

Minutes of a Virtual/Remote Meeting of **FULL COUNCIL** held on **Tuesday 23 February 2021** from 7.30pm to 10.30pm.

Present: Councillors Keith Martin (Chair) Martin Trevett (Vice-Chair) Matthew Bedford, Sara Bedford, Marilyn Butler, Joanna Clemens, Stephen Cox, Donna Duncan, Steve Drury, Peter Getkahn, Alex Hayward, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Paula Hiscocks, Margaret Hofman, Tony Humphreys, Raj Khuroya, Joan King, Stephen King, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Joy Mann, Shanti Maru, Alex Michaels, Debbie Morris, Sarah Nelmes, Reena Ranger, David Raw, Michael Revan, David Sansom, Alison Scarth, Andrew Scarth, Roger Seabourne, Stephanie Singer, Dominic Sokalski, Jon Tankard, Alex Turner, Kate Turner, Alison Wall and Phil Williams.

CL77/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

CL78/20 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 8 December 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair of Council when it was possible to do so.

CL79/20 MOTION UNDER RULE 12.3

Councillor Matthew Bedford proposed that the following items of business should take precedence for the following reasons:

- Part 2 Item 1 (Thrive Homes) to be taken between agenda items 2 & 3 – due to the need to ensure negotiations were concluded (taken early on the agenda to avoid complications with entering and leaving Part 2 during the course of the meeting);
- Item 19(1) and 19(2) (motions) to be taken between agenda items 16 & 17 – in each case to ensure the Council could express its view and write to the relevant ministers in advance of the date of the final decisions on these matters.

Councillor Matthew Bedford therefore moved, seconded by Councillor Sara Bedford, the motion to change the order of the Agenda under Rule 12.3.

Councillor Alex Hayward opposed this and did not understand why Motions were being put before the business of the Council.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said these were business items relevant to what was on the agenda.

Councillor Alex Hayward moved, duly seconded, an amendment not to change the order of the Agenda under Rule 12.3.

The Chair was advised by the Monitoring Officer that if Councillor Matthew Bedford's motion failed the Agenda would remain the same so Councillor Alex Hayward's motion would not be required.

On being put to Council the motion to change the order of the agenda under Rule 12.3 was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being 21 For, 12 Against and 4 Abstentions

RESOLVED:

That

- Part 2 Item 1 (Thrive Homes) to be taken between agenda items 2 & 3 – due to the need to ensure negotiations were concluded (taken early on the agenda to avoid complications with entering and leaving Part 2 during the course of the meeting);
- Item 19(1) and 19(2) (motions) to be taken between agenda items 16 & 17 – in each case to ensure the Council could express its view and write to the relevant ministers in advance of the date of the final decisions on these matters.

CL80/20 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, duly seconded the following motion:

“that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under paragraphs 3 and 5 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. This is because the report and appendices deal with information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information and information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings

It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.”

The motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being by general assent.

The Council meeting went in Part II confidential business.

CL81/20 THRIVE HOMES REPORT

Councillors Joan King and Stephen King both declared a non-pecuniary interest in this item but were able to remain in the meeting for the debate and vote.

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

RESOLVED:

That public access to the report and decision be denied until the matter is resolved.

The Council meeting returned to consider the Part I business.

CL82/20 FINANCIAL PLANNING

Councillor Matthew Bedford advised that the last 12 months had been the most extraordinary anyone could remember. The impact on this Council, Officers and the services had been profound. Councillor Bedford was extremely proud that the Authority had come through with its financial position intact. This had been helped by some additional Government support but it was a testament to the sound financial management of the Council over the previous years. The Economic Impact Reserve provided the Council with a buffer to absorb short term shocks and was invaluable. The decision to invest in carefully chosen property assets had provided the Council with additional resources that meant services were protected at a time when so many of them were really needed, particularly Leisure. Residents were being asked to pay an additional £5 per year on average in Council Tax. Three Rivers continued to offer 100% rebate to the most needy in the community. The Council continued to deliver efficiency savings making reductions in the net cost of services that did not directly impact on the level of service provided. Savings had consistently been delivered in the past totalling well over £4million over the last 16 years. The Council would continue to seek further savings into the future. They were continuing to invest in areas considered priority, particularly arising out of the Pandemic so including support for Watford and Three Rivers Trust, the CVS and outdoor fitness centres.

Council Matthew Bedford moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, the financial planning recommendations of the Administration.

Councillor David Sansom asked for the breakdown on the revenue and the costs of the investment. The Councillor said that page 15 mentioned the investment in transformation of Three Rivers House of £270k to refurbish the reception area. This would not be spent in the current financial year so should not be in the column it was in. This was a guesstimate rather than a budget.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks was concerned that the Administration were spending £34k on a PID replacing the adult outdoor equipment in the parks, even though they were getting a grant of £20k as replacement parts were no longer available. The Councillor said the equipment was used by children and thought there should be extra equipment for the children using the Ebury Road play area and that the adult equipment should be moved elsewhere in the Aquadrome.

Councillor Alex Michaels said that climate emergency was the biggest challenge being faced. Spending was not being increased on this and urged for more funding for these initiatives to decrease costs in the longer term. Plans at the depot, verge cutting and rewilding would not happen unless money was allocated.

Councillor Alex Hayward said the Conservative Group did not put a budget forward but Officers had done a good job putting the budget together. The Conservative Group would have been happy to support the budget if their suggestion that two hours of free parking across the District be given in all Council owned car parks had been approved. Having met with the Financial Officers and gone through the figures, they were told that a slight increase on stays over 2 hours would have nil impact on the parking charges within the budget so would stay the same and could have been accommodated.

Councillor Stephen Cox spoke of an unfortunate happening last year when a Watford Observer journalist appeared to print one side of an argument on the

budget debate that they had not heard as it was in Part II. The Labour Group did not expect a similar misrepresentation of their voting during this evening.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said he would have looked into the Parking issue had it been raised with them. The Councillor commended this budget to the Council. The Administration continued to have £150k for Highways Enhancement, nearly £250k for parking bay and verge protection, £150k to enhance and improve the retail parade in South Oxhey and assist with Covid recovery. They supported the Rickmansworth Work Hub which provided employment and employment accessibility to businesses and individuals. They continued to provide support to cycling schemes and free of charge disabled parking bays. The £5 Council Tax increase was a lower percentage than the increase for both the Police and Crime Commissioner and Herts County Council. The Councillor thanked all the Officers for the incredible amount of hard work they had put in to ensure all the residents received first rate services during the Pandemic.

Councillor Reena Ranger said that the Conservative Group had brought a motion to Council for the two hour free parking and a petition had been submitted. This was an ongoing issue. Attention was also brought to the RCCG Facebook Group where residents were noticing that the High Streets needed help.

Councillor Roger Seabourne said a budget was a guesstimate as no budget was 100% accurate. Under current circumstances the Council were in unchartered waters. If there was a good case for two hours free parking there was nothing to stop it being looked at despite not being in the budget although this would require the Traffic Regulation Orders to be changed.

Councillor David Raw asked what the extraordinary expenses were mentioned by Councillor Matthew Bedford during the Pandemic.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes commended the budget to the Council. With regard to the query on extraordinary expenses, the food hub the Council ran during lockdown to support the most vulnerable residents was one of those expenses.

Councillor Matthew Bedford said there had been a considerable amount of detail presented about the additional costs and the reduced income the Council had suffered as a result of the Pandemic had been provided in a number of reports. The Councillor confirmed to Councillor Hayward that the proposed payment with regard to the Part II item would come out of Capital as against the annual payments that were budgeted from the Revenue budget. The overall impact on the Council was positive. On Councillor Sansom's comment that the figures go up and down this was very much with reference to reality and when the Pandemic hit the figures needed to be adjusted to take account of that. The way the Council had handled the extraordinarily difficult period over the last 12 months had been exemplary and thanks were given to all the Officers involved for their hard work.

Councillor Matthew Bedford reminded Councillors that budget amendments had to be signed off by the Chief Finance Officer 5 days ahead of time so an email on 2 hour free parking received that same morning was too late.

On being put to the Council the Administration Budget was declared CARRIED, by the Chair of Council, the voting being 22 For; 0 Against and 17 Abstentions. In accordance with budget setting legislation a recorded vote was requested, the details of which were as follows:

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

Against: Zero

Abstentions: Councillors Marilyn Butler, Joanna Clemens, Stephen Cox, Donna Duncan, Alex Hayward, Paula Hiscocks, Joan King, Stephen King, Joy Mann, Shanti Maru, Alex Michaels, Debbie Morris, Reena Ranger, David Raw, Michael Revan, David Sansom and Alison Wall.

RESOLVED:

1. Council notes that there is significant uncertainty around the future level of Government financial support for local authorities, including redistribution of NNDR and New Homes Bonus, and that Council has adopted a prudent approach in assuming a significant reduction in future income from these sources.
2. Council further notes the following achievements, enabling services to be protected without steep increases in its council tax:
 - Cashable efficiency savings averaging £0.3m per year, sustained over the last sixteen years; and further cashable efficiency gains and additional income planned over the course of the medium term financial plan;
 - Increased income, excluding government grants and council tax, rising from £6.1m in 2013/14 to £9.2m in 2021/22. This includes returns on the investment into property assets of £1m.
3. **Council agrees the following actions;**
 - a) That the 2020/21 revised revenue budget be approved giving a balance on the general fund at 31 March 2021 of **£4.483m**.
 - b) That the revenue budget for 2021/22 totalling net expenditure of £12.759m 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 **£2.969m** be approved. **(Appendix 1)**
 - c) That **£2.0m** be considered as a prudent minimum balance for the general fund.
 - d) That the total capital investment programme for 2020/21 of **£8.959** and the arrangements for funding the programme resulting in an estimated balance of capital resources at 31 March 2021 of **£5.878m** be approved. **(Appendix 2)**
 - e) That the total capital investment programme for 2021/22 of £4.408m and the capital strategy (including the 2021/22 treasury management policy) for the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2024 be approved. **(Appendix 2)**
 - f) That the financial and budgetary risks be approved and their management monitored by the Audit Committee. **(Appendix 3)**
 - g) That the position on the financial reserves **(Appendix 4)** and the Director of Finance's advice on the robustness of the estimates and the adequacy of the financial reserves are noted.

CL83/20 SPECIAL EXPENSES 2021/22

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, the recommendations on Special Expenses.

Councillor Joanna Clemens asked why areas across the District would be paying for the YMCA Woodlands building in Abbots Langley, the Councillor was sure it had nothing to do with the fact that both Councillor Bedford's represented Abbots Langley. Clarification was also asked on what use Batchworth Council got from Watersmeet. How many nights or days per year were reserved for the use of Batchworth Community Council in the facilities of Watermeet?

POST MEETING NOTE

No days or nights are reserved for the use of Batchworth Community Council.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks said most Parish Council's use their community hall for public meetings but Batchworth Community Council had to rent facilities in the Hub building next door rather than using Watermeet which was the Community Council building. Could it be accommodated to allow Batchworth Community Council to use it for their meetings?

POST MEETING NOTE

Watersmeet is available to hire by Batchworth Community Council but will need to be booked in advance.

Councillor Sara Bedford asked if someone could clarify the amount for the YMCA at the Woodlands as it had been income for the past £20 years, therefore a gain to the general fund. It was situated within the Leavesden Ward.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes confirmed that Woodlands was an income to the Council and any suggestion that such a thing would be to the advantage of a Councillor living within a Ward would be borderline libellous and insulting. Particularly as it was a positive rather than a negative. Councillor Nelmes recommended the report to the Council.

On being put to the Council the motion was declared CARRIED, by the Chair of Council, the voting being 27 For; 0 Against and 12 Abstentions. In accordance with Council Procedure Rule 23(3) a recorded vote was requested, the details of which were as follows:

For: Councillors Matthew Bedford, Sara Bedford, Stephen Cox, Steve Drury, Peter Getkahn, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Margaret Hofman, Tony Humphreys, Raj Khiroya, Joan King, Stephen King, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Joy Mann, Keith Martin, Alex Michaels, Sarah Nelmes, Alison Scarth, Andrew Scarth, Roger Seabourne, Stephanie Singer, Dominic Sokalski, Jon Tankard, Martin Trevett, Alex Turner, Kate Turner and Phil Williams.

Against: Zero

Abstentions: Councillors Marilyn Butler, Joanna Clemens, Donna Duncan, Alex Hayward, Paula Hiscocks, Shanti Maru, Debbie Morris, Reena Ranger, David Raw, Michael Revan, David Sansom and Alison Wall

RESOLVED:

That the Council confirms that it will apply the following resolution for special and general expenses for 2021/22:-

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
2. 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).

CL84/20 COUNCIL TAX – DISTRICT ELEMENT

This item (item 5 Council Tax – District Element) had not been available five clear days before the meeting, as information from other authorities had not been available but was of sufficient urgency to be considered by Council to enable the Council to despatch Council Tax bills by the required deadline.

Councillor Stephen Cox thanked Councillor Matthew Bedford but advised that this was the moment it was skewed last year. Sometimes the administration were in need of the votes and should be careful what they spin to the Watford Observer. They had taken note accordingly and hopefully their votes would save everybody's time this evening.

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, the recommendations as set out in the report.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being 34 For, 0 Against and 5 Abstentions and in accordance with budget setting legislation a recorded vote was requested the details of which were as follows:

For: Councillors Matthew Bedford, Sara Bedford, Marilyn Butler, Steve Drury, Donna Duncan, Peter Getkahn, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Alex Hayward, Paula Hiscocks, Margaret Hofman, Tony Humphreys, Raj Khuroya, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Keith Martin, Shanti Maru, Alex Michaels, Debbie Morris, Sarah Nelmes, Reena Ranger, David Raw, Michael Revan, David Sansom, Alison

Scarth, Andrew Scarth, Roger Seabourne, Stephanie Singer, Dominic Sokalski, Jon Tankard, Martin Trevett, Alex Turner, Kate Turner, Alison Wall and Phil Williams.

Against: Zero

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

RESOLVED:

That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2021/22, in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992:-

- (a) £51,273,954 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) £42,028,750 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
- (c) £9,245,204 being the amount by which the aggregate (a) above exceeds the aggregate at (b) above.
- (d) £238.44 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) £3,295,500 being the aggregate amount of all special items (parish precepts and special expenses)
- (f) £153.44 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	244.35
Batchworth	238.19
Chorleywood	253.39
Croxley Green	233.56
Sarratt	241.35
Watford Rural	227.93
Unparished	226.93

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	162.90	190.05	217.20	244.35	298.65	352.95	407.25	488.70
Batchworth	158.79	185.26	211.72	238.19	291.12	344.05	396.98	476.38
Chorleywood	168.93	197.08	225.24	253.39	309.70	366.01	422.32	506.78
Croxley Green	155.71	181.66	207.61	233.56	285.46	337.36	389.27	467.12
Sarratt	160.90	187.72	214.53	241.35	294.98	348.62	402.25	482.70
Watford Rural	151.95	177.28	202.60	227.93	278.58	329.23	379.88	455.86
Unparished	151.29	176.50	201.72	226.93	277.36	327.79	378.22	453.86

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

CL85/20 SETTING THE COUNCIL TAX

This item (item 6) (Setting the Council Tax) had not been available five clear days before the meeting, as information from other authorities had not been available, but was of sufficient urgency to be considered by Council to enable the Council to despatch Council Tax bills by the required deadline.

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, the recommendations in the report.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being 38 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention and in accordance with budget setting legislation a recorded vote was requested the details of which were as follows:

For: Councillors Matthew Bedford, Sara Bedford, Marilyn Butler, Stephen Cox, Steve Drury, Donna Duncan, Peter Getkahn, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Alex Hayward, Paula Hiscocks, Margaret Hofman, Tony Humphreys, Raj Khuroya, Joan King, Stephen King, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Joy Mann, Keith Martin, Shanti Maru, Alex Michaels, Debbie Morris, Sarah Nelmes, Reena Ranger, David Raw, Michael Revan, David Sansom, Alison Scarth, Andrew Scarth, Roger Seabourne, Stephanie Singer, Dominic Sokalski, Jon Tankard, Martin Trevett, Alex Turner, Kate Turner, Alison Wall and Phil Williams.

Against: Zero

Abstentions: Councillor Joanna Clemens

RESOLVED:

That it be noted that for the year 2021/22 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	879.57	1,026.17	1,172.76	1,319.36	1,612.55	1,905.74	2,198.93	2,638.72
Hertfordshire County Council Adult Social Care	100.85	117.65	134.46	151.27	184.89	218.50	252.12	302.54
Police & Crime Commissioner	142.00	165.67	189.33	213.00	260.33	307.67	355.00	426.00
Total	1,122.42	1,309.49	1,496.55	1,683.63	2,057.77	2,431.91	2,806.05	3,367.26

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 2021/22 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	1,285.32	1,499.54	1,713.75	1,927.98	2,356.42	2,784.86	3,213.30	3,855.96
Batchworth	1,281.21	1,494.75	1,708.27	1,921.82	2,348.89	2,775.96	3,203.03	3,843.64
Chorleywood	1,291.35	1,506.57	1,721.79	1,937.02	2,367.47	2,797.92	3,228.37	3,874.04
Croxley Green	1,278.13	1,491.15	1,704.16	1,917.19	2,343.23	2,769.27	3,195.32	3,834.38
Sarratt	1,283.32	1,497.21	1,711.08	1,924.98	2,352.75	2,780.53	3,208.30	3,849.96
Watford Rural	1,274.37	1,486.77	1,699.15	1,911.56	2,336.35	2,761.14	3,185.93	3,823.12
Unparished	1,273.71	1,485.99	1,698.27	1,910.56	2,335.13	2,759.70	3,184.27	3,821.12

CL86/20 COUNCIL PAY POLICY STATEMENT 2021

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Matthew Bedford, the recommendations in the report.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report and pay policy statement be agreed.

CL87/20 PROCESS FOR APPOINTMENT OF STATUTORY OFFICER

The Interim Director of Finance, Alison Scott, left the meeting during the consideration of this item.

Following the promotion of the previous shared Director of Finance and S151 Officer, Joanne Wagstaffe, to the role of Chief Executive, the role of Director of Finance and S151 Officer had been filled on an interim basis by Alison Scott, Head of Finance. The report set out the recruitment process for a permanent S151 Officer.

Councillor Stephen Cox said that the Labour Group had been extremely dissatisfied with how the matter had been handled and it was telling that the original reports had to be, in part, rewritten. They were surprised that emails had been written which should not have been written based on the report. Given their strength of feeling on the matter which led to the report being amended they believe the appropriate response on this occasion would be to abstain. They were

extremely grateful for the commendable patience and understanding shown by the Three Rivers Chief Executive in this regard and wish that to be noted. They were very happy with their Officer's conduct.

There had been an amendment to the report concerning the proportionality split for the interview panel for this role.

Councillor Alex Hayward noted the amendments but asked why it said in Paragraph 1.1.2 that Council was informed in January 2020 there would be a requirement to set up a Joint Panel for agreement by both Councils. This position had always been shared and a joint position.

Written response provided by the Leader of the Council:

The report to Council in January 2020 set out the appointment process for an interim Director of Finance and S151 Officer. The report stated there will be a requirement to set up a Joint Panel for agreement by both Councils to make a permanent appointment to the post in due course once it had been advertised. However the decision to advertise the post was delayed and the interim arrangements had continued for a longer period than originally intended.

It was now appropriate to bring a report back to Council setting out the selection process.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Matthew Bedford, the recommendations in the report.

On being put to the Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council, the voting being 23 For, 0 Against and 16 Abstentions

RESOLVED:

1. That permission is granted to undertake a recruitment and selection process for the role of shared Director of Finance and S151 Officer for the Council and WBC.
2. That external advertising for the post commences on 25 February.
3. That for the appointment of the shared Director of Finance and S151 Officer the Council agrees to a joint appointment panel with Watford Borough Council as set out in the report who will make a recommendation to Council on the appointment.
4. That the Executive Head of Human Resources be given delegated authority to take any further action necessary to give effect to the contents of this report and these recommendations.

CL88/20 ANNUAL REPORT ON AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL CONSTITUTION

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Matthew Bedford, the recommendations in the report.

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

RESOLVED:

Noted the minor amendments made by the CEO to the Scheme of Delegation (Part 3 of the Council Constitution)

Noted the Urgent Decisions made by the CEO in consultation with the Group Leaders to the Scheme of Delegation

Agreed the minor amendments to the Scheme of Delegation (Part 3) and to Rule 11 of the Council Procedure Rules

CL89/20 POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Council received the following recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 25 January 2021:

Statement of Community Involvement

Councillor Paula Hiscocks said that at Paragraph 2.8 it had been agreed for hard copies to be posted on the Three Rivers House noticeboard, but believed it was agreed for these to be posted on all the Council's noticeboards so would like this amendment included in the recommendation.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes advised that a discussion had taken place on this at the Policy and Resources meeting. The Principal Committee Manager confirmed that this had been noted in the minutes of the meeting.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks moved an amendment for details to be placed on all the Council's noticeboards.

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

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, seconded by Councillor Matthew Bedford, the recommendation.

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

RESOLVED:

Agreed the adoption of the Addendum to the Statement of Community Involvement as set out in Appendix 2 to the report and the amendment to include details on all the Council's noticeboards.

CL90/20 RECOMMENDATION - LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2021

Council received the recommendation from the Licensing Committee on the Licensing Act 2003 – Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-2026.

Councillor Roger Seabourne moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, the recommendation.

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

RESOLVED:

The amended Policy; 'The Licensing Act 2003 - Statement of Licensing Policy 2021-2026' is agreed by members and adopted by Council.

CL91/20 RECOMMENDATION - REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEE HELD ON 10 FEBRUARY 2021

Polling Districts and Polling Places – Returning Officer Temporary Delegated Authority.

Councillor Roger Seabourne moved, seconded by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, the recommendations.

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

RESOLVED:

Temporary delegated authority be given to the Returning Officer, in consultation with Group Leaders and Agents as a minimum, in order to make any necessary changes to polling places that may occur during the coronavirus pandemic to enable voters to exercise their democratic right to vote at local government elections scheduled this May.

CL92/20 CHANGE OF NAME OF FORUM

This item was removed from the agenda.

CL93/20 TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 18

None received.

CL94/20 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 15

None received.

CL95/20 CHAIR OF COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair of the Council had virtually attended three moving Holocaust Memorial Day events.

Noted the announcements

CL96/20 MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 11

Motion 1

Councillor Sarah Nelmes, seconded by Councillor Stephanie Singer moved under Notice duly given as follows:

On 4 April 2020 The Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panel Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020 made under the Coronavirus Act 2020 enabled Council/Committee meetings to be held in a virtual format and enabled remote attendance.

These regulations expire on 6 May 2021.

The change was stated to be to ensure effective local decision making and transparency during the national effort to fight the coronavirus pandemic. That fight is still ongoing. To ensure the continued smooth running of local democracy, the continued safety of officers and members of this Council and of members of the public, this Council urges the government to extend this regulation further.

This Council resolves to write to the Local Government Secretary, The Right Honourable Robert Jenrick MP to urge that the regulation is extended so that we continue to be supported to maintain our vital role while continuing to follow government advice to stay home, protect the NHS and save lives.

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

RESOLVED:

This Council to write to the Local Government Secretary, The Right Honourable Robert Jenrick MP to urge that the regulation is extended so that we continue to be supported to maintain our vital role while continuing to follow government advice to stay home, protect the NHS and save lives.

Motion 2

Councillor Sarah Nelmes, seconded by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved under Notice duly given the amended motion as follows:

Council notes:

All Councils are required by central government to prepare a Local Plan setting out sufficient land to be allocated for housing and employment use until 2036;

The number of homes required to be built is calculated by a 'standard methodology', a government formula using a housing need assessment based on Office of National Statistics data from 2014. More recent data suggests a lower need but government has confirmed that this older calculation must be used;

No Council has successfully challenged the 'standard methodology' nor been allowed to implement a plan using any target other than the 'standard methodology';

The Three Rivers area is well over 70% Green Belt. The land that has been put forward for development that is not in Green Belt can provide less than 20% of that assessed housing need (under 2000 homes), requiring the remainder to be allocated on precious green belt (more than 9000 homes).

Council therefore resolves:

That the Government's 'standard methodology' produces an unacceptable housing target for this District;

To request an urgent meeting with the Local Government Secretary, The Right Honourable Robert Jenrick MP to discuss reductions to this unacceptable target;

To write to the three MPs that serve different parts of Three Rivers asking them to confirm that they reject the Government's 'standard methodology' as it harms the green belt and damages local communities and that they call on Robert Jenrick to agree a lower target for this District.

Councillor Alex Hayward proposed an amendment to the Motion, seconded by Councillor Reena Ranger, to write to the Minister to include an acknowledgement of the Council's failure together with an apology.

The proposer and seconder of the motion did not accept the amendment to the motion.

On being put to the Council the Motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of the Council the voting being 28 For, 0 Against, 11 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That the Government's 'standard methodology' produces an unacceptable housing target for this District;

To request an urgent meeting with the Local Government Secretary, The Right Honourable Robert Jenrick MP to discuss reductions to this unacceptable target;

To write to the three MPs that serve different parts of Three Rivers asking them to confirm that they reject the Government's 'standard methodology' as it harms the green belt and damages local communities and that they call on Robert Jenrick to agree a lower target for this District.

CL97/20 REPORTS AND QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER AND LEAD MEMBERS

Under the new Rule 14 written questions that had not dealt with at the previous meeting had been included in the minutes of the previous meeting together with written answers.

Listed below are the supplementary questions to the written answers provided in the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2020.

17b Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council had provided the following written report which was noted:

As I am sure you can guess, much of my focus since we last met has been around the ongoing Covid pandemic. Since that meeting we have moved from tier to tier and then into full lockdown. Of course, none of us wanted to be in this position, but at the same time the lockdown was necessary to save lives and protect the NHS. Tragically, many people have sadly lost their lives to this virus. All of our hearts go out to their friends and loved ones. It has also had a devastating impact on our business community and local economy. I am pleased we are giving them as much support as we can by offering a number of grants that they can apply for. We are also very fortunate in Hertfordshire to have such a fine public health team and I know from colleagues around the country that we have been kept very much more informed about how things are in our communities because of them. We now have access to rapid testing for those who are not showing symptoms and much quicker testing for those with symptoms. Via both County and our Environmental Health team, there is excellent work on Track and Trace to ensure that people are self-isolating. With the vaccination programme continuing at pace, we are now, hopefully, beginning to see some light at the end of the tunnel. Our Primary Care Networks (primarily GPs) and the mass vaccination centres are working tirelessly to vaccinate people across our District. Fingers crossed, it will then be possible to ease the lockdown and return to some degree of normality soon.

The Leader of the Council gave an update to the written report as follows:

Infection figures in Three Rivers continued to drop, although it had slowed. The current rate for the first tranche of vaccinations was 58% so GPs and vaccinations centres in the area were to be congratulated. The road map approach seemed to be slow and sensible.

The Leader thanked Anne Morgan, Monitoring Officer/Solicitor to the Council for everything Anne had done for the Council and the Leader personally and for the extra year Anne had stayed on help through the Pandemic. After 37 years at Three Rivers this was her last Council Meeting.

Councillor Stephen Cox asked whether the Leader of the Council agreed that Anne Morgan had been a truly outstanding public servant at Three Rivers. On behalf of the Labour Group and the people of South Oxhey, Councillor Cox wished her all the best for her retirement. Councillor Sarah Nelmes agreed with Councillor Stephen Cox.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks asked for the details of the pop up Rapid Test Centre to be listed on the Council Website. Councillor Sarah Nelmes agreed for this to be done.

Councillor Alex Hayward wished Anne Morgan all the best for her retirement.

Councillor Reena Ranger asked if the Leader of the Council agreed that Community Leaders should be invited to the next meeting of the Equalities sub-committee to allay any fears their communities may have about the Covid Vaccines being rolled out.

The Leader of the Council advised that there was a county wide exercise on uptake. Data could be provided on communities not taking up the vaccine and the Community Leaders could be contacted.

Under the new Rule 14 written questions that had not dealt with at the previous meeting had been included in the minutes of the previous meeting together with written answers. Listed below are the supplementary questions to the written answers provided in the Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2020

A supplementary question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability from Councillor Paula Hiscocks (12x in the minutes of 8 December 2020).

The warning signs that had been requested regarding the raw sewage discharge into the Rivers Chess and Colne from Thames Water had been agreed. When would these warning signs be erected?

Councillor Phil Williams advised that they were awaiting some figures and pollution readings before receiving the go-ahead to put them up.

Councillor Marilyn Butler asked for the sewage signs to extend from North Hill to Latimer.

17c) Question to Councillor Sarah Nemes, Leader of the Council for the Local Plan from Councillor David Raw

The Equalities sub-committee was established in August 2020, to ensure agreed definitions affecting community groups are reflected in the policy and to understand how people have been affected by prejudice and discrimination, the impact this has on an individuals and the resulting community needs and to provide an opportunity for research and discussion with organisations, charities and community groups. Please can you tell us how many individuals, organisations, charities and community groups have been consulted and invited to speak at committee (please provide details) to date and how many recommendations made by the subcommittee have been adopted.

Written response:

The Equalities sub-committee has met twice in August 2020 and November 2020. The first meeting considered two definitions which were then recommended to and adopted by Full Council. The next meeting of the Equalities sub-committee met in November 2020 and it received a presentation on the prejudice and discrimination consultation. The objective of the consultation was to investigate the experiences of our communities, to understand how people have been affected by prejudice and discrimination, the impact this has on an individual and the resulting community needs. This consultation took place in September – October 2020 and was marketed to residents, community groups and Councillors. In total, 356 survey entries were completed. The demographic profile of those completing the survey is as follows:

- 55% female, 43% male, 1% non-binary

- 84% heterosexual, 5% gay/lesbian, 5% asexual.

- 72% white UK, 5% white European, 9% Indian, 3% black (African & Caribbean), 1% Middle Eastern and 1% Pakistani.

- 48% Christian, 32% no religion, 7% Hindu, 2% Jewish and 2% Muslim.

The comments in the survey show the continued need to work together (white and BAME people, different age groups and genders), to address inequality and strengthen empathy and thus, communities. This can be helped by working with the Police and other partners to refresh the local network of key links within local communities, including community faith leaders/representatives. The next Equalities sub-committee will be considering a presentation on this at the meeting on 15 March and agreeing a programme of engagement with community representatives at future meetings. The Equality policy is due to be reviewed fully in 2023 but will be considered at a future meeting with regard to the definitions which have been agreed by the Council.

Two definitions were considered by the Equalities sub-committee in August 2020 and recommended to the Policy and Resources Committee in August 2020 and were then adopted by Full Council on 1 September 2020. On 7 September 2020 the Policy and Resources Committee received a Part II report on Hate Crime which was agreed by the Committee. The report and its contents remain confidential.

At the Council meeting on 20 October 2020 it was agreed by Full Council that the three motions on Equalities would be referred to the Equalities sub-committee. The three motions were all considered individually by the sub-committee on 30 November 2020. At this meeting all the proposers and seconders of the motions were invited to present their motion as required under the new Rule 11(11) of the Council Procedure Rules. All the three motions were discussed by the Equalities sub-committee on 30 November 2020 and agreed their intentions as applicable to the Council and any actions arising that might require officer actions, further reports, costings, legal and equalities implications. A further meeting of the Equalities sub-committee is scheduled for 15 March 2021.

At the next meeting YCH Services for Young People have been invited to attend. They have recently started running more diverse groups for their young people. In addition they have run consultations with young people over the pandemic to understand their thoughts, feelings and concerns on a range of issues, so would be able to convey their voice which wasn't captured in the results of the Prejudice and Discrimination Survey. The police hate crimes officer is also being invited to add their thoughts on equalities at the moment.

There was no supplementary question from Councillor David Raw

17d) Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council and Lead Member for the Local Plan from Councillor Alex Hayward

This Council has decided not to reach every resident in respect of the Local Plan public consultation by post or leafleting, yet the Liberal Democrats have their hard copy leaflets delivered door to door – why?

Written response:

There has been no decision made at this time on the methods of communication from the Council to members of the public and to stakeholders in respect of a consultation on sites for any potential developments in Three Rivers. I can assure you though, that we will seek to ensure that all can contribute to any such consultation. A final decision has not been made and will not be made until we are closer to that consultation. By then Covid regulations may be very different than at present but we will be looking to leaflet all households.

With regard to Liberal Democrat literature delivery, keeping our communities informed is vital at all times. If paid delivery by either the Post Office or a commercial delivery firm is ok for my local takeaway then I do not see that there is any difference for our literature, as I am sure Labour colleagues will agree. As presumably would the Police and Crime Commissioner who used paid delivery earlier this year. Lawyers from Operation Talla (which coordinates Covid policing in the UK) at the National Police Chiefs Council have confirmed that, even for volunteer delivery '*it was reasonably necessary for the volunteer to leave home in order to achieve the outcome intended by delivery of the leaflets and that it was not reasonably possible for that outcome to be achieved from home.*'

Supplementary Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council and Lead Member for the Local Plan from Councillor Alex

Had there had been any update?

The Leader of the Council advised that Section 95 of the report from Government said there would be further clarification but meanwhile the Council would continue to follow the guidance that was agreed between the Legal Advisors to the National Police Chief Council and their HQ. On the Local Plan question, there was an intention for a written leaflet as that would be within the rules to be delivered as public information.

Due to the late hour the Chair then thanked Anne Morgan for her 37 years of service and wished her a happy retirement. It was the Chairs final meeting as Chair and was thanked by Members.

CHAIR OF COUNCIL