

Three Rivers District Council

Local Policy Context Background Paper

July 2012

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1) Introduction

There are a large number of strategies and plans that are relevant to the local plan for Three Rivers. Many of those which are aimed directly at influencing the planning of the District, for example the East of England Plan and National Planning Policy are discussed within local plan documents and supporting documents showing how policies have developed.

A background paper was produced in March 2010 which discussed some of the plans and strategies that were developed outside of the planning system, but that may affect the future development of the District through the priorities identified for the area. It provides summaries of the key information and provides links to further details where possible.

This information informed the development of the Three Rivers Core Strategy which draws on strategies and plans where these have implications for the development and use of land. As all local plan documents are produced in conformity with the Core Strategy, the strategies and plans will also have relevance to lower level local plan documents, and the background paper has now been updated to include the latest information.

2) Three Rivers Community Strategy

It is particularly important that the local plan relates to the Sustainable Community Strategy for Three Rivers which sets out the local community's aspirations.

The Community Strategy for Three Rivers (2012-2018)¹ has been prepared by the Local Strategic Partnership and is the overarching strategy to improve 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
- NHS Hertfordshire
- Three Rivers Citizen's Advice Bureau
- Three Rivers Parish Councils
- Hertfordshire Chamber of Commerce
- Thrive Homes

The Community Strategy was informed by public consultation in September 2011 with the public and service providers. Consultation included focus groups with adult residents from across the District, work with children and young people in primary schools, youth clubs and the Youth Council. Consultation was also taken with partner agencies and councillors in the three areas of greatest deprivation in the District.

The Community Strategy 2012-2018 and was adopted by the Local Strategic Partnership Board in June 2012. The five priorities of the refreshed Strategy are to address concerns about:

- i. Children and Young People's Wellbeing

¹ <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/LocalStrategicPartnership>

- ii. Health and Disability
- iii. Adult Skills and Employment
- iv. Affordable Housing
- v. Crime and Anti-Social Behaviour

There are a variety of action plans stemming from the Local Strategic Partnership and the Community Strategy such as the Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan, the Improving the Environment Action Plan, the District Children and Young People's Plan and the Housing Strategy. These are discussed below.

During 2011, the Local Strategic Partnership reviewed its priorities and action plans against the new county-wide Sustainable Community Strategy and the associated Local Area Agreement. As a result, additional areas of work for action plans were identified. These areas are:

- 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) Three Rivers Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan

To tackle the Community Strategy objective priority of anti-social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime the Community Safety Partnership produced a strategic assessment document in November 2009 to help it identify local priorities for action. The assessment highlighted the following priority areas for action:

- Anti-social behaviour and criminal damage (including fires)
- Dwelling burglaries
- Other burglaries
- Violent crime including robbery
- Vehicle crime
- Domestic violence
- Drug and alcohol abuse (including underage drinking)
- Hate crimes
- Managing offenders and persistent priority offenders
- Inconsiderate motoring – including mobile phone use, speeding and inconsiderate parking at school, gates

The 2010/11 Community Safety Strategy and Action Plan² shows how the partnership plans to tackle these priorities and includes targets to help make the District a safer place.

² <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/CommunitySafety>

4) Improving the Environment Action Plan

To tackle the Community Strategy priority of improving the environment, Local Strategic Partnership partners have developed an Improving the Environment Action Plan³. This sets out priorities and targets for the District to improve and manage open spaces and sites of nature conservation importance, waste and recycling improvements and planning related environmental projects.

The objectives of the Action Plan are:

- To obtain Green Flag status at Chorleywood House
- To obtain Green Flag status at the Aquadrome
- Agree and implement the Leavesden Country Park Management Plan
- To conduct and review outcomes of LAA Green Spaces survey
- To implement the Woodlands Management Plan
- To achieve accreditation of Local Nature Reserves (Aquadrome, Chorleywood House grounds) by Natural England and monitor their action plans
- Nature reserve management plan implementation
- To monitor the sections of the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan relevant to Three Rivers (e.g. Frogmore Meadows managed by Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust)
- To achieve recycling targets set by the Local Area Agreement
- To pilot commercial waste recycling service
- To monitor the outcomes of a potential Green Belt review recommended by central government
- To monitor the outcomes arising from joint planning studies for example flood risk assessment, gypsy and traveller sites, retail study.

5) Housing Strategy Action Plan

Local Strategic Partnership Partners have developed a Three Rivers Housing Strategy 2006-2011 Action Plan⁴ to set out the priorities for improving the quality and affordability of housing in the District. The objectives of the action plan are to:

- Improve the quality of Council owned housing stock
- Improve the quality of private owned housing stock
- Enable affordable housing in the District
- Review the use of sheltered schemes and develop extra care
- Increase choice in housing
- Put in place works to improve the neighbourhood/ environment
- Work in partnership developing facilities to reduce ASB
- Improve the quality of Council services
- Improve tenant participation and communication
- Reduce homelessness through improved support for vulnerable people
- Increase support to vulnerable people.

³ <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/LocalStrategicPartnership-12June2008>

⁴ <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/StrategiesandPlans>

6) Hertfordshire 2021- A Brighter Future

Hertfordshire Forward, the Hertfordshire County Council Strategic Partnership issued its Sustainable Community Strategy 'Hertfordshire 2021- A Brighter Future'⁵ 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 actions for Hertfordshire. These broadly correspond to the existing priorities and actions identified in the existing Three Rivers Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Hertfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy key areas of concern and long term objectives to address these are:

- Jobs, prosperity and skills
 - Support the growth and retention of existing businesses and encourage high value inward investment
 - Ensure the skills of the workforce meet the demands of employers
 - Provide opportunities for everyone to share in our prosperity
 - Encourage lifelong learning and an entrepreneurial culture.

- Safer and stronger communities
 - Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in our neighbourhoods and town centres
 - Reduce the fear of crime
 - Develop cohesive communities
 - Enable and support a vibrant voluntary and community sector and a range of diverse cultural activities which meets the needs of local people
 - Encourage communities and individuals to have a greater voice and participate in local decision making.

- Children and young people
 - Narrow the gaps between vulnerable children and all children in Hertfordshire whilst improving outcomes for all
 - All children and young people in Hertfordshire remain safe in an ever-changing world
 - Ensure that children and young people are ready to succeed, particularly as they move into primary school, secondary school, further study and work
 - Provide high quality information and support to parents
 - Ensure all children and young people have access to high quality facilities and a range of positive activities to develop personal and social skills, promote wellbeing and reduce behaviour that puts them at risk
 - Ensure children and young people have a healthy weight
 - Eradicate child poverty
 - Significantly reduce the number of young offenders and young people who are victims of crime.

- An ageing population
 - Focus on prevention of illnesses

⁵ <http://www.hertslink.org/hertfordshireforward/15communitystrategy/?view=Standard>

- Help older people maintain their independence
- Ensure older people have the opportunities to be active members of our communities.
- Health and wellbeing
 - Improve the health and wellbeing of all our residents in the 20% most deprived wards
 - Reduce the mortality rate difference between deprived and non-deprived areas
 - Improve life chances and access to healthcare for all, especially those in areas of deprivation and those with learning disabilities.
 - Housing, affordable housing and quality neighbourhoods
 - Ensure partners work together to understand housing needs and market demands in the county
 - Ensure we have an appropriate mix of housing provision to support those needs and demands, especially relating to key workers, other key occupational groups, migrant workers and preventing homelessness.
- Transport and access
 - Reduce the need to travel and encourage the use of alternatives to the car
 - Improve access to services, including education and health, no matter where you live
 - Bring about a step change in the provision, quality and use of public transport in Hertfordshire
 - Improve the reliability of journey times and improve east to west travel
 - Improve access to the countryside, open spaces and cultural activities for recreation and health
 - Ensure effective long term management and maintenance of the transport network
 - Improve road safety.
- Sustaining Hertfordshire's unique character and quality of life
 - Avoid coalescence between our communities by protecting our greenbelt wherever possible, and enhancing our urban fringe and open spaces
 - Support the management of our land, particularly the historic built and natural landscape, as well as local agriculture, which protects our biodiversity, wildlife and natural resources
 - Enhance the quality and distinctiveness of our town centres and their range of local facilities and ensuring our villages remain vibrant
 - Improve the efficiency, standard and connectivity of public services in Hertfordshire
 - Secure more investment and funding into Hertfordshire for our public services.
- Promoting sustainable development
 - Ensure sustainability principles are central to future planning and decision making in Hertfordshire

- Ensure the development of properly planned sustainable communities with the necessary social, economic, environmental and transportation infrastructure in place
- Meet all national and EU targets relating to waste and recycling, minimising waste volumes and ensuring the provision of a range of waste processing facilities to deal with the county's waste locally
- Meet the Government's target for reducing Hertfordshire's carbon emissions.

7) Local Area Agreement 2

The Hertfordshire Local Area Agreement 2008-2011 (LAA2)⁶ served as a short-term delivery vehicle for the Hertfordshire Sustainable Community Strategy. The three year contract between central government and partners in Hertfordshire sought to deliver a range of targets aimed at improving performance.

The LAA was structured around six main themes in Hertfordshire:

- Economic Development and Enterprise
- Children and Young People
- Housing and Character
- Safer and Stronger Communities
- Healthy Communities for Older People
- Transport and Sustainable Development.

The LAA's performance was reviewed every year and updated to reflect changing priorities where appropriate.

8) Three Rivers Strategic Plan

The Three Rivers Strategic Plan 2012-2015⁷ brings together high level medium to long term objectives which, following consultation and analysis of data, the Council considers to be its priorities for the District.

The Strategic Plan focuses on those areas where the Council has a lead role, or can play a key part in delivering or influencing outcomes. Its purpose is to guide the Council in its annual consultation, 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 it will be possible to track progress towards delivering long-term objectives.

The Strategic Plan's vision for Three Rivers is that

'the District should remain a prosperous, safe and healthy place where people want and are able to live and work'.

⁶ <http://www.hertslink.org/hertfordshireforward/20laa/laa2cr/?view=Standard>

⁷ <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/StrategicPlan>

To deliver on this vision, the two themes of the Strategic Plan are the creation and maintenance of safer and more sustainable communities, reflecting the priorities of the Three Rivers Community Strategy. On the creation and maintenance of safer communities objective, the Council will work with partners to make the district a safer place and will provide a safe and healthy environment. On the creation and maintenance of sustainable communities objective, the Council will work to provide equal access to services and facilities for the public within the district and surrounding area and in particular will work to address the needs of vulnerable residents such as elderly, disabled and young people. In addition, the Council want to maintain a high quality local environment and reduce the eco-footprint of the District and so is working to achieve ISO14001 across the Council.

9) Three Rivers Housing Strategy

The Three Rivers Housing Strategy 2006-2011⁸ sought to address the then existing and projected housing issues in Three Rivers, having been produced in consultation with tenants, residents and a variety of stakeholders. A key partner in the delivery of the Housing Strategy was Thrive Homes which acquired the Council's housing stock in April 2008.

The Housing Strategy Vision was defined as;

'working in partnership to ensure that there is sufficient affordable housing in Three Rivers in neighbourhoods where people want to live. Provide the advice and support to promote independence and reduce homelessness'.

The issues identified in the Housing Strategy that the Council and its partners that were needed to address to work towards the vision were:

- The need to improve the Council's housing stock to meet Decent Homes Standard and invest in the future
- The need to improve private sector stock in the District
- The need to attract investment into the District for affordable housing, and to ensure sufficient land to meet needs for new housing whilst protecting the Green Belt
- Meeting the needs of the elderly population
- Ensure that housing services provided increase choice for all people
- The need to improve the environment in which people live and reduce the levels of anti-social behaviour
- Improve the quality of services for tenants and leaseholders
- The need to reduce the risk of homelessness and improve the provision of services to the homeless and those threatened with homelessness and to increase support to vulnerable, in particular young people with mental health circumstances.

A review of the Housing Strategy is currently being undertaken.

10) Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan

The Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan (LTP3) has been published and covers the period 2011-2031. This new Local Transport Plan sets out the transport strategy for Hertfordshire over the next 20 years, the goals and challenges to be met, and outlines a programme of

⁸ <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/StrategiesandPlans>

transport schemes and initiatives (interventions). The various interventions are to be delivered over the short, medium and longer term but the present uncertainties over funding mean their timing cannot be assured. Targets have also been set so that progress towards meeting the strategy objectives can be measured.

The Plan covers all modes of transport – including walking, cycling, public transport, car based travel and freight – and takes account of the effect of transport on wider aspects including the economy, environment, climate change and social inclusion.

11) East & North Hertfordshire and West Hertfordshire PCTs Strategic Plan

The East & North Hertfordshire and West Hertfordshire PCTs Strategic Plan 2009/10-2013/14⁹ sets out how the PCTs will deliver the vision of being

‘high performing PCTs recognised by our people, patients and partners as commissioning outstanding care and improving the well being of all’.

The strategic priorities identified by the Strategic Plan to meet this vision are:

- Keeping Hertfordshire healthy and improving the health of our growing population, both the very young and the very old.
- Enhancing the patient experience across primary and secondary care recognising our ageing population and the need to support the growing numbers of patients with chronic conditions such as diabetes and Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD) through effective care pathways.
- Commissioning high quality health care for the population of Hertfordshire.

These strategic priorities are to be delivered through nine work streams around: staying healthy, acute care, planned care, mental health with learning disabilities and substance misuse, maternity and newborn, children’s health, long term conditions, end of life and patient experience.

A major component of the strategic plan is the effective commissioning of the work programme to implement ‘Delivering Quality Healthcare for Hertfordshire’ which has two clear strands. One strand is to develop two strong sustainable acute hospitals based at Watford and the Lister Hospital in Stevenage. These will concentrate on the core purpose of providing specialist care for the sickest patients. They will be supported by a network of eight urgent care centres across the county which will provide a range of unscheduled care services, accommodating 65% of people who currently attend a major A&E department. The second strand is to provide as many services as close to where people live as possible. This will involve working closely with Practice Based Commissioning groups to secure significant investment in primary and community care settings. The flagships of this vision will be two thriving local general hospitals at Hemel Hempstead and in Welwyn Garden City, providing a wide range of outpatient diagnostic and other services.

⁹ <http://www.hertfordshire.nhs.uk/resource-centre/strategies.html>

12) Building Schools for the Future

The Building Schools for the Future programme¹⁰ sets out how Hertfordshire County Council will be implementing a programme to improve all public secondary schools in the county over a 10-15 year period, either through refurbishing or rebuilding and the provision of ICT equipment. Improvements to schools in Three Rivers are currently scheduled for the end of the programme period.

13) Children and Young People's Plan

The Children and Young People's Plan 2011-2012¹¹ is the key document for all partners delivering services to children, young people and their families in Hertfordshire. The plan focuses on two key areas for improvement – 'safeguarding children and young people' and 'narrowing the gap between vulnerable children and all children'. Across these themes, 12 priorities have been identified in order to improve outcomes for children and young people.

The priorities are:

- Children and young people are safe from abuse and neglect
- Children and young people achieve their full potential whilst in and moving on from care
- Children and young people are confident to respond to bullying
- Children and young people's emotional wellbeing and mental health is well supported
- Children and young people have a healthy weight
- Under 5s from the poorest families have a positive early childhood
- Vulnerable children achieve as well as others
- Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are empowered to reach their full potential
- Young people get a wide range of opportunities to learn
- Children and young people thrive in spite of family poverty
- Children and young people keep on the right track.

14) Adult Care Services Plan

The Adult Care Services Plan 2009-2012¹² aims to help people maintain or improve their wellbeing and give people more choice and control of the support they receive.

15) Hertfordshire Policing Plan

Hertfordshire is one of the top performing police forces in the country and has low crime levels. The Hertfordshire Policing Plan 2011-2014¹³ aims to secure safety, justice and reassurance for all. It focuses on several key priority areas and places particular emphasis on:

- Drive down crime

¹⁰ <http://www.hertsdirect.org/infobase/docs/pdfstore/bsfqanda.pdf>

¹¹ <http://www.hertsdirect.org/docs/pdf/c/cypp1112.pdf>

¹² <http://www.hertsdirect.org/infobase/docs/pdfstore/acs0912.pdf>

¹³ <http://www.hertspa.org/adobePDFs/14011512/14011527/16800264>

- In partnership, drive down crime, particularly organised crime and the most serious crimes
 - In partnership, at least maintain the overall detection rate
- Improve local confidence and satisfaction
 - In partnership, improve community confidence and satisfaction in police services
 - Deliver effective Neighbourhood Policing
- Keep people safe
 - In partnership, protect vulnerable people and promote public safety with a particular emphasis on young people
 - Protect the county from terrorism and violent domestic extremism
- Manage resources wisely
 - Use resources effectively and efficiently with a representative workforce.

16) Conclusions

This paper has set out an overview of some of the plans, strategies and programmes that may affect Three Rivers. The local plan will draw on these strategies where there are implications for the development of the District, and where appropriate will provide an integrated approach to the implementation and delivery of these aspects.