

At a meeting of **COUNCIL** held at Penn Chamber, on **Tuesday 16 July 2019** from 7.30pm to 9.45pm.

Present: Councillors Paula Hiscocks (Chair), Keith Martin (Vice-Chair), Matthew Bedford, Sara Bedford, Joanna Clemens, Steve Drury, Donna Duncan, Peter Getkahn, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Margaret Hofman, Tony Humphreys, Raj Khiroya, 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, Martin Trevett, Alex Turner, Kate Turner, Alison Wall, Phil Williams.

CL31/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Marilyn Butler, Alex Hayward and Stephen Cox.

CL32/19 MINUTES

Minutes of the Council held on 21 May 2019 were agreed and signed by the Chair of the Council.

**CL33/19 RECOMMENDATION FROM THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE
– 17 JUNE 2019**

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee Meeting held on 17 June 2019. He advised that under point 1 there was a significant underspend and saving in last year's revenue budget of £792,510. Just under £300,000 of it related to items of expenditure budgeted for in the previous year but would be carried forward to the current year. That left a saving of just under £500,000 from last year's budget. The proposal was to use £400,000 for one off budgets in the current year to move forward with some of the Council's priorities found in Appendix 2 of the report. Three of the largest items were:

- 1) Revamp and improvement to the Council's website.
- 2) Project to address the Climate Emergency Agenda.
- 3) Investigations and due diligence for potential commercialisation and income generation project. The Council needed to invest in expert advice and guidance that was not available in house in order that informed decisions to balance potential benefits against risks may be made.

Councillor Alex Michaels had an issue with item 3, Appendix 2 Asset Management where £250,000 of public funds would be spent on various property and joint venture projects. He said most Members would be unaware of the specific projects the money would be spent on as it had had only been discussed at Cabinet/Management Board meetings. As he had been advised the items were commercial confidential, he stated he was prevented from going into specific details as this would breach the Councillor Code of Conduct. He was

concerned about the spending of a substantial sum of money on advisor's fees for a project that carried huge risks and in his view was not suitable for local authorities. The process should be transparent and open to all Councillors and they should know what projects these fees were being spent on. The large proportion of the fees would be spent scoping out one particular project which may or may not go ahead. Once the whole Council found out the money could have already been spent. If six figure sums were paid to advisors the Council would be in the situation where only the Cabinet would decide where the money was spent. It was critical for Policy and Resources Committee to see details of these investment opportunities, before money was spent. The Council's true obligation was to protect the tax payer.

He agreed that the Council needed to invest and to be innovative, but it was crucial that large sums of taxpayers' money were not wasted on projects that nobody but the Cabinet knew about.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes understood the Councillor's concerns. She would not buy a house before getting a surveyor to look at the property and would not get a mortgage before consulting with a mortgage advisor. She felt this was effectively what the Council was doing. The Council were considering a complex investment, but were not in a position to put together the papers to make an informed decision without getting expert advice. She did not think this should be discussed in public until there was enough information available to make an informed decision by the Council.

Councillor David Sansom welcomed Councillor Michaels' comments and agreed that this information should be taken to the Policy and Resources Committee.

Councillor Reena Ranger said that the Council had lost £40,000 on the investment property income. They were spending £327,000 on consultancy fees, £250,000 for various property joint ventures, advisors for sustainability projects and consultants for employment matters. If this had not already been spent, what would be the tender process? Who would we be spending the fees on? How were the fees being spent? What would we be getting for the money and would a recommendation be coming to Committee? Or had the money been spent?

Councillor Alex Michaels said that emails received from Officers had requested him not to provide details. If a contract had been signed a large amount of money would be handed over. He would appreciate Councillor Matthew Bedford advising of the amount. In response to Councillor Nelmes, he said when buying a house one would not pay 10% to the agent before making a bid. He said the Council were spending money to find out whether an opportunity was suitable when they could find out what the opportunity looked like first.

Councillor Sara Bedford said she would not allow Members to make unsubstantiated attacks on Officers. She had received an email accusing the Legal Officer of making unsubstantiated comments. The Chief Legal Officer was here to protect the Council and the residents from any financial or legal problems that could arise a job she had done very well for many years. Companies that approached this Council on investment did so in total confidentiality. If confidentiality was breached the Council could be sued. The Chief Legal Officer was doing her job by ensuring the Council was protected.

Councillor Matthew Bedford advised that on the third budget recommendation to investigate commercialisation and income generation, the fees would be in relation to a whole range of different things which included: Legal and contractual arrangements, financial modelling, advice about Risks and Forecasts and

sensitivity analysis. All these things needed to be carried out before decisions could be made about income generation opportunities.

The outturn for 2018/19 needed to be agreed together with some additional budgets for the current year, paid for out of savings made last year. The third recommendation which had caused concern was not all to be spent on one single opportunity. As things stood he would not feel ready to recommend this opportunity as he did not have all the information available. Any decision would be made through the Council's decision making process.

On Procurement, Officers would follow the correct procedures and correct authorisations of the Council.

In response to Councillor Debbie Morris on what the fees were for, he advised that a budget of £250,000 had been created to be used against a number of different schemes throughout the year.

In response to Councillor Reena Ranger, he advised that the money had not yet been spent.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being 20 For, 1 Against and 15 Abstentions. On the request of 6 Members of the Council a recorded vote was taken the details of which were as follows:

For – Councillors Matthew Bedford, Sara Bedford, Steve Drury, Peter Getkahn, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Tony Humphreys, Raj Khuroya, Chris Lloyd, David Major, Joy Mann, Keith Martin, Sarah Nelmes, Alison Scarth, Andrew Scarth, Roger Seabourne, Stephanie Singer, Dominic Sokalski, Jon Tankard, Martin Trevett, Phil Williams

Against – Councillor Joanna Clemens

Abstain – Councillor Donna Duncan, Paula Hiscocks, Margaret Hofman, Joan King, Stephen King, Shanti Maru, Alex Michaels, Debbie Morris, Reena Ranger, David Raw, Michael Revan, David Sansom, Alex Turner, Kate Turner, Alison Wall

RESOLVED:

Council agreed that the favourable revenue outturn variance of (**£792,510**) to be noted:

- (1) That the capital outturn as summarised in paragraph 2.6 and Appendix 3 be noted.
- (2) Approved to carry forward:
 - (A) the unspent service budgets from 2018/19 to 2019/20 which total **£308,900** to enable completion of projects as detailed at Appendix 2.
 - (B) the savings made from budgets in 2018/19 which total **£397,000** be carried forward to 2019/20 for use on new Council initiatives as detailed at Appendix 2.
- (3) Approved the rephasing on capital projects from 2018/19 to 2019/20 which total **£4,640,744** as detailed at Appendix 4.
- (4) Approved to write off the sum of **£58,687** in respect of irrecoverable debts.

CL34/19 APPOINTMENT OF INTERIM HEAD OF PAID SERVICE/CHIEF EXECUTIVE

This item had not been available five clear days before the meeting, as the Appointments Committee had not met until 11 July 2019. It was of sufficient urgency to be considered by Council to enable the Council to appoint an Interim Head of Paid Service/Chief Executive.

The Chairman moved, duly seconded, that the item be taken as Part I business and this was duly agreed by Council.

Councillor Sara Bedford reported that there had been a very effective and politically proportionate interview panel had comprised along with herself Councillors Matthew Bedford, Sarah Nelmes, Debbie Morris, Chris Lloyd, Stephen Cox and David Sansom. There had been four very good candidates and the decision of the appointment had been unanimous.

Councillor Sara Bedford moved, duly second, the recommendations on the Appointment of the Interim Head of Paid Service/Chief Executive.

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

RESOLVED:

1. That David Hill is appointed as interim Head of Paid Service and Chief Executive Officer for Three Rivers District Council from 22 July 2019 and is remunerated at a rate of £977 per day.
2. That Joanne Wagstaffe be authorised to continue to act as Head of Paid Service for Three Rivers District Council up to the date of appointment of the interim Head of Paid Service on 22 July 2019.
3. That Alison Scott acts as Section 151 Officer for Three Rivers District Council up to the 22 July 2019
4. That Geof Muggeridge is confirmed as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for Three Rivers District Council up to the 22 July 2019.
5. That David Hill is appointed as Returning Officer and Electoral Registration Officer for Three Rivers District Council from the 22 July 2019
6. That the 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.
7. That public access to the report be denied until publication of the decision
Councillor Alex Michaels left the meeting after this item

CL35/19 TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 18

None received.

CL36/19 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 15

The following questions received from a Member of the Public, responded to by the Leader of the Council:

Is the Council the freeholder of the land the Pavilion Pub South Oxhey?

Response: The Council holds a reversionary freehold but not the benefit of a number of restrictive covenants which go with the land. This means that the Council cannot control activities on the land through the freehold. Those restricted covenants are held by The London Borough of Bromley which is the result of a rather bizarre splitting up of assets when the GLC was broken up in 1986. The lease has over 100 years remaining on it.

Does the Council own the Car Park at the Pavilion and the changing room facilities?

Response: As previously stated, the Council owns the reversionary freehold on the car park but does not have any current possessory interest. An area of the car park must be made available for parking by those using the playing fields at the rear of that building. That does not cover the bowls club, Scouts' building or skate park that are there, but only the playing fields themselves.

What can it do about the leaseholder of the Pavilion Pub blocking off access routes to Council run leisure facilities and other users?

Response: Access to the Bowls Club and Scouts' building is still available via the route which is laid out in the lease. That route does mean that they have to walk 2.5 times round the sides of a square but that legal access has not been blocked up. What has happened is an informal access, which is much shorter and also allows vehicular access to the bowls club has been blocked up by the person who owns the long lease on the car park. Officers are investigating whether or not this route has acquired any status as a public right of way, whether that right of way would cover just the footpath traffic or would include vehicular traffic.

The Committee Team would provide a written reply to the member of the public.

POST MEETING NOTE: The Leader of the Council had visited the Bowls Club a couple of Sundays ago and is aware of the distress this is causing and is committed to working to get the informal access made available again.

CL37/19 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman had travelled across the County representing Three Rivers and supporting residents at events too numerous to mention. She said it had been an honour to meet so many wonderful people

She advised of the following events:

- The Chairman's Charity Quiz on Friday 11 October would take place in the Penn Chamber. Tickets to go on sale shortly. Any donations of raffle prizes would be gratefully received. Either to be given to the Chairman or to be left in the Member's room clearly marked.
- The Chairman's Civic Service followed by reception on Sunday 1 March at St Marys Church, Rickmansworth. Details to follow.

She reminded the Council to have courtesy, politeness and respect for one another during any emotive debates that may take place.

CL38/19 REPORTS AND QUESTION TO THE LEADER AND LEAD MEMBERS

LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

The Leader of the Council had attended the great Opening Event at Leavesden County Park. She thanked all the members of the Leisure team for their contribution towards the event, particularly Charlotte Gomes, Jo Copley and Lisa Cook

She paid tribute to the work done in the Community Safety section, by Shivani Dave and Michelle Wright which was highly regarded.

She thanked Joanne Wagstaffe, Geof Muggeridge and Terry Baldwin for providing support and help in the last few weeks.

As a result of Councillor Alex Michaels' resignation as Lead Member, she announced the following changes:

Councillor Phil Williams appointed as Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability.

Councillor Steve Drury to replace Councillor Phil Williams as Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy.

Councillor Martin Trevett to be Chairman of both Regulatory Services Committee and Licensing Committee therefore only one Chairman.

Question to Councillor Sara Bedford, Leader of the Council, from Councillor Keith Martin, Vice-Chair of Council

Could you please advise whether the Council has given planning permission for the fence to be built across the car park at the Pavilion? What action is the Council taking to restore access to users of the Bowls Club and the Scouts HQ?

The Leader of the Council said the question had been answered in response to the questions from the member of the public. The fence was not across the car park but across the access. This needed to be resolved as soon as possible.

Questions to Councillor Sara Bedford, Leader of the Council, from Councillor Joan King

Please can the Leader provide full details of the issues surrounding the fencing off of areas in the vicinity of The Pavilion in Green Lane which has deeply inconvenienced the Bowls Club and the Scouts who moved to that area at the behest of this Council?

Further what action, if any, does the Council intend to take, or has taken already, to safeguard, preserve and reinstate previous access arrangements including those to the car park?

Councillor Joan King also asked for an additional question to Councillor Lloyd could be included in this item as follows:

Does the Council anticipate a reduction in revenue for football pitch hire at South Oxhey Playing Fields? She mentioned that the lease had been handed over in 1990 and at the time someone did not put in the appropriate detail to ensure this would not happen in the future.

The Leader of the Council said much of the questions had been answered previously. The route to the changing rooms was mostly unaltered, there was a slight increase in the route for the footballers. With regards the lease, this would have been written correctly by officers following best practise at the time. She felt that the current leaseholders were being unnecessarily heavy handed.

Councillor Joan King asked whether the Council were trying to do anything about it. There was a footpath but it included steps which were a problem, particularly for people with health problems or wheelchair users.

The Leader of the Council advised that the Council was doing everything within its powers to resolve the issue.

Question to Councillor Sara Bedford, Leader of the Council, from Councillor Debbie Morris

At the last Planning Committee meeting, none of the microphones worked to the detriment of all in attendance. When are they being replaced?

The Leader of the Council advised that the Policy and Resources Committee had approved the replacement of the Audio visual equipment at the 17 June Committee meeting. Work was scheduled to start at the end of July to take around 2 weeks to complete.

Questions to Councillor Sara Bedford, Leader of the Council, from Councillor David Sansom

Following the Chief Executive's sudden departure, why did he leave?

What are the financial implications for the Council?

He is on several joint organisations / outside bodies, what are the implications for them?

Councillor Sara Bedford had been asked by the Head of Human Resources to provide a written response. She confirmed that any joint organisations / outside bodies had been covered by other officers in the interim.

POST MEETING NOTE:

The responses to the questions above are provided below:

Dr Steven Halls retired from the organisation at the end of June 2019.

A payment of £63,514 was made to the Chief Executive Officer plus payment for all outstanding contractual entitlements, including outstanding holiday pay. No contributions were made to Dr Halls' pension.

The membership of joint organisations and outside bodies has been passed to either David Hill interim Chief Executive Officer, or where appropriate to other members of the senior management team. The posts of Director of Three Rivers Commercial Services Ltd and Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd are to be ratified at the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 2nd September 2019.

Question to Councillor Sara Bedford, Lead of the Council, from Councillor David Sansom

"The public don't agree with the Councils description of Rickmansworth High Street as 'flourishing'. What is your answer to those residents?"

The Leader of the Council made reference to a report at the Local Plans sub-committee meeting in June of an Independent Retail Study that showed Rickmansworth with a vacancy rate of 3%, much lower than the UK average of just over 10%. South Oxhey was the only place in Three Rivers with a high rate

of vacancies, but that was because they were waiting to be demolished. There was no increase in vacancies and a natural churn of businesses.

Councillor David Sansom said the information had come from retailers and residents rather than consultants and wondered if the Leader of the Council would react once this fed through.

The Leader of the Council said the evidence and figures were very clear. When asked, people would always say they would prefer the parking to remain free. The practice of business people moving their cars around the car parks throughout the day had now ended, freeing up spaces for shoppers. The evidence showed that the shops were thriving.

INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

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

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst reported that there were 60 new covered cycle racks at Rickmansworth Station with more to follow. Agreement had been reached with Transport for London to increase the provision of cycle racks at Croxley Station from 20 to 30.

He said consultation on parking changes on High Elms Lane, Leavesden, Rickmansworth West and Worker Permits in Rickmansworth would start this week. The next stage of the design of the Croxley Parking Scheme would go out to public consultation within the next few weeks.

A list of minor traffic regulations orders would be advertised in the local paper this week.

Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development, from Councillor Alison Wall

Will this Council consider a two way cycle lane between the bottom of Scots Hill through to the centre of Rickmansworth? A number of residents have raised this and improving cycle routes will support our green strategy.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said the proposal referred to enable cycling in both directions on the High Street (between Park Road and Church Street) was a long-standing desire promoted by both the Three Rivers Cycling Strategy and for the local Highway Authority, Hertfordshire County Council (as set out in its SW Herts Cycling Study 2013). These both identified this route as a key local link. There had been very little local support expressed for this scheme and any evidence of local support would be welcomed.

The County Council was developing a proposal to introduce contra-flow cycle lane on this section of the High Street. This proposal would require very significant remodelling of the road and was therefore contingent on significant funding, as well as on local support.

The District Council had created an alternative route via Northway, Three Rivers House and The Cloisters to enable cyclists to travel from the town centre towards

Croxley Green. This route was upgraded in 2018? with the introduction of a cycle wheeling ramp on the link to The Cloisters.

Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development, from Councillor Joan King

What is the Council's policy with regards to non-respondents to CPZ consultations?

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said the question on consultation responses was specifically raised in relation to a recent parking consultation in Croxley Green. When the Council consults informally ahead of a traffic order proposal, it must consult every directly affected address and must consider every response. Where a response was not received from any directly affected address, the lack of that specific response was not given any weight in the assessment of consultation outcomes.

Councillor Joan King asked why Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst had said the opposite at the meeting.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said that was not reflected in the published minutes. The Officer also did not say that. The turnout of Dickinson Ward in the local election was 37%, the turnout for this consultation was 35%. The turnout for the detailed design consultation was over 42%. Those not responding had not been included.

Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development, from Councillor David Sansom

As the parking deficit has now been cleared and the Council plans to raise £140,000 from low paid workers in Rickmansworth by selling parking spaces on residential streets, how does the Council plan on spending the extra money?

The proposal to address the parking needs for local businesses and employees requiring regular cost effective parking near their place of work whilst safeguarding the parking needs of local residents and existing permit holders was agreed in outline in August 2018. This had been discussed at the Parking Services Working Party in May 2017 and March 2018,

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said the local worker's scheme proposal was to enable the employees of local businesses to park in unused parking spaces and was intended to assist local workers by reducing their parking costs (currently in excess of £1000 in long stay car parks. This proposal if adopted following consultation would cut the cost to workers to potentially £300 per year, a 72% reduction. It had been agreed to pursue this investigation with public consultation. The estimated income was only anecdotal at this stage and would need to be further considered if and when the scheme was implemented but was unlikely to be full take up immediately or in 2019/20. Any income would be offset against additional Enforcement and additional Enforcement Officer costs and would contribute towards making the parking service break even.

Councillor David Sansom understood that the parking deficit had been eliminated so what would the extra money be spent on?

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said any income from parking was ring fenced, to be ploughed back into parking schemes, on or off road as per legislation. The scheme was designed to assist workers, churn and businesses within Rickmansworth. The deficit had not yet been cleared and the scheme was yet to be implemented.

Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development, from Councillor David Raw

When will this Administration bring two hours free parking back in Rickmansworth to bring it in line with the rest of the District?

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said there was currently no intention to vary the charges.

Councillor David Raw: asked whether further investigation would be required to check the information gathered was correct?

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said in June 122 units were surveyed in Rickmansworth, and the vacancy rate was 5 of those units. The short-stay parking charges in Rickmansworth allow people who want to shop or visit Rickmansworth to find somewhere to park in convenient and safe locations.

Following a consultant's report, it was clear there was a need to create churn, i.e. turnover of spaces in Rickmansworth and this scheme was introduced to allow for that. The Consultants recommended a 30 minute free period, but it was decided to allow for a 1 hour free period. The vacancy rate here was 3% against a UK average of 11%.

Councillor Phil Williams said there was no report on Infrastructure and Planning Policy.

Councillor Andrew Scarth reported that he, Councillor Sara Bedford and Officers had attended the official opening of the Chess Homes in South Oxhey, a joint venture between TRDC, Watford Community Housing Trust and Three Rivers Homes. It was great to see the new homes built by Buglar, a local company based in Rickmansworth. Ten of the homes were for social housing. On 10 July he had attended the Watford Community Housing Trust Annual Councillors briefing showing where they would be going in 2020-2025.

Councillor Stephen King asked if Councillor Scarth thought it was nice to have the families turn up to see the naming of the two blocks in South Oxhey? Councillor Andrew Scarth said it was fabulous and Councillor Joan King and John Elliott's speeches were excellent. It was a lovely occasion and it was great that their names lived on, on the new buildings.

Councillor Alex Turner left the meeting after this item.

LEISURE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE REPORT

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

Councillor Chris Lloyd advised that the Council had been re-awarded Green Flags at Leavesden Country Park, Rickmansworth Aquadrome and Chorleywood House Estate and thanked all Officers involved. The award ceremony would take place on Friday 19 July in Stevenage. The Green Flag status was recognised across

the country valuing the quality of green spaces that matter to residents and visitors and celebrated the dedication that went into their maintenance.

2020 would be the Year of Culture and Three Rivers District Council would be working in partnership with HCC and other Districts to showcase Hertfordshire as a County of Creative and Cultural Opportunity. There were five broad objectives which would be supported to celebrate, share and explore Hertfordshire's Arts, Culture and Heritage. Also to enable access and participation in Arts and Culture and Heritage for new audiences. The Council want to increase wellbeing and a sense of belonging through the Arts, Culture and Heritage and to show case pathways to education, employability, enterprise and creative and cultural industries within Three Rivers. To create new Partnerships and new work through skill sharing and new ways of working together. There would be a separate theme for each month.

Councillor Lloyd echoed the thanks to those involved in Leavesden Country Park and the grand opening.

He had attended the Herts Sports Games and Herts Sports Partnership Annual Update and the Herts Health and Wellbeing Update.

Question to Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure, from Councillor Joanna Clemens

In terms of addressing the ongoing environmental emergency, what plans has Three Rivers, working with County, to increase wild grass and wild flower verges on land Three Rivers owns around the District to improve biodiversity?

Councillor Chris Lloyd said there had been a number of areas identified on TRDC land to increase wild grass and flowers, and to improve biodiversity. Work had already commenced in the following areas:

- Behind Eastbury Tennis Courts
- Woodcock Hill Woodlands Cemetery
- The top end of Oxhey Playing Field
- Horse Field in South Way.

Most highway verges belonged to the County Council. Those owned by Three Rivers in South Oxhey were used for parking.

Councillor Phil Williams, the Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability had nothing to report.

Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability, from Councillor Debbie Morris

What are the Council's plans to phase out Council-owned/operated diesel vehicles where electric alternatives are available?

Councillor Phil Williams said Environmental Protection had been talking to several vehicle manufactures over the last five years. One of the main dust cart manufacturers would be bringing out an electric refuse freighter in 2020/21 which was priced at circa £400,000 compared to circa £162,000 in a recent tender for a diesel refuse freighter. The Council was on a waiting list for a demonstration of an electric refuse freighter which was in the process of being built and this was due mid-2020.

Environmental Protection was working on a tender to replace the majority of the Grounds and Street cleansing vehicles. Within the tender, prices were being sought for Diesel, Electric and Hybrid vehicles.

Environmental Protection currently had one electric buggy that worked in the Aquadrome and an electric ride-on-mower for the play areas. It also had a selection of battery strimmers / hedge cutters and a chainsaw which were being tested.

Councillor Debbie Morris asked what would the time frame for the Grounds and Street cleansing vehicles that were in the process of being tendered?

Councillor Phil Williams would provide a written answer.

Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability, from Councillor Reena Ranger

In light of the climate emergency declared at Full Council, what can this Council do stop or deter cars idling outside schools?

Councillor Phil Williams said the Council may apply for *designation* under <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2002/1808/contents/made> The Road Traffic (Vehicle Emissions) (Fixed Penalty) (England) Regulations 2002.

The Council had an Air Quality Management Area so meets the first criteria for designation. If designated the Council would be empowered to issue fixed penalty notices to users of vehicles in their area who fail to switch off their vehicle engine, when requested so to do, by a suitably trained and authorised officer of the Council. Part of the application for designation would include the submission of evidence to demonstrate that there was a problem locally.

A number of London Boroughs have designation under the Regulations, but as yet no Hertfordshire Authorities have applied.

Engine idling while parked was a common problem around schools everywhere.

The legislation does not apply to stationary vehicles held in traffic queues, at traffic lights or other highway obstructions.

Whilst the cost of seeking designation would be minimal, there would be little point in so doing unless a commitment was made to actively enforce the regulations. In London, Civil Enforcement Officers had been trained and authorised for enforcement. Were this Council to explore designation, the cost would have to be thoroughly researched, as retaining the fixed penalty income would not meet the additional cost of the service currently provided by Hertsmere BC.

Two years ago officers obtained some banners to be displayed outside schools re idling engines. These were provided as part of a national RAC campaign for the prevention of idling engines outside schools and funded through a County Councillor's Locality Budget. The Council was attempting to source more of these banners.

Councillor Reena Ranger said in light of the climate emergency declared by the Council, would the Council seek to explore for Enforcement Officers who patrol schools and issue fines to parents who park antisocially to also check for idling engines outside schools?

Councillor Phil Williams advised that this would be something to look into.

Councillor Roger Seabourne had no report for Community Safety and Partnerships.

RESOURCES AND SHARED SERVICES

There was no report from the Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services (Cllr Matthew Bedford).

Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services, from Councillor Michael Revan

How many of the new dwellings at the South Oxhey development are accessible for those in wheelchairs?

Councillor Matthew Bedford said all existing properties were not wheelchair accessible so anything would be an improvement. The Satellite Sites were all designed in accordance with building regulations and to lifetime home standards. There were no lifts to flats in the Satellite Site, so the ground floor flats would be wheelchair accessible but not the flats above the ground floor.

As regards phases 1 and 2, there were 47 affordable apartments in Phase 2 and of those 35 were at ground floor or had access to a lift.

The current plans for phase 3 show 66 affordable properties, all of which would be ground floor or have access to a lift.

Councillor Michael Revan asked if they had looked at the Equality Human Rights Act, and a report 1.1.5, that actually stated what Councils have to put into new build flats. In addition he stated that the Council did not get the CIL Money?

Councillor Matthew Bedford said the affordable properties were all built to lifetime home standards which did meet the regulations, with the vast majority being wheelchair accessible. The properties provided to existing residents who had been decanted from the old properties, had all been individually assessed and where appropriate bespoke adaptations had been made. The Council were complying with all the necessary regulations.

Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services, from Councillor David Raw.

Are the trees removed to build the Bury development to be replaced?

Councillor Matthew Bedford said there would be some tree planting as part of site reinstatement requirements as per planning consent conditions. A copy of the landscape plan for the Bury Development would be forwarded Cllr David Raw.

Councillor David Raw asked if semi mature trees would be planted.

Councillor Matthew Bedford said this would be included in the landscape plan.

Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services, from Councillor Joanna Clemens

Further to my question at last Full Council with respect to the security of our systems, and ongoing concerns being raised in the media, can you advise whether Three Rivers has one of the 524 gov.uk sites in the UK with unpatched vulnerabilities from the CVE system? If so how many do we have and which?

Councillor Matthew Bedford said ICT had confirmed that as part of the security scanning completed, threerivers.gov.uk domain was scanned, and threerivers.gov.uk did not contain the vulnerabilities referenced and was not included within the list of 524 .gov.uk Councils.

CL39/19 REPORTS AND QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRMEN OF THE AUDIT, PLANNING, LICENSING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEES (RULE 14)

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Councillor Keith Martin advised that the accounts would be signed off the following Wednesday. This was due to the excellent work carried out by Jo Wagstaffe, Alison Scott and the team. There had been good feedback on the work carried out on Internal Audit. The previous huge list of outstanding audit recommendations had been significantly reduced and there were no 'critical' or 'high risk' recommendations on any of them.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

Councillor Sarah Nelmes said that the Planning Committee continued to meet throughout the summer. Officers had trained new Members of the Committee and would be running one of their interactive sessions for Parish Councillors on 22 July.

LICENSING

Councillor Martin Trevett advised there was no report as the previous meeting of Licensing Committee had been cancelled.

REGULATORY SERVICES

Councillor Steve Drury advised that the results of the consultation with the Taxi Operators on the complete revision of the Hackney Carriage, Private Hire and Operator Policies had been discussed at the last Regulatory Services Committee Meeting. The Committee had been in general agreement with all the changes and Cllr Drury thanked Lorna Fryer for the work she put into the report and also Gordon Glenn for his work on the Open Spaces Byelaws Consultation.

Post Meeting Note: *The Constitution had been amended with immediate effect under Rules and Procedures, Rule 16(3) with regards to Members being required to stand when addressing the Chairman etc. to include the words "where possible". The Rule will now read "where possible a Member when speaking shall stand and address the chairman etc." The Chief Executive has authority to make minor amendments to the Constitution as detailed in Part 3, Part A -Matters Delegated to the CEO/Directors Point 8.*

CL40/19 MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 11

1. *Councillor Sara Bedford, seconded by Councillor Andrew Scarth, moved under Notice duly given as follows:*

Council affirms:

1. Its declaration of a climate emergency.
2. A strong desire that new homes in the District should be built to high levels of energy efficiency, for the benefit of both the environment and future occupiers.
3. A wish to for Government to take steps to decarbonise the country's economy.

Council notes that the current Three Rivers Local Plan made provision for all new homes to be Zero Carbon by 2016.

Council therefore regrets that:

1. The current Government published a document in July 2015 entitled 'Fixing the foundations: Creating a more prosperous nation', which effectively ended the policy for homes to be zero carbon by 2016, non- domestic properties to be zero carbon by 2019 and supporting revisions to the Building Regulations.
2. Whilst Paragraph 150 of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states new development should be planned for in ways that avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change, and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design, there are no national technical standards for carbon emission reductions in the same way that there are technical standards for space, water and access.
3. Attempts by other Councils to set higher standards for energy efficiency in Local Plans has been met with threats by Planning Inspectors to find the Plan unsound if the Policy is not removed from the Draft Plan.

Council therefore calls for:

1. An immediate return to the obligation for Councils to plan for Zero Carbon Homes, and for homes with a lower reliance on other resources during their building and lifetime.
2. The introduction of Building Regulations which support and extend these sustainable moves.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman of the Council the voting being 24 For, 0 Against and 10 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

Council affirms

1. Its declaration of a climate emergency.
2. A strong desire that new homes in the District should be built to high levels of energy efficiency, for the benefit of both the environment and future occupiers.
3. A wish to for Government to take steps to decarbonise the country's economy.

Council notes that the current Three Rivers Local Plan made provision for all new homes to be Zero Carbon by 2016.

Council therefore regrets that:

1. The current Government published a document in July 2015 entitled 'Fixing the foundations: Creating a more prosperous nation', which effectively ended the policy for homes to be zero carbon by 2016, non- domestic properties to be zero carbon by 2019 and supporting revisions to the Building Regulations.
2. Whilst Paragraph 150 of National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states new development should be planned for in ways that avoid increased vulnerability to the range of impacts arising from climate change, and help reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its location, orientation and design, there are no national technical standards for carbon emission reductions in the same way that there are technical standards for space, water and access.

3. Attempts by other Councils to set higher standards for energy efficiency in Local Plans has been met with threats by Planning Inspectors to find the Plan unsound if the Policy is not removed from the Draft Plan.

Council therefore calls for:

1. An immediate return to the obligation for Councils to plan for Zero Carbon Homes, and for homes with a lower reliance on other resources during their building and lifetime.
2. The introduction of Building Regulations which support and extend these sustainable moves.

2. *Councillor Sara Bedford withdrew the Motion*

Motion Withdrawn

3. Councillor Sarah Nelmes,, seconded by Councillor Sara Bedford, to move under Notice duly given as follows:

To amend Part 3 of the Council's Constitution regarding the appointment if substitutes to the Planning Committee so that it reads:

Either:

Yes. Substitutes are only permitted from a designated named pool of substitute Members with each Group allowed to appoint up to the same number of substitute Members as Members of the Committee. All substitute Members serving on the Planning Committee to have undertaken suitable training on the planning process prior to serving on the Committee.

Or

Yes. Substitutes are only permitted from a designated named pool of substitute Members. All substitute Members serving on the Planning Committee to have undertaken suitable training on the planning process prior to serving on the Committee.

The Proposer and Secunder proposed an amendment that the first option be agreed.

On being put to Council the amended motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman of the Council the voting being 22 For, 12 Against and 0 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

Substitutes are only permitted from a designated named pool of substitute Members with each Group allowed to appoint up to the same number of substitute Members as Members of the Committee. All substitute Members serving on the Planning Committee to have undertaken suitable training on the planning process prior to serving on the Committee.

4. Councillor Stephen King, seconded by Councillors Joan King, moved under Notice duly given as follows:

Councillor Steve Drury declared a non-pecuniary interest in the motion as he was a Member of the Committee at the County Council that would make a decision on the request for Village Green status and would abstain from voting.

This Council supports the objective of Watford Rural Parish Council to obtain Village Green status for South Oxhey Playing Fields. Accordingly, it instructs Officers to provide the fullest possible pro-active assistance and liaise with both Hertfordshire County Council and the Parish Council itself to ensure this land receives much-needed added protection as a public open space as soon as possible.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman of the Council the voting being 33 For, 0 Against and 1 Abstention.

RESOLVED:

This Council supports the objective of Watford Rural Parish Council to obtain Village Green status for South Oxhey Playing Fields. Accordingly, it instructs Officers to provide the fullest possible pro-active assistance and liaise with both Hertfordshire County Council and the Parish Council itself to ensure this land receives much-needed added protection as a public open space as soon as possible.

CHAIR