

Minutes of the Meeting of **FULL COUNCIL** held at Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth on **Tuesday 22 February 2022** from 7.30pm to 10.30pm.

Present: Councillors Keith Martin (Chair) Debbie Morris (Vice-Chair) Matthew Bedford, Joanna Clemens, David Coltman, Stephen Cox, Donna Duncan, Alex Hayward, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Paula Hiscocks, Lisa Hudson, Margaret Hoffman, Tony Humphreys, Raj Khiroya, Joan King, Stephen King, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Shanti Maru, Sarah Nelmes, Reena Ranger, David Raw, Paul Rainbow, Ciaran Reed, Alison Scarth, Andrew Scarth, Stephanie Singer, Dominic Sokalski, Jon Tankard, Alison Wall and Phil Williams

CL55/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sara Bedford, Ruth Clark, Donna Duncan, Alex Michaels, Roger Seabourne, Martin Trevett and Alex Turner

CL56/21 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 December 2021 and the Extraordinary Council meeting held on 25 January 2022 were agreed by general assent and signed by the Chair.

CL57/21 FINANCIAL PLANNING

Councillor Dominic Sokalski, seconded by Councillor Matthew Bedford moved the recommendations for budget setting.

Councillor Dominic Sokalski thanked all the Officers who had worked incredibly hard throughout the year to keep services going and paid tribute to Councillor Matthew Bedford who did a brilliant job in the role and had supported the Councillor in the role. The three main themes of the Liberal Democratic budget were: to secure Council finances, fully fund the highly rated services and ambitious investment to protect the environment. The Councillor stated that the previous 12 months had been challenging and testing time for residents, businesses and the Council. This had been made more challenging by the continued uncertainty on the future Government funding and policies such as the National Insurance hike which hinder the ability to plan for the long term. The Council now faced a new economic challenge, of high inflation, running at over 5% and estimated to surge to over 7% this year by the Bank of England. This would place immense pressure on the Council's finances, and it had been estimated that the pay bill alone would increase by £825,000 over the next three years. There had already been inflationary cost pressures on key supplies including an increase in the cost of diesel of 6.9%. Given all the uncertainty and the priority to protect services, the Council had focused on strengthening the Councils financial position by looking for savings and tighter controls on expenditure. Three Rivers were set to exceed prior forecasts and be a net £250,000 better off in the next year, than was predicted last year. The main causes for these improvements were the provisions of the Liberal Democratic administration. Firstly efficiency savings which amounted to

over £200,000, secondly additional income due to joint ventures and commercial decisions and thirdly higher fees on charged income than expected. Also the postponement of Business Rate reform and Government funding had helped. Overall this was testament to the prudent and sound financial management by this Liberal Democrat Council. Three Rivers have been putting local values into practise to support residents and businesses. The Councillor was proud that Three Rivers continued to provide a 100% Council Tax rebate to those most in need in our community which only a handful of Councils in the country had done. Three Rivers Council Tax increases are low, a modest £5 for a band D household which was significantly below inflation. The Council had distributed £17.6 million in grants to support businesses with a particular focus on hard working sole traders and micro businesses like hairdressers or taxi drivers, who would not otherwise have received Covid support. We had been working to support independent businesses for example: The Kitchen in Croxley Green via the Save the High Street campaign. These local businesses play a vital role in our communities and was why the Council was expanding membership of the 'Save the High Street' campaign to keep the local economy and businesses vibrant.

The Liberal Democrat Council had also frozen parking charges for another year in recognition of supporting our High Streets and support residents during the cost of living crisis. The Councillor stated that the Liberal Democrats were Britain's greenest party and green industry would endorse us at the General elections. Greenpeace and Friends of the Earth had said that we have the most credible green policies. Here in Three Rivers those values are being put into practise, with a national newspaper recently pointing out how Three Rivers pride ourselves on our green credentials and they were spot on. This newspaper noted the impressive recycling rates, Green Flag Park awards, tree planting, and work to improve biodiversity. The Council had also signed up to the UK 100 pledge to be carbon neutral, well ahead of the Government deadline. Recently, Climate Emergency UK had rated Three Rivers as Hertfordshire's best Council for climate action. Because of the sound approach to the Council's finances we have funded growth bids for two new Biodiversity and Sustainability Officers who would work to improve the wildlife and environment. £100,000 had been committed for new equipment to improve biodiversity through re-wilding. In summary the careful approach to the Council finance remains strong and the Council had risen to the challenges brought on by the Covid pandemic, and had continued to invest to protect the environment, fully fund our services and all the while keeping reserves at a healthy level.

Councillor Dominic Sokalski went on to state that the only proposed budget that evening was the Liberal Democrat budget and the Council was required by law to set a budget. Therefore they moved the budget recommendations and hoped Members would support it.

Councillor Mathew Bedford reserved their right to speak later in the debate.

Councillor Alex Hayward wanted to fully endorse the objective to secure the Council's finances due to it being public money but in 2008 we had £33.6 million in reserves and now the Council had £2 million.

Councillor Reena Ranger congratulated Councillor Sokalski on presenting their first budget. The challenges of inflation had been discussed along with Covid and the economy as it recovered and there had been changes in business models that had not yet even understood yet. In a recent survey 77% of the High Street shop

owners wanted two hours of free parking. The Council should share that prosperity and should help the shop owners and High Streets. The Councillor also wanted to congratulate the lobby of residents and organisations who had made changes to grass cutting and the residents who had been truly excellent recyclers which allowed Three Rivers to claim those accolades of highly rated services.

Councillor Matthew Bedford commented that it was disappointing that other groups had not come up with any other ways of running the Council. Regarding Councillor Hayward's comment about the Council's reserves, as Councillor Hayward was well aware quite significant sums had been invested in assets that were delivering significant support to this budget and that was one reason why the Council had weathered the financial storms of recent years better than any others. There were also various earmarked reserves set aside in terms of potential economic downturn and other things. The Councillor added that this was an excellent budget and commended Councillor Sokalski's introduction to it and recommended that all Members vote in favour of it.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst stated that Three Rivers District Council was well run and pointed out some of the achievements that had been made and were reflected in the Wards that the Members represent. Last week Councillor Giles-Medhurst attended the celebrations for The Hive and the Heritage Green Flag. This would not have been possible without the dedication of the Officers who had pushed the project forward through the Heritage Lottery Bid, the support of Warner Bros, the initial seed funding and the support of officers to enable the Council to invest in Leavesden County Park to make it a jewel in the crown of Three Rivers. In other future plans, The Horse's Field was soon to have cattle on it.

Councillor Chris Lloyd agreed that it was important to recognise the work of staff over the last two years during the most challenging time that could be remembered over the last 30 years. A big thank you was to be passed onto the teams as it had been challenging, people did jobs that they hadn't done before, and putting together a budget had been challenging as there were no details available until December. The Government needed to give a settlement for not just one year but a longer term settlement to enable the Council to plan. The contribution given from Government had dropped. Recycling was still a key part of the environmental strategy and could be built upon as it was what the Council had done over many years. Councillor Lloyd recommended the budget and hoped it would be supported.

Councillor Alison Wall asked about car permits and wondered if we were considering purchasing career permits as parking gets more difficult when doing social care work. Councillor Dominic Sokalski advised that the budget does cover that service.

On being put to the Council the Administration Budget was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council, the voting being 19 For; 0 Against and 13 Abstentions.

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

For: Councillors Matthew Bedford, David Coltman, Steve Drury, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Margaret Hofman, Tony Humphreys, Raj Khuroya, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Sarah Nelmes, Paul Rainbow, Alison Scarth, Andrew Scarth, Stephanie Singer, Dominic Sokalski, Jon Tankard, Kate Turner and Phil Williams.

Against: Zero

Abstentions: Councillors Joanna Clemens, Stephen Cox, Alex Hayward, Paula Hiscocks, Lisa Hudson, Joan King, Stephen King, Shanti Maru, Debbie Morris, Reena Ranger, David Raw, Ciaran Reed and Alison Wall

Post meeting note: When the recorded vote was taken Councillor David Coltman announced their vote as being For the Administration Budget. This was checked by the Committee Clerk and confirmed by the Councillor. When the Chair announced the vote result the Conservative Group queried the vote and Councillor Coltman wished to amend their vote to an abstention as the Councillor had voted incorrectly. It was advised by the Chief Executive and Solicitor to the Council that it was not possible to change the vote at that stage, but a record would be made in the minutes that the Councillor had meant to abstain from the vote. The Chair so announced.

RESOLVED:

1. Council notes the challenge to our finances of the past couple years and the continuing impact of the pandemic on our budgets. There continues to be uncertainty around funding with the long anticipated reforms around business rates and fair funding now expected from 2023/24 with the Council taking a prudent approach within the Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP) and reflecting expected losses in resources as a result. Inflation and pay pressure is a key feature of current the MTFP and one that is unlikely to be matched by increases in resources putting further pressure on our budgets.
2. Council further notes the following achievements, enabling services to be protected without steep increases in its council tax:
 - Cashable efficiency savings, sustained even during the pandemic and further cashable efficiency gains in this MTFP of £0.2m per annum
 - Additional income from our investments including our joint venture Three Rivers Homes and Wimbledon The key pressure is around pay – future cost of living increases and additional supplements at the depot.
3. **Council agrees the following actions;**
 - (a) That the Medium Term Financial Strategy and Capital Programme as presented to Policy and Resources on 24 January 2022 be approved subject to the following changes:
 - (i) Following the agreement of Policy and Resources that the £100k capital budget in 2023/24 for Improvements to Play Areas be funded by CIL, the resources freed up fund a £100k budget for Biodiversity.
 - (ii) An additional £60,000 be allocated for pay at the depot funded from an increase in Lower Tier Grant of £1,775, an increase in business rate income of £42,734 as a result of an increase in s.31 grant, and an improved position on the Council Tax Collection fund of £15,491.
 - (b) That the 2021/22 revised estimates for the revenue account be agreed giving a balance on the General Fund at 31 March 2022 of **£4,001,560.**

- (c) That the revenue budget for 2022/23 totalling net expenditure of **£13,187,793** and the draft revenue estimates for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024 giving a balance on the general fund at 31 March 2024 of **£2,420,775** be approved. (Appendix 1)
- (d) That £2.0m be considered as a prudent minimum balance for the general fund.
- (e) That the capital strategy as presented to Policy and Resources Committee on 24 January 2022 be agreed and the total investment programme for 2022/23 be agreed at **£5,973,907**.
- (f) That the arrangements for funding the 2022/25 capital strategy and investment programme resulting in an estimated balance of capital resources at 31 March 2025 of **£2,060,074** be agreed
- (g) That the financial and budgetary risks presented to The Policy and Resources Committee on 24 January 2022 be approved and their management monitored by the Audit Committee.
- (h) That the position on the financial reserves as presented to the Policy and Resources Committee on 24 January 2022 and the Director of Finance's advice on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the financial reserves are noted.
- (i) That the fees and charges set out in Appendix 2 are agreed and effective from 1 April 2022.

CL58/21 SPECIAL EXPENSES 2022/23

Councillor Dominic Sokalski moved, seconded by Councillor Matthew Bedford, the recommendations on Special Expenses.

Councillor Matthew Bedford reserved their right to speak.

Councillor Paula Hiscock commented that the residents of Rickmansworth and the Batchworth Community Council were the ones that bore the brunt of Special Expenses. The Aquadrome, which was used by all, being a special expense, yet Leavesden Country Park, which was a very similar outdoor/activity place used by all and apart from the Ranger, it was not a special expense. Watersmeet, could have been used as a community hall previously but was not able to now as it was used every night. It was also expensive to hire as a community hall could be hired for half the price. Councillor Hiscocks felt that this was unfair on the residents of Rickmansworth and Batchworth Community Council.

Councillor Reena Ranger agreed with the Councillor's comments and asked if it could be explained how the Special Expenses were fair for Batchworth when it is 50%.

Councillor Ciaran Reed wished to echo the concerns about Rickmansworth and stated the Aquadrome was a community facility for everyone around Three Rivers. It would not be uncommon for those who live in Chorleywood or Sarratt to go across to the Aquadrome, therefore it did not seem overly unfair for the expenses to be picked up at a District level, given that it is a District wide asset rather than just a Batchworth Community asset. The Parish of Sarratt is the most heavily wooded part of Three Rivers yet received next to no financial help for managing its woodland despite the fact that the District got some say over what type of trees were planted. This came back to the question of fairness in the District, with places such as Sarratt and Batchworth complaining that they are expected to pick up costs which in other areas were distributed at a District wide

level. The Councillor stated it was not necessarily clear that fairness was seen throughout this report.

Councillor Matthew Bedford was concerned the evening would turn into a seminar on the calculation of Special Expenses and asked that if Members would like a briefing with Officers to understand how it works. They advised that the points made were wrong, and that it was not correct that the whole cost of the Aquadrome was allocated to Batchworth. The cost related to the Aquadrome was as a District wide cost. The cost of the Aquadrome was as an open space activity and was a Special Expense in the same way that other open spaces were around the District. In exactly the same way, Watersmeet which had the pantomime (which is a net cost not a net profit) was allocated across the whole District as it was a District wide cost. The piece that had been allocated as a Special Expense was the local hall cost. Considering the detail that was provided in Point 3.6, it can be seen that Batchworth was not the most expensive part of the District. Three of the parishes had a higher charge than Batchworth and two of the Parishes and the unparished area had a lower charge. With regards to the Sarratt, the table in Point 3.6 showed that the Special Expenses to Sarratt Parish are zero. It would be unfair to say that there is an unfair allocation to Sarratt. Officers work to ensure that all of the allocations are robust and are fair and if Members needed further and detailed explanation of where these numbers had come from, how the system worked and how the budget was fair there could be a seminar or briefing organised.

Councillor Alex Hayward said it was the residents who felt the charges were unfair.

Councillor Dominic Sokalski explained that Councillor Matthew Bedford had explained very clearly how the Special Expenses had been calculated.

On being put to the Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council, the voting being 18 For, 10 Against and 4 Abstentions. In accordance with budget setting legislation and Council Procedure Rule 17 a recorded vote was undertaken, the details of which were as follows:

For: Councillors Matthew Bedford, Steve Drury, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Margaret Hofman, Tony Humphreys, Raj Khiroya, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Sarah Nelmes, Paul Rainbow, Alison Scarth, Andrew Scarth, Stephanie Singer, Dominic Sokalski, Jon Tankard, Kate Turner and Phil Williams.

Against: Councillors David Coltman, Alex Hayward, Paula Hiscocks, Lisa Hudson, Shanti Maru, Debbie Morris, Reena Ranger, David Raw, Ciaran Reed and Alison Wall

Abstentions: Councillors Joanna Clemens, Stephen Cox, Joan King and Stephen King

RESOLVED:

That the Council confirms that it will apply the following resolution for special and general expenses for 2022/23:-

- 1) that the following functions being either those provided equally across the district or incurring minimal expenditure be declared general expenses:-
 - allotments;
 - litter, salt and dog bins;
 - highways, trees and roadside verges;

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

That the following functions are declared special expenses:-

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

CL59/21 COUNCIL TAX – DISTRICT ELEMENT

The Chair advised Council that they had agreed to take this report as an urgent report. The report had not been available for 5 clear working days but was required to be taken as urgent business as the Council needed to set the Council Tax. The reason for the delay in the publication of the report was due to Herts County Council not setting their Council Tax until the day of the Council meeting (22/2/22).

Councillor Dominic Sokalski moved, seconded by Councillor Matthew Bedford, the recommendations on the Council Tax – District Element.

On being put to the Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council, the voting being 28 For; 1 Against and 3 Abstentions. In accordance with budget setting legislation and Council Procedure Rule 17 a recorded vote was undertaken, the details of which were as follows:

For: Councillors Matthew Bedford, David Coltman, Steve Drury, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Alex Hayward, Paula Hiscocks, Margaret Hofman, Lisa Hudson, Tony

Humphreys, Raj Khuroya, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Shanti Maru, Debbie Morris, Sarah Nemes, Paul Rainbow, Reena Ranger, David Raw, Ciaran Reed, Alison Scarth, Andrew Scarth, Stephanie Singer, Dominic Sokalski, Jon Tankard, Kate Turner, Alison Wall and Phil Williams.

Against: Councillor Joanna Clemens

Abstentions: Councillors Stephen Cox, Joan King and Stephen King

RESOLVED:

That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2022/23, in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

- (a) £51,646,758 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act taking into account all precepts issued to it by parish councils.
- (b) £42,001,849 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
- (c) £9,644,909 being the amount by which the aggregate (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above.
- (d) £245.67 being the amount at (c) above divided by the council tax base, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year (including parish precepts).
- (e) £3,448,103 being the aggregate amount of all special items (parish precepts and special expenses)
- (f) £157.84 being the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of the area to which no special item relates.

(g)

Parts of the Council's Area	£
Abbots Langley	257.31
Batchworth	243.39
Chorleywood	259.60
Croxley Green	240.00
Sarratt	245.08
Watford Rural	233.35
Unparished	232.33

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

Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(h)

Parts of the Council's Area	Valuation Band							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Abbots Langley	171.54	200.13	228.72	257.31	314.49	371.67	428.85	514.62
Batchworth	162.26	189.30	216.35	243.39	297.48	351.56	405.65	486.78
Chorleywood	173.07	201.91	230.76	259.60	317.29	374.98	432.67	519.20
Croxley Green	160.00	186.67	213.33	240.00	293.33	346.67	400.00	480.00
Sarratt	163.39	190.62	217.85	245.08	299.54	354.00	408.47	490.16
Watford Rural	155.57	181.49	207.42	233.35	285.21	337.06	388.92	466.70
Unparished	154.89	180.70	206.52	232.33	283.96	335.59	387.22	464.66

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

CL60/21 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX

The Chair advised Council that they had agreed to take this report as an urgent report. The report had not been available for 5 clear working days but was required to be taken as urgent business as the Council needed to set the Council Tax. The reason for the delay in the publication of the report was due to HCC not setting their Council Tax until the day of the Council meeting (22/2/22)

Councillor Dominic Sokalski moved, seconded by Councillor Matthew Bedford, the recommendations on Setting the Council Tax.

On being put to the Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council, the voting being 31 For; 0 Against and 1 Abstention. In accordance with budget setting legislation and Council Procedure Rule 17 a recorded vote was undertaken, the details of which were as follows:

For: Councillors Matthew Bedford, David Coltman, Stephen Cox, Steve Drury, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Alex Hayward, Paula Hiscocks, Margaret Hofman, Lisa Hudson, Tony Humphreys, Raj Khiroya, Joan King, Stephen King, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Shanti Maru, Debbie Morris, Sarah Nemes, Paul Rainbow, Reena Ranger, David Raw, Ciaran Reed, Alison Scarth, Andrew Scarth, Stephanie Singer, Dominic Sokalski, Jon Tankard, Kate Turner, Alison Wall and Phil Williams.

Against: Zero

Abstentions: Councillor Joanna Clemens

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that for the year 2022/23 the Hertfordshire County Council and the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwelling shown below:-

Precepting Authority	Valuation Band							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Hertfordshire County Council	899.09	1,048.93	1,198.78	1,348.63	1,648.33	1,948.02	2,247.72	2,697.26
Hertfordshire County Council Adult Social Care	120.45	140.53	160.60	180.68	220.83	260.98	301.13	361.36
Police & Crime Commissioner	148.67	173.44	198.22	223.00	272.56	322.11	371.67	446.00
Total	1,168.21	1,362.90	1,557.60	1,752.31	2,141.72	2,531.11	2,920.52	3,504.62

That, having calculated the aggregate in each case the Council in accordance with Section 30 (2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2022/23 for each of the categories of dwellings shown below:-

Parts of the Council's Area	Valuation Band & Charges							
	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Abbots Langley	1,339.75	1,563.03	1,786.32	2,009.62	2,456.21	2,902.78	3,349.37	4,019.24
Batchworth	1,330.47	1,552.20	1,773.95	1,995.70	2,439.20	2,882.67	3,326.17	3,991.40
Chorleywood	1,341.28	1,564.81	1,788.36	2,011.91	2,459.01	2,906.09	3,353.19	4,023.82
Croxley Green	1,328.21	1,549.57	1,770.93	1,992.31	2,435.05	2,877.78	3,320.52	3,984.62
Sarratt	1,331.60	1,553.52	1,775.45	1,997.39	2,441.26	2,885.11	3,328.99	3,994.78
Watford Rural	1,323.78	1,544.39	1,765.02	1,985.66	2,426.93	2,868.17	3,309.44	3,971.32
Unparished	1,323.10	1,543.60	1,764.12	1,984.64	2,425.68	2,866.70	3,307.74	3,969.28

CL61/21 COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2022

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

Councillor Ciaran Reed wished to say that the Council Officers should be getting the pay rise that is deserved. Councillor Sarah Nelmes advised this was included in the budget.

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

RESOLVED:

That the policy and report be agreed.

CL62/21 APPOINTMENT OF EXTERNAL AUDITORS

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Margaret Hofman, the recommendation as set out in the report.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks wanted to ask if the external auditors had completed the audit on time this year.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes responded that it had not been completed as was the case with most other Councils and advised that some Councils were behind by two years.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks wanted to know how far behind Three Rivers was.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes advised that due to Covid and collective fees, Three Rivers was currently two years behind. It was universal but Councillor Nelmes advised that the reports were already in the public domain.

The Shared Director of Finance advised that the Government was aware of this and that it was a national issue and that changes are being proposed again for this year's accounts. The timetable would be moved back again and potential changes to the accounting code to allow the auditors to catch up. The signing off on the accounts was imminent and it was hoped that the two accounts would be completed by the end of the year. It is also hoped that next year it would be on time.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Council confirms that it will opt in to the national scheme for auditor appointments from April 2023

CL63/21 ANNUAL REPORT ON AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

Council received an annual report on amendments to the Council Constitution and details on Urgent Decisions taken.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

CL64/21 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Council received the following recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee from its meeting held on 24 January 2022.

Recommendation 1 - PR68/21 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, the recommendation on the Local Development Scheme.

This had already been discussed at the Policy and Resources Committee and was recommended to Council to approve. This was the revised timetable for the Local Plan and looked to extend it due to the very large response to the public consultation held at the end of last year.

Councillor Reena Ranger asked for clarification on what Members were voting on. The information had been conflicting and wanted an explanation on the

delay and asked was it because: the Council are going to be looking for or assessing new sites; was it because the Council were going to be looking or assessing amendments for old sites that had already been approved and if so what were the potential amendments; was it because the Council were going to be looking at all the sites that were disregarded again and on what basis would we be doing that. Depending on the answers provided how would that work in terms of pushing back numbers and putting together a plan for Three Rivers. The Councillor asked if there had been a policy change and if there had been was it a Government policy change or a Three Rivers policy change. With this new delay, what does this mean in terms of Three Rivers Green Belt and predatory development, what does this mean in terms of a Government Inspector taking over and how far up or down do you think Three Rivers would be on the list considering the Council had been in a presumption of development since 2016.

Councillor Ciaran Reed felt that the Council were in a very precarious position as a District due to the presumption of development. Members had seen what had happened at Killingdown Farm, the residents of Chorleywood are likely starting to get nervous about how quickly Green Street would get to appeal. There had been sites popping up that mean there was a genuine risk of development taking place despite TRDC, as a Planning Authority, attempting to block these because there is no Local Plan in place. The Council had been left extremely exposed without a Local Plan yet Members are being asked to delay it to 2025. As a representative of the areas where two major sites were being proposed Councillor Reed was concerned about going back to residents and advising that they had pushed back removing that big barrier on the ability as a Council to block sites being developed to 2025 as those sites may have come through already. There was also the threat of Inspectors coming in to consider our Local Plan. Members would have already seen Uttlesford Council put under special measures in order to be taken over by the Inspectorate. The Councillor asked why another Regulation 18 consultation was needed.

It seemed that sites needed to be re-evaluated which had already been disregarded. If these sites were not suitable, why were they now being reconsidered? In the case of new sites, what would happen to the residents of Chorleywood and Green Street, what would happen to the residents of Sarratt with Burlington? It seemed we would not be aware of the sites until after the election, similar to last year when the Regulation 18 was not published until after the election. At the elections in May the residents would get their say on how well they think Three Rivers is doing but once again they would not know the local sites that are being considered in the Local Plan which was the biggest issue in this area.

Councillor Ciaran Reed wondered how we get any form of democratic consent if people don't know what was being considered. Fundamentally the timetable would not work for the people of Three Rivers as it leaves the Green Belt at a threat of being developed upon. It gives more opportunities for either new developments or developers that have already been given a negative would then be given a second chance. It was not believed this was in the interest of the District. This was similar to when there had been generic problems with the Local Plan and the Council not pushing back the numbers as far as they should have been, according to the MP letters. It is clear that this plan would not work for the people of Three Rivers and the timetable was another step in the wrong direction. They urged that Members vote against it.

Councillor Dominic Sokalski responded that the biggest threat to the Green Belt was the Governments housing targets. The Government had been approving developments in the Green Belt and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty around the country on appeal. Killingdown Farm was not in the Green Belt, it had been allocated for housing by the Inspector. The Government did not use housing supply or presumption for a reason for approval. The Councillor stated that not a single Council in the country had been successful in asking for a lower housing target.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks asked if Three Rivers had tried to push back the numbers.

Councillor David Raw advised it was important that the Council supported the residents. The Council should be supporting the fact that some of these developments needed to be stopped and fought against.

Councillor Jon Tankard advised that having worked with developers in the past they would overturn a decision made by planning were they able to do so. If the numbers are managed within the sites that are allocated and developers win on a number of sites we would have more housing than we are allocated to provide. We need to look at ways, when a site was inappropriate, to stop the developers.

Councillor Lisa Hudson asked where the Liberal Democrats were planning to put 380 houses that needed to be built.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst stated that so many appeals had been turned down and lost by the Planning Inspectorate between 2018 and 2020. There were refusals which were lost to developers where the Government had stepped in which were similar to Killingdown Farm with the documents showing why the Inspector granted permission. There were no costs awarded against this authority because there were adequate reasons for the authority to refuse. The authority faced the same as Hertsmere and Dacorum which had similar issues in terms of housing numbers and their timeline is longer than Three Rivers and their Local Plan is more out of date. It would be remiss, having undertaken public consultation where 3,500 residents replied, to not look at those comments and the Council is duty bound to look at what had been submitted and analyse it. If developers stated that a site had been excluded and they believed that to be wrong, the site might be more viable than site another that residents objected to. If the Council did not undertake that process residents were being let down. The big let-down for residents was the failure of the MPs to go and see the Minister with the Leader of the Council and argue why these figures for Three Rivers were wrong which had been done time and time again. There had been motions which the other party had failed to support time and time again. Each time it had been voted against these motions and should have been voted for.

Councillor Stephen Cox wished to state that the Council were in a bad situation, not unique and was awaiting attendance at a Local Plan meeting to find out exactly what was going on.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes stated in seconding the recommendation that it had been discussed at length and the Council had a perfectly decent Local Plan until higher housing numbers had been imposed on us. The Council had conscientiously tried to work towards them. The Regulation 18 consultation went with lower numbers as it was not felt the given target could be reasonably reached. There had been consistent communications to ministers, the ministers advised they were flexible but no Council, led by any party had yet managed to get through the figures that had been set out in National Planning Policy. It

would be disingenuous to say we are not required to follow it. Colleagues in neighbouring authorities all had the same problem as they have had all over the country. The Council would continue to lobby MP's and frequent meetings on the subject and continue to fight. It is urged that the Local Development Scheme is supported so that sites can be considered and moved forwards.

Councillor Matthew Bedford stated the only reason the Council had the presumption of development that Members had talked about was because the Government had increased the housing figures. Until then the housing target was being hit. The Government had now more than tripled the target. Three Rivers now faced dealing with the situation entirely imposed on us by the Government. In answer to Councillor Ranger's questions: yes to all of the above. If there were owners of sites that had not previously been considered, we were obliged to have them evaluated on the same criteria that the original sites were evaluated on. If some of the previously disregarded sites turned out to be less feasible than some of the ones we previously had on the list then it would make sense to swap them out. There were other sites that had been previously rejected where the landowners may have come back with reasons, which they are entitled to do, to explain why the Council was wrong to reject them and provide evidence to counter that. If those sites when evaluated are more feasible than some of the other ones on the list it would be wrong to ignore that. There may be other sites which were on the list where representations had come forward which may mean sites are not suitable and would need to come off the list. The Council are looking at every single comment made and formulating responses to each comment. Residents would expect all comments to be taken into account and this takes time to complete. It is right that if the list changes residents need to be re-consulted on potential new sites and would be wrong not to do that. The new timetable accounts for this.

On being put to the Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council, the voting being 22 For, 10 Against and 0 Abstentions. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 23(2) a recorded vote was requested, the details of which were as follows:

For: Councillors Matthew Bedford, Joanna Clemens, Stephen Cox, Steve Drury, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Margaret Hofman, Tony Humphreys, Raj Khuroya, Joan King, Stephen King, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Sarah Nelmes, Paul Rainbow, Alison Scarth, Andrew Scarth, Stephanie Singer, Dominic Sokalski, Jon Tankard, Kate Turner and Phil Williams.

Against: David Coltman, Alex Hayward, Paula Hiscocks, Lisa Hudson, Shanti Maru, Debbie Morris, Reena Ranger, David Raw, Ciaran Reed and Alison Wall.

Abstentions: Zero

After the vote was announced by the Chair, Councillor Alex Hayward advised that an officer had reminded them that they had a pecuniary interest in the item and should have declared this at the start of the debate and not voted and wished to remove their recorded vote. This had been unintentional and Councillor Hayward had not spoken in the debate.

The Chair checked with the Monitoring Officer and advised that the vote result would be recorded as 22 For, 9 Against and 0 Abstentions due to the pecuniary interest being declared.

RESOLVED:

The Local Development Scheme as set out in Appendix 1 of the report be adopted.

Recommendation 2 - PR70/21 EXTENSION OF EXISTING PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER WITH RESTRICTIONS FOR DOGS

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

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

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst requested if other areas of the District, in addition to the Aquadrome, could be considered for a Public Spaces Protection Order with regard to restrictions for Dogs particularly looking at Leavesden Country Park. It was agreed that Officers would look into this and report to LEC in the future.

RESOLVED:

That approval is given to extend the existing PSPO for a further 3 years and that the current restrictions in the PSPO are maintained.

Recommendation 3 - PR73/21 COUNCIL CONSTITUTION AND URGENT DECISIONS

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Phil Williams, the recommendations as set out in Recommendation 3 on the Summons to include items 3i, 3ii, 3iii, 3iv, 3v, 3vi and 3vii.

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

Review of Rule 11 – Notices of Motions

RESOLVED:

That there be no changes to Rule 11 on motions.

Rule 14 – Questions from Members to the Leader/Lead Members and Chairs of Committees

RESOLVED:

That there be no changes to Rule 14

Rule 15 – Questions from the Public

RESOLVED:

1. Members of the public questions to be submitted 8 working days prior to meeting;
2. Written response to the public questions to be published in summons;
3. A maximum of 5 questions to be allowed for each Full Council meeting (excluding Annual Council) and to be limited to one question per member of the public.

Rule 15 – Petitions

RESOLVED:

1. Shorten the URL for e-petitions on the Council's e-petition portal;
2. Encourage e-petitions to be created via the Council's e-petition portal;

3. Any e-petition not submitted via the portal must contain sufficient information to allow officers to verify the identity and address of the person who has signed the form;
4. To continue to allow paper petitions to be submitted but to provide a pro-forma to use with details of the information that the Council requires for the paper petition;
5. That the signatures needed to bring forward a petition to remain at 25
6. To review the e-petition guidance and come back to the sub-committee with a revised guidance at a future meeting.

Rule 37 – Application to Committees and Sub-Committees

RESOLVED:

To add Rule 11 to the list of Rules under Rule 37.

Member/Officer Protocol

RESOLVED:

That Member contact details be removed from all published press releases but retain the communications team contact details.

Urgent Decisions and Minor Amendments to the Council Constitution

RESOLVED:

1. Group leaders to be informed 24 hours prior to any minor changes being made to the Council Constitution by the Chief Executive;
2. That the urgent decision form with the Group Leaders be amended to include a section asking “Why is the urgent decision not able to go through the Committee process.”
3. That Part 3, Section 8 be amended accordingly to read:

“Minor Changes to the Council Constitution - to be delegated to the Chief Executive to be advised to the Group Leaders 24 hours before the minor change is made.”

Recommendation 4 - PR74/21 Council/Committees/Sub-committees recordings

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Phil Williams, the recommendations as set out in Recommendation 4 on the Summons.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes proposed that recordings of the meetings of council and its committees (so far as they are open to the public) be made available on the council website for a period of 12 months from the date of the meeting, following which, recordings of the meetings of council and its committees be archived for a period of 6 years therefore being retained for a total of 7 years, after which they be destroyed, in the absence of a specific reason to retain them.

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

RESOLVED:

That recordings of the meetings of council and its committees (so far as they are open to the public) be made available on the council website for a period of 12 months from the date of the meeting, following which, recordings of the meetings of council and its committees be archived for a period of 6 years therefore being

retained for a total of 7 years, after which they be destroyed, in the absence of a specific reason to retain them.

Recommendation 5 - PR76/21 - CIL SPENDING APPLICATIONS

Councillor Dominic Sokalski moved, seconded by Councillor Matthew Bedford, the recommendation as set out in Recommendation 5 in the Summons.

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

RESOLVED:

Approved CIL funding for the following schemes detailed in Table 1 of the report and summarised in the table below for 2022/2023:

Applicant & Project Name	Infrastructure	CIL Amount
TRDC Leisure Team Denham Way Play Area/ Maple Cross Playing Fields (Appendix 1)	New play area Community pavilion, 3 floodlight tennis courts Outdoor fitness zone MUGA Playing pitch improvements Access pathways Seating formal garden	£347,000
TRDC Leisure Team South Oxhey Playing Fields (Appendix 2)	Tennis Courts AGP Basketball Court Skate/BMX Park Outdoor Gym Pathways	£375,000
HCC Breakspeare School (Appendix 3)	Expansion and relocation of SEND school	£901,574

CL65/21 TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 18

None received.

CL66/21 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 15

None received

CL67/21 CHAIR OF COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Thanked everyone for their support at the Council meetings.

Thanked James Baldwin for all his hard work and support provided as Monitoring Officer and wished James well for the future. James would be retiring in April.

Thanked Sarah Haythorpe and Mike Simpson for all their hard work and support while being Chair over the last 2 years.

Wished Councillor Debbie Morris well in the role of Chair and to have a fantastic year.

CL68/21 REPORTS AND QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER AND LEAD MEMBERS

14a) Report from Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council

I am writing this report with our Covid situation looking more hopeful, we appear to be moving to a phase of learning to 'live with Covid' rather than having some of the stringent restrictions we have had in the past. I continue to work with colleagues across the county and with our Director of Public Health to plan the path for the future handling of our response and to work on Covid recovery plans and town centre recovery initiatives. I'm sure we all recognise that we do need to continue to use our good judgement to protect ourselves and others though.

I was very moved by our small but beautiful marking of Holocaust Memorial Day – particular thanks to Cllrs Martin and Morris for their thoughtful comments.

The Lord Lieutenant kindly attended the first planting of trees for our contribution to the Queens Green Canopy. There is a quote "The true meaning of life is to plant trees under whose shade you do not expect to sit", I thought of that as we planted those oaks on Croxley Green on a beautiful sunny morning – looking forward to planting many more.

I attended a celebration at Leavesden Country Park to acknowledge the successful completion of the National Lottery Heritage Fund project there. With Councillors, officers, volunteers and partners present the importance of teamwork to achieve great things was brought in to sharp focus.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes had no further updates to add to the report.

Councillor Ciaran Reed wished to ask a question regarding the written report and asked if the Covid Officers employed by the Council are likely to be redeployed and wondered if they could be redeployed to deal with the Local Plan comments.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes responded that the officers would not necessarily have the same skill set and as previously reported the Covid Officers were paid for by Herts County Council for specific tasks although one officer is likely to remain with the Council.

14b) Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Shanti Maru

How will Three Rivers District Council be inclusive and diverse in their plans for celebrating the Queen's Jubilee?

Written response to question: A project team are looking at a range of events and activities across the District. We are also talking to some of key businesses to coordinate activities with them. We are setting up a 'What's on' type page on our website where our own activities will be published but also other organisations such as our Parish Councils and Community organisations will be able to publicise what they are doing. I think that we are all truly looking forward to celebrating this milestone.

Supplementary Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Shanti Maru.

Are Three Rivers organising any events themselves and can they give details of any events they are funding?

Response to supplementary question: Yes we are running some events ourselves, there is a project team working on it. They will be published on our website. Some will be organised and paid for by us and some are working with the Park Rangers.

14c) Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Stephen Cox

In December of last year, two almost identical public notices were published in the same edition of the Watford Observer regarding Members' Allowances with the only difference being the date beneath the Chief Executive's name. How did this situation come to pass and did this authority pay for two advertisements?

Written response: I asked officers to look into this matter. They have done this and have been in contact with the Watford Observer (WO).

Two advertisements are required under the regulations regarding Members Allowances. A request for ads to appear in public notices was sent on 19 November 2021, to appear on 26 November and 24 December. This was acknowledged by WO the same day and a purchase order was sent for those two ads on 24 November. Not realising that two ads had already been booked, a request for a further ad on 24 December was erroneously made by a junior officer on 16 December, with a purchase order number sent subsequently to the WO. This was for a single ad in the same wording in public notices. This is the explanation for the same two ads appearing side by side on 24 December 2021 in the same edition.

However, the WO have since acknowledged that an "assumption" was made about the booking being for an entirely new, additional public notice. Furthermore, the WO were sufficiently aware of the duplication that this was not replicated in its online digital notices. Why their production processes therefore failed to prevent the duplication in the print copy when aware of the error is not clear.

The duplicated ad has not been paid for. Officers are now in contact with WO at a higher level to review the matter, as it is felt that the Council should not be asked for the fee in these circumstances. I can notify Cllr Cox when we have the final response of WO.

Supplementary Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Stephen Cox.

As I have not yet been notified of a final response from the Watford Observer, it is unclear three weeks after the question was formally asked if Council Tax payers will have to pay twice for the duplication initiated by this authority.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes agreed to chase the answer to ensure it came as soon as possible.

Written answer to the supplementary question provided after the meeting:

Officers contacted the WO at a higher level requesting a further review of the matter and liaised with several members of their staff, including Newsquest Media's Commercial Director Vicky Wright. The WO confirmed that an "assumption" was made about the original booking being for an entirely new, additional public notice. Furthermore, the WO were sufficiently aware of the duplication that this was not replicated in its online digital notices. Why their production processes therefore failed to prevent the duplication in the print copy when aware of the error is not clear and they were unable to provide further explanation.

Nevertheless, the WO refused to accept any responsibility whatsoever and said the error was made by Three Rivers District Council, therefore no credit or refund would be issued. The duplicate advert invoice has now been paid and the member of staff at Three Rivers responsible for the booking has received further training to avoid such an incident being repeated.”

14cc) Urgent question under Council Procedure Rule 14(3) to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Stephen Cox

Can the Leader advise what, if anything this Council can, will or has done following this question in respect to changes to Arriva bus services which it has been announced will come into effect on 17 April and includes severing the direct link between South Oxhey and Abbots Langley

Written response: Any urgent question accepted under Rule 14(3) shall be answered within 5 working days or as soon as practicable thereafter and the response circulated to all members. A record of the question and response shall be kept with the minutes of the meeting.

14cc) Councillor Sarah Nelmes referred the question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst as the question was within their portfolio.

Response provided: I am aware of the changes proposed and have had a meeting with the Lead County Council officers, in addition to the considerable correspondence with them, who oversee the bus network which the Member will be aware is de-regulated (i.e. mainly privately run) since 1985 by the then Conservative Government. Therefore there are limited powers for TRDC and indeed any Council to act on.

The County Council overseas the bus tendering process and has some powers to offer and assists with operating the Quality Bus Partnership and publishes details via the Interlink website.

It had been unhelpful that Arriva when announcing the changes some weeks ago to not make it clear that many of the changes would result in alternative routes being provided to cover the revised service. A number of the changes were in fact changes to the bus route numbers. It was equally very unhelpful that they did not publish its new timetable and are still yet to publish it although the Councillor understood it would be available later this week.

As regards the route from Abbots Langley to Mount Vernon, the No.8 bus had 61 stops and took on average just over an hour. From 17 April this service will be restricted to run from Watford Town Centre to Mount Vernon with some 30 stops reducing the service length to 30 minutes and running every 30 minutes.

Abbots Langley will be linked to Watford by two routes, the No.10 and the No.20, offering up to four buses an hour from Abbots Langley to Watford. Although these buses will not necessarily serve the same routes as the No.8 (e.g. The Harebreaks and Leggatt's Way they would not be served by the other routes). However following discussions with the County Council on Friday the County Council had confirmed are tendering for a replacement bus service to cover that section of the route in North Watford that was covered by the No.18 service which ceases on 17 April. It was proposed that the replacement service would run from 18 April into Watford Town Centre.

The changes mean that from 17 April the northern section previously operated by the No.8 will be covered by the No.10 which will be extend to South Way and Abbots Langley covering the stops that were previously used by the No.8.

Other changes mean that the northern section previously covered by the No.8 would be covered by the No.10 which would be extended to South Way and Abbots Langley.

Therefore the Councillor could be assured that anyone living in Abbots Langley will still be able to get to South Oxhey and Mount Vernon but will need to make a change in Watford Town Centre.

Supplementary Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Deputy Leader from Councillor Stephen Cox.

Councillor Stephen Cox thanked the Deputy Leader for taking the time to respond to the question and was indeed correct that the de-regulation of the bus services meant that they could be changed by Arriva as they were able to do as they wish. For residents of Abbots Langley they were still getting their four bus services an hour into Watford but were losing the 318 service. It seemed to the Councillor that the South Oxhey bus users had been corralled. If the Councillor needed to go to Mount Vernon they would need to go into Watford Town Centre, with the loss of the 520 service and the replacement 321 service, and the same when you want to go to Abbots Langley. Did the Deputy Leader believe that any more could be done by this Authority?

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst advised that in terms of the services that run within the Three Rivers area they reported no as obviously alternative services were being provided. If a service was not being provided in the Three Rivers area then they would be discussing the matter with officers of the Council in terms of the bus budget that was available to us. Whilst those services were still being maintained they could not see any other option. The service which goes through the centre of Watford was not for Three Rivers to fund (Route 8) which will be funded by the County Council as part of their tendering process. Some of the services which are being provided, i.e. the 320, would be withdrawn but will be replaced in part by the No.20 and the 321. What had been really unhelpful of Arriva was not announcing the changes as one complete package with one timetable. Councillor Cox when travelling to South Oxhey in the future would need to change in Watford Town Centre.

INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Reports from the Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development (Cllr Stephen Giles-Medhurst), Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy (Cllr Matthew Bedford), Lead Member for Housing (Cllr Andrew Scarth).

14d) Report from Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development

Additional COVID pressures, not least dealing with the Welcome Back Fund and recovery grants process (Additional Restrictions Grant) (ARG) and staff absences, has resulted in some re-prioritisation of workloads within my area of responsibility. Due to issues arising (i.e. with GIS) and competing work priorities it has not been possible to progress all schemes as I know we would have wished.

Notwithstanding this, officers have a significant workload, exacerbated by the demands of the pandemic (ARG funded projects, Welcome Back funded (WBF) schemes, Rickmansworth High Street closure) on top of existing work including the parking schemes, the LCWIP project, EVCP procurement and verge hardening schemes to name a few.

Rightly officers in liaison with myself have placed greater emphasis on ensuring ARG and WBF projects are all ready to commence by late March 2022 and we do not lose the available funding. There has had to be a choice between many competing priorities. There are a number of work streams where work is progressing but unfortunately it is rarely straightforward and I acknowledge progress often appears slow.

However staff have risen to the occasion and the extra work they have had to take on so I hope we can all thank them for the extra work and having to juggle so much.

LCWIP's

Local Cycling Walking strategy has been discussed with Members and feedback has been given to the County Council on the proposals. We are awaiting the County Council to come back to us on formal public consultation plans.

Parking

The Rickmansworth West CPZ consultation has closed. The response rate was 47% but with some late replies may well be over 50%. Officers are checking the results and once a report is ready I will discuss with Ward Members.

The results of Primrose Hill consultation have now been analysed and there appears merit in formal consultation on a controlled parking consultation for some roads. I will be discussion with Ward Members but it is unlikely due to restrictions on consultations during election periods that a further consultation will be until after May.

Ward Members have requested that Sandy Lodge Way consultation be restricted to just that road. Officers are awaiting feedback from Ward Councillors on the extent of the Sandy Lodge Way parking scheme. Ward Councillors will soon be shown some minor parking scheme details to progress (such as junction protection proposals) prior to formal public consultation.

Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) Welcome Back funded (WBF)

Finalisation of allocations of the monies received from Government are being made and maybe able to update at Council. However these are being targeted at additional business grants, subsidised membership of the Federation of Small Business, monies for the Herts Growth Hub and car park improvements especially in Rickmansworth and new secure cycle storage.

Rickmansworth High Street

As per the decision of the Joint Project Board with the County Council a report will be made to IHED in March to continue with the current trial for a further 6 months until the end of the summer whilst seeking feedback and improving the current works.

MLX Alternatives - now known as Watford to Croxley Link (W2CL)

Following consideration of this at Herts County Council I have discussed in detail with Council Officers, the Leader and also with County Officers to ensure that any Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) covers the commissioning of some conceptual designs to inform mobility options and that for Three Rivers this must include the clear need for connectivity to Croxley Met and wider afield to benefit Three Rivers residents. County Officers have accepted this. At this stage funding streams to support this work are yet to be identified.

Delta Gain refurbishment

Finally the agent for the landlords here has finally engaged and approached the Council but we still await feedback on which proposals they are willing to agree. We are seeking a contact that ensure any public money spent is not wasted.

Noted the Lead Member report and oral update. Noted in the last line on the update on Delta Gain the word should read "contract" not contact.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks wanted to ask about the Rickmansworth West CPZ consultation and was surprised to see only 50% response as they expected it to be higher. The Councillor also wanted a timeframe as to when the results would be published, this had been going on for nearly 4 years and the residents just wanted an answer one way or the other.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst responded that the consultation had only just closed and there had been considerable responses, higher than on some previous consultations which was good news. Once the responses had been analysed the first process would be to discuss the results and arrange a meeting with all Ward Members. Following this the next steps would be to publish the results and decide whether to progress the CPZ. A definitive timeframe cannot be given at this stage. The Councillor had indicated in their report that we are unlikely to be able to publish the results until after May as this cannot be done during the pre-election period.

Councillor Joan King wished to ask about the Delta Gain refurbishment and if there could be reassurance that the Parish Council will be advised as they were putting money into the refurbishment.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst believed they had been kept in the loop and would be advised when and if we get a contract deal with the landowners. The problem had not been the fault of Three Rivers, who had done everything possible to get a deal done. A scheme had been discussed 3 years ago in the Parish Offices at Watford Rural, and we all believed it would be done within a year. We are 3 and a bit years down the line now and we still haven't got that agreement. It would not be right for this authority to spend public money on someone else's land to find the following year it was dug up.

Councillor Alison Wall asked for more details about the MLX alternatives and wondered what representations Three Rivers would be making to the County Council who own the land and any recommendations we've made for the use of that land. The Councillor had attended a consultation the previous evening, put on by Courtlands for people to discover what they intend to do with the strip of land where the clock tower is and wanted to put 300 extra flats there. The Courtlands representative advised that there are other businesses in that area who are keen to have a shuttle service developed there. It would be helpful if people from Three Rivers could write to the County Council. Transport links are needed along there.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst advised that that there are two issues, the development proposals in Watford Borough on the strip of land where the clock tower is which would require a planning application. The other is the MLX link now called W2CL. We are in the very early stages in terms of commissioning documents in conjunction with the County Council and Watford Borough Council to look at options and viability of particular schemes. There is ambition and aspirations for a rail link, but as far as TRDC are concerned we have been very clear the link has to be comprehensive and include connectivity into Three Rivers and to Croxley Green and wider afield. It may or may not be feasible but we need the commissioning report but are hopeful in the near future we can move forward. It would be some years down the line. They wished the Mayor of

London hadn't pulled the plug on the scheme but we are where we are and we have to make best use of what we have now got.

Councillor Reena Ranger wanted to check on the parking in Sandy Lodge Way as it stated that officers were awaiting feedback from Ward Councillors on the parking scheme. The Councillor thought Ward Councillor's had responded and were unaware of any more feedback required.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst responded that at the time the report was written the feedback had not been received but was subsequently.

14e) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Councillor Ciaran Reed

Will the administration share with all Councillors its plan of action in the event of protests, especially around Junction 18, in time for the next summer following the issues experienced in 2021?

Written response: I am aware of the issues that occurred last year and the disruption caused. This however is a matter for Highways England and Herts Police who will take the lead on this matter and as such the question should be better directed at the Police and Crime Commissioner. TRDC have no legal powers or duties as regards the motorway network.

Supplementary Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst from Councillor Ciaran Reed.

While aware that it is not the Council's responsibility to complete the plan for such circumstances, there are obviously some services that could be affected by another series of protests at junction 18 which will most probably end up taking place this summer. Things such as bin collections through Chorleywood would be significantly harmed if junction 18 gets bunged up again. Last month I met with the Home Secretary who advised that unless the Protest Bill had made it through Parliament by the summer junction 18 is likely to be targeted again. Will the Council have a back-up plan if people choose to do that again?

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst responded that the Leader of the Council was always kept fully informed of any issues that would affect us in terms of policing and this sort of activity. What was done by the authority would have to be directed by the Police and Highways Authority. Contingency plans are in place that have to be mobilised and there may or may not be disruption.

14f) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Councillor Ciaran Reed

Ward Councillors for Chorleywood North have been contacted by the Police on the issue of parking around North Hill by parents and pupils accessing St Clement Danes School. As there are already double yellow lines there, will this administration instruct Parking Enforcement Officers to go to this area and support parents and children impacted by the parking issues?

Written response: Hertsmere BC, who enforce parking restrictions on behalf of TRDC, have confirmed the double yellow lines are regularly enforced were possible however there are single yellow lines in the vicinity which form part of Herts County Council. However due to the very poor quality of the road surface, and the fact that these cannot be repainted on the broken up surface and thus to so enforce, it has led to successful appeals as they are thus unenforceable at present.

I am aware that the County Councillor for the area Cllr Phil Williams has been following this up with Herts County Council to get them to make good their road surface. I understand that they failed to do so from their normal maintenance budget. I further understand that Cllr Phil Williams is now funding this work from his local budget. He is waiting for the County Council to do this work and fully restore the single yellow lines which will enable them to be enforced. This is clearly for HCC to action and I thank Cllr Phil Williams for being proactive with this whilst expressing disappointment at the County Council failing to act when this was brought to their attention.

No supplementary question was asked.

14g) Report from Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy

The Council's updated Local Development Scheme (timetable for production of the Local Plan) has been recommended by P&R for approval by Council this evening. It is therefore public; and if approved by Council it will be formally published on the Council website.

Dates have now been published for meetings of the Local Plan Sub-Committee in line with the updated Local Development Scheme.

Meanwhile officers are continuing to work through the responses to the Regulation 18 Consultation. Members may be aware the Senior Planner in the team is leaving to go travelling; we are currently recruiting to replace her. The contract planner also leaves next month at the end of their contract; but we have managed to secure a 6 month contract for a planner who will be starting later this month (it will a few weeks for him to settle in and get up to speed).

The Government published its 'Levelling Up' white paper earlier this month. This contains indications of prospective reforms to planning, including a new Infrastructure Levy to replace CIL. We await details with interest. It also makes it clear that the changes outlined in the August 2020 Planning White Paper, which would have further reduced local residents' input into planning, will now be superseded. We might have expected that 'Levelling Up' would equalise growth across the country; but to my surprise and disappointment there is no indication in the white paper that the government will be reducing its housebuilding targets for the South East.

Members have been advised about the difficulties being experienced with planning applications as a result of staff shortages at Herts County Council (Local Lead Flood Authority); we were notified last month that the situation has worsened. HCC have now confirmed that they are not able to respond to any new planning applications, except in the most exceptional of circumstances, and there will continue to be excessive delays on dealing with outstanding and on-going applications. This puts us as the Local Planning Authority in really difficult position and officers are currently exploring options to find a way forwards.

Councillor Matthew Bedford had nothing to add to the written report.

Councillor Ciaran Reed advised they were surprised and disappointed by the White Paper levelling up as it doesn't change house building targets despite the fact that it had already been pointed out that we should be waiting for this spring's planning paper. Did Councillor Bedford hold out hope that the White Paper would bring much joy to us? Looking at the Local Plan and then criticising the levelling up White Paper for doing something that in a few months' time is not necessarily constructive for working with the Government.

Councillor Matthew Bedford responded that they did not hold out hope that the Government might be listening. It would be nice to think that's the case and hope that comes out in due course.

14h) Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Ciaran Reed

There is a new Local Plan timetable. Will the public be informed about the sites under consideration before the local elections this May?

Written response: No. The details of new sites submitted for consideration will be subject to formal consultation in November 2022 as set out in the Local Development Scheme.

Supplementary question to Councillor Matthew Bedford from Councillor Ciaran Reed.

As mentioned earlier it is very unfortunate that we have not released to the public details before May in terms of what they will be voting for on in the Local Plan. I have been asked by residents on the cost of delaying the publication of the sites beyond the election in relation to the cost of Regulation 18 consultation? Residents will be voting in May without really knowing where the Local Plan is, as most of it will be in Part II in terms of the sites being considered.

Councillor Matthew Bedford responded that we have annual elections and it is inevitable that if there is going to be a consultation in autumn it will fall between two sets of elections. By definition the consultation is the key event where residents can give their views on details of what may or may not be proposed. The Council had been extremely open and would continue to be open and consultative about the entire process.

14i) Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Reena Ranger

The Liberal Democrat motion from the October 19 2021 at Full Council stated that "The recent Planning Inspectorate appeal decisions (including nearby examples in recent months in Colney Heath and Codicote) which have given permission for housing development in the Green Belt, despite the acknowledged harm caused, explicitly on the grounds that the local Council could not demonstrate it had a plan to achieve its calculated Housing Need figures" With Three Rivers being in a presumption of sustainable development since 2016 and the administration's failure to come up with a local plan, what does this mean for our Green Belt?

Written response: The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where Green Belt policy provides a clear reason for refusing the development proposed (paragraph 11d, footnote 7 of NPPF) although it is recognised that in these two appeal decisions, the application sites were located in the Green Belt.

As a result of the huge increase in the housebuilding target imposed on Three Rivers by central government, the Council is currently not able to show a five-year housing supply based on the increased target. This potentially gives grounds to the Planning Inspectorate, a government quango, to allow developments in the Green Belt on appeal, as seen recently elsewhere in Hertfordshire.

Supplementary question to Councillor Matthew Bedford from Councillor Reena Ranger.

These housing numbers are not imposed by Government. If it was a Liberal Democratic Government there would be 80,000 more houses imposed on us and where would we put them. You have said there is no Council that have managed to achieve the housing targets but has this Council tried to push back the numbers and put together a Three Rivers plan as not doing so was not serving our residents.

Councillor Matthew Bedford responded that the Councillor was aware of the steps the Council had taken. The Conservative Group had failed to support the Council in its efforts to address Ministers on this topic. You will also be aware that Conservative colleagues in Welwyn/Hatfield had tried to push back on the numbers and have had the Planning Inspectorate telling them to go back and try again. Yes we are looking at all possible options, until we get to the point where we are ready to submit a Local Plan to the Planning Inspectorate, of course we will continue to consider all options.

14j) Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Reena Ranger

Two sites were removed from the local plan consultation last year, one in Abbots Langley and another in Croxley. Please remind us what the criteria were for removal and will this same criteria be applied to all other sites?

Written response: The two sites (CFS26a and CFS21) were omitted via an amendment to the recommendations of the Local Plan Sub-Committee and Policy & Resources. The 'Amendment to recommendation from P&R' document which was circulated to propose this amendment stated the following in relation to CFS21 and CFS26.

To amend the recommendations of the Local Plan Sub-Committee and Policy & Resources Committee as follows:

Omit sites CFS21 & CFS26a which would cause particular harm to existing communities and residents' quality of life without providing compensating benefits to the community

Supplementary question to Councillor Matthew Bedford from Councillor Reena Ranger

The answer does not answer the questions about criteria and how we quantify those and how we will use that as a quantifiable scale for other sites; new sites, old sites, and all the other sites. Could you please explain how you will measure harm to existing communities and resident's quality of life?

Councillor Matthew Bedford stated there was nothing to add to the written answer and this will be discussed at the Local Plan subcommittee in due course.

14k) Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Reena Ranger

What correspondence have TRDC had with the Housing Minister since May 2021? If there has been any, will this be shared with all Councillors and available to residents? If there has been none, does the administration feel it should be in dialogue with the Minister?

Written response: All correspondence with the Minister with regard to any motions agreed by Council on housing matters have been shared with Members' in the Members' Information Bulletin.

Supplementary question to Councillor Matthew Bedford from Councillor Reena Ranger.

Councillor Reena Ranger asked if the public can access the Members Information Bulletin.

Councillor Matthew Bedford asked if this is made available to the public. It was advised that a link could be provided. The bulletin is made public on the website.

Councillor Reena Ranger stated that this is difficult to find and asked if this can be made available on the Local Plan page.

Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy agreed this could be provided.

14l) Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor David Raw

Does the Lead Member feel that all Members of the Planning Committee and substitute members should be provided as a part of their planning training a guided tour of conservation areas and other sites of special interest so that members are able to execute their roles with local understanding and an understanding of potential impact or benefit.

Written response: Annual training is mandatory for all Members of the Planning Committee. Officers regularly review how this training is provided. Full details of all the Conservation Areas are available online including Conservation Area appraisals, and all Members of the Planning Committee are encouraged to be familiar with these appraisals, in addition to other local and national policies and guidance. Full details of any planning application coming to Committee are also provided in the Officer's Committee reports.

Supplementary question for Councillor Matthew Bedford from Councillor David Raw

Councillor David Raw stated that this is a reactive response rather than proactive one and asked if it would be a good idea for Members of the Planning Committee and new Members to spend time with Officers.

Councillor Matthew Bedford was sure that officers would accommodate this and it sounded like a good idea.

The Chief Executive Officer advised they would look into this and there is training for Members available.

Councillor Steve Drury had spoken to officers about the possibility of training and there will be some training if you would like something specific put on the agenda for that to let Councillor Drury know.

14m) Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Lisa Hudson

The Government has set a deadline for all local plans to be completed by December 2023. The administration's new timeline shows that our new local plan won't be adopted until late 2025. What will the consequences be?

Written response: Delaying the preparation of the Local Plan poses the following risks:

The Council is already potentially susceptible to predatory planning applications as a result of the increase in central government housebuilding targets, leaving us without a five year supply of housing based on the increased targets. That means we could find it more difficult to defend refusals, particularly on land that is previously developed. An extended Local Plan process means this situation could continue for longer.

Due to the Government's stated desire for all Local Plans to be adopted by 2023, there is a risk of a Government decision to intervene and take control of plan-making. However, given the large number of councils in the same position as us, this seems unlikely.

However, there are also risks associating with proceeding too quickly to the Regulation 19 stage from the Council's current position:

There may be substantial changes to the sites that have so far been selected/not taken forward due to representations received to the recent Regulation 18 consultation; and any substantial changes should be subject to public consultation prior to the Regulation 19 stage.

The current level of housing growth proposed in the recent Regulation 18 consultation is below the figure derived by the Standard Methodology and this could pose a risk to the Plan without compelling evidence to justify the departure.

Some key pieces of evidence are not yet complete (Transport Assessment and Viability Assessment) which could impact on the final site selection.

Government policy could change and the unreasonable housebuilding targets imposed on areas in the M25 belt could reduce, especially if the Government's "Levelling Up" policy is intended to increase growth in the North and Midlands and relieve pressure on the South East. We should not move to allocate too many sites at this stage if there is potential for the existing unreasonable targets to be reduced in future,

Supplementary question for Councillor Bedford from Councillor Lisa Hudson

Is this Council taking a gamble, hoping the inspectors won't prioritise us, since we have been behind since 2014 and therefore gambling with our residents and green belt.

Councillor Matthew Bedford responded no, and believed the Member was suggesting that we should allocate wholesale Green Belt sites for development simply to get a plan in place. They did not agree that rushing ahead and allocating lots of sites in Green Belt was a good idea. The final point (No.4 in the written response) picks up on what Councillor Ciaran Reed said a few moments ago, a bit of a delay and waiting to see what does transpire from the Government was the most prudent course of action and benefits our local residents.

14n) Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Lisa Hudson

How much weight will neighbourhood plans have when our own local plan is delayed?

Written response: Neighbourhood Plans already form part of the development plan and this is not affected by the timetable for our new Local Plan. The development plan is made up of:

Three Rivers Core Strategy (adopted October 2011);

Development Management Policies (adopted July 2013);

Site Allocations LDD (adopted November 2014);

Croxley Green Neighbourhood Plan

Chorleywood Neighbourhood Plan

When a new Local Plan document is adopted, this would supersede the current Local Plan documents (the Core Strategy, Development Management Policies and Site Allocations LDD) but adopted Neighbourhood Plans would still remain as part of the development plan.

There is no ranking or hierarchy between the development plan documents – each document and policy is to be taken into account as part of the determination of a planning application, with the weight to be attributed to each case dependent on the individual merits and circumstances of the particular planning application. Therefore, the two adopted neighbourhood plans (and any future neighbourhood plans that are adopted) are material considerations where planning applications within the neighbourhood area are being considered (in the same way that the local plan documents are material considerations).

There was no supplementary question

14o) Report from Councillor Andrew Scarth, Lead Member for Housing

I am pleased to confirm that after a bit of a lengthy delay by the Home Office, the Housing team have now placed the second Afghan family within Three Rivers.

Secondly, the shared Community Liaison Officer post with the Community Partnership Team has been filled and after all the usual checks have been carried out, the new officer is due to start in March.

Councillor Andrew Scarth had nothing to add to the written report.

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY

Reports from the Lead Member for Leisure (Cllr Chris Lloyd), Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change & Sustainability (Cllr Phil Williams), Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships (Cllr Roger Seabourne) and questions.

14p) Report from Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure

Health and Community

Our first virtual Health Event took place on 10 February offering top tips from guest speakers on how to improve health and wellbeing. The event also offered the chance to find out about the positive benefits of volunteering, as well as a virtual yoga session.

Following active engagement with communities and charitable organisations across Watford and Three Rivers, Watford & Three Rivers Trust (W3RT) have developed a new digital platform to help match local people to local volunteering opportunities. For more information visit - <https://www.w3rt.org/volunteer>

Household Fund, organisations are receiving their allocations following the agreement at Policy and Resources in December on the spend. So far the council has also directly supported 123 people.

Funding for the Healthy Hubs has been secured for a further two years.

Watersmeet:

Following the challenges caused as a result of the Omicron variant, tickets sales have picked up across the board with a recent highlight being the sell-out performance of 'Illegal Eagles' on 3 February. Whilst overall this year's earned income is significantly down on pre-Covid, customer confidence and tickets sales appear to be recovering.

The 'Cinderella' pantomime was forced to close early due to all except one of the cast testing positive for Covid-19. All schools performances were presented and the pantomime was seen by just under 5,000 people. All customers have been contacted offering the options to donate ticket income to the theatre, credit notes, transfers or refunds and box office are 90% through processing those. This year's pantomime 'Aladdin' is on sale now.

The accessible toilet refurbishment being funded by the Friends of Watersmeet Film Society and supported by the Friends of Watersmeet is currently out to tender, with the works planned to be completed in summer 2022.

We welcomed our new Digital Marketing Apprentice to the team in December on an 18 month contract and is a shared role with the Customer Contact Programme.

Leisure and Landscapes:

As part of the legacy to the National Lottery Heritage Project at Leavesden Country Park, a beautifully written and illustrated children's book about Martha the Monkey Puzzle Tree at Leavesden Country Park has been produced. Over a 1,000 copies have been distributed to all Three Rivers libraries and primary schools.

Activity programme over February half term at Leavesden Country Park taking place with Young Carers, Young Rangers Experience and Bird Box building.

Almost all of the trees being planted as part of the Queen's Green Canopy scheme are now in the ground at a number of locations across the district

Launch of Three Rivers ACE (Accessible Childcare for Everyone) – new self-referral offering a 50% discount for families on a low income or who receive additional support within school. This was previously known as the Holiday Referral Scheme and places are offered on Three Rivers play schemes and in partnership with other providers, including Multi-Active at the Leisure Centres and Junior Playmakers.

New Arts on Prescription project commencing in Rickmansworth at the end of March, referrals are already coming in from professionals

Thank you to the Chair for attending the 7th anniversary at South Oxhey parkrun. I was unable to go as I was isolating with Covid.

Hayling Road play area upgrade works are now completed, with positive feedback coming in from the local community

There will be the 5 Anniversary of Rickmansworth Parkrun at the Aquadrome on the 5 March. I look forward to seeing some of you on that day.

I have volunteered at South Oxhey Parkrun and Leavesden Junior Parkrun since last Full Council in December.

Councillor Chris Lloyd made the following oral update at the meeting:

I would like to thank all the staff for their hard work they have done within this Local Government year. I was unable to be at the Council meeting in January as I had tested positive for Covid that day.

Report is as written and would like to thank Officers for their help. Councillor Paula Hiscocks would like to highlight "friends of watersmeet" film society which has now disbanded. They are paying for refurbishment of the disabled toilets. It is right and fitting that we should thank them for that. Councillor Lloyd advised that thanks have been given.

14q) Question to Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure from Councillor David Coltman

Following the last P&R meeting, there is a balance of £4,264,487 – why isn't this being spent in our local areas? My residents would like to see the Greenfield Avenue play area refurbished and upgraded?

Written response: Greenfields Avenue Play Area is maintained and managed by Watford Rural Parish Council. This play area was last upgraded in 2015 by The Children's Playground Company Ltd.

Watford Rural can apply for Community Infrastructure Levy funds to undertake the work. All applications will be considered against the CIL Regulations and relevant legislation requirements.

No supplementary question was asked.

14r) Question to Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure from Councillor Joan King

In December, we were advised that once the Land Registry Plan for the South Oxhey Playing fields was received officers would forward it to Hertfordshire County Council and that a further update would be provided when the task was completed. Has the task been completed yet?

Written response: The Land Registry plan has been received and reviewed. At the time of writing, the submission of a definitive site plan is pending submission.

The reason for this pause is to account for the fact that the original request to nominate South Oxhey playing field as a Town & Village Green was made by Council Motion and Members were not afforded the opportunity to understand the legal and practical implications of the nomination, as would have been the case if a report had been submitted to Council. Therefore a report has been submitted to JLT, which states the similarities and key differences between the current protections of the site offered by the restrictive covenants and legislation governing the management of public open space (presently in place) and those provided by the Town & Village Green and Commons Act obligations.

Supplementary question for Councillor Lloyd from Councillor Joan King

Councillor Joan King asked will the Lead Member undertake and now release to the Labour Group the full content of the report within 28 days and could they explain why the report referred to had gone only to the JLT instead of the relevant Committee.

Councillor Chris Lloyd advised it is an important piece of land and the Officers had brought things to our attention. The Councillor was happy to discuss at other times and was committed to keep the open space. It hasn't stalled or stopped, Watford Rural Parish had been spoken to and we are hoping to see some further progress. There will be a discussion with all of the Ward Members regarding the report.

14s) Report from Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability

Regular briefings and meeting with officers, partners and outside bodies have continued

The Batchworth Depot work continues. The modular buildings are now on site. Completion of the project is due at the end of the summer, early autumn.

The teams at the Depot have been working as hard as ever. There are currently no driver vacancies, however there are a number of vacancies for loaders.

Energy Saving Trust App now live. Please encourage your residents to sign up for this app which will them, not only save money but also decrease their carbon footprint.

Biodiversity audit carried out last year should be with us in early March.

Our plans to tackle climate change locally in Three Rivers have been rated as the best in Hertfordshire. Three Rivers District Council's climate strategy and action plan scored 55% in an analysis by the not-for-profit campaigning organisation Climate Emergency UK which featured in the Guardian.

Climate Action Plan - Progress is reviewed at LEC on 16 March with the papers out soon.

Domestic Retrofit - Both our GHG LAD1 B schemes have recruited all the required homes, the principal measures installed are External Wall Insulation and Solar Panels. The scheme are closed to new applicants and all work will be completed by the end of June 2022. Of the 32 homes completed so far an average of 1.2 tonnes of CO₂ has been saved annually, helping to lift residents out of fuel poverty.

New applicants can apply to the LAD2 scheme which is being run by the South East Energy Homes.

We just been advised we will be awarded £1.6m for use by Thrive and WCH to retrofit 139 homes. With their contribution the total investment will be £3m.

The solar bulk buy scheme for able to pay residents has been stalled for the moment whilst the contracts are drafted.

We will be working with E.on to deliver their ECO4 obligation. This is an excellent scheme which enables a deep retrofit of qualifying households (low income, low EPC) to move properties up to 2 EPC bands. The scheme will include conservation area properties and as well as off gas. Our programme will commence in Carpenters Park and Oxhey Hall.

Route to Zero - The Baseline Carbon emissions for the Council have been established. Surveys have been completed on all Council buildings and we are awaiting the reports on how they can be decarbonised. Once all data is collected, the route to net-zero carbon will then be professionally modelled. We will report on these findings at LEC in October.

The fleet are going to be taking part in a consultancy project with other Herts LA's to assess Future Fuel options.

Engagement - Elen Roberts has been attending various event with school and community groups – recently Rickmansworth School, Sustainable Three Rivers and groups in Croxley Green and Chorleywood.

Renewable Energy - Unfortunately, the drop on any of the waterfalls on our land is not sufficient to power large enough generators to produce enough power to make any scheme viable. Officers are looking into other possible options for generating renewable energy.

Councillor Phil Williams had nothing to add to the written report.

14t) Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability from Councillor Paula Hiscocks

Has this Council now started to monitor air quality in all areas of TRDC?

Written response: TRDC are legally obliged to monitor air quality in the whole of the District and to review and report the data annually to DEFRA. Annual status reports (ASRs) are undertaken by specialist officers to consider all monitored data, existing AQMAs, and any changes in the District since the last ASR such as new developments, infrastructure proposals, and polluting industry that could have an impact on air quality.

The Air Quality Objectives in England require TRDC to consider nitrogen dioxide, particulates, and sulphur dioxide. Sulphur dioxide is normally associated with heavy industry such as electricity generation, there are no known significant local sources of SO₂ and therefore this is not monitored by TRDC. The main source of local pollution in TRDC is from vehicles, both nitrogen dioxide and particulates are released from vehicle sources.

TRDC currently monitor Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) by diffusion tubes. The tube locations have been historically identified and sited in areas where it is most likely that the air quality objectives could be exceeded, Officers also need to consider relevant receptors i.e. dwellings, schools, care homes. Officers would normally decide the locations based on the annual monitoring and data such as traffic counts and queuing data. There is also monitoring at a limited number of locations where there is limited pollution to provide background measurements. A link to the air quality information is provided <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/service/air-quality>

The following supplementary question was asked to Councillor Phil Williams from Councillor Paula Hiscocks after the meeting as agreed by the Chair of Council

Councillor Paula Hiscocks stated the importance of this with TRDC being the lead authority in air quality. The Councillor asked if a Member briefing could be organised and for the important results to be tracked possibly coming to a LEC meeting biannually so Members can analyse the results, make comments and track them. We've got to be cleaner, greener, and our residents need to be healthier. Air pollution can kill.

Councillor Phil Williams advised it can and does kill and agreed to check with Officers if this can be possible.

POST MEETING NOTE:

The written response from Cllr Phil Williams provide to the supplementary question after the meeting is provided below:

I shared your request for a Member air quality briefing and subsequent report to be provided to LEC Committee. You may be aware an Annual Status Report on air quality monitoring is submitted to DEFRA and we provide details on our website to this report which is also available at: <https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk/local-authority/hnb-reports> (Local Authority Data - Air Quality monitoring service (airqualityengland.co.uk)). This report has recently been submitted for 2021.

However, I note your comments requesting an update and whilst I am not able to present this information to Committee as there is no formal decision requiring determination, I can advise the information will be provided in the Members Information Bulletin going forward. Details of this action will be included in the Work Programme.

14u) Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability from Councillor Paula Hiscocks

Will this Council commit that they will cut and lift new meadow areas?

Written response: At the 24 January 2022 Policy and Resources Committee, the following recommendation was agreed:

Members agree that, subject to the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit report, appropriate budget provision to be made in the forthcoming Council budget for alternative grassland management, acknowledging that there are a variety of options, and that a further report come back to this Committee in March on the options being implemented. A public consultation exercise be undertaken post implementation of the revised regime to assess the impact. (PR69/21)

At point 2.16 of that same Committee report, it stated:

Headlines coming from the initial drafts of the report (Biodiversity Opportunities Audit) indicate the potential for a variety of biodiversity enhancements in the majority of locations, including new tree and spring wildflower planting. There also appears to be potential for a substantial increase in alternative grassland management, including cut and lift, in particular at locations such as: Fortune Common, Berry Way/Mead Place, Tanners Hill, Denham Way and Rickmansworth Park.

A Committee report on the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit will be presented to Policy and Resources on the 14 March 2022 and the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee on the 16 March 2022 and will include proposals for alternative grassland management at a number of sites, including Hay Meadow Cut and Lift areas.

No supplementary question was asked.

14v) Report from Councillor Roger Seabourne, Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships

Detailed reports of work involving our Partners has been included in the regular "Partnership Bulletins" issued to all Members by Officers and I do not intend to repeat any of the information included in those bulletins here.

There has been a recent increase in residential burglary. The police believe and have evidence to support their view that this is as a direct result of the arrival of a new Travelling Community in the vicinity. The police are being proactive on this with an ongoing operation.

The police are experiencing difficulties with "holding" people with mental health issues. The police are only able to detain them for 24 hours after which they must be released or passed on to the Mental Health Professionals (MHPs). There are insufficient MHPs available to accept them. This is causing senior officers a serious problem, particularly if they feel the people concerned are a danger to themselves or others. The police are pushing to expedite a plan to have a commercial organization provide a "holding place" for these people.

The Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) Group have developed their action plan.

The reporting of Hate Crime is unfortunately no longer broken down into different categories, making the targeting of resources more difficult.

Any questions on this report could be submitted in writing as Councillor Roger Seabourne was not present at the meeting.

RESOURCES AND SHARED SERVICES

14w) Report from Councillor Dominic Sokalski, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services

The Government finally confirmed their funding settlement for local councils on 7 February. The final settlement differed little from the provisional published in December.

Having the final settlement published so late hinders the Council's preparations for the budget and planning for the following year. I hope future settlements are finalised sooner and cover a longer period than just one year. "

14x) Question to Councillor Dominic Sokalski, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor David Raw

What are the 5 highest value services, provided to the Council by outside contractors, that have not changed in the last 5 years?

Written response: Comensura – Vendor Neutral Agency Service. Last tendered 2015. Will be reviewed this year.

Pearce Recycling – Waste Recycling Service. Part of Herts Waste Partnership and procured Herts wide.

Murrill Construction Ltd – Highways and Civils Works. Through Watford BC Measured Term Contract. Currently out for tender by WBC.

Plant Tec Municipal. Vehicle Servicing. Last tendered 2019 but Plant Tec won meaning that they have been delivering the service for over 10 years.

Zurich Municipal. Insurance Services. Zurich consistently win tenders. Ongoing provision for more than 5 years.

These are the highest value spends over the last year in TRDC where we have not changed Contractor regardless of whether there has been a Competitive tender. In those cases, the incumbent won.

Supplementary question for Councillor Sokalski from Councillor David Raw

What are the actual values of the 5 services provided to the Council by outside contractors, both before the tender went out and after the tender was received.

Councillor Dominic Sokalski agreed to provide a written response.

Post meeting Note:

14y) Question to Councillor Dominic Sokalski, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Alison Wall

What is the timeframe for renovating Basing House? In particular, when will the sash windows be repaired?

Written response: A condition survey of Basing House has been completed and works are being specified, costed and programmed. As Basing House is a listed building, any elements that impact upon the fabric of the building, both internally and externally will also require Listed Building Consent and these will dictate the timings within the programme.

Given the need to repair and/or replace some of the windows, a more favourable weather window is also important, particularly as the building is occupied and in

use. A formal programme will be shared with the current Tenant's once the initial evaluation phase has been completed.

Supplementary question for Councillor Sokalski from Councillor Alison Wall

Councillor Alison Wall asked if we could be more specific on the timescale for the renovation and we can see works are underway on Basing House but the windows are in an appalling state, it is urgent that they are done. Internal repairs are being done but external repairs do need attention urgently.

Councillor Dominic Sokalski responded that it depends on the scale of work needed, but should be within the next 12 – 24 months as a guide.

14z) Question to Councillor Dominic Sokalski, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Stephen Cox

On 2 December, Members received an email following the publication of the Register of Electors which came into force the previous day. The email contained attachments in regard to electoral registration which were unintelligible in their nature and failed to clearly advise Members of the result of the canvass upon which they were based.

When will this Council publish the correct information in a clear and unambiguous format that Members are used to as tabulated below?

WARD	No. of Properties	No. of non-responding properties	Response Rate
Abbots Langley & Bedmond			
Carpenders Park			
Chorleywood North & Sarratt			
Chorleywood South & Maple Cross			
Dickinsons			
Durrants			
Gade Valley			
Leavesden			
Moor Park & Eastbury			
Oxhey Hall & Hayling			

Penn & Mill End			
Rickmansworth Town			
South Oxhey			
Overall District Totals			

Written response: Please find below the information requested in the tabulated format Members are used to receiving:

WARD	No. of Properties	No. of non-responding properties	Response Rate
Abbots Langley & Bedmond	2884	79	97.3%
Carpenders Park	2930	98	96.7%
Chorleywood North & Sarratt	2918	70	97.6%
Chorleywood South & Maple Cross	3141	124	96.1%
Dickinsons	2831	92	96.8%
Durrants	2544	26	99.0%
Gade Valley	2986	170	94.3%
Leavesden	3350	106	96.8%
Moor Park & Eastbury	2258	149	93.4%
Oxhey Hall & Hayling	2852	141	95.1%

Penn & Mill End	2969	132	95.6%
Rickmansworth Town	3652	301	91.8%
South Oxhey	3349	263	92.1%
Overall District Totals	38664	1751	Average 95.6%

Supplementary question to Councillor Dominic Sokalski from Councillor Stephen Cox

Thank you for the tabulated answer, it would be far better if the information was automatically circulated in this format as it always was hitherto and as I have repeatedly asked for it to be rather than being extracted by questions to the Council. Please ensure in the future that Members receive it in the format laid out as soon as practicable after 1 December and not in this mumbo jumbo format that cannot be understood.

Councillor Dominic Sokalski confirmed the Council were talking to the system provider for next year. A new module was released in the election systems which did not have the same functionality as the old one, complicating the process. We are working on this and would keep Members informed.

14aa) Question to Councillor Dominic Sokalski, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Stephen King

Further to the Lead Members' response to my question to December's meeting in respect of retail units in phases 1 2 and 3 of the South Oxhey Initiative:

Please can I be advised who took the decision not to exercise this Council's pre-emption on units at Station Approach when we had previously been led to believe this would not be so?

Can he advise if this council has done the same in respect of the other retail units, completed or otherwise, in phases 2 and 3?

Written response: In consultation with senior Members and in line with the Property Strategy in place at the time, the Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services decided that we should not proceed to acquire or invest in retail assets given the risk profile of the asset class. With the benefit of hindsight and with the subsequent impact of the pandemic, this was a well-placed decision which Councillor Matthew Bedford will recall.

There are no other pre-emption options in relation to retail units within the remaining phases of the South Oxhey development.

Supplementary question for Councillor Sokalski from Councillor Stephen King

Could we be provided a written reply to demonstrate the mastery of his brief here and now by naming the off-shore company which are benefiting from the rents on retail units?

Councillor Stephen King advised that he would put the supplementary question in writing and Councillor Dominic Sokalski would respond.

Post Meeting note:

We have lodged a request with the Land Registry and are awaiting a response.

CL70/21 REPORTS AND QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRS OF THE AUDIT, PLANNING, LICENSING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEES (RULE 14)

AUDIT COMMITTEE

15a) Report from and questions to the Chair of the Audit Committee, Cllr Margaret Hofman

There has been a further delay in signing off the statutory accounts for 2019/2020. This is primarily due to additional work required in relation to the valuation of Property, Plant and Equipment (PPE) and Investment Properties which was a key focus of the audit for 2019/20. Resolving the issues raised by the external auditors has required liaison between the external valuers, Property and Finance teams.

Audit Committee members have been closely monitoring the implementation of audit recommendations, which resulted in receiving monthly updates from the Head of Property & Major Projects.

The Audit Committee supported the recommendation to opt in to the national scheme for the appointment of auditors for the period from 2023 in order to facilitate auditor selection and maintain high standards of external audit.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks asked if it was the fault of Three Rivers or the external auditors that the audit wasn't completed on time. Is that because the information was not given on time.

Councillor Margaret Hoffman responded it is regarding the valuation of properties. In previous years (2017/18) they had changed their approach and the accounting policies regarding the valuation of properties. There are many parties involved such as the external auditors and third parties such as RICS. There is a shortage of resources.

Councillor David Raw asked if there is a shortage of auditors why auditors have been put to us by the Government, why haven't they got enough staff.

Councillor Margaret Hoffman advised that there is a problem with external auditors in public sector as there are not many auditors that specialise in this area. Fees for auditors are quite low so not many are specialising in that area. The pandemic had also contributed.

The Chief Executive advised there was a problem in local government. The National Auditor's office brought forward the deadline a number of years ago, and the auditors struggled to deliver on this as it coincided with the NHS. There was not the resources to do them all. This had been compounded by a reduction in the number of big players left in the market. The vast majority of local authorities haven't had their accounts signed off. On top of that there was a change in a requirement for auditing the balance sheet particularly on assets. Auditors had to change the way they audited the balance sheet. This was not a problem with Three Rivers supplying valuations, it was to do with the audit staff on their side. Auditors had accepted the vast majority of the fault. This is a national picture and was the same position for most Councils. We expect to have our accounts signed off fairly shortly. Audit committee are keeping an eye on this.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

15b) Report from and questions to the Chair of the Planning Committee, Cllr Steve Drury

As most people would be aware, there is quite a lot of information on planning matters, applications and outcomes, on the Members Information Bulletin.

In the months of January and February there have been a number of appeals and decisions relating to those.

With regard to major applications, again, these can be found in the same document. For those who don't read the bulletin we have a major housing application on Green Street, Chorleywood and two other warehouses as an application in Maple Cross, over and above the existing applications for two warehouses which is being appealed on grounds of non-determination on and around 24 February.

As of today, 14 February, we still await the Hydrogeologist's report, which is the reason Committee turned down the original application

15c) Question to Councillor Steve Drury, the Chair of the Planning Committee, from Councillor Paula Hiscocks

Did TRDC fail our residents in not determining the Warehouse Development at Maple Cross (planning ref: 21/0573/FUL) and not voting on the proposal to refuse?

Written response: written-response-to-question-15c

Councillor Paula Hiscocks asked when the Council will stop blaming government inspectors. We as a local authority should be determining planning applications when they come to us. Ensuring that all reports are on time, comprehensive and we as lay people can understand them. We get to a situation where it goes to planning inspectors and goes with Officer recommendations and not elected Members.

Councillor Drury stated he could give a proper written answer but the bottom line is people on the planning committee are not actually qualified. We can only go on the Officers report, Officers are not always necessarily qualified. If an applicant decides they don't like the answer the planning committee gives they are quite entitled to go straight to a government inspector. Councillor Hiscocks and Councillor Drury agreed to continue the conversation outside of the meeting.

LICENSING

15d) Report from and questions to the Chair of the Licensing Committee, Cllr Raj Khuroya

New premises license applications have been received for 92 High Street, Rickmansworth and 20 High Street, Abbots Langley.

REGULATORY SERVICES

15e) Report from and questions to the Chair of the Regulatory Services Committee, Cllr Raj Khuroya

Regulatory Services Committee meeting scheduled for 9 February 2022 has been postponed to Tuesday 8 March 2022. At this meeting the Committee will consider the consultation results on the Hackney Carriage, Private Hire and Operator Policy and the Street Trading policy 2022 – 2025. The consultation period on the two policies was extended for a further 6 weeks to 11 March 2022

CL71/21 MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 11

Motion 1

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Paul Rainbow the Notice duly given as follows:

This Council notes the Elections Bill currently working through parliament which, in its current form and among other provisions, would require voters to show photographic ID at polling stations.

This Council further notes the costs of the new measures are estimated by government to be £8.5m a year, and the cross-party Local Government Association have noted the serious capacity and resilience implications for councils, including the risk that identity checks and the possible refusal of votes may make election staff recruitment even harder than it is already.

This Council believes the proposals requiring photographic ID are a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Enquiries show there have been no cases of suspected electoral fraud in Three Rivers which have required any form of investigation during at least the past five years, and none are known before that. In 2019, nationally and across Local, European, Parliamentary and Mayoral elections, 58 million votes were cast. Of these, there were 33 allegations of impersonation which resulted in one conviction and one caution for people casting votes illegally. Most years are similar, and the Electoral Reform Society have branded this “an expensive distraction”, highlighting the way this would act as a barrier to voting for already disadvantaged groups.

This Council believes the Voter ID proposals will only serve to add barriers for those already least likely to vote and that the resources needed for these proposals to be implemented would be better spent promoting voter registration and encouraging voting across all communities.

This Council therefore resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to our three local Members of Parliament, noting our opposition to the Voter ID provisions, and asking them to support any amendments to the Bill which would remove these provisions, and to focus instead on promoting voter registration and actually voting, in the interests of ensuring higher participation rates in our already safe and secure elections system.

The motion on being put to Council was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 20 For, 10 Against and 0 Abstentions.

Councillors Matthew Bedford and Councillor Alex Hayward had left the meeting and were not present for the vote.

RESOLVED:

This Council notes the Elections Bill currently working through parliament which, in its current form and among other provisions, would require voters to show photographic ID at polling stations.

This Council further notes the costs of the new measures are estimated by government to be £8.5m a year, and the cross-party Local Government Association have noted the serious capacity and resilience implications for

councils, including the risk that identity checks and the possible refusal of votes may make election staff recruitment even harder than it is already.

This Council believes the proposals requiring photographic ID are a sledgehammer to crack a nut. Enquiries show there have been no cases of suspected electoral fraud in Three Rivers which have required any form of investigation during at least the past five years, and none are known before that. In 2019, nationally and across Local, European, Parliamentary and Mayoral elections, 58 million votes were cast. Of these, there were 33 allegations of impersonation which resulted in one conviction and one caution for people casting votes illegally. Most years are similar, and the Electoral Reform Society have branded this “an expensive distraction”, highlighting the way this would act as a barrier to voting for already disadvantaged groups.

This council believes the Voter ID proposals will only serve to add barriers for those already least likely to vote and that the resources needed for these proposals to be implemented would be better spent promoting voter registration and encouraging voting across all communities.

This council therefore resolves to ask the Chief Executive to write to our three local Members of Parliament, noting our opposition to the Voter ID provisions, and asking them to support any amendments to the Bill which would remove these provisions, and to focus instead on promoting voter registration and actually voting, in the interests of ensuring higher participation rates in our already safe and secure elections system.

Motion 2

Councillor Stephen Cox, seconded by Councillor Joan King moved under Notice duly given the amended motion as follows:

This Council notes the impending cost-of-living crisis which will adversely affect all Three Rivers residents across the board.

This Council:

(a) believes that we are facing a cost-of-living crisis, with rising bills and ballooning prices;

(b) notes that we have seen a decade of low growth under Conservative- led governments, and believes that this is holding back Britain and has left the national economy weakened and unable to deal with shocks;

(c) notes that this is particularly felt in less well-off areas leaving many residents acutely vulnerable to a worrying combination of factors – such as inflation, rocketing energy bills, increased costs for food and fuel, and the forthcoming rise to national insurance;

(d) notes that a Labour government would immediately cut VAT on domestic energy bills to ease the burden on households during winter – giving a potential saving of up to £400 for many Three Rivers residents – which would be paid for by a one-off windfall tax on booming oil and gas profits;

(e) believes that we need radical long-term change to keep energy bills low in the future, and yet this Government have consistently failed to keep in check rising energy bills and have a very poor record on insulating homes and improving energy efficiency;

(f) believes the Government should get a grip and tackle this crisis;

This Council resolves to will write urgently to the local MPs and the Prime Minister calling for the Government to cut VAT on household energy bills this winter, scrap the planned rise in National Insurance in April noting it is a broken Conservative manifesto promise and urging it to do far more to better insulate homes and improve energy efficiency.

The Proposer and Seconder of the motion agreed to remove the word “will” from the first line of the last Paragraph.

The motion on being put to Council was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being 20 For, 1 Against and 9 Abstentions.

Councillors Matthew Bedford and Councillor Alex Hayward had left the meeting and were not present for the vote.

RESOLVED:

This Council notes the impending cost-of-living crisis which will adversely affect all Three Rivers residents across the board.

This Council:

(a) believes that we are facing a cost-of-living crisis, with rising bills and ballooning prices;

(b) notes that we have seen a decade of low growth under Conservative- led governments, and believes that this is holding back Britain and has left the national economy weakened and unable to deal with shocks;

(c) notes that this is particularly felt in less well-off areas leaving many residents acutely vulnerable to a worrying combination of factors – such as inflation, rocketing energy bills, increased costs for food and fuel, and the forthcoming rise to national insurance;

(d) notes that a Labour government would immediately cut VAT on domestic energy bills to ease the burden on households during winter – giving a potential saving of up to £400 for many Three Rivers residents – which would be paid for by a one-off windfall tax on booming oil and gas profits;

(e) believes that we need radical long-term change to keep energy bills low in the future, and yet this Government have consistently failed to keep in check rising energy bills and have a very poor record on insulating homes and improving energy efficiency;

(f) believes the Government should get a grip and tackle this crisis;

This Council resolves to write urgently to the local MPs and the Prime Minister calling for the Government to cut VAT on household energy bills this winter, scrap the planned rise in National Insurance in April noting it is a broken Conservative manifesto promise and urging it to do far more to better insulate homes and improve energy efficiency.

CHAIR OF COUNCIL