

Local Plan Regulation 18

Preferred Policy Options Consultation

(June 2021)



INTENTIONALLY BLANK

Foreword by Councillor Sarah Nelmes, Leader, Three Rivers District Council

All Councils in England are required by the Government to plan for future population growth and the demand for homes and jobs. That's why we're preparing a new Local Plan for Three Rivers. It's a blueprint for how the District will develop until 2038, identifying possible sites for development to provide new local homes and jobs alongside the shops, community facilities, transport, open space, schools and doctors that will be needed. Just as importantly, we also want to set out the policies that planning applications will be assessed against.

We now want to hear your views and invite you to take part in this consultation.

Much has changed since we first started on the journey to create a new planning framework for Three Rivers, including the national planning system which is undergoing further reform. Amongst these changes was the introduction of a national 'standard methodology' for calculating the District's local housing need; local housing need is the number of new homes needed on a year-by-year basis; this requires Three Rivers to provide 630 dwellings per year, resulting in an overall target of 12,624 dwellings over the plan period to 2038. Another very significant factor has been the Covid pandemic and lockdowns which have dramatically changed leisure activity and increased the demand for outdoor recreation and open space easily accessible from people's homes.

The Minister for Housing, Christopher Pincher, has stated that "*it is important to stress the standard method is only the first step in the current local plan process – the numbers generated for an area's housing need will not necessarily be the same as their ultimate targets. That's because councils will take into account various constraints in their areas, including protecting their Green Belt and environmentally significant sites. Nor does it dictate where those homes should go. Both are important aspects of the system which rest with local councillors to determine.*"

As a Council, we acknowledge that there is an acute housing crisis in much of the UK and in particular high-cost areas like Three Rivers, and a pressing need for more homes, especially more affordable homes, so young people are not forced to move away from the area, but that this cannot be addressed at the cost of harming existing communities and reducing the quality of life and wellbeing of our residents. After very careful consideration of all the sites put forward, it is not possible to provide the Government's target for additional homes without causing disproportionate harm to existing communities as a result of building on much-needed accessible open space.

This is a draft version of the Plan which means that elements of it can still change before it is published and submitted to the Planning Inspectorate for independent examination. Alterations can be made based on the feedback received from this consultations or the findings of any emerging evidence.

Many of the sites put forward in this consultation will be controversial to some, but the Council has to seek to allocate sufficient sites to meet our needs. This will involve difficult decisions but is necessary. The sites now put forward are not the Council's preferred sites but those that meet the criteria in terms of availability, deliverability and sustainability. Some may change as a result of the consultation but for each site ultimately taken out, another has to be put in or site densities increased at those to be included.

We would welcome your thoughts on our approach which provides a balanced approach for new homes and local facilities which should benefit new and existing residents alike, while at the same time doing what we can to preserve our most valuable open spaces for the benefit of all of us. Thank you for taking the time to complete the consultation and give us your views so we can make the best possible plan for our District.



Cllr Sarah Nelmes

How to Respond to this Consultation

We are interested to hear the views of everyone including residents, businesses, community groups and all other stakeholders. All comments received will contribute towards the new Local Plan that will be submitted to the Government next year.

This document and supporting documents can be viewed and downloaded from the Councils website at: www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/new-local-plan

Our preferred method for accepting your representations is through our website, using our consultation portal. The links to the consultation portal for the Part 1 and Part 2 documents are at: www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/new-local-plan.

You can also send representations in the following ways:

By email to: localplanconsult@threerivers.gov.uk

By post to: Economic & Sustainable Development, Three Rivers District Council, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth, Herts, WD3 1RL

The consultation period starts on 11 June 2021 and runs for a period of six weeks, ending at 5pm on 23 July 2021.

Please note that Three Rivers will only consider comments by respondents who provide their name and address. Your name, organisation and response will be made publically available once we publish responses; any comments made in your response therefore cannot be treated as confidential (published comments will exclude your personal contact details). Inappropriate, offensive or racist comments will not be accepted.

We cannot consider matters that are outside the boundaries of the planning process and are likely to be civil matters between parties. These include representations in relation to loss of property value, loss of view from property, private access rights, moral issues and restrictive covenants.

Decisions on sites will not solely be based upon how many responses of support or objections are received but will primarily be based on the impact of the development assessed against local and national policy and the requirements that a Local Plan must meet.

A separate sustainability appraisal report has been prepared on an independent basis for the Council. This document appraises the environmental, social and economic implications of the policies and sites and can also be viewed on the Council's website.

Notification of Future Consultations

If you would like your email address to be added to the Local Plan consultation database so that you are notified of future Local Plan consultations, please request this by emailing localplanconsult@threerivers.gov.uk including your full name and email address.

Contents

Introduction	7
Background and Context	9
Overall Levels of Growth	15
Part 1: Preferred Policy Options	17
Sustainable Development	
Overarching Policy on Sustainable Development	20
Housing Mix and Type	22
Housing Density	26
Affordable Housing	28
Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople	32
Residential Design and Layout and Accessible and Adaptable Buildings	33
Employment	
Employment and Economic Development	37
Warner Bros. Studios at Leavesden	39
Retail and Leisure	40
Social and Community Facilities/Health and Wellbeing	
Social and Community Facilities	45
Health and Wellbeing	47
Climate Change	
Carbon Dioxide Emissions and On-site Renewable Energy	48
Adapting to Climate Change and Sustainable Construction	49
Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments	51
Flood Risk and Water Resources	52
Green Belt	57
Environment	
Ground Conditions, Contamination and Pollution	60
Waste Management and Recycling	62
Green Infrastructure	
Green and Blue Infrastructure	64
Landscape Character	66
Biodiversity, Trees, Woodlands and Landscaping	68
Open Space, Play Space, Sport and Recreation	73
Design and Heritage	
Local Distinctiveness and Place Shaping	76
Advertisements	81
Heritage and the Historic Environment	82
Transport and Connections	
Sustainable Transport and Travel	88
Parking	91
Deliveries, Servicing and Construction	93
Waterways	95
Broadband and Electronic Communications	96
Appendices	
Appendix 1 Design Criteria	98
Appendix 2 Development in the Green Belt	105
Appendix 3 Parking Standards	111

1 Introduction

What is the role of the Local Plan?

- 1.1 The Government requires local planning authorities to draw up a plan containing policies and proposals that will guide future decisions about how land will be used and sets out policies that will be used in the determination of planning applications. This is done through a Local Plan.
- 1.2 The new Local Plan will set out how much land should be provided to accommodate new homes and jobs that are needed within Three Rivers up to 2037/2038 and where this should be located. It will consider the need for new homes and jobs alongside the need for associated infrastructure such as shops, community facilities, transport, open space, sport and recreation, health and education facilities. The Local Plan will also set out the policy framework which will be used to determine proposals for new development across the District.
- 1.3 The Government's objectives are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2019). The NPPF places Local Plans at the heart of the planning system, so it is important that they are prepared and kept up to date. It makes it clear that local authorities should:
- Support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes (Para.59)
 - Apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development which for plan-making means that:
 - a) plans should positively seek opportunities to meet the development needs of their area, and be sufficiently flexible to adapt to rapid change;
 - b) strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas (Para.11).

Arriving at Preferred Policy Options and Sites for Potential Allocation

- 1.4 In arriving at the Preferred Policy Options and Sites for Potential Allocation that are set out in this consultation, the Council has taken into consideration the following:
- The views arising from previous public consultation involving a range of stakeholders in the District including residents, businesses statutory bodies, local groups and individuals with interest in Three Rivers (Issues and Options & Call for Sites (2017), Additional Call for Sites (2017) and the Potential Sites Consultation (2018)) Further details of these consultations are available on our website at <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/new-local-plan>
 - National planning policy requirements and other plans and strategies affecting the area
 - The long-term priorities for Three Rivers as defined by local people and main service providers in the area
 - The rigorous testing of options and alternatives primarily through a sustainability appraisal process, taking into account 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 represents the prudent 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.

1.5 To date the following studies have been completed to form the Evidence Base:

- Strategic Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)
- Urban Capacity Study
- Edge of Settlement/New Settlement Scoping Study
- South West Hertfordshire Local housing Needs Assessment
- South West Hertfordshire Economic Study
- South West Hertfordshire Retail & Leisure Study
- Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment
- South West Hertfordshire Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Heritage Impact Assessments
- Landscape Sensitivity Assessments
- Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study
- Three Rivers District Council & Watford Borough Council Green Belt Review Strategic Analysis (Stage 1)
- Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment for Three Rivers District and Watford Borough Council
- Three Rivers District Council Green Belt Study Stage 3: New Settlement Analysis

The Evidence Base can be viewed at <https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/new-local-plan-evidence-base>

Sustainability Appraisal

1.6 Sustainable development is the key principle underpinning the Three Rivers new 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, effective protection of the environment, prudent use of natural resources and the maintenance of stable levels of economic growth and employment.

1.7 The Local Plan has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating) Strategic Environmental Assessment) at each stage of production to assess the options and inform the plan preparation and decision making process. The full Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessments are available on our website. Comments on the Sustainability Appraisal are welcomed.

Format of the Consultation Document

1.8 This Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation is presented in two parts:

- **Part 1: Preferred Policy Options** – A vision and objectives for the Plan Area and detailed policies for determining development proposals
- **Part 2: Sites for Potential Allocation** – This sets out the potential sites where development could take place, how much development could take place and when.

1.9 This consultation document seeks your views on the policies that will be used in the determination of planning applications and sites that the Council considers have met the criteria in terms of availability, deliverability and sustainability and have the potential to meet the needs for a range of uses including housing, employment, shopping, leisure and open spaces.

1.10 This is not the final stage of the Plan as we are still awaiting some key pieces of evidence. Your views submitted as part of this consultation will help inform the next stage and ultimately the document to be submitted to the Secretary of State. There will then be an examination by an independent Inspector before the Council can adopt the document and details of the timetable are set out in the Local Development Scheme available to view at the following link:

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/local-development-scheme>

2 Background and Context

Overview of Three Rivers

- 2.1 The District of Three Rivers is located at the extreme south west of the East of England Region within South West Hertfordshire, and covers an area of approximately 88sqkm. The District borders the Hertfordshire boroughs of Hertsmere and Watford to the east, St Albans City & District and Dacorum Borough (also in Hertfordshire) to the north, Buckinghamshire Council to the west and the London Boroughs of Harrow and Hillingdon to the south.
- 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 the Rickmansworth, Croxley Green and Chorleywood areas was closely related to the arrival 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.
- 2.3 The District benefits from both excellent road and rail connections. Heathrow and Luton airports are located in close proximity to the south and north respectively and Gatwick and Stansted airports are about an hour away. 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.

Population

- 2.4 The District's population has increased from 82,905 in 2001 to 92,641 in 2017¹, and the population is predicted to grow to reach 105,200 by 2036². There is a trend towards an ageing population with a 46% increase expected in households aged 65 and over by 2036 in line with national trends³ which will have implications for housing needs, health and support care needs as well as the economy and access to services.
- 2.5 Residents in Three Rivers are largely healthy and enjoy well above average life expectancy. The workforce is generally well-educated, highly skilled and well paid.

Deprivation

- 2.6 The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 provides a measure of deprivation based on factors such as income, employment, health, education, housing and crime. The Index ranks Three Rivers amongst the least deprived 10% of districts and boroughs in England⁴.
- 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

¹ ONS (2018) Mid-2017 Population Estimates

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/datasets/populationestimatesforukenglandandwalesscotlandandnorthernireland>

² ONS (2019) Subnational Population Projections for England: 2016-based

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2>

³ ONS (2019) Subnational Population Projections for England: 2016-based

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationprojections/datasets/localauthoritiesinenglandtable2>

⁴ MHCLG (2015) English Indices of Deprivation <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-indices-of-deprivation-2015>

feature relatively low, while wards such as South Oxhey and Chorleywood South and Maple Cross feature comparatively high with part of the South Oxhey ward identified as within the 10% most deprived neighbourhoods in the country.

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

Employment and Economy

- 2.9 The District has a mixed economy of business and industry. It is more dependent on the public sector and service employment than England, and is attractive to small businesses, often relocating from London.

- 2.10 The South West Herts Economic Study Update (2019) indicates that the Three Rivers economy is predominantly office-based, with 55% of jobs in offices, although there is also a high concentration of knowledge-based industries, and the film and TV sector is noted as a particular strength of the District.

- 2.11 There is no dominant employer, but the head or regional offices of a number of large national and international companies are located in Three Rivers (examples include Nissan, Skanska, ASOS, Imagination technologies and GE Money). These are complemented by a wide variety of small businesses, and the Warner Bros Film Studios at Leavesden which is an internationally acclaimed site for making films, with the adjacent Studio Tour visitor attraction which attracts 6,000 visitors a day at peak times.

- 2.12 Each weekday, 18,500 workers come into the District compared to 27,100 going out⁵. This high daily outflow of commuters reflects the significance of the adjacent London job market, and a high proportion of Three Rivers' residents work in Watford. It will be important in the future to provide a balance of new homes and jobs to try and address commuting levels.

- 2.13 Within Three Rivers, 78% of people aged 16-64 were economically active in the 12 months to December 2018, compared to 81% in Hertfordshire and 78% in England⁶.

- 2.14 Looking to the future, 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 also a shortage of land suitable for small scale industrial uses, and there is likely to be further demand for office space in the District.

- 2.15 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.

- 2.16 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.

⁵ Census (2011) Table WF01

⁶ ONS (2019) Annual Population Survey

Infrastructure

- 2.17 Pressure on existing infrastructure and additional demands caused by planned growth must be addressed if we are 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

- 2.18 The District is on the outer fringe of London and benefits from excellent road and rail connections. Heathrow and Luton airports are in close proximity and Gatwick and Stansted are about an hour away. The M1 and M25 motorways run through the District.
- 2.19 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.
- 2.20 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 also been identified as an issue for local communities.
- 2.21 Car ownership in the District is high; 86% of households had at least one car or van at the 2011 census. This is above the Hertfordshire (83%) and England (74%) averages and in the more rural areas, car ownership levels are even higher, with 90% of households in Chorleywood North and Sarratt and 95% of households in Moor Park and Eastbury having access to at least one car or van⁷.
- 2.22 Traffic levels in Three Rivers are forecast to grow 15.6% in the period 2017-2031⁸, 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

- 2.23 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. Regeneration and redevelopment of housing within South Oxhey Town Centre promoted under the Core Strategy (2011) is helping to address these issues.

⁷ Census (2011) Table KS404

⁸ Hertfordshire County Council (2018) Hertfordshire Traffic and Transport Data Report
<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/highways/transport-planning/transport-and-accident-data/ttdr/hertfordshire-traffic-and-transport-data-report-2018.pdf>

- 2.24 Over 73% of households in Three Rivers are owner occupied. This is a higher proportion than the Hertfordshire (68%) and national (64%) averages⁹. Just 1,051 households (3%) were recorded as being vacant at the time of the Census in 2011¹⁰.
- 2.25 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 at April 2019 of £528,795, a 4.9% increase on average prices in April 2011¹¹. The general trend has been towards worsening affordability ratios, and lower quartile house prices were 14.68 times higher than lower quartile incomes at January 2018¹².
- 2.26 The South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment identifies a notable need for affordable housing and confirms that this is an important and pressing issue in South West Hertfordshire. The focus of new market housing requirements is likely to be on 2-bed, 3-bed and 4-bed properties, with a greater range of requirements for affordable housing. While the requirement for larger family-sized affordable housing may be lower, there is a lack of these properties and low turnover of these kinds of properties. There will also be a notable demand for affordable housing from the ageing population, and it is important that the type and form of housing delivered can meet future accommodation requirements.
- 2.27 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.

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 546ha of the Chiltern's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is also contained within Three Rivers. Within the District, this part of the AONB is sparsely populated, however change within and

⁹ Census (2011) Table KS402

¹⁰ Census (2011) Table KS401

¹¹ HM Land Registry (2019) UK House price Index England

<http://landregistry.data.gov.uk/app/ukhpi/browse?from=2011-04-01&location=http%3A%2F%2Flandregistry.data.gov.uk%2Fid%2Fregion%2Fthree-rivers&to=2019-05-01>

¹² ONS (2018) Ratio of House Price (Existing Dwellings) to Residence-Based Earnings (Lower Quartile and Median)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/housing/datasets/housepriceexistingdwellingsstoresidencebasedearningsratio>

near to the AONB needs to be managed to recognise the need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.

- 2.32 Biodiversity is also an integral part of the character of Three Rivers and contributes 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. These sites cover a variety of wildlife species in a diverse range of habitats.
- 2.33 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.
- 2.34 In May 2019, the 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 Monuments, two Registered Parks and Gardens, as well as 19 Sites of Known Archaeological Interest. All of these heritage assets contribute to the character and quality of the District, and retention of them is a priority to protect local character and maintain the attractiveness of the District.

Summary

- 2.36 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, the characteristics of the District indicate the following areas of significance to be addressed:
- House prices in Three Rivers are very high and affordability has been worsening. Alongside the need to provide more housing to meet forecast needs, there is a particular need to achieve more affordable housing and a priority to provide more family sized affordable housing;
 - It is important to continue to achieve high levels of new development on previously developed land but, in general, the supply of previously developed land is falling;
 - The extent of the Green Belt will need to be balanced taking into account local development needs;
 - There is a high dependency on the car, particularly in rural parts of the District. There is therefore 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 businesses and growth, and to provide local employment opportunities in order to try and reduce levels of out-commuting, which are currently high;
 - 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 inequalities. South Oxhey is particularly affected by income, barriers to education, skills and training, living environment and crime and disorder. Parts of Maple Cross and Mill End are affected by income, barriers to housing and services and living environment. 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. Any new development will require an appropriate level of investment in infrastructure 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 to sustain the unique character of the area and its attractiveness;
- Levels of crime in the District are low; however there is a need to tackle fear of crime and antisocial behaviour.

Local Policy Context

2.37 There are several strategies and plans which affect the Three Rivers area 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 aspects of other strategies.

2.38 It is particularly important that the Local Plan relates to the Community Strategy for Three Rivers which sets out the local community's aspirations so that these can be delivered in an effective and joined-up way.

2.39 The Community Strategy for Three Rivers (2018-2023) has been prepared by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to improve quality of life in the District through partnership working.

2.40 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. Five themes are identified, each of which has a number of supporting priorities:

- i. Housing
 - Residents have good quality, affordable housing and temporary accommodation;
 - Residents are supported to live independently and maintain their tenancies and homes;
 - To make our residents safe in their accommodation
- ii. Ambition
 - Residents attend, engage in and enjoy high quality education and learning experiences;
 - Residents are supported to secure work and get closer to the labour market including via apprenticeships and skills development;
- iii. Independence & Resilience

- Residents are able to manage their finances and debt;
 - Residents are able to manage their own health, social care and support;
 - Residents have the life skills and access to the resources they need to live independently and cope with challenges to sustain their independence;
 - Residents live in supportive communities;
- iv. Health & Wellbeing
- Residents have opportunities to be physically and mentally healthy;
 - Residents, especially the vulnerable, have access to health and social care;
- v. Safety
- Residents are safe from crime and antisocial behaviour ;
 - Residents are safe from abuse, neglect, violence, bullying, discrimination and exploitation;
 - Neighbourhoods are safe for people to live, work and socialise in.

2.41 The Local Plan is a key mechanism for delivering on the ground many of the priorities established through the Community Strategy.

Overall Levels of Growth

2.42 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 and jobs that also safeguards and enhances the environment, maintains the Green Belt, secures good services and facilities for all and achieves a sustainable transport system.

2.43 The new Local Plan is anticipated to be adopted in May 2023 in accordance with the Local Development Scheme (December 2020); national policy requires that a Local Plan should plan for a 15 year period following adoption. The new Local Plan period will therefore be 2018 – 2038.

2.44 For the 15 year plan period following adoption of the Local Plan the Government's Standard Method for calculating housing needs has been used of 630 dwellings per year. The Housing Target for the Local Plan will therefore be 12,624 dwellings over the plan period 2018 – 2038.

2.46 However, it is important to note that there have been a significant number of completions and commitments through planning permissions since 2018 together with a windfall allowance that can be deducted from this figure. The table below shows information as of 31 March 2020:

	Net Number of Homes
Total Target	12,624
Completions (2018 – 2020)	608
Commitments (unimplemented planning permissions)	948
Windfall Allowance	390
Total (completions, commitments & windfall)	1,946

2.47 The residual Housing Target as of 31 March 2020 is 10,678 dwellings. The Council seeks to meet as much of the identified need for housing as possible given the ecological, environmental and policy constraints.

2.48 Over the Plan period 2018-2038, significant levels of housing, employment and retail development will be planned for alongside supporting infrastructure and environmental protection and enhancement comprising:

- 8,973 additional homes

- Pitches for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople
- A minimum of 5.5ha of land for employment use
- Approximately 2,400-3,100sqm convenience retail floorspace
- Approximately 1,900-2,600sqm comparison retail floorspace and 730sqm floorspace for restaurants, cafes and bars
- Extension to Warner Bros. Studios at Leavesden
- Associated Infrastructure

2.49 We will seek to maximise the delivery of housing 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 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 a proportion of development.

Question 1

Do you agree with the Council's proposed stance of not complying with the Government's Standard Method for calculating the District's housing need figure (due to the constraints of the District), which means that the Council would not fully meet the residual housing target? If no, please explain why.

See paragraphs 2.44-2.47 for further information.

3 PART 1: PREFERRED POLICY OPTIONS

Our Vision

- 3.1 The Vision for our district has been developed and informed by the key issues that have been identified (see paragraph 2.36) and takes account of other relevant strategies. It is supported by strategic objectives required to deliver that Vision.
- 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. The majority of our vision is based upon the vision in the current Core Strategy, as well as 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

Three Rivers will be recognised as a highly desirable, prosperous and outward-looking District where people want, and are able, to live and work.

We will endeavour to protect the character of the area, 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 proposed Vision and to address the key issues which have been identified. These objectives underpin the 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:

1 Provide for a range of high quality new homes within the District to meet objectively assessed needs and increase the provision of affordable housing.

In addition to making appropriate provision to accommodate needs for housing in terms of the number of homes delivered, there should be provision of a range of housing to reflect local requirements in terms of the size, type and tenure of homes including market, affordable, special needs, elderly persons and Gypsy and Traveller accommodation. In particular there remains a very high need for affordable housing in the District which affects the ability of the District to attract and retain workers with impacts on key services and the local economy. It is vital that all new housing development contributes to addressing this need, and the priority will be rented affordable homes and family sized homes which are required to meet the most urgent needs in the District.

2 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 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. Space will be protected and provided to accommodate and support both existing and new businesses, including the strong film and TV sector in the District at Warner Bros. Studios in Leavesden

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

It is important to continue to achieve high levels of new development on previously developed land but, in general, the supply of previously developed land is falling. Development will be focused on a number of urban sites and edge of settlement sites through the strategic release of Green Belt sites to make the best use of land.

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

It is important that all residents have good access to services including health, education, transport and emergency services and that this is maintained or improved in the future as an integrated component of new developments. Proposals 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.

5 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.

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

Although levels of car ownership are high within Three Rivers, not everyone has access to a car and it is essential that alternatives to the car are available to reduce impacts on the environment, congestion and to improve quality of life. Promoting alternatives to car travel through better public transport, better opportunities for cycling and walking, and 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.

7 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. 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.

8 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 which 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.

It is important to conserve heritage assets and their settings through appropriate control of development but also to enhance the historic environment where opportunities arise.

9 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 designing, constructing and reusing buildings and materials to minimise the use of natural resources 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, 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. 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.

10 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.

11 Provide a coherent network of Green 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 Infrastructure through improving the diversity and connectivity of landscape and habitats, and through the conservation and enhancement of natural assets including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty; the District's Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves and wildlife sites; and the District's trees and woodlands.

12 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 and Blue 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.

13 Promote safety and security as a high priority in the design of new developments, in order to create attractive and safe places in which to live and work.

Reducing crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour are key community priorities that can be addressed by the Local Plan including by promoting good design and securing contributions towards increased police resources.

14 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, there is a need 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.

15 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.

What you told us

- 3.5 Public consultation responses on the Council's original Vision and Objectives undertaken in the Issues & Options consultation (2017) were generally supportive with some changes/additions requested. These included strengthening the objectives in relation to protecting the historic environment and the natural environment and the delivery of new housing in sustainable locations.
- 3.6 The original Vision and 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 are formulated.
- 3.7 The proposed Spatial Vision and 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.

Sustainable Development

- 4.0 We are committed to promoting sustainable development which the National Planning Policy Framework defines 'as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'.
- 4.1 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. Adopting the presumption in favour of sustainable development will enable the Council to approve appropriate development without delay, in accordance with national planning policy.
- 4.2 The following strategic policy 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 which need to be taken into account. Further detail on these elements are provided within other non-strategic policies in this document.

Preferred Policy Option 1

Strategic Policy: Overarching Policy on Sustainable Development

- (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, 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 flooding, and manage water and flood risk through the use 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 and providing opportunities for recycling wherever possible.
- f) Protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environments from inappropriate development and improve the diversity of wildlife and habitats.
- 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, Key and Secondary Centres and Villages 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 Infrastructure, utilities, waste facilities, waste water, leisure, cultural and community facilities.
- n) Promote buildings and public spaces of a high enduring design quality that respect local distinctiveness, are accessible to all and reduce opportunities for crime and anti-social behaviour.
- o) Manage and reduce risk of and from pollution in relation to quality of land, air and water and dealing with land contamination.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 4.3 Sustainable development is the key principle underpinning the Local Plan, and is critical to the delivery of many of the Council's and the community's aspirations. It requires social progress which recognises the needs of everyone, effective protection of the environment, prudent use of natural resources and the maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment.

- 4.4 The District's future growth will be pursued in the most sustainable way. Taken as a whole, the policies within the Local Plan outline what is considered to be sustainable development in the context of Three Rivers and add more detail to the criteria to this preferred policy.
- 4.5 Particular priorities for sustainable development within the District are to:
- Increase the supply of homes and affordable housing;
 - Improve access to jobs, services and facilities for all groups;
 - Achieve a high quality environment and
 - Tackle climate change by reducing the area's carbon footprint and creating resilient and adaptive environments.
- 4.6 New development will need to be built to high sustainability standards, helping to generate wider benefits in terms of the quality of the environment and carbon reduction, be energy efficient, using renewable resources, and minimising the production of waste. The built environment will need to be resilient to the potential impacts of climate change with flood plains protected from inappropriate development and the sustainable management of the District's watercourses promoted.
- 4.7 All future development will also need to be supported by suitable social and Green Infrastructure and set within environments that reflect the character and history of the area. All development must be well-designed, accessible and safe including for people with disabilities. Schools, health care facilities, shops and other services need to be available in accessible locations along with open spaces, parks, sports facilities and play, forming part of a wider Green Infrastructure network.
- 4.8 The historic environment is an important part of the character of the District. Heritage assets will be conserved and enhanced as part of the creation and maintenance of distinctive places. In addition, the District's wide variety of natural environments, landscape and biodiversity will be protected and enhanced, and the District's watercourses should remain a key asset for the area, providing space for water, biodiversity, recreation and a setting for development.

Alternative Options Considered

- 4.9 There were no realistic alternatives to this option.

Question 2

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for meeting the Presumption in Favour of Sustainable Development is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Housing Mix and Type

- 4.10 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.
- 4.11 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.

4.12 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.

Preferred Policy Option 2 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, the Council will require proposals to take into account:
 - 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) 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.

Self-Build and Custom Housebuilding

6) Proposals for self-build and custom housebuilding will be supported where development would have no adverse effect on the local character. Strategic sites will be expected to provide serviced plots for self-build and custom build where possible. 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 18 months.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

7) Proposals for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) that require planning permission will be supported where the balance of housing types 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.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

4.13 The Local Housing Needs Assessment (LHNA) (2020) 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.
- 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 44.2% in the period 2020 – 2036.
- 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.

4.14 The following table sets the strategic mix of housing provision which will be sought until any subsequent revision to the LHNA 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	5%	23%	43%	30%
Affordable Home Ownership	21%	41%	28%	9%
Social/ Affordable Rented Housing	40%	27%	31%	2%

4.15 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.

4.16 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 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.

- 4.17 While the LHNA provides estimated housing requirements, there are a range of factors that need to be taken into account in setting policies for provision.
- 4.18 In particular for 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.
- 4.19 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

- 4.20 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.
- 4.21 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

- 4.22 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.
- 4.23 For Three Rivers there is projected to be a requirement for 1,156 homes 2020 – 2036 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 – rented: 231 homes
 - Housing with support – leasehold: 551 homes
 - Housing with care – rented: 222 homes
 - Housing with care – leasehold: 152 homes.
- 4.24 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 683 care beds 2020 – 2036.
- 4.25 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.

- 4.26 The LHNA estimates that there is a need for 430 wheelchair user homes in Three Rivers over the plan period equivalent to approximately 4% of the overall housing requirement. 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 addressed at Preferred Policy Option Residential Design and Layout and Accessible and Adaptable Buildings.

Self-Build and Custom Build Housing

- 4.27 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.

Houses in Multiple Occupation

- 4.28 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.
- 4.29 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.

Alternative Options Considered

- 4.30 There were no reasonable alternatives to consider.

Question 3

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Housing Mix & Type is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Housing Density

- 4.31 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.

Preferred Policy Option 3 Housing Density

- (1) The Council will promote high quality residential development that respects the character of the District 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 generally of at least 50 dwellings per hectare. 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 accommodation. Any proposals for development at a density below the target levels above should include supporting information to justify the proposed approach.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 4.32 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.
- 4.33 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.
- 4.34 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.
- 4.35 As such, it is considered that guideline densities of a minimum of 50 dwellings per hectare should be set 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.
- 4.36 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.
- 4.37 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.

Alternative Options Considered

- 4.38 Lower densities of development were considered.

Question 4

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Housing Density is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Affordable Housing

- 4.39 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.
- 4.40 The LHNA 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.

Preferred Policy Option 4 Affordable Housing

Requirements and Thresholds

- (1) Delivery of genuinely affordable housing is a key priority of the Local Plan. In view of the identified pressing need for affordable housing in the District, all new development resulting in a net gain of one or more dwellings will be expected to contribute to the provision of affordable housing through providing at least:
 - a) 40% of the total number of dwellings as affordable housing for rent (by net additional unit), **and**
 - b) An additional 10% of the total number of dwellings as dwellings available for affordable home ownership on developments delivering 10 or more dwellings, except where an exemption applies under paragraph 64 of the NPPF.
 - c) 10% of affordable housing meeting the Building Regulations M4(3) standard (wheelchair user dwellings) as per the requirements of Preferred Policy Option 6 on Accessible and Adaptable dwellings.
- (2) 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.
- (3) 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.

Rural Exception Sites

- (4) 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. A minor degree of market

housing may be acceptable where it is required to support the delivery of affordable housing on the site.

Affordability and Tenure

- (5) The tenure split of affordable housing on all sites must prioritise forms of affordable housing which are genuinely affordable for those in need and which will meet the most acute needs for affordable housing in the District. As a guide, this means providing:
- a) Affordable housing for rent
 - 80% of the affordable housing for rent as Social Rent,
 - 20% of the affordable housing for rent as Affordable Rent,
 - b) Affordable home ownership
 - 10% of all dwellings on sites delivering 10 or more dwellings as dwellings for affordable home ownership, except where an exemption applies under paragraph 64 of the NPPF.
- (6) Affordable housing should reflect the mix of sizes and types required in the District as identified through Policy xx Housing Mix and the Local Housing Need Assessment (LHNA) and subsequent updates.

Mode of Affordable Housing Provision

- (7) 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 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.
- (8) 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

- (9) 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.
- (10) 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.

- (11) 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).

What you told us

- 4.41 The majority of responses to the Issues & Options consultation in 2017, told us it is important to ensure that affordable housing is provided either on-site or by way of commuted payments on proposals for new development. Concern was raised regarding affordable housing being acceptable on sites of less than 10 dwellings in light of recent Government changes stipulating that affordable housing contributions should not be sought on sites below 10 dwellings.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 4.42 Paragraph 63 of 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.
- 4.43 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, 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.
- 4.44 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.
- 4.45 The LHNA demonstrates that the average house price in Three Rivers during 2017 was £641,706. This is significantly above the Hertfordshire average of £492,392 and the England and Wales average of £338,621 during the same period. Monthly rents across all sizes of accommodation are similarly above Hertfordshire and England averages within Three Rivers.
- 4.46 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 14.68 times higher than lower quartile incomes at January 2018. The affordability of housing therefore remains a critical issue in Three Rivers, and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future.

- 4.47 The LHNA considered needs for affordable housing in accordance with the methodology set out within the National Planning Practice Guidance (NPPG). This identifies an annual net need for affordable housing for rent in Three Rivers over the period 2017-2036 of 373 homes per year.
- 4.48 The need for affordable housing for rent is equivalent to 60% of the District's total housing requirement under the standard methodology, and given the significant and growing need for affordable housing the LHNA confirms that seeking the maximum amount of affordable housing for rent as is viably possible is justified
- 4.49 With regard to the tenure of affordable housing for rent that is required, the greatest need in the District is for Social Rented housing, followed by Affordable Rent. Based purely on an analysis of affordability the LHNA recommends a tenure mix of 80% as Social Rent and 20% Affordable Rent.
- 4.50 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.
- 4.51 The LHNA also indicates that in addition to the requirement for affordable housing for rent, seeking 10% of housing on larger sites as affordable home ownership in line with the NPPF would be reasonable. However, given the main analysis demonstrates that the most significant need is for households who cannot afford anything in the market without subsidy, there would be no basis to increase provision of affordable home ownership above this baseline 10% figure.
- 4.52 The Council acknowledge 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 the draft LHNA will therefore be sought
- 4.53 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.
- 4.54 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.
- 4.55 However, an element of new development can help to support these communities and paragraph 145 of the NPPF therefore enables provision of limited affordable housing for local community needs under policies set out in the development plan, including policies for rural exception sites.
- 4.56 In line with this potential exception, proposals for rural exception sites delivering 100% affordable housing within and immediately adjacent to the village core areas of Sarratt (may be supported 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.

Alternative Options Considered

- 4.57 Different affordable housing thresholds and tenures were considered.

Question 5

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Affordable Housing is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- 4.58 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.
- 4.59 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. All the identified Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople Sites 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. Further details of the 'safeguarded sites' can be found in Part 2 of this consultation.

Preferred Policy Option 5

Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople

- (1) When allocating sites or considering planning applications for sites 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 flooding;
 - b) Avoid causing an adverse impact on areas of recognised wildlife, heritage or landscape importance, and on the openness of the Green Belt;
 - c) Be in or near existing settlements with access by foot and/ or public transport to local services, including shops, schools and healthcare;
 - d) Be well located to the highway network, with safe and convenient vehicular and pedestrian access to the site;
 - e) Provide adequate on-site facilities for parking, storage, play and residential amenity;
 - f) Provide adequate levels of privacy and residential amenities for occupiers and not be detrimental to the amenities of adjacent occupiers; and
 - g) The circumstances of the applicant and their need for pitches on the application site.
- (2) Existing Gypsy, Traveller and Travelling Showpeople sites will be safeguarded in accordance with the preferred policy 'Sites for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople' in Part 2 of this consultation.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 4.60 There are a number of Gypsies, Travellers and Traveling Showpeople in Three Rivers all living on small privately owned sites in Bedmond, Sarratt, Kings Langley, Langleybury and Mill End.
- 4.61 In 2016, a Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment (GTAA) was undertaken following new planning policy guidance (PPG) which changed the definition for 'Travellers' for the purpose of planning.

- 4.62 The GTAA concluded that for the period 2016 – 2031 two additional pitches were needed for households who met the definition of ‘Traveller’, three additional plots were needed to meet the needs of Travelling Showpeople and that there was no requirement for transit sites in the District.
- 4.63 The additional needs identified for ‘Traveller’ households arose from sites which had temporary planning permission at the time of the assessment, both of which have since been granted permanent planning permission. The identified needs of those households have therefore been met and will continue to be met through safeguarding the existing sites and/or future site intensification.
- 4.64 Future needs for plots for Travelling Showpeople can be accommodated within the existing authorised sites, and therefore there is no need to allocate further sites. These needs will continue to be met through safeguarding the existing sites and/or future sites.
- 4.65 Beyond 2031, accurate assessment of needs for Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is much more challenging and less robust and any needs arising beyond 2031 will therefore be considered through application of the preferred criteria-based policy or through future allocations based on an updated assessment of need, rather than specific allocations at this time.

Alternative Options Considered

- 4.66 There were no reasonable alternatives to consider.

Question 6

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Provision for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Residential Design and Layout and Accessible and Adaptable Buildings

- 4.67 As well as securing an adequate supply of housing of a mix of sizes, types and tenures to meet needs in the District, to ensure the quality of life of Three Rivers’ residents and communities it is essential that all housing that is provided is of high quality and that there is suitable accommodation to meet a range of needs.
- 4.68 Achieving this requires new development to be designed in accordance with the objectives and full range of policies of the new Local Plan, as well as specific design principles for new homes set out in the following preferred policy.

Preferred Policy Option 6

Residential Design and Layout and Accessible and Adaptable Buildings

- (1) All new housing development should be designed and built to a high quality for the duration of its lifetime. This includes C3 and C4 Use Class developments, conversions and changes of use. A high quality dwelling is one which meets the criteria set out in this policy and which accords with the Local Plan objectives and other relevant Local Plan policies.
- (2) All applications for residential development, including new dwellings, replacement dwellings, and extensions or alterations to existing dwellings should satisfy the preferred 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

- (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 supported where 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.

Subdivision of Dwellings

- (7) Subject to other development policies, proposals for the conversion of single dwellings into two or more units will generally be acceptable where:
 - 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 and External Amenity Space Standards

- (8) All residential development should meet or exceed the nationally described space standards as set out by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) unless a different approach is robustly justified. 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.
- (9) Standards for the quantity and quality of external amenity space set out at Appendix 1 should be met) unless a different approach is robustly justified.

Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings

- (10) 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. On developments of 50 or more dwellings:
 - a) 10% of new homes should meet Building Regulations M4(2) standard (accessible and adaptable dwellings) and
 - b) 10% of the affordable housing should meet Building Regulations M4(3) standard (wheelchair user dwellings) or subsequent standards in legislation to make homes accessible and adaptable.

In calculating the percentage of accessible and adaptable dwellings units to be provided as part of a development scheme, the M4(2) and M4(3) requirement will normally be 'rounded up' to the nearest whole number.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 4.69 To deliver the step-change in housing required to meet needs in the area the preferred 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.
- 4.70 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 at paragraph 122 that development should take into account the desirability of maintaining an area's prevailing character and setting (including residential gardens), and at paragraph 70 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.

- 4.71 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.
- 4.72 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.
- 4.73 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.

Internal and External Amenity Space Standards

- 4.74 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.
- 4.75 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.
- 4.76 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.
- 4.77 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.
- 4.78 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 at Appendix 1 should be applied with consideration for the shape and utility of space provided to ensure that spaces offer good amenity.

Accessible and Adaptable Dwellings

- 4.79 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.
- 4.80 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.

- 4.81 The LHNA (2020) recommendation is that Council's 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.

Alternative Options Considered

- 4.82 A higher threshold of 100 dwellings was considered for the provision of accessible and adaptable dwellings and wheelchair user dwellings.

Question 7

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Residential Design and Layout and Accessible and Adaptable Buildings is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Employment and Economic Development

- 5.0 In order to maintain and improve the economic performance of the District, it is important to make provision for future employment and economic development alongside housing growth and protection of the environment. To provide a balance between homes and jobs, economic growth should be in broad alignment with housing development.
- 5.1 Economic development includes development within the office uses, industry and warehousing uses, public and community uses, leisure and tourism uses and main town centre uses. It also includes any other development which provides employment opportunities, generates wealth or produces or generates an economic output or product. It does not include housing development.

Preferred Policy Option 7 Employment and Economic Development

- 1) The Council will support the delivery of at least 5.5ha of B-class employment space and associated sui-generis uses with focus given to industrial and warehouse uses with priority given to proposals in allocated employment sites and those within the most sustainable locations such as town centres and areas served by sustainable transport. It is recognised that in rural areas sites that meet local business needs may not be in the most sustainable locations or served well by sustainable transport.
- 2) Allocated employment sites will be safeguarded for business, industrial and storage or distribution uses.
- 3) New employment provision will be focused towards existing allocated employment sites through intensification and expansion, where appropriate.
- 4) Proposals providing a range of small, medium and large business premises will be supported.
- 5) Proposals for non-employment uses on allocated employment sites should only be permitted where:
 - there would be no unacceptable impact on amenity;
 - there would be no hindrance to the site's operation as a key employment area.

- 6) 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.
- 7) Proposals resulting in a loss of B class floor space will only be supported where there is up-to-date evidence demonstrating there is no longer a need for the employment use and the property has been vacant for at least 12 months with clear evidence that the property has been marketed for that use during this period.
- 8) Proposals for creative industries and the expansion of Leavesden Studios will be supported where they are in accordance with local and national policy. Preferred Policy Option 8 provides the policy for Warner Bros. Studios.

What you told us

- 5.2 The majority of responses to the Issues & Options consultation in 2017, which was undertaken before the South West Herts Economic Study Update (2019) was completed, told us that it was important to continue to safeguard the existing allocated employment sites and allocate additional land for employment use as well as allowing mixed use schemes (mix of employment, residential, retail, leisure uses).

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 5.3 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, 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.
- 5.4 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.
- 5.5 Employment in the area has continued to grow at a strong rate and there has been a large fall in unemployment in recent years. This combined with the high levels of out-commuting from the District could limit the labour supply. The growth levels planned for in the Local Plan will provide a significant boost to the labour supply.
- 5.6 Three Rivers has a predominantly office based economy with 55% of jobs being office based. The main employment locations offer very high quality office space in large floorplates. This, together with the highly skilled workforce in Three Rivers, has attracted a number of large 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.
- 5.7 Three Rivers is the home of Leavesden Studios which is a key asset for the District and the wider south west Herts 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 (2019) recommends that land should be safeguarded for the expansion of Leavesden Studios.

5.8 The South West Herts Economic Study (2019) has been used to inform the detailed requirements for land or floorspace for economic development over the plan period. The Study indicates that on the basis of projected growth within the area, Three Rivers cannot afford to lose any more employment floorspace. The demand for office space is expected to be met by existing commitments at Croxley Park, while there will be a requirement for further land to be allocated for warehousing and industrial uses.

- In Three Rivers there is expected to be a demand of 30,100 sqm office space for the period to 2036. This is expected to be met by existing commitments at Croxley Park which will deliver 36,363 sqm resulting in a 6,263 sqm oversupply in the period.
- In terms of industrial and warehousing space there is a requirement for 28,800 sqm floorspace over the period to 2036. However, existing commitments will result in a loss of 11,145 sqm, therefore resulting in a total requirement of 39,945 sqm. However, there is capacity for approximately 18,000 sqm on the existing Maple Cross/Maple Lodge employment site allocation (Site E(d) in the Site Allocations LDD) which reduces the total requirement for industrial and warehousing space to 21,945 sqm. Using the plot ratio of 0.4 recommended in the Study, 21,945 sqm equates to a requirement of 5.5ha employment land which will need to be planned for over the period to 2036.

Alternative Options Considered

5.9 The following options were considered as part of the Issues & Options consultation in 2017:

- Continue safeguarding the existing allocated employment areas so they can continue to be a focus for jobs growth only
- Extend existing employment areas for employment use
- Continue safeguarding the existing allocated employment areas and allocate an additional 8.6ha of land for office-based uses and warehousing, in accordance with the employment land requirements outlined in the South West Hertfordshire Economic Study
- Continue safeguarding the existing allocated employment areas and allocate an additional 8.6ha of land, but allow conversion to residential uses with the need for planning permission, to ensure a satisfactory form of development
- Continue safeguarding the existing allocated employment areas, and allocate an additional 8.6ha of land, but allow the development of mixed use schemes (mix of employment, residential, retail, leisure uses) within existing employment areas

Question 8

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Employment and Economic Development is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Warner Bros. Studios at Leavesden

5.10 The South West Herts Economic Study Update (2019) confirms that the Studios at 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.

Preferred Policy Option 8 Warner Bros. Studios at Leavesden

- (1) Leavesden Studios Operations
 - a) Development on this site must be in relation to the Warner Bros. Studios Operations and associated uses.
 - b) The allocated site will be safeguarded for studio operations and associated uses

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 5.11 The South West Herts Economic Study Update (2019) 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.
- 5.12 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 Herts and key to the future growth of creative industries in the economic market area. Warner Bros has already invested significantly in Leavesden Studios and has further plans to increase its size by around a quarter, including new sound stages workshops, post production facilities and an extension of the studios tour.
- 5.13 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 it is essential that land is allocated to allow the expansion of the studios and that a policy is in place to ensure that the land is safeguarded for that use.

Alternative Options Considered

- 5.14 Land adjacent to the existing Leavesden Studios allocation site was considered for housing development.

Question 9

**Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Warner Bros. Studios at Leavesden is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.
Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.**

Retail and Town Centres

- 5.15 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.

Preferred Policy Option 9 Retail and Leisure

- 1) Retail development will be acceptable in principle within the Retail Hierarchy:
 - The **Town Centre** at **Rickmansworth**
 - The **District Centres** at **South Oxhey, Abbots Langley and Chorleywood**
 - The **Local Centres** at **Croxley Green** (Watford Road and New Road) and **Mill End** (Money Hill Parade)
 - The **Neighbourhood Centres** across the District
- 2) Main town centre uses will be directed to the Town Centre, District Centres and Local Centres.
- 3) Primary Shopping Areas will be the main focus for retail uses (and other Class E uses) and these uses will be protected, unless it is demonstrated that the loss of the Class E use would not have significant harmful effects on the vitality and viability of the Town and District Centres. A wider variety of main town centre uses will be encouraged within the Town Centre Boundaries of the Town and District Centres.
- 4) Identified Local Centres, Neighbourhood Centres and Individual Shops will be protected and enhanced where they are catering for local day-to-day needs. The retention of retail uses will be encouraged. The provision of uses that are complementary to the Local and Neighbourhood Centres will also be encouraged.
- 5) The hierarchy of retail centres and their established character and diversity will be maintained by:
 - a) Protecting and enhancing the vitality and viability of the Primary Shopping Areas of the Town and District Centres by generally resisting the loss of retail use and other Class E uses
 - b) Promoting uses which are complementary to the Primary Shopping Area, normally within the Town Centre boundary of the Town Centre and District Centres.
 - c) Taking account of the contribution of non-retail uses to the vitality and viability of centres, having regard to market conditions and impacts on local amenity
 - d) Protecting and enhancing existing Local Centres, Neighbourhood Centres and Individual Shops where they are catering for local day-to-day needs
 - e) Permitting main town centre uses in out-of-town locations only where the sequential test is passed and where it is demonstrated that the development would not significantly adversely affect existing retail centres.
 - f) Only permitting retail and leisure development (of 2,500m² gross floorspace and above) in an out of centre location where an impact assessment has demonstrated that the development would not have a significantly adverse impact on the considerations stated in paragraph 89 of the NPPF or result in an increase in private vehicle use.
- 6) Proposals involving main town centre uses will be considered taking into account:
 - a) The location of the proposed development with preference given to centrally located and accessible areas served by a range of transport modes including public transport
 - b) The impact of development on the viability and vitality of existing retail centres
 - c) The appropriateness of the type and scale of development in relation to the centre and its role, function, character and catchment area.
- 7) In all locations, proposals for new retail and leisure development, involving gains and/or losses, will be considered taking into account its accessibility, its impact on existing centres and appropriateness of the type and scale of development. New retail and leisure facilities will be encouraged where they are supported by up to date evidence of need, where they contribute to the vitality and viability and general economic well-being of the area and where they do not impact detrimentally on existing centres.

- 8) Any sustainable applications for evening economy uses in the Town Centre should be considered favourably.
- 9) Shop fronts and displays should be appropriate to the character and function of the area.

Future Retail and Leisure Provision

(Leisure = commercial leisure sector e.g. indoor health and fitness facilities, cinemas, restaurants, pubs/bars/nightclubs, bowling, bingo and cultural facilities (theatres, museums, etc.).)

- 10) With regard to convenience (food) floorspace, this equates to a net gain of around 2,400-3,100 square metres by 2036. The target provision over forthcoming five year periods will be broadly as follows:
 - a) 1,000-1,300 square metres by 2026
 - b) 700-800 square metres from 2026 to 2031
 - c) 700-1,000 square metres from 2031 to 2036
- 11) With regard to comparison (non-food) floorspace, the provision of additional floorspace equates to the net gain of around 1,900-2,600 square meters by 2036. This is broadly set out over forthcoming five year periods below:
 - a) 300-400 square meters by 2026
 - b) 800-1,000 square meters from 2026 to 2031
 - c) 800-1,200 square meters from 2031 to 2036
- 12) With regard to the development of restaurants, cafés and bars , the provision of net additional floorspace equates to a net gain of:
 - a) 327 square meters by 2036 in Rickmansworth Town Centre
 - b) 402 square meters by 2036 in the District and Local Centres

These targets will be reviewed regularly and amended in light of new evidence in relation to forecast expenditure and population. 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.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 5.16 Chapter 7 of the NPPF confirms that planning policies and decisions should support the role that town centres play at the heart of local communities, taking a positive approach to their growth, management and adaption. This includes defining a network and hierarchy of town centres and the extent of town centres and primary shopping areas and promoting their long-term vitality and viability; as well as allocating a range of sites to meet the scale and type of development likely to be needed in future for retail, leisure, office and other main town centre uses.
- 5.17 The South West Hertfordshire Retail & Leisure Study (2018) provided an assessment of current retail and leisure provision and future development needs within the Three Rivers, Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans and Watford areas.
- 5.18 The Study indicates that Three Rivers has a relatively low market share within the South West Hertfordshire area, with a 5.7% market share of convenience goods and a 1.3% share of comparison goods. Larger centres of Watford, Hemel Hempstead and St Albans remain the primary destination for Three Rivers' residents and are likely to continue to do so in future.

5.19 However, the centres in Three Rivers will continue to provide an important function in meeting all types of local needs, and reducing the need to travel.

5.20 To support the management and growth of town centres and shopping, the hierarchy of centres in the District previously identified within the Core Strategy has been reviewed in line with the role and relationships of the centres and updated definitions in the NPPF as shown in the table below:

Town Centre	Rickmansworth
District Centres	South Oxhey
	Abbots Langley
	Chorleywood
Local Centres	Croxley Green (Watford Road)
	Croxley Green (New Road)
	Mill End (Money Hill Parade)
Neighbourhood Centres	2-8 Chalfont Road, Maple Cross
	61-65 Station Road, Kings Langley
	15 Bridge Road and 5 Old Mill Road, Hunton Bridge
	17-22 School Mead, Abbots Langley
	1-14 Katherine Place, Abbots Langley
	41-55 and 295-309 Baldwins Lane, Croxley Green
	193-197 Watford Road, Croxley Green
	4-12 Scots Hill, 1-3 The Green & 1-4 New Parade, Croxley Green
	1-11 Tudor Parade, Mill End
	68-82 Church Lane, Mill End
	2-28 Main Avenue, Moor Park
	10-24 Hallowes Crescent, South Oxhey
	305-317 Prestwick Road, South Oxhey
	1-18 The Parade, Delta Gain, Carpenders Park
	18-48 Little Oxhey Lane, South Oxhey
	46-52 Heronsgate Road, Heronsgate
	2-4 Station Approach, Chorleywood
Cunningham Way, Leavesden	
Wyatts House and Shell Filling Station, Rickmansworth Road, Chorleywood	
Individual Shops	Sarratt Post Office, The Green, Sarratt
	57-63 High Street, Bedmond
	5-7a and Sherwood News, College Road, Abbots Langley

5.21 Town Centre Boundaries and Primary Shopping Areas for the Town Centre (Rickmansworth) and District Centres (South Oxhey, Abbots Langley and Chorleywood) are defined within Part 2 of this consultation document in line with the recommendations of the Retail and Leisure Study.

5.22 The Retail and Leisure Study identifies a relatively small undersupply of convenience and comparison shopping floorspace in the District to 2036 as noted in the table below:

Year	Convenience Floorspace	Comparison Floorspace
2026	1,000-1,300sqm	300-400sqm
2031	1,700-2,100sqm	1,100-1,400sqm
2036	2,400-3,100sqm	1,900-2,600sqm

5.23 Although the Study has forecast requirements to 2036, as a consequence of uncertainty over factors including population growth and the impact of planned or proposed retail growth in neighbouring areas, the Study advises that greater weight is placed on forecasts up to 2031 and that there is more caution over the forecasts for 2036.

5.24 Where there is an identified need for new town centre development, the Town and District Centres will be the focus for this development and retail development will specifically be directed to the Primary Shopping Area within these centres in the first instance.

Whilst retail development will be directed to Primary Shopping Areas in the first instance, it will be possible for changes of use from retail to other town centre uses to take place as permitted development. This is due to the Government's revisions to the Use Classes Order in 2020 which were made with the aim of introducing greater flexibility over changes of use in order to support town centres. Various main town centre uses (including retail) are now grouped together under new classes E and F1. Planning permission is not required for changes of use within the same use class. The table below sets out the main town centre uses defined by the NPPF and the use class that they fall within:

Main town centre uses	New use class (from 1 September 2020)
Retail development	E: commercial, business and service
Restaurants, drive through restaurants, health and fitness centres	E: commercial, business and service
Cinemas, bars and pubs, nightclubs, casinos, indoor bowling centres and bingo halls	Sui generis
Offices	E: commercial, business and service
Hotels and conference centres	C1: hotels, boarding and guest houses
Museums and galleries	F1: learning and non-residential institutions
Theatres, concert halls	Sui generis

5.25 There may also be opportunities for new provision as part of development proposals where this would help to meet the needs of the existing and new community and rectify local deficiencies in provision.

5.26 However, in all cases, proposals for main town centre uses will not be permitted unless they satisfy the requirements set out in national planning policy, including the requirement for a sequential test for applications for main town centre uses which are not in an existing centre or in accordance with an up to date plan at paragraph 86, as well as the requirements for impact assessments of certain retail and leisure development at paragraph 89.

5.27 The Retail and Leisure Study also assesses potential leisure requirements within key centres, including consideration for any gaps in the market where demand is not being met. It advises that under the highest population growth scenario there is some limited capacity for health and fitness clubs across South West Hertfordshire which could be satisfied through introduction of additional low cost gyms. While it is recommended that further facilities are planned for at this time, the principle of new health and fitness developments coming forward should be considered on their own merits.

5.28 There is forecast to be additional capacity of 728sqm restaurants, bars and cafes to 2036 in the District. The study does not recommend specific intervention in any centres through large-scale intervention, but the essential function of these as part of healthy town centres should be recognised and facilities promoted, providing that these uses would not adversely impact existing retail provision and the vitality or viability of town centres. It is anticipated that smaller units coming forward as planning applications over the period to 2036 would address the identified capacity.

Alternative Options Considered

5.29 There were no reasonable alternatives to consider.

Question 10

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Retail and Leisure is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Social and Community Facilities

6.0 Social and community facilities and important local services, such as 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.

6.1 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.

Preferred Policy Option 10 Social and Community Facilities

Protection of Existing Facilities

- (1) Proposals for the redevelopment or change of use of any premises resulting in the loss of social or community facilities, 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; and
 - c) Are designed and sited to maximise shared use of the facility.

What you told us

- 6.2 As part of the Issues & Options consultation you told us that social and community facilities should be provided as part of new development.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 6.3 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.
- 6.4 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.

Alternative Options Considered

- 6.5 It was considered that there were no suitable alternative options.

Question 11

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Social and Community Facilities is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed. Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Health and Wellbeing

- 6.6 The way that we plan and design places has a significant influence over whether communities are able to live healthy lives. This is reflected in the National Planning Policy Framework consequently local plan policies should support population health by using public health evidence to inform policies to ensure that new development proposals support improvements to the health of the population.

Preferred Policy Option 11 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) Proposals for residential development of 100 or more dwellings and non-residential development of 1000sqm or more will be required to submit a Health Impact Assessment (HIA), prepared in accordance with Hertfordshire Public Health's Position Statement on HIAs, with their applications.

What you told us

- 6.7 As part of the Issues & Options consultation you told us that ill health can be reduced by building health into the existing urban environment and that the Local Plan can achieve this by taking an approach in its policies that balances provisions for a positive, healthy environment alongside the provision of healthcare facilities.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 6.8 The Health and Wellbeing Partnership have set out in their Health and Wellbeing Strategy the 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

- 6.9 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.

- 6.10 HCC Public Health Department have produced a Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Planning Guidance Document (2017) to aid local authorities and developers in the delivery of healthy development and communities and focusses on the principle of designing in health and wellbeing 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 and builds on the Hertfordshire Health and Wellbeing Strategy and focusses on seven key areas:

- Air Quality
- Food and healthy choices
- Movement and access
- Neighbourhood spaces
- Housing and development design
- Local economy and employment
- Quality open space, play and recreation.

- 6.11 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 50 or more dwellings and for non-residential developments of 1,000sqm 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>

Alternative Options Considered

- 6.12 The alternative option considered was not to set out a policy for Health and Wellbeing.

Question 12

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Health and Wellbeing is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Reducing Carbon Dioxide Emissions

- 7.0 Minimising our contribution to climate change by continuing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is a key consideration for the new Local Plan. Despite reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in recent years, the effects of climate change are projected to continue with the potential for hotter, drier summers and milder, wetter winters, along with an increase in the frequency of intense rainfall events.
- 7.1 In response to climate change the Climate Change Act 2008 requires a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the 1990 baseline of at least 34% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. The Government intend to deliver this by setting and meeting five-yearly carbon budgets for the UK for that period.
- 7.2 In May 2019, the Council declared a climate emergency and is committed to use all practical means to cut carbon emissions.

Preferred Policy Option 12

Carbon Dioxide Emissions and On-site Renewable Energy

- a) Applications for all new residential development of one unit and above and for all new commercial development will be required to submit an Energy Statement demonstrating that development proposals will produce 20% less carbon dioxide emissions than Building Regulations Part L requirements (2013) having regard to feasibility and viability.

This may be achieved through; a combination of energy efficiency measures; incorporation of on-site low carbon and renewable technologies; connection to a local, decentralized, renewable or low carbon energy supply.

What you told us

- 7.3 As part of the Issues & Options consultation you told us that new developments should install energy efficiency measures such as solar panels, ambient air heat pumps

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 7.4 The Preferred Policy Option is critical to helping address climate change and reflects national policy and the local high priority to tackle this issues. Buildings such as houses and offices account for approximately 40% of all carbon dioxide emissions in the UK and the Council will encourage all new developments to be as energy efficient as possible.

Alternative Options Considered

- 7.5 A higher percentage of carbon emission reductions was considered as well as a requirement for all new dwellings to be zero carbon. As national planning policy does not allow us to do this we are seeking the maximum reduction in carbon emissions that are currently allowed under national planning policy.

Question 13

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Carbon Dioxide Emissions and On-site Renewable Energy is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Adapting to Climate Change and Sustainable Construction

- 7.6 In addition to reducing carbon emissions under Preferred Policy Option 12, sustainable construction requires the creation of adaptable buildings which are resilient to the effects of climate change and which also minimise the use of natural resources.
- 7.7 Climate change could have potentially major impacts on Three Rivers through a greater intensity and frequency of extreme weather events such as flooding, storms, drought, heat waves or extended cold periods.
- 7.8 It is therefore important that development incorporates measures to minimise and mitigate the effects of these consequences.
- 7.9 Ensuring that development is constructed in the most sustainable way to reduce impacts on the environment also requires consideration for the inclusion of measures to reduce energy and water consumption, to reduce waste and to use sustainable building materials.

Preferred Policy Option 13

Adapting to Climate Change and Sustainable Construction

- (1) All major developments are required to submit a Sustainability Statement demonstrating how sustainable design and construction methods have been used, and measures to enable the development to mitigate and adapt to climate change over its lifetime.

Adapting to Climate Change

- (2) To help manage the impacts of climate change, new development should build in greater resilience to climate change and extreme weather events through the design of sites and buildings, including where appropriate:
- a) Managing flood risk and promoting sustainable drainage systems;
 - b) Promoting and enhancing the Green Infrastructure network across the District and integrating this as part of the design process;
 - c) Protecting the natural environment, and conserving and enhancing biodiversity;
 - d) Considering the layout of new development, building orientation, shading, construction materials and ventilation systems to address sunlight and daylight, passive solar gain and reduce risks of overheating and reliance on air conditioning systems.

Sustainable Design and Construction

- (3) New development should be designed and constructed to:
- a) Make efficient use of mineral resources and incorporate a proportion of recycled materials and/or secondary aggregates;
 - b) Minimise waste and reuse material resulting from excavation and demolition activity;
 - c) Conserve water in accordance with the requirements set out in Preferred Policy Option 15 (the tighter Building Regulations optional requirement of 110 litres/person/day or subsequent updated tighter standards), and reduce flood risk;
 - d) Be flexible and adaptable to the needs of future occupiers;
 - e) Incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity value.
- (4) Major non-residential development should aim to achieve BREEAM 'Excellent' Standard, unless this is demonstrated to be unviable.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 7.10 Mitigating and adapting to climate change are intrinsic to the Local Plan and are key priorities for the Council. We consider that all development should take into account opportunities to mitigate and manage the effects of climate change and to use resources efficiently. While opportunities may be more limited for minor developments, improvements should still be sought in the design and construction of these schemes where possible.
- 7.11 For major developments where there is generally more scope to achieve significant improvements, it is proposed that a Sustainability Statement is required as part of an application to demonstrate how sustainable design and construction measures are included to mitigate and adapt to climate change and reduce the use of natural resources over the intended lifetime of a development.
- 7.12 In addition, projected increases in future temperatures must be taken into account to ensure that developments provide for a suitable standard of amenity and quality of life for future occupiers. As a consequence, development proposals need to consider how measures have been taken to minimise overheating and to reduce reliance on air conditioning.
- 7.13 Ensuring that development is constructed in the most sustainable way requires consideration to be given to reducing the use of natural resources including through minimising waste, using sustainable building materials and reducing water consumption; and making sure that development is flexible

and adaptable to respond to future needs, manages flood risk and supports enhancements to biodiversity.

7.14 Household water consumption in the District is significantly higher than in the rest of Hertfordshire or nationally. As a result, there is a need to make sure that development improves the way we use water with a water efficiency standard for new development above the basic national standard. We are therefore requiring new dwellings to meet the Building Regulations optional requirement of 110 litres/person/day.

7.15 The Building and Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method (BREEAM) provides market recognition for low environmental impact non-residential buildings. It addresses a wide range of environmental issues and enables developers and designers to prove the environmental credentials of their buildings so we are asking for major non-residential development proposals to aim to achieve BREEAM 'Excellent' Standard.

Alternative Options Considered

7.16 Higher targets for water efficiency standards were considered but as national planning policy does not allow us to do this we are seeking the maximum reduction currently allowed under national planning policy.

Question 14

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Adapting to Climate Change and Sustainable Construction is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments

7.17 We are 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.

Preferred Policy Option 14

Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments

(1) Proposals for large-scale 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 will 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.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 7.18 Hertfordshire as a whole had the technical potential to achieve a significant amount of renewable energy production by a number of other 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.
- 7.19 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.

Alternative Options Considered

- 7.20 It was considered that there were no suitable alternative options.

Question 15

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy Developments is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Flood Risk and Water Resources

- 7.21 Climate change will result in drier summers and warmer, wetter winters which has implications for both water management and flood risk. Local Planning Authorities have always been required to consider the need to avoid the location of certain types of development in areas which are at the highest risk of flooding and this information is obtained through undertaking a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment.
- 7.22 The National Planning Policy Framework says that Local Authorities should also develop policies to manage flood risk from all sources. The National Planning Practice Guidance provides further details on the approach to development and flood risk and how the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment should be carried out.
- 7.23 Areas within Three Rivers are at risk of flooding from rivers, surface water, groundwater, sewers and reservoirs and the effects of climate change are predicted to increase the risk of flooding in the District. 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. 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, water quality is enhanced and that development makes efficient use of water resources.

Preferred Policy Option 15 Flood Risk and Water Resources

1) Flood Risk

- a) In locations identified as being at risk of flooding, planning permission will only be granted where sequential and exception tests¹³ have been undertaken and passed and where the requirements set out in national policy have been demonstrated through a site-specific flood risk assessment.
- b) 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.
- c) New development will not be permitted in Flood Zone 3b, as defined by the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment. Redevelopment of existing built development in Flood Zone 3b will only be permitted where a less vulnerable use class is proposed and should ensure no loss of floodplain or an increase in flood risk elsewhere.
- d) A Flood Risk Assessment (FRA) will be required for:
 - Any proposals for development within Flood Zones 2 and 3
 - Development proposals of 1ha or greater in area within Flood Zone 1
 - For proposals within Flood Zone 1, where a proposed development or a change of use to a more vulnerable class may be subject to other sources of flooding, as identified in the SFRA or by the Lead Local Flood Authority.
- e) 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.
- f) Development at risk of flooding should 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 should be demonstrated that residual risks can be safely managed.
- g) 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.
- h) Major development in all areas will require Sustainable Drainage Systems to reduce surface water runoff to greenfield rates or less. Minor developments which incorporate Sustainable Drainage Systems into their designs will be encouraged.

¹³ 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.

- i) 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.
- j) Development should maintain a minimum distance of 8m 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.

2) Water Resources

The Council will support development where:

- k) The quantity and quality of surface and groundwater resources are protected from pollution and where possible enhanced.
- l) It will not be at risk or adversely affected by unacceptable levels of aquatic pollution.
- m) 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:
 - Rainwater harvesting techniques (for example providing waterbutts fitted to drainpipes and rainwater storage tanks as part of new development)
 - Harvesting and recycling greywater (wastewater from baths, showers, washbasins, kitchen sinks)
 - Using water efficient appliances (for showers, taps, washing machines, toilets etc.)
 - Using water efficient landscaping and irrigation measures (for example by using drought tolerant plants)
 - 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.
- n) Any development adjacent to, over or in a watercourse needs to take into account 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.
- o) 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.

3) Wastewater

- a) 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.

What you told us

7.24 As part of the Issues & Options consultation you told us that allocations for development in the new Local Plan should be located in areas where there is the least risk of flooding (Flood Zone 1) and that consideration should be given to allocating sites outside of Flood Zone 1 only where mitigation measures can be put in place to the satisfaction of the Environment Agency and Hertfordshire County Council as the Lead Local Flood Authority.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 7.25 National Policy aims to ensure that flood risk is taken into account 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.
- 7.26 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.

- 7.27 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.
- 7.28 Although Flood Zone 1 represents areas of low flood risk, it does not account for the risk of flooding from other sources (e.g. surface water, groundwater). All sources of flood risk and the impacts of climate change, must be taken into account.
- 7.29 As a means of assessing levels of risk, the Council commissioned a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA).
- 7.30 The SFRA defines the flood risk within the District, taking into account 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.
- 7.31 Site-specific Flood Risk Assessments (FRAs) will be required for proposals for development in locations identified as being at risk of flooding and these should demonstrate how flood risk will be managed, taking into account climate change and having regard to the vulnerability of different land uses to flood risk.
- 7.32 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 consider 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.

- 7.33 The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) 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 a development, allowing water to seep into the ground rather than running off directly into rivers and drainage systems and they also help to reduce the burden on traditional water management systems such as sewers and reduce the impact of pollution on receiving water bodies.
- 7.34 We propose that SuDS should be integrated into the design of all development sites and that the techniques used should be appropriate to local conditions. Surface Water Drainage Strategies will also be required for major development and where appropriate, for minor developments.
- 7.35 In order to maintain the riparian habitat and provide access for maintenance, a minimum 8m buffer zone from development to a main river (as defined by the Environment Agency) will be required and a 5m buffer zone between an ordinary watercourse and development is proposed.
- 7.36 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.
- 7.37 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, protecting and enhancing surface water resources, such as through the use of SuDS to manage surface water.. Changes to the design of developments and the implementation of mitigation measures should ensure potential harm to water bodies is prevented, however, where it is likely that a proposal would have a significant adverse impact on water quality, a more detailed assessment will be required. If adequate mitigation cannot be provided against any significant adverse impact on water quality, the application should be refused.
- 7.38 Three Rivers is an area of serious water stress (as classified by the Environment Agency) , 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 re-use 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.
- 7.39 It is noted that many existing water mains and sewerage systems are increasingly becoming overloaded by successive development. It is therefore important that new development is 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.

Alternative Options Considered

- 7.40 The alternative option to rely on National Planning Policy alone was not considered to be a realistic alternative as national policy requires that Local Plans should contain flood risk policies which are supported by a strategic Flood Risk Assessment.

Question 16

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Flood Risk and Water Resources is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Green Belt

- 8.0 76% of our District is designated as Green Belt. A key purpose of Green Belt is to keep a sense of openness between built up areas (in this case around London), together with other factors such as protecting the countryside from development and supporting urban regeneration. Green Belt also provides opportunities for people to access the countryside, to grow food and support nature conservation.
- 8.1 As set out in national policy, the fundamental aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. The essential characteristics of Green Belts are their openness and their permanence, and Green Belts serve five purposes:
- To check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - To prevent neighbouring towns merging into one another;
 - To assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - To preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - To assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 8.2 Great importance is attached to the Green Belt in Three Rivers, and as highlighted by the National planning Policy Framework (NPPF), established Green Belt boundaries should be altered only in exceptional circumstances and only when a Local Plan is being prepared or reviewed.
- 8.3 The need for housing and employment development together with supporting infrastructure to provide for the growth which is essential to deliver sustainable development and the Government's growth agenda means that the Council has no choice but to release some land within the Green Belt to meet these needs.
- 8.5 The main focus for development is making as much use as possible of suitable brownfield sites and underutilised land, and an exhaustive search of potential sites to accommodate development needs has been carried out as part of the SHELAA (2020). The policies of the new Local Plan also promote a significant uplift in the density of development in the District, and in all cases, proposals will need to make efficient and effective use of land.
- 8.6 However, even with these actions, there is insufficient capacity to meet needs for growth within the District's existing urban area. The Council has also been in discussion with neighbouring authorities to establish whether some of the identified need for development could be accommodated within these areas, however, they are unable to do so.
- 8.7 The Green Belt review, alongside analysis of other environmental/sustainability considerations and the results of consultation have informed decisions regarding the relative merits of different locations for potential allocations to meet housing need, and any mitigation which might need to accompany development such that consequent impacts on the purposes of the Green Belt are ameliorated or reduced to the lowest reasonable practicable extent.
- 8.8 However, notwithstanding these changes which will be necessary, the majority of the Green Belt in the District continues to fulfil the purposes set out in the NPPF. The remaining Green Belt will therefore need to be protected for the long term, and opportunities which enhance the Green Belt, particularly in terms of public accessibility or enhancement to the landscape, visual amenity and

biodiversity will be supported. The following preferred policy and further guidance set out in Appendix 2 aim to do this.

Preferred Policy Option 16 Green Belt

- (1) The revised Green Belt Boundary will be shown on the Policies Map.
- (2) There is a general presumption against inappropriate development that would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt or which would conflict with the purposes of including land within it. Such development will not be permitted unless very special circumstances exist.
- (3) 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 below.
- (4) Measures to improve public access to the Green Belt, and to enhance landscapes, visual amenity and biodiversity will be encouraged. Opportunities for outdoor sport and recreation will also be supported, provided that these would preserve the openness of the Green Belt and would not conflict with the purposes of including land within it.

New and Replacement Buildings

- (5) Within the Green Belt, approval will not be given for new buildings other than those specified in national policy except in very special circumstances.
- (6) Further 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.
- (7) Replacement buildings in the Green Belt will only be permitted where the following criteria are met:
 - a) The replacement building is in the same use;
 - b) The replacement building is not materially larger than the original building in accordance with the guidance at Appendix 2; and
 - c) The replacement building would not be more harmful to the visual amenity and openness of the Green Belt by reason of its siting than the original building.

Extensions and Alterations to Buildings

- (8) In accordance with the factors noted at Appendix 2, extensions or alterations to buildings in the Green Belt that are disproportionate in size (individually or cumulatively) to the original building will not be permitted. The building's proximity and relationship to other buildings and whether it is already, or would become, prominent in the setting and whether it preserves the openness of the Green Belt will be taken into account.

- (9) An ancillary residential outbuilding may be considered an extension for the purposes of Green Belt policy where located within 5m of the main dwellinghouse on the site. In such cases, the outbuilding must also:
- a) Be of a scale and design which is clearly subordinate to the dwelling and of a height and bulk such that the building would not adversely affect the openness of the Green Belt;
 - b) Be sited in an appropriate location that would not be prominent in the landscape and would not result in the spread of urbanising development;
 - c) Avoid features normally associated with the use of a building as a dwelling such as dormer windows.

Change of Use of Land

- (10) 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. Proposals including the extension of residential curtilage within the Green Belt resulting in encroachment to the countryside will not be supported.

Re-Use of Buildings in the Green Belt

- (11) The re-use 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 would comply with the provisions at part (10) of this policy and would not include open or agricultural land to provide new gardens/amenity space, and no doors would give access directly from buildings to such land;
 - d) 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; and
 - e) The scale of the proposed use would not have a detrimental effect on the locality (e.g. by noise, smell, bringing heavy traffic into narrow lanes or involving uses not appropriate to the Green Belt or areas of open land).

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 8.9 In accordance with the NPPF, there is a general presumption against inappropriate development that would not preserve the openness of the Green Belt or which would conflict with the purposes of including land within it. All proposals for development in the Green Belt will be considered in accordance with the provisions of the NPPF, and more the more detailed criteria within the preferred policy and Appendix 2 which will apply to certain forms of development that may be considered an exception to inappropriate development in Three Rivers.

Alternative Options Considered

8.10 The alternative option to rely on National Planning Policy alone was considered.

Question 17

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Green Belt is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Ground Conditions, Contamination and Pollution

- 9.0 It is important that a site is suitable for its proposed use taking account of ground conditions, including land instability and contamination.
- 9.1 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 soil, air, water or noise pollution.
- 9.2 The District enjoys a generally high environmental standard. However, the minimisation of pollution and contamination remains a key 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 principle¹⁴
- 9.3 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.

Preferred Policy Option 17

Ground Conditions, Contamination and Pollution

- (1) Development must not contribute to; be put at unacceptable risk from; or be adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water, light or noise pollution, odour, vibration, disturbance or land instability. Where mitigation measures are required to avoid unacceptable impacts, these must be capable of being implemented and permanently maintained. Measures to protect and enhance water quality are provided in Preferred Policy Option 15.
- (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:
- There will be no threat to future users or occupiers of the site or neighbouring land; and
 - There will be no adverse impact on the quality of local groundwater or surface water quality.

¹⁴ 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, it is the responsibility of the developer to ensure solutions to address and mitigate noise are put forward as part of proposals.

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 property 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 the minimum required for public safety and security;
 - 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) Road and footway lighting meets the County Council's adopted standard; and
 - f) There is no unacceptable adverse impact on wildlife, habitats or habitat features.

What you told us

- 9.4 As part of the Issues & Options consultation you told us that air pollution was a key issue affecting the environment and health.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 9.5 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. Pollution can be in many forms and includes all solid, liquid and gaseous emissions to air, land and water (including groundwater) from all types of development.
- 9.6 Pollution 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.
- 9.7 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.
- 9.8 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 preferred policy. Measures to protect and enhance water quality are provided in Preferred Policy Option 15 (Flood Risk and Water Resources).

Alternative Options Considered

- 9.9 The alternative option to rely on National Planning Policy alone was not considered to be a realistic alternative as national policy requires that Local Plan policies should contribute to and enhance the natural environment which includes consideration for pollution, land instability and contamination.

Question 18

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Ground Conditions, Contamination and Pollution is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Waste Management and Recycling

- 9.10 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.
- 9.11 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.

Preferred Policy Option 18 Waste Management and Recycling

- (1) Development proposals should provide waste and recycling facilities in accordance with the Council's Solid Waste Storage/Collection Guidance (2019) or subsequent updates which:
- a) Can be easily accessed and moved by occupiers and local authority/private waste collectors;
 - b) Do not result in any adverse impact to residential or work place amenities through their siting or design; and

- c) Would not result in obstruction to pedestrian, cyclists 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 Preferred Policy Option 13);
 - b) Enable the sorting of waste and recycling on-site taking into account impact on residential amenities and the environment;
 - c) Using 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) Applying a Site Waste Management Plan for relevant projects.

What you told us

9.12 As part of the Issues & Options consultation you told us that waste planning matters should be included in the new Local Plan.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

9.13 In 2017/18, nearly 500,000 tonnes of Local Authority Collected Waste was produced across Hertfordshire. Levels of recycling have been increasing, and in 2017/18, 50.9% of Hertfordshire's collected waste was recycled or composted. Three Rivers achieved a 62.4% recycling rate, the highest in Hertfordshire and the fourth highest rate of any authority in the country.

9.14 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.

9.15 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.

9.16 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 pre-cast/pre-fabricated materials and modular construction: components such as pre-cast 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.

9.17 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.

Alternative Options Considered

9.18 There were no alternative options considered.

Question 19

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Waste Management and Recycling is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Green and Blue Infrastructure Network

10.0 Green Infrastructure is defined national policy as a “network of multi-functional green space, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental and quality of life benefits for local communities”. Green infrastructure includes a range of spaces and assets including parks and gardens, playing fields, woodlands, wildlife habitats, street trees, amenity greenspace and other open spaces. Green Infrastructure networks also include ‘blue infrastructure’ features, such as ponds, rivers, canals and other water bodies and may subsequently be referred to as Green and Blue Infrastructure.

10.1 The preferred 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.

Preferred Policy Option 19 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) Priorities for Green and Blue Infrastructure focus on conserving and enhancing the following key assets and the linkages between them:
 - a) the corridors of the Rivers Chess, Colne and Gade and the Grand Union Canal;
 - b) the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
 - c) the Colne Valley Park;
 - d) the District’s Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves, Wildlife Sites, key biodiversity habitats, species and areas identified in the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan¹⁵ and heritage assets and landscape character within areas of Green Infrastructure.
- 3) The Council will require new development to contribute to the delivery of new safe and accessible Green and Blue Infrastructure and to the management of a linked network of new and enhanced open spaces and corridors.

¹⁵ Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (2006) http://www.hef.org.uk/nature/biodiversity_vision/contents.htm

- 4) 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.
- 5) 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 appropriate 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.
- 6) Development will not compromise the integrity of the Green Infrastructure network, by causing fragmentation, damage to, or isolation of Green Infrastructure assets including natural habitats and species.

What you told us

10.2 As part of the Issues & Options consultation you told us that you supported the objective to conserve and enhance the river and canal corridors and that green infrastructure should be protected and where possible enhanced.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

10.3 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 through the migration of species to more suitable habitats, the protection of water quality and the provision of sustainable drainage systems; the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity through better ecological connectivity and the facilitation of biodiversity net gain and the enhancement of local landscape character and economic growth through the creation high-quality environments.

10.4 The key Green and Blue Infrastructure assets in Three Rivers include:

- the corridors of the Rivers Chess, Colne and Gade and the Grand Union Canal;
- the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;
- 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
- The Colne Valley Park.

10.5 These form significant Green Infrastructure assets within the District into which other assets link through the identified Green 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.

10.6 Public Rights of Way provide valuable footpath, cycle and bridleway routes within the urban area and out into the countryside. During the coronavirus pandemic Rights of Way have been prevalent, providing an extensive network to access and recreation within the countryside. Public Rights of Way are an important green corridor for pedestrian access encouraging both activity and sustainable transport. 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. All

Green Infrastructure provision should be made safe and accessible and new or improved active travel routes which connect people to green infrastructure should also be provided where possible. These measures will help to ensure that the multi-functional uses of green and blue infrastructure are maximised and that all parts of the District benefit from high quality and accessible green infrastructure.

Alternative Options Considered

10.7 There were no other reasonable alternatives to the preferred policy approach.

Question 20

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Green and Blue Infrastructure is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Landscape Character

10.8 The landscape of Three Rivers is a complex mix of rural and urban areas, woodlands, wildlife habitats, farmland, water features and other land forms. Wildlife habitats such as meadows, woodlands, hedgerows, orchards and wetlands are valued components of the landscape and have their own special management requirements.

10.9 Three Rivers incorporates 546 hectares of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), 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 AONB within the District consist largely of chalk stream, river, valley and adjacent hillsides and woods.

10.10 As there will be increasing pressure for development across the District, it is important that all landscape, including the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, is conserved and enhanced. The preferred policy approach ensures that the design of development proposals is sensitive enough to ensure that schemes make a positive contribution to the landscape.

Preferred Policy Option 20

Landscape Character

(1) Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

Planning permission will only be granted for development within the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) if it:

- a) conserves and enhances the special qualities, distinctive character and natural features which contribute to the natural beauty of the AONB
- b) has regards to the AONB Management Plan
- c) has regards to the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and 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 and
- d) avoids adverse impacts from individual proposals and any cumulative effects, unless these can be satisfactorily mitigated.

There is a presumption against major development in the AONB unless it can be demonstrated that there are exceptional circumstances and the development is in the public interest. Whether a development constitutes a 'major development' 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 AONB designation.

(2) Landscape Regions

In all landscape regions, the Council will require proposals to make a positive contribution to the surrounding landscape. Proposals that would unacceptably harm the character of the landscape in terms of siting, scale, design or external appearance will be refused planning permission. 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.

What you told us

10.11 As part of the Issues & Options consultation you told us that an objective of the Local Plan should include the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes including the Chilterns AONB.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

10.12 New development should conserve and enhance the special character and natural beauty of the AONB. Proposals should also protect the setting of the AONB and safeguard views into and out of the area.

10.13 Hertfordshire County Council's Landscape Character Assessment identifies three landscape regions in Three Rivers (shown on the proposals map)

- The Chilterns Landscape Region (including parts of the Chilterns AONB)
- The Central River Valleys Landscape Region
- The South Hertfordshire Plateau

10.14 These landscape regions contain a variety of landscape character areas for which assessments have been produced identifying key characteristics and influences. A Landscape Strategy has 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>

10.15 The Council will seek to ensure that development complements the surrounding local landscape of Three Rivers as identified in the current Local Character Assessments produced by Hertfordshire County Council, through siting, layout, design, appearance and landscaping of development. When preparing applications, proposers should give consideration 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 features
- The topography of the area.

10.16 For developments in or near to the Chilterns AONB, the Council will have regard to the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide and Supplementary Technical Notes on Chilterns building materials (flint, brick and roofing materials) as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. These provide further information on acceptable design in the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the issues facing the area and the management actions required. These are available from: <https://www.chilternsaonb.org/conservation-board/planning-development/buildings-design-guidance.html>

Alternative options considered

10.17 The alternative option to rely on national planning policy was not considered appropriate given the importance of the landscape and the importance of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Question 21

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Landscape Character is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Biodiversity, Trees, Woodlands and Landscaping

10.18 The preferred policy demonstrates the Council's commitment to meet the relevant national requirements to conserve and enhance biodiversity, trees and woodlands. It also recognises that where development is necessary it should not be at the expense of irreplaceable natural assets.

Preferred Policy Option 21

Biodiversity, Trees, Woodlands and Landscaping

- 1) Development should result in a net gain of biodiversity value.
- 2) The weight given to the protection of sites will be commensurate with their position in the hierarchy:
 - International
 - National
 - Regional
 - Local
- 3) Development that would affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserve, Local Wildlife Site or protected species under UK or European law, or identified as being in need of conservation by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework or the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan, will not be permitted where there is an adverse impact on the ecological, geological or biodiversity interests of the site, unless it can be demonstrated that:
 - a) The need for the development would outweigh the need to safeguard the biodiversity of the site;
 - b) Alternative wildlife habitat provision can be made in order to maintain local biodiversity; and

- c) Adverse effects can be satisfactorily minimised through mitigation and compensation measures to maintain the level of biodiversity in the area.
- 4) The following areas have been highlighted as key areas for biodiversity within the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan:
- Mid Colne Valley
 - Whippendell Woods and Surrounds
 - River Chess Valley
- 5) In the first instance development should seek to avoid impacts on designated sites and important habitats/species through sensitive design and consideration of alternatives. Proposals should seek to incorporate measures for biodiversity enhancement and Green Infrastructure delivery wherever possible.
- 6) All development must conserve, enhance and, where appropriate, restore biodiversity through:
- a) Protecting habitats and species identified for retention
 - b) Providing compensation for the loss of any habitats (as a last resort)
 - c) Providing for the management of habitats and species
 - d) Maintaining the integrity of important networks of natural habitats, and
 - e) Enhancing existing habitats and networks of habitats and providing roosting, nesting and feeding opportunities for rare and protected species.
- 7) Linked habitats are important in allowing species to adapt and respond to circumstances. Development must not result in fragmentation or isolation of wildlife habitats and should seek opportunities for habitat connectivity with the wider landscape.
- 8) When granting permission for any proposals that include measures to improve biodiversity, the Council will impose conditions or seek planning obligations that secure the delivery of biodiversity gain in perpetuity.
- 9) Trees, Woodland and Landscaping
- a) 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 to enhance the landscape and habitats of the site and its surroundings as appropriate.
 - b) 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.
 - c) 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.
 - d) 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.
 - e) 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.

- f) Where the felling of a tree or removal of a hedgerow is permitted, a replacement tree or hedge of an appropriate species, size and in a suitable location will be required, taking account of issues such as landscape and biodiversity.
- g) 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.

What you told us

- 10.19 As part of the Issues & Options consultation you told us that there were associated health benefits to tree and woodland planting and that development should ensure the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity as well as delivering measurable net gains in biodiversity.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 10.20 Woodland, trees and hedgerows are important contributors to biodiversity and 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, hedgerows watercourses and their surrounding habitat. Authorities are obliged to conserve and enhance wildlife and landscape under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, the Water Framework Directive and the Natural Environment White Paper.
- 10.21 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 where possible. 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 priority habitats. Appropriate weight should be attached to designated sites of international, national and local importance, protected species and to biodiversity and geological interests in the wider environment.
- 10.22 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.
- 10.23 The Hertfordshire Local Nature Partnership has been established in response to the Natural Environment White Paper and will take a strategic lead on how the natural environment can be taken into account in decision-making within the local area. The Local Nature Partnership may identify or endorse priority areas for habitat conservation and restoration.
- 10.24 Three Rivers has a number of important wildlife sites, ranging from nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) to Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and sites of local wildlife importance referred to as Local Wildlife Sites. These include:

Sites of Special Scientific Interest at:

- 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, and
- 144 Local Wildlife Sites.

10.25 The Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP): A 50-Year Vision for the wildlife and natural habitats of Hertfordshire (2006) 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 – wetlands, grasslands, woodland and heathland

10.26 These represent priority areas for conserving existing biodiversity resource and also provide the best opportunity for maintaining and creating large areas of quality habitat. The Council will give particular weight to impacts of development on biodiversity and ecological connectivity within Key Biodiversity Areas as defined in the BAP and future revisions thereof.

10.27 Biodiversity is 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 preferred Green Infrastructure Policy identifies key assets for Green Infrastructure and the existing and potential linkages. It also sets out policy to seek a net gain in the quality and quantity of Green Infrastructure through the protection and enhancement of assets and the provision of new green spaces.

10.28 In addition, 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.

10.29 The Defra Biodiversity Metric has been designed to quantify the value of biodiversity (in terms of habitats) in a consistent, transparent and objective way. This mechanism is considered to be the appropriate method for determining ecological value and delivering measurable ecological gain.

10.30 Applicants will be required to complete the Defra Biodiversity Metric demonstrating a net gain in biodiversity. Any secured biodiversity net gain is expected to follow a hierarchy in terms of delivery. Firstly any net gain should aim to be delivered on site if possible, where this is not possible the aim should be for local projects to be delivered in the immediate vicinity and then an offsetting approach can be used whereby any monies secured can buy into projects at the national level.

10.31 Developers should have regard to the potential impact of development proposals on biodiversity, 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 it is considered that a habitat/species protected under European or 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.

10.32 For sites including trees covered by a Tree Preservation Order or located within a Conservation Area, or where the site has trees within or adjacent to it, which are greater than 75mm in diameter, then planning applications 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.

10.33 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.

10.34 When considering development proposals, the Council will take account of UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework, the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan and other relevant information to:

- Assess the importance of a habitat
- 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 Green Infrastructure corridors.

10.35 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 appropriate, developers may be required to contribute to improvements in biodiversity as part of their proposals.

10.36 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.).

10.37 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.

Alternative options considered

10.38 There were no alternatives considered appropriate as national policy requires 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 where possible as well as promoting the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats and that appropriate weight should

be attached to designated sites of international, national and local importance, protected species and to biodiversity and geological interests in the wider environment.

Question 22

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Biodiversity, Trees, Woodlands and Landscaping is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Open Space, Play Space, Sport and Recreation

10.39 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.

10.40 The Council recognises the importance of open space, recreation and sports facilities, children's play space and their wider benefits including:

- Contribution to quality of life and health benefits for the community
- Greater opportunities for leisure and recreation
- Provision of wildlife habitats and opportunities for enhanced biodiversity.

Preferred Policy Option 22

Open Space, Play Space, Sport and Recreation

- 1) Development proposals which result in the whole or partial loss of existing open space, sport and recreation facilities will only be permitted where:
 - i) The proposed development includes provision for open space, sports and recreation facilities of sufficient benefit to sport and recreation provision to outweigh the loss or
 - ii) Alternative provision of equivalent or better quantity and quality is made for the catchment area served by the open space, sport and recreation facilities in an accessible location served by sustainable modes of transport or
 - iii) The proposal is ancillary to an existing leisure use serving the catchment area and does not adversely affect the open space, sport or recreation facility or
 - iv) A deficiency of open space, sport and recreation facilities is not created through or exacerbated by its loss, now or over the plan period
- 2) Development proposals which result in the loss of, or prejudice the use of, any existing children's play space will only be permitted where:
 - i) A carefully quantified and documented assessment of current and future needs demonstrates that there is an excess of the particular type of amenity space in the local catchment or
 - ii) The proposed development is ancillary to the principal use of the site and does not affect the quality, quantity, use or availability of the amenity space and
 - iii) The amenity space that would be lost would be replaced by a facility of equivalent or better usefulness and quantity and subject to equivalent or better management arrangements being in place prior to the commencement of the development.
- 3) 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.

New Provision for Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities and Children's Play Space

- 4) Proposals for new open space, sport and recreation facilities and Children's Play Space will be encouraged where they will meet an identified need subject to the protection of the character of the area and amenity.
- 5) The Council will seek to ensure that all new or improved sports and recreation facilities on school sites will be subject to community use agreements.
- 6) 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:
 - i) Developments of 25 or more dwellings or 0.6ha (whichever is greater) should make provision on site for open space and play space. 10% of the site area should be set aside as open space, and where the development is likely to be occupied by families with children 2% of the open space area should provide formal equipped play facilities.
- 7) Where open space is provided onsite, the Council will seek to ensure the proper maintenance of the space.

Variation of these standards may be appropriate where the Council considers:

- i) that the development is already fully served by existing open space or children's play space within 400m of the proposed development; or
- ii) that retaining 10% of the site area for open space would not be an appropriate use of the land taking into account local need and the character of the locality, or where the development is specialised accommodation for the elderly.

Guidance on the provision of open space and children's play space is set out in the forthcoming Open Space, Sport and Recreation SPD¹⁶.

- 8) In order to ensure that any additional demand generated for indoor and outdoor sports facilities arising from new residential developments, major development proposals will be expected to contribute to the following:
 - a) The enhancement of existing pitches to increase their capacity or
 - b) Securing greater community access to currently restricted provision or
 - c) The provision of new playing pitches on existing sites

Guidance on the contributions to indoor and outdoor sports facilities will be set out in the forthcoming Open Space, Sport and Recreation SPD.

Design of Open Space

- 9) Proposals for new or existing open space should be designed to a high standard and should not consist of large areas of open grass. The design of open space should have regard to the relationship between the open space and its surroundings, the level and kind of use likely given the nature of nearby uses and occupants, 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.

¹⁶ This will be based on the existing Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space SPD (2007) but updated to reflect the NPPF and the OSSR recommendations.

10) Development on commons within the District will generally be resisted. New vehicle tracks or additional car parking will not be permitted unless there would be a net reduction in the area or number of these features. Any works taking place on commons should adopt a low impact design approach.

What you told us

10.41 As part of the Issues & Options consultation many respondents supported the objective to provide opportunities for leisure, sport and recreation in the District.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

10.42 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) notes that achieving sustainable development includes a social objective and to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities and to achieve this there is a need to consider accessible services and open spaces to reflect current and future needs and support for communities' health, social and cultural well-being.

10.43 The NPPF also states that existing open space, sports and recreation buildings and land including playing fields should not be redeveloped without re-provision unless an assessment has been undertaken which has clearly shown that they are/will be surplus to requirements.

10.44 A detailed assessment of existing provision of open spaces is contained in the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (2019) which were undertaken in accordance with national policy. These also provide information on catchment areas. The assessment identified areas of both surplus provision and under provision across the District.

10.45 To ensure that new development is adequately served by open space and children's playspace, where it is justified by the scale of new development, developers will be expected to contribute towards the provision of open space in order to help achieve the standards set out in the Council's Open Space, Sport and Recreation Assessment. Where developments are of a suitable scale provision will be made on site.

10.46 New open space provision will be designed to complement and enhance the existing open space provision in the area. Where appropriate, improvements to the quality and/or accessibility of existing provision will be sought.

10.47 To ensure that the demand generated by new residential development for indoor and outdoor sport facilities where it is justified by the scale of new development, developers will be expected to contribute towards the improvements to the quality and/or accessibility of existing provision.

10.48 Developer contributions will also be spent on built recreation facilities where justified by an increase in population. These standards will be kept up to date, and will reflect guidance from Sport England, Play England, Fields in Trust and other relevant bodies, through the Open Space Strategy.

10.49 Consideration will be given to more diverse forms of provision (e.g. community orchards, local nature reserves etc.) where these respond to local needs and make a positive contribution towards the local environment. Regard will be paid to the Woodland Trust's Woodland Access Standard.

10.50 The District contains several commons each with its own distinctive character and providing open space for local communities. Pressure for apparently minor works such as playgrounds, parking, tracks and street furniture can erode the character and sense of public ownership of such areas, and will generally be resisted.

Alternative Options Considered

10.51 There were no alternative options considered.

Question 23

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Open Space, Play Space, Sport and Recreation is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Design and Heritage

- 11.0 Three Rivers is a diverse place with many different areas which give the District its character. This includes a rich mix of buildings and spaces with heritage value, as well as the District's many Conservation Areas.
- 11.1 Across all areas of the District, the design of development can have a significant impact on individual buildings or spaces, as well as the wider 'public realm' including streets, town centres, parks and open spaces and how these places are used.
- 11.2 The promotion of high quality and sustainable design, and the protection of the elements that contribute to the character and local distinctiveness of the District are important in contributing to the Vision for Three Rivers in the future, and meeting Council and community objectives to improve the environment, protect the historic environment, deal with crime and anti-social behaviour and reduce, reuse and recycle waste.

Local Distinctiveness and Place Shaping

- 11.3 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.
- 11.4 The relationship between buildings, spaces and landscape as well as detailed design and materials are all relevant factors. Good design influences positively how people move around settlements, how people interact and how places make people feel.
- 11.5 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.

Preferred Policy Option 23

Local Distinctiveness and Place Shaping

- (1) All new development is required to achieve high quality design that responds to distinctive local character (including landscape character) of the area in which it is set and contribute to a strong sense of place. Essential elements of place making include creating economically and socially successful new places with a clear identity that promote wellbeing.
- (2) Development should satisfy relevant detailed Design Criteria at Appendix 1.
- (3) Innovative designs will be encouraged where appropriate, however 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. Proposals will need to take account of local design guidance including that contained within Conservation Area Appraisals, Neighbourhood Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents to conserve or enhance the character, amenities and quality of an 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 used 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 residential amenities and the attractiveness of non-residential buildings and spaces which contribute to the economic success of the District for both existing and proposed 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) Landscaping must be considered as an integral element of the layout and design of development, including integration with adjoining networks of green open spaces where appropriate and retaining, enhancing or improving important existing natural features such as trees, hedgerows and walls as far as possible. 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.
- (14) 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.
- (15) 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

- (16) All development should conserve and enhance natural, built, cultural and heritage assets, including public open space.
- (17) 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 durable capable of adaptation to other uses and functions where practical in order to ensure their long-life.

Safety and Security

- (18) 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.
- (19) 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

- (20) 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.

(21) 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

(22) 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.

What you told us

11.6 As part of the Issues & Options consultation there was support for the delivery of high quality homes, to promote safety and security in the design of new development, that development should be accessible and to promote sustainable forms of transport.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

11.7 The NPPF states that the creation of 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, 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 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. Building exteriors and public realm should be designed in a way that contributes to pedestrian friendly environments.

11.8 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.

11.9 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.

11.10 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 all 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.

11.11 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.

- 11.12 Development of larger sites through allocations within the 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.
- 11.13 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.
- 11.14 Alongside the requirements of other policies of the Local Plan, Policy D1 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.
- 11.15 Further specific requirements which apply to certain forms of development or sites are set out within other preferred policies in this document. 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 in future.
- 11.16 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.
- 11.17 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.
- 11.18 The Council encourages applicants, particularly for major development proposals, to engage in early and ongoing pre application discussions about design with both the Local Planning Authority and 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.
- 11.19 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 and expert feedback and advice on design proposals. Applicants are strongly encouraged to undertake 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.
- 11.20 Steps will also be taken through the use of planning conditions and careful consideration for any proposed amendments after 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.

Alternative options considered

- 11.21 No alternative options were considered.

Question 24

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Local Distinctiveness and Place Shaping is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Advertisements

- 11.22 Not all advertisements are regulated by the Council and others benefit from deemed consent, which means that permission is not needed; this will depend on the size, position and illumination of the advert.
- 11.23 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.

Preferred Policy Option 24 Advertisements

- (1) The display of advertisements must not compromise amenity and highway safety.
- (2) Advertisements will only be permitted if the character or setting of a building would not be unduly affected due to inappropriate size, design, colour, materials or illumination; taking into account cumulative impacts.
- (3) Advertisements should generally be located within the curtilage of the premises to which they relate or at the site access.
- (4) Advertisements 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;
 - d) Contribute to a safe and attractive environment;
 - e) Not contribute to proliferation/clutter of signage in the vicinity; and
 - f) Respect local context, including listed buildings and Conservation Areas.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 11.24 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. In addition to other more general policies within the Local Plan, the preferred policy identifies specific criteria which will be taken into account when considering amenity and public safety of advertisements in Three Rivers to ensure that the quality and character of the District and places is not adversely affected.
- 11.25 The Council recognises the value of informing and directing the public through the use of Advertisement signage. However, it also recognises that signs both individually and cumulatively can cause visual harm to the area and overly distract drivers. In considering applications for

advertisement consent the Council will take into account the likely impact of the sign on visual amenity and on road safety. The nature of material advertised is not a planning matter.

Alternative options considered

11.26 No alternative options were considered.

Question 25

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Advertisements is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Heritage and the Historic Environment

11.27 The historic environment of Three Rivers contains many important heritage assets, both designated and undesignated, which make a significant contribution to the District's character, sense of place and quality of life.

11.28 This includes significant buildings, monuments, sites, places, areas and landscape which all add heritage interest to the area and require protection from inappropriate development.

Preferred Policy Option 25 Heritage and the Historic Environment

Protection and Enhancement

- (1) The historic environment will be conserved 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, 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, its significance or its setting.

Proposals Affecting Heritage Assets

- (5) Applications for development 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, conserve 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 following criteria:

Listed Buildings

- (8) Proposals should conserve or enhance Listed Buildings. Applications involving demolition of a Grade II Listed Building will only be granted in exceptional circumstances, and demolition of or substantial harm to a Grade I or Grade II* Listed Building will only be granted in wholly exceptional circumstances.
- (9) 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.
- (10) Any change of use of a Listed Building should conserve or enhance its character as a building of special architectural or historic interest and its significance, and should ensure its continued use and viability.

Conservation Areas

- (11) Within Conservation Areas, development will only be permitted if the proposal:
- a) Is of a design and scale that preserves or enhances the character or 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.
- (12) 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.

(13) 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.

Locally Important Buildings

(14) The retention of Locally Important Buildings is encouraged. Proposals affecting Locally Important Buildings should retain or enhance features of historic or architectural interest.

Historic Parks and Gardens

(15) Proposals should not cause unacceptable harm to historic parks or gardens (both registered and unregistered), their settings or public views into, out of, or within them.

Archaeology

(16) 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.

What you told us

11.29 As part of the Issues & Options consultation there was general support for the conservation and enhancement of the historic environment and for the Council to resist the loss of, or damage to, heritage assets.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

11.30 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.

11.31 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.

11.32 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, and archaeology, and the setting of these assets.

11.33 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.

- 11.34 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.
- 11.35 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.
- 11.36 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 House¹⁷. 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.
- 11.37 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 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

- 11.38 Enabling development refers to development which would usually be considered harmful but is considered acceptable because the resulting benefits outweigh the harm.
- 11.39 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.
- 11.40 Further guidance on 'Enabling Development and the Conservation of Significant Places' is available at www.historicengland.org.uk.

Listed Buildings

- 11.41 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 and bridges including the railway bridge in Railway Terrace, Kings Langley designed by Robert Stephenson for the London and Birmingham Railway Company.
- 11.42 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.

¹⁷ Historic England (2020) Heritage at Risk 2020 Registers <https://historicengland.org.uk/images-books/publications/har-2020-registers/ee-har-register2020/>

11.43 All works to Listed Buildings must conserve or enhance these structures and their significance in accordance with national policy requirements.

Conservation Areas

11.44 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.

11.45 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.

11.55 Development within Conservation Areas should conserve or enhance their significance in accordance with national policy requirements and guidance on how significance will be considered within this preferred policy.

11.56 The Council will continue with a programme of 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

11.57 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.

Historic Parks and Gardens

11.58 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 District.

11.59 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

11.60 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.

- 11.61 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.
- 11.62 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.
- 11.63 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.
- 11.64 The NPPF requires us 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.
- 11.65 We will also:
- a) support proposals which conserve and enhance the historic environment
 - b) 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 areas
 - c) support proposals for heritage-led regeneration, ensuring that heritage assets are conserved, enhanced and secured for the future
 - d) identify heritage assets that make an important contribution to the local character of the area and update our local list on a regular basis
 - e) identify buildings that could be included on the national list and preparing reports to support new listings
 - f) identify buildings that are falling into disrepair and work with owners to find new uses to ensure their continued beneficial use.

Alternative options considered

- 11.66 No alternatives were considered as the National Planning Policy Framework requires local planning authorities to set out within their Local Plan a positive strategy for the conservation and enjoyment of the historic environment and the Council has a duty to conserve and enhance the significance, character and appearance of the district's historic environment when carrying out its statutory functions and through the planning system.

Question 26

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Heritage and the Historic Environment is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed. Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Transport and Connections

- 12.0 High quality 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, employment, business, retail and leisure opportunities and can support sustainable lifestyles and opportunities.
- 12.1 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 transport networks and connections to ensure that they provide an effective, efficient and high quality network with efficient public transport, attractive and suitable routes for pedestrians and cyclists, an efficient road network and modern digital infrastructure.

Sustainable Transport and Travel

- 12.2 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.
- 12.3 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.
- 12.4 Hertfordshire County Council will produce a Growth and Transport Plan (GTP) for South West Hertfordshire, which aims to identify the transport interventions that will be needed to support and help facilitate sustainable development within the South West Hertfordshire area, including in Three Rivers.
- 12.5 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.
- 12.6 We will seek 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 enable the use of public transport, walking and cycling as alternatives to the car.
- 12.7 The Council is also working with Hertfordshire County Council, the Highways Agency 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 town centres in surrounding areas, and to London.

Preferred Policy Option 26 Sustainable Transport and Travel

- 1) 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.
- 2) 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.
- 3) 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.

Development Proposals

- 4) New development should integrate means of travel and minimise the impacts of travel by motor vehicle on the District by maximising where relevant:
 - 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 short distance trips by walking and cycling;
 - b) The provision of sufficient secure, accessible and convenient cycle parking;
 - c) Enhancement of existing cycle and walking routes in the area to local facilities, services, bus stops and railway stations, as well as links to and from the Grand Union Canal towpath;
 - d) The provision and improvement of public transport access including layouts to enable convenient access for buses and provision of covered waiting facilities where appropriate;
 - e) Opportunities for taxi ranks where there is a demonstrated need.
- 5) Development proposals should demonstrate that:
 - a) It provides a safe and adequate means of access;
 - b) It will maintain the safe operation and the performance of the local road networks and the Strategic Road Network;
 - c) It is 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 contributions;
 - d) It is integrated with the wider network of transport routes, including public rights of way and cycle paths where appropriate;
 - e) It makes 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;
- 6) 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.

What you told us

- 12.8 As part of the Issues and options consultation you told us that it was important to reduce car dependency by locating development in sustainable locations near existing services and facilities and that development is designed to enable the use of sustainable modes of transport.
- 12.9 Many respondents highlighted the need for improved transport links and alternative/ sustainable modes of transport within suggested new developments. There was also concern raised at many areas of the current transport network often being at capacity and that policies should encourage and enable shorter journeys to be made by sustainable means, including by walking and cycling and

there would need to be careful consideration of reducing the need to travel and maximising sustainable transport use within the District.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 12.10 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.
- 12.11 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.
- 12.12 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.
- 12.13 We will seek 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.
- 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, unless there is robust justification as to why this is not possible.
- 12.15 New development proposals should incorporate the Transport User Hierarchy as set out in Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan 2018 – 2031 into the design of any scheme. The development of any transport strategy should consider 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
- 12.16 Supporting a safe and pleasant walking environment requires prioritisation of pedestrians at the top of the road user hierarchy and improvements to pedestrian safety in existing areas. 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.
- 12.17 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), including improvements to crossing facilities as well as the routes themselves. 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.

- 12.18 The Council will also support 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.
- 12.19 Training and/or travel behaviour initiatives to support the take up of cycling will also be supported.
- 12.20 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.
- 12.21 Land within the designated HS2 safeguarding area will be protected in accordance with advice from HS2 Ltd.
- 12.22 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. Appropriate provision for parking should also be made in accordance with the preferred policy on parking standards.

Alternative options considered

- 12.23 As part of the Issues and Options consultation four options were put forward to include:
- Ensure that all new development is designed to enable the use of sustainable modes of transport where possible
 - Reduce the need to travel by locating housing development near existing services/facilities
 - Reduce the need to travel by providing services/facilities within settlements
 - Ensure new development provides services/facilities, along with improved transport links

Question 27

**Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Sustainable Transport and Travel is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.
Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.**

Parking

- 12.24 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 these 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 residences.
- 12.25 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.

12.26 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.

Preferred Policy Option 27 Parking

- 1) Development should make provision for parking in accordance with the preferred parking standards and the zone based reductions set out in Appendix 3 until such time that standards are revised.
- 2) 20% of car parking spaces for major developments (10 dwellings or more) should be unallocated.
- 3) 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.
- 4) Areas providing parking 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.
- 5) 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.
- 6) The provision and/or improvement of a car club by a new development will be supported if appropriate.

What you told us

12.27 As part of the Issues and options consultation you told us that it was important to reduce car dependency and to encourage the use of electric powered vehicles.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

12.28 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.

12.29 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

- 12.30 In order to support sustainable transport choices, 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.
- 12.31 The proposed parking standards (Appendix 3) 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.
- 12.32 It is proposed that 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.
- 12.33 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.

Alternative Options Considered

- 12.34 An alternative option was considered to keep the existing parking standards that allow for more parking.

Question 28

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Parking is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Question 28a

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Parking Standards (Appendix 3) is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Deliveries, Servicing and Construction

- 12.35 In addition to the specific requirements around the management of waste, arrangements for deliveries and servicing and for the management of construction 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.

**Preferred Policy Option 28
Deliveries, Servicing and Construction**

Deliveries and Servicing

- (1) All development proposals must consider arrangements for deliveries and servicing 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.
- (2) In all cases there should be no adverse impacts of deliveries or servicing on the amenity of local residents and businesses including from vehicle noise or the size of vehicles.

- (3) Proposals for development 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.
- (4) 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.
- (5) Delivery and Servicing Plans (DSPs) will be required for developments 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.

Construction

- (6) 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.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 12.36 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.
- 12.37 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.
- 12.38 It is proposed that, 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.
- 12.39 To help manage impacts over the lifetime of a development, it is proposed that Delivery and Servicing Plans (DSP's) will be required for some larger developments to demonstrate how any potential impacts will be mitigated.

Alternative Options Considered

- 12.40 No alternative options were considered.

Question 29

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Deliveries, Servicing and Construction is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed. Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Waterways

- 12.41 Waterways 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 in managing flood risk. It is also an important visual amenity and there are a number of heritage assets on or associated with the Canal.
- 12.42 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 Infrastructure network.
- 12.43 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.

Preferred Policy Option 29 **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 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.
- (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.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 12.44 It is essential that the Canal and waterways are protected as an important resource for the District and area providing multiple benefits, and that these benefits are recognised and enhanced.
- 12.45 Making use of the Canal and waterways, 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.

- 12.46 The new 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 preferred 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.
- 12.47 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.
- 12.48 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.

Alternative options considered

- 12.49 No alternative options were considered.

Question 30

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Waterways is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

Broadband and Electronic Communications

- 12.50 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.
- 12.51 The current Covid-19 restrictions have reinforced the importance of broadband and electric communications with more people working from home.

**Preferred Policy Option 30
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
 - 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 should be served by or be capable of being served by super-fast broadband through the integration of appropriate measures such as open access ducting to industry standards.

Why is this the Preferred Policy Option?

- 12.52 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. The Council supports the expansion of electronic communications network and full fibre broadband connections for all new development.
- 12.53 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.
- 12.54 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.
- 12.55 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 2017 the Government defined superfast broadband as being at least 24Mbps therefore this is the minimum level of service that is considered acceptable.

Alternative options considered

- 12.56 No alternative options were considered

Question 31

Do you think the Preferred Policy Option for Broadband and Electronic Communications is the right approach? If not please identify how the option could be changed.

Should we have considered alternative options? If yes, please explain.

APPENDIX 1 DESIGN CRITERIA

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 Town and District Centres 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 development including new dwellings, replacement dwellings, and extensions or alterations to existing dwellings.

For the purposes of these guidelines, habitable rooms are considered to be living rooms, dining rooms, kitchens, 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 overlooking:

- a) Distances between buildings should be sufficient so as to prevent overlooking, particularly from upper floors. As an indicative figure, 22m should be achieved between the faces of single or two storey buildings backing onto each other or in other circumstances where privacy needs to be achieved. Distances should be greater between buildings in excess of two storeys (especially dwellings/flats) with elevations which directly face one another or in situations where there are site level

differences involved. 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 should not incorporate balconies, or first floor conservatories which overlook neighbouring properties to any degree.
- d) Trees and hedges (either existing or planted as part of the development) can provide an effective screen but should not be solely relied upon due to the loss of leaves in winter or the possibility of storm damage, disease etc.
- e) Windows of habitable rooms at first floor level should not generally be located in flank elevations. Flank windows of other rooms should be non-opening, below 1.7m (from internal floor level) and obscure glazed. 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. All residential units 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.

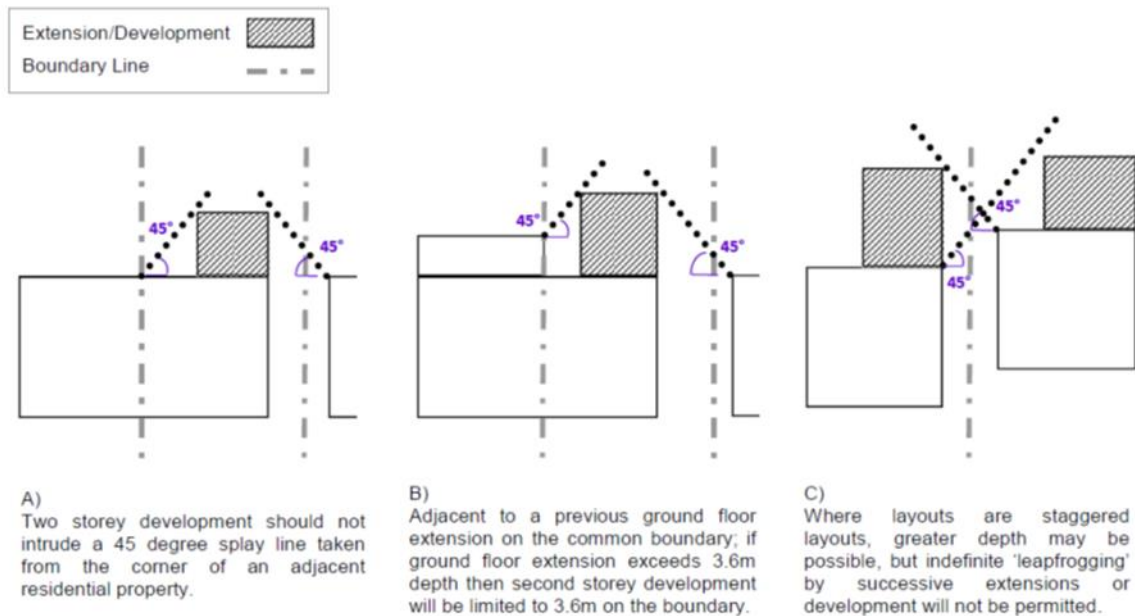
Daylight, Sunlight and Outlook

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 and living rooms, kitchens and dining rooms should preferably receive direct sunlight.

Two storey development should not intrude into a 45 degree splay line drawn from the corner of an adjacent residential 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.1 provides illustrative examples.

Figure A.1 Examples of the 45 Degree Splay Line Principle



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:

- Provide a good level of daylight for each habitable room, and optimise opportunity for direct sunlight;
- 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;
- Provide a good level of natural ventilation throughout the dwelling via passive/non-mechanical design measures; and
- 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:

- The number of units per core and storey should not normally exceed 8 in order to encourage neighbourly interaction, and a smaller number is preferable;

- b) 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;
- c) 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;
- d) 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.
- e) Internal layouts, including the relationship of rooms on different floors within the scheme, and the position of entrances, extensions and fire escapes should ensure amenity for all occupiers;

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 which are set out at Policy XX.

New residential development should provide private 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.
- c) Specialist and Supported Housing for older people:
 - 15sqm per bedspace to be provided communally.

These standards provide guidance for all new residential development. However it is acknowledged that in some situations, such as where existing buildings in town centres are converted to residential use, there may be challenges in meeting these standards. Some flexibility will be applied where developments would still provide a good standard of living for future residents. This may, for example, include additional internal living space or the provision of winter gardens.

Amenity space provided should be of practical shape and utility, 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.

The minimum depth and width of balconies and other private external spaces should be 1500mm.

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/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.

Most dwellings in the District are terraced, semi-detached or detached. Limited enlargements or alterations to these types of properties may be 'permitted development' under the provisions of the Town and Country Planning General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended). Permitted development rights may also allow for extensions and alterations to commercial buildings. The local planning authority has no control over these works unless there are restrictions imposed by a planning condition, there is an Article 4 Direction, or the permitted development allowance has been taken up by previous works.

Where permission is required, applications will be assessed on their own merits but 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 loss of light to the windows of neighbouring properties nor allow overlooking.

The following guidelines will apply:

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 adjoining properties or be unduly prominent.
- 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 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.2 for illustrative examples.

- Rear extensions: in terms of size 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.

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.

Dormers

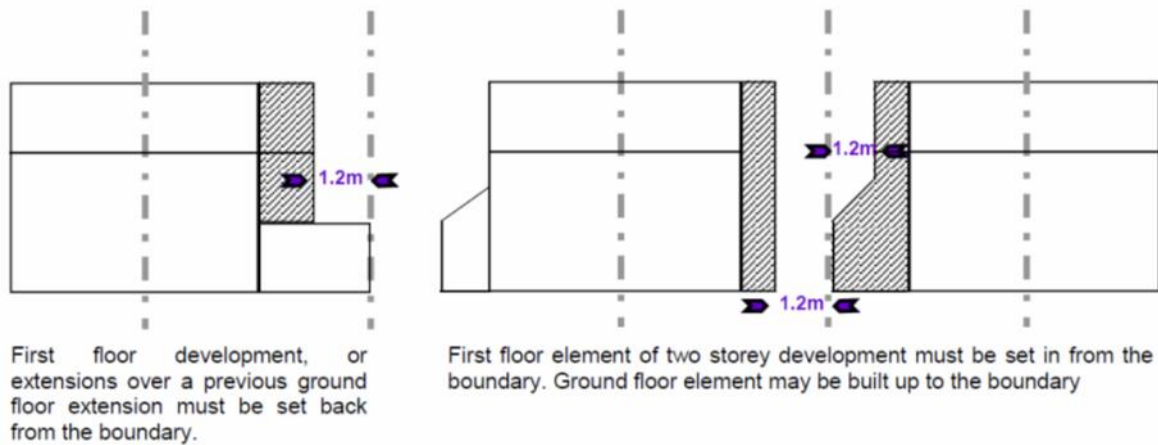
- Dormer windows should always be subordinate to the main roof. They should be set below the existing ridge level, set in from either end of the roof and set back from the plane of the front or rear wall. The roof form should respect the character of the house if possible.
- Front dormers may not always be appropriate in the street scene.
- Multiple dormers should be proportionate in scale and number to the host roof.

Roofs

- Crown roofs 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 extensions are discouraged in the case of semi-detached houses as it is considered that this unbalances the pair and results 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.

Figure A.2 Examples of Single and Two Storey Side Extensions/Development and Flank to Boundary Distances



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 and places for deliveries. 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 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

Under paragraph 145 of the NPPF, 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 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 (see paragraph A4.6 below);
- 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 (see paragraph A4.10 below);
- 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 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 (see paragraph A4.4 above), 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 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 (see paragraph A4.4);
- 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 in paragraph A4.4 above are 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

Paragraph 145 of 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 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.

Disproportionate Additions

Extension 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 satisfying paragraph A4.32 below;
- b) Ground floor conservatories of modest size compared to the building and site.
Future planning applications to replace these with more substantial constructions would be resisted
- c) 'In-fill' extensions (e.g. if the existing building is 'L' or 'U' shaped) 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 as 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 residential outbuildings within 5m of a dwelling will be taken into account, regardless of whether these were implemented by the current owner or through the exercise of permitted development rights. The cumulative total of floorspace increase will therefore be assessed in considering new extensions or alterations.

The floorspace of existing outbuildings within the curtilage of a building will not be taken into account in assessing the size of the original building unless they were built at the same time as the original building and are within 5m of the building.

For the purposes of Green Belt policy a residential outbuilding will be classed as an extension providing it is located within 5m of the main dwellinghouse on the site. In these circumstances the outbuilding will count towards the total floorspace of the dwelling and must still not result in an increase in the floorspace of more than 40%.

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 5m of the dwelling.

The erection of any residential outbuildings more than 5m from the main dwelling is unlikely to be classed as an 'extension' and therefore would constitute inappropriate development in the Green Belt.

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

Extensions at first floor level or above (except for dormer windows) 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. Subject to no adverse impact on neighbours, rear extensions will normally be viewed more favourably than side extensions. Extensions to isolated buildings in the countryside will be judged on their own merits given site circumstances, as in some instances side extensions may be preferable to rear extensions.

Single storey side extensions to buildings resulting in more than 80% of the site frontage being covered by buildings will normally be viewed as adversely affecting the openness of the Green Belt. Otherwise, single storey extensions would not normally be considered to impact on the openness of the Green Belt.

Dormer windows proportionate to the existing building, and with glazing covering the full frontage other than side framing, 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 original 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 original building (as 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).

The floorspace of existing outbuildings within the curtilage of a building will not be taken into account in assessing the size of the original building unless they were built at the same time as the original building and are within 5m of 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.

In most cases, floorspace will be the starting point, and a replacement building resulting in an increase in floorspace (measured externally) of more than 40% will normally be considered materially larger. However, depending on the facts of the case the assessment of whether a replacement building is materially larger may take into account other measures including volume, footprint, height, width and depth and will include consideration of any proposed basement levels.

Where an original 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 house 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.

APPENDIX 3 PARKING STANDARDS

The following standards have been taken from the adopted Local Plan 2011-2026, and updated to include census data on car and van ownership as well as taking into consideration the latest update to the National Planning Policy Framework (February 2019). They cover standards for car parking, disabled parking, cycle parking, electric vehicles, and parking for powered two-wheelers.

The standards for car parking may be adjusted according to which sustainability zone the proposed development is located in (zones are indicated in maps on pages 134-137).

Zone Type	Car parking provision
Sustainability Zone 1	80% of indicative demand-based parking standard
Sustainability Zone 2	90% 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 8 parking spaces in Sustainability Zone 1, where 80% of the indicative demand-based standard would be acceptable. Similarly, this would be reduced to 9 parking spaces in Sustainability Zone 2 where 90% of the indicative demand-based standard would be acceptable.

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. Non-food retail warehouses without garden centres.	1 space per 25sqm gross floor area 1 space per 35sqm gross floor area
E(a) Non-food retail (cont)	Garden centres up to 4,000sqm gross floor area. Garden centres exceeding 4,000sqm gross floor area. Non-food retail parks where individual land use components are known. Non-food retail parks where individual land use components are not known.	1 space per 25sqm gross floor area Decided in each case on individual merits. Decided in each case on individual merits (shared parking and an overall reduction in provision, taking into account linked to trips on site). 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	Hotels	1 space per bedroom (including staff accommodation) plus 1 space per manager plus

	<p>Hostels</p> <p>Small (single parent or couple with no children)</p> <p>Family (2 adults and 2 children)</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>
<p>C2 Residential institutions</p>	<p>Institutions/homes with care staff on premises at all times (excluding nursing homes, hospitals, residential schools, colleges or training centres).</p> <p>Elderly persons residential and nursing homes.</p>	<p>1 space per 5 resident bed spaces plus</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>

	Hospitals	<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>0.9 spaces per dwelling</p> <p>1.4 spaces per dwelling</p> <p>1.9 spaces per dwelling</p> <p>2.5 spaces per dwelling</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)	0.5 spaces per tenancy

F1 Learning and non-residential Institutions	F1(e) Public halls/places of assembly (excluding D2) F1(f) Places of worship	1 space per 9sqm gross floor area or 1 space per 3 fixed seats plus 3 spaces per 4 staff members 1 space per 10sqm gross floor area
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).	1 space per full-time member of staff plus 1 space per 8 pupils over 17 years old plus

	F1(a) Schools	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 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.	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 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	F2(d) Swimming pools. F2(c) / E(d) Tennis/badminton	1 sp per 22 sq m (1000 sq m threshold) 4 spaces per court not to exceed 1 space per 22sqm (1000sqm threshold)

pools or ice skating rinks	<p>E(d) Squash courts</p> <p>F2(d) Ice rinks</p> <p>E(d) Fitness centres/sports clubs</p>	<p>3 spaces per court not to exceed 1 space per 22sqm (1000sqm threshold)</p> <p>1 space per 12sqm gross floor area of rink not to exceed 1 space per 22sqm (1000sqm threshold)</p> <p>1 space per 22sqm (1000sqm threshold)</p>
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)	Showroom car sales	3 spaces per 4 employees plus 1 space per 10 cars displayed.

	Vehicle storage	3 spaces per 4 employees plus 2 spaces per showroom space or provision at rate of 10% annual turnover.
	Hire cars	3 spaces per 4 employees plus 1 space per 2 hire cars based at site.
	Ancillary vehicle storage	3 spaces or 75% of total if more than 3 vehicles.
	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 (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
<p>E(a) Retail Foodstores</p> <p>F2(a) Shops selling essential goods which do not exceed 280sqm and there is no other facility within 1,000 metres</p>	<p>Small food shops up to 500sqm gross floor area</p> <p>Food superstores/hypermarkets up to 2,500sqm retail floor area</p>	<p>1 short-term space per 150sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 maximum staff on site at any one time.</p>
<p>E(a) Retail Foodstores</p>	<p>Food superstores/hypermarkets exceeding 2,500sqm retail floor area.</p> <p>Food retail parks</p>	<p>1 short-term space per 250sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 maximum staff on site at any one time.</p>
<p>E(a) Non-food retail</p>	<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>	<p>1 short-term space per 350sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 maximum staff on site at any one time.</p>
<p>E(c) Financial and professional services</p>	<p>Banks, building societies, estate agencies</p>	<p>1 short-term space per 200sqm gross floor area plus 1 long-term space per 10 full time staff.</p>

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	1 long-term space per unit if no garage or shed provided.

	Houses in multiple occupation (i.e. separate households sharing facilities)	
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).	1 long-term space per 10 full time staff plus:

	F1(a) Schools	<p>a) Primary School: 1 long-term space per 15 students.</p> <p>b) Secondary School: 1 long-term space per 5 students.</p>
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>	On merit, depending upon mix of uses.
Sui generis (cinemas)	Cinemas (including multiplexes)	<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>
E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness	F2(d) Swimming pools.	1 short-term space per 25sqm

F2(c) Outdoor sport and recreation F2(d) Indoor or outdoor swimming pools or ice skating rinks	F2(c) / E(d) Tennis/badminton E(d) Squash courts F2(d) Ice rinks E(d) Fitness centres/sports clubs	
E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness	Ten pin bowling Indoor bowls	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.
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	1 long-term space per 10 full time staff.

	Car wash/petrol filling station	1 long-term space per 10 full time staff plus 5 short-term spaces if shop included
Passenger transport facilities	Rail Stations	5 long-term spaces per peak period train
	Bus Stations	2 l/t 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 privacy. 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. It need not be looked on as a burden.

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.

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	Small food shops up to 500sqm gross floor area	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% of spaces to be passive provision.

no other facility within 1,000 metres	Food superstores/hypermarkets up to 2,500sqm retail floor area	
E(a) Retail Foodstores	Food superstores/hypermarkets exceeding 2,500sqm retail floor area. Food retail parks	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% of spaces to be passive provision.
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. Non-food retail parks where individual land use components are known. Non-food retail parks where individual land use components are not known.	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% 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 20% 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 20% 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 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
B2 General Industry	General industry	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% 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 30% 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 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
C1 Hotels and hostels	Hostels Small (single parent or couple with no children) Family (2 adults and 2 children)	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 30% of spaces to be passive provision.
C2 Residential institutions	Institutions/homes with care staff on premises at all times (excluding nursing homes, hospitals, residential schools, colleges or training centres).	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% of spaces to be passive provision.

	Elderly persons residential and nursing homes. Hospitals	
Use Class	Description	Electric vehicle parking standards
C2 Residential institutions	Education – halls of residence.	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% of spaces to be passive provision.
C3 Residential	1 bedroom dwellings 2 bedroom dwellings 3 bedroom dwellings 4 or more bedroom dwellings Houses in multiple occupation (i.e. separate households sharing facilities)	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). Sheltered dwellings – warden control (Category 2)	20% of all spaces to be active provision, the remaining 80% to be passive provision.
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 20% 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 20% of spaces to be passive provision.
E(f) Day centres	E(f) Day centres	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% 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 20% 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 20% 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 20% 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 20% 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 20% of spaces to be passive provision.
Sui generis (cinemas)	Cinemas (including multiplexes)	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% of

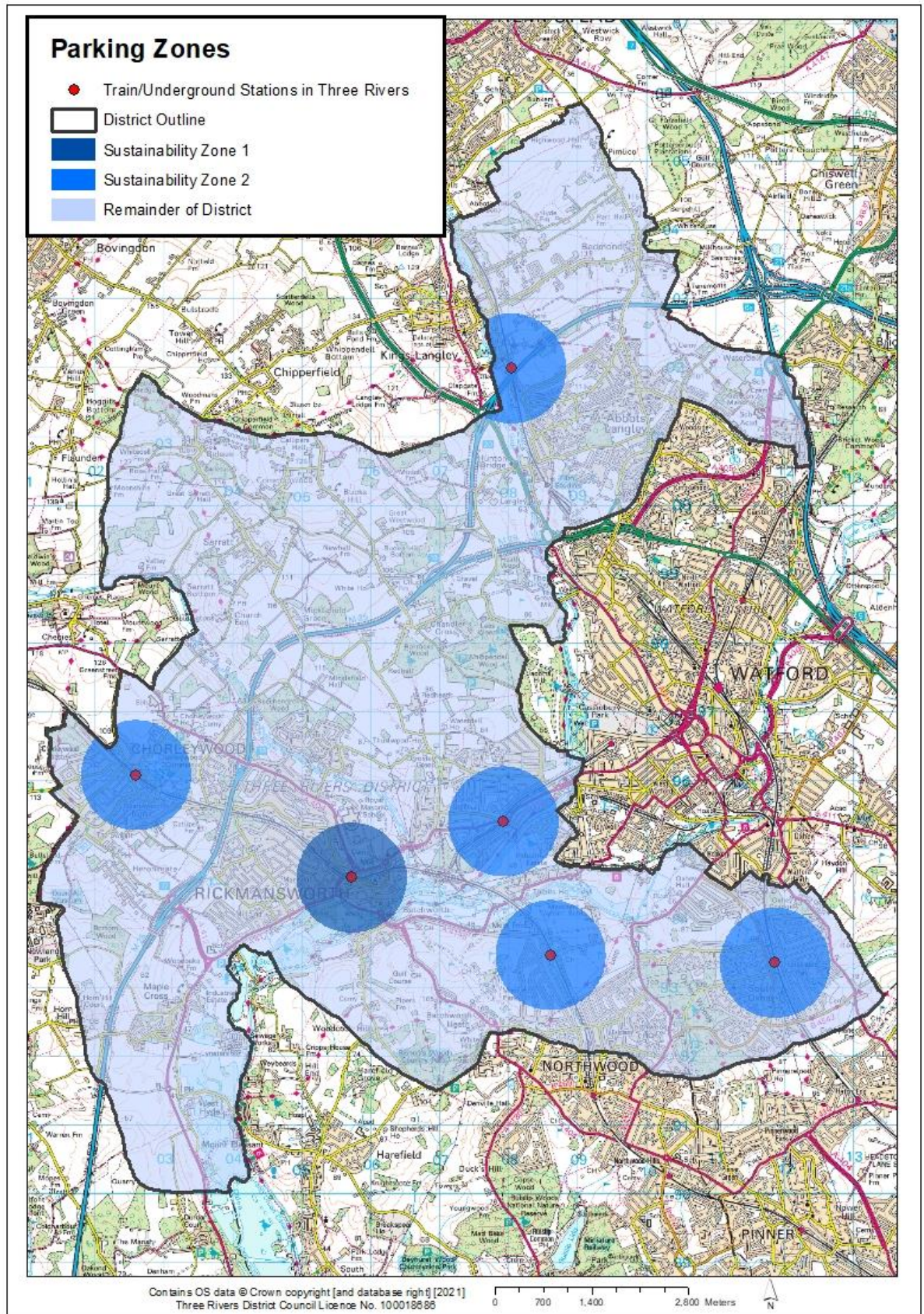
		spaces to be passive provision.
E(d) Indoor sport, recreation or fitness F2(c) Outdoor sport and recreation F2(d) Indoor or outdoor swimming pools or ice skating rinks	F2(d) Swimming pools. F2(c) / E(d) Tennis/badminton E(d) Squash courts F2(d) Ice rinks E(d) Fitness centres/sports clubs	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% 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 20% 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 20% 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 20% 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	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% of spaces to be passive provision.

	Bus Stations	20% of all spaces to be active provision, a further 20% of spaces to be passive provision.
--	--------------	--

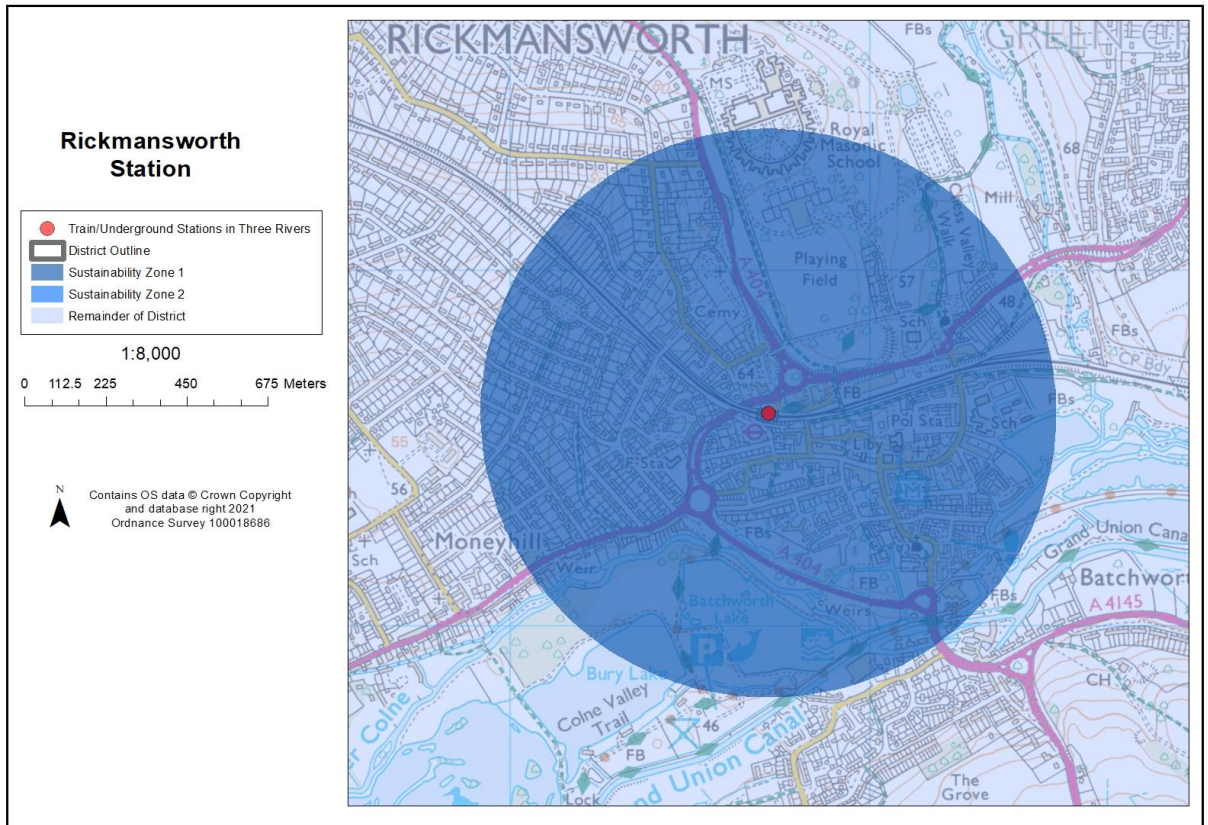
Powered Two-Wheeler Parking Standards

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:



Sustainability Zone 1:



Sustainability Zone 2:

