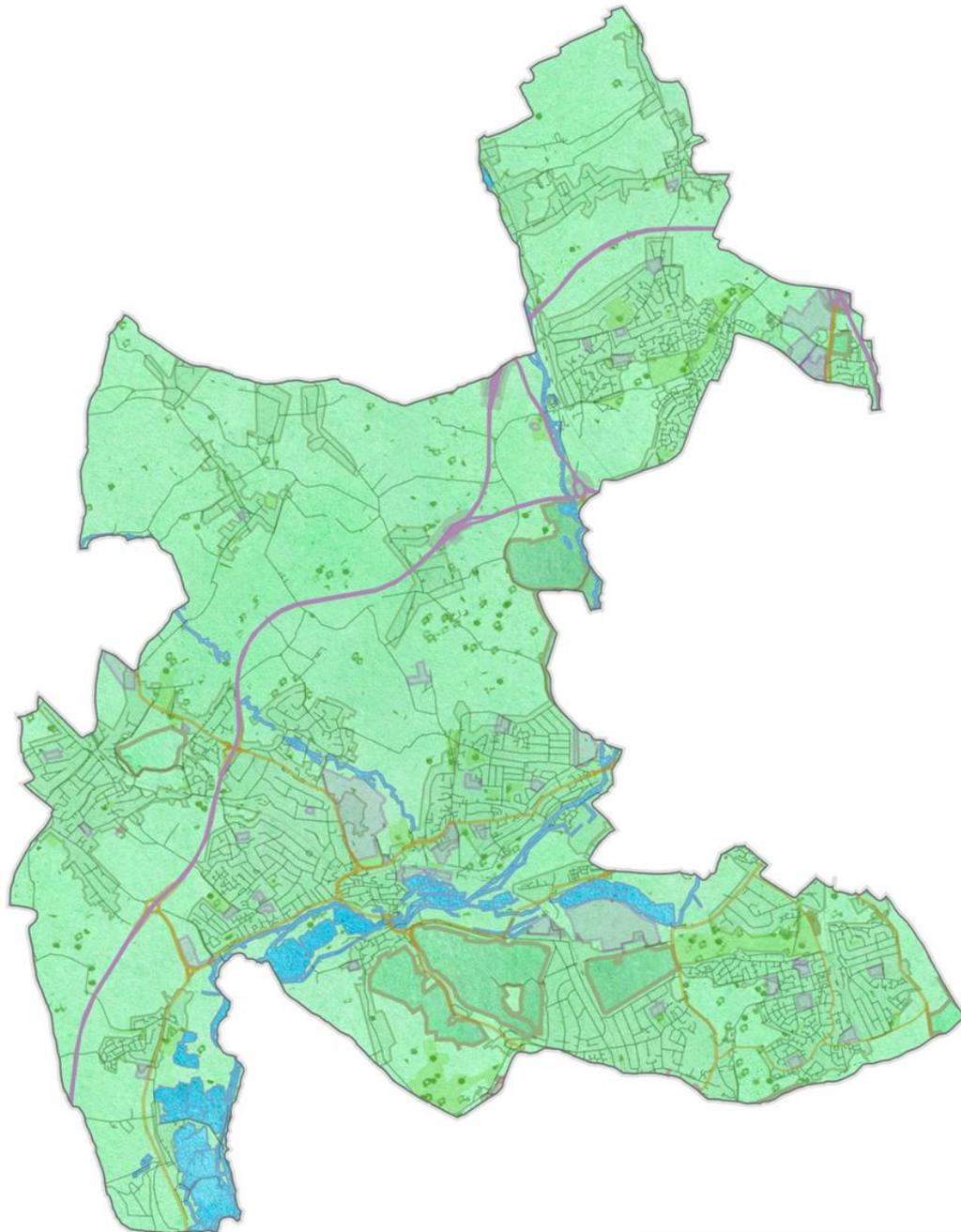


Local Plan 2026-2041 Regulation 19 Part I



February 2026



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Foreword by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE, Leader of the Council and Lead Member on the Local Plan, Three Rivers District Council

Dear Fellow Residents,

Three Rivers is shaped by its villages and towns, its green spaces and waterways, and by the strong sense of community shared by those who live and work here.

This Regulation 19 Publication version of the Three Rivers Local Plan marks a major milestone. It reflects extensive evidence-gathering, technical work and, crucially, engagement with residents, businesses, infrastructure providers and neighbouring authorities. The Plan sets out a clear, deliverable framework for how our district should grow up to 2041, while protecting the qualities that make Three Rivers distinctive.

The Plan strikes a careful balance. It meets the need for new homes — including genuinely affordable housing — while prioritising protection of the Green Belt and our natural environment. It supports a resilient local economy, helps our town centres adapt, and promotes well-designed, sustainable development backed by essential infrastructure.

Our guiding principle throughout has been simple: growth must work for Three Rivers. That means development that respects local character, tackles climate change, improves health and wellbeing, and enhances quality of life. Sustainability is at the heart of this Plan, with clear expectations for energy efficiency, biodiversity net gain and resilient communities. We are planning for the right level of housing, and for the right types of homes — focusing on one, two and three-bed properties rather than large executive homes.

The Publication Plan is now open for formal consultation before submission for independent examination. This is a key stage, and I encourage all interested parties to review the document and make representations where they consider it necessary. Your views will help ensure the Plan is sound, robust and fit for purpose.

Thank you to the residents, stakeholders, councillors and officers whose time, expertise and local knowledge have brought us to this point. Planning for the long term is never easy, but by working together we can ensure Three Rivers remains a place where people choose to live, work and invest.

Yours sincerely

Stephen Giles-Medhurst

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE



1 Introduction

What is the role of the Local Plan?

- 1.1 The Local Plan is the main planning document prepared by local planning authorities, under statutory requirements. It outlines a council's long term planning framework with strategic and non-strategic planning policies. The Local Plan also provides policy guidance on delivering new homes and jobs, protecting landscape resources and green infrastructure. It establishes the council's strategy for managing development and infrastructure in Three Rivers up to 2041.
- 1.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) sets out planning policies at a national level and provides a framework for Local Plan to ensure the pursuit of social progress, economic wellbeing and environmental protection in a sustainable manner. The NPPF identifies that achieving sustainable development means the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives):
- **Economic objective** – to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
 - **Social objective** – to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
 - **Environmental objective** – to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.
- 1.3 The NPPF requires that a Local Plan must include policies which set out an overall strategy for the pattern, scale and design quality of places, and make sufficient provision for homes (including affordable housing), employment, retail, infrastructure, community facilities, as well as the conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment. Strategic policies should address each of the council's priorities for the development and use of land in the district, along with policies to address non-strategic matters.
- 1.4 Consistency with national policies is one of the criteria to determine the soundness of Local Plans at the Independent Examination. Other tests of soundness include that

the formulation of the Local Plan is based on proportionate and justifiable evidence; that the Local Plan is effective, and that it is positively prepared.

1.5 The Local Plan, along with the Minerals and Waste Local Plan (for Hertfordshire) and any Neighbourhood Plans within the district, forms the Development Plan for Three Rivers District. The Development Plan is the basis on the determination of planning applications in the district. This Local Plan replaces the following Development Plan documents:

- Core Strategy (**October 2011**);
- Development Management Policies Local Development Document (**July 2013**);
- Site Allocation Local Development Document (**November 2014**)

1.6 As of February 2026, there are four adopted Neighbourhood Plans; Chorleywood, Croxley Green, Batchworth and Sarratt. Additionally, Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan has undergone examination. Moving forward, any new or updated Neighbourhood Plans will need to conform with the policies in this Local Plan following its adoption.

Preparation of the Local Plan

1.7 The preparation of the Local Plan commenced in 2017, with the council undertaking numerous public consultations, including:

- Issues and Options and Call for Sites Consultation (2017);
- Regulation 18 Consultation – **Part 1: Preferred Policy Options and Part 2: Sites for Potential Allocation (2021)**;
- Regulation 18 Consultation – **Part 3: Additional Sites for Potential Allocation (2023)**;
- Regulation 18 Consultation – **Part 4: Three Rivers' Preferred Local Plan Lower Housing Growth Option - Protecting More Green Belt Land (2023)**;
- Regulation 18 Consultation – **Part 5: Newly Submitted Sites and New Policies Consultation (2025)**

1.8 In arriving at the formation of the Local Plan, the council has taken into consideration the following:

- The views arising from public consultations involving a range of stakeholders including residents, businesses, statutory bodies, local groups and individuals with interest in Three Rivers;
- National planning policy requirements and other plans and strategies affecting the area;

- The testing of options and alternatives, primarily through the sustainability appraisal process, taking into account the environmental, social and economic impacts of choices;
- The Government's principles of sustainable development, whereby development helps to maintain high and stable levels of employment, achieves social progress which recognises the needs of everyone, provides effective protection of the environment and appropriate use of natural resources;
- The extensive research and technical studies known as the Evidence Base that the council has compiled in order to understand the needs of the area and opportunities and constraints that exist.

1.9 The Local Plan has been informed by a range of technical studies, which form part of the wider Evidence Base as shown below:

- Strategic Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA, 2025)
- Urban Capacity Study (2020)
- Edge of Settlement/New Settlement Scoping Study (2020)
- South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment (2024)
- South West Hertfordshire Economic Study (2024)
- South West Hertfordshire Retail & Leisure Study (2018)
- Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (2025)
- South West Hertfordshire Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2019)
- Three Rivers District Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (2021)
- Hertfordshire Water Study (2017)
- Heritage Impact Assessments (multiple addendums)
- Landscape Sensitivity Assessments (multiple addendums)
- Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study (2019)¹

¹ This study comprised of seven reports, namely i) The Open Space Assessment Report 2019; ii) The Open Space Standard Paper 2019; iii) The Indoor Leisure Facilities Needs Assessments 2019; iv) The Leisure Facilities Strategy 2019; v) The Playing Pitch Strategy Assessment Report 2019; vi) The Playing Pitch Strategy and Action Plan 2019; and vii) The Playing Pitch Strategy Developer Contributions Toolkit.

- Three Rivers District Council & Watford Borough Council Green Belt Review Strategic Analysis (Stage 1) (2017)
- Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment for Three Rivers District and Watford Borough Council (2019)
- Three Rivers District Council Green Belt Study Stage 3: New Settlement Analysis (2020)
- Three Rivers District Council Stage 4 Green Belt Review (2025)
- Sustainability Appraisals (multiple throughout the Local Plan process)
- Three Rivers District Strategic Flood Risk Assessment, Levels 1 and 2 (2026)
- Integrated Health and Equality Impact Assessment (2026)
- Whole Plan Viability Assessment (2026)
- Transport Assessment (2026)
- Infrastructure Delivery Plan (2026)

1.10 Sustainable development is the key principle underpinning the Local Plan and is critical to the delivery of many of the council's and community's aspirations. It requires social progress which recognises the needs of everyone, including housing, effective protection of the environment, appropriate use of natural resources and the maintenance of stable levels of economic growth and employment. The Local Plan has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (including working notes and addendums) at each stage of production (including during every public consultation) to assess the sustainability of the options and to inform plan preparation and the decision-making process.

Format of the Local Plan

1.11 The Local Plan is presented in two parts:

Part I: Planning Policies – This section provides an introduction, background and context to the district and the vision and objectives for the district. It also contains detailed planning policies and supplementary appendices, which will be used for determining development proposals.

Part II: Site Allocations – This section details the site allocations (including site specific requirements), supporting the delivery of the planning policies through site

allocations to meet the district's need for housing, employment, education, retail, open space and other infrastructure.

2 Background & Context

Overview of Three Rivers District

- 2.1 Three Rivers is situated to the southwestern tip of Hertfordshire adjoining Greater London to the south. It covers an area of approximately 88 square kilometres. To the north of the district is the borough of Dacorum and St Albans City & District. Buckinghamshire is situated to the west of the district. To the east of Three Rivers is the borough of Watford and district of Hertsmere. The London Boroughs of Harrow and Hillingdon adjoin the southern boundary of the district.
- 2.2 Three Rivers is a mixture of beautiful countryside, villages and small towns with main settlements at Rickmansworth, Croxley Green, South Oxhey, Abbots Langley and Chorleywood. The development of Rickmansworth, Croxley Green and Chorleywood areas was closely related to the development of the London Underground Metropolitan Line railway stations, while South Oxhey was developed after the Second World War to alleviate housing pressures in London. Other settlements such as Abbots Langley have developed more gradually.

Population

- 2.3 The population of Three Rivers has increased from 87,300 in 2011 to 93,800 in 2021² (an increase of 7.4%). The Office for National Statistics (ONS) produces mid-year population estimates of the district, estimating the mid-2025 population as 95,090. It is estimated that the population is predicted to grow continuously to 98,919 by 2041³.
- 2.4 The demographic data by ONS also demonstrates a trend of an aging population in the district, with a 25% increase expected in the age category 65 and over by 2041⁴.
- 2.5 Residents in Three Rivers are largely healthy and experience above average life expectancy. The workforce is generally well-educated, highly skilled and well paid.

Deprivation

- 2.6 The English Indices of Deprivation (2025) provides a measure of deprivation based on factors such as income, employment, health, education, barriers to housing and services, living environment, and crime. The Index ranks Three Rivers amongst the 10% least deprived districts and boroughs in England⁵.
- 2.7 However, despite the district's relative affluence, there is variation across the area and pockets of deprivation exist. Wards such as Moor Park and Eastbury and Chorleywood North and Sarratt feature relatively low deprivation, while wards such

² ONS. (2022). How the population changed in Three Rivers: Census 2021.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/censuspopulationchange/E07000102/>

³ ONS. (2025). Subnational population projections for England: 2022-based.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/subnationalpopulationprojectionsforengland/2022based>

⁴ ONS. (2025). Projected population age structure by single year of age and sex for Three Rivers, 2022 to 2047.

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/bulletins/subnationalpopulationprojectionsforengland/2022based>

⁵ MHCLG. (2025). English Indices of Deprivation 2025: Statistical Release.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025/english-indices-of-deprivation-2025-statistical-release#local-authority-district-analysis>

as South Oxhey and Maple Cross feature comparatively high deprivation with part of the South Oxhey ward identified as within the 20% most deprived neighbourhoods in England.

- 2.8 The differences in deprivation across the district highlight inequalities in terms of access to services, housing, employment, education, skills, training and health.

Employment and Economy

- 2.9 Three Rivers has a mixed economy of business and industry and is attractive to small businesses, often relocating from London.
- 2.10 The South West Hertfordshire Economic Study Update (2024) indicates that Three Rivers experienced the strongest employment growth rates in South West Hertfordshire between 2016 and 2021, with growth of 1.6% (per annum), higher than the average percentage increase (0.7% per annum) across the rest of the UK.
- 2.11 Furthermore, the study indicates that Three Rivers' economy is largely based on the IT sector and professional services. Although there is also a high concentration of knowledge-based industries, the film and TV sector is noted as a particular strength of the district, particularly due to the Warner Bros. Studios in Leavesden.
- 2.12 A number of national and multinational corporations have set up head or regional offices within Three Rivers (e.g. Nissan, Renault UK, Skanska, ASOS, Imagination technologies, GE Money, Schleich, Mane Contract). These are complemented by a wide variety of small and medium sized businesses. The Warner Bros. Film Studios in Leavesden is an internationally acclaimed site for creative industry, with the Harry Potter Studio Tour attracting 6,000 visitors per day.
- 2.13 As reflected in the South West Herts Economic Study, approximately 67% of working residents in Three Rivers work within the district. However, it must be noted that the 2021 census was undertaken in early 2021 when a large proportion of people were working from home due to the Covid pandemic. Notwithstanding this, the result demonstrates the increase in homeworking/remote working and the importance of providing a balance of new homes and jobs in the district.
- 2.14 Within Three Rivers, about 79.8% of people aged 16-64 were economically active in 2023, compared to 80.4% in Hertfordshire and 79% in England⁶.
- 2.15 There is predicted to be significant growth in demand for studio space over the next 15 years at Warner Bros Film Studios, and this is a key asset to the future growth of creative industries in the area. There is a shortage of land suitable for small/medium scale industrial uses, and there is a need to protect existing office space in the district despite high vacancy levels across the wider South West Hertfordshire functional economic market area (FEMA).

⁶ ONS. (2024). Economic inactivity rate (Great Britain). <https://www.ons.gov.uk/explore-local-statistics/indicators/economic-inactivity-rate>

- 2.16 Securing increased business investment in the area will be necessary to maintain the mixed economy of Three Rivers, and to provide continued opportunities for local employment.
- 2.17 In terms of provision for retail and services, Rickmansworth is the principal town in the district, but no one town dominates. Many Three Rivers residents also rely on towns in neighbouring areas for work, shopping and leisure purposes including parts of north London, Watford, Hemel Hempstead and St Albans. The district remains fairly 'self-sufficient' in a number of areas including the provision of everyday local facilities, services and recreation, however, the dispersed settlement pattern across the district raises issues for the provision of some higher order services, and for the maintenance of the viability of shops and services in the villages and small towns as these compete with much larger centres in adjoining districts and boroughs.

Infrastructure

- 2.18 Pressure on existing infrastructure and additional demands caused by planned growth must be addressed to maintain and enhance the district's prosperity and quality of life. Many people are attracted to Three Rivers by the quality of life and environment. This places a high demand on school places and access to amenities, such as open spaces. The local and strategic road networks, rail network and local facilities in smaller settlements are also facing increasing pressure.

Transport and Accessibility

- 2.19 The district is on the outer fringe of London and benefits from excellent road and rail connections (although primarily in and out of the district). Heathrow and Luton airports are in close proximity and Gatwick and Stansted are approximately an hour's drive away. The M1 and M25 motorways also run through the district.
- 2.20 Demand for rail services remains high and is increasing. The West Coast Main Line, the Chiltern Line and the London Underground Metropolitan Line railways all serve the district, providing links to London and the north, as well as more local connections. Access to, and parking at stations are under pressure and will likely continue to increase.
- 2.21 Bus networks provide an important service in the district, particularly for more rural areas. However, these routes are often uneconomic to operate and networks in the district are shrinking. These services require support to maintain access to essential services for people without access to a car. Limited services between Abbots Langley and Watford General Hospital, and South Oxhey and Watford General Hospital have been identified as an issue for local communities.
- 2.22 Car ownership is relatively high in the district. Around 87.5% of households had at least one car or van at the 2021 census⁷, which is higher compared with Hertfordshire's (84.4%) and England's (76.5%) averages. In the rural areas of the

⁷ ONS. (2025). Number of Cars or Vans – Census 2021.
<https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps/choropleth/housing/number-of-cars-or-vans/number-of-cars-3a/no-cars-or-vans-in-household>

district, car ownership levels are even higher, with 90.6% of households in Chorleywood and 91.8% in Croxley North & Sarratt owning a car.

- 2.23 Traffic levels in Three Rivers are forecast to grow 15.6% in the period 2017-2031, and there are existing local congestion problems. Despite high car ownership levels, there are still households without access to a car or van, and this can have significant impacts on access to services, particularly for households in rural areas. Dependency on the car also has social, economic and environmental consequences. There is therefore a need to enable and promote more sustainable modes of transport to improve travel options, increase access to services, reduce the environmental impacts of travel and promote the sustainability of the district.

Housing

- 2.24 Housing is a key challenge for the district. Three Rivers has a relatively high proportion of detached and semi-detached housing, and a relatively low proportion of flats when compared to the rest of Hertfordshire and the national average. The quality of housing stock in Three Rivers is generally good, although there are areas such as South Oxhey where some of the housing stock has exhibited problems of poor thermal insulation, poor space and layout standards, and unsatisfactory access. Recent regeneration and redevelopment of housing within South Oxhey is helping to address these issues.
- 2.25 Approximately 71% of households in Three Rivers are owner occupied. This is a higher proportion than the Hertfordshire (65%) and national (65%) averages⁸. About 3.9% of houses were recorded as being vacant at the time of the Census in 2021⁹.
- 2.26 There is a high demand for housing in the district, particularly from people moving out of London and this is illustrated by the high house prices. Three Rivers house prices are amongst the highest in the country. Average house prices in Three Rivers in October 2025 were £594,000¹⁰. The general trend has been towards worsening affordability ratios, and lower quartile house prices were 12.24 times higher than lower quartile incomes in September 2024.
- 2.27 The South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment (2024) identifies a notable need for affordable housing and confirms that this is an important and pressing issue in the district and wider South West Hertfordshire. A lack of affordable housing can lead to people moving out of the district and to recruitment problems for local businesses and public sector organisations. Where firms have difficulty attracting staff to 'high cost' regions, wages may be higher, but this risks the competitiveness of firms in the area. There is a need to provide housing to meet local needs, and there is a particular need to provide affordable housing in the district.

⁸ ONS. (2025). Tenure of Household. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/census/maps/choropleth/housing?lad=E07000102>

⁹ ONS. (2023). Number of Vacant and Second Homes England and Wales: Census 2021. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/bulletins/numberofvacantandsecondhomesenglandandwales/census2021#:~:text=Of%20all%20dwellings%2C%20it%20was,England%20and%20120%2C450%20in%20Wales.>

¹⁰ <https://www.ons.gov.uk/visualisations/housingpriceslocal/E07000102/>

Natural Environment

- 2.28 As well as having intrinsic value, the environment of Three Rivers is significant in influencing the character of the district and supporting the quality of life of local communities.
- 2.29 Over three quarters (76%) of the district is designated as Green Belt, with Green Belt boundaries generally closely related to the urban areas of the small and medium sized settlements which are distributed fairly evenly across the district.
- 2.30 The landscape of Three Rivers is a complex mix of rural and urban areas, woodlands, wildlife habitats, farmland, water features and other land forms. The landscape has been heavily altered by human activity so many distinctive features such as field boundaries are of historical interest as well as visual and ecological merit.
- 2.31 Approximately 546ha of the Chilterns National Landscape is situated within Three Rivers, which is sparsely populated. However, development within and near to the National Landscape needs to be suitably managed to recognise the need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.
- 2.32 Natural habitats and biodiversity are also an integral part of the character of Three Rivers and contribute to the high quality of life in the area. There are five Sites of Special Scientific Interest, nine Local Nature Reserves, and 144 Local Wildlife Sites within the district. These assets cover a variety of wildlife species in a diverse range of habitats.
- 2.33 The three rivers that give the district its name (namely the Rivers Colne, Gade and Chess) are important resources for the district in terms of landscape, biodiversity and access to open space, and form important parts of the district's Green and Blue Infrastructure network.
- 2.34 In May 2019, Three Rivers District Council declared a climate emergency in recognition of the threat climate change poses to the planet and to humanity. As part of this, the council has committed to use all practical means to reduce the impact of council services on the environment, to cut carbon emissions and to reduce impacts on the environment. In addition to calling on the Government to provide support and resources, the Local Plan is a key opportunity to influence the achievement of these objectives.

Historic Environment

- 2.35 The district has a rich and varied heritage with 352 listed buildings, many locally important buildings, 22 Conservation Areas, three Scheduled Ancient Monuments, two Registered Parks and Gardens, as well as 19 Sites of Archaeological Interest. All these heritage assets contribute to the character and quality of

the district, and the conservation of these assets is a priority to protect local character and maintain the attractiveness of the district.

Relationship with the Community Strategy

- 2.36 There are several strategies and plans which affect the district in terms of priorities and actions. The Local Plan draws on strategies and plans that have implications for the development and use of land and, where appropriate, it provides an integrated approach to the implementation and delivery of these other strategies.
- 2.37 It is particularly important that the Local Plan relates to Three Rivers' Community Strategy (2023-2028) and any subsequent update, which sets out the local community's aspirations so that these can be delivered in an effective and joined-up way.
- 2.38 The Community Strategy was prepared by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to improve quality of life in the district through partnership working. The Local Strategic Partnership and Community Safety Board merged in 2024 to create the Connecting Three Rivers Board, which will have responsibility for preparing future community strategies.
- 2.39 The themes identified within the Community Strategy focus on areas of local service provision that need most improvement and that can be delivered through partnership working. Four themes are identified including:
- Belonging
 - Safe and Well Communities
 - Thriving Environment
 - Stable Economy
- 2.40 The Local Plan is a key mechanism for delivering on the ground many of the priorities established through the Community Strategy and other council strategies and plans.

Relationship with the Corporate Framework (2023-2026)

- 2.41 It is also important that the Local Plan relates to Three Rivers' Corporate Framework (2023-2026) and any subsequent update, as the Local Plan is a key driver to delivering its vision and objectives.
- 2.42 The vision of the Corporate Framework is for Three Rivers to be "a great place to live, work and visit".
- 2.43 The Corporate Framework also identifies four objectives:
- Provide responsive and responsible local leadership

- Expand our position as a great place to do business
- Support and enable sustainable communities
- Achieve net carbon zero and be climate resilient

Relationship with Hertfordshire Growth Board

2.44 It is also important for the Local Plan to align and help deliver larger scale (such as at a county level) strategies. The Hertfordshire Growth Board (HGB), which is made up of the County Council, the 10 district and borough councils, the NHS Hertfordshire & West Essex Integrated Care Board, Homes England, Hertfordshire Futures and the Police and Crime Commissioner, aims to deliver sustainable and positive growth for residents, communities and businesses.

2.45 The vision of the HGB is as follows:

- A vibrant and resilient economy that seizes the right opportunities, enabling Hertfordshire's residents and businesses to succeed
- Healthy, inclusive, safe and better-connected communities who thrive, and enjoy Hertfordshire's quality of life
- A place that grows responsibly, and celebrates its heritage, diversity, rural and green landscapes that make Hertfordshire special

Summary

2.46 The key issue for the future of Three Rivers will be making provision for new development required to meet local needs whilst protecting the environment and maintaining or improving the quality of life of Three Rivers' communities. In doing this, following topics of significance need to be addressed:

- House prices in Three Rivers are very high and affordability has been worsening. Alongside the need to provide more housing, there is a particular need to provide more affordable housing
- It is important to continue to focus new development on previously developed land, but, in general, the supply of previously developed land is falling
- The extent of land released from the Green Belt will need to be balanced, taking into account local development needs, whilst safeguarding as much of the Green Belt as possible and still complying with national policy.
- There is a high dependency on the car, particularly in rural parts of the district. Therefore, there is a need to enable and promote more sustainable modes of transport to improve travel options, increase access to services and reduce the environmental impacts of travel

- There is a need for increased business investment in the area to support existing business and growth and to provide local employment opportunities
- There is an ageing population which will lead to differing demands on services and housing. These demands will need to be met whilst ensuring that the district remains attractive and accessible to younger people to support the economic development of the area
- While the district as a whole is ranked low in terms of deprivation, there are pockets of inequality and deprivation across the district. Additionally, more rural parts of the district are affected by barriers to housing and access to services
- Existing infrastructure requires investment to cope with growth in the district. New development will require an appropriate level of investment in infrastructure or on-site provision to ensure that new and existing communities are able to access the services that they require
- The dispersed pattern of settlements across the district affects the provision of shops and services and the vitality and viability of existing centres. These need to be maintained to continue to meet local needs and contribute to the sustainability of settlements
- Climate change is a global threat, and it is important that Three Rivers contributes to reducing and mitigating impacts as far as possible
- The attractiveness of the district as a place where people want to live and work depends in part on the environment. This is affected by landscape, biodiversity and open spaces (Green and Blue Infrastructure), as well as heritage. It is very important that these are maintained and enhanced to sustain the unique character of the area and its attractiveness and to protect biodiversity and habitats
- Levels of crime in the district are relatively low, however, there is a need to tackle fear of crime and antisocial behaviour

Overall Levels of Growth

- 2.47 All growth in the district must maintain or improve the quality of life of Three Rivers' communities, and future development must secure a balanced provision between homes, jobs and infrastructure that also safeguards and enhances the environment, maintains the Green Belt, secures good services and facilities for all and achieves a sustainable transport system.

- 2.48 This Local Plan is anticipated to be adopted towards the end of 2026. National policy requires that a Local Plan should plan for a 15-year period following adoption. The new Local Plan period will therefore be 2026 - 2041.
- 2.49 For the 15-year plan period following adoption of the Local Plan the Government's Standard Method for calculating housing needs has been used, which is 832 dwellings per annum. The Housing Target for the Local Plan will therefore be 12,480 dwellings over the plan period 2026 - 2041.
- 2.50 However, it is important to note that there have been a significant number of commitments (unimplemented planning permissions) together with a windfall allowance, that can be deducted from this figure. The table below shows these deductions in more detail:

	Net Number of Homes
Total Target	12,480
Commitments (unimplemented planning permissions as of 31.12.2025)	1,508
Windfall Allowance	660
Total (commitments & windfall)	2,168
Residual Housing Target:	10,312

- 2.51 The residual Housing Target is therefore 10,312 dwellings. The council seeks to meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible given the ecological, environmental and policy constraints throughout the district.
- 2.52 Over the plan period of 2026-2041, the following will be planned for in addition to housing:
- Pitches for gypsies & travellers and plots for travelling showpeople
 - Employment use
 - Retail use
 - Education use
 - Open Space
 - Warner Bros. Studios

- Utilities and other infrastructure

2.53 We will seek to maximise the delivery of housing and other development within the built-up urban area including through intensification and higher densities of development to make the most efficient use of land and making as much use as possible for previously developed brownfield sites and underutilised land. However, it is not possible to achieve the levels of new housing (and other) development which would be required to meet needs, within the urban area, and as such there will be a requirement to release Green Belt land in appropriate locations to accommodate development.

3 Vision and Strategic Objectives

- 3.1 The Vision for our district has been developed and informed by the key issues that have been identified and takes account of other relevant strategies. It is supported by strategic objectives required to deliver that Vision and followed up by policies and proposals.
- 3.2 The vision for the district is designed to be broad and strategic addressing key issues which have been identified and are applicable to the district as a whole. A number of our communities have also outlined their vision for their area through the neighbourhood plan process.
- 3.3 The policies and proposals within the Local Plan will deliver the vision. Our vision builds on the vision set out in the current Core Strategy, as well as on the evidence from various studies, high level strategies and the priorities and concerns of the community as set out in the Community Strategy and through responses to consultation.

Vision for Three Rivers

Our vision for Three Rivers is to be recognised as a highly desirable, prosperous and outward-looking district where people want, and are able, to live and work. The district will have sustainable settlements, a resilient economy and a high quality built and natural environment embedding climate-sensitive principles in reducing carbon emissions and supporting the transition to a zero-carbon future. The district will have a strong townscape and landscape character, with a strong sense of a place to foster cohesive communities whilst delivering the high quality homes, jobs and infrastructure that will provide access to good services and facilities for all.

- 3.4 The following strategic objectives outline what will need to be achieved to deliver the Vision and to address the key issues which have been identified. These objectives underpin the emerging spatial strategy, policies and proposals which will be included within the Local Plan.

Strategic Objectives

In order to implement and deliver the Vision the following set of strategic objectives have been identified:

Provide for a range of high quality new homes within the district to meet local needs for both market and affordable housing

The Local Plan plays a key role in accommodating a range of housing types, sizes and tenures to suit the varied needs of our population which includes market, affordable, special needs, elderly persons and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. There remains a very high need for affordable housing in the

district which is key to attracting and retaining workers. It is vital that all new housing development contributes to addressing this need, and the priority will be rented affordable homes and smaller family sized homes which are required to meet the most urgent needs in the district. It is vital that all new housing development contributes to addressing this need, and-the priority will be to deliver rented affordable homes and family-sized homes which are required to meet the most urgent needs in the district.

Secure economic prosperity within the district by providing a network of employment allocations that continues to meet the current and future needs of businesses.

The Local Plan seeks to ensure the district remains competitive and benefits from a high-performing economy that does not damage the environment. Space will be protected and provided to accommodate and support both existing and new businesses, including the strong film and TV sector. The-proximity and influence of the London job market may affect the potential for improving the homes to jobs ratio within Three Rivers. However, 'balance' between the provision of new homes and jobs is needed in order to redress the relatively high daily outflow of commuters from Three Rivers into adjoining areas. We anticipate that to meet needs in Three Rivers the number of new homes provided should be matched by the number of new jobs at a ratio of 1:1.

Ensure that new development prioritises and makes best use of previously developed land (PDL)

The Local Plan continues to focus on previously developed land (PDL) and to promote well-designed and beautiful development with minimum impact on the environment, but, in general, the supply of previously developed land is falling. Development will be planned on a number of edge of settlement sites through the strategic release of Green Belt to make the best use of land.

Ensure that necessary infrastructure and services are integrated within new developments where appropriate

The Local plan seeks to provide enhanced access to infrastructure and services including health, education, transport and emergency services and that this is maintained or improved in the future,-delivered as an integrated component of new developments. They also include access to high quality green spaces, cultural and community facilities and a network of open spaces rich in biodiversity offering multiple benefits to health and wellbeing through their social, environmental and recreational value. New development must address requirements for new and improved infrastructure through direct, on-site provision, planning obligations and/or through the Community Infrastructure Levy which applies to certain forms of new development.

Support the viability, vitality and variety of shops and services within the district's main settlements and villages.

Ensuring that Abbots Langley, Chorleywood, Croxley Green, Rickmansworth, South Oxhey, Mill End, Maple Cross and Leavesden and Garston provide a good range of goods and services across the district will reduce the need to travel to centres further away, especially to meet every day local needs, and will support

local businesses. Retaining services in other smaller settlements will also help to enable these settlements to meet some of the day-to-day needs of their communities.

Encourage active modes of travel and enable the integration of sustainable transport within new developments.

The Local Plan seeks to promote reduced private car travel and a good network of safe and accessible cycling and walking routes. The district has high levels of car ownership but the alternatives to car travel will be encouraged to reduce impacts on the environment, congestion and to improve quality of life. Promoting alternatives to car travel through better public transport, and better opportunities for cycling and walking as well as for those with mobility issues will be a priority, including an opportunity to create 20-minute neighbourhoods. Ensuring that opportunities for sustainable transport are integrated as part of development is vital to help achieve a more sustainable District. It will also be important to integrate transport networks to enable people to change easily between road, rail, bus and cycle travel.

Reduce the need to travel by locating development in sustainable and accessible locations.

As well as ensuring that sustainable transport options are promoted and are integrated as part of development proposals, siting development at locations with good access to services, employment and a range of transport options, will be major contributors to achieving a more sustainable District. In doing so, full account will be taken of local needs and environmental, social and economic constraints, including flood risk and highways constraints and ensuring that the district's high quality natural environment is maintained. Development will be focused on a number of urban sites and edge of settlement sites to prioritise land which is well served or can be well served by public transport.

To conserve and enhance the historic environment and resist the loss of, or damage to, heritage assets.

Three Rivers has a rich historic environment including many historic buildings, archaeological sites, historic structures, historic landscapes, spaces and Conservation Areas. There are over 350 Nationally Listed Buildings within Three Rivers and include historic homes such as Moor Park Mansion and Hunton Park, public houses, ecclesiastical buildings, and structures such as telephone kiosks, statues and bridges. These contribute towards the high quality of environment in the district and is an important resource bringing social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits to the community.

The Local plan will seek to conserve heritage assets and their settings through appropriate control management of development and enhance the historic environment by promoting high quality design and a public realm that complements the existing historic environment, townscape and landscape character.

Continue to tackle climate change and reduce the impacts on the environment by encouraging reductions in carbon emissions, waste,

pollution, energy and water consumption and promoting the use of renewable energy and sustainable building materials.

Three Rivers has declared a climate emergency and it is essential that the problem of climate change is tackled at all levels, including the local. This means the District aims to be an exemplar for low carbon development by promoting good design, sustainable construction, and the reuse of buildings and materials; minimise the use of natural resources, increase overall green coverage and reduce the amount of waste going to landfill and encouraging the use of water efficiency measures and a reduction in water consumption in order to protect future water supply. In addition, producing energy from local, renewable and low carbon sources will be promoted to become resilient to the impacts of climate change. Air pollutants (including dust and odour) have been shown to have an adverse effect on both health and the environment and it will be important to consider emissions arising from development including indirect emissions, such as those attributable to associated traffic generation are considered. It also means dealing with the effects of extreme weather and potential flood risk through appropriate design and siting of development. The nature of the district does not lend itself to large-scale wind energy developments; however there are opportunities for smaller-scale wind and other renewable and low carbon energy opportunities.

Provide opportunities for leisure, arts, sport and recreational activities within the district.

Supporting the location and provision of suitable open space, children's play space and sports facilities to meet future need will increase opportunities to exercise as part of a healthy lifestyle for the whole community will contribute to improving the health and wellbeing and to the quality of life of communities.

Provide a coherent network of Green and Blue Infrastructure that will continue to support the natural environment along with human health and wellbeing.

Three Rivers has visually attractive landscapes and important habitats for wildlife. There is however scope to develop and enhance the district's Green and Blue Infrastructure by improving the diversity and connectivity of landscape and habitats, and through the conservation and enhancement of natural assets including the Chilterns National Landscape; the district's Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves and wildlife sites; and the district's trees and woodlands.

To conserve and enhance the corridors of the Rivers Chess, Colne and Gade and the Grand Union Canal.

The Colne Valley Park, the Grand Union Canal and all river corridors including the Rivers Chess, Colne and Gade are particularly important assets to be conserved and enhanced as they provide Green Infrastructure connections across the whole district and into adjoining areas as well as providing space for water and biodiversity, a setting for development and opportunities for recreation and leisure. There are also a high number of heritage assets associated with the waterways which should be conserved and enhanced.

Promote a sense of place, and safe and secure places through good design

The Local plan seeks to promote safe and overlooked spaces to bring people together, create cohesive communities and foster a sense of a place. In addition, reducing crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour are key community priorities including and the Local plan seeks to achieve that by promoting good design and securing contributions towards increased police resources.

Meet the demands of an ageing population whilst ensuring the district remains attractive and accessible to younger people

Given the ageing population in the district, the Local Plan seeks to ensure that new homes provided are flexible and accessible to allow adaptations to meet changing needs; that neighbourhoods are welcoming, inclusive and accessible to people of all ages, regardless of age or wellbeing; and that there is sufficient provision of housing for older people including specialist care to meet needs.

Health and Wellbeing

The way that we plan and design places has a significant influence over whether communities are able to live healthy lives. The policies within the Local Plan aim to improve the health and wellbeing of all Three Rivers' communities and to reduce health inequalities.

To safeguard the Green Belt

Through planning policies and site allocations, the Local Plan will safeguard as much of the district's Green Belt as possible, whilst complying with National Policy.

Protection and enhancement of biodiversity

The Local Plan seeks to protect, enhance, and restore biodiversity across Three Rivers, particularly protected and vulnerable species; deliver measurable biodiversity net gain; reduce fragmentation; further the aims of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and ensure that development contributes positively to ecosystem resilience, climate adaptation, and the health and wellbeing of communities.

Reasoned Justification:

- 3.5 The Vision for the district has been developed and informed by the key issues that have been identified from public consultations, evidence from studies and high-level strategies and priorities. It is supported by strategic objectives required to deliver that Vision and followed up by policies within the Local Plan. The vision for the district is designed to be broad and strategic addressing key issues which have been identified and are applicable to the district as a whole.
- 3.6 The original Vision and Strategic Objectives have been refined over time to reflect more accurately local aspirations and sustainability objectives and to be more focused and better refined and are likely to develop further and become more locally distinctive, as the policies and proposals in the Local Plan were formulated.

- 3.7 The Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives are considered to provide the correct framework for the Local Plan taking into account the views of the local community. They also reflect and align with other plans and strategies affecting the area.

4 Strategic Policies

Spatial Strategy

- 4.1 The spatial strategy directs growth to the most sustainable locations across the district, balancing the need to meet objectively assessed housing needs with the requirement to protect the Green Belt and the character of smaller settlements. Development will be focused on the edges of the district's larger settlements, where access to services, employment, public transport and infrastructure is strongest, and where development can be planned comprehensively and delivered at scale.
- 4.2 The strategy recognises that, despite a strong commitment to brownfield development, such sites can only accommodate a limited proportion (fewer than 700 new homes) of the district's housing requirement. As a result, the Local Plan makes provision for circa 4,200 dwellings across the plan period within the Green Belt.
- 4.3 The council considers that exceptional circumstances exist to justify alterations to Green Belt boundaries through this Local Plan, as required by national policy. These exceptional circumstances arise from the cumulative impact of the following factors, taken together:
- The scale of the district's objectively assessed housing need, which cannot be met within existing urban areas or on non-Green Belt land alone;
 - The limited availability and capacity of brownfield land within the urban area, which, despite being prioritised, can only deliver a small proportion of the required housing supply;
 - The inability to meet the council's acute needs for affordable housing and specialist accommodation within the urban area alone;
 - The extensive coverage of the district by Green Belt, which significantly constrains alternative spatial options;
 - The need to deliver development in locations that can support strategic infrastructure provision, climate change mitigation and sustainable travel patterns.
- 4.4 The council has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of all reasonable spatial options and concluded that strategic, edge-of-settlement Green Belt release adjacent to the larger settlements represents the most sustainable and least harmful approach.
- 4.5 A clear settlement hierarchy underpins the spatial strategy:
- The Principal Town, small towns (and large suburban settlements) and large villages (and suburban settlements) will accommodate the majority of housing and employment growth, reflecting their higher levels of accessibility, services and infrastructure capacity.
 - Washed-over Green Belt villages will play a limited and proportionate role, together accommodating only 1–2% of the district's total housing growth. Development in these villages will be restricted to small-scale schemes

that meet local needs and do not undermine Green Belt openness or village character.

- 4.6 This distribution ensures growth is directed away from the least sustainable locations and avoids incremental, unplanned erosion of the Green Belt.
- 4.7 Given the constraints on development within existing urban areas, the plan prioritises strategic edge-of-settlement locations adjoining the larger settlements. These locations are considered the most appropriate areas for Green Belt release as they:
- Relate well to existing urban form and can be integrated with existing communities;
 - Offer opportunities for comprehensive masterplanning, including new infrastructure, green spaces and community facilities;
 - Enable the creation of sustainable neighbourhoods rather than piecemeal development; and
 - Minimise harm to the purposes of the Green Belt by avoiding isolated or fragmented development.
- 4.8 Green Belt releases will be limited to those sites necessary to meet identified development needs and will be accompanied by compensatory improvements to environmental quality and accessibility where appropriate.
- 4.9 To maximise the efficient use of land, particularly within the Green Belt, the Plan requires significantly increased housing densities on new development sites, especially those in accessible locations close to town centres, public transport corridors and key services. Higher-density development will:
- Reduce overall land take;
 - Support viable public transport and local services;
 - Help deliver a broader mix of housing types and tenures; and
 - Ensure that Green Belt land is used responsibly and only where necessary.
- 4.10 Design quality will be paramount, with higher densities delivered through well-designed, place-led schemes that respond positively to local character.
- 4.11 The council has prioritised brownfield development within the urban area, including previously developed land and underused sites. While such sites make an important contribution to housing delivery and urban regeneration, they are insufficient in scale and number to meet the district's full housing need. Brownfield development will therefore be pursued alongside, rather than instead of, strategic Green Belt releases.

Overall Levels of Growth

SP1- Overall Levels of Growth
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Provision is made for the delivery of 468 dwellings per annum, equating to at least 7,017 dwellings over the 15-year plan period. 2) Housing development will be delivered in accordance with the spatial strategy, directing growth to the most sustainable locations and reflecting the capacity of the district's infrastructure and environment. 3) Existing employment uses on allocated employment sites will be safeguarded unless their loss is robustly justified. 4) The council will monitor housing delivery and infrastructure capacity and will consider an early review of the Local Plan where evidence indicates that additional growth could be accommodated sustainably without resulting in unacceptable harm to the Green Belt.

Reasoned Justification:

- 4.12 Policy SP1 is underpinned by an extensive and proportionate evidence base, prepared to ensure the Local Plan is justified, effective and consistent with national policy. This evidence has been used to assess development needs, identify constraints, test reasonable alternatives and determine a realistic and deliverable level of growth
- 4.13 The standard method identifies a local housing need of 832 dwellings per annum, equating to 12,480 dwellings over the plan period. The Local Housing Needs Assessment demonstrates an acute need for affordable housing across the district, alongside a growing requirement for specialist and adaptable accommodation, particularly for older persons.
- 4.14 While the council has sought to respond positively to these needs, the evidence demonstrates that it is not possible to accommodate the full standard method figure without causing significant and demonstrable harm. The plan therefore provides for 7,017 dwellings, representing the maximum level of growth that can be delivered sustainably within the district's constraints.
- 4.15 In preparing the Plan, the council has undertaken an extensive assessment of development opportunities. This includes the consideration of over 350 housing sites through the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment

(SHELAA), alongside additional capacity considered through an Urban Capacity Study. Brownfield and urban sites were prioritised; however, these opportunities are limited and can only deliver a small proportion of overall housing needs.

- 4.16 The majority of assessed sites were discounted due to a range of constraints. Many were found to be located in unsustainable rural locations, typically accessed by single-track roads with no footways, limited public transport provision and poor opportunities for walking and cycling. Development in these locations would necessitate a high level of private car use and would conflict with sustainable development objectives.
- 4.17 The district's rural road network is constrained in nature, with frequent congestion and long waiting times, particularly where drivers divert from congested main routes. Accommodating higher levels of growth could result in severe residual impacts, which could not be mitigated through proportionate or deliverable highway improvements within the rural network.
- 4.18 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan further confirms that there are limits to the capacity of existing infrastructure, and that the scale of development required to meet the full standard method housing need would stretch infrastructure capacity beyond current limits. Additionally, future development will struggle to bridge the ever-increasing infrastructure funding gap.
- 4.19 A new settlement option was considered as a reasonable alternative; however, the evidence demonstrates that no suitable location exists where such a settlement could be delivered at a scale sufficient to fund the necessary infrastructure without overwhelming the rural road network or causing unacceptable environmental and Green Belt impacts. Fragmented land ownership was also an issue resulting in no site being put forward for a potential new settlement. As such, the council would have had to pursue CPOs as its delivery route which was not considered appropriate at this time.
- 4.20 The district is extensively covered by Green Belt, which represents a significant constraint on growth. The Green Belt Review identifies strategic areas of fundamental importance where overdevelopment could be considered to fundamentally undermine the purposes of the Green Belt as a whole.
- 4.21 While limited Green Belt release is proposed and exceptional circumstances have been demonstrated, the evidence clearly shows that accommodating the full standard method housing need would result in unacceptable harm to the Green Belt. The overall level of growth has therefore been curtailed to ensure that the plan remains environmentally responsible and consistent with national policy.
- 4.22 The Economic Study identifies a limited quantitative need for new employment land, reflecting the district's economic profile and constraints. However, it highlights the strategic importance of protecting existing employment sites to support economic resilience, local jobs and sustainable travel patterns. Policy SP1 reflects this evidence by supporting housing growth while ensuring that employment land is safeguarded unless robust justification for its loss is provided.

- 4.23 The housing requirement set out in Policy SP1 reflects a balanced and evidence-led approach, which seeks to maximise delivery while recognising the district's environmental, transport and infrastructure constraints. The policy aligns with the spatial strategy, addresses identified housing and economic needs as far as possible, and ensures that development remains deliverable and sustainable.
- 4.24 The council recognises that circumstances may change over the plan period, including changes to national policy, infrastructure delivery, housing delivery rates or the availability of additional land. Housing delivery, infrastructure capacity and environmental impacts will be actively monitored through the council's Annual Monitoring Report.
- 4.25 Where evidence demonstrates that additional sustainable development opportunities have emerged, the council will consider an early review of the Local Plan to reassess the overall level of growth and spatial strategy. This approach ensures that the plan remains flexible, responsive and effective, while providing certainty for residents and developers.

Overarching Policy on Sustainable Development

- 4.26 The council is committed to promoting sustainable development which the National Planning Policy Framework summarises "as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".
- 4.27 The National Planning Policy Framework also emphasises that Local Plans should be based upon and reflect the presumption in favour of sustainable development and the principle informs both the policies and site allocations within the Local Plan. This will enable the council to approve appropriate development without delay, in accordance with national planning policy.

SP2 - Overarching Policy on Sustainable Development
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The council will take a positive approach to the consideration of development proposals that reflects the presumption in favour of sustainable development contained in the National Planning Policy Framework. 2) The council will work proactively with applicants to find solutions that mean that proposals can be approved wherever possible, and to secure development that improves the economic, social and environmental conditions in the area. 3) To contribute to the sustainability of the district, all development must take into account the need to:

- a) Tackle climate change by reducing carbon emissions helping the council achieve its ambition of net-zero emissions by 2030 for our own emissions and to achieve district-wide net zero carbon by 2045, increasing energy and water efficiency of buildings, promoting the use of renewable energy systems, and using other natural resources wisely, including through the use of sustainable building materials;
- b) Avoid development in areas at risk from all sources of flooding unless appropriate mitigation measures can be demonstrated, and manage water and flood risk through the use and maintenance of Sustainable Drainage Systems;
- c) Make efficient use of land by prioritising development on previously developed, brownfield land and incorporating mixed-use development wherever possible, recognising that some previously developed land can have significant biodiversity value;
- d) Optimise the use of land including through an uplift in the density of development where appropriate;
- e) Reduce waste going to landfill by reducing materials used, reusing and recycling building materials, encourage the re-use and renovation of buildings as opposed to demolition and providing opportunities for recycling wherever possible;
- f) Protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environments from inappropriate development, improve the diversity of wildlife and habitats including protecting vulnerable species, and taking account of the need for biodiversity net gain;
- g) Build mixed and sustainable communities by providing housing across a range of tenures and types, including affordable housing and specialist and supported accommodation to meet needs;
- h) Maintain high levels of employment by attracting jobs and training opportunities for local people and supporting businesses;
- i) Improve access to jobs, skills, services and facilities particularly within areas of deprivation in the district;
- j) Sustain the viability and vitality of the Principal Town, Small Towns/Large Suburban Settlements, Large Villages/Suburban Settlements and Green Belt Villages/Small Suburban Settlements

as identified in the Three Rivers Settlement Hierarchy;

- k) Protect and enhance existing social and community facilities, and provide new facilities;
- l) Reduce the need to travel by locating development in accessible locations and promoting a range of sustainable travel modes with priority given to cycling and walking;
- m) Provide necessary infrastructure to enable and/ or support development, including (but not limited to) transport, education, health, Green and Blue Infrastructure, utilities, waste facilities, waste water, flood risk mitigation, leisure, cultural and community facilities;
- n) Promote buildings and public spaces of a high enduring design quality that respect local distinctiveness, take into account Neighbourhood Plan character areas where available, are accessible to all, reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour and encourage active lifestyles; and
- o) Manage and reduce risk of and from pollution in relation to quality of land, air and water and dealing with land contamination.

Reasoned Justification:

- 4.28 The NPPF is underpinned by a presumption in favour of sustainable development which applies both in plan-making and decision taking. The Overarching Policy on Sustainable Development is a strategic policy that sets out the council's approach to sustainable development and will be complemented by more detailed policies in the Local Plan, enshrines the presumption in favour of sustainable development, and provides details of the specific local circumstances relevant to the achievement of sustainable development in Three Rivers.

Infrastructure Delivery

- 4.29 In addition to providing a significant increase in the quantum of new housing (and other forms of development, such as employment, education etc), to meet needs in Three Rivers, it is important to ensure that sufficient infrastructure is in place to meet the planned growth.
- 4.30 The Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) was produced to ensure growth is accompanied with the appropriate infrastructure, in order to establish sustainable development. Developers must ensure that new development is accompanied by the

appropriate infrastructure as per the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Local Plan policies and site allocation policies.

- 4.31 Infrastructure can include community assets such as healthcare, schools and other community buildings; transport infrastructure such as footpaths, cycle paths and roads; and green spaces, such as parks, country parks and other general ecological enhancements.
- 4.32 As per Planning Practice Guidance, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan was produced following extensive consultation with infrastructure providers and stakeholders
- 4.33 The Planning Act 2008, which established the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL), provides the legislative framework for infrastructure funding. The framework is designed to ensure that new developments contribute proportionately to the strategic and local infrastructure needs. While CIL provides a broad funding base, Section 106 (S106) Agreements are also a vital tool for addressing site-specific impacts and should operate alongside CIL. The council recognises that national policy regarding developer contributions is subject to reform; therefore, this policy framework is designed to remain resilient and adaptable to any future statutory replacements of CIL or S106.
- 4.34 The council requires a range of contributions from major development projects to mitigate their impact on the wider community. Depending on the nature of the requirement, these obligations are directed to either the District Council or Hertfordshire County Council. For requirements governed by the County—such as education, highways, and library services—developers should refer to the standards and formulas outlined in the Hertfordshire Planning Obligations Toolkit (or its successor document).

SP3 - Infrastructure Delivery

- 1) To ensure growth is sustainable, all development proposals must secure the infrastructure necessary to support their specific impacts. This requires a comprehensive approach to:
 - a) Address the direct needs of new occupants while protecting the service capacity of existing community networks;
 - b) Mitigate to prevent, reduce, or offset any negative social, economic, or environmental consequences;
 - c) Restore or enhance the value of local assets affected by the development; and

- d) Guarantee the long-term functionality of new assets by securing necessary funding for their continued operation and upkeep.
- 2) The council will secure infrastructure through direct onsite works, offsite delivery, or proportional financial contributions. Where strategic infrastructure is required to support wider growth, cross-developer cooperation should be carried out to ensure that shared requirements are met collectively and that cumulative pressures on the local area are effectively managed.
- 3) Infrastructure must be treated as a prerequisite for development, not a consequence of it. Consequently:
 - a) Proposals must align with the priorities and project specifications detailed within the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), Local Plan policies and site allocation policies;
 - b) Project timelines should be phased so that essential facilities are operational before the completion of the dwellings or commercial spaces they are intended to serve; and
 - c) Developers should proactively engage with the council and statutory providers to identify and resolve delivery barriers during the pre-application stage.
- 4) The council presumes that all IDP-specified infrastructure is deliverable. Should a developer claim that these obligations jeopardise the delivery of a major project:
 - a) A comprehensive, viability assessment must be submitted for independent verification, adhering to national standards;
 - b) If a shortfall is evidenced, the council will negotiate a revised contribution schedule that prioritises "critical" infrastructure over "desirable" projects;
 - c) Flexible payment triggers or deferred contribution mechanisms may be explored to ensure site commencement.
- 5) The council will refuse any application that fails to provide the necessary legal guarantees - through planning obligations or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) - to secure the infrastructure required.

Development that results in an unmitigated deficit of essential services will be considered fundamentally unsustainable.

- 6) The council will maintain and update supplementary guidance to detail the specific benchmarks, calculation methods, and procedural steps for securing developer-led infrastructure and social value.

Reasoned Justification:

- 4.35 The importance of infrastructure delivery is set out in the NPPF, where it states that local planning policy should make sufficient provision for:
- Infrastructure for transport, telecommunications, security, waste management, water supply, wastewater, flood risk and coastal change management, and the provision of minerals and energy (including heat);
 - Community facilities (such as health, education and cultural infrastructure); and
 - Conservation and enhancement of the natural, built and historic environment, including landscapes and green infrastructure, and planning measures to address climate change mitigation and adaptation
- 4.36 National Policy also sets out the importance of joint working between policy-making authorities and relevant bodies to help determine where additional infrastructure is necessary and whether development needs that cannot be met wholly within a particular plan area could be met elsewhere.

Local Distinctiveness and Place Shaping

- 4.37 It is important that all new development, including extensions and alterations to existing buildings and spaces, is designed to respect the existing character of the district and create great places for the community.
- 4.38 The relationship between buildings, spaces and landscape, as well as detailed design and materials, are all relevant factors. Good design positively influences how people move around settlements, how people interact and how places make people feel.
- 4.39 The council places a high value on the importance of good design in the built environment and making places better for people. The quality of development and the ability to create well-designed places is central to how the area will function in future and the quality of the environment.

SP4 - Local Distinctiveness and Place Shaping

- 1) All new development is required to achieve high quality design that contributes to enhancing local distinctiveness (including landscape and townscape character) of the area and help shape a place to create a strong sense of place. Essential elements of place shaping include creating economically and socially successful new places with a distinctive identity that promotes wellbeing.
- 2) Development should satisfy relevant Design Criteria (Appendix 1).
- 3) Innovative designs will be encouraged where appropriate. Development of poor design that fails to take the opportunities available for improving the character and quality of an area and the way it functions will be refused.

Distinct Local Character

- 4) All new development should be designed to respond to locally distinct patterns of development and character, including landscape setting and the historic environment. Proposals will need to take account of local design guidance including that contained within Conservation Area Appraisals, Neighbourhood Plan character areas where available, and Supplementary Planning Documents to preserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an area. Large new developments should reflect the diversity of architecture in the area.
- 5) Development should make efficient use of land whilst respecting the distinctiveness of the surrounding area in terms of density, character, layout and spacing, the pattern of street blocks and plots, building forms, amenity, scale, height, massing, style, landscaping and the use of materials.
- 6) The layout of proposals must be easy to navigate, with buildings designed and positioned to define and enhance a hierarchy of streets and spaces and create a density appropriate to the site, taking account of factors such as the relationship between building height and street width, and the relationship between the height, width and depth of buildings.
- 7) Materials should be sustainable, practical, durable and attractive with regard to aspects including their colour, texture, grain and reflectivity.

- 8) The size, function or density of some of the allocations for development within the Local Plan are such that it may not be appropriate for these sites to always reflect locally distinct patterns of development. In such cases, sites should take opportunities to create their own identity while ensuring cohesive and vibrant neighbourhoods.

Connections

- 9) The layout of development should be designed to ensure it connects appropriately to existing street patterns and built form, and creates safe and accessible spaces.
- 10) Buildings and open spaces should be designed to create a high quality public realm, promote positive social interaction and create attractive environments that maximise opportunities and encourage people to move around by cycling and walking.

Safeguarding Amenity

- 11) Development should protect the amenities and the attractiveness of the living environment for both existing and future occupiers by taking into account the need for adequate levels and disposition of privacy, prospect, amenity and garden space, and suitable access.

Landscaping and Public Realm

- 12) Development should incorporate visually attractive frontages to adjoining streets and public spaces and should provide for high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping.
- 13) A landscape led approach must be considered as an integral element of the layout and design of development, including integration with adjoining networks of Green and Blue Infrastructure, open space, surface water management systems and recreation and wildlife movement networks where appropriate, and retaining, enhancing or improving important existing natural features such as trees and hedgerows as far as possible, including incorporating tree-lined streets.
- 14) Proposals for landscaping should show how the design, planting species and materials have been selected with regard to factors including the character of the area, conservation and enhancement of biodiversity and the natural environment, and ongoing management and maintenance.

- 15) All proposals must provide landscape schemes, hard and soft landscape specifications, planting schedules and plans, and management and maintenance plans for a minimum of five years during the aftercare period.
- 16) Development should provide for a clear distinction between public and private space and should provide boundary treatments which enhance the appearance, character and amenity of the site and area, whilst ensuring wildlife is able to move freely across boundaries.
- 17) Development should enhance the public realm to promote social interaction, including making provision for adequate lighting and for street furniture and public art where appropriate and ensuring that all appropriate frontages contain windows and doors that assist informal surveillance.

Safeguarding Assets and the Environment

- 18) All development should conserve and enhance natural, built, cultural and heritage assets, including public open space.
- 19) Proposals must take opportunities to make sustainable design integral to the development and build resilience into a site's design taking into account climate change including through flood resistant design, Green Infrastructure, sustainable drainage, minimising the use of natural resources, reducing waste and ensuring that buildings and spaces are capable of adaptation to other uses and functions where practical in order to ensure their long-life.

Safety and Security

- 20) Development must design out opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour through the incorporation of appropriate measures to minimise the risk of crime and create safe and attractive places taking into account the Police 'Secured by Design' standards and where appropriate guidance on terrorism in the Government's Planning Practice Guidance.
- 21) Development should provide natural security through layout and design with attractive, well enclosed, and overlooked streets, roads and spaces with clear consideration for the interrelationship of land use with external spaces and landscaping.

Access and Inclusion

- 22) Places, spaces and buildings must be accessible to all potential users, including those with mobility difficulties taking into account the setting of

buildings in the wider environment, the location of buildings within plots, gradient, transport infrastructure and public realm.

- 23) Development must provide appropriate levels of parking for cycles to support sustainable travel choices and appropriate levels of parking for vehicles to avoid additional on-street parking where this would cause congestion or harm to amenity or highway safety. Parking and cycle storage areas should be convenient, safe and visually attractive areas that do not dominate the development or its surroundings or impact on driver, cyclist or pedestrian sight lines.

Ancillary Facilities

- 24) Development must provide appropriate facilities for individual and communal use including cycle storage, amenity areas and facilities for the storage and collection of refuse and recycling materials which are designed and sited in accordance with current council standards, avoiding adverse impacts on safety or security, the street scene, or the amenities of the proposed and existing properties.

Reasoned Justification:

- 4.40 The NPPF states that creating high quality buildings and places is fundamental to what the planning and development process should achieve. Good design is a key aspect of sustainable development as it creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. Urban design and architecture can contribute to health outcomes through the encouragement of more active lifestyles, and development should be encouraged to create places that support mixed communities catering for the needs of different types of people including the young and old, encourage walking and cycling, improve access to public transport, and ensure that new development connects with existing parks and open spaces for recreation. Additionally, building exteriors and public realm should be designed in a way that contributes to pedestrian-friendly environments.
- 4.41 The Local Plan identifies a requirement to accommodate significant growth over the plan period including the provision of new homes and space for employment and economic development with supporting infrastructure.
- 4.42 Meeting these requirements in a sustainable way will require all proposals to take opportunities to make the most efficient use of land, and in particular there is a need to secure a general uplift in the density of development in town centres and other locations which are well served by public transport.
- 4.43 However, this should not be at the cost of the quality of the environment or quality of life, or the local distinctiveness of our places. It is essential that new development functions well for all users and will add to the overall quality of the area in both the short- and long-term. Proposals should respond to the elements of a place that make

it distinctive, but this does not mean that development should necessarily replicate the scale or density of existing built form.

- 4.44 Since no two places are identical, there is no blueprint for good design and each proposal will need to show how the design responds to a thorough understanding of place and context.
- 4.45 Development of larger sites through allocations within the Local Plan also offers an opportunity for these sites to create their own identity and character, although it remains vital that these developments are integrated with the surrounding area and community.
- 4.46 In all situations, well-designed places should be functional; support mixed uses and tenures; include successful public spaces; be adaptable and resilient; have a distinctive character; be attractive; and encourage ease of movement.
- 4.47 Alongside the requirements of other policies of the Local Plan, the Residential Design and Layout policy (and Appendix 1) identifies the key design considerations which will apply in Three Rivers to all development proposals including new development, extensions, alterations, conversions and changes of use to create quality places and spaces for our communities.
- 4.48 Further specific requirements which apply to certain forms of development or sites are set out within other policies within the Local Plan. Regard will also be had to well-established good design principles as set out in national initiatives such as the 'Building for Life' standard, 'Secured by Design' and 'Manual for Streets', and further guidance will be provided through Supplementary Planning Documents (or similar) in future.
- 4.49 Proposals will not be supported where they do not address these policy requirements and where opportunities to improve the character and quality of the area in which they are located are not taken.
- 4.50 Innovative designs which promote high levels of sustainability, or help raise the standard of design more generally in an area are encouraged, so long as they are appropriate with regard to the character, distinctiveness and amenities of the area and address the objectives and policies of the Local Plan as a whole.
- 4.51 The council encourages applicants (especially for major development proposals) to engage in early and ongoing pre-application discussions about design and other material planning considerations with both the Local Planning Authority and the local community. In accordance with the NPPF, applications that can demonstrate early, proactive and effective engagement with the community will be looked on more favourably than those that cannot. Reference should be made to the Building Futures sustainable development initiative and toolkit.
- 4.52 Largescale major development schemes delivering more than 200 dwellings or over 10,000sqm floorspace are encouraged to undergo assessment by a Design Review Panel to provide independent, objective feedback and advice on design proposals. Applicants are strongly encouraged to undertake a design review at pre-application

stage and to show how feedback has informed proposals for a site. In considering proposals, regard will be had to the outcome of any review undertaken.

- 4.53 Steps will also be taken through the use of planning conditions and careful consideration for any proposed amendments after the grant of permission to ensure that the quality of approved development is not materially diminished between the grant of permission and completion. This will include (but is not limited to) consideration for materials, architectural detailing, landscaping and layouts.

5 Housing

Housing Mix and Type

- 5.1 In addition to providing a significant increase in the quantum of new housing delivered, to meet future housing needs in Three Rivers it is important that new housing provides for a range of housing types and sizes. Providing a balance of housing will help meet the varied needs of the community and contribute to sustainability objectives.
- 5.2 Sustainable communities contain a mix of dwelling types, sizes and tenures as well as jobs and local services that make a neighbourhood successful and it is important that new housing is provided across all sectors of the housing market to meet a wide variety of household needs and add to the choice of housing available. New homes therefore need to comprise a mix of tenures and prices, sizes and types.
- 5.3 There is also an ageing population in the district, and it is important that new development includes specific forms of housing for older people, as well as specialist accommodation to meet needs.

HOU1 - Housing Mix and Type

- 1) All new homes (both market and affordable and whether general needs or specialised) should contribute to the creation of balanced and sustainable communities by meeting identified local and district housing needs in terms of mix, size, tenure and type to cater for the full range of different households.
- 2) In determining an appropriate housing mix, applications must be based upon the housing mix provided in the Development Plan (see below) and only varied from this where it can be clearly evidenced (by reference to a-g below) that an alternative mix would be significantly more appropriate. Such variation would be subject to review by elected Members before approval:
 - a) The range of housing need in terms of the size and type of dwellings as identified by the Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) and subsequent updates;
 - b) Detailed local housing market assessments (where relevant);
 - c) Current and future demographic profiles and population;
 - d) The characteristics of the site which may influence its ability to accommodate a mix of housing, including its size, location and

constraints and opportunities for development;

- e) Evidence of local market signals, trends and circumstances;
 - f) Information on past housing delivery; and
 - g) For affordable housing, the council's Housing Register
- 3) All large-scale major housing proposals delivering 100 dwellings or more (gross) should be accompanied by a strategy to ensure a diversity of housing on the site including differing types, sizes, styles, design and tenure mix as well as housing to meet the requirements of different groups (specialist and supported housing).

Specialised and Supported Accommodation

- 4) The provision of well-designed specialist and/or supported accommodation will be supported in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan where:
- a) The type of specialised accommodation proposed would meet an identified need and contribute to maintaining a balance of housing stock;
 - b) The proposal is in a location with good access to services and facilities, including public transport, enabling residents to live independently as part of the community;
 - c) The design of the proposal, including any individual units of accommodation, is capable of meeting the specialised accommodation support and care needs of occupiers; and
 - d) Arrangements are in place to ensure the delivery of appropriate care and support packages where appropriate.
- 5) Specialist and support housing developments of 50 dwellings or more, should adhere to the design principles adopted in the Hertfordshire County Council's Adult Care Service (ACS).
- 6) Existing specialised or supporting housing should be retained where a need exists (and/or is projected to exist over the plan period) unless it is adequately replaced either on or off site by an equivalent quality and

quantity of accommodation.

Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings

- 7) All housing should be designed and built to encourage sustainable and flexible living, and should be built to be accessible and adaptable to meet changing occupier circumstances over the lifetime of the development.
 - a) All new dwellings should comply with M4(2) standards of the Building Regulations as a minimum.
 - b) For major developments of 10 or more dwellings, the following proportions of dwellings should be built to be wheelchair adaptable/accessible and comply with M4(3) standards of the Building Regulations where:
 - i) 5% of market dwellings should be built to M4(3a) standards; and
 - ii) 10% of affordable dwellings for social and affordable rent should be built to M4(3b) standards
 - iii) 10% of all other forms of affordable housing should meet the Building Regulations M4(3) standard
 - c) The proportions of homes to be built to the above standards should be applied to the housing mix of the development in terms of size and type in consultation with the council's housing department to ensure that developments provide a mix of sizes and types adapted for wheelchair users that reflects local need

Self-Build and Custom House Building

- 8) Proposals for self-build and custom housebuilding will be supported where development would have no adverse effect on the local character. Sites of at least 200 dwellings will be expected to provide 2% of serviced plots for self-build and custom build where possible.
- 9) Schemes including self-build plots should consider the sizes of plots identified as required on the Self Build register and should be made available and priced and marketed appropriately as self-build or custom build plots for at least 6 months.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

10) Proposals for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) that require planning permission will only be supported where the balance of housing types, amenity and character of the immediate locality would not be adversely affected; where suitable living conditions would be created; and where there would be sufficient provision of amenity space and parking.

Reasoned Justification:

- 5.4 The Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) (March 2024) has been prepared to provide an up-to-date evidence base on overall housing needs in South-West Hertfordshire, the needs for specific types and size of homes, and the housing needs of specific groups within the population of demand from specific housing market segments.
- 5.5 The LHNA provides information on the current and future housing needs of the district and found that:
- Population projections (2016 based) indicate a projected population growth in Three Rivers of 9,459 people 2020 – 2036, a 9.9% increase. However, the 2018 projections show a very small increase in population (less than 1%). Historically, the population of the district has increased by 7.4% between the 2011 and 2021 census
 - When linked to the standard methodology housing OAN, the Three Rivers population is projected to increase by 18,294 people 2020 – 2036, a 19.3% increase and therefore some net in-migration would be expected
 - The largest growth in population is expected from people aged 65 and over, with this group expected to increase by 4.6% in the period 2020 – 2036 based on 2018 population projections
 - There is a need to increase the supply of accessible and adaptable housing and wheelchair user dwellings as well as specific housing for older people
- 5.6 The LHNA reveals different profiles in the size mix across the different tenures, with social and affordable rented housing being more heavily skewed towards smaller homes, market housing being more heavily skewed towards larger homes, and affordable home ownership housing sitting between the two.
- 5.7 While the LHNA provides estimated housing requirements, it recognises there are a range of factors that need to be taken into account in setting policies for provision. The LHNA's housing mix is based on a trend-based analysis and does not take into account deficiencies in existing stock. The council has therefore taken into consideration the housing completions over the period from 2005 until 2025 against the housing mix set out in the Core Strategy (2011). This shows a significant under delivery of smaller homes and a significant over delivery of larger homes. As such the housing mix in the LHNA has been adjusted to take this into consideration.

- 5.8 Other factors such as the need for homes for older persons to downsize to and extensions that have led to properties moving up a level in the mix have also been factored into these adjustments. The Social/Affordable Rented housing mix has not been adjusted as the LHNA mix is considered to meet the district's needs for affordable housing.
- 5.9 The following table sets the required Strategic mix of housing provision which will be obligatory until any subsequent revision to the LHNA (2024) and council's evidence and should form the basis for the housing mix of development proposals and provision across the district.

	1-bedroom	2-bedroom	3-bedroom	4+-bedroom
Market Housing	15%	35%	40%	10%
Affordable Home Ownership	20%	40%	30%	10%
Social/Affordable Rented Housing	20%	40%	35%	5%

- 5.10 However, it is recognised that the mix may need to be adjusted for specific schemes to take account of market information, housing needs and preferences, the council's Housing Register, households whom the council owe the full housing duty and specific site factors. Where adjustment to the proportions is sought, applications should explain how relevant factors have contributed to the mix of housing being proposed. With regards to outline applications, applicants are encouraged to provide details of the housing mix at the outline application stage wherever possible.
- 5.11 With regards to the affordable sector, the LHNA notes that there are typically issues around demand for and turnover of 1-bedroom homes (as well as allocations to older person households) which provide limited flexibility for households and as a result these can see relatively high levels of turnover. Therefore, it may not be appropriate to provide as much 1-bedroom stock as is suggested by the modelling exercise. In addition, the stock of 4-bedroom affordable housing is very limited and tends to have a very low turnover. As a result, whilst the number of households coming forward for 4+-bedroom homes is typically quite small, the ability for these needs to be met is even more limited. The LHNA therefore advises that the proportion of 1-bedroom affordable homes is reduced with a commensurate increase in 4+-bedroom homes.
- 5.12 Within the strategic housing mix, the council will support provision of bungalows as an element of the overall supply as it is recognised that these may be particularly attractive to older owner-occupiers (many of whom are equity-rich) and can assist in encouraging households to downsize. However, bungalows are a low-density form of development and as such are land-intensive for the amount of floorspace created. Given the requirement to achieve an uplift in the density of development, the council does not consider that it is appropriate to set a specific target for these.

Specialist and Supported Accommodation

- 5.13 To meet specific needs and to offer a real choice of accommodation, there is a need to provide an element of housing as specialist or supported housing. This may be required to address permanent needs, or longer term or shorter-term timescales which meet temporary needs. Development should refer to the National Statement of Expectations for Supported Housing (MHCLG, 2020) for further guidance.
- 5.14 Specialist and supported accommodation may include housing for older people, people with disabilities or ongoing support needs, student housing, self-build and custom build housing, the build to rent sector or hostels and may fall within C2, C3 or Sui Generis planning use classes depending on the nature of the accommodation.
- 5.15 The LHNA and Paragraph 10 (Reference ID: 63-010-20190626) of the PPG set out some of the different types of specialist housing:
- Age restricted general market housing
 - Retirement living or sheltered housing
 - Extra care housing or housing-with-care
 - Residential care and nursing homes
- 5.16 Further to this, the LHNA specifies the different types of specialist housing into three main categories of accommodation which are:
- Housing with Support (retirement/sheltered housing)
 - Housing with Care (enhanced sheltered/extra-care housing)
 - Care/Nursing Home
- 5.17 Specialist and supported accommodation may include housing for older people, people with disabilities or ongoing support needs, student housing, self-build and custom build housing, the build to rent sector or hostels and may fall within C2, C3 or Sui Generis planning use classes depending on the nature of the accommodation.

Housing for Older People and People with Disabilities

- 5.18 Given the strong link between people's ages and levels of disability, the LHNA considers housing needs from these groups together. In assessing the need for housing for older people the LHNA sets out that there is projected to be a notable increase in the population aged 65 and over and given the ageing population and higher levels of disability and health problems amongst older people the LHNA identifies that there is likely to be an increased requirement for specialist housing options in future.
- 5.19 When using the scenario based on the Housing Learning & Information Network's (SHOP@) modelling assumptions, for Three Rivers there is projected to be a requirement for 1,276 homes between 2024 – 2041 for older people. The LHNA divides this between 'housing with support' which covers retirement living and sheltered housing, and 'housing with care' which covers extra care housing or housing-with-care. The total requirement comprises:

- Housing with support – Affordable: -281 homes
- Housing with support – Market: 975 homes
- Housing with care – Affordable: 109 homes
- Housing with care – Market: 473 homes

- 5.20 The LHNA also considers the need for older persons accommodation within a C2 Use Class (residential care homes and nursing homes) which also suggests a notable need in future for 678 care beds between 2024 – 2041. This is also based off the Housing Learning & Information Network's (SHOP@) modelling assumptions.
- 5.21 Over 80% of over-65 households in Three Rivers are under-occupying homes. In addition to meeting the housing requirements of people over 65, the provision of smaller properties through the general mix of housing under this policy will allow for downsizing, as well as provision of specific accommodation such as retirement and/or extra care housing will help release under-occupied homes to meet other housing needs in the area.
- 5.22 The LHNA estimates that there is a need for 322-584 wheelchair user homes in Three Rivers over the plan period. There is also a significant increase projected in the population with a range of disabilities. Requirements for Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings M4(2) and Wheelchair User Dwellings M4(3) are therefore addressed in the policy above.

Accessible and Adaptable Buildings

- 5.23 Providing a flexible housing stock is an important element of ensuring that a wide range of accommodation needs can be met and that these can respond as needs change over time. As a consequence, all new homes should be designed to be flexible, accessible and adaptable to support the changing needs of individuals and families.
- 5.24 Given the ageing population in Three Rivers, it is particularly important that there is housing which would be suitable for any occupiers, regardless of whether or not they have a disability at the time of initial occupation.
- 5.25 The LHNA recommendation is that councils should seek as much M4 (2) (accessible and adaptable dwellings) housing as viably possible and 10% of affordable housing to be M4(3) compliant to meet the identified need for wheelchair users over the plan period.

Self-Build and Custom building

- 5.26 Self-build and custom build housing is defined in the Housing and Planning Act 2016 as 'the building or completion by individuals, or persons working with or for individuals or associations of individuals, of houses to be occupied as homes by those individuals... [but] does not include the building of a house on a plot acquired from a person who builds the house wholly or mainly to plans or specifications decided or offered by that person'. This type of housing enables people to choose the design or layout of their home, and in many cases custom build houses can be constructed

faster and to a higher quality with less risk to builders as the house has effectively been sold before construction.

- 5.27 The LHNA states the council should implement a policy on strategic sites, where justified and the exact level should be determined in reference to the number and capacity of strategic sites and overall local need in consideration with the committed supply and viability. The need for self-build and custom build housing has been based on demand from the council's Right to Build Register¹¹.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

- 5.28 Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) are dwellings lived in by more than one family or groups of individuals who share facilities such as a kitchen or bathroom and can contribute to meeting the housing needs of some of the population, offering a more affordable way to live in the district.
- 5.29 It is important to get the balance of housing right and conventional residential development is generally considered to be more sustainable as it meets the broadest spectrum of housing need. While planning permission may not always be required to convert a dwelling to an HMO, where permission is required, the balance of housing will be considered as well as living conditions for future occupiers.

Housing Density

- 5.30 The NPPF highlights that plans should contain policies to optimise the use of land in their area and meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible. Given the constrained supply of available land to meet needs for growth in Three Rivers, it is particularly important that all new housing comes forward at a density which makes efficient use of land, and that the Local Plan secures an uplift in the average density of residential density where appropriate in accordance with other policies in the Local Plan.

HOU2 - Housing Density

- 1) The council will promote high quality residential development that respects the character of the district and the area of the proposed development and caters for a range of housing needs. Development should make the most efficient use of land, without compromising the quality of the environment or existing residential areas.
- 2) New housing should be provided at a target density responding to the site, its context and the housing need, with densities normally 50 dwellings per hectare within the developable area. In areas well served by public transport, services and facilities higher densities will be expected.
- 3) There may be occasions where a lower density of development would be appropriate with regard to a site and its context; for example within an area of special historic or landscape value, or specialist forms of

¹¹ <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/planning/planning-policy/registers>

accommodation. Any proposals for development at a density below the target levels above should include supporting information to justify the proposed approach.

- 4) Generally, densities should be lower within the edges of the site, with an increase in density towards the centre of the site.

Reasoned Justification:

- 5.31 Monitoring data shows that past housing completions in Three Rivers have been delivered at a range of densities. Average densities have varied year to year depending on the nature of the schemes which have come forward within that year, with some years showing a high proportion of completions at less than 30 dwellings per hectare and other years showing a high proportion of completions of 30-50 or over 50 dwellings per hectare.
- 5.32 The existing built-up areas of the district have a varied character, including as a consequence of the density of development. For example, within Rickmansworth Town Centre, residential densities are approximately 52 dwellings per hectare, while in Chorleywood densities are approximately 18 dwellings per hectare.
- 5.33 Whilst it is important to make more efficient use of land, particularly to reduce pressure on greenfield and/or Green Belt sites, this should not compromise the quality of the environment and existing residential areas in Three Rivers, some of which may fall within areas of special historic or landscape value.
- 5.34 As such, it is considered that a guideline for densities being normally 50 dwellings per hectare within the developable area is appropriate for the district, with higher densities expected from areas well served by public transport, services and facilities. It is considered that this will strike an appropriate balance for the district between optimising the use of land and securing an uplift in appropriate locations, while ensuring due regard for the character and amenities of the district and the quality of life of residents.
- 5.35 Higher densities of development are not precluded, but should be delivered through high quality designs which ensure that all impacts on surroundings and future occupiers are fully considered.
- 5.36 Where lower densities are proposed on the basis of the character or amenities of an area, the reasons for this should be explained as part of any application.

Affordable Housing

- 5.37 Delivery of affordable housing is a key priority of the Local Plan. Average house prices in Three Rivers are some of the highest in the country outside London. Housing affordability within the district continues to be a major concern for many residents,

and many local people have difficulty in accessing housing on the open market. This particularly affects the young and those on lower incomes who are entering the housing market. The South-West Herts Local Housing Needs Assessment Update (LHNA, March 2024) is clear that there is a notable need for affordable housing in Three Rivers and across South-West Hertfordshire. Improving the supply and standard of affordable housing is therefore one of the biggest priorities for the council to address the needs of our community.

HOU3 - Affordable Housing

Thresholds and Percentage

- 1) The council will seek an overall provision of at least 40% of all new housing as affordable housing (by net additional unit), incorporating a mix of tenures. All new development resulting in a net gain of one or more dwellings will be expected to contribute to the provision of affordable housing. On specialist housing schemes for older people, these thresholds will apply except in the case of development falling within a C2 use class.

Split

- 2) 70% of affordable housing should be for rent and 30% for affordable home ownership and have regard to the following:
 - a) Affordable housing for rent includes Social Rent and affordable rent (and can include affordable private rent). As a guide 70% of affordable housing for rent provision should be Social Rent and 30% should be for affordable rent.
 - b) Affordable home ownership includes First Homes and shared ownership. First Homes and shared ownership products are preferred; however, other types of affordable home ownership products will be considered on a case- by-case basis. As a guide 50% of affordable home ownership provision should be First Homes and 50% should be shared ownership.
- 3) In calculating the percentage of affordable units to be provided as part of a development scheme, the affordable housing requirement will normally be 'rounded up' to the nearest whole number.
- 4) Where development would affect existing affordable dwellings, permission will only be granted where this would not result in a net loss of affordable housing, and where the proposed tenure mix would meet affordable housing needs of the community.

Green Belt

- 5) All major development involving the provision of housing in the Green Belt (i.e. sites for 10 or more homes; or with a site area of 0.5 hectares or more) should provide at least 50% of the total housing provision as affordable housing. Any development in the Green Belt resulting in a net gain of 1-9 dwellings should provide at least 40% of the total housing provision as affordable housing, as set out in paragraph 1 of this policy. An affordable housing split in line with policy criterion 2 is expected.

Rural Exception Sites

- 6) Small-scale proposals delivering 100% affordable housing in perpetuity within and immediately adjacent to the village core areas of Bedmond and Sarratt may be supported within the Green Belt where these are evidenced to provide affordable housing to meet identified local community needs. Such proposals must accommodate households which contain current residents or have an existing family or employment connection (to the respective village) in perpetuity. A minor degree of market housing may be acceptable where it is required to support the delivery of affordable housing on the site. If market housing is proposed to support the delivery of affordable housing on the site, a viability assessment must be submitted as part of the application to justify this.
- 7) Affordable housing should reflect the mix of sizes and types required in the district as identified within the Housing Mix and Type Policy, the most up-to-date Local Housing Need Assessment (LHNA) and subsequent updates, the council's Housing Register and any relevant Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Mode of Affordable Housing Provision

- 8) In most cases, affordable housing provision should be made on site, however, on small sites delivering between one and nine dwellings, contribution to affordable housing may be made through commuted payments. Such payments will be broadly equivalent in value to on-site provision of affordable housing for rent, but may vary depending on site circumstances and viability. Payments will fund the development of affordable housing on other sites within the district.
- 9) To ensure community cohesion and good design, affordable homes must be fully integrated in the design of the overall scheme, being physically and visually indistinguishable from market units and dispersed across the site in clusters appropriate to the size and scale of the development. Designs resulting in high maintenance or service charges should be avoided.

Delivery

- 10) Affordable housing requirements that have been determined on the basis of viability and site-specific viability information seeking to justify an alternative level or mix of affordable housing will therefore only be accepted in exceptional cases. Viability assessments should be undertaken in accordance with the recommended approach set out in national planning guidance, including standardised inputs, and will be made publicly available.

- 11) Where a reduction in affordable housing is justified, the council will seek to secure the preferred tenure split as a priority over a potentially higher total percentage of affordable housing which would not be consistent with meeting priority needs. Such proposals will also be subject to detailed review mechanisms throughout the period up to full completion of the development, including an advanced stage review mechanism.

- 12) Where developments would trigger affordable housing requirements, application of the Vacant Building Credit will only be appropriate in demonstrated exceptional circumstances, and where a proposal would meet all of the following criteria:
 - a) It is clearly demonstrated that the site would otherwise not come forward for any form of redevelopment at any point over the medium to long-term;

 - b) All buildings within the site boundary are vacant at the time the application is submitted;

 - c) There are no extant or recently expired permissions on the site for any proposed use class;

 - d) The proposal does not involve the loss of any capacity to meet other development needs from a site allocated for non-housing development; and

 - e) The building has not been made vacant for the sole purpose of redevelopment, evidenced by provision of marketing and vacancy evidence for a continuous period of five years (up to the point of submission of an application).

Local Connection Criteria

13) All forms of affordable housing (except homes for social and affordable rent) should be allocated in accordance with the Council's 'Local Connection Criteria', set out below or by any subsequent detailed guidance. This will be secured by planning obligation.

First Homes

14) First Homes are required to be sold at a minimum discount of at least 30% of the market value of homes available for sale locally which are of the same size and type as those proposed. The minimum discount will be secured in perpetuity.

Reasoned Justification:

- 5.38 The NPPF advises that affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major developments, other than in designated rural areas where policies may set a lower threshold of five units or fewer. However, the local circumstances in Three Rivers are considered to justify an alternative approach to require all developments resulting in a net gain of housing to contribute to affordable housing provision. This is on the basis of the acute need for affordable housing in the district demonstrated by the LHNA, the council's "*Evidence Relating to the Application of the Affordable Housing Threshold in Core Strategy Policy CP4: Affordable Housing*" documents¹², and the crucial role that smaller sites delivering fewer than 10 dwellings has played in delivering housing historically which is expected to continue in future. These factors are considered to outweigh the guidance within the NPPF and justify the approach within the Affordable Housing Policy to require all sites resulting in a net gain of dwellings to contribute to affordable housing provision in the district, and this approach has been supported in recent appeal decisions in the district.
- 5.39 The LHNA demonstrates that the median house price in Three Rivers during the year to September 2022 was £560,000. This is significantly above the Hertfordshire average of £512,940 and the East of England average of £328,000 during the same period. Monthly rents across all sizes of accommodation are similarly above Hertfordshire and England averages within Three Rivers.
- 5.40 Affordability ratios in Three Rivers and across the South-West Hertfordshire area have deteriorated significantly since 1997 and lower quartile house prices in the district were 12.24 times higher than lower quartile incomes in 2024. The affordability of housing therefore remains a critical issue in Three Rivers and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.
- 5.41 The LHNA considered needs for affordable housing within the district and identified an annual net need for affordable housing in Three Rivers over the period 2024-2040 of 527 affordable homes per year. When split between rented affordable need and affordable home ownership need, this overall identified need of 527 affordable homes a year equates to a need of 364 rented affordable homes (including Social Rent and

¹² <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/planning/planning-applications/latest-appeals-cp4>

affordable rent) and 163 affordable home ownership dwellings (including First Homes, shared ownership etc).

- 5.42 Given the substantial need for affordable housing in the district, it is also essential that development does not lead to a reduction in the overall supply of affordable housing, or to changes to the tenure of affordable housing which is provided so that it is less well suited to meet demonstrated local needs. Such proposals would undermine the overall approach to the supply of affordable housing in the district and will be resisted

Rented Affordable Need

- 5.43 The LHNA sets out that “there are therefore policy choices to be made by individual authorities around how policies are crafted ... the analysis is however clear that there is need for both social and affordable rented homes”. The LHNA further adds that “decisions should be influenced by individual authorities’ priorities, the results of viability evidence and funding availability”. With regard to the tenure of affordable housing for rent, local evidence suggests that the greatest need in the district is for Social Rented housing, followed by Affordable Rent.
- 5.44 However, when benefits are taken into account, the LHNA notes that for households claiming Household Benefit, an affordable rent may be appropriate as long as the Housing Benefit is able to cover all of the rent, whilst for households with an income that would allow them to afford an affordable rent it is arguable that a social rent would be more appropriate as the housing costs would be less of a strain on household finances.
- 5.45 Affordable rent should be genuinely affordable, with rents at around 60% of median market values (including service charges).
- 5.46 The council acknowledges that requiring a higher proportion of affordable homes for rent, will impact on the overall level of affordable housing that may be delivered. However, these are the most urgent and pressing needs for housing in the district and the council will therefore prioritise the delivery of a greater proportion of affordable housing for rent rather than a higher total level of affordable housing delivery through, for example, a higher proportion of affordable home ownership. A tenure mix in accordance with Policy X (Housing Mix and Type) will therefore be sought.

Affordable Home Ownership Need:

- 5.47 The LHNA also indicates that in addition to the requirement for affordable housing for rent, that there is a case for setting out policies in Local Plans which support provision of a range of affordable home ownership products. Such products include First Homes, shared ownership and rent to buy.
- 5.48 First Homes are a specific type of discounted market sale housing and meets the definition of ‘affordable housing’ for planning purposes. First Homes are discounted market sale units which:

- a) must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value;
- b) are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria
- c) on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and,
- d) after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000

- 5.49 National standard criteria apply to First Homes eligibility and will be considered at the time of the planning application.
- 5.50 The council can exercise flexibility to lower the price cap; increase the discount level and/or reduce the income cap, provided there is local evidence to justify doing so. The LHNA suggests the possibility of raising the discount levels to 40% in Three Rivers, but the case for higher discounts needs to be balanced against scheme viability and the potential knock-on effect on other tenure types in the scheme. As such, higher discounts can be considered, where this can be viably achieved.

Local Connection Criteria

- 5.51 To demonstrate a local connection, applicants for Affordable Housing (except social and affordable rent) that are built in Three Rivers will need to provide evidence for one of the following:
- Have current residence (by choice) in the district and have lived in the district for at least five out of the last six years; or
 - Work in Three Rivers in employment other than of a casual nature as defined by Local Government Association Guidelines. For the purposes of this policy this will be defined as having had permanent work with a minimum of a 16 hour contract per week for the previous 12 months, and without a break in the period of employment for more than 3 months; or
 - Have family connections in Three Rivers with a member of their household, parents, adult children or adult siblings who have been residents in the district for at least the last 10 years.
 - Have caring responsibilities to a family member within the district or are cared for by a family member within the district
 - Are a Keyworker within the district or nearby (further details will be provided by guidance)
- 5.52 Other exceptional circumstances not listed above may be considered on a case-by-case basis.
- 5.53 In recognition of the unique nature of their circumstances, all Armed Forces veterans, irrespective the length of Service or when this Service ended are exempt from any local connection testing restrictions. This includes:

- Current serving members of the Armed Forces;
- Former members of the Armed Forces;
- Bereaved spouses or civil partners of Armed Forces members where (i) the bereaved spouse or civil partner has recently ceased, or will cease, to be entitled to reside in Ministry of Defence accommodation following the death of their Service spouse or civil partner, and (ii) the death was wholly or partly attributable to their Service;
- Adult children of serving Armed Forces members who need to move out of family accommodation;
- Serving or former members of the Reserve Armed Forces who are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is wholly or partly attributable to their Service;
- A divorced or separated spouse or civil partner of a Regular Armed Forces member who needs to move out of accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence due to a relationship breakdown

- 5.54 The above list is not exhaustive and the council may grant an exception to the local connection criteria on the grounds of exceptional circumstances, to an Armed Forces veteran or family member who may not wholly fulfil one of the above.
- 5.55 Applicants with a local connection will be expected to be prioritised for the first three months of marketing. Council officers will monitor compliance with requirements set out in a s106 and other planning obligations.
- 5.56 It must be noted that future detailed guidance will supersede the above criteria.

Rural Exception Sites

- 5.57 There are fewer opportunities to build new homes in the district's smaller villages surrounded by, or designated as Green Belt due to more restrictive policies on housing in countryside and particularly in the Green Belt. However, an element of new development can help to support these communities. The NPPF recognises this and enables the provision of limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan, including policies for rural exception sites. Proposals for rural exception sites delivering 100% affordable housing within and immediately adjacent to the village core may be supported (including in the Green Belt) where these are evidenced to provide affordable housing which would meet identified local community needs. The type and size of affordable housing provided on such sites must address identified needs in the individual village or the area it serves which is defined as the village or parish in which it is located.

Specialist Housing

- 5.58 In relation to specialist housing (such as extra care housing), it is recognised that provision of affordable housing may be particularly difficult to achieve from both a viability and practical perspective), as highlighted within the LHNA. As such, affordable housing provision will not apply in the case of development falling within a C2 use class. In other cases (i.e. where development falls within a C3 use class), a

viability assessment will be required to demonstrate if an affordable housing contribution is not viable.

Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 5.59 Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople have particular accommodation needs that require additional consideration. To ensure that members of these communities are able to access decent and appropriate housing with access to services including health and education, the council must make provision for accommodation to meet identified needs.
- 5.60 Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) sets out the Government's planning policy for traveller sites and should be read in conjunction with the National Planning Policy Framework.

HOU4 - Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 1) The council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (July 2025) sets out that there is a need for 37 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers who meet the definition set out in the PPTS and a need for 6 plots for Travelling Showpeople who meet the planning definition set out in the PPTS.
- 2) When considering planning applications for sites/yards for Gypsies and Travellers or Travelling Showpeople, a criteria-based approach will be used. The following criteria will be taken into account:
 - a) Avoid areas at risk from all sources of flooding, or affected by environmental hazards that may affect residents' health or welfare;
 - b) Avoid causing an adverse impact on areas of recognised wildlife, heritage or landscape importance, and on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - c) Have reasonable access to local services and facilities, including shops, schools and healthcare;
 - d) Be well located to the highway network, with safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access to the site/yard;
 - e) Sites/yards should be suitably designed and the layout include sufficient space to accommodate the proposed number of caravans, provision of day rooms, space for tourer caravans, landscaping, SuDS mitigation, biodiversity net gain, vehicles and

ancillary areas as appropriate. Where appropriate, adequate on-site facilities for parking, storage, waste collection, play and residential amenity should be provided;

- f) The site/yard must be capable of being adequately serviced by drinking water, utilities and sewerage disposal facilities;
 - g) The size and scale of the site/yard, alone or in combination with other nearby traveller sites or travelling showpeople yards, respects the size and density of the local settled community and does not dominate the nearest settled community;
 - h) Provide adequate levels of privacy and residential amenities for occupiers and not result in significant harm to the amenities of any nearby occupiers; including being able to achieve a reasonable level of visual and acoustic privacy for both people living on the site/yard and those living nearby;
 - i) The circumstances of the applicant and their need for pitches/plots on the application site.
- 3) Existing Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites/yards will be safeguarded unless there is no longer a need for their retention, or they are no longer viable.

Reasoned Justification:

- 5.61 The NPPF sets out that within the context of establishing need (housing), the size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in planning policies and specifically refers to travellers as one of these groups.
- 5.62 The PPTS states that the Government's overarching aim is to ensure fair and equal treatment for travellers, in a way that facilitates the traditional and nomadic way of life of travellers while respecting the interests of the settled community.
- 5.63 The council will seek to meet identified needs on suitable sites in sustainable locations and to maintain a five-year supply of deliverable pitches/plots taking into account the findings of the council's Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment (July 2025) and any subsequent updates. All the identified Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites/yards within the district will be 'safeguarded' to ensure that the permitted use as a traveller site is not lost through

the grant of any subsequent planning permission whilst there remains a need for sites.

- 5.64 The table below sets out the identified need for gypsy and traveller pitches within the district by year periods. There is a need of 37 pitches arising from those households who meet the planning definition and a need of 4 pitches arising from households with undetermined need.

Year Period	Dates	PPTS Need	Undetermined Need
0 – 5	2025 – 29	21	1
6 – 10	2030 – 34	5	1
11 – 15	2035 – 39	7	1
16 – 20	2040 – 41	4	1
0 – 20	2025 – 41	37	4

- 5.65 The table below sets out the identified need for travelling showpeople plots within the district by year periods. There is a need of 6 plots arising from those households who meet the planning definition and a need of 10 plots arising from households with undetermined need.

Year Period	Dates	PPTS Need	Undetermined Need
0 – 5	2025 – 29	6	5
6 – 10	2030 – 34	0	2
11 – 15	2035 – 39	0	2
16 – 20	2040 – 41	0	1
0 – 20	2025 – 41	6	10

- 5.66 The GTAA has not identified the requirement for transit sites within the district, as such we have not planned for such a facility at the current time, although will keep this approach under review as suggested by the GTAA.

- 5.67 There are a range of different methods to meet identified need, and often a combination of methods is often most effective. The approaches can be categorised as a criteria-based policy approach, extension of existing sites/yards, allocating entirely new gypsy and traveller sites/travelling showpeople yards, or allocating parts of strategic general needs housing sites. A combination of approaches will be utilised in order to meet the need identified within the GTAA.

6 Employment & Economy

Employment and Economic Development

- 6.1 Employment within Three Rivers District is fairly typical of the wider South West Hertfordshire economic market area, in that it is highly dependent on professional services, as well as construction, retail and hospitality. Three Rivers in particular, additionally has a strong T.V and film sector at Warner Bros studios in Leavesden and in Langleybury and a high concentration of knowledge-based industries.
- 6.2 Three Rivers has long had a pattern of out commuting given its proximity to London and Watford and its attractive residential areas. Although this has declined somewhat since COVID, particularly into London, it is still a significant feature of the employment market.
- 6.3 Unemployment is generally quite low in Three Rivers with recent falls and is now below the national average and around the average for the East of England.
- 6.4 Another feature of the economic market since COVID is the decline in need for office space. Three Rivers had a significant proportion of its employment land as offices, and as such, it has been assessed in the latest South West Hertfordshire Economic Study (2024) that the fall in demand means that Three Rivers has broadly the right level of office space for the next 15 years, but any changes in working patterns will need to be kept under review. Three Rivers is also noted in the 2024 economic study as having low vacancy levels compared to other authorities in the functional economic market area (FEMA), so should be seeking to protect existing stock. Industry and warehousing have continued to see strong growth across the South West Hertfordshire FEMA and future need depends on the outcome of a number of scenarios.
- 6.5 Subsequently, this policy seeks to protect employment areas and office space, while encouraging appropriate growth in the right areas, investing in high-quality development reflective of the characteristic companies in the district, such as life sciences and film and television studios.

EE1 - Employment and Economic Development

Strategic Approach to Employment Land

- 1) The council will seek to facilitate the growth and forecasted change of business development over the plan period by promoting the supply of office and industrial space across the district to meet any identified shortfall. A range of types and sizes of employment sites and premises will be encouraged throughout the district to meet the needs of the local economy. Proposals for business development should be of a high-quality design and in keeping with the surrounding environment.

Designated Employment Areas

- 2) Within designated Employment Areas, as defined on the policies map, the council will support the delivery of additional industrial floorspace and the intensification of office and industrial uses within these locations, subject to there being no unacceptable impact on the surrounding highway network or local amenity.
- 3) Proposals for non-employment uses on designated employment areas should only be permitted where:
 - a) There would be no unacceptable impact on amenity;
 - b) There would be no hindrance to the site's operation as a key employment area.
- 4) Sites allocated as having potential for mixed use development may provide for mixed use development including, but not limited to business, industrial and storage or distribution; residential or community uses.

Outside Designated Employment Areas

- 5) Outside the Designated Employment Areas, office and industrial development will be supported where:
 - a) The type, scale and intensity of the proposed business activity is appropriate to the locality and accessibility of the site;
 - b) The proposed use would not harm the amenity or operation of neighbouring uses.
- 6) Outside the Designated Employment Areas, the redevelopment of employment land to other uses will be supported where the site has been allocated for an alternative use or where it can be demonstrated that:
 - a) There is no reasonable prospect of the site remaining in employment use;
 - b) Opportunities to reconfigure or reuse the site to retain its current use have been exhausted;

- c) The site has been actively but unsuccessfully marketed at a realistic rate for a 12-month period; and where there is up-to-date evidence demonstrating there is no longer a need for the employment use;
 - d) The proposed alternative use would not adversely affect the efficient operation or economic function of other employment uses or businesses in the locality;
 - e) The proposal does not substantially prejudice the overall supply of employment land over the plan period.
- 7) Proposals for creative industries and the expansion of Leavesden Studios will be supported where they are in accordance with local and national policy.

Reasoned Justification:

- 6.6 The economy of the South West Hertfordshire functional economic market area (Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans, Three Rivers and Watford) is highly dependent on professional services as well as construction, retail and hospitality. These sectors provide the greatest opportunity for economic growth in the future. Three Rivers specifically has a strong TV and Film sector (at Leavesden Studios and Langleybury) and a high concentration of knowledge-based industries, and growth of these sectors should be encouraged. The significant concentration of small businesses in professional services and ICT suggest a need for flexible and affordable workspace to support the growth of these businesses.
- 6.7 The influence of surrounding areas on the economy of Three Rivers is significant. This is demonstrated for example by the high levels of out-commuting from the district, reflecting proximity to the London job market and to other larger centres such as Watford and Hemel Hempstead.
- 6.8 There has been a slight increase in unemployment in the area between 2016 and 2022, although the difference is within the margin of error and remains below the national average.
- 6.9 The study identified high levels of out-commuting from the district which could limit the labour supply. The growth levels planned for in the Local Plan will provide a boost to the labour supply.
- 6.10 Three Rivers has a predominantly office-based economy with different market conditions in comparison to the rest of the South West Hertfordshire region. This has meant that while office space vacancies have risen from 2019 to 2023, availability has fallen and remains much lower than other areas. As of July 2023, there was

162,000 sqm of available office space in South West Hertfordshire, of which 124,000 sqm was identified as vacant. There is also a further 36,000 sqm of office space with planning permission in the form of commitments. As such, the Economic Study concludes there is not a need to identify additional sites for office development. In terms of office space need, the Economic Study recommends that in Three Rivers any loss of office space be resisted due to low vacancy rates and increasing labour supply.

- 6.11 The main employment locations in Three Rivers offer very high-quality office space in large floorplates. This, together with the highly skilled workforce in Three Rivers, has attracted a number of headquarters to the district. The majority of this office floorspace is spread across the existing allocated employment sites which should be retained to ensure that Three Rivers remains an attractive destination for businesses and to keep a check on the existing high levels of out-commuting by Three Rivers' residents. While there is not a need to identify additional sites for office development, there may still be demand for office space, particularly from smaller sized businesses which should be supported.
- 6.12 The South West Herts Economic Study (2024) sets out that demand for industrial and storage & distribution space in South-West Hertfordshire is strong, driven mainly by demand for large scale storage & distribution space which increased during the pandemic. The study identifies a need for 413,400 sqm of storage & distribution space between 2021 and 2041. After taking account of the existing employment land supply, the study considered two employment land scenarios. In Scenario 1, there is no need to identify additional employment sites over the 2021-41 period. In Scenario 2 (which is the preferred option), there is a shortfall of 9.5 hectares across South-West Hertfordshire. There are no local need figures identified for individual authorities and the study found that there are no suitable sites identified in Three Rivers to address that shortfall.
- 6.13 A non-immediate Article 4 Direction was confirmed in March 2024 to remove permitted development rights regarding the change of use from class E use (commercial, business and service uses) to C3 use (dwellinghouses) on the five employment areas (Croxley Business Park, Maple Cross/ Maple Lodge Employment Area, Tolpits Lane Employment Area, Kings Langley Employment Area and Leavesden Park Employment Area) and four town/district centre locations (Rickmansworth Town Centre, Chorleywood District Centre, Abbots Langley District Centre and South Oxhey District Centre).
- 6.14 Three Rivers is the home of Leavesden Studios which is a key asset for the district and the wider South West Hertfordshire area. As such, it is key to the growth of creative industries across the functional economic market area. There is still significant growth potential at the site and there will likely be a significant growth in demand for studio space over the next 15 years. The South West Herts Economic Study (2024) recommended that land should be safeguarded for the expansion of Leavesden Studios and in particular support applications for studio space up to a maximum size, support new industrial developments or changes of use where they are linked to film and TV production and look favourably and act quickly on applications for new set builds.

Retail

- 6.15 Centres within Three Rivers play an important role in supporting local communities by providing for day to day needs and contributing to the economy of the district. There is competition between centres and with larger nearby town centres at Watford, Hemel Hempstead and St Albans but thriving, vibrant and attractive town, district and local centres are important to help meet a range of local needs of Three Rivers communities.

EE2 - Retail

- 1) Rickmansworth town centre and the district centres of South Oxhey, Chorleywood and Abbots Langley will remain the focus for retail, leisure activity and other town centre uses.
 - a) Within the primary shopping areas at ground floor level, as defined on the Policies Map, development will normally be permitted where:
 - i) Uses retain active frontages at ground floor level and demonstrate a positive contribution to the vitality, viability, balance of services and/or evening economy of the centre within which it is proposed
 - ii) Development is of a scale, type and format that reflects and enhances the role and function of the centre within which it is proposed
 - b) Within the primary and secondary shopping areas, the use of upper floors for residential use is supported in principle across all parts of the town centre hierarchy subject to other local planning policies.
 - c) Outside of the primary shopping areas at ground level, development within Use Class E, Sui Generis uses suited to a town centre, Class F1 and Class F2(b) will normally be permitted.
 - d) Redevelopment proposals providing managed workspace, flexible workspace accommodation will be encouraged to support small businesses within the defined retail hierarchy.

e) The intensification of town centres to provide additional floorspace for main town centre uses is supported in principle subject to impacts on townscape and heritage.

- 2) Local Centres should provide commercial and community uses to meet residents' day to day shopping needs, provide local employment opportunities, and support opportunities for community interaction.
- 3) Retail impact assessments will only be required for proposals of more than 2,500 sqm of (gross) new retail floorspace outside the retail hierarchy, including proposals for Class E (commercial, business and service) uses that would enable at least 2,500 sqm of (gross) floorspace to be occupied by retail use.
- 4) Shop fronts and displays should be appropriate to the character and function of the area.

Reasoned Justification:

- 6.16 The NPPF states that policy should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities. Local Plans must define a network and hierarchy of centres that is resilient to economic changes. The policy defines these centres and supports their economic viability.
- 6.17 The South West Hertfordshire Retail and Leisure Study (2018) sets out an objective assessment of retail and leisure development needs. The study finds a need for an improvement in the evening economy and the standard of shop frontages in Rickmansworth Town Centre. The policy allows for the creation and retaining of active frontages at ground floor level which demonstrate a positive contribution to the vitality, viability, balance of services and/or evening economy of the town centre.
- 6.18 With regard to convenience (food) floorspace, this equates to a net gain of around 1400-1800 square metres from 2026 to 2036. The provision over the forthcoming five year periods should be broadly as follows:
- 700-800 square metres from 2026 to 2031
 - 700-1,000 square metres from 2031 to 2036
- 6.19 With regard to comparison (non-food) floorspace, the provision of additional floorspace equates to the net gain of around 1,600-2,200 square meters from 2026 to 2036. This is broadly set out over forthcoming five-year periods below:
- 800-1,000 square meters from 2026 to 2031

- 800-1,200 square meters from 2031 to 2036
- 6.20 With regard to the development of restaurants, cafés and bars, the provision of net additional floorspace equates to a net gain of:
- 327 square meters by 2036 in Rickmansworth Town Centre
 - 402 square meters by 2036 in the District and Local Centres
- 6.21 These provisional targets will be reviewed regularly and amended in light of new evidence in relation to forecast expenditure, population and updates to the evidence base. Proposals that would result in provision over and above these targets will be considered on their merits taking into account their appropriateness in scale and function to the relevant centre.
- 6.22 New retail development is encouraged to incorporate accessibility measures.

Warner Bros

- 6.23 The South West Herts Economic Study Update (2024) confirms that the Studios in Leavesden are a key asset for South West Herts' creative industries and there is forecast increased demand for studio space which is a significant opportunity for expansion to support the sector and the local and national economy.

EE3 - Warner Bros. Studios
<p>1) Warner Bros. Studios Operations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Development on this site must be in relation to the Warner Bros. Studios Operations and associated uses, including the Harry Potter Studio Tour. b) The Warner Bros. Studios allocation (as shown on the policies map) will be safeguarded for studio operations and associated uses.

Reasoned Justification:

- 6.24 The South West Herts Economic Study Update (2024) notes that the Warner Bros Film Studios in Leavesden is one of only a few locations in the UK where large-scale film productions can be made. The site has also become a major visitor destination since the opening of 'Warner Bros. Studio Tour – The Making of Harry Potter' which receives over 6,000 visitors a day at peak times.

- 6.25 There is likely to be significant growth in demand for studio space over the next 15 years and there is still significant growth potential at the site. This is therefore a key asset for South West Hertfordshire and key to the future growth of creative industries in the economic market area. Warner Bros. has already invested significantly in the Studios and has further plans to increase its size by around a quarter, including new sound stages workshops, postproduction facilities and an extension of the studios tour.
- 6.26 In order not to compromise the ability of Warner Bros. Studios at Leavesden to contribute to the local and national economy, both as a local employer and as a centre to contribute to the economic growth of the district over the Local Plan period.

7 Green Belt

Green Belt

- 7.1 Green Belt designation covers approximately 76% of the area of Three Rivers. The fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl and coalescence of settlements by keeping land permanently open. As set out in the National Planning Policy Framework, the Green Belt serves five purposes:
- a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 7.2 Within the Green Belt, there is a general presumption against inappropriate development which should not be approved except in very special circumstances. Following the update to the NPPF in December 2024, the concepts of grey belt and “Golden Rules” were introduced and form part of assessing whether exceptions to inappropriate development in the Green Belt apply.
- 7.3 Protection of the Green Belt and open countryside is a key objective of the Three Rivers Local Plan. However, the Green Belt boundary is tightly drawn around urban areas, and local evidence (including the Urban Capacity Study 2020) has demonstrated that future development needs cannot be accommodated entirely within the urban area.
- 7.4 As part of its evidence base for the Local Plan, the council has undertaken a Stage 4 Green Belt Review (December 2025) which includes a spatial analysis of provisional grey belt (of land close to settlement edges) across the district and identifies areas of fundamental importance which can help with decisions on whether the purposes of the Green Belt have been fundamentally undermined.

GB1 - Green Belt
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Green Belt Boundary is shown on the Policies Map. 2) The council will seek to protect Three Rivers’ Metropolitan Green Belt against inappropriate development, as defined by national policy.

- 3) Inappropriate development will not be permitted in the Green Belt, unless very special circumstances are demonstrated to outweigh the potential harm, including harm to the openness of the Green Belt and any other harm and the purposes of including land within it.
- 4) Exceptions to the definition of inappropriate development are set out in national policy and those further exceptions set out in Appendix 2 will be permitted where they comply with other relevant policies in this plan.
- 5) Development proposals, including those involving previously developed land and buildings in the Green Belt, will be considered in accordance with relevant national planning policy and more detailed provisions set out in Appendix 2.
- 6) Measures to improve public access to the Green Belt, and to enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity will be encouraged.
- 7) Guidance on the factors that will be considered in assessing applications for agricultural or forestry dwellings in the Green Belt is contained in Appendix 2.

Reasoned Justification:

- 7.5 The Metropolitan Green Belt is a long-standing instrument of national and regional planning policy. Whilst much guidance is provided in national policy, the Local Plan's Green Belt policy and Appendix 2 supplements this with other relevant local criteria and seek to provide the context for protecting the Green Belt in Three Rivers.

8 Climate Change and Net Zero

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments

- 8.1 Renewable and low carbon energy developments are essential for addressing the challenges of climate change, energy security, and sustainable economic growth. Replacing fossil fuels with cleaner energy sources significantly reduce greenhouse gas emissions. They also enhance energy security by diversifying supply and reducing dependence on imported fuels. Furthermore, the transition to renewable and low carbon energy supports innovation and job creation, particularly in emerging green industries and technologies.

CNZ1 - Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments

- 1) Proposals for renewable energy developments, micro-renewables (such as, but not limited to, micro-wind turbines, micro-hydro and solar panels), or low and zero carbon and decentralised energy (such as, but not limited to Combined Heat and Power systems) may be supported subject to assessment of potential impacts on:
 - a) Residential/workplace amenity;
 - b) The visual amenity of the local area, including landscape character;
 - c) Local natural resources, including air and water quality;
 - d) The natural, built and historic environments;
 - e) Biodiversity;
 - f) Public access to the countryside;
 - g) The openness and visual amenity of the Green Belt;
 - h) Other site constraints.
- 2) The council will take into account the individual and cumulative impacts of applications for renewable energy developments on the above.

Reasoned Justification:

- 8.2 The council is keen to support the transition to a low carbon future and that the Local Plan should help to contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.
- 8.3 Hertfordshire as a whole has the technical potential to achieve a significant amount of renewable energy production by various means including Biomass, dedicated Combined Heat and Power facilities, Bio-diesel and Bio-ethanol. Given the district's watercourses, there may also be opportunities for micro-hydro power generation.
- 8.4 Specific areas suitable for large-scale renewable and low or zero carbon and decentralised energy have not been identified. However, the council encourages applicants to integrate the use of renewable energy technologies into all proposals and supports the use of micro-renewables subject to an assessment of potential impacts.

Net Zero Operational Carbon in New Build Residential Development

- 8.5 Operational carbon is an area where policy can ensure the provision of buildings that are fit for the future, both in terms of reduced energy consumption and holistic integration of design decisions that address climate adaptation. It is essential that housing developers prioritise these metrics and subsequent total energy consumption to best ensure that any on-site renewable energy can feasibly match total regulated energy use. If the energy use of a residential building is not mitigated in the first instance, on site renewable energy generation will likely not be sufficient to deliver a net zero building.

CNZ2A - Net Zero Operational Carbon in New Build Residential Development

All new build dwellings (use class C3 and C4) are required to meet the following requirements:

A1.1 - Part L% improvement

- 1) At least a 63% improvement (reduction) on Part L 2021 TER (Target Emissions Rate) from energy efficiency measures.
- 2) Heat pumps are to be calculated as an energy efficiency measure, rather than a renewable energy measure.
- 3) As a measure in aid of this TER target, achieve an improvement (reduction) on Part L 2021 TFEE (Target Fabric Energy Efficiency) as follows:

End terrace: at least a 12% improvement

Mid terrace: at least a 16% improvement

Semi-detached: at least a 15% improvement

Detached: at least a 17% improvement

Bungalow: at least a 19% improvement

Flats/ apartments: at least a 24% (weighted average, whole block) improvement

All of the above should be calculated using SAP10.2 or later version, or the Home Energy Model (HEM, once it has been implemented)

In the event national building regulations exceed the requirements of this policy, the national standards (i.e. the higher standards) would apply.

A1.2 - Energy metrics guidelines

Or –

- 4) Positive weight will be given to development proposals which can demonstrate that the following absolute energy metrics are met:
 - Total energy use: 35 kWh/m²/year
 - Space heating demand: 15 kWh/m²/year
- 5) Performance against these targets must be evidenced using a methodology that accurately predicts buildings' operational energy use. Suitable methodologies include the Passive House Planning Package (PHPP). Where a building achieves Passivhaus certification, it will be deemed to have complied with these targets.

A2 - No Fossil Fuels

- 6) The use of fossil fuels and connection to the gas grid will not be considered acceptable. Although, the use of fossil fuels may be considered acceptable in exceptional circumstances and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

A3 - On site renewable energy

- 7) On-site annual renewable energy generation capacity (in kWh) at least equal to the predicted annual total regulated and unregulated energy use (residual energy use in kWh after A1.1 has been achieved, plus unregulated energy use).
- 8) Where an on-site net zero regulated and unregulated energy balance is not possible¹³, it should be demonstrated that the amount of on-site renewable energy generation equates to at least 120kWh/m² projected building footprint/year.
- 9) Where a building in a multi-building development cannot individually achieve the requirements of A3 this shortfall is to be made up across other units on-site. Innovative solutions, for example utilising PV canopies on car parks or solar PV on communal buildings should be demonstrated before carbon offsetting A4 is considered.
- 10) Regulated and unregulated energy use can both be calculated with Part L SAP or BREDEM, but a more accurate method such as PHPP is advised. Any other proposed methods are subject to council confirmation of acceptability.
- 11) The annual renewable energy generation and the annual energy use are whole-building figures, not per-m² figures.
- 12) Renewable energy output should be calculated in line with MCS guidance for the relevant technology (expected to be PV in most cases).

A4 - Energy Offsetting

- 13) Only in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort where it is demonstrably unfeasible to achieve an on-site net zero regulated and

¹³ Exceptional circumstances where an on-site net zero energy balance is not achieved may only be found acceptable in some cases, for example with taller flatted buildings (4 storeys or above) or where overshadowing significantly impacts solar PV output.

unregulated energy balance, should any shortfall in on-site renewable energy generation that does not match energy use be offset via a S106 financial contribution, reflecting the cost of the solar PV that will need to be delivered off-site.

- 14) The energy offset price shall be determined based on the cost of delivering equivalent off-site solar PV capacity, calculated using the most up-to-date government data on solar PV installation. The methodology will account for capital costs, expected local energy yield, and a reasonable allowance for the administration of the offset fund by the council or its delivery partners. The total offset contribution shall be calculated as a one-off payment, based on the projected annual shortfall in on-site renewable energy generation, multiplied by the published offset price.

A5 - Reduced Performance Gap

- 15) An assured performance method must be implemented throughout all phases of construction to ensure operational energy in practice performs to predicted levels at the design stage.

A6 - Smart Energy Systems

- 16) Proposals should demonstrate how they have considered the difference (in scale and time) of renewable energy generation and the on-site energy demand, with a view to maximising on-site consumption of energy generated on site through energy storage or smart distribution, and overall minimising the need for wider grid infrastructure reinforcement.

A7 - Post-Occupancy Evaluation

- 17) Large-scale development (50 units or more) is to monitor and report total energy use and renewable energy generation values on an annual basis. An outline plan for the implementation of this should be submitted with the planning application. The monitored in-use data is to be reported to the Local Planning Authority for 5 years upon occupation.

Reasoned Justification:

- 8.6 As set out in the Climate Change Act 2008, national policy is working towards achieving the legally-binding UK target of net zero by 2050 and carbon budgets are

subsequently legislated under the aegis of the act. These carbon budgets are linked to the Climate Change Committee's Balanced Pathway to Net Zero report, which is supported by analysis that sets out that all new buildings must be net zero by 2025. The 2050 net zero target is specifically referenced in the NPPF.

- 8.7 The Planning and Energy Act 2008 sets out that local standards for energy efficiency in new homes are able to exceed those set in Building Regulations.
- 8.8 In the context of the 2023 Written Ministerial Statement, these policies are fully compliant with the perceived constraints it poses. The WMS only applies to energy efficiency standards where it states that any standards that exceed Building Regulations must be done so using the TER metric. Policy A1 remains within its bounds through the use of TER% reduction as the primary metric. The TFEE target is not additional to, but is a step towards, that TER target.
- 8.9 The 63% reduction target on Part L 2021 TER is set to align with national policy in that it is in line with the Future Homes Standard. Correspondingly, the TFEE target is set to align with the performance of a home that achieves that TER target via the indicative FHS specification set out by the Government in the 2019-21 FHS consultation. This is necessary in order to reduce the space heat demand (which is necessary for the achievement of the UK's carbon budgets. It is also necessary in order to protect the resident from excessive energy bills and potential fuel poverty, as the latest FHS consultation indicated that the FHS carbon target could be achieved just with a heat pump and no fabric improvements, resulting in heating bills approximately double those of a current new build home.
- 8.10 A2 is aligned to the Government's direction of travel indicated by both the options proposed in the Future Home Standard 2023 consultation, in that no fossil fuel heating systems are proposed. In some exceptional cases the use of fossil fuels may be acceptable, for example in remote and isolated areas. A3 and A4 are not impacted because they address renewable energy, which is out of scope of the 2023 WMS.
- 8.11 Policy elements A1, A2 and A3 are to be addressed at the design and post-completion stages, to ensure that the development has been built to intended standards. Post-completion resubmission of the original energy statement including energy performance calculations, informed by the relevant tests to systems and fabric, should be required as a condition as part of the planning application process. A5 and A7 compliance should also be demonstrated post-completion through planning condition.
- 8.12 A1 – A7 are to be demonstrated at the planning application stage through submission of an energy statement, which should include associated output reports from energy modelling software (e.g. SAP, BREDEM, PHPP, or HEM when available for general use).

Smart Energy Systems

- 8.13 In order to maximise energy self-sufficiency of a site, in relation to policy element A6, a number of methods may be considered. These may include smart local grids, energy sharing, energy storage and demand-side response, and/or solutions that combine elements of the above.

The Non-Mandatory Energy Targets in Policy A 1.2

- 8.14 The achievement of the energy efficiency performance levels set out in Policy A1.2 will reduce the amount of solar PV required under A3 for an on-site net zero balance. This can save the applicant costs in renewable energy provision and/or energy offsetting.
- 8.15 Performance against these non-mandatory targets would need to be calculated using a method that accurately predicts energy use. SAP is not suitable for this due to its poor predictive accuracy in the context of high-performance buildings. PHPP (Passivhaus Planning Package) is a suitable methodology, as it is widely recognised for its precision in predicting energy performance, particularly for low-energy buildings. Unlike SAP, PHPP has a proven track record of providing accurate energy use and heating demand predictions, ensuring that the development can meet its energy efficiency targets and reduce operational energy consumption effectively.
- 8.16 The council may subsequently take a view on whether the incoming Home Energy Model (HEM) may be suitable, when HEM's final form is known.

No Fossil Fuels

- 8.17 The A2 No fossil fuels policy prohibits the use of fossil fuels within the operational phase of the development, specifically for energy purposes within the buildings, including heating, hot water, and electricity. The intent is to ensure that the development aligns with sustainability goals and supporting the transition to low-carbon energy sources. The restriction on fossil fuels does not apply to their use in construction activities or transport. The use of fossil fuels may be considered acceptable in exceptional circumstances, and will be considered on the merits of an individual case.

Steps to Calculating and Narrating Amount of Renewable Energy Provisions

- 8.18 Policy A3 should contain the following steps, to be expressed in an energy statement:
- First calculate the total predicted annual energy use in kWh for all proposed new buildings
 - This can be modelled using SAP, BREDEM or PHPP. PHPP is the preferred model due to its accuracy, to avoid SAP's inaccuracies at predicting actual energy use in operation. The council may later take a view on whether the incoming Home Energy Model (HEM) is a suitable method for energy use prediction when the final form of HEM is available

- Then calculate the annual renewable energy generation for whole site in accordance with the MCS guidance for the relevant renewable energy technology. This does not have to be exclusively on the buildings themselves and can include provision of new standalone renewable energy installations within the site. The figure does not include renewable heat delivered by heat pumps, as that would count instead towards Policy A1
 - Deduct the annual renewable generation from the annual energy use. The result should be zero or less
 - If the result is not zero or less, explore how to provide more on-site renewable energy
 - If it proves unfeasible to increase renewable energy generation on-site to result in an annual balance of energy generation with energy use, then divide the total annual renewable energy generation by the building footprint. If this is impossible, provide evidence as to why this is not possible even with a PV area equivalent to 70% of projected building footprint and reasonably efficient panels available on the market
 - Calculate the residual energy demand (whole building, not per m²) for all proposed new buildings are all measures proposed towards policies A1 and A3, then proceed to use this figure to calculate the required amount of offsetting provision in policy A4
- 8.19 If a development cannot generate enough renewable energy on-site to balance the total regulated and unregulated energy use (as calculated after fabric efficiency improvements in Policy A1.1), the policy requires the renewable energy generation to meet a minimum of 120 kWh per square metre of projected building footprint per year.
- 8.20 Applicants should demonstrate compliance with this fallback target by providing a clear calculation of the renewable energy generated per square metre of the projected building footprint. This can be demonstrated in the Energy Statement by:
- Renewable energy system design, such as PV layouts, system capacities, and expected energy outputs.
 - Calculation of the renewable energy generated based on these designs, ensuring it meets or exceeds the 120 kWh/m² threshold for the total projected building footprint.
- 8.21 If the 120 kWh/m² target cannot be met, the applicant must provide evidence explaining why, even with renewable energy provision up to the equivalent of 70% of the projected building footprint (including roof overhangs), it is unfeasible to meet this threshold. This should include details on the constraints (e.g., site limitations, technical or financial barriers).

If Applicants Cannot Meet Policies A1.1 and A3

8.22 If the requirements of Policy A1.1 (fabric efficiency) and Policy A3 (on-site renewable energy) cannot be met, applicants must demonstrate compliance through the energy hierarchy:

- Fabric efficiency: The first step is reducing energy demand through fabric efficiency measures (e.g., insulation, airtightness, efficient windows). If these measures can't be met due to technical or site-specific constraints, applicants should provide clear evidence (e.g., feasibility studies or cost analyses) to justify why
- Renewable energy: After addressing fabric efficiency, applicants must meet energy needs through on-site renewable energy generation. If fabric efficiency measures cannot be fully met, applicants can look to increase renewable energy provision, but they must still comply with overarching policy objectives.
- Submission requirements: Applicants should submit an energy statement that includes:
 - Predicted energy demand (kWh/year);
 - Proposed renewable energy contributions (e.g., PV output in kWh/year);
 - The percentage of energy demand met by on-site renewables;
 - Evidence of site-specific constraints preventing full compliance.

The Offsetting Calculation

8.23 The offset is a one-off payment, calculated by multiplying the annual shortfall in on-site renewable energy generation (in kWh) by the energy offset price (£/kWh). This represents the upfront cost of installing the equivalent renewable energy capacity that the developer has not provided on-site. Since it's a one-time contribution to cover this capital cost, it only reflects one year's shortfall – there's no need to factor in the building's lifetime or ongoing energy use.

8.24 The offset price is based on the national cost of solar PV deployment as published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). This price reflects the average cost of delivering solar PV (including installation), adjusted to include inflation and a 10% uplift to support fund administration and delivery of offset projects. The most up-to-date offset price and details on how it is calculated will be provided within separate guidance. The council may revise the offset price annually to reflect updated DESNZ cost data and factor wider environmental requirements into the delivery model as necessary

8.25 Flexibility in applying the offsetting requirement may be considered where it is robustly demonstrated that full offsetting would make social or affordable housing unviable due to site-specific costs that exceed assumptions in the Whole Plan Viability Assessment. In these cases, the council may consider:

- Reducing the scope of energy to be offset, or

- Applying a discounted offset price where the council is confident it can still deliver the equivalent renewable generation on a case-by-case basis.

Assured Performance Methods

- 8.26 These are processes to follow throughout design, construction, commissioning and building handover that reduce the energy performance gap (the gap between predicted energy use and actual energy use). These not only help keep the building's actual carbon emissions to a minimum (as opposed to their predicted emissions using inaccurate methods like SAP), but they also help to ensure occupant satisfaction. Suitable methods include (BSRIA Soft Landings, NEF/GHA Assured Performance Process, and Passivhaus certification). Alternative processes proposed by the applicant will be subject to consideration by the council about their evidence-based merits.

Applicability to Outline Applications

- 8.27 Compliance with the policies will be conditioned at outline stage and must be confirmed in detailed reserved matters. However, the council accepts that the degree of detail provided in the outline energy strategy will be less than for full and reserved matters applications. It is also recognised that this means the outline energy calculations may be largely based on assumptions. The aim should be to demonstrate that options have been identified by which the development could comply with the policy targets, taking into account the broad mix of anticipated floorspace, typologies and site conditions. Statements made about estimated carbon and energy performance based on a high degree of assumptions at outline stage should be reassessed at detailed reserved matters, albeit the reserved matters may diverge in how the required compliant performance will be achieved.
- 8.28 Where more detail is known, it should be reflected in the outline application; for example, if expecting to connect to a site-specific low-carbon energy source. For a further example, if expecting a limited number of repeated home types, then the energy modelling would ideally reflect similar archetypes and identify a specification by which they could meet the policy targets for energy efficiency and renewable energy (taking into account site conditions). The modelled homes could reflect, for example, a sample of a relevant housebuilder's 'products' most likely to be built on site. This exercise benefits the developer in that it gives an early understanding of the degree of amendment needed to their existing regular specifications, allowing them to set up supply chains and economies of scale well in advance of commencing on site, as outline proposals typically are large-scale and take several years from outline application, to detailed design, to commencement.
- 8.29 Outline applications' estimated offsetting contribution should be stated in the outline Energy Assessment. These will be subject to a Section 106 agreement, but not paid at the time of the outline application. In that case the offset contribution must be

recalculated within the subsequent reserved matters application, and paid on or prior to commencement of works on site for the reserved matters scheme. The reason for payment into the offset fund prior to commencement of works is so that the offset fund administrators are able to deliver the offset projects on a timescale not too dissimilar from the timescale for completion and occupation of the development. The aim is to enable, wherever possible, the offsetting project to be producing renewable energy no later than the development's occupants begin to place their demands on the grid.

Net Zero Operational Carbon in New Build Non-Residential Development

- 8.30 As per Policy XA (residential), planning policies supporting net zero operational carbon in new build non-residential developments can drive significant improvements in energy efficiency and the reduction of regulated operational carbon in new buildings. This is in line with the council's commitment to becoming a carbon-neutral district by 2045 and national policy targets to the UK as a whole becoming carbon-neutral by 2050.

CNZ2B - Net Zero Operational Carbon in New Build Non-Residential Development

All new build non-residential development is required to be net zero carbon in operation (regulated energy) through the following requirements:

B1.1 - Part L% improvement

- 1) % improvement on Part L 2021 TER (Target Emissions Rate), or equivalent reduction on future Part L updates through on-site measures as follows:

Offices: at least 25% improvement

Schools: at least 35% improvement

Industrial buildings: at least 45% improvement

Hotels (C2, C5) and residential institutions (C2, C2a): at least 10% improvement

Other non-residential buildings: at least 35% improvement

In the event national building regulations exceed the requirements of this policy, the national standards (i.e. the higher standards) would apply.

B1.2 - Energy metrics guidelines

Or -

- 2) Positive weight will be given to development proposals which can demonstrate the following absolute energy metrics:
 - Total energy use: 65 kWh/m²/year
 - Space heating demand: 15 kWh/m²/year
- 3) Employing absolute energy metrics reduces the amount of solar PV required under B3 for an on-site net zero balance of regulated energy. Applicable methodologies to calculate this include CIBSETM54 and the Passivhaus Planning Package. At present, the Part L calculation method (SBEM) is not considered suitable as it does not provide accurate predictions of a building's actual energy use.

B2 - No fossil fuels

- 4) The use of fossil fuels and connection to the gas grid will not be considered acceptable. Although, the use of fossil fuels may be considered acceptable in exceptional circumstances and will be assessed on a case-by-case basis.

B3 - On-site renewable energy

- 5) On-site annual renewable energy generation capacity to at least equal predicted annual total regulated energy use (residual energy use after B1.1 has been achieved). In buildings subject to Part L's requirement for energy forecasting, that forecasting should be the source of the 'annual total regulated energy' figure.
- 6) Where an on-site net zero regulated energy balance is not possible¹⁴, it should be demonstrated that the amount of on-site renewable energy generation equates to ≥ 120 kWh/m² projected building footprint/year.
- 7) Where a building in a multi-building development cannot individually achieve the requirements of B3, this shortfall is to be made up across other units on-site before carbon offsetting is considered.

¹⁴ Exceptional circumstances where an on-site net zero energy balance is not achieved may only be found acceptable in some cases, for example with taller flatted buildings (4 storeys or above) or where overshadowing significantly impacts solar PV output.

- 8) Development should demonstrate that opportunities for on-site renewable energy infrastructure (on-site but not on or attached to individual buildings), such as solar PV canopies on car parks, have been explored.

B4 - Energy offsetting

- 9) Only in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort where it is demonstrably unfeasible to achieve an on-site net zero regulated energy balance, any shortfall in on-site renewable energy generation that does not match regulated energy use is to be offset via a S106 financial contribution, reflecting the cost of the solar PV that will need to be delivered off-site.
- 10) The energy offset price shall be determined based on the cost of delivering equivalent off-site solar PV capacity, calculated using the most up-to-date government data on solar PV installation. The methodology will account for capital costs, expected local energy yield, and a reasonable allowance for the administration of the offset fund by the council or its delivery partners. The total offset contribution shall be calculated as a one-off payment, based on the projected annual shortfall in on-site renewable energy generation, multiplied by the published offset price.

B5 - Reduced Performance Gap

- 11) An assured performance method must be implemented throughout all phases of construction to ensure operational energy in practice performs to predicted levels at the design stage.

B6 – Smart Energy Systems

- 12) Proposals should demonstrate how they have considered the difference (in scale and time) of renewable energy generation and the on-site energy demand, with a view to maximising on-site consumption of energy generated on site through energy storage or smart distribution and overall minimising the need for wider grid infrastructure reinforcement.
- 13) This may include smart local grids, energy sharing, energy storage and demand-side response, and/or solutions that combine elements of the above.
- 14) Large-scale development (over 5000m² of floorspace) is to monitor and report total energy use and renewable energy generation values on an annual basis. An outline plan for the implementation of this should be

submitted with the planning application. The monitored in-use data is to be reported to the Local Planning Authority for 5 years upon occupation.

Reasoned Justification:

- 8.31 As per the Climate Change Act 2008, national policy is working towards achieving the legally binding UK target of net zero by 2050 and carbon budgets are subsequently legislated under the aegis of the act. These carbon budgets are linked to the Climate Change Committee's Balanced Pathway to Net Zero in the Sixth Carbon Budget Report, which sets out that all new buildings should be zero carbon from 2025, with high levels of energy efficiency and low-carbon heat. It is also found that non-residential buildings should phase out high-carbon fossil fuel boilers no later than 2026 and phase out gas boilers in 2030-33. Furthermore, the 2050 net zero target is now specifically referenced in the NPPF.
- 8.32 Therefore, new buildings today should not have these, to avoid the need for expensive disruptive retrofit less than 10 years after completion which would also waste embodied carbon. The policy supports these targets by prohibiting fossil fuel connection and improving energy efficiency, which mandate a heating technology similarly efficient to a heat pump. The policy relates to all new build non-residential development required to meet building regulations.
- 8.33 The policy remains consistent with the 2023 Written Ministerial Statement's stipulations, given that the metric for B1 is a % reduction on TER (to be calculated with SBEM, which is the non-residential equivalent of SAP).
- 8.34 B2 is aligned to the Government's direction of travel indicated by both the options proposed in the Future Homes Standard 2023 consultation, in that no fossil fuel heating systems are proposed. In some exceptional cases the use of fossil fuels may be acceptable, for example in remote and isolated areas. B3 and B4 are not impacted because they address renewable energy, which is out of the scope of the 2023 WMS.
- 8.35 Policy elements B1, B2 and B3 are to be addressed at the design and post-completion stages, to ensure that the development has been built to intended standards. Post-completion resubmission of the original energy statement including energy performance calculations, informed by the relevant tests to systems and fabric, should be required as a condition as part of the planning application process. B5 and B7 compliance should also be demonstrated post-completion through planning conditions.
- 8.36 B1 to B7 are to be demonstrated at the planning application stage through the submission of an energy statement, alongside associated output reports from energy modelling software (e.g. SBEM).

Smart Energy Systems

- 8.37 In order to maximise energy self-sufficiency of a site, in relation to policy element B6, a number of methods may be considered. These may include smart local grids, energy sharing, energy storage and demand-side response, and/or solutions that combine elements of the above.

Compliance with Policy B1.1 TER Reductions

- 8.38 These %TER reduction targets are not limited to be solely delivered through energy efficiency measures. Therefore, there could be an element of clean energy supply or renewable energy measures included in these. Further renewable energy will be needed to subsequently meet the requirements of Policy B3, therefore applicants should be advised to pursue energy efficiency measures as far as feasible in the first instance in pursuit of Policy B1.1, so that the subsequent Policy B3 renewable energy requirements are not rendered excessively expensive or unfeasible. Designing to use less energy in the first place reduces the amount of renewable energy needed to match this, and/or the amount of carbon offset payment needed.
- 8.39 In the current Part L for non-domestic buildings, the type of heating system in the 'notional' building (from which the TER is derived) is the same as the type of heating system in the actual proposed building. Therefore, no TER gains will be made by switching from a gas or oil boiler to a heat pump or other all-electric or otherwise low-carbon heat system. However, TER improvements can be made by selecting a heating system that is more efficient than Part L 2021's notional efficiency for that heating type.

Assured Performance Processes for Energy Performance

- 8.40 Regarding assured performance processes, in addition to those mentioned in relation to the equivalent residential policy (A5) in residential, there is also one additional method for non-residential: NABERS UK (administered by CIBSE). NABERS is currently only available for offices but intended to extend to other building types in future.

Offsetting

- 8.41 The requirement for offsetting may be applied flexibly where it is demonstrated that this makes development unviable due to the unique energy use profile of the proposed building and site characteristics, where this results in an offsetting cost uplift significantly higher than assessed in the Whole Plan Viability Assessment. The flexibility could include a reduction in the scope of energy that has to be offset, or a discounted price per kWh if the Local Authority is confident that it can still deliver the required offset projects within this price (when pooled into the offsetting fund which will primarily consist of full price offset contributions). The degree of flexibility will depend on the unique scheme characteristics and evidence submitted to the local authority about what could be viably accommodated. It may also depend on the degree to which the proposed development represents a socially desirable facility that meets unmet community needs (such as for healthcare, education or similar). The most up-to-date offset price and details on how it is calculated will be provided within separate guidance.

8.42 See also the reasoned justification for the equivalent residential policies (A1-A7) regarding:

- Calculating renewable energy provision and offset payments;
- Applicability to outline applications;
- Assured performance processes

Regulated vs Unregulated Energy

8.43 Regulated energy is building energy consumption resulting from the specification of controlled, fixed building serviced and fittings such as space heating and cooling, ventilation, pumps and lighting. Such energy uses are an inherent part of building design.

8.44 Unregulated energy is building energy consumption resulting from a process or source which is not “controlled”, primarily energy consumption from systems in the building which Building Regulations do not impose requirements or targets. Examples include energy consumption from systems such as IT equipment, lifts, external lighting, printers, photocopiers and other appliances. Some buildings can have a high percentage of unregulated energy consumption, levels of which can vary significantly depending on occupants and use. Compared to regulated energy, unregulated energy is harder to consider and limit during the design process.

8.45 Policy Criterion 5 (B3) requires renewable energy generation to be equal to the annual total regulated energy, and not ‘process energy’ (which may result from large infrastructure sites), which would be deemed non-regulated energy for the building or operation.

Climate-adapted Design and Construction

8.46 Adapting to and mitigating against the effects of climate change is crucial, particularly as climate change impacts worsen with more extreme and variable temperatures and weather. The need for climate-adapted design and construction for new development is key for current and future occupant comfort and safety, as well as making the built environment more resilient and future-proofed.

CNZ2C - Climate-adapted Design and Construction
<p>1) All development should mitigate against climate change and adapt to climate change by employing sustainable design and construction principles.</p>

- 2) Applicants are expected to demonstrate that the following elements have been considered, and evidenced where appropriate by the corresponding assessment methodology, in an Energy and Sustainability Statement.

C1 - BREEAM

- 3) New non-residential developments with over 1000sqm of floorspace should achieve the BREEAM 'Excellent' certification, including full water credits for category Wat 01 (water efficiency). Where this is demonstrated as being unfeasible or unviable, developers should demonstrate that greywater/rainwater systems have been utilised to the best of their ability, and sanitaryware flow rates have been reduced as far as possible.

C2 - Sustainable construction

- 4) All new build developments must minimise their carbon footprint and energy impact through sustainable design and construction practices. Proposals should demonstrate efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by considering factors such as site location, building orientation, design, landscaping, and planting strategies, while prioritising a "fabric-first" approach.
- 5) Now and for their lifetime, all developments should be designed to enhance resilience to the anticipated effects of climate change. Proposals must incorporate measures to adapt to changing climate conditions, including resilience to extreme weather events, rising temperatures, stronger winds, droughts, heavy rainfall, and snow. Water conservation and storage measures should also be integrated into designs, taking into account best practices and future climate projections.
- 6) All development should demonstrate consideration to reducing carbon emissions and waste through construction. Where development impacts existing buildings, proposals should also comply with Policy CNZ2E on 'Reducing Carbon Emissions in Existing Buildings'.

C3 - Cooling Hierarchy

- 7) All development proposals must show how designs have optimised the internal and solar heat gains to balance the need to minimise space heating demand with the need to passively maintain comfortable temperatures during hot summers. This should be shown by demonstrating that overheating risk measures have been incorporated in accordance with the cooling hierarchy which prioritises measures, as follows:

- a) Minimise internal heat generation through energy-efficient design and equipment selection
- b) Reduce and manage the amount of heat entering the building in summer using:
 - i) Building orientation
 - ii) Shading
 - iii) Albedo
 - iv) Fenestration
 - v) Insulation
- c) Manage heat within the building through exposed internal thermal mass and high ceilings
- d) Passive ventilation, including cross ventilation through a building wherever possible. Passive stack and wind-driven ventilation, night purging and designing windows to allow effective and secure ventilation. Single aspect developments are discouraged
- e) Natural cooling measures including green and blue infrastructure
- f) Use of mixed-mode cooling such as low-energy mechanical cooling (fan-powered ventilation)
- g) Mechanical ventilation (which, if it has a heat recovery function, should also have a summer bypass mode)

C4 - Overheating assessment

- 8) All major residential developments should complete *CIBSE TM59* overheating assessment (or future equivalent assessment methodology) as their route to compliance with Building Regulations Part O. The simplified Part O route will not be considered acceptable.
- 9) All major non-residential developments should complete *CIBSE TM52* overheating assessment (or future equivalent assessment methodology).

C5 - Resilience to Climate Change

10) All development must incorporate proactive measures that increase resilience to extreme weather events and a changing climate, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating and drought from rising temperatures. All developments should:

- a) Reduce the risk of flooding and conserve water;
- b) Employ sustainable urban drainage

11) Development proposals should reduce the 'heat island' effect through the use of cool materials and green and blue infrastructure within the development, for example tree-lined streets.

Reasoned Justification:

- 8.47 The NPPF requires the planning system to take full account of the long-term implications of climate change including the risk of overheating and the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change. It also sets out that policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future health and resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts.
- 8.48 This policy addresses the critical need to mitigate the risks associated with overheating and climate vulnerability. Without effective design, factors such as building orientation and glazing ratios could increase the risk of overheating. To respond to this, this policy includes sections on the cooling hierarchy and overheating assessments, which ensure that new developments do not contribute to unacceptable levels of overheating risk. The cooling hierarchy prioritises passive design measures reduces the need for air conditioning and other energy-intensive systems, reducing cost, energy reliance and providing improved thermal comfort throughout the year.
- 8.49 This policy also recognises the increasing pressure on water resources. For non-residential buildings, water use limits aligned with BREEAM Wat 01 credits promote efficient water consumption.
- 8.50 The comprehensive approach to climate change adaption and mitigation set out in this policy not only reduces the likelihood of future retrofitting (which can be disruptive and costly) but also promotes future proofing of new developments, ensuring long-term sustainability and occupant well-being. The policy is also linked to other Local Plan policies through the integration of green and blue infrastructure as well as reducing flood risk by employing measures such as sustainable urban drainage.

- 8.51 To ensure that buildings are not at risk of overheating, applicants are required to demonstrate compliance with additional assessments beyond the standard requirements set by Building Regulations. C4 of the policy mandates that all major residential developments complete a CIBSE TM59 overheating assessment to assess and mitigate overheating risk, in addition to the basic compliance with Building Regulations Part O (or its future equivalent). For major non-residential developments, a CIBSE TM52 overheating assessment must be completed, or the future equivalent. These additional assessments go beyond the standard regulatory checks to ensure that the building design considers factors such as internal heat generation, ventilation, and shading to avoid uncomfortable indoor temperatures during hot summer months.
- 8.52 The Energy Statement should include the relevant overheating assessment reports, demonstrating that the design of the building effectively addresses overheating risk and includes measures to minimise it.
- 8.53 For BREEAM, applicants are expected to submit a BREEAM pre-assessment to demonstrate that the relevant BREEAM level has been designed into the scheme, and that more than the minimum WAT 01 credits (for the respective certification level targeted) will be achieved. Residential developments which take account of and deliver upon the provisions of the BREEAM UKNCR and achieve higher ratings where feasible will be supported. A condition upon any grant of planning permission is expected to ensure that the development is completed in accordance with the BREEAM pre-assessment and that the BREEAM certification is provided once the building is completed.
- 8.54 It is accepted that the level of detail provided by applicants may be lower for householder and minor applications, particularly in relation to the cooling hierarchy.
- 8.55 The requirements of this policy would not generally be applicable to major infrastructure developments, for example for water and wastewater works, which are already subject to industry specific standards.

Embodied Carbon and Minimising Waste

- 8.56 Embodied carbon refers to the emissions associated with materials and construction processes throughout the whole lifecycle of a building or infrastructure. Embodied carbon is an important aspect to consider as it represents the total greenhouse gas emissions from the entire life cycle of a building's materials, ranging from extraction and manufacturing to transport, construction, maintenance and disposal.
- 8.57 The case for addressing embodied carbon is justified by the increasing proportional importance of these emissions as a share of buildings' total carbon footprint as the power grid is decarbonised and buildings become more energy efficient. Unlike operational carbon emissions, embodied carbon has front-loaded impacts as the carbon is released before a building is even first used or occupied. Additionally, once materials are made and installed their emissions are permanent, so it is important to consider embodied carbon at the earliest opportunity.

CNZ2D - Embodied Carbon and Minimising Waste

Residential and non-residential buildings (thresholds given below) must meet the followings requirements:

D1 - Embodied Carbon Reporting

- 1) All major new residential (10 dwellings or more) and non-residential (1000m² of floorspace or more) developments are required to complete a whole-life carbon assessment in accordance with RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment guidance.

D2 - Limiting Embodied Carbon

- 2) All large-scale major development (50 dwellings or more; 5000m² or more of non-residential floorspace) is required to limit embodied carbon (RICS/BS 15978 modules A1-A5) to 600kgCO₂e/m² GIA.

D3 - Building End-of-Life

- 3) All new buildings should be designed to enable easy material re-use and disassembly, subsequently reducing the need for end-of-life demolition.

D4 - Demolition Audits

- 4) All major development that contains existing buildings/structures to carry out a pre-development and/or pre-demolition audit, following a well-established industry best practice method (e.g BRE) in accordance with Policy CNZ2E (E4).

D5 - Embodied Carbon in Non-Major Development

- 5) Proposals for new development of 1 or more homes or more than 100m² of non-residential floorspace, but below the size thresholds for embodied carbon reporting and targets as noted above (set out in point 1), should include proportionate narrative on options considered (and where possible, decisions made) to minimise embodied carbon of the proposed development.

Reasoned Justification:

- 8.58 Whilst there is no explicit reference to embodied carbon in the NPPF, the NPPF references to 'low carbon development' and 'low carbon economy' could readily include embodied carbon as an implicit part of this. The NPPF also sets out that the full range of potential climate change impacts should be taken into account when preparing and assessing planning applications. Additionally, embodied carbon can be considered as a design issue and therefore would fall under the NPPF's instruction that new development should be planned for in ways that help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its design.
- 8.59 By addressing embodied carbon and promoting sustainable construction practices, this policy could deliver a range of co-benefits that extend beyond carbon reduction, supporting wider economic, environmental, and social goals. This policy seeks to ensure that carbon emissions are limited across the whole life cycle of a building. Without this policy, large amounts of carbon emissions could be missed, given that up to 50% of a building's lifetime carbon emissions result from upfront embodied carbon.
- 8.60 The requirement for whole-life carbon assessments under D1 ensures that all major developments assess and mitigate the full carbon impact of building materials and construction. By limiting embodied carbon in large-scale developments (e.g., to 600 kgCO₂e/m² GIA), D2 plays an important role in reducing the carbon impact of large-scale major construction. Developers are expected to use RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment guidance to demonstrate compliance, and site and project-specific factors can be taken into account. Where it is demonstrably unfeasible to achieve this limit (including the provision of strong and justified evidence) developments are expected to reduce embodied carbon to the lowest practicable level. The requirements of D2 would not generally be applicable to major infrastructure developments, for example for water and wastewater works.
- 8.61 By promoting circular economy principles (particularly within D3 and D4) which focus on material reuse and the ease of disassembly at the end of a building's life, the policy encourages more resource-efficient construction, reducing waste generation and lowering costs of future demolition and disposal. Designing buildings for disassembly and material reuse helps reduce dependency on raw materials and limits costs related to sourcing and transporting new materials. By designing for disassembly and material re-use (D3), new buildings will be more adaptable and future-proofed, capable of being modified, extended, or dismantled with lower environmental impact. This leads to greater building longevity and flexibility, enabling spaces to evolve without the need for significant new construction.
- 8.62 The requirement for demolition audits under D4 ensures that before any building is demolished, the potential for reusing or recycling materials is thoroughly assessed. This reduces the amount of waste sent to landfill and encourages the repurposing of valuable construction materials.
- 8.63 The requirement to provide a narrative on embodied carbon for smaller developments (D5) encourages development of all scales to consider sustainable construction methods and communicate their choices to foster greater awareness and engagement with sustainable practices.

- 8.64 Compliance with D1, D2 and D3 are to be demonstrated within an energy statement. If applicable, output reports for D4 should be submitted alongside an energy statement.
- 8.65 With regards to D3, to ensure buildings can be adapted or dismantled at the end of their life, developers should focus on modular design using dry construction methods (e.g., bolts, screws) to enable easy disassembly. Avoiding permanent adhesives and welds allows materials to be reused or recycled efficiently. Material selection is also important. Low-embodied-carbon materials like timber or recycled steel are preferred for ease of reuse. Designs should prioritise durable, long-lasting materials and incorporate a reuse strategy for managing materials at the building's end of life, including deconstruction and sorting for recycling or reuse.
- 8.66 With regards to D5, it is recognised that the level of detail required will vary depending on the size and scale of the development. Applicants should provide a proportionate narrative in their energy statement, exploring how embodied carbon has been minimised. While detailed assessments are not required for smaller developments, the following considerations are encouraged:
- Incorporating and repurposing on-site materials or features where possible.
 - Designing with a focus on reducing material use, such as through space-efficient layouts or structural design
 - Opting for materials with lower embodied carbon, such as timber, instead of higher-carbon materials like steel, aluminium, or conventional cement
 - Reducing 'product miles' by sourcing materials closer to the site or from manufacturers with demonstrated low-carbon practices
 - Implementing processes that reduce material wastage during construction
- 8.67 This approach ensures that applicants, even for smaller developments, are considering embodied carbon in a meaningful way, fostering sustainable practices without imposing excessive burdens on projects that do not meet the higher thresholds for formal reporting.

Reducing Carbon Emissions in Existing Buildings

- 8.68 Given that a third of the district's emissions arise from existing buildings, the decarbonisation of existing buildings is crucially important to the council. Whilst local planning policy has only a limited influence on the carbon and energy performance of existing buildings (as policy can only seek changes to buildings where the building owner is seeking to require a change to the building that requires planning permission), the retrofit of existing buildings can be pursued through providing a permissive and supportive policy approach to energy efficiency and carbon improvements to existing buildings.

CNZ2E - Reducing Carbon Emissions in Existing Buildings

- 1) Development which would result in considerable improvements to the energy efficiency, carbon emissions and the general suitability and longevity of an existing building will generally be supported, with significant weight attributed to those benefits.

E1 - Prioritise Retrofit- First Principles

- 2) Development should adopt a retrofit-first approach, where options for retrofitting and retention of existing buildings are considered before demolition.
- 3) Development involving existing buildings should demonstrate that a whole building approach and the following hierarchy has been considered:
 - a) Refurbishment and upgrading of existing building fabric including wall, roof and floor insulation, windows, doors and thermal bridging
 - b) Installation of low or zero-carbon heating and hot water systems, and the installation of renewable energy generation on-site
 - c) Connection to an existing or planned low carbon heat network
- 4) Where substantial or total demolition is proposed, a feasibility assessment must be submitted. The feasibility assessment should demonstrate:
 - a) The whole life carbon of a new building(s) would be less or similar to a suitably comparable retrofit option (as detailed in 3 a-c above); or
 - b) The proposed development would deliver public benefits which would not be delivered by a suitably comparable retrofit option; or
 - c) The feasible reasons retrofit cannot be considered, including operational or structural requirements
- 5) Demolition of existing buildings will only be permitted where applicants can demonstrate that alternative development options have been comprehensively explored and following assessment by the Local

Planning Authority, on balance, the whole life carbon of a new building(s) would be less or similar to a suitably comparable retrofit option, the proposed demolition of an existing building(s) secures benefits over and above retention, refurbishing and retrofitting an existing building(s) or is not feasible as set out in the feasibility assessment.

E2 - Embodied Carbon

- 6) For major developments involving substantial or total demolition of an existing building(s), applicants should submit a Whole Life Carbon Assessment in accordance with Policy D1.

E3 - Adapting Heritage Assets to Climate Change

- 7) Development which would result in considerable improvements to the energy efficiency, carbon emissions, resilience and longevity of designated (including within Conservation Areas) or non-designated heritage assets will be supported, providing that the significance of the asset is preserved.
- 8) A whole-building approach should guide interventions to upgrade historic buildings, and direct interventions, where they limit the impact to the significance of the historic buildings or their setting.
- 9) The sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures and the appropriate use of micro-renewables in designated and non-designated heritage assets will be encouraged, providing that the significance, character and appearance of the asset is preserved in a manner appropriate for their significance.

Reasoned Justification:

- 8.69 The Climate Change Committee (an independent, statutory body in the UK that advises the government on climate change targets and progress in reducing emissions) has shown that in order for the UK to meet its legally binding carbon reduction goals, it is vital that the existing building stock must be decarbonised . Therefore, Local Plan policy which supports improving the efficiency of existing buildings, reducing the energy demand and carbon emissions of existing buildings aligns with local and national carbon targets (including the UK's legally mandated Carbon Budget).
- 8.70 The NPPF sets out that local planning authorities should give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic. It further sets out that where the

proposals would affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets, local planning authorities should also apply the policies set out in the chapter of the framework relevant to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.

- 8.71 The hierarchical approach to retrofitting prioritises fabric upgrades and energy efficiency improvements before incorporating low- or zero-carbon heating, hot water systems, and renewable energy generation, aligns with Policy XA, offering potential benefits including reduced energy bills and longevity of buildings. This policy also closely correlates to Policy XD with regards to reducing embodied carbon and promoting circular economy principles.
- 8.72 This policy aims to ensure that retrofitting of historic buildings and heritage assets are undertaken in a sensitive manner, balancing the important notions of conserving and enhancing the historic environment and decarbonising existing buildings, leading to a more sustainable and resilient historic built environment.
- 8.73 Compliance with E1 should be demonstrated within the energy statement. It is accepted that the level of detail provided may be lower for householder and minor applications. However, where substantial or total demolition is proposed, applicants would still be expected to assess the embodied carbon of alternatives to demonstrate why this level of demolition would be acceptable. It is recommended that applicants engage with the council early in the development process regarding feasibility assessments and alternative options. Additionally, with regards to applicants demonstrating that a whole building approach are recommended to utilise a nationally recommended recognised assurance scheme such as BSI PAS 2035. The demolition (to enable replacement infrastructure), or upgrades of essential infrastructure such as water and wastewater works would generally not be obligated to fulfil the requirements of E1 as it's acknowledged that replacement and upgrades to essential infrastructure is often driven by compliance, safety, or resilience needs.
- 8.74 If applicable, output reports for E2 should be submitted alongside an energy statement.
- 8.75 To support applicants in retrofitting existing buildings, various guidance is available including: [LETI Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide \(LETI, 2021\)](#), [Net Zero Carbon Toolkit \(Etude, Elementa, Passivhaus, Levitt Bernstein, 2021\)](#), and [Passivhaus Trust's Retrofit Primer \(2022\)](#).
- 8.76 In respect of historic buildings and heritage assets, guidance is available at [Historic England's Energy Efficiency and Retrofit Guidance](#).

9 Biodiversity, Green & Blue Infrastructure and Landscapes

Biodiversity

- 9.1 Biodiversity is in decline across England, which is one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth, something which Three Rivers has not escaped. This, and growing public awareness of this biodiversity emergency was recognised by the Government's 2023 Environmental Improvement Plan which stated that there is a "*... clear, scientific case and growing public demand for a step change in environment protection and recovery*".
- 9.2 Whilst much legislation and Government policy that informed the last Local Plan remains valid, other components have evolved, and new laws and guidance created to provide local authorities with the best chance of playing their part in reversing this decline. In terms of legislation, for instance, local authorities now, importantly, have a duty to 'conserve and enhance' (instead of simply 'to have regard to') biodiversity when exercising its functions, a consequence brought about by the Environment Act 2021. Additionally, the terms 'nature recovery' and 'Biodiversity Net Gain' have become embedded in the scientific and public vocabulary, both of which have significant planning implications.
- 9.3 In this context, the primary drivers now influencing the conservation and recovery of nature in Three Rivers include but are not limited to those set out below:
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
 - Circular 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
 - NERC 2006
 - The Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended)
 - The Environment Act 2021
 - [The Environmental Improvement Plan](#) (2023)
 - National Planning Policy Framework (2024) and associated Planning Practice Guidance
 - [The Environmental Principles policy statement](#) (2023)
 - Hertfordshire's Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- 9.4 Together, these bring forward a range of aspirational, policy or mandatory requirements which combine to frame the Local Plan's policies.
- 9.5 National policy states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing

net gains in biodiversity. The National Planning Policy Framework requires local authorities to identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks; and promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of important habitats and species. Further, it requires that appropriate weight is given not only to protected sites but also to protected features of biodiversity and geological interest in the wider environment.

- 9.6 In terms of the Local Plan, these drivers can be taken to act together to ensure that local authorities conserve and enhance nature in part by establishing Local Plan policies that ensure that harm to biodiversity within protected sites and, beyond these boundaries, the habitats and species distributed across the rural and built environments is firstly avoided, secondly that harmful impacts are mitigated before they arise, and only as a last resort, that effective compensation is secured for any unavoidable damage that cannot be mitigated. This is the '*mitigation hierarchy*' and its use should be evident both in terms of the allocation of development opportunities and subsequent development proposals. Depending on circumstances, each of the three stages can be heavily influenced by differing legislation, policy and best practice guidance and should not be treated lightly.
- 9.7 More specifically, the Environment Act (2021) promotes positive actions such as the establishment of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which will aim to increase the quality and size of existing protected areas, buffer harmful impacts from outside and link these together by creating new wildlife sites as stepping-stones or direct physical connections. In turn, the Hertfordshire LNRS contributes to the national Nature Recovery Network (NRN) to begin to deliver the aspirations of the Lawton Report for a network that comprises a '*more, bigger, better, better joined*' biodiversity resource (which in turn can help deliver other societal benefits).
- 9.8 Biodiversity is an integral part of the character of Three Rivers and contributes to the high quality of life in the area. The district supports a variety of wildlife in habitats as diverse as wetlands, woodlands, grasslands, orchards, heathlands and urban gardens. Conserving and enhancing the diversity of wildlife and habitats in Three Rivers is a strategic objective.
- 9.9 Further, biodiversity provides numerous benefits, or ecosystem services, for people, such as flood attenuation, softening extremes of temperature and weather, recreation, wellbeing, pollinators and carbon sequestration. Nature conservation and its recovery are therefore not only required but highly desirable.
- 9.10 In these and other ways, the new local plan has a wide remit to take positive steps towards achieving the '*step change*' demanded by the Environmental Improvement Plan and provide the framework by which Government expects it will achieve commitments made in the 25-year Environment Plan.

BGL1 – BiodiversityBiodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 1) All qualifying development must deliver at least 10% measurable biodiversity net gain from the existing baseline value of a site through the use of DEFRA's statutory biodiversity metric. Development should apply the mitigation hierarchy to minimise or mitigate harmful effects on biodiversity.

- 2) Biodiversity net gain should be delivered using the following biodiversity net gain hierarchy:
 - 1) On-site

 - 2) A mixture of on and off-site

 - 3) Off-site

 - 4) Purchase of statutory biodiversity credits

- 3) On-site biodiversity net gain should be prioritised and undertaken wherever possible. Off-site measures will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that, after following the biodiversity net gain hierarchy, all reasonable opportunities to achieve measurable net gains on-site have been exhausted or where greater gains can be delivered off-site where the improvements can be demonstrated to be deliverable and are consistent with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. As a last resort and following the submission of robust and justified evidence that on-site or off-site biodiversity provision will not achieve 10% biodiversity net gain, the Council will consider allowing the developer to purchase statutory biodiversity credits as an alternative approach.

- 4) Biodiversity Gain Plans will be required to demonstrate how BNG will be achieved. This will apply to on-site and / or off-site BNG requirements. Consequently, where it is not possible to avoid or mitigate any or all impacts on site, the Biodiversity Gain Plan should also demonstrate and confirm how any off-site measures proposed will enhance local and nationally important biodiversity priorities.

- 5) To ensure the long-term net gain, all development proposals delivering a significant onsite enhancement or off-site enhancement must prepare a long-term monitoring and maintenance plan for biodiversity and habitat proposals for a minimum period of 30 years.
- 6) Biodiversity net gain will be secured by condition, conservation covenant, and/or legal agreement, including a requirement to cover the Council's costs associated with the long-term BNG monitoring.
- 7) Where possible, the council will encourage the delivery of greater than 10% biodiversity net gain.

Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity

- 8) The weight given to the protection of protected sites will be commensurate with their position in the hierarchy:
 - 1) International
 - 2) National
 - 3) Local
 - 4) Irreplaceable habitats
- 9) Proposals that are likely to have, directly or indirectly, an adverse impact on protected sites will not normally be permitted except where the public benefits of development in that location clearly and significantly outweigh both the impact on the site and the wider network.
- 10) Proposals resulting in, directly or indirectly, the loss or significant harm to a Local Wildlife Site will normally only be permitted if it can be demonstrated there is a need for the development in that specific location and the benefit of the development clearly and significantly outweighs the loss or harm.
- 11) Proposals resulting in directly or indirectly, in the loss or significant harm of an irreplaceable habitat will normally be refused.

- 12) In all cases, the mitigation hierarchy should be used to first avoid, then mitigate and, where necessary and possible, compensate for the loss of biodiversity, and evidence provided to show how this has been followed. Where loss or harm to a European or other designated site cannot be avoided or mitigated, as a last resort, effective compensation must be secured and delivered.
- 13) Proposals should further the aims and objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy including via the delivery of biodiversity net gain where applicable.
- 14) Proposals must not result in the fragmentation or further fragmentation of wildlife habitats and should link or reconnect fragmented wildlife habitats where possible.
- 15) Proposals should seek to conserve, restore and enhance statutorily protected species and those listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006, not addressed by "Biodiversity Net Gain" and reduce fragmentation by enhancing the connectivity of their populations and supporting habitats, and promote the functionality of other green and blue infrastructure. It is expected that applicants submit a proportionate and up-to-date ecological survey and assessment where it is likely that a proposal may impact upon a statutorily protected species or a species listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 or their habitats, and where appropriate action plans detailing how the habitat of those species will be protected to ensure that there will be no negative impact on the population of the species.
- 16) All new housing developments must provide on average at least one swift brick per dwelling across the development. All new proposals for non-residential buildings must include a proportionate number of swift bricks appropriate to the scale and use of the building.

Reasoned Justification:

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 9.11 Biodiversity net gain aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. The Environment Act (2021) requires that all applicable development shall deliver a net gain of at least 10% against the ecological baseline. Net gain is not intended to facilitate the unnecessary loss of valuable habitats, and all proposals are expected to follow the mitigation hierarchy and the measures

required to deliver a net gain go beyond those required to mitigate or compensate any harm after following the mitigation hierarchy.

- 9.12 Net gain is measured using Defra's Statutory Biodiversity Metric, which quantifies the value of biodiversity in terms of the habitats present and those proposed to be created and/or enhanced. A simplified version (the Small Sites Metric) may be used for sites proposing fewer than ten dwellings on land of less than one hectare. Exemptions for small self-build development exist which fulfil other requirements. Successful applicants will also be required to provide a Biodiversity Gain Plan to be approved in writing by the Council prior to commencement of development.
- 9.13 The creation or enhancement of features to achieve the net gain can be delivered on-site, off-site (or a combination of the two) or, as a last resort, via the purchase of statutory biodiversity credits. On-site solutions are preferred. Off-site solutions should be located in proximity to the development site where possible (ideally within the respective parish) and should be within Three Rivers (unless strong and justified evidence suggests this is not possible) and ideally contribute to the functioning of the LNRS or other green infrastructure networks within the district. All will be secured for a period of at least 30 years via planning conditions, legal agreements and conservation covenants as appropriate.
- 9.14 Applicants are reminded that if the site boundary includes land within 10m of a watercourse, the adjacent lengths of watercourse should be included within the watercourse baseline assessment in the Metric. Unless an exemption applies, applicants would need to deliver a minimum 10% net gain in watercourse number biodiversity units.
- 9.15 Whilst it is acknowledged that this is not a statutory requirement, applicants are encouraged where possible to deliver greater than 10% biodiversity net gain which will further the aims of BNG to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state after development than before.

Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity

- 9.16 Despite the widespread decline in nature, Three Rivers retains a valuable biodiversity resource albeit fragmented by built development, infrastructure and intensive agriculture. These range from sites of national to local importance, although all will be afforded protection either in law, policy or best practice, but to differing degrees.
- 9.17 The relative importance of these is typically presented as the following hierarchy
1. Designated (or Protected¹⁵) sites and species
 2. Irreplaceable habitats
 3. Habitats and species of principal importance

¹⁵ Although a frequently used term not all are formally 'designated' and it is better to consider these as 'protected' sites (a term that will be used throughout this chapter).

- 9.18 Whilst each is described below, there is considerable overlap on the ground with certain features or sites frequently arising in all three categories. The range of protected sites are shown below in descending importance:

Internationally important sites (Statutory)	Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) Special Protection Areas (SPA) Ramsar sites
Nationally important sites (Statutory)	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) National Nature Reserves (NNR)
Locally important sites	Local Nature Reserves (LNR) (Statutory) Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) (Non-statutory) Local Geological Sites (LGS) (Non-statutory)

- 9.19 SACs and SPAs are afforded the highest levels of protection via the Habitats Directive (transposed into UK law by the Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended)), with Ramsar sites enjoying similar protections though only in national policy. SSSIs, NNRs and LNRs are protected by domestic legislation and LWS and LGS are locally identified. Whilst the levels of protection therefore differ, these are set out in the NPPF, and local plans are expected to reflect this.
- 9.20 Irreplaceable habitats are listed in and protected by the biodiversity net gain legislation as examples of England's most ecologically valuable features that are very difficult to restore, recreate or replace. They include but are not limited to ancient woodlands, ancient and veteran trees and lowland fens. Whilst examples frequently comprise part of a protected site they also frequently occur beyond these boundaries and can be distributed across the rural and built environments.
- 9.21 Ancient woodland is also given additional protection from [Government's standing advice](#) which only allows its loss where 'wholly exceptional reasons' apply and where a suitable compensation strategy is in place.
- 9.22 Habitats and Species of Principal Importance are defined and listed in s41 of the NERC Act 2006 and represent those features of particular importance for the overall purpose of conserving biodiversity. The list of 56 habitats and 943 species features was carried forward from the UKs Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), itself a response to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Rio in 1992 but has been adapted, accordingly, along the way.

- 9.23 However, levels of protection can vary widely with some species - for instance great crested newts and all bats - afforded additional protection additional protection by the Habitats Regulations, a consequence of their status as 'European species'.

Biodiversity in Three Rivers

- 9.24 Though there are no internationally important protected sites within Three Rivers, it does support a range of other protected sites ranging from nationally designated SSSIs to local identified LNRs and LWSs. These include:

Special Areas of Conservation:

- None within the district (although parts of the district fall within the zone of influence of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest:

- Frogmore Meadows
- Sarratt Bottom
- Croxley Common Moor
- Whippendell Woods
- Westwood Quarry

Local Nature Reserves at:

- Oxhey Woods
- Stockers Lake
- The Withey Beds
- Croxley Common Moor
- Prestwick Road Meadows
- Chorleywood House Estate
- Rickmansworth Aquadrome
- Chorleywood Common
- Batchworth Heath

- 9.25 There are also 139 Local Wildlife Sites located at least partially within the district, part of a county-wide network of almost 2,000 sites that seeks to maintain key components of the county's biodiversity resource.
- 9.26 However, HMWT's [State of Nature Report](#) (2020) identified that in the last 50 years, 76 species had become extinct in the county and, of the species assessed, 20% (or 1,524) of those remaining were identified as being of conservation concern and less than 12% of LWS within Hertfordshire were under beneficial management.
- 9.27 Although destined to be superseded by the LNRS, the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP): A 50-Year Vision for the wildlife and natural habitats of

Hertfordshire (2006) remains relevant and identifies three key biodiversity areas in Three Rivers:

- Mid-Colne Valley - wetlands (gravel pits) and grassland
- Whippendell Woods and surrounds - woodlands, grasslands and wetland
- River Chess Valley - river, wetlands, grasslands, woodland and heathland

9.28 These areas are also highlighted in the LNRS as areas of particular importance for biodiversity. Consequently, the council will be likely to refuse applications that have harmful impacts on biodiversity or compromise the effectiveness of the LNRS. In contrast, developments that avoid harmful impacts and make a positive contribution to the aims of the LNRS will be supported.

9.29 Developers should have regard to the potential impact of development proposals on biodiversity, including, for instance, trees, watercourses and woodlands from the outset. Applications should be accompanied by sufficient information to assess the impact of the proposed development on any protected species, trees, watercourses, woodlands or priority habitats. Where not exempt from BNG, there must also be acceptable baseline habitat surveys or assessments to properly inform subsequent BNG calculations using the Statutory or Small Sites Metric (as of 2025). Where it is considered that a habitat/species protected under European or domestic statutory legislation could be affected by development, the Council will require adequate survey information to be submitted at the time of the application together with an assessment of the potential impacts and appropriate mitigation/compensatory measures, these should be integrated into schemes and shown on submitted plans. The surveys should be undertaken and carried out by competent persons and at appropriate times of the year. Surveys and assessments should all follow established CIEEM best practice.

9.30 In accordance with national policy on biodiversity and geology the Council will conserve and, where possible, enhance:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Reserves
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Protected Species
- Trees and Ancient Woodlands
- Geological and physiographical features.

- 9.31 When considering development proposals, the Council will take full account of contemporary and rapidly emerging legislation, policy and guidance and other relevant information to:
- Assess the importance of a habitats and species
 - Consider the potential impact of development
 - Identify ways to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Three Rivers
 - Improve connectivity between habitats through establishment and expansion of the LNRS and Green Infrastructure corridors.
- 9.32 The Council will support measures identified in management plans (including the Thames River Basin Management Plan) and related status reports for Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves and other wildlife sites that seek to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity. Where subject to BNG, developers will be required to contribute to improvements in biodiversity as part of their proposals in addition to providing compensation for impacts on protected species, under licence where necessary.
- 9.33 It's important that development does not fragment wildlife habitat because fragmentation breaks large, connected ecosystems into isolated patches. This makes it harder for animals to find food, migrate, repopulate, and increases the risk of local extinctions. Connected habitats support healthier ecosystems, greater biodiversity, and more resilient wildlife populations.

Swift Bricks

- 9.34 The NPPF specifically refers to swifts when setting out that planning policies should contribute and enhance the natural and local environment, including incorporating features which support priority species. The use of swift bricks is particularly important because swifts rely on urban cavities for nesting. Nest boxes can provide important habitat for other species as well as swifts, such as starlings and sparrows. Specific support for the selection and installation of swift bricks can be found in the British Industry Standard BS 42021:2022, the Future Homes Hub Homes for Nature Guidance, and the RSPB's Guide to Nestboxes.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 9.35 In a wider context, biodiversity also represents a key element of Green Infrastructure (networks of green spaces and natural elements including open spaces, waterways, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, wildlife habitats, street trees, natural heritage, heritage assets, earth science interests and open countryside). The Green and Blue Infrastructure Policy identifies key assets for Green and Blue Infrastructure and the existing and potential linkages. It also sets out policy to seek a net gain in the quality

and quantity of Green and Blue Infrastructure through the protection and enhancement of assets and the provision of new green spaces.

Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows and Landscaping

- 9.36 This policy demonstrates the council's commitment to meet the relevant national requirements to conserve and protect trees, woodlands and hedgerows and promote appropriate landscaping.
- 9.37 Woodlands, trees and hedgerows are important contributors to biodiversity, contribute to carbon sequestration, reduce noise and pollution, provide shade and reduce extremes of heat and wind. Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows may be protected by wildlife or conservation designations, Tree Preservation Orders or the Hedgerow Regulations. It is important that those not covered by designations are retained, protected and wherever possible added to, since pressure for development will increasingly threaten trees woodlands and hedgerows.

BGL2 - Trees, Woodlands, Hedgerows and Landscaping

- 1) Proposals for new development should be submitted with landscaping proposals which seek to retain trees and other important landscape and nature conservation features. Landscaping proposals should also include new trees and other planting, create tree-lined streets and enhance the landscape and habitats of the site and its surroundings as appropriate.
- 2) A minimum of one tree will be required to be planted on-site for each new dwelling (including applications for replacement dwellings and excluding applications for conversions and changes of use to residential) or per 100sqm floor space for non-residential developments. The planted trees should be native species and suitable for the site. There will be a presumption that new trees should be provided on-site, however, if it is justified that this is not possible, a financial contribution will be required towards the planting of trees off-site. A Landscape Plan should be submitted, providing details of the tree(s) to be planted and their long-term management.
- 3) Development proposals on sites which contain existing trees and hedgerows will be expected to retain as many trees and hedgerows as possible, particularly those of local amenity or nature conservation value or hedgerows considered to meet the criteria of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

- 4) Development proposals should demonstrate that existing trees, hedgerows and woodlands will be safeguarded and managed during and after development in accordance with the relevant British Standards.
- 5) Development should be designed in such a way as to allow trees and hedgerows to grow to maturity without causing undue problems of visibility, shading or damage. Development likely to result in future requests for significant topping, lopping or felling will be refused.
- 6) Planning permission will be refused for any development resulting in the loss or deterioration to protected woodland (including ancient woodland), protected trees (including aged or veteran trees) and hedgerows, unless conditions can be imposed to secure their protection.
- 7) Where the felling of a tree or removal of a hedgerow is permitted, a replacement tree or hedge of an appropriate number, species, size and in a suitable location will be required, taking account of issues such as landscape and biodiversity.
- 8) Areas forming part of development proposals which are to be transferred to the local authority for maintenance should be designed for ease of access and low-cost maintenance overheads and management regimes.

Reasoned Justification:

- 9.38 Woodland, trees and hedgerows are important contributors to biodiversity and vital to moderating our climate, and may be protected by wildlife or conservation designations, Tree Preservation Orders or the Hedgerow Regulations. The NPPF ensures that they remain a planning consideration in all development proposals. Further, ancient woodland and trees are considered 'irreplaceable' and the Natural England/Forestry Commission [Standing Advice](#) makes clear the loss of ancient trees/woodlands is not permitted unless there are 'wholly exceptional reasons' and that 'a suitable compensation strategy is in place'.
- 9.39 Whilst reiterating the nature conservation importance of ancient trees and woodlands, their cultural and societal benefits are also set out in Defra's [Keepers of Time](#) policy.
- 9.40 In addition, all woodlands contribute to carbon sequestration, reduce noise and pollution, provide shade, reduce extremes of heat and wind, provide places to relax and reduce flood risk. Furthermore, new or existing woodlands can play an important role in Green Infrastructure networks and the Local Nature Recovery Network.

- 9.41 Whilst the protection of the most important woodlands may be achieved via the biodiversity policies elsewhere in this plan, it is important that all woodlands are suitably protected, retained (where possible), managed for the long term and wherever appropriate added to, since pressure for development will increasingly threaten trees, woodlands, hedgerows and their surrounding habitat.
- 9.42 Mature trees on development sites can make a major contribution to the quality of finished development, provided they are given the space and protection they need. It is acknowledged that for some minor development, particularly on brownfield sites there may be limited space to plant a minimum of one tree per dwelling. Where this is the case, applicants should demonstrate why it has not been possible to meet the policy requirements for new tree planting and how they have sought to maximise the planting of trees on the site, taking into account the constraints of the site. A commuted sum would be sought for any shortfall.
- 9.43 Developers should have regard to the potential impact of development proposals on trees and woodlands from the outset. Applications should be accompanied by sufficient information to assess the impact of the proposed development on any trees or woodlands. Arboricultural reports, Impact Assessments and Tree Protection Method Statements submitted in support of applications should comply with guidance set out in the British Standard BS5837:2012 'Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations' and any future editions of the standard.
- 9.44 For sites with significant tree cover, and which include trees protected by a Tree Preservation Order or located within a Conservation Area, a planning application should be accompanied by a Tree Survey and an Arboricultural Impact Assessment. The advice of an arboriculturalist should be sought to identify all relevant trees to be included in a Tree Survey.
- 9.45 Landscaping of new development should be considered as an integral part of the design process. Landscaping refers to both soft landscaping (planting and/or retention of trees, shrubs and other plants and earth contouring) and hard landscaping (paths, walls, seats, planters, kerbing etc).
- 9.46 Landscaping proposals should address:
- The incorporation of visually obtrusive elements of development such as car parks, bank elevations and electricity sub-stations
 - The setting of buildings within the site, and the setting of the site within the locality
 - The creation of views into and out of buildings and the site as a whole and the creation and enhancement of visual focal points
 - The conservation of existing local landscape character and enhance natural features

Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 9.47 Green Infrastructure is defined by national policy as a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable

of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.

- 9.48 The high-level green and blue infrastructure network for Three Rivers includes key landscape features, strategic wildlife corridors and areas of high biodiversity. Key elements are chalk streams and river valleys, wetland and grazed pastures, dry chalk valleys and chalk landforms, woodlands and ancient woodlands, historic parklands and designed landscapes and farmland. The district has a number of strategically significant and historic green infrastructure assets, such as the corridors along the River Chess, Colne and Gade, and the Grand Union Canal. It also has a network of public access routes enabling people to reach these areas. Safeguarding and enhancing the highly attractive and diverse environment is therefore a key objective.
- 9.49 Agriculture, horticulture and forestry are traditional, land-based businesses which are still present in the district and continue to contribute to its rural economy. Appropriate and well-designed farming and forestry development (e.g. grazing, coppicing, nature reserves) supports farming and countryside practices that enhance wider biodiversity and landscape quality by supporting economically and socially valuable activities. This ensures that the district's existing land-based business sector continues to flourish, while simultaneously ensuring that the district's landscape is protected.
- 9.50 This policy demonstrates the council's commitment to conserve and enhance the district's Green and Blue Infrastructure, which will help to improve the district's Green and Blue Infrastructure network and ensure its multi-functional benefits are achieved. The conservation and enhancement of the Green and Blue Infrastructure network will help to enhance biodiversity resources, support healthy lifestyles, minimise flood risk and mitigate against pollution.

BGL3 - Green and Blue Infrastructure

- 1) The council will seek a net gain in the quality and quantity of Green and Blue Infrastructure, through the protection and enhancement of assets and the provision of new green spaces:
- 2) Where land is provided or identified for Green and Blue Infrastructure purposes as part of a development proposal:
 - a) Applicants will be required to provide appropriate land management and maintenance plans.
 - b) Stewardship plans and funding arrangements will also be required on major developments or ecologically sensitive sites (where appropriate).

- 3) Priorities for Green and Blue Infrastructure focus on conserving and enhancing the following key assets and the linkages between them:
 - a) Chalk Streams (such as Rivers Chess, Colne and Gade)
 - b) The corridors of the Rivers Chess, Colne and Gade and the Grand Union Canal;
 - c) The Chilterns National Landscape
 - d) The Colne Valley Regional Park;
 - e) The district's Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves, Local Wildlife Sites, key biodiversity habitats, species and areas identified in the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategy, allocated open spaces, heritage assets and landscape character within areas of Green and Blue Infrastructure.
 - f) Rickmansworth Aquadrome (including lakes)
- 4) The council will require new development to contribute to the delivery of new Green and Blue Infrastructure, that is safe and accessible where appropriate, and to the management of a linked network of new and enhanced open spaces and corridors, addressing deficiencies in quantity, quality and access across the district.
- 5) Development proposals should improve connectivity between key assets in the Green and Blue Infrastructure network through the establishment of linked and coherent networks and corridors of green spaces. The council will work with developers and other partners to facilitate the delivery of projects and programmes set out in the Hertfordshire County Council Green Infrastructure Strategy and other relevant strategies (taking account of the priorities identified in the latest audits and future management/maintenance arrangements).
- 6) Public Rights of Way and other sustainable transport links between spaces in the Green Infrastructure network should be protected and enhanced through development proposals. Where possible, buffers of at least 20m around Rights of Way should be incorporated into masterplans. Diversions of Public Rights of Way will only be appropriate where an alternative route

of equal or improved character, amenity, safety, directness and convenience is provided.

- 7) Development will not compromise the integrity of the Green and Blue Infrastructure network, by causing fragmentation, damage to, or isolation of Green and Blue Infrastructure assets including natural habitats and species.

Reasoned Justification:

- 9.51 Green and Blue Infrastructure is essential to the success of the district, given its multi-functional benefits, including the promotion of health and wellbeing through opportunities for recreation, exercise and social interaction; mitigation against climate change and flooding; enables natural flood control; and the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity enables land management and connectivity between sites and facilitates biodiversity net gain.
- 9.52 The key Green and Blue Infrastructure assets in Three Rivers include (but not limited to):
- Chalk Streams (such as the Rivers Chess, Colne and Gade)
 - The corridors of the Rivers Chess, Colne and Gade and the Grand Union Canal;
 - The Chilterns National Landscape;
 - The district's Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves, Wildlife Sites, key biodiversity areas and priority habitats and species identified by the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan and Local Nature Recovery Strategy;
 - The Colne Valley Regional Park;
 - Rickmansworth Aquadrome (including lakes)
- 9.53 These form the strategic Green and Blue Infrastructure assets within the district into which other assets link through the identified Green and Blue Infrastructure corridors, however, these are not the only important elements for Green Infrastructure within and around the district. Open spaces, woodlands, parks and gardens, allotments, amenity greenspace and other spaces may also be important. Green and Blue Infrastructure should seek contribute to the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (where appropriate).
- 9.54 The rivers Chess, Colne and Gade flow through the district, providing globally rare habitats as three of only 210 chalk streams in the world. The district's chalk streams are a globally rare habitat that must be carefully protected and enhanced.

- 9.55 Public Rights of Way provide valuable footpath, cycle and bridleway routes within the urban area and out into the countryside. During the coronavirus pandemic the value of Rights of Way became even more important, providing an extensive network for access and recreation within the countryside. Any new development should take into account the importance of the Public Rights of Way running through the site and development should incorporate an appropriate buffer to enhance the existing Rights of Way. Given its importance to the district, it will be vital that all new developments protect existing and incorporate new Green Infrastructure wherever possible.
- 9.56 Green Infrastructure provision should be made safe and accessible (where appropriate) and new or improved active travel routes which connect people to Green Infrastructure should also be provided where possible in accordance with the Sustainable Transport Policy. These measures will help to ensure that the multi-functional uses of Green and Blue Infrastructure are maximised and that that all parts of the district benefit.

Open Space, Play Space, Sport and Recreation

- 9.57 Open spaces, sports and recreation facilities and children's play spaces perform important functions within communities and contribute significantly to quality of life. Open spaces can be public or private and include (but are not limited to) parks and gardens, woodlands, outdoor sports pitches, children's play space, amenity greenspace, allotments and cemeteries.

BGL4 - Open Space, Play Space, Sport and Recreation

Protection of designated open spaces

- 1) The existing provision of designated open spaces will be safeguarded from development unless in exceptional circumstances it can be demonstrated that:
 - a) The open space is no longer required and;
 - b) Alternative provision of equivalent or better quality open space would be provided in close proximity; and
 - c) A deficiency of open space is not created through or exacerbated by its loss, now or over the plan period.

In all cases, an assessment will be required setting out as to whether the land in question makes a positive contribution to the character, environmental quality and amenity of the surrounding area.

Loss of Sport and Recreation facilities

- 2) Development proposals which result in the whole or partial loss of existing sport and recreation facilities (including allotment space) will only be permitted where:
 - a) The proposed development includes provision for alternative sports and recreation facilities of sufficient benefit to sport and recreation provision to clearly outweigh the loss of the current or former use; or
 - b) Alternative provision of equivalent or better quantity and quality is made for the catchment area served by the sport and recreation facilities in an accessible location served by sustainable modes of transport; or
 - c) The proposal is ancillary to an existing leisure use and does not adversely affect the sport or recreation facility; or
 - d) An assessment is undertaken which clearly shows that a deficiency of sport and recreation facilities is not created through or exacerbated by its loss, now or over the plan period.

Loss of children's play space

- 3) Development proposals which result in the loss of, or prejudice the use of, any existing children's play space will only be permitted where:
 - a) The play space that would be lost would be replaced by a facility of equivalent or higher standard in the existing area; or
 - b) A partial reduction in the open space land on a site is justified by the need to provide essential community infrastructure.

New and improved Provision for Sport and Recreation Facilities

- 4) Proposals for new or improved sport and recreation provision (including allotment space) will be supported where an identified need can be demonstrated. If new provision cannot be provided on site, developments should seek to explore opportunities to enhance/expand equipment range

at existing sites to raise quality standards where there is suitable space to do so.

- 5) Dual and multiple use of sports facilities will be encouraged, particularly involving public use. In appropriate circumstances the council may grant planning permission subject to conditions or seek to enter into a planning obligation with the developer to ensure dual or multiple use of facilities are maintained over a long-term period.
- 6) New/enhanced sport and recreation facilities will be expected to be designed in accordance with Sport England and the relevant sports' governing body design guidance.

New open space provision in residential developments

- 7) Where open space is provided onsite, the council will seek to ensure the proper maintenance of the space. Where the council is in charge of maintenance a Section 106 or other legal agreement will be required to cover the costs of such maintenance.
- 8) In order to ensure that new residential developments do not exacerbate deficiencies in open space and children's play space, new residential development will be expected to provide for amenity and children's play space.
- 9) Where appropriate for the site, developments of 25 or more dwellings or 0.6ha (whichever is greater) should make provision on site for open space and play space in areas of deficiency and in accordance with the British Standards for play: BS EN 1176 and BS EN 1177. Where the development is likely to be occupied by families with children, the open space area should provide formal equipped play facilities, in accordance with Fields in Trust standards.
- 10) Open space provided on site will be expected to be accessible to all and not be used only by those who reside on the development.
- 11) Variations of these standards may be appropriate where the council considers:

- a) That on site provision of open space would not be an appropriate use of the land taking into account local need and the character of the locality, or
- b) That the development is already fully served by existing open space within 300m or children's play space within 720m of the proposed development.
- c) That a financial contribution to install or improve open space or children's play space in the vicinity of the development is more appropriate owing to the above considerations

Design of Open Spaces

- 12) Proposals for new or existing open space should be designed to be multifunctional, to a high standard and should have regard to the relationship between the open space and its surroundings and seek to minimise the potential for crime and anti-social behaviour. It should also take into consideration the need to maintain a variety and balance of different forms of open space and the need to maintain and enhance existing nature conservation interests and the benefits of creating new habitats.

Reasoned Justification:

- 9.58 The Open Space Assessment Report 2019 assessed open space provision in the district, its condition, distribution and overall quality. Open Spaces assessed include parks and gardens, natural and semi-natural greenspaces, amenity greenspace, provision for children and young people (such as play space), allotments, cemeteries and churchyards.
- 9.59 The NPPF states that access to high quality open spaces and opportunities for sport and physical activity is important for the health and well-being of communities. Open spaces can also deliver environmental benefits in terms of supporting nature and efforts to address climate change.
- 9.60 Public Health England recommend that planning authorities include policy in the Local Plan that ensures that existing green space/green infrastructure are preserved. Developers are expected to set out the provision of open space and green infrastructure at an early stage of development to encourage healthy and sustainable behaviours from the outset. The policy supports the provision of amenity and children's play space in residential developments and developments over 25 dwellings must provide on-site open space and play space as per Natural England's Accessible Natural Green Space standards.

- 9.61 The Open Space Standards Paper (2019) sets out that residential developments should normally be expected to meet the requirement generated by the development on site, although where this is not feasible a developer contribution should be sought to install or upgrade such facilities in the vicinity of the development.
- 9.62 Public engagement is encouraged with regards to creation of new recreation or sports facilities.
- 9.63 Open space should be designed in accordance with Sport England's Active Design to encourage physical activity.
- 9.64 New open spaces should be accessible to all members of the public. Design should especially consider the safety of women and young girls by including appropriate lighting, accessible pathways and access and egress points. Accessibility and safety could be improved in existing spaces by providing lighting, accessible signage, and auxiliary aids to people with reduced mobility. Accessible surfacing should be considered for mobility aid users and people with mobility restrictions. Opportunities for sensory stimulation should be maximised to ensure inclusive enjoyment of spaces. Where practicable, sensory planting should be encouraged to aid the neurodiverse population in the district.
- 9.65 The council's Open Space Assessment Report (2019) identified a need for allotment space within the district as per the standard set by The National Society of Allotment and Leisure Gardeners (NSALG). In order to meet the standard, there would need to be 23 hectares of allotment provision across the district. It is therefore important to safeguard existing allotment plots and be favourable to future allocations in order to meet current and future demand. There are currently 17 allotment sites within the district.
- 9.66 Local food production provides advantages in terms of community involvement, sustainability and mental and physical health. It also supports our net zero policies through reducing the carbon footprint of food production by minimising CO2 emissions from transportation of food and through carbon sequestration.
- 9.67 The council's Open Space Assessment Report (2019) further identifies the sustainability, health and social benefits of allotment and open space provision. The policy aims to safeguard existing allotment sites and to encourage additional provision where viable.

Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation

- 9.68 The Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation includes 9 separate sites in the Chiltern Hills and spreads across 3 counties. The Special Area of Conservation is an internationally recognised designation with habitats and species of significant ecological importance.

BGL5 - Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
<p>1) Development proposals which are likely to have a significant effect on the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) will be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). This applies to proposals which are within the zone of influence of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and which would result in a net increase of 100 units or more.</p> <p>2) Where development proposals are subject to a HRA they will be required to deliver suitable mitigation and / or avoidance measures in order to address potential adverse effects arising from increased recreational disturbance. This includes provision, improvement and / or maintenance of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) (or a suitable financial contribution towards the same).</p>

Reasoned Justification:

- 9.69 As part of its emerging local plan, Dacorum Borough Council has found evidence of visitor pressure in Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation as a result of additional residential development from within the zone of influence. The report¹⁶ identified a 12.6km Zone of Influence (ZOI). As a result, large developments in the ZOI will be required to produce a Habitat Regulations Assessment and may be required to provide mitigation measures.
- 9.70 A small part of Three Rivers falls within the ZOI. It was not included in the 'strategic solution' by Natural England as less than 2% of visitors to the SAC were from Three Rivers. However, the requirement to produce a Habitat Regulations Assessment applies to sites within the ZOI. The Council has set a threshold of 100 dwellings or more on the advice of Natural England.
- 9.71 As part of the Habitat Regulations Assessment, development proposals will be expected to deliver suitable mitigation and / or avoidance measures to address any adverse impact on the SAC. Mitigation measures include the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (or a suitable financial contribution towards the same) of sufficient size/quality to divert visitors away from the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC and leading to a creation of a semi-natural experience. Any SANG provided or financially contributed to, should be as close to the development as possible and must be within the district. Any mitigation measures should take into account information in the most recent Mitigation Strategy.
- 9.72 SANGs must also consist of adequate parking for visitors, unless the site is intended for local use (within 400m walk of developments linked to it); aim to enable completion of a circular walk of 2.3 to 2.5km around the SANG; are designed to enhance safety

¹⁶ Visitor survey, recreation impact assessment and mitigation requirements for the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and the Dacorum Local Plan https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/dacorum-recreation-evidence-base-200322.pdf?sfvrsn=fbe079e_0

perceptions by users; are free from tree and scrub cover along parts of the walking routes and must incorporate a semi-natural feel with little intrusion of artificial structures.

Landscape Character

- 9.73 The landscape of Three Rivers is a complex mix of rural and urban areas, woodlands, wildlife habitats, farmland, water features and other landforms. Wildlife habitats such as meadows, woodlands, hedgerows, orchards and wetlands are valued landscape components and have their own special management requirements.
- 9.74 Three Rivers incorporates 546 hectares of the Chilterns National Landscape, an area of national landscape importance, generally made up of a mosaic of woodland, copses, enclosed pastures, arable fields, wooded and open heath and scattered farms and villages, overlying rolling hills and valleys. The parts of the National Landscape within the district consist largely of chalk streams, rivers, valleys and adjacent hillsides and woods.
- 9.75 As there will be increasing pressure for development across the district, it is important that all landscape, including the Chilterns National Landscape, is conserved and enhanced. This policy ensures that the design of development proposals is sensitive enough to ensure that schemes make a positive contribution to the landscape.

BGL6 - Landscape Character

Chilterns National Landscape

- 1) The Chilterns National Landscape is a nationally important landscape designation, and development proposals are expected to conserve and enhance the landscape and scenic beauty within the area, its cultural significance and wildlife habitats. There is a presumption against major development (10 dwellings or more, or greater than 0.5ha) in the National Landscape unless it can be demonstrated that there are exceptional circumstances and the development is in the public interest. In the case of National Landscapes, whether a development constitutes a 'major development' is not limited to the 10 dwelling threshold and will be assessed on a site-by-site basis, taking account of the nature and scale of the proposal and its relation to the local context and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes of the National Landscape designation. Planning permission will be granted for development within the Chilterns National Landscape only if the proposal:
 - a) conserves and enhances the special qualities, distinctive character and natural features which contribute to the National Landscape and the overall purpose of the National Landscape designation;

- b) has regard to the Chilterns National Landscape Management Plan, Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and supplementary technical notes by being of high-quality design which respects the natural beauty of the Chilterns and its traditional built character, and reinforces the sense of place and local character;
- c) avoids adverse impacts from individual proposals and any cumulative effects, unless these can be satisfactorily mitigated;
- d) does not harm important views into, out of or within the National Landscape; and
- e) submits a Landscape Visual Impact Assessment where the development is within the National Landscape area or will likely affect its setting.

Landscape Regions/Character Areas

- 2) Proposals that have an impact on the distinctive landscape character in which they are set will be required to demonstrate that they have taken into consideration the key characteristics, attributes and sensitivities of the landscape typology in which the proposed development is to be located, together with the landscape guidelines set out in the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Assessments for Three Rivers. The council will support proposals that:
 - a) Lead to the removal or a reduction in the impact of existing structures and land uses that are detrimental to the visual quality of the landscape
 - b) Enhance public access and recreation opportunities without detriment to the landscape or wildlife
 - c) Contribute to the delivery of Green Infrastructure
 - d) Contribute to the measures identified in the Hertfordshire Landscape Strategy to strengthen, reinforce, safeguard, manage, improve, restore and reconstruct landscapes.

- 3) When considering proposals for development which may affect the management of an area or particular feature of the landscape, details of management proposals to protect and enhance the contribution of the site to the wider landscape will be required.

Reasoned Justification

- 9.76 Areas of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB), as they have been known since their inception in 1949, have been elevated to National Landscapes to place them alongside their larger and more well-known counterpart National Parks, to highlight their equal place in the country's aims around health, wellbeing, sustainable public access, climate change and nature recovery.
- 9.77 New development should conserve and enhance the special character and natural beauty of the National Landscapes. Proposals should also protect the setting of the National Landscapes and safeguard views into and out of the area. The areas of the district within the Chilterns National Landscape are shown on the policy map.
- 9.78 The NPPF sets out that great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing the landscape and scenic beauty of National Landscapes. The requirement for Local Plans to reflect National Landscape designations is set in legislation with the 2023 Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (s245) and subsequent 2024 Government guidance, placing a duty on public bodies preparing a Local Plan to further the purposes of the National Landscape.
- 9.79 The Chilterns National Landscape Management Plan can be found at <https://www.chilterns.org.uk/what-we-do/future-proofing-the-chilterns/management-plan/>
- 9.80 There are a variety of landscape character areas for which assessments have been produced identifying key characteristics and influences. A Landscape Strategy has also been produced which includes suggestions for managing future change. Further details can be obtained from: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/landscape/landscape-character-assessment.aspx>
- 9.81 The council will seek to ensure that development complements the surrounding local landscape of Three Rivers as identified in the current Local Character Assessments, through siting, layout, design, appearance and landscaping of development. When preparing applications consideration should be given to:
- The development pattern of the area, its historical and ecological qualities, tranquillity and sensitivity to change
 - The pattern of woodlands, fields, hedgerows, trees, waterbodies, walls and other feature
 - The topography of the area.

- 9.82 Applicants are encouraged to refer to the Landscape Character Assessments for information in relation to these matters and the council's Trees and Landscape Strategy.
- 9.83 For developments in or near the Chilterns National Landscape, the council will have regard to the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and Supplementary Technical Notes on Chilterns building materials (flint, brick and roofing materials). These provide further information on acceptable design in the Chilterns National Landscape, the issues facing the area and the management actions required.

10 Environment

Flood Risk and Water Resources

- 10.1 As the name of the district suggests, there are several significant watercourses flowing through the district. The three rivers referred to in the name of the district are the River Colne, River Chess and River Gade, with their confluence at Rickmansworth. With the addition of the Grand Union Canal running parallel to the rivers and a number of large lakes, mainly formed as a result of sand and gravel quarrying, the area around Rickmansworth has a particularly varied range of water bodies, leading to a complex flooding picture and a wide floodplain, running from south-west Watford to the south through Rickmansworth and to the south west corner of the district near Maple Cross and West Hyde. However, a significant area of 'flood plain' is in fact occupied by the linear pattern of lake formations running parallel to the River Colne. Three Rivers is at risk of flooding from all sources, namely rivers, surface water, groundwater, sewers and reservoirs and the effects of climate change are predicted to increase the risk of flooding in the district.
- 10.2 Despite this, Three Rivers is located in one of the driest parts of the UK, with Hertfordshire's average rainfall returning only two-thirds of the national average.
- 10.3 Due to the potential impacts of climate change and the increasing pressure for development across the district, it is vital that developments are safe and resilient to the risk of flooding, that water quality is enhanced and that development makes efficient use of water resources.

ENV1 - Flood Risk & Water Resources

Flood Risk

- 1) In locations identified as being at risk of flooding from any source, planning permission will only be granted where sequential and exception tests¹⁷ have been undertaken and passed as necessary and where the requirements set out in national policy have been demonstrated through a site-specific flood risk assessment.
- 2) Development will only be permitted where it would not be subject to unacceptable risk of flooding and would not exacerbate the risk of flooding within the site or elsewhere. Wherever practicable and feasible, development should reduce existing flood risks to and from the site.
- 3) New development will not be permitted in Flood Zone 3b, as defined by the Environment Agency. Redevelopment of existing built development in

¹⁷ The Sequential and Exception Tests are not required for applications for some minor development (householder development, non-residential extensions of less than 250sqm) and changes of use (unless the change of use would introduce a more vulnerable use to flood risk). However, if applicable, these applications should be supported by site-specific FRAs. For allocated housing sites, the Sequential Test is not required but the Exception Test may need to be reapplied. Additionally, the sequential test is not applicable for sites that have their built footprint, access and egress routes outside areas of flood risk from any source now or in the future.

Flood Zone 3b will only be permitted where a less vulnerable use class as per the Environment Agency is proposed and ensuring no loss of floodplain or an increase in flood risk elsewhere.

- 4) A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required for development proposals of 1ha or greater in area within Flood Zone 1, for any proposals for development within Flood Zones 2 and 3; for proposals within Flood Zone 1, where proposed development or a change of use to a more vulnerable class may be subject to other sources of flooding, as identified in the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA), Lead Local Flood Authority or the Environment Agency's Flood Map for Planning, if the SFRA is not fully up to date.
- 5) Development should be designed using a sequential approach; the most vulnerable uses of proposed development should be located in the areas of lowest flood risk within a site, unless there are overriding reasons to prefer a different location. The site and building design will need to ensure that development is safe and resilient to flood risk and to any residual risk in flood defended areas.
- 6) Development at risk of flooding must be flood resilient and resistant through appropriate mitigation measures. Safe access and egress routes are required for development at risk of flooding and for changes of use to a more vulnerable use; it must be demonstrated that residual risks can be safely managed.
- 7) Finished Floor Levels (FFLs) of development in Flood Zones 2 and 3 should be situated at a freeboard of at least 300mm above the modelled 1% (1 in 100 year) plus climate change predicted maximum water levels. FFLs should also be 300mm above the modelled 1 in 100-year (1%) AEP surface water level with allowance for climate change. If no surface water model is available, FFLs should be 300mm above ground level.
- 8) Major development in all areas will require Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) to reduce surface water runoff to greenfield rates or less. Minor developments which incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems into their designs will be encouraged, particularly in the River Colne and Gade catchments, where the cumulative impact of development will have the highest overall impact on flood risk.
- 9) Natural Flood Management is encouraged where locationally relevant or as an off-site measure for larger developments looking to reduce flood risk upstream, or as part of BNG. These can include offline storage areas,

reconnection and restoration of functional floodplains and targeted woodland planting.

- 10) Where appropriate, developers will be required to show that any necessary flood protection and mitigation measures will not have unacceptable impacts on nature conservation, landscape character, recreation or other important matters.
- 11) Development should maintain a minimum distance of 10m from a main river (as defined by the Environment Agency) and a minimum distance of 5m from any ordinary watercourse, in order to maintain the riparian habitat and provide access for maintenance.

Water Resources

12) The council will support development where:

- a) the quantity and quality of surface and groundwater resources are protected from pollution and where possible enhanced.
- b) it will not be at risk or adversely affected by unacceptable levels of aquatic pollution.
- c) Efficient use is made of water resources and account taken of climate change. This means incorporating all or some of the following measures as part of development:
 - i) Rainwater harvesting techniques (for example providing water butts fitted to drainpipes and rainwater storage tanks as part of new development)
 - ii) Harvesting and recycling greywater (wastewater from baths, showers, washbasins, kitchen sinks)
 - iii) Using water efficient appliances (for showers, taps, washing machines, toilets etc.)
 - iv) Using water efficient landscaping and irrigation measures (for example by using drought tolerant plants)

- v) New development adjacent to watercourses should seek to restore rivers to their natural state, including through de-culverting piped watercourses. Further culverting and building or within 8m of existing culverts will not be permitted.
- d) Any development adjacent to, over or in a watercourse requires consideration of the Water Framework Directive requirements and opportunities outlined in the Thames River Basin Management Plan. All developments should seek to improve the biodiversity of the site and contribute towards the riparian corridor's ability to be used by migrating species.
- e) All new residential development must achieve as a minimum the optional requirement set through Building Regulations for water efficiency that requires an estimated water use of no more than 110 litres per person per day. Non-residential development achieving the 'BREEAM Excellent' rating for water efficiency will be supported.
- f) Where appropriate, planning permission for developments resulting in the need for off-site upgrades to wastewater infrastructure will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupation does not outpace the delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades.

Reasoned Justification:

Flood Risk

- 10.4 National Policy aims to ensure that flood risk is considered at all stages of the planning process and to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk from flooding by directing development away from areas at highest risk. Where development cannot be allocated or granted permission in areas of low risk, it must be made safe without increasing flood risk elsewhere.
- 10.5 The district is mapped according to the level of flood risk; Flood Zones in Three Rivers are defined in the council's Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Flood Zone	Definition
Zone 1 – Low Probability	Land having a less than 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding from rivers or sea.

Zone 2 – Medium Probability	Land having between a 1 in 100 and 1 in 1,000 annual probability of flooding from rivers or sea.
Zone 3a – High Probability	Land having a 1 in 100 or greater annual probability of flooding from rivers or sea.
Zone 3b – The Functional Floodplain	Land providing flood storage or where water has to flow in times of flood.

- 10.6 Through applying a risk-based, sequential approach, the overall aim is to steer new development to Flood Zone 1 (low risk) in the first instance. Development in Zone 2 and Zone 3a may be considered if no other preferable, reasonably available sites in areas of lower flood risk exist and both parts of an 'Exception Test' are satisfied. Development in Flood Zone 3b will not be permitted; Flood Zone 3b will be protected as the functional floodplain and its capacity to attenuate periodic flood events will not be compromised.
- 10.7 When applying the Sequential Test to individual planning applications, a pragmatic approach on the availability of alternative sites should be taken.
- 10.8 Although Flood Zone 1 represents areas of low flondsod risk, it does not account for the risk of flooding from other sources (e.g. surface water, groundwater). Under the NPPF, all sources of flood risk and the impacts of climate change, must be considered.

Site-specific Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs)

- 10.9 Site-specific FRAs should demonstrate how flood risk will be managed, considering climate change and having regard to the vulnerability of different land uses to flood risk. FRAs should make optimum use of already available information, for example from the SFRA, the Environment Agency and the Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA). The detail contained in FRAs should be proportionate to the degree of flood risk and appropriate to the scale, nature and location of development¹⁸.
- 10.10 National planning guidance¹⁹ provides a 'checklist' of information to be included in a site-specific FRAs. In addition, for sites located in catchments identified in the SFRA as highly sensitive to the cumulative impact of development, site-specific FRAs should also require consideration of the cumulative effects of the proposed development and should demonstrate that flood risk downstream will not be made worse as a result of cumulative development. Where developments are located in areas benefitting from defences or adjacent to a canal, FRAs should include an assessment of the residual risk, considering the impact of breach, including the effect on safe access and egress, as well as potential for flood risk to increase in the future due to overtopping.

Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)

¹⁸ PPG Flood Risk and Coastal Change, Paragraph: 021

¹⁹ PPG Flood Risk and Coastal Change, Paragraph: 080

- 10.11 As a means of assessing levels of risk, the council commissioned Level 1 and Level 2 Strategic Flood Risk Assessments. A South West Hertfordshire wide Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment was published in 2019. This SFRA concluded that a Level 2 assessment was required at several sites within Three Rivers District and as such, a draft Level 2 SFRA was published in 2021. In 2026, a Three Rivers District specific Level 1 and Level 2 SFRA were published.
- 10.12 The SFRAs define the flood risk within the district, considering all sources of flooding and future climate change impacts. The document details the following flood risk objectives:
- Achieve a reduction in flood risk through spatial planning and site design;
 - Consider the cross-boundary and cumulative impacts of flood risk;
 - Inform flood risk and drainage assessments and promote SuDS; and
 - Identify strategic flood risk solutions, including river and floodplain restoration and enhancement.
- 10.13 The SFRAs considered the risk of flooding to individual sites as well as the cumulative impacts which successive developments may have on flood risk within a river catchment. The Colne (Ver to Gade) and Gade (Bulbourne to Chess) catchments were identified as highly sensitive to the cumulative impact of development. In order to manage the cumulative impact of development on flood risk, all new development (other than minor extensions) in the Colne (Ver to Gade) and Gade (Bulbourne to Chess) catchments should provide wider betterment by demonstrating site-specific FRAs and Surface Water Drainage Strategies what measures can be put in place to contribute to a reduction in flood risk downstream. This may either be by provision of additional storage on site (e.g. SuDS with long-term storage, natural flood management techniques, green-blue corridors) and/or by providing a contribution towards any wider schemes.

Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)

- 10.14 The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems or Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) (often referred to interchangeably) to manage surface water flows is an important tool in managing flood risk, designed to control surface water run off close to where it falls and to mimic natural drainage as closely as possible. SuDS increases permeable surfaces in development, allowing water to seep into the ground rather than running off directly into rivers and drainage systems. SuDS also help to reduce the burden on traditional water management systems such as sewers and reduce the impact of pollution on receiving water bodies. Proposals incorporating SuDS should seek to deliver multifunctional benefits for green space and amenity, recreation and wildlife.
- 10.15 SuDS should be integrated into the design of all development sites, although as the effectiveness of SuDS within a site is dependent on the site characteristics (such as topography, geology, soil permeability and existing flow paths across the site), the techniques used should be appropriate to local conditions. Surface Water Drainage

Strategies will be required for major development and where appropriate, for minor developments. Where SuDS are implemented, the systems used should take account of advice from the LLFA, have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards and have maintenance arrangements to ensure operation for the development's lifetime. Where implemented on major and minor developments, SuDS schemes should reduce runoff to greenfield rates or less, unless achieving this standard is shown to be unreasonable. SuDS on smaller developments will help with mitigating the cumulative impact of flood risk, defined as a series of many smaller developments in a river catchment adding to overall run off if no measures are in place to reduce runoff.

10.16 Development can provide opportunities to work with natural processes to help reduce flood and erosion risk, benefit the natural environment and reduce costs of schemes. This is known as Natural Flood Management (NFM), a process whereby action is taken to mitigate flood risk by protecting, restoring and emulating natural processes. This approach aims to reduce flow volumes and delay the arrival of peak flood flow downstream. Techniques include:

- Creation of offline storage areas.
- Re-meandering streams (creation of new meandering courses or reconnecting cut-off meanders to slow the flow of the river).
- Targeted woodland planting
- Reconnection and restoration of functional floodplains (Section 12.4)
- De-culverting and naturalising watercourses
- Installation or retainment of large woody material in river channels.
- Improvements in management of soil and land use.
- Creation of rural and urban SuDS

10.17 Some measures will be location specific and should be tailored to an areas needs, with reconnection and restoration of functional floodplains and the creation of offline storage areas more relevant to the lowland Colne areas in and around the lake system of Rickmansworth and further downstream and woodland planting and remeandering of streams in the more rural upstream areas. An example of areas where this may work are areas that could facilitate works to allow the existing lake and pond system in the Colne Valley to store flood water.

Buffer Zones

10.18 In order to maintain the riparian habitat and provide access for maintenance, a minimum 10m buffer zone from development to a main river (as defined by the Environment Agency) will be required. The 10m distance is required from the top of the riverbank and the buffer zone should be used to exclude any development, including hardstanding, paths and lighting. Buffer zones should be used as green

spaces, with native planting encouraged. Buffer zones should not be used for the storage of materials. Between an ordinary watercourse and development, a minimum distance of 5m will be required.

Further Guidance

- 10.19 Applicants are advised to consult the Level 1 and 2 SFRAs for information on areas at risk from flooding. Where required by applicants, Hertfordshire County Council (as the LLFA), the Environment Agency and Thames Water can be contacted for more detailed flood risk information.
- 10.20 In some cases, developers will be required to contribute to the delivery of flood risk management schemes and facilities, as identified in the South West Herts Level 1 SFRA, the Three Rivers Level 2 SFRA and other relevant plans such, as the Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for Hertfordshire. If identified as appropriate in a site-specific FRA, developers will be required to work with the emergency services and emergency planners to prepare an acceptable Flood Warning and Evacuation Plan, to safely manage residual flood risk.
- 10.21 Further guidance on flood risk and ways to deliver SuDS are contained in the following documents (and subsequent updates):
- Hertfordshire County Council (2019) LFRMS 2 - A Strategy for the Management of Local Sources of Flood Risk ²⁰;
 - National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems²¹;
 - Hertfordshire Highways Place and Movement Planning and Design Guide²²

Water Resources

- 10.22 The Three Rivers District is entirely underlain by a chalk aquifer, which is the main drinking water resource for the area and a regionally important source of groundwater. It is important to protect this resource from pollution and to safeguard it, taking into account future climate change. The Three Rivers area has a large number of surface water resources including the Rivers Colne, Gade and Chess, the Grand Union Canal, as well as several lakes and ponds, particularly within the floodplain of the River Colne.
- 10.23 It is essential for development to protect and, where possible, enhance water quality. This means controlling pollution, protecting and enhancing the quality and quantity of groundwater, and protecting and enhancing surface water resources, such as by using SuDS to manage surface water. Development should ensure, where possible, that it carries out measures found in the Thames River Basin Management Plan and should ensure that there is no deterioration in the status of designated water bodies. Changes to the design of developments and the implementation of mitigation measures should ensure potential harm to water bodies is prevented, however,

²⁰ Hertfordshire County Council (2019) LFRMS 2 - A Strategy for the Management of Local Sources of Flood Risk. <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/water/flood-risk-management/lfrms-for-hertfordshire-full-report.pdf>

²¹ National Standards for Sustainable Drainage Systems <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems/national-standards-for-sustainable-drainage-systems-suds>

²² Hertfordshire Highways Place and Movement Planning and Design Guide <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/highways-roads-and-pavements/business-and-developer-information/development-management/highways-development-management.aspx#highwaydesignguide>

where it is likely that a proposal would have a significant adverse impact on water quality, a more detailed assessment will be required²³. If adequate mitigation cannot be provided against any significant adverse impact on water quality, the application should be refused.

- 10.24 Three Rivers is an area of serious water stress (as classified by the Environment Agency)²⁴, so reducing water consumption levels is important. Measures that will reduce water consumption will be expected, recognising that the incorporation of water efficiency measures into developments is essential to prepare and be able to adapt to climate change and increased water demand in future. The efficient use of water resources, including water reuse and recycling, should be sought through sustainable construction methods (such as rainwater harvesting) that conserve and make prudent use of water and other natural resources. Water-efficient appliances (for showers, taps, washing machines, toilets, etc.) and water-efficient landscaping and irrigating measures in new developments will also help to support sustainable supplies of water for the future.
- 10.25 Given the district's location in an area of serious water stress and the estimated future shortfall in water supply, all new developments will be expected to meet the water efficiency standard of 110 litres per person per day (or less). Older buildings are often the least efficient in resource use and therefore, where opportunities arise through the refurbishment or change of use of existing buildings, retrofitting to improve the water efficiency of buildings will be supported²⁵. The Environment Agency's Thames River Basin Management Plan and Affinity Water support the adoption of this standard, given the need to ensure long-term water efficiency and supply. The Colne Abstraction Licensing Strategy (2026)²⁶ shows that the Environment Agency were unable to grant new licences for abstraction from surface waters and most groundwater areas, further evidencing the stress on water availability in Three Rivers and the subsequent need to incorporate water efficiency measures into development.

Water Waste and Sewage

- 10.26 The council will seek to ensure that there is adequate wastewater infrastructure to serve all new developments. Developers are encouraged to contact Thames Water as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network reinforcement requirements. Where there is a capacity constraint, when appropriate, phasing conditions will be applied in order to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the relevant phase of development.
- 10.27 It is noted that many existing water mains and sewerage systems are increasingly becoming overloaded by successive development. It is therefore crucial to ensure that adequate infrastructure is in place prior to development, to avoid impacts such

²³ The requirements of a detailed water quality assessment are set out in PPG (Water supply, wastewater and water quality; Paragraph: 016).

²⁴ The Environment Agency (2021) Water stressed areas – final classification <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/water-stressed-areas-2021-classification> . 'Serious' water stress is identified as an area where the current or future demand for household water is, or is likely to be, a high proportion of the effective rainfall which is available to meet that demand.

²⁵ The BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit-Out Technical Standard provides guidance to support retrofitting. BREEAM UK (2014) Refurbishment and Fit-out Technical Standard <https://breeam.com/standards/refurbishment>

²⁶ The Environment Agency (2026) Colne abstraction licensing strategy. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/colne-catchment-abstraction-licensing-strategy>

as sewage flooding of existing residential dwellings and commercial premises. New development must be served by an adequate means of water supply and sufficient foul and surface water drainage and adequate provision must be made for water supply and sewerage infrastructure.

- 10.28 The Water Cycle Study Scoping Report (2010) for South West Hertfordshire highlighted the restrictions in the capacity of Maple Lodge and Blackbirds Wastewater Treatment Works in accommodating growth. Upgrading of the sewerage infrastructure across South West Hertfordshire was identified as a requirement. These conclusions were reinforced in the Draft Hertfordshire Water Study (2017) which concluded that in the longer term (2031-2051), strategic investment will be required to increase the capacity of major sewage treatment works in Hertfordshire, including Maple Lodge STW. This infrastructure requirement is detailed further in the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP).
- 10.29 Further guidance on ways to conserve water are contained in the following documents (and subsequent updates):
- Building Futures: Sustainable Design Toolkit²⁷
 - Affinity Water: Water Resource Management Plan²⁸
 - Thames River Basin Management Plan²⁹
 - BREEAM New Construction Technical Standards
 - BREEAM Refurbishment and Fit-Out Technical Standard

Ground Conditions, Contamination and Pollution

- 10.30 The district enjoys a generally high environmental standard. However, the minimisation of pollution and contamination is an important local priority. We will therefore consider the possible polluting effects of a development proposal on aspects such as amenity and surrounding land-uses and will take account of the agent of change principle.

ENV2 - Ground Conditions, Contamination and Pollution
<p>1) Development must not contribute to, be put at unacceptable risk from, or be adversely affected by unacceptable levels of ground, air, water, light or noise pollution, odour, vibration, disturbance or land instability. The submission of relevant assessments and reports may be required. Where mitigation measures are required to avoid unacceptable impacts, details</p>

²⁷ Building Futures: A Hertfordshire Guide to Promoting Sustainable Development
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/building-futures/toolkit-pdfs/new-dwellings.pdf>

²⁸ Affinity Water (2024) Water Resources Management Plan
<https://www.affinitywater.co.uk/corporate/plans/water-resources-plan>

²⁹ DEFRA and The Environment Agency (2015) Thames River Basin Management Plan
<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/river-basin-management-plans-2015> and update (2022)
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/thames-river-basin-district-river-basin-management-plan-updated-2022>

of these should accompany a planning application and these must be capable of being implemented and permanently maintained.

- 2) Opportunities should be taken to improve local environmental conditions and/or to remediate or mitigate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.

Ground Conditions

- 3) The council will only grant planning permission for development on, or near to, former landfill sites or on land which is suspected to be contaminated or subject to land instability, where the council is satisfied that:
 - a) There will be no threat to future users or occupiers of the site or neighbouring land; and
 - b) There will be no adverse impact on the quality of local groundwater or surface water quality.

Air Quality

- 4) Development will be permitted where it would not:
 - a) Have an adverse impact on air pollution levels, particularly where it would adversely affect air quality in an Air Quality Management Area; or
 - b) Give rise to, or be subject to unacceptable levels of air pollutants, odour or disturbance from existing pollutant sources.

Noise and Vibration

- 5) Development will be permitted where it would not:
 - a) Have an unacceptable adverse impact on the indoor and outdoor acoustic environment of existing or planned development, or give rise to unacceptable vibration impacts;

- b) Have an unacceptable adverse impact on countryside areas of tranquillity which are important for wildlife and countryside recreation; or
 - c) Be subject to unacceptable noise or vibration levels or disturbance from existing noise or vibration sources whether irregular or not.
- 6) Noise or vibration from proposed commercial, industrial, recreational or transport use should not cause any significant increase in the background noise or vibration level of nearby existing noise-sensitive premises such as dwellings, hospitals, residential institutions, nursing homes, hotels, guesthouses, schools and other educational establishments.
- 7) Proposals which have the potential to cause or exacerbate noise and vibration impacts on land uses or occupiers in the locality, or which may be affected by existing sources of noise or vibration, must fully assess such impacts.

Lighting

- 8) Development proposals which include external lighting should ensure that:
- a) Proposed lighting schemes are at least the minimum required for public safety and security and lighting should seek to improve public safety and reduce crime;
 - b) There are no unacceptable adverse impacts on neighbouring or nearby properties;
 - c) There is no unacceptable adverse impact on the surrounding countryside;
 - d) There is no dazzling or distraction to road users including cyclists, equestrians and pedestrians;
 - e) All adopted and non-adopted road and footway lighting meets the County Council's adopted standard;

- f) There is no unacceptable adverse impact on wildlife, habitats or habitat features;
- g) Domestic light pollution will be minimised to the lowest possible extent by following the latest guidance of the Institute of Lighting Professionals, Guidance Note 9/19; and
- h) Appropriate technologies will be used to minimise the energy usage required and carbon generated. This may include the energy source, bulb, daylight or movement sensors, or timers and hours of illumination shall be controlled.

Reasoned Justification:

- 10.31 It is important that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions, including land instability and contamination.
- 10.32 To protect the environment and quality of life it is also important that existing or new development is not adversely affected by, or put at unacceptable risk from, unacceptable levels of ground, air, water or noise pollution.
- 10.33 Where possible, we will require development proposals to take opportunities to improve local environmental conditions and to remediate or mitigate despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated or unstable land.

Pollution

- 10.34 Pollution can be in many forms and may include emissions to land, air or water including noise, light, vibration, smell, smoke and fumes, soot, ash, dust or grit which has a damaging effect on the environment and the public's enjoyment, health or amenity. The planning system has an important role to play in protecting the environment, biodiversity, local residents, businesses and the public in general from all forms of development that could give rise to pollution.
- 10.35 While in many cases pollution control regimes are governed by legislation outside of the planning process, the NPPF emphasises that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment which includes consideration for pollution, land instability and contamination.
- 10.36 As part of this role, both existing and new development, including changes of use, should be protected from unacceptable levels of pollution or instability as required by this policy. Measures to protect and enhance water quality are provided in the Flood Risk and Water Resources policy.

Ground Conditions

- 10.37 The Spatial Strategy for the district prioritises the use of previously developed brownfield land to deliver the growth needed in the district. However, the risk of pollution arising from contamination and the impact on human health, property and the wider environment also needs to be considered.
- 10.38 The council maintains a register of contaminated land. The information stored on the formal register is that relating to regulatory action and remediation that has been undertaken at sites within the district. There are currently no sites listed on the council's Contaminated Land Register.
- 10.39 Contamination is more likely to arise in former industrial areas but cannot be ruled out in other locations, including in the countryside. Some areas may be affected by the natural or background occurrence of potentially hazardous substances, such as radon, methane or elevated concentrations of metallic elements.
- 10.40 Land instability may also affect the suitability of a site to accommodate development, and proposals will need to demonstrate that any such sites are, or can be made safe.
- 10.41 Whether contamination or land instability affects a particular site can only be identified through a specific investigation. To establish the risks possessed by a site, it is necessary for applicants to use a competent and suitably experienced consultant to investigate and, where necessary, remediate contamination to mitigate the risk in accordance with best practice guidance.
- 10.42 Where an application relates to contaminated land or land which is suspected to be contaminated, applicants will need to submit details of an investigation of the site detailing any remedial measures that need to be carried out. The approved remedial measures will be secured through use of planning conditions.

Air Quality

- 10.43 Air pollutants (including dust and odour) have been shown to have an adverse effect on health and the environment, and the 2008 Ambient Air Quality Directive sets legally binding limits for concentrations in outdoor air of major air pollutants that impact public health such as particulate matter (PM10 and PM2.5) and nitrogen dioxide (NO₂).
- 10.44 The council is also required to carry out a review and assessment of air quality across the district. This involves measuring air pollution and trying to predict how it will change in the next few years. The aim of the review is to make sure that the national air quality objectives are achieved by the relevant deadlines. These objectives have been put into place to protect public health and the environment. In locations where the objectives are not likely to be achieved, the council will designate an Air Quality Management Area and will put together a plan to improve the air quality through a Local Air Quality Action Plan.
- 10.45 There are currently two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) within the district. The Chorleywood NO₂ AQMA covers an area along the M25 south of Junction 18 to just north of where the motorway crosses the River Chess. The Chorleywood PM10

AQMA is a slightly narrower area from just north of Junction 18, along the M25 to just north of where the motorway crosses the River Chess.

- 10.46 However, to ensure that objectives can continue to be met in future and to secure improvements in air quality, emissions arising from any development including indirect emissions, such as those attributable to associated traffic generation, must therefore be considered in determining planning applications. Developments sensitive to air pollutants should also be located where future occupiers would not be subject to unacceptable levels of air pollutants from existing sources.
- 10.47 Applicants for development should have regard to any emissions arising from the proposed use/development and seek to minimise those emissions to control any risks arising and prevent any adverse impact on local amenity. Environmental Health will be consulted on applications which may affect air quality.
- 10.48 Proposals that can raise issues of odour emissions, for example extraction systems for restaurants/takeaways, must be accompanied by details of the equipment to be installed including any odour abatement measures.
- 10.49 Where significant increases in emissions covered by the nationally prescribed air quality objectives are proposed, the applicant will need to assess the impact on local air quality by undertaking an appropriate modelling exercise to show that the national objectives will still be achieved.

Noise and Vibration

- 10.50 To support the health and quality of life of the community, it is important to ensure noise-sensitive developments are located away from existing sources of significant noise and that potentially noisy developments are located in areas where noise or vibrations will not give rise to adverse impacts on surrounding occupiers or the environment, or where impacts can be minimised and mitigated.
- 10.51 In considering noise and vibration impacts, the council will have regard to National Planning Practice Guidance and the Explanatory Note of the Noise Policy Statement for England.
- 10.52 Where proposals may create or be subject to noise and/or vibration, applications will need to be supported by a noise and vibration assessment to consider impacts and any resulting requirement for mitigation. The scheme should aim to design out the exposure of noise-sensitive receptors to traffic from the strategic road network and inherently noisy businesses/operators for example. In line with Planning Practice Guidance, the utilisation of measures such as incorporating noise barriers, optimising sound insulation provided by the building envelope, or 'source control' measures should be implemented prior to occupation. Mitigation plans will need to bear in mind the 'agent of change' principle, whether as a receptor or generator of noise, that the onus to mitigate noise will be on the developer, rather than the incumbent neighbouring land use and any mitigation should not lead to an unsatisfactory development.

- 10.53 Proposals that can raise issues of noise, for example extraction systems for restaurants/takeaways, must be accompanied by details of the equipment to be installed including any noise mitigation measures.
- 10.54 Necessary mitigation measures will need to be implemented and maintained in the long term and will be secured by condition.

Lighting

- 10.55 Artificial lighting is essential for safety and security within the district. There may also be some opportunities to add to the amenity of the built environment by highlighting buildings and open spaces of character. However, it is important to avoid insensitive lighting (light pollution) which can have a negative effect on the amenity of surrounding areas and have a negative impact on biodiversity by influencing plant and animal activity patterns. In particular, light pollution can be harmful to birds, bats, and other nocturnal species that avoid overly lit areas.
- 10.56 Under the agent of change principle, if new development or uses are to be introduced near a pre-existing business, such as a live music venue, or sports facility it is the responsibility of the developer to ensure solutions to address and mitigate lighting issues as well as noise are put forward as part of proposals.
- 10.57 Proposals incorporating new lighting may require a Lighting Impact Assessment to consider potential for impacts and any measures to mitigate these. Necessary mitigation measures will be secured by condition.

Waste Management and Recycling

- 10.58 Hertfordshire County Council's adopted Waste Core Strategy & Development Management Policies DPD forms part of the Development Plan for the district. Whilst the responsibility for dealing with waste (and minerals) in Three Rivers lies principally with Hertfordshire County Council, the District Council can help promote kerbside collection and community recycling through planning policy.
- 10.59 A key part of this is ensuring that residents and businesses have sufficiently convenient facilities and storage to maximise re-use and recycling, and that this provision is integrated through the design and layout of development without adverse impact on the street scene or, in less developed areas, the local landscape.

ENV3 - Waste Management and Recycling
<p>1) New development proposals should provide waste and recycling facilities in accordance with the Council's Solid Waste Storage/Collection Guidance (2024) or subsequent updates which:</p>

- a) Can be easily accessed and moved by occupiers and local authority/private waste collectors;
 - b) Do not result in any adverse impact on the character and appearance of the area through their siting or design, including bins and their respective storage areas; and
 - c) Do not result in obstruction to pedestrian, cyclist or driver sight lines.
- 2) New development should contribute to reducing the amount of waste generated through the following measures where possible:
- a) Re-using materials wherever possible as part of construction (see Policy CNZ2C)
 - b) Enable the sorting of waste and recycling on-site taking into account impact on residential amenities and the environment;
 - c) Using Modern Methods of Construction such as pre-cast/pre-fabricated materials and modular construction;
 - d) Allocating appropriate refuse and recycling storage facilities for domestic kerbside collection, composting facilities and commercial waste recycling facilities; and
 - e) Submitting a Site Waste Management Plan for major development incorporating a Circular Economy Statement;
- 3) New development should explore opportunistic extraction of minerals for use on site, prior to non-mineral development.

Reasoned Justification:

- 10.60 During 2023/24, 477,868 tonnes of local authority collected waste was produced across Hertfordshire. In 2023/24 52.0% of Hertfordshire's collected waste was recycled or composted. Three Rivers District Council achieved a 61.9% 'household

waste' recycling rate, the highest in Hertfordshire and the second highest rate of any authority in England.

- 10.61 Despite this excellent performance, there is still a need to reduce the amount of waste produced overall and to ensure that as little as possible is placed in the refuse bin. Reusing waste products and materials, and reclaiming materials through recycling can reduce our consumption of primary resources and support the move to a circular economy.
- 10.62 In addition, commercial and industrial sources and construction, demolition and excavation waste also make a significant contribution to the overall levels of waste produced. These should similarly be minimised.
- 10.63 Reducing the amount of waste produced locally requires:
- Re-use of materials wherever possible: high value materials such as bricks, slates, tiles, beams and architectural details can often be re-used for the same function;
 - Sorting of waste and recycling on-site: allowing space on-site for segregation of waste, including construction waste and recycling and operational waste and recycling;
 - Allocating appropriate recycling storage facilities: providing sufficient space within development for domestic kerbside collection and composting facilities, or larger commercial waste recycling facilities;
 - Use of Modern Methods of Construction such as pre-cast/pre-fabricated materials and modular construction: components such as precast concrete beams, insulated wall panels, bathroom pods reduce the amount of waste generated;
 - Use of materials with recycled content: products are available that incorporate waste into the manufacturing process that have the same performance and costs as non-recycled materials.
- 10.64 Making suitable provision to encourage recycling and minimise waste production requires that waste and recycling storage areas are integrated into the design and layout of new development at the initial stages.
- 10.65 Provision of refuse and recycling facilities and collection points should be situated in locations that are accessible for those with mobility disabilities and be within a reasonable distance from dwellings. Features such as ramps and raised pavements should be considered within specialist housing/homes for older persons.
- 10.66 The policy requires that Site Waste Management Plans and Circular Economy Statements are submitted for all major development (as defined in The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015) which include details of the management of waste at all stages of development

(construction, demolition and subsequent occupation). The Waste Planning Authority will be consulted in the process as part of the formal planning application.

11 Design and Heritage

Residential Design and Layout

- 11.1 The district's housing stock contains many larger than average dwellings, often detached or semi-detached, making the district a popular choice for families. Houses are also often on larger plots, lowering density. There are relatively few flatted/high density developments in the district, reflective of the small size of the district's settlements and associated relatively lower sustainability. However, some settlements, such as South Oxhey do have higher density development, influenced by its location on the edge of Watford and London boroughs.
- 11.2 Whilst the Local Plan looks to increase density and encourage more 1, 2 and 3 bedroom dwellings, there is a balance to be struck with the existing character of the district, which has a strong identity that should be maintained. For example, the history of 'Metro-land' developments associated with the district along the route of the Metropolitan line expansion are characterised by large plots often with detached houses and good access to open spaces. Styles of housing can be more uniform, with Tudor revival influences, or in the case of Moor Park, with more individualistic Arts and Crafts influences.
- 11.3 Subsequently, this policy and other relevant Local Plan policies aim to strike a balance between the future needs and historic pattern of development, secure an adequate supply of housing of a mix of sizes, types and tenures to meet needs in the district, while ensuring living standards are not compromised, for example, through minimum space standards and restricting the subdivision of dwellings. Furthermore, it is essential that all housing, including residential extensions, are of high quality and that they remain suitable and adaptable living accommodation to meet a range of needs.

DH1 - Residential Design and Layout

- 1) All applications for residential development, including new dwellings, replacement dwellings, and extensions or alterations to existing dwellings should satisfy the Design Criteria as set out in Appendix 1 to ensure that development does not lead to a gradual deterioration in the quality of the built environment, and that landscaping, the need for privacy and amenity space and the creation of identity in housing layouts are taken into account.

New Residential Development

- 2) All new development should be designed and built to a high quality for the duration of its lifetime and should comply with the National Design Guide. This includes C3 and C4 Use Class developments, conversions and changes of use where planning permission is required.

- 3) New residential development should make the most efficient use of land, which may include conversion or change of use of existing buildings, new development and taking opportunities to use airspace above existing buildings where this would be consistent with policies of the Local Plan and would not compromise the quality of the environment and existing residential areas.
- 4) The council will protect the character and residential amenity of existing areas of housing from forms of backland, infill or other forms of new residential development which are inappropriate for the area.
- 5) Development will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the proposal will not result in harm to the character or amenities of an area including through:
 - a) Tandem development;
 - b) Servicing by an awkward access drive which cannot easily be used by service vehicles;
 - c) Unsafe or unsuitable access arrangements;
 - d) The generation of excessive levels of traffic;
 - e) Loss of residential amenity; or
 - f) Layouts detrimental to the particular character of an area in terms of plot size, plot depth, building footprint, plot frontage width, frontage building line, height, gaps between buildings and streetscape features (e.g. hedges, walls, grass verges etc.)
- 6) The individual and cumulative effect of applications for development on the character of an area will be taken into account and piecemeal development will be resisted in favour of comprehensive proposals that properly address design requirements.

- 7) Major development will be required to provide a masterplan and should follow the principles of design and master-planning in accordance with the National Design Guide and National Model Design Codes.

Tall Buildings

- 8) The council will refuse proposals for tall buildings (buildings 4 or more storeys above natural ground level, buildings higher than 12m above natural ground level or any building substantially taller than its neighbours) unless the following criteria are satisfied:
- a) The location is sustainable and suitable for high density development;
 - b) The height is proportionate to the proposed location and size of site;
 - c) They will not have a negative impact on the general amenity of surrounding area;
 - d) They reinforce or add positively to the surrounding scale and urban form of the area;
 - e) Consideration is given to how the building will affect important views to and from key areas of the district;
 - f) The building is of an exemplary architectural design and residential quality, maximising energy efficiency and prioritising the use of sustainable materials and construction methods;
 - g) They provide appropriate levels of usable amenity space for future occupants;
 - h) They include sufficient parking for cars and cycles, in accordance with the council's parking standards.

Subdivision of Dwellings

9) Subject to other development plan policies, proposals for the conversion of single dwellings into two or more units will generally be unacceptable, unless the following criteria are met:

- a) The building is suitable for conversion by reason of its size, shape and number of rooms. Normally, only dwellings with three or more bedrooms will be considered suitable for conversion;
- b) The dwellings created are completely self-contained, with separate front doors either giving direct access to the dwelling, or a secure communal lobby or stairwell which itself has a secure entrance;
- c) Adequate car parking, services and amenity space can be provided for each new unit in compliance with the Council's standards;
- d) The character of the area and the residential amenity of immediate neighbours are protected; and
- e) If conversion of semi-detached dwellings is proposed, generally this takes place in pairs in order that privacy and the amenities of the occupants of the adjoining dwelling are maintained.

Internal Space Standards

10) All residential development should meet or exceed the Technical Housing Standards as set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG). Appropriate consideration should also be given to:

- a) Providing sufficient space for the general and specific storage needs of residents (including those with disabilities);
- b) Floor layouts which provide for practical usable space and a good standard of amenity; and
- c) The provision of rooms which are designed to function comfortably and efficiently for their intended purpose.

Amenity Standards

11) All development should meet the standards for the quantity and quality of amenity space as set out in Appendix 1, unless a different approach is robustly justified (for example town centre development and development in close proximity to public open space).

Reasoned Justification:

- 11.4 To deliver the step-change in housing required to meet needs in the area the policy confirms that new development should make the most efficient use of land without compromising the quality of the environment and residential areas in line with the NPPF requirement that policies optimise use of land and seek a significant uplift in density in city and town centres and areas well served by public transport unless there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate.
- 11.5 While there is a need to increase the density of development generally and encourage innovation in the delivery of new housing, it is also essential that new housing provided is of high quality and that the quality of the environment and existing residential areas is maintained or enhanced. The NPPF also acknowledges that development should take account of the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), and that there may be a case for policies to resist inappropriate development of residential gardens, for example where development would cause harm to the local area.
- 11.6 Pressure for development including on garden land or for infill development can erode the particular character of an area or impact on the residential amenity of both existing and new occupants if not managed. However, taking a different approach to the established character of an area will not necessarily be harmful in all cases where it is informed by careful consideration for important elements of local character and the quality of the area.
- 11.7 In particular, proposals for tandem development (one or more dwellings directly behind one another on the same plot and sharing the same access) or backland development (one or more dwellings provided to the rear of existing buildings with no street frontage and generally accessed by a long driveway) need to be carefully considered as these can often be inappropriate.
- 11.8 The subdivision of existing dwellings can also contribute a source of new housing supply and these types of applications can be a satisfactory way of raising densities in low density areas close to local transport nodes and local services. Whether or not subdivision is acceptable will depend on the characteristics of the building and area, and the standard of accommodation that can be created.
- 11.9 Development should have regard to the most up-to-date and relevant version of the Secured by Design guidance to improve the security of buildings and their immediate surroundings to provide safe places to live, work and visit.

Internal Space Standards

- 11.10 Delivering high quality housing requires careful consideration for the provision of usable internal space, as well as providing access to a suitable quantity and quality of external amenity space to support quality of life for residents.
- 11.11 To provide for a suitable standard of accommodation, the government has published nationally described space standards (NDSS) which set out optional requirements for the floor area of new dwellings depending on the level of occupancy, as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home such as bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling heights.
- 11.12 The NPPF sets out that Local Plans may make use of these NDSS where the need for an internal space standard can be justified. Monitoring information shows that 193 dwellings (25%) permitted in Three Rivers between April 2015 and March 2019 were smaller than the NDSS. This is a significant proportion and suggests that there is a clear need to apply the NDSS to new housing development in Three Rivers.
- 11.13 As such, requiring new development to generally accord with NDSS would provide for improvement to the quality of housing being delivered and resulting benefits for the general health and wellbeing of the community and a more flexible and adaptable housing stock better able to meet the needs of residents.

Tall Buildings

- 11.14 A tall building is defined as a building being 4 or more storeys above natural ground level, buildings higher than 12m above natural ground level or any building substantially taller than its neighbours.
- 11.15 In considering proposals for the erection of tall buildings, the following criteria will be taken into account:
- The character of the area;
 - The relationship between an individual site and adjoining land and buildings;
 - The context within which the proposal will sit;
 - The design of the building; and
 - The impact on long range views.
- 11.16 When considering tall buildings, an assessment of the appropriateness of the location will be made. Consideration will be given to whether the proposal will enhance the character of the area. The inter-relationship with existing buildings will also be an important factor in the assessment of the appropriateness of the location and proposal. Designs which are inappropriate in their context, or which fail to make good use of the opportunities for improving the character and quality of an area will be refused.
- 11.17 Tall buildings should include appropriate accessibility features for the elderly and for those who are disabled and have mobility impairments.

Amenity Space Standards

- 11.18 Similarly, ensuring that residents have access to a suitable quantity and quality of private or semi-private amenity space is important to provide for a good quality of life and the standards in Appendix 1 (Design Criteria) should be applied with consideration for the shape and utility of space provided to ensure that spaces offer good amenity.

Heritage and Historic Environment

- 11.19 Three Rivers boasts a rich history of architectural styles, helping to convey the story and pattern of development within the settlements, ranging from timber-framed Tudor buildings to Arts and Crafts and Metro-Land style development of the 1920's and 1930's.
- 11.20 There are around 350 Listed Buildings and listed structures in the district. Whilst they are found throughout the district, there are high concentrations in Rickmansworth, Chorleywood, Abbots Langley, Sarratt and Croxley Green. There are also numerous Locally Listed Buildings in the district.
- 11.21 There are 22 Conservation Areas in the district ranging from the large Conservation Areas in Chorleywood, covering entire settlements in the case of Loudwater and Heronsgate, to much smaller locally specific designations such as Church End in Sarratt and Hunton Bridge.
- 11.22 This policy seeks to preserve and enhance these Conservation Areas and historic buildings, with high quality and sympathetic design.

DH2 - Heritage and the Historic Environment

Protection and Enhancement

- 1) The historic environment will be preserved and enhanced in a manner appropriate to its significance. Development of the highest design quality that will sustain and, where appropriate, enhance the special interest, character and significance of the district's heritage assets and their settings and that will make a positive contribution to local character and distinctiveness will be supported.
- 2) Protecting and enhancing the wide range of historic and cultural assets which contribute to the character and identity of the district is a priority including:
 - Designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas, and the settings of these assets;

- Non-Designated heritage assets such as Locally Important Buildings, unregistered historic parks and gardens, the Grand Union Canal, and archaeology, and the settings of these assets
- 3) Opportunities to promote the historic environment as a key element of the vitality of the district, and to reduce the number of heritage assets at risk will be sought.
 - 4) Initiatives and opportunities to mitigate the effects of climate change by seeking the reuse of historic buildings, and where appropriate, their modification to reduce carbon emissions and secure sustainable development will be supported where this would not harm the significance of the heritage asset, or its setting.

Designated Heritage Assets

- 5) Applications for development which could impact upon a designated heritage asset must be supported by a Heritage Statement which demonstrates a clear understanding of the significance of any relevant heritage assets and the contribution of their settings, details the likely impacts of the proposal on these assets and their significance and where relevant, explains how this significance has informed the proposals. Proposals on sites which include, or have the potential to include, archaeological interest should be accompanied by an appropriate desk-based assessment, and where necessary a field evaluation.
- 6) There is a presumption in favour of the retention and enhancement of heritage assets and putting heritage assets to viable and appropriate uses to secure their future protection. Applications will be supported where they sustain, preserve and where appropriate enhance the significance, character and setting of the asset itself and the surrounding historic environment.
- 7) The impact of development proposals on the significance of heritage assets and their settings will be considered in accordance with case law, legislation and the NPPF, as well as the criteria set out in this policy.
- 8) Any harm to, or loss of, the significance of a designated heritage asset (from its alteration or destruction, or from development within its setting), must require clear and convincing justification. Development which results in substantial harm to or loss of Listed Buildings, registered parks or gardens, scheduled monuments, or other registered heritage assets, must

be refused unless it can be demonstrated that the harm or loss is necessary to achieve substantial public benefits that outweigh the harm or loss.

- 9) Any change of use of a Listed Building should preserve or enhance its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest and its significance and should ensure its continued use and viability.
- 10) Extensions or alterations to a Listed Building should not adversely affect its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest, its significance or its wider setting.
- 11) Listed Building Consent is required for demolition or for any alteration or extension to a Listed Building which could affect its character (interiors as well as exteriors) and for works to any fixtures and to buildings or structures within the curtilage of the building. Control over changes to Listed Buildings is not intended to prevent all alterations but to protect the buildings from unnecessary demolition and from unsuitable alterations which would be detrimental to the historical significance of the building.
- 12) Proposals must not cause unacceptable harm to registered historic parks or gardens, their settings or views into, out of, or within them. Proposals should seek to protect their character.
- 13) There is a presumption against any harm to Scheduled Monuments and heritage assets with archaeological interest that are demonstrably of equivalent significance to Scheduled Monuments. Where the loss of the whole or a material part of a heritage asset's significance is justified, planning conditions will ensure that an adequate record is made of the significance of the heritage asset and this is published appropriately.

Conservation Areas

- 14) Within Conservation Areas, development will only be permitted if the proposal:
 - a) Is of a design and scale that preserves or enhances the character and appearance of the area;
 - b) Uses building materials, finishes, including those for features such as walls, railings, gates and hard surfacing, that are appropriate to the local context;

- c) Retains historically significant boundaries, important open spaces and other elements of the area's established pattern of development, character and historic value, including gardens, roadside banks and verges;
- d) Retains and restores, where relevant, traditional features such as shop fronts, walls, railings, paved surfaces and street furniture, and improves the condition of structures worthy of retention;
- e) Does not harm important views into, out of or within the Conservation Area;
- f) Protects trees, hedgerows and other significant landscape features and incorporates landscaping appropriate to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area.

15) Within Conservation Areas, permission for demolition or substantial demolition will only be granted if it can be demonstrated that:

- a) The structure to be demolished makes no contribution to the special character or appearance of the area, or;
- b) It can be demonstrated that the structure is wholly beyond repair and incapable of beneficial use, or;
- c) It can be demonstrated that the removal of the structure and its subsequent replacement with a new building and/or open space would lead to the enhancement of the Conservation Area.

16) Permission will not be granted for development outside but near to a Conservation Area if it adversely affects the setting, character, appearance of, or views into, out of or through that Conservation Area.

17) Proposals including solutions to shop front security and/or use of standardised shop front designs, fascias or advertisement displays in a Conservation Area will only be supported if they:

- a) Are sympathetic to the character and appearance of the Conservation Area;
- b) Respect the scale, proportions, character and materials of construction of the upper part of the building and adjoining buildings, and the street scene in general;
- c) Incorporate traditional materials where the age and character of the building makes this appropriate.
- d) Comply with the requirements set out in Policy DH3 (Advertisements and Shop Fronts)

18) Totally internally illuminated fascias or projecting signs will generally be unacceptable. Applications for additional signs that would result in a proliferation of, or an excess amount of, advertisement material on any individual building or group of buildings will not be supported.

Non-Designated Heritage Assets

- 19) The retention of Locally Important Buildings and non-designated heritage assets identified in adopted Neighbourhood Plans is encouraged. Proposals affecting Locally Important Buildings should retain or enhance features of historic or architectural interest.
- 20) Where demolition is proposed, it must be demonstrated that all reasonable attempts have been made to retain all or part of the building and all alterations and extensions should enhance the building's character, setting and features and must not adversely affect the significance of the building.
- 21) Proposals must not cause unacceptable harm to unregistered historic parks or gardens of local significance, their settings or views into, out of, or within them. Proposals should seek to protect their character.

Reasoned Justification:

- 11.23 Protection of the district's heritage is an important function of the council, particularly through the determination of planning applications. This policy seeks to reflect

national policy and includes clarification on what characteristics will be considered when determining development within the historic environment of Three Rivers.

- 11.24 The district's historic environment is not just important for its own sake but contributes towards the high quality of environment in the district and is an important resource bringing social, cultural, economic and environmental benefits to the community.
- 11.25 The historic environment is a finite and non-renewable resource. Heritage assets and the historic environment will be protected from inappropriate development to sustain and where appropriate enhance their significance, including putting heritage assets into uses consistent with their conservation. The more significant the heritage asset, the greater the presumption for its conservation.
- 11.26 Within Three Rivers, heritage assets which make a positive contribution to the historic environment include:
- Designated heritage assets such as Scheduled Monuments, Listed Buildings, Registered Parks and Gardens and Conservation Areas, and the setting of these assets;
 - Non-Designated heritage assets such as Locally Important Buildings, unregistered historic parks and gardens, the Grand Union Canal, and archaeology, and the setting of these assets.
- 11.27 The significance of a heritage asset is a result of the value of the asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting which is the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. The extent of the setting of a heritage asset is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate the significance of the asset or may be neutral.
- 11.28 The conservation and enhancement of heritage assets will be given weight appropriate to the significance of the asset. The council will seek to identify heritage assets at the earliest opportunity within the decision-making process.
- 11.29 Historic England's annual Heritage at Risk Register includes buildings, places of worship, monuments, parks and gardens, Conservation Areas, battlefields and wreck sites that are listed and have been assessed and found to be at risk. However, Grade II Listed Buildings outside of London, other than places of worship, are not included.
- 11.30 The Register records condition, occupancy and use, vulnerability, priority actions and trends in condition. The Register currently includes just one entry in Three Rivers at Langleybury House³⁰. It notes that proposals for repair are yet to be implemented, and while use of the buildings for filming helps to ensure their protection the implementation of a comprehensive scheme remains desirable.
- 11.31 While Historic England's annual Heritage at Risk Register would only record a Grade II Listed Building in the district as at risk if it was a place of worship, there may be

³⁰ Historic England (2025) Heritage at Risk 2025 Registers <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/har-2023-registers/ee-har-register2023/>

other Grade II Listed Buildings in the area which are at risk as a result of neglect, decay or inappropriate development or are vulnerable to becoming so.

Enabling Development

- 11.32 Enabling development refers to development which would usually be considered harmful but is considered acceptable because the resulting benefits outweigh the harm.
- 11.33 Where relevant, the council will consider whether the benefits of a proposal for enabling development which would otherwise conflict with planning policies but which would secure the future conservation of a heritage asset would outweigh the disbenefits of departing from those policies.
- 11.34 Further guidance on 'Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places' is available at www.historicengland.org.uk.

Listed Buildings

- 11.35 Proposals must conserve or enhance Listed Buildings within Three Rivers.
- 11.36 The Government's List of Buildings of Special Architectural or Historic Interests contains over 352 entries relating to buildings within Three Rivers which form an integral part of the district's historic landscape. These buildings/structures are nationally listed and include historic homes such as Moor Park Mansion and Hunton Park, public houses, ecclesiastical buildings, and structures such as telephone kiosks, statues, war memorials and bridges including the railway bridge in Railway Terrace, Kings Langley designed by Robert Stephenson for the London and Birmingham Railway Company.
- 11.37 Listed Building Consent is required for demolition or for any alteration or extension to a Listed Building which could affect its character (interiors as well as exteriors) and for works to any fixtures and to buildings or structures within the curtilage of the building. Control over changes to Listed Buildings is not intended to prevent all alterations but to protect the buildings from unnecessary demolition and from unsuitable alterations which would be detrimental to the historical significance of the building.
- 11.38 All works to Listed Buildings must conserve or enhance these structures and their significance in accordance with national policy requirements.

Conservation Areas

- 11.39 In Three Rivers there are 22 Conservation Areas which make a very significant contribution to the character and distinctiveness of the district. These include the settlements around ancient commons such as Croxley Green, Chorleywood and Sarratt; the historic cores of the settlements of Rickmansworth and Abbots Langley; and distinctive areas of 19th and 20th century housing such as Loudwater, Moor Park and Heronsgate; the first Chartist settlement.

- 11.40 Conservation Areas are designated not on the basis of individual buildings but because of the special architectural or historic interest, quality of the area, its mix of uses, historic layout, characteristic materials, scale and detailing of open spaces. Designation also takes into account the need to protect trees, hedges, walls, railings and other characteristic features. Once designated, special attention must be paid in all planning decisions, to the desirability of preserving or enhancing its character and appearance.
- 11.41 Development within Conservation Areas must preserve or enhance their significance in accordance with national policy requirements and guidance on how significance will be considered can be found within this policy.
- 11.42 The council will continue with a programme of reviewing Conservation Area Appraisals which will assess the existing boundaries, character and important features of the district's Conservation Areas and develop Management Plans. These Appraisals and associated Management Plans will be used as a material consideration when assessing planning applications.

Locally Important Buildings

- 11.43 There are a large number of other buildings within the district that whilst not of sufficient quality or importance to be nationally listed, make a significant contribution to the local area in terms of their historical and/or architectural characteristics. Currently there are over 250 of these buildings on the council's List of Locally Important Buildings. Many of these buildings were built in the nineteenth and twentieth Centuries, but all are considered an important part of the district's local heritage.
- 11.44 The lists of Locally Important Buildings within Three Rivers can be found at: <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/planning/heritage-urban-design>

Historic Parks and Gardens

- 11.45 Historic parks and gardens complement the historic buildings and landscapes of the district and are an important feature of the area. Some are listed on the Historic England Register of Parks and Gardens of Special Historic Interest. Within Three Rivers the grounds at Moor Park Mansion are listed as Grade II* because of their important contribution to the historic, recreational and conservation value of the landscape. Part of Cassiobury Park, which is a Grade II Listed Park, also extends into Three Rivers.
- 11.46 In addition, there are other unregistered parks and gardens in the district of significance which include Rickmansworth Park, The Grove, Oxhey Grange, Sandy Lodge, Redheath, Micklefield Green and Chorleywood House. Although these currently fall below the threshold for inclusion in the Historic England Register, they are of importance locally and as such their character will be protected from harmful development.

Archaeology and Scheduled Monuments

- 11.47 There are 19 sites of known archaeological significance in the district and three Scheduled Monuments. Information and advice about these and other non-designated heritage assets with archaeological interest may be obtained from the historic Environment Unit of Hertfordshire County Council.
- 11.48 The Areas of Archaeological Significance are subject to regular revision, and the absence of designation should not be taken to mean that there is no archaeological potential.
- 11.49 Prospective developers should contact the County Council to obtain the most up-to-date information and establish whether there is potential archaeological interest and establish the need for investigation and evaluation at an early stage.
- 11.50 Proposals on sites which include, or have the potential to include, archaeological interest should be accompanied by an appropriate desk-based assessment, and where necessary a field evaluation.
- 11.51 The NPPF requires the council to provide a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and this policy aims to protect, conserve and enhance our historic environment and the heritage assets within it.
- 11.52 The council will also:
- support proposals which conserve and enhance the historic environment
 - carry out a programme of reviewing existing conservation areas and producing conservation area appraisals to identify what it is about the area that contributes to its significance as well as identifying and considering new areas for designation as conservation area
 - support proposals for heritage-led regeneration, ensuring that heritage assets are conserved, enhanced and secured for the future
 - identify heritage assets that make an important contribution to the local character of the area and update our local list on a regular basis
 - identify buildings that could be included on the national list and preparing reports to support new listings
 - identify buildings that are falling into disrepair and work with owners to find new uses to ensure their continued beneficial use.

Advertisements and Shop Fronts

- 11.53 Not all advertisements are regulated by the council and others benefit from deemed consent, which means that advertisement consent is not required by the Local Planning Authority, although this will depend on the size, position and illumination of the advert.

- 11.54 The quality and character of places can be affected where advertisements are poorly sited or designed and where consent is required, the council can have regard to considerations of amenity and public safety, as well as the Control of Advertisements Regulations.

DH3 - Advertisements and Shop Fronts

- 1) The display of advertisements must not compromise amenity and highway safety. The appropriate highways authority should be consulted on applications for advertisements close to the principal or Strategic Road Network.
- 2) Advertisements and shop fronts will only be permitted if the character or setting of an area or building would not be unduly affected due to inappropriate size, design, colour, or materials; taking into account cumulative impacts.
- 3) Advertisements and shop fronts must not contribute to excessive light pollution from flashing or illumination with impact on passers-by, highway users, nearby residential or wildlife habitats.
- 4) Advertisements should generally be located within the curtilage of the premises to which they relate or at the site access.
- 5) Advertisements, shop fronts and displays must:
 - a) Be high quality in terms of visual appearance, and should not have flashing internal or external illumination;
 - b) Be sited to prevent visual intrusion by virtue of light pollution into adjoining sensitive land uses, including residential properties and wildlife habitats;
 - c) Not restrict pedestrian movements or impact the safety of pedestrians or road users;
 - d) Contribute to an attractive environment;

- e) Not contribute to proliferation/clutter of signage in the vicinity; and
- f) Respect local context, including Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas and other heritage assets.

Reasoned Justification:

- 11.55 The term 'advertisement' covers a very wide range of advertisements and signs, including hoardings, illumination of hoardings, illuminated fascia signs, free-standing display panels, and estate agent boards. Not all advertisements are regulated by the council and others benefit from deemed consent.
- 11.56 The visual identity of settlements within Three Rivers is shaped by the design of shopfronts, signage, and advertisements. When these elements are executed with sensitivity and high-quality design they enhance the public realm, fostering a sense of vibrancy and economic vitality. Conversely, poorly conceived or haphazardly placed installations can lead to visual clutter, which when compounded across a street scene, can erode the local character and amenity of an area.
- 11.57 Central to this policy is the protection of the district's character and heritage. The preservation and restoration of historic or unique shopfront features are often vital to the integrity of the building and the wider landscape. Beyond their aesthetic value, high-quality and traditional shopfronts provide a distinct economic advantage, providing bespoke environments that attract investment. The council will exercise careful control over these features to ensure they contribute positively to a cohesive and attractive local environment.
- 11.58 The type of illuminated signs should be sympathetic to the design of the building on which it is located. The method of illumination (internal, external, lettering, neon etc) should be determined by the design of the building.
- 11.59 The quality and character of places can be affected where advertisements are poorly sited or designed and where consent is required, the council can have regard to considerations of amenity and public safety, as well as the Control of Advertisements Regulations. The nature of material advertised is not a planning matter.

12 Transport and Connections

Sustainable Transport and Travel

- 12.1 High quality transport connections, both physical by road, rail, bus, walking, cycling; or digital are vital to the district's future sustainability, economic prosperity and social inclusiveness. These connections provide access to education, health centre, employment, business, retail and leisure opportunities and can support sustainable lifestyles and opportunities.
- 12.2 The Local Plan sets out to make sure that new development is located in the right places to benefit from access by a variety of sustainable transport modes. However, facilitating sustainable economic growth and supporting the growth needed in the district also requires development of sustainable transport networks and connections to ensure that they provide an effective, efficient and high-quality network with efficient public transport, attractive and suitable routes and choices for pedestrians and cyclists, a safe road network and modern digital infrastructure.
- 12.3 Three Rivers is well served by communication links. However, car ownership levels are high and car usage increasingly dominates patterns of movement in the district. Traffic levels in the district are forecast to grow by 15.6% by 2031 and there are existing local congestion problems. Increased congestion and car use could undermine the economic growth of the district and harm the quality of the environment and social well-being.

Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy

- 12.4 An efficient, comprehensive and sustainable transport system is an essential element in supporting the district's economic competitiveness, meeting targets for reducing CO2 emissions and enabling the delivery of sustainable development. Promoting sustainable transport modes will help re-balance the focus to those modes that have lower emissions and contribute to creating a higher quality environment across the district.
- 12.5 Hertfordshire County Council has produced a Growth and Transport Plan (GTP) for South West Hertfordshire, which identifies some of the transport interventions that will be needed to support and help facilitate sustainable development within the South West Hertfordshire area, including in Three Rivers.
- 12.6 While Three Rivers District is not responsible for the transport network, the location of new development may have a significant impact on transport and travel and the travel choices made.
- 12.7 The spatial strategy seeks to direct development to the areas with greatest access to public transport, services and facilities, which should contribute to reducing the need to travel and journey lengths, and prioritise the use of public transport, walking and cycling as realistic alternatives to the car.
- 12.8 The council is also working with Hertfordshire County Council, National Highways and other transport providers to provide a co-ordinated and enhanced transport

system which improves connectivity and transport services to and between settlements within Three Rivers, to key destinations in surrounding areas, and to London.

TC1 - Sustainable Transport and Travel

- 1) New development will be located in areas where the opportunity for sustainable travel to, from and within the site is realistic.
- 2) New development must contribute to the delivery of an integrated, accessible and safe transport system, maximising the use of the sustainable transport modes of walking, cycling and the use of public transport including the provision of Mobi-Hubs where appropriate in line with the current version of the Local Transport Plan.
- 3) Proposals for development will need to have regard to the Infrastructure Delivery Schedule and any subsequent updates which identify the key infrastructure requirements on which the delivery of the plan depends. Provision of suitable access and transport infrastructure and services will be achieved through direct improvements and/or schemes funded through Section 106 contributions or the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) to address impacts of new development.
- 4) The transfer of road freight to railways and canals in the district will be supported in principle, subject to the provision of a full Transport Assessment and compliance with other relevant local, regional or national policies, including an assessment of impacts on the environment and amenity and prior discussion with the Canal and River Trust and Network Rail.

Development Proposals

- 5) New development should integrate means of travel and minimise the impacts of travel by private motor vehicle on the district by maximising:
 - a) The provision of high-quality, safe and direct walking and cycling routes within a permeable site layout, with priority over vehicular traffic, that facilitates and encourages walking and cycling;

- b) The provision of sufficient secure, accessible and convenient cycle parking;
 - c) Delivery of new and enhanced cycle and walking routes in the area to schools, local facilities, services, bus stops and railway stations, as well as to the towpath and access including links to and from the Grand Union Canal towpath, or other key destinations identified;
 - d) The provision and improvement of public transport access including layouts to enable convenient access for buses, bus priority where possible and accessible bus stops with high quality infrastructure;
 - e) Opportunities for new taxi ranks where there is a demonstrated need arising from new developments including transport hubs where demand would be high, such as station forecourts, and town centres.
- 6) Development proposals should demonstrate that:
- a) they provide a safe and adequate means of access for each mode;
 - b) opportunities for routes to key destinations by sustainable modes are maximised to reduce reliance on private vehicles for short journeys;
 - c) they will maintain the safe operation and the performance of the local road networks and the Strategic Road Network;
 - d) they are appropriate in scale to existing transport infrastructure, including public transport and, where necessary, infrastructure can be improved with provision for public transport as part of a scheme, and/or through off-site delivery and contributions;
 - e) they are integrated with the wider network of transport routes, including public rights of way and cycle paths where appropriate;
 - f) they make adequate provision for all users, including car and other vehicle parking, giving priority to people with mobility difficulties,

pedestrians, cyclists and equestrians, and to low and ultra-low emission vehicles;

- g) they are linked to local facilities, amenities and public transport hubs through roads which provide sufficient width to allow vehicles to maintain the separation from pedestrians, cyclists and other road users required by the Highway Code.
- 7) Development generating a significant amount of movement must be supported by a Transport Assessment or Transport Statement and a Travel Plan for prospective residents, employees or users in accordance with the Local Validation Checklist. The Assessment/Statement should fully assess the impact of the proposal on transport taking into account the cumulative impacts of permitted developments and allocated sites, and detail any measures to be taken to mitigate adverse impacts taking into consideration relevant guidance available from the County Council.

Reasoned Justification:

- 12.9 Transport has a range of impacts on the environment. As well as the land take for provision of transport infrastructure, it is a major source of carbon dioxide and of emissions affecting air quality in the district, with consequences for the health and quality of life of communities.
- 12.10 The NPPF requires that developments that generate significant movement are located where the need to travel will be minimised and the use of sustainable transport modes can be maximised. It also states that different policies and measures will be required in different communities and that opportunities to maximise sustainable transport solutions will vary from urban to rural areas.
- 12.11 Sustainable modes of travel are defined within the NPPF as any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, low and ultra-low emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.

Reducing the Need to Travel

- 12.12 The spatial strategy seeks to focus growth to locations which are or can be made sustainable to make the fullest possible use of public transport, walking and cycling. Complementing this, there is a need for all individual proposals for development to maximise opportunities to support and integrate sustainable travel and to manage and mitigate transport impacts to ensure that safe and suitable access will be provided for all users and that significant impacts of development will be limited. In doing so, we seek to create environments that make it easier to be physically active,

enhance opportunities for walking and cycling safely, create high quality public spaces and public realm, improve connectivity and accessibility for all, and focus on supporting the high streets, and centres as destinations that people want to go to and use to 'live locally'.

- 12.13 The council requires proposals for every development and all major developments to promote the concept of enjoyable / liveable / 20-minute neighbourhoods. Creating neighbourhoods where residents' daily needs can be reached within a 20 minute walk (10 minutes each way) will not only improve quality of life but will also bring the multiple benefits of healthier lifestyles, cleaner air, stronger local economies and above all, better resilience against climate change. Proposals for new development must evidence exactly how more sustainable travel will be prioritised (through walking and cycling, travel planning and design to reduce the need for both essential and non-essential journeys).
- 12.14 All opportunities to minimise the impacts of transport on the environment through reducing the need to travel and promoting and encouraging the use of alternative more sustainable modes of transport must be taken as part of proposals for development.
- 12.15 Developers are encouraged to explore the opportunity to integrate new development to existing Mobi Hubs and/or create new multi-modal hubs providing electric vehicle charge points, e-bikes, car clubs, and information on local transportation for businesses, the general public, communities and visitors. They will be designed with respect to their compatibility with future mobility technologies, ensuring infrastructure that is compatible with developments such as automotive vehicles, vehicle to grid charging and battery storage.

Walking and Cycling

- 12.16 New development proposals should incorporate the Transport User Hierarchy as set out in the current Hertfordshire County Council Local Transport Plan into the design of any scheme. The development of any transport strategy should provide for travel needs in the following order:
- Opportunities to reduce travel demand and the need to travel
 - Vulnerable road user needs (such as pedestrians and cyclists)
 - Passenger transport user needs
 - Powered two-wheeler (mopeds and motorbikes) user needs
 - Other motor vehicle user needs
- 12.17 Supporting a safe and pleasant walking environment places prioritisation of pedestrians at the top of the road user hierarchy and improvements to pedestrian safety in existing areas. The council has developed and adopted its Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan in line with Government guidance. More information is available at <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/transport-and-streets/cycling->

[walking#Local%20Cycling%20and%20Walking%20Infrastructure%20Plan%20\(LC%20WIP\)](#). Developments must incorporate high quality pedestrian routes that promote walking as an attractive, convenient, safe and pleasant mode of transport and that connect in networks and to the surrounding area taking into account existing and likely desire lines. Adequate wayfinding is also important to help to incentivise walking.

- 12.18 Cycling is also an essential component of sustainability and the support of healthy lifestyles, as well as providing an affordable means of access to local destinations and opportunity for leisure and recreation. To encourage and support cycling, developments should connect to, and further develop and enhance the existing network of cycle routes of different types (on-road and off-road) helping to deliver the local cycling and walking strategies. This will include improvements to junctions as well as the routes themselves. Developments should adhere to Highway Code in implementing a risk-based 'hierarchy of road users', which places more responsibility on the drivers of larger vehicles to look after more vulnerable road users such as cyclists and pedestrians. Providing sufficient, convenient and secure cycle parking, with a particular priority at key destinations such as town centres and railway stations is also important, as well as end-of-trip facilities for cyclists.
- 12.19 Where possible, walking and cycling routes should be designed to incorporate designing out crime principles, including being well lit, and provide clear sightlines.
- 12.20 Active travel infrastructure should be accessible and inclusive. Cycleways should provide enough space for adapted cycles such as tricycles, tandems and wheelchair cycles. Cycle infrastructure should be designed in line with LTN 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design. This will ensure that cycle tracks and footways are designed to be perceived as wholly separate facilities, ensuring the safety of both pedestrian and cyclist users.

Travel Planning

- 12.21 The council will also require Travel Plans for every major development and will work with the Local Transport, Traffic and Highway Authority to require, monitor and enforce the effectiveness of Travel Plans. Local guidance sets out criteria for production of Travel Plans and can be viewed with the following link: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/travelplans.
- 12.22 This can include initiatives to increase access to bicycles through cycle loan and hire opportunities subject to consideration of any associated facilities against other policies and objectives of the Local Plan.
- 12.23 Training and/or travel behaviour initiatives to support the take up of cycling will also be supported.
- 12.24 The Council will work with partners including Hertfordshire County Council and bus and rail operators to implement measures to give buses priority over other vehicles; to create and enhance the public realm around rail stations to improve the user experience and interchange; to develop the network to meet travel needs in the area; and to ensure that bus stops and bus stopping areas are well located and that they

are designed to be accessible and comfortable for all. New development must also make provision for public transport where this is appropriate taking into account of the scale and nature of a development, including for example through layouts which enable access for buses and provision of covered waiting facilities and accessible bus stops with high quality infrastructure. Relevant guidance is available in HCC’s Intalink Bus Strategy and the Rail Strategy.

- 12.25 In addition to supporting sustainable modes of travel, where new development comes forward, it must ensure that access arrangements are safe and do not result in danger or inconvenience to other users of the highway, including as a consequence of traffic generation on both the local road network and the Strategic Road Network which comprises the motorways and some A roads. Any impacts on the SRN will need to be identified and mitigated as far as reasonably possible. Appropriate provision for parking should also be made in accordance with the parking standards and the Place and Movement Design Guide.
- 12.26 The council will work in partnership with Canal and River Trust in relation to integrating the canal corridor into adjacent development and creating / strengthening links to other areas of open space. This could include improvements to the existing towpath, improving signage and creating circular walks or heritage trails. Canal Trust will be consulted as particular working practices and frequency required, costs, management would be key to determining overall suitability of any proposals for freight on the waterway.

Parking

- 12.27 There are high levels of car ownership and usage in Three Rivers, and the demand for and management of parking is an important issue for the district. Three Rivers has Controlled Parking Zones in Rickmansworth and Chorleywood and other parking schemes, including permit parking, which have been established to meet the requirements of existing residents in areas where off-street parking is either limited or not available. Parking space in many areas is frequently used to maximum capacity and, as a consequence, there may be a conflict in the use of space between existing residents and occupiers of new properties.
- 12.28 The provision and management of parking is also an important factor in helping to influence travel demand and modes of travel. As noted within the NPPF, consideration for parking needs to be integral to the design of schemes alongside patterns of movement and can contribute to making high quality places through the reduction in congestion, carbon emissions and unreliable journey times.

TC2 - Parking
<p>1) Development should make provision for parking in accordance with the parking standards and the zone based reductions set out in Appendix 3 (Parking Standards).</p>

- 2) Car parking spaces should be provided in line with the dimensions set out in the Government's Manual for Streets document and any subsequent updates.
- 3) 20% of car parking spaces for major developments (10 dwellings or more) should be unallocated. Major developments should provide a parking management plan to demonstrate how on-site parking spaces will be reserved for residents only.
- 4) Off-street vehicle parking for new developments should be provided such that the level of any resulting parking on the public highway does not adversely impact road safety or the movement of other road users.
- 5) Areas providing parking should be an integral part of a proposal. They should preserve a building's setting and the character of the surrounding area and should provide adequate soft landscaping and surface material to avoid adverse visual impacts and to manage surface water runoff.
- 6) The council will encourage the delivery of infrastructure to support the use of low carbon transport, including requiring electric vehicle charging points to be provided as part of new development in accordance with the standards set out in Appendix 3.
- 7) The provision and/or improvement of a car club by a new development will be supported if deemed to be in an appropriate location.

Reasoned Justification:

12.29 National policy states that when setting local parking standards for residential and non-residential development local planning authorities should take account of:

- The accessibility of the development;
- The type, mix and use of development;
- The availability of and opportunities for public transport;
- Local car ownership levels; and
- The need to ensure an adequate provision of spaces for charging plug-in and other ultra-low emission vehicles.

- 12.30 Parking standards are required in Three Rivers to manage the network and reduce pressure on the on-street supply of parking which can give rise to problems of congestion and reduce road safety.
- 12.31 There is also a need to ensure that sufficient parking is provided to address the needs of all users including parking for people with disabilities, for motorbikes, as well as providing sufficient spaces for low emission vehicles and electric vehicle charging equipment. Supporting the use of lower emission vehicles as an alternative to high emission vehicles is an important measure to reduce air pollution and carbon emissions in the district.
- 12.32 In order to support sustainable transport choices and cycle parking standards, it is also essential that sufficient cycle parking provision is accommodated as part of new development, and that this is safe, secure and convenient for users.
- 12.33 The Parking Standards (Appendix 3) which set out the amount of parking to be provided takes account of a number of factors including seeking to reduce unnecessary car trips, promoting effective use of land, making development viable and not creating on street parking pressure which undermines quality of life.
- 12.34 These standards will be applied as a 'standard' (rather than a 'maximum') which may be adjusted upward or downward if robust evidence is provided. As such, the car parking standards should be taken as a starting point and any proposed scheme will be assessed accordingly.
- 12.35 The standards promote fewer spaces in locations better served by public transport. The emphasis is on not trying to provide spaces where they are unnecessary. There may also be opportunities for low car or car free development in highly sustainable locations close to public transport interchanges where space for parking is constrained and controlled parking measures are, or can be put, in place.

Construction, Deliveries, Collections and Servicing

- 12.36 In addition to the management of waste and construction, the arrangements for deliveries and servicing can have a significant impact on the environment, both on a development site and in the surrounding area. Managing these impacts is important for the quality of life of communities and the amenity of the area.

TC3 - Construction, Deliveries, Collections and Servicing
<p><u>Construction Phase</u></p> <p>1) Development proposals located close to Strategic Road Networks (SRNs) should be consulted with National Highways. Construction Management Plans (CMPs) will be required for development sites positioned close to SRNs, or which would place a sizeable amount of construction vehicles on the SRNs. Any impacts arising from any disruptions during</p>

construction, traffic volume, composition or routing change and transport infrastructure modification should be fully assessed and reported.

- 2) Construction Management Plans (CMPs) may be required where development proposals may have a significant impact on highway safety and the amenity of users of the public highway and Rights of Way.
- 3) Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) may be required where development proposals may have a significant impact on the environment or amenity of nearby residents.

Deliveries, Collections and Servicing

- 4) Development proposals must consider arrangements for deliveries, collections, and servicing for the lifetime of the development and demonstrate that adequate provision can be made for future occupiers. Where possible, delivery and servicing arrangements should be accommodated off-street and the use of delivery and servicing bays should be strictly controlled.
- 5) Proposals should demonstrate that delivery, servicing and emergency vehicles are able to enter and exit the site in forward gear and that the proposed arrangements will be safe and will not cause traffic obstruction or nuisance
- 6) Applications for major developments must demonstrate suitable provision for refuse and recycling collection, including details of storage and collection points and locations for vehicles to turn and wait.
- 7) There should be no adverse impacts of deliveries, collections or servicing on the amenity of local residents and businesses including from vehicle noise, size of vehicles and times of deliveries, collections and servicing.
- 8) Delivery and Servicing Plans (DSPs) will be required for development that by virtue of likely vehicle movements may impact on the operation of the public highway, private roads, the public realm and/or on the amenity of residents and businesses. The DSP should demonstrate how any potential impacts will be mitigated, and should seek to encourage use of low-emission vehicles and efficient and sustainable delivery systems which minimise motorised vehicle trips.

Reasoned Justification:

- 12.36 The management of construction can have a significant impact on the environment, on a development site, local highway network and in the surrounding area. A Construction Management Plan may include details of:
- Construction vehicle numbers, type, routing, including details of vehicles attending for spoil removal;
 - Access arrangements to the site, including the access points to be used for specified construction activities, including deliveries, and the use of banksmen;
 - Traffic management requirements;
 - Plan showing construction and storage compounds (including areas of hard surfacing designated for car parking, loading/unloading and turning areas);
 - Siting and details of wheel washing facilities;
 - Cleaning of site entrances, site tracks and the adjacent public highway;
 - Timing of construction activities (including delivery times and removal of waste) and to avoid school pick up/drop off times;
 - The provision of screening including site hoarding to the site perimeter, including its location, type and height and the provision on the public-facing side of the hoarding of contact details for the site manager;
 - Details of locations for contractor vehicle parking and locations contractors will be forbidden from parking at
 - Pre-development survey of the road and verges around the site.
- 12.37 Construction Environmental Management Plans (CEMPs) sets out the environmental issues and management procedures to be adopted during construction works on site, to control potential adverse impacts to the environment and the local community. A CEMP may include details of:
- Details of the location, layout, and surrounding sensitive receptors including potential impacts
 - Monitoring and reporting information (including compliance schedule and roles and responsibilities of site personnel)
 - Waste, fuel/chemicals and minerals management
 - Pollution control, including details on how to mitigate against noise, vibration and dust

- 12.38 Delivery and servicing arrangements can have significant impacts on the quality of the environment and living and working conditions of an area and must be considered as an important part of proposals for new development.
- 12.39 This includes ensuring that there is adequate space and access within a site to accommodate requirements for storage and collection of waste and deliveries as well as managing associated vehicle movements so that these do not result in harm to the amenity of the area or any neighbouring occupiers. Where possible, delivery and servicing arrangements should be accommodated off-street, and the use of delivery and servicing bays provided should be strictly controlled.
- 12.40 Where relevant, applications for development should include details of:
- Delivery hours;
 - Delivery frequency;
 - Location of service bays;
 - Size of servicing vehicles;
 - Operation of servicing bays including swept path analysis
- 12.41 To help manage impacts over the lifetime of a development, Delivery and Servicing Plans (DSP's) will be required for some larger developments to demonstrate how any potential impacts will be mitigated.
- 12.42 Developments should adhere to best practice construction techniques to limit impacts on the environment, reduce noise and vibration from construction, and manage the transportation of construction waste and materials.

Waterways

- 12.43 A waterway is a navigable body of water and can include rivers and canals. They are important to both the natural environment and human activities. The Grand Union Canal runs the length of the district and provides a significant Green and Blue Infrastructure resource and supports transport, biodiversity, recreation, drainage, water supply and managing flood risk. It is also an important visual amenity and there are a number of heritage assets on or associated with the canal.
- 12.44 The three rivers that give the district its name (the Rivers Colne, Gade and Chess) are important resources for the district in terms of landscape, biodiversity and access to open space, and form the basis of the district's Green and Blue Infrastructure network.
- 12.45 As well as these functions, the canal is used by many houseboats and leisure craft. Concentrations of houseboats exist at Batchworth Lock, Rickmansworth and to a lesser extent at Cassiobury in Croxley Green.

TC4 - Waterways

- 1) Development in the vicinity of waterways must protect and enhance waterway infrastructure and should enable water-dependent uses where appropriate.
- 2) Proposals for permanent moorings and marinas (including any associated ancillary works and infrastructure) will only be permitted on the canal/waterways where adjacent to the existing built-up area and where it can be demonstrated that the proposal will:
 - a) Not compromise the ability of leisure boat users to access moorings;
 - b) Have no adverse effect on the nature conservation value of the canal/waterway or nearby land;
 - c) Include sufficient space for essential facilities and landscaping;
 - d) Provide adequate pedestrian and service vehicle access;
 - e) Cause no harm to the historic or visual character of the canal/waterway;
 - f) Not increase flood risk;
 - g) Provide safe access and egress during a flood;
 - h) Not impede navigation and/or the use of the towpath;
- 3) Major development schemes adjacent to waterways should consider the provision of new moorings, or facilities for water-based leisure and recreation as part of development proposals. Opportunities to use the canal for transport, including freight during the construction process, or as a renewable energy resource should also be considered.

Reasoned Justification:

- 12.46 It is essential that the canal and other waterways are protected as an important resource for the district and area providing multiple benefits, and that these benefits are recognised and enhanced.
- 12.47 Making use of the canal and other waterways, including residing on houseboats are a lifestyle choice for some residents, and they contribute to increasing diversity of homes within the district. Residents can also provide valuable assistance to leisure boat users and aid security along the canal.
- 12.48 The Local Plan aims to deliver new development in sustainable locations and so the same principle will be applied to proposals for residential and other moorings. The policy aims to ensure that potential residents of houseboats benefit from the same level of access to services and facilities as those living in traditional housing.
- 12.49 Major development schemes adjacent to waterways offer an opportunity to consider the provision of new moorings or facilities for water-based leisure and recreation as an integrated part of proposals. Any such proposals will be supported where they address the requirements of all other policies within the Local Plan.
- 12.50 Development proposals are also encouraged to consider opportunities to use the canal for transport, including for the transport of freight during construction, or as a renewable energy resource for heating and cooling.

Broadband and Electronic Communications

- 12.51 The council recognises that electronic communications networks and the availability, reliability and speed of broadband provision is essential to the development of the local economy and for the benefit of the local community as they underpin almost every aspect of modern life.

TC5 - Broadband and Electronic Communications

- 1) Proposals for the installation of electronic communications equipment should:
 - a) Have no significant adverse effect on the external appearance of the building on which, or space in which, they are to be located, or the surrounding area. Particular care should be taken in Conservation Areas;
 - b) Fully explore the possibility of sharing facilities, such as masts, cabinet boxes and satellite dishes, and erecting antennae on existing buildings or other structures;

- c) Fully explore technologies to miniaturise and camouflage any electronic communications apparatus;
 - d) Be appropriately designed, coloured and landscaped to take account of their setting
- 2) All residential, employment and commercial developments must be served by or be capable of being served by super-fast full-fibre broadband through the integration of appropriate measures such as open access ducting to industry standards.
 - 3) Electronic communications construction and engineering work for new developments should be operational prior to first occupation of the development.

Reasoned Justification:

- 12.52 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Governments policy on full fibre broadband connections and electronic communications networks which include next generation mobile technology (such as 5G). It recognises that high quality and reliable communications infrastructure is essential for economic growth and social well-being.
- 12.53 The council recognises the importance of electronic communications networks and the availability, reliability and speed of broadband provision, so supports the expansion of electronic communications networks and full fibre broadband connections for all new development.
- 12.54 With regards to electronic communications equipment (including satellite dishes, microwave antennae, radio masts, public call boxes, cabinets and other types of telecommunication equipment) the aim is to ensure that these are kept to a minimum through encouraging the sharing of equipment where this is technically possible. The impact of telecommunications can be minimised through careful design, colouring and landscaping to minimise visual intrusion which can help to protect the character and appearance of an area. When considering applications the council shall have regard to the legal requirements placed upon electronic communications operators to provide an adequate service and any technical and operational obligations that the operator is required to undertake.
- 12.55 It will be important for all new residential, employment and commercial developments to provide the means to enable connection to be made to fibre optic broadband infrastructure as the main technology for delivering superfast connections. This

should be designed and installed as an integral part of development to avoid the visual impact and future disturbance caused by retrofitting. It is recognised that the availability of broadband infrastructure will vary across the district.

- 12.56 The expectation is that where such infrastructure is not readily available nearby, provision is made for ducting and cabinets to enable easy connection at a later date. In 2021 the Government defined superfast broadband as being at least 30 Mbps download speed, therefore this is the minimum level of service that is considered acceptable.

13 Social, Health and Wellbeing

Social and Community Facilities

- 13.1 Social and community facilities and important local services including libraries, places of worship, community centres or village halls, meeting places, sports venues, cultural buildings, facilities for arts, theatres, and public houses perform a vital function in terms of the economic and social welfare of the district.
- 13.2 The retention and enhancement of this social and community infrastructure, which makes a crucial contribution to the mental and physical wellbeing and sense of place and community, should be strongly supported. In addition, it is important that a range of new social and community facilities should be provided as part of significant new development proposals.

SHW1 - Social and Community Facilities

- 1) Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of any premises resulting in the loss of social or community facilities, assets of community value, or services that support the local community, will not be permitted unless:
 - a) A replacement facility is provided on-site, offering a level of accessibility and standard of provision at least equal to that of the existing facility which would continue to meet the need of the local population; or
 - b) The facility or service concerned will be adequately supplied or met by an easily accessible existing or new facility in an appropriate alternative location, served by sustainable modes of transport; or
 - c) It can be demonstrated that there is no current or forecast future demand for the use or an alternative social or community use through provision of marketing information and an impact assessment to show why the site cannot support the social or community use and identify impacts on users; And
 - d) The premises or site cannot readily be used for, or converted to, any other community facility.

- 2) Where a use is no longer economically viable, the council will require supporting information setting out reasons as to why the use is no longer viable and cannot be made viable in the foreseeable future. This may include details of previous use, accounts and marketing information demonstrating that the premises has been marketed for use as a community facility for a reasonable length of time and that no suitable user has been/or is likely to be found.

New Provision and Enhancement

- 3) The council will support proposals to provide new and/or extended or enhanced social and community infrastructure facilities and their co-location with other social and community uses, subject to an assessment against all relevant Local Plan policies.
- 4) Social and community infrastructure will be funded through the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and/or section 106 planning obligations (as appropriate). In addition, new and/or extended on-site provision of social and community infrastructure may be required as part of the supporting infrastructure for significant new housing and mixed-use development proposals where it is necessary to mitigate the impacts of the development on local services and meet the needs of occupiers.
- 5) Development resulting in the provision of new social and community facilities which are not generally accessible or available to the public, such as school sports facilities, will be required to enter into Community Use Agreements to allow and promote access by local communities to the facility.
- 6) Proposals for new or improved social or community facilities, including extensions to existing facilities will be supported where they are in accordance with relevant objectives and other policies of the Local Plan and:
 - a) Are located in areas convenient for the community they would serve and be accessible by a range of sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport;
 - b) Provide spaces and buildings which are inclusive, accessible, flexible and sustainable and which meet the needs of intended users;

- c) Are designed and sited to maximise shared use of the facility; and
- d) A strategic or local need can be identified for the new/improved social or community facility.

Reasoned Justification:

- 13.3 It is vital that all residents have good access to community, leisure and cultural facilities and it is recognised that the loss of these facilities can have a detrimental impact upon an individual's quality of life. Social and community facilities, whether publicly or privately owned, can be subject to development pressures from alternative uses. It is therefore important that where appropriate such facilities are retained within the local community.
- 13.4 In addition, ensuring that new development is supported by a suitable level of social and community infrastructure is important not only for the quality of life of residents in new developments, but also for the existing population who should not see a reduction in the quality of their services, their health and wellbeing or their experience of living in Three Rivers.

Health and Wellbeing

- 13.5 The way that we plan and design places has a significant influence over whether communities are able to live healthy lives, which is reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework. Consequently, Local Plan policies should utilise public health evidence to inform policies to ensure that new development proposals support improvements to the health and wellbeing of the population.

SHW2 - Health and Wellbeing

- 1) All development shall be designed to maximise the impact it can make to promoting healthy communities and reducing health inequalities. In particular, regard shall be had to providing the necessary infrastructure to encourage physical exercise and health, including accessible open space, vegetation and landscaping, sport and recreation facilities, cultural facilities and safe, well promoted, walking and cycling routes.
- 2) Where new health facilities are planned these should be located where there is a choice of sustainable transport options and should be accessible to all members of the community.

- 3) To support healthy eating, community assets such as allotments and community orchards should be protected and planting of fruit trees on open spaces encouraged. Opportunities for food growing should be maximised within new developments.

- 4) Health Impacts Assessments are required for proposals that may have an adverse health impact on the immediate area and affect people living in the development and close by. Health Impacts Assessments should be provided as part of a planning application submitted for major residential proposals of 100 units or more, non-residential applications of 1000sqm or more, and any other locally or nationally significant infrastructure project. Assessments should be prepared in accordance with Hertfordshire Public Health's Position Statement on HIAs. Where a Health Impact Assessment has identified an issue that may have a significant adverse impact, the applicant should set out how this has been addressed and mitigated.

Reasoned Justification:

- 13.6 The World Health Organisation and various Health and Wellbeing Partnerships suggest the numerous social determinants of health, these factors include:
1. Housing and living environment
 2. Work environment
 3. Transport
 4. Access to health and social care services
 5. Unemployment and welfare
 6. Education
- 13.7 All of the above have particular links with planning. Many of the health issues relating to the above can be overcome by well-designed developments with consideration of the location, density and mix of land uses and the 'designing in' of health and wellbeing as an essential part of the development. Emphasis should also be placed on active travel, multi-functional open space and high quality urban environments to ensure that the setting of the housing and development within the neighbourhood area also contribute to the health and wellbeing of individuals.
- 13.8 HCC Public Health Department have produced a Hertfordshire Healthy and Safe Places Framework (2025) to aid local authorities and developers in the delivery of healthy development and communities and focusses on the principle of "healthy placemaking" as an essential part of the planning process. The document sets out the key principles and aspirations of the Hertfordshire County Council's Public Health Department focusses on seven core Healthy Placemaking Principles:
- Healthy Homes
 - Healthy Movement and Connectivity

- Healthy Community Infrastructure
- Healthy Nature Environment
- Healthy Economy
- Healthy Places and Neighbourhoods
- Healthy and Safe Communities

- 13.9 The guidance shifts the planning focus toward the wider determinants of health, such as housing quality, social connectivity, and safety, to ensure that new and existing environments actively promote physical and mental wellbeing while reducing long-standing health inequalities across the region. The guidance is available at <https://hertshealthyplacemaking-hertscc.hub.arcgis.com>
- 13.10 Further guidance on design is also available in Sport England's 'Active Design Guidance' available at: <https://www.sportengland.org/how-we-can-help/facilities-and-planning/design-and-cost-guidance/active-design>
- 13.11 To ensure that health and wellbeing is considered in proposals for development we will require that Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) are submitted with planning applications for major residential developments of 100 or more dwellings and for non-residential developments of 1000sqm or more in accordance with the Hertfordshire Public Health's Position Statement on HIAs, available at: <https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/public-health/health/hia-position-statement.pdf>.

14 Northwood Headquarters

Northwood Headquarters (MOD)

- 14.1 Northwood Headquarters is a major military command centre, serving as both a national and NATO operational headquarters. It is the UK's principal military headquarters site, home to 5 Operational Headquarters. The site was rebuilt between 2006-2011, resulting in a purpose-built Headquarter site for 2,000 personnel.

NH1 - Northwood Headquarters (MOD)

- 1) New development at Northwood Headquarters that helps to enhance or sustain its operational capability will be supported.
- 2) Redevelopment, conversion and change of use of redundant MOD sites and buildings will be supported.
- 3) Non-military or non-defence related development within or in the areas around the Northwood Headquarters site will not be supported where it would adversely affect military operations or capability, unless the effect is suitably mitigated against or it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a defence or military need for the site.

Reasoned Justification:

- 14.2 National planning policy requires planning policies to take into account defence requirements by recognising and supporting development required for operational defence and security purposes and ensuring that operational sites are not affected adversely by the impact of other development proposed in the area.
- 14.3 Northwood Headquarters is identified as a significant defence asset where additional development is envisaged to support National Security needs.
- 14.4 Due to the need for operational secrecy, the evidence provided by the Ministry of Defence of the national security impact of development may be more limited than for other consultees. This council recognises this and will defer whenever possible to representations from the Ministry of Defence regarding the national security impact of development.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Design Criteria

Buildings, streets and spaces should be of the highest quality. In addition to the policies of the Local Plan, development proposals should satisfy the following more detailed criteria to ensure that new development creates a positive sense of place, does not lead to a gradual deterioration in the quality of the built environment, and that landscaping, the need for privacy and amenity space and the creation of identity in new development are taken into account.

It is important to note that whilst a development may be in accordance with the guidance contained in this document, in some cases it may still not be considered acceptable based on site circumstances. Likewise, certain developments may not comply with all guidance but could still be considered acceptable, particularly in the Principal Town, and Small Towns/Large Suburban Settlements, and other locations where high-density development is considered appropriate, and a relaxation of standards may be justified to enable efficient and effective use of land. All applications will be assessed and determined on their own merits.

The following criteria provide more detailed guidance for all new residential development including new dwellings, replacement dwellings, and extensions or alterations to existing dwellings.

For the purpose of these guidelines, the Town and Country Planning Act defines the term 'habitable rooms' as rooms used or intended for the use of sleeping or living which are not solely used for cooking purposes. This would exclude bath or toilet facilities, service rooms, corridors, laundry rooms, hallways or utility rooms. Habitable rooms are considered to be living rooms, dining rooms, shared kitchen-living spaces, studies and bedrooms.

Non-residential space is not given the same degree of protection as residential properties. However, proposals should still ensure that development provides for suitable standards of amenity for existing and proposed non-residential space to maintain these as attractive spaces contributing to the economy of the district, and that commercial development including new buildings, replacement buildings and extensions or alterations to existing buildings do not adversely affect the character or amenities of the district.

Privacy

All developments are expected to maintain acceptable standards of privacy for both new and existing residential buildings. The degree of overlooking and privacy inherent in a development will depend on density, layout, distances and angles between buildings, internal layout, positioning of windows, relative levels and, to some extent, the presence of trees, hedges or other landscape features.

In the interests of privacy and to prevent unacceptable levels of overlooking:

- a) Distances between buildings must be sufficient so as to prevent unacceptable levels of overlooking, particularly from upper floors. Areas of particular sensitivity are habitable rooms, the first 3m of private space behind a rear elevation and balconies or terraces which are the sole source of private outside space for a home. As an indicative figure, 22m is considered a reasonable separation distance to ensure privacy levels are protected. Distances should be at least 24m between buildings if they include external balconies or are in excess of three storeys (especially dwellings/flats) with elevations which directly face one another or in situations where there are site level differences involved. However, the characteristics of the site may allow some degree of variation, for example where there is a difference in ground level between buildings, where buildings face each other at an angle and where impact on privacy levels can be satisfactorily mitigated, including sites within an urban environment. Mitigating circumstances such as careful layout and orientation, screening and window positions may allow a reduction of distances between elevations.
- b) A proportion of each garden should be a private zone abutting or close to the dwelling that is not visible from the gardens or ground floor habitable rooms of adjoining properties. This should be of a minimum distance of 3 metres from a wall of the dwelling and be permanently screened by walls or fences.
- c) Development must not incorporate balconies, raised platforms and patios or first floor conservatories which unacceptably overlook neighbouring properties and will only be acceptable where there is no perceived or direct overlooking. Raised platforms and patios that require privacy screens which visually impact neighbours will not be supported.
- d) Trees and hedges (either existing or planted as part of the development) are crucial in planning as they can provide an effective screen and additional privacy, and they should be safeguarded throughout construction and lifetime of the development. To ensure privacy, trees and hedges should not be solely relied upon due to the potential loss of leaves in winter or the possibility of storm damage and disease etc. Where trees are relied on in any development, a tree management plan is required to ensure their future protection.
- e) Windows of habitable rooms at first floor level must not be located in flank elevations where they will result in unacceptable levels of overlooking or result in an un-neighbourly relationship. Flank windows of other rooms should be non-opening, below 1.7m (from internal floor level) and fitted with purpose made obscure glazing. High level windows with a sill height of 1.7 metres or more may be acceptable where a secondary light source is necessary.
- f) Ground floor windows should be located away from flank boundaries. Where flank windows to ground floor habitable rooms have to be incorporated, the boundary must be satisfactorily screened by a fence, wall or evergreen hedge.
- g) Reliance should not be placed on high screening fences or walls (2 metres and above) where these would form a dominant and oppressive feature.

Prospect

Developments which rely on outlook over garage courts, extensive parking areas, railway lines etc. will be discouraged where this can be avoided. All residential units where possible should have an outlook over a public or private highway, garden or other open space.

Where the rear of a building looks onto the side of another (for instance at a corner in a housing layout), the distance between them must be sufficient to avoid the flank wall having an overbearing effect.

Daylight, Sunlight and Outlook

Development should ensure a good level of daylight, sunlight and outlook, throughout the day and the year and minimise impact on surrounding properties and spaces.

The design of all development is required to maximise natural light into the room (subject to passive heating and cooling considerations). All dwellings should provide for direct sunlight to enter the main habitable rooms for a reasonable period of the day. Living rooms, dining rooms and open living or dining kitchen spaces should preferably receive direct sunlight.

Aspect

All new residential units should be dual aspect, unless provision of dual aspect is demonstrated to be impossible or unfavourable. Where such circumstances are demonstrated, all single aspect units must:

- a) Provide a good level of daylight for each habitable room, and optimise opportunity for direct sunlight;
- b) Ensure that the aspect is not predominantly north-facing and does not face onto main roads or other significant sources of air pollution and/or noise and vibration, which would preclude opening windows;
- c) Provide a good level of natural ventilation throughout the dwelling via passive/nonmechanical design measures; and
- d) Ensure that future occupiers have a good level of privacy and do not experience adverse impacts from overlooking.

Flatted Developments

Proposals for flatted development or involving the conversion of residential unit(s) into a larger number of units must provide for a good standard of amenity for all occupiers and consider the effect of development on the amenity of adjacent properties, and put in place measures to address any adverse impacts raised. This will include (but is not limited to) the following considerations:

- a) Internal communal corridors should be a minimum of 1.5m wide and should ideally have windows which open to promote cross ventilation and maximise daylight;

- b) Common/shared entrances should lead to a hall large enough for people to manoeuvre with shopping and/or baby buggies, and in wheelchairs, with ease;
- c) Access cores must provide an access control system, with entry phones in all dwellings linked to a main front door with remote electronic lock release;
- d) Internal layouts, including the relationship of rooms on different floors within the scheme, and the position of entrances, extensions and fire escapes should ensure utility for all occupiers. If internal layouts are unable to maintain room relationships, details of acoustic insulation will be required.

Residential Amenity Space

This section refers to provision of private and semi-private communal amenity space to serve individual dwellings rather than requirements for public open space.

New residential development should provide private outdoor amenity space within the curtilage of the development in accordance with the following indicative minimum levels:

- a) Houses
 - 2 bed house – 45sqm;
 - 3 bed house – 60sqm;
 - 4 bed house - 75sqm;
 - Additional bedrooms – 15sqm each
- b) Flats (space may be allocated specifically to each flat or provided communally)
 - 1 bed flat - 15sqm;
 - 2 or more bed flat – 25sqm.
 - The minimum depth and width of balconies and other private external spaces should be 1.5m. If required, mitigation such as privacy screens should be incorporated to avoid unacceptable levels of overlooking
- c) Specialist and Supported Housing for older people:
 - 15sqm per bedspace to be provided communally

Developers are encouraged to exceed these standards where applicable. Where developments are not able to meet the standards, such as where existing buildings in town centres are converted to residential use, the council may consider lower levels (of amenity space) being provided if the standard of living for future residents is not compromised.

Amenity space provided should be of practical shape and usable, with care taken to ensure the space offers a good standard of amenity. Where privacy is achieved by means such as careful layout, screening, or differing levels, rear gardens may be of varied lengths. However, where rear garden length alone is relied on to provide privacy the minimum length should be 11 metres.

Depending on the character of the development, the amenity space provided may be in the form of private gardens or in part, may contribute to formal spaces/settings for

groups of buildings or existing mature trees. In the latter case this can help avoid problems which can arise from the proximity of large trees to houses.

Communal space for flats should be well screened from highways and casual passers-by but should benefit from good levels of natural surveillance. Amenity space that lacks clear landscape proposals and consists of simple grassed or hard surfaced areas will not be acceptable.

Where space in the front of a dwelling is assigned to that particular property, it should be defensible space in the sense of being enclosed as part of the original layout.

Purely visual amenity space plays a different role; it should be prominent and may well include mature trees and key areas of planting and serve as a visual asset to the development without necessarily being heavily used by the occupants.

Built Form

All proposals should be in keeping with the prevailing landscape and streetscape, reflecting the variety of local building types by using complementary building materials and designs, and should not result in overdevelopment or unacceptable intensification by reason of scale, form, bulk, height, spacing, density and design.

New development, including extensions to existing properties should take into consideration impacts on neighbouring properties, both within and surrounding the development, and visual impacts generally. Oversized, unattractive and poorly sited development can result in loss of light and outlook for neighbours and detract from the character and appearance of the street scene, or original property in the case of extensions.

Few properties are designed to incorporate future extensions, therefore any additions built need to take into consideration their effect on neighbouring properties and their visual impact generally.

Where planning permission is required, planning applications will be assessed on their individual merits. New development and extensions or alterations to existing properties must:

- a) Not be excessively prominent in relation to adjacent properties or to the general street scene;
- b) Have the appropriate number of car parking spaces and/or garages in accordance with the council's Parking Standards;
- c) Respect the character of the property/street scene particularly with regard to the spacing of properties, roof form, positioning and style of windows and doors, and materials;
- d) Not result in significant loss of light to the windows of neighbouring properties nor allow unacceptable levels of overlooking

Single Storey Extensions

Side extensions: proximity to the flank boundary will be individually assessed.

Rear extensions: generally, the maximum depth should be 3.6m, or 4m in the case of detached dwellings. This distance may be reduced if the extension would adversely affect the amenities of occupants of adjoining properties or be unduly prominent.

Front extensions: applications will be assessed on their individual merits but must not result in significant loss of light to windows of a neighbouring property nor be excessively prominent in the street scene.

Two Storey Extensions

Side extensions: in order to prevent a terracing effect and maintain an appropriate spacing between properties in character with the locality:

- First floor extensions (i.e. over a garage or previous ground floor extension) shall be a minimum of 1.2m from the flank boundary
- Two storey extensions may be positioned on the flank boundary provided that the first floor element is set in by a minimum of 1.2m. This distance must be increased in low density areas or where the extension would have an adverse effect on an adjoining property. In high density areas an absolute minimum of 1m will be considered

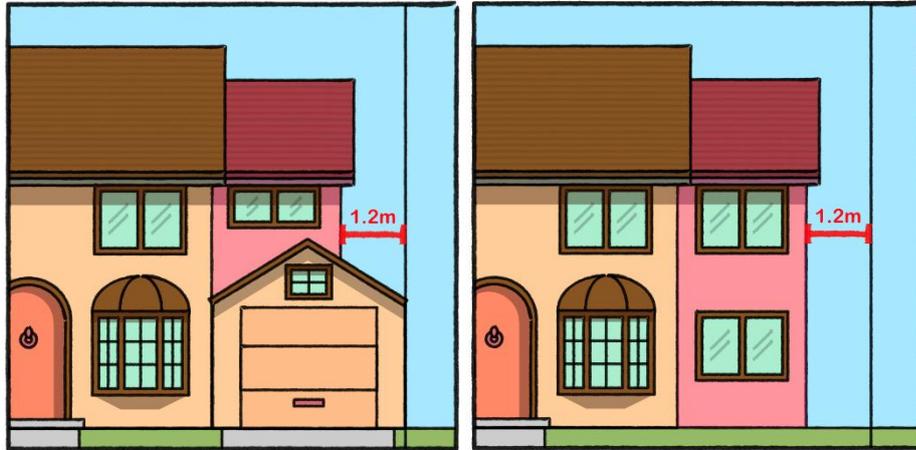
See Figure A.1 for illustrative examples.

Rear extensions: in terms of design, mass and volume, each application will be assessed on its individual merits according to the characteristics of the particular property.

Front extensions: applications will be assessed on their individual merits but should not result in loss of light to windows of a neighbouring property nor be excessively prominent in the street scene.

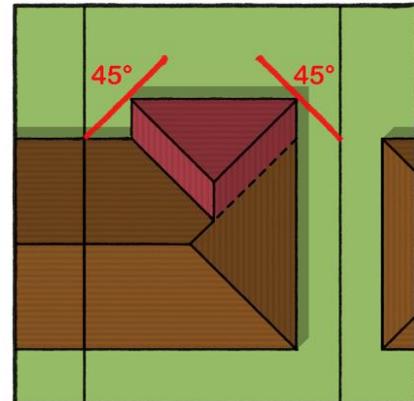
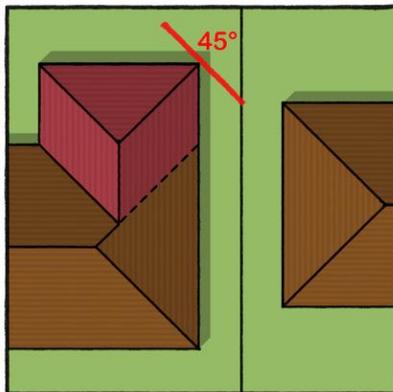
Two storey development should not intrude into a 45 degree splay line drawn across the rear garden from a point on the joint boundary, level with the rear wall of the adjacent property. This principle is dependent on the spacing and relative positions of the dwellings and consideration will also be given to the juxtaposition of properties, land levels and the position of windows and extensions on neighbouring properties. Figure A.2 provides illustrative examples.

Figure A.1 Single and Two Storey Side Extensions and New Development – Flank to Boundary Distances

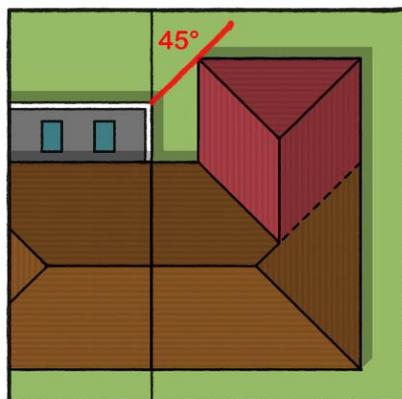


The first floor element of two storey development must be set in from the boundary. The ground floor element may be built up to the boundary

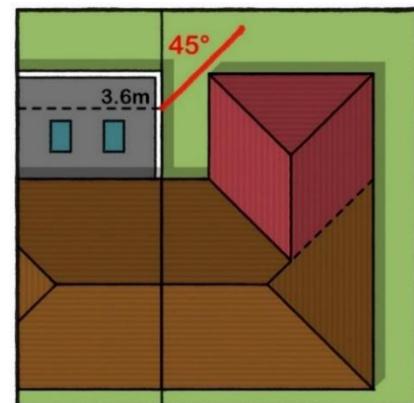
Figure A.2 Two Storey Rear Extensions and New Development – Examples of the 45 degree rule



Rear extensions should not intrude into a 45 degree splay line drawn across the rear garden from a point on the joint boundary, level with the rear wall of the adjacent property.



Staggered layouts: Greater depth may be possible but indefinite 'leapfrogging' by successive extensions will not be permitted



If the neighbour's extension is deeper than policy compliant guidance (i.e either 3.6m or 4m depending on dwelling type), then the 45 degree splay line is taken from the policy compliant depth from a point on the joint boundary

New Development

Development at first floor level and above should be set in from flank boundaries by a minimum of 1.2m. This distance may be increased in low density areas or where development would have an adverse effect on an adjoining property. In high density areas, an absolute minimum of 1m will be considered. See Figure A.2 for illustrative examples.

Dormer Windows

Dormer windows should always be subordinate to the main roof. They should be set below the existing ridge level, set in from either end of the roof and set back from the plane of the front or rear wall. The roof form should respect the character of the house if possible.

Front dormers may not always be appropriate in the street scene.

Multiple dormers should be proportionate in scale and number to the host roof.

The fenestration of any dormer window should respect the fenestration of the floors below.

Roof Structures

Crown roofs as the main roof structure can exacerbate the depth of properties and often result in an inappropriate bulk and massing. As such, they are generally discouraged and more traditional pitched roofs are generally favoured.

Increases to ridge height will be assessed on their own merits at the time of a planning application, and a street scene plan will be required as part of any application. Where roof forms are of a uniform style/height and appearance, it is unlikely that an increase in ridge height will be supported by the council.

Hip to Gable and Dutch Gable roof structures are discouraged in the case of semi-detached houses where they would unbalance the pair and result in a loss of symmetry. In some cases, roof forms in a street may be uniform and therefore this type of alteration may erode the group value of the street and will not be supported by the council.

Servicing and Ancillary Facilities

Careful consideration should be given to services for dwellings, bin and bike storage, access to meter boxes, space for clothes drying, places for deliveries and EV charging points where relevant. These should be designed to ensure that they are discreet and can easily be used in a safe way and should be designed as part of the building envelope wherever possible.

In all cases facilities should be designed to minimise visual impact on the street scene and ensure the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

Provision of sufficient and accessible external storage space for the accommodation of containers for refuse and recycling is particularly important and must be carefully designed and located to be accessible to the occupiers of developments and waste operatives and to minimise impacts on the character and amenities of an area.

The layout and location of parking areas are key features affecting the overall quality of residential and commercial schemes. There are many different approaches that can support successful outcomes, such as on-street parking, in-curtilage parking and basement parking.

The provision, location and type of car parking and service areas will be considered in context to ensure the most successful outcome can be delivered in each case, with consideration for factors including:

- a) Safety and security, including suitable levels of natural surveillance for parked cars;
- b) Degree of impact of parking on the street scene and public realm;
- c) Suitable and safe access for all users, including from the highway and between parking and buildings;
- d) Landscaping and materials

Appendix 2 - Development in the Green Belt

Agricultural and Forestry Dwellings

The NPPF sets out that buildings for agriculture or forestry may be an exception to inappropriate development in the Green Belt. However, it is important that any such buildings, and in particular dwellings, are demonstrably required **for** the purposes of agriculture or forestry.

There may be occasion where new residential development can be justified when accommodation is required to enable agricultural, forestry and certain other full-time workers to live at, or in the immediate vicinity of, their place of work. It will often be as convenient and more sustainable for such workers to live in nearby towns or villages, or suitable existing dwellings, so avoiding new and potentially intrusive development in the Green Belt. However, there will be some cases where the nature and demands of the work concerned make it essential for one or more people engaged in the enterprise to live at, or very close to, the site of their work. Whether this is essential in any particular case will depend on the needs of the enterprise concerned and not on the personal preferences or circumstances of any of the individuals involved.

It is essential that all applications for planning permission for new agricultural/forestry dwellings in the Green Belt are scrutinised thoroughly with the aim of detecting attempts to abuse (e.g. through speculative proposals) the planning system. In particular, it will be important to establish whether the stated intentions to engage in farming, forestry or any other rural-based enterprise, are genuine, are reasonably likely to materialise and are capable of being sustained for a reasonable period of time. It will also be important to establish that the needs of the intended enterprise require one or more of the people engaged in it to live nearby.

Permanent Agricultural Dwellings

New permanent dwellings will only be allowed to support existing agricultural activities on well-established agricultural units, providing:

- a) There is a clearly established existing functional need;
- b) The need relates to a full-time worker, or one who is primarily employed in agriculture and does not relate to a part-time requirement;
- c) The unit and the agricultural activity concerned have been established for at least three years, have been profitable for at least one of them, are currently financially sound, and have a clear prospect of remaining so;
- d) The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned; and
- e) Other planning requirements, e.g. in relation to access, or impact on the countryside, are satisfied.

A functional test is necessary to establish whether it is essential for the proper functioning of the enterprise for one or more workers to be readily available at most times. Such a requirement might arise, for example, if workers are needed to be on hand day and night:

- In case animals or agricultural processes require essential care at short notice;
- To deal quickly with emergencies that could otherwise cause serious loss of crops or products, for example, by frost damage or the failure of automatic systems.

In cases where we are particularly concerned about possible abuse, we will investigate the history of the holding to establish the recent pattern of use of land and buildings and whether, for example, any dwellings, or buildings suitable for conversion to dwellings, have recently been sold separately from the farmland concerned. Such a sale could constitute evidence of lack of agricultural need.

The protection of livestock from theft or injury by intruders may contribute on animal welfare grounds to the need for a new agricultural dwelling, although it will not by itself be sufficient to justify one. Requirements arising from food processing, as opposed to agriculture, cannot be used to justify an agricultural dwelling. Nor can agricultural needs justify the provision of isolated new dwellings as retirement homes for farmers.

If a functional requirement is established, it will then be necessary to consider the number of workers needed to meet it, for which the scale and nature of the enterprise will be relevant.

New permanent accommodation cannot be justified on agricultural grounds unless the farming enterprise is economically viable. A financial test is necessary for this purpose, and to provide evidence of the size of dwelling which the unit can sustain. In applying this test, we will take a realistic approach to the level of profitability, taking account of the nature of the enterprise concerned. Some enterprises which aim to operate broadly on a subsistence basis, but which nonetheless provide wider benefits (e.g. in managing attractive landscapes or wildlife habitats), can be sustained on relatively low financial returns.

Agricultural dwellings should be of a size commensurate with the established functional requirement. Dwellings that are unusually large in relation to the agricultural needs of the unit, or unusually expensive to construct in relation to the income it can sustain in the long-term, will not be permitted. It is the requirements of the enterprise, rather than those of the owner or occupier, that are relevant in determining the size of dwelling that is appropriate to a particular holding.

We will consider making planning permissions subject to conditions removing some of the permitted development rights under Part 1 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 2015 (as amended) for development within the curtilage of a dwelling house. For example, proposed extensions could result in a dwelling whose size exceeded what could be justified by the functional requirement,

and affect the continued viability of maintaining the property for its intended use, given the income that the agricultural unit can sustain.

Agricultural dwellings should be sited so as to meet the identified functional need and to be well-related to existing farm buildings, or other dwellings.

Temporary Agricultural Dwellings

If a new dwelling is essential to support a new farming activity, whether on a newly-created agricultural unit or an established one, it should normally, for the first three years, be provided by a caravan, a wooden structure which can be easily dismantled, or other temporary accommodation. It should satisfy the following criteria:

- a) Clear evidence of a firm intention and ability to develop the enterprise concerned (significant investment in new farm buildings is often a good indication of intentions);
- b) Functional need;
- c) Clear evidence that the proposed enterprise has been planned on a sound financial basis;
- d) The functional need could not be fulfilled by another existing dwelling on the unit, or any other existing accommodation in the area which is suitable and available for occupation by the workers concerned; and
- e) Other normal planning requirements, e.g. on siting and access, are satisfied.

If permission for temporary accommodation is granted, permission for a permanent dwelling will not subsequently be given unless the criteria set out in the permanent agricultural dwelling section is met. We will make clear the period for which the temporary permission is granted, the fact that the temporary dwelling will have to be removed, and the requirements that will have to be met if a permanent permission is to be granted. We will not normally grant successive extensions to a temporary permission over a period of more than three years, nor give temporary permissions in locations where we would not permit a permanent dwelling.

Forestry Dwellings

The council will apply the same criteria to applications for forestry dwellings as to those for agricultural dwellings. The other principles in the advice on agricultural dwellings are equally relevant to forestry dwellings. Under conventional methods of forestry management, which can involve the use of a peripatetic workforce, new forestry dwellings may not always be justified, except perhaps to service intensive nursery production of trees.

Occupancy Conditions

Where the need to provide accommodation to enable farm, forestry or other workers to live at or near their place of work has been accepted as providing the special justification required for new, isolated residential development in the Green Belt it will be necessary to ensure that the dwellings are kept available for meeting this need for as long as it exists. For this purpose, planning permission will be made subject to appropriate occupancy conditions.

Extensions and Alterations to Buildings in the Green Belt

The NPPF sets out that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate in the Green Belt. However, exceptions to this include:

- The extension or alteration of a building provided that it does not result in disproportionate additions over and above the size of the original building; and
- The replacement of a building, provided the new building is in the same use and not materially larger than the one it replaces.

The NPPF does not define the terms ‘disproportionate’ or ‘materially larger’. However, ‘original building’ is defined as:

A building as it existed on 1 July 1948 or, if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally.

Further guidance on what will be considered ‘disproportionate’ (in the case of extensions) or ‘materially larger’ (in the case of replacement buildings) and how the impact of such development on the openness of the Green Belt will be considered is set out below.

Extensions to Buildings

Applications for extensions or alterations to dwellings/buildings in the Green Belt will normally be unacceptable where this would result in disproportionate additions over the size of the original building, or harm to the openness of the Green Belt. Applications for residential extensions in the Metropolitan Green Belt will normally be unacceptable unless both the openness of Green Belt and percentage increase in original floorspace criteria (as set out below) are satisfied and are in accordance with the guidance noted in Appendix 1 (Design Criteria). The position, volume, and height of the proposal are also material considerations in assessing whether the proposal would result in disproportionate additions to the original building.

Disproportionate Additions

The position, volume and height of the proposal are material considerations in assessing proportionality. In terms of floor space, extensions or alterations resulting in a cumulative increase in floorspace (measured externally) of more than 40% over the original building will normally be considered disproportionate with the following exceptions:

- a) Dormer windows (where proportionate to the existing building)
- b) Ground floor extensions of modest size compared to the building and site.
- c) 'In-fill' extensions which do not increase the apparent bulk of the building.

The bulk and massing of an extension or alteration, including the roof form, will also be considered against the scale of the original building.

When determining the floorspace increase, all previous additions to the original building (defined in the NPPF as a building as it existed on 1 July 1948, or if constructed after 1 July 1948, as it was built originally) including outbuildings within close proximity of a building will be taken into account, regardless of who built them, or whether they follow a grant of express planning consent or are through the exercise of permitted development rights. The cumulative total of floorspace increase will therefore take into account previous extensions and alterations.

For the purposes of Green Belt policy, a residential outbuilding will be classed as an extension providing it is located within close proximity of the main dwellinghouse on the site. In these circumstances the outbuilding will count towards the total floorspace of the dwelling and any proposed extension or alteration should not result in an increase in the floorspace of more than 40% of the original building. Similarly, the floorspace of existing outbuildings within the curtilage of a dwelling that may be proposed to be removed will not be taken into account in assessing the percentage increase in floorspace unless they were built at the same time as the original dwelling and are within close proximity of the dwelling.

Proposals to demolish redundant formerly non-residential outbuildings now lying within a defined residential curtilage which detract from the appearance of the area will be treated on their own merits. It will not normally be acceptable for the floorspace of extensions or alterations to the host building to approach the level of the outbuilding(s) to be removed, and permitted development rights for future outbuildings will generally be removed.

Small dwellings (defined as 110sqm floorspace measured externally or less) with limited basic amenities may be allowed larger extensions to allow upgrading to contemporary living standards.

Applications for basement extensions will be subject to the same criteria as above ground extensions.

Openness of Green Belt

Side extensions should not significantly extend the width of the original building or in any other way make the building more prominent by virtue of its bulk and/or design. Rear extensions will normally be viewed more favourably than side extensions.

Dormer windows proportionate to the existing building will not normally be viewed as adversely affecting the openness of the Green Belt.

Increases in ridge height, apparent bulk of roof and/or replacement of a storey at least partially contained in the existing roof, by a full storey will normally be considered to adversely affect the openness of the Green Belt.

Replacement Buildings

Applications for replacement buildings in the Green Belt will normally be unacceptable where the replacement would be materially larger than the existing building on the site or would result in harm to the openness of the Green Belt.

Material Increase

When considering whether a replacement building is materially larger than the one it replaces, the baseline will be the existing building.

The floorspace of existing outbuildings within the curtilage of a building will not be taken into account in assessing the size of the existing building unless they are located within close proximity to the building.

The assessment of whether a replacement building is materially larger than the one it replaces will be by reference to size. The physical dimension most relevant for the purposes of assessing relative size of buildings will depend on the circumstances of the case.

Depending on the facts of the case the assessment of whether a replacement building is materially larger may take into account measures including floorspace, volume, footprint, height, width and depth and will include consideration of any proposed basement levels.

Where an existing dwelling has a floor area (measured externally) of less than 110sqm then the replacement dwelling may be of a total floorspace (excluding garage) of 110sqm.

Openness of Green Belt

The impact of replacement buildings on the openness of the Green Belt will be considered in relation to the design, siting within the plot and general location of the proposed building.

If a replacement building is proposed in a different location to the existing, it will be necessary to demonstrate that there is no increase in the overall visual impact of the building in the landscape. A scheme of remediation of the original building site will also be required and will be linked by condition or legal agreement to any replacement building.

Permitted development rights for extensions and outbuildings may be removed from replacement buildings in the Green Belt to prevent future additions that may cumulatively impact on openness of the Green Belt.

Re-Use and conversion of Buildings in the Green Belt

The re-use and conversion of buildings in the Green Belt will only be supported where this would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it, and where:

- a) The building is of permanent and substantial construction and is suitable for reuse/conversion without extensive alteration, rebuilding and or extension;
- b) The form, scale and general design of the building is in keeping with the surroundings and the proposals would not have a significant adverse effect on the openness of the Green Belt or appear excessively prominent, including as a consequence of any alterations/extensions;
- c) Any change of use of associated land does not include open or agricultural land to provide new gardens/amenity space or include doors giving access from buildings directly onto such land. Any associated parking/turning areas or modifications to access or landscaping would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

Ancillary Buildings

The council will only support the provision of ancillary buildings in the Green Belt where it can be demonstrated that the development would:

- a) have an ancillary function;
- b) be of a scale and design clearly subordinate to the primary building on site and of a height and bulk such that the building would not have an adverse effect on the visual openness of the Green Belt;
- c) be sited in an appropriate location that would not be prominent in the landscape and would not result in the spread of urbanising development;
- d) avoid features normally associated with the use of a building as a dwelling such as dormer windows

Change of Use of Land and Extensions to Residential Curtilage

Material changes in the use of land will only be supported where this would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

The council will safeguard the Green Belt from encroachment, therefore proposals which include the extension of the curtilage of a property into the Green Belt which result in a net reduction in open Green Belt land will not be supported.

Other Development

Any enclosure (including gates, walls, fences etc), hardstanding and new accesses must be appropriate to its location in terms of scale, siting, design and materials and where necessary to be supplemented by soft landscaping.

The council will have regard to the locational context of development and whether existing enclosures already exist within the immediate area and have eroded the openness of the Green Belt and where fallback positions have a realistic prospect of being built.

Appendix 3 - Parking Standards

The following standards have been taken from the Local Plan 2011-2026 and updated to take account of census data on car and van ownership as well as taking into consideration the latest update to the National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024). They cover standards for car parking, disabled parking, cycle parking, electric vehicles, and parking for powered two-wheelers.

These standards have moved away from a 'minimum/maximum' approach and will be applied as a 'standard' which may be adjusted upward or downward if robust evidence is provided. As such, the car parking standards should be taken as a starting point and the proposed scheme will be assessed accordingly. Applicants should explain how the standards have been applied to their individual proposal and, where appropriate, how and why they have deviated from them. The expectation is that development will meet its own needs on-site by providing parking to this standard.

In line with national policy and Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plans, there has long been an increased emphasis on encouraging the use of sustainable transport and reduce our reliance on car travel to reduce emissions, cut congestion and improve our general health and wellbeing. In combination with increasing sustainable travel options, small reductions in parking provision is a commonly adopted strategy to help implement this.

Subsequently, modest reductions have been made in parking provision for residential development and some employment uses. Census data between 2011 and 2021 has shown that while there has been a small increase in the number of cars in the district (less than 5%), on average there is still just over 1 vehicle per household, so overall average car and van ownership has not increased significantly following additional dwellings being built during this period.

We have also benchmarked our standards against neighbouring authorities with similar spatial patterns of development and found that the proposed standards to be around the average.

The standards for car parking may be adjusted according to which sustainability zone the proposed development is located in.

Zone Type	Car parking provision
Sustainability Zone 1	60% of indicative demand-based parking standard
Sustainability Zone 2	80% of indicative demand-based parking standard
Rest of District	Apply full indicative demand-based standard

The percentages of indicative demand-based standards identify the degree of restraint that will normally be applied to new development within each zone type. For

example, a development requiring 10 parking spaces would be reduced to 6 parking spaces in Sustainability Zone 1, where 60% of the indicative demand-based standard would be acceptable. Similarly, this would be reduced to 8 parking spaces in Sustainability Zone 2 where 80% of the indicative demand-based standard would be acceptable.

The sustainability zones are applied mainly within a 800m radius of a train station, where you might reasonably expect that car ownership will be a little lower. Rickmansworth as the principal town with a wide range of shops and services has a greater reduction applied, due to the dual sustainability benefits of being near a train station and a well serviced town centre.

When compared to other local authority parking standards that apply similar parking reduction zones, Three Rivers is generally higher than average, providing less reduction than our neighbouring comparable authorities. This is mainly due to the fact that while broadly comparable, they do generally have larger, more densely developed main settlement centres with a wider range of facilities and public transport options.

Car Parking Standards

Use Class	Description	Car parking standards
E(a) Retail and Foodstores F2(a) Shops selling essential goods which do not exceed 280sqm and there is no other facility within 1,000 metres	Retail and Small food shops up to 500sqm gross floor area	1 space per 30sqm gross floor area
	Food superstores/hypermarkets up to 2,500sqm retail floor area	1 space per 18sqm gross floor area
E(a) Retail Foodstores	Food superstores/hypermarkets exceeding 2,500sqm retail floor area.	1 space per 15sqm gross floor area
	Food retail parks.	1 space per 14sqm (threshold 1000spm) below this figure to be decided in each case on individual merits (shared parking an overall reduction

		in provision, taking into account linked trips on site).
E(a) Non-food retail	Non-food retail warehouses with garden centres.	1 space per 25sqm gross floor area
	Non-food retail warehouses without garden centres.	1 space per 35sqm gross floor area
E(a) Non-food retail (cont)	Garden centres up to 4,000sqm gross floor area.	1 space per 25sqm gross floor area
	Garden centres exceeding 4,000sqm gross floor area.	Decided in each case on individual merits.
	Non-food retail parks where individual land use components are known.	Decided in each case on individual merits (shared parking and an overall reduction in provision, taking into account linked to trips on site).
	Non-food retail parks where individual land use components are not known.	1 space per 40sqm gross floor space (shared parking).
E(c) Financial and professional services	Banks, building societies, estate agencies	1 space per 30sqm gross floor area.
Sui generis (betting shops)	Betting shops.	
E(b) Restaurants and Cafés	Restaurant/ cafés	1 space per 5sqm of floorspace of dining area plus 3 spaces per 4 employees.
Sui generis (Drinking Establishments)	Public houses/bars	1 space per 3sqm of floorspace of bar area plus 3 spaces per 4 employees.

Sui generis (Hot Food Takeaways)	Roadside restaurants	1 space per 5sqm of floorspace of dining area plus 3 squares per 4 employees.
	Transport café	1 lorry space per 3.5sqm gross floor area plus 3 spaces per 4 employees.
	Hot food takeaway shops (excluding fast food drive thru restaurants)	1 space per 3sqm of floorspace of public area plus 3 spaces per 4 employees.
	Fast food drive thru restaurants	1 space per 8sqm gross floor area.
E(g)Business	E(g)(i) offices	1 space per 30sqm gross floor area
	E(g)(ii) research and development, high-tech/ E(g)(iii) light industry.	1 space per 35sqm gross floor area
B2 General Industry	General industry	1 space per 50sqm gross floor space (1 lorry space per 200sqm)
B8 Storage and distribution	Wholesale distribution, builders merchants, storage	1 space per 75sqm gross floor area (1 lorry space per 200sqm)
Use Class	Description	Car parking standards
Business Parks	Mixed E(g)/B2/B8 (unless heavily oriented to B8) for use where individual land use components are not known.	1 space per 40sqm gross floor area (1 lorry space per 200sqm)

C1 Hotels and Hostels	<p>Hotels</p> <p>1 space per bedroom (including staff accommodation) plus</p> <p>1 space per manager plus</p> <p>2 spaces per 3 staff minus spaces related to staff bedrooms plus</p> <p>1 space per 5sqm dining area plus</p> <p>1 space per 3sqm bar area plus</p> <p>1 space per 5sqm public area in conference facility plus</p> <p>1 space per 6sqm of public area in exhibition hall plus</p> <p>a minimum of 1 coach parking space per 100 bedrooms.</p> <p>Hostels</p> <p>Small (single parent or couple with no children)</p> <p>3 spaces per 4 units.</p> <p>Family (2 adults and 2 children)</p> <p>1 space per units.</p>	<p>1 space per bedroom (including staff accommodation) plus</p> <p>1 space per manager plus</p> <p>2 spaces per 3 staff minus spaces related to staff bedrooms plus</p> <p>1 space per 5sqm dining area plus</p> <p>1 space per 3sqm bar area plus</p> <p>1 space per 5sqm public area in conference facility plus</p> <p>1 space per 6sqm of public area in exhibition hall plus</p> <p>a minimum of 1 coach parking space per 100 bedrooms.</p> <p>3 spaces per 4 units.</p> <p>1 space per units.</p>
C2 Residential institutions	Institutions/homes with care staff on premises at all times (excluding nursing homes, hospitals, residential schools, colleges or training centres).	1 space per 5 resident bed spaces plus

	<p>Elderly persons residential and nursing homes.</p> <p>Hospitals</p>	<p>1 space per 2 staff non-resident (parking for resident staff to be based on general needs standard).</p> <p>0.25 spaces per resident bed space plus;</p> <p>1 space per 2 staff non-resident (parking for resident staff to be based on general needs standard).</p> <p>1 space per 0.5 beds or to be decided on individual merits (including a full transport assessment and proposals in a green transport plan); special hospitals must be considered individually.</p>
Use Class	Description	Car parking standards
C2 Residential institutions (cont)	Education – halls of residence.	<p>1 space per 2 full-time staff plus</p> <p>1 space per 6 students (but with linkage to student transport plans where appropriate).</p>
C3 Residential	<p>General needs</p> <p>1 bedroom dwellings</p> <p>2 bedroom dwellings</p> <p>3 bedroom dwellings</p> <p>4 or more bedroom dwellings</p>	<p>1 space</p> <p>1.5 spaces</p> <p>2 spaces</p> <p>2.5 spaces</p>

C3 Residential	<p>Elderly person's accommodation.</p> <p>Retirement dwellings – no warden control, 1 or 2 bedroom (Category 1).</p> <p>Sheltered dwellings – warden control (Category 2)</p>	<p>1.5 spaces per unit including 0.25 visitor space.</p> <p>0.75 spaces per unit including 0.25 visitor space.</p>
C4 Residential	Houses in multiple occupation (i.e. separate households sharing facilities)	1 space per bedroom
F1 Learning and non-residential Institutions	<p>F1(e) Public halls/places of assembly (excluding D2)</p> <p>F1(f) Places of worship</p>	<p>1 space per 9sqm gross floor area or 1 space per 3 fixed seats plus 3 spaces per 4 staff members</p> <p>1 space per 10sqm gross floor area</p>
F2(b) Halls or meeting places for the local community	F2(b) Community/family centres	1 space per 9sqm gross floor area plus 1 space per full time staff member or equivalent
E(f) Day centres	E(f) Day centres	1 space per 2 staff members plus 1 space per 3 persons attending or 1 space per 9sqm gross floor area

E(e) Provision of medical or health services Non-residential Institutions	E(e) Surgeries and clinics	3 space per consulting room plus 1 space per employee other than consulting doctors/dentists/vets.
Use Class	Description	Car parking standards
F1 Learning and non-residential Institutions (Cont)	F1(d) Libraries and miscellaneous cultural buildings (including F1(b) buildings for display of works of art, F1(c) museums and F1(g) law courts)Miscellaneous cultural buildings.	1 space per 30sqm gross floor area of freestanding development (otherwise assessed on merits). 2 spaces plus 1 space per 30sqm of public floorspace.
F1 Learning and non-residential Institutions	F1(a) Educational establishments (including residential). F1(a) Schools	1 space per full-time member of staff plus 1 space per 8 pupils over 17 years old plus 1 space per 20 pupils under 17 years old.
F1 Learning and non-residential Institutions	F1(a) Further education	1 space per 2 staff plus 1 space per full-time 15 students (2500sqm threshold). The standard for students attending an educational establishment, rather than full-time equivalent.
E(f) Crèche, day nursery	E(f) Nursery schools/Playgroups	1 space per 4 pupils.
E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness F2(c) Outdoor sport and recreation F2(d) Indoor or outdoor swimming pools or ice skating rinks	Places of entertainment/leisure parks for use when individual land use components are known.	1 space per 22sqm (threshold 1000sqm) below threshold to be decided in each case on individual merits: parking for individual land use components should be based on the standards set out in this appendix, but with an overall reduction in provision

Sui generis (cinemas, concert halls, bingo halls, dance halls)	Places of entertainment/leisure parks for use when individual land use components are not known.	to reflect linked trips on site (all parking should be shared and an overall reduction of 25% should form the starting point for discussion). 1 space per 22sqm (1000sqm threshold)
Sui generis (cinemas)	Cinemas (including multiplexes)	1 space per 5 seats (1000sqm threshold)
Use Class	Description	Car parking standards
E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness F2(c) Outdoor sport and recreation F2(d) Indoor or outdoor swimming pools or ice skating rinks	F2(d) Swimming pools. F2(c) / E(d) Tennis/badminton E(d) Squash courts F2(d) Ice rinks E(d) Fitness centres/sports clubs	1 sp per 22 sq m (1000 sq m threshold) 4 spaces per court not to exceed 1 space per 22sqm (1000sqm threshold) 3 spaces per court not to exceed 1 space per 22sqm (1000sqm threshold) 1 space per 12sqm gross floor area of rink not to exceed 1 space per 22sqm (1000sqm threshold) 1 space per 22sqm (1000sqm threshold)

E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness	<p>Ten pin bowling</p> <p>Indoor bowls</p>	<p>4 space per lane not to exceed 1 space per 22sqm (1000sqm threshold)</p> <p>4 space per rink not to exceed 1 space per 22sqm (1000sqm threshold)</p>
F2(c) Outdoor sport and recreation	<p>Outdoor Sports Grounds</p> <p>with football pitches</p> <p>without football pitches</p>	<p>20 spaces per pitch</p> <p>50 spaces per hectare</p>
F2(c) Outdoor sport or recreation	<p>Golf</p> <p>18 hole golf course</p> <p>9 hole golf course</p> <p>golf driving range</p> <p>golf course larger than 18 holes and/or for more than local use</p>	<p>100 spaces</p> <p>60 spaces</p> <p>1.5 spaces per tee</p> <p>To be decided in each case on individual merits</p>
Sui generis (Motor Trade Related)	<p>Showroom car sales</p> <p>Vehicle storage</p> <p>Hire cars</p> <p>Ancillary vehicle storage</p>	<p>3 spaces per 4 employees plus 1 space per 10 cars displayed.</p> <p>3 spaces per 4 employees plus 2 spaces per showroom space or provision at rate of 10% annual turnover.</p> <p>3 spaces per 4 employees plus 1 space per 2 hire cars based at site.</p> <p>3 spaces or 75% of total if more than 3 vehicles.</p>

	Workshops	3 spaces per 4 employees plus 3 spaces per bay (for waiting and finished vehicles) in addition to repair bays.
	Tyre and Exhaust	3 spaces per 4 employee plus 3 spaces for customers.
	Part stores/sales	3 spaces per 4 employees plus 3 spaces for customers.
	Car wash/petrol filling station	3 spaces per 4 employees plus 3 waiting spaces per bay or run in to row of bays (additional parking is required where a shop is provided).
Passenger transport facilities	Rail Stations/bus Stations	To be decided in each case on individual merits.
Sui generis (houses in multiple occupation, i.e. separate households sharing facilities, accommodating 7 or more occupants)		1 space per bedroom
Sui generis (where specific use is not included as a description elsewhere in this appendix)		To be decided in each case on individual merits

Parking for Disabled Motorists

The parking needs of disabled motorists shall be met in full irrespective of location i.e. where the zonal procedure results in on-site parking restraint, there shall be *no* corresponding reduction in disabled spaces. The minimum measurements of a disabled space provided off the highway should be 3.2m in width and 4.8m in length.

Disabled spaces provided on the highway must comply with the requirements of Hertfordshire Highways Authority.

Employment generating development	
(1) Up to 200 space car park (demand-based as calculated from above standards).	Individual spaces for each disabled employee plus 2 spaces or 5% of total capacity, whichever is greater.
(2) More than 200 space car park (demand-based as calculated from above standards).	6 spaces plus 2% of total capacity.
Shops/premises to which the public have access/recreation.	
(1) Up to 200 space car park (demand-based as calculated from above standards).	3 spaces or 6% of total capacity whichever is greater.
(2) More than 200 space car park (demand-based as calculated from above standards)	4 spaces plus 4% of total capacity.
Residential	
General	1 space for every dwelling built to mobility standards (such as Lifetime Homes).
Elderly persons dwellings up to 10 spaces (demand-based as calculated from above standards)	3 spaces
More than 10 spaces (demand-based as calculated from above standards).	1 space per 4 spaces

Cycle Parking Standards

Cycle parking standards have been developed for each Use Class. It is recognised that cycle theft deters greater use and thus the type of cycle provision is important. The cycle parking standards differentiate between short and long term requirements. 'Sheffield' stands are satisfactory for short term cycle parking and supervised 'cycle parks' provide better weather and security protection for long term use.

'Full time staff equivalents' is the main parameter used to express long term cycle parking standards as this can be directly related to modal split targets. The long term standards relate to a modal split target of 10% by cycle, but should be adjusted (up or down) locally to accord with local targets and/or those set out in green transport plans. While it is questionable whether realistic estimates of employee numbers will always be possible at the planning application stage, available data on floorspace: worker ratios is inadequate for converting modal split targets to standards based on 'gross floor area' (an alternative parameter).

Use Class	Description	Cycle parking standards
E(a) Retail Foodstores F2(a) Shops selling essential goods which do not exceed 280sqm and there is no other facility within 1,000 metres	Small food shops up to 500sqm gross floor area Food superstores/hypermarkets up to 2,500sqm retail floor area	1 short-term space per 150sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 maximum staff on site at any one time.
E(a) Retail Foodstores	Food superstores/hypermarkets exceeding 2,500sqm retail floor area. Food retail parks	1 short-term space per 250sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 maximum staff on site at any one time.
E(a) Non-food retail	Non-food retail warehouses with garden centres. Non-food retail warehouses without garden centres. Garden centres up to 4,000sqm gross floor area Garden centres exceeding 4,000sqm gross floor area.	1 short-term space per 350sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 maximum staff on site at any one time.

	Non-food retail parks where individual land use components are known.	
	Non-food retail parks where individual land use components are not known.	
E(c) Financial and professional services	Banks, building societies, estate agencies	1 short-term space per 200sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 full time staff.
Sui generis (betting shops)	Betting shops.	

Use Class	Description	Cycle parking standards
E(b) Food and drink	Restaurant/cafes	1 short-term space per 100sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 maximum staff on site at any one time.
Sui generis (Drinking Establishments)	Public houses/bars	1 short-term space per 100sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 maximum staff on site at any one time
Sui generis (Hot Food Takeaways)	Hot food takeaway shops (excluding fast food drive thru restaurants) Fast food drive thru restaurants	1 short-term space per 100sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 maximum staff on site at any one time
Sui generis (Hot Food Takeaways)	Roadside restaurants Transport café	1 long-term space per 10 maximum staff on site at any one time.
E(g) Business	E(g)(i) offices E(g)(ii) research and development, high-tech/ E(g)(iii) Light industry.	1 short-term space per 500sqm gross floor area plus

		1 long-term space per 10 full time staff
B2 General Industry	General industry	1 short-term space per 500sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 full time staff
B8 Storage and Distribution	Wholesale distribution, builders merchants, storage	1 long-term space per 10 full time staff
Business Parks	Mixed E(g)/B2/B8 (unless heavily oriented to B8) for use where individual land use components are not known.	1 short-term space per 500sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 full time staff
C1 Hotels and Hostels	Hotels	1 long-term space per 10 beds plus 1 long-term space per 10 maximum staff on site at any one time
C1 Hotels and hostels	Hostels Small (single parent or couple with no children) Family (2 adults and 2 children)	1 long-term space per 3 units
C2 Residential institutions	Institutions/homes with care staff on premises at all times (excluding nursing homes, hospitals, residential schools, colleges or training centres). Elderly persons residential and nursing homes. Hospitals	1 short-term space per 20 beds plus 1 long-term space per 10 staff on duty at any one time.
Use Class	Description	Cycle parking standards

C2 Residential institutions	Education – halls of residence.	1 long-term space per 10 full time staff plus 1 long-term space per 3 students.
C3 Residential	General needs 1 bedroom dwellings 2 bedroom dwellings 3 bedroom dwellings 4 or more bedroom dwellings Houses in multiple occupation (i.e. separate households sharing facilities)	1 long-term space per unit (or per room if HMO) if no garage or shed provided.
C3 Residential	Flats	1 space per 2 units
C3 Residential	Elderly person's accommodation. Retirement dwellings – no warden control, 1 or 2 bedroom (Category 1). Sheltered dwellings – warden control (Category 2)	1 short-term space per 3 units plus 1 long-term space per 5 units
F1 Non-residential Institutions	F1(e) Public halls/places of assembly (excluding D2) F1(f) Places of worship	1 short-term space per 200sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 staff on duty

F2(b) Halls or meeting places for the local community	F2(b) Community/family centres	1 short-term space per 200sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 staff on duty
E(f) Day centres	E(f) Day centres	1 short-term space per 200sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 staff on duty
E(e) Provision of medical or health services	E(e) Surgeries and clinics	1 short-term space per consulting room plus 1 long-term space per 10 staff on duty at any one time.
F1 Learning and non-residential Institutions	F1(d) Libraries and miscellaneous cultural buildings (including F1(b) buildings for display of works of art, F1(c) museums and F1(g) law courts)	1 short-term space per 100sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 full time staff
F1 Learning and non-residential Institutions	F1(a) Educational establishments (including residential). F1(a) Schools	1 long-term space per 10 full time staff plus: a) Primary School: 1 long-term space per 15 students. b) Secondary School: 1 long-term space per 5 students.
Use Class	Description	Cycle parking standards
F1 Learning and non-residential Institutions	F1(a) Further education	1 long-term space per 10 full time staff plus 1 long-term space per 5 students
E(f) Crèche, day nursery	E(f) Nursery schools/playgroups	1 long-term space per 10 full time staff.

<p>E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness</p> <p>F2(c) Outdoor sport and recreation</p> <p>F2(d) Indoor or outdoor swimming pools or ice skating rinks</p> <p>Sui generis (cinemas, concert halls, bingo halls, dance halls)</p>	<p>Places of entertainment/leisure parks for use when individual land use components are known.</p> <p>Places of entertainment/leisure parks for use when individual land use components are not known.</p>	<p>On merit, depending upon mix of uses.</p>
<p>Sui generis (cinemas)</p>	<p>Cinemas (including multiplexes)</p>	<p>Cinemas up to 500 seats: 1 short-term space per 20 seats plus 1 long-term space per 10 staff on duty at any one time.</p> <p>Cinemas over 500 seats: 25 short-term spaces plus 1 short-term space per 100 seats in excess of 500 plus 1 long-term space per 10 staff on duty at any one time.</p>
<p>E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness</p> <p>F2(c) Outdoor sport and recreation</p> <p>F2(d) Indoor or outdoor swimming pools or ice skating rinks</p>	<p>F2(d) Swimming pools.</p> <p>F2(c) / E(d) Tennis/badminton</p> <p>E(d) Squash courts</p> <p>F2(d) Ice rinks</p> <p>E(d) Fitness centres/sports clubs</p>	<p>1 short-term space per 25sqm</p>
<p>E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness</p>	<p>Ten pin bowling</p> <p>Indoor bowls</p>	<p>1 short-term space per 3 lanes or rink plus 1 short-term space per 25 spectator seats plus 1 long-term space per 10 full time staff.</p>

F2(c) Outdoor sport and recreation	Outdoor sports grounds with football pitches without football pitches	1 short-term space per 10 players/participants at busiest period
F2(c) Outdoor sport or recreation	Golf 18 hole golf course 9 hole golf course golf driving range golf course larger than 18 holes and/or for more than local use	10 long-term spaces 5 long-term spaces 5 short-term spaces per 20/30 tee driving range Pro rata to the above
Sui generis (Motor trade related)	Showroom car sales Vehicle storage Hire cars Ancillary vehicle storage Workshops Tyre and Exhaust Part stores/sales Car wash/petrol filling station	1 long-term space per 10 full time staff. 1 long-term space per 10 full time staff plus 5 short-term spaces if shop included
Passenger transport facilities	Rail Stations Bus Stations	5 long-term spaces per peak period train 2 long-term spaces per 100 peak period passengers

In addition to cycle parking provision it is also expected that shower and changing facilities are provided. If not built in as part of the normal facilities of a building (in schools and hospitals for example), commercial and institutional uses should consider providing a small room where people can change in private. Experience shows that such a facility will not only be used by cyclists, but other staff engaged in exercise activity during lunch breaks or after hours.

For commercial and institutional uses, shower and changing facilities should be provided at a minimum rate of 1 locker per 10 persons and 1 shower cubicle per 50 persons.

Proposals for a reasonable level of provision for fewer personnel will be assessed on their merits according to the location, use and travel needs of the personnel.

Electric Vehicle Standards

Electric vehicles are a sustainable mode of transport that contribute to a reduction in vehicle emissions. An electric vehicle is considered any road vehicle with a battery that is intended to be charged from mains electricity. National policy supports the provision of electric vehicle recharging infrastructure with new development. Electrical vehicle standards have been developed for each Use Class, with a distinction between active provision and passive provision.

Active provision: an actual socket connected to the electrical supply system that vehicle owners can plug their vehicle into.

Passive provision: the network of cables and power supply necessary so that at a future date a socket can be added easily.

EV charging points should adhere to the British Standards Institution's Electric vehicles Accessible charging – Specification (PAS 1899:2022) or future equivalent.

Use Class	Description	Electric vehicle parking standards
E(a) Retail Foodstores F2(a) Shops selling essential goods which do not exceed 280sqm and there is no other facility within 1,000 metres	Small food shops up to 500sqm gross floor area Food superstores/hypermarkets up to 2,500sqm retail floor area	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.

E(a) Retail Foodstores	<p>Food superstores/hypermarkets exceeding 2,500sqm retail floor area.</p> <p>Food retail parks</p>	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
E(a) Non-food retail	<p>Non-food retail warehouses with garden centres.</p> <p>Non-food retail warehouses without garden centres.</p> <p>Garden centres up to 4,000sqm gross floor area</p> <p>Garden centres exceeding 4,000sqm gross floor area.</p> <p>Non-food retail parks where individual land use components are known.</p> <p>Non-food retail parks where individual land use components are not known.</p>	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
E(c) Financial and professional services	Banks, building societies, estate agencies, betting shops.	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% of spaces to be passive provision.

Use Class	Description	Electric vehicle parking standards
E(b) Food and drink	Restaurant/cafes	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
Sui generis (Drinking Establishments)	Public houses/bars	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% of

		spaces to be passive provision.
Sui generis (Hot Food Takeaways)	Hot food takeaway shops (excluding fast food drive thru restaurants) Fast food drive thru restaurants	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% of spaces to be passive provision.
Sui generis (Hot Food Takeaways)	Roadside restaurants Transport café	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
E(g) Business	E(g)(i) offices E(g)(ii) research and development, high-tech/E(g)(iii) light industry.	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 40% of spaces to be passive provision.
B2 General Industry	General industry	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 40% of spaces to be passive provision.
B8 Storage and Distribution	Wholesale distribution, builders merchants, storage	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 40% of spaces to be passive provision.
Business Parks	Mixed E(g)/B2/B8 (unless heavily oriented to B8) for use where individual land use components are not known.	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
C1 Hotels and Hostels	Hotels	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 40% of spaces to be passive provision.
C1 Hotels and hostels	Hostels	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.

	Small (single parent or couple with no children) Family (2 adults and 2 children)	
C2 Residential institutions	Institutions/homes with care staff on premises at all times (excluding nursing homes, hospitals, residential schools, colleges or training centres). Elderly persons residential and nursing homes. Hospitals	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
Use Class	Description	Electric vehicle parking standards
C2 Residential institutions	Education – halls of residence.	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
C3 Residential	1 bedroom dwellings 2 bedroom dwellings 3 bedroom dwellings 4 or more bedroom dwellings	20% of all spaces to be active provision, the remaining 80% to be passive provision; Houses to have 1 charging point per house.
C3 Residential	Elderly person's accommodation. Retirement dwellings – no warden control, 1 or 2 bedroom (Category 1).	20% of all spaces to be active provision, the remaining 80% to be passive provision.

	Sheltered dwellings – warden control (Category 2)	
F1 Learning and non-residential Institutions	F1(e) Public halls/places of assembly (excluding D2) F1(f) Places of worship	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
F2(b) Halls or meeting places for the local community	F2(b) Community/family centres	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
E(f) Day centres	E(f) Day centres	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
E(e) Provision of medical or health services	E(e) Surgeries and clinics	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% of spaces to be passive provision.
F1 Learning and non-residential Institutions	F1(d) Libraries and miscellaneous cultural buildings (including F1(b) buildings for display of works of art, F1(c) museums and F1(g) law courts)	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
F1 Learning and non-residential Institutions	F1(a) Educational establishments (including residential). F1(a) Schools	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
Use Class	Description	Electric vehicle parking standards
F1 Learning and non-residential Institutions	F1(a) Further education	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.

E(f) Crèche, day nursery	E(f) Nursery schools/playgroups	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness F2(c) Outdoor sport and recreation F2(d) Indoor or outdoor swimming pools or ice skating rinks Sui generis (cinemas, concert halls, bingo halls, dance halls)	Places of entertainment/leisure parks for use when individual land use components are known. Places of entertainment/leisure parks for use when individual land use components are not known.	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
Sui generis (cinemas)	Cinemas (including multiplexes)	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness F2(c) Outdoor sport and recreation F2(d) Indoor or outdoor swimming pools or ice skating rinks	F2(d) Swimming pools. F2(c) / E(d) Tennis/badminton E(d) Squash courts F2(d) Ice rinks E(d) Fitness centres/sports clubs	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness	Ten pin bowling Indoor bowls	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
F2(c) Outdoor sport and recreation	Outdoor sports grounds with football pitches without football pitches	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.

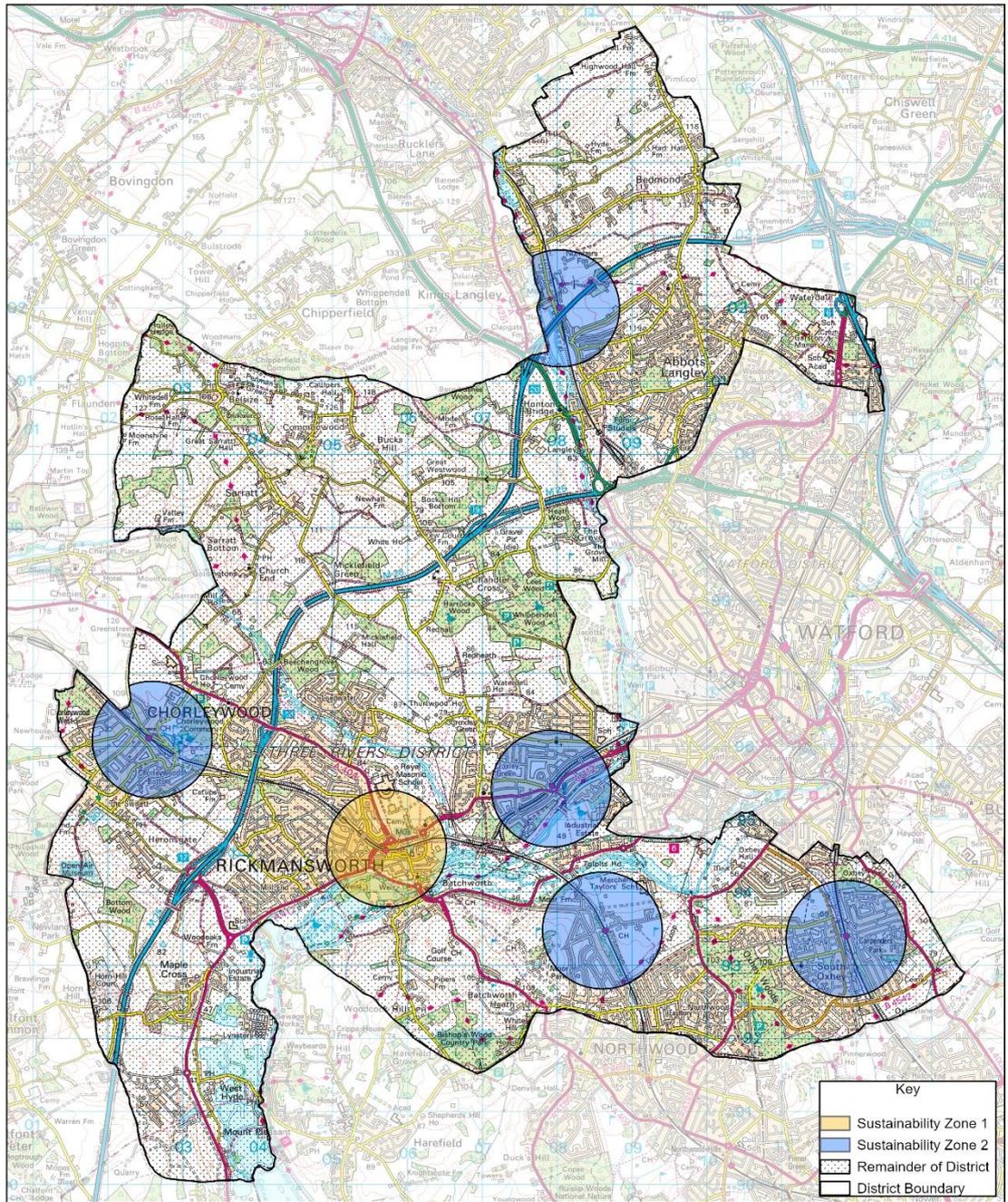
Use Class	Description	Electric vehicle parking standards
F2(c) Outdoor sport or recreation	Golf	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
Sui generis (Motor trade related)	Showroom car sales Vehicle storage Hire cars Ancillary vehicle storage Workshops Tyre and Exhaust Part stores/sales Car wash/petrol filling station	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% of spaces to be passive provision.
Passenger transport facilities	Rail Stations Bus Stations	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision. 20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.

Powered Two-Wheeler Parking Standards

Motorcycles comprise around 3% of all registered vehicles, and recent large increases in sales of mopeds and other commuter machines have resulted in further demand on existing motorcycle parking places, with indications that this trend will continue. As a guide, local authorities should set aside around 4% of the total stock of publicly accessible motor vehicle parking space for motorcycle use. Local authorities should also take steps to ensure that workplaces, new developments, and other parking not under their direct control, includes sufficient provision to ensure pressure is not simply concentrated on local authority provision.

Powered two-wheeler parking should therefore be provided at approximately five per cent of the amount of car parking to be provided on a site. Each use needs to be considered on its merits.

Parking Zones – Whole District:



REMAINDER OF DISTRICT

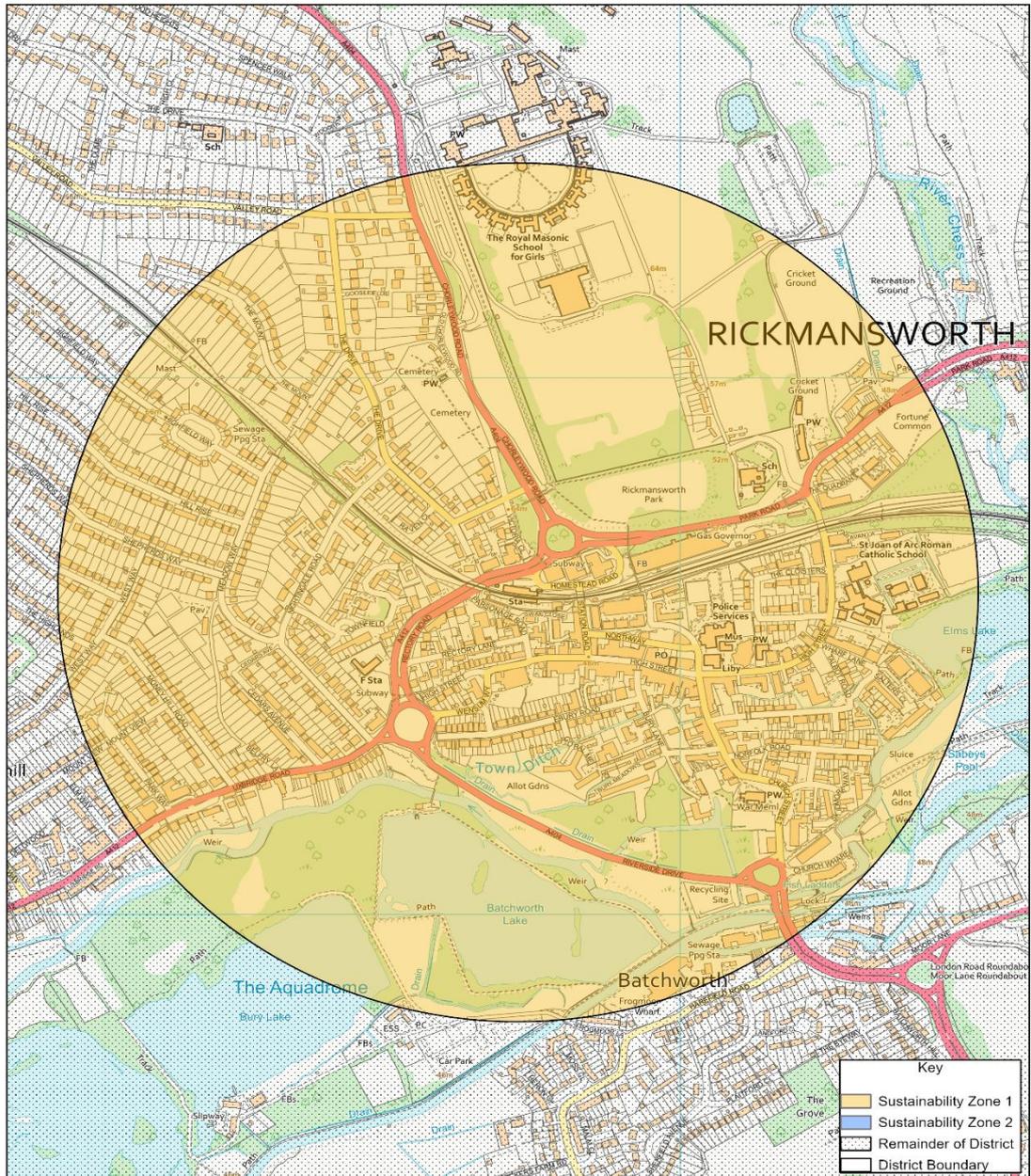


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Sustainability Zone 1:

Rickmansworth Station



RICKMANSWORTH STATION

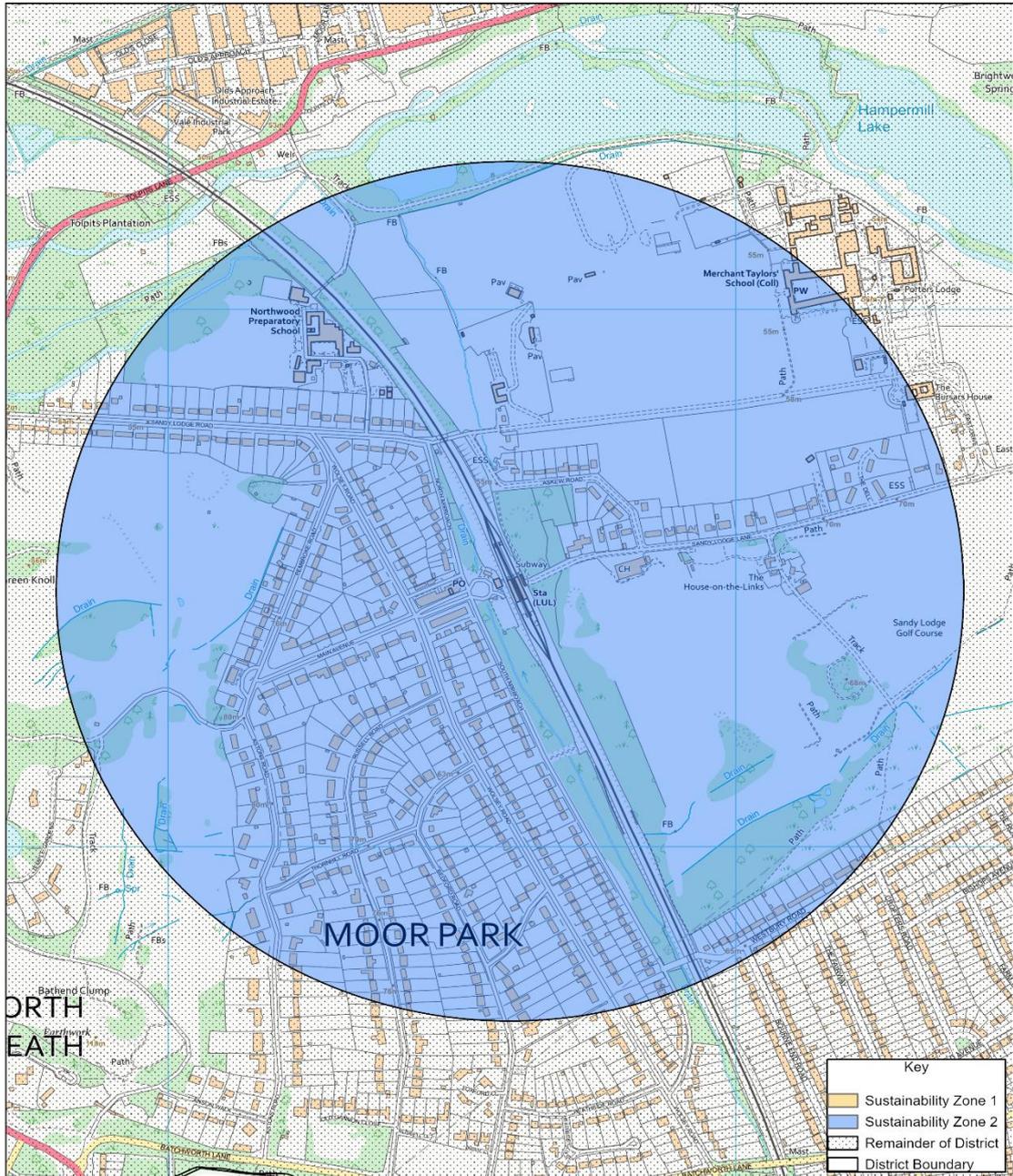


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Sustainability Zone 2:

Moor Park Station



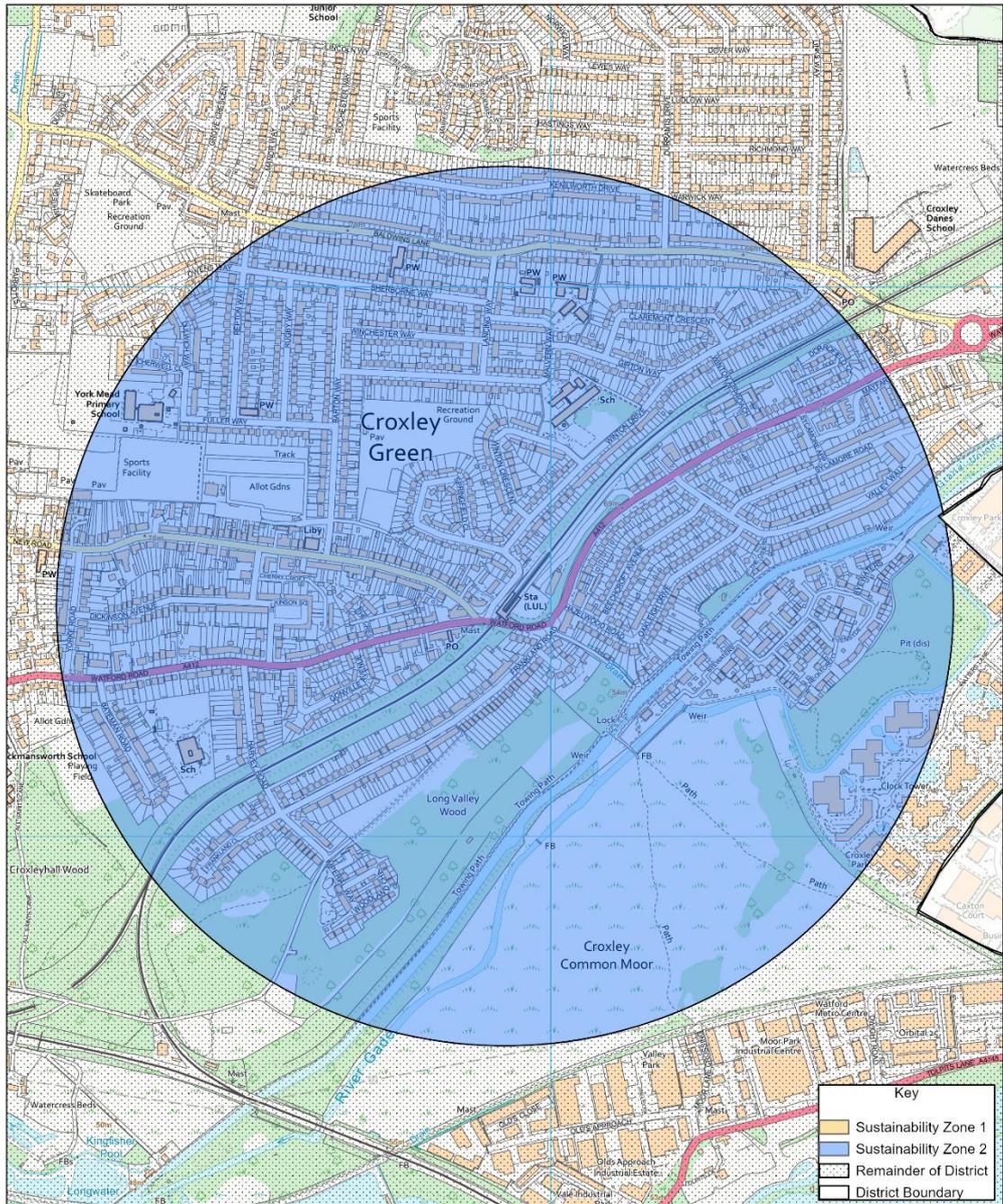
MOOR PARK STATION



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Croxley Green Station



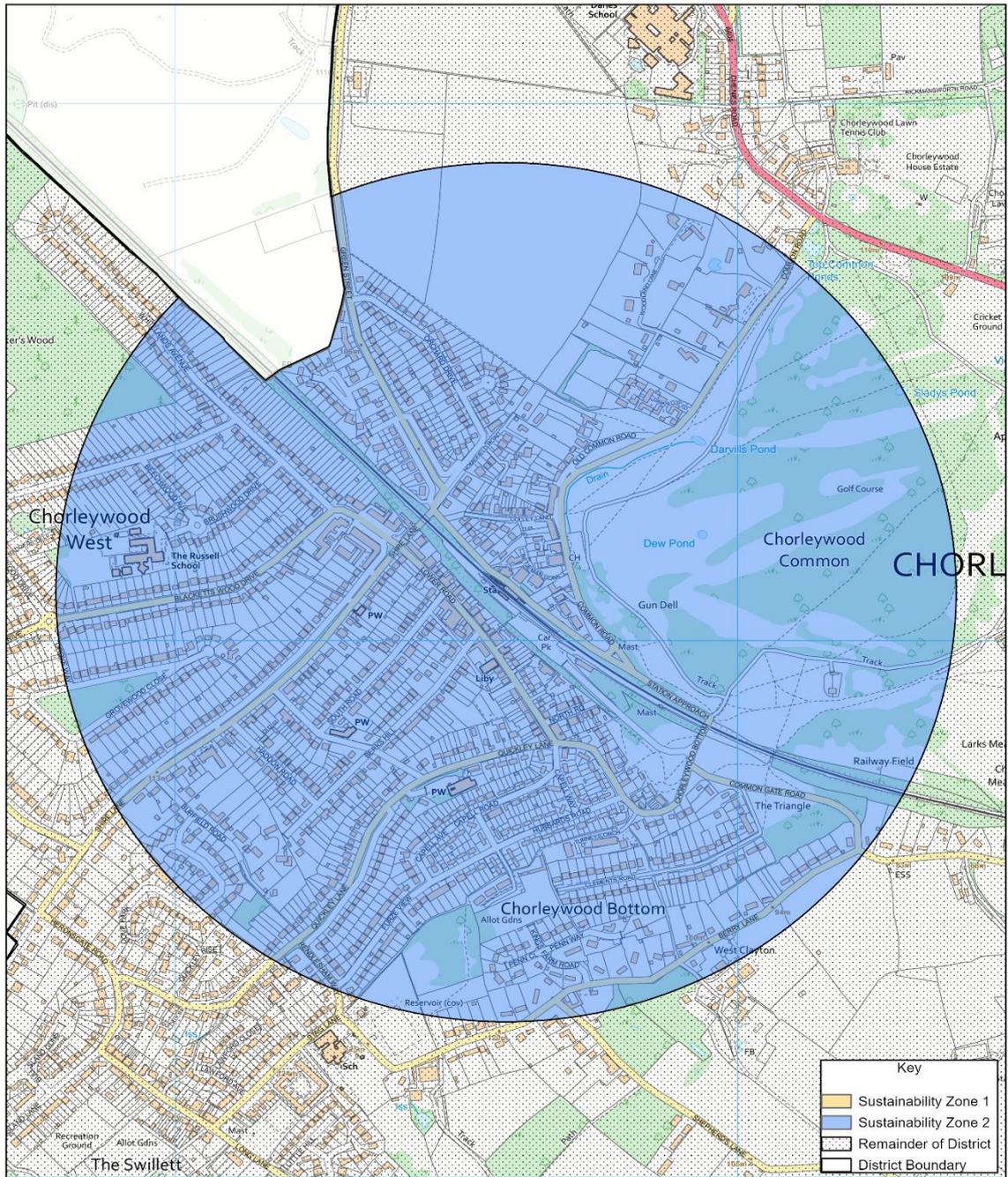
CROXLEY GREEN STATION



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Chorleywood Station



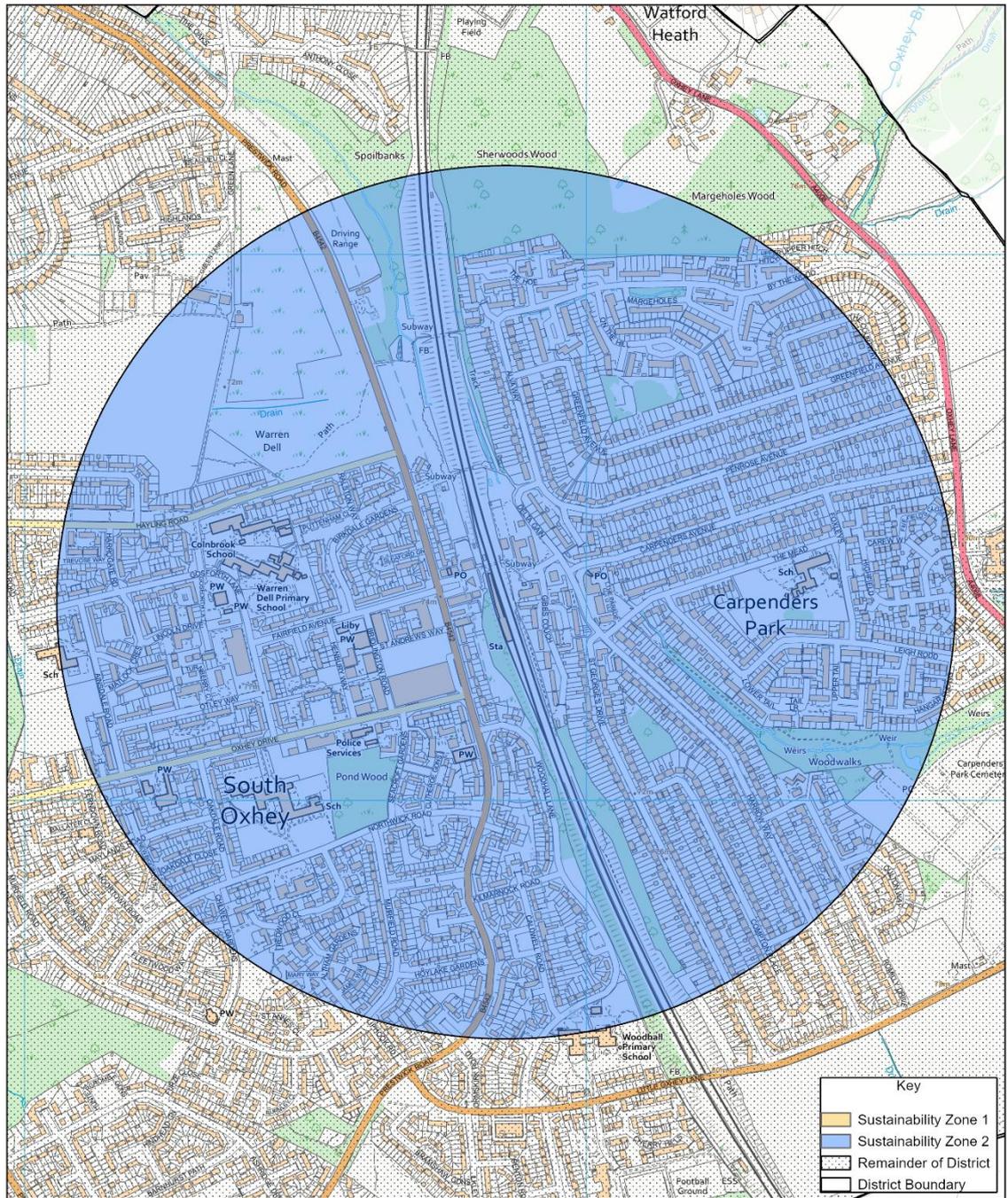
CHORLEYWOOD STATION



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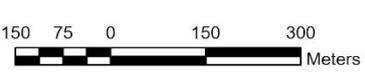
Carpenders Park Station



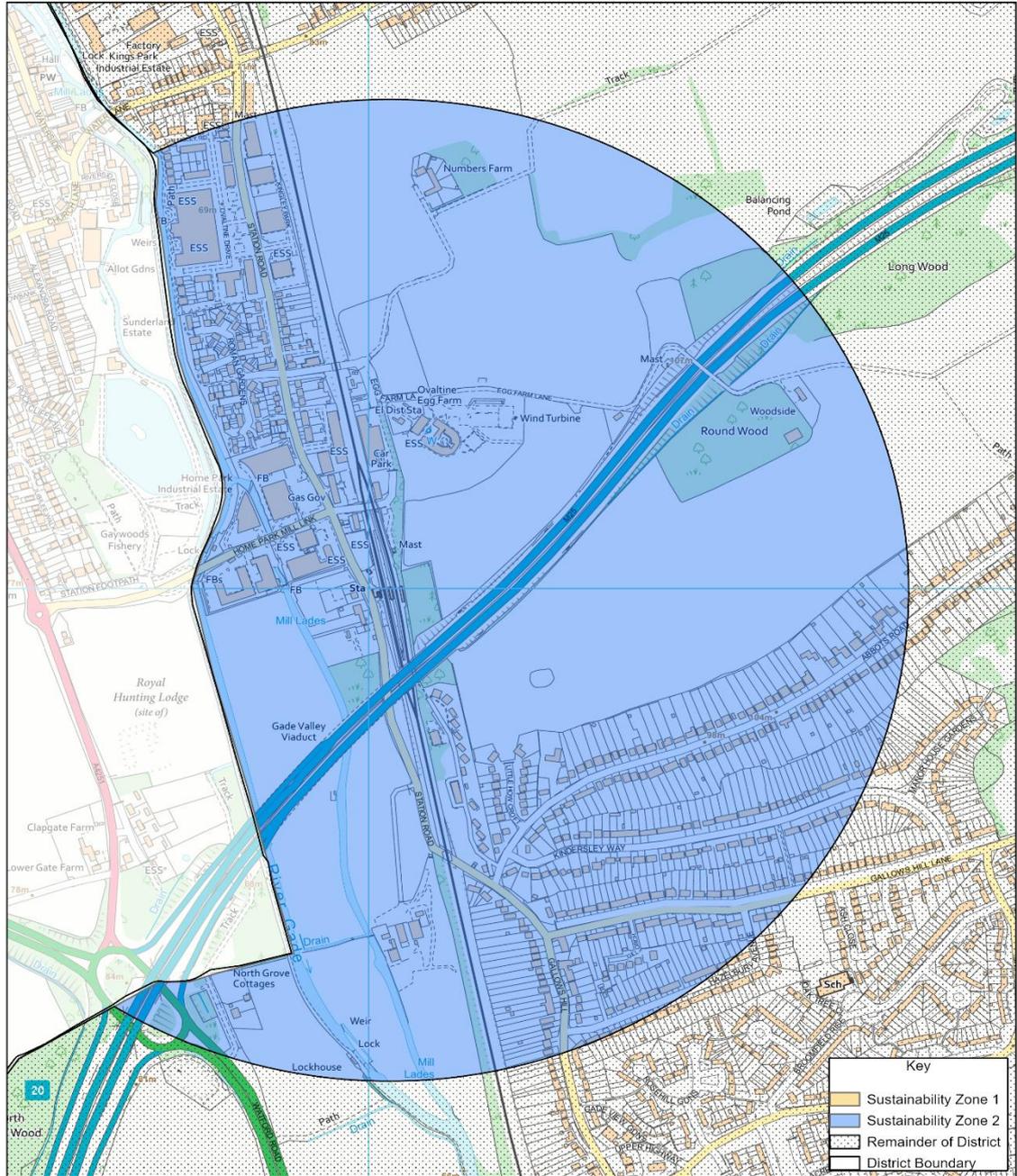
CARPENDERS PARK STATION



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Kings Langley Station



KINGS LANGLEY STATION



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Appendix 4 – Glossary

Terms	Definitions
Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings	Dwellings designed to meet the Building Regulations M4 standard, enabling adaptation to meet the changing needs of occupants over time.
Active Frontages	Ground floors where windows and doors face onto the street, avoiding blank walls and which enable people to see into and out of buildings.
Active Travel	Non-motorised travel, such as cycling and walking
Affordable Housing	<p>Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="528 927 1465 1128">▪ Social Rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government’s rent policy for Social Rent; (b) the landlord is a registered provider; and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. <li data-bbox="528 1182 1465 1621">▪ Other affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government’s rent policy for Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent). <li data-bbox="528 1675 1465 1798">▪ Discount market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future

	<p>eligible households</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.
Ancient or Veteran Tree	A tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient, but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage.
Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)	Area designated by the council because they are not likely to achieve national air quality objectives for certain pollutants.
Amenity	The quality or the character of the living environment and elements that contribute to the overall enjoyment of an area, including privacy, peace and quiet, daylight and sunlight, access to outdoor space etc.
Ancient Woodland	An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)
Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)	A report prepared by the council annually to monitor the performance of the Local Plan by assessing progress in meeting targets and requirements across a range of plan related topic areas.
Archaeological Interest	<p>There will be archaeological interest in a heritage asset if it holds, or potentially holds, evidence of past human activity worthy of expert investigation at some point.</p> <p>Under the above definition, Areas of Archaeological Potential and Archaeological Priority Areas are often included.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Area of Archaeological Potential: it refers to the areas which have been examined by the archaeologist and determined to

	<p>likely to have archaeological interests with containing good evidence for the existence of archaeological remains.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Archaeological Priority Area (APAs): it refers to a defined area where there is significant known archaeological interest or potential for new discoveries. APAs are used to help highlight where development might affect heritage assets.
Article 4 Direction	A direction made under Article 4 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 which withdraws permitted development rights granted by that Order.
Biodiversity	The variability among living organisms from all sources, underpins all life on Earth. This includes diversity within species, between species and across ecosystems, representing the genetic makeup of plants, animals, microorganisms and the complexity of ecosystems.
Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP)	It refers to the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan which is a 50-year vision for the wildlife and natural habitats of Hertfordshire and provides guidance on the protection, restoration and re-creating a sustainable level of biodiversity in the country.
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	A requirement / approach that development delivers a measurable net gain for biodiversity of at least 10% from the existing baseline value of the site. It aims to make sure development has a measurably positive impact on biodiversity and contribute to improve habitats and ecological network.
Biodiversity Metric	A biodiversity metric is used to quantify the biodiversity value of habitats in "biodiversity units" to measure losses and gains, primarily for achieving mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain in developments. It assesses habitat size, distinctiveness, condition, and strategic importance to ensure environments are left measurably better after development.
Blue Infrastructure	Water-related features such as rivers, canals, wetlands and drainage systems, which form part of Blue and often Green Infrastructure.
Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM)	An assessment that measures the sustainability of a new building including issues related to energy, health and wellbeing, innovation, land use, materials, management, pollution, transport, waste and water.
Brownfield Land	Previously developed land which is / was occupied by a permanent structure and any fixed surface infrastructure associated with it. Agricultural and forestry buildings are excluded.

Building Regulations	Government standards set for design and construction which apply to most new buildings and alterations to existing buildings in England and Wales.
Built Environment	Buildings and structures created by people and their relationship with streets, spaces and landscapes.
Built-up Area	Areas defined on the Policies Map where development is generally acceptable in principle.
Circular Economy	A model of production and consumption, which involves sharing, leasing, reusing, repairing, refurbishing and recycling existing materials and products as long as possible. In this way, the life cycle of products is extended. In practice, it implies reducing waste to a minimum. When a product reaches the end of its life, its materials are kept within the economy wherever possible
Climate Change Adaptation	Adjustments made to natural or human systems in response to the actual or anticipated impacts of climate change, to mitigate harm or exploit beneficial opportunities.
Climate Change Mitigation	Action to reduce the impact of human activity on the climate system, primarily through reducing greenhouse gas emissions.
Combined Heat and Power	It is the simultaneous generation of useable heat and power (usually electricity) in a single process. It is a form of decentralised energy technology and typically installed on-site, supplying customers with heat and power directly at the point of use.
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	A planning charge by the council to raise funds from owners or developers of land undertaking new building projects in the district to support the provision of infrastructure needed to serve the development.
Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities	These include, but are not limited to, village halls, community centres, sports halls, theatres, public halls, doctors and dental surgeries, faith facilities, post offices, public houses, schools and local shops.
Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO)	An order issued by the government or the council to acquire land or buildings in the wider public interest, e.g. for the construction of a major road or to regenerate an area.
Conservation Area	Areas of special architectural or historic interest, where the character, appearance or setting is desirable to preserve and enhance. The impacts of new development upon the conservation area must be considered and permitted development may be restricted.

Controlled Parking Zones	An area where all on street parking is controlled and restricted by the council.
Decentralised Energy	Local renewable and local low carbon energy sources.
Density	A measurement of how intensively land is occupied by built development. For housing, this is often measured in dwellings per hectare.
Designated Heritage Assets	A World Heritage Site, Scheduled Monument, Listed Building, Protected Wreck Site, Registered Park and Garden, Registered Battlefield or Conservation Area designated under the relevant legislation.
Designated Rural Areas	National Parks, National Landscapes and areas designated as 'rural' under Section 157 of the Housing Act 1985.
Development Plan	The statutory Development Plan comprised of the Local Plan, Minerals and Waste Local Plan and any Neighbourhood Plans within the district. It is the basis on the determination of planning application in the district.
District Centre	A group of shops and some service outlets serving part of an urban area and providing a geographic focus for it, separate and smaller than the town centre, but with more variety than local centres.
Edge of Settlement	Locations adjoining larger settlements, used in the spatial strategy as areas where comprehensively planned development can be integrated with existing communities.
Employment Land	Land specifically used, allocated, or available for economic activities like offices, industry, warehousing, and distribution, crucial for local job creation and economic growth. These are identified and managed through the Local Plan to balance supply with demand for a range of business uses.
Evidence Base	It refers to the technical studies and background research that provides information on key aspects of social, economic and environmental characteristics of the district. This enables the preparation of a sound Local Plan meeting the objectives of sustainable development.
Exception Test	A test applied to sites with flood risk, when there are not enough suitable sites with lower or no risk of flooding available for use. The test is required to show that the sites with flood risk will be safe to develop and that any sustainability benefits of developing the site will outweigh the risk of flooding
Flood Risk Assessment (FRA)	An assessment of the likelihood of flooding to a site so that development needs and mitigation measures can be carefully considered.

First Homes	<p>It refers to a specific kind of discounted market sale housing and should be considered to meet the definition of ‘affordable housing’ for planning purposes. Specifically, First Homes are discounted market sale units which:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) must be discounted by a minimum of 30% against the market value; b) are sold to a person or persons meeting the First Homes eligibility criteria; c) on their first sale, will have a restriction registered on the title at HM Land Registry to ensure this discount (as a percentage of current market value) and certain other restrictions are passed on at each subsequent title transfer; and, d) after the discount has been applied, the first sale must be at a price no higher than £250,000. <p>It is the government’s preferred discounted market tenure and should account for at least 25% of all affordable housing units delivered by developers through planning obligations.</p>
Flood Zones	<p>Refers to the area of land which are mapped by the Environment Agency into flood zones. Flood Zone 1 is least likely to experience a flooding event and Flood Zone 3 has the highest risk.</p>
Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA)	<p>An area that is not constrained by administrative boundaries but takes account of how the economy works in a local area. This takes account of the relationships between where people live and work and how the regional economy links together.</p>
Green Belt	<p>An area of land which has been designated to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open; the essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence. Green Belt serves five purposes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas; b) to prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another; c) to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;

	<p>d) to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and</p> <p>e) to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.</p>
Grey Belt	<p>It refers to the land in the Green Belt comprising previously developed land and/or any other land that, in either case, does not strongly contribute to any of purposes (a), (b), or (d) of Green Belt. It excludes land where the application of the policies relating to the areas or assets* which would provide a strong reason for refusing or restricting development.</p> <p><i>*including habitats sites and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI); Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets; and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.</i></p>
Green Infrastructure	<p>Networks of green space which are multifunctional and offer environmental and social benefits for the surrounding area. This can include parks and gardens, green corridors, natural areas, amenity spaces and allotments.</p>
Greenfield Land	<p>Land (or a defined site) which has never been built on before or where remains of any structure or activity have blended into the landscape over time.</p>
Gross Floor Space	<p>The total floorspace of the building measured to the outside of all external walls including staircase, lobbies, porches and circulation space.</p>
Gypsies and Travellers	<p>Persons of nomadic habit of life, encompassing specific ethnic minorities or cultural groups also including such persons who on grounds only of their own or their family's or dependants' educational or health needs or old age have ceased to travel temporarily or permanently, and all other persons with a cultural tradition of nomadism or of living in a caravan, but excluding members of an organised group of travelling showpeople or circus people travelling together as such.</p>
Habitats Regulation Assessment (HRA)	<p>An assessment which identifies any aspects of an emerging DPD / Local Plan that would have the potential to have a significant effect on certain designated wildlife sites (i.e. SACs, SPAs, Ramsar Sites) and begin to identify appropriate mitigation measures where such effects are identified.</p>
Heritage Asset	<p>A building, monument, site, place, area or landscape identified as having a degree of significance meriting consideration in planning decisions, because of its heritage interest. It includes designated</p>

	heritage assets and assets identified by the council (including local listing).
Historic Environment	All aspects of the environment resulting from the interaction between people and places through time, including all surviving physical remains of past human activity, whether visible, buried or submerged, and landscaped and planted or managed flora.
Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO)	A property rented out to people who are considered to be at least three separate households and who have shared facilities such as kitchen and bathroom.
Housing Mix	The mix of different dwelling types, sizes and tenures of housing.
Irreplaceable Habitat	Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen.
Lifetime Homes	It refers to the standard homes designed with 16 adaptable features for flexibility, comfort, and accessibility, allowing people to live in them throughout all life stages, from raising a family to aging with mobility issues, with minimal costly adaptations, often required by UK planning policy for new builds to support diverse needs.
Listed Buildings	A building identified as being of special architectural or historic interest by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on the advice of Historic England. Listed buildings are graded I, II* or II with grade I being the highest and are included within the definition of “designated heritage asset” in the NPPF. Listing includes the interior as well as the exterior of the building and also any buildings or permanent structures, e.g. walls, within its curtilage that pre-date July 1948.
Local Centres	An area including shops and facilities for local people.
Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA)	It is a planning document that assessing housing needs of the district by type, size and tenure.
Local Nature Reserves	It refers to the legally designated area of land by the council, important for its local wildlife, geological features, or educational value, offering people chances to enjoy, study, and connect with nature close to home, ranging from woodlands and meadows to rewilded urban sites.
Local Wildlife Site	Refers to the non-statutory, locally designated areas recognized for significant wildlife value, identified by expert panels using scientific criteria, acting as crucial wildlife corridors and stepping stones within ecological networks, encompassing habitats like ancient woodlands,

	meadows, ponds, and even urban green spaces, important for biodiversity but managed voluntarily by owners with council's support.
Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)	The Three Rivers Local Strategic Partnership is an umbrella partnership that brings together public and private organisations and community groups, allowing different initiatives and services to support one another so that they can work more effectively together. One of its main tasks is to prepare and implement the Sustainable Community Strategy.
Local Transport Plan	All local transport authorities are required to produce a Local Transport Plan. The Plan sets out the objectives and priority schemes for developing transport within the district.
Locally Important Buildings	Buildings, structures or monuments of local interest that contribute to the heritage, identity and streetscape of the district. Locally important buildings do not merit statutory listing under the Planning Act (1990), but they are considered to be of local architectural or historic importance.
Main Town Centre Uses	Retail development (including warehouse clubs and factory outlet centres); leisure, entertainment and more intensive sport and recreation uses (including cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls); offices; and arts, culture and tourism development (including theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels and conference facilities).
Major Development	For housing, development where 10 or more homes will be provided, or the site has an area of 0.5 hectares or more. For non-residential development it means additional floorspace of 1,000m ² or more, or a site of 1 hectare or more, or as otherwise provided in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015.
Masterplan	A type of planning brief outlining the preferred usage of land through illustrating the overall development concept that include urban design, landscaping, infrastructure, service provision, access, present and future land use and building form.
Mixed-use Development	A development that is comprised of different land uses, such as employment and residential uses.
National Landscape	Areas legally designated as areas of outstanding natural beauty under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

National Described Space Standards (NDSS)	Government defined standards set out in Building Regulations for the Gross Internal (floor) Area of new dwellings of any tenure at a defined level of occupancy as well as floor areas and dimensions for key parts of the home, notably bedrooms, storage and floor to ceiling height.
National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)	A document setting out the government's main economic, social and environmental planning policies for England. The policies set out in the framework apply to the preparation of local and neighbourhood plans and to decisions on planning applications.
Natural and Semi-natural Greenspaces	Woodland, scrub, grassland, wetlands, open and running water, and open access land.
Natural Flood Management	Managing flood and coastal erosion risk by protecting, restoring and emulating the natural 'regulating' function of catchments, rivers, floodplains and coasts, by slowing and/or diverting the flow of water
Nature Recovery Network	An expanding, increasingly connected, network of wildlife-rich habitats supporting species recovery, alongside wider benefits such as carbon capture, water quality improvements, natural flood risk management and recreation. It includes the existing network of protected sites and other wildlife rich habitats as well as and landscape or catchment scale recovery areas where there is coordinated action for species and habitats.
Neighbourhood Plan	A plan prepared by a parish council or neighbourhood forum for a designated neighbourhood area. In law this is described as a neighbourhood development plan in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
Older People	People over or approaching retirement age, including the active, newlyretired through to the very frail elderly; and whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing through to the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.
On-site Renewable Energy	Collective term for domestic scale renewable energy generated by technologies such as solar thermal, solar photovoltaics and domestic wind turbines provided on the site of development.
Open Space	All open space of public value, including not just land, but also areas of water (such as rivers, canals, lakes and reservoirs) which offer important opportunities for sport and recreation and can act as a visual amenity.
Parks and Gardens	Formal green spaces including urban parks, country parks, forest parks and formal gardens.

People with Disabilities	People have a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment, and that impairment has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. These persons include, but are not limited to, people with ambulatory difficulties, blindness, learning difficulties, autism and mental health needs.
Planning Obligation	A legal agreement entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.
Previously Developed Land (PDL)	Please refer to 'Brownfield Land'
Primary Shopping Area	Defined area where retail development is concentrated.
Priority Habitats and Species	Species and Habitats of Principal Importance included in the England Biodiversity List published by the Secretary of State under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
Public Realm	The space between and within buildings that is publicly accessible, including streets, squares, forecourts, parks and open spaces.
Ramsar Sites	Wetlands of international importance, designated under the 1971 Ramsar Convention.
Renewable and Low Carbon Energy	Includes energy for heating and cooling as well as generating electricity. Renewable energy covers those energy flows that occur naturally and repeatedly in the environment – from the wind, the fall of water, the movement of the oceans, from the sun and also from biomass and deep geothermal heat. Low carbon technologies are those that can help reduce emissions (compared to conventional use of fossil fuels).
Riparian	Area adjacent to a river or similar body of water.
Rural Exception Site	Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity in less sustainable locations not normally used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. A proportion of market homes may be allowed on the site at the council's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable units without grant funding.
Scheduled Monument	Nationally important monuments usually archaeological remains, that enjoy greater protection against inappropriate development through the Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979.

Self-build and Custom Build Housing	Housing built by an individual, a group of individuals, or persons working with or for them, to be occupied by that individual. Such housing can be either market or affordable housing. A legal definition, for the purpose of applying the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 (as amended), is contained in section 1(A1) and (A2) of that Act.
Sequential Approach	A planning principle that seeks to identify, allocate or develop certain types or locations of land before others.
Setting of a Heritage Asset	The surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. Its extent is not fixed and may change as the asset and its surroundings evolve. Elements of a setting may make a positive or negative contribution to the significance of an asset, may affect the ability to appreciate that significance or may be neutral.
Significance (for heritage policy)	The value of a heritage asset to this and future generations because of its heritage interest. The interest may be archaeological, architectural, artistic or historic. Significance derives not only from a heritage asset's physical presence, but also from its setting.
Site of Special scientific Interest (SSSI)	Sites designated by Natural England under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.
Spatial Planning	A term introduced to imply that wider factors than just the use of land or buildings have to be taken into consideration. A spatial plan will make clear that to achieve all its objectives other non-land use matters will be important - e.g. the provision of community, education, primary healthcare, transport, utilities or other services.
Special Area of Conservation	Areas defined by regulation 3 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been given special protection as important conservation sites.
Special Protection Areas	Areas classified under regulation 15 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 which have been identified as being of international importance for the breeding, feeding, wintering or the migration of rare and vulnerable species of birds.
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)	An assessment on the likelihood of flooding in wider area, often local authority or a group of neighbouring authority areas, so a full picture of flood risks and mitigation measures can be considered against development needs.
Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability	A key component of the evidence base which identifies constraints and opportunities for housing and employment and assesses the suitability,

Assessment (SHELAA)	deliverability and developability of sites. Such assessments are required by the National Planning Policy Framework
Strategic Policies	Policies and site allocations which address strategic priorities in line with the requirements of section 19(1B-E) of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
Supplementary Planning Documents	Documents which add further detail to the policies in the development plan. They can be used to provide further guidance for development on specific sites, or on particular issues, such as design. Supplementary planning documents can be a material consideration in planning decisions but are not part of the development plan.
Sustainability Appraisals (SA)	An assessment of the economic, environmental and social impacts of plans and programmes. Its role is to promote sustainable development by assessing the extent to which the emerging plan, when judged against reasonable alternatives, will help to achieve relevant environmental, economic and social objectives.
Sustainable Development	Defined by the United Nations General Assembly as 'meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. In terms of planning, the National Planning Policy Framework states that sustainable development should be viewed in a social, economic and environmental context.
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS)	Sustainable drainage systems control surface water run off close to where it falls, combining a mixture of built and nature-based techniques to mimic natural drainage as closely as possible, and accounting for the predicted impacts of climate change. The type of system that would be appropriate will vary from small scale interventions such as permeable paving and soakaways that can be used in very small developments to larger integrated schemes in major developments.
Sustainable Transport Modes	Any efficient, safe and accessible means of transport with overall low impact on the environment, including walking and cycling, ultra low and zero emission vehicles, car sharing and public transport.
Target Emission Rate (TER)	A standard for energy efficiency of a building expressed as kilograms of CO ₂ per square metre.
Town Centre	Area defined on the council's policies map, including the primary shopping area and areas predominantly occupied by main town centre uses within or adjacent to the primary shopping area. References to town centres or centres apply to city centres, town centres, district centres and local centres but exclude small parades of shops of purely neighbourhood significance. Unless they are identified as centres in the development plan, existing out-of-centre developments, comprising or including main town centre uses, do not constitute town centres.

Transport Assessment	A comprehensive and systematic process that considers and sets out transport issues relating to a proposed development, in the context of the vision for the scheme. It identifies measures required to support alternatives to the car such as walking, cycling and public transport, and to promote accessibility and safety, together with measures that will be needed to deal with the anticipated transport impacts of the development.
Transport Statement	A simplified version of a transport assessment where it is agreed the transport issues arising from development proposals are limited and a full transport assessment is not required.
Travel Plan	A long-term management strategy for an organisation or site that details how agreed sustainable transport objectives are to be delivered, which is monitored and regularly reviewed.
Travelling Showpeople	Members of a group organised for the purposes of holding fairs, circuses or shows (whether or not travelling together as such). This includes such persons who on the grounds of their own or their family's or dependants' more localised Travelling showpeople: pattern of trading, educational or health needs or old age have ceases to travel temporarily, but excludes Gypsies and Travellers as defined in 'gypsies and travellers'.
Tree Preservation Order (TPO)	A mechanism for securing the preservation of single or groups of trees of acknowledged amenity value. A tree subject to a tree preservation order may not normally be topped, lopped or felled without consent of the council.
Urban Sprawl	The uncontrolled or unplanned extension of urban areas into the countryside.
Water Stress	When the amount of water being consumed exceeds the amount that is readily available for use it leads to water stress. Areas of water stress are determined by the Environment Agency.
Wildlife Corridor	Areas of habitat connecting wildlife populations.
Wildlife Site	A non-statutory designation for sites of substantive nature conservation, geological or geomorphological value, as identified in the 'Habitat Survey for Three Rivers' carried out by the Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust.
Windfall Site	Sites not specifically identified in the development plan.