities and banks.

Wenta can also support refugees and asylum seekers who have been granted indefinite leave to remain and the ability to work in the UK, to help them start new businesses.

Shivani Dave offered to check with local secondary schools about Wenta services.

Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce

A presentation was delivered by Shirish Chauhan, Three Rivers Chamber of Commerce covering the following topics:

- **Three Rivers Chamber of Trade and Commerce**
 - **Formed in 1899**
 - **Serving the local business and trade community**
 - **Supporting, Advising & Connecting**
 - **Small Leadership Team of 4 Volunteers**
 - **Networking**
 - **Information**
 - **Support & Education**
- **Supporting, Advising, Connecting Local Businesses**
- **Events**
- **Challenges**
- **[Video content](#)**

Presentation to be inserted

The group was discussing business on the high street and Councillor Nelmes advised that vacancy figures for Rickmansworth High Street is lowest in Herts, the issue with high street sale is that a lot of the shops have moved to online sale.

It was suggested that perhaps events could be arranged to recruit new members in the Abbots Langley and South Oxhey area.

Shirish confirmed that this is on their agenda, to run events in other parts of Three Rivers.

Shivani Dave advised that there will be a Disability Confidence event happening for local businesses on 14 May 2024 at the Warner Brothers Studio. Shivani will share the flyer with board members when it is ready.

Watford and West Herts Chamber of Commerce

Saffron Johnson was unable to attend the meeting.

Donations platform

Lee Keogh delivered a presentation on the donations platform in a live demo.

Lee shared that work has been done on the platform to highlighting the 4 key aims of the Three Rivers Community Strategy to encourage people to donate into the Connecting Communities pot and the reasons why the donations are needed.

One of the key feedback items that was received was about what the fund was for and who is driving the fund, and in response to this a page was created with a photo of the Local Strategic Partnership Board advising the public that it is powered by the LSPB and administered by Watford & Three Rivers Trust and what the key mission is.

Case studies can be created on the blog now, where we can share stories of the impact the community funds have.

A suggestion was made to all to consider donating, and to share the information about the platform with friends and family.

Bob Jones advised that W3RT does not collect any fee, but there is small charge for each transaction.

Shivani Dave informed the group that to kick start the donations platform, there will be a community auction held for 6 weeks online between mid-May to June and invited the board members to offer items for the auction.

A request was made for an update from Herts Growth Board at a future LSPB meeting.

CHAIR