

## **POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE - 8 MARCH 2021**

### **LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – 10 MARCH 2021**

#### **COUNCIL – 18 MAY 2021**

#### **PART I – NOT DELEGATED**

### **8. CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY 2021-2026**

#### **1 Summary**

- 1.1 Three Rivers District Council heard the climate change motion on Tuesday 21 May 2019 at Full Council. The motion asked for the details of a strategy to be brought for consideration by the Council. It requested the Council to work with partners in the public and private sectors and engage with residents and businesses to gain their input and support when developing the strategy.
- 1.2 The motion commits the Council to use all practical means to reduce the impact of council services on the environment and use planning regulations and the Local Plan to cut carbon emissions. It also calls for help from the Government to provide the support and resources needed to progress the action plan.
- 1.3 A draft Climate Change Strategy was presented to the LEC Committee on 7<sup>th</sup> October 2020 which was recommended by the Committee for public consultation. The Consultation was formally completed on 30<sup>th</sup> November 2020.
- 1.4 This report presents the revised Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy, (attached at Appendix A) which includes new ambitions in relation to climate change and sustainability, our achievements so far, and how we can lead, enable and engage individuals and businesses to adopt pro-environmental behaviours to reduce their environmental impacts. The associated action plan will be developed and used by officers to deliver the strategy once agreed.

#### **2 Details**

- 2.1 Local Authorities play an important role in delivering national and international climate mitigation targets and climate adaptation measures. They can drive and influence emissions reductions and improve resilience in their areas through: the services they deliver, their role as community leaders and major employers, and their regulatory and strategic functions. For district councils this can include more energy efficient buildings and assets; changes to vehicle fleet and travel arrangements; changes to procurement and contract management; embracing reduce/reuse/recycling; improved flood protection; planning; regeneration; community development and educating and enabling our communities to be enhance public awareness.
- 2.2 Three Rivers District Council has been delivering a number of projects which contribute to tackling climate change and biodiversity decline. A review of our achievements were highlighted in the Full Council report in February 2020, with the highlights and new achievements also identified in the strategy, Appendix A.
- 2.3 The new Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy 2021-2026, attached at Appendix A, has been produced following public consultation and officer reviews in response to the consultation. The strategy is a live document which will be reviewed

regularly to ensure it reflects any policy changes across the themes over the next 5 years across.

### **3 The Consultation**

- 3.1 The Council wished to ensure that public, voluntary and business stakeholders had a say in the content of the Three Rivers Climate Change Strategy and the findings reported back to the Leisure and Environment Committee and the Policy and Resources Committee. The full online consultation results are in Appendix C.
- 3.2 The online survey attracted 356 respondents, and although the number of respondents was not especially high, this consultation was unique in the depth and detail of the comments stakeholders contributed, making the survey highly constructive.
- 3.3 The demographic of respondents was predominantly people of white British ethnicity (representing 80% of respondents) who identify as female (representing 54% of respondents).
- 3.4 Those aged between 45-64 years old comprised the majority - 54% of respondents.
- 3.5 Residents of Chorleywood, Croxley Green and Rickmansworth were most represented in the survey.
- 3.6 Council Officers from a range of departments, including those from planning, property, procurement, transport, waste, landscapes and biodiversity, were invited to review and respond to the survey comments relevant to their area of expertise, and consequently strongly influenced the objectives concerning their policy areas.
- 3.7 In addition to the survey, work and consultation with the, Local Strategic Partnership, Environmental Forum, Local Area Forums and a number of local groups took place from September to December 2020.
- 3.8 Numerous valuable suggestions generated by the Consultation have informed the revised version of the strategy and the action plan that will follow.

### **4 Key Findings:**

- 4.1 The aims and objectives of the strategy were consistently endorsed and encouraged, with a widely-shared sense of urgency regarding the Climate Crisis, Biodiversity Loss and the ubiquitous problem of environmental degradation; namely water pollution and littering.
- 4.2 Given this collective sense of urgency, a notable theme in the feedback was the passionate appeal for District-wide decarbonisation to be achieved well before 2050.
- 4.3 Respondents were enthusiastic about involving the community in realising the goal of net-zero, and recognised the importance of collaborative action by the Council with a range of stakeholders.
- 4.4 Despite this extensive support, there were some concerns over the cost of implementing the measures laid out in the strategy, and some people expressed doubt over the Council's capacity to implement measures that were viewed as ambitious in relatively short timescales.

- 4.5 While many emphasised the necessity of strong action, some participants were worried that enacting certain measures like promoting sustainable transport would negatively impact themselves, financially or in terms of convenience.
- 4.6 Numerous people felt that these strategy proposals had to be supported by more stringent regulations and policies, for example, by incorporating strict sustainable development standards into the Local Plan.
- 4.7 Respondents felt that there was a shared responsibility for action among local government, business and industry as well as local residents, and therefore widely suggested both urging local businesses to enhance the sustainability of their practices, alongside engaging the public in educational campaigns to encourage the adoption of pro-environmental behaviours.

## **5 Changes to the Strategy resulting from the Consultation**

- 5.1 To reflect the collective sense of urgency among residents who passionately appealed for district-wide decarbonisation to be achieved *well* before 2050, the strategy has been amended to adopt the more ambitious target of achieving net-zero for the District's emissions by 2045 at the latest, in order to increase our chances of limiting global warming to the crucial 1.5°C threshold outlined in the 2015 Paris Agreement.
- 5.2 The consultation responses highlighted that the original strategy did not sufficiently address the issue of climate adaptation. We have therefore revised the strategy to include an additional section dedicated to 'Adaptation and Resilience' and information on the likely impacts of climate change in Three Rivers.
- 5.3 In addition, the consultation revealed a popular interest in food production and consumption and its relationship to climate change and wider ecological issues such as biodiversity loss, in acknowledgement of this, a new section has been added to the strategy titled 'Food and Agriculture'.
- 5.4 In response to the recurring criticism that some of the language and terminology used in the strategy was not accessible, the strategy's Supplementary Document now includes a 'Glossary of Key Terms' where specialist terms such as 'decentralised energy' and 'circular economy' are fully-defined.

## **6 Summary of Key Themes**

- 6.1 The new strategy aims to define the action the Council can take to:
- Achieve net-zero carbon emissions for its own emissions by 2030 and for the entire district by no later than 2045.
  - Influence others both directly and indirectly to mitigate the negative impacts their lifestyles and choices have on the environment.
  - Ensure all new developments achieve the highest possible standards of sustainable design and construction and are resilient to the unavoidable impacts of climate change.
  - Improve energy efficiency in the District's existing buildings.
  - Enable and encourage greater use of sustainable transport modes in the District.

- Further incorporate the principles of sustainability and circular economy into its operations.
- Protect and enhance local biodiversity.
- Reduce water consumption, prevent water pollution, and mitigate and provide resilience to the increasing risk of flooding due to climate change.
- Create communities, services, infrastructure and ecosystems that are resilient to the unavoidable impacts of the climate and ecological crises.
- Encourage sustainable food production and consumption in the District.

6.2 Through this Strategy, Three Rivers District Council are committing to transform how we tackle the climate and ecological crises facing us, with the following themes embedded in the Strategy:

- Enable And Engage
- Energy
- Sustainable Design And Construction
- Efficiency of Existing Buildings
- Sustainable Travel And Air Quality
- Waste And A Circular Economy
- Biodiversity
- Water And Flooding
- Adaptation and Resilience
- Food and Agriculture

6.3 The Council is also a member of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership which is working together to deliver joint initiatives across the county in line with local strategies and working towards the government's carbon-zero target.

6.4 Carbon neutrality is a term used to describe the action organisations, businesses and individuals take to remove as much carbon dioxide from the atmosphere as each put in to it. The overall goal of carbon neutrality is to achieve a net-zero carbon footprint.

6.5 Three Rivers' (the Council and the District), emissions are currently being investigated through a technical assessment in order to create a baseline and set target milestones which will be included in the Action Plan to support the overarching Strategy. The Action Plan will be reviewed annually to reflect the advancement in technology and to keep them in line with the national targets and policies.

## **7 Reasons for Recommendations**

7.1 At the time of declaring a Climate Emergency, the Council committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions by 2030. This is clarified as being for its own emissions, which is a similar pledge made by neighbouring councils such as Dacorum, Watford, St Albans, and Welwyn and Hatfield. This Strategy will:

- Enable the Council to reduce its own operational emissions down to net-zero emissions by 2030 and assist the District to achieve net-zero by 2045, with key milestones along the way.
- Further the implementation of sustainability, moving from a take-make-waste economy to a circular one in Council operations and through encouragement across the District.

- Enable the Council to influence the land use and operational impact of residents, businesses and organisations to reduce and offset their own emissions;
- Help build resilience against the unavoidable impacts of climate change on Council services;
- Promote net-zero carbon and sustainable development of the Council and the District as part of a green recovery from COVID-19; and
- Improve the health, well-being and life quality of Three Rivers' residents.

7.2 As a consequence of the Environmental Bill five environmental principles may be placed into law for the first time. The Government is creating the Office for Environment Protection (OEP), a new environmental watchdog which will ensure environmental law is enforced and be able to hold the Government to account on achieving targets set. Residents will be able to complain to the OEP if they think their council is not adhering to environmental protection regulations.

7.3 Central Government has committed to achieving net-zero carbon emissions no later than 2045. A delay in acting on reducing emissions will require more radical interventions in the future, at a greater cost and with more severe impacts on the residents of Three Rivers and society at large.

7.4 Public attitudes will have a significant impact on the success of the Strategy in terms of the behavioural change required to realise fundamental lifestyle changes. The Council can play a major role in enabling and facilitating this across the district through promotional campaigns and working with communities and businesses.

## 8 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

8.1 The new Corporate Framework 2020-2023 outlines “Sustainable Environment” as a key theme with the following priorities:

- We will produce and deliver a Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan
- We will continue to improve the energy efficiency of the Council’s buildings
- We will deliver and implement a Cycling and Walking Strategy
- We will seek to maintain our position as the highest recycling authority in Hertfordshire

8.2 The recommendations in this report relate to the achievement of the following current performance indicators, which are being reviewed in line with the new Corporate Framework.

<b>ESD10</b>	Home Energy Conservation Authority Report Actions	Community Partnerships
<b>ESD11</b>	Greenhouse gas emissions reported as CO2 equivalent	Community Partnerships
<b>EH01</b>	Pollution Service Requests	Environmental Health
<b>EP01</b>	Percentage household waste recycled	Environmental Protection
<b>EP03</b>	The kg of household waste collected per head per annum	Environmental Protection

<b>EP04</b>	The Percentage change in Kg per head from the previous year	Environmental Protection
<b>EP06</b>	Tonnes of residual waste	Environmental Protection
<b>EP08</b>	Cost of Waste collection per household	Environmental Protection
<b>EP09</b>	Residual household waste per household	Environmental Protection
<b>EP10</b>	Percentage of household waste sent for reuse, recycling and composting	Environmental Protection
<b>CP02</b>	Satisfaction with parks and open spaces	Community Partnerships
<b>CP03</b>	Satisfaction with refuse collection	Community Partnerships
<b>CP04</b>	Satisfaction with doorstep recycling	Community Partnerships
<b>CP17</b>	Reduce fly tipping across the District	Community Partnerships
<b>LL32</b>	To manage TRDC woodland estate to an assured standard (Year 1 to achieve UKFS Management Plans for woodland estate)	Leisure and Landscape
<b>LL34</b>	To maintain accreditation for Green Flag (annual)	Leisure and Landscape
<b>LL35</b>	To ensure all of our key open spaces have a current management plan in place	Leisure and Landscape

8.3 The impact of the recommendations on this/these performance indicator(s) is:

Some performance indicators may change as a result of the new Strategy. We will also look at introducing new performance indicators to ensure the Strategy and Action Plan are monitored accordingly.

## **9 Community Safety Implications**

9.1 None specific.

## **10 Financial Implications**

10.1 Additional budget will be required over the medium and long term to enable the Council to achieve the targets that it has committed too. This will need to be approved in the usual way, either through Policy and Resources or through the Strategic, Service and Financial Planning process.

10.2 Officers will actively seek grant funding and have already been successful in securing the Green Homes Grant which will support the delivery of the strategy. A number of initiatives will also be delivered in partnership to realise efficiencies. For example the Biodiversity Baseline study will be funded 50% by Hertfordshire County Council and the remainder split between all ten Local Authorities in Hertfordshire.

- 10.3 Areas of the Council which emit carbon will require an action plan and subsequent business case (growth PIDs) to consider the cost of removing carbon emissions. These business cases should consider green funding options, the suitability of low or zero carbon technology, the savings over lifetime and the carbon offsetting required if no action is taken. The carbon pricing review taking place in Government is likely to lead to additional carbon taxes in the future, which would have financial implications on the Council.

## 11 Legal Implications

- 11.1 The Council is required to display the DEC (Display Energy Certificates) ratings of its building in a visible prominent place.
- 11.2 All elements of the strategy will need to be considered alongside the Council's legal duties and powers.

## 12 Equal Opportunities Implications

- 12.1 Relevance Test

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact? An ERT has been completed for the strategy.	Yes
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required? Full impact assessments will be completed for projects where necessary.	No

## 13 Staffing Implications

- 13.1 None specific.

## 14 Environmental Implications

- 14.1 The development of this Strategy sets out to improve the environment. This includes the Council's direct impact through our operations, indirect impact through our powers to influence local activity or by using our influence to encourage local residents and businesses to reduce their impact on the environment.

## 15 Public Health implications

- 15.1 The strategy will contribute to a prevention of deterioration of health and well-being issues arising from the consequences of climate change such as overheating, skin cancers, decline in productivity, and air respiratory illnesses. It considers priorities to promote improvements in Home Energy Efficiency and the Herts Warmer Homes project which promote positive health and wellbeing as well as energy reduction outcomes.

## 16 Customer Services Centre Implications

- 16.1 None specific.

## 17 Communications and Website Implications

17.1 The delivery of the Strategy will involve promotion and consultation including use of the website as well as for individual projects in the future.

## 18 Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

18.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at Three Rivers District Council Risk Management Strategy. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

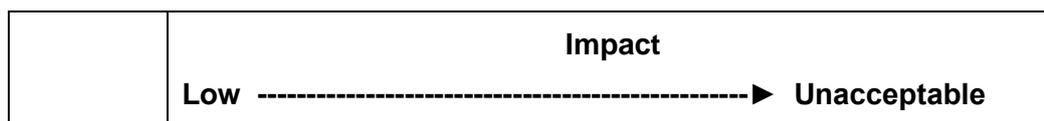
18.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Community Partnerships, Environmental Protection, Regulatory Services, Property Services, Economic and Sustainable Development, and Leisure service plans. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within these plans.

<b>Nature of Risk</b>	<b>Consequence</b>	<b>Suggested Control Measures</b>	<b>Response</b> <i>(tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)</i>	<b>Risk Rating</b> <i>(combination of likelihood and impact)</i>
The Council fails to develop the Strategy on climate change and sustainability.	The Council will fail to deliver improvements to address climate change within the District.	For the Committee to approve the Final Strategy.	Tolerate	4
The Council fails to act to reduce its' emissions	The Council 2030 pledge is unlikely to be met, unless a co-ordinated programme of activity is implemented.  The Council will not be addressing the Climate Emergency and thus will contribute further to the increase in global warming and its' consequences. (For details of risk see Climate	For the Committee to approve the Final Strategy.	Treat	6

	Change Strategy Supplementary document)			
Possible increase in construction costs for developers	Affordable Housing targets may not be met.	All councils are facing the same issues due to forthcoming Environment Bill and Future Homes Standards. Need to work with stakeholders to encourage wider knowledge and adoption of new technologies such as off-site manufacture.	Tolerate	6

18.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

<b>Very Likely</b> Remote ----- Likelihood ----- ↓	<b>Low</b> 4	<b>High</b> 8	<b>Very High</b> 12	<b>Very High</b> 16
	<b>Low</b> 3	<b>Medium</b> 6	<b>High</b> 9	<b>Very High</b> 12
	<b>Low</b> 2	<b>Low</b> 4	<b>Medium</b> 6	<b>High</b> 8
	<b>Low</b> 1	<b>Low</b> 2	<b>Low</b> 3	<b>Low</b> 4



<b>Impact Score</b>	<b>Likelihood Score</b>
4 (Catastrophic)	4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
3 (Critical)	3 (Likely (21-79%))
2 (Significant)	2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
1 (Marginal)	1 (Remote (≤5%))

18.4 In the officers' opinion, the new risk above, were it to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and is therefore a strategic risk. The management of strategic risks are reviewed by the Policy and Resources Committee.

Description of the risk	Service Plan
The Council fails to develop the Strategy on climate change and sustainability.	Community Partnerships, Environmental Protection, Regulatory Services, Property Services, Economic and Sustainable Development, Leisure and Landscapes

Progress against the treatment plans for strategic risks is reported to the Policy and Resources Committee quarterly. The effectiveness of all treatment plans are reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

## 19 Recommendations

19.1 For the Policy and Resources Committee to:

Recommend the proposed Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy to Council for adoption subject to any comments made by the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee.

Report prepared by: Rebecca Young, Acting Head of Community Partnerships  
Joanna Hewitson, Climate Change Strategy Officer

### Data Quality

Data sources:

Service and Officer Updates

Consultation Results

Strategies and action plans by other authorities.

Data checked by: Elen Roberts, Climate Change, Recycling and Sustainability Officer

Data rating:

<b>1</b>	<b>Poor</b>	
<b>2</b>	<b>Sufficient</b>	✓
<b>3</b>	<b>High</b>	

**Background Papers - none**

**APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS**

Appendix A Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy 2021 - 2026

Appendix B The Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy Supplementary Document

Appendix C Consultation Results