

## Development Management: Frequently Asked Questions

The Planning Department (also referred to as Development Management) at Three Rivers District Council is responsible for helping to protect the local urban and rural environments in the district. From small householder extensions to major urban developments, planning regulates development to ensure that our towns, villages and countryside are not subjected to inappropriate development. Most new buildings or major changes to buildings need planning permission. Less significant works may not require planning permission but you can contact the Development Management Section to discuss any development within the District on 01923 776611. We provide a Duty Planning Officer service for householder enquiries at Three Rivers House Mondays to Fridays between 10am-1pm if your query cannot be answered by the Frequently Asked Questions below.

Please note that hyperlinks are provided to take you directly to the relevant website pages where possible.

### **GENERAL QUERIES**

#### *1. What is planning permission and when is it required?*

Planning permission is the formal approval given by the Local Planning Authority (the local Council) that allows a proposed development to proceed.

Planning permission is required for “development”. This includes building, engineering or mining operations; and material changes of use to land or buildings. Therefore a proposal to erect or alter a building, change the use of a building or land, form a vehicle access, or carry out work that can be described as an engineering operation, may require planning permission. There are specific categories of minor or insignificant development for which permission is automatically granted, known as “permitted development”, (see question 4 below).

#### *2. What types of applications are there?*

There are various types of planning applications. The three most common types of planning application are Outline, Reserved Matters and Full. A full application will include full details of the proposals, including detailed drawings showing the site and the proposed works. Householder extensions which require planning permission should be submitted as full applications.

An outline application can be submitted to establish the principle of the proposed development and is often used for larger developments. Such an application will contain a broad outline of the size and scale of development. Where outline planning permission has been granted, a “Reserved Matters” application must be submitted for approval of the detailed plans before the development starts.

Almost all permissions, regardless of type, are granted subject to conditions. Conditions help to regulate the development or use of land, for example by requiring that the development be built in accordance with approved plans, or that a building may only be used for a particular purpose. Conditions can limit the duration of permission, or require certain things to be done or agreed by the Council before development can start.

In addition, to the three main types of application listed above, there are varying other forms of consent that may also be required, including Conservation Area Consent, Listed Building Consent and Advertisement Consent.

[Application forms with guidance notes](#) are available to download on the Three Rivers District Council website or you can [apply online](#) on the Planning Portal website. If you are unsure what application form you require, please contact the Duty Planning Officer between 10am-1pm Monday-Friday or the Technical Support Team, Monday- Thursday, 8.00-5.30pm and Fridays 8.00-5.00pm.

### *3. How long does planning permission last for?*

The duration of full planning permission lasts for three years from the date of the decision notice, although in some circumstances, a temporary consent may be granted for a duration of less than three years. Once a planning approval has been commenced and building works have started there is no time limit for the development to be completed,

Where outline planning permission has been granted, any further details for approval (Reserved Matters) have to be submitted no later than three years from the date of the outline permission. The development must be begun no later than two years from the date of approval of the last Reserved Matter.

#### *4. What is permitted development?*

Certain limited forms of development can be carried out without the need to make an application to the Council. Examples of permitted development include small single storey rear extensions, some loft conversions and small outbuildings (depending on specific criteria such as size, height and location). The Government has also made certain types of renewable energy microgeneration equipment permitted development. However, some non-permeable hardstandings to the front of a dwelling now require full planning permission.

Permitted development rights are set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 and amendments of October 2008, which introduced new rules in respect of householder development. The changes are intended to make it easier to improve a dwelling by relaxing planning controls on smaller extensions. The Government has released Technical Guidance in addition to the guidance provided by Planning Portal's Interactive House. Further information on [permitted development](#) is available on the Three Rivers District Council website.

On 30th May 2013 for a three year period, the government introduced new legislation introducing a new notification and prior approval process for single storey rear extensions to dwellinghouses. Essentially this allows a 3m – 6m deep rear extension on an attached house or a 4m – 8m deep rear extension on a detached house, subject to certain criteria. Developers must notify the Local Planning Authority of their intentions through a prior approval process. Further information is available on the Planning Portal website.

#### *5. How can I confirm that my works would be permitted development?*

You can establish whether your proposal is permitted development by submitting an application for a Certificate of Lawfulness to the Council. For such applications the Council does not assess the planning merits of the development but merely whether the proposals are lawful in that they comply with permitted development legislation.

However, you may also need to obtain building regulations approval; please contact the Building Control Section on 01923 776611 between 8.30-10am or after 2pm Monday-Fridays for further information.

Please note that in some instances (particularly on modern housing estates or conservation areas), permitted development rights may have been removed and full planning permission is required. Further advice may be sought from the Duty Planning Officer on 01923 776611 between 10am-1pm.

[Guidance notes and application forms](#) for applying for a Certificate of Lawfulness can be found on the Three Rivers District Council website. Refer to the [appeals page](#) on the Planning Portal website for details about how to appeal a Certificate of Lawfulness should the application be refused.

## **SITE CONSTRAINTS**

### *6. How do I find out about previous planning application/ constraints on a particular site?*

The Council's website provides the planning history and any constraints (eg: if the site is located in the Green Belt/Conservation Area) for all sites within Three Rivers District via [Planning Online](#). You can search by the property address or a planning application number.

### *7. What is a Listed Building and what difference does this make to applying for planning permission?*

A Listed Building is a building or other structure officially designated by Central Government as being of special architectural, historical or cultural significance. A Listed Building may not be demolished, extended or altered without Listed Building Consent from the Council. Listed Building Consent is additional to any planning consent that may also be required.

Some buildings may not qualify for national listing, however, may be of local architectural or historical importance. The Council keeps a list of all locally important buildings within the District.

*8. What is the effect of Conservation Area designation?*

A Conservation Area is an area of special architectural or historical interest, the character or appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance. A list of all Conservation Areas within the District can be found on the Three Rivers District Council Website. The effect of designation imposes additional requirements on residents to obtain consent and permission for certain works, including demolition. This is called Conservation Area Consent.

You can find out whether a property is located within a Conservation Area by searching on [Planning Online](#) and checking under 'Site Constraints'.

For specific advice on development with Conservation Areas, please contact Steve Farrell, Senior Conservation Officer on 01923 776611. Alternatively, please contact the Duty Planning Officer on 01923 776611 between 10am-1pm Monday-Friday.

*9. What is an Article 4 Direction and how does it affect my property?*

Article 4 Directions are issued by the Council and remove specified permitted development rights, so planning permission is required for minor works that would not usually require planning permission. Article 4 Directions are issued in circumstances where specific control over development is required, primarily where the special character of an area would be threatened. These are therefore most commonly applied in Conservation Areas.

If you wish to find out whether your property is affected by an Article 4 Direction, you can do this by using [Planning Online](#) via the Council's website or by contacting the Duty Planning Officer between 10am-1pm Monday- Friday.

*10. My property is located in the Metropolitan Green Belt- How does this affect my property?*

Green Belt designation covers 77% of the area of Three Rivers and therefore there is a high likelihood that your property may be located within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The aim of the Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. If your property is located within the Green Belt, it may affect the extent which you may extend your property. You are advised to contact the Duty Planning Officer for further information.

### *11. What other permissions may I require?*

Other types of consent which may be required include the following:

#### Listed Building Consent

If you wish to undertake internal or external alterations which affect the character of a listed building or extend or demolish part or all of a Listed Building you will require Listed Building Consent. Listed Building Consent may also be required for any works to buildings within the grounds of a Listed Building.

#### Conservation Area Consent

If you wish to demolish all or part of a wall or building that is within a Conservation Area, you may require Conservation Area Consent for the demolition. However, from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2013, in order to streamline the process, new legislation will remove the requirement to apply for Conservation Area Consent if you are proposing to demolish an unlisted building within a Conservation Area. However, proposals which involve demolition of an unlisted building in a Conservation Area will still be subject to a full planning application.

#### Tree Preservation Orders

You will require consent to lop, reduce, top or fell a tree or uproot or prune a root system that is protected by a Tree Preservation Order. In addition, trees in Conservation Areas are protected by the requirement to give the Local Planning Authority prior notice of any tree works; and many other trees are protected by conditions attached to planning permissions.

#### Advertisement Consent

The display or illumination of an advertisement or sign may require advertisement consent. This includes signs on shop frontages.

## **MAKING AN APPLICATION**

### *12. How do I make a pre-application enquiry?*

The Council offers a free Duty Planning Service between 10am-1pm Monday- Friday. The Duty Planner is able to provide informal planning advice for householders in the Council's reception and by telephone, however, this is for small scale developments only. No appointments are necessary but enquires are limited to a maximum of 15 minutes. No site visits or written responses will be available from this service.

In addition, the Council now offers a further paid pre-application service. A formal pre-application submission including an application form, plans and the correct fee should be submitted. You will be provided with a written response from the Council which will also involve a site visit. You are able to request a meeting for all developments other than householder development but it is at the discretion of the Case Officer whether a meeting is necessary.

Further information on the [pre-application services](#) offered by the Council (including information on the fee and timescales) are available on the Three Rivers District Council website.

### *13. How do I apply for planning permission?*

You can apply for planning permission by completing and submitting the relevant application form, plans and the appropriate fee to the Council

You can apply online via the Planning Portal website. Alternatively, the forms can be downloaded from the Three Rivers District Council website and submitted as a hard copy. You may wish to appoint an agent to submit the application on your behalf.

Further information in relation to the general planning process is available within the ['Planning Application Process'](#) section of the Three Rivers District Council website.

*14. How much is the planning fee?*

A list of current [planning application fees](#) is available on the Three Rivers District Council website. Alternatively, to establish the correct fee for proposed works contact the Technical Support Team on 01923 776611, 8.00am -5.30pm Monday-Thursday and Fridays 8.00-5.00pm.

*15. What do I need to submit with my application?*

To be validated, the application must contain all necessary information and the correct fee. To ensure that you have all relevant information, please refer to the [Development Management Validation Checklist for Planning Applications](#) which is available to view on the Three Rivers District Council website

*16. How many copies of plans are required for an application?*

Three Rivers District Council requires applications to include 3 copies of the application forms and 2 copies of all other documents when submitted in hard copy. Alternately, applications can be received on-line via the Planning Portal.

*17. What kind of detail do you require on the plans?*

All submitted plans must be drawn to an appropriate scale and of a reasonable standard, so an architect or surveyor's help may be needed. The plans should show the following, as a minimum, for an application to be accepted as valid:

- Location Plan (1:1250 or 1:2500 Ordnance Survey Map can be supplied by the Council to private individuals for this purpose only - there is a charge) showing at least two named roads and the site outlined in red.
- Block Plan (1:200 or 1:500 is ideal) showing the proposed development in relation to neighbouring properties (with all new work shown hatched).
- Elevations ( 1:100 or 1: 50, all sides including existing and proposed)
- Floor Plans (1:100 or 1:50, all floors including existing and proposed).

- Sections may also be required in some cases.

Please note that we do not accept plans at a scale at 1:75. Elevations and floor plans at a scale of 1: 200 will also not be considered acceptable.

For further information, please refer to the [Development Management Validation Checklist for Planning Applications](#).

#### *18. Do I need an architect to draw my plans accompanying an application?*

The Council will accept plans that have not been prepared by an architect providing they are accurately scaled or fully dimensioned and all relevant drawings are submitted with the application.

### **CONSULTATION ON APPLICATIONS**

#### *19. Who is consulted?*

Planning legislation requires the majority of applications to be subject to some form of consultation before they are determined (public consultation is not required for Certificate of Lawfulness applications for a Proposed Use or Development).

This is carried out in several ways and may include individual letters; posting a site notice, an advertisement in the local paper and details on the Council's website. The Council sends consultation letters to those properties/premises located adjacent to an application site. For larger developments and those affecting Listed Buildings or in Conservation Areas, a site notice will also be erected and an advert placed in the Watford Observer.

Other statutory bodies will be consulted if relevant to the application (including Highways Authority, Environment Agency, Conservation/wildlife bodies).

*20. Can you tell me which neighbours were notified of an application?*

We will send consultation letters to properties/premises located adjacent to the application site, however, a larger area maybe consulted upon for larger applications. If you wish to find out whether a particular address was consulted, you are able to do this by visiting [Planning Online](#) and viewing the application details. Alternatively, please contact the Customer Service Centre on 01923 776611.

Everybody has the right to comment on any application whether they are directly affected or not. We welcome comments on any application, whether they are for or against it. All comments must be received by the consultation expiry date, 21 days after validation (or by the date given in the Site or Press Notices).

*21. How can I find out what planning applications have been submitted?*

All applications are listed each week on [Planning Online](#) on the Three Rivers District Council Website.

If you wish to find out whether any application has been submitted in relation to a particular property, you can search by property address or planning application reference number. Larger applications and those affecting Conservation Areas, Listed Buildings, Public Rights of Way and applications made by the Council are also advertised in the Watford Observer weekly.

*22. How do I comment on a planning application?*

We encourage you to submit comments electronically via [Planning Online](#) on the Three Rivers District Council website if possible. You will first need to enter the application reference number or the address to find the application details.

Alternatively, you can make a representation in the following ways:

- By email to [enquiries@threerivers.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@threerivers.gov.uk) (with the subject heading: "Comments on Planning Application Number.....")
- In writing to the Case Officer dealing with the application: Three Rivers District Council, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth, WD3 1RL.

All comments received including letters will be available to view via [Planning Online](#) on the Three Rivers District Council website. Comments received electronically will not be available to view on the Planning File.

It is important that you state the application reference number and the address of the property that you are referring to. We must receive comments within 21 days of the date on the neighbour letter (21 days from validation) or the date given on the site notice, press advert or website notice. The consultation expiry date can be found via [Planning Online](#) or by calling the Customer Service Centre on 01923 776611.

### *23. What comments will be taken into account?*

Not all comments will be taken into account by the Case Officer when assessing a planning application. Valid objections include those relating to:

- Harm to the Green Belt and countryside
- Traffic and highway safety issues
- Loss of privacy or light
- The size or effect of a new building
- Increase in noise, disturbance or smell
- Conflict with Council planning policies

The following reasons are not material planning considerations that can be considered when determining a planning application:

- The loss of value to a property
- Loss of a private view
- The effect of building work
- Disagreement about boundaries
- Objections based on moral, racial or religious views
- The development would break a private agreement (including deeds/covenants)

*24. Have you received my comments on a planning application?*

You can find out whether we have received your comments by viewing the application details on [Planning Online](#) on the Three Rivers District Council Website. All comments received including letters will be available to view electronically. Alternatively, you can contact the Customer Service Centre on 01923 776611.

You may also view the Planning file in reception at Three Rivers House Monday- Thursday between 8.30am and 5.30pm and Friday 8.30am-5pm. You are advised to contact the Council first to check that the file is available in case an Officer is out on site or the file is in use. In addition, comments received electronically will not be available to view on the Planning file.

*25. Why was I not consulted about a development that I feel impacts on me and my property?*

The Council has a statutory obligation to consult the immediate adjoining properties/premises of an application site for the majority of applications. However, there is no requirement for the Council to consult on applications for Certificates of Lawfulness.

If you are aggrieved about the manner in which an application has been dealt with, follow the Council's complaint procedure as outlined on the Three Rivers District Council website. If you remain dissatisfied following this procedure, you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman who can investigate whether the Council has dealt with a case in accordance with its own procedures. However, the Ombudsman cannot review the merits of a particular decision or reverse a decision.

## **PLANNING DECISIONS**

*26. How long does it take for a planning application to be determined?*

The majority of applications are determined within 8 weeks. More complex applications may run beyond this timeframe, but if this is the case, we will contact you to let you know.

### *27. How are planning applications determined?*

Planning applications are determined in accordance with the Council's Local Development Framework and any other material considerations. A site visit to the application site will be made for all planning applications.

In determining whether a planning application is acceptable and in accordance with policy, the Local Planning Authority will consider a number of issues including (but not limited to):

- The number, size, layout, siting and external appearance of buildings
- Landscaping requirements
- The proposed use
- Impact on surrounding area including impact on streetscene and neighbours.

The documents which make up the Council's Local Development Framework can be found on the [Planning Policy](#) page of the Three Rivers District Council website.

The National Planning Policy Framework has replaced Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes and is a material planning consideration. This can be viewed on the [Communities and Local Government Website](#).

### *28. Who determines my planning application?*

Most minor planning applications are decided under delegated powers. An officer will make a recommendation taking into account relevant material planning considerations received. The recommendation will then be agreed by the Area Team Leader.

In other cases, recommended decisions will be presented to a Planning Committee made up of elected Councillors who can vote on the application. They do not have to follow the recommendation made by the Planning Officer. However, any decision they make must be based on the submitted plans and the policies of the Local Development Plan. Once a decision has been reached, a decision notice will be issued giving either a summary of the reasons for granting permission or detailed reasons for refusal.

*29. Can I attend and have my views heard at the Planning Committee?*

Any member of the public can attend the Planning Committee meeting which is held once a month at Three Rivers House. Dates for [forthcoming meetings](#) can be found on the Three Rivers District Council website.

You are able to speak at the committee meeting about an application you are interested in. If you would like to speak, you will need to register before the start of the meeting. One speaker can speak in support of an application and one against for a maximum of 3 minutes. More information about the procedure for at the Planning Committee is available on the Three Rivers District Council website.

## **POST DECISION**

*30. My planning application has been refused. What, if anything can I do?*

A formal decision notice detailing the reasons for refusal will be sent to you or your agent once the decision has been made. The decision will also be available to view via [Planning Online](#) on the Three Rivers District Council website.

You may wish to contact the Case Officer to discuss whether a revised application would overcome the reasons for refusal prior to considering an appeal. If you wish an Officer to comment on any amended plans, you will need to apply formally for pre-application advice. Only the applicant can appeal the decision of the Council and the appeal must be submitted within three months of the decision notice for householder appeals or six months for all other appeals.

For more information on the planning appeal process, please contact The Planning Inspectorate on 0117 372 6372 or visit the [appeals page](#) on the Planning Portal website.

*31. How is an appeal determined?*

A planning appeal is determined by an independent Inspector appointed by the Planning Inspectorate, a Central Government body acting on behalf of the Secretary of State. The Inspector will assess the merits of the case and how it fits within local and national planning policy.

Most householder appeals will be dealt with via a fast track process. The Planning Inspector will consider the planning merits of the case as well as making a site visit. It will not be possible for further comments to be submitted by the Local Planning Authority, applicant, neighbours or statutory consultees during the course of an appeal. A decision should be issued within eight weeks.

Other applications may be determined by the Written Representations procedure where a decision is reached on the basis of written materials submitted by both parties. Those appeals dealing with more complex issues are usually considered by an Informal Hearing or a Public Inquiry. The appellant can request their preferred method, however, the Planning Inspectorate will determine the process to be used for each application.

For further guidance, please refer to the [appeals page](#) on the Planning Portal website.

*32. My application has been approved, what do I do if I wish to make further changes to the plans?*

In some cases, small changes which would not affect the appearance of a development or affect neighbouring properties can be considered as non material and therefore further planning permission would not be required. In order to determine whether the changes you are proposing are non material, an application can be made for a non material amendment. Further information on this process can be found on the [post application page](#) of the Three Rivers District Council website.

If the changes you are proposing would materially alter the original application, a further planning application will be required and will take up to eight weeks to be determined.

*33. How do I discharge the conditions listed on my planning decision?*

Applications which are granted by the Council are often subject to a number of conditions; some may be pre -commencement conditions, meaning that additional information must be submitted to the Council prior to works commencing on site.

An application to discharge the condition along with the application form, supporting information and the appropriate fee should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. A decision will normally be issued within eight weeks. It is important to remember that

pre-commencement conditions may not always be discharged at the first attempt; therefore please plan your development timescales with this in mind.

It is also important to discharge your conditions in good time to allow sufficient time for the development to commence. Therefore, it is advisable to refer to the expiry date of your planning permission.

[Application forms](#) can be found online on the Three Rivers District Council website or you can apply online via the '[Make an application page](#)' of the Planning Portal website.

*34. My planning permission is close to expiring? How do I extend the time period for implementing?*

For applications approved prior to October 2010, it is possible to apply to extend the time period for implementation. The application must be received and validated prior to the expiry date of the decision notice and takes up to eight weeks to be assessed. Where applications were approved after October 2010, a new planning application will be required. Information on the [application form and fees](#) can be found online at the Three Rivers District Council website.

*35. I am unhappy with the decision made in relation to my neighbour's application, may I appeal?*

Unfortunately there is no third party right of appeal.

If you are aggrieved about the manner in which an application has been dealt with, follow the Council's complaint procedure as outlined on the Three Rivers District Council website. If you remain dissatisfied following this procedure, you can complain to the Local Government Ombudsman who can investigate whether the Council has dealt with a case in accordance with its own procedures. However, the Ombudsman cannot review the merits of a particular decision or reverse a decision.

## **CHANGES TO LEGISLATION**

*36. Are there any changes that I should be aware of?*

The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 17 November 2011. This act aims to give more power to local communities. Further information in relation to this act is available on the [Communities and Local Government](#) website.

On 27 March 2012, the framework of government guidance in the form of Planning Policy Statements and Planning Policy Guidance Notes was replaced by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This document sets out national planning policies including policies on Design; Green Belt; Flood Risk and Heritage. This document can be viewed on the [Communities and Local Government Website](#).

## **COMPLIANCE**

### *37. What happens if I carry out work without approval?*

Whilst it is not an offence to undertake development without the requisite planning permission, it may still constitute a contravention of planning laws and the Council has the power to enforce those laws. If it is brought to the Council's attention that development is taking place without permission, the Projects and Compliance Team will investigate the allegation and further action may be taken.

### *38. What matters can the Council investigate?*

Planning laws are designed to control the development and use of land and buildings in the public interest. The function of the Projects and Compliance Team is to bring unauthorised development (development without the necessary planning permission) under control.

The Projects and Compliance Team will investigate when:

- Development is commenced or a change of use occurs without the relevant planning permission;
- There is a failure to comply with planning conditions or the terms of an agreement attached to a planning permission or listed building consent;
- Demolition or alteration to Listed Buildings or buildings within Conservation Areas takes place without consent;
- Works are undertaken to protected trees and hedgerows without consent or proper notice;

- Advertisements are displayed without consent.

The Projects and Compliance Team will not get involved with neighbour disputes, investigation of land ownership or boundary disputes.

### *39. How do I report unauthorised works?*

If you wish to report unauthorised works to the Council, you can contact the Projects and Compliance Team by telephone on 01923 776611, between 8.30-11am or 4-5.30pm Monday- Thursday and between 8.30-11am or 4-5pm on Fridays. Alternatively, you can send an email to [planning.enforcement@threerivers.gov.uk](mailto:planning.enforcement@threerivers.gov.uk).

You will need to provide the following information:

- Your name, address and contact telephone number
- The address of the enforcement complaint
- The details of the complaint

We are unable to investigate anonymous complaints. However, all complaint details are kept confidential and exempt from the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act.

### *40. What happens to my allegation?*

On receipt of your allegation a new investigation file will be opened and you will receive a letter of acknowledgement outlining the process of investigation. An officer from the Projects and Compliance Team will endeavour to make a site visit within 20 working days of receipt of the allegation and thereafter establish if there has been a breach of planning control. If you have asked to be kept informed of the progress of the investigation, we will notify you of our findings and any actions we propose to take. On conclusion of the investigation you will be informed of the outcome and what if any, action has been taken.

#### *41. What happens if a breach of planning control is found?*

When it is clear that there has been a breach of planning control, we will draw this to the attention of the person responsible and advise them of the following possible courses of action:

- a) If the breach is minor with no significant effects then no further action is likely to be taken.
- b) If the development is in line with Local Plan Policies, the Council will usually invite a 'retrospective' application for planning permission or advertisement consent.
- c) If too much time has passed since the breach occurred for us to take enforcement action, we may invite an application for a Certificate of Lawful Development/Use.
- d) If permission is unlikely to be granted, the Council will ask for the use or works to cease, or unauthorised development to be removed, voluntarily.
- e) As a last resort formal notices can be issued.

The use of a formal notice is a discretionary power that will only be pursued where the Council is satisfied that it is expedient to do so in the interests of public amenity. In such cases the Council may serve an Enforcement Notice, a Breach of Condition Notice, or a Stop notice, or a combination of these depending on the circumstances. The failure to comply with the requirements of a notice is an offence and a conviction can result in a fine or even a prison sentence.

### **BUILDING REGULATIONS**

Most types of building work are controllable under the Building Regulations. Building Regulations are a set of standards for the design and construction building work to ensure the health and safety of people in and around buildings. There are also requirements to ensure that fuel and power is conserved and facilities are provided for people, including those with disabilities, to access and move around inside buildings. Further information is available from the [Building Control Section](#) of the Three Rivers District Council website or by telephone on 01923 776611

*42. What is the difference between planning permission and Building Regulations approval?*

Building Regulations approval is a separate matter from obtaining planning permission for your work, and in many cases both types of approval will be required.

Planning seeks to guide the way our towns, cities and countryside develop. This includes the use of land & buildings, the appearance of buildings, landscaping considerations, highway access and the impact that the development will have on the general environment. Building Regulations approval deals with the design and construction standards of a building in terms of the health and safety of persons using that building.

For many types of building work, separate permission under both regimes will be required. For other building work, such as internal alterations, Buildings Regulations approval will probably be needed, but planning permission may not be.

Within Three Rivers District Council, Building Regulations are dealt with by the Building Control Team and Planning is dealt with by Development Management Team. Both are contactable on 01923 776611.

*43. What is the building control history for the site?*

For information on a particular property's Building Control history please use the [Public Access](#) search application on the Three Rivers District Council website or contact the Building Control department on 01923 776611 between 8.30am-10.00am and 2.30pm-4.00pm Monday to Friday.

*44. How deep are the foundations, will they hold another storey?*

Foundations depths and requirements depend on a number of different factors. We recommend that you contact the Building Control Department on 01923 776611 between 8.30am-10.00am and 2.30pm-4.00pm Monday to Friday to speak with an officer to discuss your options further.

*45. Do any drains run through my property and if so are they public or private?*

We recommend that you contact the Building Control Department on 01923 776611 between 8.30am-10.00am and 2.30pm-4.00pm Monday to Friday. Information on the location of public sewers is also available from Thames Water 0845 8502777.

## **PLANNING POLICY**

*46. At what stage is your Local Development Framework at?*

The Council's Core Strategy was formally adopted by the Council on 17 October 2011 after a process of public examination. This document provides the over-arching strategy and policies and the long term vision for Three Rivers including policies relating to sustainable development and affordable housing. This document is a material planning consideration for all planning applications.

The Development Management Policies Document sets out the criteria against which all planning applications in the district will be considered. These policies will enable the delivery of the long term vision for Three Rivers set out in the Core Strategy. The Development Management Policies LDD was formally adopted by the Council in July 2013.

The Site Allocations document will identify sites throughout the District for development up to 2026 to support the delivery of the Core Strategy. The document will set out the sites that the Council considers have the potential to meet needs for a range of uses including housing, employment, education, shopping, leisure and open spaces. The Site Allocations LDD was submitted to the Secretary of State for independent examination on the 19 June 2013.

Further details on the progress of the Local Development Framework is available on the Planning Policy Pages of the Three Rivers District Council website, please contact the [Development Plans Section](#) on 01923 776611.