

Minutes of a Virtual/Remote Meeting of **FULL COUNCIL** held on **Tuesday 8 December 2020** from 7.30pm to 9.30 pm.

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

CL63/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor David Sansom.

CL64/20 MINUTES

The Minutes of the Council meeting held on 20 October 2020 were confirmed as a correct record and would be signed by the Chair of Council.

Councillor Alex Hayward asked for the written reply to her question at Minute LC62/20 to be included in the minutes.

Post Meeting Note: The written reply had been added as Addendum 1 at the end of the minutes dated 20 October 2020.

CL65/20 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

To receive the recommendations from the Policy and Resources Committee meetings held on 2 November 2020 and 7 December 2020.

A link had been provided to the Minutes of the P&R Committee meetings but Members asked for the actual minutes document(s) referred to in each recommendation to be included in the background papers on the Agenda for future meetings. This was agreed.

PR62/20 LOCAL PLAN DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, duly seconded, the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee with regard to Minute PR62/20 Local Plan Development Scheme.

On being put to the Council the recommendation was declared **CARRIED** by the Chair of Council, the voting being 21 For, 11 Against and 4 Abstentions. Councillors Marilyn Butler and Roger Seabourne were unable to vote due to technical reasons.

RESOLVED:

That Council agreed the Local Development Scheme as set out in Appendix 1.

PR64/20 BUDGET MONITORING – MONTH 6 (SEPTEMBER)

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, duly seconded, the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee with regard to Minute PR64/20 Budget Monitoring – Month 6 (September).

Councillor Alex Hayward asked for an update on the temporary accommodation on the two sites projected for end October. Councillor Andrew Scarth advised that there had been delays getting the furniture into Bowring Green and Ashridge Drive due the Pandemic. This was now all in place and it was hoped that clients would be able to move in the following week.

On being put to the Council the recommendation was declared CARRIED by the Chair of Council, the voting being 22 For, 1 Against, 14 Abstentions

RESOLVED:

Council agree 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	191,000	4,352	(35,648)
Capital - Increase / (Decrease)	(1,145,500)	1,164,000	0

PR66/20 MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 11

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, duly seconded, the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee with regard to Minute PR66/20 Motions Under Procedure Rule 11, that Council approve the paying of the real living wage.

Councillor David Raw said on point 4 it stated that the Council are a responsible employer and this wage should be provided regardless of their contract type and to contracted staff. The Councillor thought we were in a free market situation where if we contract to private companies it would be down to them to decide how they pay their staff wages and why the Council were getting involved in private companies wage structures. Councillor Sarah Nelmes advised that this had been discussed at the Policy and Resources Committee and it was the wish of the Council that contractors working for the Council be paid the living wage.

Councillor Sara Bedford wished to make the point that as the person who originally had put forward the motion to full Council and moved the motion at Policy and Resources Committee it is a motion which seeks to value everyone who works for us and to act as a decent employer. As a decent and reasonable employer we should be looking to pay people a decent and reasonable wages which reward them for the job they carry out and does not leave them highly dependent on benefit payments in order to be able to live. The Councillor asked if the Council should not be decent and reasonable employers who value our staff.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes agreed that the Council did want to be decent and reasonable employers who paid the real living wage.

Councillor Stephen Cox said in the 21st century all employees and contractors who are working on behalf of our residents are paid fairly and that is what this motion is about and the Labour Party were happy to support the motion. The Leader of the Council agreed with the statement made by Councillor Cox.

Councillor Alex Michaels asked whether the Council had not known that the cost of this was £10k like other motions are costed out. Councillor Sarah Nelmes advised there had been an error with the original costing which was why it had come to the Council.

Councillor Alex Hayward said they were all in agreement with the motion but clarity was requested on the wording of point 4 of the Motion and when it states contracted it means people who would be being brought into the Council for example if the Council employed an electrician to do a job do we therefore know what the electrician is paying their staff.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes said in most organisations this was part of the procurement process but would provide a written response.

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

RESOLVED:

Paying the real living wage

That:

1. Council notes its decision in 2013 to pay the Real Living Wage (RLW) to all employees.
2. Council further notes that this decision was not extended to staff employed on a casual basis and believes that this was incorrect.
3. Council understands that only the Real Living Wage is independently calculated each year and is based on the minimum that employees and their families need to live.
4. Council believes that as a responsible employer this wage should be extended to all employees, regardless of their contract type, and to contracted staff, such as cleaners and security officers.
5. Council therefore requests that all employees of contractors and Council staff employed on a casual basis should be paid the RLW as soon as practically possible, and that discussions take place with SLM regarding the pay of employees at our leisure facilities.
6. Council also commits to becoming an accredited Living Wage Employer.

Note: the cost of this has been estimated by TRDC to be around £10,500pa.

MINUTE PR71/20 BUSINESS RATES POOLING

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, duly seconded, the recommendation from the Policy and Resources Committee with regard to Minute PR71/20 Business Rates Pooling.

Councillor Alex Michaels was concerned that the business rates were variable and the Government grant was not so were there risks with this? Councillor Matthew Bedford advised that a source of income was not guaranteed in the way a

Government Grant was guaranteed. This would be raised with the Government in the future, however, this was a one year procedure and offered some upside if the Council joined it.

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

RESOLVED:

That Council agreed that

Subject to a final review following the Local Government Settlement for 2021/22, Three Rivers District Council enters into the Hertfordshire Business Rates Pool and

Council delegate authority to the Chief Executive and the Director of Finance, in consultation with the Chairman and Vice Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee to sign up to the Hertfordshire Business Rates Pool, within 28 days of the Local Government Finance Settlement

CL66/20 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, duly seconded, the recommendations from the Independent Remuneration Panel.

Councillor Alex Hayward pointed out that the appendix had zero beside the Main Opposition Leader. Councillor Sarah Nelmes apologised and said the lines were out of alignment and would get this rectified.

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

RESOLVED:

Council agreed the recommendation that there be no change in the Members Allowance or Special Responsibility Allowance for 2021/22.

CL67/20 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME FOR 2021/22

Councillor Matthew Bedford reminded the Council that Three Rivers was one of a minority of Councils that continued to offer up to 100% rebate to the residents in most need in the District and recommended the Policy be retained for the coming year.

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, duly seconded, the recommendation as set out in the report on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2021/22.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Council adopts the scheme as operated in 2020/21 for 2021/22.

CL68/20 COUNCIL TAX BASE FINANCIAL YEAR 2021/22

The Chair of Council advised that they had agreed to take the report as a matter of urgency as the report had not been available 5 clear working days before the meeting but was of sufficient urgency as the Council needed to set its Council Tax Base for 2021/22 by 31 January 2021.

Councillor Matthew Bedford moved, duly seconded, the recommendation in the report.

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

RESOLVED:

That the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2021/21 be approved.

That in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by the Three Rivers District Council as its council tax base for the year 2021/22 shall be:-

Parish	Band D Equivalent 2021/22
Abbots Langley	8,622.1
Batchworth	6,343.1
Chorleywood	6,214.6
Croxley Green	5,563.4
Sarratt	1,098.3
Watford Rural	7,251.7
Unparished Area	3,681.1
Total District	<hr/> 38,774.3 <hr/>

CL69/20 AMENDMENTS TO RULE 17

Councillor Sarah Nelmes moved, duly seconded, the amendment to Rule 17 – Procedure Rules for Budget Setting.

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

RESOLVED:

That Council agreed the amendment to Rule 17 – Procedure Rules for Budget Setting

CL70/20 TO RECEIVE THE RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE LICENSING COMMITTEE HELD ON 2 DECEMBER 2020 ON THE LICENSING POLICY

Councillor Roger Seabourne drew Member's attention to the revised Appendix B which superseded the original document that had been presented to the Licensing

Committee on 2 December. As the Lead Member responsible for this area Councillor Seabourne wished to sincerely apologise to Members and Residents for this mistake. An error had been made under unique circumstances but felt it was right that the admission of an error be highlighted but this had allowed a full investigation of the process to ensure it would not happen again.

Councillor Seabourne advised that the Licensing Team had been a member of staff short from March and the two remaining members of the team faced a 25% increase in their workload. The Pandemic had meant frequently changing rules and regulations which had been confusing and the Licensing team had been dealing with many enquiries along with an increased workload. Councillor Seabourne hoped Members would agree that it was right that licensed premises, businesses and members of the public had their concerns addressed as a priority because for many of them it was their livelihood and safety that was at stake. Councillor Morris' very thorough scrutiny was accepted and justified and it was right to do so.

The revised schedule proposed was a more condensed schedule. Councillor Seabourne wished to thank the Officers for working so hard to get the Council to a position to be able to reduce the time period to bring forward the new Licensing Statement.

Councillor Debbie Morris was pleased to hear the apology from Councillor Seabourne which was welcome although Councillor Morris had only been on the Licensing Committee for six weeks, the Chair and Lead Member had been on for longer. Both of them should be on top of their briefs and should know that the Council's Constitution states that it is the Licensing Committee's function to recommend to Council a Statement of Licensing Policy and to ensure full review of the Policy at least every three years. The Licensing Committee should hold a minimum of two meetings a year and delegated powers to the Head of Regulatory Services and Licensing Officers, whilst including numerous functions, do not include ensuring that Council have that Policy. At last week's Licensing Committee they put the blame on Officers of the Council's failure from 7 January 2021 to have a compliant Policy. They had belatedly taken on board concerns raised and proposed an expedited timetable for a new policy to be adopted but this would not stop the Council from breaching its mandatory statutory obligations.

Councillor Debbie Morris said that the Council had received specialist Licensing Counsel's advice, the cost of which came from the Licensing Legal Budget. It was the Councillor's belief that the situation had arisen due to no Licensing Committee meetings taking place between December 2018 and 2020.

Councillor Stephen Cox thanked Councillor Seabourne for the apology. It was not great for the Council to be in breach of its statutory obligations but the Councillor was reassured as to the risks not being major. It was to the Officers' credit that there was an expedited timetable and lessons had been learned.

Councillor Alex Hayward thanked the Officers and thanked Councillor Roger Seabourne for the apology and said it was very much appreciated.

Councillor Alex Michaels said it was very positive for a Councillor to apologise.

Councillor Roger Seabourne advised that they had been fully aware that the Policy was due to expire and the review and preparation was on-going. It was due to have been completed on time. The Officers had fully expected the volume of

questions from the public to drop off but constant changes to the rules and regulations meant they continued.

Councillor Roger Seabourne moved, duly seconded, the recommendation and moved an amendment providing a revised implementation plan - Appendix B. The amendment proposed would enable the policy to be reviewed and implemented by 23 February 2021 instead of May 2021.

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

RESOLVED:

That the Council:

- i) Authorise Officers to continue to adopt the existing Statement of Licensing Policy 2016-2021 for an interim period up until 23 February 2021 and
- ii) Authorise Officers to review the Policy in line with the Schedule of Implementation (Appendix B).

CL71/20 TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 18

None received.

CL72/20 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 15

None received.

CL73/20 CHAIR OF COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised that the Council had sent condolences to the families of two former Chairs of the Council who had recently died, John Oakley-Smith (Chair 1978/9) and Ivor Ambrose (Chair 1999/2000).

The Chair had laid a wreath at the War Memorial in Croxley Green on Remembrance Day and extended thanks to all Councillors who had also laid wreaths.

The Chair had attended the Herts Scouts virtual AGM.

CL74/20 REPORTS AND QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER AND LEAD MEMBERS

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

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

12a Supplementary question to Councillor Roger Seabourne, Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships from Councillor Alex Hayward.

What were the timescales on the reviews of the parking controls and the outcomes?

Written response provided: The Parking Management programme for the next 2 years will be reviewed in January 2021 at the IHED Committee and requests

assessed against the Committee agreed criteria. There are requests for this area to be considered but minor requests based on junction improvements which will be discussed and assessed at the January IHED Committee meeting. Officers cannot at this time confirm timescales for the possible outcomes until the result of that assessment has been discussed and decided and it is known what they are to be.

12b Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor David Sansom

No supplementary question was asked as Councillor David Sansom was not in attendance.

RESOURCES AND SHARED SERVICES

12c Supplementary question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Joan King.

Thanked the Lead Member for confirming that the Parish Council suggestion of using Henbury Way car park had been accepted and does the Lead Member realise that the answer to the question was only half an answer. No indication had been provided on what the cost of the parking permits would be for the stall holders' vans at the new market in South Oxhey?

Written response provided after the meeting: No final decision on permit prices for market traders has been made as the formal scheme, including the Traffic Regulation Order, has not yet been formally proposed or agreed (this will require a Committee resolution). Consideration will be given to the cost of enforcing any scheme and the costs of other permits issued by TRDC when proposing permit costs.

Further supplementary question to written response provided after the meeting:

I am aware that there are existing permits for parking so if I could be advised what the cost is for shopkeepers in Rickmansworth I am sure this would help.

Written response provided:

The cost of business permits in Rickmansworth is £540.

12d Supplementary question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Stephen King

Councillor Stephen King thanked the Lead Member for the non-answer and asked whether the Lead Member accepted that seeking 45% of affordable and social housing and achieving it are two different things? What percentage of affordable and social housing should the Council have in its local plan to achieve to the 45% target? What do we need to do to achieve the target? On past performance the Council had not gone past its 45% target.

Councillor Matthew Bedford said that the Government would need to change the rules. The Council was asking for 45% but under the rules developers had a get out of viability that there were set ways of measuring that the Council could not say that they did not accept what the developer was saying. The Council were

subject to national rules and as far as they could operate within the National Framework they would do so, ideally achieving 45%.

12e Supplementary question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Paula Hiscocks

When would the short term lease for Batchworth Community Council Bowls club be available?

Councillor Matthew Bedford asked whether the Bowls club had put forward a proposal to Council Officers. Councillor Hiscocks said they were waiting to have sight of the lease. Councillor Matthew Bedford advised that negotiations with the bowls club were well advanced and there had been significant discussions about the various options of the lease. The Councillor was not aware that the Community Council had been directly involved in the discussions and that Batchworth Community Council should contact the Property Team at the Council and advised Councillor Hiscocks to contact the Property Team direct to discuss when the short term lease was expected to be available. It was advised that the current lease had run out. The leases had been discussed with the bowls clubs.

12f Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council had provided the following written report which was noted:

‘So we are now out of 'Lockdown 2' and in to Tier 2. While tiers are theoretically to be reviewed every two weeks, it is not thought to be likely that we will move before Christmas. It continues to be a very difficult time for all of us.

Covid continues to cause enormous damage to families and businesses around us, heart breaking, our hospitality industry is particularly hard hit. We will continue to work hard to help. But what has been wonderful has been how our officers have stepped up and adapted to changed priorities, how so many of our residents have volunteered to help those more vulnerable members of our communities, and how the majority of our residents have followed the rules and so helped to keep our infection rates down. We will all have continue with this for the while, but I do believe that we can finally see the light at the end of the tunnel. We must continue to be vigilant to keep our infection numbers on the correct trajectory.

Details of local cases can be found using the HCC dashboard: https://hcc-phei.shinyapps.io/covid19_public_dashboard/

We have a shared commercial Environmental Health Service with Watford BC and they have been supporting the Council's operational response to the current pandemic. They have been working closely with HCC to monitor and respond to local cases and ensure appropriate response measures are in place. The Environmental Health Officers have been proactively engaging and supporting businesses across the District with their response to the evolving legislation. They have been working closely with the Police and our licensing officers. In the run up to Christmas we will be working with our larger stores to ensure they have adequate plans in place to promote mask wearing and social distancing as stores get busier. Queuing in a supermarket is not, I'm afraid, going to be a very attractive proposition at this time of year.

We have had a significant communication push promoting the Covid-19 messages. This has recently involved an Ad Van traversing the District and targeted social media messages. Currently we have additional staff patrolling our larger parks at the weekend, they are seeking to engage, to explain and to encourage visitors to our parks to follow the rules. Information banners have also been erected at key locations around the District.

I will give a verbal update at the meeting on Covid, a very fast moving situation.

As many of you know, I'm not a great one for church going but one service I never miss is the Annual Remembrance service at my local church where I lay a wreath on behalf of the Offices and members of the council. It was a very different experience this year as I know it was for many of you, laying the wreath with just the vicar and one of his team filming for their on line service. Reading the names on the memorial board always gives me shivers, so many of the surnames familiar to me from my local community. I know many of you laid wreaths in the same quiet way. Even in these difficult times we will never forget.

At the end of November I spoke at two on line induction sessions for new staff, it was a strange way to meet new team members, some of who haven't met colleagues or any members face to face since they started. I was impressed, though, with their enthusiasm and flexibility, some doing secondments to jobs that were not what they applied for. I hope we can meet them, and each other, face to face soon.

In spite of the pandemic the normal work of the council continues such as work on the local plan and keeping in touch with our major stakeholders, business as usual.

The start of the Christmas season for so many years has been the switching on of the lights in Croxley. It was heart breaking to hear of the death of 'Mr Christmas', as he was known locally, a day before this years 'switch on'. My thoughts are with his family and friends. Farewell 'Mr Christmas', thanks for all the joy and pleasure you gave to so many.

As this is our last Full Council before Christmas I would like to wish you and yours a very Happy Christmas and, all being well, a much better 2021 than 2020.

I know some restrictions are being lifted for a few days over Christmas, but please do take care to protect yourself and everyone else from infection, we really do not want our 'Christmas break' to cause another spike afterwards. And remember: Hands; Face; Space'.

Councillor Sarah Nelmes advised that the Covid figures were not going in the right direction.

Questions to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council

12g Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Michael Revan

When did our current local plan expire? When was our current local plan due to originally be published and what was the new estimated timeline?

Written Response provided: The Core Strategy, Development Management Policies LDD and Site Allocations LDD which made up our current local plan for the District did not expire until 2026 and would remain in place until the new Local Plan was adopted.

The new Local Plan's original publication date was originally anticipated to be published in December 2018 as detailed in the Local Development Scheme that was prepared in February 2017. The Local Development Scheme (November 2020) anticipated the publication of the Local Plan would be November/December 2021.

Supplementary question: Looking at the Local Plan timetable, some of the dates did not tally. The publication date was being pushed back to November/December with no mention of 2023. Why were there so many different dates and years?

Councillor Sarah Nelmes replied that the dates had moved back because they wished to put some other considerations through. The current Local Plan was still in place and had not expired.

12h Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Marilyn Butler

Did this Council accept that any further delay to our local plan at this stage will set the process back by at LEAST ONE Year if not two or three?

Written response provided: A delay in the production of the Local Plan could be due to a number of issues, including but not limited to, changes in national planning policy, the number of evidence based studies and delays to evidence based studies that had to be prepared, decisions made by Committees and consultation requirements. It would depend on the reason for a delay as to how long the Local Plan process would be delayed. For example, the Government had recently indicated that they were considering a levelling up between the north and south of the Country though there was little or no detail to this as yet. This may mean housing targets would be reduced for our area and increased for more northern parts of the Country. It had been announced that some Government departments would move to Birmingham from London for example. This may mean that by the time we had to finally decide on sites the target numbers had reduced and the Local Plan reviewed accordingly.

Legislation required that the Local Development Scheme (which sets out the timetable for the production of the Local Plan) was updated on a regular basis and published on the Council's website to keep residents and stakeholders informed.

Supplementary question: What was the timeframe?

Councillor Sarah Nelmes advised that this was as set out in the previous item when Council considered the recommendation from Policy and Resources Committee on the Local Development Scheme (CL65/20).

12i Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Alison Wall

A Facebook post from a District Councillor stated that due to Covid a review of sites and methodologies was needed in the local plan process. What revisions were needed? What did this administration feel would be the change needed in land use in the District post Covid that would render all work toward the local plan in need of review?

Written response provided: The Covid situation had resulted in many of our residents making more use of open spaces and we needed to ensure that the Local Plan contained policies that would protect these spaces and other community facilities that people had come to rely on over the past months. There may be some revisions needed to the Local Plan to accommodate this but this would not render all work toward the Local Plan in need for review.

Supplementary question: What reviews would be required? The green belt and rights of way should be protected regardless of Covid-19. Should the facebook entry have been written and was it misleading?

Councillor Sarah Nelmes had not written a facebook post and was unable to comment on someone else's facebook post.

12j Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Paula Hiscocks

Does this Council have a greater obligation to approve development applications that would otherwise be refused due to a lack of Local Plan? Should our residents be worried that due to TRDC being unable to show a 5 year housing supply a presumption in favour of development applied to all applications?

Written response provided: The Core Strategy, Development Management Policies LDD and Site Allocations LDD which made up our current local plan for the District remained in place until the new Local Plan was adopted. However, as we were unable to demonstrate a 5 year housing land supply, which had been the case since the Government introduced the Standard Method for Calculating Housing Needs, the presumption in favour of sustainable development had to be applied in the consideration of planning applications.

We had been applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development since December 2018. The presumption puts the onus on national policy, however the Local Plan was still a material consideration in decision making on planning applications. Being a Green Belt authority this had meant very little had changed to planning committee decision making.

Supplementary question: By moving the local plan to May 2023 was the Council prolonging the presumption in favour of sustainable development and allowing residents less protection from developers?

Councillor Sarah Nelmes said on the contrary, should the levelling up occur the Council would be giving extra protection by stretching out further. The presumption of sustainable development was part of the Local Plan and the Council had a sustainable Local Plan with a five year land supply until the figures were changed so drastically, but we continue to work to get the best Local Plan we can under the circumstances.

12k Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Stephen Cox

Does the Administration agree that the Government's proposed pay freeze for public sector works was unacceptable particularly when it was those people that had been at the vanguard of keeping services to the general public running during the present on-going pandemic? If the Administration agree would the Leader write to the Prime Minister advising him of this?

Written response provided: Although it was very disappointing that the Government has recently announced a public sector pay freeze, this does seek to protect all front-line medical workers and all public sector workers on below-median earnings, but no increases to higher-paid public sector workers away from the medical front line. At a time when so many in the private sector are seeing pay freezes, pay cuts or losing their jobs, this does appear to give some balance. Given that in August the Consumer Prices Index (12 month inflation rate) was 0.5%, in September 0.7%, in October 0.9%, and likely to rise further due to Covid and Brexit, people who had worked so hard keeping services running and worked flexibly to support our residents, especially the most vulnerable, will once again be hit with a reduction in earning in real terms. This was clearly very disappointing and I wish it was not so, there were clearly going to be some difficult decisions to be made in the coming months.

12l Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council from Councillor Alex Michaels

Can you please update the Council on local plan progress, which seems to be stalling/delayed? Specifically, some Councillors asked for new criteria to be introduced contrary to professional officer progress made, which has since been ruled unlawful. How has this impacted the plan? Can you also please give your view on the impact on the District of presumption for development, which is a consequence of a delayed local plan?

Written response provided: The majority of the work had been completed with regard to the evidence based studies and the assessment of sites, including infrastructure considerations such as education establishments for which we rely on the County Council. There were still some pieces to be completed, for example the Transports Assessment which we rely on the County Council for assistance. The majority of the policies that would form part of the Local Plan had already been approved by Policy and Resources Committee and could be viewed from the Council web site at the following links:

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/meeting/policy-and-resources-committee-20-july-2020>

(see Item 6)

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/meeting/policy-and-resources-committee-7-september-2020>

(see Item 5).

The revised Local Development Scheme that had been approved by the Policy & Resources Committee and to be approved by Full Council on the 8 December sets out the timetable for the production of the Local Plan.

We had been applying the presumption in favour of sustainable development since December 2018. The presumption puts the onus on national policy, however the Local Plan was still a material consideration in decision making on planning applications. Being a Green Belt authority this had meant very little has changed to planning committee decision making.

Supplementary question: Clarification was required on the last 2 questions, how do you think this had impacted the Local Plans around the legal advice received and what was the Leader of the Council's view on the impact on the District of presumption for development?

Councillor Sarah Nelmes replied that presumption had been there ever since the housing requirement had been increased. It was not believed that there was any difference on the impact on the District.

INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

12m Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development had provided the following written report which was noted:

'Rickmansworth High Street

The County Council has now installed the more user friendly "swing gates" and the "plastic" barriers have been removed. Additional signage has been requested. I have followed up with the County Council the need for some seating by the temporary bus stop in Northway.

They had confirmed that the bus stop has now been marked with appropriate bus stop markings and pole. They are looking at installing a shelter here, but the footway width isn't particularly generous so will probably require a narrow roof-type shelter to be installed. They hope to go on site to determine what is possible once the current lockdown situation is eased, but the shelter company has been advised.

Ebury Road

We are progressing to include further short stay car parking bays (near the car park) close the High Street.

Croxley Green Controlled Parking Zone

The Statutory advertisement has finished and the comments will be reviewed by myself and officers within the next week to see if any changes are required. Pending this we expect to publish the final order which will come into effect six weeks later. I have asked officers to set up a contractor to install the required signage etc. as soon as possible after this date and still anticipate that the scheme will be up and running before the end of the fiscal year.

Rickmansworth West Controlled Parking Zone.

Meetings have been held with Ward Councillors and Officers are progressing to the next stage of consultation with, for some roads, a separate letter seeking confirmation of inclusion or not, due to some generic objection letters.

Pavement Parking consultation

A response to the Government consultation has been submitted making it clear that any blanket prohibition, with possible exemptions, would require substantial enforcement powers and staffing. We are proposing that this rests with the Police.

Delta Gain shopping parade upgrade

We still await full legal agreement from the land owner before works can progress.

Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plans (LCWIPs)

I have attended a workshop with other Councillors on developing this plan for Three Rivers and Watford led by the County Council. We had a valuable discussion on a proposed cycle network and core walking zones (CWZs) (and routes).

High Elms Lane works

The County Council has finally responded on the plans for improvements here to enhance safety and parking. A detailed breakdown of undertaking work section by section is now being sought.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks said that Residents had asked that the consultation on the Rickmansworth West controlled parking zone did not go out until January. All of the residents in Park Way did not want this scheme. Will their voices be heard and acted on? Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said the intention was to send this out but give an extended period of time for responses. Waiting until the first week of January would mean the scheme would not be progressed until the middle of February and if March then purdah would cut in. The intention was for it to go out now with responses in by the 2nd week of January. All responses to the consultation would be considered and discussed with the Ward Members.

Councillor Michael Revan asked if anything could move forward on Delta Gain? Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said the design had been agreed and

amended by Board Members who wanted some different trees. In relation to the leave agreement, the Council were in the hands of the owners waiting for them to sign off the detailed legal agreement before work could progress on what was not TRDC land.

12n Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Councillor Alex Hayward

Why have we failed our residents and issued PCN fines during lockdown when many people have to work from home?

Written response provided: Parking Enforcement had continued during the 2nd lockdown, the decision to maintain the service taken having regard to the length and context of the current lockdown. Whilst it was acknowledged many residents would continue to remain at home, many premises remained open and accessible resulting in traffic on our local roads. It was considered appropriate to ensure parking enforcement was maintained to ensure the safe and free flow of traffic on our roads and in our car parks. This decision was also taken having regard to general advice issued from the British Parking Association and the actions of our neighbouring authorities.

Supplementary question: Traffic flow and car parks were mentioned but a resident working from home had to move their car from outside their home where parking restrictions for an hour or so were there to deter commuters who are not commuting. Would the Council help? Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst advised that the advice from the British Parking Association was not to suspend this. Very few Local Authorities had made suspensions. If there was an issue of dispute regarding a PCN notice there was an appeal mechanism that could be dealt with through the Policy Enforcement Control Officers at Hertsmere.

12o Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Councillor Joan King

As the Government has announced it is bringing forward a ban on new petrol and diesel cars in the UK to 2030 and we should all be going electric, what publicly available charging points have been installed to date in the Three Rivers District Council area and how many of those are on land owned by this authority. What plans exist for this council to expedite the roll-out of electricity charging points for cars in the District?

Written response provided:

- The District has the highest number of publicly-accessible charge points in Herts (42 out of 182 across Hertfordshire in April 2020). This is over twice the regional average (which is 20 per 100k popn) but a third lower than London (63 per 100k popn). While 2 are on District Council land, most are provided commercially
- While Government grants have not been made available since 2015 for introducing public charging infrastructure (which like petrol pumps are often provided by the market), this Council's Retail Parade Revitalisation Programme includes plans to introduce charging points in District car parks this year, specifically to enable and encourage drivers to visit local shops.
- A pilot scheme will launch in Abbots Langley and Rickmansworth, with further points planned in all the District Centres if this scheme proves popular.

- The Parking Standards draft policy approved by the Local Plan sub-committee and Policy & Resources Committee for the new Local Plan encourages the delivery of infrastructure to support the use of low carbon transport, including requiring electric vehicle charging points to be provided as part of new development.

Supplementary question: Does the Lead Member agree people would be discouraged from purchasing electric cars if insufficient charging points exist. Could he define how the popularity referred to would be judged?

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst agreed in relation to the charging points. The County Council who were the highways authority currently had no policy to introduce Electric Vehicle (EV) Charging points on the highway. There were also issues with the network and electricity supply companies. They were progressing EV charging points with the two pilot schemes mentioned and further charging points were planned within the District, but these were on Three Rivers land rather than the highway, for which they would need permission from the County Council. He agreed that the County and Government needed to step up to the mark.

12p Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Councillor Stephen King

Large vehicles, including dustcarts, have been seen constantly driving over grass verges at the entrance to Mullion Walk which has had the effect of blocking the gullies, leading to flooding, and an unsightly mess and creates hazardous conditions. Given the County Council refuses to widen the splay at the entrance will this Council commit to hardening the verges as required to improve the environment for residents?

Written response provided: Yes, the District Council is planning to install hardening on one side and is looking into access by refuse vehicles.

Supplementary question: What was the timetable for the verge hardening at Mullion Walk?

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst said that Officers would be looking at both sides of Mullion Walk in terms of hardening and possible posts on rail fencing. The timetable would be discussed with Members, and the Lead Member had told Officers it would need to be addressed as soon as possible.

12q Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Councillor Stephen Cox

Can I be assured that this Council has not subsidised bus services on the W19 route which have been axed and therefore not operated during the on-going pandemic?

Updated written response provided: Additional information has been received from HCC regarding the W19 bus route.

The W19 service has not been axed but did not operate between March lockdown to June; it was reinstated on the 1 June except for two journeys (1939 and 2039) which still aren't running.

However, HCC have confirmed 'the government rules are that LA's (which includes districts and boroughs) have to continue paying operators the pre-Covid amounts.

The early morning and early evening routes are still therefore being subsidised by TRDC.

Supplementary question: Councillor Stephen Cox had preferred the Lead Member's original answer which stated that the Council had not paid for the non-existent buses which had the advantages of simplicity but was wrong and had to be corrected. Pre Covid this Council was subsidising three buses on the W19 route Monday to Saturday as the County Council would not. There was supposed to be additional services to those that the operator was providing at their own commercial risk however does the Lead Member agree that the question never stated that the W19 service had been axed but pointed out that services this Council subsidised had, and will the Lead Member undertake to ascertain what journeys specifically Three Rivers were subsidising presently but seemingly unknowingly and when would the latest service be restored and thus a full service would be restored?

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst was not sure of the questions being asked. The original question did state the services which had been axed and the point had been made that the W19 service had not been axed. The individual times for the services would be provided in writing.

Three Rivers were still subsidising some of the early morning first services and one of the evening services. The issues with the latter two were difficulties with the operator in terms of providing that service but that was being looked at.

Written responses provided after the meeting: Unfortunately the District Council are unable to answer this question on when the W19 bus service would return, it is up to the operator who has to act on Government guidance.

The details of the timed service were as follows:

- The W19 journeys TRDC support are: Mon-Fri 0635, 1637, 1737, 1839, 1939, 2039 and Sat 1839, 1939, 2039
- Generally journeys run anti-clockwise in the morning peak and clockwise in the evening peak to offer the same routeing as normal for passengers travelling to (morning) and from (afternoon) Watford. Off-peak journeys run in each direction alternately to offer a two-way link between Carpenders Park and the South Oxhey shops.
- On the first emergency timetable introduced 30th March none of these journeys operated.
- From 15th August the 1637 and 1737 journeys resumed (the latter to Carpenders Park Station only) now operating on a circular basis Watford - Bushey Arches - Watford Heath - Carpenders Park - South Oxhey - Prestwick Road - Bushey Arches - Watford.
- From 7 September journeys have been added at 0645 (anti-clockwise) and 1837 (clockwise). The circular route has been maintained.

12r There was no written report from Councillor Steve Drury, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy.

12s Question to Councillor Steve Drury, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Reena Ranger

Does this Administration believe that elected representatives are there at the behest of residents, elected to protect, preserve and enhance the District to the very best of our abilities? That Councillors should act in the interest of all residents, our communities and District above self-interest and it is its duty to ensure good planning, suitable development and have a clear vision for the District, as it is vital to serve future generations and keep the District a special place for all who reside here.

Written response provided: I certainly agree that elected representatives are here for residents and should act for all. For planning and development matters the Council must, in planning for the future, have full regard to National Planning policy, and also housing numbers prescribed to us by MHCLG. All efforts are made to achieve the best for our residents both now and in the future, given those requirements.

Supplementary question: Are there concerns that without a valid Local Plan the Council may be forced to watch the area change as the ability to refuse unwanted applications is diminished. The National Policy Framework says that without a Local Plan the Council were liable to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. This presumption had been applied for some time and the delays to the Local Plan meant it would be applied for another three years. Surely it would be in Three Rivers best interests and to serve residents well if the Council did not have to presume but could deliver the local plan on the original timetable?

Councillor Steve Drury advised he agreed to a certain extent but that certain aspects of the Local Plan had to be changed due to changes from central Government. Also they had been waiting for the Local Transport Assessment from the County Council. That would need to be included in the Local Plan and the current Local Plan was not out of date.

12t Councillor Andrew Scarth, Lead Member for Housing had provided the following written report which was noted:

- Following an 'Everyone in' directive from central Government regarding assisting rough sleepers or those of risk of rough sleeping, I am delighted that even with a very short deadline for application, the Head of Housing has been successful with two bids; one short term funding of £35,940 to work with clients that are still in temporary accommodation. This has to be spent in 2020/21.
- The long-term scheme has resulted in the Council being granted £513,015 to enable it to deliver five long-term assets in the form of supported move-on homes for people recovering from rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping. New Hope trust will be supporting such clients. Due to grant conditions, Watford Community Housing will own and manage the properties with legal agreement from the Council.
- On 16 November, the Head of Housing and myself had a good virtual meeting with Tina Barnard; CEO of Watford Community Housing who went through the Housing Association's (HA) new Business Plan 2020 -2025. It was good to note that this HA wished to remain local and keep in touch with its tenants as well as looking at joint ventures.

12u Question to Councillor Andrew Scarth, Lead Member for Housing from Councillor Alex Michaels

Can you please update Council on progress made towards readying TRDC to accept additional refugees since the motion passed in September? Do you support Council's motion?

Written response provided: Following agreement of the motion at the Extra Council meeting on 1 September 2020, a report was presented at Policy and Resources Committee on 7 September. P&R agreed that the resettlement programme does not begin until 2021/22. However, in accordance with the report presented to P&R, as a new resource is required, work has begun on the job description and person specification for the new post so that we are prepared in time for the new financial year.

Supplementary question: How could this be speeded up as the Council were at risk of not achieving this. Did the Lead Member support the Council's motion?

The Lead Member did support the motion and he had seconded it at the previous meeting. When he was Chair of the Council Watford and Three Rivers Refugees Trust was one of the nominated charities. A part time Officer would have to be appointed which would be budgeted for in 2021/22. That would start moving. The programme was being worked on currently by the Housing team.

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY

12v Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure had provided the following written report which was noted:

'On Thursday 26 November we found that we were in Tier 2.

At the Leisure Environment and Community Committee we received an update on Watersmeet. We made use of the Government grant to put in safety measures and reduced numbers. The first film was due to be shown on 9 December 2020.

Rickmansworth Golf Course, William Penn Leisure Centre, South Oxhey Leisure Centre and SJA MUGA had reopened on 2 December. They play important in mental health as well as physical health. I would like to thank all the staff at Everyone Active who have made this possible.

We are also due to open the tennis courts and MUGAs along with outdoor Gyms and Skate parks from 2 December. This will be confirmed in my verbal update at Full Council. We still need to follow social distancing measures. The Leisure Environment and Community Committee recently considered and recommended for approval as part of the budget setting process a PID for replacing the current equipment over a 3 year plan'.

12w Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability had provided the following written report which was noted:

'71 trees had been ordered. This included the 50 trees that fell in storms, 2 for the 750 year celebration at St Mary's, 8 to replace the 4 which would be removed from the depot, and the remainder to replace dangerous or trees throughout the District.

Half of the funding for the storm damaged trees (£3,750) would be from the Climate Change budget. 11 of these have been sourced from a new supplier in Hertfordshire who specialise in locally grown native trees.

Charlotte Gomes has been linking with Jo Hewitson on the Climate Change strategy as part of the Youth Council. Proposal to Youth Council for a project to look at idling engines outside of schools. The children will then propose a way to tackle it. For all those who take part, we can provide them with wildflower seeds and some information on how to create a wildflower area on their school grounds.

Leavesden Country Park has been awarded a Defra Bees' Needs Champions Award 2020 for its work helping to protect bees.

The Trees and Landscape Strategy will be led by the new Principal Tree and Landscape Officer who will advise timescales accordingly.

Principal Tree and Landscape Officer appointed – Alex Laurie. Due to commence on 7 December.

Grant application submitted for Public Sector Low Carbon Skills Fund to employ a consultant to assess and apply for £1 million of funding from the Public Sector Decarbonisation Capital Fund. This would be used for a deep retrofit of Three Rivers House, Watersmeet and Maple Cross Sports Pavilion.

The Climate Change Consultation has now concluded, having shared the strategy at the Environmental and Local Area Forums, Croxley Danes School student environment group, and carrying out a social media campaign. Over 150 responses have been received at time of writing, and credit must be given to Elen Roberts and Jo Hewitson for a great job.

Following the consultations, officers have commenced engagement with informed residents and environmental groups to begin informing a Climate Crisis Action Plan and improve communication and engagement with the wider community

Our recycling rate has increased from 63% (in 2018/19) to 64.1% (in 2019/20) making us top in Hertfordshire and third in the country. We are awaiting where 64.1% will put us nationally for 2019/20. Full credit must be given to our expert in this field, Jennie Probert and her team

Cemeteries - the memorial garden at Woodcock Hill Cemetery is almost complete.

A water partnership group is being formed to tackle the problem of over abstraction and pollution of our chalk streams, the river Colne, and to ensure safe and sufficient water supply through this century.

An Environmental Science graduate Ellie Nathan – has joined the team in a voluntary capacity to aid us in calculating the District's current emissions.

We are submitting a bid to win funds from Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery for low income low EPC homes identified by an assessment of all properties in the District carried out by the Energy Saving Trust. The target is to move 150 homes out of fuel poverty by improving thermal performance. One of these bids is working in conjunction with Watford Community Housing who will in addition be improving approx.

We have provided Watford and Three Rivers Trust with a grant for £10,000 to voluntary organisations that are struggling as a result of Covid. The grant is to support voluntary groups whose aim is to tackle climate change and sustainability

issues, or unrelated charities who need help to carry out sustainability initiatives as part of their climate change action plan.

We will be assisting Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust to improve 350m of the River Gade which will establish a corridor to enable 2 populations of water voles on either side to mix and thus help ensure their future.

Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability from Councillor Paula Hiscocks on the written report.

Once the Water Partnership Group had been formed would Ward Councillors be able to attend these groups and advised of the dates of the meetings? What progress had been made to set up the regular meetings with the water authorities to discuss flooding and putting up signage about the raw sewage discharged into the River Chess as Thames Water had said they would be prepared to pay for this signage?

Councillor Phil Williams said progress with Thames Water was continuing and imminent. The Lead Member said the Water Partnership Group was still being drawn up but advised that Ward Councillors would be included.

Councillor Alex Hayward asked if Councillor Williams could give direction to all Councillors, in view of wanting to reduce the carbon footprint, to stop pressing 'Reply all' when responding to emails? Councillor Phil Williams said this point had been taken on board.

12x Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability from Councillor Paula Hiscocks.

With the green energy initiatives such as solar panels on council owned buildings, can we be advised how much income/ savings this has generated over the last 2 years With the green energy initiatives such as solar panels on Council owned buildings, can we be advised how much income/ savings this has generated over the last 2 years

Written response: The response to this question is particularly complex. Officers will try to get a written answer to the Lead Member in time for it to be circulated to Members for the meeting. Under Rule 14(2) it does allow that "In exceptional circumstances a written answer will be circulated at the meeting. If the matter is particularly complex, a written answer may be circulated to all Members as soon as practicable after the meeting and a record kept with the minutes of the meeting."

Councillor Phil Williams said they would try to respond within the next five days and apologised for the delay.

No supplementary could be asked as the question had not yet been answered therefore it was agreed that Councillor Paula Hiscocks could ask a supplementary question as the next Council Meeting.

Written response provided after the meeting:

Income received from the Feed in Tariffs for TRDC is as follows:

2018/19 - £4,401

2019/20 - £5,904

2020/21 to date £3,569

12y Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability from Councillor Alison Wall

Please can you direct us to the register of all green measures on TRDC land or buildings?

Written response provided: We do not currently have a register of green measures. Green initiatives were managed as part of the Green Expectations Action Plan, the latest update took place in January 2020 and can be found in the climate change section (item 8) of the Full Council meeting on 25 February 2020 – link provided below:

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/meeting/full-council-25-february-2020>

We are presently consulting on the new strategy and then a new action plan will be written in the first part of 2021 which will include green measures.

12z Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability from Councillor Alex Michaels

We declared a climate emergency in May 2019. Little progress has been made. The motion called for a strategy to be in place by December 2019. We are now a year on and no such strategy has been forthcoming (admittedly a flimsy vision has been produced). As discussed a lot of these steps are things we could have done immediately and some in instances things that we could stop doing (as opposed to time consuming or costly things to start doing, e.g. cutting verges on a large scale). Some of these have now been discussed on multiple occasions. What do you think the impact is of the 18 month lag in seeing action? Public consensus on the matter through media outlets widely available is clear they want action.

Written response provided: The Draft Climate Change Strategy finished consultation on 30 November. This will be reviewed and re-presented to the Leisure Committee in January. Thereafter an Action Plan will be written. Throughout the consultation process we have engaged with a number of local activists all of whom will have helped to add breadth to the final strategy. During the 6 months since an officer has been in post a number of initiatives have been commenced this includes; an application for grant funding to improve the carbon emissions of 4 public sector buildings, application to Green Homes Grant funding together with the supply chain to lift 150 homes out of fuel poverty by fabric improvements to their homes, measurement of District and TRDC operation carbon emissions in order to inform target setting for action plan, an analysis of the carbon emission of every building in the district – the results of which will be used to inform the action plan, preparation to assess the Biodiversity opportunities of the District's land, a water action plan for County led by our officer to help lead the way reducing water consumption and pollution of the chalk rivers. We have also recently agreed to set up a water partnership group, and support to Herts and Middlesex wildlife trust to open up a stretch of the River Gade to allow free movement of water voles and other wildlife. Watford and Three Rivers Trust are also launching a community grants fund in partnership with Three Rivers DC to offer funding to community groups and charities to recover from Covid in a more sustainable way and support climate change.

Supplementary question: What do you think the impact is of the 18 month lag?

Councillor Phil Williams said he did not think this had had an impact.

12aa Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability from Councillor Reena Ranger

The recently unanimously passed motion to have one tree plant for everyone removed, will this Council agree to increase the number of trees from one to two to move into line with Hertfordshire County Council?

Written response provided: This will be considered as part of the Climate Change Action plan.

Supplementary question: This motion was taken to HCC with a two tree replacement by a Liberal Democrat and Liberal Democrats were in charge and therefore able to execute this proposal. This was not being done so an explanation was asked for if the commitment to Green Initiatives was just posturing or was there one rule for Liberal Democrats at County and one rule at the District.

Councillor Phil Williams advised that this was turned down at County Council but was being considered now.

12bb Councillor Roger Seabourne, Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships explained that the following report was due to be given verbally at the Council Meeting on 20 October.

There was nothing to report for the current Council Meeting apart from that spikes in domestic abuse had gone up a little but had not escalated as much as feared. The report was noted:

As many Members may be aware, Andy Stovold has left the Council's employment. I did not get the opportunity to say "goodbye" and I was not able to wish him well.

Aimee Carson, another successful product of our own 'academy', has also left. You would (under normal circumstances) still have seen her around as she is, very kindly, helping us out until her replacement is able to take up post. Hopefully we will still see her around after that as she was effectively "head hunted" by the police who saw the quality of the work she was doing. I was able to thank her and wish her well.

I have continued to have regular meetings and briefings with officers, police, the Police Commissioners office as well as colleagues in other Districts since I last had the opportunity to report to Council. The patterns we have been seeing are not significantly different to any of the other 9 Districts.

Whilst it is a sad fact that some aspects of our work have seen massive increases, in particular the amount of domestic abuse, I have been amazed and truly impressed by the amount and quality of the partnership work that has been carried out. If there are any "silver linings" to this terrible pandemic, one is that new productive partnerships have been formed and existing ones strengthened in order to help deal with some of the issues. I am sure you will all have noted Shivani's weekly Partnership Bulletins, what they do not show is the amount of work going into all of that.

My main concern is what might happen with the domestic violence caseload over the next few months as restrictions get tighter, there are fewer opportunities to "get out", tolerance levels are lower generally and we move into the time of year when reports usually rise anyway. (NB this was written before the announcement of a second lockdown).

While quarterly reports have, up until now, been suitable to minimise the likelihood of 'blips' perhaps indicating false trends, I have asked for more regular reports as we enter this critical time.

Although the number and the increase in the number of reports is of great concern, it is pleasing to note so many residents obviously now have the confidence to report incidents in an area where there has always been a reluctance to report and underreporting has always been an issue. It is also good to note that the number of positive outcomes from police intervention (in percentage as well as actual terms) has increased considerably compared to last year. However, like the virus itself, what we do not know is how many cases are out there that we are not aware of.

RESOURCES AND SHARED SERVICES

12cc Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services had provided the following written report which was noted:

Updates from the national Government spending review 25 November:

The announcements around Local Government funding were in line with previous expectations and the overall message for District Authorities is 'No change'. The detail of the settlement is expected in late December. We may benefit from some of the additional funding announced for Covid-related costs and rough sleeping. The pay-freeze for higher-paid public sector workers does not directly impact local government but may still be followed. As further information becomes available, it will be incorporated into the Council's budget-setting process.

Business rates will be frozen next year (rather than rising in line with inflation) but Councils will be fully compensated for this. There will be no other changes to business rates next year pending publication of the conclusions of the full review of business rates in spring 2021.

Implications of Croydon Council's s114 notice

Croydon Council published a report into the causes of their financial crisis on 13 November showing that one of the key contributing factors to Croydon's difficulties was their housing development company. Officers have reviewed the report to check if there are lessons for Three Rivers. Officers have confirmed that Three Rivers' arrangements differ significantly from Croydon's through stronger and more transparent reporting and governance; and through all developments handled as partnerships with Housing Providers who have expertise in development and management of housing stock.

12dd Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor David Raw

Can this Council itemise the top 5 savings they have made this financial year.

Written response:

Per the period 6 budget monitoring these are:

£73k saving in temporary staffing in Leisure

£23k saving on hiring of rooms for Active Community Development Fund

£34k due to additional transport subsidy from HCC

£15k additional building control income

£71k additional property income

These will be updated at Period 8.

Supplementary question: Does the current administration feel they are making every effort to monitor the spending of resident's council tax money and make the required procurement decisions on finding and delivering the services at the highest quality and lowest cost. If yes, please explain the policy and how this was achieved. Councillor Matthew Bedford said the answer was yes. The savings was given to mean the biggest reductions in the Council's general fund expenditure. That was why some were income generation and others cost reductions. There was a whole series of further cost reductions. Specific information could be provided on request from either the Lead Member or Officers. The regular Budget Monitoring Reports provided more details of cost savings that had been achieved. The Lead Member was very confident that the Council had a robust budget monitoring policy and achieved substantial savings in terms of driving efficiency on behalf of Council Tax payers. Councillor Matthew Bedford to forward details of the Budget Monitoring process to Councillor David Raw.

Written response: You asked at the Council meeting this week about how the Council monitors its expenditure and ensures it provides value for money. Much of this information is published and available on the Council's website but having consulted with officers I can confirm the procedures in place as follows:

Each year as part of budget setting, all budgets are scrutinised. In particular the salary budget, which is our largest cost, is reviewed on a post-by-post basis to ensure that all posts are still needed and that costs are correct. The period 8 budget monitoring (a public document) includes the outcome of these reviews and forms the basis of the following years Medium Term Financial Plan (MTFP). The finance team is currently working on this review and when this is brought forward to P&R in the New Year will include further efficiency savings. As you know, our budget-monitoring is published on the website and discussed in public committee meetings.

Efficiency savings by their very nature tend to comprise a larger number of small savings as they are the way we reduce cost without impacting on service levels. (As distinct from savings achieved by cutting service provision). The latest savings against budget were provided in the written response to your original question. Additional savings had already been built into the budget for the current year, as published at the time. You will be aware from information published at budget-setting that the Council has consistently achieved substantial efficiency savings averaging almost £300,000 each year over the past 14 years.

The finance team works with managers on a quarterly basis to review all budgets in considerable depth and this work forms the basis of the Finance Digest that is published and presented regularly at P&R. The finance digest includes detailed information about financial performance such as income generation, debtors and financial risks as well the detail behind any changes to forecast income and expenditure.

The processes for budget management in-year is clearly set out in our financial procedure rules which are part of the Council Constitution and published on the Council's website: [part-4-rules-of-procedure \(threerivers.gov.uk\)](http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/part-4-rules-of-procedure)

As a member of Audit Committee you will be aware that the independent Shared Internal Audit Service (SIAS) regularly reviews our financial procedures and service arrangements to ensure both probity and value for money. Their recommendations are taken to Audit Committee along with management

responses. Our Audit Committee has been very successful in monitoring the implementation of audit recommendations and holding service managers to account.

As you know, all committee meetings are held in public and information published on the Council website (unless there is a specific reason why an item needs to be in Part 2).

2020 has been a year unlike any other, and the council has had to re-prioritise resources to ensure that we are responding to the Covid crisis, redeploying staff and resources as necessary to meet the needs of our community.

12ee Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Stephen Cox

What plans, if any, does this authority have to bring the Pavilion in Green Lane, back in to local community use, instead of being for private hire?

Written response: None presently the property is let on a long lease.

Supplementary question: How does the Lead Member square that disappointing answer admitting the Council have absolutely no plans to restore community use back to the Pavilion when the Liberal Democrat leaflet circulated promised to 'do everything we can to get the property back into community use'. Furthermore does the Lead Member believe the Council is responsible for parking issues experienced by the scouts who the Council moved there, and the Bowls Club whose parking interest were not secured when the lease was sold. How much would it cost the Council to fund alternative car parking and where would it be?

The Lead Member said that the car parking needs of the scouts, bowls club and wider community users of the Oxhey Playing Fields is protected under the current lease arrangements. These are being actively enforced against the misinterpretation of the lease that the current lease holder of the Pavilion had chosen to adopt. Some of the leaseholders actions had been stopped and addressed and the Council was pursuing that against the leaseholder.

12ff Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Alex Michaels

Can you please update Council on property investment outlook? One tenant has not paid rent since 25 March 2019, is this still the case and what annual cost is this to TRDC, including indirect costs such as officer time and any services (e.g. debt collection). Are there any other costs from these other properties?

Written response: The only shortfall is with Jigsaw who are on a CVA currently paying 20% of their rent plus top up turnover rent. Jigsaw full rent is £5k per month. The impact of the reduction in rent income is included in the Council's budget monitoring reports and mid-term financial planning."

Supplementary question: What are the debt collection costs?

The Lead Member was not aware of any debt collection costs in relation to this. The full impact of jigsaw rent was already built into the budget and was available on the Council's website.

CL75/20 REPORTS AND QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRS OF THE AUDIT, PLANNING, LICENSING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEES (RULE 14)

AUDIT COMMITTEE

Councillor Margaret Hofman, Chair of the Audit Committee had provided the following written report which was noted:

Due to Covid 19, the publication date of audited accounts for all local authorities moved from July to November. Draft statutory accounts for TRDC have been published and are available to view on the Council's website.

However, the external audit of the draft statement of accounts for the year ended 31 March 2020 has not yet been completed by our external auditors due to resources pressures as additional audit work has been required due to pandemic.

Due to unknown impact of COVID 19, the Audit Committee has requested additional information and more frequent reporting from officers so that the Committee can perform its key role more effectively. That is as a source of assurance about the Council's arrangements for managing risk, internal controls and reporting on financial and non- financial performance.

Councillor Alex Michaels left the meeting.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

There was no report.

LICENSING

There was no report

REGULATORY SERVICES

There was no report. Councillor Martin Trevett thanked Michael Summerville for the work presenting reports to all Members giving details about the annual canvas.

CL76/20 MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 11

Councillor Joan King, seconded by Councillors Stephen Cox, Sarah Nelmes and Alison Scarth moved the amended Motion as follows:

This Council notes:

Fireworks are an important part of British life and that letting them off responsibly for celebratory reasons such as important events, including religious festivals provides entertainment, a spectacle, joy and spiritual comfort. Whilst acknowledging that fireworks can bring much enjoyment to some, they can cause significant injury, problems and fear for other people and animals. In particular, the sudden loud noises that many fireworks make can cause distress.

This Council resolves:

- to require all public firework displays within the local authority boundaries to be advertised in advance of the event, allowing residents to take precautions for their animals and vulnerable people
- to actively promote a public awareness campaign about the impact of fireworks on animal welfare and vulnerable people – including the precautions that can be taken to mitigate risks and encouragement to consider the use of lower noise fireworks(under 90dB)
- to write to the Government urging it to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90 decibels for those sold to the public for private displays
- to encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock lower noise fireworks both for private use or public display.

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

RESOLVED:

Fireworks are an important part of British life and that letting them off responsibly for celebratory reasons such as important events, including religious festivals provides entertainment, a spectacle, joy and spiritual comfort. Whilst acknowledging that fireworks can bring much enjoyment to some, they can cause significant injury, problems and fear for other people and animals. In particular, the sudden loud noises that many fireworks make can cause distress.

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- to write to the Government urging it to introduce legislation to limit the maximum noise level of fireworks to 90 decibels for those sold to the public for private displays
- to encourage local suppliers of fireworks to stock lower noise fireworks both for private use or public display.

Councillor Paula Hiscocks, seconded by Councillor Alison Wall to move under Notice duly given as follows:

Will this Council collectively express their sympathy and immense gratitude for the service the late Mr Christmas, Mr Dave Edwards, gave to the residents of Croxley and wider Three Rivers community and for embodying the Christmas spirit through his light displays and supporting charities. Can this Council send a letter with these sentiments on behalf of all at TRDC to his family?

Councillor Sarah Nelmes advised that the daughter of Mr Dave Edwards had already been written to on behalf of all Members thanking the family for all that had been contributed to the area.

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

RESOLVED:

This Council collectively expressed their sympathy and immense gratitude for the service the late Mr Christmas, Mr Dave Edwards, gave to the residents of Croxley and wider Three Rivers community and for embodying the Christmas spirit through his light displays and supporting charities.

Council agreed that a letter with these sentiments would be sent to Mr Dave Edwards' family.

Councillor Martin Trevett thanked the Chair and noted what a well-run meeting it had been.

The Chair thanked the Committee Team for all the work they did for all the meetings, particularly Council Meetings. Thanks to Sarah Haythorpe, Anne Morgan and ICT.

CHAIR OF COUNCIL