



# **DRAFT HOUSING STRATEGY**

**2006-2011**

January 2006

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## **FOREWORD**

Housing is a critical issue for the people of Three Rivers. It is central to the health and economic well being of everyone who lives in the District. The Council recognises this and has made housing a core part of the Corporate Strategy for the future of the Council.

This document is designed to explain the background to the housing situation within the District and set out the way that the Council proposes to address the big issues to improve the housing conditions and make housing more affordable. We have proposed a vision saying how,

“We will work in partnership to ensure that there is sufficient affordable housing in Three Rivers in neighbourhoods where people want to live. We will provide the advice and support to promote independence and reduce homelessness. “

We need to know however whether that vision is shared by the people of the District and the partners with whom we work to deliver the vision. We are therefore asking you to take this opportunity to take part in this consultation and tell us your views on what we are proposing. Have we identified the big issues facing housing in the District? Have we got the resources to make it a reality? Are we doing what is needed to deliver the vision?

Details of how to respond are found at the end of the strategy. I look forward to hearing your views.

Cllr Matthew Bedford  
Portfolio Holder for Housing

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Housing Needs and Market Assessment describes the current housing circumstances in the District and the relationship with the surrounding area. It also projects demand for housing, and in particular, affordable housing for the next five years.

From this analysis the Council has identified ten key issues that this strategy addresses. These are:

1. The need to improve the quality of the Council's housing stock.
2. The need to improve the private sector stock within the District.
3. The need to attract investment into the District for affordable housing and provide sufficient land to meet the need for new housing while protecting the green belt.
4. Meeting the needs of an increasing elderly population.
5. The need to extend choice in housing in line with Government policy.
6. The need to improve the environment in which people live
7. The need to reduce the levels of anti-social behaviour.
8. The need to improve the quality of Council services
9. The need to reduce the risk of homelessness and improve the provision of services to the homelessness.
10. The need to increase support to vulnerable people in particular young people and people with mental health problems.

Having considered the issues that need addressing, the options open to the Council and the constraints we are facing we are proposing the following vision for housing in Three Rivers.

“We will work in partnership to ensure that there is sufficient affordable housing in Three Rivers in neighbourhoods where people want to live. We will provide the advice and support to promote independence and reduce homelessness.”

In order to turn this into reality we have the following aims and objectives.

**Your Home We will work in partnership to increase the supply of affordable, sustainable housing and improve the standards of housing stock in the District.**

- 1 We will improve the quality of the housing stock in both the Council and private stock.
2. We will enable more affordable housing in the district through actively engaging in sub-regional working, including developing the effectiveness of HARI. The housing will be in the right location, of the right type, size and mix.
3. We will review the use of sheltered schemes and develop extra care.
4. We will effectively target the use of Disabled Facilities Grants and other grants to those in most need and encourage the use of equity release.

**Your Neighbourhood We will actively seek to engage with the community to improve the environment in which people live and reduce the levels of anti-social behaviour.**

5. We will introduce Choice Based Lettings in partnership with neighbouring authorities and review our housing allocations scheme.
6. We will work in partnership to develop facilities to reduce anti-social behaviour.
7. We will take action against tenants who commit anti-social behaviour such as ASBOs and demoted tenancies.
8. We will carry out neighbourhood improvement and environmental works.

**Your Services      We will improve the quality of our services, reduce the risk of homelessness, and increase support to vulnerable people.**

9. We will improve South Oxhey Neighbourhood Office
10. We will improve our performance to become a top quartile performer.
11. We will actively promote housing options.
12. We will reduce homelessness through improved support for vulnerable people.
13. We will improve tenant participation and communication.

## **Introduction**

### **About Three Rivers**

Three Rivers is situated in South Hertfordshire spanning 34 square miles comprising 12 villages and small towns. The district has excellent road links to the M25 and M1 and rail services into central London but transport within the District is hindered by many of the local transport routes being centred on neighbouring urban Watford.

The population of the district is 82,848, within 33,488 households. The increase in population has been less than the increase in households which has resulted in the average household size reducing. 27% of the households in the District consist of one person.

The majority tenure type in Three Rivers is owner-occupation making up 76% of households. Council tenants consist of 13.2%, private rented sector 4.6%, and housing association tenants 2.6%. Black and minority ethnic groups make up just over 7% of the population with the Asian community being the largest group.

Those of working age 60% were employed, 16% self employed, 2% unemployed, 2% were permanently sick or disabled and 2% at home looking after the family. 62% of all owner occupiers are employed compared with 45% of council tenants. There is a higher percentage of retired households in council rented properties (22%) than owner-occupied (17%). A snapshot of housing benefits claimants taken in May 2005 was 3370. Overall housing benefit claimants have increased 17% since 2001.

Further information on Three Rivers is contained within the Housing Needs and Market Assessment in Appendix C.

### **The Big Picture**

The Government has set out its vision for housing in the Sustainable Communities Plan published in 2003. It has also established targets for the delivery of housing which are:

- Achieve a better balance between housing availability and the demand for housing, including improving affordability, in all English regions while protecting valuable countryside around our towns, cities and in the green belt and the sustainability of towns and cities.
- The planning system to deliver sustainable development outcomes at national, regional and local levels through efficient and high quality planning and development management processes.
- Bring all social housing into a decent condition and housing for vulnerable households in the private sector, including families with children, increase the proportion that live in homes that are in a decent condition by 2010.
- Lead the delivery of cleaner, safer, greener public spaces and improvement of the quality of the built environment in deprived areas and across the country.

Three Rivers fully supports these objectives and this strategy sets out how we intend to deliver those objectives within the District.

There are a series of initiatives that have been taken at a national level that will have an impact on the housing within Three Rivers. The central ones are:

- Extending access to sustainable low cost home ownership through national 'Homebuy' scheme (for first time buyers), other low cost home ownership schemes and restricting take up of the Right to Buy Scheme.
- Reducing the construction costs using modern method of construction and make use of National Affordable Housing Programme by partnering.
- Extended powers for local authorities to bring empty homes back into rentable use.
- Reduce subsidy costs of building programmes of affordable units through planning gain.
- Housing choice to be extended further by nationwide rollout of Choice Based Lettings Scheme.
- Housing benefit regime changes for the rented sector. New 'Local Housing Allowance' to be paid at a fixed rate based on household size.
- Extra powers given to local authorities to tackle ASB - balancing punishment and support.
- National targets for the reduction in the use of B&B for families and reduce numbers in temporary accommodation.
- Protecting private rented sector tenants where necessary through measures of licensing HMOs, enforcement through Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) and tackling some landlord abuse by the introduction of a nationwide Tenancy Deposit Scheme.
- Requirement to implement effective homelessness prevention and preventing repeat homelessness.
- The impact of the Supporting People programme for elderly, vulnerable people and the requirement to reduce costs.
- The requirement to assess the accommodation needs of gypsies and travellers and make provision within Local Development Frameworks.

### The Regional Picture -The Eastern Region

The Housing Priorities for the Eastern Region are set out in the Regional Housing Strategy for the Eastern Region that was published in 2005. Many of the priorities for the region reflect those of the national housing policy. The Regional Housing Strategy is one of eight parts that makes up the 'Regional Spatial Strategy' that provides a complete vision, key housing related strategies to housing are the Economic Strategy and the Spatial Strategy ensuring all strategies are consistent and working together than competing for funds. Whilst the Regional Housing Delivery Group recommend to government the investment needed to meet objectives, this public investment (single regional housing pot) flows through the Regional Housing Board. The aims for the strategy are:

More sustainable housing provision	High quality homes & environment	Creating inclusive communities
Key factors	Key factors	Key factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ User Affordability</li> <li>~ Volume of subsidy</li> <li>~ Land use &amp; availability</li> <li>~ Effective partnerships for successful delivery</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Decent homes</li> <li>~ Decent Environments</li> <li>~ Higher standards of new builds</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>~ Promote mixed tenure communities</li> <li>~ Future tenure choice for key workers</li> <li>~ Linking strategies for certain client groups</li> <li>~ Aid/informing the Supporting People Strategy</li> </ul>

## The Sub-Regional Picture

### London Commuter Belt

The London Commuter Belt Sub-Region (LCBSR) consist of 15 District authorities plus Hertfordshire and Essex County Councils and over 40 housing associations. The LCBSR Housing Strategy reflects the collective views of stakeholders; it provides in-depth analysis of important housing issues occurring in the sub-regional housing market as well as identifying investment priorities and informing requirements into the Regional Housing Strategy. Whilst issues such as housing supply, need and shortfall are typical across most parts of the eastern region, the sub region does have unique challenges such as:

- Increased house price inflation due to the close proximity to London, this presents a problem as it outweighs local wages inflation.
- Other issues that require careful balance are housing growth and community sustainability, and protection of the green belt.

The LCBSR agreed in consultation the objectives and activities that form the strategy's three year action plan. The list below outlines key objectives

- Strengthen the principle of RSL joint commissioning & procurement
- Develop clear and consistent Section 106 agreements for affordable housing
- Enable new rural housing to be built for rural communities
- Deliver joint approach to commissioning of sub-regional Housing Needs Studies and Housing Market Assessments
- Accrue information on public and private homes concerning Decent Homes, HHSRS failures and SAP ratings averages
- Explore feasibility of joint funding pot to support empty homes strategies.
- Arrange for designated RSLs to manage/own certain empty properties.
- Develop cross authority private sector landlord accreditation schemes
- Promote development of 'Lifetime Homes' for new housing
- Joint commissioning in areas that will add value and improve services (such as SPP and sheltered housing)

The LCB sub-regional strategy also sets out the priorities for investment of the National Affordable Housing Programme budget in the sub-region. This is allocated on a sub-regional basis. The table below provides a comparison between the priorities and regional and sub-regional level.

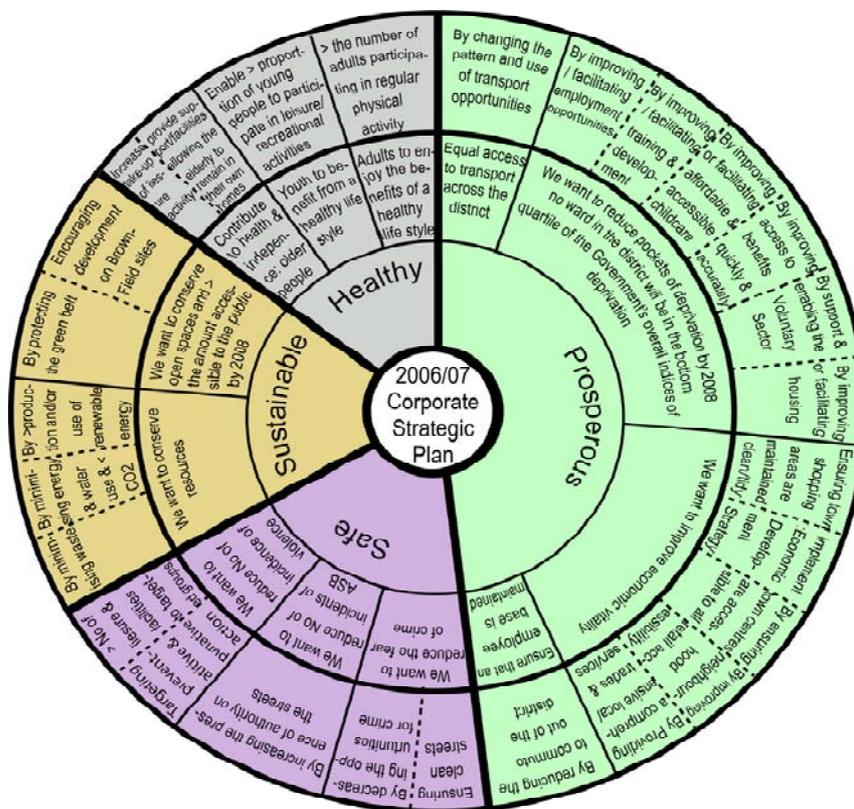
Theme	RHS	LCB HS
Local Housing Need	20%	50%
Housing Growth	20%	30%
Key Worker	14%	3%
Regeneration	5%	10%
Rural Housing	10%	5%
Supported Housing	8%	5%
BME	3%	3%

## The Local Picture

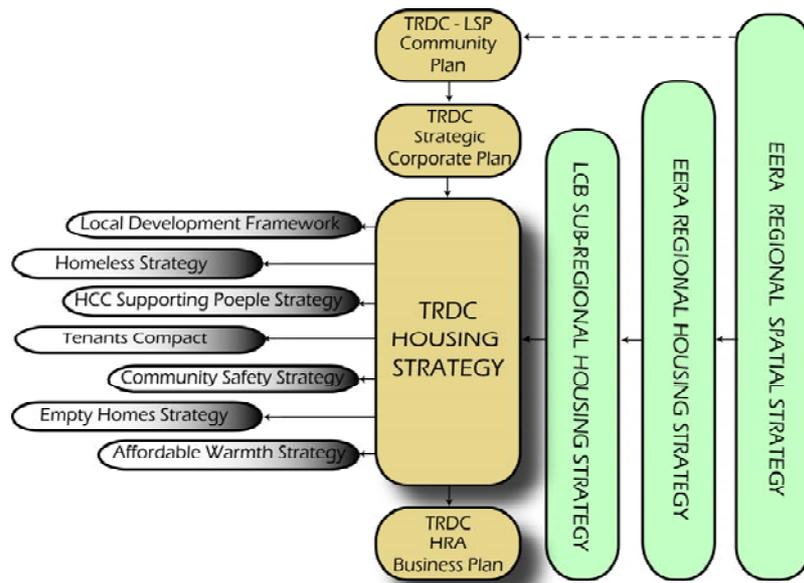
### The Council's Vision And Priorities

The Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has developed a Community Plan for Three Rivers to bring about improvements throughout the District. Four themes were developed: Healthy, Safer, Sustainable and Prosperous communities. These themes informed the Three Rivers Strategic Plan 2005/08 and the illustration below summarises the aims, outcomes and objectives for 2006/07. In the future Three Rivers will develop and implement 'Local Area Agreements' (LAA); these are neighbourhood focused partner agreements aimed at pulling funding streams together to deliver specific local targets. The themes for our existing Community Plan will need reviewing in light of LAA themes. Whilst both share similar themes the LAA goes further to structure themes around young people and link healthier communities with older people.

Three Rivers Corporate Strategic plan - Vision, aims and objectives



The chart below shows the flow between plans and strategies within the region



### The Three Rivers Housing Picture

Appendix C provides an exhaustive description of the current and projected housing market and needs for housing within the District. This information has been used to assess the future needs for affordable housing and concluded that there is a shortfall in supply of 2145 units of affordable housing over the next 5 years. About 80% of these will be for social rented housing and 20% for intermediate low cost home ownership or below market renting.

This is based on a target of reducing the number of households in housing needs by 5% and would require a net supply of new affordable housing of about 1716 social rent and 429 intermediate.

From the information available we have identified the following 10 key issues that the Council should be addressing. The section below sets out these issues, identifies the options open to the Council to address these issues and proposes the objectives that should be adopted for the housing strategy for the coming 5 years.

#### **1. The need to improve the quality of the Council's housing stock.**

The Council has carried out a comprehensive survey of its housing stock over the past years and it is anticipated that in order to meet the Government's public sector Decent Homes Target approximately £38.5m will have to be spent. The projected income from Council rents and the capital from the sale of properties through the right to buy would enable the basic standard to be met by the target date of 2010. If however the quality of the homes were to be improved to make the properties safe and suitable homes for the future, as desired by the tenants, then an additional approximate £57.8m would have to be spent. This is not possible given the financial position.

**Options:** The Council therefore undertook an extensive options appraisal that was completed in September 2005. This looked at the following options and carried out extensive consultation with tenants and leaseholders.

- Retention of the stock by the Council. If this option was chosen then the basic decent homes standard would be achieved by 2010 but this would not be able to be sustained in the long term. Tenants have expressed a strong desire for their homes to be maintained at a standard higher than the basic decent homes standard and therefore it would not be possible to meet this standard while the properties are in Council ownership.
- Arm's length management organisation. To pursue this route would require a new organisation to be established and achieve a 2-star rating by the Housing Inspectorate in time for the deadline. It was considered that it would not be possible to achieve this. This would only have marginal financial benefits.
- Private Finance Initiative. This would involve the stock being leased to a private organisation who would initiate an improvement programme. Given the scattered nature of the housing stock however it was not felt to be a viable option.
- Transfer of the Stock to a housing association. This would enable the higher decent homes standard to be met and provide financial security for the future.

**Outcome:** Following the consultation the Council agreed that the best option would be the transfer of the stock to a housing association and the tenants will be asked to vote on the proposal in the spring of 2007.

**Objective:** We will ensure that the decent homes target for public sector housing is achieved.

**Action:** We will ballot the tenants on the option to transfer the council stock to an RSL.

We will implement an improvement programme to meet the Decent Homes 'Three Rivers' Standard.

## **2. The need to improve the private sector stock within the District.**

The majority of the housing stock within the District is privately owned and a majority of that is in a good condition. There are a small number of properties however that pose a risk under the HHSRS and therefore require action. This is particularly an issue for capital rich but revenue poor older people who are resistant to moving.

**Options:** A number of options exist to improve the condition of the private sector stock within the District.

- Use of equity release scheme to enable owner-occupiers to release cash from the equity held in their homes to improve the conditions.
- Use of disabled facilities grants (DFG) to improve the properties for those who are unable to afford to do so. The funding for DFGs for the District is provided through the single housing pot from the ODPM. The resources available are therefore beyond the control of the Council although we work with our partners to attract additional resources to the area.
- Taking action against owners who fail to maintain their properties.
- Compulsory leasing of empty properties under the new power in the Housing Act 2004. There are a very low number of empty properties in

the District given the high property values and therefore the extent of the use of this power may be limited. We will however use it, in partnership with a local RSL where appropriate.

- Selective licensing of private landlords. This option is only available if there is a large number of poorly managed and maintained properties that reduce the sustainability of an area. This is not the case in any area in Three Rivers and therefore this is not an option open the Council.
- Licensing of houses in multiple occupation. There are a small number of HMOs in Three Rivers and we will implement a licensing scheme for all of them.

**Outcome:** We will extend the use of equity release schemes, take action against owners who allow their properties to pose a risk and implement HMO licensing. We will also use to powers of compulsory leasing of empty properties where appropriate.

**Objective:** We will effectively target the use of Disabled Facilities Grants and other grants to those in most need and encourage the use of equity release.

**Action:** We will extend the use of equity release schemes.

We will target the use of grants to those in most need.

We will introduce HMO licensing.

We will introduce the use of empty property management orders.

## **6. The need to attract investment into the District for affordable housing and provide sufficient land to meet the need for new housing while protecting the green belt.**

**Options:** Decreasing the threshold for developments that have to provide social housing as part of planning gain from the current 25 to 15. This is in line with the draft PPS3 issued in December 2005.

Attract additional investment through the National Affordable Housing Programme by demonstrating our ability to work in partnership with other authorities and share nominations to new developments.

To set a target for the provision of new affordable housing in the District.

To allocate land within the Local Development Framework sufficient to meet the need for affordable housing.

To produce a supplementary planning document that sets out what is expected in relation to affordable housing from the planning system.

**Outcome:** We will adopt a range of measures as set out below.

**Objective:** We will enable more affordable housing in the district through actively engaging in sub-regional working, including developing the effectiveness of Housing and Regeneration Initiative. The housing will be in the right location, of the right type, size and mix.

We will produce a supplementary planning document for affordable housing is part of the LDF.

## 7. Meeting the needs of an increasing elderly population.

The proportion of the population who are elderly is increasing and the proportion of those who are frail elderly is also increasing. This has the impact of meaning that there are a large proportion of elderly people living alone and requiring support but when they are no longer able to remain in their homes they require a high degree of care. Therefore sheltered housing is becoming less popular. Both the Council and other providers are under pressure to reduce costs of support for the elderly from the Supporting People regime.

**Options:** Reduce the supply of sheltered housing or change it to make it more attractive.

Rely on the private sector to provide supported housing for the elderly.

Provide increase level of community support services for elderly people living in their own homes.

Provide increased levels of extra care services (there are currently none in the Three Rivers area).

**Outcome:** We will increase the provision of extra care accommodation and review the current provision of sheltered housing.

**Objective:** We will review the use of sheltered schemes and develop extra care.

**Action:** We will review the provision of sheltered housing in the District by September 2006 and implement the findings by the end of 2007/8.

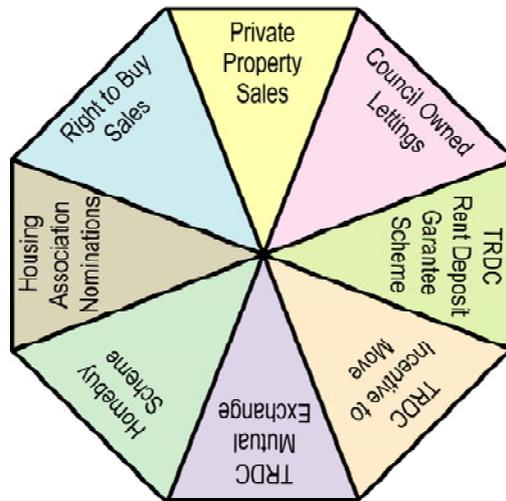
We will enable the provision of 25 units of extra care accommodation by 2011.

## 8. The need to extend choice in housing in line with Government policy.

The Government have set a target for local authorities to implement choice based lettings (CBL) before 2010. There is however no agreed model for choice based lettings and a variety of different schemes exist across the country. The Government have provided funding to assist in the implementation of the schemes across the Country.

**Options:** To implement a local CBL scheme for Three Rivers. This could be a partial stock scheme (e.g. for sheltered housing) or a whole stock scheme. The costs of implementing a local scheme may prove prohibitive and if this option were chosen then a limited scheme would be all that was possible. To implement a CBL scheme in partnership with neighbouring authorities and RSLs. This would enable the overheads of implementing and running a scheme and facilitate cross boundary movement of people thereby supporting other key objectives for enabling people to move for work and reducing travelling. ODPM are more likely to financially support cross authority schemes.

## Housing Availability in Three Rivers



**Outcome:** We will pursue the bid for funding and implement a cross boundary scheme.

**Objective:** We will introduce Choice Based Lettings in partnership with neighbouring authorities and review our housing allocations scheme.

**Action:** We will submit a joint bid for ODPM funding with Watford & St Albans by end of June 2006.

We will review our housing allocation policy to ensure it supports the principles of CBL and offers a range of housing options to applicants.

## 6. The need to improve the environment in which people live.

The problems of environmental improvement are particularly relevant to those tenants living on estates. The feeling of isolation can be exacerbated by the presence of poorly maintained street furniture and petty vandalism.

**Options:** Invest a proportion of the housing capital programme in the improvements to the environment on housing land. This option could be seen as benefiting all residents of an area not just tenants and therefore it should be the responsibility of the Council as a whole. The maintenance of roads is sometimes the responsibility of the highways agency.

**Outcome:** The environment in which people live is key to the enjoyment of their homes and the quality of the lives. We will therefore restrict a proportion of the capital programme to improve the external surrounding to peoples homes and design out crime.

**Objective:** We will carry out neighbourhood improvement and environmental works and reduce the fear of crime.

**Actions:** We will ensure that all new affordable housing developments are 'Secure by Design'

## 7. The need to reduce the levels of anti-social behaviour.

Anti-social behaviour remains a high priority both for our tenants but all residents. The Government has provided social landlords and local authorities with new powers to tackle the problems.

**Options:** Use of demoted tenancies to deal with tenants who commit anti-social behaviour. This acts as a warning to those families and to others in the community.

Ensure effective support is provided for victims of hate crime and harassment.

Introduce a zero tolerance to anti-social behaviour in Council owned property, a so called 'broken window' policy. This means that any broken window or unruly behaviour leads to the deterioration of neighbourhoods. By responding to the minor incidents effectively will reduce the level of anti-social behaviour generally and improve the sense of well being within the neighbourhood. This policy requires the corporation from the other agencies at work in the community, in particular the police.

Work in partnership with all agencies to ensure effective action is taken against anti-social behaviour.

**Outcome:** We will work in partnership with all agencies to ensure effective action is taken against anti-social behaviour.

**Objective:** We will work in partnership to develop facilities to reduce anti-social behaviour.

**Actions:** We will take action against tenants who commit anti-social behaviour such as ASBOs and demoted tenancies.

## 8. The need to improve the quality of Council services

**Options:** Tenants and staff have complained about the reception and office space provided in the main estate management office in South Oxhey. We could improve the physical facilities of our public offices to provide a high quality environment for both staff and tenants. This will have a cost to the authority however there are benefits to the staff as they will be able to provide a better service to tenants if they are not working in cramped and run down buildings.

Provide integrated estate management services with one member of staff providing the range of estate management services from repairs through to neighbour disputes. Given the complex geography of the District housing

one member of staff is better able to build up knowledge of the area. Staff are also able to cover for each other during absences.

Provide specialised estate management services with specialist teams or staff providing service such as repairs, rent arrears from central offices. This can reduce costs of providing the services. Given the number of properties in management however it would not be possible to have all the skills required with the number of staff available.

Enable the electronic access to Council services. Tenants and residents are increasingly reporting that they wish to access Council services through the telephone or the internet and this could save them money. Given the geographical spread of the stock this could also improve access for those more remote from the main Council offices. We already provide some services electronically and we should move to meet tenant aspirations. There is a cost however particularly in a transitional phase so any new service will have to be assessed on best value criteria.

**Outcome:** We will improve the physical appearance of the South Oxhey area office to provide a high quality environment for both tenants and staff and enable the increased electronic access to services.

**Objective:** We will improve our performance to become a top quartile performer and improve access to services for tenants and residents. We will improve tenant participation and communication.

**Actions** We will improve South Oxhey Neighbourhood Office.

We will enable the electronic payment of rent by the end March 2007.

## **9. The need to reduce the risk of homelessness and improve the provision of services to the homelessness.**

The Council's Homelessness Strategy was agreed in 2003 and the issues relating to homelessness remain a priority.

**Options:** Remove the need to use B&B completely.

Reduce the number of applicants accepted as homelessness.

Increase the options available to people in housing need as alternatives to homelessness. Ensure that there is the opportunity to be housed through the Housing Register without 'going homeless'.

Improve the advice and assistance provided to those groups most at risk of homelessness.

Increase opportunities to access housing in other parts of the country.

**Outcome:** We will eliminate the use of B&B. We will increase advice and assistance to all households in housing need and provide increased options for housing.

**Objective:** We will reduce homelessness through improved support for vulnerable people.

We will actively promote housing options.

We will explore the sharing of resources for the homeless with neighbouring authorities.

**Action:** We will eliminate the use of B&B by the end of June 2006.  
We will review our casework standards and train all the staff to ensure that there is a consistency of approach in every case by the March 2007.

## **10. The need to increase support to vulnerable people in particular young people and people with mental health problems.**

Without the provision of support vulnerable people are more likely to have difficulty finding adequate housing and are more likely to be unable to sustain a tenancy. There is also a high number of people with disabilities requiring housing.

**Options:** Provide new accommodation for all client groups within the District. Funding for support is now provided through Supporting People and therefore any new provision has to be negotiated with our partners and Hertfordshire County Council.

Provide specific housing for members of the BME communities within the District. The housing needs and market assessment does not identify a particularly higher level of housing needs within the BME communities. In contrast the BME communities enjoy a high quality of housing. There does not therefore seem to be the requirement to provide specific housing or services for these communities.

Provide additional housing for people with disabilities. We are aware of the need for more housing suitable for the needs of disabled people. The principle route to securing this additional supply is to make it a condition of the planning system to provide a proportion of new housing to lifetime homes standards.

**Outcome:** We need to increase the supply of housing suitable for people with disabilities.

We will increase the supply of supported housing for young people and people with mental health problems.

**Objective:** We will increase the provision of supported housing for vulnerable groups in line with the Supporting People Strategy.

**Action:** Develop a supported housing scheme for 12 young people in Gosforth Lane

Develop a floating support service for 15 people with mental health problems.

We will consult, as part of the Local Development Framework the requirement for 20% of all new housing to be lifetime homes standard.

## Chapter 11

### Summary

Having considered the issues that need addressing, the options open to the Council and the constraints we are facing we are proposing the following vision for housing in Three Rivers.

“We will work in partnership to ensure that there is sufficient affordable housing in Three Rivers in neighbourhoods where people want to live. We will provide the advice and support to promote independence and reduce homelessness.”

In order to turn this into reality we have the following aims and objectives.

#### **Your Home We will work in partnership to increase the supply of affordable, sustainable housing and improve the standards of housing stock in the District.**

1. We will improve the quality of the housing stock in both the Council and private stock.
2. We will enable more affordable housing in the district through actively engaging in sub-regional working, including developing the effectiveness of HARI. The housing will be in the right location, of the right type, size and mix.
3. We will review the use of sheltered schemes and develop extra care.
4. We will effectively target the use of Disabled Facilities Grants and other grants to those in most need and encourage the use of equity release.

#### **Your Neighbourhood We will actively seek to engage with the community to improve the environment in which people live and reduce the levels of anti-social behaviour.**

5. We will introduce Choice Based Lettings in partnership with neighbouring authorities and review our housing allocations scheme.
6. We will work in partnership to develop facilities to reduce anti-social behaviour.
7. We will take action against tenants who commit anti-social behaviour such as ASBOs and demoted tenancies.
8. We will carry out neighbourhood improvement and environmental works.

**Your Services      We will improve the quality of our services, reduce the risk of homelessness, and increase support to vulnerable people.**

9. We will improve South Oxhey Neighbourhood Office
10. We will improve our performance to become a top quartile performer.
11. We will actively promote housing options.
12. We will reduce homelessness through improved support for vulnerable people.
13. We will improve tenant participation and communication.

## Appendix A

### Draft Action Plan

In order to ensure the delivery of these objectives we will implement the following actions. Full details of the action plan can be found in appendix B.

1. Develop a supported housing scheme for 12 young people in Gosforth Road by the end of 2007/8.
2. Develop a floating support service for 15 people with mental health problems by the end of 2007.
3. We will consult, as part of the Local Development Framework the requirement for 20% of all new housing to be lifetime homes standard by the end of 2007.
4. We will review the provision of sheltered housing in the District by September 2006 and implement the findings by the end of 2007/8.
5. We will enable the provision of 25 units of extra care accommodation by 2011.
6. We will eliminate the use of B&B by the end of June 2006.
7. We will review our casework standards and train all the staff to ensure that there is a consistency of approach in every case by the March 2007.
8. We will improve South Oxhey Neighbourhood Office by the end of 2007/8.
9. We will enable the electronic payment of rent by the end March 2007.
10. We will submit a joint bid for ODPM funding with Watford & St Albans by end of June 2006.
11. We will review our housing allocation policy to ensure it supports the principles of CBL and offers a range of housing options to applicants before the implementation of CBL.
12. We will enable more affordable housing in the district through actively engaging in sub-regional working, including developing the effectiveness of HARI.
13. We will produce a supplementary planning document for affordable housing is part of the LDF by the end of 2007.
14. We will extend the use of equity release schemes.
15. We will target the use of grants to those in most need.
16. We will introduce HMO licensing.
17. We will introduce the use of empty property management orders.
18. We will ballot the tenants on the option to transfer the council stock to an RSL by the end of March 2007.

19. We will implement an improvement programme to meet the Decent Homes 'Three Rivers' Standard.
20. We will ensure that all new affordable housing developments are 'Secure by Design'
21. We will take action against tenants who commit anti-social behaviour such as ASBOs and demoted tenancies.

**Appendix B**

**Housing Strategy 2006–11  
Consultation Feedback**

Q 1. Have we identified the key housing issues, if not, what have we missed?

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Q 2. Have we set the target of meeting Housing need correctly at 5%? (refer to page 10)

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Q 3. Do you have any comments on the objectives that have been proposed?

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Q 4. Are there things the Council haven't identified, that you know would help meet housing need?

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Q 5. Which of the 10 options (pages 10-17) was most appropriate/important for your client group?

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Q 5. Is there anything else you want to comment on?

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Please return this form to Ms T Mann, Policy Officer, Three Rivers District Council, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth, Hertfordshire, WD3 1RL.

This form is also available at [www.threerivers.gov.uk](http://www.threerivers.gov.uk)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Tel: \_\_\_\_\_ Organisation: \_\_\_\_\_