

**Three Rivers District Council**

**Open Space, Amenity and Children's  
Play Space SPD**

Sustainability Appraisal

Sustainability Report

July 2007

**Halcrow Group Limited**

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## **Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space SPD**

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## **Halcrow Group Limited**

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# Three Rivers District Council

## Sustainability Appraisal

### Sustainability Report

#### Contents Amendment Record

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# Non Technical Summary

## **Introduction**

Three Rivers District Council has appointed Halcrow Group Ltd to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the emerging Three Rivers Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The appraisal will provide an independent assessment of the effects the Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space SPD will have on a range of sustainability objectives.

## **Purpose of this SA Report**

This Sustainability Report documents the outcome of the SA of the emerging Sustainable Communities SPD. This report provides an independent, broad qualitative appraisal of the emerging draft SPD. It also includes a number of sustainability recommendations to be considered in future stages of the SPD.

This Sustainability Report will be submitted with the draft SPD for public consultation in July 2007. Following consultation the final SPD and Sustainability Report will then be formally adopted towards the end of 2007.

## **Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space Supplementary Planning Document SPD**

As part of this LDF process Three Rivers District Council are preparing an Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space SPD. The SPD provides guidelines and expands on the "saved" Local Plan policies L10: 'Amenity and Children's Play Space Provision in New Residential Development' and L11 'Design of Open Space'. The SPD provides clarification and advice on the application of Policies L.10 and L.11. The SPD provides guidance on open space contributions, design, maintenance and provision in new residential development in Three Rivers. These policies will be saved until the adoption of the Core Strategy. The SPD will provide a planning context for planning application decisions.

## **Predicting the effects of the draft SPD**

The overall conclusion is that the draft Open Space, Amenity and Children's play space SPD and saved policies have due regard for sustainability objectives, with mainly positive effects and no negative effects.

It is judged the saved local plan policies L.10 and L.11 do not have different effects than the SPD itself. This is to be expected as the SPD does not set any new policy or add further requirements to those set in the saved policies. The SPD provides additional detailed information for the developer in terms of costings for open space and play area provision and maintenance costs. It is considered that no significant effects either positive or negative will arise from the implementation of the SPD.

The implementation of the draft SPD will result in mostly local effects. This is largely due to the nature of the SPD and its implementation is unlikely to lead to significant negative effects. The time frame for effects is likely to be medium and long term primarily due to the property construction time.

### **Key Recommendations**

#### **Biodiversity**

- The SPD could encourage the inter-connection of green spaces (including CWS's) to provide a network of open spaces both within and across local authority boundaries (which could incorporate cycle and pedestrian links), which will encourage biodiversity and nature conservation interest.
- Consideration of guidance to help 'design-in' biodiversity, e.g. 'Biodiversity by Design' (TCPA), 'Integrating Biodiversity in Development: Realising the Benefits' (Essex Biodiversity Partnership, 2005) and 'Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning' (available on Natural England website).

#### **Water**

- The SPD should encourage applicants to include specific measures to enhance the water environment and to integrate water courses and ponds into open space design.
- The potential to incorporate energy saving and sustainable management techniques into maintenance plans should be encouraged, for example, best practice for watering open space.

#### **Climatic Factors**

- The SPD design section could give consideration to the inclusion of creative solutions for managing extreme weather events. This should include designing with climate change in mind. Solutions to decrease storm water run off, such as sustainable drainage, green roofs, planting and landscape enhancements should be considered.

### **Material Assets**

- The maintenance section could highlight the opportunities for waste recycling e.g. composting of grass cuttings, recycling of waste such as newspapers and drinks cans etc.
- The SPD should discuss maintenance techniques that will help reduce pollution, and how recycling and other sustainable practices can be implemented wherever possible.
- The SPD should encourage applicants to adopt environmentally friendly maintenance techniques.

### **Population and Human Health**

- The SPD could encourage developers to convert unused/underused playing pitches as public open spaces.

### **Social Factors**

- It is suggested that the involvement of the public is an on-going process in SPD design and implementation.
- The quality of open spaces will be an important recreational resource. The SPD could include specific measures to promote access to green/open space for all sectors of society, including disabled persons.
- There are no specific measures in the design section to promote access to green/open space for all sectors of society, including disabled persons.
- The SPD design section should encourage applicants to consider the use of open space for sports development. It is envisaged that combining different uses will encourage further use of the open space, reduce maintenance cost and aid in reducing crime.
- The SPD or policy L.11 should encourage the provision of allotments for residents.
- Use of open space as display areas for local art in order to increase sense of ownership for community.

### **Economic Factors**

- The SPD could include initiatives to encourage community involvement in the management of public open space, which will increase stewardship.
- Maintenance is critical to the ongoing success of green/open spaces. Section 3.2 and Appendix 5 of the SPD identifies the need for proposals to include arrangements for maintenance.

### **Next SA Steps**

This draft Sustainability Appraisal Report will be submitted with the draft SPD for public consultation in summer 2007. If any significant changes are made to the SPD as a result of the public consultation, these changes will be assessed and a final SA Report prepared. Following consultation the final SPD and Sustainability Report will then be formally adopted towards the end of 2007.

# 1 Context and Purpose of the Sustainability Appraisal

## 1.1 *Introduction*

Three Rivers District Council has appointed Halcrow Group Ltd to undertake a Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of the emerging Three Rivers Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SA will form an integral part of the formulation of the SPD. In this report the acronym SA is used to denote the appraisal process as prescribed by the EC SEA Directive and UK Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004), and includes consideration of broad sustainability issues which would usually be considered in a SA.

The appraisal will provide an independent assessment of the effects the Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space SPD will have on a range of sustainability objectives. The SA ensures that the SPD is grounded on sustainable foundations.

Given that 4,000 new homes (as a minimum) are to be provided in the District between 2001 and 2021 the adoption of the Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space SPD offers a significant opportunity to increase the amount and quality of open space in Three Rivers and help address the open space deficiencies which the District suffers from.

## 1.2 *Purpose of this report*

This Sustainability Report documents the outcome of the SA of the emerging Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space SPD. This report provides an independent, broad qualitative appraisal of the emerging draft SPD. It also includes a number of recommendations to be considered in future stages of the SPD.

This Sustainability Report will be submitted with the draft SPD for public consultation in July 2007. Following consultation the final SPD and Sustainability Report will then be formally adopted towards the end of 2007.

This Sustainability Report relates to Stages B and C of the five stage process outlined in the former ODPM guidance<sup>1</sup>, Stage A having been completed at the LDF Scoping stage. Future tasks relate to Stages D and E.

<b>Stages and tasks</b>
<b>Stage A: Setting the context and objectives, establishing the baseline and deciding on the scope</b>
<b>A1: Identifying other relevant plans, programmes and sustainability objectives</b>
<b>A2: Collecting baseline information</b>
<b>A3: Identifying sustainability issues and problems</b>
<b>A4: Developing the SA Framework</b>
<b>A5: Consulting on the scope of the SA</b>
<b>Stage B: Developing and refining options and assessing effects</b>
<b>B1: Testing the SPD objectives against the SA framework</b>
<b>B2: Developing the SPD options</b>
<b>B3: Predicting the effects of the draft SPD</b>
<b>B4: Evaluating the effects the draft SPD</b>
<b>B5: Considering ways of mitigating adverse effects and maximising beneficial effects</b>
<b>B6: Proposing measures to monitor the significant effects of implementing the SPD</b>
<b>Stage C: Preparing the Sustainability Appraisal Report</b>
<b>C1: Preparing SA Report</b>
<b>Stage D: Consulting on draft SPD and Sustainability Appraisal Report</b>
<b>D1: Public participation on the SA Report and the draft SPD</b>
<b>D2: Assessing significant changes</b>
<b>Stage E: Monitoring the significant effects of implementing the SPD</b>

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<sup>1</sup> Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents (ODPM, November 2005)

## Stages and tasks

**E1: Finalising aims and methods for monitoring**

**E2: Responding to adverse effects**

### 1.3

#### *Three Rivers Local Development Framework*

The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the emerging development plan for Three Rivers. LDFs are the new form of spatial development plan introduced by the Government's planning reforms in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act (2004) (hereafter referred to as The Act). The LDF will replace the existing Three Rivers Local Plan 1996-201. The new LDF will set out the strategy for the way in which land is used and to guide new development in the District for the next 10-15 years.

The LDF will consist of a portfolio of Local Development Documents (LDDs). Central to this portfolio is the Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD), which sets out the overall vision for future development in the District and is the basis for later LDDs including the Site Allocations DPD. In addition to these statutory DPDs there will be a number of non-statutory SPDs, setting out more detailed guidance at a more specific level.

### 1.4

#### *Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space SPD*

As part of this LDF process Three Rivers District Council are preparing an Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space SPD. The SPD provides guidelines and expands on the "saved" Local Plan policies L10: 'Amenity and Children's Play Space Provision in New Residential Development' and L11 'Design of Open Space'. The SPD provides clarification and advice on the application of Policies L.10 and L.11. The SPD provides guidance on open space contributions, design, maintenance and provision in new residential development in Three Rivers. These policies will be saved until the adoption of the Core Strategy. The SPD cannot outline new policy. The SPD will provide a planning context for planning application decisions.

If any of these saved local plan policies are revised or new policies are prepared as part of the Core Strategy preparation process then the Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space SPD will need to be revised to illustrate these policy changes.

## 1.5

### ***Background to SEA and SA***

Under The Act and the SEA Regulations<sup>2</sup> which came into force in England and Wales in July 2004 SA and SEA are mandatory for Regional Spatial Strategies (RSS), Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs).

The Act requires SAs to be carried out on DPDs (which include the core strategy and site specific allocations), and SPDs. SAs help planning authorities to fulfil the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development in preparing their plans through a structured assessment of the objectives and core strategies against key sustainability issues for their area.

The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (2004) which implement European Directive 2001/42/EC, known as the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Directive, requires SEA of a wide range of plans and programmes, including LDFs. The objective of the SEA Directive is to provide for a high level of protection of the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans, with a view to promoting sustainable development.

SEA and SA are very closely linked. SA aims to integrate sustainability issues into decision making by appraising the plan or strategy using environmental, social and economic objectives. SEA also aims to facilitate sustainable development but its emphasis is on integrating environmental considerations into decision making through a thorough analysis of environmental issues.

Although the requirement to carry out both an SA and SEA is mandatory, it is possible to satisfy the requirements of both pieces of legislation through a single appraisal process. The former ODPM's Guidance on Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents<sup>3</sup> integrates SEA with SA. It describes a single appraisal process that meets the legal requirements of both the SEA Directive and the Act. This SA incorporates this integrated approach.

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<sup>2</sup> The Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004

<sup>3</sup> Sustainability Appraisal of Regional Spatial Strategies and Local Development Documents, ODPM, November 2005

## 1.6

### ***Interface with Core Strategy SA***

A Scoping report for the Three Rivers LDF was prepared and consulted upon with statutory consultees and stakeholders in March 2006 as part of the previous phase of the Core Strategy SA. This Scoping Report provided an overview of the completed SA tasks, presented the baseline information and the SA framework and outlined the proposed methodology for the remaining stages of the LDF SA. The Scoping Report set the sustainability framework for the SA process for the Three Rivers LDF. This Scoping report acts as the basis for all DPDs and SPDs. Given the level of detail and amount of baseline information collected as part of the LDF Scoping Report, an individual Scoping Report for the SA of the Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space SPD was not been prepared. The LDF Scoping Report can be viewed at [www.threerivers.gov.uk](http://www.threerivers.gov.uk). (Follow links to Local Development Framework).

A Scoping Note was submitted to the statutory bodies in July 2007. The purpose of the Scoping Note was to seek views and opinions on the SA framework which will be used to appraise the draft Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space SPD and to provide the opportunity for the statutory consultees to raise any issues which can feed into the assessment process. The results of this consultation exercise will be presented in the final SA report, which will be finalised after Draft SPD and SA Report consultation.

To ensure that all Three Rivers' LDDs are assessed in a consistent format, the SA of the Open Space, Amenity and Children's Play Space SPD was carried out using the sustainability objectives used for the SA of the Core Strategy.

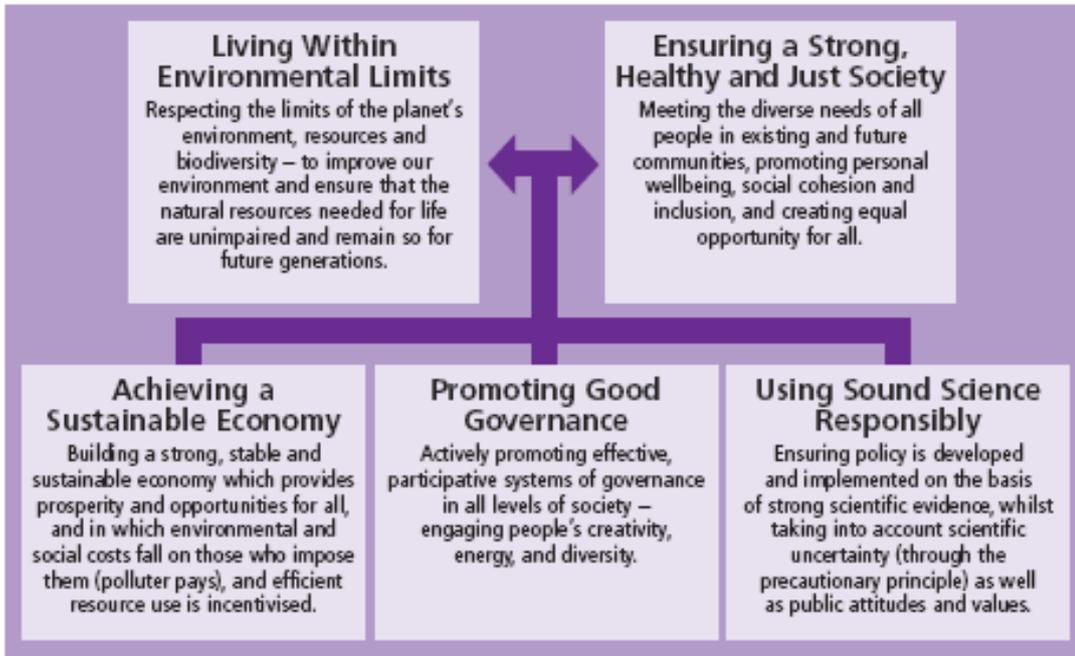
## 1.7

### ***Sustainability Context***

In 1987 the World Commission on Environment and Development, produced the report, "Our Common Future" (commonly known as the Brundtland Report). It provided the now widely accepted definition of sustainable development:

"Development that meet the needs of the present, without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs"

The UK Government's approach to sustainable development is set out in the national strategy "Securing Our Future". The strategy, published in March 2005 focuses on five principles – with an explicit focus on environmental limits.



Four priority areas are identified within the strategy:

- sustainable consumption and production
- climate change
- natural resource protection and
- sustainable communities

**1.8**

***SEA Directive Requirements Checklist***

Table 1.1 below summarises the requirements of the SEA Directive and signposts where they have been met in the SA process.

**Table 1.1: The SEA Directive's requirements**

<b>The SEA Directive's requirements<sup>4</sup></b>	<b>Where covered in the SEA/SA process</b>
a) An outline of the contents, main objectives of the plan or programme, and relationship with other relevant plans and programmes	LDF Scoping Report

<sup>4</sup> As listed in Annex 1 of the SEA Directive

The SEA Directive's requirements <sup>4</sup>	Where covered in the SEA/SA process
b) The relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the plan or programme	LDF Scoping Report
c) The environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected	LDF Scoping Report
d) Any existing environmental problems which are relevant to the plan or programme including, in particular, those relating to any areas of a particular environmental importance, such as areas designated pursuant to Directives 79/409/EEC and 92/43/EEC	LDF Scoping Report
e) The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or national level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation;	LDF Scoping Report and Scoping Note
f) The likely significant effects on the environment, including on issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, & fauna, flora, soil, water, air, climatic factors, material assets, cultural heritage including architectural and archaeological heritage, landscape and the interrelationship between the above factors. (Footnote: These effects should include secondary, cumulative, synergistic, short, medium and long-term permanent and temporary, positive and negative effects)	Section 3
g) The measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and as fully as possible offset any significant adverse effects on the environment of implementing the plan or programme	Section 4
h) An outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with, and a description of how the assessment was undertaken including any difficulties (such as technical deficiencies or lack of know-how) encountered in compiling the required information	Sections 2 and 3
i) a description of measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10	Section 5
j) a non-technical summary of the information provided under the above headings.	Non Technical Summary

## 2 Task B1: Testing the SPD objectives against the SA framework

### 2.1

#### *Purpose*

An important test of the effectiveness of the SA process is its capacity to identify any inconsistencies between plan objectives set out in the document under review and the sustainability objectives defined in the SA framework. This task represents a key opportunity to ensure that the SPD objectives reflect the principles of sustainability, and that full recognition is given to sustainability issues early on in plan development. Table 1.1 below summarises this assessment.

**Table 1.1: Compatibility between the SA and SPD objectives**

C	Objectives are compatible	N	Objectives are not compatible
?	Uncertainty over compatibility	-	No relationship between objectives

SA Objective	Abridged SPD Objectives				
	Give developers detailed advice on the interpretation of Policies L.10 and L.11	To execute joined-up design through a combination of landscape environment, art and play structures	To provide an innovative and sustainable play environment that encourages cross-generational (and species) interaction	To consider the whole park as a stimulating and playful environment. This will avoid creating single purpose-built, segregated areas and encourage consistent design across the park	To combine landscape, sculptural and architectural interventions alongside traditional play equipment
To protect and enhance biodiversity at all levels	C	C	C	-	C
To maintain/enhance water quality and limit water consumption	C	C	C	C	C
Ensure new developments do not increase flood risk	C	C	C	C	C
Minimise the loss of valuable soils to development	C	C	C	C	C
Reduce the emissions of CO <sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases	C	C	C	C	C
Ensure development is	C	C	C	C	C

SA Objective	Abridged SPD Objectives				
	Give developers detailed advice on the interpretation of Policies L.10 and L.11	To execute joined-up design through a combination of landscape environment, art and play structures	To provide an innovative and sustainable play environment that encourages cross-generational (and species) interaction	To consider the whole park as a stimulating and playful environment. This will avoid creating single purpose-built, segregated areas and encourage consistent design across the park	To combine landscape, sculptural and architectural interventions alongside traditional play equipment
Climate Change proof					
To achieve good air quality especially in urban areas	C	C	C	C	C
To maximise the use of previously developed land	-	-	-	-	-
To use natural resources efficiently	-	-	-	-	-
To maintain and enhance historic and cultural assets	?	?	?	?	C
To conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape	?	?	?	?	?
Encourage healthy lifestyles	C	C	C	C	C
To deliver more sustainable patterns of development	-	-	-	-	-
To promote equity and address social exclusion	C	C	C	C	C
Ensure that everyone has access to good quality housing	C	C	C	C	C
Enhance community identity and participation	C	C	C	C	C
Reduce both crime and fear of crime	C	C	C	C	C
Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and growth	C	C	C	-	C
Promote wider prosperity and fairer access to services	C	C	C	-	C
Revitalise town centres	C	C	C	C	C

## 2.2

### ***Summary and Conclusions***

The Compatibility Matrix confirms that overall, the SPD objectives are compatible with the SA objectives. The assessment indicates that there are no areas of conflict and a limited number of minor uncertainties. The main areas of uncertainty concern the following:

- The implementation of the SPD will have social and economic benefits but the impact of large scale residential development on the environment remains unclear;
- The increase in the amount of open space and children's play space could result in the increase in noise pollution for local residents;
- There are a number of uncertainties at this stage as the full extent of the scale of residential development, design, location and open space design remains unclear. Thereby the effects on Three River's landscape, townscape and cultural assets are unclear at this stage; and
- All of the uncertainties can be addressed if high environmental standards and high quality design are delivered in all development proposals.

### 3 **Tasks B2 and B3: Developing the SPD options and predicting the effects of the draft SPD**

#### 3.1 *Purpose*

It is considered that this stage provides the first opportunity for the appraisal of the emerging draft SPD. This stage covers the prediction and examination of the environmental, social and social effects that will potentially arise as a result of the implementation of the draft SPD. An examination of the saved policies which the Open Space, Amenity and Children’s Play Space SPD is based upon has also been undertaken.

#### 3.2 *Appraisal Approach*

The appraisal was undertaken using the SA framework developed at the LDF Scoping stage. The draft SPD and saved policies were scored against their compliance with the sustainability objectives. The predicted impacts and key assumptions were set out in the appraisal comments column. This task takes into account the scale, permanence, the nature and sensitivity of the receptor(s), duration, frequency, secondary, cumulative and synergistic effects of the draft SPD.

The appraisal results are set out in Table 2.1 below. The performance of the draft SPD and the saved policies against the SA objectives was scored using the following six point scale:

<b>Symbol</b>	<b>Description</b>
✓✓	<b>Very sustainable</b>
✓	<b>Sustainable</b>
-	<b>Neutral (neither positive or negative)</b>
?	<b>Uncertain</b>
X	<b>Unsustainable</b>
XX	<b>Very unsustainable</b>

**Table 3.1: Draft Open Space, Amenity and Children’s Play Space SPD Assessment Results**

**Option Description**

**Prepare and adopt SPD**

Provides additional information and guidance on implementing the saved Three Rivers Local Plan 1996-2011 policies- L.10: Amenity and Children’s Play Space Provision in New Residential Development and L.11: Design of Open Space. The focus of this assessment is on of the potential environmental, social and economic impacts of the draft SPD.

**Business as Usual**

Continuation of exiting national, regional and local planning policy. This assessment focuses on the saved Three Rivers Local Plan 1996-2011 policies- L.10 and L.11.

<b>SEA/SA Objective (abridged)</b>	<b>SPD</b>	<b>Commentary</b>	<b>business as usual</b>	<b>Commentary</b>
<b>Biodiversity</b>				
To protect and enhance biodiversity at all levels	✓	<p>The requirement for all housing development proposals to provide amenity open space or financial contributions for off-site open space will help promote habitat creation.</p> <p>It is important to strike a balance to design open space areas which encourage biodiversity and nature conservation interest as well as creating an attractive environment.</p> <p>The potential value of quality open spaces in terms of biodiversity could be discussed in section 2.2 of the SPD. The potential to promote links between new and existing areas of open space (particularly CWS's) to form a multi-functional network of open spaces should be explored.</p> <p>The SPD could result in adverse impacts on areas of biodiversity interest as a result from increased public access as well as disturbance during construction.</p> <p>Consideration of the biodiversity value of brownfield sites before redevelopment, and in cases where significant value is found, the open space should retain the brownfield character. These areas may therefore not be suitable as amenity space or children’s play areas, however, it is possible that if managed correctly, they could have some educational benefits (for local schools etc).</p>	✓	<p>Policy L.11 requires developers to maintain, enhance and create areas of nature conservation interest. This could contribute to the areas biodiversity and help offset any losses attributable to development.</p> <p>Policy L.11 helps ensure that impacts on areas of biodiversity value are avoided with synergistic, positive effects for landscape and economic investment.</p>
<b>Water</b>				

SEA/SA Objective (abridged)	SPD	Commentary	business as usual	Commentary
To maintain/enhance water quality and limit water consumption	✓	Increased storm water run off will intensify flooding in urban areas and sediment-laden runoff will threaten the water quality of rivers. By requiring developers to provide amenity open space will help minimise this effect. The increase in the level of permeable surfaces in the District will help reduce surface water run-off	✓	The increase in the provision of open space resulting from the implementation of policies L.10 and L.11 will help reduce the amount of storm-water run off with positive effects on flood risk and water quality and synergistic positive effects on the economy and human health.
Ensure new developments do not increase flood risk	✓	Provision of open space can help reduce storm water run off and increase rainfall capture which will help reduce the risk of flooding. In addition trees can provide an important carbon sink- (trees have capacity to absorb carbon dioxide)	✓	No significant change from the SPD situation.
<b>Soil</b>				
Minimise the loss of valuable soils to development	✓	Provision of open space will present opportunities for soil creation and improvement.  The reduction in storm water run off will help protect soil resources and reduce opportunities for pollution of soil resources.	✓	No significant change from the SPD situation.
<b>Climatic Factors</b>				
Reduce the emissions of CO <sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse gases	-	Provision of open space in new residential development will help reduce the risk of flooding therefore helping address the effects of climate change which in turn will have positive synergistic effects for biodiversity and health, however there is uncertainty about the potential effects for the prospects of increased car use associated with the new residential development.  Planting of trees and vegetation will help provide shading which will reduce the need for air conditioning and will help reduce greenhouse gas emissions.	-	No significant change from the SPD situation.
Ensure development is Climate Change proof	-		-	No significant change from the SPD situation.
<b>Air Quality</b>				
To achieve good air quality especially in urban areas	-	Planting of trees and vegetation will help provide shading which will reduce the need for air conditioning in the summer and will help reduce the effects of wind and could potentially reduce the need for electrical heating.  The provision of open spaces in new residential development promotes the opportunity for walking and cycling to different areas of open space which in turn should help improve air quality (for those recreational users). A safe attractive cycling and walking environment is central to healthy living.	-	No significant change from the SPD situation.

SEA/SA Objective (abridged)	SPD	Commentary	business as usual	Commentary
<b>Material Assets</b>				
To maximise the use of previously developed land	-	<p>Requiring developers to provide open space provision will help alleviate open space deficiencies in the District.</p> <p>There are opportunities to bring under-used brownfield and under-used land back into productive use. Brownfield sites may contain species of interest but these can be accommodated in detailed site proposals.</p>	-	No significant change from the SPD situation.
To use natural resources efficiently	-	<p>No Significant Impact</p> <p>The promotion of low environmental impact materials is applauded.</p>	-	No Significant Impact
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>				
To maintain and enhance historic and cultural assets	✓	<p>Quality open space can improve the settings and features of places of historical interest. This will result in positive synergistic effects for townscape and the economy.</p> <p>A quantitative contribution for open space is included in the SPD and the quality of provision is also a key consideration.</p> <p>The encouragement for public art opportunities within the SPD has potential landscape and townscape benefits.</p> <p>Children's play space (play structures) and other innovative open space designs (arches, climbing areas, skate board ramps) could have potential negative effects on historic and cultural assets- depends on the scale and location of play space and other structures.</p>	✓	Policy L.11 ensures that the quality of open space is a key consideration as well as quantity.
<b>Landscape</b>				
To conserve and enhance the landscape and townscape	✓	Open space plays an important part in creating a high quality built environment and can contribute to the District's landscape.	✓	Maintaining and enhancing the existing nature conservation interest of a site
<b>Population and human health</b>				
Encourage healthy lifestyles	✓	<p>Implementation of the SPD will help ensure the provision of quality open space and increase accessibility to areas of open space.</p> <p>The provision of public open spaces within new residential development will enhance human health and wellbeing by providing an area where people can walk, socially interact and encourage community</p>	✓	The requirement under Policy L.10 for developments which are likely to be occupied by families to provide a minimum of 2% of the site area for play facilities this will ensure social interaction and opportunities for physical activity.

SEA/SA Objective (abridged)	SPD	Commentary	business as usual	Commentary
		<p>gathering.</p> <p>The requirement for a proportion of children's play spaces will encourage child physical activity.</p> <p>The SPD includes a range of principles designed to deliver high quality open spaces. Implementation of these principles will result in positive synergistic effects for human health, townscape, landscape, cultural heritage, biodiversity and economic investment.</p> <p>It is applauded that the draft SPD includes best practice exemplars of open space design.</p> <p>The increase in the amount of open space and children's play space could have negative impacts in terms of noise pollution for local residents.</p>		
To deliver more sustainable patterns of development	-	The primary focus of the SPD is on open space and children's play space provision. Land use pattern is covered in the emerging Core Strategy.	-	The primary focus of the SPD is on open space and children's play space provision. Land use pattern is covered in the emerging Core Strategy.
<b>Social Factors</b>				
To promote equity and address social exclusion	✓	<p>The provision of open spaces within new residential development will contribute to a feeling of well-being and encourage social and family interaction. The SPD requires the provision of open space which can be an important recreational resource.</p> <p>Provision of open space will provide access to open space to those who do not have private gardens. The requirement for a proportion of children's play spaces will encourage and improve social skills, community gathering and social cohesion.</p> <p>It is considered that the SPD should give consideration to open space access for disabled people.</p>	✓	<p>The requirement under Policy L.10 for developments which are likely to be occupied by families to provide a minimum of 2% of the site area for play facilities this will ensure social interaction and opportunities for physical activity.</p> <p>If the targets for open space and children's play areas are too onerous the development costs may have impacts upon dwelling costs and overall housing delivery. This must be carefully managed to ensure that outcomes are feasible and make developments viable (for the developer).</p>
Ensure that everyone has access to good quality housing	✓	Requiring contributions for high quality open space as part of new housing developments will contribute to the delivery of a quality residential development, enhance quality of life and local property prices.	✓	No significant change from the SPD situation.
Enhance community identity and participation	✓	The Draft SPD will be subject to extensive public and stakeholder consultation ensuring that the views of the community have been taken into account during plan preparation.	✓	The saved Local Plan policies will be subject to public and stakeholder consultation through the Core Strategy preparation process.

SEA/SA Objective (abridged)	SPD	Commentary	business as usual	Commentary
		Implementation of the SPD will improve accessibility to greenspaces which offers significant health benefits and encourage family activity.		
Reduce both crime and fear of crime	✓	Requiring high quality open space as part of new residential development has the opportunity to reduce crime, fear of crime and deter anti-social behaviour. Residential development needs to overlook areas of open space. This will contribute to passive natural surveillance of open spaces. It is important to note that high quality open space design alone will not reduce crime and fear of crime: the management and maintenance of open spaces will be critical in sustaining reduced levels of fear and fear of crime.  The continued maintenance of open spaces will help reduce crime and fear of crime with positive synergistic effects on human health and well being.	✓	No significant change from the SPD situation.
<b>Economic Factors</b>				
Achieve sustainable levels of prosperity and growth	✓	High quality residential open space will help enhance the economic, social and environmental well being of Three Rivers and its marketability. The promotion of innovative and a high standard of open space design will result in positive synergistic effects for the economy, cultural heritage and townscape.		The requirement for a high standard open space design will result in positive cumulative/synergistic effects for the economy, cultural heritage, townscape and landscape.
Promote wider prosperity and fairer access to services	✓	A high quality landscape/ townscape could lead to indirect commercial benefits as well as increasing Three River's ability to attract inward investment.		Policy L.10 covers maintenance issues.
Revitalise town centres	✓	The SPD will also support economic objectives by providing employment opportunities associated with management and maintenance of open spaces.		If the targets for open space and children's play areas are too onerous the development costs may have impacts upon dwelling costs and overall housing delivery. This must be carefully managed to ensure that outcomes are feasible and make developments viable (for the developer).

### 3.3

#### *Assessment Summary*

The overall conclusion is that the draft Open Space, Amenity and Children's play space SPD and saved policies have due regard for sustainability objectives, as set out in the SA framework, with mainly positive effects and no negative effects, although a number of recommendations are proposed to further enhance the sustainability of the SPD. There is a potential for these recommendations arising from the appraisal process to be taken on board in the final stages of SPD preparation.

It is judged the saved local plan policies L.10 and L.11 do not have different effects than the SPD itself. This is to be expected as the SPD does not set any new policy or add further requirements to those set in the saved policies. The SPD provides additional detailed information for the developer in terms of costings for open space and play area provision and maintenance costs. It is considered that no significant effects either positive or negative will arise from the implementation of the SPD. Thereby a further assessment evaluating the significant effects was not required in this SA.

The implementation of the draft SPD will result in mostly local effects. This is largely due to the nature of the SPD and its implementation is unlikely to lead to significant negative effects. The time frame for effects is likely to be medium and long term primarily due to the property construction time.

## 4 Task B5: Mitigation Measures

### 4.1 *Introduction*

The evaluation of the draft SPD demonstrate that overall the draft SPD performs well against the sustainability objectives. However there are some aspects of the draft SPD that we feel could be strengthened, which will help increase its overall sustainability. A list of recommendations to be tackled as part of future SPD preparation are set out below. It is considered that the sustainability performance of the SPD will be enhanced through the incorporating these recommendations.

#### 4.1.1 *Biodiversity*

- The SPD could encourage the inter-connection of green spaces (including CWS's) to provide a network of open spaces both within and across local authority boundaries (which could incorporate cycle and pedestrian links), which will encourage biodiversity and nature conservation interest.
- Consideration of guidance to help 'design-in' biodiversity, e.g. 'Biodiversity by Design' (TCPA), 'Integrating Biodiversity in Development: Realising the Benefits' (Essex Biodiversity Partnership, 2005) and 'Environmental Quality in Spatial Planning' (available on Natural England website).
- Consideration of biodiversity value of brownfield areas and priority habitats as presented in Three Rivers BAP, and how to incorporate these areas into development design.

#### 4.1.2 *Water*

- The SPD should encourage applicants to include specific measures to enhance the water environment and to integrate water courses and ponds into open space design.
- The potential to incorporate energy saving and sustainable management techniques into maintenance plans should be encouraged, for example, best practice for watering open space.

#### 4.1.3 *Climatic Factors*

- The SPD design section could give consideration to the inclusion of creative solutions for managing extreme weather events. This

should include designing with climate change in mind. Solutions to decrease storm water run off, such as sustainable drainage, green roofs, planting and landscape enhancements should be considered.

#### 4.1.4

##### *Material Assets*

- The maintenance section could highlight the opportunities for waste recycling e.g. composting of grass cuttings, recycling of waste such as newspapers and drinks cans etc.
- The SPD should discuss maintenance techniques that will help reduce pollution, and how recycling and other sustainable practices can be implemented wherever possible.
- The SPD should encourage applicants to adopt environmentally friendly maintenance techniques.

#### 4.1.5

##### *Population and human Health*

- The SPD could encourage developers to convert unused/underused playing pitches as public open spaces.

#### 4.1.6

##### *Social Factors*

- It is suggested that the involvement of the public is an on-going process in SPD design and implementation.
- The quality of open spaces will be an important recreational resource. The SPD could include specific measures to promote access to green/open space for all sectors of society, including disabled persons.
- There are no specific measures in the design section to promote access to green/open space for all sectors of society, including disabled persons.
- The SPD design section should encourage applicants to consider the use of open space for sports development. It is envisaged that combining different uses will encourage further use of the open space, reduce maintenance cost and aid in reducing crime.
- The SPD or policy L.11 should encourage the provision of allotments for residents.
- Use of open space as display areas for local art in order to increase sense of ownership for community.
- It is considered that the SPD should give consideration to open space access for disabled people.

#### 4.1.7

##### *Economic Factors*

- The SPD could include initiatives to encourage community involvement in the management of public open space, which will increase stewardship.
- Maintenance is critical to the ongoing success of green/open spaces. Section 3.2 and Appendix 5 of the SPD identifies the need for proposals to include arrangements for maintenance.

#### 4.1.8

##### *Design Principles*

The list below provides a selection of best practice open space features which could be incorporated into the open space design section:

Central to the open space:

- Lots of seating
- Water feature
- Something of interest all year round
- Attractive to young and older people

Opportunities for Adventure Park

- Open 24/7
- Challenging equipment
- Located on a school route

One Stop Shop for Youth

- Teen shelters
- Climbing wall
- Transitional equipment
- Drop-in internet access

Extreme Sports Area

- All weather area for BMX and skateboard
- Bike Works- utilising young people with disability in providing Bike hire, bike repair, and training
- Concrete dishes
- Adult supervision 7 days a week
- Training space
- 5-a side football pitches

Children Play Area

- Fixed children's play is boring
- Aim to allow for more imaginative play

## 5 Task B6: Monitoring Proposals

### 5.1

#### *Introduction*

The SEA Directive requires that the significant environmental effects of the plan are monitored<sup>5</sup>. Monitoring of the Open Space, Amenity and Children’s Play Space SPD will help verify the performance of the SPD against the sustainable objectives.

The ODPM’s SEA Guidance states that monitoring should be based on the indicators which have been used to describe the baseline environment. Therefore it is proposed that the SA indicators outlined in the SA Framework which were developed and consulted on during the LDF Scoping Report stage, will form the basis of the SPD Monitoring Strategy. The SA team has selected key priority indicators which should form the basis of any future Monitoring Strategy. Note that work on developing the monitoring indicators is ongoing and will not be finalised until submission of the final Open Space, Amenity and Children’s Play Space SPD.

**Table 5.1 Proposed Monitoring Indicators**

Topic	Potential Monitoring Indicator
<b>Economic Factors</b>	
	Percentage rise in Gross Value Added (GVA)
<b>Social Factors</b>	
	Index of Multiple Deprivation*
	Burglaries No. per 1,000 households
	Robberies per 1000 population and percentage detected
	Violent offences committed in a public place per 1,000 population
<b>Water</b>	
	Biological and chemical river quality
	Number of properties at risk from flooding

<sup>5</sup> “Annex 1 (i): a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring in accordance with Article 10. **Article 10:** Member States shall monitor the significant environmental effects of the implementation of plans and programmes in order, inter alia, to identify at an early stage unforeseen adverse effects, and to be able to undertake appropriate remedial action.”

Topic	Potential Monitoring Indicator
<b>Biodiversity</b>	Condition of SSSIs Wildlife Sites and HBRC number and area of Wildlife Sites (CWS and LNR) No. of Wildlife Sites lost or degraded by development or gained/secured by agreements Bird Populations
<b>Air Quality</b>	Levels of key air pollutants (e.g. Benzene, 1,3-Butadiene, CO <sub>2</sub> , Lead, NO <sub>2</sub> , PM10, SO <sub>2</sub> ) within the local authority area, and within the East of England Number of days when air pollution reported as moderate or higher within the LA area Number of designated AQMAs
<b>Soil</b>	Amount of high quality agricultural land degraded/lost to development
<b>Climatic Factors</b>	Emissions of greenhouse gases (particularly CO <sub>2</sub> ) per capita grouped per type of source
<b>Population and Human Health</b>	Length and condition of cycle / footpath network Number and condition of sports facilities* Percentage of eligible open spaces managed to green flag award standards* Percentage of population with access to public open space*
<b>Material Considerations</b>	% of new homes built on previously developed land
<b>Cultural Heritage</b>	Number of Listed Buildings at Risk Number and condition of Scheduled Ancient Monuments (SAMs)
<b>Landscape and Townscape</b>	Area of designated landscapes affected by/lost to development Light pollution and tranquillity

\* Indicators of most significance to the Sustainable Communities SPD.

## 5.2

### *Next SA Steps*

This draft Sustainability Appraisal Report will be submitted with the draft SPD for public consultation in summer 2007. If any significant changes are made to the SPD as a result of the public consultation, these changes will be assessed and a final SA Report prepared. Following consultation the final SPD and Sustainability Report will then be formally adopted towards the end of 2007.