

# LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

## MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth on Wednesday 16 March 2022 between 7.30pm and 9.09pm.

Councillors present:

Roger Seabourne (Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships)	Phil Williams (Lead Member Environmental Services. Climate Change and Sustainability)
Chris Lloyd (Lead Member for Leisure)	Reena Ranger (Substitute for Lisa Hudson)
Paula Hiscocks	Alison Scarth
Stephen King	David Major
Alison Wall (Substitute for Debbie Morris)	Jon Tankard

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Officers present:

Ray Figg – Head of Community Services  
Rebecca Young – Head of Community Partnerships  
Charlotte Gomes – Landscapes and Leisure Development Manager  
Malcolm Clarke – Waste and Environment Manager  
Alex Laurie – Principal Tree and Landscape Officer  
Sally Riley – Finance Manager  
Jo Hewitson, Strategic Climate Change and Sustainability Officer  
Elen Roberts – Climate Change Sustainability Recycling Officer  
Sarah Haythorpe - Principal Committee Manager  
Amy Parmar – Committee Manager

**Councillor Roger Seabourne in the Chair**

**LEC 36/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Debbie Morris, Lisa Hudson and Alex Michaels with substitutes Members being Councillors Reena Ranger and Alison Wall.

**LEC 37/21 MINUTES**

The minutes of the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee meeting held on 12 January 2022 were confirmed as a correct record and were signed by the Chair of the meeting.

**LEC 38/21 ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chair advised that Appendix B to the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit, including Alternative Grassland Management had been delayed by a day but was of sufficient urgency to be considered at the meeting with the report so that the Alternative Grassland Management could start from April.

**LEC 39/21 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

There were no declarations of interest received.

**LEC 40/21 BUDGET MONITORING – PERIOD 10**

This report covered the Committees financial position over the medium term (2021 – 2025) as at Period 10 (end of January). The Period 10 comprehensive Budget Management report had already been presented to the Policy & Resources Committee on 14 March 2022 to recommend approval to a change in the Council's 2021 - 2025 medium-term financial plan.

The Finance Manager provided details on the following items:

On revenue the Committee had a favourable variance of £11,000 however that was made up of several larger items which were offsetting other items within the remit of this Committee.

The main things coming out of the budget monitoring were on Licencing of £30,000. The income budget would not be met on private hire for both drivers and vehicles. In addition, other licences continue to decline in applications.

There had been £20,000 transferred from the Active Communities Development Fund and £12,600 was being transferred from Play Development Schemes into Trees and Landscapes to assist with emergency tree works that have been incurred.

On Watersmeet we have a £128,289 negative variance which related to reduced income due to the Pantomime cancellation after 16 performances as a result of Covid. This was slightly offset by way of a saving of £22,360 on materials which would have been brought to run the pantomime. There was also the possibility that the Council may recover up to a maximum of £48,000 from the Pantomime producers but negotiations are still ongoing and the £48,000 had not been accounted for at this stage.

On Playing Fields we had needed to increase the budgets for utilities due to the increase supply costs for electricity. With respect to water, the prices had needed to be increased because the previous year's costs were all estimated and we were now receiving proper bills.

On the Aquadrome costs we had also seen an increase to the electricity budget due to increased costs from suppliers.

We have a £200,000 saving on kerbside recycling. Over the past couple of years we have been paying for the recycling to be taken away and recycled. Very recently this position has changed and we are now receiving a payment for the recycling materials. At this stage we don't know if this is one off saving or the present position will continue into next year.

On Capital we have a favourable variance of £185,583 which was partly due to the re-phasing in 2022/23 and partly due to savings. We are re-phasing £117,923 for replacement vehicles as a sweeper needs replacing as the current model we have is no longer available and research was needed before we buy a suitable alternative.

We have a saving of £10,000 on Community CCTV. This is a demand led service and we have not been required to replace the existing CCTV cameras this year.

We have a saving of £1,660 on energy performance certificates as the programme for 2021/22 had been completed and therefore the full budget was not required.

There was a budget transfer between open spaces, access improvements and countryside management of £10,000 which was just to realign budgets.

On Leisure Facilities improvement the budget of £6,000 had been carried through to next year which was when the works would be required.

We have a saving this year of £50,000 on Improved Play Areas and Future Schemes and £100,000 for next year because the two new schemes which are going ahead next year (South Oxhey Playing Field and Denham Way) are being funded through CIL which was agreed at P&R Committee on 24 January 2022.

A Member queried the transfer of money from the Active Community Fund and the Play Development Fund to help with the tree situation at the Aquadrome and wondered when that money was transferred what we would be missing out on in those areas. The Member was surprised we were having to find money from other sources for the trees in Aquadrome as trees fall over and die all the time and we have had storms for years and wondered why we had not had a budget for this. On the CCTV £10k saving did that mean we were taking away one of the cameras or one was not being monitored? On the debtors as detailed in Point 2.9 of the report they asked who were the Councils main debtors.

The Landscapes and Leisure Development Manager advised that in terms of the Active Development budget, we had not had an officer for some time as they were seconded as part of the Covid work and had since got a job within Community Partnerships. That post had now been offered up as a saving with a new post coming in from the new financial year. That budget was therefore available to support other schemes. On the Play Development budget, due to Covid, we had looked at where we run play schemes. Previously we had run them in Bedmond and Croxley Green but because of staffing issues and the situation with Covid around risk

assessments, bubbles and staffing ratios we had only run one site during the last financial year at Easter and during the summer. As a result of this we did not deliver the play scheme in Bedmond and hence a budget was available for us to use for emergency tree works across the District.

In terms of the tree works we have had a tree survey undertaken this year which identified a number of high priority works that needed to be undertaken and added to the adverse weather conditions we had over the winter period which added to the increase in emergency tree works which took place during that timeframe. We anticipate that there will be further costs because of the storms recently.

The Head of Community Partnerships commented on the CCTV which was a capital budget just for maintaining the current cameras that we have and we have not had to use all the funds available this year to fix or replace them. This year we have not had to spend all of the funding. A new contract had just been entered into with Herts CCTV Partnership, and a report had been provided to Committee. Although the contract was more expensive, it was going very well and they were able to get out and fix cameras a lot quicker. We would use the budget when required.

The Finance Manager advised that the majority of the debtors were under Environmental Services and were for trade refuse. The payment terms ran from 1 day to 30 days so the payments were not actually due but we do still report on them. From one month to one year it was generally 30 to 40 days if they had not paid in. This report was as at 31 January and we would not have another report until year end on what was currently outstanding. On trade waste debts generally they do get paid and it was rare for us not to be paid. On leisure debtors it was £2,000 over a month.

A Member asked if we could manage the tree works in the Aquadrome. We were lucky this time that we had surplus budgets but we don't want to be in that situation again. We are going to continue to have severe weather and the trees in the Aquadrome will require more maintenance.

The Chair commented that tree damage was a demand led service and noted that this year had been especially bad with the weather and the impact this had on the trees.

A Member questioned the variance on the kerb side recycling. Were we going back to the days where people pay us to dispose of it? Was the garden waste service making any profit or breaking even?

The Head of Community Services advised on the garden waste service we are just achieving recovery costs even with the £5 increase. On kerb side recycling the market had been very volatile over the last couple of years but at the moment we were achieving a small income but at one time we were paying £35/£40 per tonne for recyclables which provided us with a loss. The market had improved but we did not know what would happen in the future. With Covid the disposal costs did increase. We are coming back to where we were 2/3 years ago and the market was looking a lot more positive but we would continue to monitor the situation through budget monitoring.

Councillor Chris Lloyd thanked Members for their questions and the officers for their reports. The Councillor moved that the Committee note the changes in the budget, seconded by Councillor Phil Williams.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair having been agreed by general assent.

RESOLVED:

Noted & commented on the contents of the report.

## **ENVIRONMENT SERVICES, CLIMATE CHANGE AND SUSTAINABILITY**

### **LEC 41/21 STAFF ENVIRONMENTAL CHARTER**

A report was presented to the Committee on a proposal to introduce a Staff and Member Environmental Charter to embed and inspire the consideration of environmental and carbon impacts when making decisions, implementing policies, and interacting with the wider District and County. The proposed Environmental Charter also encourages the consideration of climate change in staff's everyday lives when working from home or the office with particular consideration to transport, waste and energy.

The actions in the Charter were in response to the declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019 followed by a Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy and associated action plan put together to aid the Council and the District to reach net-zero carbon by 2030 and 2045 respectively.

The Head of Community Partnerships apologised that the title on the agenda had not been addressed for both Staff and Members but the aim was that it would be for both. The proposal was to introduce a Member and Staff Environmental Charter to help embed considerations on the environmental impact we are having in day to day decision making, policy making and day to day working across the Council and its services. The Charter forms part of our action plan which would be discussed in the next item. Details would be included in both Member and staff inductions, promoted to existing staff and incorporated into the training we are developing as part of the action plan which would be available for both Members and staff. It was explained that the Charter was split into two sections with the first section shown in the appendix which we would use as a poster that would be put around the offices and would also be sent out to Members and staff. The second part would be to show more around what our ambitions are across the District so all Members and staff can see what our aims are and making behaviour changes. We are engaging with services across the Council to highlight the changes that could be made to make a changes to the environment. We will be using other means to promote the Charter through initiatives such as our Green Hero's which started in January to show videos of staff who have made a change in their lives for example one had started buying only second hand clothes and to encourage staff to take forward those ideas. The report was taken to Policy and Resources Committee on Monday and the recommendation was agreed to adopt the Charter at Annual Council in May.

A Member commented that whilst they were happy for the Charter for staff, as an elected Member and not a paid member of staff they were not in agreement for the Charter to be for Members. Their view was that they would follow as much as they were able to of the Charter but they would make their own choices and found the proposed Charter patronising. They would look to adhere to Climate Change but did not need a Charter to tell them how to behave.

A Member queried what was being done on a practical level to encourage people to walk and cycle to and from work. We had not received the walking and cycling strategy for a long time and there did not seem to be any timeframe on the strategy. To have the strategy would be a very tangible way for people to save energy.

The Head of Community Partnerships advised that this sat within another department although it was included within the Climate Change action plan and was something we want to take forward.

A Member appreciated the second point in Section 2.4 regarding listening to the ideas and suggestion of employees. The concept of being able to put forward ideas and suggestions would make people feel more engaged with the Charter. As a Member they fully supported the fact that they would need reminding from time to time about things we should be doing and what we could be doing better to be more sustainable. They thought the Charter was a good idea.

The Chair advised that the Council had passed a motion on Climate Emergency but when it comes to the costs both financially and personally who would agree to it. They felt the Council should be leading by example and be seen to lead.

A Member welcomed the Charter and was not above being told/advised on how to live their life and welcomed people's comments and was willing to change. They felt Members should be included but they did not need to take the advice but it was knowing we can be approached and be offered advice on ways in which we can live a more sustainable life.

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved to note the comments and note that the Charter had been recommend to Council, seconded by Councillor Phil Williams. The Councillor felt that holding more meetings and briefings virtually would be more sustainable going forward and was not only good for the environment but was more in keeping with our new ways of working following the last few years. The Charter was very encouraging and looked forward to new ideas coming forward.

On being put to the Committee the motion was declared CARRIED by the Chair having been agreed by general assent.

**RESOLVED:**

The Environmental Charter be noted and noted that the Charter had been recommended to Council, as part of the Council's commitment to deliver the Climate and Sustainability Action Plan.

## **LEC 42/21 CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY ACTION PLAN UPDATE**

This report provided an update on the progress of various initiatives included in the Council's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan. Updates had been provided by officers and heads of service where appropriate and was reflected in the work undertaken over the last year.

The Strategic Climate Change and Sustainability Officer and Climate Change Sustainability Recycling Officer provided a Bi-annual update of the Action Plan providing a powerpoint presentation to the Committee. A copy of the presentation was attached to the minutes. The action plan covered the following key areas:

- Enable and Engage
- Energy
- Sustainable Design and Construction
- Efficiency of Existing Buildings
- Sustainable Travel and Air Quality
- Waste and a Circular Economy
- Biodiversity
- Water and Flooding
- Adaptation and Resilience
- Food and Agriculture

The Committee's attention was brought to Paragraph 2.4 of the report which reported that TRDC's Action Plan had scored the highest in Hertfordshire and was above the national average.

The Lead Member for the action plan referred the Committee to the Green Homes page of the presentation and the residents delight in receiving a Green Homes grant. The Member thought the report was great and applauded the work that had been undertaken over the last 18 months and thanked everyone engaged in the process including Community Groups, members of the public, Members and officers.

A Member appreciated the work that was being done and thought it was making a real difference. They questioned Point 2.5.8 regarding the grants that were given out to the local groups and requested to know where that money was being funded from.

The Strategic Climate Change and Sustainability Officer reported that there was a budget allocated of approximately £80,000 to the Climate Change Team to include salaries and projects. Due to a delayed start in the formation of the climate change team the project budget was rolled forward. This has enabled us to support initiatives such as the £10,000 sustainability fund available to inspire community groups to start their sustainability journey.

A Member referred to Point 2.6.5 where a report was currently being considered to assess the feasibility of solar schemes on Council owned assets. They thought we had solar panels already in place on our Council buildings or was this a wider matter. On trees mentioned in Point 2.9.4 it

was great to see we were planting more trees for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee but could not see any being planted in Rickmansworth.

The Strategic Climate Change and Sustainability Officer advised they would need to provide a written reply. The Property team had been looking at where more solar panels could be fitted.

*Post meeting note:*

*Whilst solar panels are in place on some properties owned by the Council, a further study has been undertaken to determine the suitability and practicality, amongst other identified restraints, of installing solar panels on open spaces and buildings. At present, next steps are being considered, and the viability determined. Energy surveys have been undertaken on the majority of Council owned buildings, with more to be undertaken, showing positive ratings across almost all physical assets requiring such.*

The Head of Community Services reported that there were some solar panels at Watersmeet and the William Penn Leisure Centre and we are looking to expand on that.

The Principal Tree and Landscape Officer advised that wild cherries would be planted at the Scotsbridge open space for the Queens Platinum Jubilee which was confirmed to be on the border of the Rickmansworth Town ward. The Member could suggest other sites in Rickmansworth to plant further trees for the Queens Platinum Jubilee, which Three Rivers own, and officers would see what could be done.

Officers were thanked for the positive report and raised question on the trees under Biodiversity at Point 2.9.4. They asked whether the trees being planted were semi-mature trees, who would water them and maintain them. Had we got a contract in place for that and if so what would the cost of that be?

The Principal Tree and Landscape Officer advised that we had planted 21 standard trees this planting season and they would be maintained by the grounds maintenance team which included watering them and was within the maintenance budget. Next year we would be planting about 700 additional younger trees as part of community projects and would be inviting volunteers to come along and be involved in planting the trees as part of the Jubilee celebrations.

A Member queried if we were asking volunteers to plant the trees could we be sure the trees were going to be maintained.

The Principal Tree and Landscape Officer advised that the trees would be planted on Three Rivers land and that smaller trees were being used specifically as they required less maintenance than larger trees. They would also be fenced to prevent damage to them in the early years and we would be using mulch around the base of the trees which would help to keep the moisture in and helps to get them through the early years.

The Chair commented that the easy part was planting the trees. Getting community groups to plant them means we can hopefully get them to take ownership of them and water them.

Another Member commented that the report was exciting and questioned getting the Youth Council involved in the project.

The Climate Change Sustainability Recycling Officer advised that the Council had undertaken an event with schools last year as a hybrid style meeting. They were in discussions with the same group to do the same type of event next year with an environment topic.

A Member pointed out that we had a high recycling percentage but also had high water use. They asked if there was a correlation between washing tins before they were put in the bin and the creation of a higher water usage. If so, could anything be done to reduce it? Could the tins be washed on site?

The Climate Change Sustainability Recycling Officer said that although there was some debate around the point raised, the overall water footprint of recycling materials is beneficial, than if the overall water footprint was less for recycling materials. With regard to the tins being washed on site this would not be possible as if you put things in the bin with food then pieces of paper and cardboard might get ruined and we could end up having moldy food. Tins needed to be cleaned prior to being put into the recycling bin to prevent contamination and mold.

The Chair commented that there was positive progress with this but questioned the communication regarding the newsletter and subscriptions especially in relation to resident queries. They asked if there could be a way to click on a link on the website and look at the newsletter and get access to App as well as being able to have the opportunity to subscribe to the newsletter. They suggested that more needed to be done around communications and this be referred to the Communications team. Members would be happy to provide any assistance they may require.

The Climate Change Sustainability Recycling Officer advised that the newsletter was posted on Facebook so people can view it. Press releases are published on the website on the home page so residents can pick up details there on what the Council is doing. In person events would make a bigger impact and referenced the forthcoming Rickmansworth festival. Links to the newsletter and Climate change were posted on Facebook and Twitter however Instagram does not have that option.

A Member commented that there was a budget for improving the website.

A Member referred to trees being planted by Herts County Council who were using QR codes that could be placed by the tree which would give advice on the tree type and who owned it. Questioned if this was something that could be done by the Council in the future.

The Principal Tree and Landscape Officer advised that they would look into it.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared CARRIED by the Chair having been agreed by general assent.

RESOLVED:

To enable officers to continue with the implementation of the Climate and Sustainability Action Plan and where necessary add to the action plan.

**LEC 43/21 BIODIVERSITY OPPORTUNITIES AUDIT, INCLUDING ALTERNATIVE GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT**

The purpose of this report was to summarise the content and implications of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit (BOA) of minor TRDC open spaces. The report also includes proposals for alternative grassland management for parts of the district, in particular some of the Council's major open spaces, such as Chorleywood House Estate and Leavesden Country Park. The report and Appendices C and E includes financial implications of the recommendations detailed at point 13.1 and 13.2.

The Landscapes and Leisure Development Manager advised that the report brought together the outcomes of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit including details on the Alternative Grassland Management. This was the start of the process which would continually change throughout the year and subsequent years and was not static. The key headlines were:

- A 5 year action plan had been developed following the outcomes of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit (BOA) as detailed within Appendix C;
- Officers would seek to work with the local community to implement the proposals and to seek external funding opportunities where possible;
- Details for alternative grass and management regimes can be viewed from 2.15 onwards in the report;
- In order to focus on consistent percentages officers had focused on available grassland which was grassland excluding sites where grass was kept short for specific purposes for example football pitches;
- Currently the Council keeps 62% of available grassland as non grassland for biodiversity benefits. This moves to 77% following the changes outlined with a 15% reduction in grassland kept as general amenity;
- These proposals offer a variety of grassland management regimes which was based on using the right grassland management regime in the right place but also to diversify the biodiversity benefits achieved. For example, at Point 2.24, 31% of grassland would be conservation grazed. This included sites in the Chorleywood House grounds, Croxley Common Moor and the Withey Beds and would see the introduction of grazing at The Horses' Field in Leavesden Country Park this summer. All of these sites have been agreed as part of the Committee process and with public consultation. Aside from the numerous biodiversity benefits that conservation grazing brings some of these are subject to a countryside stewardship scheme and higher level stewardship as

endorsed by Natural England or they are a tripe SI site which included Croxley Common Moor;

- Following the BOA further sites would have a hay meadow cut and lift which included Bury Lane and Mead Place, Denham Way, Tannershill, Rickmansworth Park and Fortune Common as well the pilot sites introduced in 2021.
- Officers are continuing to look for opportunities to cease mowing and to move to a hay meadow cut and lift where appropriate. During 2022/23, as part of the preparation of the new Management Plan for the Aquadrome, officers identified new opportunities for increased cut and lift. Later in the year officers would be updating the Management Plan for Chorleywood House Estate and will look for opportunities to change the grass cutting method for the main lawn area from general amenity to hay meadow cut and lift. Due to the sensitivities of this site this needs to be consulted on with the public first;
- Next year and in future years and where management plans are produced for open spaces officers will look for opportunities to increase the areas of cut and lift. All of the changes to the grass and management regimes across the entire District and all the sites would be implemented from April this year.

Members raised the following points:

The report commissioned from the Countryside Management Service (CMS) how much did it cost and had the money for the report come out of the £100k budget for implementation.

Conservation grazing had been cautioned against by the Wildlife Trust as it was expensive, difficult to implement not public friendly as it involves fencing and if not done correctly can be worse for the environment.

Cutting and lifting is easy, cheap and effective so how do we justify some of the figures provided.

It was stated that we could save £30k per year by adopting cut and lift but no savings were identified. If we stopped cutting grass 12 times a year and if we outsource cut and lift surely there would be savings.

The report did not include big sites where there were existing Management Plans and they don't include much cutting and lifting – only around 3%.

On the cut and lift machine we are looking to buy it would Hoover up the insects but we want to encourage biodiversity.

Would we be cutting the grass at the right times.

Not a fan of cattle and we were looking at putting cattle in our amenity spaces where people played, had picnics in and children ran about but if they are being turned into grazing rather than hay meadows are we going to be shutting off our amenity space.

There was not one solution to everything and everything had a cost and cut and lift was not the answer to everything. This report was a starting point and they were sure it would have to be adapted as we move forward.

On the amenity space audit and the amenity pollinator mix, they knew it would be going into areas where you don't want too much disturbance but didn't feel there was great biodiversity with crocus or primrose bulbs although they thought primroses were seeds. They would like to see cowslips planted.

Could we also look at water run off, pollution absorption and summer cooling effect which will have an effect on the urban areas and to educate residents on what they can do on cooling their house. Winter water run off was also another important factor.

On Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust and the correspondence Members had been sent and the possible damaging effects of conservation grazing this seemed to go against what they had on their website.

In response to the questions it was advised as follows:

The Strategic Climate Change and Sustainability Officer advised that the Council had worked across Hertfordshire, as part of the Hertfordshire Sustainability Project initiative, and for this report we had paid a £2,500 contribution towards the cost. As it was being done across the whole of the County we benefited from this (including some funding provided by Herts County Council to the project).

*Post meeting note: It was funded by Sustainable Hertfordshire and delivered by Countryside Management Service and Rights of Way, both HCC services. No payment was made by TRDC.*

The Principal Trees and Landscape Officer referred to the point on conservation grazing vs cut and lift. On conservation grazing being more expensive than cut and lift that had not been officers experience in recent years. The conservation grazing we are doing had been focused on re-introducing it on sites where historically it had taken place but had ceased and we had brought it back because it was felt it was the right form of management rather than introducing it to sites which had not historically had that. Cut and lift was focused on areas which were amenity grass but were now being turned into hay meadow cut.

The Head of Community Services said savings could possibly be made from having seasonal workers but we do not have any. We only have a small number of staff which cut the grass and our grounds maintenance staff do not cut all the grass throughout the season. Last year we only cut the grass 7 times not 12. Officers did not believe there would be any potential staff savings and if there were to be any capacity then staff would be utilised in carrying out other ground maintenance responsibilities. For example tree works including planting. The Head of Community Services pointed out that following the recent storms, a number of grounds maintenance staff duties were diverted to undertake tree works. This year was about introducing the new alternative grass cutting.

The Principal Trees and Landscape Officer advised that the BOA had focused on our smaller sites to look at the opportunities available and not the larger sites which have Management Plans. As the Management Plans come up for renewal we will look for more opportunities. We are working on the Aquadrome at the moment and will be working on Chorleywood House Estate later this year. Next year officers will look at South Oxhey Playing Fields.

On insects the Principal Trees and Landscape Officer advised that following the BOA we are looking to use an agriculture contractor who will cut the grass and bail it using a bailer so the grass will be left for a few days before being bailed up. The machine was designed for smaller sites where we can't get the larger bailing machines in. It would also be needed for the second cut. It was important that we do a second autumn cut. When we do that cut the grass will be a lot shorter so we will not be able to bail it and it would need to be collected using the Wessex cut and collect machine but there will be some impact on the invertebrates. Conservation grazing was a much more gentle form of management which was better for invertebrate life and not cutting the grass all in one go.

The Principal Trees and Landscape Officer said there was a period of cutting from late June to late August. Historically for hay meadows you would need dry weather to do that and the period for cutting would vary. Historically they would have used hand tools which would have taken a lot longer for farmers to cut the hay. Varying the cut from year to year has benefits as certain plants don't come fully into flower until August and if we cut too early we will be cutting the plants before they flower. If we cut in mid-July that would be before the school summer holidays so we would miss the period where we would be able to run environmental activities for children and their families to learn about wildflowers and biodiversity.

The Principal Trees and Landscape Officer advised that with conservation grazing the number of cattle was much lower than commercial situations. With Croxley Common Moor and Withey Beds being wet sites and the ground uneven it would not be possible to manage a cut and lift so the cattle are a vital element at those sites. They were not aware there had been any incidents historically with the way we have done grazing. We would like people living in urban areas to come into contact with livestock and we could organise open days with CMS to meet the livestock.

The Landscapes and Leisure Development Manager advised that the sites where we are going to be doing the grazing had all gone through public consultation – Chorleywood House grounds, Withey Beds and Croxley Common Moor and had formed part of the Management Plan. The additional site at The Horses' Field at Leavesden Country Park had also been out for public consultation twice last year and was agreed as part of the Management Plan this time last year which was why grazing was going on that site. There will still be an area where people can walk around The Horses' Field and would not need to walk near to the cattle grazing.

The Principal Trees and Landscape Officer advised on the bulb and spring wildflower planting there were suggestions for native and non-native species, but the decision on what to plant would be based on the situation in the area. In more natural locations it may be appropriate to use native

species, particularly in rural sites. In urban areas other spring flowers either as bulbs or as plug plants could be suitable.

The Strategic Climate Change and Sustainability Officer advised that in regard to water run off two sites in Three Rivers had been identified as pilot SUDs projects one in South Oxhey and one in Northwood. A stakeholder engagement meeting was coming up soon. In terms of the urban heat effect that adaptation is not well understood but a sub group had been formed on this on a cross county basis which would include Highways and we will begin to see some change over the next few years.

The Principal Committee Manger would publish the spreadsheet for Appendix 3 as some of the wards had realigned when made into a PDF document.

*Post meeting note: the spreadsheet was published the day after the meeting.*

On being put to the Committee the recommendation to note the recommendations was declared CARRIED by the Chair the voting being agreed by general assent.

RESOLVED:

Noted the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit Action Plan proposed in Appendix C and the delivery of an alternative grassland management regime as set out at 2.32 and within Appendix D.

Noted that the implementation of the action plan had been agreed by P&R Committee to be within the £100k budget approved as part of the 2022/23 budget decision with additional funding sources being sought for the balance working in partnership with other community based organisations. Noted that funding for future years will be brought forward as part of the 2023/24 budget process.”

**LEC 44/21 TO RECEIVE THE FOLLOWING FINAL SERVICE PLANS 2022-2025 FOR RECOMMENDATION TO COUNCIL**

The Committee received the following Service Plans for recommendation to Council.

- Leisure and Landscapes
- Environmental Protection
- Community Partnerships
- Regulatory Services (items relating to licensing)

Councillor Chris Lloyd moved, duly seconded, that the service plans be recommended to Council.

On being put to the Committee the recommendation was declared CARRIED by the Chair having been agreed by general assent.

RECOMMEND:

That the final Service Plans for Leisure and Landscapes, Environmental Protection, Community Partnerships and Regulatory Services (items relating to Licensing) for 2022-25 be recommended to Council.

**LEC 45/21 WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee received its work programme. Two items had been added the Aquadrome Management Plan and Oxhey Woods Management Plan.

A Member referred to a question raised at Council on Air Quality Monitoring and reiterated a request for a briefing and report on Air Quality data.

A Member asked if a road trip could be organised for Members to understand our different management processes in Three Rivers. The Head of Community Services said officers could look to organise a tour in late summer/ early autumn to one or two sites in the District to show Members the different types of grass cutting.

A Member queried whether mental health should be included on the work programme as discussed at the last meeting. The Head of Community Partnerships advised that was regard to including mental health as part of physical activity strategy and it was agreed it would be included as part of the importance of physical activity as part of mental health wellbeing. An update in the Member Information Bulletin could be provided on the community support services that the team commission.

Could something be added on monitoring the water quality in our chalk streams and the levels of sewerage being detected? It was noted the monitoring of sewerage was done by the Environment Agency but details could be provided in the MIB.

Batchworth Heath Management Plan – had we got all the areas of the Heath included? The Head of Community Services advised that the Member should email officers to make sure all the points were captured in the plan.

RESOLVED:

That the comments and work programme be noted.

**CHAIR**