

## **THREE RIVERS DC STRATEGIC PLAN 2007-2010**

### **Introduction**

Three Rivers District Council's vision is that *the district should remain a prosperous, safe and healthy place where people want and are able to live and work*. This vision recognises that Three Rivers District is a mixture of beautiful countryside, villages and small towns, and the majority of its inhabitants are relatively healthy, well educated, affluent, articulate and able to access our public services. This vision also recognises that people are attracted to live here because of the amenities and way of life, the proximity to central London and the excellent communication links by road, rail and air. Not surprisingly, people want this state of affairs to improve further, or at least to stay the same, and the Council's plans must pay careful heed to this point of view, without slipping into complacency. Thus its plans for developing the physical and industrial infrastructure (enshrined, for example, in the present Local Plan and its draft successor, the Local Development Framework) are designed to preserve the Green Belt, attract only "clean" industries, secure good quality housing, educational and leisure facilities, and attract shopping that is not at the top of the hierarchy, since there are ample major shopping facilities in and around Watford and beyond.

However, deprived communities do exist in the District, often side by side with more affluent areas, where disadvantaged individuals and groups find difficulty in accessing the full range of services and facilities many of us take for granted. The Council has therefore made a conscious decision to concentrate on improving services and access to services for these people, so its plans for developing the physical and industrial infrastructure seek to secure and improve local shopping areas, maintain free shoppers' parking throughout the district to support the local economy, attract employment opportunities, and provide services, facilities and opportunities in the identified areas aimed specifically at target groups.

This document brings together the high level, medium- to long-term objectives which the Council considers its priorities for the District and focuses on those areas where the Council has a lead role, or can play a key part in delivering or influencing the outcomes.

Its purpose is to guide the Council in its annual planning, resource allocation and performance management process by articulating clearly a series of SMART targets (targets that are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resourced and Time-limited) by which we shall be able to track our progress towards delivering our long-term objectives.

How did we decide on these objectives? Primarily they emerge from what you, the public, tell us. But also, we have to note the Government's priorities for local government and then we have to analyse, in particular, two major plans that influence what we do. These are all discussed below.

### **Influences on the Strategic Plan (1) The Local Area Agreement and the Community Strategy**

This Strategic Plan has been modified to reflect the objectives of two major documents, the first of which, the Local Area Agreement (LAA) has a range of activities contained within the four Hertfordshire "blocks", agreed in early 2006 by the Government, Hertfordshire County Council and the ten district councils:

- Economic Development and Enterprise
- Children and Young People
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Healthy Communities for Older People

The second document is the new Three Rivers Community Strategy 2006 – 2012, developed by the Three Rivers Local Strategic Partnership (LSP).<sup>1</sup> The Community Strategy priorities were developed in the context of community consultation and a massive amount of data including the Indices of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2004<sup>2</sup> and health information collected by the PCT.

From these, the Community Strategy identified (for the reasons set out below) some themes that require cross-agency working, including **Children & Young People** and **Equality**, and five **priorities** for the district.

**Children and Young People** are a growing percentage of the population and, whilst the difficulties that young people face are no greater (and often considerably smaller) than in other areas, Three Rivers D.C. has taken a political decision to lead in pursuing the Government's *Every Child Matters* agenda and make young people a priority. In order to progress this, a District Children's Trust Partnership has been established in Three Rivers and an Action Plan has been written to reflect the five *Every Child Matters* priorities.

**Equality** became a theme because the LSP was aware that the small pockets of deprivation in the district could be addressed by ensuring equality of access to all of the partners' services.

The **five priorities** that residents say are most important for the District are, in descending order:

- 1. Anti-social behaviour, crime, and fear of crime**
- 2. Access to services for all residents**
- 3. Improving the environment**
- 4. Children and young people's access to education, skills and training**
- 5. Improving the supply and standard of affordable housing**

#### **Influences on the Strategic Plan (2) Consideration of the Government's Reform Agenda**

The Government's Reform Agenda has a significant effect on all local authorities and acts as an influence on this Authority's priorities and capacity to effect change. The Agenda covers three key areas of a local authority's sphere of influence: **Democratic Renewal**, **Community Leadership** and **Service Improvement**, as well as **Corporate Governance**. Given that it must target and prioritise limited resources, the Council initially considered these key areas and assessed them in the light of its own strategic priorities.

Having noted the demographic profile of the majority of the TRDC inhabitants, the Council has decided that **democratic renewal**, whilst it is important and desirable, should not be its first priority for the next two years. It will continue to run local area forums, the Youth Council and other

<sup>1</sup> The LSP comprises members from the local Primary Care Trust, the Constabulary, the Police Authority, the Voluntary Sector and the District and County Councils.

<sup>2</sup> Hotspot Areas for Local Development in the Three Rivers Community Plan

The LSP analysed the Indices of Multiple Deprivation data for those SOAs falling in the 50% most deprived in England, and the table below shows the 10 SOAs with the highest scores for deprivation. The SOA with the most severe deprivation across all of the domains in the Indices of Multiple Deprivation is ranked 1. The Three Rivers LSP has noted that the 10 SOAs listed might benefit from cross-cutting regeneration and development in the Community Strategy and will be used to benchmark against when other areas' needs demand that priorities be made. TRDC has similarly noted these areas as hotspots for possible local action in this Strategic Plan, whilst recognising the requirement for multi-agency co-operation to tackle them.

Rank	Ward Area	SOA Code	Rank	Ward Area	SOA Code
1	Northwick	E01023844	6	Ashridge	E01023806
2	Northwick	E01023842	7	Ashridge	E01023805
3	Hayling	E01023828	8	Hayling	E01023827
4	Northwick	E01023843	9	Maple Cross	E01023838
5	Langleybury	E01023830	10	Penn	E01023848

Table 1: SOAs with most deprivation factors.

participatory forums and partnerships, in order both to attempt to gain greater participation in setting the policy agenda and gradually to increase capacity within the community. It feels, however, that a geographically small district with 48 councillors should be able adequately to reflect the wishes of its communities in the short term. This position will be reviewed towards the end of the 2007-8 financial year, dependent on the progress made on its other priorities.

Similarly, the Council believes it already demonstrates good examples of **community leadership**, such as its “No Smoking” public health campaign, and its active participation by Members and Officers in its many partnerships. The Council however does not believe that either health or economic regeneration via community leadership should be its top priorities in the short term. Having reviewed the Health data available, the Council felt that there would be minimal benefit from investment in this and the Employment areas, except in those localised areas where the IMD shows intervention to be necessary. Nevertheless, these issues are addressed as part of the broader responses to overall hotspot areas and Health may also be addressed through overcoming ‘Barriers to Services’ as well as through service improvement targets (see below). Preserving, strengthening and extending the health and prosperity of the district continues to be enshrined in the Strategic Plan and measures have been adopted to achieve this aim. For example, the Council recognises that prosperity is extended to more of its inhabitants if it continues to work hard to secure affordable housing. Community leadership does however re-emerge below.

Concerning **service improvement**, the Council’s reputation rests fundamentally upon delivering and improving a wide range of high quality services consistently well across its communities, and it has worked hard since its 2004 CPA score of “Good” to improve its performance both in quality and in its applications to hard to engage and minority groups. It has adopted a 2-year programme to ensure that, by the end of 2005/06, the performance of all its services to all sections of the community will be as good as or better than the national median. In April 2007 we received a positive Direction of Travel statement from the Audit Commission, although we identified a need to demonstrate value for money across all our services. In addition, to ensure that the customer focus is spread consistently throughout the whole Authority, it decided to seek Charter Mark for the whole Council by March 2007. This was fully achieved and corporate Charter Mark, involving 19 separate assessments, was awarded in December 2006. Finally, this commitment to improving public services enables it to respond better to the targets that have been agreed (March 2006) between the districts, county and government under Hertfordshire’s Local Area Agreement. Service improvement has therefore to remain a major priority.

### **Influences on the Strategic Plan (3) Corporate Governance**

In the knowledge that public money should be spent wisely, efficiently, effectively and with demonstrable value for money, the Council has invested much time in improving its **governance**. Corporate Governance is the system by which local authorities direct and control their functions and relate to their communities. The Council has adopted a local Code of Corporate Governance incorporating the underlying principles of good governance, which are integrity, accountability, openness and inclusivity.

The Council reviews its governance arrangements under the following headings to ensure it is adhering to these principles.

- Community Focus – The Council gives leadership by providing vision for its residents and leads by example in its decision-making.
- Service Delivery Arrangements – The Council seeks continuous improvement and value for money and it will be concentrating on demonstrating value for money during the next year.

- Structures and Processes – The Council has established effective managerial structures and processes, including support to front line services, and ensures that its policies are implemented using, where appropriate, its performance management framework
- Risk Management & Internal Control – The Council has established a systematic strategy, framework and processes for managing risk;
- Standards of Conduct – The Council adheres to the highest standards of conduct.

The Council's aim is to be able to demonstrate value for money, secure risk assessment and project management procedures, demonstrable customer focus and consequently an enhanced reputation.

## **Equalities**

As part of its commitments to better customer focus and improving the quality of life for all its residents and employees, Three Rivers has developed a *Comprehensive Equality Policy* to help us promote fair and equal access to services by all citizens. We demonstrate our commitment to Equalities by placing it as a key priority in our Strategic Plan, making it integral to our Community Strategy, and setting out equality targets and actions in our service planning framework.

Based on the findings of a council-wide equalities assessment, the Council's equalities commitments will be promoted through five strategic equality and diversity objectives.

- a. Promoting Community Leadership & Community Cohesion
- b. Improving Community Engagement & Communication
- c. Promoting Equality in Service Delivery
- d. Promoting Equality of Opportunity in Employment & Training
- e. Evaluating the success of our Equalities commitments

We value the diversity of our community and want to use its wealth of experience to create an excellent quality of life in Three Rivers. We intend that the Council's three-year Corporate Equalities Plan will help us to achieve those commitments by ensuring delivery of fair and equally accessible service to all our citizens. In 2006/07, the Council achieved Level 2 of the Commission for Racial Equality's (CRE) Equality Standard and aims to achieve Level 3 by the end of 2008/09.

## **Reputation**

The Council wishes to improve its reputation with the public through four means, initially by improved community engagement in our planning and decision-making. Secondly, we referred earlier to our 2-year programme of service improvements as reflected by our BVPIs. This will help drive and demonstrate improvements to the street scene and liveability, which affects all our citizens. Thirdly, by telling the story to our communities about what their authority does, why it does those things, and how it has responded to the community's needs. Fourthly, by demonstrating that we strive for economy and efficiency to deliver value for money in everything we do.

Specific objectives for our communications in 2006-8 are,

- Effective media management
- Providing all households with an a-z guide of council services
- Publishing a good quality council magazine on a regular basis
- Promoting an effective and consistent image of the council brand to our services
- Promoting good internal communications

## **People Management Principles**

We demand of our staff a very high level of skill, integrity, customer focus and competence and, to ensure this, we have been guided by a set of principles that reflect the culture of the organisation and underpin our human resource management objectives and activities.

1. Customer service comes first, whether for external or internal customers
2. To encourage flexibility and innovation by embracing the opportunities offered by change and having a 'can do' approach
3. Encouraging a culture of openness, trust and transparency throughout the Council
4. Treating people with fairness and recognising the contribution of teams and individuals
5. Recognising that 'one size doesn't fit all'

### **Conclusions for the Strategic Plan**

Having considered all of the above, sometimes bewildering, influences on what we do and how we do it, Three Rivers District Council commits to the following priorities for the period 2007-10.

1. The four themes of the Strategic Plan continue to be *Safe, Sustainable, Prosperous* and *Healthy Communities*, incorporating the priorities of the new Three Rivers Community Strategy 2006 – 2012. These cross-cutting themes do not have equal priority but neither are they separate from each other – activities in each theme influence results in another. Nevertheless, *Safe* and *Sustainable Communities* will have pre-eminence over *Prosperous* and *Healthy Communities*, whilst the present circumstances persist.
2. As stated at the beginning and demonstrated above, deprived communities do exist in the District. The Council has therefore made a conscious decision to concentrate on *improving services* and *improving access to services* for those people.
3. The Council will seek to demonstrate enhanced community engagement in our planning and decision-making.
4. The Council will seek to demonstrate an enhanced reputation during the life of this Plan.
5. The Council will actively pursue its five strategic equality and diversity objectives.
6. Finally, pursuing the theme of *Sustainable Communities*, Three Rivers District Council believes that it also should focus on demonstrating community leadership through *promoting environmental sustainability*. The Council therefore seeks to concentrate its efforts on the theme of sustainability by creating a more sustainable environment within the district to counter climate change and mitigate environmental degradation. It will therefore:
  - Examine, update and implement its major plans such as the Local Development Framework
  - Implement an Action Plan that will set out the outcomes that we wish to see and all the actions we shall need to undertake to achieve the outcomes.

### **RISK ASSESSMENT**

The following table shows the risks that have been identified and gives an assessment of their impact and likelihood in accordance with the Council's Risk Management Strategy:-

	Description of Risk	Impact	Likelihood
1	Threats to the Green Belt / Historic Buildings	III	D
2	Failure to deliver the Local Development Framework	III	D
3	Annual Monitoring report fails to be approved by the Secretary of State	III	D

4	Community Safety Actions fail to meet targets	III	D
5	Council's reputation suffers from failure to deliver value for money	III	D
6	Test reveals Business Continuity Plan is not workable	III	D
7	Failure to achieve the Decent Homes Standard	IV	C
8	Failure of ICT systems	III	D
9	Loss of key staff or skills	II	D
10	Authority fails to give a lead on sustainability	IV	D

Note:

- For the meaning of the assessment score see the key to the matrix below.
- For the definitions of 'catastrophic', 'almost certain', etc, see the extract from the [Council's Risk Management Strategy Statement](#)

The above risks have been prioritised in the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk. It is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood are shaded in the bottom left in the table below. The remaining risks require management and monitoring. Those combinations of impact and risk shaded centrally below are less time critical but those shaded to the right require immediate management and monitoring.

Likelihood ↑	A					Impact V = Catastrophic IV = Critical III = Significant II = Marginal I = Negligible	Likelihood A = >98% B = 75% - 98% C = 50% - 75% D = 25% - 50% E = 2% - 25% F = <2%	
	B							
	C				7			
	D		9	1,2,3,4 5,6,8	10			
	E							
	F							
	I	II	III	IV	V	Impact →		

All the risks that require management and monitoring are included in the appropriate service plans.

## Definitions

**Vision.** This is our aspirational statement describing the future. The Three Rivers vision is that *the district should remain a prosperous, safe and healthy place where people want and are able to live and work.*

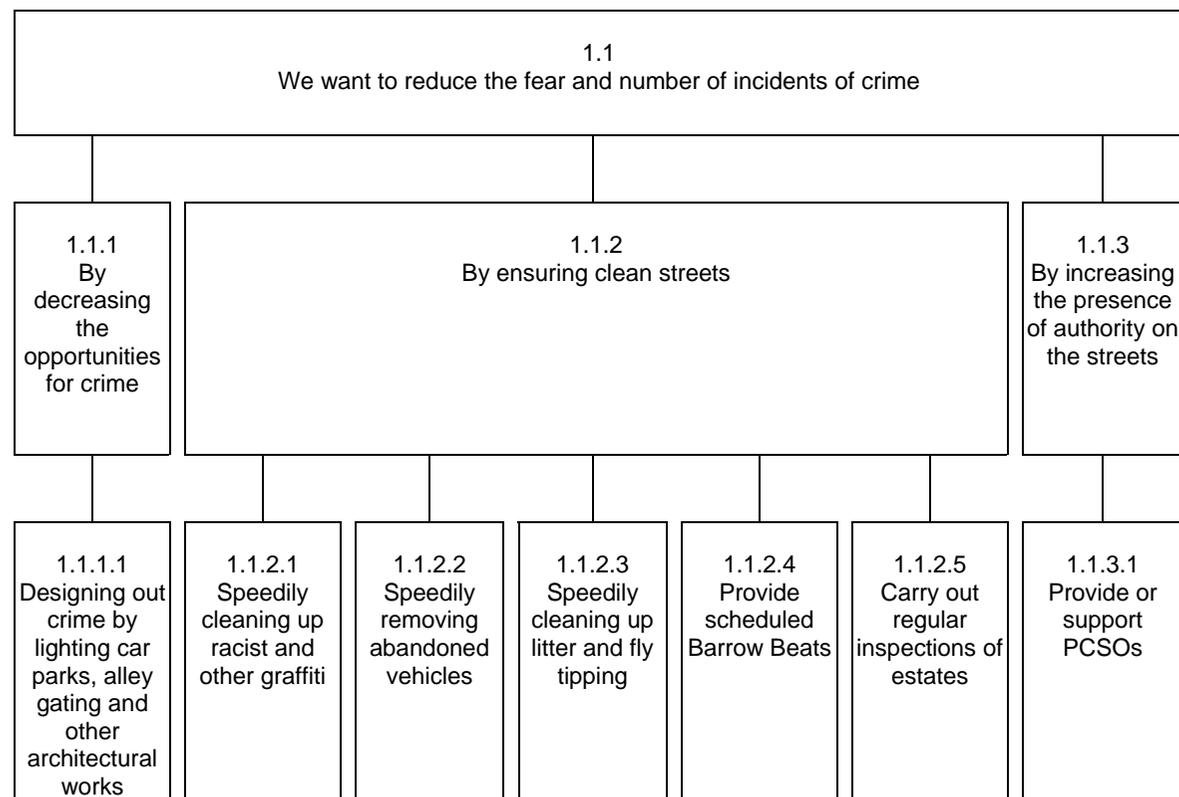
The four **themes** in which we want to make our communities **safer, sustainable, prosperous** and **healthy** provide the framework for the areas where we believe we can help make a difference. Overleaf, we have set out four charts equivalent to our themes and a further one for Corporate Governance. For each one, the top level sets out our prioritised **aim**. This describes what we want to have achieved by 2010, by showing the **outcomes** needed to bring about the desired future.

The second level sets out our **objectives**, which are all the things we need to achieve in order to realise those aims and outcomes.

The third level identifies the **activities** we undertake in the pursuit of our objectives.

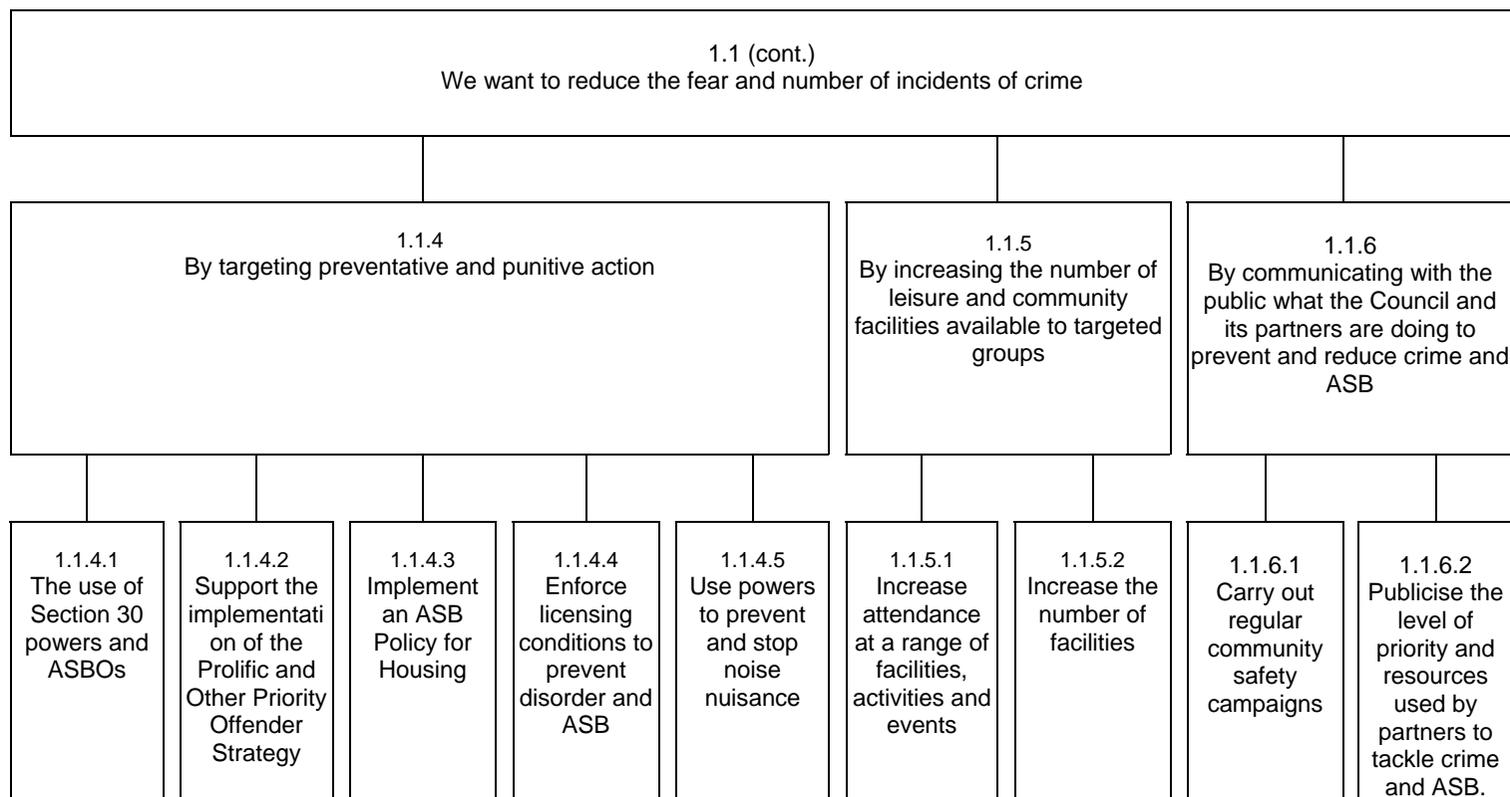
Beneath the chart, we provide contextual information and quantifiable targets and milestones to underpin the activities. If we achieve all these, then we should have reached our objectives and secured our desired outcomes.

## 1 SAFE COMMUNITIES



- 1.1 A fear of crime survey carried out during the summer of 2004 revealed that 29% of the residents within Three Rivers considered crime in general to be a very big or fairly big problem. By the time of the next survey we want to reduce this figure to 25%.
- 1.1.1 We aim to vet 90% of all major planning applications for the Secure by Design Award. This target will be increased incrementally to 95% by 2008/09. During 2006/07 we dealt with 31 major planning applications. The Crime Liaison Officer is consulted on appropriate planning applications.

- 1.1.2 The clean and tidy appearance of the local environment is a contributory factor in reducing the perception and fear of crime in the locality. Of the 900 sites surveyed in 2006/07, 90.8% (817) had either no or acceptable levels of graffiti. Of the 392 vehicles reported as abandoned during 2006/07, 93.9% were investigated within 24 hours. Of the 105 abandoned vehicles removed in 2006/07, 89.5% were removed within 24 hours. Of the 1800 sites surveyed 89.1% (1604) were defined as having no or acceptable levels of litter and detritus. The total number of fly-tips decreased from 2005/06. Of the 900 sites surveyed 97.3% (877) had no or acceptable levels of fly-posting.
- 1.1.3 By the end of 2006/07 there were 23 posts of which 19 were filled. This compares to 12 posts in 2005/06, of which 11 were filled.



1.1.4 We want to reduce the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour. During 2006/07 there were 5,556 incidents of anti social behaviour reported to the police. This compares to 5,594 incidents in the previous year.

We want to reduce the number of incidents of violence. The Community Safety Strategy has set a target to reduce acts of violent crime by 10% over a 3-year period (2005 to 2008) During 2006/07 there were 622 incidents of violence reported to the Police; this compares to 667 incidents in the previous year.

During 2006/07 a total of 5 ASBO's were enforced. During 2006/07 there were 171 reported tenant related ASB complaints. Of the 135 cases that were closed 118 (87%) required no further action. The use of these powers will be enforced as appropriate, but we are adopting an approach of preventative action as opposed to punitive and have set a local target to resolve 90% of all cases without the need for further formal action.

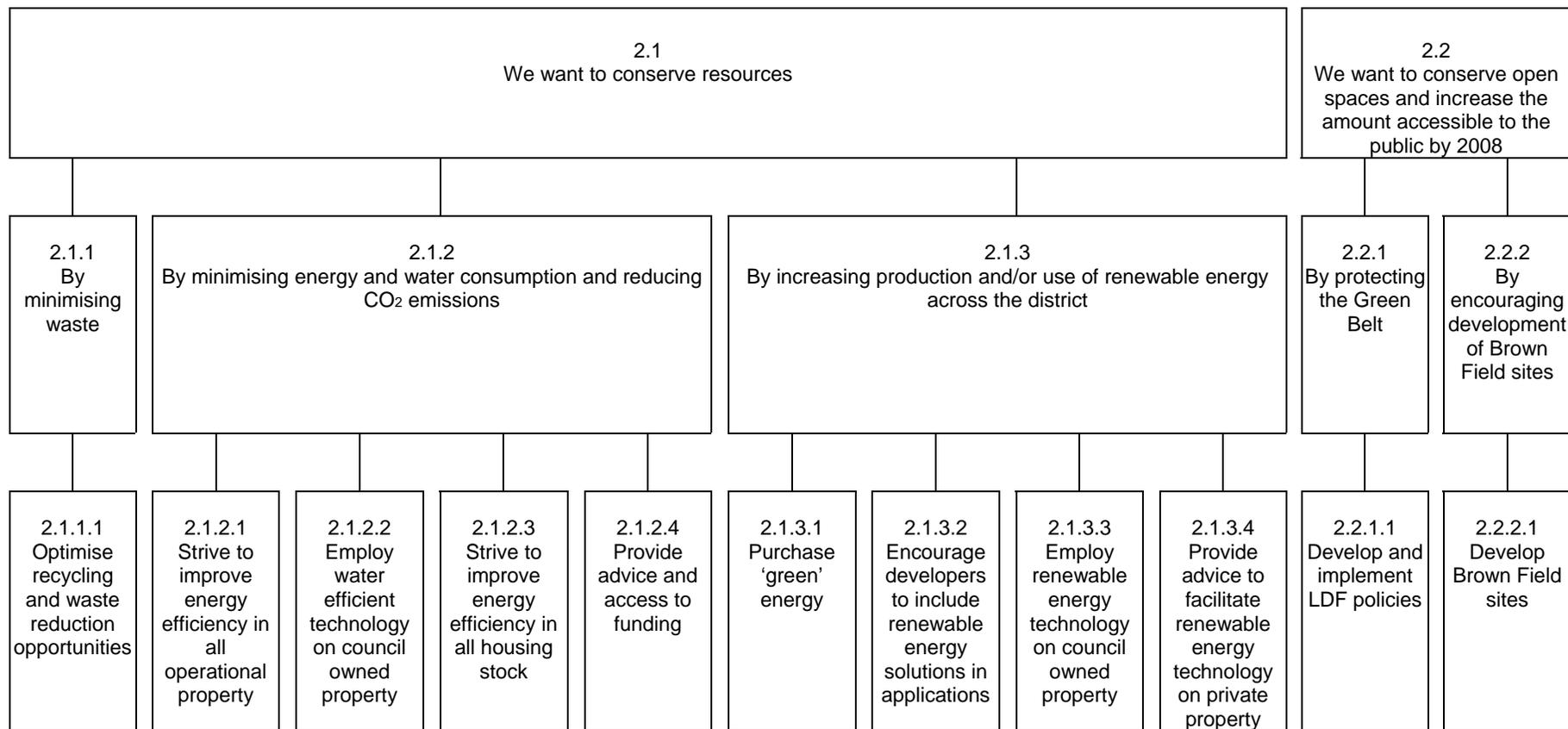
An Anti-Social Behaviour Policy and Procedure for Housing Services was developed in January 2006

1.1.5 The provision of a range of diversionary leisure and recreational activities has proved to be a contributory factor in reducing anti-social behaviour and incidents of violence. We have already provided a number of facilities such as skate parks and youth shelters and we aim to increase the number of these and other facilities. There were 1649 attendances to Community Safety related projects during 2006/07 compared to 1552 for 2005/06. There were 6714 attendances to the Free Swimming scheme during 2006/07 (no comparable figures for previous year). There were 3035 attendances at staffed Skate Parks during 2006/07 (no comparable figures for previous year).

1.1.6 83% of the programmed community safety campaigns were carried out during 2006/07.

Public perception of the level of crime does not reflect the reality of police statistics which demonstrate a reduction in crime, and ASB over the last three years. As a means to combat this a number of initiatives will be introduced that aim to re-assure the public that crime within Three Rivers is relatively low and reducing when compared to other areas in England.

## SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES



2.1 We want to conserve resources

2.1.1 The Council has provided substantial funding over the past few years to enable residents to both recycle and compost household waste. A combined target of 44% was achieved for 2006/07.

2.1.3 7% of the electricity purchased by the Council is from 'green/renewable' sources..

2.2 We want to conserve open spaces and increase the amount accessible to the public by 2008.

At the end of 2006/07 there were four designated Local Nature Reserves on Council owned open space; this will increase to six in 2007/08 . We will organise a programme of at least 10 Wildlife Activities per year for the public to take place on our Local Nature Reserve sites.

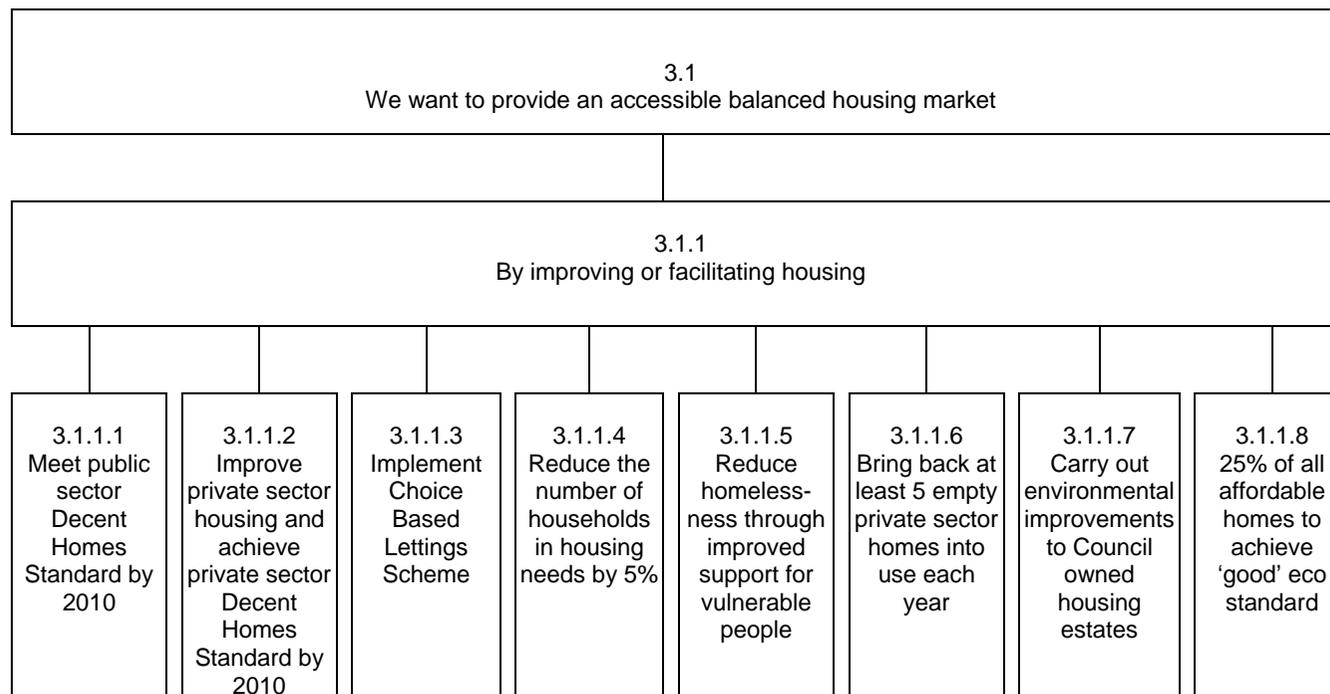
We are currently drawing up Woodland Management Plans with the aim of gaining UK Woodland Assurance Scheme (UKWAS) accreditation

We have applied for the Green Flag Award for one site at Chorleywood House Estate and await the outcome.

2.2.1 The total area of the Green Belt within the district is 6,800 hectares, which represents 68% of the total area of the district. Our aim is to ensure that this does not reduce in future years. We have a local annual target to control new development within the Green Belt that no more than 25% of appeals by developers are allowed. In 2006/07 12% of appeals were allowed.

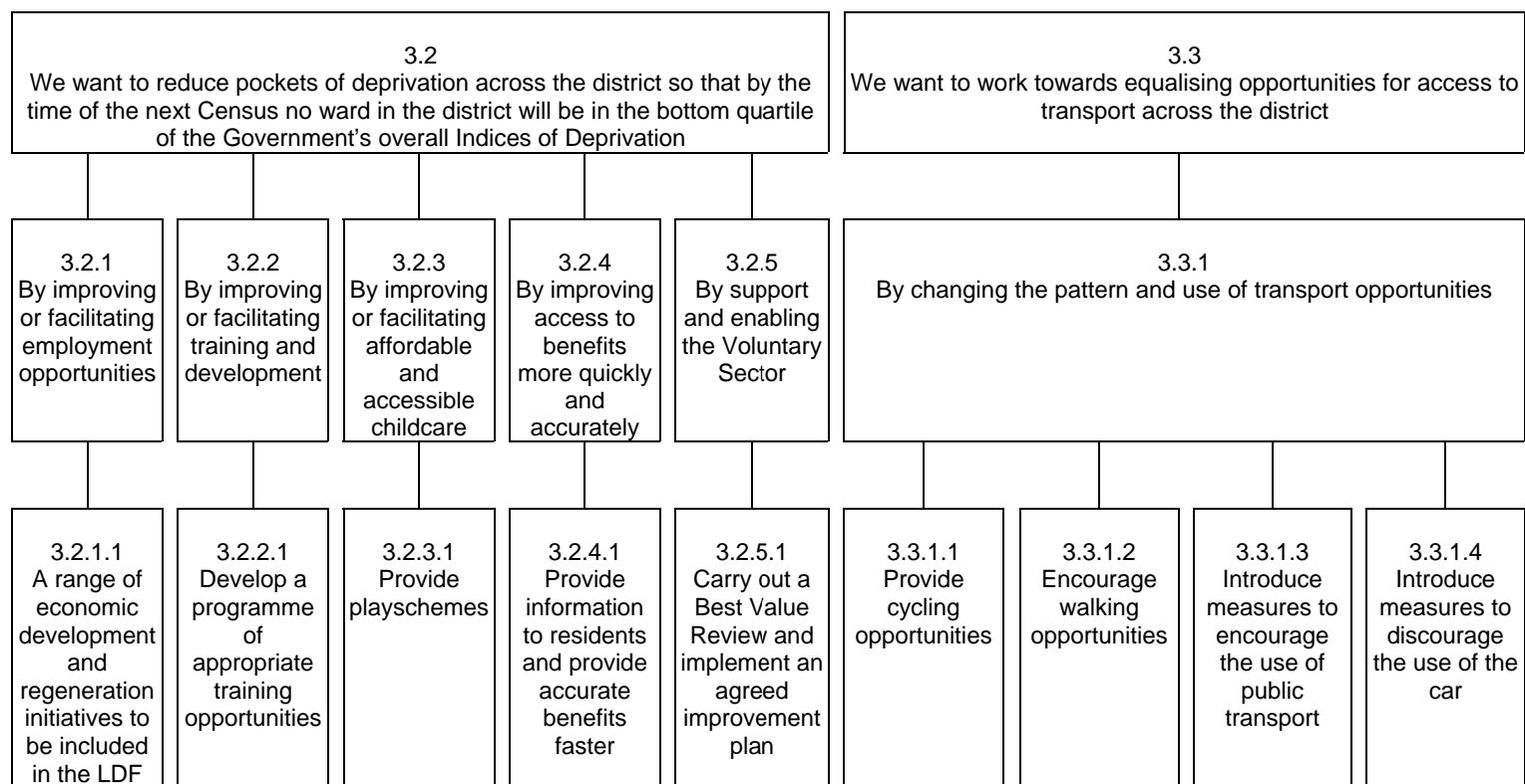
2.2.2 In 2006/07 89.76% of new homes were built on 'brownfield' land.

## PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES



- 3.1 The Council is committed to improving the quality of both its own and that of privately owned housing stock. In order to meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010 a Stock Options Appraisal has been carried out which concluded that the Council is not able to generate sufficient funding to carry out the necessary programme of works to upgrade its housing stock. The next stage is for tenants to be consulted on the transfer of TRDC's housing stock to a Housing Association, which would be able to attract funding to carry out repairs and refurbishment in order to meet the Standard. It is our aim, therefore, to facilitate the process to ensure that our tenants receive the best possible service in terms of the quality of housing and its management. In 2006/07, an audit for our housing stock transfer reported that 36% is non-decent.
- 3.1.1 To improve the quality of private sector stock and to bring them back into circulation we are able to grant fund improvements and during 2006/07 56 vacant private sector dwellings were returned into occupation or demolished. We will continue to provide grants to improve the quality of private sector housing and in 2006/07 made fit or demolished 39 unfit private sector dwellings.

## PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES (Continued)



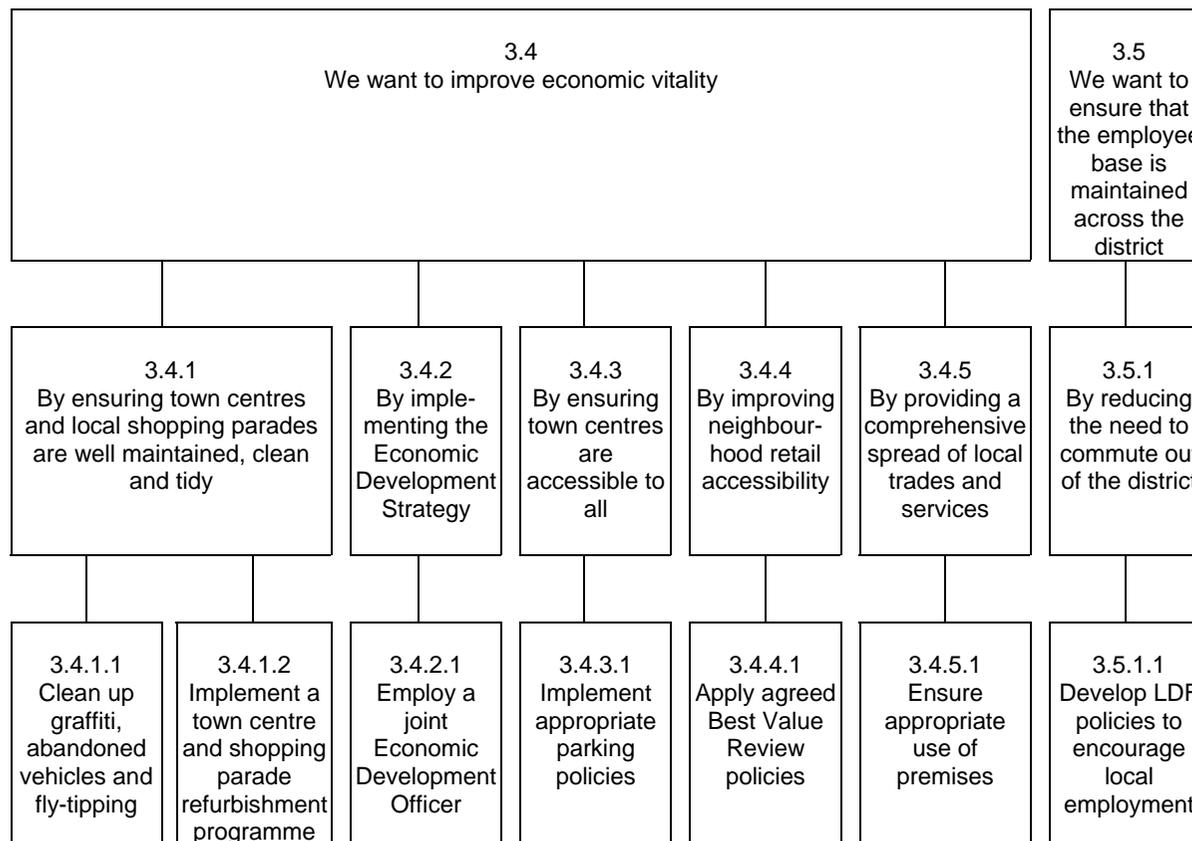
- 3.2 We want to reduce pockets of deprivation across the district to an acceptable level so that by the time of the next Census no ward in the district will be in the bottom quartile of the Government's overall Indices of Deprivation. Three Rivers ranks 308 out of 354 local authorities on the national Indices of Deprivation (2004) which suggests that deprivation is not an issue within the district. There are, however, a number of Super Output Areas within the district which fall in the bottom quartile on either the Index of Multiple Deprivation or its domains and supplementary indices.
- 3.2.1 Against a working population of 50,800 the Census 2001 identified that 80.7% are economically active with an overall unemployment rate of 3.6%. To facilitate local employment growth and opportunities we will include a range of economic development and regeneration initiatives in the Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 3.2.2 To improve the economic well being of the area and individuals we will, where appropriate, provide, improve and facilitate training and development programmes within the community. Identified projects include the *Learning for Leisure* programme.

- 3.2.3 We currently directly and indirectly provide a range of playschemes and we will continue to do so and ensure that all current places are allocated and where appropriate develop and provide new schemes. There are 1600 playscheme referral places available each year and a further 15 for disabled children.
- 3.2.4 We already provide information on benefits available to residents through articles in the *Three Rivers Times* and with the Council Tax demand sent out to all residents in February each year. We also provide a dedicated Benefits reception facility at Three Rivers House on a daily basis , 3 days per week at South Oxhey, and a half day per week at Abbots Langley. The Three Rivers website also provides a wide range of benefits information. The average time for processing all new Benefit claims in 2006-07 was 22.4 days; the time for processing change of circumstances in 2006-07 was 6.5 days; the percentage of accurate claims was 96%.
- 3.2.5 We provide financial and other support to a range of voluntary organisations and community groups both in and around the district. We aim to ensure that the Council supports and funds voluntary and community groups to enable improvements to the quality of life within the District. By the end of 2007/08 we will have published an agreed Local Compact.
- 3.3 We want to work towards equalising opportunities for access to transport across the district
- 3.3.1 Over 67% of the working population within Three Rivers use a form of motorised transport<sup>3</sup> to travel to work. Approximately 15% use public transport, 5% walk and just over 1% cycle. 10% stated that they work mainly from home. Through a number of our strategies and plans we aim to improve and increase access to public transport, cycleways and footpaths to provide greater choice for residents in how they wish to travel in and around or out of the district for both work and recreational purposes.

---

<sup>3</sup> Includes being the driver or passenger of a car, van or motorcycle or using a taxi/cab.

**PROSPEROUS COMMUNITIES (Continued)**



3.4 We want to improve economic vitality

3.4.1 All scheduled barrow beats have been implemented to keep town centres and shopping areas clean and tidy. See 1.1.2 for more information.

To improve town centres and shopping parades, funding is allocated for improving 1 designated area or scheme.

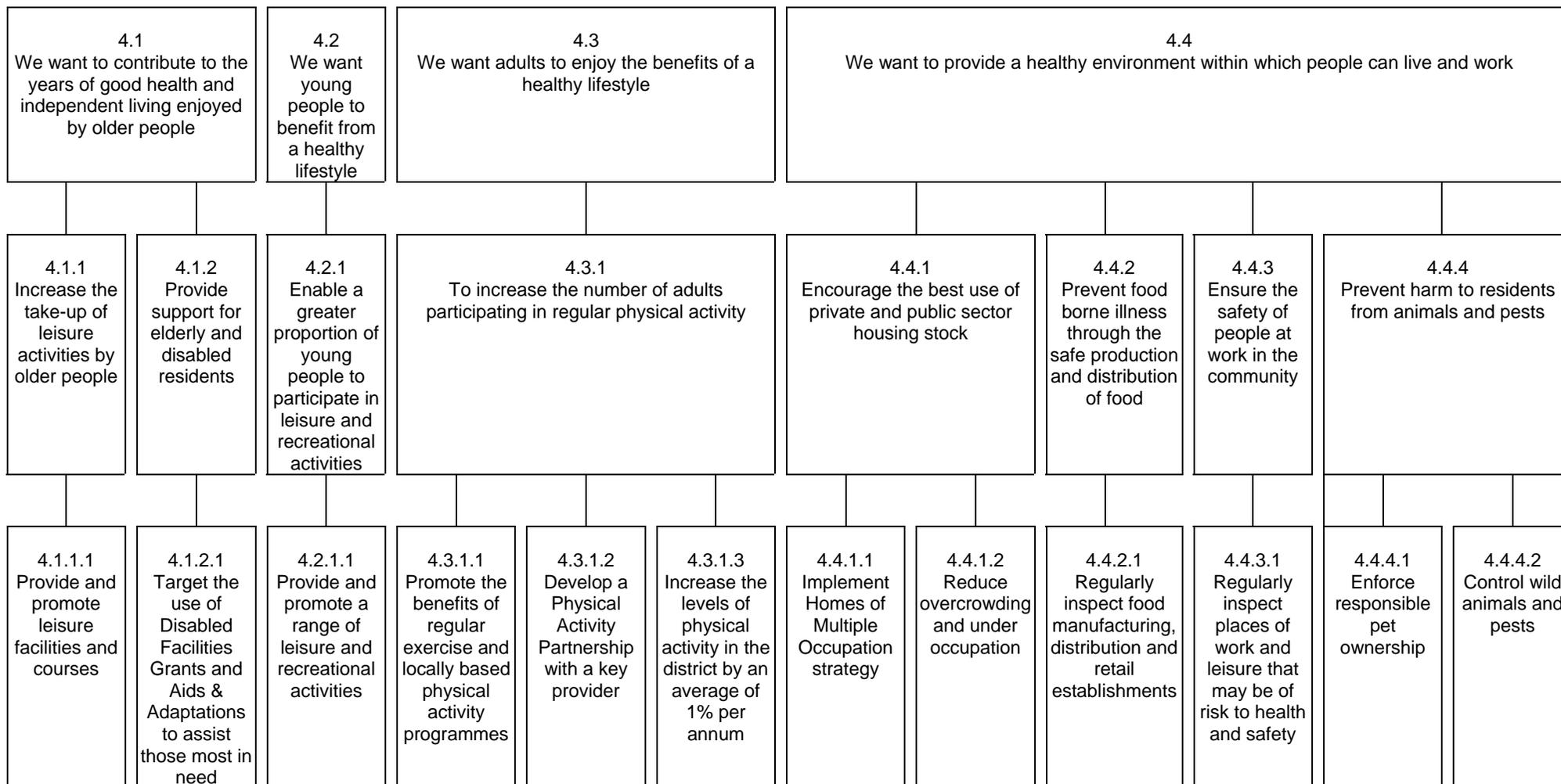
3.4.2 An Economic Development Officer has now been appointed as a joint funded initiative with Watford BC and Hertsmere BC. Key objectives include, to encourage new businesses in to the area of South West Herts, to promote the area to the business community and to act as conduit between the Business community and Local Councils, business support agencies and partner organisations.

- 3.4.3 The Council encourages the controlled accessibility for cars to its local town centres and shopping areas to maintain and improve the economic viability of the local area. Charging for parking is limited and restricted to on-street parking areas, but we aim for the Car Parking service to break even through the effective enforcement of our off-street and on-street parking policies.
- 3.4.4 We own 78 retail units/shops throughout the district and aim to let 95% of these units at any one time. At the 1<sup>st</sup> April ~~2006~~-2007 the occupancy rate was just over 97% generating approximately £493,855 per annum through rents.
- 3.4.5 Where appropriate we consult with local communities to ensure that the use of our retail units and shops meets the needs and requirements of the local community.
- 3.5 We want to ensure that the employee base is maintained across the district.
- 3.5.1 The current working age population<sup>4</sup> within the district (Census 2001) is 50,800 and the number of available jobs is 38,000, equating to a job density of 0.75. The South West Herts Employment Space Study published in January 2005 revealed that 26,900 of the 40,700 working residents commute out of the district to work and 16,900 commute into the district from other areas. Reversing this trend is a tremendous challenge but we will continue to make available relevant land and adopt other measures to encourage a range of companies and organisations to choose Three Rivers as a preferred choice to locate and/or expand their operations and improve local employment opportunities.

---

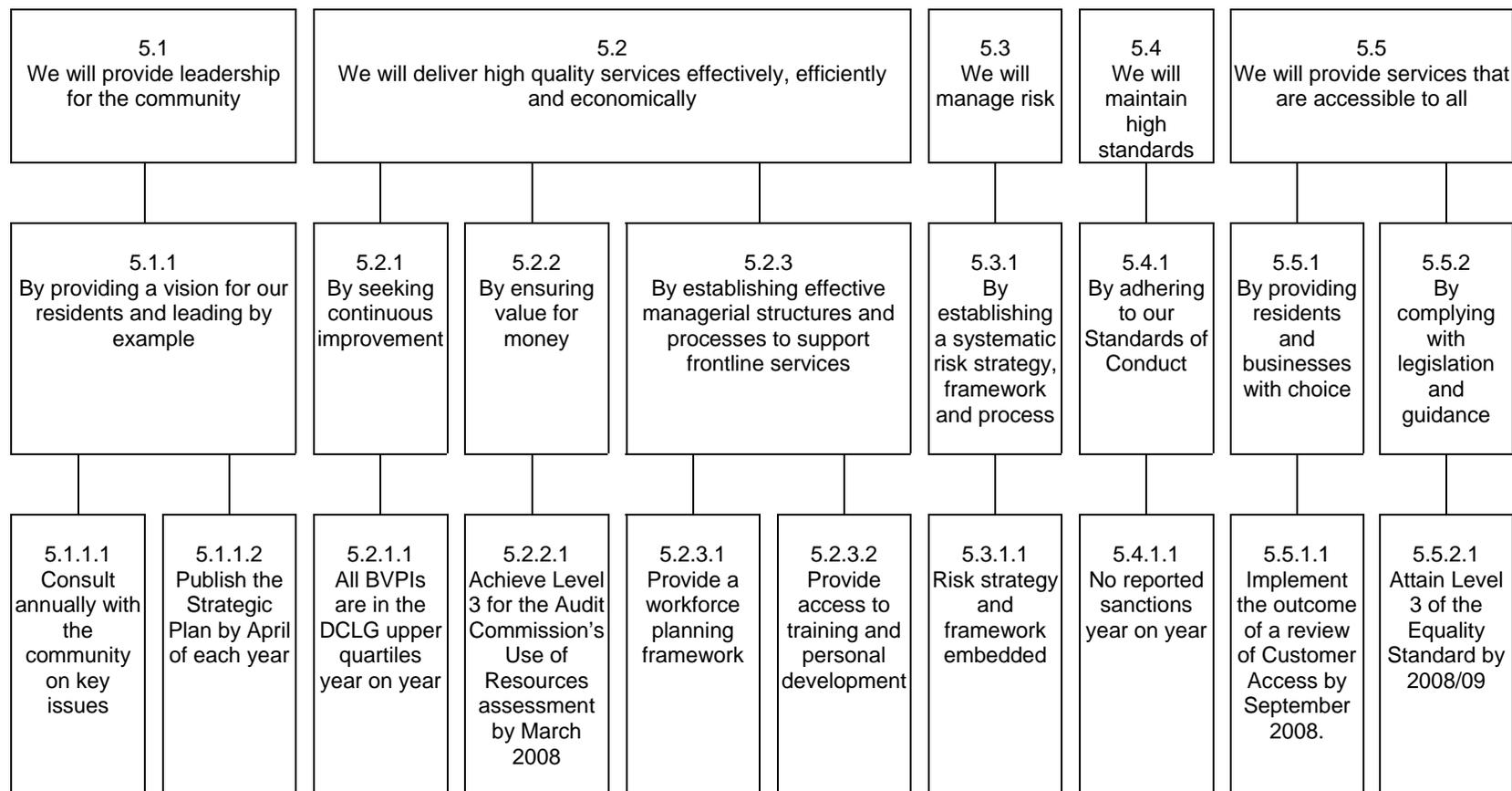
<sup>4</sup> Working Age Population is defined as 16-59 (female) and 16-64 (male). This includes both economically active and economically inactive residents.

## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES



- 4.1 The results of the 2001 Census reveals that 93.5% of the population within Three Rivers considered themselves to be in good or fairly good health, and 6.5% considered not to be in good health. This latter is against the national average of 9.0% and ranks the district 301 out of 354 local authorities in England, the higher the rank the more healthy the local population. There are 2 Wards within Three Rivers where the national average for residents who consider themselves not to be in good health is exceeded - Northwick (9.9%) and Hayling (9.4%).
  - 4.1.1 22% of the local population within Three Rivers are over the age of 60, with 7% being over 75.
  - 4.1.2 A range of targets have been set to encourage and improve the attendance of older people at our leisure facilities. During 2006/07 we want to increase the proportion of users over the age of 60 by 1%.
  - 4.1.3 We encourage elderly persons to live independently and provide support and facilities to meet this objective. We have a local target for 92% of all elderly persons in CAT1 Elderly and Sheltered Housing to receive a community support visit within an 8 week period.
- 4.2 Young people, i.e. persons under the age of 19, represent 21% of the total resident population within Three Rivers. We provide a range of leisure and recreational facilities and activities for young people to participate and have implemented a range of initiatives aimed to encourage and lead to a healthy lifestyle.
- 4.3 Approximately 5% of the adult population within Three Rivers consider themselves not to be in good health. We have introduced a number of initiatives aimed to increase the number of adults participating in regular physical activity, under our 'Everyday Active' programme, in partnership with the West Hertfordshire Primary Care Trust. This aims to increase the level of physical activity in the district by an average of 3% over a three year period, in accordance with the Sport England Regional Plan.
- 4.4 We want to provide a healthy environment within which people can live and work
  - 4.4.1 A Homes of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Strategy has been approved. There is just one licensable property in the district but the other known HMOs are subject to inspection on a risk-based assessment system. We also operate a cash and incentive scheme for Council dwellings.
  - 4.4.2 A programme of regular inspections has been implemented in accordance with food law enforcement plan
  - 4.4.3 A programme of regular inspections has been implemented in accordance with the health and safety law enforcement plan
  - 4.4.4 We enforce legislation relating to: control of dogs in public places, animal welfare and animal nuisance (e.g. dog barking). In 2006/07, 99.36% of animal control service requests and 99.4% of pest control service requests were responded to within the target time of 24 hours.

## CORPORATE GOVERNANCE



- 5.1 The Council has clearly stated its medium- to long-term priorities that it believes will lead to improving the quality of life to the local community. There is a commitment to continuing an active approach by taking a leading role in identifying and implementing initiatives that will further this objective. We will regularly consult with and inform both residents and businesses of our intentions for the future and publish information in a format that is easy to understand and relate to.
- 5.2 We are committed to deliver high quality services that underpin the principles of Best Value and continually seek to improve services through the effective, efficient and economical use of all available resources.

- 5.2.1 The BVPP 2004/05 set out an objective for all BVPIs to be in the upper quartiles by 2005/06. As at 2005/06 the percentage of BVPIs in the upper quartiles was 60% and in March 2007, we received a positive Direction of Travel statement from the Audit Commission.
- 5.2.2 The Audit Commission has now introduced a Use of Resources assessment to determine how well district authorities manage their finances and deliver value for money. We were assessed as Level 2 in March 2007.
- 5.2.3 The delivery of quality frontline services relies on the provision of cost effective and efficient support services and a range of processes that meet statutory and operational requirements. We need to ensure that this support is provided uninterrupted through a well-trained and qualified workforce able to meet both current and future demands.
- 5.3 To successfully deliver our key priorities and objectives we need to identify and manage elements of risk that could delay or jeopardise our overall aims. We have been developing a risk-aware culture throughout the organisation and have now appointed a Risk Manager to support, advise and offer training to managers on risk management principles, processes and procedures.
- 5.4 Maintaining standards and codes of conduct by both Elected Members and Officers is crucial to the integrity and reputation of the Council. We have developed and implemented a number of documents that provide guidance for Members and Staff, which includes a Members' Code of Conduct, Officers' Code of Conduct and a Whistle-Blowing Policy. Through these we aim to eliminate instances of inappropriate behaviour that could lead to action against an individual and damage the reputation of the Council.
- 5.5 The Council has always regarded itself as a customer-focused organisation and subsequently implemented a Customer Service Centre in 1999. We have continued to look at ways to improve accessibility of services both through utilising technology and by providing services at a more local level, such as face-to-face Benefits surgeries at satellite offices in South Oxhey, Abbots Langley and Rickmansworth too. Considerable funding has been allocated to meet guidance and legislation with regards to physical access to our buildings and as at the end of 2006/07 approximately 91% of our buildings were suitable for and accessible by disabled persons.
  - 5.5.1 In order to continually improve services a major review is re-assessing the Council's approach to Customer Accessibility. This will fundamentally appraise alternative ways to deliver services and improve accessibility.
  - 5.5.2 As a part of our commitment to equalities we are currently implementing a Comprehensive Equalities Policy. Level 2 was achieved in 2006/07. We have set a target to achieve Level 3 of the Equalities Standard for Local Government by 2008/09.