

# **Three Rivers District Council**

Local Development Framework

## **Spatial Portrait of Three Rivers**

March 2010

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
1) Introduction	1
2) Location and Context	1
3) Three Rivers Population	2
4) Three Rivers Education	2
5) Three Rivers Health	2
6) Deprivation in Three Rivers	3
7) Three Rivers Crime	3
8) Three Rivers Households	3
9) Three Rivers Housing	4
10) Three Rivers Transport	5
11) Three Rivers Environment	6
12) Three Rivers Water	7
13) Three Rivers Energy	7
14) Three Rivers Landscape	7
15) Three Rivers Biodiversity	8
16) Three Rivers Heritage	8
17) Three Rivers Economy	8
18) Three Rivers Employment	8
19) Three Rivers Retail and Town Centres	9
20) Three Rivers Settlements	9
Rickmansworth	9
South Oxhey	10
Croxley Green	10
Abbots Langley	11
Chorleywood	12
Carpenders Park	12
Oxhey Hall	12
Eastbury	13
Maple Cross	13
Moor Park	14
Kings Langley	14
Sarratt	14
Bedmond	14
21) Issues Arising from Spatial Portrait	15

## 1) Introduction

This spatial portrait sets out the social, environmental and economic characteristics that make Three Rivers the place that it is. It provides the context on which the Local Development Framework is based. Where possible, issues arising from the portrait will be addressed by the Local Development Framework.

## 2) Location and Context

Three Rivers is a sub-urban District of 88.8 square kilometres located in south-west Hertfordshire, at the extreme south west of the Eastern Region. It borders Watford and Hertsmere boroughs to the east, Buckinghamshire County (Chiltern and South Bucks Districts) to the west, St Albans City & District and Dacorum Borough to the north, and the London Boroughs of Hillingdon and Harrow to the south.

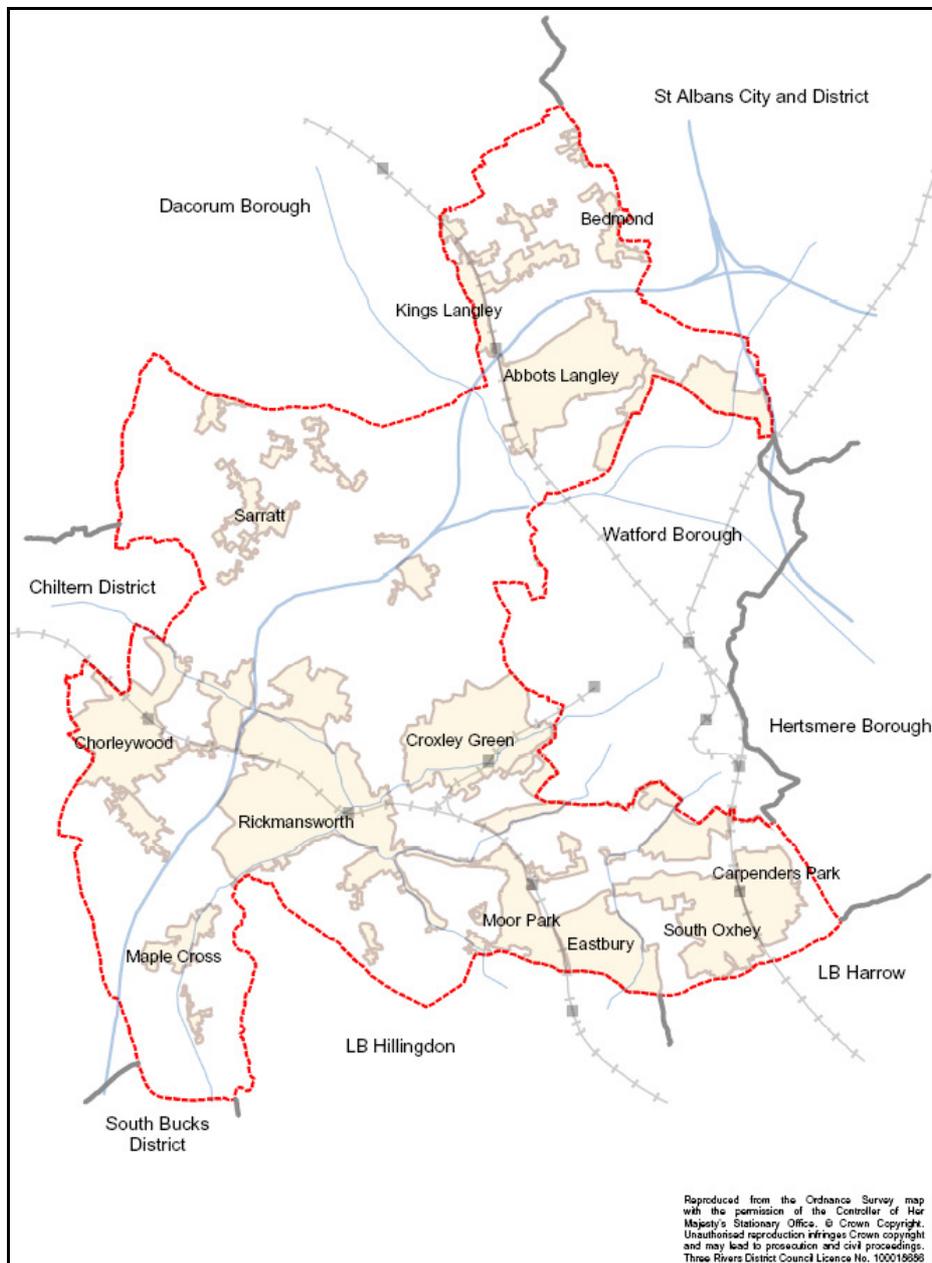


Figure 1: Three Rivers Location

The main settlements in the District are Rickmansworth, Croxley Green, South Oxhey, Abbots Langley and Chorleywood. The development of Rickmansworth, Croxley Green and Chorleywood was closely related to the arrival of Metropolitan railway stations, while South Oxhey was developed after the Second World War to alleviate housing pressures in London, and other settlements such as Abbots Langley developed more gradually. The differing heritages of Three Rivers settlements have led to a variety of different characters across the District, which have contributed to different problems and opportunities.

### **3) Three Rivers Population**

Three Rivers has a population of 87,700<sup>1</sup>. There is an ageing population and the District has a higher proportion of older residents than the County average. 21.2% of Three Rivers residents are over 60 compared to a county average of 19.7%. This trend is forecast to continue, with a 49% increase expected in households aged 65 and over by 2031<sup>2</sup>, while the population of people aged under 50 is expected to fall.

The trend towards an ageing population is consistent with national trends, and will have implications in Three Rivers on housing needs, health and support care needs, the economy and on the provision of access to services.

The minority ethnic population in Three Rivers increased between the 1991 and 2001 Census, and at 2001, 12.9% of the population were from minority ethnic groups. The minority ethnic population varies by ward, ranging from 5.2% to 39.6%, and is greatest in Moor Park and Eastbury, Chorleywood East and Carpenders Park.

### **4) Three Rivers Education**

Educational attainment in Three Rivers is generally high, however, there is a rising demand for school places, both at primary and secondary level.

A particular need for additional secondary school places in the south west of Hertfordshire area has been recognised as an issue by Hertfordshire County Council, who are seeking to identify ways of expanding capacity to serve needs.

As additional development takes place in the District, there will be a continued and potentially increased demand for education facilities that will require continued investment and infrastructure.

### **5) Three Rivers Health**

The health of people in Three Rivers is generally better than the England average, though there are inequalities by location, gender, level of deprivation and ethnicity. The South Oxhey area has been identified by the PCT as an area of opportunity to tackle health inequality.

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<sup>1</sup> ONS (2009) Mid-2008 Population Estimate.

<sup>2</sup> CLG (2009) Household Estimates and Projections 2006-2031

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/housing/xls/table414.xls>

There are no hospitals in Three Rivers, but residents are served by several hospitals situated in neighbouring Districts. Watford General Hospital provides Accident & Emergency facilities, and Hemel Hempstead and St Alban's City Hospitals provide Minor Injuries Units.

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

There are 14 GP surgeries within the District, and residents are also likely to be registered with practices outside the District.

Access to health services in the south west of the district has been identified as an issue, and housing growth in the District is expected to create a need for additional health services in the future.

## **6) Deprivation in Three Rivers**

The Indices of Deprivation are a measure of health, access to education, relative incomes, unemployment and other social and economic factors. Overall, the 2007 Indices show that Three Rivers is the 293<sup>rd</sup> least deprived local authority area out of 354 local authorities (where 1 = the most deprived and 354 = the least deprived).

However, while Three Rivers as a whole is ranked low, there is variation across the District. Wards such as Moor Park & Eastbury and Chorleywood West feature relatively low, whilst wards such as Northwick, Hayling, Ashridge, Maple Cross and Langleybury feature comparatively high.

South Oxhey is particularly affected by income deprivation; barriers to education, skills and training; and crime and disorder. Parts of Maple Cross and Mill End are affected by income deprivation, barriers to housing and services and living environment.

Some areas of the District such as Sarratt, Bedmond and Moor Park score poorly in terms of barriers to housing and services as a result of high house prices and the more rural character of the area.

The differences in rankings and pockets of deprivation highlight inequalities across the district in terms of access to services, housing, employment, education skills and training, and health which should be addressed in future.

## **7) Three Rivers Crime**

Crime is low in Three Rivers and levels are below the county average. However, fear of crime remains a prominent issue and anti-social behaviour is a concern amongst residents.

## **8) Three Rivers Households**

At the 2001 Census, there were 33,439 households in Three Rivers, and the average household size was 2.47. This is expected to fall in line with national trends towards smaller

households reflecting an ageing population, relationship breakdown and more people choosing to live alone.

At 2001, 27% of households were single person households compared to a national average of 30%, and 31% have children compared to the national average of 29%

### 9) Three Rivers Housing

Three Rivers has a relatively high proportion of detached and semi-detached housing, and a relatively low proportion of flats when compared to the rest of Hertfordshire and the national average.

The quality of housing stock in Three Rivers is generally good, although there are areas such as South Oxhey where some of the housing stock is exhibiting problems of poor thermal insulation, poor space and layout standards, and unsatisfactory access. This issue presents an opportunity for regeneration and redevelopment to address the stock problems.

Over 77% of households in Three Rivers are owner occupied. This is a higher proportion than the Hertfordshire (73%) and national (68%) averages. Just 661 households (2%) were recorded as being vacant at the time of the Census in 2001.

There is a high demand for housing in the District, particularly from people moving out of London. This is illustrated by high house prices. Three Rivers house prices are amongst the highest in the country; average house prices in Three Rivers at quarter 1 of 2009 were £319,317, and lower quartile house prices were 8.34 times higher than lower quartile incomes<sup>3</sup>. The general trend has been towards worsening affordability ratios.

The London Commuter Belt West Strategic Housing Market Assessment (2010) forecasts that even if all new housing provided in the District to meet East of England Plan targets was affordable, this would still not meet needs for affordable housing.

The result of the high demand for housing and high house prices is therefore a large gap in affordability between the costs of social renting and entry level owner occupation which has led to a significant need for affordable housing across the District.

At April 2010, there are 2,985 people on the Council's housing register seeking housing.

In 2008, ownership and management of local authority housing stock was transferred to Thrive Homes (a registered social landlord).

The existing stock of affordable housing in the District is not well matched to current needs in the District- partly as a result of 'right-to-buy' leading to the sale of larger family homes. This means that there is a deficit in family housing and a lack of accommodation for older people has also been highlighted as an issue in the District.

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<sup>3</sup> CLG Live Tables on Housing Market and House Prices  
<http://www.communities.gov.uk/housing/housingresearch/housingstatistics/housingstatisticsby/housingmarket/livetables/>

A lack of affordable housing can lead to people moving out of the District and to recruitment problems for local businesses and public sector organizations. Where firms have difficulty attracting staff to 'high cost' regions, wages may be higher, but this risks the competitiveness of firms in the area.

There is a need to provide housing to meet local needs, and there is a particular need to provide affordable housing in the District.

Between 1991 and 2009, 4813 new dwellings have been built, and nearly all of these have been within existing built up areas. This has led to particular concern that infrastructure provision has not matched the levels of new housing and that quality and availability have been affected as a result.

### **10) Three Rivers Transport**

The District is on the outer fringe of London and benefits from excellent road and rail connections. Heathrow and Luton airports are in close proximity and Gatwick and Stansted are about an hour away.

The M1 and M25 motorways run through the District. Work is ongoing to widen the M25 to increase capacity to cope with high levels of traffic and is due to be completed in 2012.

The West Coast main line, the Chiltern Line and the London Underground Metropolitan line railways all serve the District, providing links to London and the north, as well as more local connections. Demand for rail services remains high, although access to and parking at stations are a pressure.

Bus networks provide an important service in the District, particularly for more rural areas. However, these routes are often uneconomic to operate and networks in the District are shrinking. These services require support to maintain access to essential services for people without access to a car. Limited services between Abbots Langley and Watford General Hospital, and South Oxhey and Watford General Hospital have also been identified as an issue for local communities.

Car ownership in the District is high; 84% of households had at least one car or van. This is above the Hertfordshire (82%) and England (73%) averages. In the more rural wards, car ownership levels are even higher, with 92% of households in Sarratt and 94% of households in Chorleywood East having access to at least one car or van. Traffic levels in Three Rivers are forecast to grow 21% by 2021, and there are existing local congestion problems.

Despite high car ownership levels, there are still households without access to a car or van, and this can have significant impacts on access to services, particularly for households in rural areas.

Dependency on the car has social, economic and environmental consequences. There is therefore a need to enable and promote more sustainable modes of transport to improve travel options, increase access to services, reduce the environmental impacts of travel and promote the sustainability of the District.

## 11) Three Rivers Environment

Three Rivers District is a mixture of beautiful countryside, villages and small towns. The three rivers that give the District its name (the Rivers Colne, Gade and Chess) are important resources for the district in terms of landscape, biodiversity and access to open space, and form the basis of the District's Green Infrastructure network.

Over three-quarters (77%) of the District is designated as Green Belt, and the Green Belt boundaries are generally closely related to the urban areas of the number of small and medium sized settlements distributed fairly evenly across the district. The populations of the main settlements are shown in Figure 2.

<b>Settlement</b>	<b>Approx. Population</b>
Rickmansworth	9,500
South Oxhey	12,000
Croxley Green <sup>1</sup>	11,500
Abbots Langley <sup>4</sup>	10,500
Chorleywood <sup>1</sup>	7,000
Carpenders Park	5,000
Mill End	5,000
Oxhey Hall	3,000
Eastbury	3,000
Maple Cross	2,000

**Figure 2:** Population of Three Rivers Settlements

Rickmansworth is the principal town in the District, but no one town dominates. Many Three Rivers residents also rely on towns in neighbouring areas for work, shopping and leisure purposes including parts of north London, Watford, Hemel Hempstead and St Albans. The District remains fairly 'self-sufficient' in a number of areas including the provision of everyday local facilities, services and recreation, however the dispersed settlement pattern across the District raises issues for provision of some higher order services, and for the maintenance of the viability of shops and services in the villages and small towns as these compete with larger centres in adjoining districts.

In the past, the level of new development on previously developed land has been very high, however the supply of sites is becoming more limited as available sites in the towns and villages are used up. Future development will need to make the best use of previously developed land as it becomes available in all of the Districts towns and villages, however there may be opportunities for higher levels of development on previously developed land in South Oxhey as part of any regeneration/ redevelopment here.

Green Belt designation across the majority of the District contributes to the attractiveness of the area, and the high quality of life of residents. However, given the finite availability of previously developed land, in the future there will be a challenge in maintaining the extent of

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<sup>4</sup>The population of the wider parish areas are significantly higher than the population of the settlements alone

the Green Belt whilst also providing for local housing and employment needs, and meeting regional targets.

As well as having intrinsic value, the environment of Three Rivers is significant in influencing the character of the District and supporting the quality of life of local communities.

Climate change is expected to impact on the environment (which will subsequently affect the economy and local community). There is uncertainty surrounding the exact likely impacts of climate change, but recognising that there are likely to be impacts and acting to try and reduce, mitigate or respond to them is therefore a priority for the District in order to maintain and where possible improve the attractiveness of the area and quality of life and environment.

## **12) Three Rivers Water**

Three Rivers is an area of 'serious' water stress, and the Environment Agency have suggested that all water courses in the District would fail to meet 'good status' under the Water Framework Directive, with common concerns over the impacts of excessive nutrients and low flow levels.

Waste water from Three Rivers (and much of South West Hertfordshire) is dealt with at Maple Lodge Sewage Treatment Works which is approaching capacity.

Parts of the District are within identified flood zones.

## **13) Three Rivers Energy**

Gas and electricity consumption levels are high, above the regional and national averages<sup>5</sup>. Consumption will need to be reduced in further to contribute to the sustainability of the District and to meeting targets for the reduction of carbon emissions.

Current commercial renewable energy capacity in the District is limited to a wind turbine at Kings Langley, and a co-firing biomass plant at Maple Cross. There are also domestic renewable energy installations, the majority of which are solar panels.

## **14) Three Rivers Landscape**

The landscape of Three Rivers is a complex mix of rural and urban areas, woodlands, wildlife habitats, farmland, water features and other land forms. The landscape has been heavily altered by human activity so many distinctive features such as field boundaries are of historical interest as well as visual and ecological merit.

546ha of the Chiltern's Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty is also contained within Three Rivers. Within Three Rivers, the AONB is sparsely populated, however change within and near to the AONB needs to be managed to recognise the need to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the landscape.

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<sup>5</sup> DECC Sub National Energy Consumption Statistics  
<http://www.decc.gov.uk/en/content/cms/statistics/regional/regional.aspx>

### **15) Three Rivers Biodiversity**

Biodiversity is an integral part of the character of Three Rivers and contributes to the high quality of life in the area. There are five Sites of Special Scientific Interest, nine Local Nature Reserves, and 152 local wildlife sites. These sites cover a variety of wildlife species in a diverse range of habitats.

Climate change and new development in the District and surrounding areas may have an impact on biodiversity, and it will therefore be important to manage any change, and to promote Green Infrastructure and linkages across the District to support biodiversity.

### **16) Three Rivers Heritage**

Three Rivers contains 351 nationally Listed buildings, many locally important buildings, 22 conservation areas, three Scheduled Ancient Monuments, two registered parks and gardens, as well as 18 sites of archaeological interest. All of these heritage assets contribute to the character and quality of the District, and retention of them is a priority to protect local character and maintain the attractiveness of the District.

### **17) Three Rivers Economy**

The District has a mixed economy of business and industry. It is more dependent on the public sector and service employment than England, and is attractive to small businesses often relocating from London.

There is no dominant employer but the head or regional offices of a number of large national and international companies are located in Three Rivers (examples include Nissan, BT, Cadbury-Trebor-Basset and Comet). These are complemented by small businesses, and the film studios at Leavesden are an internationally acclaimed site for making blockbuster films.

Each weekday, 17,000 workers come into the District compared to 27,000 going out (Source: Census, 2001). This is the second highest daily outflow of commuters in Hertfordshire and reflects the high importance of the adjacent London job market. It will be important in the future to provide a balance of new homes and jobs to try and address commuting levels.

Securing increased business investment in the area will be necessary to maintain the mixed economy of Three Rivers, and to provide continued opportunities for local employment.

### **18) Three Rivers Employment**

Unemployment levels in Three Rivers are historically low compared to other parts of the country, although they have increased as a result of the recession. In January 2010, the Three Rivers claimant count rate was 2.5%, compared to 3% in Hertfordshire and 4.3% nationally. The July 2008 to June 2009 Annual Population Survey estimates unemployment at a rate of 4.5% in Three Rivers.

The average annual income for Three Rivers is £45,395 and is the highest in Hertfordshire (Source: Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, 2009).

The majority of employees are engaged in managerial, administrative, clerical, and secretarial positions, principally in the banking, finance, distribution and catering sectors. While there are local employment opportunities within the District, many residents rely on London, Watford and Hemel Hempstead to provide employment.

### **19) Three Rivers Retail and Town Centres**

Rickmansworth is the principal shopping and service centre in the District, and provides a range of facilities. South Oxhey, Abbots Langley and Chorleywood centres provide a varied but more limited range of shops and services, while there are smaller centres serving more local needs in Croxley Green.

The District remains fairly self-sufficient in the provision of everyday facilities and services, but faces competition from larger centres in Watford, Hemel Hempstead and St Albans, particularly in relation to higher order shops and services.

In order to support self-sufficiency in future, reducing the need to travel to centres further away, it will be necessary to maintain the vitality and viability of the centres.

### **20) Three Rivers Settlements**

The overall portrait of the District shows that it is a diverse area with contrasting characteristics which have led to different issues and opportunities. While many priorities apply across the whole District, others apply more specifically to certain settlements.

A summary of the main issues and opportunities in each of the main areas is therefore provided.

#### **Rickmansworth**

As the principal settlement in Three Rivers, Rickmansworth provides the greatest range of shops and services in the District. Maintaining the vitality and viability of these will be important to maintaining the town's competitiveness and to provide access to services for local people.

The town began to grow in the 1920s and 1930s as part of the metroland area due to the arrival of the Rickmansworth Station. As such it is largely a commuter town; however there are local employment opportunities at the nearby Tolpits Lane Industrial Estate, and also in the town centre which provides office space, as well as employment opportunities in retail and the service sector. While there are some vacancies in Rickmansworth office space, retaining floorspace should support the functioning of the town as a viable mixed use centre.

Future growth at Rickmansworth should make the best use of previously developed land, recognising the sustainability of the location in relation to town centre shops and services and public transport concentrated around the station and along bus corridors.

However, growth will also need to respect the character of the area. The town contains a range of building styles and materials, with a number of Nationally Listed and Locally Important Buildings. Rickmansworth Town Centre was designated a Conservation Area in

1974 and extended in 1980 to include the Victorian development of the town. Three further conservation areas were designated between 1998 and 2006 to the west of the Town Centre as good examples of “metroland” development.

It will also be important to respect the natural environment of the town. The Rivers Colne, Gade, Chess and the Town Ditch, as well as the Grand Union Canal flow through or past Rickmansworth, so flood risk is a consideration, and may become more important as a result of climate change. The Green Infrastructure resource surrounding the town is significant and means that there is limited potential for development outside the existing urban area.

Towards the west of Rickmansworth, access to health facilities is an identified problem. Any additional growth of the town will need to provide for appropriate infrastructure to support this growth.

### **South Oxhey**

South Oxhey was developed after the Second World War to alleviate housing pressures in London. As a result, there are a higher proportion of social rented dwellings in the town. Although this social rented stock has reduced as a result of right to buy, problems of quality have been identified with some of this stock.

South Oxhey does have a range of shops and services, and the only civic space in Three Rivers. However the shops and services available are not always appropriate to the needs of local people.

Areas of South Oxhey exhibit higher levels of deprivation than the rest of the District, and there are particular inequalities surrounding access to services, housing, employment, education skills and training, and health

Regeneration and redevelopment of the area may promote opportunities to tackle these issues, and to provide necessary services in a more efficient way. Regeneration and redevelopment means that there may be a greater potential for development in the area to take place on previously developed land. However, any development will need to invest in the infrastructure of the area to ensure that there is no adverse impact on service provision that would affect existing or new communities.

There may be some potential for future development to take place around some edges of the existing urban area, however opportunities to the north and west are limited by Green Infrastructure resources, and to the east by the railway line and development at Carpenders Park.

### **Croxley Green**

The main settlement of Croxley Green is situated along New Road and Watford Road. Most of the houses were built in the 1930's as “metroland” development following the arrival of the station.

The Green and its buildings at the west of the village were designated as a conservation area in 1980, and there is a further conservation area designated at Dickinson Square.

The village does not have a main retail centre, and instead there are several small shopping parades including west and east of Baldwins Lane, New Road, Watford Road and Scots Hill. Maintaining the vitality and viability of these parades will be important to ensuring centres can meet local daily needs, supporting the sustainability of the village in future.

At the east of the village, there are proposals to create a rail link between the Metropolitan line, and mainline services at Watford Junction. This would improve access to Watford, London and the North.

Future growth at Croxley Green should make the best use of previously developed land, however, there may also be opportunities for development around the edges of the existing urban area recognising the availability of services. Development will need to support Green Infrastructure surrounding and with Croxley Green, and this may limit opportunities for development to the south of the village.

Any additional development will require investment in existing and new infrastructure to ensure that access to services is not adversely affected for new or existing residents of the area.

Employment land at Croxley Business Park is a good quality and important resource in supporting the economy of Three Rivers and providing opportunities for local employment and the broad extent of employment floorspace should therefore be retained.

### **Abbots Langley**

Abbots Langley provides a significant resource for shops and services in the north of the District, and it will be important to maintain the vitality and viability of these to ensure continued access to services for residents.

Future growth at Abbots Langley should make the best use of previously developed land, however, there may also be opportunities for development around the edges of the existing urban area recognising the availability of services. However, any additional development will require investment in existing and new infrastructure to ensure that access to services is not adversely affected for new or existing residents of the area.

It will also be necessary for development to support Green Infrastructure surrounding and within Abbots Langley, and in particular Leavesden Country Park which also has an important role in preventing the coalescence of Watford and Abbots Langley.

Development will need to respect the character of the settlement. The centre of Abbots Langley is the oldest conservation area in Three Rivers, and contains a number of listed buildings including the Grade I listed Church of St Lawrence the Martyr.

The Leavesden Aerodrome site to the south of Abbots Langley is a significant resource, providing an important source of employment land for high quality offices, and Leavesden Studios which are key to the UK film industry. The site also offers potential for future mixed use development to support the creation of sustainable communities.

## **Chorleywood**

The development of the majority of Chorleywood followed the opening of the Metropolitan railway line and station, and the Chorleywood Station conservation area to the south of the station seeks to preserve the 'metroland' development.

The Common to the north of Chorleywood is a significant resource; it is a conservation area, a local nature reserve, and contains a number of listed and locally listed buildings. It also provides a nine-hole golf course, riding track and cricket pitch and an important open space resource.

To the north and west of Chorleywood is the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Future growth at Chorleywood will need to make the best use of previously developed land. While there may be opportunities for development around the edges of the existing urban area recognising the availability of services, these will be limited by the Common to the north, the AONB to the north and west, and existing development to the east. Any additional development that does take place will require investment in existing and new infrastructure to ensure that access to services is not adversely affected for new or existing residents of the area.

Chorleywood provides a significant range of shops and services as a District Centre, and maintaining the vitality and viability of this centre will be important to ensuring centres can meet local daily needs, supporting the sustainability of the village in future.

## **Carpenders Park**

Carpenders Park is an area of mainly post-war housing that has developed alongside the station on the main Watford to Euston railway. It is mainly residential, but also includes a small employment area, and local shops and services serving the local community, while facilities in South Oxhey and Watford are also close by.

Future development at Carpenders Park should make the best use of previously developed land. There may be opportunities for development around the edges of the existing urban area, however the availability of services is less than at other higher order settlements in the District.

Any new development will need to support Green Infrastructure surrounding and within Carpenders Park, limiting potential for development to the north and south of the settlement. New development will also require investment in existing and new infrastructure to ensure that access to services is not adversely affected for new or existing residents of the area.

## **Oxhey Hall**

Oxhey Hall is a relatively small residential area to the south of Watford. The properties are mainly 1930's 'metroland' development and the core of the settlement was designated as a conservation area in 2007.

Oxhey Hall is reliant on surrounding settlements for the provision of shops and services, and while there may be potential for development to take place on previously developed land, there is therefore limited potential for additional development here without additional infrastructure provision.

Any new development will need to support Green Infrastructure surrounding and within Oxhey Hall. In particular, this limits potential for development outside the existing urban area to the south and east of the settlement.

### **Eastbury**

Eastbury is primarily a residential area, and is home to HMS Warrior. Apart from a primary school, there are limited services within the settlement, and residents are reliant on surrounding areas.

Any development at Eastbury should make the best use of previously developed land. Opportunities for development around the edges of the existing urban area are limited as a result of existing development and Green Infrastructure resources.

Any development that does take place will require investment in infrastructure to ensure that access to services is not adversely affected for new or existing residents of the area.

### **Maple Cross**

Maple Cross is a mainly residential area with a large proportion of the housing being affordable housing or formerly Council owned purchased under 'right to buy'.

The area has limited services, with the exception of a primary school and local shop, and is therefore reliant on surrounding areas. Access to healthcare provision has been identified as a particular issue for the area.

The settlement includes an important and good quality employment area which provides offices for many multinational businesses, and this site is significant in providing local employment opportunities for the District.

Maple Cross is also the location of the Thames Water Maple Lodge Sewage Treatment Works which together with the sewage works in Aldenham serve the whole of west Hertfordshire.

Maple Cross is located within the Colne Valley Regional Park which is an important resource for wildlife and recreation, and should be safeguarded from inappropriate development.

Any future growth at Maple Cross should make the best use of previously developed land. There may also be opportunities for development around the edges of the existing urban area, but this will need to support Green Infrastructure, including the Colne Valley Regional Park, and any additional development will require investment in existing and new infrastructure to ensure that access to services is not adversely affected for new or existing residents of the area.

## **Moor Park**

Moor Park is primarily a residential area, the majority of which is designated as a conservation area. The settlement includes a rail station on the Metropolitan line, and some local shops and services, however Moor Park is reliant on surrounding areas for some services.

The settlement is surrounded by existing development and Green Infrastructure resource, therefore potential for development around the existing urban area is limited. The conservation area also limits potential for new development on previously developed land within the urban area.

## **Kings Langley**

Kings Langley is a village on the boundary of Three Rivers and Dacorum councils. While the part of the village within Dacorum provides a range of shops and services, the Three Rivers part is residential interspersed with employment land, although there is also a train station on the West Coast Main Line.

Past trends in the Three Rivers part of Kings Langley have seen the conversion of employment land to residential.

Any future growth at Kings Langley should make the best use of previously developed land, however growth will need to respect the natural environment. The River Gade, and the Grand Union Canal flow through Kings Langley, so flood risk is a consideration, and may become more important as a result of climate change. The Green Infrastructure resource (and existing development) surrounding Kings Langley is significant and means that there is limited potential for development outside the existing urban area.

## **Sarratt**

Sarratt is a small village within the Green Belt. It provides some limited local services for local communities, but is reliant on surrounding areas for higher order services. The centre of the Village is designated as a conservation area.

Some deprivation exists in Sarratt as a result of poor access to services from the rural character of Sarratt, and barriers to accessing housing.

## **Bedmond**

Bedmond is a small village within the Green Belt to the north of Abbots Langley. It provides some limited local services for local communities, but is reliant on surrounding areas for higher order services.

Some deprivation exists in Bedmond as a result of poor access to services from the rural character of Sarratt, and barriers to accessing housing.

## 21) Issues Arising from Spatial Portrait

- House prices in Three Rivers are very high, and affordability has been worsening. Alongside the need to provide more housing to meet forecast housing growth, there is therefore a particular need to achieve more affordable housing, and to provide more family sized affordable housing.
- There will be a challenge to maintaining the extent of the green belt while providing for local housing and employment needs and meeting regional targets.
- There is a high dependency on the car, particularly in rural parts of the District. There is therefore a need to enable and promote more sustainable modes of transport to improve travel options, increase access to services and reduce the environmental impacts of travel.
- There is a need for increased business investment in the area to provide local employment opportunities to try and reduce levels of out-commuting, which are currently high reflecting the importance of the London job market on Three Rivers.
- There is an ageing population which will lead to differing demands on services and housing. These demands will need to be met whilst ensuring that the District remains attractive and accessible to younger people to support the economic development of Three Rivers.
- While the District as a whole is ranked low in terms of deprivation, there are inequalities. South Oxhey is particularly affected by income; barriers to education, skills and training; and crime and disorder. Parts of Maple Cross and Mill End are affected by income, barriers to housing and services and living environment. More rural parts of the District are affected by barriers to housing and access to services.
- Existing infrastructure requires investment to cope with growth in the District. In particular, a requirement for additional secondary school places has been identified, and there is a need for improved access to healthcare services in the south west of the District. Any new development will require an appropriate level of investment in infrastructure to ensure that new and existing communities are able to access the services that they require.
- The dispersed pattern of settlements across the District affects the provision of shops and services, and the vitality and viability of existing centres. These need to be maintained to continue to meet local needs and contribute to the sustainability of settlements.
- It is important to continue to achieve high levels of new development on previously developed land, but in general, the supply of previously developed land is falling. The exception to this may be in South Oxhey where potential for redevelopment and regeneration highlights an opportunity to make better use of land in the area, achieving higher levels of development on previously developed land.

- Climate change may have significant impacts on Three Rivers which will need to be responded to, and it will be important to try and reduce and mitigate these impacts as far as possible.
- The attractiveness of the District as a place where people want to live and work depends in part on the environment which is a factor of the landscape, biodiversity and open spaces (Green Infrastructure), as well as heritage. It is very important that these are maintained to sustain the character of the area and its attractiveness.
- Housing stock in the District is generally good quality and does not present particular concerns. The exception is in South Oxhey where some stock is now in need of significant updating.
- Levels of crime in the District are low, however there is a need to tackle fear of crime and antisocial behaviour.

The key issue for the future of Three Rivers will be making provision for new development required in the District to meet local needs and East of England Plan targets, whilst protecting the environment and maintaining or improving the quality of life of Three Rivers' communities.