

Appendix 3

Stakeholders comments on SA/SEA Scoping Report for Three Rivers District Council

Key to colour coding of comments:

Comments Relating to Indicators

Comments Relating to SEA Objectives

Comments Relating to Environmental Baseline

Comments Relating to Review of Policies Plans and Programme

Comments to be addressed by Local Planning Authority

Comments for SA/SEA team

Generic changes which have been flagged by Stat Bods for one authority should later when the relevant sections are updated also be included in the reports for the other authorities.

Summary of Comments	How comments taken on board
Statutory Consultees	
English Heritage	
Section 2.2 Review of Plans and Programmes The list of policies and programmes in Table 1 seem comprehensive. In relation to PPS1, page 8, reference should also be made to the emphasis placed on protecting and enhancing the historic and natural environment.	noted – amendments made
Section 2.3.4 Cultural Heritage, page 24 In the first paragraph, it would be more accurate to refer to the major contribution of the historic environment to the economy in general.	noted – amendments made
Baseline information, page 24/5 Heritage counts for the East of England 2005 is available and can be found on the HELM website It is not clear why National Trust properties are mentioned here. There are other sites open to the public, but	noted noted

Summary of Comments	How comments taken on board
<p>the issue is the state of historic assets rather than their visitor potential</p> <p>The reference to English Nature should be English Heritage</p> <p>Page 26 – reference should be made in this baseline section to the survey of historic farm buildings conducted by Hertfordshire County Council and reported in the national ‘Heritage Counts’ report 2005</p> <p>Page 27 – we welcome the use of HLC data in this section</p> <p>Further data should be included to establish the condition of the historic environment. Tracking numbers of designated sites is important, but generally will not show the variation of trends.</p> <p>We recommend that the % of Conservation Areas covered by Appraisals should be included as a measure of positive management (BVIP 219)</p>	<p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>noted</p> <p>noted – SA is a highly detailed Report and should only take into consideration the condition of assts. Detailed Review should be covered in conservation appraisals or similar documents</p> <p>noted</p>

Summary of Comments	How comments taken on board
<p>Section 2.3.5 Landscape</p> <p>We recommend that the landscape character paragraph make reference to the Historic Landscape Characterisation (HLC) data held in the County Historic Environment Record Centre.</p>	<p>noted – amendments made</p>
<p>Section 3 – Environmental and sustainability issues, opportunities and priorities Table 29, page 64 – Issues and opportunities in Three Rivers – Cultural Heritage – in the key issues column it would be helpful to identify key trends and challenges.</p> <p>Q6- it is vital the historic environment is both protected and enhanced for its inherent value, but is also treated as an integral part of the wider environmental quality and well being. Thus – assessment is needed at a broad level, in terms of the character and distinctiveness the historic environment confers, as well as in terms of individual sites</p>	<p>noted</p> <p>noted – incorporated</p>
<p>SA/SEA Objectives and Framework</p> <p>Q7 – it is important that some qualitative evaluation is built into the assessment framework to provide commentary on wider issues of character and environmental quality</p> <p>Cultural Heritage – Objective 10 – broaden objective to ‘Maintain and enhance the historic environment and cultural assets’</p> <p>Criteria; Re-creating historic features may be appropriate in some instances, but is not always desirable. We suggest this is changed to ‘..and restore historic character where appropriate, based on sound historical evidence’</p> <p>3rd criterion: we recommend ‘To encourage thoughtful, high quality design in housing and mixed uses developments-to a density which respects the local context and townscape character, and includes enhancement of the public realm’.</p> <p>Possible Assessment Indicators; Building at Risk data should be extended to cover grade II listed building since these are more</p>	<p>noted – to be incorporated as appropriate</p> <p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>noted – amendments made</p>

Summary of Comments	How comments taken on board
<p>representative of the historic building stock.</p> <p>Numbers of historic assets taken from the 'at risk' category should be measured.</p> <p>Include % of conservation areas covered by appraisals.</p> <p>Quality in the built environment as measured by public perception surveys might be included.</p> <p>A measure of increased public access or interpretation of sites could be included.</p>	<p>noted – to be incorporated as appropriate</p> <p>noted – to be incorporated as appropriate</p> <p>noted – to be incorporated as appropriate</p> <p>noted – to be incorporated as appropriate</p>
Environment Agency	
<p>Plans, policies and Programmes</p> <p>PPS1 – Delivering Sustainability Development – need to add that PPS! Clearly sets out the need to promote all three aspects of sustainable development and is very strong on environmental enhancements and promoting a greener more environmentally focussed community, this must be addressed in the summary of PPS 1 otherwise the SA will be biased from the start.</p>	<p>noted – amendments made</p>
<p>Baseline</p> <p>2.3.6 Material Assets in respect to 'Land Use', we support the collation of information for the two new indicators form 2005/06 onwards.</p> <p>2.3.3 Climatic Factors This section needs to be cross referenced with both the water resources and flood risk sections in this document in relation to 'adapting to climate change'</p> <p>2.3.8 – Flood Risk This section makes gross assumptions about flood risk on Three Rivers. Rather than displaying flood risk information in the form of a table, it would be prudent to produce a flood risk map, in the same vein as other maps in the document.</p>	<p>note – no action required</p> <p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>noted – Updated SFRA information available. Parts of the DC are under Zone 3a, 3b & 2. Reference to SFRA is</p>

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<p>The statement made about 'flood risk in the area... appears to be high due to the low number of objections by the Environment Agency' is irresponsible. Flood risk information displayed spatially on maps should be the starting point upon which to begin discussing flood risk.</p> <p>In addition, there is no indication that a sequential test has been undertaken which should be part of a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) undertaken in conjunction with the SA in line with Draft PPS25</p> <p>Whilst you acknowledge a trend in the chemical and biological water quality, there is no mention of trends in flood risk and water resources. Perhaps the inclusion of these trends would help to highlight the seriousness of the issues associated with water in Three Rivers.</p>	<p>recommended for all development purposes</p> <p>noted – to be incorporated as appropriate</p> <p>noted – SA does not conduct a sequential test. This should be the outcome of Level 1 SFRA, however SA can recommend sequential test, based on available information. At the time of production of the scoping report, the level 1 SFRA results were not available.</p> <p>noted – to be incorporated as appropriate</p>
<p>Environment and Sustainability Issues, Opportunities and Priorities</p> <p>Biodiversity Opportunities for the enhancement of biodiversity in general should be encouraged</p> <p>Water The opportunities do not seem to directly link to the addressing of the issues in the LDF. For each opportunity, the proposed way of addressing it should sit directly opposite. This section also needs to address the prevention of water pollution generally.</p> <p>Q6 – Main Issues in the Area Flood Risk – it needs to be ensured that any development that takes place does not increase the risk of flooding on the site or elsewhere, and does not increase the number of people and properties at risk of flooding. Ground water flooding is a significant contribution. We would therefore like to see Strategic Flood Risk Assessment as part of any Sustainability Appraisal.</p>	<p>noted</p> <p>noted</p> <p>noted</p>

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<p>Water Resources – there is current over-abstraction to supply other areas resulting in low flow issues in Bulbourne, Chess and Colne Lakes and these impacts on River Ver. Any new development needs to include water efficient measures and there is the potential for enhancement.</p>	noted
<p>Contaminated Land – Source Protection Zone 1 covers a large area within Three Rivers. Landfill sites that now closed are sometimes targeted for housing development because they are cheap land and therefore potential contamination of groundwater. In line with PPs23, it needs to be ensured that any existing contamination is mitigated to ensure land is fit for purpose for which it is intended. There should be no outstanding issues that could render the land contaminated under Part IIa of the Environmental Protection Act 1990.</p>	noted
<p>Buffer Zone – new development that occurs adjacent to watercourses must allow for the preservation or creation of a buffer zone free from built development. This will protect the important natural habitat associated with watercourses and adjacent land. There are existing water quality and conservation issues particularly on the River Colne because of river corridor encroachment.</p>	noted
<p>Surface Water Drainage – it needs to be ensured that as part of any development, account is taken of the surface water discharge arising from the development. It must be ensured that there is no increased risk of flooding or pollution due to new development. The use of Sustainable Drainage Systems, where appropriate, will be encouraged.</p>	noted

Summary of Comments	How comments taken on board
<p>SA/SEA Objectives and Framework</p> <p>4.1.2 – Sustainability Objectives Whilst you state that the objectives are directly relevant to South West Hertfordshire and based on the sustainability objectives presented in the ‘Sustainable Development Framework for the East of England, the objectives should be informed by the appraisal of plans and baseline information for Three Rivers and adjust accordingly.</p> <p>4.2 – SA/SEA Framework It is difficult to believe that table 30 is in any way strategic. The indicators are too numerous and too detailed for a strategic approach.</p> <p>The objectives need to reflect those proposed in section 3. with regard to point 3 ‘ensure that new development does not increase flood risk and protects or enhances the capacity and integrity of flood storage areas’, new developments should not be sited in flood risk areas in the first instance. The objectives need to reflect this.</p> <p>Point 3 also refers to coastal flooding. This is not appropriate in Three Rivers</p> <p>Climatic Factors – ‘Ensure that development is capable of withstanding the effects of climatic change’, the criteria should refer to flood proofing, however, this should also be referred to, in the first instance, in the water section of the table.</p> <p>4.3 – Compatibility between SA/SEA Objectives and Plan Objectives This section is very difficult to assess, coupled with the fact that table 31 is very confusing as it appears that some of the objectives compatibilities are incomplete.</p>	<p>consider during assessment process</p> <p>noted</p> <p>noted</p> <p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>consider during assessment process</p>

Summary of Comments	How comments taken on board
<p>5 - Consultation and next steps</p> <p>Q11 – Involvement of the Organisation We would like to be involved at all stages of the rest of the SA/SEA process. due to the inadequacy of this scoping report we would suggest a revised report is undertaken prior to the next stages of the process</p> <p>5.2.2 Stage B: Assessment of the Effects of the LDF Alternatives With regard to point 8 (mitigation measures and the concept of ‘no-net loss’) this should be reworded, at least in the case of biodiversity, to seek enhancements and improvements as referred to in PPS1 and PPS9</p>	<p>noted – accepted</p> <p>noted – amendments made</p>
<p>Natural England (previously known as English Nature) (Charles Williams), Conservation Officer</p>	
<p>Plans, policies and Programmes</p> <p>Should include:</p> <p>Strategic Environmental Assessment and Biodiversity: Guidance for Practitioners</p> <p>Regional Woodland Strategy</p>	<p>consider during assessment process.</p> <p>noted – added to PPP list</p>
<p>Scoping Report Questions;</p> <p>Q1 – there are no Natura 2000 sites within Three Rivers District or nearer that about 8kms from the district’s boundaries at their nearest points, so it is unlikely that the LDF will impact upon any such sites.</p>	<p>no action required</p>
<p>Baseline information</p> <p>2.3.2 Biodiversity</p> <p>From the content of the SEA scoping report we are not convinced that the best use has been made of Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre’s (HBRC) resources. We urge you to engage fully with HBRC during the next stage of development of the SEA Report. Information on locally designated sites and BAP priority habitats and species should be sought from the HBRC, who will be able to provide the most detailed, up-to-date data available.</p> <p>Liaison should be undertaken with other bodies concerned with the environment and biodiversity</p>	<p>noted – accepted</p>

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<p>conservation in the county to help identify key issues, opportunities and potential conflicts which need to be addressed in the SEA.</p> <p>Section 2.3 of the scoping report, though providing some detailed information, is rather weak in interpreting the data to bring out key issues specific to Three Rivers District.</p> <p>Natural England considers there should be more focus on the characteristics and condition of the five SSSIs within Three Rivers District. Table 7 is of little relevance to Three Rivers LDF – main habitat type represented in Three Rivers SSSIs, their current condition and main management issues would be more relevant.</p> <p>Natural England considers that more base-line information should have been provided on local sites, particularly CWSs.</p> <p>Natural England welcome the emphasis given to the Hertfordshire BAP but would prefer all its prioritised habitats to be listed on page 20, rather than ‘lumping’ several under the generic term ‘a variety of lowland habitats’. The absence of the Three Rivers BAP is surprising because it should contain the specific priorities and targets of greatest relevance to the district’s LDF.</p> <p>Natural England note that in the SEA information on trends is often absent or covers periods of well under a decade. To address this Natural England suggest;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where long term district-specific data is not available but a trend with significant consequences for the design of the LDF is suspected, then use the more generic county or regional long-term trend data that may well be available. • Support and use county record centres like HBRC in order to ensure that the district-specific biological data that is now required for designing LDFs and monitoring their implementation is available in the future. 	<p>noted – accepted</p> <p>noted – accepted</p> <p>noted –Stages subsequent to the Scoping Report included appropriate assessment. This issue has therefore been addressed</p> <p>noted</p> <p>Hertfordshire BAP is most relevant as no BAP for Three Rivers is available.</p> <p>noted – to be incorporated as appropriate</p>
<p>Environmental and Sustainability Issues, Opportunities and Priorities</p> <p>Q4</p> <p>The importance of protecting Country Wildlife Sites: CWSs in Three Rivers hold an important component of the districts biodiversity. Most of them are not currently protected SSSI or LNR designations but they will need to be conserved if the opportunities listed in Table 29 under the SEA ‘biodiversity’</p>	<p>noted – amendments made</p>

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<p>objective are to be fulfilled. Therefore they should be mentioned explicitly in the table as a biodiversity 'key issue'.</p> <p>The biodiversity value of some brownfield sites: in many circumstances the general principle of re-using brownfield sites for new development is appropriate. However as recognised within PPS9, brownfield sites can be of high value for nature conservation. Therefore we recommend biodiversity assessment of brownfield land in the district using expertise of HBRC, HMWT and others. If a site is found to be of significant nature conservation value then the option of retaining it as urban green space should be considered seriously.</p> <p>Loss of the infrastructure needed to support agriculture (particularly livestock production): this is causing problems for nature conservation both on designated wildlife sites and in the wider countryside, especially in the home counties. In particular, shortage of grazing animals has become a major problem for the conservation management of semi-natural grassland and heathland in the area.</p> <p>Problems caused by invasive non-native species: HBRC, HMWT and the Environment Agency will know of invasive species problems affecting Three Rivers' biodiversity.</p> <p>Collaboration with neighbouring local authorities: Natural England supports this and suggests that, if it has not already been, collaboration should be extended to include a structured dialogue between the local authorities on the content of the LDFs themselves, in particular with respect to the many 'cross-boundary' issues affecting nature conservation and the environment. On nature conservation issues, collaboration between Three Rivers DC and Watford BC is particularly important.</p> <p>Q5</p> <p>Worth highlighting the following interrelationships:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The positive synergy between prioritising biodiversity conservation in the flood plains and reducing the risk of flood damage to property. • The negative synergy between poor water quality and low river flows which acting together, are likely to have increasingly severe effects on the flora and fauna of the rivers and their associated habitats. • <p>Natural England welcomes the inclusion of an 'interrelationships' column</p>	<p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>noted</p> <p>noted – welcomed</p>

Summary of Comments	How comments taken on board
It is suggested	
Including geology conservation in Objective 1: Amend Objective 1 to include 'to protect and enhance biodiversity and geological sites at all levels,...	noted – amendments made
Biodiversity	
Amend to 'Avoid Damage to designated wildlife and geological sites...'	noted – amendments made
Fifth criterion should be generalised to include all habitats of value for biodiversity to 'to manage sustainability all areas of woodland and other habitats of value for biodiversity, and protect these areas from conservation to other uses'	noted – amendments made
Amend sixth criterion 'to recognise the social/environmental value of woodlands/orchards particularly near urban areas' to include other habitats of value for biodiversity as well.	noted – amendments made
Q8	
With respect to SEA objective 1; biodiversity. Natural England urge discussions are held to discuss the question of biodiversity indicators with Martin Hicks of HBRC.	noted – to be discussed
Inclusion of some indicators that are very largely determined by conditions within your local authority area and very directly affected by decisions taken by Three Rivers DC. For Biodiversity these should include;	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Areas of different habitats designated as LNRs and CWSs • Simple measures of the condition of designated sites and • Simple indices of the abundance of some prioritised and easily recorded species, especially within sites where local authority planning and management decisions have a large effect. 	noted – to be considered in study
Species sensitive to environmental changes and relatively immobile are likely to be the most useful indicators. (mobile species are also useful if data is readily available)	noted – amendments made
Targets given in the Three Rivers, Hertfordshire and UK BAPs should be used to inform the selection of biodiversity indicators.	noted – to be considered in study
Q9	
Some objectives are stated in very broad terms	noted – the SA is a strategic Report

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<p>In general Table 31 shows reasonably high levels of compatibility.</p> <p>Q10</p> <p>Sensible decisions should be achievable provided systems are in place to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Allow structured, objective and 'transparent' dialogue between stakeholders, including local residents and the various organisations and individuals with special interests and knowledge; • Provide the up-to-date, locally relevant information needed to form the bases of this dialogue. 	<p>noted – welcomed</p> <p>noted</p>
<p>Consultation and Next Steps</p> <p>English Nature wishes to be consulted at the required stages as a matter course.</p> <p>English Nature welcome the intention expressed in section 5.2.2 that the approach used will be an iterative one that involves environmental groups as well as planners. Strongly recommended that HBRC and HMTW are included also.</p> <p>Agree with need to distinguish between strategic level and site level assessment and urge the use of HBRC</p> <p>The methodologies should suffice provided the process is sufficiently iterative and an appropriate mix of different methods and activities is used.</p>	<p>noted – to be consulted</p> <p>noted – to be incorporated</p> <p>noted – to be incorporated</p> <p>noted – to be incorporated</p>
The Countryside Agency Landscape Access Recreation	
<p>Natura 2000 sites</p> <p>The Environment Agency to confirm that impact on Natura 2000 sites</p>	<p>Impacts to be assessed at next SEA/SA stage.</p>
<p>Policies, Plans and Programmes</p> <p>The Review is comprehensive and well-focused</p>	<p>noted – welcomed</p>
<p>Baseline on Landscape 2.3.5</p> <p>Could include reference to Countryside Quality Counts work on landscape change – would influence 'Trends' especially the Chiltern and Northern Thames Basin Joint Character Areas.</p>	<p>noted – to be incorporated</p>

Summary of Comments	How comments taken on board
<p>Sources of information include – www.countryside-quality-counts.org.uk:1990-1998</p> <p>Disappointing that the material from the Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study 2005 is not presented in the analysis.</p> <p>Sources of information for consideration in LDF process include;</p> <p>www.countrysideaccess.gov.uk/where_you_can_go.php ;</p> <p>Rights of Way Improvement Plan</p>	<p>noted – to be incorporated</p>
<p>Environmental and Sustainability Issues, Opportunities and Priorities</p> <p>Welcome the recognition of issues and opportunities under 'landscape'. We note that the improvement of pedestrian and cycle is included as an opportunity under 'Air'</p> <p>Analysis of the adequacy of Open Space provision should be included – if not an issue evidence should be presented in section 2.3. if evidence suggests that it is an issue then it should be recorded in Table 29</p> <p>Agree with the course of action taken in paragraph 2.3</p>	<p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>noted – Open space SPD was prepared in the stages subsequent to this scoping report and results incorporated in the draft SA report.</p> <p>noted - welcomed</p>
<p>SEA/SA Objectives and Framework</p> <p>Phrase Objective 11 as 'to conserve and enhance the landscape character of the District'</p> <p>Objective 12; in relation to open space criterion evidence needs to be provided to show if provision will be an issue or not.</p> <p>Welcome the proposed indicators for Objective 11: Landscape</p> <p>Objective 12; should include an indicator that monitors the length and condition of cycle ways and footpaths</p> <p>No conflicts recognised</p>	<p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>noted – to be incorporated</p> <p>no action required</p> <p>noted – amendments made</p> <p>no action required</p>
<p>Consultation and Next Steps</p>	<p>no action required</p>

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Consideration of the use of Quality of Life Assessment as a tool to assist in the identification of impacts for the appraisal. www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Landscape/Quality/index.asp	noted - welcomed
EEDA (Natalie Blaken)	
<p>To be considered where appropriate:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision for business (particularly based in science and technology, research and innovation) including the supply of high quality business premises in sustainable locations; • Improving the region's skills base and human capital (and especially to address skills gaps and shortages) • Tackling deprivation and social exclusion, equality and diversity (giving communities improved opportunities to participate fully in the regional economy) • Improving provision of port, airport and transport infrastructure so as to enable corridors of economic activity and deliver growth and sustainable communities • Promoting sustainable development, urban renaissance and rural vitality, including the supply of high quality and affordable housing/residential environments, balanced with provision for employment; • Managing growth and development sensitively and effectively; • Complementing and enhancing the position of London as a world city and • Protecting and enhancing the regions landscapes and environmental assets. 	to be taken into account during the assessment