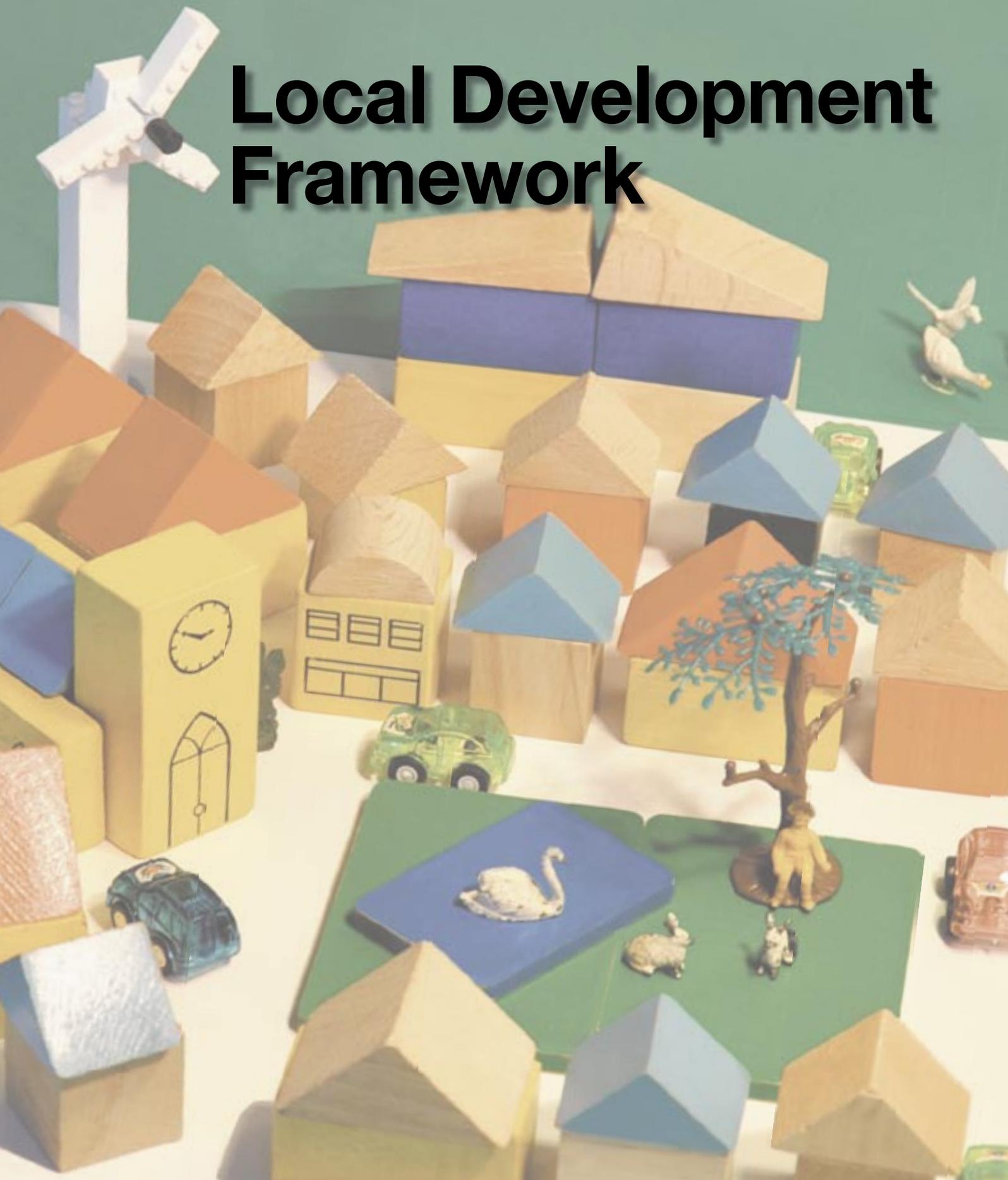


Local Development Framework



Core Strategy Preferred Options

February 2009

 **THREE RIVERS
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

PLANNING YOUR FUTURE

Preface

Looking forward to 2021 and beyond, the District will remain a prosperous, safe and healthy place where people want, and are able to, live and work.

This is our vision for Three Rivers over the next 15 years or so. In seeking to deliver this vision, the Council is preparing a new type of development plan for the District called the Local Development Framework. This will replace the existing Local Plan with a suite of new planning documents, the first of which is the Core Strategy. It will link with other strategies such as the Sustainable Community Strategy and set out the long term vision for Three Rivers, along with the spatial strategy and policies to deliver the vision. The plan will set out the broad locations for where new houses, jobs and services will go over the period to 2021 and how we can effectively control development.

The Council carried out extensive public consultation at an early stage of the Core Strategy (known as 'Issues and Options' consultation) during 2006 and 2007. This identified the many challenges facing the District, including how the future needs of the community could be met, whilst retaining and enhancing the special character of the District.

This document, known as the 'Preferred Options', sets out the Council's preferred approach to the spatial planning of the District. It reflects the results of earlier consultation and takes into account a range of research. Whilst the document has been prepared within the context of national and regional policy requirements, it also reflects the District's specific local requirements.

Following public consultation on these 'Preferred Options', the Core Strategy will be reviewed in the light of responses received before reaching the next stage known as the 'Publication' stage. The document will then be sent to the Government for independent public examination at the 'Submission' stage before being finalised and adopted.

The 'Preferred Options' stage is therefore important as it is a key decision-making stage; it is about offering real choices for the future development of our area. We need your views in helping us decide if the identified choices are the right ones for the District and for you.

Have your Say

The Council is interested to hear the views of everyone including residents, businesses, community groups and all other stakeholders. All comments received will contribute towards the final document that will be submitted to the Government later this year.

This paper and all supporting documents can be found on the Council's website at: www.threerivers.gov.uk (under Local Development Framework).

Hard copies are available for inspection at the Council's offices in Rickmansworth and at all public libraries in the District. A summary and questionnaire can also be obtained at the above locations and downloaded from the Council's website.

Please let us have your comments in one of the following ways:

Fill in the questionnaire enclosed with this document and send it back to us in the reply-paid envelope.

Make comments electronically by completing the questionnaire online on the Council's website, or through the following link to Public Access:

www2.threerivers.gov.uk/publicaccess/ldf/ldf_home.aspx

The closing date for responses is the 30th March 2009.

For further information on this document, please contact the Council:

By e-mail: trldf@threerivers.gov.uk

By telephone: 01923 727106 or Minicom on 01923 727303.

In writing: Development Plans, Three Rivers District Council, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth, WD3 1RL.

A separate sustainability appraisal report has been prepared on an independent basis for the Council. This document appraises the environmental, social and economic implications of the options. As with the Preferred Options document, the appraisal can be viewed at the Council's website, at the Council's reception and at the libraries within the District.

Contents	Page
Chapter 1: Introduction	7
Chapter 2: Arriving at ‘Preferred Options’	10
Chapter 3: Background and Context	11
Chapter 4: The Content of the Core Strategy	18
Chapter 5: Spatial Vision and Strategic Objectives	19
Spatial Strategy	24
Preferred Option Spatial Strategy	28
Chapter 6: Place-Shaping Policies	33
PSP1: Development in the Principal Town	33
PSP2: Development in Key Centres	34
PSP3: Development in Secondary Centres	36
PSP4: Development in Villages	37
Chapter 7: Core Policies	39
Sustainable Development	39
CP1: Overarching Policy on Sustainable Development	40
Housing	41
CP2: Housing Supply	45
CP3: Housing Mix and Density	48
CP4: Affordable Housing	51
CP5: Gypsy and Traveller Provision	53
Employment and Economic Development	55
CP6: Employment and Economic Development	58
Town Centres and Shopping	61
CP7: Town Centres and Shopping	63
Transport	65
CP8: Transport	69
Infrastructure and Planning Obligations	73
CP9: Infrastructure and Planning Obligations	76
Monitoring Framework	78
CP10: Monitoring and Delivery	79
Chapter 8: Development Policies	81
Green Belt	81
DC1: Green Belt	82
Biodiversity, Trees and Woodlands	84
DC2: Biodiversity, Trees and Woodland	86
Landscape Character	88
DC3: Landscape Character	89
Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities	91

DC4: Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities	93
Children’s Play Space	95
DC5: Children’s Play Space	96
Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities	97
DC6: Community, Leisure and Cultural Facilities	98
Design of Development	99
DC7: Design of Development	101
DC8: Residential Design and Layout	101
Flood Risk and Water Resources	103
DC9: Flood Risk and Water Resources	104
Carbon Emissions and Renewable Energy	107
DC10: Carbon Dioxide Emissions and On-Site Renewable Energy	109
Renewable Energy Developments	110
DC11: Renewable Energy Developments	111
Waste Management	112
DC12: Waste Management	114
Historic Environment	115
DC13: The Historic Built Environment	117
Contamination and Pollution	120
DC14: Contamination and Pollution Control	122
Parking	124
DC15: Parking	125
Appendix 1: Settlement Information	127
Map 1: Settlements	129
Map 2: Key Diagram	130
Map 3: Spatial Option 1	131
Map 4: Spatial Option 2	132
Map 5: Spatial Option 3	133
Appendix 2: Issues and Options Housing Locations	134
Appendix 3: Housing Sites Selection Criteria	136
Appendix 4: Larger Housing Sites	144
Appendix 5: Smaller Housing Sites	149
Appendix 6: Monitoring Indicators	161
Map 6: Retail Centres	171
Map 7: Transport	172
Map 8: Biodiversity Corridors	173
Map 9: Landscape Regions	174
Appendix 7: Parking Standards	175
Map 10: Car Parking Zones	188

Appendix 8: Glossary and Abbreviations	189
Appendix 9: Planning Policy Statements and Guidance	195

Figures	Page
Figure 1: Core Strategy Key Elements	9
Figure 2: Population of Three Rivers Settlements	11
Figure 3: Inter-Relationships between Core Strategy and Sustainable	14
Figure 4: Alignment of the Core Strategy Strategic Objectives with other Plans/ Strategies affecting Three Rivers	22-23
Figure 5: Accessibility Rating of Main Settlements in Three Rivers	26
Figure 6: Hierarchy of Main Settlements in Three Rivers	27
Figure 7: Housing Trajectory Table 2001-2021 at 2009 Preferred Options	43
Figure 8: Housing Trajectory Table 2001-2026 at 2009 Preferred Options	43
Figure 9: Indicative Phasing Strategy for Housing Supply	44
Figure 10: Summary of Main Employment Areas in Three Rivers	56
Figure 11: Hierarchy of Retail Centres	61

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 In 2005 the Council began preparing the Three Rivers Local Development Framework (LDF). The Local Development Framework is a new type of plan that will eventually replace the existing Three Rivers Local Plan 1996-2011, and create a new set of planning documents to help plan for, and manage, development in the District over the next 15 years or so.

1.2 Significant progress has been made on the various component parts of the Local Development Framework including:

- **The Local Development Scheme (LDS):** a project plan for the Local Development Framework setting out which documents will be produced by when and how the process will be managed and resourced. The original Local Development Scheme was submitted in April 2005 and was subsequently revised in March 2007.
- **The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI):** a document setting out the Council's approach to how, when and with whom the Council will consult with the community at various stages of the Local Development Framework process. This was adopted in July 2006.
- **The Annual Monitoring Report (AMR):** a document measuring the effectiveness of planning policies and setting out a housing delivery programme for the District. Four successive Annual Monitoring Reports were submitted at the end of 2005, 2006, 2007 and 2008.
- **The Evidence Base:** a series of research documents establishing an understanding of the needs, opportunities and constraints within the District. To date the following studies have been completed:
 - Urban Housing Capacity Study (January 2005)
 - Employment Land Study (January 2005)
 - Open Space, Sport and Recreation Study (July 2005)
 - Gypsy and Travellers' Needs Study (April 2005) and Identification of Potential Sites (September 2006)
 - Retail Capacity Study (March 2007)
 - Transport Background Paper (March 2007)
 - Access to Services and Infrastructure Background Paper (March 2007)
 - Settlement Appraisal Paper (March 2007, update May 2008)
 - Housing Market Needs Background Paper (November 2006)
 - Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (June 2007) and Addendum (January 2009)
 - Appropriate Assessment report (December 2007)
 - Strategic Housing Market Assessment (February 2009)
 - Development Economics Study (February 2009)
 - Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (November 2008)
 - London Arc Employment Study (February 2009)
 - Hertfordshire Investment and Infrastructure Strategy (to be completed April 2009)
- **The Sustainability Appraisal:** a series of documents assessing the social, environmental and economic effects of plans and documents to ensure that development is 'sustainable'. A scoping report was produced in February 2006, together with an initial sustainability appraisal for the Core Strategy document in June 2006. A further appraisal was carried out for the Supplemental Issues and Options Paper in July 2007. A further Sustainability Appraisal has been produced alongside this 'Preferred Options' document.

- **Appropriate Assessment:** an assessment required under the European Habitats Directive to ensure that development proposals do not have any significant adverse impacts on Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). The screening carried out indicated that the proposed development outlined at Issues and Options stage would have no significant impact on the Burnham Beeches Special Area of Conservation, which is the relevant Area for Three Rivers.
- **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):** two Supplementary Planning Documents were adopted in December 2007:
- **Sustainable Communities Supplementary Planning Document** - this sets out guidance on good principles and practice on how development in the District can reduce carbon emissions through appropriate design, energy and water efficiency and waste reduction and recycling
- **Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space Supplementary Planning Document** - this sets out guidance on good principles and practice for designing open spaces and securing amenity and children's play space as part of appropriate development in the District.
The Council intends to produce further Supplementary Planning Documents on other topics including affordable housing and design guidance.
- **The Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD):** the key part of the Local Development Framework setting out the broad vision, objectives and policies for the District. Between June and September 2006 the Council carried out extensive consultation with the local community on the Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper, referred to as '**Planning your Future**'. This Paper identified the vision, objectives and key challenges facing the District in terms of future development.

1.2 Further public consultation was carried out on a Supplemental Issues and Options Paper between July and September 2007. This covered additional key areas including spatial options for the future location of housing, employment and retail in the District, policies to control development and an implementation and monitoring framework. The combined consultation on the Core Strategy resulted in over 900 responses being made. A summary of the responses received together with an assessment of the options put forward can be viewed on the Council's website.

1.3 The Council also intends to prepare a **Site Allocations Development Plan Document:** this document will relate directly to the Core Strategy and will allocate key land uses in more details including housing, employment, gypsies and travellers, retail and open space.

1.4 All parts of the existing Local Development Framework and the timetable for the preparation of future documents can be found at on-line at:
[www.ThreeRivers.gov.uk/Local Development Framework](http://www.ThreeRivers.gov.uk/Local%20Development%20Framework)

How the Core Strategy Fits Together

1.5

A Core Strategy should be based on the following key elements:

- A brief description of the essential characteristics of the area
- The critical issues, problems and challenges facing the area
- The development of the spatial vision for the area
- The strategies to achieve the spatial vision
- The core policies containing the activities and actions to deliver the strategy
- A clear set of delivery mechanisms and measures for monitoring how effective the overall strategy is.

Figure 1 sets out how the key elements fit together.

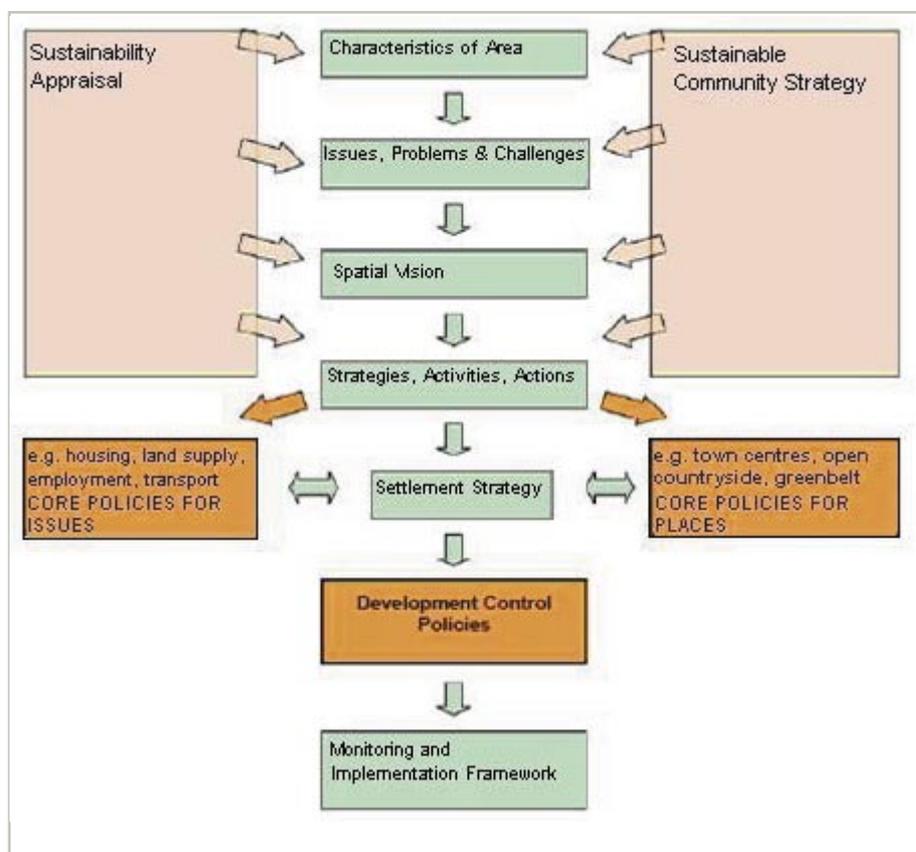


Figure 1: Core Strategy Key elements

(Source: Core Strategy Guidance, PAS, Dec 2006)

CHAPTER 2: ARRIVING AT 'PREFERRED OPTIONS'

2.1

The 'Preferred Options'* document builds on and refines earlier Issues and Options and focuses on the key decisions for the Core Strategy. In arriving at the Preferred Options that are set out in this document, the Council has taken into consideration the following:

- The views arising from previous public consultation involving a range of stakeholders in the District including residents, businesses, statutory bodies, local groups and individuals with interest in Three Rivers (over 900 combined responses)
- National and regional planning policy requirements and other plans and strategies affecting the area
- The long-term priorities for the Three Rivers area as defined by local people and main service providers in the area (Local Strategic Partnership)
- The rigorous testing of options and alternatives primarily through a sustainability appraisal process, taking into account environmental, social and economic impacts of choices
- The extensive research and technical studies known as the evidence base that the Council has compiled in order to understand the needs of the area and the opportunities and constraints that exist
- The Government's principles of sustainable development, whereby development helps to maintain high and stable levels of employment, achieves social progress which recognises the needs of everyone, provides effective protection of the environment and represents prudent use of natural resources.

*At the time of writing, the Government introduced new planning guidance in the form of Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Spatial Planning. This document together with the accompanying regulations which came into force on the 27 June 2008 changed the way a Development Plan Document such as a Core Strategy should be prepared. The result is that the stage previously known as 'Preferred Options' has now effectively been subsumed into a new public participation stage, known as Regulation 25. The Council considers that the previous 'Issues and Options' consultation carried out in 2006 and 2007, combined with the current 'Preferred Options' consultation, will be sufficient to meet the requirements of Regulation 25. Whilst a formal 'Preferred Options' stage no longer exists, this document will nevertheless be known as a 'Preferred Options' document. This is considered necessary in order to provide continuity from previous consultation giving a clear context in which options have been developed.

CHAPTER 3: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

Overview of the District

- 3.1 Three Rivers is a sub-urban District of 88.8 square kilometres located in south-west Hertfordshire. It borders Watford and Hertsmere boroughs to the east, Buckinghamshire County (Chiltern and South Bucks Districts) to the west, St Albans City & District and Dacorum Borough to the north, and the London Boroughs of Hillingdon and Harrow to the south.
- 3.2 The District is on the inner fringe of London and benefits from excellent road and rail connections including the M1 and M25 motorways which run through the District, the West Coast main line, the Chiltern Line and the London Underground Metropolitan line. Heathrow and Luton airports are in close proximity and Gatwick and Stansted are about an hour away.
- 3.3 Over three-quarters (77%) of the District is designated as Green Belt and there are a number of small and medium sized settlements:

Settlement	Approx. Population	Parish Area
Rickmansworth	15,000	Unparished
South Oxhey	12,000	Watford Rural
Croxley Green ¹	12,000	Croxley Green
Abbots Langley ¹	11,000	Abbots Langley
Chorleywood ¹	7,000	Chorleywood
Carpenders Park	5,000	Watford Rural
Oxhey Hall	3,000	Watford Rural
Eastbury	3,000	Unparished
Maple Cross	2,000	Unparished

Figure 2: Population of Three Rivers Settlements

(Source: Census 2001)

- 3.4 The District has a population of 86,400 (Source: mid-2007 population estimates, Office for National Statistics, 2008), with a higher proportion of older residents than the County average: 21.2% are over 60 compared to a county average of 19.7%.
- 3.5 The minority ethnic population of Three Rivers increased between the 1991 and 2001 Census: 12.9% of the District population were from minority ethnic communities in the 2001 Census. The minority ethnic population varies by ward, ranging from 5.2% to 39.6%, and is greatest in the wards of Moor Park & Eastbury, Chorleywood East and Carpenders Park.
- 3.6 Between the 1991 and 2001 Census, the overall population increased by 4.8%, while the numbers of households increased by 9%. 27% of all households are single people households as a result of people living longer and relationship breakdown. Population projections indicate that the population as a whole will increase by 1.8% by 2021, with the under 50s falling and the over 50s increasing (Source: Housing Market Assessment, 2009).
- 3.7 Crime is low in Three Rivers and levels are below the county average. However, fear of crime

¹ The population of the wider parish areas are significantly higher than the population of the settlements alone

remains a prominent issue and anti-social behaviour is a concern amongst residents.

- 3.8 The District has a mixed economy of business and industry with no dominant employer but with the head or regional offices of a number of large national and international companies (examples include Nissan, BT, Cadbury-Trebor-Basset and Comet). These are complemented by small businesses. The film studios at Leavesden are an internationally acclaimed site for making blockbuster films.
- 3.9 Each weekday, 17,000 workers come into the District compared to 27,000 going out (Source: Census, 2001). This is the second highest daily outflow of commuters in Hertfordshire and reflects the high importance of the adjacent London job market. The majority of employees are engaged in managerial, administrative, clerical, and secretarial positions, principally in the banking, finance, distribution and catering sectors. Unemployment in the District is historically low compared to other parts of the country. At December 2008, the claimant count rate was 1.4% compared to a Hertfordshire average of 1.9% and a national level of 3.0% (Source: Hertfordshire County Council). The July 2007 to June 2008 Annual Population Survey records unemployment at a rate of 3.4% in Three Rivers.
- 3.10 In relation to the District as a whole, Northwick, Hayling, Ashridge, Maple Cross and Langleybury wards feature comparatively high on the national Index of Multiple Deprivation, whilst wards such as Moor Park & Eastbury and Chorleywood West feature relatively low. Overall, Three Rivers is ranked 293 out of 354 local authorities where 1= the most deprived and 354 the least deprived (Source: Index of Multiple Deprivation 2007). The Index is a measure of health, access to education, relative incomes, unemployment and other social and economic factors.
- 3.11 The average annual income for Three Rivers is £46,419 and is the highest in Hertfordshire (Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2007). The District is also second highest for detached house prices (£643,600), third highest for semi-detached (£296,800), fourth highest for terraced (£242,700), and highest for flats/maisonettes (£214,100). The Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2009) indicates a shortfall in affordable housing amounting to 2700 units a year, when comparing need against provision. This lack of affordable housing can lead to people moving out of the District and to recruitment problems for local businesses and public sector organizations.

Local Distinctiveness

- 3.12 Three Rivers District is a mixture of beautiful countryside, villages and small towns, and the majority of its inhabitants are healthy, well educated, affluent, articulate and able to access our public services. 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. However, access to services and facilities does vary in places and some pockets of deprivation exist as a result.
- 3.13 Whilst Rickmansworth is the principal town in the District, no one town dominates. There are a number of settlements distributed fairly evenly throughout the District. Many Three Rivers residents also rely on towns in neighbouring areas for work, shopping and leisure purposes including parts of north London, Watford, Hemel Hempstead and St Albans. However, the District remains fairly 'self-sufficient' in a number of areas including the provision of everyday local facilities, services and recreation.
- 3.14 Although there are no key health centres in Three Rivers, residents are served by several hospitals situated in neighbouring Districts. Watford General and Hemel Hempstead Hospitals both provide Accident & Emergency facilities. St Alban's City Hospital provides a Minor Injuries Unit to the north-east of the District.
- 3.15 To the south of the District there is Mount Vernon Hospital which has a

Minor Injuries Unit and is renowned for its Cancer Care Unit. Bishops Wood Hospital is also situated on the same grounds. There is also Harefield Hospital which is a regional centre for cardiology and its Heart and Lung Transplant Unit is one of the largest and most experienced centres in the world.

- 3.16 **Appendix 1** sets out a brief description of each settlement in the District, covering its history, role and function and the issues that local people raise on a regular basis, which make it unique.

Local Policy Context

- 3.17 There are a number of strategies and plans which affect the Three Rivers area in terms of priorities and actions. It is therefore important that the Core Strategy relates to these so that the community's aspirations can be delivered in an effective and joined-up way. The key strategic plans are referred to below:

- 3.18 The **Community Strategy for Three Rivers** (2006-2012) has been prepared by the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) to improve the quality of life in the District. The Local Strategic Partnership consists of the following organisations:

- Three Rivers District Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Hertfordshire Police Authority
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- Centre for Voluntary Services
- Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Three Rivers Parish Councils
- West Hertfordshire Primary Care Trust
- Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce
- WENTA

- 3.19 The five priorities of the Strategy are to address:

- Anti-social behaviour, crime, and the fear of crime
- Reducing Inequalities (including Access to services)
- Improving the environment
- Children's and young people's access to education, skills and training
- Improving the supply and standard of affordable housing.

Community Strategy Priority	Delivery through the Core Strategy	Relevant Core Strategy Policies and Objectives
Priority 1: Anti-social behaviour, crime and fear of crime	Promote safety and security as a high priority in the design of new development in order to create attractive and safe places in which to live work and play.	CP1 CP3
Priority 2: Reducing Inequalities (including Access to services)	Facilitate the provision of services, shops and infrastructure to meet the needs of existing development and new development Deliver improved and more integrated transport systems and to reduce the need to travel by locating development in accessible locations.	CP1 CP6 CP7 CP8 PSP1 PSP2 PSP3 PSP4
Priority 3: Improving the environment	Reduce the impact on the environment by reducing waste, pollution and energy consumption Make efficient use of previously developed land and to protect the Green Belt and open countryside Protect and enhance the historic environment Protect and improve the countryside and the diversity of wildlife and habitats	CP1 CP2 CP3 CP8 PSP1 PSP2 PSP3 PSP4
Priority 4: Children's and young people's access to education, skills and training	Facilitate the provision of education services, sport, recreation and open space facilities Retain and improve the range of local employment opportunities in the District.	CP1 CP6 CP9 PSP1 PSP2 PSP3 PSP4
Priority 5: Improving supply and standard of affordable housing	Seek a greater proportion of new housing development to be locally affordable in both the urban and rural areas of the District.	CP1 CP4 PSP1 PSP2 PSP3 PSP4

Figure 3: Inter-relationship between Core Strategy and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 3.20 There are further ‘cross-cutting’ themes around promoting equal opportunities and improved health for all residents, meeting the needs of children and young people and sustainable communities.
- 3.21 It is important that the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is closely linked with the Local Development Framework in an area so that an integrated approach to community planning can be achieved. The Local Development Framework is the key mechanism for delivering on the ground what the community has said it needs in the Sustainable Community Strategy. Figure 3 details how the Core Strategy can contribute to the Sustainable Community Strategy priorities.
- 3.22 The Local Strategic Partnership Partners have also developed further specific strategies and action plans stemming from the main Community Strategy. These include:
- **The Three Rivers Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan (2008-2009)** setting out priorities and targets to make the District a safer place
 - **Improving the Environmental Action Plan** setting out priorities and targets to improve and manage open spaces and sites of nature conservation, waste and recycling improvements, and planning related environmental projects
 - **The District Children and Young People’s Plan 2008-2009** setting out the priorities and targets to improve outcomes for children and young people in the District
 - **The Three Rivers Housing Strategy 2006-2011 Action Plan** setting out priorities for improving the quality and affordability of housing in the District.
- 3.23 During 2008, the Local Strategic Partnership reviewed its priorities and action plans against the new County-wide Sustainable Community Strategy and the associated Local Area Agreement. Three new areas of work have been identified for new action plans as follows:
- **Family Intervention Project:** to identify the broader support needs of families associated with anti-social behaviour and crime
 - **Poverty Action Group:** to identify ways to increase access to benefits advice and insulation grants for families on low incomes and those challenged by fuel poverty such as the elderly
 - **Health Inequalities:** to develop projects through the Watford and Three Rivers Health Partnership to increase access to health and fitness services for the most vulnerable in the District
 - **Employment Group:** to assess the need to maintain current employment opportunities in the District and the training needs of local residents to secure employment.
- 3.24 Hertfordshire Forward, the County Strategic Partnership, issued its Sustainable Community Strategy (**‘Hertfordshire 2021-A Brighter Future’**) in November 2008. This sets out the strategic plan for Hertfordshire and provides the long-term context for future reviews of local Community Strategies. The Hertfordshire Strategy identifies eight themes and short-term actions for Hertfordshire which broadly correspond to the existing priorities and actions identified in the existing Three Rivers Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 3.25 The Sustainable Community Strategy short-term actions also provide a framework for the next rounds of **Local Area Agreements** (LAA) targets. The Local Area Agreement is a three-year contract between central Government, local authorities and local partners in improving local services. They are structured around six main themes in Hertfordshire:
- Safer and Stronger
 - Children and Young People
 - Health and Older People
 - Economic Development and Enterprise

- Housing and Character
- Transport and Sustainable Development.

3.26 New targets and outcomes for the Local Area Agreement 2008-2011 have been agreed with Central Government. Reward grants will apply to the achievement of the Local Area Agreement 2006-2009 targets payable from the end of 2009. This reward grant will provide an important source of funding towards the achievement of Local Strategic Partnership priorities in the District and Hertfordshire Forward priorities across the County. New Local Area Agreements will not receive such significant reward grants. It is important that the new Local Area Agreement reflects local priorities, including those of the Local Development Framework, to ensure that County-wide use of reward grant is coordinated and invested locally.

3.27 The **Three Rivers Strategic Plan (2008-2011)** identifies the priorities for the Council which are linked to the Sustainable Community Strategy Themes. Consultation with residents has indicated that there are five main priorities for the District. These are, in priority order:

- i. Anti-social behaviour, crime, and fear of crime
- ii. Access to services for all residents
- iii. Improving the environment
- iv. Children's and young people's access to education, skills and training
- v. Finding affordable housing

3.28 The Three Rivers Strategic Plan reflects these priorities in its vision, whereby:
 'the District should remain a prosperous, safe and healthy place where people want and are able to live and work'.

3.29 Future planning of development and infrastructure through the Local Development Framework is seen as a critical tool in delivering the strategic vision for the District.

3.30 The Strategic Plan centres around two main themes relevant to the Local Development Framework:

Safer Communities

- Working with partners to ensure the District is safe in terms of crime and anti-social behaviour
- Enforcing public health and safety regulations.

Sustainable Communities

- Improving access to services, facilities, jobs and housing particularly for vulnerable residents such as elderly, disabled and young people
- Maintaining a high quality local environment by protecting the character of the District and minimising the impact of the built environment
- Reducing the carbon footprint of the District by minimising the use of energy, water and waste, reducing carbon dioxide emissions and increasing the use of renewable energy and waste recycling.

3.31 **The Three Rivers Housing Strategy 2006-2011**

This identifies the Council's priorities to improve the quality and range of the public and private stock of housing and provide more affordable housing. The Council is committed to working with partners to achieve these priorities. The partners include Thrive Homes, the housing association which recently acquired the Council's housing stock (April 2008).

3.32 **The Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan (2006-2011)**

This sets the framework for achieving the vision for a better transport system for all. It focuses on delivering the shared priorities of tackling congestion, delivering accessibility, providing safer roads, improving air quality and improving the quality of life for residents. Specific measures and schemes are included in the Plan for Three Rivers; these are referred to in this document.

3.33 **Health Authority Strategy**

This follows the “Delivering Quality Health Care for Hertfordshire” consultation in 2007, the West Hertfordshire and East & North Hertfordshire Primary Care Trusts and the Hertfordshire NHS Trusts have agreed improvements in key health centre provision in Hertfordshire. These take into account the likely growth in population across the area using information from the local planning bodies and the East of England Regional Authority and include the following:

- The Acute Hospitals will be located at Watford and at the Lister Hospital in Stevenage
- Development of a new Local General Hospital in Hemel Hempstead
- Planned surgery to be at St Albans City Hospital
- A network of eight Urgent Care Centres, four of which will be 24 hour service based at Watford, Lister, Welwyn and Hemel Hempstead, and four reduced hours service at St Albans, Herts & Essex, Hertford and Cheshunt.

3.34 **Building Schools for the Future Programme**

This sets out how Hertfordshire County Council will be implementing a programme to improve all the public secondary schools in the County over a 10-15 year period, either through refurbishing or rebuilding and the provision of ICT equipment. There are 27 primary schools, six secondary schools and a further five private schools, providing primary and secondary education in the District. Improvements of schools in Three Rivers are scheduled for the end of the programme period. There are no current plans for any major expansion of facilities.

3.35 **Hertfordshire Policing Plan 2008-2011**

This sets out the priorities for the Police to make Hertfordshire an even safer community. It focuses on several key priority areas and places particular emphasis on the following:

- Reducing crime
- Protecting vulnerable people
- Bringing more serious offenders to justice
- Improving public confidence and satisfaction in police services
- Increasing people’s feelings of safety; and
- Reducing anti-social behaviour.

3.36 Hertfordshire has one of the top performing forces in the county and levels of crime continue to fall – recent figures showed a 12% reduction across the county. The Council and Parish Councils currently help fund 23 Police Community Support Officers who work in the District. Local community priorities for all the Wards in the District are agreed by Neighbourhood Action Panels and these can be viewed at the following link: www.herts.police.uk

3.37 The Core Strategy will need to draw on any strategies of the local authority and other organisations that have implications for the development and use of land. Where appropriate, it should provide an integrated approach to the implementation and delivery of these aspects of other strategies. A range of specific local plans and strategies are also referred to in this ‘Preferred Options’ document.

CHAPTER 4: THE CONTENT OF THE CORE STRATEGY

4.1

In practice a Core Strategy will:

- Provide an overall vision which sets out how the area and the places within it should develop
- Identify strategic objectives for the area focusing on the key issues to be addressed
- Seek to implement the spatial and transport policies of the Regional Spatial Strategy and incorporate its housing requirement
- Identify broad locations for delivering the housing and other strategic development needs such as employment, retail, leisure, community, essential public services and transport development
- Set out how much development is intended to happen where, when, and by what means it will be delivered
- Set out clear arrangements for managing and monitoring the delivery of the strategy.

4.2

The format of this document

In the following sections, the Council's 'Preferred Option' is presented on each aspect of the Core Strategy. For each 'Preferred Option' a range of information is given and is usually set out in the following format:

- **Context** - an overview is given of the national, regional and local policy context affecting the relevant issue
- **'What you told us'** - sets out what previous public consultation has shown; this is taken primarily from previous public consultation undertaken on the 'Issues and Options' during 2006 and 2007. It also includes other relevant consultation, for example, undertaken as part of the Community Strategy
- **'What the Sustainability Appraisal told us'** - sets out how the previous Issues and Options performed in relation to their social, economic and environmental impacts and recommendations in relation to developing the 'Preferred Options'
- **The Preferred Policy Option** - sets out what the Council considers to be the best way forward taking into account all considerations
- **Reasoned Justification** - sets out why the Preferred Policy approach is considered to be the best option for Three Rivers
- **Options Rejected** - sets out the options previously considered where relevant and why they have been rejected.

4.3

Further details of the evaluation of alternatives are presented in the accompanying Sustainability Appraisal document.