

Minutes of a Virtual/Remote Meeting of **FULL COUNCIL** held on **Tuesday 20 October 2020** from 7.30pm to 10pm.

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, Debbie Morris, Sarah Nelmes, Reena Ranger, 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.

CL51/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Alex Michaels, David Raw and Sara Bedford (who joined the meeting later).

CL52/20 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 14 July 2020 and the Extraordinary Council meetings held on 28 July 2020 and 1 September 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair of Council subject to an amendment to the minutes of 14 July and an amendment to the minutes of 1 September 2020 as detailed below:

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

Is it appropriate that a Councillor should have to wait the best part of two months for a response to correspondence sent to an Officer on 17 May?

The Leader of the Council believed, as explained, that a delay of that order would not ordinarily, on the face of it, be acceptable. The Leader asked Councillor Cox to forward details of the circumstances and what this item was and who it had gone to in order to do some research to find out why there was such a lengthy delay. It may have been a member of staff who had been reallocated to a different task. A written answer would be provided once the details had been provided of what the problem was.

Councillor Cox thanked the new Leader for the answer. Having not had an answer for almost two months, miraculously a response had appeared at 18.00hrs on that day that told him what he already knew. He asked if the leader would agree that he had been pretty shabbily treated.

The leader agreed to find out once the details were received and if Councillor Cox had been shabbily treated and apology would be given.

POST MEETING NOTE: *Response given in writing by Officers on behalf of the Leader of the Council. There are set time periods for officers to respond to*

queries and these are usually met with officers responding very quickly despite the pressures on their time. Councillors can chase up with an officer if a response is not given in a timely manner or take the matter up with a more senior officer – this sentence to be deleted

Councillor Stephen Cox asked the following supplementary question: A response had been received at 18.00 that day telling Councillor Cox what he already knew so would the Leader of the Council agree that he had been pretty shabbily treated?

The Leader of the Council believed she could not yet determine if Councillor Cox had been treated shabbily until she had investigated the circumstances and would revert.

In the statement made by Councillor Joanna Clemens under Minute CL46/20 and CL47/20 to replace they with she.

Councillor Alex Hayward asked for a fuller explanation on the £27,000 'additional interest accrued and paid to the Council 106 reserves balances', from Minute CL 34/20 14 July 2020.

Written response: The adverse variance of £27,000 relates largely to interest that should have been accrued for the Puckeridge Lane Clarendon Living project. There was a budget for this but as interest does not actually come until the project finishes the adjustment to accrue the interest in 19/20 was missed.

However this does mean that the interest we will receive, (which is rolled up and will be paid at the end of the loan term or when all units have been sold) if we receive it in 20/21 or 21/22 when the scheme completes, will be higher than the budget giving a favourable variance. So it is a timing issue and overall the budgets for the interest and the actual interest earned over the lifetime of the project should balance out.

The Chair of the Council had agreed to take an urgent report at Item 4. The report had been published on time but had been updated and had not been available for five working days but was considered urgent business.

CL53/20 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

Councillor David Major registered a non-pecuniary interest in item 3F as Chair of West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst registered a non-pecuniary interest in item 3F as a member of the Scrutiny Committee.

3A - PR19/20 - BUDGET MONITORING – IMPACT OF COVID 19

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, duly seconded, the recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee with regard to Minute PR19/20 Budget Monitoring – Impact of Covid 19.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks asked for an explanation for the additional expenditure of £75,694 paid to Waste Crews. Councillor Matthew Bedford advised it was an

additional sum paid in the early stages of the Pandemic to the Waste Crews who were maintaining that service.

Councillor Alex Hayward asked how many employees benefitted from the additional £75,000 paid to the Waste Crews.

Written Response: The figure reported as "Waste (honorary)" covers payments and associated on-costs made to 89 Council employees in the refuse, street cleaning and grounds maintenance teams

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

RESOLVED:

Agreed that the Director of Finance be authorised to make the necessary adjustments to individual budgets to reflect the expenditure and loss of income arising from Covid-19 contained in the report, including the expenditure savings set out in Appendix 2 and the capital programme changes set out in Appendix 3.

3B - PR39/20 - LOCAL PLAN UPDATE: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Item postponed. Would go to Policy and Resources Committee on 2 November and return to Council on 8 December.

It was noted that Councillor Alex Hayward wanted Officer re-assurance that the Council would not be open to legal proceedings due to the postponement of this item.

3C - PR40/20 CHORLEYWOOD NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN: PROGRESS TO REFERENDUM

Councillor Steve Drury thanked Members of Chorleywood Parish Council and Officers of the Council for working so hard to keep this on track and there would now be a referendum on 6 May 2021.

Councillor Steve Drury moved, duly seconded, the recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee with regard to Minute PR40/20 Local Plan Update: Local Development Scheme.

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

RESOLVED:

Council Agreed

1. That the modifications to the Chorleywood Neighbourhood Development Plan be made in accordance with the Examiner's Report (Appendix 1) and that the modified Chorleywood Neighbourhood Development Plan (Appendix 2) proceeds to referendum on 6 May 2021 (Option 1, as noted at Paragraph 4.1); and
2. That the decision statement is published.

3D - PR41/20 - COUNCIL CALENDAR OF MEETINGS

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, duly seconded, the recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee with regard to Minute PR41/20 Council Calendar of Meetings.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Calendar of Meetings for 2022/23 be approved.

3E - PR48/20 - BUDGET MONITORING – PERIOD 4 (JULY)

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, duly seconded, the recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee with regard to Minute PR48/20 Budget Monitoring – Period 4 (July)

Councillor Alex Hayward asked about vacancies within the Council on pages 5 and 25 of the report. There were vacancies within Revenues and Benefits and wondered if the Council would be actively recruiting to these jobs? Councillor Matthew Bedford advised that the Council's Management Board considered each vacancy as it arose with what action was required. There was no awareness of any difficulty recruiting staff or any shortfall in service delivery.

Councillor Alex Hayward asked for an explanation on vacant posts where it was stated 'not currently advertised'. Councillor Matthew Bedford advised that staffing arrangements were operational matters that were dealt with by Officers. Councillor Hayward could speak to the Director of Finance if further information was required.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being 24 For, 0 Against, 12 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

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

Variance	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23
	£	£	£
Revenue - (Favourable)/ Unfavourable	(1300,166)	4,352	(35,648)
Capital - Increase / (Decrease)	(230,000)	241,000	10,000

3F - PR49/20 - WEST HERTS CREMATORIUM JOINT COMMITTEE – LOAN AGREEMENT

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, duly seconded, the recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee with regard to Minute PR49/20 West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee – Loan Agreement

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

RESOLVED:

- That Three Rivers, as one of the partner authorities to the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee, signs the loan facility agreement between Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough Council as borrowers with Dacorum Borough Council as lender for £6 million to part fund a new Crematorium in Hemel Hempstead, subject to all the other 4 borrowing authorities passing similar resolutions;
- That Three Rivers also signs a Deed of Contribution and Indemnity with all five partner authorities of the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee, namely Dacorum Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, St Albans City and District Council, Three Rivers District Council and Watford Borough, subject to all the other member authorities passing similar resolutions;
- Notes that in agreeing to 1.1 and 1.2 in report that Three Rivers are underwriting one fifth of the £6 million loan facility should the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee default on repayment of the loan; and
- That delegated approval is given to the Interim Director of Finance to approve the final terms of both agreements.

3G - PR52/20 - THREE RIVERS COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP HATE CRIME ACTION PLAN 2020-21

Councillor Roger Seabourne moved, duly seconded, the recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee with regard to Minute PR52/20 Three Rivers Community Safety Partnership Hate Crime Action Plan 2020-21

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

RESOLVED:

That a budget of £20,000 is allocated to resource a 0.6fte Hate Crime Support Officer post to deliver on the Hate Crime Action Plan and areas of work identified and this be agreed by Full Council.

3H - REVIEW OF RULE 14 – REPORTS FROM AND QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL AND LEAD MEMBERS AND CHAIRS OF COMMITTEES

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, duly seconded, the recommendations made in the review of Rule 14 of the Council Constitution – reports from and questions to the Leader of the Council and Lead Members and chairs of Committees.

Members asked for the deadline dates for questions to be submitted of 8 working days prior to the Council Meeting and for written response to be provided of 5 working days prior to the Council Meeting to be published in the Member's Calendar.

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

RESOLVED:

That Council agreed the recommendations on Rule 14 Reports from and Questions to the Leader of the Council and Lead Members and Chairs of Committees.

3I - REVIEW OF RULE 11 NOTICES OF MOTIONS

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, duly seconded, the recommendations made in the review of Rule 11 of the Council Constitution – Notices of Motions. Councillor Nelmes asked for the final date for motions to be included in the Member's Calendar.

19.49 Councillor Donna Duncan temporarily lost connection to the meeting.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being 32 For, 1 Against, 2 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

That Council agreed the recommendations on Rule 11 Notices of Motions.

3J - REVIEW OF RULE 18 PETITIONS

The recommendation on Rule 18 (Petitions) to Council was that there be no change.

RESOLVED:

Agreed no change to Rule 18

3K - REVIEW OF RULE 15 (QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC)

The recommendation on Rule 15 (Questions from the Public) to Council was that there be no change.

RESOLVED:

Agreed no change to Rule 15.

3L - RULE 16 (RULES OF DEBATE)

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved an amendment that the proposer of the motion to speak for not more than seven minutes and seconder and subsequent speakers to have not more than four minutes.

On Rule 17 the amendment would be brought to the Council in December.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, duly seconded, the recommendations, to include the proposed amendment with regard to speaker time.

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

RESOLVED:

that any changes to the Rules of Debate which arise as a result of amendments to Rule 11 to include the amendment that the proposer of the motion to speak for not more than seven minutes and seconder and subsequent speakers to have not more than four minutes.

That amendments to Rule 17 be brought to Council in December.

3M - MEMBER/OFFICER PROTOCOL

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved the recommendation that the Member/Officer Protocol be approved.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Member/Officer Protocol provided below be approved.

3N - COUNCIL CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved the Council Constitution Amendments recommendation to change the pronouns throughout the Council Constitution to the inclusive they/their/the.

Councillor Joanna Clemens said the most important job of the Constitution was to be clear and intelligible to members of the public. She felt referring to people as 'they' was confusing. To re-word things within the standards of normal written english to make them friendly to as many groups as possible was acceptable but she could not support something that was deliberately confusing.

Councillor Stephen Cox felt that Three Rivers was moving with the times and did not find this contentious.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks felt that changing singular pronouns to plural pronouns would be incorrect grammatically but understood that it was to be more inclusive.

Councillor Phil Williams said language evolved and the Council had to move with it.

Councillor Alex Hayward asked if each Member's preference for how they wished to be referred to in minutes could be respected. This was agreed by the Chair.

On being put to Council the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being 35 For, 1 Against, 0 Abstentions.

RESOLVED:

Council agreed for the pronouns throughout the Council Constitution to the inclusive they/their/the.

3O - WORKING PARTIES

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved the recommendation that Council consider the use of Working Parties/Task and Finish Groups in appropriate circumstances ensuring where possible that meetings would be held in the public domain.

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

RESOLVED:

That Council consider the use of Working Parties/Task and Finish Groups in appropriate circumstances ensuring where possible that meetings would be held in the public domain.

CL54/20 AMENDMENTS TO THE COUNCIL SCHEME OF DELEGATION

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved the recommendation in the report.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Scheme of Delegation to Officers contained within Part 3 of the Council's Constitution be amended in accordance with paragraph 2.4 of the Addendum Report.

CL55/20 COMMITTEE PROPORTIONALITY REPORT

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved the recommendation in the report.

Councillor Alex Hayward proposed Councillor Debbie Morris to sit on Licensing and Regulatory Services Committees

Councillor Stephen Cox proposed Councillor Joan King to sit on Audit Committee

RESOLVED:

Council agreed the seats on Licensing and Regulatory Services Committee and Audit Committee

CL56/20 COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Council noted the appointment of Councillor Kate Turner to the named substitute vacancy on the Planning Committee.

CL57/20 HERTS GROWTH BOARD

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst advised that the Herts Growth Board had been operating since 2018 as a non-constituted partnership of the 11 Local Authorities and Local Enterprise Partnership and this would move it to the next level by establishing a formal Joint Committee and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes confirmed that Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst was the current nominee to the Herts Growth Board. Councillor Giles-Medhurst advised that any Member could be appointed as a substitute at the time of meetings.

Councillor Steve Drury asked whether nominees would be required for the Scrutiny Committee. Councillor Giles-Medhurst advised that, should all ten District and Borough Councils sign up, the first meeting of the Joint Committee would not take place until July 2021 so nominations would be made at the Annual Council meeting.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst moved, duly seconded, the recommendation 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 Council agrees to and confirms the establishment of the Growth Board and Growth Board Scrutiny Joint Committees (to hold their inaugural meetings in January/ February 2021 and then HGB Scrutiny aligned to confirmation of securing Government funding in 2021) for the Hertfordshire Growth Board and that the Council becomes a member of both;

That the Council adopts the Growth Board Integrated Governance Framework into its own constitutional framework;

That it nominates a member and substitute member as its representative to the Scrutiny Committee and

That it nominates a member and substitute member as the Council's representative on the Joint Committee which will be Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst

CL58/20 APPOINTMENT TO OUTSIDE BODIES

To appoint a new Member to the Three Rivers Museum to replace Councillor Sarah Nelmes.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes nominated Councillor Stephanie Singer

Councillor Alex Hayward nominated Councillor Alison Wall.

On being put to Council the votes were cast as follows:

Liberal Democrat 24, Conservative Group 11, Abstentions 1

Councillor Stephanie Singer was declared by the Chair of Council as the Council's new appointee to the Three Rivers Museum

RESOLVED:

Councillor Stephanie Singer be appointed the Council representative on the Three Rivers Museum.

CL59/20 TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 18

None.

CL60/20 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 15

Questions had been received from one Member of the Public and were responded to by Councillor Phil Williams.

- Given your declaration of a climate emergency when will you be introducing a requirement that all new builds are zero carbon dioxide emitters?

Response: We are seeking the maximum carbon emission reductions from new developments that we are allowed. We will not be able to require new builds to be zero carbon until the Government changes national policy that will allow us to do so. With regard to Council owned commercial buildings we are targeting the BREEAM rating "Very Good"

Supplementary Question: What does that mean in terms of Carbon Emissions?

Response: All new building were rated on the BREEAM scale which was a Government standard. All Three Rivers buildings would be 'very good' on the scale. The Council were unable to have zero emissions until the Government changes National Policy.

- Given your financial situation how big a consideration is the income new housing will generate. What would the target number of houses, if built, generate for the Council?

Response: The housing target was set by Government. Income will be from Council Tax. Based on an annual housing target of 624 dwellings, the income generated will be approximately £92,626.56 per year or £1,389,398 over a 15 year plan period (based on a band D charge of £148.44 per annum).

Supplementary Question: The full figure of income generated from Council Tax to include Section 106 money was required. The written response would be appended to the minutes.

- Green areas are carbon dioxide absorbers. How do you intend to make good this loss of carbon absorption when you build on green areas?

Response: There will be a requirement for developers to provide a net gain of biodiversity of 10% as set out in the draft policy of the Local Plan and as required by the Environmental Bill which is anticipated to be enacted early next year. In the first instant the Biodiversity increase will need to be implemented in the actual development, if that is not possible it will be used elsewhere in the District.

POST MEETING NOTE: To determine where in the district the optimum possibilities for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and the subsequent carbon absorption, TRDC are commissioning a bio diversity audit of their land and the connected ecological networks which will convert the opportunities into Biodiversity units. BNG funds will be used to buy BNG units in the priorities identified.

The draft policy of the local plan requires that all major developments will be required to submit a sustainability statement demonstrating how sustainable design and construction methods have been used, and measures to enable the development to mitigate and adapt to climate change over its lifetime.

- There is a massive and likely to be permanent shift away from office working to home working as a result of the pandemic. What sort of area of commercial property do you think will become empty as a result of this shift and how many dwellings could be put on the sites instead?

Response: It is too early to predict what the effect on offices will be due to people working at home at the moment due to the Covid situation or the long term changes in people's working. However, there is likely to remain a demand for office use as companies move away from offices in London and relocate to areas such as Three Rivers.

- What actions do you plan to take in the next 3 months to bring down carbon dioxide emissions on sites under Council control and in the area more generally?

Response: Two weeks ago the climate change draft strategy was approved by Leisure, Environment and Communities Committee to go forward for consultation, which is taking place across a number of organisations throughout the autumn. At the Environmental Forum on 4 November there would be an opportunity for residents to form part of small groups and contribute. The draft strategy can be found on the Council website and welcomes comment from all members of the public. Once consultation is complete the final strategy will be approved early in the New Year. An action plan will follow. In order to inform the Action plan we will also be shortly undertaking an assessment of TRDC own emissions and across the District. We are also working on developing projects to contribute to the strategy and reducing carbon emissions in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council.

Supplementary Question: What are the Council doing now to bring down carbon emissions?

Response: Three Rivers is the leading authority on reducing water usage. The Council are doing everything they can to reduce emissions.

- Should you not reconsider and make representations to have the housing target reduced given the shifts in location of housing demand resulting from greater home working as a result of the pandemic.

Response: The Council has already made representations to the Government on the housing target.

Supplementary Question: What representations have been made?

Response: Three Rivers had written to the Government asking for a reduction and for the housing target to be re-looked at.

- Given the coming climate chaos it is important we have plenty of space for food growing in and around housing. What are your plans to do that? The big housing estates like the one around Warner Brothers are deserts with next to no land for *growing food amongst the housing*.

Response: Allotments form an important part of the District's Green infrastructure as well as providing opportunities for people to grow food. Policies in the new Local Plan protect these and encourage the provision of allotments and orchards as part of new developments. As part of the Climate Change Strategy we will be engaging with local groups and Parish Councils to encourage rewilding and community gardening.

Supplementary Question: What provision will be made for community food growing spaces near to homes?

Response: It is within the strategy to include introducing orchards, re-wilding and community gardens.

Councillor Phil Williams thanked the member of the public for attending the meeting and asking the questions and encouraged further involvement at the Environmental Forum.

CL61/20 CHAIR OF COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

Chair advised that there were no events to note.

LC62/20 REPORTS AND QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER AND LEAD MEMBERS

Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council, acknowledged the difficult and challenging times due to Covid-19 and the increase in infection rates. The Leader of the Council was pleased with the way services had functioned during the pandemic and advised that the recovery plan was underway to bring all services back in line.

Survey results from the public on the County Council's suggestion of a single Unitary Authority for Hertfordshire showed that over 82% thought this was not the right time to look at Local Government reorganisation and 89% of residents did not feel it would be right in this area as it would reduce their ability to influence the Council's policies. Three Rivers, along with all the District and Borough Councils within Hertfordshire supported this view.

The Leader of the Council had met two local MPs, Dean Russell and Gagan Mohindra and some of the major stakeholders, including Warner Bros and the Grove Hotel. Visits had been made to Leavesden Country Park and the new South Oxhey Swimming Pool. The support received from Lead Members, Opposition Leaders, Colleagues and Officers had been much appreciated. Following on from the Peer Review during which concerns had been raised about the Council's communications strategy, an interim Communications Specialist had been appointed to look at the strategies going forward to ensure stakeholders, residents and staff understood the Council's ambitions, priorities and plans for the future.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks asked how many people had been included in the Unitary Authority survey. The Leader of the Council advised that it had been a telephone poll carried out by an external communications company and had included just over 200 people per District. This figure had been considered statistically significant.

Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council, from Councillor Stephen King

What plans, or powers if any, has this this authority to allocate land for self-build homes as part of the local plan?

Response: The Council did not have its own land holdings that could be allocated for self-build housing. One of the policies within the Local Plan encouraged developers to provide some self-build plots.

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

Councillor Stephen King was unable to locate the self-build register.

POST MEETING NOTE: The Leader of the Council had provided information to Councillor Stephen King regarding the Right to Build Register which was available at the following link. The Register itself was not published due to data protection reasons.

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/right-to-build>

INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The report from the Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development (Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst)

Rickmansworth

As Members were aware the Rickmansworth High Street social distancing scheme came into force in two phases with the second phase being a partial closure from 10am weekdays and all weekend. This should have happened before the August Bank Holiday but due to issues with the County Council was delayed a few days. The Lead Member especially wanted to single out Peter Simmons for his hard work in helping promote this.

HCC had confirmed that traffic was expected to be diverted around Rickmansworth High Street via Northway for up to 18 months following publication of a new traffic order in October.

The temporary barriers were due to be replaced in the very near future by the County Council with formal metal barriers. Additional signage to warn of cyclists and advise them of pedestrians had been raised as a need, as had the need for a bus shelter at the new temporary bus stop in Northway and that was being investigated by the County Council.

At the Lead Member's request officers had installed two new additional blue badge bays in the Ebury House Car Park which was a level service walk only a few metres from the centre of the High Street. Officers were also pursuing the installation of new on road 20 minute free parking bays next to this in Ebury Road. This would form part of a consolidation Traffic Order.

Croxley Green

The Croxley Green Permit Parking Scheme Traffic Order would be advertised on 23 October in the Watford Observer.

Copies of the Notice would also be posted on every affected street and the statutory response period was 3 weeks. Ward Members had been sent the details. Letters had been sent to every address in each street, purely to advise them of the statutory consultation and would include an advisory leaflet.

Two tier bike racks had been installed at Croxley Green Station.

Rickmansworth West Controlled Parking Zone

The Lead Member had had a virtual meeting with local Ward Councillors and agreed a way forward following the public consultation carried out earlier in the year.

They expected the detailed design publication in early November (after half term) and would be seeking comments on these over a three week period. After that the Council considered that the proposed scheme would be moved to the next stage, subject to those comments, which would be the advertisement of a Traffic Order planned in late January (subject to agreement following feedback on detailed design).

Cycling

Proposed routes were now being developed for the local cycling and walking plan, following meetings with all the local cycling and walking groups. Public consultation on the new plan was expected early in the spring.

Delta Gain Upgrade

Unfortunately this project had been delayed for a number of reasons, as Ward Members were aware, not least over securing a detailed legal agreement over land that was not in public ownership and revised costs above original estimates.

On the green agenda, the tender in relation to vehicle electric charging points and having fast charging instead of normal charging points in two different places in the District was underway. It was hoped they would be installed before the end of the financial year.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks asked for clarification as to how long Rickmansworth High Street diversion scheme was going to continue as she was under the impression it was a 42 day temporary Traffic Order that would be reviewed. Councillor Giles-Medhurst said the original was 42 days. The Traffic Order being promoted by the County Council was a temporary Traffic Order valid for up to 18 months and therefore could be rescinded within that time. As it was clear the 42 days were going to be exceeded the County Council promoted the temporary Traffic Order that enabled this particular operation to carry on for the 18 month period. It was clear that we had entered the second wave of the pandemic and County Officers would not consider the rescinding of this within 42 days was valid.

Councillor Donna Duncan asked whether the Delta Gain project would happen soon. Councillor Giles-Medhurst hoped so but would need to get the correct legal agreement in place. When it was investigated further, if the land was to be sold by the current land owner without the legal agreement in place the money spent by the Council would be null and void and the Council have no holding over that investment in terms of the infrastructure. It was right and proper the legal process needed to be completed. Once it was complete they would hope to be able to give contractors the go ahead.

Councillor Duncan had been advised by the Officer that the Legal Agreement was in hand so wondered if there was any progress. Councillor Giles-Medhurst confirmed it was in hand but had not yet been agreed.

Councillor Alex Hayward asked whether it was envisaged to keep Rickmansworth High Street closed for 18 months. Councillor Giles-Medhurst said the County Council together with Three Rivers would keep this under review but currently it would continue. The intention of the County Council was to ensure everyone was able to be safe and were able to socially distance while in the High Street.

Councillor Stephen Cox asked whether the car parks in Croxley Green and Rickmansworth were getting the electric charging points. They had put in a bid for a couple of charging points in South Oxhey and asked, if they had not been successful on this occasion could they be considered for the next time? Officers were aware that Councillor Cox had raised this in the past.

Written Response: The location and number of EV charging points within the South Oxhey regeneration scheme are subject to ongoing review. With specific regard to Phase 3 it is still at an early design stage. However, it is very likely that any provision will be located on private not public land. Further consideration to electric vehicle charging points across the District will be reviewed as we work through the Climate Change Strategy and relevant transport programmes.

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

The Council should be aware that Rickmansworth High Street has witnessed a surge in anti-social behaviour and that residents are extremely worried that with the new barriers remaining down on Saturday night, that this will escalate. The barriers are 50 yards from the Council Offices, the Council has hundreds of staff and yet we are told that nobody is available to unlock the barriers on Saturday evening, is this a demonstration in the lack of interest in Rickmansworth from this Council?

Response: The Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst was surprised and disappointed that Councillor Sansom having had an answer to this question in writing on the 27 August which was acknowledged was asking the same question again.

This was a County Council scheme, supported by Three Rivers Council and the Lead Member had attended four meetings with Ward Councillors (who wished to attend) including Councillor Sansom and the County Councillor as well as separate meetings with Francis and County Officers to see what could be done to assist the county, traders and residents to put the scheme in place in the light of social distancing requirements. The closure over the weekend provided flexibility in the use of the High Street for a longer duration.

Although this was a County Council scheme and the barriers were funded by them it was a public highway and the County Council, despite employing thousands of staff, said they could not open and close the barriers.

TRDC offered to assist with this, and cover the cost. This involved the Civil Penalty Officers closing the barriers at 10am and opening them at 6pm and again closing them at 10am on a Saturday. Three Rivers Depot Staff opened the barriers on a Monday morning to allow access for traders. The Civil Penalty Officers undertaking this work did not work late Saturday afternoons or on Sundays.

It had been arranged using the Depot for this operation to continue. This had worked very well with no complaints from traders since it was brought in on the 1st September.

As for the "hundreds of Three Rivers staff" as mentioned in the original question, only a handful of staff were at Three Rivers house during the week during the pandemic and none at the weekends so there was no way this could be covered on Saturday evening or Sunday.

Officers had received only 7 reported incidences of anti-social behaviour since 1 September on the High Street since its closure, and not all had taken place at the weekend (none directly from the public or Police).

It was strongly refuted that there had been a 'surge' in anti-social behaviour in the High Street and it would be unjustified to correlate any anti-social behaviour with the part or full weekend closure unless evidence existed.

Supplementary Question from Councillor David Sansom: What can be done about the anti-social behaviour after the pubs close and the cycling?

Response: The Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst advised that any anti-social behaviour should be taken up with the Police, either through Crime Stoppers or 101, or if of a serious nature using 999. He was aware of issues with cycling which was why additional signage had been requested from County Council to advise cyclists, particularly at the Solomons Hill junction with the High Street to ensure they were aware of pedestrians, but this was also a matter for the Police to deal with not the District Council.

Councillor Roger Seabourne advised that Councillors had a responsibility to report things they hear and also to inform members of the public on the best way to report incidents. Police resources would always be directed to where the issues were. There had only been 7 reports in 6 weeks which was considered very low.

Report from the Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy (Councillor Steve Drury)

Councillor Steve Drury advised that although there was very little to report, there would be more next time with the arrival of the Local Plan.

Report from the Lead Member for Housing (Councillor Andrew Scarth)

Councillor Andrew Scarth reported that together with the Leader of the Council they had been on a tour of the two new temporary accommodation developments in South Oxhey, Bowring Green and Ashridge Drive which he thought were fabulous buildings. There were 12 two bed homes for those who fell on hard times. He also visited Notley Court in Abbots Langley, a Thrive new build which was highly impressive. Some of the 17 dwellings would be shared ownership, some affordable lets and some were for sale.

Councillor Debbie Morris questioned the Lead Member for Housing findings that they were fabulous buildings as she had received information from local residents to the contrary. They were horrified by the proximity to their own dwellings and by the overlooking and lack of screening.

The Lead Member for Housing said they had seen that opaque glass had been used to avoid direct overlooking and the stairs were screened. The developer had done a great job to comply with residents in terms of fencing and everything had been done to work with residents. They were not overlooked.

Councillor Reena Ranger said residents had complained about mental distress as well as inconvenience during the construction of the buildings. Residents had been given the option to plant a conifer of their choice to try to screen what they are seeing. The views from Bowring Green windows go directly into people's gardens and the stairwell was overlooked. People falling on hard times should be supported in the best way possible. Did the buildings confirm to any space standards?

The Lead Member for Housing said there was a screen for the stairs. The opaque windows did stop the overlooking. There were trees planted in the area. There was a lot of space in accommodation with the two bedrooms and kitchen/dining area. Members were welcome to go and have a look.

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY

Report from the Lead Member for Leisure (Councillor Chris Lloyd)

Councillor Chris Lloyd advised that the Council had been awarded a fourth green flag at South Oxhey Playing Fields, the other three being at the Aquadrome, Leavesden Country Park and the Chorleywood House Estate. He thanked all the Officers, past and present, people from the County Council and Local Residents who worked hard to make this possible. He recommended any Members wishing to should visit the new Leisure Centre at South Oxhey or go to use the facilities. He also pointed out that some Leisure Staff were still on re-deployment and some on secondment.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks asked whether Watersmeet had got the Government grant. The Lead Member for Leisure said the grant had been received and Officers were working out how they could use it as the Covid situation had made things more complicated.

Question to Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure, from Councillor Stephen Cox

Does the Lead Member recognise the importance of all the green open space separating South Oxhey and Oxhey Hall which provides great amenity for both communities?

Response from the Lead Member for Leisure, Councillor Chris Lloyd: The quick answer was yes, however, the Council values all its open spaces, particularly noting the greater use the public have been making of them during the coronavirus pandemic. The Council also has a duty to allocate land for housing as part of the Local Plan process however, and cannot commit to protecting all the open spaces, but could not comment on that in a public meeting. Councillor Lloyd offered to meet up to walk around the South Oxhey area with Councillor Cox.

Supplementary Question: Councillor Stephen Cox wanted it to be noted that he preferred one part of the answer more than the other and would the Lead Member for Leisure take note of that.

Response: Councillor Chris Lloyd would be more than willing to come and walk around the area with Councillor Cox and any other Members.

Report from the Lead Member for Environmental Services & Sustainability (Councillor Phil Williams)

Batchworth Depot's planning application had been approved.

The Climate Change Strategy had been approved at the Leisure Environment and Community Committee Meeting, so work was taking place getting it into the community and getting as much feedback as they could with the goal of getting the action plan confirmed. He thanked Elen Roberts, Joanna Hewitson and Councillor Jon Tankard for all the effort they put into the Climate Change Strategy.

The textile collections had started up again.

Councillor Alex Hayward asked whether the Climate Change Officer had been consulted on the Batchworth Depot Planning Application in terms of how carbon neutral it would be. The Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability to provide a written reply.

POST MEETING NOTE: Whilst the Climate Change Officer was not consulted on the planning application, as there was no formal requirement for such consultation, the building had been designed to exceed the minimum requirements set out in the Development Plan policies relating to Carbon Dioxide emissions (achieving a 20.67% reduction in emissions in excess of the 5% Development Plan target). This would be achieved by the installation of photovoltaic panels on the roof, and the use of efficient lighting and heating/cooling systems.

Councillor David Sansom asked how the grey water policy could be improved. The Lead Member advised that the Climate Change Officer was working on that now.

Councillor Reena Ranger asked the Lead Member to confirm whether in place of the trees being removed at Batchworth Depot, there would be a replacement tree

for each as per the motion at Full Council, and also whether there would be two trees planted for each tree removed? The Lead Member advised there was not much room at Batchworth Depot so those that could not be replanted at the Depot would be planted elsewhere in the District.

Councillor Marilyn Butler questioned the amount of surface/rain water that was running off and into the rivers which should be going into soakaways. The Lead Member advised that this was a massive issue. Infrastructure at the sewage treatment works was unable to cope. Water run-off was very high on the agenda and all aspects of water needed to be looked at.

Councillor Debbie Morris asked for clarification as Councillor Williams had advised there would be replacement trees planted at Batchworth Depot but Planning Committee were advised there was no room for replacement trees so they would be replanted at the Aquadrome. Planning Committee had also raised a question of electric charging points which were not covered in the scheme at Batchworth Depot. Would there be charging points available if the Council converted to electric vehicles? Councillor Williams advised that if the Council converted to electric vehicles charging points would be installed. They were on the agenda and there was space for them. Councillor Williams would provide a written reply regarding replanting the trees.

POST MEETING NOTE: On the questions regarding replacement tree planting for the Depot, an Informative was added on this at the Planning Committee on 15 October 2020

Councillor Paula Hiscocks raised the issue of flooding on Harefield Road with rainwater going into the sewers. Were the Council working with other authorities to prevent this recurring? Councillor Williams advised that Three Rivers had built some slow release dams at Bishops Wood to try to alleviate the flooding although it was the responsibility of the County Council. It was hoped the dams would slow the water down so it would be soaked up.

Councillor Marilyn Butler said the Sarratt Bottom Watercress Beds were ruined by sewage leaks in 2014, and that more pressure should be put on Thames Water. Councillor Williams advised that they were in continuous correspondence with Thames Water and the Environment Agency need to be involved. He suggested everyone should contact their MPs to get some legislation to make it illegal to dump sewage in any river.

The Chair advised that there were 10 minutes left of the meeting. Any questions not yet answered would not be carried over to the next Full Council Meeting but would receive a written reply and would be allowed a supplementary question at the next Council Meeting. Motions would be treated as being withdrawn and would have to be re-submitted.

Councillor Alex Hayward believed there were 37 trees at Batchworth Depot of which 4 would be taken down and asked for confirmation that 8 would be planted at the Aquadrome to replace these. The Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability to provide a written answer. The written reply would be appended to the minutes.

MOTIONS UNDER RULE 11

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst proposed that under Rule 12(14) Council Procedure Rules be suspended and that the following motions be referred to the relevant Committee/Sub-Committee as follows:

Motion 2- Leisure Community
Motion 3: Policy & Resources
Motion 4: Policy & Resources
Motion 5: Equality Sub
Motion 6: Policy & Resources
Motion 7: Local Plan
Motion 8: P & R
Motion 9: Equality
Motion 10: Equality

On being put to the Council the proposal was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council the voting being 24 For, 7 Against, 7 Abstentions

RESOLVED:

Under Rule 12(14) Council Procedure Rules were suspended and motions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 were referred to the relevant Committee/Sub-Committee.

The Chair of Council announced that the questions that had been asked by Members of the Lead Members but had not been answered at the meeting tonight would receive a written answer to the question.

The written answer would be published in the minutes. At the meeting in December the Member who asked the question would be able to ask one supplementary question on the written answer provided.

QUESTIONS NOT COVERED DURING THE MEETING TOGETHER WITH WRITTEN ANSWERS PROVIDED AFTER THE MEETING

Question to Councillor Roger Seabourne, Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships from Councillor Alex Hayward

Now that the children are back at school and the PSPO at Shepherd School has elapsed can we be updated on the traffic conditions?

Response provided to Cllr Alex Hayward after the meeting by the Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships

Although technically, traffic conditions are outside the scope of TRDC, as this is a matter for HCC Highways, I do not wish to 'split hairs' on a technicality; parking is our responsibility and the two are inexorably linked, albeit with a rather muddled, confused cause and effect. As such it is neither sensible, practical nor productive to treat them separately.

Following notice of your question, I visited the site and felt, just as a couple of one off snapshots (although of course I was very careful not to take photographs) the general situation was worse than when the PSPO was in force, but still better than it had been previously.

Following receipt of your question, officers contacted Shepherds School for their comments and/or observations. Perhaps, not surprisingly, the Head Teacher expressed concerns that parking conditions have worsened around the school at dropping off and collection times in terms of blocked driveways and parking on double yellow lines. However, the school apparently did not consider the problems severe enough to warrant contacting the Council before being approached.

This was a pilot, and therefore no precedents for actions or procedures were available, but I think it fair to assume officers would probably not have followed up in any proactive way without some requests to do so. Your question, which prompted some inquiries which produced some comments, has prompted some action, and I thank you for that.

An increased PEO presence in the vicinity of the school over the next few weeks has been requested and we will be reviewing the parking controls in the wider area in the future.

RESOURCES AND SHARED SERVICES

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

I am sure all Councillors are aware that this Council has identified "Promoting a Healthy Lifestyle" in the TRDC Strategic Plan as one of the Councils aims. Rickmansworth Bowls Club and the British Legion Bowls Club contribute to our stated aim by providing Exercise and a Social Network for a large number of Local Residents. Will this Council confirm that it will continue to serve our residents and support the Bowls club which promotes a healthy physical and mental outdoor lifestyle?

Response provided to Cllr Sansom after the meeting by the Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services

Yes

Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Joan King

Given the area designated for the new market in South Oxhey is now completed, can the Lead Member advise when this Council will inform Watford Rural Parish Council where stall holders' vans will be allowed to park and at what cost?

Response provided to Cllr Joan King after the meeting by the Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services

Discussions are still ongoing with the Parish Council and Countryside and it is currently anticipated that Henbury Way car park will be utilised.

Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Stephen King

What percentage of affordable/social housing does the Lead Member believe should be stipulated in this Council's local policies in future to at least guarantee that the present target of 45% affordable/social housing, which is so infrequently achieved, is henceforth always met?

Response provided to Cllr Stephen King after the meeting by the Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services

The Council remains committed to its policy of seeking 45% affordable housing.

Urgent Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Paula Hiscocks

Would this Council be prepared for the Rickmansworth Bowls Club building to be acquired by Batchworth Community Council as a Community Asset?

Response provided to Cllr Paula Hiscocks after the meeting by the Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services

The Council would be extremely unlikely to offer either a freehold or long leasehold interest in the clubhouse or the bowling green as they are an integral part of the Three Rivers House campus. Any sale would therefore be unlikely to represent Best Value. But in principle we would of course consider a (short) lease along similar lines to that already under discussion with the bowls club. I suggest the Clerk contacts officers if the community council has a proposal they want to discuss.

CHAIR OF COUNCIL