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**POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE****MINUTES**

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Monday 2 September 2019 between 7.30pm and 8.40pm.

Councillors present:

Sara Bedford (Chairman) (Local Plan)  
Matthew Bedford (Resources and Shared Services)  
Sarah Nelmes (for Cllr Stephen Giles-Medhurst)  
Stephen Cox  
Steve Drury (Infrastructure and Planning Policy)  
Alex Hayward  
Marilyn Butler (for Cllr Alison Wall)

Chris Lloyd (Vice-Chairman) (Leisure)  
Andrew Scarth (Housing)  
Reena Ranger  
Roger Seabourne (Community Safety and Partnerships)  
David Sansom  
Phil Williams (Environmental Services and Sustainability)

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Officers Present: David Hill, Interim Chief Executive  
Joanne Wagstaffe, Director of Finance  
Geof Muggerridge, Director of Community and Environmental Services  
Peter Simons Senior Transport Planner  
Andy Stovold Head of Community Partnerships  
Marko Kallik Senior Planning Officer  
Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

**PR21/19 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stephen Giles-Medhurst and Alison Wall with the substitute Members being Councillors Sarah Nelmes and Marilyn Butler.

**PR22/19 MINUTES**

The Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 22 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman.

**PR23/19 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman ruled that the following item of business had not been available 5 clear working days before the meeting but was of sufficient urgency for the following reason:

**HEATHROW EXPANSION PROPOSAL – THIRD STAGE OF CONSULTATION**

To enable the Council to respond to the consultation.

**PR24/19 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

None received.

**PR25/19 HOUSING DELIVERY TEST ACTION PLAN**

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) required Councils to prepare an action plan where housing delivery had fallen below the housing requirement.

The Action Plan analyses the reasons for the under-delivery of new homes and sets out actions to improve housing delivery within the District. It also reviewed Government policy and guidance, considers the views of relevant stakeholders and analyses existing data in order to identify a series of actions to help increase housing delivery across the District.

The Senior Planning Officer said this was a technical document which included a list of standard actions which the Council was expected to follow. The Council was already undertaking them and would continue to improve where we could although many of the actions relating to housing delivery were beyond the Council's control. The Council was not in a unique position as many Councils had not met the housing delivery test. The test measured the delivery of housing against the Local Plan target. As the Local Plan was out of date, being over 5 years old, this meant that although we were the first District in Hertfordshire to deliver their Local Plan it was now out of date. We were being judged against a much higher target than the 180 houses a year we were delivering against in the past. This was a new policy requirement to produce an action plan which included key actions to deliver the targets. The only way we were going to have the sites to be able to build enough houses within the District was to have a new Local Plan and to work together with other Authorities on the joint strategic plan which gave us the opportunity to look at the wider strategic growth areas across the whole of South West Hertfordshire.

Members raised the following points:

With regard to Paragraph 2.2 of the report the housing delivery test was an annual measure of housing so if it was done annually why were we in this position? Some Members could not recall discussing a Housing Delivery Action Plan before.

POST MEETING NOTE: details had been provided in a report to the Policy and Resources Committee on 19 March 2018 – South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan report (item 6) and to the Local Plan sub-committee on 7 March 2019 as Part of the Local Plan update report (item 5) weblinks are provided below to both the reports:

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/meeting/policy-and-resources-committee-19-march-2018>

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/meeting/local-plan-sub-committee-thursday-7-march-7pm>

A Member appreciated that other Councils were in this position but it was how we perform. On the action plan the bullet point "Continue to reduce the number of applications determined after the statutory deadline" what would be the measurement for this? On the review of the CIL charging schedule the word review was an open word and did not give any detail of what the review was, when it was going to be and timeframe.

A Member asked about point 4.27 of the action plan on density standards and wondered if the density standards in the new Local Plan were going to be incorporated in any way as we had agreed to adopt the Central London standards. Here Members were being asked to increase density which was not specific to Three Rivers and would erode what made Three Rivers the place it was and way people lived here. We did not want to become an extension of London. We would be stuck with the minimum standard set for London and there would be no minimum standards set for Hertfordshire as a whole.

On the bullet point "Further joint ventures with housing associations will be explored. This will involve expanding the joint venture" what expansion was suggested.

A Member said it was incumbent on the Council especially in the current economic climate to provide more affordable housing including housing at the cheapest rent.

The Chairman advised that the intention was the new Local Plan would look to adopt the Central London density standard as to adopt another standard would require an immense amount of work. There may be some confusion between the density of the housing and the size of the rooms. The Council was looking at the London standards in terms of the size of the rooms which was considerably better than some of the rooms currently being provided.

POST MEETING NOTE: this was discussed at the Local Plan sub-committee meeting on 8 August 2019 as part of the report on Local Distinctiveness and Place Shaping. The report can be viewed using the weblink below:

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/meeting/local-plan-sub-committee-thursday-8-august-7pm>

A Member asked about the bullet point on reducing the time spent on applications.

The following responses were provided:

This was the first time the Government had introduced the Housing Delivery Test. The results were published in November last year and would be published every November unless there was a change in policy. The policy enabled the Council to see if they had passed the Housing Delivery Test and looked back at the previous three years housing delivery. Without a new Local Plan in place by November we were likely to have to produce a new action plan next year.

The Chairman advised that the Government had changed the targets and we were not the only Council in this position. We were previously leading by having the most updated plan but were now behind because the targets had changed.

The Senior Planning Officer said this was about getting applications determined in time although we could not control how quickly they were built we can only try to speed up the process.

The Council would be reviewing in 2021 the CIL charging areas together with the Local Plan which would help with the delivery of the infrastructure.

The Director of Community and Environmental Services said the Council had currently one completed scheme with Watford Community Housing and were looking at a number of other possible schemes for expansion which had not been agreed. The other Joint Venture was potentially with another local Housing Association. The Chairman said if the Council had the opportunity to provide

more affordable housing by using our land and having a Joint Venture and it was financially viable then we would.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being 9 For, 0 Against and 4 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That the Policy and Resources Committee agrees the Action Plan and the series of actions that the Council will seek to implement.

## **PR26/19 HEATHROW EXPANSION PROPOSAL – THIRD STAGE OF CONSULTATION**

The proposed expansion of Heathrow Airport had progressed into consultation stage and here had been a number of consultations covering to different areas. The two areas are the Airport Expansion and the other was the Airspace and Future Operations.

The Senior Transport Planner said the consultation invited feedback on Heathrow's proposals for the future layout of the airport, including the new runway and other airport infrastructure such as terminals and road access. Details included plans to manage the environmental impacts of expansion, including a proposed Heathrow Ultra Low Emissions Zone, Heathrow Vehicle Access Charge and a proposed 6.5-hour ban on scheduled night flights. There would not be a significant impact on Three Rivers either on the operation or the construction. There might well be other elements which would impact on Three Rivers in particular in 2022 when there would be a full consultation on the precise flight paths. The construction phase issues on the M25 meant that there was likely to be some impact but the intention was to divert the motorway with an 'offline' temporary diversion to keep the existing M25 open while the diversion was built reducing the effect on road users.

A Member referred to the topic areas identified in Paragraph 2.10 of the report noted that none of these had been identified as affecting Three Rivers although Members felt they would. It was asked if some measurements could be taken before any work started.

The Senior Transport Planner said this was not being discussed as part of this consultation. There were 30 specific questions but if we wanted to comment on any particular areas and how it might affect us, Officers could do that although he didn't believe there would be any impact on these points. The Council was in a strong position as when we petitioned regarding HS2 we were already taking electronic emissions south of Maple Cross.

The Chairman said that a number of residents were concerned about the effect of the expansion at Heathrow and this should be recorded in our reply to the consultation.

A Member said residents of Moor Park and Eastbury would say there was already a problem and they had noticed this year that after 11pm and before 6am a steady stream of aircraft. Details had been provided from Heathrow on the holding patterns. It needed to be asked if post the expansion would flights be landed quicker and would we be listed as an existing flight path. Priority should be made to reduce the impact on noise although there was speculation that the planes would be flying a lot lower.

If a third runway went ahead it was disappointing that no new rail link would be provided to reduce the vehicles travelling there.

The Senior Transport Planner said if Members did have information on the flight paths it would be useful to send to Officers. What they were proposing was looked at last year with some diagrams provided on the flight paths. On the noise Officers had looked at this in quite a lot of detail to understand what the impact would be.

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

The Committee thanked Officers for the report and the speed in which it was provided.

RESOLVED:

Delegate authority to provide a detailed response to the consultation to the Director of Environmental and Community Services in consultation with the Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development and to take into account Hertfordshire County Council's response.

## **PR27/19 CORPORATE PEER CHALLENGE FEEDBACK REPORT AND RESPONSE TO KEY RECOMMENDATIONS**

A Corporate Peer Challenge was completed at Three Rivers Council between in March 2019. The conclusion of the challenge and investigation was a plenary meeting, where the Peer Team provided their considered feedback and opinions of the Council, our structures, performance and policies. It was a very positive report on the performance of the Council on the work we are doing and had asked for feedback on the work we are doing around commercialisation and growth. Management Board had put together a response to the recommendations and was provided at Appendix 2 and that work was ongoing to be developed over the timescales provided in the appendix with individual papers brought back to the Committee within the due timescale. At this stage we are unable to provide any financial implications of those.

A Member said on page 8 of appendix 1 (feedback from the Peer Challenge Group) it mentioned some actions which were not listed in the 7 key recommendations in Appendix 2). The points raised were:

1. Council performance reporting where it was found not to be part of a formal committee, although information is distributed to all Councillors. As a political objective exists to ensure high quality, value for money public services are delivered it would be beneficial to have a more formal approach to ensure political oversight and challenge is achieved and could not see this as part of the key actions.
2. There were a number of references made to projects slipping and not delivering on time. The peer team recommend more clarity around reporting major project progress to support member and supportive officer challenge and holding project sponsors / managers to account. And could not see this being addressed.
3. There is no evidence of budget managers being held to account for in-year changes or managers constructively challenged by colleagues. As TRDC are on a pathway to a more commercial culture and operating model, it is essential to manage overspends more effectively and ensure they are properly accounted for and managed down for example decreasing demand, better forecasting, negotiating existing contracts or examining reduction in general operating cost, rather than having their adverse budget position

being made good. Was this going to be addressed with the Council writing off variances for years?

The Chairman said the Committee was being asked to sign off the 7 key recommendations which had been agreed with the LGA. It did not mean that the other points were not being looked at. There would always be better ways of doing things but they hadn't said there was anything wrong it was just suggesting some things could be done better. The Council would report back on how the 7 key recommendations were being addressed.

The Director of Finance said there was a separate report which was presented to Management Board on a regular basis who had agreed the actions and started to put some initial timeframes together. The report included the 30 to 40 individual points which were outside the 7 key recommendations and hoped that they would all have been addressed before the Council agreed its budget in February 2020.

The Member felt the points highlighted were major issues and would expect them to be addressed.

The Director of Finance said the points did not form part of 7 key recommendations and were of less importance. The review did not say there was any fundamental problem. Councils would just pull out the key recommendations identified.

A Member noted we were an outstanding Council but all Members had a need and right to know all the other areas which were being discussed by Management Board. The CEO said he would be happy to discuss with Members.

It was noted that there would be a follow up visit probably next summer to review the progress of the 7 key recommendations.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared CARRIED by the Chairman the voting being 8 For, 0 Against and 5 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

1. Noted the Corporate Peer Challenge Feedback Report in Appendix 1.
2. Agreed the responses to the recommendations of the Feedback Report outlined in Appendix 2.

## **PR28/19 COUNCIL MEETING CALENDAR 2021-2022**

The Committee considered the draft Calendar of Meetings for the Local Government Year 2021/22.

Officers had checked to make sure there were no clashes with religious holidays. If Members saw any clashes or issues could they please contact the Committee team before the 22 October Council meeting. All the school holiday dates would be added once they were available from the County Council.

On being put to the Committee the Chairman declared the recommendation CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RECOMMEND:

That the attached Calendar of Meetings for 2021/22 be approved subject to details being provided on the future Hertfordshire school holiday dates for 2021/22.

**PR29/19 APPOINTMENT TO THE HERTFORDSHIRE BUILDING CONTROL BOARD AND THREE RIVERS COMMERCIAL SERVICES LTD**

The purpose of the report was to appoint the Interim Head of Paid Service/CEO as a Director on Three Rivers Commercial Services Ltd and Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd

In response to a question on the other two Directors on the organisations on Commercial Services it was the Director of Community and Environmental Services (DCES) and Director of Finance (DoF) and on the Joint Ventures it was DCES, DoF and Head of Finance

On being put to the Committee the Chairman declared the recommendation CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

RESOLVED:

That the appointments at Paragraph 3.1 of the report be agreed.

**PR30/19 BUDGET MANAGEMENT 2019/20**

The Budget monitoring report was a key tool in scrutinising the Council's financial performance and is designed to provide an overview to all relevant stakeholders. It is essential that the Council monitors its budgets throughout the year to ensure that it is meeting its strategic objectives within its resource limits and, where necessary, corrective action is taken. A key principle of budgetary control is to align the budget holders' financial responsibilities and their management responsibilities.

The Director of Finance said there was an overall £59k favourable variance around revenue and the same around capital mainly due to bringing forward the Swillet play area by a year. The main reasons for the revenue was some additional income from back dated rents from investment properties, additional costs around the Interim CEO, additional costs for the parking projects assistant which was agreed by the Committee at the last meeting and a shortfall in parking income.

A Member asked where the shortfall in parking income came from. The Director of Community and Environmental Services said it was due to the number of parking permits issued being slightly down on what was expected and take up in the car parks was slightly down although it was up on last year but this was against the new target.

A Member asked what our total exposure was on rental incomes and was it commercial or temporary housing. The Director of Finance said it was mainly on our commercial properties and was those listed under point 3.1 of the report being the commercial investments that the Council had made but could also be linked into some of our garage income. On debts, the largest debts were down to housing but were actually the recovery of temporary accommodation costs. When we put people into temporary accommodation sometimes we are allowed to recover certain costs from them so there was a large volume of not very large amounts. We needed to tidy some of those so we can charge the service charge but because some of the individuals had moved very quickly we were unable to find them. The debts issues was not part of the voids.

On the car parking we were expecting to receive less income. The £42k variance was due to reduced income, the creation of the project assistant post and additional costs associated with the parking contract.

In response to a Member question on what the homeless demand was for temporary accommodation in the District it was advised it was around 60.

On being put to the Committee the Chairman declared the recommendation CARRIED the voting being 8 For, 0 Against and 5 Abstentions.

**RECOMMEND:**

That the following revenue and capital budget variations be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan:-

<b>Variance</b>	<b>2019/20</b>	<b>2020/2021</b>	<b>2021/2022</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Revenue - (Favourable)/unfavourable	(58,960)	21,240	22,600
Capital - Increase/(Decrease)	59,680	(276,823)	226,823

**PR31/19 STRATEGIC, SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING 2020- 2023**

The purpose of this report was to seek agreement to the process whereby the Council will determine its three-year medium-term strategic plan for 2020-2023, the related service plans, and the allocation of financial resources to achieve them.

On being put to the Committee the Chairman declared the recommendation CARRIED the voting being unanimous.

**RESOLVED:**

That the assumptions to use in preparing the detailed budgets for the period shown in Appendix 1 be agreed:

That the scheme used to prioritise revenue & capital growth shown in Appendix 2 be agreed.

That the draft timetable at Appendix 3 be agreed.

That the format of any budget consultation if agreed be approved by the Director of Finance in consultation with the Lead Member for Resources.

**PR32/19 LOCAL PLAN SUB-COMMITTEE**

Noted Councillor Steve Drury had filled the vacancy on the sub-committee.

**RESOLVED:**

Noted the appointment.

**PR33/19 WORK PROGRAMME**

To agree the Committee's work programme.

**RESOLVED:**



Agreed the items included in the work programme.

**PR34/19      EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The Chairman moved, duly seconded, the following motion and it was agreed:

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 paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

**PR35/19      CONFIDENTIAL MINUTES**

The Confidential Minutes of the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held on 22 July 2019 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chairman. Councillor Reena Ranger wished to record her abstention from approving the minutes.

**PR36/19      LOCAL PLAN**

This report sets out the exceptional and site specific circumstances relating to land at Oxhey Jets F.C.

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

RESOLVED:

- That in the light of the threat to the future of this important community facility which would be occasioned by a delayed decision (when Members are asked to approve a Draft Local Plan for Publication) and the very clear NPPF advice which would render a proposal to allocate the land for housing within the new Local Plan unsound, they exceptionally agree at this time and in advance of the approval of the Draft Local Plan for Publication, that the land associated with the Oxhey Jets F.C. clubhouse and pitches are not allocated for development in the new Local Plan.

That public access to the report be immediate.

That public access to the decision be immediate.

**CHAIRMAN**