

CHAPTER 3: SPATIAL VISION AND STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

- 3.1 The Core Strategy sets out the long term Spatial Vision for Three Rivers and the strategic policy objectives required to deliver that Vision.
- 3.2 The Spatial Vision is about what Three Rivers should be like in 2026, and has been developed to address the issues and opportunities arising from the Spatial Portrait of Three Rivers³, as well as to reflect the priorities and concerns of the local community as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy and responses received as part of public consultation.

Spatial Vision

Looking forward to 2026 and beyond, the District will remain a prosperous, safe and healthy place where people want and are able to live and work.

The priorities for the future are:

- a) To provide growth required to support local communities and provide for their needs in the most sustainable way possible
- b) To locate growth in the most sustainable locations in terms of access to services and transport networks and impact on the environment
- c) To improve access to housing and affordable housing for communities across the whole District
- d) To provide opportunities for local employment and maintain the vitality and viability of existing centres across the District, reducing the need to travel
- e) To promote sustainable transport options to improve access for all communities and reduce dependence on the car
- f) To support growth with appropriate investment in infrastructure to ensure that new and existing communities can access services that they require
- g) To reduce inequalities across the District, in particular through regeneration of the South Oxhey area
- h) To recognise opportunities to make the best use of land whilst minimising adverse impacts on the character of the District and minimising harmful changes to the built, historic and natural environment
- i) To recognise opportunities to improve and enhance the built, historic and natural environment wherever possible

³ Spatial Portrait of Three Rivers (2010)
<http://www.threerivers.gov.uk/Default.aspx/Web/EvidenceBase>

- j) To limit changes to the Green Belt that will be necessary to accommodate some growth required to locations which result in the least harm to Green Belt and sustainability objectives.

All growth will need to be sustainable so that the present needs of residents and businesses in Three Rivers can be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. New development will need to mitigate its impact on the causes of climate change and should be resilient to climate change impacts. Opportunities to reduce the impacts on the environment of existing built stock will be supported.

In essence, future development must secure a balanced provision between homes and jobs that also safeguards and enhances the environment, maintains the Green Belt, secures good services and facilities for all and achieves a sustainable transport system. Growth required in the District will maintain or improve the quality of life of Three Rivers' communities.

- 3.3 In order to implement and deliver the Local Development Framework's Vision, the following Strategic Objectives have been identified. These follow on from the Spatial Vision and the issues and opportunities for Three Rivers identified in the Spatial Portrait of Three Rivers. These objectives are key in helping the vision become a reality and provide more specific direction for the Spatial Strategy, Place-Shaping Policies and Core Policies, which are developed in later sections of the Core Strategy.

Strategic Objectives

- S1. To ensure that development in Three Rivers recognises and safeguards the District's distinctive character of small towns and villages interspersed with attractive countryside and Green Belt, through sustainable patterns of development**

Development in the District needs to be achieved whilst protecting the very assets that make Three Rivers unique and help maintain a high quality of life. There will remain a strong commitment to the protection of the Green Belt which occupies 77% of the area of the District, although it is recognised that some minor adjustments to the Green Belt boundary may be necessary over the plan period to meet development needs, prevent over-development in some areas and generally promote a sustainable pattern of development. Changes to the Green Belt will be on the edges of existing urban areas. Change will be limited to locations which result in the least harm to Green Belt and to sustainability objectives. Changes will not result in the loss of more than 1% of the total Green Belt area in the District.

- S2. To make efficient use of previously developed land**

The re-use of land in the urban area is necessary to act as a stimulus for existing settlements, to concentrate development in the most accessible areas and to protect more open parts of the District. It may also facilitate the remediation of any areas of contaminated land. Continuing to achieve at least 60% of new development on previously developed land (PDL) will remain a priority for Three Rivers. However,