
Minutes of the Meeting of Full **COUNCIL** held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth on **Tuesday 12 July 2022** from 7.30pm to 9.40pm.

Present: Councillors Debbie Morris (Chair), Raj Khiroya (Vice Chair for the meeting), Matthew Bedford, Sara Bedford, , Ruth Clark, Stephen Cox, Steve Drury, Andrea Fraser, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Rue Grewal, Phillip Hearn, Tony Humphreys, Khalid Hussain, , Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Shanti Maru, Abbas Merali, Chris Mitchell, Sarah Nelmes, Kevin Raeburn, Paul Rainbow, Reena Ranger OBE, David Raw, , Ciaran Reed, Andrew Scarth, Roger Seabourne, Stephanie Singer, Jon Tankard, Alison Wall, Phil Williams and Anne Winter.

CL32/22 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR FOR THE MEETING

Councillor Sarah Nelmes proposed, seconded by Councillor Phil Williams, that Councillor Raj Khiroya be appointed Vice Chair for the meeting.

RESOLVED:

Councillor Raj Khiroya be appointed Vice Chair for the meeting.

CL33/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors David Coltman, Joan King, Stephen King, Lisa Hudson, Dominic Sokalski, Martin Trevett and Kate Turner.

CL34/22 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Annual Council meeting held on 24 May 2022 were agreed by general assent and signed by the Chair.

CL35/22 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor David Major made the following declaration of interest as the Council appointed representative on the Joint Committee and having taken legal advice wished to declare a non-pecuniary interest in agenda item 6. The Councillor would stay in the meeting and take part in the debate and vote and came to the meeting with:

- an open mind about the report and recommendation
- not bound by the views of the Joint Committee and
- can deal with the report and recommendations fairly and on its merits at Council

CL36/22 CHANGE OF ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair, Councillor Debbie Morris, proposed to change the order of business to take the Part II confidential items being items 15 – 17 after item 7.

The motion on being put to Council was declared **CARRIED** by the Chair the voting being agreed by general assent.

RESOLVED:

To take the Part II confidential items being items 15 – 17 item after item 7

CL37/22 LEAVE OF ABSENCE REPORT

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 the voting being agreed by general assent.

RESOLVED:

1. Approved the request from Councillor Martin Trevett for an extension beyond the six month period of non-attendance on health grounds.
2. That such an extension be granted until the end of October 2022 which would allow for any request for a further extension being considered by Council at its meeting on 18 October 2022.
3. In the event of that meeting either being cancelled or postponed, such an extension to remain in place until after the next available meeting of the Council.

CL38/22 SECOND LEAVE OF ABSENCE REPORT

The Chair advised that this leave of absence report had been published as (4a) after the summons was published but the Chair had agreed to take the item as an urgent item of business so that the Council are able to make a decision on the granting of leave of absence as requested by the Councillor.

Councillor Stephen Cox moved, seconded by Councillor Ciaran Reed the recommendations as set out in the report.

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

RESOLVED:

1. Approved the request from Councillor Joan King for an extension beyond the six month period of non-attendance on health grounds.
2. That such an extension be granted until the end of October 2022 which would allow for any request for a further extension being considered by Council at its meeting on 18 October 2022.
3. In the event of that meeting either being cancelled or postponed, such an extension to remain in place until after the next available meeting of the Council.

CL39/22 APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON (IP) ON THE COUNCIL

The Chair advised that the report was late in being published in order to advise the Group Leaders of the appointment following the recent interviews and for the IP to accept the appointment.

The Chair advised that they had agreed to take the report as an urgent report in order that the appointment of the IP can be made. It is a requirement of the Council to have an IP on the Council.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Rue Grewal the recommendations as set out in the report.

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

RESOLVED:

Council is asked to approve the appointment of Mr Kenneth Lee as Independent Person on the Council from November 2022 for 2 years.

That Mr Gates be appointed a reserve IP from November 2022 and provides some mentoring if asked.

CL40/22 WEST HERTS CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE NEW GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

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

The motion on being put to Council was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being agreed by general assent.

RESOLVED:

1. That the adoption of a Lead Authority model for the future operation of the Joint Committee is agreed.
2. That Three Rivers District Council agrees to become the Lead Authority, subject to agreeing the terms in the new Joint Committee Agreement.
3. The decision to enter into the new Joint Committee Agreement is delegated to the Chief Executive Officer and the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services. With the new agreement setting out the terms for the Lead Authority arrangements.

CL41/22 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE AND SPECIAL POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Council received the recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 13 June 2022 and 12 July 2022.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst the recommendations at Minute PR09/22, PR10/22, PR12/26 and PR14/22 from the P&R Committee on 13 June.

The motion on being put to Council was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being agreed by general assent.

RESOLVED:

Minute **PR09/22 ADOPTION OF STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)**

- 1) Agree the responses to the draft Statement of Community Involvement as set out in Appendix 2.
- 2) Approve the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) 2022 for the SW Herts Joint Strategic Plan (in Appendix 3) for adoption, with any further minor amendments to the document to be agreed by the Director of Community and Environmental Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy.

**Minute PR10/22 APPROVAL OF INITIAL ISSUES AND OPTIONS
(REGULATION 18) CONSULTATION FOR SW HERTS JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN**

1. That the following documents are issued for consultation:
 - a) South West Hertfordshire 2050 – 'Realising our Potential,' Issues and Options document (Appendix 1); and
 - b) Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report (Appendix 2).
- and
2. Delegate authority to the Director of Community and Environmental Services, in consultation with the Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy to:
 - a) Confirm detailed consultation arrangements; and
 - b) Make any minor changes to the documents referenced above before they are formally published for comment.

Minute PR12/22 COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) - GOVERNANCE

Approved the CIL Governance arrangements as set out in paragraphs 5.3 to 6.2 of the report.

Minute PR14/22 CIL SPENDING APPLICATIONS

- (i) approve CIL funding for the following schemes detailed in Table 1 of this report and summarised in the table below for 2022/2023:

Applicant & Project Name	Infrastructure	CIL Amount
TRDC Leisure Team Barton Way, Croxley Green Multi Use Games Area	Full refurbishment of the MUGA – surfacing and 3 sides of fencing	£29,979

AND

- (ii) any changes to the scheme proposals or variation of the financial requirements by up to 25% of the agreed commitment to be delegated to the DCES to determine in consultation with the Lead Member.

Councillor Keith Martin proposed, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nemes Minute PR16/22 – Summary of the Financial Year End Position for 2021/22 with an

amendment to Point 3 - To approve to carry forward the unspent service budgets from 2021/22 to 2022/23 which total £651,970. To reflect the additional £50k to create the sustainability pot.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 21 For, 0 Against and 11 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

- That the favourable revenue outturn variance after carry forwards of (£735,638) to be noted.
- That the capital outturn as summarised in paragraph 2.6 and Appendix 3 be noted.
- To approve to carry forward the unspent service budgets from 2021/22 to 2022/23 which total £651,970. To reflect the additional £50k to create the sustainability pot. .
- To approve the re phasing of capital projects from 2021/22 to 2022/23 which total £11,336,915 as detailed at Appendix 4.

Rule 6 - Order of Business

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes the recommendations from the Special P&R Committee on Rule 6.

The motion on being put to Council was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being agreed by general assent.

RESOLVED:

- (1) The Order of Business at every ordinary meeting shall be:
 - (a) To choose a Member to preside if the Chair and Vice-Chair be absent.
 - (b) Apologies for absence.
 - (c) To confirm as a correct record the Minutes of the previous meeting of the Council which shall then be signed by the Member presiding at the meeting.
 - (d) Chair's announcements.
 - (e) Receive any petitions under procedure Rule 18.
 - (f) Questions from the public under procedure rule 15
 - (g) Business required by statute to be dealt with before any other business.
 - (h) To deal with any other business specifically required by law.
 - (i) Recommendations of the Policy & Resources Committee (including budget-setting recommendations).
 - (j) To deal with any other recommendations.
 - (k) To deal with any other business specified in the Summons.
 - (l) To receive reports from the Leader and Lead Members.
 - (m) To consider notices of motions (Rule 11).
- (2) The order of business under items (g) – (m) can be changed by the Chair or by a resolution passed on a motion (which need not be in writing) duly moved

and seconded and put to vote without discussion. The Chair shall have the ability to move without discussion any items required to be considered under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 with the press and public excluded to any stage of the meeting after item (f) to ensure that such business is concluded before the close of the meeting.

(3) If in accordance with Rule 1 the above business (a) to (k) and any items under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 are not concluded by the set time, that business shall be adjourned to a time fixed by the Chair at the time the meeting is adjourned, or, if they do not fix a time, to the next ordinary meeting of the Council. Item (l) will be taken as read and added to the minutes but items (m and n) shall fall and not be considered.

CL42/22 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The Chair advised that it will be appropriate to move the following motion to Council to move into the Part II confidential items to be passed in the following terms and read out as follows:-

“that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under paragraphs 3 and 5 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 the voting being by general assent.

RESOLVED:

Council agreed to move into Part II confidential business

CL43/22 TO RECEIVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2022

A) BUILDING CONTROL AND UPDATE REPORT

RESOLVED:

Agreed decision but that public access to the report and decision be denied until the matter is resolved.

B) LEISURE FACILITIES MANAGEMENT CONTRACT – REPROFILING OF MANAGEMENT FEE

RESOLVED:

Agreed the decision but that public access to the decision and report be denied until the matter is resolved.

CL44/22 TO RECEIVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12 JULY 2022

PRE EMPTION SITES

RESOLVED:

Agreed the decision

Agreed Public access to the report be denied until issue resolved.

Agreed Public access to the decision be denied until Committee minutes publication.

CL45/22 Council moved back into Part I business

CL46/22 OUTSIDE BODY APPOINTMENT

Councillor Phil Williams proposed, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes that Councillor Jon Tankard be appointed the substitute member to The Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership.

Councillor Ciaran Reed proposed, seconded by Councillor Abbas Merali, that Councillor Andrea Fraser be appointed the substitute member

On being put to Council the vote was:

21 For Councillor Jon Tankard

10 For Councillor Andrea Fraser

1 Abstention

RESOLVED:

That Councillor Jon Tankard be appointed the substitute member on The Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership.

CL47/22 RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 18

None received.

CL48/22 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 15

None received.

CL49/22 CHAIR OF COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair made the following announcements:

It had been a busy but enjoyable few weeks. The term of office had started off with jubilee celebrations. The first event was at Clitheroe Gardens Community Centre where a carriage had been built for the Queens Jubilee. This was followed by the Beacon lighting at Three Rivers Rose Gardens which had been a tremendous event with a significant turn out, with music provided by the South Oxhey choir.

The Chair had attended many other Jubilee events as well as a visit to a care home with a Pets as Therapy (PAT) volunteer and their dog. There was a wonderful engagement between the dog and the residents, as Cllrs were aware. PAT was the Chair's chosen charity for the year.

The Chair had held a summer social which many Cllrs had attended and this had raised over £1000 for Pets as Therapy. There was to be at least one other fundraising event during the year and other fundraising initiatives.

CL50/22 REPORTS AND QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER AND LEAD MEMBERS

Please note that the action sheet numbering is different to the summons due to the Part II items being taken early – the numbering of the reports and questions remains as published in the summons

12a) Report from Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council

Noted the written report provided in the summons link provided [here](#)

Councillor Reena Ranger asked a question on the written report.

Could a link be provided or report on the LGA session by Kemi Badenoch for the launch of a campaign on the subject of #Debate not Hate. The Leader would try to get permission to provide the report or link for Members but it may be subject to copyright.

Supplementary response:

The report is only available on a subscription basis.

Councillor Rue Grewal asked a question on the written report

Why had opposition Councillors not been invited to some events?

Supplementary response:

The Leader replied that they were not aware of any events where there had been no cross party representation.

12b) Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Abbas Merali

Why is the training provided to Members of the Three Rivers Planning Committee not tailored to the processes in the District?

Written response:

The initial and mandatory training provided to Members of the TRDC Planning Committee is required to ensure Members have sufficient understanding of the Committee and Planning decision making process. The decision making process is an exercise requiring judgements to be made, and that process is not specific to Three Rivers. However it should be noted that Officer's had input to and agreed the training material presented at this initial training to ensure it was relevant to Three Rivers Councillors. Officers are happy to consider requests for training on matters specific to Three Rivers and have invited requests for future training topics.

There was no supplementary question.

12c) Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Reena Ranger

The Leader of this Council has a yearly opportunity to send information to all residents via post at the time of the Council Tax summons. Can the Leader please explain why this Council felt it unimportant to include any of the following information in this year's letter: How to arrange assisted bin collection, garden waste payment methods, the refuse calendar, the location

of car parks in Rickmansworth and how those who are not online can access information and services?

Written response:

The Leaders letter is restricted to one sheet of A4 to minimise postage costs and printing and aims to explain the Council tax position.

All the information you have referred to is available online and if a resident is not on-line they can access information about services by telephoning the CSC or in person at the Council Offices.

When important changes are made to bin collections, such as over the Platinum Jubilee and for Christmas arrangements posters are placed on the noticeboards throughout the District.

Supplementary question for Councillor Sarah Nelmes from Councillor Reena Ranger:

Please could it be reconsidered that this information could be replicated to all households in the District, as not all members of the public are at ease online or wish to sit in a call queue waiting to speak with the call centre? The three lines in the question could be easily replicated in communications with the public, it's an opportunity that should not be missed. For information the noticeboards in Rickmansworth/Moor Park/Eastbury were generally empty and blank.

Supplementary response:

Councillor Sarah Nelmes noted the comments and agreed to speak to Officers.

12d) Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Reena Ranger

Why is this local authority actively discriminating against our older residents and those who are unable to easily access online services? Our car parks do not allow remote topping up of payments, our garden waste service is only available if payable by direct debit and our website is difficult to navigate to access services where applications forms need to be filled in and/or sent back via PDF.

Written response:

The Council is NOT discriminating against older residents or indeed any resident. All of the Councils reports and decisions are subject to an Equality Impact.

The Council recognises that Digital exclusion, the inability to access or use online products or services, remains an issue for some in our community. This is however not an issue exclusive to our older residents with affordability rather than age characteristics often proving to be the main barrier. The pandemic has increased internet participation levels including amongst those over 75 years, but more than a million homes (6%) of the UK population remain offline; this is not an issue unique to Three Rivers.

To tackle this issue locally we work with local partners through the Watford and Three Rivers Trust to support the '*Staying Connected*' Digital Inclusion project. The project aims to tackle the struggles related to digital exclusion and participation for all our residents. The project addresses four key areas:

- Access to equipment

- Access to connectivity
- Fear of using equipment
- Skills in using the equipment

Further information on this and other support can be found at <https://www.w3rt.org/digitalinclusion>

If you have an example of how the website is difficult to navigate and suggestions for improvement please submit them the officers for consideration.

It is odd you are suggesting “remote topping up” of payments whilst saying that residents are unable to undertake online activity!

Supplementary question for Councillor Sarah Nemes from Councillor Reena Ranger:

Please could an overhaul of the whole website be considered?

Councillor Sarah Nemes, Leader of the Council, to provide a written response to Councillor Reena Ranger on the date for the website relaunch/rewrite of the website and updates of noticeboards.

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

On Noticeboards communications co-ordinate and the Grounds Maintenance team get any new posters from Three Rivers House marked ‘noticeboards’ and they are put up on a Friday.

The website is currently in the development phase and once complete will move to the testing phase. Officers expect it to go ‘live’ to the public this winter.

12e) Question to Councillor Sarah Nemes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Stephen Cox

Can the Leader of the Council advise and evidence what action precisely was, has and continues to be taken by this authority following the passing the of Labour’s motion at Full Council on 26 February 2019 concerning Modern Day Slavery regarding the ten points outlined below:

Train staff who undertake procurement tasks to understand modern slavery through the Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply’s (CIPS) online course on Ethical Procurement and Supply, or other equivalent training.

Require its contractors to comply fully with the Modern Slavery Act 2015, wherever it applies, with contract termination as a potential sanction for noncompliance.

Challenge any abnormally low-cost tenders to ensure they do not rely upon the potential contractor practising modern slavery.

[Highlight to its] Ensure that contractors and suppliers are aware that [contracted] workers are free to join a trade union and are not to be treated unfairly for belonging to one.

Publicise its whistle-blowing system for staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.

Require its tendered contractors to adopt a whistle-blowing policy which enables their staff to blow the whistle on any suspected examples of modern slavery.

Review its contractual spending regularly to identify any potential issues with modern slavery.

Highlight for its suppliers any risks identified concerning modern slavery and refer them to the relevant agencies to be addressed.

Refer for investigation via the National Crime Agency's national referral mechanism any of its contractors identified as a cause for concern regarding modern slavery.

[Report publicly on the implementation of this policy annually]. Council further resolves to publish the Three Rivers Community Safety Partnership's Modern Slavery Action Plan and its outcomes on an annual basis.

Written response:

National Living Wage and Modern slavery requirements are embedded in our contracts. Specifically, the following measures are in place:

Relevant training for staff is included within the procurement toolkit.

Standard tender documents include all relevant practices and clauses required to ensure compliance with the MS ACT 2015 and suppliers who don't meet this will fail the evaluation process. This includes challenging abnormally low cost tenders as standard practice.

The Council's whistle blowing policy is published on the Council's website. The scope of the policy includes raising concerns about contractors and suppliers in relation to 'unlawful acts' which includes failure to comply with the MS Act and relevant wage and employment legislation.

Contract management arrangements are in place for all contracts which would enable the Council to identify issues in relation to Modern Slavery.

The Council has not had to refer any contractors to the National Crime Agency as a result of concerns in relation to Modern Slavery.

The Council's standard contract does not require contractors to adopt a whistleblowing policy.

The Council's website includes information about Modern Slavery, how to spot the signs and how to report it.

The Council recognises that this is a complex issue it cannot solve alone and as such works in partnership, through the Community Safety Partnership Board to develop and prepare an action plan which includes specific actions related to the prevention, awareness raising of and combat of Modern Slavery

A specific Action Plan to tackle the issues related to Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking was published in 2018 with progress against it published in 2019. Given the complexity and importance of this work stream it has since been fully incorporated into the annual priorities and action plan of the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). As members will be aware, due to the sensitivities of the work managed through the CSP, whilst priorities are published annually, the detailed action plan which is reported to the Community Safety Board, with further oversight and governance in place through the wider Local Strategic Partnership (LSP), is not normally published. Copies are however available to any member on request.

Alongside the work undertaken through our procurement channels, this Council, in March 2020 published an updated Safeguarding Children, Young People and Adults at Risk Policy. The policy now supports the Council's commitment to ensuring staff and contractors are aware of the risks of modern-day slavery, and the criminal exploitation of children and adults in relation to drug dealing through

‘County Lines.’ <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/news/safeguarding-against-criminal-exploitation-and-modern-slavery>

There was no supplementary question.

12f) Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Sara Bedford

Have there been any discussions with the Returning Officer regarding the errors and lack of information provided at this year’s local elections?

Written response:

Along with the Deputy Leader I have raised concerns about the election process and count arrangements with the Returning Officer at our first meeting after the election. These and any other issues will continue to be discussed between the Returning Officer and relevant staff to ensure as smooth a process as possible next time with any lessons learnt being incorporated as necessary. I understand that two special meetings have been arranged with the election agents to discuss issues, concerns and future processes.

Supplementary question for Councillor Sarah Nelmes from Councillor Sara Bedford

Could there please be a commitment that election agents will be communicated with and errors will be eliminated?

Response:

Councillor Sarah Nelmes advised the Council would be looking at lessons learnt when we design the process for next year.

12g) Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Sara Bedford

What are the Council's standards for responding to emails, letters and phone calls from residents? How is adherence to this monitored and recorded?

Written response:

The details are: Emails – Initial response within 3 working days and full response within 10 working days. If this is not able to be met, then the officer needs to inform the customer of the new timescale. Letters - Initial response within 3 working days and full response within 10 working days. If this is not able to be met, then the officer needs to inform the customer of the new timescale. Phone Calls – Returning a phone call should be within 48 hours (note working days only) Monitoring and recording of letters and phone calls are the responsibility of the Manager/Head of Service

Supplementary question for Councillor Sarah Nelmes from Councillor Sara Bedford

What happens when the standards are not met? What can we do to ensure questions are answered?

Response:

Councillor Sarah Nelmes advised that if responses were not given within the timeframe please refer them to me and I will escalate to senior management.

12h) Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Sara Bedford

What methods are used to ensure the Council meets statutory deadlines and that other legal communications are replied to on time?

Written response:

The question lacks particularity, however, regarding the meeting of statutory deadlines, the Council has numerous statutory deadlines, in respect of multifarious functions. For this reason the various Heads of Service are charged with ensuring that such deadlines are met. In respect of “other legal communications” – this query might cover any matter which the Council has legal responsibility for, or a member of the public might perceive they do. As such, it is not possible to speak of replying “on time”. Heads of Service are charged with ensuring that timely responses are provided in relation to all communications.

Supplementary question for Councillor Sarah Nelmes from Councillor Sara Bedford

There does not appear to be a lot of monitoring, the longest outstanding response has been 11 months. Does the Leader think this is acceptable and what can be done to stop this occurring again?

Response:

Councillor Sarah Nelmes advised that if people are aware of a situation where a timely response has not been given please make me aware and I will endeavour to ensure that Officers deal with it promptly.

INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

12i) Report from Councillor Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development

Noted the written report provided in the summons link provided [here](#)

The following oral update was given at the meeting:

Councillor Paul Rainbow advised that there were eight parking schemes in total but the report just focussed on one which was progressing at present.

Councillor Reena Ranger asked a question on the written report:

Please could further details be given regarding the Rickmansworth Road Closure?

Response:

Councillor Paul Rainbow to provide Councillor Reena Ranger some more information on the Rickmansworth High Street road closure and the link to the Rickmansworth High Street road closure IHED report from March 2022 in the form of a written response.

Link to [Committee report and](#) Link to [Minutes of meeting](#)

Councillor Andrea Fraser asked a question on the written report:

Please provide evidence that the money from the Welcome Back fund has been paid to Batchworth Community Council. As Cllr Fraser (as Chair) and the Clerk are unaware of any money received from this fund to date.

Response:

Councillor Paul Rainbow to provide details and evidence to Councillor Andrea Fraser on the authority the Lead Member has that the funding from the Welcome

Back Fund to support BCC in providing planters in the High Street, to enable the monthly market, has been provided.

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

TRDC has successfully submitted bids and had them approved by the Welcome Back Fund, which has been a time consuming exercise for little actual benefit. To date however, the funds have not been received by TRDC. As soon as they are these will be passed on. It is correct however to say that the bids will support BCC.

Councillor Phil Williams asked a question on the written report:

With regards to the Chorleywood South parking consultation, please pass on thanks to the Officers for the time spent putting this together.

Councillor Paul Rainbow would pass on the thanks.

Councillor Chris Mitchell asked a question on the written report:

What can we do to ensure people are aware of the need to respond to the Croxley Green parking consultations? During a recent door knock residents have advised they are happy but do not realise that they need to respond. Could we do more to ensure that people realise how important it is to respond.

Response:

There had been social media reminders regarding the scheme. The response time had also been publicised. It would be interesting to hear any ideas as to how we could engage the public to respond but Councillor Paul Rainbow agreed to advise Councillor Chris Mitchell on what was being done to promote the need for residents to respond on the Croxley Green Parking Zone consultation e.g. a lot of people tell them they support it but won't write in as they assume it's okay. Are we using modern comms methods – e.g. mobile phone apps.

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

The current review of the Permit Parking Zone is promoted online and on social media and the District Council has sent a letter to every address within the Zone asking for feedback. Response rates from satisfied customers are typically very low; we tend to hear from people who are dissatisfied.

Councillor Ciaran Reed asked a question on the written report:

With regards to the payment from the Welcome Back fund for Batchworth County Council, is your report wrong or has the money got lost?

Response:

Councillor Paul Rainbow advised that they understood the money had been provided.

12j) Question to Councillor Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Councillor Andrea Fraser

12j i - At the February 2022 Full Council meeting the then Lead Member took pride in "The Liberal Democrat Council had also frozen parking charges for another year in recognition of supporting our High Street and supporting residents during the cost of living crisis" - with Rickmansworth Town Centre the only outlier in car parking charges, is this not the time to bring the same fee structure as all other TRDC car parks in the District if this administration truly believes in supporting our residents (at this time of higher cost of living) as well as our retailers and High Street.

TRDC's own High Streets survey in 2021 with 731 responses brought up the cost of parking several times and had indicated that there is enough parking so there are no concerns about churn.

Written response:

The service provided in the short-stay shopper car parks in Rickmansworth is designed to enable shoppers to easily find parking very near to the shops and services in the High Street and generate a "churn". Rickmansworth is not comparable with other public car parks in the District which are typically long-stay and do not have a major London Transport interchanges so close to the short term parking. There are no other dedicated shopper car parks that would require this kind of service.

The first one hour free and the next hour at one pound is not only the cheapest in Hertfordshire, if not the country. It has not been increased since it was introduced despite inflation and increased running costs. Failure to ensure a churn would most likely lead to the nearest shopper car park having all day long commuter/office worker car parking. This issue had previously been identified in reports by consultants prior to this charging. It should be noted that independent consultants had proposed 30 minutes only free but this council opted for one hour free.

You are at liberty to propose a different charging regime with the funding to balance the "books" at the budget making process.

12j ii - What justification is there now for penalising Rickmansworth with a unique parking fee structure through parking machines which do not allow shoppers to top up whilst shopping electronically and mean that shoppers do not have the luxury of changing any plans to enjoy our High Street without the risk of penalty or a trip back to the car park?

Written response:

The service provided in the short-stay shopper car parks in Rickmansworth is managed using parking machines rather than a 'phone payment' system (which I assume is what the question refers to) because the additional of any system like this increases the overall cost of parking. Any electronic system would increase the cost by approximately 10% plus as a service is charged. The Council would have to pass this on or find savings/ reduce other services to cover its cost. The Council preferred to keep the charges lower by using cashless parking machines. The District Council has received minimal requests from customers for a phone payment system since the current service started in 2018. If however you would like to suggest such a system and the increased cost please do so at the budget making process time or earlier.

12j iii - The Council has made a commitment to help local residents and retailers during the current cost of living crisis. Parking in the centre of Abbots Langley is free and it is free for the first two hours in Chorleywood and Croxley Green. Will the Council please bring Rickmansworth Town centre in line with every other area and reinstate two hours free parking in all the car parks providing valuable help to both residents and retailers?

Written response:

I refer to the earlier question on the same subject, it is reiterated the service provided in the short-stay shopper car parks in Rickmansworth is designed to enable shoppers to easily find parking very near to the shops and services in the

High Street. These are not comparable with other public car parks in the District such as those in Croxley Green or Chorleywood, as those are not dedicated shopper car parks that would require this kind of service. The main car parks in those settlements provide long-stay parking (for 36 hours and 4 hours, respectively)

Supplementary question for Councillor Paul Rainbow from Councillor Andrea Fraser covering all the questions asked at 12j

It is worth noting that any reference to the community and travelling on TFL is irrelevant when we are talking about the difference in one or two hours of parking in Rickmansworth Town Centre. The Council does not need to generate churn we have plenty of car parking spaces and at a meeting with HCC today they were marvelling at how many parking spaces we have in Rickmansworth. With an overwhelming opinion of shop keepers and evidence expressed in BCC survey of 90+% requesting the return of two hours free parking what data is the Council looking at that suggests shop keepers opinion is wrong and one hours free parking is more beneficial for the High Street.

Councillor Paul Rainbow to provide a written answer to Councillor Andrea Fraser.

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

Parking provision is a service and is expected by Government to pay for itself, as national legislation does not authorise local Authorities to subsidise public parking from Council tax.

The specific rationale for charging in short-stay car parks when the Traffic Order was made in 2018 was set out in that Order, supported by data considered by the relevant Committees.

12k) Question to Councillor Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Councillor Sara Bedford

Parking provision is necessary for thriving local shopping areas. What is being done to provide greater short-term parking for shoppers in different areas of the District?

Written response:

Short-stay parking is well provided in the principal centre, district and local centres for shopping and services, with free short-stay parking dedicated on-street (over a thousand bays across these retail centres not including those in car parks). New public parking opportunities have been provided through development (e.g. South Oxhey), capacity improvements in town centres (over 40 new spaces created and in process in Rickmansworth).

Supplementary question for Councillor Paul Rainbow from Councillor Sara Bedford

There are areas where there is insufficient parking particularly short term on street parking in Abbots Langley and South Oxhey. There is also a lack of monitoring and enforcement of short term parking spaces here. What can the Lead Member do to increase the number and turnover of spaces where there isn't efficiency?

Supplementary response:

The Lead Member advised that it would be looked at and reviewed.

12l) Question to Councillor Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Councillor Sara Bedford

What provision is being made for new cycle ways to assist with lowering emissions and congestion and enabling safe cycling?

Written response:

The District Council is working with the County Council to develop improvements to several new local routes featured in the current Cycling Strategy (details here <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/cycling> and the new Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan will propose new direct cycle routes connecting local towns and villages across the District. This is shortly to be consulted on by HCC.

Supplementary question for Councillor Paul Rainbow from Councillor Sara Bedford

What is being done to ensure that the cycle paths that we already have are being kept free of parking which seems to infest quite a few of the cycle paths we have particularly the cycle path along the north side of South Way which was created using a range of funding but is frequently parked on by people using the play area and is obstructing its use.

Supplementary response:

Councillor Paul Rainbow advised that there are a variety of different types of cycle paths in Three Rivers District, many of which are enforceable and regular or on-demand enforcement is available.

The District Council has consistently requested the County Council to include parking restrictions on the new cycle paths it installs.

12m) Question to Councillor Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Councillor Sara Bedford

What representations have officers made to bus operators or the County Council regarding recent cuts to local bus services?

Written response:

TRDC has no direct involvement on running bus routes and this overseen but HCC and Interlink. HCC are not involved with commercial decisions by bus operators that do not affect subsidised routes but are advised by the of route changes. HCC has only informed TRDC once any new routes are agreed. It should be noted that with limited staffing in this area of the council's operations and that we have no legal responsibility it would be impossible to monitor all changes especial if not informed in advance.

Having said that HCC has sought to adjust or secure revised routes when commercial operators make changes the most recent one that significantly affects Three Rivers is regarding the Route 103:

*HCC Officers have been in active discussions for the past 2 weeks with officers from Bucks CC

*As a result a solution has been found to maintain cross boundary links, albeit reduced.

*As part of this there will be a new service numbered 335/336 between Chorleywood and Watford but with four journeys each way (three on Saturdays) now extended from Chorleywood to Chalfont & Latimer Station and Amersham so retaining a cross boundary link, connecting with the new 103. We are awaiting costs in the next day or so but the service still incorporates the use of an existing school bus so additional costs are thought to be minimal and will be picked-up by BCC in

any case. The service is still on schedule to start at the end of July without any break in service.

*HCC Officers will be working on passenger communications to explain the changes in more detail, particularly those who will be travelling cross boundary

*Once the timetables are finalised, the team will also share them via this email chain for early visibility

Supplementary question for Councillor Paul Rainbow from Councillor Sara Bedford

Changes to route 10 do not benefit the residents of Abbots Langley who are currently unable to reach health, education, social and leisure services in Garston. People have also recently been left stranded unable to get home or to work. I realise that we are not a statutory provider of this but it would be good if the Council were able to make representations. Does the lead Member agree?

Supplementary response:

Councillor Paul Rainbow agreed.

12n) Report from Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy

Noted the written report provided in the summons link provided [here](#)

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst had no oral update to add the report.

Councillor Reena Ranger asked a question on the written report:

Will the Lead Member be discussing with senior Officers, the Article 4 in Tolpits Lane which is expiring at the end of this month and which this authority has known about since June 2021 which is going to jeopardise our employment opportunities in the District? Has the lead Member been in discussions with Hertfordshire County Council with regards to the flood advice there being a national shortage of staff and there is a new commissioning model in place and the service should be restored in August?

Supplementary response:

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst would discuss the matter regarding Article 4 with Officers. In regards to the Lead flood authority, this has been fully answered in the report. Councillor Giles-Medhurst and the Leader of the Council had written to the Chief Executive and the Chief Legal Officer.

Councillor Ciaran Reed asked a question on the written report:

Noted in the report a reference to another report which said there was not enough Brownfield land to meet a 300,000 housing target nationwide and Greenbelt would be at threat as a result of it. Would the Councillor consider going against his own party's plan of increasing that by 80,000 a year and does he believe that that is threatening Greenbelt within this District?

Supplementary response:

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst did not believe that the proposal threatens Green Belt.

Councillor Phillip Hearn asked a question on the written report:

In light of the Local Plan being delayed until at least 2025, what are we going to do to prevent a flood of applications on the Greenbelt under the presumption of sustainable development?

Supplementary Response:

All planning applications have to be assessed on their own merit, they all have to go through the process and the Local Plan is only out of date due to government increasing housing number for Three Rivers. We were meeting the targets until these were tripled by the government. Other neighbouring authorities have put their Local Plan on hold. We have put our Local Plan on hold while we consider these matters. We will continue to be robust on all planning applications which will be considered on their merits by the Planning Committee.

Councillor Chris Mitchell asked a question on the written report.

Will there be a commitment to publishing the Regulation 18 responses for the public?

Supplementary response:

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst advised that once the report has gone through the Local Plan Sub Committee, discussion of any sites would remain in Part 2 until they have been agreed by the sub committee, and subsequently by Policy and Resources and then Full Council, following this they will become public. At the next Local Plan Sub Committee some policy issues will be discussed and Members of the Council will be able to participate in this. In terms of the Regulation 18 consultation, Officers will need to consider any changes in terms of national guidance.

Councillor Phil Williams asked a question on the written report.

Would it be easier to save Green Belt in Three Rivers if politicians were to change the policy?

Supplementary response:

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst advised that speaking to Leaders and Lead Members at the Local Government Association (LGA), everyone is in the same boat, particularly in the South East and everyone would like to see changes.

Councillor Stephen Cox asked a question on the written report.

Does the Lead Member agree that it is the height of hypocrisy from the Conservatives having a go at Councillors for delaying the Local Plan when the neighbouring authority Dacorum which is run by Conservatives has done exactly that?

Supplementary response:

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst agreed and advised that Hertsmere had done the same as a Conservative led Authority.

12o) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Andrea Fraser

What due diligence is being taken to ensure sites considered for the Local Plan are available and deliverable before they are taken to consultation?

Written response:

The huge number of regulation 18 consultation responses are still being categorised and assessed by officers, including deliverability and availability, and will be reported to the Local Plan Sub Committee in July and August. Sites are assessed on a number of criteria through the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability

Assessment by professional officers and the full process will be discussed at the Sub Committee meetings which all Members are able to attend.

Supplementary question for Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Andrea Fraser

The Administration said that it had done due diligence on every site that went into the Local Plan last year, despite that Batchworth Golf Course made it through the process even with the 75 year lease to members of the golf club. Will this Council remove this site from the Local Plan process because of this and are there other sites that this Council has failed to do enough due diligence on that may also turn out to be unviable that were published last year. Will the Council re assess sites in light of this apparently failure at Batchworth Golf Course and are we dreading to a crisis of unviable sites in the Local Plan process?

Supplementary response:

The Council did do due diligence it can only go on information provided by the landowner at the time the site was put forward. If a site is no longer viable or available, that will be part of discussion at the Local Plan Sub Committee and therefore would be proposed to remove that. I am not aware of any details regarding the Batchworth site or any other individual site and if I were I would not be in a position to comment as they would be subject to Part 2 and confidential. All sites will be assessed against the same criteria on submission in terms of the Regulation 18.

12p) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Philip Hearn

Will the new Officers recruited to work on the Local Plan have an objective of collating the evidence required to support lower housing targets for Three Rivers as the current target would have a devastating impact on the Green Belt?

Written response:

The officer's role is to present the factual information to Members based on Members policy decisions. Officers are well aware that the administration view that the governments housing target for Three Rivers is unacceptable and continue to support the administration in providing evidence and support in pushing back against this in our attempts to persuade the Government change its view. I will of course be discussing this with the new officers appointed. National policy remains such that Government Inspectors expect the District's housing target as calculated by the standard method to be met in full. To date no Local Plans with lower housing numbers have been successful at examination using the argument of protecting Green Belt.

Supplementary question for Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Philip Hearn

Could the Lead Member confirm that the Council is not intending to provide evidence to support lower housing numbers?

Supplementary response:

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst advised that the Council did provide in its Regulation 18 a lower housing number than the government had asked for, the final decision will be in the Regulation 19 consultation. We are nowhere near this stage as we are going to do another Regulation 18 consultation on any of the new sites proposed. The hope is that we do not have a figure of 12,700 plus new homes which means development in Green belt we need a much lower figure and have written repeatedly to Secretary of State and Ministers to request a much lower figure.

12q) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Abbas Merali

Can a breakdown be provided of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) money collected by Ward? It is understood that over £7m in CIL money has been intentionally accumulated over several years in order to fund larger projects. What is the strategy to allocate these funds proportionate to the infrastructure needs created by those developments that have contributed to the CIL?

Written response:

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst advised that a breakdown of CIL collected by Ward can be provided, I will ask Officers to send to you.

The provision of funding will depend on the need for infrastructure in any area of the District. The Council's priorities for spending are set out in The Regulation 123 List which has now been superseded by the Infrastructure Funding Statement. Both documents can be found on the TRDC website. The priorities for spending will evolve as the new Local Plan progresses. We will also have requests from third parties and other infrastructure providers that will need to be assessed.

Supplementary question for Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Abbas Merali

Should the Council not be proactively trying to identify strategic infrastructure projects to fund rather than waiting for others to apply?

Supplementary response:

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said the Herts Growth Board, which we are party to, identifies strategic infrastructure projects and we have agreed to consultation on the South West Herts plan which will identify potential strategic infrastructure projects.

12r) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Rue Grewal

At the last Local Plan sub-committee the Chair mentioned that "harm to communities" is now a consideration. What metrics will be used to measure this and ensure there is equity amongst sites?

Written response:

As advised already, officers will summarise the full consultation responses and it will be for Members to make the decisions as to what sites are taken forward once it has been agreed they meet the agreed criteria.

Supplementary question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Rue Grewal

It is wholly subjective criteria, if Members are to make decisions what are the parameters or framework on which they base their decisions. How can residents be confident that decisions taken by Members will be uniformed, measured and fair?

Supplementary response:

The Regulation 18 document outlined the criteria and the basis for those decisions. I would refer the Member to the consultation document on Regulation 18 which is a public document.

12s) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor David Raw

What are we going to do to reduce the costs of applications going to public enquiry as a result of us delaying the Local Plan?

Written response:

I'm not sure what costs the Councillor is referring to. There have been no recent costs awards against Three Rivers and where costs have been awarded in the past it has been due to Member overturns not being upheld by Inspectors rather than any issue with the Local Plan.

Supplementary question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor David Raw

Are you saying that the Local Plan won't affect any failed applications from going to public enquiry and costing the Council money?

Supplementary response:

As this has not happened before we do not expect it to happen in the future.

12t) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Ciaran Reed

How has the Council considered the impact of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) on Three Rivers?

Written response:

All constraints are considered by officers when planning applications are assessed. Our planning application reports are very thorough. Officers weigh up sometimes competing policies and designations, assess whether they consider there is harm or not and make a recommendation accordingly.

The Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) was designated in 2005. Officers have repeatedly made requests to Natural England for guidance on how they consider the Zone of Influence relating to the SAC should be taken into account in planning decision making, however to date no guidance has been received. Three Rivers were not notified of the Zone of Influence by Natural England, because the District generates less than 2% of visits to the SAC.

The SAC is a consideration for the Council when determining planning applications, and consideration is given to development plan policies, to the statutory duties set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, to the evidence relating to harm and to the relationship between TRDC and the Zone of Influence, both spatially and in terms of the number of visits generated from TRDC.

There was no supplementary question.

12u) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Ciaran Reed

Does Three Rivers take seriously the need to keep green spaces between our settlements?

Written response:

Yes - The Council has undertaken a Green Belt review as part of its evidence work for the Local Plan. This considered how parcels of land adjoining the District's settlements performed against the five purposes of the Green Belt as set out in the

NPPF and as a result a number of sites were excluded from the Regulation 18 consultation as agreed by Members.

Supplementary question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Ciaran Reed

The Member refers to the Local Plan process however, will he give assurances that ensuring the separation of settlements will be a crucial factor in determining if green belt will be removed in the process of planning applications going through planning committee?

Supplementary response:

My detailed answer explains the criteria on how that is assessed. We have to bear in mind that not all the settlements in Three Rivers have green space in between already, so that can't be taken into account in those circumstances. It is one of the criteria and one of the things that will be looked at.

12v) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Ciaran Reed

When we will be able to see the public response to the Local Plan consultation?

Written response:

As all Members will know I hate to have to keep repeating myself, officers are still assessing the very high number of Regulation 18 consultation responses and these will be reported to the Local Plan Sub Committee in July and August and at other dates as required. Also as the Member will know the departure of the Head of Planning and appointment of a new one has unfortunately led to an initial delay to which was reported at the last Council meeting.

There was no supplementary question

12w) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Rue Grewal

The fundamental aim of Green Belt policy is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. 138. Green Belt serves 5 purposes: (a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; (b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; (c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment; (d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and (e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.

What is the justifiable reason to include sites like CSF13, CSF13, CFS69a, PCS47 and CFS52a in Carpenders Park alone that will merge different Boroughs into one and one and in some cases merge Greater London into Hertfordshire?

Written response:

As the Member well knows the Council is not legally able to discuss individual sites at this meeting and I must again refer to my previous answer and answers giving by the previous lead member and Chair of the Local Plan Sub committee.

The fact remains that until official Government policy changes, never mind Ministers letters or press statements which are not the same thing, Three Rivers will have some very difficult decisions to make to ensure there is sufficient new affordable

housing, new employment opportunities and new infrastructure to support these, given that 76% of the District is Green Belt.

Whilst it the case that some additional development in Three Rivers is and will be required to support local communities and ensure housing prices do not continue to rise locally beyond what local people and their families can afford to pay, employment opportunities decline as firms are unable to recruit locally because people cannot afford to live here, schools close as an aging static population no longer requires them and all growth grinds to a halt the figures ae in this administration view too high.

We as the administration are trying to strike a balance that does enable growth, but in a managed sustainable way and may I remind you that the regulation 18 first consultation that we undertook did propose a housing figure lower than the official Government target. As my earlier report to this Council states the figures imposed by this government are unrealistic and too high. It would of course be helpful if the Members of Parliament from the members own party who represent parts of Three Rivers actually stood up in Parliament and said to the Secretary of State reduce the 12,316 figure for Three Rivers now. Unfortunately to date they have not and continue in their statements and leaflets blame this Council for the Government's figures.

Turning to the some of the points in the question it is a pity that like the Members of Parliament the Member has also made a false claim or as some would say "fake news" claiming that certain sites in the Regulation 18 Consultation, which of course is NOT the final decision of this Council, will merge Three Rivers with the London Borough in terms of built development. This is NOT the case.

None of the consultation sites, which were proposed by land owners, where they to be built on would merge new house building with built communities in another London Borough, namely assume he means Harrow as there will remain either an open space or Green Belt buffer between Three Rivers and Harrow and indeed Hertsmere. Indeed the above issues regarding the Green Belt will again be considered as part of the reports on the consultation.

I would also point out that the members of Councillors party supported the inclusion of the mentioned sites in the consultation with the public.

I hope that the Government will after all listen to all the Shire Districts, not just Three Rivers, which are making the same comments about the unreasonable housing numbers.

Supplementary question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Rue Grewal

Any site that contravenes the fundamental aims of the green belt and brings London Boroughs closer to Three Rivers could be construed as very high harm to communities. How can we justify ever including them and what assurances can you give that this administration will prevent this type of urban sprawl?

Supplementary response:

We cannot give total assurances on this as planning applications are taken on their own merit and the government planning inspectorate has the final say. The sites mentioned do not form urban sprawl as there would remain a large green belt

wedge between Three Rivers and the London Borough of Harrow even if these sites were taken forward.

12x) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Sara Bedford

What communications has the Council had with Ministers in the past 12 months regarding lowering the numbers required for the Local Plan due to the high level of Green Belt in the District? What firm commitments have been received from Ministers?

Written response:

All written correspondence has been published in the Members Information Bulletin as far as I am aware for all see. Letters were sent in November 2021 to Michael Gove and Feb 2021 to Robert Jenrick. Also on 10 December we assisted Daisy Cooper MP in writing to the Minister of State, Chris Pincher regarding housing targets and the Planning Inspectorate's conclusion that the "provision to protect the Green Belt has not incorporated with the NPPF. No commitments to allow for a reduced housing target or additional protection for the Green Belt have ever been received, and Government policy and targets remain, despite press comments. I sincerely hope this changes. Equally the Government says is committed to using 2014 data rather 2018 or indeed not even the latest census data for calculating housing needs.

Supplementary question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Sara Bedford

Does the Lead Member agree that the Council should submit a Local Plan with numbers that we can make without attacking our green belt? Stating the assurances we have received from MP's and Ministers as the reason for not meeting our targets, does he further believe that this will generate a similar response to that of Welwyn/Hatfield when they tried the same thing?

Supplementary response:

No Local authority has been successful in putting forward a Local Plan with lesser figures than that imposed by central Government. If we did the same it is likely the Planning Inspectorate would not even consider the Local Plan. We want to see an achievable figure for Three Rivers decided by the Council and its residents.

12y) Urgent question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy, received after the deadline for questions but agreed by the Chief Executive to be taken as an urgent question, from Councillor Sara Bedford

What are the risks to the Council and to residents following the decision of the Lead Local Flood Authority (a Statutory Consultee) to respond with 'No comment' to consultations from Local Planning Authorities?

Written response:

HCC have a legal duty to provide a substantive response as the LLFA when consulted on major applications. That legal duty cannot be avoided and is not discharged by pleading recruitment difficulties or financial constraints. The Council has sought legal advice and the HHC appears to be breach of legal objections.

This later was raised some months ago both by chief Officers and the Leader of Council direct with County Council and despite assurances that the matter would be resolved it has not.

If HCC do not provide a substantive response, and officers not being satisfied on objective grounds relating to the size of the proposed development, flood plain, ground conditions or other relevant data, that it constitutes a “substantive response” and HCC refuse to respond further, the Council would, arguably, be in breach of its statutory duty were it not to then seek and take into account professional external advice on surface water drainage / flooding where the issue was a ‘material consideration’ in respect of a planning application. As a result officers are currently seeking specialist consultants to provide this advice on relevant planning applications.

Officers consider it appropriate that in circumstances where the determination of a major planning application is being frustrated by Hertfordshire County Council's chronic failure to perform its statutory duty as the Lead Local Flood Authority, the Council instruct suitably qualified flood experts to advise it. Officers note that HCC currently are seeking outside help itself from such companies in discharging its duties. In those circumstances, officers are of the view that it is unlikely that any court would find that the Council had acted carelessly or negligently in seeking and relying on such expert advice were a claim to be later made. Notwithstanding this substantive point, as matter of general public law, the local planning authority are not liable, other than in exceptional circumstances, to neighbouring landowners in negligence for granting planning permission for development adversely affecting their interests.

Given the above myself and the Leader of the Council have written a letter to the Chief Executive of HCC and the Chief Legal Officer (now circulated to members) pointing out the legal duty of the County Council and asking them to immediately restore the legal duty to provide advice.

Supplementary question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Sara Bedford

Does the Lead Member agree that the failure of the County Council to meet its legal and statutory duties is disgraceful?

Supplementary response:

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst advised that the County Council has been in breach of its obligations and places Hertfordshire authorities at risk by failing to provide sufficient comments on planning applications.

12z) Report from Councillor Andrew Scarth, Lead Member for Housing

Noted the written report provided in the summons link provided [here](#)

Councillor Andrew Scarth gave the following oral update:

Councillor Andrew Scarth was pleased to report that on 4 July, the Council was housing 92 Ukrainian refugees via the Homes for Ukraine scheme. This comprised 68 adults and 24 children.

12aa) Question to Councillor Andrew Scarth, Lead Member for Housing, from Councillor Sara Bedford

How will changes to the affordable housing funding programme signalled by the Government's 'Levelling Up' White Paper affect the provision of social housing in the District?

Written response:

It is assumed that the question relates to: "The £11.5bn Affordable Homes Programme will deliver up to 180,000 affordable homes with 75% of these delivered outside London, and lever in an additional £38bn in public and private investment in affordable housing. The UK Government will also increase the amount of social housing available over time to provide the most affordable housing to those who need it. This will include reviewing how to support councils to deliver greater numbers of council homes, alongside Housing Associations." Taken from page 224 of the document. Unfortunately, without greater detail, it is difficult to predict what impact this will have on the Council and future affordable housing.

Supplementary question to Councillor Andrew Scarth from Councillor Sara Bedford

Does the Lead Member agree that we should have more Social housing and not less as this Government believes?

Supplementary response:

Housing needs to be affordable and we need to do everything in our power to achieve this.

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY

12bb)Report from Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure

Noted the written report provided in the summons link provided [here](#)

Councillor Chris Lloyd had no oral update to add to the report.

Councillor Abbas Merali asked a question on the written report:

Could you elaborate on your plans for Health inequalities and how you will use the funding?

Response:

Councillor Chris Lloyd to provide a written response to Councillor Abbas Merali to elaborate on what the plans are regarding health inequalities and how we are going to use the funding.

Written response provided after the meeting:

Funding via the Place Based Health Inequalities Project will be used to deliver interventions to target a number of groups, including those from the most deprived and underserved communities within the District. Using an evidence based approach, the Council with its partners have specifically identified the management of Long Term Health Conditions (LTCs) including musculoskeletal diseases as the primary focus of this Project for those over the age of 65. The funds will however also support and amplify current healthcare services and healthy hub projects (a focus on diet and nutrition) to ensure they are better able to serve underrepresented communities. The full range of interventions will support range of priorities from mental health, physical activity, healthy eating, supporting people with long term health conditions and social isolation. In addition, the Project will have an emphasis on prevention messaging and health promotion, to ensure that residents (and in particular those of working age between 45 and 65 from BAME communities) are engaged in positive, healthy, behaviours and supported to take control of their own

health. Projects will be delivered by experienced and fully trained professionals via the Health Hubs.

12cc) Question to Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure from Councillor Lisa Hudson

Why does the working group discussing the Rickmansworth Bowls club not have any Councillors from the Rickmansworth Town Ward on it? Written response: The working group is an informal discussion group comprising Members & Officers, which was established to progress the re-letting of the Bowls Clubs on a more financially sustainable basis. It is not an official Sub Committee or Working Party reporting back to a Council Committee. The purpose of the group is essentially to inform the revised terms upon which a new lease or licence could be offered to the Bowls Clubs at Basing Gardens (Rickmansworth) and Mill End.

Councillor Ciaran Reed moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, under Rule 12(11) that Members who are not present at the meeting tonight be able to submit a supplementary question for which a written response would be provided. This was agreed by general assent by the Council.

12dd) Question to Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure from Councillor Ciaran Reed

How can residents in Sarratt understand if there is funding available for regeneration of the reed bed pond in the village centre?

Written response:

The District Council does not have any specific information on sources of funding for projects of this nature. Residents would be advised to investigate sources of charitable funding, such as the National Lottery. The Countryside Management Service may also be able to advice and guidance on funding sources for regeneration schemes such as this: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-andenvironment/countryside-management/countryside-management-service.aspx>

There was no supplementary question.

12ee) Question to Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure from Councillor Sara Bedford

How many trees have been planted by the Council, broken down by Ward, over the past three years?

Written response:

Ward 2019 / 2020 2020 / 2021 2021 / 2022 Abbots Langley & Bedmond No data 2 0
Carpenders Park No data 2 3 Chorleywood North & Sarratt No data 10 6
Chorleywood South & Maple Cross No data 16 0 Dickinsons No data 2 33 Durrants
No data 0 0 Gade Valley No data 0 0 Leavesden No data 9 3 Moor Park & Eastbury
No data 12 14 Oxhey Hall & Hayling No data 4 25 Penn & Mill End No data 2 8
Rickmansworth Town No data 12 3 South Oxhey No data 0 13 Total 71 108

It should also be noted that some additional 54 trees (including a substantial feature tree if 15 metres height, were planted Leavesden Ward funded by Warner Bros flowing discussions with Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst. The Council is committed to additional tree planting of up to 700 trees spread across the District in the next planting season 2022/23.

12ff) Question to Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure from Councillor Sara Bedford

How does the Council ensure that courses and classes are reasonably located across the north, west and south areas of the District?

Written response:

Officers regularly review their work programmes to ensure that there is an even spread of activities across the District. On occasion, this may be dictated by venue availability. Officers will also regularly review feedback from residents on activities and review how these could be incorporated into future work programming.

Supplementary question:

Could the Lead Member commit to looking at courses being run across the District to ensure they are being run in all areas including Abbots Langley.

Supplementary response:

Councillor Chris Lloyd to look into courses that are being run across the District and come back to Councillor Sara Bedford with further information. Noted a list of around 10 venues in Abbots Langley could be provided including a Council owned venue in Leavesden Country Park.

12gg) Report from Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability

Noted the written report provided in the summons link provided [here](#)

Councillor Phil Williams had no oral update to add to the report.

Councillor Chris Mitchell asked a question on the written report:

How many households had taken up the Green Homes Grant?

Councillor Phil Williams to provide a written response to Councillor Chris Mitchell on how many households had taken up the Green Homes Grant.

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

Under the Green Homes Grant, the Council is delivering measures at 129 households. Delivery at 41 homes within the social housing sector have been completed, along with 37 privately owned properties. The remaining 51 private homes participating in the grant scheme are programmed for completion by the end of September.

Councillor Ciaran Reed asked a question on the written report:

Please provide dates for a tour of the new Batchworth depot for Councillors.

Councillor Phil Williams to look into dates for a tour of the new Batchworth depot for Councillors.

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

Tours of the new depot will be arranged in due course, likely to be in September.

12hh) Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability from Councillor Shanti Maru

Why are the dog bins not being regularly cleared in Oxhey Woods?

Written response:

As a general rule, the litter and dog bins are cleared 3 times a week in Oxhey Woods.

There was no supplementary question.

12ii) Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability from Councillor Reena Ranger

The question of no idling zones was first raised with the Lead Member in July 2019. Almost 3 years on, can the Lead Member please advise as to how this has progressed? They will also remember this was a request from the Youth Council in December 2020.

Written response:

As previously advised at Full Council in order to enforce and issue Notices against those who are stationary with their engines on, the area has to be 'designated'. The Council may apply for designation under The Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002. However, specific criteria needs to be met. The Council has an Air Quality Management Area so meets the first criteria for designation. However, part of the application for designation would include the submission of evidence to demonstrate that there is a problem locally. There is no current available evidence detailing there is specific problem outside schools in Three Rivers DC as such the designation has not been pursued. Three London Boroughs that did bring this dropped this following the inability to ticket offenders.

Air quality monitoring equipment is located in response to specialist Officer investigations regarding air pollution levels derived from national data and local sources. Officers continue to monitor air quality across the District. As an example, there are diffusion tubes in close proximity to the Reach School in Mill End but these were located in the area due to concerns regarding air quality from the main road on nearly residential properties. No specific studies have been carried out around schools, and would not be initiated unless there was evidence of a recognised issue.

There are also challenges of changing behaviour through enforcement, and Officers are pursuing some alternatives. We are working with all the Hertfordshire local authorities and HCC to change people's attitude to idling and raise awareness of the impacts. Consequently TRDC are an active participant in a current campaign to tackle idling. The campaign started with clean air day on 16th June.

This campaign is ongoing.

With Youth Council schools are given a theme (this latest theme was curriculum) and then it is up to the school which project they initiate. We are aware some local schools looked at vehicle idling as a recent school project.

Supplementary question to Councillor Phil Williams from Councillor Reena Ranger

Will the Lead Member take this offline so that the question does not need to be asked again and can we work towards checking the air quality at some of the schools?

Supplementary response:

Yes and I look forward to working with you on this.

12jj) Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability from Councillor Alison Wall

Residents are currently expected to pay for dead animals such as Deer to be removed from their land, however the Council will remove dead animals from public roads for free. Will the Council consider removing these charges and change this district policy?

Written response:

The fee for this service has been in place for a number of years and there is no requirement for residents to use this if they are able to dispose of the dead animal themselves or arrange for a private contractor. The fee reflects the time and staff used to carry out this service. This forms part of the annual fees and charges process agreed by Members.

Supplementary question to Councillor Phil Williams from Councillor Alison Wall

Could the policy be looked into on charging residents for the removal of dead animals from private property be changed and that details be provided to the appropriate Committee for consideration.

Supplementary response:

This fee can be debated by Members further during the fees and charges process. It should be noted that if the fee is removed this will have a cost to the Council in terms of staffing, fuel and disposal costs.

12kk) Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability from Councillor Sara Bedford

What could be done to return Three Rivers to its position as number one for recycling?

Written response:

Three Rivers District Council has consistently been the top 10 of performing Councils in recycling – indeed it should be noted that the top three Councils including Three Rivers are all Liberal Democrat run. Whilst not being No1 in 2020/21 was disappointing, I understand the initial figures for 2021/22 show that position should be reversed.

Given COVID being third in the country in 2020-21 was a fantastic achievement, especially as there is a small margin at the top of the league tables. I understand part of this was down to the excess waste collected from our parks and open space that depressed our figures whilst in fact the volume was increased!

Officers and operational staff continue to operate the waste and recycling collection to a high standard, ensuring contamination is minimal and to reinforce messages about waste reduction and reuse, as well as recycling. Three Rivers has been chosen as the pilot District to lead some interventions on avoidable food waste, a project being run between Hertfordshire Waste Partnership (HWP) and Sustainable Herts and officers have been instrumental in a number of other HWP projects this year, notably on reusable period products, and continue to actively engage with schools in the District and make links with the climate change agenda.

Supplementary question:

On the recycling of plastics and in particular soft plastics does the Lead Member think we should be looking at introducing that into our regime, as supermarkets do, and as we did many years ago?

Councillor Phil Williams to provide a written response to Councillor Sara Bedford.

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

Soft plastics are not included within the current recycling contract and therefore cannot be added at this time. The Resources and Waste Strategy, currently being looked at nationally, has consistency as one of its core themes and the range of materials collected is being reviewed as part of this work. Therefore the Council is not in a position at this current time to add soft plastics to its collection service.

12ll) Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability from Councillor Sara Bedford

When will the cattle intended for the conservation grazing at the Horses' Field in Abbots Langley be in place?

Written response:

The cattle were due to be grazed at Leavesden Country Park from the week commencing 27 June 2022. Due to complications with the water connection for the cattle trough, which are being led by Affinity Water, there has been a delay with the grazing. The grazing is now due to start the week commencing the 11 July 2022

Councillor Chris Lloyd to ensure that all local Ward Councillors (all 3 wards) receive information on this going forward.

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

An update has been sent out to all three wards and further updates will be given to them

12mm) Report from Councillor Roger Seabourne, Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships

Noted the written report provided in the summons link provided [here](#)

Councillor Roger Seabourne had no oral update to add to the report.

Councillor Reena Ranger asked a question on the written report:

Is the list of partnership briefings in the report exhaustive, is there anything pending with regards to the safety in the District.

Response:

The Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) group has been set up, an action plan has been written and being implemented. Further details can be obtained directly from the Officer.

RESOURCES AND SHARED SERVICES

12nn) Report from Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services

Noted the written report provided in the summons link provided [here](#)

Councillor Keith Martin gave the following oral update:

Item two of the report focused on the impact of inflation on the Council. Officers have been asked to provide a report on the inflation issues as they affect the Council. This would be done for the next P&R meeting and all future P&R meetings. The Director of Finance has produced the report and all Councillors are urged to read it.

Item four of the report is regarding the Council Tax emergency payments. Two drop in sessions have been organised for members of the public. The message has gone out via Communications and Councillor Andrew Scarth would send out via OWL.

Councillor Abbas Merali asked a question on the report:

Can you confirm the report going to P&R will contain scenarios where the Council may need to adapt its services so we don't get inflation linked increases in Council tax?

Response:

Councillor Keith Martin advised this was not part of the report but would be happy to discuss.

12oo) Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Andrea Fraser

Can we obtain a list of grants that Three Rivers has received from the Central Government and Hertfordshire County Council since 2020?

Written response:

The list of grant funding received is extensive. The funding received includes monies to passport directly to business, funding to support discretionary grant schemes and funding to support the delivery of Council services. A full breakdown will be provided as a written response following the completion of the final accounts working papers. Rule 14(2) does allow that "If the matter is particularly complex, a written answer may be circulated to all Members as soon as practicable after the meeting and a record kept with the minutes of the meeting."

There was no supplementary question

12pp) Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Lisa Hudson

It seems that Three Rivers now plans for Council Officers to mainly work from home. What have we done to assess the impact of this change on the services for our residents?

Written response:

The Visitor Centre at Three Rivers House is open to the public from 09:00-16:00 hrs, Monday to Friday. This provides our residents with 35 hours each week when they can be greeted and assisted by our Customer Service Centre or Revenues & Benefits staff. Should a resident require access to a specific service area this can be conducted virtually or over the telephone? If face-to-face contact is required an appointment will be scheduled with the relevant Officer. Visitor Centre staff can also direct residents online services, where this is appropriate. There is no "mainly working from home" plan. Rather, we have adopted an agile working practice, the objective of which is to provide residents with the best possible service, given our resources. This involves a combination of office-based, and where appropriate, remote working. We have no evidence that this approach has reduced the quality of

service provided to residents. Indeed, when combined with increased online services our residents can access information and report issues out of office hours, thereby expanding our overall service capability.

12qq) Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Lisa Hudson

Residents are in queues of up to 29 people when they are ringing the Three Rivers switchboard. What are we doing to get this number down?

Written response:

Three factors drove higher than usual call volumes; i) the £150 Council Tax rebate; ii) changes to bin collections before and after the Jubilee bank holiday weekend; iii) a high volume of recovery letters which had been sent out at this time. We are encouraging residents to use the self-service portal via the Council's website wherever possible in order that the phones are available for those who do not have access to the internet or find this way of communicating difficult.

12rr) Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor David Raw

Has Three Rivers got a list of what services are outsourced and when the providers were last reviewed?

Written response:

The following services are delivered through partnerships or contractual arrangements:

Outsourced through Partnership agreement / Service Level Agreement (SLA) / Contract:

- Pest Control
- Environmental Health
- Parking
- Conservation Advice
- Disabled Facilities
- Emergency Planning
- Leisure Venues

Company structures:

- Building Control – service provided by Herts Building Control, Inter Authority Agreement and Shareholder agreement was extended for 12 months in August 2021. This is now being reviewed for 2022 onwards.

Shared Services:

- Shared Services with Watford Borough Council (HR & ICT and procurement) – Overseen by Shared Service Operations Board
- Internal Audit – Overseen by Shared Internal Audit Services (SIAS) Board

Supplementary question to Councillor Keith Martin from Councillor David Raw

What is the review process currently used in the Council?

A full written response will be provided including the review dates for each arrangement. Rule 14(2) does allow that "If the matter is particularly complex, a

written answer may be circulated to all Members as soon as practicable after the meeting and a record kept with the minutes of the meeting.”

Supplementary response:

A written response to the supplementary question will be provided as soon as practicable and circulated to all Members (Rule 14(4))

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

The following services are delivered through partnerships or contractual arrangements:

Outsourced through Partnership agreement / Service Level Agreement (SLA) / Contract:

Service	Provider / Partner	Contract / SLA dates	Review date
Pest Control	Watford Borough Council	March 2022 to March 2024	March 2023 to provide a year to review options for extension / re-procurement
Environmental Health	Watford Borough Council	May 2019 to April 2024	Spring 2023 to provide a year to review options for extension / re-procurement
Parking Enforcement	Hertsmere Borough Council	April 2018 to March 2023	Arrangement is currently under review with a view to extending the SLA.
Place Services (Conservation Advice)	Essex County Council	May 2021 to March 2022	SLA has ended – provision of advice service under review
Disabled Facilities Grant	Building Control Company (part of Broste Rivers Group – Herts Building Control)	Falls within the framework for Building control – see below	This arrangement commenced in April 2019 and is monitored by the Housing team.
Emergency Planning	Hertfordshire County Council	Partnership established in 2005 and is reviewed and renewed annually	Options are currently being explored for provision after March 2023
Leisure Facilities	SLM	July 2018 to June 2038	In addition to the usual contract management arrangements, detailed work has been

			undertaken to ensure the continued value for money from the arrangement as part of the negotiation of additional support and valuations to contracts agreed over the last two years in relation to the impact of COVID-19.
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For all contracts and SLAs standard contract management procedures are followed which includes monitoring performance, reviewing KPIs and ensuring that services continue to offer value for money.

Company structures:

- Building Control – service provided by Herts Building Control, Inter Authority Agreement and Shareholder agreement was extended for 12 months in August 2021. This is now being reviewed for 2022 onwards and will be formally approved by all eight partners. As a shareholder the Council receives performance information from the company and has the right (which is exercised) to appoint a director to the board of directors.

Shared Services:

- Shared Services with Watford Borough Council (HR & ICT and procurement) – Overseen by Shared Service Operations Board which includes the monitoring of KPIs and budget. The SLA is a rolling agreement.
- Internal Audit – Overseen by Shared Internal Audit Services (SIAS) Board which includes the monitoring of KPIs and budget. The Partnership Agreement has been updated and is being prepared for formal sign off from all six partners. SIAS produce an annual report which is received by Audit Committee.

12ss) Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Stephen Cox

Whilst accepting that Rome was not built in a day, please can the Lead Member advise what progress has been made, if any, to alleviate the bowls club parking issues that went unaddressed when this Council sold the Pavilion lease to Whitbread and similarly the parking issues this council created for the Scouts when it encouraged them to move from Oxhey Drive under false pretences?"

Written response:

As Members will be aware this matter was previously addressed at Full Council in February 2022. There is no 'quick fix' to this issue. The Council does not retain the rights to grant permission to park over the Pavilion car park in South Oxhey.

As a reminder, my Predecessor stated in response to a supplementary question arising from the Full Council meeting in February that:

"Unfortunately it was believed at the time of agreeing the lease to the Scouts that they could use the car park, however this was not enshrined in their lease and not challenged by their legal representatives at the time."

"Whilst it is regrettable that this situation has occurred, TRDC is unable to permit or grant rights for parking in the car park to the Scouts or Bowls Club, as it does not retain the rights to do so."

It is therefore impossible to guarantee any further positive developments in relation to this matter and only the willingness of the current Leaseholder would enable such concessions to be granted.

Supplementary question to Councillor Keith Martin from Councillor Stephen Cox

Would you agree that the Council did not provide sufficient care when it sold the lease of the Pavilion to Whitbread brewery and this had a detrimental effect on the

bowls club parking arrangements and can the Lead Member advise who wrote the lease and whether it was TRDC lawyers?

Supplementary response:

The subject lease was granted a significant time ago and therefore archived records will need to be consulted.

12tt) Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Stephen King

When can I expect to receive a full answer to my supplementary question regarding retail units at Station Approach in South Oxhey which I asked in February?

Written response:

Following Councillor King's supplementary question in February, Officers sought to identify the purchaser of the retail units at South Oxhey. A search of the Land Registry database was undertaken, but at the time, the ownership records had not been updated on the Land Registry database. Following a more recent search at that the end of June, those records had still not been updated. Officers subsequently spoke with colleagues from Countryside PLC to confirm that a transaction had occurred. However, the identity of the purchaser has not yet been published within the public domain. As soon as we are made aware that this information has been published to the Land Registry database, Officers will provide a further update directly to Councillor King

12uu) Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Joan King

Can the Lead Member advise is there anything further this authority needs to do in respect of Three Rivers District Council's application for Village Green status for South Oxhey Playing Field that it has submitted on behalf of Watford Rural Parish Council.

Written response:

There is nothing further that Three Rivers District Council needs to do in relation to this application. The definitive site plan has been submitted to Hertfordshire County Council and it is now up to them to determine the Town & Village Green application for South Oxhey Playing Fields. We have been advised that there is a substantial backlog in relation to Town & Village Green and Common Land registration applications. We understand that it could take between 2-3 years before this application is processed and Town & Village Green status is granted. I have asked Officers to notify if there are any material changes affecting this application. In the event I am so notified I will advise Councillor King and report the matter at Full Council as part of my report

12vv) Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Sara Bedford

What provision is there for residents to meet Council officers in person, including on a 'drop-in' basis?

Written response:

The Visitor Centre is open between 9.00am – 4.00pm Monday – Friday for residents to hold face-to-face discussions with a member of staff from the Customer Services Centre or Revenues & Benefits. Should a customer require access to a specific service area, this can be conducted virtually or over the telephone. If face-to-face contact is required then an appointment will be scheduled with the relevant Officer.

Supplementary question to Councillor Keith Martin from Councillor Sara Bedford

Please could a notice be put up in reception that states Officers are available to be met and spoken with? There have been occasions where members of the public have been told there is no one available as we do not do this since covid.

Supplementary response:

Councillor Keith Martin to provide a written answer to Councillor Sara Bedford that a sign will be put in the visitor centre to state that officers are available to meet with people, particularly those in crisis.

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

The first point of contact for people coming into Three Rivers House is the Visitor Centre front desk where CSC officers sit who can assist with general matters and direct customers to the appropriate method of contact for specific requests. As the front desk is staffed during opening hours officers do not believe an additional notice is necessary. Customers are encouraged to use online services wherever possible and for those who cannot or need to speak to a specific service an appointment can be arranged. Customers requiring crisis support from specific services are able to access a duty officer but this may be via the telephone or virtually and not always face to face.

12ww) Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Sara Bedford

What is the provision for residents who may be in crisis to speak in person regarding Housing Benefit or Council Tax payments?

Written response:

Residents requiring assistance with Housing Benefit, Council Tax Support and any queries relating to payment of Council Tax payments, repayment of overpayments etc. can come into the Visitors Centre at Three Rivers House. Two Revenues & Benefits Officers are on duty every day in Visitors Centre between 09:00 - 16:00 hrs. If visiting Three Rivers House is impractical, residents can call Three Rivers and they will be directed to Revenues & Benefits staff, who can assist them.

There was no supplementary question.

12xx) Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Sara Bedford

Being able to identify the correct officer to speak to is vital for Councillors. What is done to ensure Councillors know when officers have moved on, new officers have taken on roles or responsibilities have been reallocated?

Written response:

The Head of Customer Experience has recently circulated to Councillors the key contacts in each service area. Any changes to this will be communicated from each department to Committee Officers so that this information can be shared with Councillors.

Supplementary question for Councillor Keith Martin from Councillor Sara Bedford

Could the Lead Member confirm that the structure charts are up to date and are available to Councillors and that all Managers advise Councillors of any staffing changes in their team when they arise to ensure Councillors are talking to the right person.

Supplementary response:

The structure chart has been updated and is live on the Council's website, and staff changes will be communicated regularly through the Members Information Bulletin.

12yy) Questions to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Sara Bedford

12yy i How many Three Rivers households were eligible to receive the Council Tax Rebate?

Written response:

The number of eligible households in Three Rivers for the Council Tax Energy payment is approximately 19,500.

12yy ii On what date were residents whose bank details were held by the Council paid the Council Tax Rebate?

Written response:

Payments to households who pay their Council Tax by DD started on 27 April 2022. Payments were made on the following dates; 27.04.22, 05.05.22, 12.05.22, 16.05.22 & 27.05.22. All payments to DD payers were made by 27.05.22.

12yy iii How many households had received the rebate by 31 May and 30 June respectively?

Written response:

12,296 by the end of May 22.
12,716 by 22.06.22 (in total)

We have also made a number of payments direct to households Council Tax accounts where this is their chosen method of receiving the payment. To date there are 180 of these.

The difference between the total number of 5,900 between the expected payments of 19,500 and 13,600 total number of payments made is then number of applications we are still expecting to receive.

Non-DD payers have to complete an application form in order to receive the payment. Payments to non-DD payers commenced on 30.05.22 with payments being made on the following dates; 30.05.22, 06.06.22, 07.06.22, 10.06.22, 15.06.22, 17.06.22, 21.06.22 & 29.06.22.

Three Rivers have now paid 70% of the payments due to households in Bands A-D.

12yy iv What are the reasons for any delays in payments?

Written response:

The Revenues Team are completely up-to-date with payments and applications are being turned around daily as they continue to be received. Households can apply on-line and they can also come into the council offices if they need assistance. Officers are available at Three Rivers House between the hours of 09:00 and 16:00. There is no need to make an appointment, just turn up.

We are also holding 2 Council Tax Energy Rebate surgeries in the district on 19 & 20 July. 19 July is in Abbots Langley at the Hillside Community Hub and 20 July is at the Watford Rural Parish Council offices. The dates and times are going to be published on the web and social media. We thought this would be a good way to engage with residents and encourage further take up of this rebate. We are analysing data with regards to the numbers of applications received from each Parish and we will run further drop-in surgeries where required.

We have until 30.09.22 to make payments for this scheme. At the moment households have the choice of receiving the payment directly into their nominated bank account or have the payment transferred to their Council Tax account. Towards the end of the scheme if there are any households who have not applied but are eligible we will make the payment to their Council Tax account in order that they do not lose out.

Supplementary question to Councillor Keith Martin from Councillor Sara Bedford covering all the questions asked at 12yy i to iv

Councillor Sara Bedford asked if the Lead Member could ensure that senior managers are passing on information to Members when they ask for it so that they do not have to put a formal question into Council.

Supplementary response:

The Lead Member agreed and noted Councillor Sara Bedford's comments.

12zz) Question to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Sara Bedford

What policy has been used to make discretionary payments to those outside Council Tax bands A-D? How many payments have been made, broken down by Ward?

Written response:

The criteria for the Council Tax Energy Discretionary Rebate Scheme was agreed at the Policy & Resources Committee on 13.06.22. The criteria is as follows:

- Residents of properties in Bands E-H who are in receipt of Council Tax Support (CTS) will receive a payment of £150.00.
- Residents of properties in Bands A-D in receipt of Council Tax Support will receive a 'top-up' payment of £40.00
- Residents who have moved into the area since 01.04.22 who have not received a payment from another local authority can apply for a payment of £150.00. Claims of this type will be restricted to the first 61 as funds will then be spent.

Please see the answer to 12xx iii for the number of payments made under the core scheme. There have been no payments made yet under the discretionary scheme.

We do not have the breakdown of the numbers in each ward for payments referred to at 12xx, above. Producing this information involves significant work. Once an answer has been produced it will be sent to Councillor Bedford.

Supplementary question:

Can you ensure that senior managers are passing on this information to Councillors on council tax rebates and energy payments when asked for and not to have to put a formal question to Council? To ensure that information is provided to Councillors and residents in future on drop in sessions on council tax/revenue matters at the earliest opportunity so that residents can attend. To provide details to Councillor Sara Bedford.

Supplementary response provided after the meeting:

A report was presented to the P&R Committee on 18 July (link to the report below – item 8) on the Impact of Inflation on the Council which included details on council tax, energy payments and revenue matters. Regular reports will be provided at each P&R Committee meeting.

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/meeting/policy-and-resources-committee-18-july-2022>

12aaa) Questions to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Sara Bedford

12aaa i - What progress has been made towards providing and signing a gender-neutral toilet where possible in every public building owned or operated by the Council?

Written responses:

There is a gender-neutral toilet at Three Rivers House although there is presently no legal requirement to provide gender-neutral toilet facilities, indeed in certain circumstances, the removal of gender-specific toilets in favour of unisex/gender-neutral provision can be considered inappropriate and can be regarded as discriminatory towards women.

The Council continues to maintain a range of gender-specific and unisex disabled facilities and there are presently no plans to review this provision.

HM Government hosted a consultation on “Toilet provision for men and women” which ran from 31 October 2020 to 26 February 2021. HM Government are currently reviewing feedback and the Council will of course review such findings and implement any recommendations.

12aaa ii - What has been done to encourage partners to do likewise?

Written response:

As indicated in the answer to the initial question (12zz i), there is presently no legal requirement to provide gender-neutral toilet facilities and partner organisations and we can encourage but not force them to do so.

Councillor Keith Martin agreed policies passed by the Council should be followed in full and would check with officers that the policies are being adhered to in full and if not get it rectified.

Supplementary response to all questions under 12aaa

The Equalities Sub Committee agreed a motion at their meeting on 30 November 2020. The motion included a request that the Council resolves to: “work to provide at least one gender neutral toilet where possible in every public building owned or operated by the Council, and encourage partners to do likewise.” The motion does not form part of formal Council policy, rather an objective to work towards.

In my earlier response I confirmed that there is no current legal requirement to provide gender-neutral toilet facilities or the ability to force partners to do so. Should there be a change in the law or a need to consider the adoption of such policies, of course the Council will contemplate doing so. I am content to request that Officers consider the inclusion of gender-neutral toilet facilities when undertaking refurbishment of any Council-owned or operated premises.

12bbb) Questions to Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Sara Bedford

12bbb i - How many contracted staff are now being paid the Real Living Wage where the roles were previously being paid at a rate lower than the RLW?

Written response:

The Real Living Wage for the Leisure Management Contract is due to commence on 1 October 2022. It will affect 103 colleagues/staff broken down as the below;

Full Time – 15

Part Time – 39

Casual – 49

Tenon FM provide cleaning services for Watersmeet, Batchworth Depot, Basing House and Three Rivers House. Their staff are paid the National Minimum wage. The contract is due for renewal in January 2023 when the requirement to provide the Real Living wage will be implemented

12bbb ii - Which areas of the Council's operations do these staff work in?

Written response:

Cleaning Contract, Leisure Management Contract

Supplementary question to Councillor Keith Martin from Councillor Sara Bedford:

Does the Councillor agree with my disappointment that we have not gone to our contract managers on the amount the Council has agreed to pay these people – the real living wage – and would like to up the value of the contract in order that these people can be paid that? The people that clean these office and the leisure staff are very valuable to us and should be being paid the real living wage as agreed by the Council.

Supplementary response:

At their meeting on 8 December 2020 Full Council approved a motion, in which “...all employees of contractors and Council staff employed on a casual basis should be paid the RLW as soon as practically possible, and that discussions take place with SLM regarding the pay of employees at our leisure facilities.” The Council agrees, these employees are very valuable. Noting that the motion requires action is taken as soon as is ‘practically possible’, changes will come into effect for the Leisure Management Contract on 1 October 2022 and for Cleaning Staff when the contract is re-tendered in January 2023.

CL51/22 REPORTS AND QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRS OF THE AUDIT, PLANNING, LICENSING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEES (RULE 14)

AUDIT COMMITTEE

13a) Report from and questions to the Chair of the Audit Committee, Cllr Tony Humphrey

No report.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

13b) Report from and questions to the Chair of the Planning Committee, Cllr Steve Drury

No report.

13c) Question to Councillor Steve Drury, the Chair of the Planning Committee, from Councillor Sara Bedford

How can the Council better defend planning appeals for major or minor planning applications?

Written response:

Planning applications are required to be determined in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Should planning applications be refused by the Council, it is essential that refusals are based on demonstrable harm which can be evidenced. It is also important that when schemes are refused, regard is had to the planning balance and whether the adverse impacts of granting permission would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits. If schemes are refused having full regard to the statutory requirements and having undertaken a balancing exercise, then any decision reached ought to be defensible but the decision on whether to allow or dismiss an appeal rests with the Government's Planning Inspector.

Supplementary question to Councillor Steve Drury from Councillor Sara Bedford:

During recent planning training we were told if there was an overturned decision then Members should go and speak on it at appeal. This was previously discouraged by this Council. Does the Member feel we should go and speak on applications and will this help with our success at planning?

Supplementary response:

If Members, in particular ward Members or Members of the Planning committee wish to attend an appeal they are free to do so but must register if they wish to speak. If they do speak they should take advice from Officers as to what they can and cannot say.

LICENSING

13d) Report from and questions to the Chair of the Licensing Committee, Cllr Raj Khiroya

No report.

REGULATORY SERVICES

13e) *Report from and questions to the Chair of the Regulatory Services Committee, Cllr Raj Khiroya*

No report.

CL52/22 MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 11

Motion 1:

Councillor Ciaran Reed, seconded by Councillor Reena Ranger moved under Notice duly given as follows:

Three Rivers District Council are saddened and disturbed by the unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, which has caused horrific devastation, and created an escalating humanitarian crisis with millions displaced or affected. In light of this, and as a way of expressing support for the people of Ukraine and members of our communities who are from or who have ties with Ukraine this Council:

1. Condemns the unprovoked Russian invasion of Ukraine and stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and their families and friends, including those local to Three Rivers;
2. Stands ready to provide support and open our arms to innocent people displaced and affected by this unprovoked Russian aggression;
3. Will work with and support the efforts of our local communities to provide help, support and comfort to those in need;
4. Commits to ensure that Three Rivers District Council will not cooperate with any organisation or form contracts with any companies owned or part owned by the government of the Russian Federation and work to leave any contracts that are with companies owned or part owned by the government of the Russian Federation.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved an amendment to the word Russian in Points 1 and 2 to be replaced with Putin and the points on Federation be changes to Government which the proposer of the motion agreed.

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

RESOLVED:

Three Rivers District Council are saddened and disturbed by the unprovoked aggression against Ukraine, which has caused horrific devastation, and created an escalating humanitarian crisis with millions displaced or affected. In light of this, and as a way of expressing support for the people of Ukraine and members of our communities who are from or who have ties with Ukraine this Council:

1. Condemns the unprovoked Putin invasion of Ukraine and stands in solidarity with the people of Ukraine and their families and friends, including those local to Three Rivers;
2. Stands ready to provide support and open our arms to innocent people displaced and affected by this unprovoked Putin aggression;

3. Will work with and support the efforts of our local communities to provide help, support and comfort to those in need;
4. Commits to ensure that Three Rivers District Council will not cooperate with any organisation or form contracts with any companies owned or part owned by the government of the Russian Government and work to leave any contracts that are with companies owned or part owned by the government of the Russian Government.

Motion 2

Councillor Reena Ranger, seconded by Councillor Ciaran Reed moved under Notice duly given as follows:

The Council believes that administrative boundaries do not define communities. Residents of Moor Park and Eastbury in Northwood, Three Rivers' residents are being unfairly penalised by parking charges to access vital services in Northwood High Street which falls in Hillingdon.

We believe that all residents should have easy and fair access to doctors, dentist basic services and therefore request the administration to write to the Leader of Hillingdon Council to urge them to reinstate for 30 minutes free parking for those residents living in Northwood who happen by virtue of an administrative boundary to be a non-resident but in reality and use it as a principal town due to proximity so that we can ensure our residents are able to access the vital services that they need as needed without financial consequence at this already difficult time.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes proposed some amendments to the motion as follows:

The first line of paragraph 1 to take out "Residents of Moor Park and Eastbury in Northwood" and "in Northwood High Street which falls in Hillingdon" and to read as follows:

"The Council believes that administrative boundaries do not define communities. Three Rivers' residents are being unfairly penalised by parking charges to access vital services in Hillingdon, just over the border."

In Paragraph 2 replace the word "Northwood" with "Three Rivers". The amendments were agreed with the proposer.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

The Council believes that administrative boundaries do not define communities. Three Rivers' residents are being unfairly penalised by parking charges to access vital services in Hillingdon, just over the border.

We believe that all residents should have easy and fair access to doctors, dentist basic services and therefore request the administration to write to the Leader of Hillingdon Council to urge them to reinstate for 30 minutes free parking for those residents living in Three Rivers who happen by virtue of an administrative boundary

to be a non-resident but in reality and use it as a principal town due to proximity so that we can ensure our residents are able to access the vital services that they need as needed without financial consequence at this already difficult time.

Motion 3 - withdrawn

CHAIR OF COUNCIL