

Minutes of the **Extraordinary Council** meeting held at Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth on **Tuesday 25 January 2022** from 7.30pm to 8.10pm.

Present: Councillors Keith Martin (Chair) Debbie Morris (Vice-Chair), Matthew Bedford, Ruth Clark, Joanna Clemens, Stephen Cox, Steve Drury, Donna Duncan, Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lisa Hudson, Margaret Hofman, Tony Humphreys, Raj Khuroya, David Major, Shanti Maru, Alex Michaels, Paul Rainbow, David Raw, Ciaran Reed, Alison Scarth, Andrew Scarth, Dominic Sokalski, Martin Trevett, Alex Turner, Kate Turner and Phil Williams

CL63/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Sara Bedford, David Coltman, Alex Hayward, Paula Hiscocks, Joan King, Stephen King, Chris Lloyd, Sarah Nelmes, Reena Ranger, Roger Seabourne, Stephanie Singer, Jon Tankard and Alison Wall

CL64/21. TO RECEIVE ANY PETITIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 18

None received.

CL65/21 QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 15

The following question had been received from Mr Alley, who had submitted the questions as a member of the public although it was confirmed with them that they were a Herts County Councillor:

Q1 Can the Council explain why they have failed to provide adequate local social housing, resulting in a number of children and families being uprooted from their friends, family, schools and community?

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst responded that the Council was not a registered stock holder for social housing and was not a registered provider for social housing and did not build social housing. Housing Associations provided a full service for general needs however the Council had provided Temporary Housing accommodation for residents and this had been done at three different sites in the District. For the residents of Three Rivers that needed emergency accommodation, it was not accommodation that they could remain in indefinitely. By doing this the Council drastically reduced how much it relied on temporary housing accommodation outside of the District. Further information was available on the Council's website regarding the affordable housing policy which was published annually. The latest Annual Report for 2020/21 could be found at <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/annual-monitoring-report> with details starting at Section 4.33 on Page 18.

No supplementary question was asked.

Q2 Can the Council explain their failure to adequately enforce parking restrictions around the Leisure Centre on Gosforth Road and the surrounding roads, Particularly Oxhey Drive?

The Deputy Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst advised that they assumed the question was referring to Gosforth Lane as Gosforth Road did not exist. Councillor Giles-Medhurst stated that both Gosforth Lane/Oxhey Drive had no statutory parking restrictions. Hertsmere Borough Council were under contract by Three Rivers Council to provide the parking enforcement. Civil Enforcement Officers regularly visited South Oxhey and enforced the parking restrictions which were in place. There are no marked parking restrictions outside the South Oxhey Leisure Centre or in Gosforth Lane/Oxhey Drive. Three Rivers District Council and the Enforcement Officers had no legal powers or statutory responsibility to act on any parking on the footway or at the road junctions. Notwithstanding this, if a vehicle was causing an obstruction or possible danger on any public road, this would be a matter for the Police and not Three Rivers District Council. The Police can enforce on this and they could take enforcement action. Any incident should be reported to them on the 101 number or on the form which could be completed on the Police website.

The following supplementary question was asked, which was permitted by the Chair.

There are several large signs outside the Leisure Centre that stated 'Do Not Park' and on a daily basis there were a rows of cars along that lane blocking access for disabled people and children. Would that not be the Council's duty to enforce that?

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst responded that if there are no yellow lines on the road there was no traffic regulation order which can be enforced under civil penalties powers. Hertsmere Borough Council, who undertake the enforcement on behalf of Three Rivers District Council, had no legal responsibility to undertake that enforcement. Councillor Giles-Medhurst was surprised that the questioner, who was a County Councillor, was not aware that Herts County Council had requested that Three Rivers District Council undertake a review of the parking regulations in that area with a view to bringing in a Traffic Regulation Order. This would be undertaken in consultation with the County Council and District Members but fully funded by the County Council.

CL66/21 CHAIR OF COUNCIL ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chair advised that they and the Vice Chair, Councillor Debbie Morris, had visited Rickmansworth School this week and had arranged for the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire to visit the school to have a discussion with the Six Form politics students. It was an excellent visit and the school was very pleased the visit had been arranged for them.

The Chair also commented that there would be no oral report as the Leader and a Lead Member were not at the meeting. There could be no questions to them on the written report but they could be emailed. In addition, any

supplementary questions a Member may have to the written questions submitted, could be emailed..

CL67/21 REPORTS AND QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER AND LEAD MEMBERS

5a) Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council had provided the following report which was noted. As the Leader was not present at the meeting no oral update was provided.

When I reported at our last meeting I talked of us starting to return to normal. Sadly that was a bit premature, and much of the focus of work at the moment is working with colleagues to help keep residents safe and again ramping up the vaccination programme to get as many people vaccinated as possible in as short a time as possible, especially our more vulnerable communities. From Tuesday (November 30) temporary laws were put into place across England in response to Omicron. These include wearing face coverings in shops and on public transport, self-isolating if you come into contact with someone who has Omicron (regardless of age or vaccination status), and measures for travellers returning from both red-list and non-red list countries. To help keep ourselves and others safe please do consider doing a lateral flow test before you mix with others so we can hopefully slow the spread of this new variant.

But we are also working on 'business as usual', including supporting businesses to recover all across the District. We can all help play our part in this too, shop local, eat out local, support our local businesses.

Above all though, my message is to wish all of you and all our residents a happy and safe festive season.

As Councillor Sarah Nelmes was not present, the Chair advised that any supplementary questions to the written questions would need to be put in writing.

5b) Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council, from Councillor David Coltman. As the Councillor asking the question was not present at the meeting the Chair asked that the Member be contacted to see if they had a supplementary question.

As Councillor Scarth voiced that the Watford Rural Local Area Forum resident attendance was a 'joke', please may we have the attendance figures for all of the Local Area Forums across the District?

Written response to question:

The attendance at the meetings since they have been held virtually is provided below. The Committee team do not attend the meetings and have no records of attendance when they were held as face to face meetings.

Date	Meeting	Attendees
03/11/20	Abbots Langley Local Area Forum	17
10/11/20	Watford Rural Local Area Forum	30
19/11/20	Rickmansworth Local Area Forum	19

24/11/20	Croxley Green Local Area Forum	40
01/03/21	Chorleywood & Sarratt Local Area Forum	20
02/03/21	Abbots Langley Local Area Forum	17
11/03/21	Rickmansworth Local Area Forum	39
17/06/21	Croxley Green Local Area Forum	42
23/06/21	Watford Rural Local Area Forum	21
06/07/21	Rickmansworth Local Area Forum	39
08/07/21	Abbots Langley Local Area Forum	24
11/10/21	Chorleywood & Sarratt Local Area Forum	16
4/11/21	Abbots Langley Local Area Forum	7
9/11/21	Watford Rural Local Area Forum	11
11/11/21	Rickmansworth Local Area Forum	18
23/11/21	Croxley Green Local Area Forum	31

5c) Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council, from Councillor Alex Hayward. As the Councillor asking the question was not present at the meeting the Chair asked that the Member be contacted to see if they had a supplementary question(s).

How many times has this Administration, the Lead Members who are given an allowance to be in charge of their brief, said 'We'll provide a written answer'?

5d) Question to Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader of the Council, from Councillor Alex Hayward

How many Lead Members take extra pay and provided no written report?

Written responses to questions 5c and 5d are provided in the attached spreadsheet

[answers-to-question](#)

INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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

5e) Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development had provided the following written report which was noted.

Additional COVID pressures not least dealing with the Welcome Back Fund and recovery grants process (Additional Restrictions Grant) (ARG) and staff absences has resulted in some re-prioritization of workloads within my area of responsibility. However staff have risen to the occasion and the extra work they have had to take on so I hope we can all thank them for the extra work and having to juggle so much. It has been a hard year for them all.

LCWIP's

Local Cycling Walking strategy has been discussed with members and feedback has been given to the county council on the proposals.

Parking

The final details on the proposed Rickmansworth West CPZ has been discussed with Ward Members. The Rickmansworth West consultation has been delayed and will start in January. The results on the Chorleywood and Primrose Hill consultations are being analysed and will be discussed in or by the New Year with Ward Members.

Sandy Lodge Way consultation will also take place in January.

High Street recovery

The High Street survey results will shortly be published but show a positive position in Three Rivers with a higher % of retail units occupied in our area than many cities.

Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG) from Government has been provided to local authorities to enable them to support businesses through and as they recover from the pandemic.

An initial award of funding (£1.8 million) was received by TRDC in October 2020. These monies had to be spent (or committed) by July 2021 in order for an additional amount of funding to be received.

TRDC received further ARG funding in the autumn of 2021 totalling £829,000. These monies have to be spent (or committed) by 31 March 2022 otherwise the money is returned.

A report to Policy & Resources Committee identified a number of projects to support businesses and the economy in TRDC to be committed to these projects.

I attended the Rickmansworth Local Area Forum where I briefed those present on the Rickmansworth High Street temp closure and the proposals from the County Council. I have attended meetings of Rickmansworth High Street recovery board that is overseen by the County Council.

EVs

The Council is promoting the installation of new charge points in public car parks.

Officers are in the process of procuring 'rapid' and 'fast' electric vehicle charging points for its car parks, specifically to enable and encourage drivers to visit local shops.

I anticipate, subject to procurement arrangements, the points to be first launched in Abbots Langley and Rickmansworth, with points planned in all the District Centres if this scheme proves popular. The Council also supports in principle the introduction of 'rapid' electric vehicle charging points for use by taxi firms around the District.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development made the following oral update on the written report which was as follows:

The Rickmansworth West parking consultation had commenced and was due to finish on 8 February 2022. Officers were waiting feedback from Ward Councillors in relation to the Sandy Lodge Way parking scheme. The Ward Councillors had been emailed on this today. Ward Councillors would be shown details on some minor parking schemes in their Wards in various parts of the District on junction protection proposals prior to the formal public consultation. The Councillor had attended a meeting of the Rickmansworth Town Project Board relating to the road closures in Rickmansworth which were promoted by the County Council. At the last meeting of the Project Board it was agreed that the intention would be to bring a report to the next IHED Committee meeting to consider extending the current experimental closures until the end of summer.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst commented on the EV charging, which was part of their portfolio. The Councillor stated that it was expected that the procurement of this would be out by the end of the financial year but was expecting it to be more extensive than originally anticipated in their report and would not just cover Rickmansworth and Abbots Langley. The Councillor was anticipating making it more inclusive across the District and was impressing on officers to make this happen.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst had also attended today a meeting of the Hertfordshire Growth Board for which I am the Council's representative. At the meeting a Hertfordshire Digital Framework Strategy was adopted. Hertfordshire and its neighboring authorities fall well behind on the promises on fibre optics, broadband and the digital capability network but aim to push this forward across the whole of Hertfordshire and secure funding for it and thus improve the Council's ability to support local businesses.

The Councillor wished to provide an update on one of the questions in relation to Penalty Charge Notices in Delta Gain, we now have the final figures for October, November, December of which the information would be provided to the officers. This was in response to Councillor David Coltman's question.

Councillor Stephen Cox asked how inclusive was Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst going to be in respect of EV charging points? The indication was that it would not just be Abbots Langley and Rickmansworth both of which had already got them. Would the Councillor be interested in putting a charging point in the Watford Rural Parish area or indeed more?

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst responded that they wanted to see rather more EV charging points across the whole of the District. The Council had sole responsibility to install charging points in our car parks and on the land we owned, but the County Council were responsible for EV charging points on the road network but were currently discouraging any road charging points. The Councillor clarified that the procurement that was going to go out would make this very clear. The Council had yet to see what providers would come forward with but was hopeful that they would be able to offer a more holistic approach across the whole District. Equally the Councillor would be chairing another meeting in a few weeks' time with the Parish Councils. They knew this matter was being progressed by some Parishes, including the Councillor's own Parish,

and the Parishes could potentially put in EV charging points on their land. The Councillor would like to see Parishes equally pursue the matter as well on its own land.

Councillor Ciaran Reed thanked Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst for their work on EVs and for engaging recently with Sarratt Parish Council. They wished to check that the inclusive plan would ensure that it was not just something that focused on the Towns within the District but was truly accessible for those in more rural areas such as Sarratt Parish Council and asked if that would that be involved in the meetings taking place.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst stated that regarding the meeting with Sarrat Parish Council that would involve meeting with all the Parishes across the whole of Three Rivers and was sure that would be discussed. The Councillor advised that what had to be considered was that they were not the masters on this and it required a network power grid system to be in place, with the suppliers willing to provide the equipment and meet most of the costs, if not all the costs. Also there was a need to obtain money from Central Government which was outlined in the original report. Money was available from Central Government, although it was said to be tied with certain conditions. Until they got the results of the procurement back to the Committee, they were not able to give any commitment on where the EV charging points would or would not be installed.

Councillor Dominic Sokalski asked if Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst could provide details on the status of the Rickmansworth parking scheme and potential cost to residents.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst advised that the public consultation was still ongoing. Two informal consultations with residents had taken place and on street parking surveys. Due to Covid and staff absences the final consultation had been delayed. However, the consultation had been agreed and approved at every stage with Ward Councillors. Meetings had been held with them on many occasions including in September, October and November before the consultation was published. Ward Councillors were sent final copies on the 14 January 2022, prior to it being sent out. Following the query from the Mount View Residents Association over the cost of permit prices on the 17 January 2022, Ward Councillors were told in writing what the costs were as detailed on the Council's website, which stated a full days scheme was £60 and £30 for a half or part day scheme. Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst found it disgraceful that the 3 Ward Councillors had deliberately mislead the public by saying the cost of permits were £70 in a leaflet which was not true and stating that the Ward Councillors had not been consulted which again was not true. The Councillor clarified that after extensive meetings, this consultation was agreed with the inclusion of the 3 Ward Councillors. The Councillor called on them to apologise and retract the leaflet with the misleading information which they had sent to residents.

5f) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Councillor Paula Hiscocks. As the Councillor asking the question was not present at the meeting the Chair asked that the Member be contacted to see if they had a supplementary question.

Many residents are wishing to be more sustainable by using bicycles, but may not be able to negotiate our hilly terrain and have therefore purchased electric bikes. What is TRDC doing to support such residents in their attempts at being more sustainable?

Written response to the question:

The Council supports all cycling. Working with statutory partners including the Highway and Traffic Authority, the District Council introduces and promote new dedicated cycling infrastructure on both new and improved routes. We also provide dedicated cycle parking at key destinations (to make sure that heavy electric bikes can be stored easily) to enable and encourage everyone to use their bike wherever possible.

As Councillor Paula Hiscocks was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing.

5g) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Councillor David Coltman

As I am constantly observing fully capable abusive drivers parking in disabled parking bays in the Delta Gain shopping centre throughout the day, please can the Administration provide a timetable of visits by traffic wardens in this area and details of parking fines issued, if any?

Written response to the question:

Hertsmere BC, who provide the Council's parking enforcement service, have confirmed they regularly visit the Delta Gain shopping area and enforce parking controls as appropriate. We are unable to provide a schedule of Civil Enforcement Officer visits, this is not publically available information as it would obviously have implications for driver behaviour. The Ward Councillor has already been issued with the following information which indicates regular visits (in 2021) to the area:

- AUG : 35 visits and 3 PCNs
- SEP : 52 visits and 2 PCNs
- OCT: 27 visits and 0 PCNs (up to 16 Oct)

As Councillor David Coltman was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing.

Post meeting note – updated visit details are:

October Visits 51 PCNs 2
November Visits 61 - PCNS2
December Visits 41 PCNs 5

5h) Question to Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Lead Member for Transport and Economic Development from Councillor Stephen King

Can the Lead Member give detail of the locations of publicly-accessible electric vehicle charging points in the Three Rivers District Council area, which ones are installed on land owned by Local Authorities?

Written response to the question:

The Government Office of Zero Emission Vehicles has the detailed information of all locations and can be accessed via their website or using the ZAP map.

The District Council is promoting the installation of Electric Vehicle (EV) charge points in TRDC public car parks and in the larger shopping centres.

Officers are in the process of procuring 'rapid' and 'fast' electric vehicle charging points for its car parks, specifically to enable and encourage drivers to visit local shops.

I anticipate, subject to procurement arrangements, the points to be first launched in Abbots Langley and Rickmansworth, with points planned in all the District Centres if this scheme proves popular. The Council also supports in principle the introduction of 'rapid' electric vehicle charging points for use by taxi firms around the District.

As Councillor Stephen King was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing.

5j) Report from Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy

There was no Lead Member written report.

Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning provided an oral update which was as follows:-

The Council had now published its new Local Development Scheme (LDS). It went to the Policy and Resources Committee the night before and would come in due course to Council for approval. The LDS set out the revised timetable for the new Local Plan which was mainly due to the volume of responses received to the Regulation 18 consultation. The nature of some of those responses meant it was likely that the list of potential sites was going to need to change. The Council would therefore need to consult on any changed sites or new sites under a second Regulation 18 consultation which would have a significant impact on the overall timetable.

Members may well have seen in the local press, that Welwyn and Hatfield Council had voted against their own District plan which they had previously proposed. That would clearly leave them in some difficulties with their Local Plan process. The understanding was that there would be further announcements from them possibly next week. This may then clarify the situation in terms of their timetable. That would leave them in the situation of needing to rerun some of their Local Plan process.

At the end of last month the Council published its Annual Monitoring report and the associated housing land supply update. The annual report was required

under the District Plan. The plan confirmed that the Council had just under 2 years of identified housing land supply which did not meet the Government's requirement since the Government so enormously increased the requirement for the Council to build a number of houses each year. That had caused the shortfall and the reason why we were readdressing the Local Plan.

Councillor Ciaran Reed asked for some clarification and asked for some Cross Party support given the situation in Welwyn and Hatfield. The fundamental reason the Local Plan would fail to pass here was as elected Members we say that it was not in public interest to pass such sites. Given the amount of controversy we had seen in some parts of the District already about the sites, already put forward in the Local Plan, is actually having another timetable which they had voted against last night, to push the plan beyond the current Government deadline and put even more sites into the Green Belt that people would oppose? Was this really the correct way of ensuring we do not end up in the Welwyn and Hatfield situation?

Councillor Matthew Bedford responded that there was nothing to lose by continuing to make slow progress as it did not bind the Council to anything. Ultimately they had that nuclear option to go down the road Welwyn and Hatfield had gone down. It was not being done because it was too difficult. They commented that it would be interesting if they went ahead with a number that was significantly lower than the Inspector had recommended. It would be interesting to see what happened in their case and clearly was one advantage that Three Rivers would have by being further behind on the process thus allowing us to look and see what happened and draw our own conclusions from that.

Councillor Alex Michaels appreciated that the slow process had its benefits but said they would really like to encourage that everyone was included in the process for when they did get to the end game and believed this would come quite quickly. Everyone would then already be in the loop and there would be no surprises. They stated that there had not been a Local Plan meeting for some time but suggested there should be a meeting at some point to discuss the options.

Councillor Matthew Bedford advised that there would be some Local Plan sub-committee dates to be published fairly soon and everything would follow the process of putting everything through the Local Plan sub-committee before it goes out to the public.

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst asked if it was also not the case that Hertsmere wished to delay going out to public consultation on their Local Plan and stated that they had received responses back in December that was not of a dissimilar number to the comments we had received. The Councillor referenced that they were also now reconsidering their timescale for their plan due to the volume of comments and suggested other sites. They understood this was already in the public domain and wished to seek confirmation on this.

Councillor Matthew Bedford confirmed this to be true and also stated that Dacorum had also paused their Local Plan process. There were large numbers of local authorities up and down the country doing the same, in particular around the M25 belt in the South East and were finding themselves in similar situations as Three Rivers. The Councillor commented that they were finding

it difficult, if not almost impossible, to accommodate the Government's expected targets and numbers without serious detriment to their Green Belt.

5j) Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Reena Ranger

Do you accept that climate change and increased development are two factors that increase the flood risk in designated flood zones? If so, in what circumstances will the Council require a flood risk assessment prior to determining a planning application?

Written response to the question:

Modelling evidence suggests the impact of climate change on flood risk tends to be an increase in the size of the area subject to flood risk. Flooding is also likely to become more frequent under a modelled climate change scenario (which means that areas situated in Flood Zone 2 may become part of Flood Zone 3a in future).

The current local Flood Risk and Water Resources Policy (Policy DM8 of the DM policies of the Local Development Plan) and the NPPF (footnote 55) require a Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) in a broad number of circumstances, summarised below:

- All development proposals in Flood Zones 2 and 3
- Development proposals of 1ha or more in Flood Zone 1
- Development proposals in Flood Zone 1 which are affected by sources of flooding other than rivers (e.g. flooding from surface water or reservoirs) and where the proposal would introduce a more vulnerable use to the site.
- An example of such a scenario would be where amenity open space (classified as a 'water compatible use') was being replaced by a use classified as more vulnerable to flooding (this would include residential development, non-residential uses such as nurseries, educational facilities, shops, restaurants, etc.). Another example would be where a change of use from commercial to residential was proposed and the site was affected by a type of flooding other than flooding from rivers. The different vulnerabilities are set out in the Flood Risk Vulnerability Classification at Annex 3 of the NPPF.
- Development proposals in Flood Zone 1 where the land has been identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as being at an increased flood risk in future (shown in climate change modelling).
- Development proposals on land identified by the Environment Agency as having critical drainage problems – the Environment Agency have not identified any such land in Three Rivers but should this change, FRAs would be required for proposals on the designated area.

However, the statutory bodies who consider flood risk arising from development proposals issue their own guidance for Local Planning Authorities. This guidance, issued by the Environment Agency, is used by Planning Officers to determine whether a flood risk assessment is required to accompany a planning application. The Officer interpretation of this guidance

is that a full FRA may not be required for all household extensions subject to certain criteria including details of floor levels being provided.

As Councillor Reena Ranger was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing.

5k) Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Reena Ranger

Where the Environment Agency's standing advice sets out that flood risk assessments should be provided as part of a planning application, why won't this Council follow that advice to the letter and insist on the provision of these before determining a planning application? Is it not prepared to do its utmost to protect residents' homes from further catastrophic flooding which along St Mary's Avenue, Northwood, led to some residents having to evacuate their homes in 2016 and live elsewhere for almost a year?

Written response to the question:

The Environment Agency issued Standing Advice to LAs which is to be taken into account when considering planning applications in flood zones. This Standing Advice was issued to LAs to reduce the consultation requirement on the Environment Agency. The interpretation of the Environment Agency's Standing Advice for extensions is that a full FRA is not required for all household extensions. However, each application in a flood zone has to be accompanied by information relating to floor levels and flood resistant design details.

Flooding is a serious consideration in the assessment of planning applications and Officers have regard to all relevant policies and advice. However, the specialist guidance and advice is provided by the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority (HCC) and only for specific applications, and Officers need to have regard to this guidance.

Officers have contacted the EA to have their interpretation of the Standing Advice confirmed. A response is awaited. Councillors are aware we are seeking further guidance from the EA.

As Councillor Reena Ranger was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing.

5l) Question to Councillor Matthew Bedford, Lead Member for Infrastructure and Planning Policy from Councillor Reena Ranger

The current Conservation Area policy under the Town and Country Planning Act is that old or diseased trees on private land can be felled with permission without any replacement being mandated. What can TRDC do ensure this loophole does not lead to a decrease in trees in our District?

Written response to the question:

In Conservation Area, tree owners are required to give the council 6 weeks written notice, if they are intending to fell or prune any tree with a stem diameter

greater than 7cm, when measured at 1.5 metres from ground level. If a tree is diseased, decayed, or dangerous, and the council does not object to the work, it does not have the powers under the Town and County Planning Act to require, by condition that a replacement tree is planted. It would require Central Government to make changes to the Act to provide councils with additional powers in relation to Conservation Areas.

The council will continue to advise and encourage tree owners to plant replacement trees, but replacements can currently only be conditioned where a tree is protected by Tree Preservation Order.

A TPO could be served on a diseased, decayed, or dangerous tree to enable a replacement tree to be conditioned. However, it would be unwise for the council to seek to protect such trees, as it may delay necessary safety works, and may appear perverse to protect trees by TPO, to then subsequently approve their removal.

The Council will be developing a Nature Recovery Strategy during 2022, which will include a range of initiatives to encourage residents and the local community to make biodiversity improvements in their gardens, such as planting new trees.

As Councillor Reena Ranger was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing.

5m) Councillor Andrew Scarth, Lead Member for Housing had provided the following written report which was noted.

- Following the resignation of the Community Liaison Officer (shared post with Community Partnerships), both departments were unsuccessful in the first round of recruitment so the post is back out to advert.
- I am pleased to report that Kimberley Grout and her team have secured a second property for the ARAP scheme (Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy), and were awaiting the Home Office to provide details of the family that will be matched to the property.
- The Housing department had completed the annual rough sleeper estimated count to Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities [DLUHC] as one person as at 18 November 2021.
- The Housing department had seen an increase in the amount of DFGs (Disabled Facility Grants) being requested and approved this financial year, it is believed this is due to this service being suspended during the last financial year due to the pandemic.
- On 2 December I viewed a Hertfordshire Growth Board webinar event on how is the Growth Board and partners were fast tracking recovery from COVID-19 and building the homes and infrastructure Hertfordshire needs?
- I was due to attend Watford Community Housing's pre-Christmas event, but this has been sensibly cancelled due to latest Covid case increases.

Councillor Andrew Scarth, Lead Member for Housing provided the following oral update:

A family from Afghanistan had been housed in a property that the Council were holding onto in Croxley Green. He was delighted with that outcome and that the family would be housed in the property.

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY

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

5n) Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure had provided the following written report which was noted.

Leavesden Country Park in Abbots Langley won the Most Improved Space of the Year category at the Green Flag Awards - the international quality mark for parks and green spaces. The special virtual award ceremony in celebration of the 25 anniversary of the Green Flag Awards was held on 24 November. You can read more about that and other Green Flag sites on the Council Website.

Watersmeet - Received £63,500 from the Government's Culture Recovery Fund will enable the venue to continue to host a variety of live performances including comedy nights, children's shows and tribute acts to encourage local residents of all ages back to the theatre. This year's Pantomime Cinderella is due to start on Thursday 9 December.

Health – The main focus has been on the Covid work, but in 2022 other Health matters will be given more emphasis for example obesity. We continue to work HCC and other partners.

As this last Council Meeting before Christmas I would like to thank all the Council staff and partners in Health and Leisure who have worked extremely hard this year.

5o) Question to Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure from Councillor Ciaran Reed

What support can Three Rivers District Council offer to Mission Employable's fundraising for their new Community Café on Chorleywood Common which will support both cricket in the village and help train those with learning disabilities in employment skills?

Written Response to the question:

TRDC currently have three grant schemes being administered by Watford and Three Rivers Trust which may be able to support the new Community Cafe. This is the link to the Three Rivers Community Fund – https://www.w3rt.org/community_funds

The grants available are as follows:

- Three Rivers Charitable Support Grant
- Three Rivers Covid Community Grant Fund

- Three Rivers Sustainability Fund

The Community Voluntary Service lead at Watford and Three Rivers Trust can also help with advice, guidance and other funding opportunities. An officer from the Community Partnerships team would be happy to meet with Mission Employable to understand more about the project and how we can work together.

As Councillor Chris Lloyd was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing by Councillor Ciaran Reed.

5p) Question to Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure from Councillor David Raw

Following a tree inspection, some trees with orange dots in the Aquadrome have still not been cut, with a least 6 visible on the 17 November, putting residents at risk of harm. Should TRDC work with BCC in the future so that we can make the Aquadrome a safer and better-looking place? Does this Liberal Democrat run Council care enough about giving a sufficient budget to Rickmansworth's best green asset?

Written response to the question:

The Council has recently carried out a safety inspection of trees across the district. Trees requiring work have been marked with orange dots by surveyors, who have also prioritised the works identified. Council Officers are currently commissioning the tree works identified based on the priority level, with higher priority works being completed as soon as reasonably possible. In line with the council's draft tree strategy, urgent safety works will be carried out the same day, or the area around the tree will be cordoned off until works can be completed. High priority works will be completed within 6 weeks, and low priority (routine) works within 6 to 9 months.

With respect to the Aquadrome, all works which were identified as being urgent, have already been completed. Some of the high priority work has been completed and the remaining work will be completed over the next few weeks, in line with the time scales set out in the tree strategy. Low priority, routine works will be completed over the next few months, again in line with the tree strategy time scales.

TRDC Officers are currently in discussion with BCC regarding working together on the Queens Green Canopy initiative, and how BCC may be able to support the delivery of the new Aquadrome management plan, which is in the first stages of being put together.

As Councillor Chris Lloyd was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing by Councillor David Raw.

5q) Question to Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure from Councillor Lisa Hudson

Does the Administration welcome the Conservative government's £63,500 extra funding for Watersmeet Theatre and do the Liberal Democrats regret planning on closing it?

Written response to the question:

The £63,500 Culture Recovery Fund: Continuity Support grant awarded by Arts Council England on behalf of the department for Digital, Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) following the successful application by Three Rivers District Council is indeed welcome, and will help Watersmeet to continue to provide a valuable service to residents over the coming months.

In relation to Covid closure:

The Council was required to close Watersmeet in March 2020 due to Covid restrictions, and Watersmeet remained closed until 9 December 2020 due to the need to support priority services as detailed in the Service Restoration reports to the Covid-19 Response sub-committee. Watersmeet was required to close again by law later in December 2020 as Three Rivers moved to tier 3 Covid restrictions. Watersmeet subsequently reopened on 17 May 2021 as soon as Covid restrictions allowed.

As Councillor Chris Lloyd was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing by Councillor Lisa Hudson.

5r) Question to Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure from Councillor Alison Wall

What work has the new Covid Engagement officer achieved since being in post, which hadn't been worked on at Hertfordshire County Council or in the existing partnership team?

Written response to the question:

The following work is all in addition to what Hertfordshire County Council is delivering and working locally with partners and GPs to support in the roll out of the Vaccination Programme particularly focussing on those communities not accessing the vaccination. The Partnerships team did not have the capacity to deliver this on top of existing workloads and other Covid recovery work. The Partnerships team are managing and overseeing the work of two Covid Engagement Officer, 1 full time and 1 part time and a Health Inequalities Lead Officer which were grant funded by Hertfordshire County Council Public Health Protection Board. 1 role began in May 2020 and the second 2 roles in September.

Vaccine Tracing/ Health Inequalities

The Covid Engagement officer has worked with GP surgeries and PCNs to carry out important vaccine tracing work, in order to identify those who have not yet had the COVID-19 vaccine. This involves spending time within the surgeries to make calls to individuals, which also provides patients with the opportunity to have their questions answered and any concerns about the vaccines alleviated. The responses have been positive so far and revealed that

a number of people expressed feeling better informed speaking to the engagement officer than just receiving a text invitation. Our work with PCNs has also highlighted other health inequalities as a result of Covid-19 such as poorly managed health conditions, obesity in children and social isolation, particularly among older people.

Community Mapping

Having undergone training on data and local insight platforms such as LG Inform and the vaccine equity dashboard; the Covid engagement officers have been able to successfully map out specific priority groups and areas across the District with the lowest uptake of the vaccine, not only geographically but also according to age, group sex and ethnicity. This has enabled the team to make more informed and evidence based decisions on where to carry out vaccination clinics and what groups to target.

Working with groups

Key partnerships have been developed with local community groups and organisations that the existing team had not previously engaged with. An example is the ongoing partnership with the Portuguese Association. It was identified that issues such as language barrier and lack of integration into local community activities had affected this group. Other new and ongoing partnerships include Carers in Herts, who the team are working with to identify unofficial carers within the BAME community. The team's work with these groups has allowed us to facilitate stronger links and help establish new links between these groups and the range of services available to them. Meeting with these groups has provided great insight into the needs of these communities so that we can better support them.

Pop Ups

Covid Engagement officers have successfully organised and facilitated a number of Covid Vaccination pop up clinics, in the heart of the communities with the lowest uptake. A great deal of groundwork was required to engage with the communities in order to build trust and forge positive relationships in the lead up to vaccine clinics. South Oxhey is a prime example, of a priority area, being one of the Districts most socially deprived areas. Our recent Covid and Flu clinics have been in collaboration with The Consulting Rooms, a GP surgery that the team had not worked with before and who had also not carried out vaccinations during the pandemic prior to our support and partnership.

Communications/Webinars/Events

The Covid engagement officers have been pro-active in pushing out information about the Covid vaccine in order to increase local uptake. They have produced myth busting communications on the misconceptions around the vaccines and also provided talks to staff groups on vaccine facts. The team are also developing plans for Covid related webinars targeted at specific groups and wellbeing events in partnership with the healthy hubs to continue to tackle health inequalities and inform the residents of Three Rivers.

As Councillor Chris Lloyd was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing by Councillor Alison Wall.

Post meeting note:

Following the meeting Councillor Alison Wall asked the following supplementary question:

I am concerned with the response about working with PCN's and contacting patients from surgeries to encourage vaccine uptake.

This would be a clear breach of confidentiality. So how was this achieved?

I am working at a number of surgeries and they report no contact with Council Covid Officers and they would certainly not share confidential information with them if they did make contact?

Written response to the supplementary question from the Lead Member for Leisure, Councillor Chris Lloyd:

Vaccine Tracing is an initiative that has been adopted across all districts and boroughs across the county in an effort to support PCNs with the national vaccine roll out (both PCNS and the Clinical Commissioning Groups developed the work with councils). The public health team and behavioural change unit at HCC delivered a 3-part high level training programme for Covid Engagement Officers, which was undertaken by Covid Community Engagement Officers at Three Rivers District Council. Vaccine tracing work has taken place at the following surgeries Manor view, South Oxhey surgery and Pathfinder and no information removed from the sites and calls were made on behalf of the surgery. We continue to build links with other PCNs as well.

A DPIA (data protection impact assessment) is in place between PCNs and district/ borough councils, developed by HWE ICS and HCC Vaccination Leads, to demonstrate that the risks of transferring and processing patient data have been mitigated appropriately.

Funding from Health Protection Board has been extended from April-September. It has been agreed that Contact Tracing staff, employed by Watford Borough Council for Watford and Three Rivers, will undertake the vaccine tracing work moving forwards.

5s) Question to Councillor Chris Lloyd, Lead Member for Leisure from Councillor Stephen King

The Leader Member's written answer to Councillor Joan King's supplementary question at October's full council indicated that information in pursuance of this council's application for Village Green Status for South Oxhey Playing Fields was being collated. Has the collation been completed and the information sent off to Hertfordshire County Council or if it has not, when will this task be completed?

Written response to the question:

Officers have completed the site boundary walk and have provided a copy of the Council resolution which endorses the nomination, this was sent to Hertfordshire County Council on Friday 3 December.

It was hoped that the definitive site plan would also have been sent at the same time, however because the requested plan from the Land Registry was subject to a manual search, rather than being directly downloadable, there has been a delay in completing that task. As soon as the Land Registry Plan arrives in the post, Officers will finalise and send the definitive site plan to HCC. Officers are happy to provide a further update to Councillor Chris Lloyd, Councillor Joan King & Councillor Stephen King when this task has been completed.

Once the plan has been provided, this will complete the requested supporting information required to support the Town & Village Green application for South Oxhey Playing Fields.

As Councillor Chris Lloyd was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing by Councillor Stephen King.

5t) Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Service, Climate Change and Sustainability had provided the following written report which was noted.

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

The Batchworth Depot work continues. Weather and Covid permitting the modular buildings are being delivered on the 12 January with phase 1 and 2 completion due by the end of the summer.

The teams at the Depot have been working as hard as ever in challenging weather conditions.

We are hoping to get an electric demonstration recycling vehicle around February/March time.

The Green Homes grant is going well, with officers working hard processing the applications, and contractors installing the retrofit measures.

Energy Saving Trust App is being rolled out in the new year. This an App that residents can use to try and save energy, reduce carbon and live more sustainably

W3RT Sustainability Grant continues to be rolled out across the District. Please let any Community Groups and Charities in your Wards aware there are still some funds available.

Three Rivers DC have been actively supporting Sustainability projects at Woodoaks Farm in Maple Cross such as the replanting of native hedgerows

Three Rivers DC has been mentioned twice in recent publications of the Telegraph. Firstly, as being one of the greenest Councils and then a few weeks later as one of the best places to live due to its green credentials and open spaces.

5u) Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability from Councillor Paula Hiscocks

Residents have complained previously that their brown bins haven't been emptied and have been told it was due to the contents being frozen. Could the Lead Member please comment on this policy and how it will be handled this winter?

Written response to the question:

Frozen garden bins information can be found on our website and is the same advice given every year.

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/eqcl-page/frozen-bins>

As Councillor Paula Hiscocks was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing.

5v) Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability from Councillor Paula Hiscocks

Does the Lead Member believe it is acceptable for frequent burning of vegetation, which affects air quality, to take place only metres from a public footpath or highway?

Written response to the question:

Should any Members be made aware of residents burning vegetation which is causing a nuisance, residents can be advised to report this to the Residential Environmental Health team via MyThreeRivers. On receipt of a report, the team would investigate to establish if the activity amounts to a nuisance under the Anti Social behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014. Evidence would be required from residents and/or Officers of the council, based on the evidence available next appropriate steps would be considered, including taking action under community protection legislation. From an air quality perspective burning vegetation would be unlikely to have a significant impact on air quality monitoring but could cause localised spikes in pollution, this would be investigated under the above legislation.

Under the Highways Act 1980 anyone lighting a fire and allowing smoke to drift across a road faces a fine if it endangers traffic. In these circumstances the Police would need to be contacted via their non emergency telephone number 101.

As Councillor Paula Hiscocks was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing.

5w) Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability from Councillor Alex Hayward

Whilst we recognise the residents of TRDC go to great lengths to recycle, what is this Council doing to encourage the recycling of non-ridged plastics?

Written response to the question:

On the relevant A-Z sections on the website there is advice to check what soft plastics local supermarkets can accept.

<https://www.recyclenow.com/what-to-do-with/plastic-film>

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/a-z-softplastic

Also, the Council continues to promote the message of reduce and reuse and actively promotes the Hertfordshire WasteAware campaign 'Remember your Reusables' which includes items such as beeswax wrap to cut down on the use of soft plastics.

As Councillor Alex Hayward was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing.

5x) Question to Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability from Councillor Joanna Clemens

I would like to know the correct method of disposing of pet litter, which is not specifically mentioned on the Council's website.

Written response to the question:

Pet litter should be placed in the refuse bin.

Supplementary question:

Councillor Joanna Clemens commented that the response had not been explicit enough as to what was the correct way to dispose of pet litter. Could the Council be more explicit on the website regarding the different types of cat litter that were available, what the ecological pros and cons were and how they should be disposed of so that residents were fully informed and could choose something that was a more greener option.

Councillor Phil Williams, Lead Member, confirmed they would look into the question raised.

5y) Councillor Roger Seabourne, Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships had provided the following written report which was noted.

Crime is "significantly down" year to date on 2019, the last comparable year.

Domestic Abuse continues to be higher than 2019 and 2020

Burglary is very significantly down on 2019

“Protests”; Insulate Britain and “anti vaxxers”, have not had a presence recently.

Policing of various matters of conflict are still being dealt with by “the 3Es”; Engage, Explain, and Encourage but the police will not shy away from Enforcement by the issue of a FPN if the appropriate response is not forthcoming.

There is to be an increased police presence in Rickmansworth Town Centre to help deal with the various issues that are anticipated.

Our Community Support Service continues to provide essential support to many residents, with the waiting list for assistance long and still growing. The funding is due to end in March 2022, but bids have been submitted to extend the project for a further 2 years.

Violence Against Women and Girls (VAW&G) – The Community Safety Partnership recently reviewed the survey, which was done by the County Community Safety Unit at Hertfordshire County Council, who carried out a Personal Safety Survey to understand residents’ views and concerns in relation to Violence Against Women and Girls. The Community Safety Partnership are now setting up a task group to look at this in more detail and are developing an action plan with partners. A summary of the survey findings has been provided to all Councillors by the Committee Team.

CCTV. Two cameras are now installed in their new locations (Ovaltine and Croxley Skate Park) and all cameras are functioning. Safer Neighbour Sergeants have been sent the current field of view and asked whether they want the angles changed. The new Herts CCTV Partnership Contract to manage the cameras is going very well. All other CCTV cameras are fully installed and are currently in working order.

The ASB casework is continues to be mainly concerned with and/or driven by mental health, drug and alcohol issues.

A training session on Personal Safety has been arranged for Wednesday 8 December, 10.30 – 12.00. Members are strongly advised to attend this. Further details can be obtained from Sarah Haythorpe.

Community Liaison Officer (Equalities and Refugees). We are currently recruiting for this role. The role recently delivered initiatives in Black History Month and developing further projects within our Hate Crime Action Plan. As Members will be already aware, The Equalities Committee also received presentations on Prevent and from Mencap on how they have coped in the pandemic.

The Partnerships team are managing and overseeing the work of two Covid Engagement Officer, 1 full time and 1 part time and a Health Inequalities Lead Officer which were grant funded by Hertfordshire County Council Public Health Protection Board. 1 role began in May 2020 and the second 2 roles in September. Two pop up vaccination clinics were recently held in South Oxhey

with a good turnout. The team has been doing vaccine tracing work with local Primary Care Networks (PCNs) as well as working with community groups and residents to increase the uptake of the Vaccine.

The Community Support Service and No More projects for young people at risk of serious violence are all going well, CSS has a long waiting list and the Community Partnerships Team are seeking funding to ensure the services can continue.

Licensing Committee:

Statement of Licensing Policy was adopted earlier this year following a public consultation. Members agreed to the changes which included removing the “no casinos” resolution which had been in place since 2006. The reviewed policy comes into effect in January when the current policy expires.

A premises in Hunton Bridge has been subject to a Licensing Review which took place on 30 September at a Licensing Sub-Committee. The review was called by the Police following a number of incidents from the premises and the impacts on the surrounding area which occurred throughout July.

Members resolved to:

-Remove the DPS

-Impose a number of amended conditions relating to CCTV / evidence of marine safety equipment and training / requirement to submit a full acoustic report / use of shuttle buses to and from premises / restricting all licensable activities to 11pm and various other restrictions.

Officers are currently seeking the submission of various reports as required from the Hearing and the premises remains of interest.

In August a former pub landlord in South Oxhey was prosecuted after being caught trading without a premises licence or designated premises supervisor. He pleaded guilty and was sentenced to 12 weeks' imprisonment suspended for 18 months and ordered to pay £1,779.68.

Regulatory Services:

Officers are seeking to implement a Street Trading Policy which seeks to improve guidance for officers, members and those applying for Street Trading consents. This is currently going through the Regulatory Services Committee and will be subject to a public consultation.

Changes are also proposed to the Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Policy which is also going through the Regulatory Services Committee and will be subject to public consultation. The changes seek to tighten various conditions, requesting operators to submit a yearly DBS certificate and take into account future legislation changes such as the requirement for Officers to undertake a tax check from April 2022 for taxi licences.

A driver was sentenced in October for not having a Private Hire Licence and no insurance. A total fine of £680 was given by the Courts.

Councillor Ciaran Reed had a question on the Lead Members report but was asked by the Chair to submit the question in writing.

RESOURCES AND SHARED SERVICES

5z) Councillor Dominic Sokalski, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services had provided the following written report which was noted.

Three Rivers financial position remains strong. We have withstood the challenges brought on by the Covid pandemic while keeping our reserves healthy and continued to fully fund our services.

However, there are additional pressures to overcome that unfortunately have not been fully addressed within the Government Spending Review. District Councils face increased pressures from a range of factors including inflation, loss of planning income, leisure services, to waste and recycling collections.

The Government's decision to increase National Insurance via the Health and Social Care Levy and to increase the National Minimum Wage will put further pressure on the Councils finances. Regardless of opinion about these policies, unless the Government is to fund the increased costs, it will heap further pressure onto the Councils ability to fund services.

While the announcement of £1.6bn in additional funding per year is helpful, it is nowhere near enough. If we apply District Councils proportionate share of those funds, it is estimated to be only an additional £70m for all District Councils. This is easily outweighed by the pressures we face.

Tough decisions will inevitably need to be made due to lack of Government support if we are to maintain the Councils high-quality services. Services that residents rightly expect us to continue providing.

This has been further complicated by the fact the Government has not yet published its provisional settlement, although we are hopeful it will be published soon. This lack of clarity hinders our ability to plan for the following year.

Councillor Dominic Sokalski, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services provided the following oral update

The budget was considered at the P&R Committee the previous night. The Administration will bring its budget to Council on 22 February.

Councillor Stephen Giles Medhurst asked for confirmation that in the budget that was tabled the previous night and in the appendix to the report which provided details on fees and charges there was no plan to increase the permit charges for either the first permit or for visitors and that the charges are fixed at £60 and £30.

Councillor Dominic Sokalski confirmed that parking charges would remain frozen. This was a long standing approach.

5aa) Question to Councillor Dominic Sokalski, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Ciaran Reed

What steps has the Council taken to check whether companies it contracts are in compliance with the 'fire and rehire' motion from the last Full Council?

Written response to the question:

The Council is currently reviewing its practices and will propose a solution in due course. The initial review is encompassing the following:

Post Contract Award

For existing Contracts, the Council needs to decide if it wants to task its Officers and Contract Managers to collect and collate data (effectively a survey) on existing providers of services, supplies and works to determine if this has occurred within the Council's supply chain. There is currently no clause provision within our contract (e.g. it is not considered a breach if they perform this)

Pre-Contract Award

There are several instances where we can review the process and decide the most appropriate way forward.

Include in the Council's Standard Questionnaire. This cannot be seen as a Mandatory or Discretionary Exclusion for legal reasons but we could introduce as an additional Question around Employment Practices (like H&S, Apprentices, Environment).

In the tender documents, we can expand the Living Wage Questionnaire to include Employment Practice specifically to Fire and Re-hire.

The Council can review its Standard Terms and Conditions to determine if something can be introduced that enables the Council to consider its position if an employer undertakes this practice with its staff

Procurement Strategy

The Council is in the process of re-drafting its procurement strategy and this element will be a key deliverable as part of the new Strategy - How suppliers will work with the Council and the Council's expectations.

Supplementary question:

Councillor Ciaran Reed thanked Councillor Sokalski for the written answer. The Councillor asked what timescale was planned to take place and when would they need to look at post contract awards since there needed to be further decisions. What Committee would that go to and when would that be?

Councillor Dominic Sokalski, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services said this would need to be confirmed but understood it would come to the next Council meeting in February.

5bb) Question to Councillor Dominic Sokalski, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Paula Hiscocks

Could the Lead Member tell this Council at what stage negotiations to lease Rickmansworth Bowls Club and our Community Orchard to Batchworth Community Council are and will they confirm that this would provide a financial saving to this Council?

Written response to the question:

There are no plans to lease the Rickmansworth Bowls Club or the Community Orchard to Batchworth Community Council. The proposals are to renew the existing lease between Rickmansworth Bowls Club and Three Rivers District Council. The lease renewal will also revise the arrangements so that the Council are no longer maintaining the green and providing ancillary support as a direct cost to the taxpayer.

As Councillor Paula Hiscocks was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing.

5cc) Question to Councillor Dominic Sokalski, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Stephen Cox

Now that due to the efforts of local residents the Pavilion in Green Lane has been listed as an Asset of Community Value can the lead member advise what progress, if any, has been made by this authority in restoring the Pavilion to community use and further what has been done to resolve the parking issues of the bowls club whose interests were not secured when the lease was sold by this authority and those of the Scouts which this authority single-handedly created?

Written response to the question:

As Members may be aware the listing of an Asset of Community Value, does not automatically ensure that the premises will be brought back into use as a community facility. When the Leaseholder or Freeholder wishes to sell an Asset of Community Value it triggers a moratorium period to provide the opportunity for the Community group to formulate a bid to acquire the asset. There is no obligation upon the Leaseholder or Freeholder to sell the Community group and there are no powers of compulsion to force the owner to sell the asset.

The Pavilion is let on a long lease and the Leaseholder is proposing to refurbish the property but requires permission from a covenant holder and TRDC. The current Leaseholders proposals includes alterations to accommodate their business and the Council and covenant holder will consider any application made for alterations and changes of use within the remit of the lease. The tenant has submitted plans for refurbishment and we have requested they provide the consent of the covenant holder. To date we have not received that

consent and therefore are not in a position to consider the application without this.

With respect to the parking situation the Leasehold interest in the Pavilion was sold by TRDC in 1990. The Bowls Club lease was granted in 1998 and the Scouts lease was granted in 2018, both parties signed leases which agreed that access to the respective sites is via Green Lane and across the playing fields into their premises. Neither party has been granted rights to park within the Pavilion car park as this forms part of the Pavilion leasehold interest. Officers remain receptive to securing such supplementary rights, but such an agreement is dependent upon the Leaseholder of the Pavilion being in agreement.

Supplementary question:

Councillor Stephen Cox questioned how was it this Council had ended up with a situation where someone can run around South Oxhey Playing Fields all day long and have a right to park in the Pavilion Car Park, but the Bowls Club's parking interests, despite being resident since 1974, were not secured when the leasehold was sold to Whitbread in 1990 and the Scouts were led up the garden path as recently as 2017 - went ahead and moved, having been incorrectly assured by this authority they'd be able to park there at will and accordingly is sorry the hardest word to utter on behalf of his predecessors?

Councillor Dominic Sokalski said that they would check into the history and give a written answer.

5dd) Question to Councillor Dominic Sokalski, Lead Member for Resources and Shared Services from Councillor Stephen King

Can the Lead Member verify if the land forming Phases 1, 2 and 3 of the South Oxhey Initiative is still in the ownership of Three Rivers District Council and to whom shop rents within the completed phases are being paid?

Written response to the question:

The majority of the ownership of the South Oxhey Initiative phase 1, 2 & 3 remains within freehold ownership of TRDC, although the Council has granted a number of long leases to the development partner; Countryside Properties UK Ltd in order to facilitate the development. Retail units within the Station Square complex were subject to a pre-emption option in favour of TRDC, and after careful consideration the pre-emption option was not exercised. The Leasehold interest in these retail properties has been separately transacted, with the retail rents being payable directly to the Leaseholder (Landlord).

As Councillor Stephen King was not present, any supplementary question would need to be put in writing.

**REPORTS AND QUESTIONS TO THE CHAIRS OF THE AUDIT,
PLANNING, LICENSING AND REGULATORY SERVICES COMMITTEES
(RULE 14)****AUDIT COMMITTEE**

6a) *The Chair of the Audit Committee, Councillor Margaret Hofman had provided the following written report which was noted.*

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 pressures on resources as additional audit work has been required due to the pandemic. Draft statutory accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021 have been published and are available to view on the Council's website.

The Assurance level provided by Independent Internal Audit Service ranges from Substantial to Reasonable for different audit areas. The Audit committee plays an active role in the monitoring the implementation of internal audit recommendations.

PLANNING COMMITTEE

6b) *The Chair of the Planning Committee, Councillor Steve Drury had no report.*

6c) *Question to Councillor Steve Drury, Chair of the Planning Committee, from Councillor Stephen Cox*

Does the Chair agree with me that the construction of dwellings in Spellen Place, South Oxhey has caused substantial overlooking issues for residents in Ellesborough Close?

Written Response to the question:

"It is not appropriate for an individual Member of the Planning Committee (including the Chair) to respond outside of the Planning Committee to questions about a decision made by that Committee in exercising its statutory functions. The Committee Report and minutes from the meeting are all publicly available documents.

The Council delegated its decision making powers under the Planning Acts to the Planning Committee. The Planning Committee as a body voted on the proposal and made a resolution. If other Members, who do not sit on the Committee, wish to understand the rationale of the Committee, this appears from the minute of the meeting which constitutes a full account of the discussion that took place and the subsequent votes of the Committee Members. The Planning Committee voted 6-5 In favour of the application and Councillor Drury was not even a member of the Planning Committee at that time.

Notwithstanding the above substantive point that the decision to grant planning permission was made by a body, not by one individual, Councillor Cox will note that the Committee Report identified concerns in respect of potential

overlooking of the inhabitants of Ellesborough Close, advising at paragraph 7.3.6:

“The rear elevation would face towards the rear of No’s. 22 – 25 Ellesborough Close, with No’s. 22 and 23 Ellesborough Close sited closest to the site boundary. Block A would be sited a minimum of 19.2 metres from the rear of No. 22 and Block B would be sited approximately 17 metres from the rear of No. 23. The distances are such that it is not considered that the development would result in overshadowing or loss of light. The separation distance would not achieve the indicative 28 metre figure referenced in Appendix 2 in the interest of privacy, however, these guidelines do also state that mitigating circumstances such as careful layout and orientation, screening and window positions may allow a reduction of distances between elevations. The proposed building would be angled away from the rear elevation of dwellings in Ellesborough Close and the plans also include Oriel windows at first floor level in order that any outlook from the proposed first floor units is directed towards the woodland to the north and not towards the rear of neighbouring dwellings.

Furthermore the Planning Committee resolved to grant planning permission subject to the imposition of a planning condition (19):

“Before the first occupation of the building/extension hereby permitted the window(s) as shown on plans 200 D and 201 B, as being translucent windows, including the oriel windows, shall be fitted with purpose made obscured glazing to a height of 1.7m above the floor level of the room of the in which the window is installed and shall be top level opening only at 1.7m above the floor level of the room in which the window is installed. The window(s) shall be permanently retained in that condition thereafter.”

Finally, officers have attended the site following notification of Councillor Cox’s concerns and have confirmed that the development has been constructed in accordance with Condition 19 of the planning permission.

Supplementary question:

Councillor Stephen Cox said given the phone call I have received today, I have to say it is not the Labour group that needs a 509-word lecture on planning matters and such strictures may be better directed elsewhere. The question here wasn’t who or what body made the decision to grant planning permission or who was the Chair at the time, or whether it was built in accordance with planning permission. It was about the reality of the outcome.

Councillor Steve Drury responded that they would be willing to go and see the new planting which was replacing the old planting which had now died.

LICENSING COMMITTEE

6d) The Chair of the Licensing Committee, Councillor Raj Khiroya reported that The Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships with responsibility for Licensing and the Chair of the Committee had worked together to produce the report on Licensing which is provided under the Lead Members report.

Councillor Stephen Cox commented that the Lead Member should have reported on the Licensing sub-committee hearing held in September to the October meeting. Can Councillor Khiroya advise whether they believe this authority passed or failed the test for preparing for this hearing and why?

Councillor Raj Khiroya believed the authority did pass the test and if Councillor Cox required any further clarification then please email me and I will respond.

REGULATORY SERVICES

6e) *The Chair of the Regulatory Services Committee, Councillor Raj Khiroya* advised that the Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships with responsibility for Licensing and the Chair of the Committee had worked together to produce the report on Regulatory Services which is provided under the Lead Members report.

CL69/21 MOTIONS UNDER PROCEDURE RULE 11

Council noted that Motion 1 had been referred to the Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee meeting on 22 March 2022 under Rule 11(5) of the Council Constitution

Motion 1

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, seconded by Councillor Phil Williams to move under Notice duly given as follows:

Council welcomes the UK Government announcement of £620 million in grants to support more electric vehicles on the UK's roads. The grants will be targeted towards infrastructure, particularly local on-street residential charge points.

Notes that a further £350m is promised to help vehicle manufacturers make the move to build electric vehicles.

Council welcomes the work of the Office for Zero Emission Vehicles (OZEV) to support the transition to zero emission vehicles (ZEVs) and the grants already awarded to support on-road charging points but notes that according to their estimates the country will need 1.5m charging points if we are to meet zero emissions target by 2030 and that currently there are only 24,000 charge points available.

Council notes that Herts County Council, as the Highways Authority, is consulting District Council's on its Electric Vehicle Charging Infrastructure Strategy but in this consultation its position is to refuse on road charging points and only allow them in exceptional circumstances.

Council believes this is unduly restrictive especially in dense urban areas with no off-road facilities and no available car parks and thus Council endorses a mixed economy approach, as promoted by OZEV, to allow for both on and off road and asks the County Council to adopt such a policy allowing the maximum facilities in local areas and grant permits to District Council's for suitable on-road charging points as covered by the recent budget announcement.

The Chief Executive to so write to the County Council accordingly.

Council noted that Motion 2 had been referred to the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on 14 March 2022 under Rule 11(5) of the Council Constitution

Motion 2

Councillor Ciaran Reed, seconded by Councillor Reena Ranger to move under Notice duly given as follows:

This Council condemns the Liberal Democrats national policy of a housing target to 380,000 homes a year due to the potential threat that poses to the rural nature of Three Rivers and resolves to write a letter to the Liberal Democrat Leader and our Three Rivers MP Daisy Cooper asking them to conserve Three Rivers.

CHAIR OF COUNCIL