

12. LEADER AND LEAD MEMBER REPORTS

Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council

I was pleased to attend a Flag Raising in honour of our wonderful 999 Emergency Services. We all clapped for them during the pandemic, hopefully they will be rewarded with a wage that allows them a real maintenance of the decent standard of living they deserve.

I was honoured to meet with the Mayor of Narima, a suburb of Tokyo, who was in Three Rivers to look at the Harry Potter Studio Tour as Warner Brothers are now building a Harry Potter Studio Tour in the Mayor's district. The Mayor and their team wanted to discuss with us what it was like to have such a popular tourist destination in our area.

I finally got to do a Staff Induction face to face, it was lovely to talk to our new team members for real, rather than just on line. All staff were invited to attend staff conferences in November. A great opportunity for the sharing of thoughts and to revisit our corporate priorities.

The last month has seen some major tree planting sessions, well done to all involved in these fabulous additions to the planting of The Queens Green Canopy.

The Mayor of Watford, the Leader of St Albans and I have written to The Secretary of State for Health to seek reassurance that the long awaited and much needed funding for the improvement of the West Herts Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust buildings in Watford, St Albans and Hemel Hempstead will be forthcoming and not 'reprioritised'.

Watford & Three Rivers Trust held their AGM on 30 November. It was really moving to talk with many of our fantastic volunteers that do so much for our communities. It was, however, quite harrowing to hear how many poor of our residents now need to seek help from, for example, Foodbanks and the Citizens Advice Bureau. The cost of living crisis is biting hard, and the winter weather has not really set in yet.

Finally, I am pleased to report that the final bits of kit for us to hold fully hybrid meetings has finally arrived. Fingers crossed it will all be up and running early in the new year.

Councillor Paul Rainbow, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development

Transport and Economic Development Report

Parking Scheme Updates

- Primrose Hill (stage 2 - initial design) – Stage 2 Survey Complete, officers are now analysing responses
- Locally important schemes – Survey Complete, officers are now analysing responses and envisage works will take place across the various locations early next year
- Chorleywood area-wide review – Survey has now been issued
- Croxley Green supplementary scheme – envisage commencing survey process in the new year

EV Charging Points

Procurement under way following release of further iteration of HCC strategy, for the installation of EV Charging points at TRDC Car Parks across the district.

Ticket-less Parking Machines

To improve sustainability Solar Powered Ticket-less Parking Machines are being installed across TRDC Parking Locations and are becoming operational this month.

Local Walking and Cycling Strategy

Following Octobers IHED Meeting the preparation of the consultation is under way.

Way Finder Signs

Way Finder Signs now installed in Croxley Green to helping people new to the area to discover new places as well as find their way to essential locations. Also encourage walking by indicating how quick it is to walk around the village.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Planning Policy and Infrastructure

Planning applications

The planning department are dealing with a large number of planning applications, including applications for residential development on unallocated Green Belt sites in Maple Cross and Primrose Hill, with a number of applications also under consideration for major redevelopments of previously developed land in Kings Langley and Northwood. Next year we are expecting a public inquiry into Officers refusal to grant planning permission for a residential development in an unallocated Green Belt site outside of Sarratt.

In the past 6 months we have received 26 appeal decisions, of which eight were allowed.

The Warner Bros application is now due to be considered on 15 December. By the time of Council the papers for this will be available.

An application for a Lidl store on the site of the current World of Water at Hunton Bridge has been submitted. I am aware of very substantial formal objections from Hertfordshire County Council regarding traffic issues and access related to the site. There is no date for consideration yet.

Local Plan

The Local Plan Sub Committee (LPSC) continues to consider the comments made following the Regulation 18 consultation and has been updating the policies in the draft Plan.

It has considered the new sites put forward by landowners and changes proposed to sites, including removal proposed by the landowners and other public comments and made recommendations (unanimously) to the Policy & Resources Committee regarding a second Reg 18 consultation. This second Regulation 18 consultation on some potential new sites will, subject to Council's decision, go out to consultation in early 2023. Council is being asked to approve the Local Development Scheme timetable in order to maintain the previously published timetable.

The last Council meeting unanimously re-affirmed the Councils' objection to the government's standard method of calculation for the housing numbers for Three Rivers, approved the delay in the publication of the Local Plan whilst we continue to press for a locally determined housing figure for Three Rivers. Once we have a better idea of any delays incurred by the work required to consider alternative options an updated Local Development Scheme will be reported back to Council.

The government has pushed back a Commons vote on its housebuilding plans that was due to go ahead on Monday, November 28. As at the time of writing no new date for the votes have been given.

Ministers have opted to delay any votes on amendments, of which there are a number including from the MP for St Albans (who covers a small part of the Three Rivers District Council area), which would remove enforced housing targets and that these could not influence planning applications, and remove the need to incorporate government targets into Local Plans in their area. Other amendments would also remove an existing rule which binds local authorities to a commitment to maintain a rolling five-year stock of land for future development.

I understand that the other two MP's representing parts of Three Rivers have been asked to support these amendments but have not yet made public their support or views on these.

Along with Marko Kalik I have held a further, and very constructive meeting, with the Three Rivers Joint Residents' Association. Some useful information and feedback was exchanged not least on the way of calculating the "right" figure of housing need for Three Rivers, actions of other local authorities and the approach of the London Green Belt Council. Officers are reviewing some of the work of the group re potential housing numbers.

Following this the Leader and myself are to discuss with leaders of Elmbridge Council and their proposals to submit a Regulation 19 that falls sustainably short of the governments' standard method.

I presented the current position on the Local Plan, and took questions at the Abbots Langley Area Forum (3 Nov), Rickmansworth Area Forum (10th Nov), the Joint Parish's Meeting (16 Nov) Cllr Drury undertook a presentation on my behalf to the Croxley Green Area Forum (22nd Nov).

I was the guest speaker at the Politics of Planning roundtable, organised by Spbroadway, on 16 November.

Article 4 Direction Marko Kalik

We received confirmation from Government on 11 November that they had received all our evidence regarding the Article 4 Direction. They are now reviewing this evidence and have stated that they will come back to us should they require any further information. The consultation was completed without any responses being received and this has been reported back to Government. This is not unusual, in 2016 we received 2 responses.

High Street Recovery conference

I took part in the Three Rivers High Street recovery conference on 17 November which recognised the support given by Three Rivers in the package of measures offered.

South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan

I attended on 1 December the South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan member Group as the representee of this Council. We received a presentation of the Regulation 18 consultation on this and agreed to continue to work together with the other four councils and the County in following through the strategic framework with a view to a Regulation 19 consultation to assist in securing the required infrastructure for our area.

Note for future: Following a suggestion made by a member, I have asked officers to arrange a member visit to the BRE (Building Research Establishment) to look at the model desire for a "net zero home" and work the BRE are doing.

Councillor Andrew Scarth, Lead Member for Housing

Changes to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy was agreed by the Policy and Resources Committee on 7 November 2022. Updates to the policy were required to reflect the recent changes in the structure of Council's Housing Services Department. Additional updates to the policy were also made to reflect any changes to relevant legislation, improve customer clarity and improve officer efficiency.

As of 28 November 2022, Three Rivers had 146 confirmed Homes for Ukraine guests arrive in the District (109 Adults and 37 Children).

As discussed in my previous update to Council on 18 October, it is anticipated that the county as a whole will have an increase in homelessness applications from guests on this Scheme as some sponsors look to end their offer of accommodation at the 6 month mark. As of 18 November, Housing Services have had five homeless applications from households that arrived in the United Kingdom as part of this Scheme.

As of 5 December 2022, there are 53 households in temporary accommodation, 1 household in refuge accommodation and 1 household residing in a mother and baby unit. From the 53 households, 2 are in nightly lets outside of the district and 2 are in contractual lets with Hightown Housing Association in Watford. Unfortunately these were emergency placements and at the time there was limited access to any available accommodation.

The teams priority is to move those located out of the district, back into the District as soon as possible and with some recent moves from temporary accommodation into permanent accommodation by a number of customers, this should be achieved shortly.

The department is currently re-advertising for the role of a Senior Housing Enforcement Officer, as a suitable candidate was not identified during the first round of advertising. The Council will continue to be looking to make use of an agency employee in the interim period.

The Rough Sleeper Accommodation Programme properties (5 x one bedroom properties in district, purchased in association with Watford Community Housing, using grant funding from Homes England and £100,000 of S106 funding from the Council) have begun to be tenanted, with the first of these properties being filled on 25 November 2022. The team expect the remaining four properties to be filled in the period before Christmas.

Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure

Watersmeet

- Building Fixed wiring – Contractor has commenced the work and is making good progress. Main bar almost complete and then move to Colne bar. Expecting completion end Jan.
- Panto sales have picked up and are now only slightly behind previous year sales. Civic Night is Friday 16 December

Leisure

- Artistmeet (Watersmeet) – Coast – An Exhibition of Calmer Waters - 2 November to 3 January
- Community Tree Planting for Queens Green Canopy happened at Denham Way Playing Fields (30/11) & Horses' Field (3/12) , Leavesden
- First Aquadrome Steering Group Meeting in 2023
- New Parkrun has started in Leavesden County Park. Thank you to Cllr Matthew Bedford who is one of the Run Directors & Cllr Sara Bedford who has volunteered. I would like to encourage the other Cllrs in the locality to come an volunteer once before next Council meeting

- Visited Nomad Club in October. Happy to visit any Sports Groups in your Ward.
- Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy approved at November LEC and P&R meeting
- Oxhey Woods Management Plan 2022 – 2027 approved at November LEC Meeting
- Sports and Physical Activity Strategy approved at November LEC Meeting

Health

- Warm Space @ Hive Tuesdays 9:30 – 11:30 and Wednesdays 2:30 – 4:30. Started 6 December. Will run to end of February. (Excluding 27 December to 4 January)
- Free 12 week weight Loss course for men- Oxhey Wood Primary 7 – 8:30 starts on 18 January (Watford FC Community Sport & Education Trust)

Cllr Phil Williams. Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability

Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability

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

Enable and engage:

- The TRDC Greener Living e-newsletter continues to be sent to residents and businesses to give updates on campaigns and Green news items. If you haven't signed up, please do
- The Sustainability team held a Fast Fashion Conference at Watersmeet November '22, with expert speakers and short video's raising awareness of the horrifying impacts of fast fashion on water and waste in particular. A healthy debate followed with members of the audience of the sell-out event.
- The Sustainability team are more than happy to speak at and present to community groups in your area, please contact them.

Energy:

- The Baseline carbon emissions for the Council for 21/22 have been collated, are currently being assessed and will be published in by the year end on the website
- The 'Route to Zero' trajectory for the Council's own emissions has been drafted and is currently being reviewed by officers to develop the business case modelling to support decision making on the proposals. This is a complex process which will be reported on in the next financial year

Waste

- Country wide leaders again!!! As mentioned in previous members briefings, TRDC have been leading the new Herts Sustainable Periods project and our officers have had numerous requests for from Councils across the UK for information and advice. To date over 400 Hertfordshire residents have applied for a discount code, and a number of schools and health professionals have been trained in reusable period product education and supplied with branded demo bags to encourage their use and increase awareness in young people as part of a pilot.

Councillor Roger Seabourne, Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships

No report

Councillor Keith Martin, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services

I am working with Officers in order to prepare the budget for the forthcoming financial year. This work is taking place at a time of continuing uncertainty and financial pressure, both of these factors being externally driven. Good progress is being made and I will be delivering the budget for debate and approval at the February 2023 Full Council meeting.