THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Three Rivers House
Northway
Rickmansworth
Herts WD3 1RL

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

NOTICE AND AGENDA

For a meeting to be held on Wednesday, 15 March 2023 at 7.30 pm in Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth

Members of the Leisure Environment and Community Committee:-

Councillors:

Roger Seabourne Lead Member for Community Safety and Partnerships (Co Chair)
Chris Lloyd (Lead Member for Leisure) (Co-Chair)
Phil Williams (Lead Member for Environmental Services, Climate Change and Sustainability) (Co-Chair)
David Major
Jon Tankard
Stephen King
Debbie Morris
Rue Grewal
Ciaran Reed
Anne Winter
Chris Mitchell

Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive
7 March 2023

Lead Member Responsibilities:

Leisure– Arts development and facilities, Leisure and Community Grants, Leisure Development and Facilities, Open Spaces, Play Areas and Play Development, Public Health Strategy, Sports Development and Facilities, Wellbeing, Woodlands.

Environmental Services, Climate Change & Sustainability Air pollution and Noise Pollution, Animal and Pest Control, Cemeteries and Crematorium; Refuse collection and recycling; Street Cleaning and litter bin emptying; Sustainability, Climate Change and Energy Efficiency.

Community Safety and Partnerships –

- To review or scrutinise decisions made, or other action taken, in connection with the discharge by the responsible authorities of their crime and disorder functions (it is the Crime and Disorder Committee for the purposes of the Police and Justices Act 2006);
- To make reports or recommendations to the Council with respect to the discharge of those functions;
- The Committee will be able to co-opt members from the Responsible Authorities (the Community Safety Partnership) should it wish to when reviewing certain projects/decisions.

(We are required by law to have a scrutiny committee to carry out this function)

Disease Control, Food Inspection, Health and Safety, Health and social care, Licensing activities covered by the Licensing Acts, Licensing and Regulatory activities outside the Licensing Acts, Public Spaces Protection Orders, Unlawful Encampments

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public to aid discussions on agenda items at the Infrastructure, Housing and Economic Development Committee meetings. Details of the procedure are provided below:

For those wishing to speak:

Members of the public are entitled to register and identify which item(s) they wish to speak on from the published agenda for the meeting. Those who wish to register to speak are asked to register on the night of the meeting from 7pm.

Please note that contributions are limited to one person speaking for and one against each item for not more than three minutes.

In the event of registering your interest to speak on an agenda item but not taking up that right because the item is deferred, you will be given the right to speak on that item at the next meeting of the Committee.

Those wishing to observe the meeting are requested to arrive on the night of the meeting from 7pm.

In accordance with The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 any matters considered under Part I business only of the meeting may be filmed, recorded, photographed, broadcast or reported via social media by any person.

Recording and reporting the Council's meetings is subject to the law and it is the responsibility of those doing the recording and reporting to ensure compliance. This will include the Human Rights Act, the Data Protection Legislation and the laws of libel and defamation.

The meeting will not be broadcast/livestreamed but an audio recording of the meeting will be made.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

2. MINUTES

To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee meeting held on Wednesday 23 November 2022.

3. NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

Items of other business notified under Council Procedure Rule 30 to be announced, together with the special circumstances that justify their consideration as a matter of urgency. The Chairman to rule on the admission of such items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest.

5. BUDGET MONITORING - PERIOD 10 (Pages 7 - 20)

This report covers this Committees financial position over the medium term (2022 – 2025) as at Period 10 (end of January)

The Period 10 comprehensive Budget Management report has already been presented to the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 13 March 2023 which sought approval to a change in the Council's 2022 - 2025 medium-term financial plan

6. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA) EXTENSION (Pages 21 - 30)

This report provides details of community based services, provided to vulnerable residents within the district under Service Level Agreements, for which the Council contributes funding.

The Committee is asked to approve the proposed extensions of the identified Service Level Agreements for a further 3 years together with the associated expenditure. The expenditure is accounted for within existing Community and Leisure budgets.
The Committee is asked to approve the continuation of support for the Community Support Service and Domestic Abuse Caseworker Service, the expenditure for which

is accounted for within existing Community and Leisure budgets
The Committee is asked to approve the proposed expenditure and extension of the existing Service Level Agreement with Citizens Advice Service Three Rivers (CASTR).

7. ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM TERMS OF REFERENCE (Pages 31 - 48)

This report presents to a draft revised Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Environmental Forum for comment and approval.

8. DRAFT CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY (Pages 49 - 154)

The Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy was adopted by committee March 10 2021 and by Full Council 25 May 2021. This was followed up by an Action Plan which was agreed at LEC 13 October 2021 and has been reviewed at LEC bi-annually since.

The purpose of this report is to present an update to the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy with the draft strategy detailed at Appendix 1.

The revised Strategy has been prepared with consideration to the bespoke reports commissioned, consultation with all relevant officers, reflection on progress to date, and an understanding of how urgent the climate emergency is for residents of Three Rivers, and to ensure Three Rivers complies with the Climate Change Act (revised 2019) target for the UK achieving net zero by 2050.

The draft strategy has been prepared as a sequel to the current strategy and supplementary document to the strategy.

The Council has commissioned and received two critical reports, namely the APSE Route to Zero (Council and District) report (Appendix 2) on how the Council's strategy should address the climate emergency. The Council's emissions from April 2018 to March 2022 are shown at Appendix 3, and the District baseline emissions are included in Appendix 2. This data informed our understanding of the scale and scope of the decarbonisation challenge for both the Council and the District.

Climate change is a core pillar of the Council's new Corporate Framework. Through this strategy the Council will consider the climate emergency and sustainability in all its decisions, steering council operations towards net-zero by 2030. It demonstrates strong leadership to inspire and influence the District to achieve net-zero by 2045 and acknowledges that mitigation alone is no longer sufficient to combat climate change; climate adaptation is now also critical to the future of our District.

9. THREE RIVERS NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY (Pages 155 - 196)

The purpose of this report is to summarise the content and implications of the Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy, and recommend that the final version of the Strategy is adopted by Three Rivers District Council.

Appendix A details the Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy.

10. BIODIVERSITY OPPORTUNITIES AUDIT, ALTERNATIVE GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT AND TREE STRATEGY UPDATE (Pages 197 - 248)

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit (BOA), the Alternative Grassland Management (AGM) initiative adopted in March 2022, and the Tree Strategy adopted in January 2022 and to make recommendations for future years.

11. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 249 - 256)

To review and make necessary changes to the Committee's work programme

12. OTHER BUSINESS - if approved under item 3 above

13. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

If the Committee wishes to consider the remaining item in private, it will be appropriate for a resolution to be passed in the following terms:-

"that under Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined under paragraphs 1 to 7 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Act. It has been decided by the Council that in all the circumstances, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information."

(Note: If other confidential business is approved under item 3, it will also be necessary to specify the class of exempt or confidential information in the additional items.)

General Enquiries: Please contact the Committee Team at
committeeteam@threerivers.gov.uk

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE - 15 MARCH 2023
PART I - DELEGATED

5. BUDGET MONITORING – PERIOD 10
(DoF)

1. Summary

1.1 This report covers this Committees financial position over the medium term (2022 – 2025) as at Period 10 (end of January)

1.2 The Period 10 comprehensive Budget Management report has already been presented to the Policy & Resources Committee at its meeting on 13 March 2023 which sought approval to a change in the Council's 2022 - 2025 medium-term financial plan

2.0 Details

2.1 This Committee's details can be found in Appendix 1 of the full Budget Management Report, a copy of which is attached.

3. Options/Reasons for Recommendation

3.1 The Committee is to note the changes concerning their budget.

4. Policy / Budget Reference and Implications

4.1 In accordance with the Council's financial procedure rules, the revenue and capital budgets will be updated accordingly, if the recommendation from the Policy & Resources Committee is agreed by Council.

4.2 There are no substantial changes to Council policy resulting from this report.

5. Legal, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, and Health & Safety Implications

5.1 None specific.

6. Financial Implications

6.1 As contained in the report

7. Risk Management and Health and Safety Implications

7.1 None specific.

8. Recommendation

8.1 That Members note & comment on the contents of the report.

Report prepared by: Sally Riley (Finance Business Partner)
Checked by: Hannah Doney (Head of Finance)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Leisure, Environment and Community Detailed Monitoring Report

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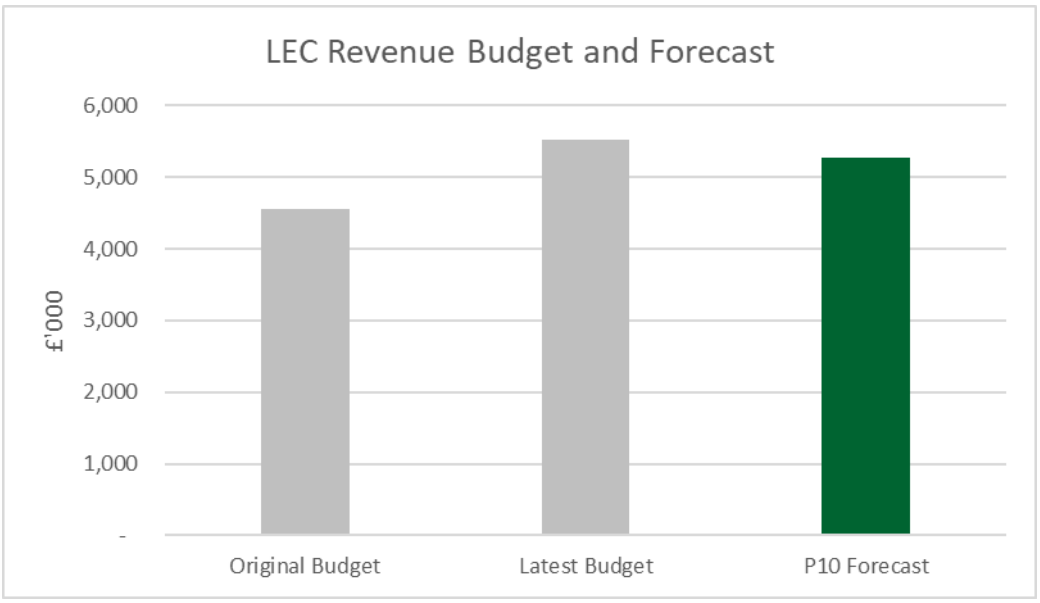
Leisure, Environment and Community Committee Detailed Monitoring Report

Overview

1. This appendix sets out the detailed financial monitoring position for budgets within the scope of the Leisure, Environment and Community (LEC) Committee. The forecast is based on the position as at Period 10 which covers the period from 1 October 2022 to 31 January 2023.

Revenue

2. The latest forecast is net expenditure of £5.278m against the latest budget of £5.524m, a variation of (£0.246m). The detailed revenue budgets and MTFP forecast is set out in Annex A.



Service Area	Original Budget £000	Latest Budget £000	Yearend Forecast £000	Forecast Variation to Budget £000
Community Safety and Partnerships	1,089	1,209	1,208	(1)
Leisure	1,120	1,874	1,850	(24)
Environmental Services	2,346	2,441	2,221	(221)
Total	**4,555**	**5,524**	**5,278**	**(246)**

3. Annex B sets out the main variations to budget.

Income Streams

4. The key income streams are detailed in Annex E. All are currently on target to achieve budget income levels in 2022/23.

Capital Investment Programme

5. The latest capital investment budget for 2022/23 is £4.289m. A favourable variation of £0.797m is reported in relation to the rephasing of capital projects into 2023/24.

6. Detailed Capital budgets and explanation of key variations are set out in Annex C and Annex D respectively.

Staff Vacancy Monitoring

7. A major risk of non-delivery of service is where key staff leave the Council's employ and there is a delay or difficulty in recruiting suitable candidates to fill the vacant post. There are no service impacts to report as a result of current vacancies.

8. The following table sets out the vacancies as at 31 January 2023.

Department	Job Title	Comments	Total
Environmental Protection	Loader	Currently advertised	3.00
	Street Cleansing Operative	Recently advertised	1.00
	Waste and Recycling Administrator	Not currently advertised	1.00
	Grounds Maintenance Operative	Not currently advertised	1.00
	Grounds Maintenance Trainee Operative	Not currently advertised	1.00
	HGV Driver	Recently advertised	3.00
Residential Environmental Health	Senior Housing Enforcement Officer	Recently advertised	1.00
Watersmeet	Front of House Manager	Currently advertised	1.00
Total LEC			**12.00**

Annex A
LEC Committee Medium Term Revenue Budget Service

Leisure, Environment & Community									
Community Safety & Partnership	**Original Budget 2022/23**	**Latest Budget 2022/23**	**Spend to Date**	**Forecast Outturn 2022/23**	**Variance @ P10**	**Forecast 2023/24**	**Forecast 2024/25**	**Forecast 2025/26**	**Officer Comments**
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Citizens Advice Bureaux	303,340	303,340	257,340	303,340	0	303,340	303,340	303,340	Accommodation costs actioned at year end
Community Development	4,500	4,500	(38,771)	4,500	0	4,500	4,500	4,500	Actuals includes grants which are yet to be paid out
Community Safety	273,695	306,460	260,286	302,245	(4,215)	217,274	218,103	218,103	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Corporate Climate Change	93,600	160,141	(1,493,195)	160,141	0	98,085	98,902	98,902	Actuals include Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund grant which will be spent by year end
Community Partnerships	198,215	210,441	173,343	217,206	6,765	209,387	211,303	211,303	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Env Health - Commercial Team	209,790	209,790	190,894	191,790	(18,000)	209,790	209,790	209,790	Full budget for Private Contractors not required this year
Licensing	(74,100)	(65,786)	(88,355)	(51,536)	14,250	(66,261)	(66,050)	(66,050)	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. £300 Publications budget and £5,000 Licences budget not required this year. £20,000 reduction in driver income and £10,000 reduction in vehicle income due to alternative options (UBER) and economic climate offset by an £8,350 increase in licences income
Community & Leisure Grant	80,000	80,000	57,181	80,000	0	80,000	80,000	80,000	Grants to be paid out
Total	**1,089,040**	**1,208,886**	**(681,277)**	**1,207,686**	**(1,200)**	**1,056,115**	**1,059,888**	**1,059,888**	

LEC Committee Medium Term Revenue Budget Service cont.

Leisure	Original Budget 2022/23 £	Latest Budget 2022/23 £	Spend to Date £	Forecast Outturn 2022/23 £	Variance @ P10 £	Forecast 2023/24 £	Forecast 2024/25 £	Forecast 2025/26 £	Officer Comments
Abbots Langley Project	0	0	133,304	0	0	0	0	0	Budget is fully funded by S106 monies
Community Sports Network Csn	0	0	(4,970)	0	0	0	0	0	Actuals includes grant funding
Community Arts	10,600	8,420	3,575	8,420	0	11,400	11,400	11,400	Budget will be spent
Watersmeet	64,990	51,745	(160,148)	46,905	(4,840)	5,406	2,181	2,181	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Leavesden Ymca	(35,000)	(35,000)	(32,432)	(35,000)	0	(35,000)	(35,000)	(35,000)	Income is received quarterly.
Oxhey Hall	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)	0	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)	Budget met
Trees And Landscapes	189,360	228,560	113,546	228,560	0	244,360	244,360	244,360	Budget will be spent - part funded by S106 monies for Leavesden Country Park
Museum	(700)	(700)	(700)	(700)	0	(700)	(700)	(700)	Budget met
Playing Fields & Open Spaces	80,225	133,225	237,158	176,345	43,120	97,731	97,731	97,731	Increase in Supplier costs for Electricity £11,550 and usage for Water Rates £9,570. Reduced income of £22,000 due to less demand of football pitches
Play Rangers	50,915	56,004	49,122	55,604	(400)	56,495	56,416	56,416	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Comm Parks & Sust Project	22,000	22,000	5,512	22,000	0	24,200	24,200	24,200	Budget will be spent
Aquadrome	16,390	16,390	47,644	49,478	33,088	16,550	16,550	16,550	Increase in supplier costs for Electricity £25,120, usage for Water Rates £3,344 and Rates £624. Reduction of income of £4,000 for fishing rights
Leisure Venues	(737,480)	(168,961)	(169,797)	(168,961)	0	(479,640)	(514,893)	(514,893)	Budget will be spent
Leisure Development	482,960	518,117	439,914	530,027	11,910	519,504	519,600	519,600	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Play Development - Play schemes	37,940	37,940	27,312	37,940	0	42,940	42,940	42,940	Budget will be spent
Sports Devel-Sports Projects	43,200	38,940	31,734	38,940	0	45,550	45,550	45,550	Budget will be spent
Leisure & Community Services	130,120	137,151	108,084	127,181	(9,970)	121,355	121,277	121,277	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Grounds Maintenance	767,495	833,144	577,509	736,264	(96,880)	735,553	737,518	737,518	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Total	**1,120,015**	**1,873,975**	**1,403,367**	**1,850,003**	**(23,972)**	**1,402,704**	**1,366,130**	**1,366,130**	

LEC Committee Medium Term Revenue Budget Service cont.

Environmental Services	Original Budget 2022/23 £	Latest Budget 2022/23 £	Spend to Date £	Forecast Outturn 2022/23 £	Variance @ P10 £	Forecast 2023/24 £	Forecast 2024/25 £	Forecast 2025/26 £	Officer Comments
Refuse Domestic	(19,695)	(19,695)	(10,482)	(19,695)	0	(23,370)	(23,370)	(23,370)	Budget will be spent
Refuse Trade	(218,075)	(103,496)	(271,265)	6,629	110,125	(37,465)	(37,465)	(37,465)	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. £4,320 budget being transferred to Animal Control for noise monitoring equipment
Recycling General	750	750	(4,387)	(740)	(1,490)	750	750	750	increased income received for recycling textile bank contract
Garden Waste	(416,960)	(433,115)	(774,983)	(439,640)	(6,525)	(595,543)	(595,543)	(595,543)	Increased income received from garden waste subscriptions £1,525 and extra income received from transport subsidy £5,000
Clinical Waste	(44,585)	(17,451)	(63,225)	(20,641)	(3,190)	(31,678)	(31,678)	(31,678)	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Recycling Kerbside	(90,790)	(547,378)	(337,247)	(605,234)	(57,856)	(318,613)	(318,613)	(318,613)	Increased income of £87,930 on recycling credits from Herts CC and £13,280 on Organic Waste Recycling expected from Herts CC. Increase income of £16,646 from Pearce for Recycling disposal, however, although income was being received until December, there has been a recent change in market conditions and we are now paying to process recycling, which requires a budget of £60,000. This will be kept under review.
Abandoned Vehicles	250	250	170	250	0	250	250	250	Demand led service
Pest Control	76,922	78,800	78,413	78,800	0	80,755	12,755	12,755	Budget will be spent
Environmental Maintenance	25,980	25,980	15,816	19,685	(6,295)	25,970	25,970	25,970	full budget for Boundary Way not required this year
Animal Control	58,850	62,582	55,350	71,297	8,715	62,305	62,253	62,253	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. Budget of £4,320 transferred from trade refuse for noise monitoring equipment. Reduction in income of £860 for return of strays and £1,980 for Vets fees as these are demand led services for which there have not been any this year
Cemeteries	(188,330)	(188,330)	(160,249)	(188,330)	0	(208,623)	(208,623)	(208,623)	Budget will be spent
Hertfordshire Fly Tipping	0	0	(10,861)	0	0	0	0	0	Ring-fenced grant monies
Environmental Protection	358,985	392,794	304,833	349,879	(42,915)	389,553	389,685	389,685	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Depot-Batchworth	34,940	37,940	58,539	52,940	15,000	35,380	35,380	35,380	Increase in supplier costs for electricity
Waste Management	2,222,160	2,551,856	2,186,411	2,304,711	(247,145)	2,360,909	2,261,172	2,261,172	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. Agency Staff employed. Increased income of £10,000 received from Transports Subsidy
Street Cleansing	545,215	599,924	518,354	610,714	10,790	632,375	633,545	633,545	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.
Total	**2,345,617**	**2,441,411**	**1,585,188**	**2,220,625**	**(220,786)**	**2,372,955**	**2,206,468**	**2,206,468**	

Total Leisure Environment & Community	**4,554,672**	**5,524,272**	**2,307,278**	**5,278,314**	**(245,958)**	**4,831,774**	**4,632,486**	**4,632,486**	

Annex B
LEC Committee Explanations of revenue variances reported this Period

Leisure, Community and Environmental Services			
Description	**Main Group Heading**	**Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget**	**2022/23 £**
Community Safety	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	(4,215)
Community Partnerships	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	6,765
Env Health - Commercial Team	Third Party Payments	Full budget for Private Contractors not required this year	(18,000)
Licensing	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	(2,100)
	Supplies and Services	£300 Publications budget and £5,000 Licences budget not required this year	(5,300)
	Income	£20,000 reduction in driver income and £10,000 reduction in vehicle income due to alternative options (UBER) and economic climate offset by an £8,350 increase in licences income	21,650
Total Community Safety & Partnership			**(1,200)**
Description	**Main Group Heading**	**Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget**	**2022/23 £**
Watersmeet	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	(4,840)
Playing Fields & Open Spaces	Premises	Increase in Supplier costs for Electricity £11,550 and usage for Water Rates £9,570	21,120
	Income	Reduced income due to less demand of football pitches	22,000
Play Rangers	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	(400)
Aquadrome	Premises	Increase in supplier costs for Electricity £25,120, usage for Water Rates £3,344 and Rates £624	29,088
	Income	Reduction of income for fishing rights	4,000
Leisure Development	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	11,910
Leisure & Community Services	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	(9,970)
Grounds Maintenance	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	(96,880)
Total Leisure			**(23,972)**

LEC Committee Explanations of revenue variances reported this Period cont.

Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2022/23 £
Refuse Trade	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	114,445
	Supplies and Services	£4320 being transferred to Animal control for noise monitoring equipment	(4,320)
Recycling General	Income	increased income received for recycling textile bank contract	(1,490)
Garden Waste	Income	Increased income received from garden waste subscriptions £1,525 and extra income received from transport subsidy £5,000	(6,525)
Clinical Waste	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	(3,190)
Environmental Maintenance	Supplies and Services	full budget for Boundary Way not required this year	(6,295)
Kerbside Recycling	Supplies and Services	A Budget of £60,000 is required as there has been a recent change in market conditions and we are now paying to process recycling. This will be kept under review.	60,000
	Income	Increased income of £87,930 on recycling credits from Herts CC and £13,280 on Organic Waste Recycling expected from Herts CC. Increase income of £16,646 from Pearce for Recycling disposal, however, although income was being received until December, there has been a recent change in market conditions and we are now paying to process recycling. This will be kept under review.	(117,856)
Animal Control	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	1,555
	Supplies and Services	Budget of £4,320 transferred from trade refuse for noise monitoring equipment	4,320
	Income	Reduction in income of £860 for return of strays and £1,980 for Vets fees as these are demand led services for which there have not been any this year	2,840
Environmental Protection	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements.	(42,915)
Depot - Batchworth	Premises	Increase in supplier costs for electricity	15,000
Waste Management	Employees	Variance includes revised employee estimates which takes into account vacancies and changes in pay elements. Agency Staff employed	(237,145)
	Income	Increased income of £10,000 received from Transport Subsidy	(10,000)
Street Cleansing	Employees	2022/23 Pay Award and Future years salary realignment	10,790
Total Environmental Services			**(220,786)**
Total Leisure, Community & Environment Services			**(245,958)**

Annex C

LEC Medium term capital investment programme

Leisure, Environment & Community															
Community Safety & Partnership	**Original Budget 202/23£**	**Latest Budget 2022/23 £**	**P10 Spend To Date £**	**Forecast Outturn 2022/23 £**	**Variance £**	**Latest Budget 2023/24 £**	**Proposed 2023/24 £**	**Variance £**	**Latest Budget 2024/25 £**	**Proposed 2024/25 £**	**Variance £**	**Latest Budget 2025/26 £**	**Proposed 2025/26 £**	**Variance £**	**Comments**
Capital Grants & Loans	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	20,000	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	0	
Community CCTV	6,000	6,805	887	6,805	0	6,000	6,000	0	6,000	6,000	0	6,000	6,000	0	Budget will be spent
Total	**6,000**	**6,805**	**887**	**6,805**	**0**	**6,000**	**6,000**	**0**	**26,000**	**26,000**	**0**	**26,000**	**26,000**	**0**	
Leisure	**Original Budget 202/23£**	**Latest Budget 2022/23 £**	**P10 Spend To Date £**	**Forecast Outturn 2022/23 £**	**Variance £**	**Latest Budget 2023/24 £**	**Proposed 2023/24 £**	**Variance £**	**Latest Budget 2024/25 £**	**Proposed 2024/25 £**	**Variance £**	**Latest Budget 2025/26 £**	**Proposed 2025/26 £**	**Variance £**	**Comments**
Heritage & Tourism Initiative	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Budget is funded entirely from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and S106 monies
Denham Way MUGA	347,000	433,750	247,878	433,750		0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent
Barton Way MUGA	0	29,979	11,242	29,979	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent
Alternative Grassland Management	0	40,000	37,845	40,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent
Aquadrome	22,500	23,416	14,551	23,416	0	22,500	22,500	0	22,500	22,500	0	22,500	22,500	0	Budget will be spent
South Oxhey Playing Fields	375,000	468,750	0	0	(468,750)	0	468,750	468,750	0	0	0	0	0	0	CIL Budget to be rephased to 2023/24. Planning application currently being considered.
Watersmeet Electrical	40,000	40,000	0	17,000	(23,000)	0	23,000	23,000		0			0		£23,000 to be rephased to 2023/24 due to contract delay
Scotsbridge-Chess Habitat	8,190	8,190	0	0	(8,190)	0	8,190	8,190	0	0	0	0	0	0	Project being led by Countryside Management Service - complex project with multiple landowners. Consultation and approval required by the Environment Agency, including identifying and seeking external funding. Deferred to the following year
Leisure Facilities Improvement	16,000	21,039	18,086	21,039	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent - part funded by Changing Places Grant
Open Space Access Improvements	60,000	95,400	27,680	95,400	0	60,000	60,000	0	60,000	60,000	0	60,000	60,000	0	Budget will be fully spent on works within parks and open spaces
Improve Play Area-Future Schemes	15,000	38,507	11,286	38,507	0	115,000	115,000	0	120,000	120,000	0	120,000	120,000	0	Budget will be spent
Aquadrome-Whole Life Costing	11,000	11,798	2,970	11,798	0	11,000	11,000	0	11,000	11,000	0	11,000	11,000	0	Budget will be spent
Watersmeet-Whole Life Costing	20,000	20,000	15,842	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	0	Budget will be spent
Pavilions-Whole Life Costing	11,000	11,000	1,368	11,000	0	11,000	11,000	0	11,000	11,000	0	11,000	11,000	0	Budget will be spent
Outdoor Fitness Zones	54,400	108,800	0	108,800	0	27,200	27,200	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent. Project part funded by S106 monies.
Watersmeet Projector	0	0	0	0	0	80,000	80,000	0	0	0			0		
Sub-total Leisure	**980,090**	**1,350,629**	**388,748**	**850,689**	**(499,940)**	**346,700**	**846,640**	**499,940**	**244,500**	**244,500**	**0**	**244,500**	**244,500**	**0**	

LEC Medium term capital investment programme cont.

Environmental Services	Original Budget 202/23£	Latest Budget 2022/23 £	P10 Spend To Date £	Forecast Outturn 2022/23 £	Variance £	Latest Budget 2023/24 £	Proposed 2023/24 £	Variance £	Latest Budget 2024/25 £	Proposed 2024/25 £	Variance £	Latest Budget 2025/26 £	Proposed 2025/26 £	Variance £	Comments
Waste Plant & Equipment	25,000	63,958	42,236	63,958	0	25,000	25,000	0	25,000	25,000	0	25,000	25,000	0	Budget will be spent
Waste Services Depot	300,000	459,348	412,112	459,348	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Budget will be spent
Replacement Bins	115,000	115,000	109,184	115,000	0	115,000	115,000	0	115,000	115,000	0	115,000	115,000	0	Budget will be spent
Waste & Recycling Vehicles	1,887,000	1,887,000	1,016,523	1,674,000	(213,000)	645,000	858,000	213,000	800,000	800,000	0	800,000	800,000	0	£213,000 rephased to 2023/24 as the purchase of 2 smaller replacement refuse collection vehicles deferred to next financial year
Energy Performance Certificate	2,000	2,000	1,305	1,700	(300)	2,000	2,300	300	2,000	2,000	0	2,000	2,000	0	£300 rephased to 2023/24. All EPC's undertaken, further review to be carried out in 23/24
Cemetery-Whole Life Costing	5,000	5,854	2,303	5,854	0	5,000	5,000	0	5,000	5,000	0	5,000	5,000	0	Budget will be spent
ement Ground Maintenance Vehicles	397,923	397,923	313,706	313,923	(84,000)	180,000	264,000	84,000	540,000	540,000	0	540,000	540,000	0	£84,000 rephased to 2023/24 as a replacement Tractor and an electric gator deferred to next financial year
Sub-total Environmental Services	**2,731,923**	**2,931,083**	**1,897,368**	**2,633,783**	**(297,300)**	**972,000**	**1,269,300**	**297,300**	**1,487,000**	**1,487,000**	**0**	**1,487,000**	**1,487,000**	**0**	
.eisure, Environment & Community	**3,718,013**	**4,288,517**	**2,287,003**	**3,491,277**	**(797,240)**	**1,324,700**	**2,121,940**	**797,240**	**1,757,500**	**1,757,500**	**0**	**1,757,500**	**1,757,500**	**0**	

Annex D

LEC Explanations of capital variances reported this Period

Description	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2022/23 £	2023/24 £	2024/25 £	2025/26 £
Leisure, Environment & Community					
South Oxhey Playing Fields	CIL Budget to be rephased to 2023/24. Planning application currently being considered.	(468,750)	468,750	0	0
Watersmeet Electrical	£23,000 to be rephased to 2023/24 due to contract delay	(23,000)	23,000	0	0
Scotsbridge-Chess Habitat	Project being led by Countryside Management Service - complex project with multiple landowners. Consultation and approval required by the Environment Agency, including identifying and seeking external funding. Deferred to the following year	(8,190)	8,190	0	0
Waste & Recycling Vehicles	£213,000 rephased to 2023/24 as the purchase of 2 smaller replacement refuse collection vehicles deferred to next financial year	(213,000)	213,000	0	0
Energy Performance Certificate	£300 rephased to 2023/24. All EPC's undertaken, further review to be carried out in 23/24	(300)	300	0	0
Replacement Ground Maintenance Vehicles	£84,000 rephased to 2023/24 as a replacement Tractor and an electric gator deferred to next financial year	(84,000)	84,000	0	0
Total Leisure, Environment & Community		**(797,240)**	**797,240**	**0**	**0**

Annex E
LEC Key Income Streams

Waste Management

Trade Refuse Contract fees	Month	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	
		£	Volume	£	Volume	£	Volume	£	Volume
	April	(346,064)		(280,745)		(342,837)		(374,524)	
	May	(1,459)		417		(23,082)		(2,105)	
	June	(1,614)		(20,476)		(3,124)		(297)	
	July	(1,652)		(10,195)		(2,934)		(328)	
	August	(419)		(2,013)		(235)		(1,417)	
	September	(1,394)	955	(1,827)	866	(869)	989	(1,221)	916
	October	(347,316)		(347,427)		(362,664)		(376,644)	
	November	10		6,383		2,382		(7,399)	
	December	(1,540)		(751)		(6,135)		(738)	
	January	(4,259)		5,463		(1,064)		(2,476)	
	February	(1,361)		(2,020)		(1,213)			
	March	(19,849)		(8,782)		(8,966)			
	Total	**(726,916)**	**622**	**(661,973)**	**866**	**(750,741)**	**989**	**(767,149)**	**916**

Comments: The original 2022/23 budget is £794,760. The latest budget is £767,000 as income has not returned to pre-pandemic levels and more customers now recycle. Customers are invoiced twice a year in April and October. Income can fluctuate depending on the size of the bin collected and customers reducing their bin size and using the recycling service.

Garden Waste Bin Charges	Month	2019/20		2020/21		2021/22		2022/23	
		£	Volume	£	Volume	£	Volume	£	Volume
	April	(912,988)	21,143	(875,957)	20,314	(1,047,033)	21,524	(1,173,068)	21,649
	May	(27,729)	732	(66,976)	1,435	(19,620)	529	(18,910)	405
	June	(14,853)	304	(23,477)	469	(19,239)	331	(17,232)	237
	July	(9,565)	210	(10,812)	243	(13,244)	256	(8,724)	163
	August	(5,795)	115	(6,029)	131	(7,939)	190	(5,778)	96
	September	(3,940)	96	(4,295)	105	(4,834)	93	(3,129)	49
	October	(2,737)	98	(2,456)	85	(2,291)	75	(2,480)	80
	November	(1,116)	39	(2,186)	65	(1,341)	51	(1,589)	51
	December	(436)	16	(925)	28	(539)	20	(324)	14
	January	(501)	24	(830)	28	(743)	31	(956)	26
	February	0	0	0	0	0	0		
	March	0	0	0	0	0	0		
	Total	**(979,660)**	**22,777**	**(993,943)**	**22,903**	**(1,118,711)**	**23,100**	**(1,232,190)**	**22,770**

Comments: The original 2022/23 budget was £1,223,200. The latest budget is £1,230,700. Officers are now predicting income of £1,232,225 due to increases in sign ups.The standard charges for 2022/23 are £50 for the first bin and £85 each for a second or third bin. Customers in receipt of benefits pay a concession fee for the first bin.

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Three Rivers District Council

Leisure Environment and Community Committee Report

Date 15 March 2023

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

PART I - DELEGATED

6. COMMUNITY PARTNERSHIPS SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT (SLA) EXTENSION (EHoS)

1 Summary

1.1 This report provides details of community based services, provided to vulnerable residents within the district under Service Level Agreements, for which the Council contributes funding.

1.2 The Committee is asked to approve the proposed extensions of the identified Service Level Agreements for a further 3 years together with the associated expenditure. The expenditure is accounted for within existing Community and Leisure budgets.

1.3 The Committee is asked to approve the continuation of support for the Community Support Service and Domestic Abuse Caseworker Service, the expenditure for which is accounted for within existing Community and Leisure budgets

1.4 The Committee is asked to approve the proposed expenditure and extension of the existing Service Level Agreement with Citizens Advice Service Three Rivers (CASTR).

2 Details

2.1 Within existing revenue allocations, the following is allocated as part of the approved existing Service budgets within the MTFP:

- Leisure and Community funding budget of £80,000 per annum for Community Service Level Agreements;
- CASTR is allocated £259,290 per annum from Council Revenue budgets

2.2 Officers currently manage Service Level Agreements (SLA) with the following services with the identified organisations, within existing approved revenue budgets:

Roundabout Transport

2.3 A Local charity tackling social isolation across the district and its surrounds. The charity employs two members of staff, who manage and maintain a fleet of disabled accessible minibuses, which can be hired, through the SLA, at a subsidised rate to local organisations and groups. This provides transport to their service users who might otherwise be unable to engage and experiencing social isolation. This is primarily used by elderly or disabled groups, but is also accessed by youth groups and community groups.

2.4 The service has been utilised by 11,536 people in the last financial year.

Homestart Watford, Three Rivers & Hertsmere

2.5 Homestart provide support through volunteers for young families experiencing difficulties or are inexperienced at parenting. Homestart supports clients on issues such as, social isolation, financial hardship, mental health and lone parenting. During the pandemic the organisation expanded its offer in the district to include group play sessions in order to reduce social isolation, at no additional cost to the Council.

2.6 A total of 80 families within Three Rivers received home visit support during the last financial year with 57 families engaged in the group play sessions.

Abbots Langley Youth Project – via Services for Young People

2.7 Services for Young People deliver a weekly youth project in Abbots Langley for young people aged 11-18. The project focusses on different themes throughout the year, including healthy relationships, sexual health, work and education and mental wellbeing.

2.8 Over the last year, 31 sessions were held with attendance averaging 18 young people per session. A total of 89 young people engaged with the project over the 12 month period.

Community Support Service (Provided by Herts Mind Network)

2.9 The Community Support Service provides advice, information and holistic outreach support to people who are experiencing mental ill-health or need help with their mental wellbeing. It works alongside individuals to develop an individually tailored package of support that meets their needs, working with them to find the solutions that are right for them.

2.10 A total of 177 referrals were received last year, with 235 individuals supported during the year.

Domestic Abuse Service (Provided by Herts Mind Network)

2.11 Individually tailored support for standard to medium risk victims of domestic abuse. The service supports residents to access legal support, address the impact of trauma and support them to identify next steps in order to achieve healthy and safe relationships. This service is open to anyone over the age of 18, regardless of gender or sexual orientation.

2.12 The service dealt with 182 referrals last year with a total of 248 people supported.

Citizens Advice Service Three Rivers (CASTR)

2.13 The Council has an SLA with the CASTR which covers funding in the sum of £259,290 per annum.

2.14 The CASTR provides advice and representation to residents across almost all advice areas including benefits, consumer, debt, education, employment, finance, health, housing, immigration, legal, relationships and family, travel and utilities.

2.15 The CASTR manage 3 local offices located in South Oxhey, Abbots Langley, and Rickmansworth. In addition, an Outreach service is offered in the community and currently provides a fortnightly advice service at the South Oxhey Foodbank, a weekly advice service at the Mill End Foodbank and a monthly advice service at the Emmanuel Church Foodbank.

2.16 The CASTR demonstrates value for money in the services that it provides for residents of Three Rivers in that for each £1 that TRDC provides to the CASTR, £9.30 is gained for the clients they support. This figure increases when written off debt is factored into calculations.

2.17 In 2021-2022, CASTRs performance can be summarised as follows:

- Total number of advice issues – 15,616 (up 18.40% from 2020/21)
- Total number of clients with a new enquiry - 7040 (up 8.25%)
- Money gained for clients in the past year - £2,417,660 (£2,769,991 in 20/21/ £1,194,305.00 in 19/20)
- Total hours donated by volunteers – 34,944 (up 21.74% from 2020/21 and up 9% from pre COVID levels of 2019/2020)
- Equivalent contribution of volunteers, if paid: £594,048 (at £17.00 gross per hour)
- Total additional external Funding raised to run the Three Rivers CA service - £175,310, accounts still with auditors (income less grants/ donations for South Bucks, plus management fee for running South Bucks in 2021/22)
- Number of volunteers supporting the work of CASTR - 84 (up 21.74%)
- Total number of people attending financial awareness courses – due to recommence 2022/23

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 Alternative options which have been considered are to:

3.1.1 Cease funding one, some, or all of the listed SLAs and/or

3.1.2 Reduce the timeframe, and thus the medium term financial commitment at this stage, of the proposed SLAs and extend the current arrangement for a single year only

3.2 Factors influencing these considerations have been:

3.2.1 All SLA delivery partners have reported a significant increase in demand for their services as a consequence of the impact of the pandemic and more recently as a consequence of the cost of living crisis. This coincides with challenges in relation to operational capacity with a loss of, and need to recruit new, volunteers and barriers (as a result of Covdi19 lockdowns, cost of living and inflation) to securing resources through traditional fundraising channels.

3.2.2 Despite the above issues delivery partners are cognisant of the financial challenges which also face the council and, recognising that, have worked with the Community Partnerships Service to develop plans which will see services continue in the district without an increased financial ask of the Council.

3.2.3 Demand of the Councils directly delivered service including but not limited to Community Partnerships, Housing, Revenue and Benefits has

increased exponentially since the onset of the Covid19 pandemic. It is only through the support of partner agency that services have been able to adequately support residents, particularly those who are most vulnerable. If the current SLAs are not renewed the demand for the services they deliver will in large part fall back upon already stretched Council services. In addition, the negative impacts that would result from gaps created by the loss of those community based services will inevitably result in increased demand for housing services as more people find themselves facing homelessness, increased ASB, increased victimisation of fraud and scams and increased arrears in relation to council tax.

3.2.4 The need for to rebuild stability and service resilience post pandemic would not be supported by a reduction in the term of the Service Level Agreement and it is not considered that demand for the proposed services will decrease in the coming year(s). A 3 year commitment would provide partners with security when they need it most and support planning consistent service delivery as well as ensure that partners could retain experienced local staff through provision of job security.

3.2.5 SLA funding from the Council can be used to lever in additional support from other grant making bodies and national schemes which could further support the services provided to our residents

3.3 In light of the above considerations the options to withdraw financial support, either completely or through a reduction in funding term, to the successful and established services covered by the SLAs is not considered a practical option. It is, however, considered prudent, given the Councils financial position, to retain the current funding level for the length of the new SLA period.

4 Policy Implications

4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and MTFP budgets.

4.2 We will work towards reducing inequalities, prevent homelessness and encourage healthy lifestyles

4.3 The recommendations in this report relate directly to the achievement of the following performance indicators

Table A

Ref	Indicator	Target for 2022/23
CP27	Number of clients supported by CASTR	7,000
CP28a	Full Benefits: Number of clients helped to receive the full benefits they are entitled to following CASTR intervention and the amount of benefit gained	500/Q; 2000 annual
CP28b	Full Benefits: CP28b, The Amount of benefits gained, after support from CASTR	£200,000/annual £50,000/ Qtr
CP29a	Client Debts: Number of clients assisted with debt, the amount of debt written off and the average amount per client of any debts written off.	200/Q; 800 annual
CP29b	Client Debts: Number of clients assisted with debt, the amount of debt written off and the average amount per client of any debts written off.	£250,000 /4 per qtr = 62,000

CP29c	Client Debts: Number of clients assisted with debt, the amount of debt written off and the average amount per client of any debts written off.	£10,000 – 50% tolerance
CP30	Number of clients helped with housing and debt issues that could threaten them with eviction	400 / 4 = 100 per qtr

5 Financial Implications

5.1 The contribution to the SLA partners has remained constant since 2018 and financial contributions are proposed to be provided without uplift for the term of the new SLA.

5.2 The following financial payments, subject to the terms of the SLAs, are indicatively proposed for each Service Provider and are contained within the existing MTFP:

Table B

SLA delivery Partner	2023-24 (£k)	2024-25 (£k)	2025-26 (£k)	Total Commitment in MTFP (£k)
Roundabout Transport	6	6	6	18
Services for Young People	2	2	2	6
Homestart Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere	4.8	4.8	4.8	14.4
CASTR	259.29	259.29	259.29	777.87
Community Support Service (Herts Mind Network)	8.7	8.7	8.7	26.1
Domestic Abuse Caseworker (Herts Mind Network)	5	5	5	15

6 Legal Implications

6.1 The Council is not obliged to provide the services proposed within this report and the identified SLAs, however, by virtue of section 1 of the Localism Act 2011, it is able to do anything which it considers is likely to achieve the promotion of the economic, social or environmental wellbeing of its area. This includes the incurring of expenditure, giving financial assistance to any person (or organisation) and entering into arrangements or agreements with any person.

6.2 The extension to the SLAs for 2023 – 2026 is proposed to be on the same terms and conditions as the existing SLA which has been reviewed by the appropriate Council Legal officer.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

7.1 The proposals and recommendations of the report have been assessed as having a positive impact on delivery of the council's equalities objectives for 2023-26.

8 Sustainability Implications

8.1 The provision of the services as set out in the SLAs supports the council's community leadership role in the delivery of sustainable communities. Specifically, the proposals in this report would contribute towards the following Sustainable Development Goals (SDG): SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 3: (Good health and wellbeing), SDG 10: (Reduced inequalities), SDG 11: (Sustainable Communities), SDG 17: (Partnership).

8.2 A Sustainability Impact Assessment of the proposals has been undertaken resulting in a score of 3 - Some positive impact for sustainability. Recommendation to further enhance this aspect where possible and proceed.

9 Community Safety Implications

9.1 Community safety would be negatively impacted should the services covered by the proposed SLAs not be commissioned. The services provide essential mental health, community cohesion, connection and youth support without which Three Rivers would expected to experience an increase in anti-social behaviour and serious youth violence. This in turn would result in increased demand for and pressures upon the local Police and a number of services directly delivered by the Council including but not limited to Community Partnerships, Housing, Revenue and Benefits and the Customer Service Centre.

10 Public Health implications

10.1 Many of the services supported by the SLAs are those which directly provide public health interventions. Responsive services are provided, within the communities that need them most, resulting in improved mental and physical health outcomes, prevention of crime and antisocial behaviour, reductions in and avoidance of social isolation. The loss of these referral pathways would result in increased health inequalities within the district.

11 Staffing and Customer Services Centre Implications

11.1 As outlined above, the implications of not renewing the SLAs would be expected to result in increased demand for council services in particular Community Partnerships, Housing, Leisure and Customer Service Centre with an increase in calls to the Customer Services Centre due to the resultant decrease in referral pathways external to the council that would be available for support.

12 Communications and Website Implications

12.1 A decrease or cessation of the funding to the services delivered by community and charitable groups through the SLAs has the potential to cause reputational damage to the Council which would result in a need for proactive and reactive communications. This would include the need to provide additional communications and online information as residents would increasingly turn to the council for services currently provided by the third sector.

Risk and Health & Safety Implications

12.2 There is no obligation for the council to provide the funding outlined in this report beyond the end of the current financial year. The negative impact on community infrastructure and vulnerable residents would, however, be considerable if this funding channel was withdrawn. This would negatively impact on the Council's role and reputation as a community leader. The Council has also consistently identified this work as a priority in its corporate framework.

12.3 The main risks that may impact upon the successful implementation of the decisions should the recommendations to continue the SLAs be approved would be an inability of the funded organisations to carry out the services or activities for which funding had been awarded. Performance monitoring is undertaken on a quarterly basis for each SLA in addition to the day to day partnership working that the Council maintains. Officers from the Community Partnerships service have and will continue to work with SLA delivery partners to secure additional, external, grant funds to further support these services in the District to accommodate any inflationary increases and the anticipated increases in demand during the SLA period.

12.4 It is considered that the risk mitigation measures in place to manage and support the proposed SLAs would reduce and/or remove the likelihood of the main risks from materialising

13 Recommendations

13.1 The Committee is requested to agree to the extension of the existing SLAs for a further 3 years (2023-2026) and agree, subject to the terms of the SLAs and future years Council annual budget approval, associated expenditure for the services as outlined in this report to:

13.1.1 Roundabout Transport at a cost to the Council of £6,000 per annum

13.1.2 Services for Young People at a cost to the Council of £2,000 per annum.

13.1.3 Homestart Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere at a cost to the Council of £4,800 per annum.

13.1.4 Citizens Advice Service Three Rivers at a cost to the Council of £259,290 per annum.

13.2 The Committee is requested to agree, subject to the terms of the SLAs and future years Council annual budget approval, to commit to the continuation of match funding contributions for a further 3 years (2023-2026) to provide:

13.2.1 The Community Support Service at a cost to the Council of £8,700 per annum.

13.2.2 The Domestic Abuse Caseworker Service at a cost to the Council of £5,000 per annum

Report prepared by: Emma Sheridan, Head of Community Partnerships

Data Quality

Data checked by: Performance and Projects Manager

Data rating: Sufficient

Background Papers: None

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS: None

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Three Rivers District Council

Committee Report

Date 15 March 2023

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

PART I - DELEGATED

7. ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM TERMS OF REFERENCE UPDATE (CED)

1 Summary

1.1 This report presents to a draft revised Terms of Reference (ToR) for the Environmental Forum for comment and approval.

2 Details

2.1 The current terms of reference of the Council's Environmental Forum were agreed by Committee August 2020 at which time it was agreed that they be reviewed every two years. The current ToR are attached in Appendix 1.

2.2 Officers have reviewed the terms of reference. A revised ToR is attached as Appendix 2.

2.3 The amendments proposed are additions as outlined below:

- All meetings will be held virtually
- To facilitate the information exchange between attendees of the forum, attendees will be asked to submit a brief update on their work prior to meeting taking place
- Members will be encouraged to submit any questions for the Council prior to the meeting taking place, so an answer can be sought from the appropriate officer.
- Each Meeting will address a theme from the Climate and Emergency Sustainability Strategy
- A Councillor will be appointed as Vice Chair at Annual Council.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 That the Committee considers, comments on and approves the proposed new Terms of Reference for the Environmental Forum.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

4.1 The work of the forum supported the delivery and ongoing development of the Councils Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy

5 Financial Implications

5.1 There are currently no financial implications for the forum. Three Rivers District Council provide the administrative support including hosting the meetings. Should the forum be allocated funds for use by the Council or secure external funding these will be subject to the Financial Standing Orders and Procedures of Three Rivers District Council and reported through the Annual Accounts of Three Rivers District Council.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 None specific to this report.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

7.1 None specific to this report

8 Staffing Implications

8.1 Three Rivers District Council will continue to administer and support the Environmental forum within existing Community Partnerships staff resource.

9 Environmental Implications

9.1 Having an effective and strategically focussed Environmental Forum will assist the Council in delivering the target of becoming Net Zero by 2030

9.2 The Proposals within the report have not achieved a 3 on the Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment tool as we need energy to run meetings and should face to face meetings return even just once a year this would generate travel, however, the meetings only occur three times a year, therefore the environmental impact is considered minimal with the benefits of wider community and stakeholder engagement on these important issues outweighing the dis-benefits.

Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment Summary	
Homes, buildings, infrastructure, equipment and energy	2.50
Travel	2.00
Goods and Consumption	3.00
Ecology	3.00
Adaptation	0.00
Engagement and Influence	4
Total Overall Average Score	**2.9**

10 Community Safety Implications

Community safety issues around air quality, littering, and other anti-social behaviours parks/open spaces are and will continue to be discussed during the Forums. This aids the Council in identifying and tackling issues in order to make our parks and open spaces safer.

11 Public Health implications

11.1 Biodiversity, nature, and use of green spaces are all improved through the Environmental Forum, leading to increased use improving general physical and mental wellbeing. Increased support and discussion around active travel options can lead to people getting more exercise and living healthier lives.

12 Customer Services Centre Implications

12.1 None specific to this report

13 Communications and Website Implications

13.1 The new terms of reference will be communicated with the Environmental Forum and available for public to see on the website.

14 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

14.1 None specific to this report.

15 Recommendation

15.1 That the Committee considers, comments on and approves the proposed new Terms of Reference for the Environmental Forum.

Report prepared by: Elen Roberts, Climate, Sustainability and Recycling Officer

Background Papers

None

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1 – Environmental Forum Terms of Reference (August 2020)

Appendix 2 – Revised Environmental Forum Terms of Reference (2023-26)

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

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THREE RIVERS ENVIRONMENTAL FORUM

Terms of Reference
July 2020

Version 2.1

Contents

1. Purpose of the Environmental Forum

The Environmental Forum works to improve the quality of the environment and support the climate change agenda for the people of Three Rivers by working in partnership to create a better place to live, work and visit.

The Environmental Forum provides an opportunity for organisations, charities, community groups and residents to hear what others are doing in Three Rivers to tackle climate change, improve and maintain the environment. The Forum also provides an opportunity to develop joint initiatives and collaborate.

The Forum can also support the development and act as a consultee for the purpose of developing new Council or Partnership Strategies for Three Rivers such as the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy.

The forum is not a decision making body or formal council committee. The Council host the environmental forum and provide administration to the forum.

2. Objectives of the Environmental Forum

In order to achieve the above, the Environmental Forum will:

a) Be an **inclusive body** of organisations / groups, representative of different sectors, which have a focus in Three Rivers.

b) Work in **partnership** where possible to improve the environment and tackle climate change.

c) **Provide leadership** and act as a voice for the people and communities of Three Rivers.

d) **Consult and engage** with citizens, residents, community representatives and local businesses in a meaningful and inclusive manner, ensuring that choice, access and equality are available to all.

e) Ensure that its activities are in line with government guidance, and **complement the work of countywide partnerships including the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Forum.**

f) Promote sustainability, provide advice and expertise and raise awareness and understanding of the potential impacts of climate change in Three Rivers.

g) Identify and encourage measures to retain and increase biodiversity across Three Rivers by through providing advice, sharing expertise and raising awareness and understanding.

h) Champion a better and more resilient natural environment in Three Rivers.

3. Meetings

- Meetings and the work of the Environmental Forum will be open and transparent. The meetings will be serviced by officers of Three Rivers District Council, and agendas and minutes published on the website of Three Rivers District Council.

- Meetings will be open to the public.

- The Environmental Forum will meet at least three times a year using an online forum. It may wish to hold extra meetings or workshops as required. This will be advertised and broadcast so that as wide a possible audience can engage in the work of the Forum.

- The Environmental Forum meetings will be held virtually.

- All members will have equal rights and representation. To ensure this, partners may send substitutes from their organisation.

- The meetings dates will be agreed in advance and will be arranged and supported by Three Rivers District Council.

4. Position of Chair of the Environmental Forum

a) The Chair of the Environmental Forum shall be a Councillor who is appointed at Annual Council.

b) The role of the Chair will be to:

- Lead and inspire the Environmental Forum.
- Promote the development and learning of the Environmental Forum
- Promote a common sense of purpose and consensus.
- Resolve conflict and promote problem solving.
- Be the link with the supporting Officer Group from the council.
- Ensure the forum remains relevant and topical.

c) The Vice Chair of the Environmental Forum shall be a Councillor who is appointed at Annual Council.

d) The role of the Vice Chair will be to:

- Take on the Chair’s responsibilities when the Chair is unable to fulfil their duties.

5. The role of Environmental Forum members

- Contribute to the work of the forum by contributing to the discussion of the forum and raising awareness of best practice as well as raising issues in the community.

- Maintain knowledge of emerging policy and best practice in their area of responsibility.

- Identify resources – financial and other, which can be pooled.

- Attend forum meetings on a regular basis.

- Report and communicate arrangements of the work of the Environmental Forum within their respective organisations and networks.

- Be aware of cross–cutting issues and be responsive to the needs of socially excluded or disadvantaged groups.

- To respect the dignity, diversity and human rights of all members of the forum, the Council, supporting staff and the public.

6. Financial Procedures

There are currently no financial implications for the forum. Three Rivers District Council provide the administrative support including hosting the meetings. Should the forum be allocated funds for use by the Council or secure external funding these will be subject to the Financial Standing Orders and Procedures of Three Rivers District Council and reported through the Annual Accounts of Three Rivers District Council.

7. Review of the Terms of Reference

Three Rivers District Council will review the terms of reference every year.

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Three Rivers District Council

Environment Forum Terms of Reference DRAFT

15 March 2023

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

1. Purpose of the Environmental Forum

1.1. The Environmental Forum works to improve the quality of the environment and support the climate change agenda for the people of Three Rivers by working in partnership to create a better place to live, work and visit.

1.2. The Environmental Forum provides an opportunity for organisations, charities, community groups and residents to hear what others are doing in Three Rivers to tackle climate change, improve and maintain the environment. The Forum also provides an opportunity to develop joint initiatives and collaborate.

1.3. The Forum can also support the development and act as a consultee for the purpose of developing new Council or Partnership Strategies for Three Rivers such as the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy.

1.4. The forum is not a decision making body or formal council committee.

1.5. The Council host the environmental forum and provide administration to the forum**.**

2. Objectives of the Environmental Forum

2.1. In order to achieve the above, the Environmental Forum will:

2.1.1. Be an inclusive body of organisations / groups, representative of different sectors, which have a focus in Three Rivers.
2.1.2. Work in partnership where possible to improve the environment and tackle climate change.
2.1.3. Provide leadership and act as a voice for the people and communities of Three Rivers.
2.1.4. Consult and engage with citizens, residents, community representatives and local businesses in a meaningful and inclusive manner, ensuring that choice, access and equality are available to all.
2.1.5. Ensure that its activities are in line with government guidance, and complement the work of countywide partnerships including the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership
2.1.6. Promote sustainability, provide advice and expertise and raise awareness and understanding of the potential impacts of climate change in Three Rivers.
2.1.7. Identify and encourage measures to retain and increase biodiversity across Three Rivers by providing advice, sharing expertise and raising awareness and understanding.
2.1.8. Champion a better and more resilient natural environment in Three Rivers.

3. Meetings

3.1. Meetings and the work of the Environmental Forum will be open and transparent. The meetings will be serviced by officers of Three Rivers District Council, and agendas and minutes published on the website of Three Rivers District Council.

3.2. Meetings will be open to the public.

3.3. The Environmental Forum will meet at least three times a year. It may wish to hold extra meetings or workshops as required. Meetings will be held virtually using conferencing facilities. This will be advertised and broadcast so that as wide a possible audience can engage in the work of the Forum.

3.4. The venue of the Environmental Forum meetings will normally be at Three Rivers District Council or virtually.

3.5. All members will have equal rights and representation. To ensure this, partners may send substitutes from their organisation.

3.6. The meetings dates will be agreed in advance and will be arranged and supported by Three Rivers District Council.

3.7. To facilitate the information exchange between attendees of the forum, attendees will be asked to submit a brief update on their work prior to meeting taking place

3.8. Members will be encouraged to submit any questions for the Council prior to the meeting taking place, so an answer can be sought from the appropriate officer

3.9. Each Meeting will address a theme from the Climate and Emergency Sustainability Strategy

4. Positions of Chair and Vice Chair of the Environmental Forum

4.1 The Chair of the Environmental Forum shall be a Councillor who is appointed at Annual Council.

4.2 The role of the Chair will be to:

- Lead and inspire the Environmental Forum.
- Promote the development and learning of the Environmental Forum
- Promote a common sense of purpose and consensus
- Resolve conflict and promote problem solving.
- Be the link with the supporting Officer Group from the council.
- Ensure the forum remains relevant and topical

4.3 The Vice Chair of the Environmental Forum shall be a Councillor who is appointed at Annual Council.

4.4 The role of the Vice Chair will be to take on the Chair's responsibilities when the Chair is unable to fulfil their duties

5. The role of Environmental Forum members

5.1. Contribute to the work of the forum by contributing to the discussion of the forum and raising awareness of best practice as well as raising issues in the community.

5.2. Maintain knowledge of emerging policy and best practice in their area of responsibility.

5.3. Identify resources – financial and other, which can be pooled.

5.4. Attend forum meetings on a regular basis.

5.5. Report and communicate arrangements of the work of the Environmental Forum within their respective organisations and networks.

5.6. Be aware of cross–cutting issues and be responsive to the needs of socially excluded or disadvantaged groups.

5.7. To respect the dignity, diversity and human rights of all members of the forum, the Council, supporting staff and the public.

6. Financial Procedures

6.1. There are currently no financial implications for the forum. Three Rivers District Council provide the administrative support including hosting the meetings. Should the forum be allocated funds for use by the Council or secure external funding these will be subject to the Financial Standing Orders and Procedures of Three Rivers District Council and reported through the Annual Accounts of Three Rivers District Council.

7. Review of the Terms of Reference

7.1. Three Rivers District Council will review the terms of reference every three years. The next review will take place in 2026.

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

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Three Rivers District Council

Committee Report

Date: 15 March 2023

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

8. DRAFT CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND SUSTAINABILITY STRATEGY (CED)

1 Summary

1.1 The Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy was adopted by committee March 10 2021 and by Full Council 25 May 2021. This was followed up by an Action Plan which was agreed at LEC 13 October 2021 and has been reviewed at LEC bi-annually since.

1.2 The purpose of this report is to present an update to the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy with the draft strategy detailed at Appendix 1.

1.3 The revised Strategy has been prepared with consideration to the bespoke reports commissioned, consultation with all relevant officers, reflection on progress to date, and an understanding of how urgent the climate emergency is for residents of Three Rivers, and to ensure Three Rivers complies with the Climate Change Act (revised 2019) target for the UK achieving net zero by 2050.

1.4 The draft strategy has been prepared as a sequel to the current strategy and supplementary document to the strategy.

1.5 The Council has commissioned and received two critical reports, namely the APSE Route to Zero (Council and District) report (Appendix 2) on how the Council's strategy should address the climate emergency. The Council's emissions from April 2018 to March 2022 are shown at Appendix 3, and the District baseline emissions are included in Appendix 2. This data informed our understanding of the scale and scope of the decarbonisation challenge for both the Council and the District.

1.6 Climate change is a core pillar of the Council's new Corporate Framework. Through this strategy the Council will consider the climate emergency and sustainability in all its decisions, steering council operations towards net-zero by 2030. It demonstrates strong leadership to inspire and influence the District to achieve net-zero by 2045 and acknowledges that mitigation alone is no longer sufficient to combat climate change; climate adaptation is now also critical to the future of our District.

2 Details

2.1 Since the original Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy was published in 2021, the climate has continued to change as a result of human activity. In 2022, the estimated rise in global mean temperature was 1.16 degrees higher than the pre-industrial period[1] and global carbon emissions were at a record high[2]. The effect of these shifts in global climatic systems can be observed in every region on Earth, including in Three Rivers. The need for rapid and deep emissions reductions to prevent dangerous levels of global heating, while

[1] 2022: sixth warmest year on record globally - Met Office

[2] ESSD - Global Carbon Budget 2022 (copernicus.org)

adapting and building resilience to the effects of climate change that are already irreversible, remain the most urgent tasks of our time.

2.2 Since the last strategy, new legislation has been enacted, most notably the Environment Act 2021 which obliges local planning authorities to require a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain from development amongst numerous other requirements.

2.3 Substantial progress has been made by this Council in tackling the Climate Emergency - the highlights of which include:

- retrofitting 117 fuel poor homes
- building a new depot to optimal energy efficiency standards
- establishing a free-to-call Home Energy Support Service
- engaging with over 1600 people in the district on climate and sustainability issues
- embedding climate change into Council decision making
- introducing a new grassland management regime and planting 750 trees across the District together with providing over 2500 free trees and hedging to residents

2.4 As recognised by the "Mission Zero" review of Net Zero (2023), the Council needs long-term certainty of government funding in order to make net zero investment plans through to 2030, and beyond

2.5 Council emissions are measured annually and have declined by 5% since 18/19 to 2113 tCO2e.

2.6 The Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) trajectory at Appendix 2 advises a budget of £19m (at 2022 prices) is required to achieve net zero by 2030. The updated strategy will establish how this can be achieved given the current financial climate for local government. The strategy focuses on objectives which are achievable within the current funding environment, but that will lead to a substantial drop in emissions. For example, it requires an in depth review and exploration of expanding the Solar PV capacity of the Council. Whilst a substantial investment would be required, the subsequent cost savings are likely to mean it is affordable.

2.7 Appendix 2 reports that the district emits just under 500,000 tCO2e per annum but identifies that grid decarbonisation and transition to electric vehicles alone will only lead to a moderate reduction in emissions. Therefore, the Council will need to demonstrate leadership to inspire everyone to play their part.

2.8 Chorleywood North and Sarratt, and Moor Park wards are the highest emitters in the district with households producing on average 25 tCO2e per annum. Residents in South Oxhey have the lowest carbon footprints, producing an average of 12 tCO2e annually[3] by comparison. The strategy recognises that for the district to achieve its vision of net zero by 2045, everyone must do their bit to contribute, no matter how big or small.

[3] Impact | Community carbon calculator (impact-tool.org.uk)

2.9 Given the international and national context, it is clear net zero is a challenge, and the emphasis of this strategy is that we are doing all that we can within the parameters and resources available. There is no doubt central government has significantly more to do to enable local authorities and districts to achieve their net zero targets. The revised strategy keeps us on course by focusing on the immediate reductions we *can* make.

2.10 There is renewed emphasis on adaptation in recognition of the local impacts which were demonstrated so clearly in 2022 with extreme heat, drought, and wildfires,

2.11 The original objectives have been reviewed and updated to further develop initiatives to tackle the climate emergency. These objectives will generate new actions and revise existing actions in the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan together with the continuation of projects underway.

2.12 This strategy will be supported by the Action Plan which is updated continuously and reviewed bi-annually by the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 Enable the Council to achieve a reduction in operational emissions to advance us towards net-zero emissions by 2030, and demonstrate leadership to inspire the District to achieve net-zero by 2045;

3.2 Further the implementation of sustainability initiatives for Council operations and inspire everyone to move towards a circular economy;

3.3 Help build resilience against the unavoidable impacts of climate change on Council services;

3.4 Promote net-zero carbon and sustainable development of the Council.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

4.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets. The relevant policy is entitled Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy and was agreed by Full Council February 2022.

4.2 The recommendations in this report relate to the achievement of the following performance indicators:

- CP50 Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan
- CP52 Greenhouse Gas emissions

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

This strategy will enable the continuation of current actions and the development of additional ones to continue the achievements within CP50, and drive down greenhouse gas emissions CP52.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 The Independent review of Net Zero 2022 recommends the Government provides continuity and long-term funding certainty. As a local authority, we need this long-term certainty of local government funding in order to make investment plans through to 2030.

5.2 Where possible, external funding will be sought for individual projects which will be approved either through Policy and Resources Committee or through the Strategic, Service and Financial Planning process.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 The recommendations in this report are fully in line with the expectations on local authorities to take local action on the climate issue contained in the Climate Change Act 2008.

6.2 A number of projects involved in the delivery of the Strategy will require contract preparation and approval.

6.3 All elements of the Strategy will need to be considered alongside the Council's legal duties and powers.

7 Equal Opportunities Implications

7.1 A Short Equality Impact and Outcome Assessment has been completed and can be found at Appendix 4

8 Staffing Implications

8.1 None specific.

9 Environmental Implications

Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment Summary	
Homes, buildings, infrastructure, equipment and energy	3.40
Travel	3.33
Goods and Consumption	4.00
Ecology	4.00
Adaptation	3.50
Engagement and Influence	4
Total Overall Average Score	**3.7**

9.1 A strong assessment for the positive impact the Strategy will have in tackling the climate and ecological emergency, but some of the achievements will be dependent upon achieving sufficient funding to implement. Full details can be found at Appendix 5.

10 Community Safety Implications

10.1 None specific.

11 Public Health implications

11.1 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 respiratory illnesses. Improvements in Home Energy Efficiency through retrofit work will improve environmental quality within homes and reduce energy bills, thereby assisting in reduction of financial anxiety related to household bills and benefitting physical health by improving the warmth and air quality within homes, and preventing damp and mould.

12 Customer Services Centre Implications

12.1 The customer service centre will be expected to answer straightforward questions regarding projects as they progress for which they will either receive training or be able to find answers on the website.

13 Communications and Website Implications

13.1 The website is crucial to this strategy as the repository for the information about all relevant projects and initiatives.

The 'Enable and Engage' theme demonstrates the need for sustained engagement with the district to encourage a switch to more sustainable behaviours. The climate team already works closely with the communications team, this will need to be maintained.

Briefings are held with members as required in order to optimise the chances of success of the various initiatives.

Active engagement will continue to be essential with parish councils, schools resident associations, housing associations and activist groups.

14 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

14.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at http://www.threerivers.gov.uk. 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.

14.2 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.

Nature of Risk	**Consequence**	**Suggested Control Measures**	**Response** *(tolerate, treat terminate, transfer)*	**Risk Rating** *(combination of likelihood and impact)*
The Council fails to develop the Strategy on climate	The Council will fail to deliver improvements to address climate change within the district.	For the Committee to approve the Final Strategy.	Tolerate	4

change and sustainability.				
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. This will lead to reputational damage. And importantly the Council will not be addressing the Climate Emergency and thus will contribute further to the increase in global warming and its' consequences.	For the Committee to approve the Final Strategy.	Treat	6
The Council fails to adapt its services to the embedded impacts of climate change which are leading to more extreme heat and cold, drought and flooding	Services may be impacted and face significant cost to restore, residents and businesses may suffer leading to ultimate financial losses, and environmental damage could be costly both in terms of loss of habitat but also cost.	An adaptation risk assessment of Council services must be prepared, and arising actions incorporated into service plans.	Treat	6
Increase in costs of retrofit hinder domestic decarbonisation	Housing Associations may be unable to afford the cost of retrofit, despite grant funding and those classified as "able to pay" will be unable to pay.	Encourage housing associations to maximise use of ECO4. Apply for grants wherever possible. Aim to work at scale to enable participants to benefit from group buying.	Treat	6
Increase in construction costs for developers	Developers sacrifice net zero technologies and do not voluntarily work to higher energy efficiency standards.	Need to work with stakeholders to encourage wider knowledge and adoption of new technologies in order to bring down costs. Work with the other Hertfordshire Authorities to	Tolerate	6

		drive up net zero standards.		

14.3 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.

Likelihood				
Very Likely	Low 4	High 8	Very High 12	Very High 16
	Low 3	Medium 6	High 9	Very High 12
	Low 2	Low 4	Medium 6	High 8
Remote	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
	Impact			
	Low ----------▶			Unacceptable

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

14.4 In the officers' opinion none of the new risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational risks is reviewed by the Audit Committee annually.

15 Recommendation

That the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee:

15.1 Approve the draft strategy to undertake a 6-week period of public consultation commencing May 15 2023;

15.2 For the final strategy to be presented at the 11 September 2023 Policy and Resources Committee on the 11 October 2023 Leisure, Environment and Community Committee.

Data Quality

Data sources:

1 Impact | Community carbon calculator (impact-tool.org.uk)

Data checked by: Ellie Nathan

1	**Poor**	
2	**Sufficient**	**X**
3	**High**	

Background Papers

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy
Appendix 2: APSE route to zero & district baseline emissions
Appendix 3: APSE baseline emissions for TRDC ‘21/’22
Appendix 4: Short Equality Impact and Outcome Assessment
Appendix 5: Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Three Rivers Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy 2023-2026

Table of Contents:

Foreword

TBA

Phil Williams,
Lead Member for Environmental Services and Sustainability.

Introduction

Since the original Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy was published in 2021, the climate has continued to change as a result of human activity. In 2022, the estimated rise in global mean temperature was 1.16 degrees higher than the pre-industrial period[1] and global carbon emissions were at a record high. If current emissions levels continue, there is a 50% chance we will exceed global warming of 1.5C within the next nine years[2].
Climate-related disasters have increased by five times over the past 50 years, causing US$202 million in losses daily[3]. Despite the Paris Agreement goal of limiting global warming to well below 2°C, under current policies we are more likely to be facing anywhere between 2.2°C and 3.4°C increase by 2100 if we do not undertake rapid and significant emissions reductions[4].

The effect of these shifts in global climatic systems can be observed in every region on Earth, including in Three Rivers. The need for swift and deep emissions reductions to prevent dangerous levels of global heating, while adapting and building resilience to the effects of climate change that are already irreversible, remain the most urgent tasks of our time.

Three Rivers District Council has been at the forefront of bringing forward work streams to mitigate the Climate Emergency. The Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and continues to lead responsibly, by our own example, whilst encouraging and enabling others to join us on our journey towards net zero and climate resilience. This strategy covering the period of the new Corporate Framework acknowledges that mitigation alone is no longer sufficient to combat climate change; climate adaptation is now also critical to the future of our District.

In 2020, Three Rivers District emissions were recorded at 474,300 tCO2 compared to 730,800 tCO2 in 2005[5] an average annual emissions reduction of 2.2%, This is positive progress but with Tyndall Centre calculations showing that the District will need to reduce its emissions by 14.1% annually to make its fair contribution to the Paris Climate Change Agreement and with much of the reduction to date linked to grid decarbonisation, there remains much still to do.

Reducing emissions by 14% per year is an immense challenge that will require concerted and sustained efforts from the entire District from not just the Council but from our businesses, communities, residents and visitors if it is to be achieved. Our ability to reach net zero at the local level is further complicated in that it is greatly dependent on national and international action on climate change mitigation. Addressing the planetary scale problem of climate change requires urgent and strong top-down leadership, and global collective action. Three Rivers will play its part, but so too must others.

[1] 2022: sixth warmest year on record globally - Met Office
[2] ESSD - Global Carbon Budget 2022 (copernicus.org)
[3] Weather-related disasters increase over past 50 years, causing more damage but fewer deaths | World Meteorological Organization (wmo.int)
[4] The CAT Thermometer | Climate Action Tracker
[5] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/uk-local-authority-and-regional-greenhouse-gas-emissions-national-statistics

This Strategy focuses on what the Council and its partners are and plan to do within the parameters of the current legal, financial, regulatory and technological frameworks, under which we must operate. It seeks to show how the Council proposes to stay on course to reach its net zero and climate resilience ambitions within the external constraints that we are bound by.

At a national level, as recognised in the Skidmore Mission Zero report, there is significantly more that is needed to enable local authorities and the areas they serve to achieve net zero targets with, *a need for* national policy confidence, continuity and long term funding certainty.

This new strategy builds on the success of the initial Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy (2021) with aims and objectives derived from the independently modelled "Route to Zero" pathways for Three Rivers, which in turn will drive our Action Plan for the coming years. In responding to the climate emergency Three Rivers District Council will not only seek to limit the impacts of climate change, but also to secure wider benefits for communities including health, prosperity, and greater equality alongside protection of and resilience for the natural world.

National Policies on Climate and Sustainability:

Legislation and Strategies in existence at time of the 2021 Strategy:

- **The Climate Change Act 2008 (Order 2019)** introduced the legally binding target for the UK to achieve at least a 100% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050.
- **The 25 Year Environment Plan 2018** sets comprehensive goals and targets to improve the UK's air and water quality, and protect threatened plants, trees and wildlife.
- **The Resource and Waste Strategy 2018** outlines the actions the UK will take to minimise waste, promote resource efficiency and move towards a circular economy.
- **The Clean Air Strategy 2019** focuses on reducing industrial, agricultural and transport emissions and aims to reduce particulate matter emissions from solid fuel used in homes.

New Legislation and policies published since the 2021 Strategy:

- **The Environment Act 2021** sets out new legal frameworks for air pollution, water quality, biodiversity conservation, waste and resource management, and the use of chemicals.
  The Act is a key vehicle to deliver the goals and targets set out in the *Government's 25 Year Environment Plan* and places greater statutory duties on local government in delivering its policies, most notably through ensuring a minimum 10% net-gain in biodiversity is delivered in all new housing and development, and creating or contributing to Local Nature Recovery Strategies.
- **The Net Zero Strategy: Build Back Greener 2021** sets out policies and proposals for decarbonising all sectors of the UK economy to meet our net zero target by 2050.
- **The Heat and Buildings Strategy 2021** describes how the Government intends to decarbonise homes, and commercial, industrial and public sector buildings, to reach net zero by 2050.
- **Industrial Decarbonisation Strategy 2021** details how industry can decarbonise in line with net zero.
- **British Energy Security Strategy 2022** sets out how Britain will accelerate nationally generated power for greater energy independence.

Our Progress So Far

In 2021-2022, the Council has:

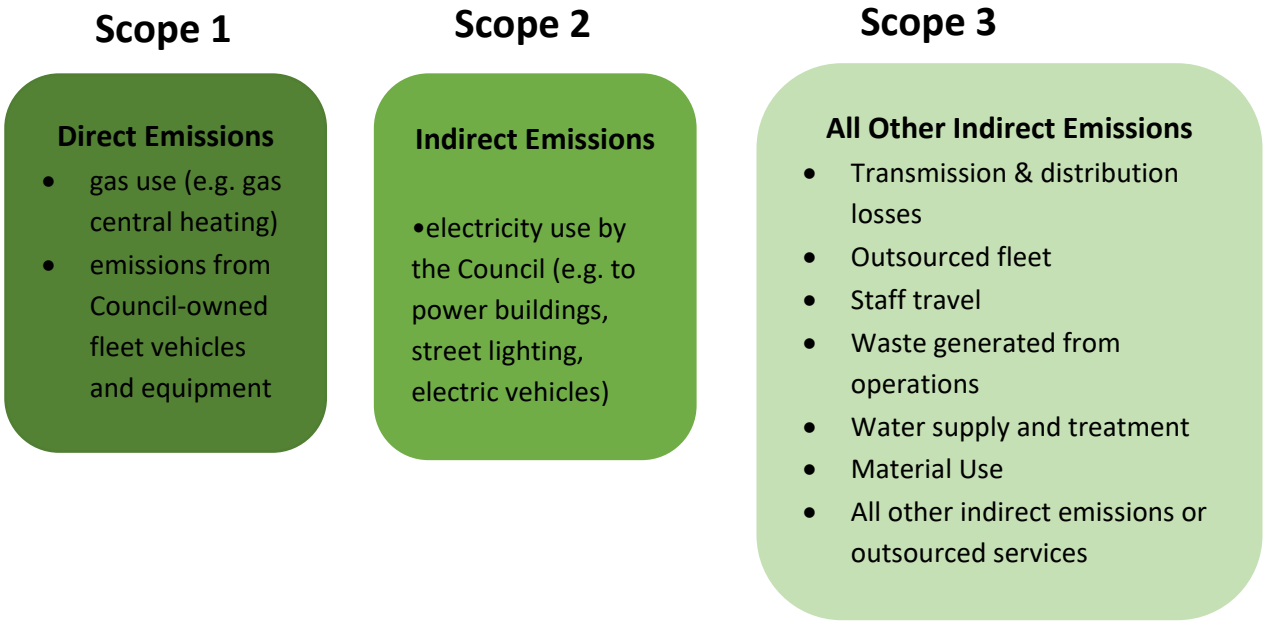
- Achieved reductions in Council emissions through the completion of the new, energy efficient depot and retrofit of Three Rivers House including the installation of air source heat pump technology, installing solar lights in car parks and park lighting, and the purchase of two electric vans.
- Supported the Hertfordshire-wide Solar Together project, with 203 homes in our District participating to-date.
- Retrofitted 117 homes in the District saving 161.2 tonnes of carbon dioxide annually, equivalent to carbon savings of 1.4TCO_2 per home, per year.
- Supported energy efficiency improvements for the least efficient homes in the District through the delivery of Energy Company Obligation (ECO4) and Social Housing Decarbonisation (SHDF) schemes.
- Commissioned the National Energy Foundation to provide an independent Home Energy Support Service helpline, where residents can get free, expert advice on energy saving, energy bills, and energy efficiency improvements. In 2022, the helpline provided advice and interventions to over 200 residents.
- Engaged with over 1600 people, in-person across the District at a wide range of events from school activities and information stands to conferences and talks.
- Published a "Guide to Greening Your Home" document filled with information, top tips, and ideas to inspire residents to make sustainable changes to their homes and gardens, reduce their carbon and water footprints, and enhance biodiversity.
- Adopted a Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment process that embeds consideration of climate and sustainability in to the Council's decision-making processes.
- Introduced Climate Change training for all Council staff, with senior leadership and sustainability officers benefiting from advanced training on climate change and adaptation.
- Introduced a grassland management plan resulting in a new woodland of approximately 350 small trees; 2 areas of bulb planting; over 50 standard trees and a distinct change in grassland management for the benefit of wildlife.
- x number of free trees were given to x residents of Three Rivers
- Planted 750 trees in Leavesden County Park and Denham Way Playing Fields and 25 street trees in South Oxhey for the Queen's Green Canopy.
- Introduced grazing to the Horses Field at Leavesden Country Park to encourage biodiversity expansion.
- Developed and approved a management plan for the Rickmansworth Aquadrome.
- Hosted 27 wildlife themed events attended by more than 500 local people.
- Resurfaced a significant section of the Ebury Way trail for walkers and cyclists.
- Improved the northbound link in the Grand Union Canal towpath (Three Rivers) route, which connects 7 local settlements along a six-mile stretch northwards of Rickmansworth
- Developed and consulted on the District's Local Walking and Cycling Infrastructure Plan.
- Installed 50 walking wayfinding signs across Croxley Green.
- Promoted Sustainable Travel planning within the District Council and with local businesses.
- Installed Real Time Information signs at 15 district bus stops.
- Established the Three Rivers Water Partnership.
- Piloted the #WorthSaving food waste reduction project.

Awarded community grants for low-carbon infrastructure totalling £7,020 and through the Three Rivers Sustainable Business Programme, helped 12 SMEs develop climate action plans.

Three Rivers District Council Emissions

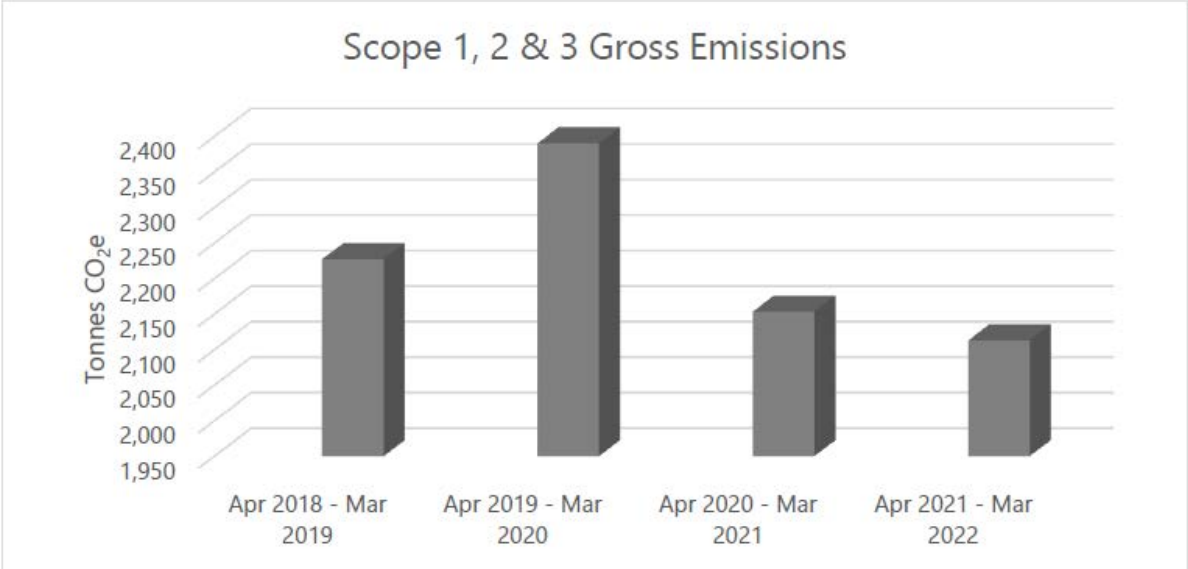
The Council measures and publishes its own emissions annually in accordance with best practise guidance of the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and uses conversion factors for the carbon dioxide equivalent (CO2e) published by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (now the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero).

The Council's emissions can be divided in to three "Scopes", which are described below.
Scope 1: release emissions directly into the atmosphere.
Scope 2: emissions associated with our consumption of purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling.
Scope 3: emissions that result from other Council activities, but occur at sources which we do not own, control or have full authority over, for example leased assets such as the leisure centres.



Scope 3 emissions are complicated, extensive and far-reaching. They are very difficult to measure accurately for year-on-year comparison purposes with no consistent methodology currently in use.
To enable comparison of the Council's GHG emissions over time, to identify trends, assess the performance of the Council, and avoid duplication of emissions accounting, we aim to maintain consistent accounting approaches, reporting boundaries, and calculation methodologies. Therefore, for Scope 3 emissions, the Council reports only those emissions which are currently measurable, accessible and accurate. Presently, this primarily consists of the emissions generated by our leisure centres, staff and councillor business mileage, and emissions associated with the transmission and distribution of electricity, and water usage on Council-owned property.
Through the Council's Procurement Strategy, suppliers are encouraged to reduce their own emissions and environmental impacts, particularly in relation to the goods or services they provide to the Council.

Figure 2 TRDC Carbon Emissions for 2021/22

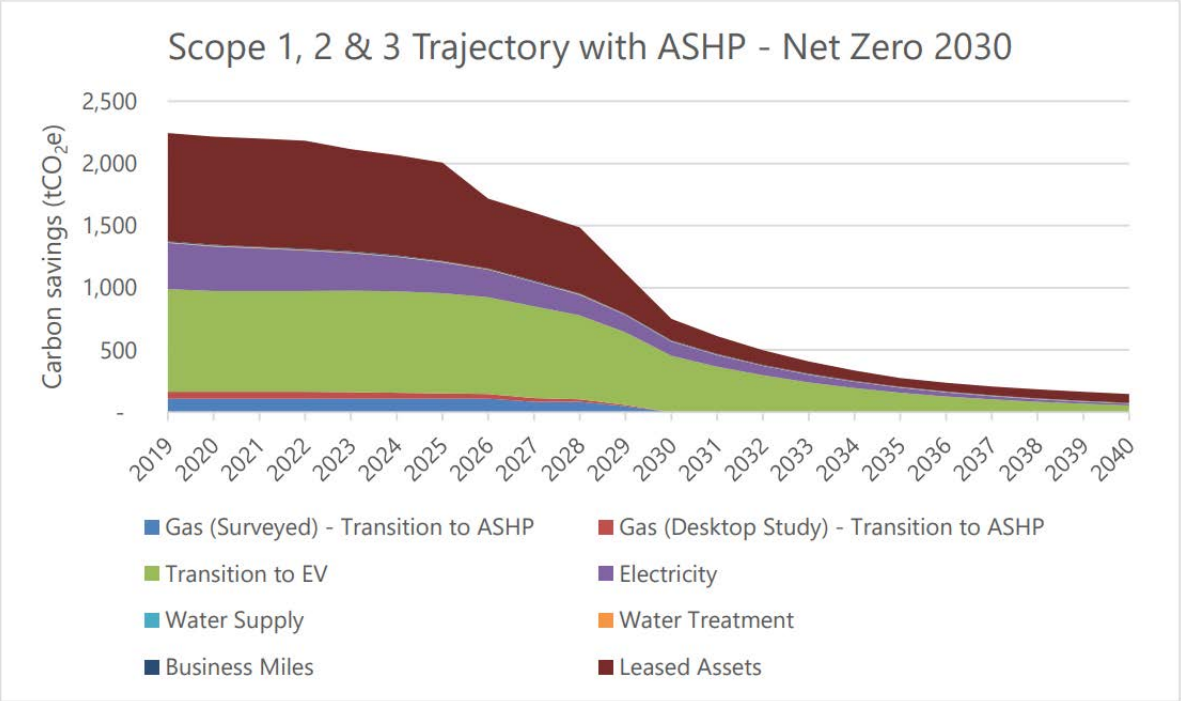


A significant reduction in emissions occurred in 2020-21 as a consequence of the introduction of hybrid working for all Council office staff.

In order to better understand the actions that need to be taken locally, the Council commissioned the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) to establish the net zero trajectory for Council emissions. All buildings were surveyed to ensure the recommendations were based on an accurate reflection of the estate and the changes which would be required to decarbonise.

Figure 3 shows the theoretical trajectory that APSE produced, representing an overall saving of 1,493tCO2e (67%) when comparing 2020 to 2030 utilising Air Source Heat Pumps, (ASHP). It is estimated that there will be 751 tCO2e from hard-to-reduce sources that will remain by 2030 and would need to be offset through a combination of Solar PV installations and tree planting schemes to enable the Council to reach net-zero. The estimated cost of this offsetting is £736,000 at 2022 prices.

Figure 3



To achieve this theoretical trajectory it was estimated that a total investment of £19 million (at 2022 prices) would be required to improve building energy efficiency, install ASHP technology, generate renewable energy, and develop a tree planting scheme. It is estimated that these interventions would save the Council £160,626 per year by 2030. It is therefore clear that there are significant financial challenges in realising the Council's ambitions.

Our Approach to Net Zero for Council Operations

Given the costs outlined above, it is apparent that achieving net zero for Council operations in the current fiscal context of local government is exceptionally challenging due to:-

- the increasingly high cost of retrofit
- the high operational cost of heat pump technologies due to the high unit costs of electricity
- skills shortages
- the lack of reflection of net zero in national planning processes and policies
- uncertainty over "low-carbon" technologies such as hydrogen
- lack of a clear decarbonisation plan by the Government
- lack of resource and finance in central and local Government, and reduced capacity of many residents to spend on pro-environmental changes due to ongoing cost of living crisis.

One of the objectives in this strategy is to model how and to what extent the net-zero trajectory could be achieved, taking into account existing challenges, affordability, sources of

finance, practicality, suitability of low carbon technology, and consideration of existing plant replacement timetables.

The emphasis of this 3-year strategy is to focus on actions that are achievable within the current funding landscape but will deliver substantial emissions reductions. For example, we will undertake an in-depth assessment on how to expand the Solar PV capacity of Council buildings and land. Whilst this would require substantial upfront investment, the positive return on investment is likely to make it affordable.

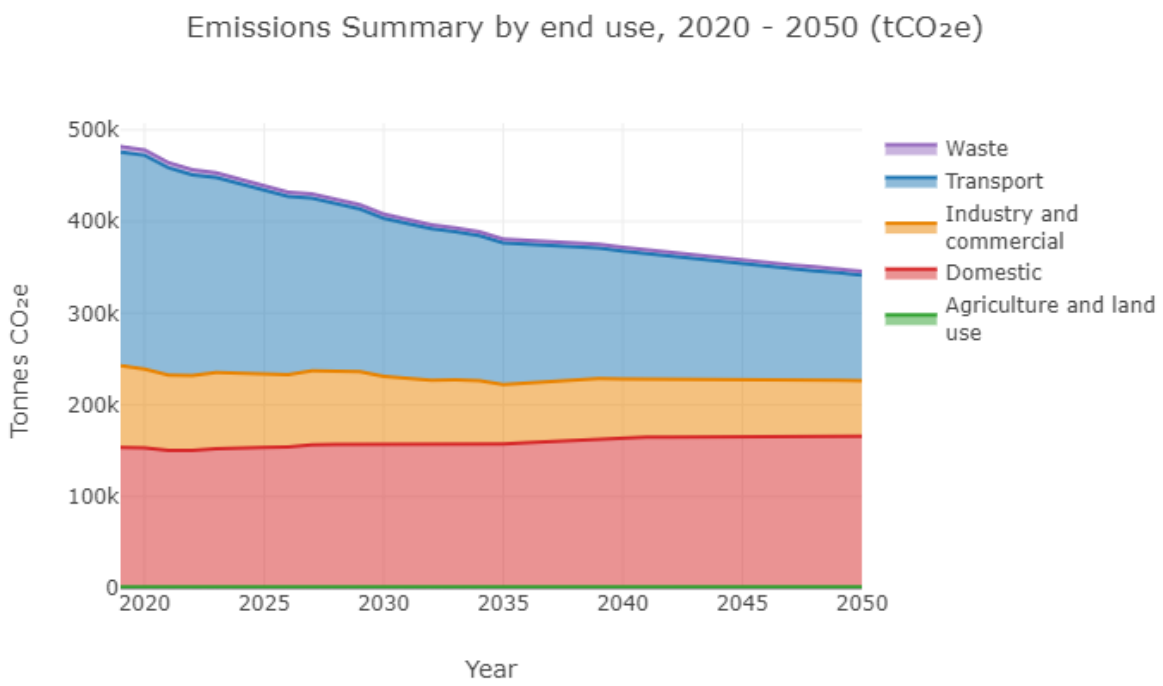
As recognised by the "Mission Zero" review of Net Zero (2023), the Council needs long-term certainty of government funding in order to make net zero investment plans through to 2030, and beyond.

Three Rivers District Emissions

In addition to considering the Council's own emissions, the APSE report provided analysis of emissions of the wider district as a whole and considered what would be required to achieve net zero at district level by 2050.

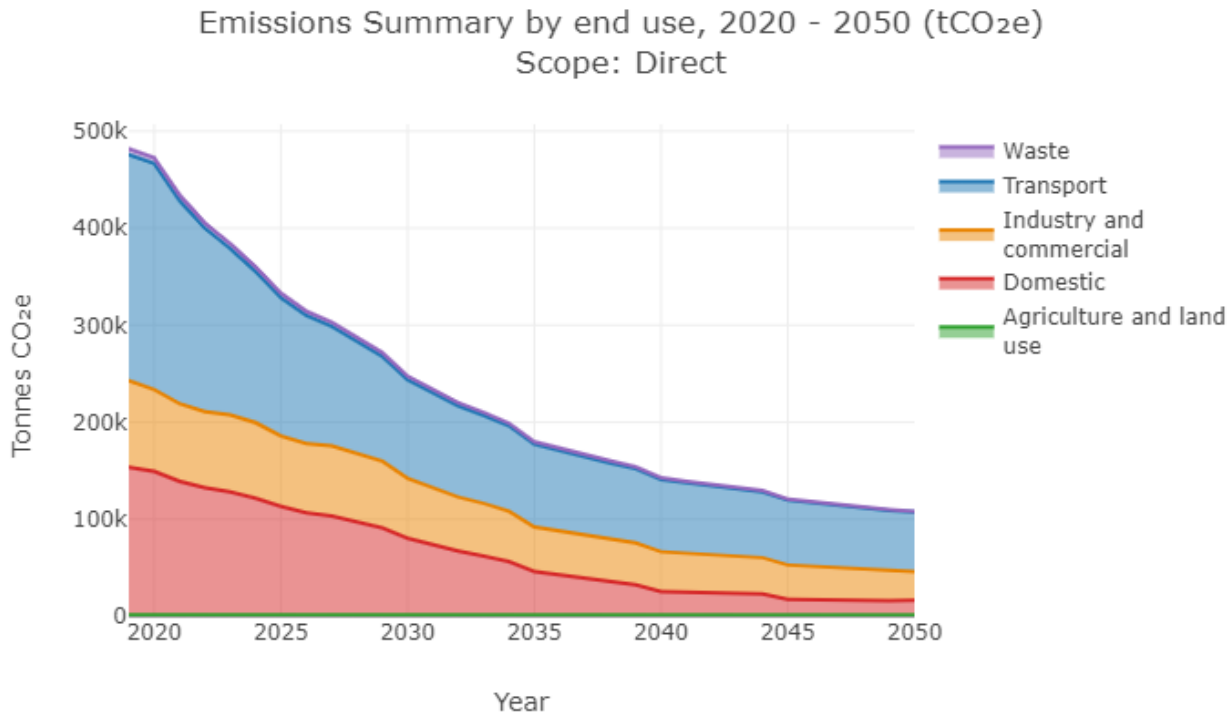
Figure 4 shows the district emits just under 500,000 t CO2e per annum and if no interventions are made, then the effects of grid decarbonisation and the transition to electric vehicles will only have a moderate effect.

Figure 4 Business as Usual



However if ambitious interventions are made, Figure 5 shows emissions could be reduced by 77%t 108,000 t CO2e.

Figure 5 High Ambition Carbon Reduction Interventions



In order to achieve its high-level ambitions for the district, the Council will demonstrate leadership that will seek to inspire businesses, community groups and individual residents to take action to achieve their own personal or organisational net zero.

Carbon emissions associated with domestic dwellings remain a key area to address both in terms of reducing overall energy demand through better insulation and in a switch to electric heating which can benefit from the grid decarbonisation at a national level.

Ward- Level Emissions

The emissions generated across Three Rivers vary considerably between local areas. Data from the Community Carbon Calculator indicates that residents in Chorleywood North and Sarratt, and Moor Park wards have the highest carbon footprints in the district with each household producing an average of 25 tonnes of carbon per year. Residents in South Oxhey, however, have the lowest carbon footprints in the district, producing an average of 12 tonnes of carbon annually.

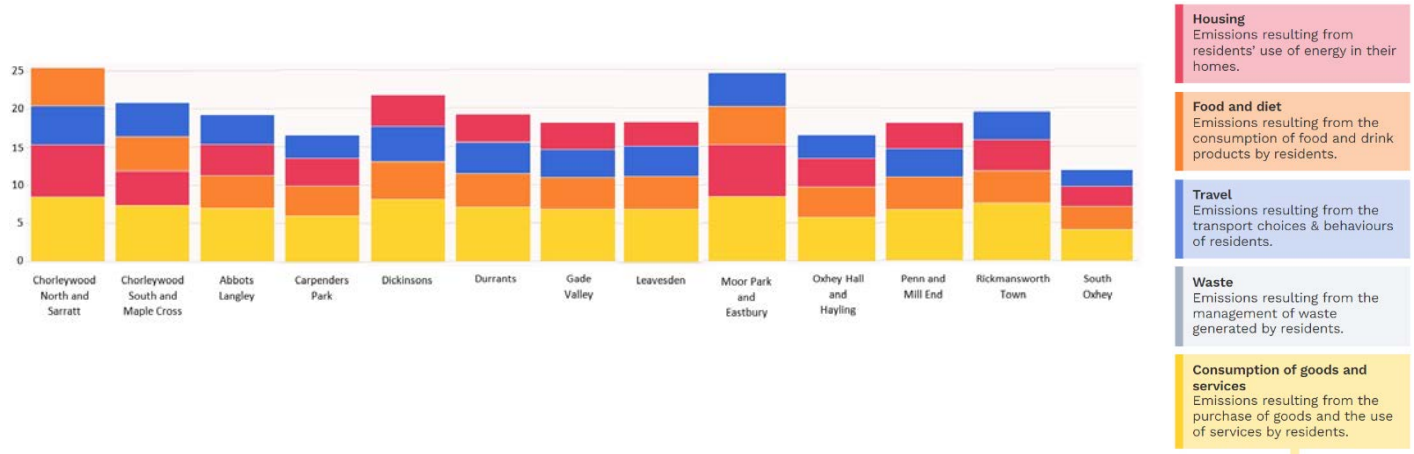
Nevertheless, all of the wards in Three Rivers currently produce emissions above the UK average [6.42tCO2e per person per year in 2019][6] and far exceed what is required to limit global temperature rise to the Paris Agreement goal of 1.5°C [<3tCO2e per person per year from 2035])[7].

Whilst this ward-level data is based on assumptions and estimates, it illustrates the differential impact of residents' day-to-day activities in different parts of the district. Such local level insights are useful in targeting communications and support in different areas and demonstrate the importance of action to reduce emissions at the local level; from ward-based initiatives organised by Parish Councils, to community-led action from community

[6] https://www.climatewatchdata.org/ghg-emissions?breakBy=countries&calculation=PER_CAPITA&end_year=2019&gases=all-ghg&regions=GBR&start_year=1990
[7] The-Sixth-Carbon-Budget-The-UKs-path-to-Net-Zero.pdf (theccc.org.uk)

groups, faith groups, residents associations and charities, all the way down to individual actions taken by residents.

The Council cannot realise its vision of a net zero Three Rivers alone, it requires everyone to do their bit to contribute, no matter how big or small.



Carbon Offsetting

There are a variety of ways to reach net-zero, not all of them equal. The Council will follow the carbon management hierarchy; this means we will prioritise emissions avoidance and reduction, and only replace or compensate our hard-to-treat emissions as a last resort. Tree planting and expanding renewable energy generation will play a key role in any offsetting that is needed for the Council to reach net zero.

Climate Change Adaptation

The Council recognises that even if all greenhouse gas emissions ceased immediately, the emissions produced over the last century have already committed us to a certain degree of global warming. The effects of the resultant climate change in the UK, including, hotter drier summers, warmer wetter winters, and more frequent and intense extreme weather events, are being experienced with increasing regularity.

In 2022, Three Rivers experienced serious drought, dried up chalk streams, and wildfires. These issues cause real and present risks to our built and natural environments, the health and wellbeing of our residents and local wildlife, and to our local economy.

In the summer of 2022, landscape fires broke out across the country due to the extreme hot and dry conditions, including in Three Rivers, where fires were reported at Leavesden Country Park, South Oxhey Playing Fields and Oxhey Woods. Pictured: the aftermath of a landscape fire at South Oxhey Playing Fields.

While the Council works to limit further climate change by reducing greenhouse gas emissions from the Council's operations and across the district, it is recognised that mitigation alone is no longer sufficient. Adapting to our changing climate and building the district's resilience to the impacts of the changes that now face our communities, businesses, services, and natural spaces, is increasingly important.

Measurement, Governance and Next Steps

The Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy 2023-2026 is supported by an Action Plan which is updated continuously and reviewed bi-annually by the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee. Progress on the work of the Council on the climate emergency can be followed on the Council's website here.

The establishment of the route to zero for Council measured operational emissions will produce annual carbon reduction targets, against which progress will be measured.

The District Council's role

Three Rivers District Council declared a climate emergency in 2019 and is committed to achieving net-zero for its own measurable emissions by 2030, and working with partners to support the district in achieving net-zero by 2045.

The aims and objectives in this Strategy all follow a hierarchy of action which recognises the three broad spheres of influence that Three Rivers District Council can have.

Enable and Engage

Aim: **Inspire everyone to work together to adopt sustainable lifestyles and make climate aware decisions.**

Three Rivers together with the community has an opportunity to lead a new low-carbon future enabling cleaner, healthier lifestyles where the local economy thrives through the growth of sustainable and green businesses. We recognise the key role that the Council has in leading and inspiring local people to be part of the solution; contributing to the enrichment of local biodiversity, altering habits and encouraging improved home efficiency and to reduce their carbon, water and ecological footprints.

To achieve our aim we will:

- Embed consideration of the climate and ecological emergencies into the culture and decision making of the Council.
- Reduce the district's vulnerability to the impacts of climate change and take advantage of any opportunities that arise.
- Inspire and enable everyone in the district to adopt sustainable, climate resilient behaviours.
- Provide and foster an attractive environment for sustainable business and "green" jobs.

Energy

Aim: Minimise energy-related emissions in the district through reducing consumption, improving efficiency and transitioning to renewable energy sources to achieve net-zero targets (2030 – council emissions, 2045 – district-wide emissions).

Renewable energy projects can generate lasting cost and carbon savings, and protect against future energy price rises. They can also deliver broader social objectives such as ensuring security of supply and addressing fuel poverty.

Recent exposure to increasingly high prices for imported fossil fuels[8], highlights the importance of deploying renewables at scale and reducing our reliance on fossil fuels urgently as well as reducing the energy demand through improved fuel efficiencies

The Council is restricted in the amount of renewable energy it can produce by the constraints of its estate, however as a community leader and planning authority we can inspire and enable residents, businesses, and other land owners in the district to invest in their own renewable energy production.

To achieve our aim we will:

- Establish the route to net-zero for the Council's measurable operational emissions.
- Make further progress towards the management of a Net Zero Carbon Council estate.
- Develop the business case for solar PV on Council buildings, sites and car parks.
- Research options for decentralised renewable energy generation.
- Encourage and enable renewable energy generation in the district.
- Help residents and businesses identify how they can reduce their energy use.

[8] Quarterly Energy Prices UK April to June 2022 (publishing.service.gov.uk)

Sustainable Design and Construction

Aim: **The highest standards of sustainable design and construction**

The Future Homes and Building standard is expected to pass into legislation in 2024 with implementation following in 2025. Under the current proposals, all new homes would be required to produce 75-80% less carbon emissions than allowed under current regulations. The goal of the standard is that, by 2025, new homes will be "zero carbon ready" so that they will not need retrofit to become carbon neutral once the electricity grid has been decarbonised.

As a Local Planning Authority, Three Rivers District Council has a responsibility to produce the Strategic Local Plan and determine and enforce planning applications and Building Regulations. The Council's policies will, therefore, be reviewed and strengthened as Building Regulation changes allow. We will strive, within the constraints of the national planning framework, for the highest standards of sustainable design and construction so that the district can have adaptable buildings which are resilient to the effects of climate change, and minimise the use of natural resources over the intended lifetime of a development.

To achieve our aim we will:

- Progress towards approval of a new Local Plan that can secure the highest standards of environmental performance and sustainability in development.
- Encourage developers within Three Rivers to adopt net zero design standards.
- Require all major developments to submit an adaptation strategy and sustainability statement to demonstrate how the development will mitigate and adapt to climate change over its lifetime.
- Integrate renewable energy within any new Council developments, Council joint venture developments and within public and private sector developments.
- For major non-residential developments, proposals should achieve BREEAM 'Excellent' as a minimum with the ambition to achieve "Outstanding."
- Ensure developments minimise the use of water resources, minimise impact on sewerage infrastructure, and do not increase the risk of flood on site or in the adjacent areas.
- Encourage Biodiversity Net-Gain to be achieved on site or within the district.

Efficiency of Existing Buildings

Aim: Improve industrial, commercial and domestic energy efficiency in the district in existing buildings.

Home energy use accounts for 28.8% of the district's greenhouse gas emissions (2020)[9], making it an area of significant emissions reductions potential and thus a key sector to focus on to meet the district level net-zero target.

Improving the energy efficiency of domestic and commercial buildings is not only an essential component of reducing greenhouse gas emissions to mitigate climate change at the local level, it also contributes to tackling fuel poverty, improving public health and wellbeing, and supporting the green economy.

The Council is a non-stock holding Authority, with the exception of a small number of temporary accommodation dwellings. Registered Social Housing Providers own and manage socially rented housing in the district with the Council maintaining a regulatory function to enforce Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (MEES) for privately rented properties.

To achieve our aim we will:

- Reduce carbon emissions from existing Council buildings through retrofit.
- Co-ordinate a Domestic Decarbonisation programme for the district, in collaboration with Housing Associations and Social Landlords.
- Educate residents on the ways that they can reduce their energy consumption.
- Encourage the retrofitting of buildings for energy efficiency improvements at the change point of application for planning permission[10].
- Develop the local retrofit sector to increase capacity for retrofit projects in the district.

[9] https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1086980/UK-local-authority-ghg-emissions-2020.xlsx
[10] https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/download?id=47493

Sustainable Travel and Air Quality

Aim: Enable and encourage journeys to be made by sustainable transport modes

Hertfordshire has some of the highest vehicle ownership levels in the country, with 87% of residents with access to a car compared to 74% nationally.[11]

The Council is playing its part to reduce resident and commercial reliance on carbon-fuelled transport, working closely in partnership with the local Highway Authority (Hertfordshire County Council), and other stakeholders to encourage, enable and, where it falls within the remit of the district Council, to deliver:

- Improved public transport accessibility
- High quality active travel infrastructure
- Travel behaviour change
- Parking management that encourages sustainable mobility
- Improved streetscapes

There are two Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) in Chorleywood, the plans for which can be found at: https://www.airqualityengland.co.uk/local-authority/hnb-reports.

To achieve our aim we will:

- Adopt the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.
- Support and promote the concept of 20 Minute Neighbourhoods.
- Support our partners in the development and promotion of strategic sustainable passenger transport and infrastructure.
- Promote and improve the public experience and perception of public transport.
- Work with the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) to develop a county wide programme that supports a transition to low carbon private hire vehicles and taxis.
- Maximise opportunities via planning and development control to promote travel planning and increase sustainable low- and zero-carbon transport infrastructure.
- Ensure Air Quality Management Plans are successfully delivered.
- Encourage behaviour change on vehicle idling through education and partnership working.
- Expand electric vehicle charging infrastructure within Three Rivers.

[11] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/media-library/documents/environment-and-planning/planning/planning-in-hertfordshire/the-sustainable-modes-of-travel-strategy-smots-2022.pdf

Waste Management and a Circular Economy

Aim: **Reduce the volume of waste produced and encourage a circular economy.**

Modern consumerism and throw-away culture is unsustainable. It generates greenhouse gasses and uses unnecessary natural resources. The volume of waste created as a result currently means that a significant portion has to be exported overseas to be recycled, which in turn, leads to further environmental issues and carbon emissions.

The Council is a waste collection Authority with Hertfordshire County Council holding the responsibility of the waste disposal Authority. Consequently, how our waste is disposed of and treated is not under the Council's direct influence as contracts held by Hertfordshire County Council with re-processors influence what can and cannot be collected for recycling.

To achieve our aim we will:

- Reduce waste and increase the proportion of recycling, composting and reuse within Council operations.

- Play an active role in the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership.

- Consult on and comply with the Government's Resources and Waste Strategy.

- Inspire and enable households and businesses to reduce the waste produced and increase recycling and composting. Achieve 65% recycling and composting rate, 10% landfill, and 25% incineration by 2035 for household waste. Total volume of waste is 61% of 2017 levels by 2040.

- Maintain our position as one of the highest recycling authorities in England.

- Consider all suitable technology when replacing waste collection vehicles to reduce their carbon footprint, and continue to use them to promote reuse and recycling.

Biodiversity

Aim: Ensure net gains in local biodiversity that protect and enhance habitats and species, and utilise the power of nature to build climate resilience.

Three Rivers is home to a rich diversity of habitats and species including those of high priority with the district fortunate to benefit from ancient woodland, chalk streams and wet woodlands. Site specific management plans are in place to assess and ensure the most appropriate management techniques for the habitats present, for example; conservation grazing is utilised on several grassland sites across the district resulting in a wider floristic diversity.

The Three Rivers Nature Recovery and Tree Strategies support delivery of this Strategy, ensuring also the protection and enhancement of the natural world both for the benefit of biodiversity and contributions towards mitigating climate change.

Engagement with local communities regarding the value of the natural world is vital to its protection and enhancement. Through, for example, wildlife based events such as bat walks, interpretation explaining the habitats present on site, outreach with local schools and community groups or advice to local residents on how to help wildlife in the garden or window box the Council seeks to engage its residents in their natural surroundings.

Route to zero emissions modelling has identified the huge role that trees will need to play in mitigating our unavoidable climate emissions. It is estimated that tree coverage will need to expand by more than 30% by 2050, however, this needs to be balanced with the extremely important role that our grassland areas have in providing environments for biodiversity to thrive, and against the need for food production. As leaders in combating the climate emergency the Council will continue to work with our partners and fellow landowners in the district to navigate the competing demands for our land.

To achieve our aim we will:

- Ensure that all TRDC-owned land is managed sustainably and for the benefit of biodiversity, soil health, education, responsible recreation and climate resilience.

- Understand the value of trees in the district and the role they will play in tackling the climate emergency locally.

- Encourage ecologically-resilient and varied landscapes to ensure that habitats remain diverse and adaptable to the impacts of climate change, thereby safeguarding local flora and fauna.

- Maximise opportunities for biodiversity arising from Biodiversity Net Gain requirements to protect, enhance and extend existing habitats within the district.

- Support landowners in the district to enhance biodiversity through proactive land management including rewilding, tree planting, improving soil health, and creating wildlife corridors.

- Encourage local residents and householders in the district to improve biodiversity in their private gardens and the district's open spaces.

Water and Flooding

Aim: Reduce water consumption, prevent contamination of our river network, mitigate the impacts of and support resilience to flooding.

Hertfordshire is one of the driest counties in the UK with average rainfall only two thirds of the national average yet its residents are amongst the highest consumers of water in the UK (8% above the national average, at 153 litres per person per day).[12] Chalk Stream in Crisis, produced by The Rivers Trust, reported low flows and chronic over abstraction in our chalk streams. In addition, the sewage overflows and pollutants that end up in the rivers and in riverine habitats places the district's three rivers under severe pressure.

Meanwhile, a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) has identified that over 2400 properties in Three Rivers are at high risk of flooding. The Colne and Gade catchments were identified as highly sensitive with warmer, wetter winters and more severe weather due to climate change likely to further increase the risk of future flooding.

One way of preventing additional pressure on water supplies is to ensure that any new development does not increase water abstraction for drinking water above existing levels – water neutrality. Whilst this is not currently enforceable in Three Rivers, it is a concept which is having an impact in other parts of the county and is expected to grow in importance over the coming years.

The Council has no statutory duty with regard to water, instead we focus on encouraging those with responsibilities to work together to benefit residents and our chalk streams**.** To that end, the Council established and hosts regular meetings of a local Water Partnership, providing key stakeholders with a network and constructive platform to discuss issues, raise awareness and establish solutions in order to achieve the above aim.

To achieve our aim we will:

- Reduce the Council's water consumption across its estate.
- Require new development to facilitate optimum water and waste water efficiency and flood mitigation measures, aiming towards water neutrality.
- Work in partnership on a catchment-scale with key stakeholders to protect and enhance local rivers and the habitats which surround them.
- Promote reductions in water consumption in the district.
- Actively encourage Thames Water to invest in their waste water catchments and the Maple Lodge Sewage Treatment Works to ensure sufficient capacity and eradication of untreated sewage discharges into the chalk streams.
- Refuse development if it is subject to unacceptable flood risk or if it would exacerbate flood risk on site or elsewhere.

[12] https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/microsites/building-futures/a-sustainable-design-toolkit/technical-modules/water/water-facts.aspx

Adaptation and Resilience

Aim: Create communities, services, infrastructure and environments that are climate resilient.

Climate adaptation is critical to the future of our district and is a priority for the Council under the Corporate Framework 2023-26. Evidence is increasing of the ways in which the climate changes already being experienced exacerbates existing inequities with lower-income and other marginalized communities who are, for example, disproportionately affected by the extreme weather conditions, not least because they are often unable to meet the expense of the adaptation measures that now must go hand in hand with carbon mitigation.

Fostering increased local resilience will require extensive collaboration between the Council, residents, public, private, and voluntary sector organisations, and partners across a wide range of concerns including energy, food and water supply, public health, transport and emergency services.

Adaptation and increased resilience will be needed cross every level and department of the Council. To achieve this, the Council will continue to work in partnership with other key partners particularly Hertfordshire County Council, who hold responsibility for managing and maintaining the infrastructure for flood risk and are the Highways Authority responsible for to prevention and alleviation of flooding through road surface drainage as well as the Environment Agency which is responsible for flooding from rivers.

To achieve our aim we will:

- Ensure our emergency and public health plans account for more severe weather and its impacts on communities.
- Prioritize climate adaptation efforts that explicitly help our most vulnerable populations.
- Assess climate risks and subsequent adaptations required to ensure the resilience of the Council’s buildings and services to the impacts of climate change.
- Ensure the Councils infrastructure, landscapes, services are built, maintained and managed to be resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- Inspire and support stakeholders, partners, community groups, businesses and residents to be resilient to the impacts of climate change.

Food and Agriculture

Aim: Encourage sustainable food production and consumption in the district, and engage with farmers to improve habitat networks.

Climate related risks are, and will continue to have, a significant impact on food security, particularly given the global nature of food supply chains. Exposure to rising food prices and tackling this associated carbon emissions requires an increase in local food production, a reduction in food waste and a shift towards a more plant based diet. Encouraging local growing, preparation and consumption of more seasonal local food provides opportunities to engage with resident on nutrition and its positive impacts on health and wellbeing.

The Hertfordshire State of Nature reports that only 3% of species in the county are connected to farmland. Working with landowners on habitat networks can create vital natural corridors that will support the expansion of wildlife populations.

The Council acknowledges that its influence over food production and consumption is limited, however, through our community partnerships and social media campaigns we can improve knowledge and awareness of the benefits of shopping and eating more sustainably.

To achieve our aim we will:

- Encourage and inspire local land owners to increase biodiversity and climate resilience on their land, and explore options for renewable energy production.
- Inspire and encourage local, sustainable food producers to connect food retailers, the hospitality sector, and residents.
- Encourage local food production through the development of community gardens, allotments, and orchards, and
- Engage with local businesses, community groups, and residents to adopt sustainable food consumption and reduce food waste.

Net Zero Carbon Emissions Trajectory for Three Rivers District Council

Report

Report produced in July 2022

APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) is a not for profit local government body working with over 300 councils throughout the UK. Promoting excellence in public services, APSE is the foremost specialist in local authority front line services, hosting a network for front line service providers in areas such as waste and refuse collection, parks and environmental services, leisure, school meals, cleaning, housing and building maintenance.

APSE Energy is APSE's local authority energy collaboration. The vision for the collaboration is to form an "effective collaboration of a large number of local authorities to enable and facilitate the local municipalisation of energy services. By this we mean the public and community, as well as private, ownership and managerial control of local energy generation, supply networks and delivery of energy efficiency works. Local authorities working together in this way would have great influence and would be able to deliver economies of scale in green energy to promote economic growth and combat fuel poverty.

Association for Public Service Excellence
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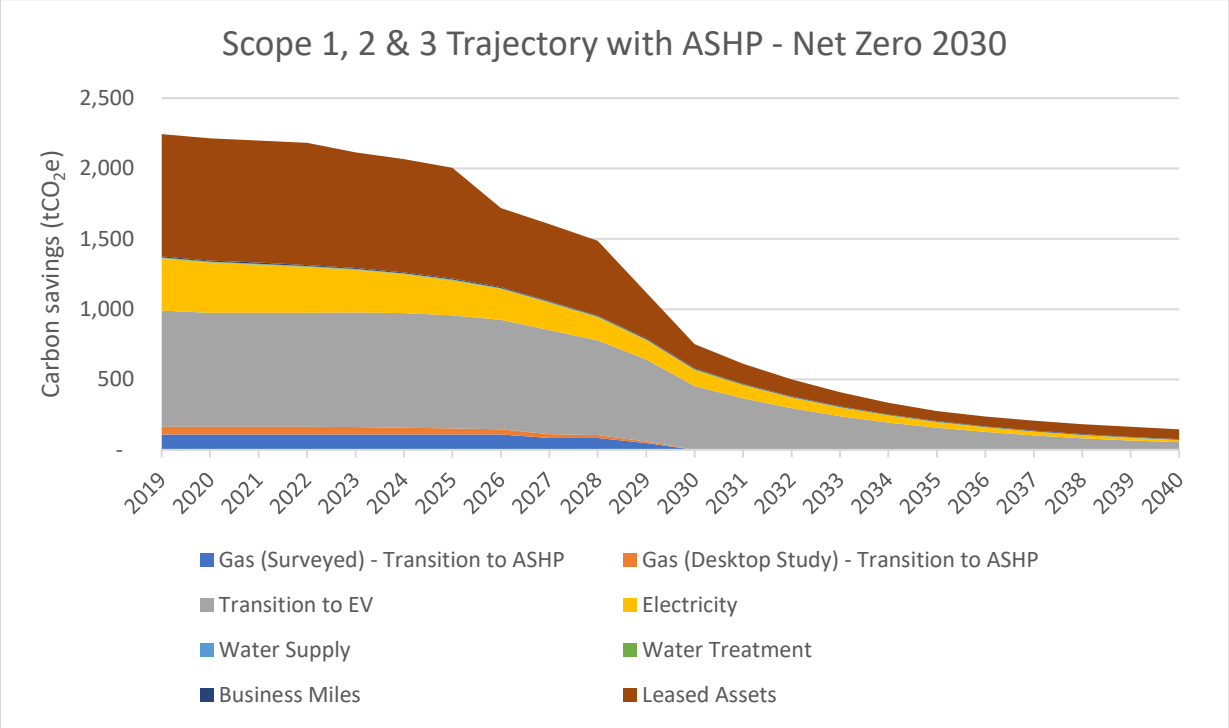
Contents

Executive Summary

This report shows calculations for the carbon emissions baseline of Three Rivers District Council and an estimated projection of emissions after interventions are made with a net zero carbon target of 2035.

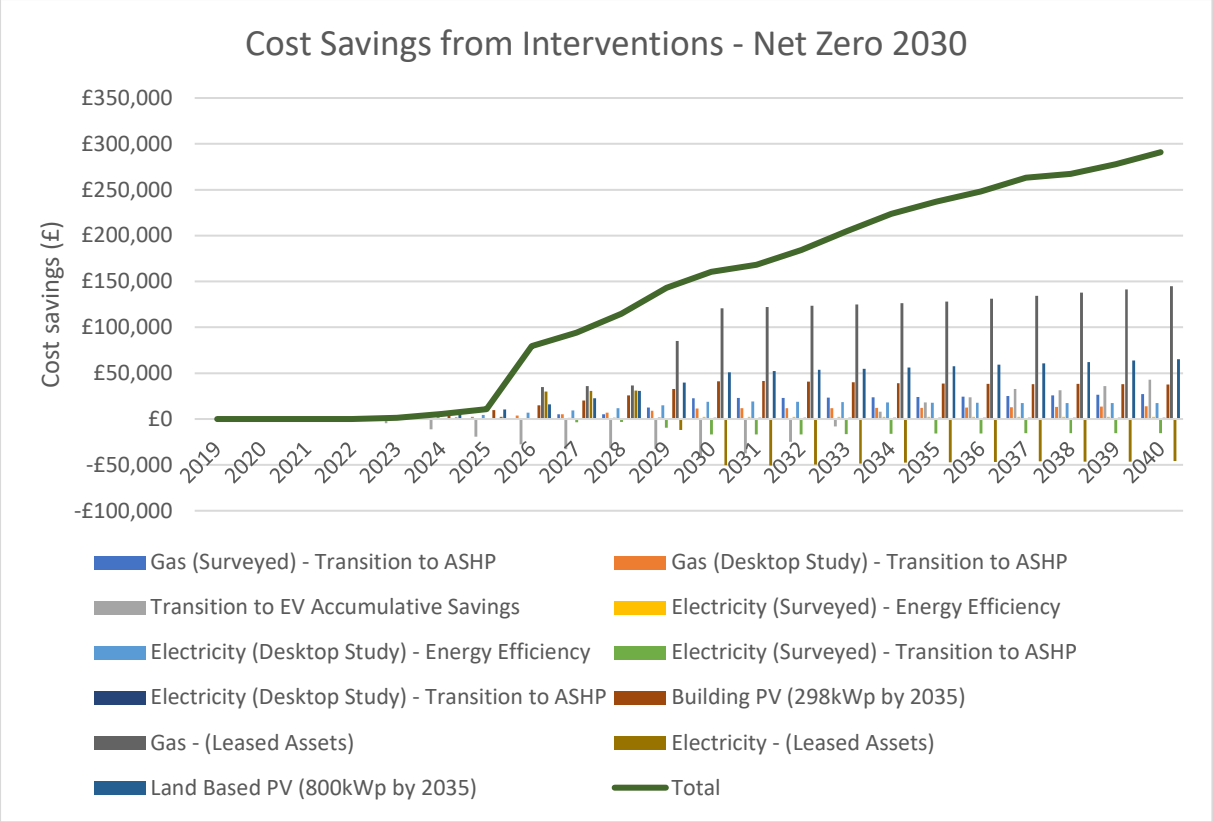
The trajectory below shows a projection of the Scope 1, 2 and known Scope 3 carbon emissions for the net zero targets of 2030 and 2035 respectively. The total emissions from all Scope 3 sources are not known to date.



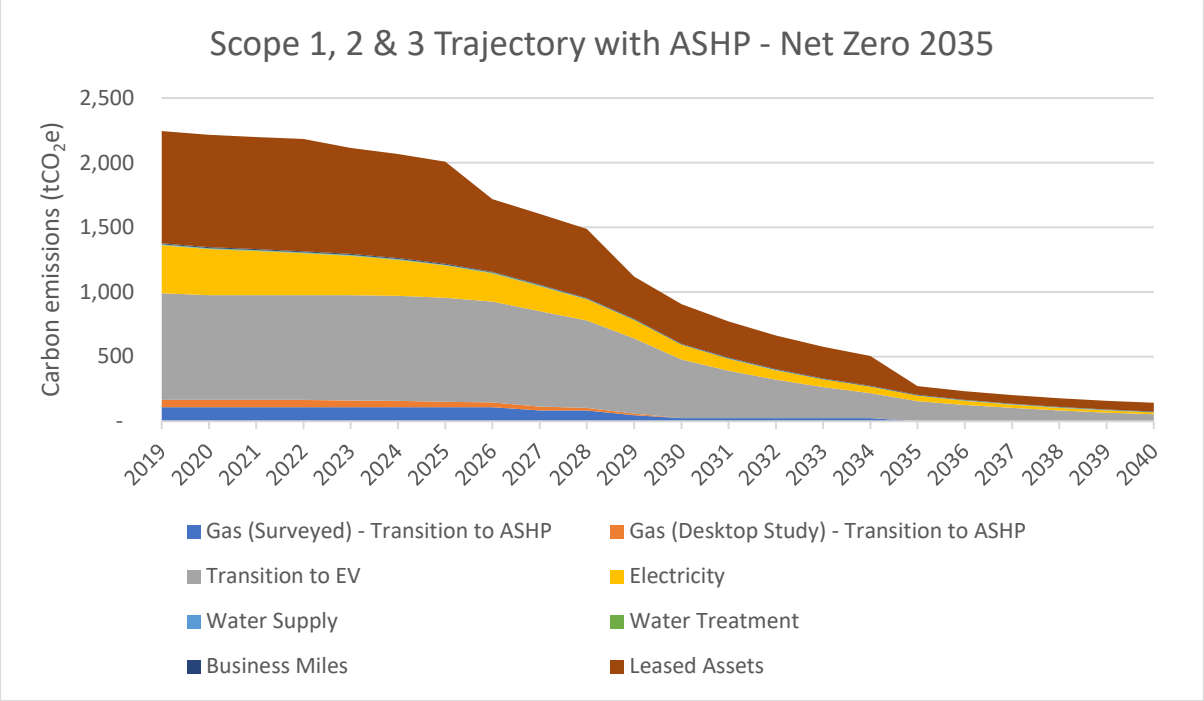
This trajectory represents an overall saving of 1,493tCO$_2$e (67%) when comparing 2019 to 2030.

It is estimated that there will be 751tCO$_2$e from hard to reduce sources that will be unavoidable by 2030 that will need to be offset, and it is assumed that this can be offset through a land – based PV and tree planting scheme which will cost £736,360 combined.

Carrying out the recommended initiatives will result in financial savings over the term as shown in the chart below:



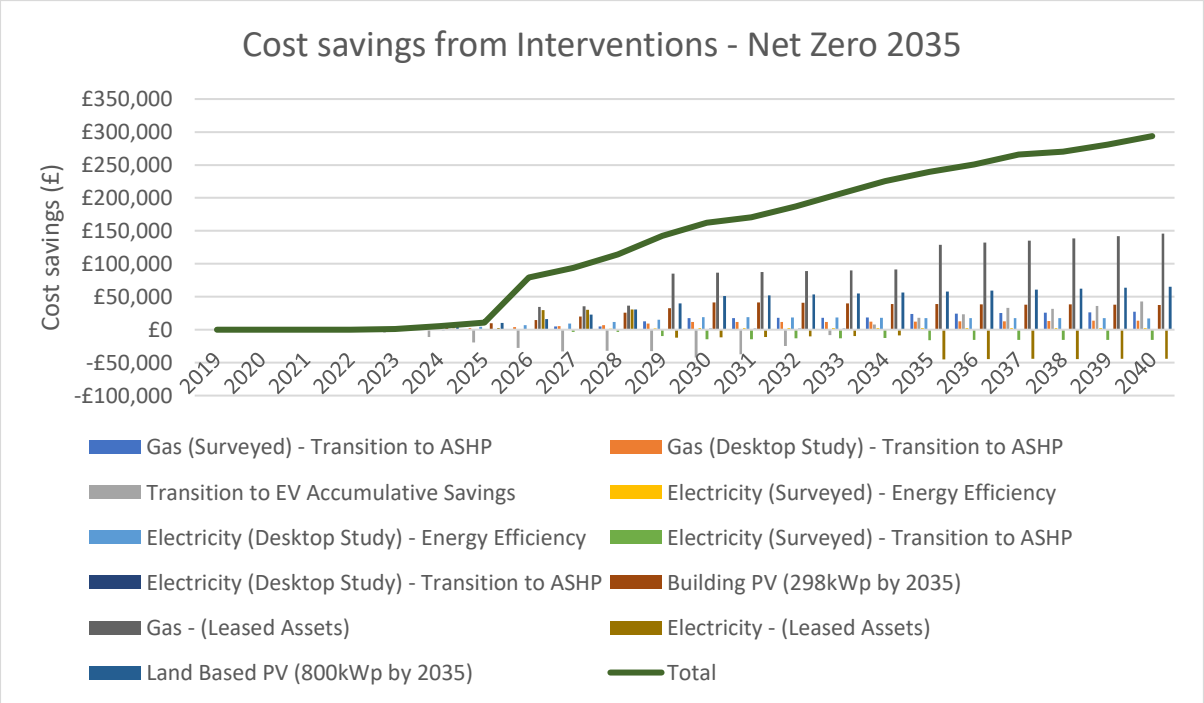
It is estimated that a financial budget of £19million is required to reach net zero carbon by 2030 for corporate assets by being more energy efficient in buildings, installing air source heat pumps, generating power, and developing a tree planting scheme. It is estimated that these initiatives will financially benefit the Council by £160,626 per year in 2030.



This trajectory represents an overall saving of 1,706tCO_2e (71%) when comparing 2019 to 2035.

It is estimated that there will be 271tCO_2e from hard to reduce sources that will be unavoidable by 2035 that will need to be offset, and it is assumed that this can be offset through a land – based PV and tree planting scheme which will cost £725,940 combined.

Carrying out the recommended initiatives will result in financial savings over the term as shown in the chart below:



It is estimated that a financial budget of £19million is required to reach net zero carbon by 2035 for corporate assets by being more energy efficient in buildings, installing air source heat pumps, generating power, and developing a tree planting scheme. It is estimated that these initiatives will financially benefit the Council by £239,663 per year in 2035.

Three Rivers District Council Net Zero Carbon Emissions

1 Introduction

This report provides the findings of the carbon footprint calculations for Three Rivers District Council which can be used as a benchmark to record current emissions and to track performance against future emissions. The carbon footprint has been undertaken in accordance with best practise guidance by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol[1] and calculated using 2019 conversion factors for the carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e is explained further in Section 2.2) published by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS)[2].

The reporting compares the financial years of 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21.

The carbon footprint is categorised into scopes, which cover:

Scope 1 (direct) emissions are from activities owned or controlled by the Council. Examples of Scope 1 emissions include emissions from combustion in council owned or controlled boilers, furnaces and vehicles.

Scope 2 (indirect) emissions are associated with purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling. These indirect emissions are a consequence of the Council's energy use, but occur at sources that the Council do not own or control. Examples include grid supplied electricity and heat provided through a heat network.

Scope 3 (other indirect) emissions are a consequence of the Council's actions that occur at sources the Council do not own or control and are not classed as Scope 2 emissions. Examples of Scope 3 emissions include business travel by means not owned or controlled by the Council (grey fleet), disposing of the Council's own waste and purchased goods in the supply chain, etc.

2 Carbon Footprint

2.1 Carbon Reporting Boundaries

The organisational boundaries determine what emission are the responsibility of the Council or others. This can be based on who owns, operates, or exerts control over certain assets and can be based on financial or operational control. The buildings categorised under Scope 1 & 2 within this reporting are those where energy is purchased or acquired and consumed by

[1] https://ghgprotocol.org/guidance-0
[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/government-conversion-factors-for-company-reporting

the Council. The vehicles categorised under Scope 1 are vehicles that the Council own, lease and operate purely for the Council's own operations.

Scope 3 emissions are classified under 15 different categories as detailed under Appendix C. As Scope 3 emissions are under the influence of the Council, but not under its direct control, it can be difficult to obtain the necessary data to calculate the associated carbon emissions from some Scope 3 sources. One of the larger contributors to carbon emissions is purchased goods and services.

Emissions from assets a company owns and leases to another entity, but does not operate, can either be included in Scope 3 or excluded from the inventory.

Table 3 below shows all of the sources that make up the reporting boundary for the Council, within this report.

The emissions from these sources represents a good data set for a Council, as it is not uncommon for Councils to only have data available for electricity and gas only.

There are sources that are missing from the reporting and the largest contributor is likely to be from purchased goods and services, which is generally very difficult to gather data and calculate emissions. This category includes all upstream (i.e. cradle-to-gate) emissions from the production of products purchased or acquired by the Council in the reporting year. Products include both goods (tangible products) and services (intangible products).

Cradle-to-gate emissions include all emissions that occur in the life cycle of purchased products, up to the point of receipt by the Council. Relevant purchases to the Council may include capital goods, such as office supplies, office furniture, computers, telephones, travel services, IT support, outsourced administrative functions, consulting services, janitorial, landscaping services, maintenance, repairs and operations.

The Council should set up procedures to record all emission sources related to its operations for future reporting, and it is likely that the overall emissions will increase as the data quality improves.

2.2 Carbon Emissions

Appendix A (previously provided) is an Excel spreadsheet that shows a breakdown of the emissions by source. APSE Energy have calculated the carbon emissions for 2019/20. Appendix A shows a summary for emissions and separate tabs showing a breakdown for each source in 2019/20.

Emissions are calculated as carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e), which is a term used to combine the seven most threatening gases that have the highest Global Warming Potential. This includes carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons, sulfur hexafluoride and nitrogen trifluoride.

The carbon footprint has been calculated using the best data that was available to the Council during the reporting year and it is the Council's responsibility to confirm the accuracy.

2.2.1 Emissions for 2020/21

The set of data below shows a summary of the most recent year available of 2020/21.

Table 1: Carbon emissions by source for 2020/21

2020/2021			
Emissions Source	**Scope**	**% Split**	**tCO2e**
Gas	1	5%	109
Vehicle - Council owned	1	40%	863
Electricity	2	9%	184
Gas - WTT	3	1%	14
Vehicle - Council owned - WTT	3	10%	207
Electricity - T&D	3	1%	16
Electricity - WTT	3	1%	28
Water Supply	3	0.1%	2.9
Water Treatment	3	0.3%	5.7
Vehicle - Employee	3	0.3%	5.6
Leased Assets	3	33.4%	718
Total	_	**100%**	**4,570**

Chart 1: Carbon emissions by source for 2020/21

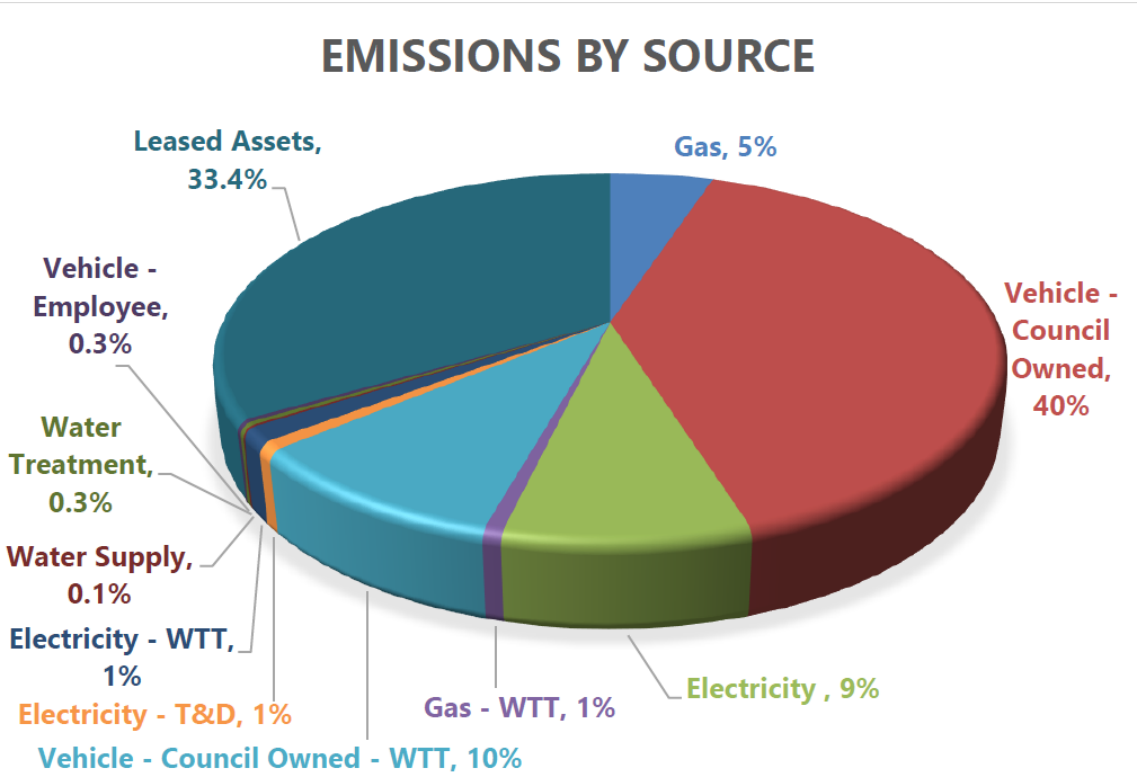
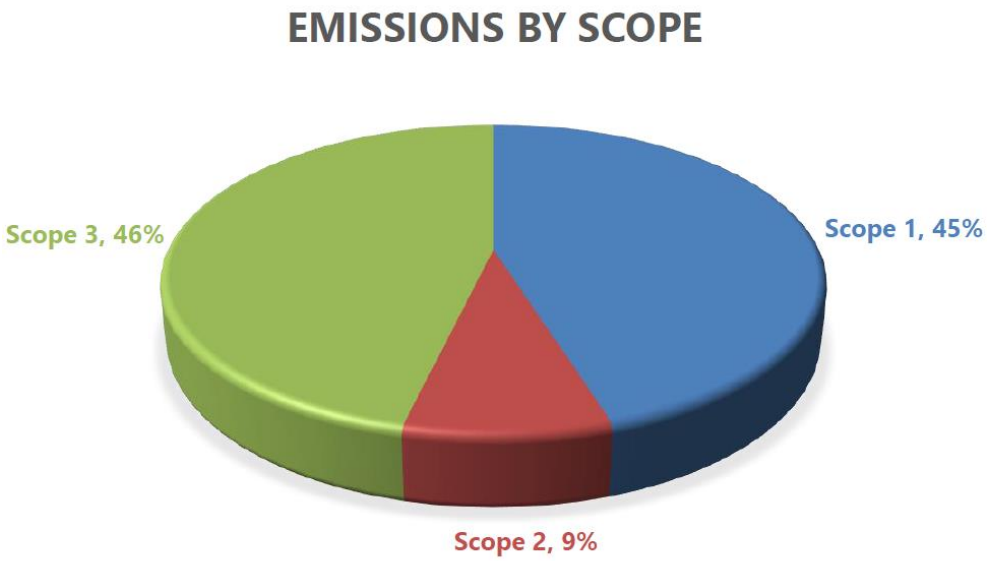


Table 2: Carbon emissions by scope for 2020/21

Emissions Source	% Split	tCO2e
Scope 1	45%	972
Scope 2	9%	184
Scope 3	46%	997
Total	**100%**	**2,153**

	Tonnes of CO_2e		
	Apr 2018 – Mar 2019	**Apr 2019 – Mar 2020**	**Apr 2020 – Mar 2021**
Scope 1 - Direct Emissions	**994**	**989**	**972**
Natural Gas	136	131	109
Council Owned Vehicles	858*	858*	863
Scope 2 – Electricity Emissions	**340**	**273**	**184**
Total Scope 1 & 2 Emissions	**1,333**	**1,263**	**1,156**
Scope 3 – Indirect Emissions	**894**	**1,128**	**997**
Gas – Well to tank emissions	19	17	14
Council Owned Vehicles - Well to tank emission	202	204	207
Electricity – Distribution and transmission emissions	29	23	16
Electricity – Well to tank emissions	55	41	28
Water Supply	N/A	2	3
Water Treatment	N/A	5	6
Employee Vehicle emissions	21	7	6
Leased Assets	569	827	718
Total Gross Emissions	**2,227**	**2,390**	**2,153**
Carbon offset	0	0	0
Solar PV Exported	0	0	0
Total Net Emissions	**2,227**	**2,390**	**2,153**
Further Information			
Solar PV Generated	15,098	16,981	23,362
Degree Days at 15.5 ^{O}C	1,757	1,856	1,875
(an indicator of heat demand)			
Total electricity kWh	1,199,498	1,069,206	790,348
Total gas kWh	737,763	714,341	593,671

Chart 2: Carbon emissions by scope for 2020/21



2.2.3 Comparison of Emissions for 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21

Table 3: Difference in carbon emissions by year

* See 3 Notes and Observations Scope 1 &2 (page 11) re 'Consumption data was only provided for council owned vehicles in 2020/21'.

Chart 3: Scope 1 carbon emissions by year

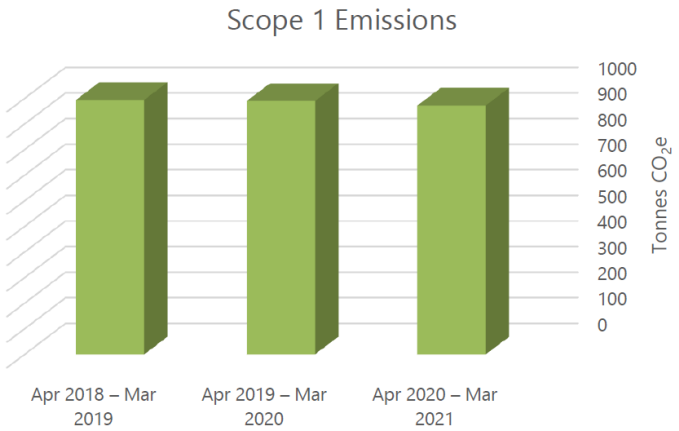


Chart 4: Scope 2 carbon emissions by year

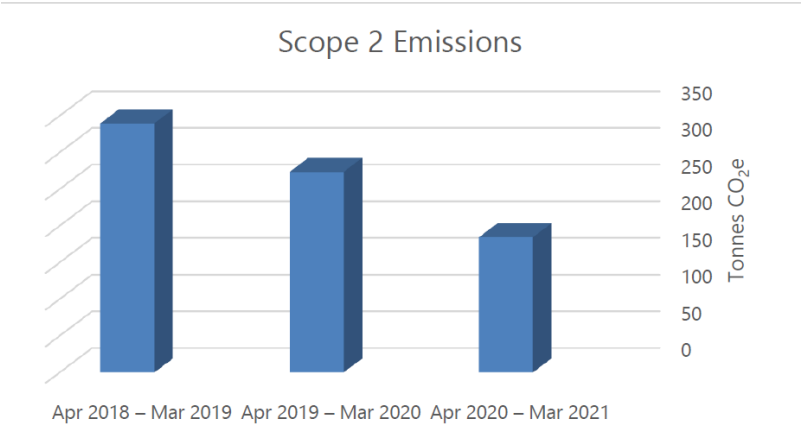


Chart 5: Scope 3 carbon emissions by year

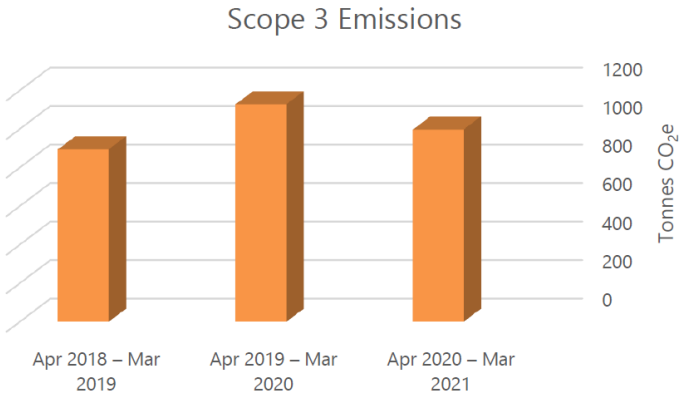
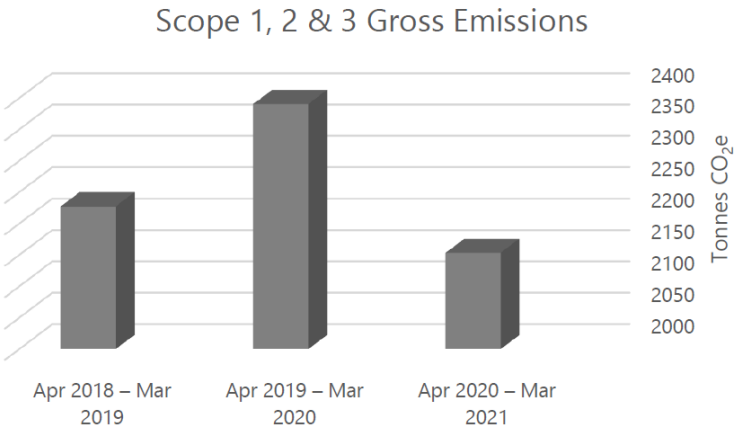


Chart 6: Scope 1, 2 & 3 carbon emissions by source by year



3 Notes and Observations

3.1 Scope 1 & 2

Appendix A is an Excel spreadsheet that shows a breakdown of the emissions by source and makes a comparison between 2018/19, 2019/20 and 2020/21. This can be used to develop a carbon strategy by identifying and approaching assets with the highest emissions.

There are two recordings for gas usage at Watersmeet, which is assumed to be because there are two gas meters on site. The gas consumption for Watersmeet Theatre 1 and 2 is recorded twice in 2018/19 (195,566kWh). This was confirmed as an error and an average has been applied for gas meter 1 and used in 2018/19.

The sites below are recorded as having zero consumption between 2019 and 2021 as the utility companies will not provide meter reading and charges:

- Baldwins Lane Pavilion
- King George V Pavilion
- Oxhey Bowls Pavilion

Consumption data was only provided for council owned vehicles in 2020/21, not for 2018/19 or 2019/20. The Council had been recording the average emissions from vehicles through the last 9 years and the average is 858, which has been used for the missing years - 2018/19 and 2019/20.

3.2 Scope 3

The Council acknowledge that there is a lot of missing data for water consumption. Going forward water supply and treatment data should be recorded as it is issued from the supplier.

4 Recommendations for gathering data going forward

4.1 Scope 1 and 2 Emissions

The Council should develop a procedure for gathering and storing data as it is made available. The benefit of this is that the carbon reporting process is streamlined and progress towards targets can be tracked.

APSE Energy can support by gathering data on behalf of the Council and storing it on energy management software. The Council will be provided with password protected access to the cloud-based database so it can access the data and generate cost and carbon reports. APSE Energy can use this data to provide streamlined reporting to the Council in subsequent years.

4.2 Scope 3 Emissions

Scope 3 emissions are separated into 15 different categories which includes waste, staff travel and the purchased goods supply chain. Scope 3 emissions can amount to a higher proportion of total emissions than Scope 1 and 2 combined and represent the most significant opportunity to reduce carbon emissions and the impact to climate change. So, understanding these risks through accurate and consistent measurement, evaluation and reporting should improve both resilience and reputation.

ASPE Energy can provide further guidance on how to gather Scope 3 data from third parties and assist in calculating emissions.

<u>Waste</u>

It is apparent that the Council were only measuring its waste from the Three Rivers House which includes the Police who operate out of the same building, but not the depot or other sites.

Apart from Covid and the office closure causing a massive reduction in waste – the two years previous to this involved a massive clear out as the Council moved from "paper" to digital, and refurbished and modernised the office which included the disposal some furniture.

The method of recording waste from Three Rivers House has been questioned and it was decided to exclude waste from this reporting period due to the accuracy.

<u>Transmission and Distribution</u>

Transmission and distribution (T&D) factors are used to report the Scope 3 emissions associated with grid losses (the energy loss that occurs in getting the electricity from the power plant to the premises). 13

Well to Tank

Fuels have indirect Scope 3 emissions associated with the production, extraction, refining and transport of the fuel before their use known as Well-to-tank (WTT). WTT emissions have been recorded for:

- Electricity
- Gas
- Transmission and Distribution
- Council Owned Vehicles

5 Pathway Methodology

5.1 Energy Efficiency

The energy and carbon data were taken from energy audits for 15no. sites: The Aquadrome, Baldwins Lane Pavilion, Barn Lea Hall, Basing Bowls Pavilion, Basing House, Chorleywood Cemetery, King George V Pavilion, Leavesden Pavilion, Maple Cross Pavilion, Oxhey Pavilion Green Lane, Rickmansworth Golf Course, Scotsbridge Pavilion, South Oxhey Leisure Centre, Watersmeet Theatre and William Penn Leisure Centre. For these sites recommendations have been made based on the type of building and what suitable improvements could be made. Three Rivers House was not surveyed by APSE Energy however, it is known that heat pumps are to be installed in December 2022 and this is reflected in the trajectory.

For the remaining sites that were not audited the energy data has been taken from the prior carbon footprint report, and a more generic approach has been taken to produce a carbon trajectory report. These methods have been detailed below in sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4. Appendix B shows generic measures that could be taken to reduce energy usage from the 2019/20 baseline emissions. This is a desktop assessment based on the consumption data and typical saving initiatives and is not based on site survey information. Estimated energy savings and forecast capital costs shown are for representative purposes to give an illustrative outcome and should not be used for budgeting purposes.

The trajectory and savings detailed in Appendix B can be used as a KPI to track performance of reducing emissions against the 2019/20 baseline year.

The Council should be able to achieve significant carbon and cost savings by reviewing its maintenance policies to specify highly efficient plant and services, and low emission vehicles, rather than replacing like-for-like. Changing policies to specify materials with low embodied carbon should also reduce Scope 3 emissions by considering the carbon life cycle cost in terms of the supply chain, operation and decommissioning.

It is recommended that a detailed audit and feasibility study is carried out for all remaining assets to determine the site-specific initiatives. This will provide an indication of the realistic interventions that could be provided and the likely cost savings, capital cost and carbon savings. The trajectory should be treated as a live document and updated once more accurate information is available following site surveys.

The following assumptions have been made which can be updated once more information is available:

- future CO_2 emissions and tariff rates have been taken from the Treasury Green Book supplementary appraisal guidance on valuing energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions published by BEIS[3]. These emissions factors include transmission and distribution losses, including significant losses due to power station inefficiency meaning that the emissions factors differ slightly to those calculated in Section 2;
- BEIS have not published future CO_2 emission factors for natural gas. Although it is likely that the carbon emissions factor of gas will decrease as non-fossil fuel gases are injected into the grid, such as hydrogen, the applied emissions factor of gas in this pathway was constant for each year;
- the energy costs are calculated using the retail fuel price which includes the Climate Change Levy but excludes standing charges that are not directly impacted by consumption fluctuations;
- the intervention capital cost is calculated by multiplying the typical payback of the intervention by the annual energy cost savings, with the exception of heat pumps which is explained later;
- not all interventions are applicable to each site e.g. replacement lighting is the only intervention that is assumed in car parks; and no savings are projected on certain assets such as door entry or CCTV;
- the pathway is based on current technology available today and assumes that all interventions could be delivered by 2035.

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/valuation-of-energy-use-and-greenhouse-gas-emissions-for-appraisal

5.2 Interventions for Reducing Gas usage (Heat)

Generic interventions for heating (gas usage) include:

Intervention	Saving on Heat Demand	Payback in Years	Detail
More efficient plant	20%	8	Could include more efficient boilers
Controls	15%	5	Could include a new or optimised BMS for larger sites and controllers and TRVs for smaller sites
Insulation	15%	10	Could include building fabric insulation, draught proofing, pool cover and pipework insulation
Other	15%	5	Could include more efficient heat emitters, heat recovery and distribution improvements

It should be noted that savings from these interventions have been calculated concurrently rather than independently i.e. each intervention reduces the heat demand following on from the previous intervention. For example:

- 100kWh less 20% saving from more efficient plant = 80kWh >
- 80kWh less 15% saving from controls = 68kWh >
- 68kWh less 15% saving from insulation = 58kWh >
- 58kWh less 15% saving from 'other' = 49kWh
- Total reduction = 51%

5.2.1 Heat Pumps

Using heat pumps is a good initiative for heating systems because the carbon factor of electricity will reduce as the grid is decarbonised; and due to their efficiency and Coefficient of Performance (COP). For a heat pump, a COP value of 3 means that 1kW of electric energy is needed to generate 3kW of heat.

Replacing gas boilers with heat pumps can be very expensive. This is because the existing boilers distribute heat at around 80°C and heat pumps distribute heat at around 50°C. It is most likely that an ASHP installation would require design, high levels of insulation, low levels of air infiltration, controls, an external location for plant and possible upgrade of

emitters and pipework. In most cases, it is assumed that the cost to retrofit an existing site with a heat pump and the associated infrastructure would be disproportionate compared to the benefits unless financial incentives are used such as the Renewable Heat Incentive or grant funding as with the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme.

Heat pumps will also increase the building's electricity demand. This could be offset by reducing the electricity usage through other methods, such as LED lighting, but in most cases the overall electricity consumption is likely to increase. An investigation is required to review the buildings Maximum Demand, Maximum Import Capacity, and new electrical load to determine if a larger electrical incoming supply is required. The Distribution Network Operator should also be contacted to understand any restrictions on the grid in the local area.

A detailed feasibility study is required for each building to review the viability of low carbon heating.

It is very difficult to estimate the capital cost for heat pumps. A Ground Source Heat Pump (GSHP) is more efficient than an Air Source Heat Pump (ASHP) but is generally much more expensive as it involves significant ground works to bury the slinkies. The costs are also heavily affected by the heat emitters as it is likely that the radiators and pipework will need to be replaced at a high cost, plus the cost to increase the electrical supply can be very high, but these elements are not normally known without a detailed investigation.

Barton Way Pavilion was not surveyed and a capital cost estimate for an ASHP was based on the costs from the energy audits for other Three Rivers properties and apportioned for Barton Way Pavilion based on the kWh gas used for heating.

It is likely that changes in technology will mean that options for more low carbon heating systems will be available by 2035.

5.3 Interventions for Reducing Electricity Usage

Generic interventions for electricity include:

Intervention	Saving on Electricity Usage	Payback in Years	Proportion of building services	Apportioned saving across whole building	Detail
LED Lighting and Control	60%	6	33%	20%	Replace existing luminaires with LED & automatic control
Controls and HVAC	15%	5	41%	6%	Controlling building services with a BMS
Office Equipment	15%	5	15%	2%	Replacing aging equipment with more efficient equipment
Other	15%	5	11%	2%	Could include variable speed drives, motors, hand dryers

*Building information sourced from the Chartered Institute of Building Services Engineers (CIBSE)

Savings from these interventions have been calculated independently from the total electricity usage and their estimated proportion to building services e.g. lighting is assumed to account for 33% of all electricity usage in a building and a potential saving of 60% could be achieved from installing LED lighting and control which leads to an apportioned whole building saving of 20%.

A change in policies to upgrade existing building services to the most efficient option through planned maintenance, and upgrade fossil fuel vehicles to low emission vehicles when they are due to be replaced, will impact the action plan significantly.

5.4 Project Phasing

For the audited premises the replacement of a specific building's boilers have been programmed to begin at the end of their useful life (15 years) depending on the net zero target year. For the buildings that have boilers that are not yet 15 years old in 2029 with a target year of 2030 it has been programmed that their replacement commences in 2029 and if the target year is 2035 the replacement is set to commence in 2034 if not yet 15 at that point to keep in line with the Council's net zero emissions plan.

For the remaining buildings, replacing boilers have been programmed to start in 2023 and end by 2030, with the delivery of projects ramping up each year. This is shown in the table below.

	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Percentage of Projects Delivered Per Year	5%	8%	10%	12%	13%	15%	17%	20%

All other projects have been programmed to start in 2023 and end in 2030, due to other projects such as LED lighting and installing solar panels stack up financially and should be completed without delay. It assumed that all vehicles will be upgraded to low emission vehicle by 2030 as there is a draft plan to ban the sale of all new petrol and diesel vehicles by 2030.

6 Achieving Net Zero Target of Council Emissions

A "net zero" target refers to reaching net zero carbon emissions by the nominated year of 2035, as provisionally chosen by the Council, but differs from zero carbon, which requires no carbon to be emitted at all.

Net-zero refers to balancing the amount of emitted greenhouse gases with the equivalent emissions that are either offset or sequestered through rewilding and tree planting or carbon capture and storage. It is much more beneficial to reduce carbon emissions and then offsetting techniques can be used for hard to reduce emissions.

6.1 Power Generation

6.1.1 Solar Panels on Buildings

The model assumes that 298kWp of PV could be installed by 2030. As the Council has around 20 buildings it is assumed that this is the expected total size of PV and it is recommended to carry out a detailed feasibility study across the estate to review the suitability of buildings.

6.1.2 Solar Panels on Land

The trajectory assumes that 800kWp land-based PV has been installed which would count towards carbon offsetting, this could be done in an open space such as grassland or a car park canopy. This is considered a carbon offset as it is assumed that the system will connect directly to the electricity grid rather than connect directly to Council owned buildings through a private wire.

The amount of available land for PV is unknown at this stage. It is recommended to carry out a detailed feasibility study to determine the amount of generation that could be possible via land-based PV.

6.2 Water Supply and Wastewater

Water supply and wastewater combined account for 0.3% of the total emissions and 7.2tCO_2e. However, simple measures can be taken to reduce water usage and cost such as installing low flow appliances and fixing leaks.

It is recommended to enter a consolidated water contract so that all supplies are on a group contract for both supply and wastewater. Conditions of the contract could be that Automatic Meter Readers (AMR) are installed which will improve the accuracy of billing and can also be configured to identify leaks quickly.

It has been assumed that emissions from water supply and wastewater will reduce by 5% annually up to 2035.

6.3 Business Miles

Business miles account for 0.3% of the total emissions and 7.4tCO_2e.

It has been assumed that emissions from business miles will reduce by 5% annually up to 2035.

6.4 Leased Assets

Leased Assets account for 39% of the total emissions and 869tCO_2e.

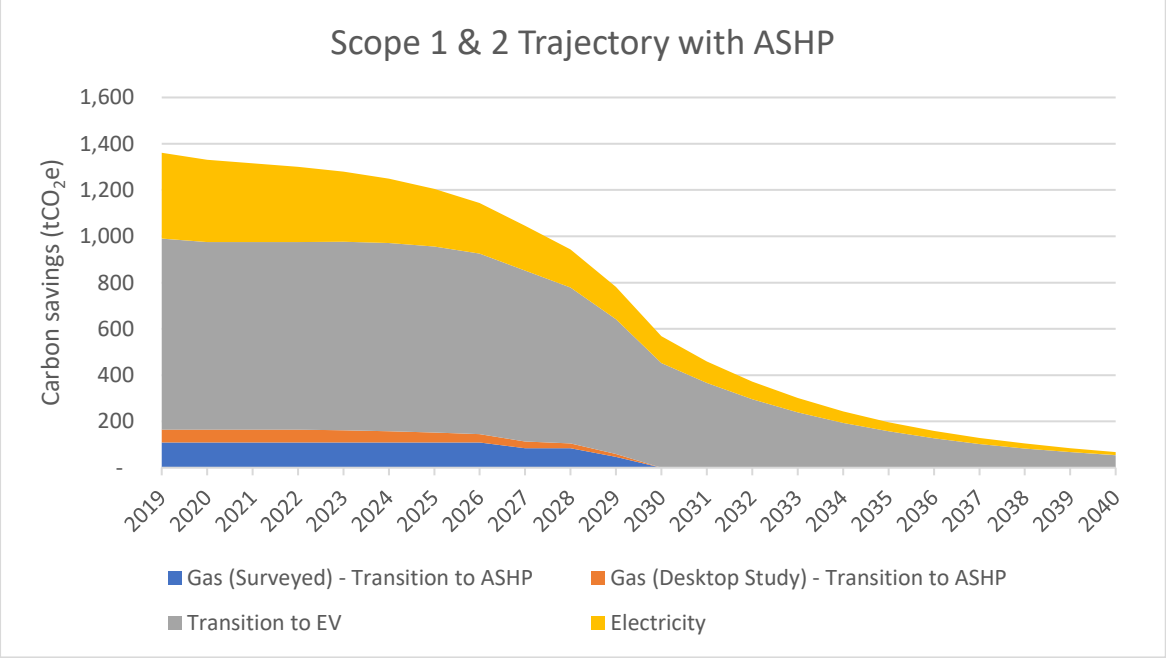
For the surveyed properties (South Oxhey Leisure Centre and William Penn Leisure Centre) the calculations for the emissions trajectory have been done in the same way as the surveyed properties detailed in Section 5.1 – Energy Efficiency. Sir James Altham pool is to be decommissioned in 2025 and the carbon trajectory reflects this to removes the associated emissions entirely. For the other unsurveyed property (the Fairway Inn) it has been assumed that the emissions will reduce by 5% annually.

6.5 Trajectory to 2040

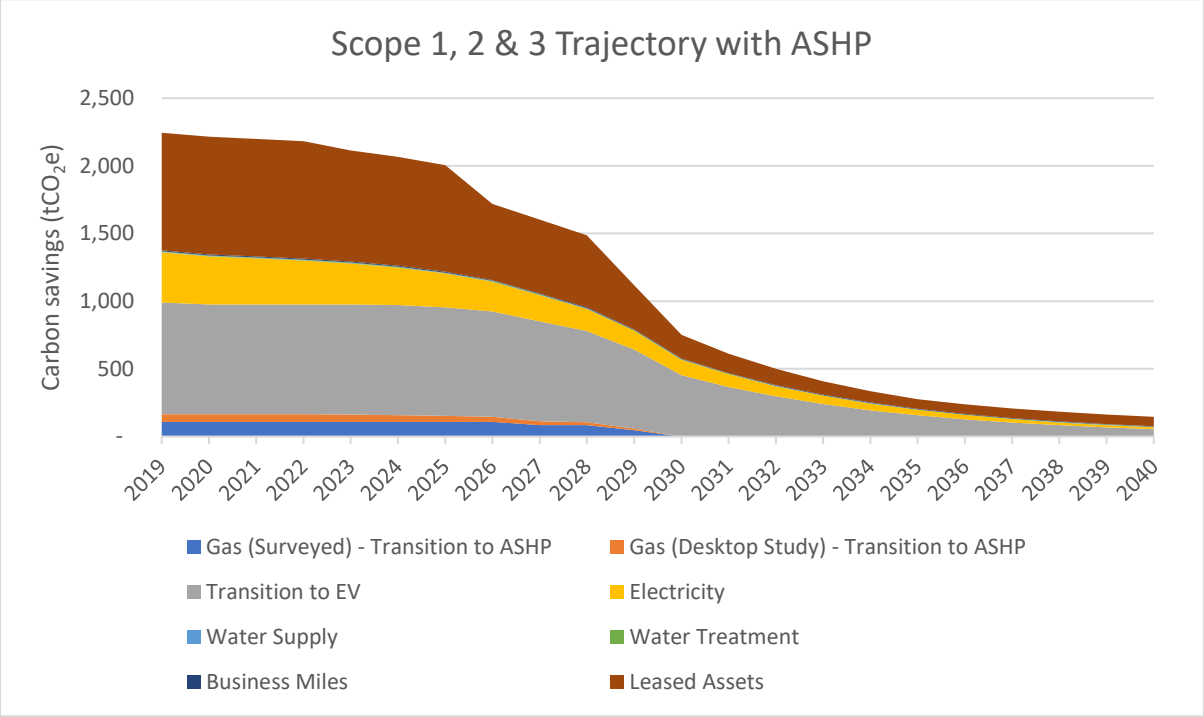
Future emissions data was taken from the Treasury Green Book supplementary appraisal guidance on valuing energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions.

A breakdown of the year-on-year carbon savings can be found in Appendix B.

For comparison's sake the following two trajectory graphs show the carbon trajectories of scope 1, 2 & 3 emissions for a net target zero year of 2030:



The graph above shows the carbon savings when installing heat pumps and removing gas boilers entirely by 2030. This is a carbon saving of 58% compared to 2019/20 if replacing gas boilers with ASHP.

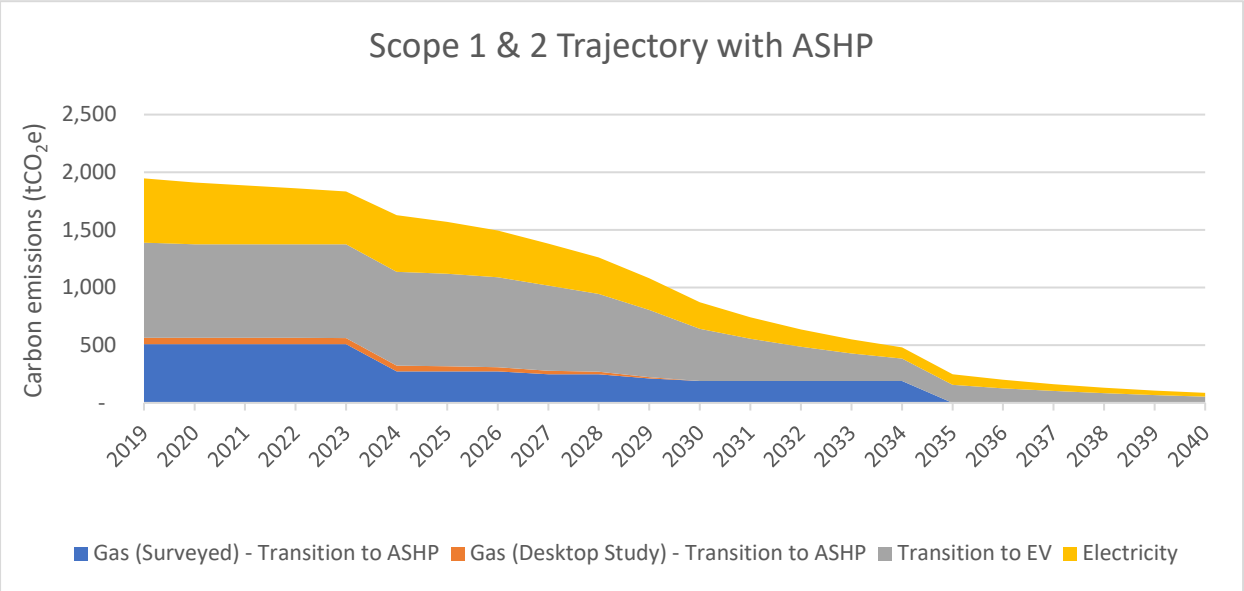


The trajectory in the graph above shows that there are 751tCO_2e that are unavoidable up to 2030 if boilers are replaced with ASHP. This is the amount of carbon that will need to be offset to balance the emissions that cannot directly be removed based on current technology and within a reasonable budget.

The following trajectory graphs unless indicated otherwise will be the carbon/cost trajectories assuming the boilers are replaced by ASHP with a net zero target year of 2035. This is due to the carbon savings being higher than replacement with electric heaters and it will be more realistic to replace the boilers nearer 2035 as they will not be nearing the end of their useful life by 2030.

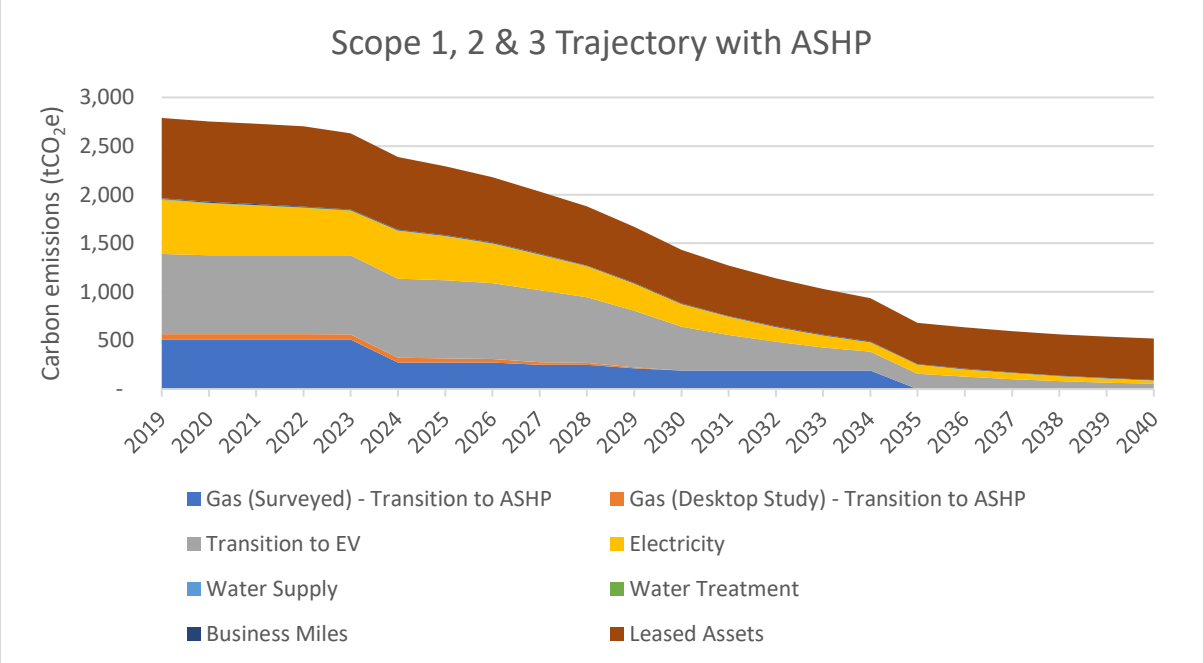
The graph below shows the carbon emission trajectory if the Council replaced the boilers with ASHP.

Carbon Emissions Trajectory 2019 to 2040 with ASHP



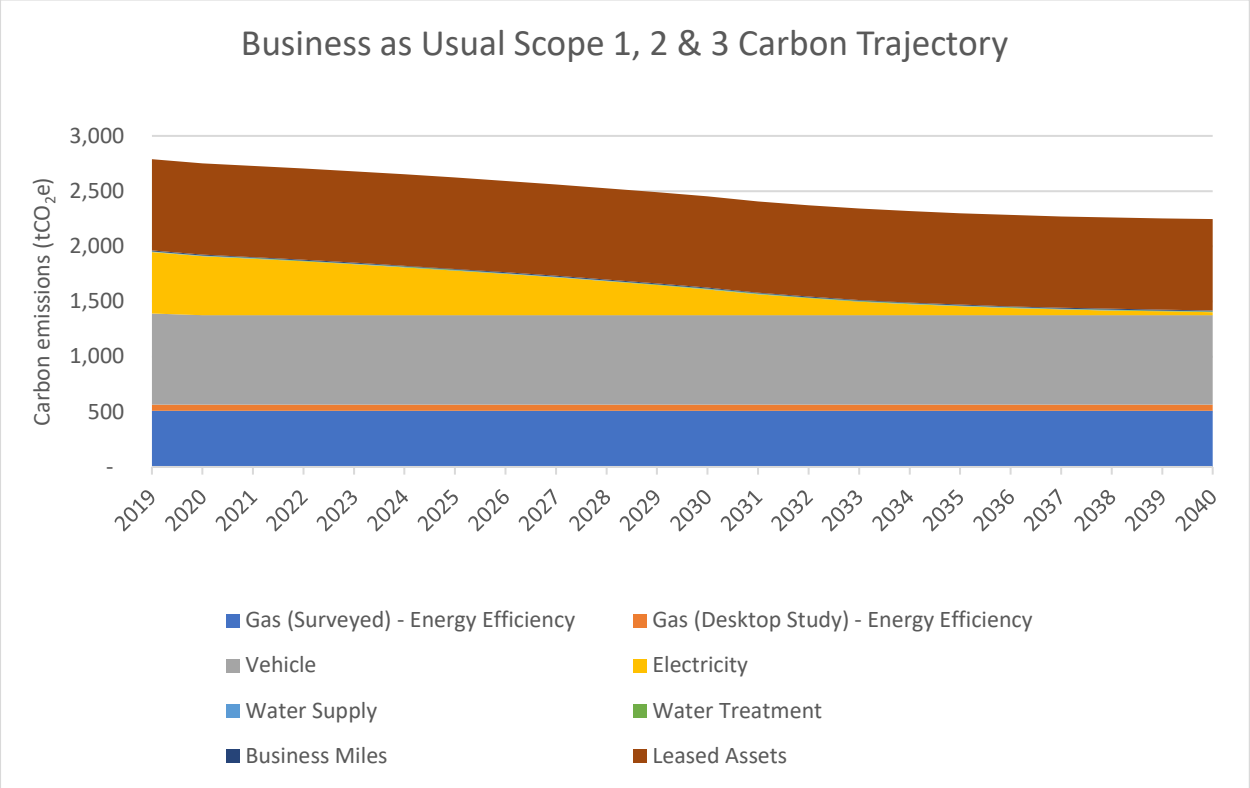
The graph above shows the carbon savings when installing heat pumps and removing gas boilers entirely by 2035. This is a carbon saving of 87% compared to 2019/20 if replacing gas boilers with ASHP.

Carbon Emissions Trajectory 2019 to 2040 with ASHP for Scope 1, 2 & 3



The trajectory in the graph above shows that there are 271tCO_2e that are unavoidable up to 2035 if boilers are replaced with ASHP. This is the amount of carbon that will need to be offset to balance the emissions that cannot directly be removed based on current technology and within a reasonable budget.

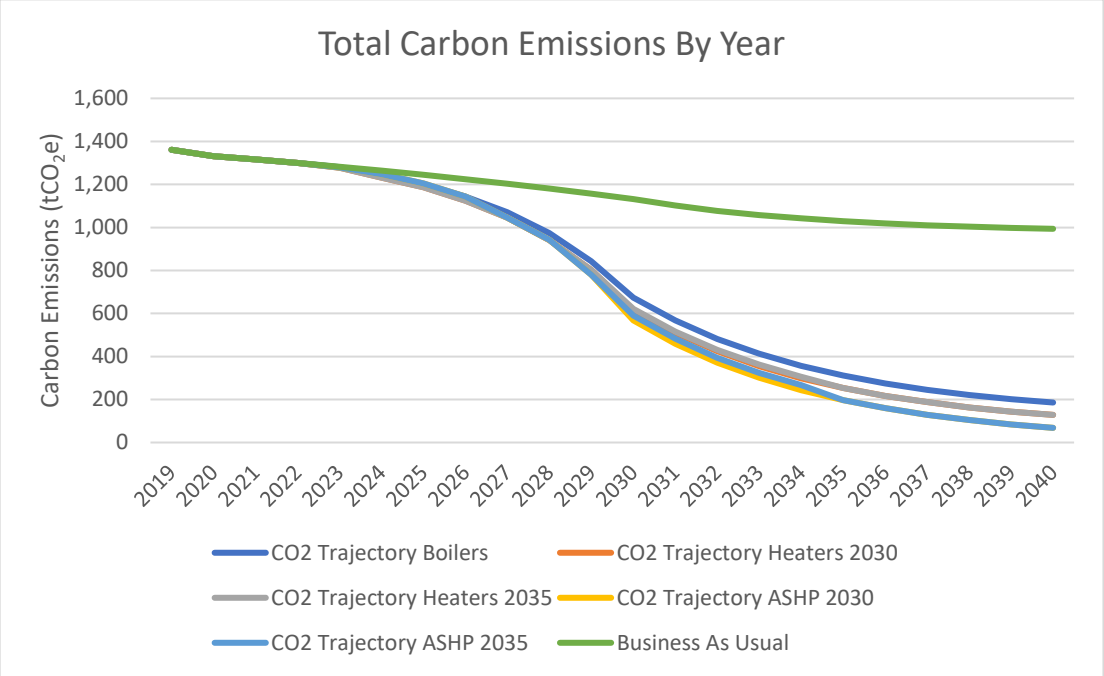
Business as Usual Carbon Emissions Trajectory 2019 to 2040 with no Interventions



The table above shows the trajectory if no interventions were delivered, and the amount of energy used by the Council is the same across the term. There is a decrease in electricity carbon emissions as the grid decarbonises, but emissions from other sources barely change. By doing nothing, the carbon emissions in 2035 will be 2,298tCO_2e.

6.5.1 Boiler vs. Electric Heaters vs. Heat Pumps

Carbon Emissions Trajectory 2019 to 2040 comparing Heating by Gas Boilers and ASHP Emissions



The years indicate the target year that the boilers will be replaced by (e.g. CO2 trajectory ASHP 2035 indicates that the boilers will be replaced by 2035 with Air Source Heat pumps). Both the "Trajectory Heater" and "Trajectory ASHP" lines in the graph above includes those interventions to improve efficiencies by improving controls and insulation and replacing existing gas boilers with their respective low carbon heating source. The graph shows that there is a significant reduction in emissions if all are replaced with Electric heaters and even further savings if replaced with heat pumps.

It is therefore the recommendation that all boilers are replaced with heat pumps.

6.5.2 Offsetting when Installing ASHP

A carbon offset is a reduction in emissions of CO_2e made to compensate for emissions made elsewhere. There are several ways of offsetting carbon emissions such as carbon capture and storage however, this is not deemed financially or technically feasible to the Council. More typical options available to the Council to directly offset emissions include renewable energy generation projects and rewilding/tree planting. However, the effectiveness of tree planting to quickly offset emissions can be questioned as it can take many decades for trees to reach maturity.

It is assumed that solar PV could be placed on land with a generation capacity of approximately 800kWp generating 760MWh of electricity that feeds directly into the electricity grid. This could include open space, car parks, etc.

A 800kWp system would have a capital cost of approximately £720,000 and would offset 34tCO_2e per year by 2035 and 12tCO2e per year by 2040. This demonstrates that the carbon offset benefits of a 'solar farm' decrease as the grid decarbonises.

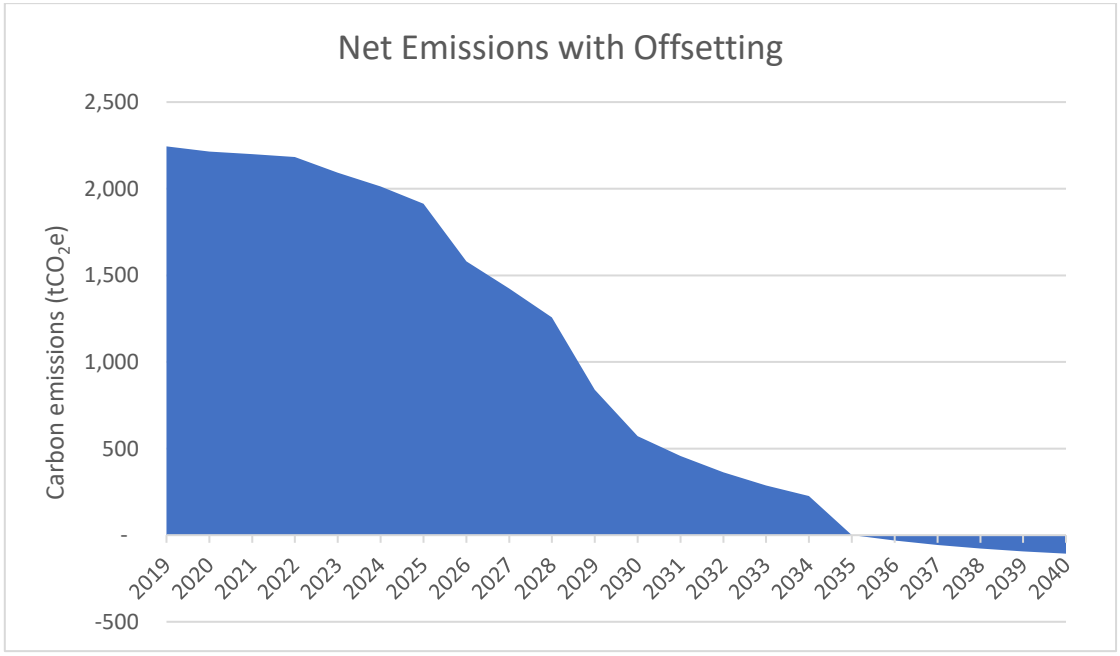
The installation of 800kWp PV would leave 648tCO_2e of unavoidable emissions by 2035 that will need to be offset. The Woodland Trust states that it costs £25 to offset 1 tonne of CO_2 in British woodlands which would result in a cost of £16,200 to offset the remaining emissions per year.

There are other schemes that provide carbon offsetting through international planting schemes such as One Carbon World which contributes funding towards large scale forestry schemes for as much as £1.20/tCO_2e.

A detailed feasibility study is required to determine the impact that planting will have as a carbon sink. It will provide an understanding of what will be needed to ensure that mature trees are in place to absorb the appropriate amount of CO_2 by 2035.

The graph on the next page shows the pathway for net zero carbon which includes reducing carbon initiatives and installing ASHP combined with offsetting measures. The graph shows that the Council will be net zero in 2035 and net carbon positive in subsequent years if the same level of offsetting is applied year-on-year.

Carbon Emissions Trajectory to 2040 with Carbon Offsetting and ASHP



6.5.3 Forecast Capital Cost with ASHP

Investing in energy efficiency projects and power generation will, in most cases, have a positive financial benefit with a good return on investment. The Council should set its own guidelines on a cap for ROI to measure the viability of projects.

Grid supplied electricity and gas rates are taken from BEIS modelling published in October 2021[4]. Market conditions have changed drastically since this time for several reasons and largely due to the war in Ukraine. It is therefore likely that the forecast energy rates provided are outdated, but this was still the best source to use at the time of writing.

The future grid export rates are based on the current price and increased by 2.5% annually.

[4] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/valuation-of-energy-use-and-greenhouse-gas-emissions-for-appraisal

Forecast Capital Cost and Financial Savings from Initiatives including ASHP

Intervention	Cost of all interventions	Accumulative cost saving up to 2035	Total annual saving of all interventions in the year 2035	Accumulative CO2e Savings by 2035	Accumulative £/CO2e Savings by 2035
Gas (Surveyed) - Transition to ASHP	£1,881,000	£136,000	£23,896	644	£2,920
Gas (Desktop Study) - Transition to ASHP	£467,800	£100,700	£12,202	483	£970
Transition to EV Accumulative Savings	£12,620,200	-£246,300	£17,950	3,860	£3,270
Electricity (Surveyed) - Energy Efficiency	£42,570	£21,600	£2,378	1,222	£30
Electricity (Desktop Study) - Energy Efficiency	£112,960	£161,400	£17,742	943	£120
Electricity (Surveyed) - Transition to ASHP	£0	-£100,100	-£15,794	-65	£0
Electricity (Desktop Study) - Transition to ASHP	£0	£7,100	£1,264	571	£0
Building PV (298kWp by 2035)	£285,265	£352,400	£38,737	271	£1,050
Total Energy - (Leased Assets)	£2,948,410	£752,500	£83,611	6,220	£470
Land Based PV (800kWp by 2035)	£720,000	£453,100	£57,677	2,942	£240
Tree Planting	£5,940	N/A	N/A	2,059	£3
Total	**£19,084,145**	**£1,638,400**	**£239,663**	**19,151**	**£997**

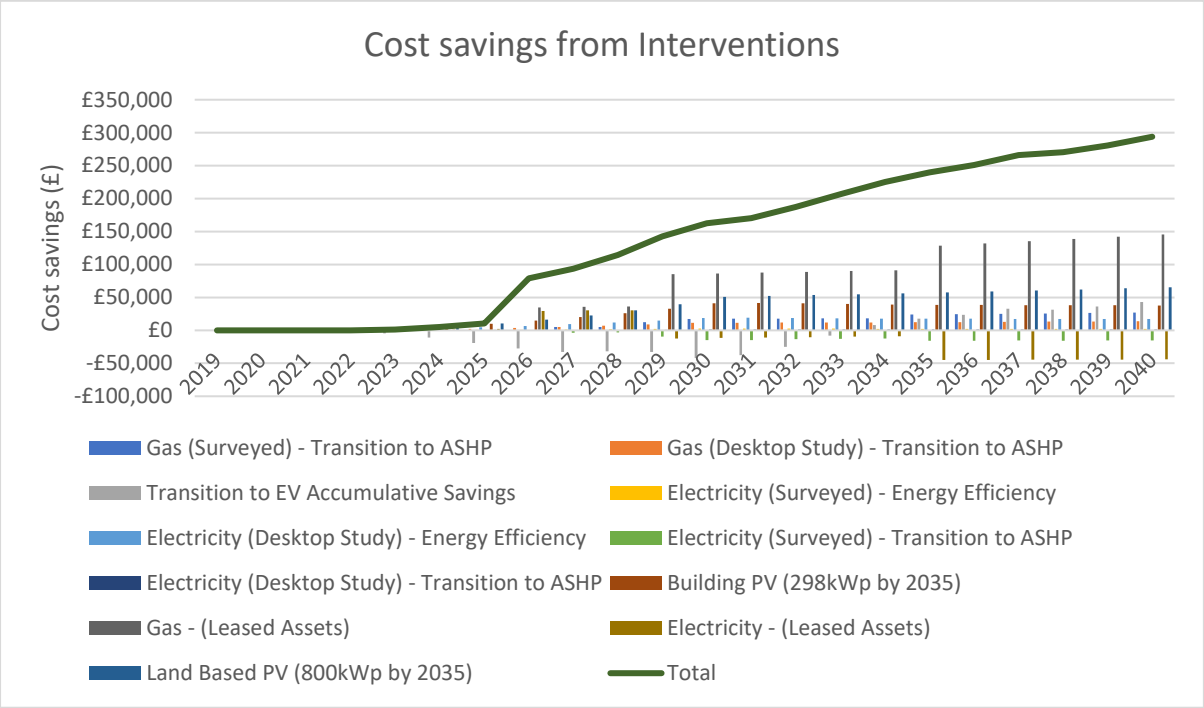
This shows that the forecast capital cost to achieve net zero in buildings is £19million and the total annual savings achieved by 2035 would be the equivalent of £239,663 per year.

The forecast capital cost to implement the changes with an offset by 2030 would be £19,094,565 and this will be approximately £10,000 more compared to 2035. The difference will only come in the offsetting of trees as the energy savings will be the same but the carbon emissions will be lower in 2035 compared to 2030 as the grid continues to decarbonise. Inflation on the capital cost has not been taken into account, however the cost of projects are likely to increase with inflation but the cost could also come down due to government subsidies and supply and demand.

6.5.4 Cost Savings with ASHP

The graph below shows the total savings if all initiatives are installed.

Cost savings from interventions between 2019 to 2040

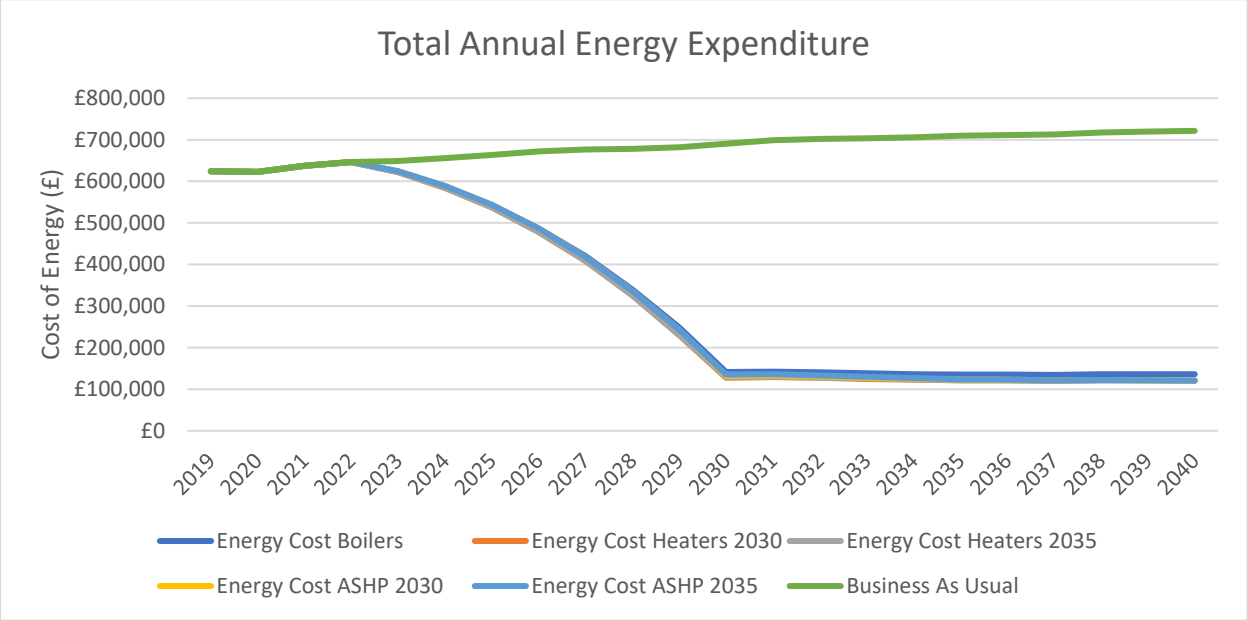


The graph takes into account savings made through efficiency savings (insulation, controls, etc.) and installing heat pumps. It should be noted that it will generally be more expensive to run a heat pump compared to a gas boiler if no other interventions are included as the cost of electricity is typically 4 times more expensive than gas up to 2035. However due to the fact that majority of the boilers are not to be replaced until 2029/2034 respectively the cost increases cannot be seen, due to the fact that the spark gap is predicted to be closer in later years and the reduction in annual kWh makes up this difference.

Although the 800kWp solar farm is larger than the 298kWp system on buildings, the financial savings are not proportional as the [current] export rate for a solar farm is much less than the savings achieved by having PV on buildings and reducing the amount of electricity purchased from the grid.

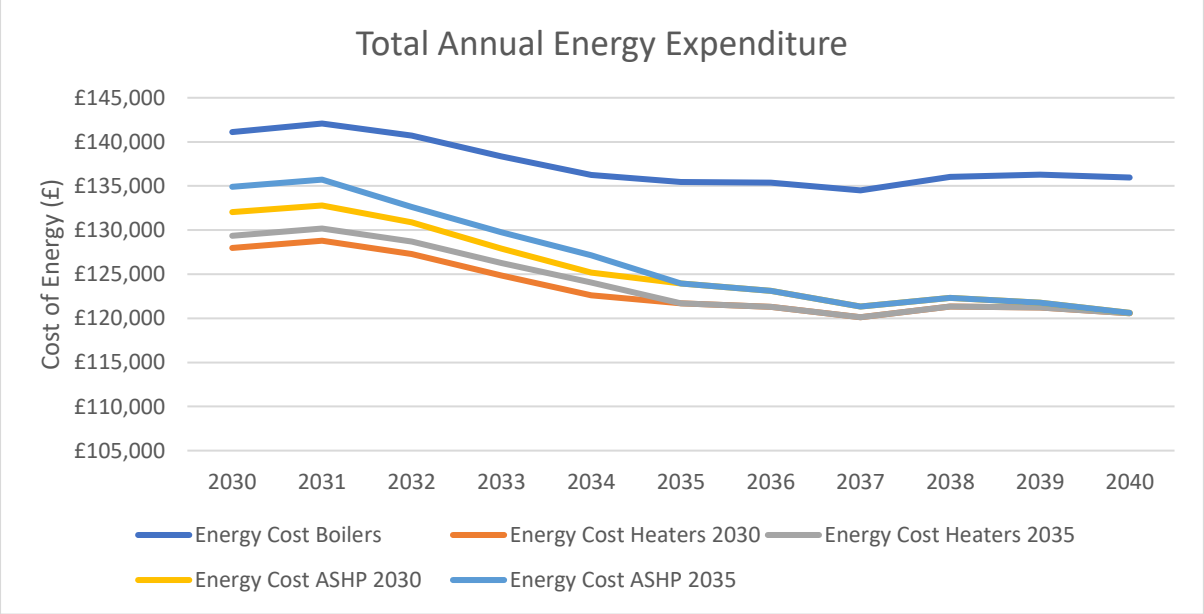
Annual cost comparison between Gas Boilers and ASHPs between 2019 to 2040

The graph below shows the cost on energy bills by comparing the installation of gas boilers with electric heaters and heat pumps as well as making the other capital investments, and with business as usual.



The graph above shows that the cost of Boilers vs Heaters vs ASHP is quite close due to the boilers not being replaced with electric until later in the project life.

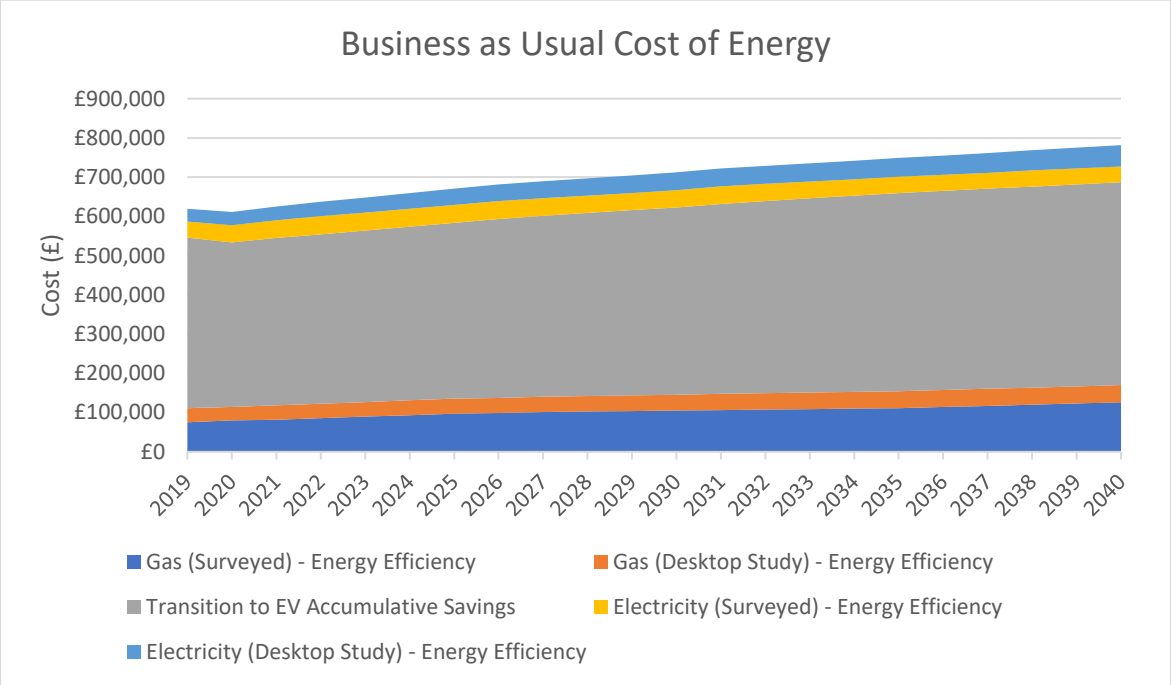
For clarity the graph below shows the cost of bills from 2030 with the various interventions that may be applied.



The graph above shows that the cost of Heaters is cheaper than ASHP, this is due to the not all surveyed boilers being replaced with electric heaters from the recommendations, but also able to have the energy reductions related to new boiler controls and such. As can be seen

however the ASHP becomes cheaper as the electricity cost reduces relative to the cost of natural gas.

Annual energy expenditure for Business as Usual with no interventions between 2019 to 2040



The graph shows that energy costs will increase from £587,000 in 2019 to £701,000 by 2035 if energy consumption remains the same.

The forecast unit rate is taken from the 'Green Book supplementary guidance: valuation of energy use and greenhouse gas emissions for appraisal'. This was published in October 2021 and markets have changed significantly since so it is likely that future operational costs, and savings, will be higher.

7 Conclusion

It is recommended to report annually on the progress of reducing carbon emissions.

Emissions from the Council's own operations should be calculated using the methodology in this report and policies and procedures should be put in place to record emissions data as it is made available rather than trying to retrieve the data in bulk retrospectively.

Further investigations are recommended to calculate Scope 3 emissions such as purchased goods and services, waste, and employee commuting; and what initiatives could be applied to reduce emissions. Overall emissions will increase when adding in additional sources as data quality improves.

The trajectory and savings detailed in Appendix B and the wider programme can be used as a KPI to track performance of reducing emissions against the 2019/20 baseline year.

The Paris Climate Agreement aims to keep global temperature increases well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C. This calls for organisations to set a 'carbon budget' which is a term used to indicate the maximum amount of carbon an organisation can produce over a period of time to stay within the Paris Agreement. This often requires setting a science-based target and carbon budget.

The minimum reduction required for targets in line with well-below 2°C scenarios is 2.5% in annual linear terms over 15 years. Organisations are strongly encouraged to adopt targets with a 4.2% annual linear reduction to be aligned with limiting warming to 1.5°C, which is a reduction of 63% over 15 years. This carbon trajectory should reduce emissions by 76% between 2019 and 2035.

For the buildings that were not subject to an energy audit the carbon trajectory in this report is a desktop study performed without any prior knowledge of the building estate and is based on rule of thumb, and engineering and industry experience. A detailed energy audit should be provided for each building to provide a clear action plan of what interventions can be provided, their capital cost, funding opportunities and the cost/carbon savings.

Appendix A – Carbon Footprint Calculations

(Separate Spreadsheet)

Appendix B – Carbon Trajectory Report

(Separate Spreadsheet)

Appendix C – Data that should be gathered to report on Scope 3 emissions

The reporting of Scope 3 emissions is discretionary. The table below provides further guidance on the information required to calculate emissions from Scope 3.

Item	Category	Details Required
1	Purchased goods and services	This category includes all upstream (i.e. cradle-to-gate) emissions from the production of products purchased or acquired by the Council in the reporting year. Products include both goods (tangible products) and services (intangible products). This category includes emissions from all purchased goods and services not otherwise included in the other categories of upstream scope 3 emissions (i.e. category 2 through category 8 below). Cradle-to-gate emissions include all emissions that occur in the life cycle of purchased products, up to the point of receipt by the Council. Cradle-to-gate emissions may include: • Extraction of raw materials • Agricultural activities • Manufacturing, production, and processing • Generation of electricity consumed by upstream activities • Disposal/treatment of waste generated by upstream activities • Land use and land-use change • Transportation of materials and products between suppliers • Any other activities prior to acquisition by the reporting company Relevant purchases to the Council may include capital goods, such as office supplies, office furniture, computers, telephones, travel services, IT support, outsourced administrative functions, consulting services, janitorial, landscaping services, maintenance, repairs and operations.

		For accurate carbon reporting emissions, the Council should request cradle-to-gate emission factors for materials used by suppliers to produce purchased goods such as Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs). It is likely that many suppliers will not be able to provide all the emission data. If an EPD cannot be provided, supplementary information required includes the volume of product (kg) and the carbon emission factor (kg CO_2e). A policy should be developed so that suppliers in the supply chain are required to provide this data as part of the contract, where the volume of goods is noteworthy.
2	Capital goods	Capital goods are final products that have an extended life and are used by the Council to manufacture a product, provide a service, or sell, store, and deliver merchandise. Capital goods are treated as fixed assets or as plant, property, and equipment (PP&E). Examples of capital goods include equipment, machinery, buildings, facilities, and vehicles. The required information is the same as Category 1 above. A policy should be developed so that suppliers in the supply chain are required to provide this data as part of the contract.
3	Fuel- and energy related activities (not included in Scope 1 or Scope 2)	Transmission and distribution (T&D) losses have been included and calculated from the data provided in Scope 2.
4	Upstream transportation and distribution	Category 4 includes emissions from: • Transportation and distribution of products purchased in the reporting year, between suppliers and its own operations in vehicles not owned or operated by the Council. • Third-party transportation and distribution services purchased by the Council in the reporting year (either directly or through an intermediary), including inbound logistics, outbound logistics (e.g. of sold products), and third-party transportation and distribution between the Council's own facilities. The Council requires data on: • Quantities of fuel (e.g., diesel, petrol, jet fuel, biofuels) consumed

		• Amount spent on fuels • Distance travelled • Vehicle type This may include managed assets - Vehicles that are used by the Council but are not owned by the organisation and generally do not appear on the organisation's balance sheet, for example, maintenance contractor vehicles, outsourced refuse and recycling trucks, road sweepers, grounds maintenance mowers etc. A policy should be developed so that suppliers using their own vehicles are required to provide this data as part of the contract.
5	Waste generated in operations	This includes emissions from third-party disposal and treatment of waste generated in the Councils owned or controlled operations in the reporting year. This category includes emissions from disposal of both solid waste and wastewater. The Council should request volume and emissions data from the waste treatment company applicable to **its own waste stream**. If this cannot be provided, the emissions can be calculated by requesting the volume of waste, type and disposal method: Example of data required: Total weight (kg) of waste type and disposal method e.g. • 5,000kg municipal waste to landfill • 500kg organic garden waste to composting • 1,000kg metal recycled • 1,000kg plastic recycled • 1,000kg paper recycled Data is required for the volume of supply and wastewater in cubic metres (m^3) from water bills. Local authorities have an important role in waste prevention and sustainable waste management through awareness-raising campaigns, providing separate collection for recycling and food waste, and implementing waste-to-energy schemes. It is therefore voluntary on whether the Council choose to include the emissions from waste associated with the whole borough, or just the Council's own operation.

6	Business travel	Travel for assets not owned or directly operated by the Council. This includes mileage for business purposes in cars owned by employees, public transport, hire cars etc. Require details for: <u>Vehicle</u> Fuel type, size of vehicle and distance for: • Car • Motorbike • Taxis • Bus • Rail <u>Flights</u> • Airport travelled to/from • Number of passengers • Class type • Distance <u>Ferry</u> • Foot or car passenger • Distance
7	Employee commuting	This category includes emissions from the transportation of employees between their homes and their worksites. Emissions from employee commuting may arise from: • Car • Bus • Rail • Other modes of transportation Staff would be required to provide method of transport and distance travelled. It may be difficult and time consuming to collect accurate data.
8	Upstream leased assets	This category is applicable from the operation of assets that are leased by the Council. If the Council procures the energy then this should be considered as Scope 1 and 2. If the landlord is responsible for the Scope 1 and 2 emissions, the Council should include the reporting under Scope 3. An example may include an office that the Council lease from a

		private landlord. All energy bills may be included as part of the lease and the energy contract is under the name of the landlord. The Council should therefore request the energy data from the landlord and include this under Scope 3. Data required include the Scope 1 and 2 data from the leased asset.
9	Downstream transportation and distribution	This category includes emissions that occur in the reporting year from transportation and distribution of sold products in vehicles and facilities not owned or controlled by the Council in the reporting year. It is assumed that this category is not applicable to the Council as it does not manufacture and sell products.
10	Processing of sold products	It is assumed that this category is not applicable to the Council as it does not manufacture and sell products.
11	Use of sold products	It is assumed that this category is not applicable to the Council as it does not manufacture and sell products.
12	End-of-life treatment of sold products	It is assumed that this category is not applicable to the Council as it does not manufacture and sell products.
13	Downstream leased assets	This category is applicable where the Council is the landlord to a lessee. If the Council procures the energy on behalf of a lessee then this should be considered as Scope 1 and 2. An example of this is where the Council may lease a premises to a lessee and include all energy costs as part of the lease. The energy contract is under the name of the Council and is therefore reported under Scope 1 and 2. If the lessee is responsible for the Scope 1 and 2 emissions, the council should include the reporting under Scope 3. An example of this is a shop that the Council own and the occupant pays for the energy bills and the contract is under their name. The Council should request the energy data from the shop occupier and report this under Scope 3. Data required include the Scope 1 and 2 data from the leased asset.

14	Franchises	It is assumed that this category is not applicable to the Council as it does not operate any franchises.
15	Investments	This category includes scope 3 emissions associated with the Council's investments in the reporting year, not already included in scope 1 or scope 2. This category is applicable to investors (i.e. organisations that make an investment with the objective of making a profit) and organisations that provide financial services. This category also applies to investors that are not profit driven (e.g. multilateral development banks). Investments are categorised as a downstream scope 3 category because providing capital or financing is a service provided by the organisation. Category 15 is designed primarily for private financial institutions (e.g., commercial banks), but is also relevant to public financial institutions (e.g., multilateral development banks, export credit agencies) and other entities with investments not included in scope 1 and scope 2. The Councils scope 3 emissions from investments are the scope 1 and scope 2 emissions of investees. For purposes of greenhouse gas accounting, this standard divides financial investments into four types: • Equity investments • Debt investments • Project finance • Managed investments and client services An example of the information required is the Scope 1 and 2 emissions from the bank where an investment is in place. This is based on the Council's proportional share of investment in the investee. If the Council has £1million invested in the bank and the banks total investments amount to £100million, the Council should report on 1% of the banks Scope 1 and 2 emissions. It is assumed that this information will be difficult to collate from third parties and that the total emissions will be proportionally small compared to other emission sources and these emissions could be excluded from the reporting.

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Three Rivers District Council

Consultancy support – Scope 1, 2 and 3 Carbon Emissions – 2021/22

Report v.4

Report produced in January 2022

APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) is a not for profit local government body working with over 300 councils throughout the UK. Promoting excellence in public services, APSE is the foremost specialist in local authority front line services, hosting a network for front line service providers in areas such as waste and refuse collection, parks and environmental services, leisure, school meals, cleaning, housing and building maintenance.

APSE Energy is APSE's local authority energy collaboration. The vision for the collaboration is to form an "effective collaboration of a large number of local authorities to enable and facilitate the local municipalisation of energy services. By this we mean the public and community, as well as private, ownership and managerial control of local energy generation, supply networks and delivery of energy efficiency works. Local authorities working together in this way would have great influence and would be able to deliver economies of scale in green energy to promote economic growth and combat fuel poverty.

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THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

CONSULTANCY REPORT – A COMPARISON OF THE COUNCIL'S CARBON FOOTPRINT FOR SCOPE 1, 2 & 3 EMISSIONS

Contents

1 Introduction

This report provides an update of the carbon footprint for Three Rivers District Council which can be used to monitor performance for emitting carbon in the Council's own operations. The carbon footprint has been undertaken in accordance with best practise guidance by the Greenhouse Gas Protocol and calculated using conversion factors for the carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) published by the Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS).

The reporting compares the financial years of 2018/19 to 2021/22.

The carbon footprint is categorised into scopes, which cover:

Scope 1 (direct) emissions are from activities owned or controlled by the Council. Examples of Scope 1 emissions include emissions from combustion in council owned or controlled boilers, furnaces and vehicles.

Scope 2 (indirect) emissions are associated with purchased electricity, heat, steam and cooling. These indirect emissions are a consequence of the Council's energy use, but occur at sources that the Council do not own or control. Examples include grid supplied electricity and heat provided through a heat network.

Scope 3 (other indirect) emissions are a consequence of the Council's actions that occur at sources the Council do not own or control and are not classed as Scope 2 emissions. Examples of Scope 3 emissions include business travel by means not owned or controlled by the Council (grey fleet), disposing of the Council's own waste and purchased goods in the supply chain etc.

2 Carbon Footprint

2.1 Carbon Reporting Boundaries

The organisational boundaries determine what emissions are the responsibility of the Council or others. This can be based on who owns, operates, or exerts control over certain assets. The buildings categorised under Scope 1 & 2 within this reporting are those where energy is purchased or acquired and consumed by the Council. The vehicles categorised under Scope 1 are vehicles that the Council own, lease and operate purely for the Council's own operations.

Scope 3 emissions are classified under 15 different categories as detailed under Appendix B. As Scope 3 emissions are under the influence of the Council, but not under its direct control, it can be difficult to obtain the necessary data to calculate the associated carbon emissions from some Scope 3 sources. One of the larger contributors to carbon emissions is purchased goods and services.

Emissions from assets a company owns and leases to another entity, but does not operate, can either be included in Scope 3 or excluded from the inventory.

Table 3 below shows all of the sources that make up the reporting boundary for the Council, within this report.

The emissions from these sources represent a good data set for a Council, as it is not uncommon for Councils to have data available for electricity and gas only.

There are sources that are missing from the reporting and the largest contributor is likely to be from purchased goods and services, which is generally very difficult to gather data and calculate emissions about. This category includes all upstream (i.e., cradle-to-gate) emissions from the production of products purchased or acquired by the Council in the reporting year. Products include both goods (tangible products) and services (intangible products).

Cradle-to-gate emissions include all emissions that occur in the life cycle of purchased products, up to the point of receipt by the Council. Relevant purchases to the Council may include capital goods, such as office supplies, office furniture, computers, telephones, travel services, IT support, outsourced administrative functions, consulting services, janitorial, landscaping services, maintenance, repairs and operations.

The Council should set up procedures to record all emission sources related to its operations for future reporting, and it is likely that the overall emissions will increase as the data quality improves.

2.2 Carbon Emissions

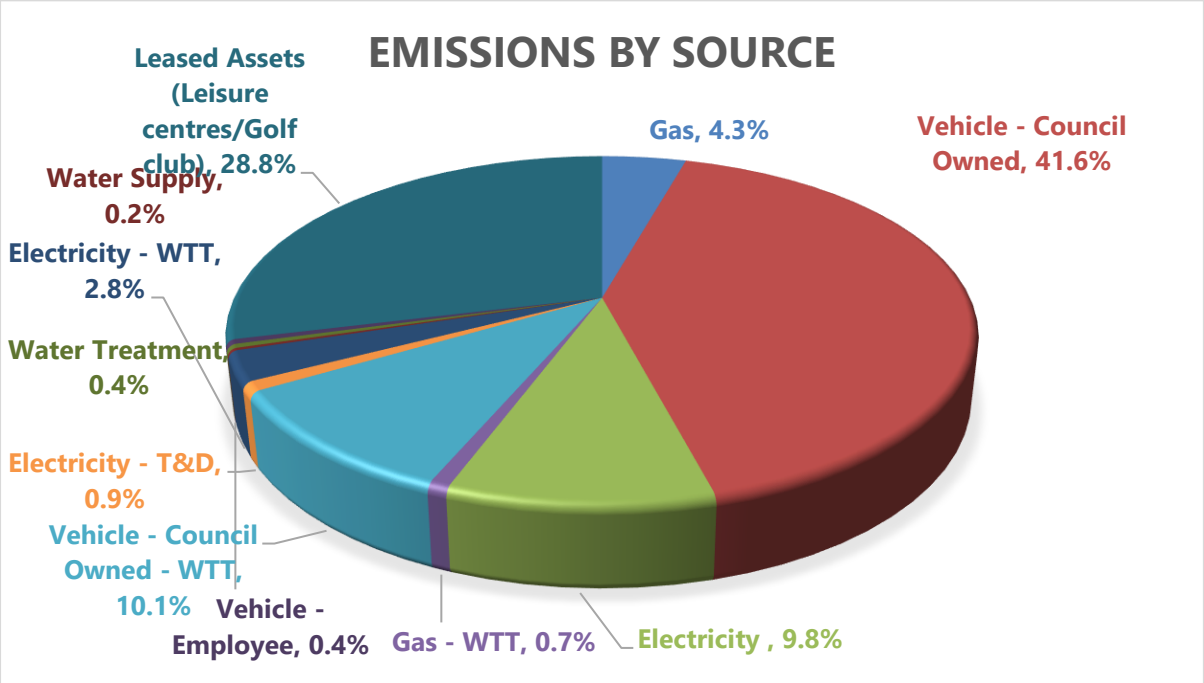
2.2.1 Emissions for 2021/22

The set of data below shows a summary of the most recent year available of 2021/22.

Table 1: Carbon emissions by source for 2021/22

2021/2022			
Emissions Source	**Scope**	**% Split**	**TonnesCO2e**
Gas	1	4.3%	91.8
Vehicle - Council Owned	1	41.6%	877.9
Electricity	2	9.8%	206.7
Gas - WTT	3	0.7%	15.7
Vehicle - Council Owned - WTT	3	10.1%	213.4
Electricity - T&D	3	0.9%	18.3
Electricity - WTT	3	2.8%	58.6
Water Supply	3	0.2%	4.4
Water Treatment	3	0.4%	7.7
Vehicle - Employee	3	0.4%	9.0
Leased Assets (Leisure centres/Golf club)	3	28.8%	609.2
Total		**100%**	**2,113**

Chart 1: Carbon emissions by source for 2021/22

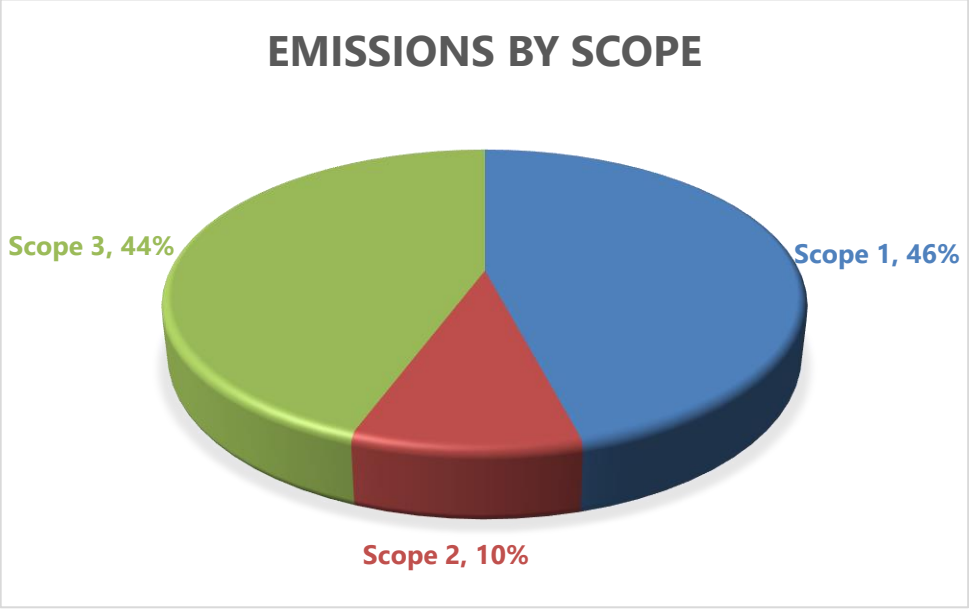


Transportation by *Council Owned vehicles* made the greatest contribution to the total carbon footprint of the Council at 37.7% (877.9 tonnes CO_2e), approximately 91% of direct greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions (Scope 1). Following closely were emissions from *Leased Assets* accounting for 28% (609 tonnes CO_2e) of total emissions. This is mostly attributable to the electricity and gas consumption at William Penn Leisure Centre which was approximately 53% (electricity) and 87% (gas) of total consumption of the Council's leased assets.

Table 2: Carbon emissions by scope for 2021/22

Emissions Source	% Split	TonnesCO2e
Scope 1	46%	970
Scope 2	10%	207
Scope 3	44%	936
Total	**100%**	**2,113**

Chart 2: Carbon emissions by scope for 2021/22



At 936 tonnes CO_2e, Scope 3 had the second largest contribution to total GHG emissions with the *Leased Assets* being the major contributor as previously cited.

Proper tracking of the 15 distinct categories (refer to Appendix B) in both the upstream and downstream directions of the Council's value chain would facilitate more accurate Scope 3 carbon reporting. Additionally, a clear definition of organisational boundaries based on financial control/responsibility and operational boundaries would also be useful to this end.

2.2.2 Comparison of Emissions for 2018/19 to 2021/22

Table 3: Difference in carbon emissions by year

	Tonnes of CO_2e			
	Apr 2018 - Mar 2019	**Apr 2019 - Mar 2020**	**Apr 2020 - Mar 2021**	**Apr 2021 - Mar 2022**
Scope 1 - Direct Emissions	**994**	**989**	**972**	**970**
Natural Gas	136	131	109	92
Council Owned Vehicles	858	858	863	878
Scope 2 – Electricity Emissions	**340**	**273**	**184**	**207**
Total Scope 1 & 2 Emissions	**1,333**	**1,263**	**1,156**	**1,176**
	0.115	-0.170		
Scope 3 – Indirect Emissions	**894**	**1,128**	**997**	**936**
Gas – Well to tank emissions	19	17	14	16
Council Owned Vehicles – Well to tank emission	202	204	207	213
Electricity – Distribution and transmission emissions	29	23	16	18
Electricity – Well to tank emissions	55	41	28	59
Water Supply	N/A	2	3	4
Water Treatment	N/A	5	6	8
Employee Vehicle emissions	21	7	6	9
Leased Assets (Leisure centres/Golf club)	569	827	718	609
Total Gross Emissions	**2,227**	**2,390**	**2,153**	**2,113**
Carbon offset	0	0	0	0
Solar PV Exported	0	0	0	0
Total Net Emissions	**2,227**	**2,390**	**2,153**	**2,113**
Further Information				
Solar PV Generated	15,098	16,981	23,362	15,995
Degree Days at 15.5°C	1,757	1,856	1,875	1,847
(an indicator of heat demand)				
Total electricity kWh	1,199,498	1,069,206	790,348	973,354
Total gas kWh	737,763	714,341	593,671	501,245

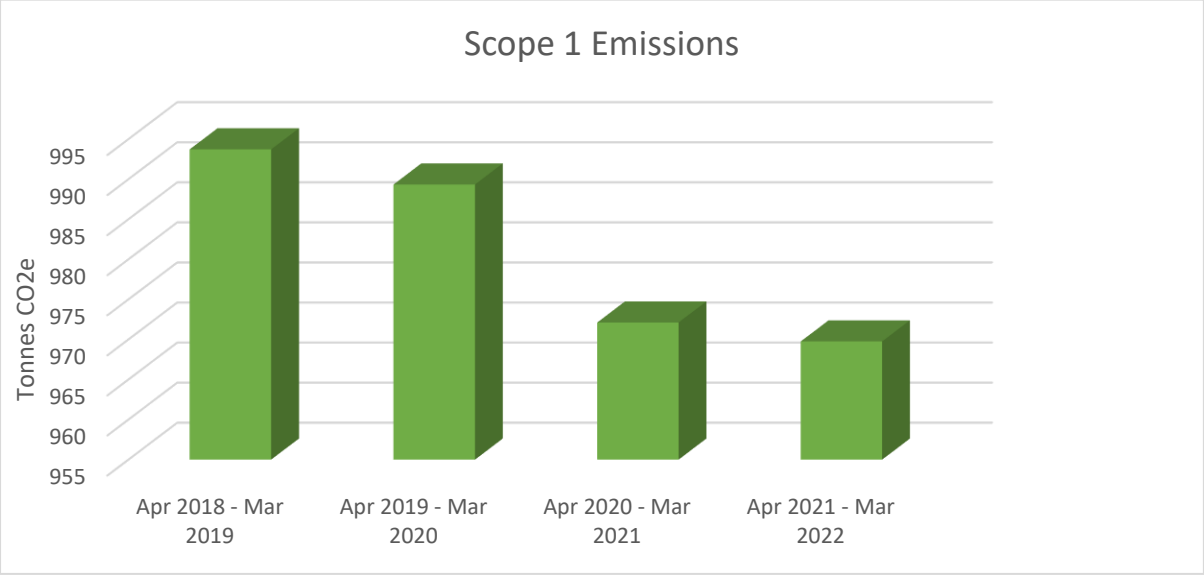
Appendix A shows a breakdown of the emissions by source in more detail.

From Table 3, the gas consumption (kWh) in the current reporting period is 42.5% less than that of the April 2019 – March 2020 reporting period. This change could be due to the heating degree days for the current period being less than that of April 2019 – March 2020 (i.e. 1,847 degree days compared to 1,856 degree days). The concept of Heating Degree Days (HDD) quantifies by how much (in degrees) and for how long (in days) the outside temperature was below the base temperature (15.5 °C in the UK) below which a building would need to be heated. Therefore, a lower value for HDD signifies less heating requirement and vice-versa. However, it is also probable that this decrease is due to better occupancy behaviour in buildings, improved energy management systems or more people working from home as the variation between the HDD of the periods being compared is not very significant (0.5% difference).

Compared to April 2018 – March 2019, it can be observed that although the HDD for the current reporting period is greater by 5%, the gas consumption is 32% less than that of April 2018 – March 2019. This perceived improvement could be due to the implementation of better energy management strategies implemented across the Council's site. Proper investigation by way of energy assessments would provide better insights to this change.

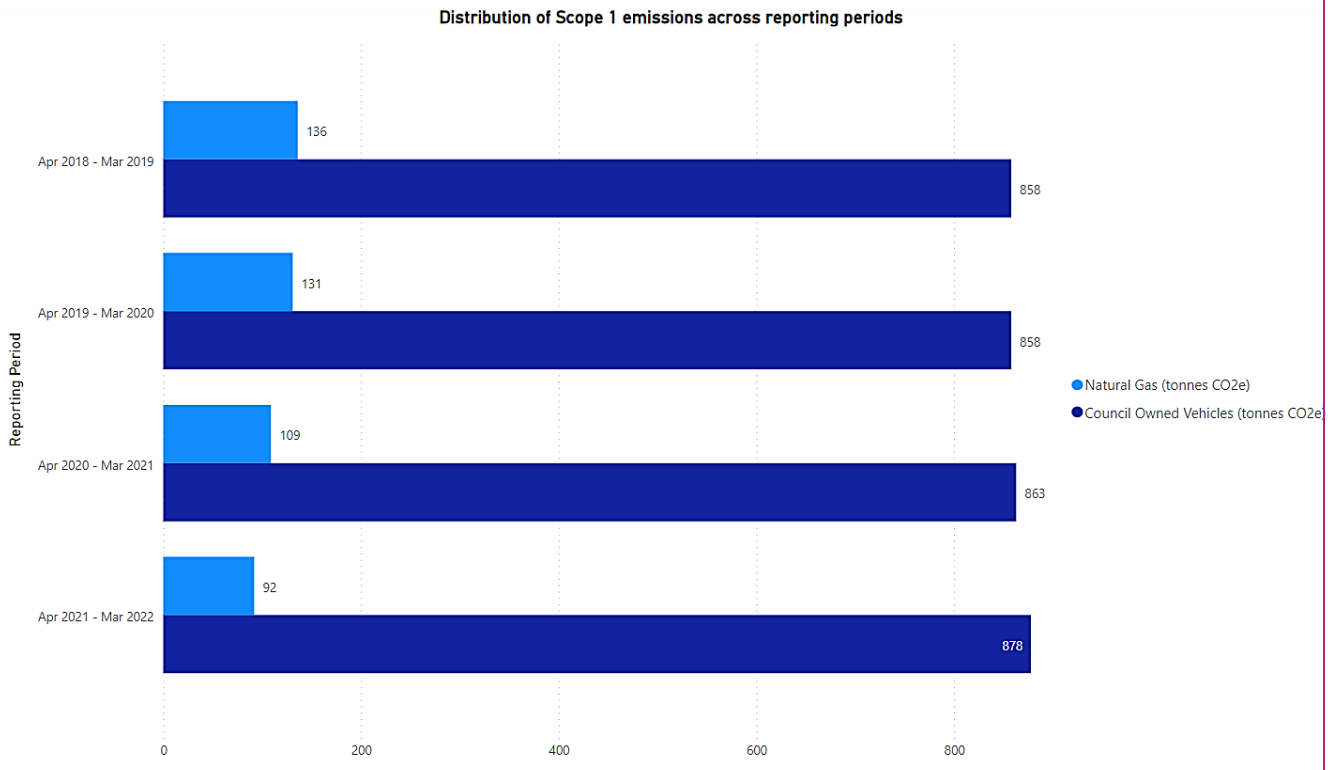
The period April 2020 – March 2021 was disrupted by the Covid-19 and so was non-representative of energy usage in the Council's day-to-day operations. As such it has not been considered in the comparative analysis.

Chart 3: Scope 1 carbon emissions by year



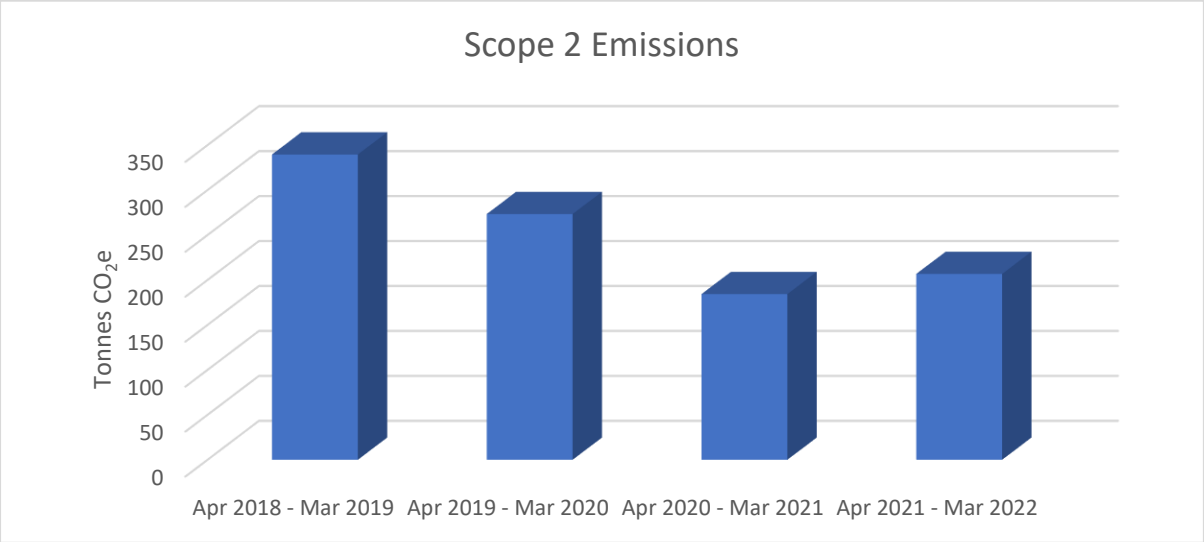
The associated CO_2e emissions for fuel consumption in Council owned vehicles has remained relatively static across the years (refer to visualisation below). Nevertheless, a decreasing trend can be observed in direct emissions associated with the Council's operations across its value chain. This is mainly attributable to the decreased gas consumption required for heating the building over the years.

Chart 4: Breakdown of Scope 1 carbon emissions by year



However, a reasonable comparison based on CO_2e emissions of the Council owned vehicles across the years cannot be made, as it is unclear whether there have been significant changes in the operational fleet as the fleet compositional data for some of the years is limited.

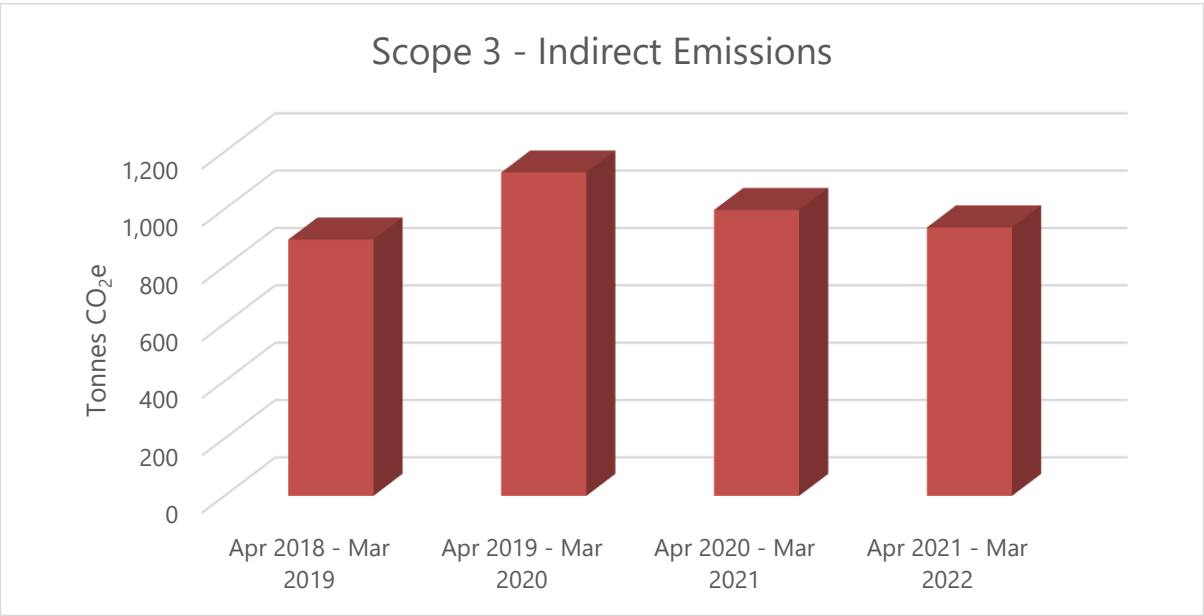
Chart 5: Scope 2 carbon emissions by year



GHG emissions associated with importing energy from the grid have decreased over the years. This could be due to a number of reasons such as decreased energy usage from year to year and a reduction in the carbon emission factor of the UK electricity grid over the years being assessed.

Accordingly, the increase observed from 2020/2021 to 2021/2022 should not be considered due to the Covid-19 pandemic and the ensuing lockdown.

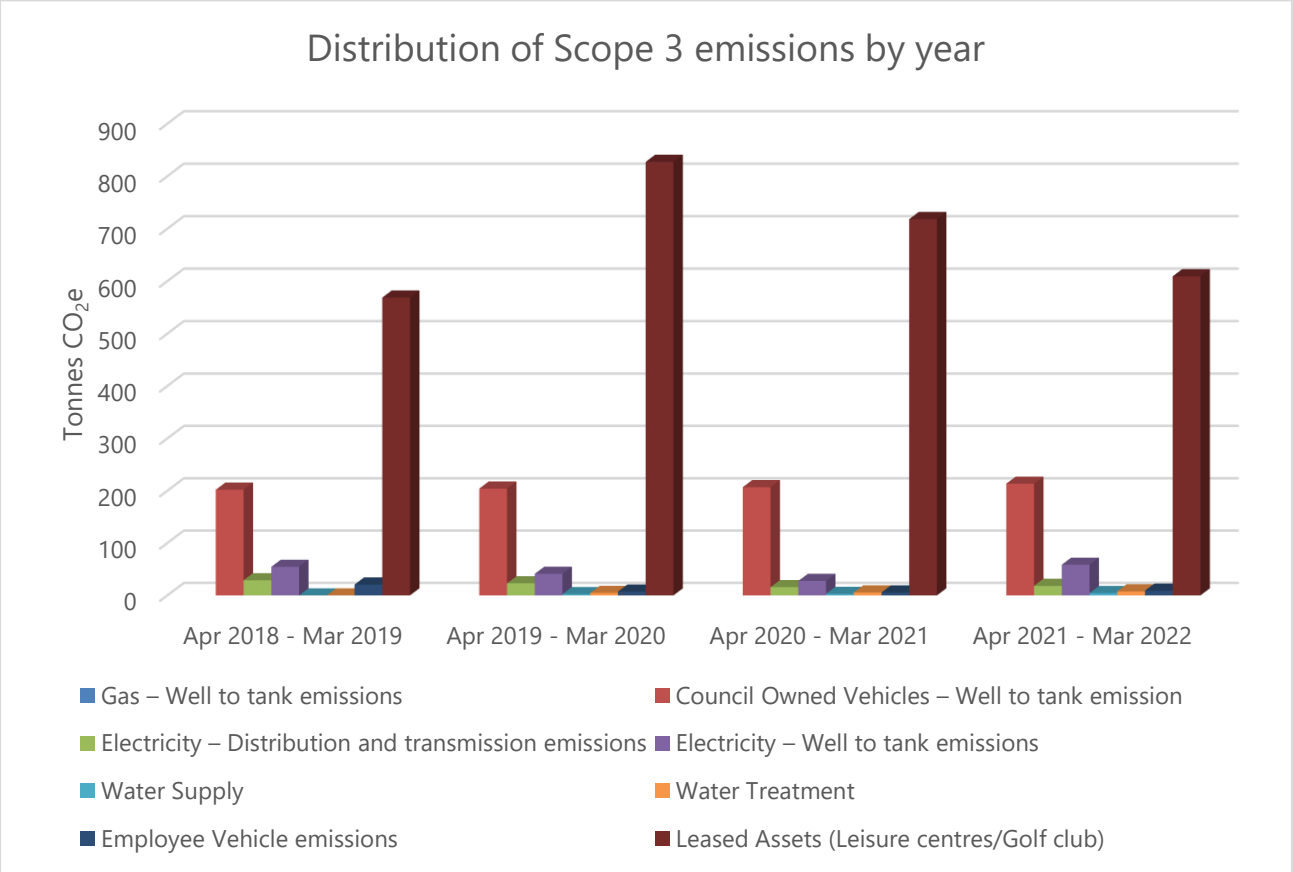
Chart 6: Scope 3 carbon emissions by year



Scope 3 emissions in the current reporting period have seen a decrease compared to previous two reporting periods (-6% against 2019/2020 and -17% against 2018/2019). Although, the electricity consumption of the Council from April 2021 – March 2022 reduced by approximately 10% compared to April 2019 – March 2020, the associated electricity well-to-tank emissions, which was the third highest contributor to Scope 3 emissions across the years, increased by 41.6%. This is due to an increase of 56% in the electricity well-to-tank carbon conversion factors between the reporting periods.

A visualisation of the breakdown of Scope 3 emissions across all covered reporting periods is provided below.

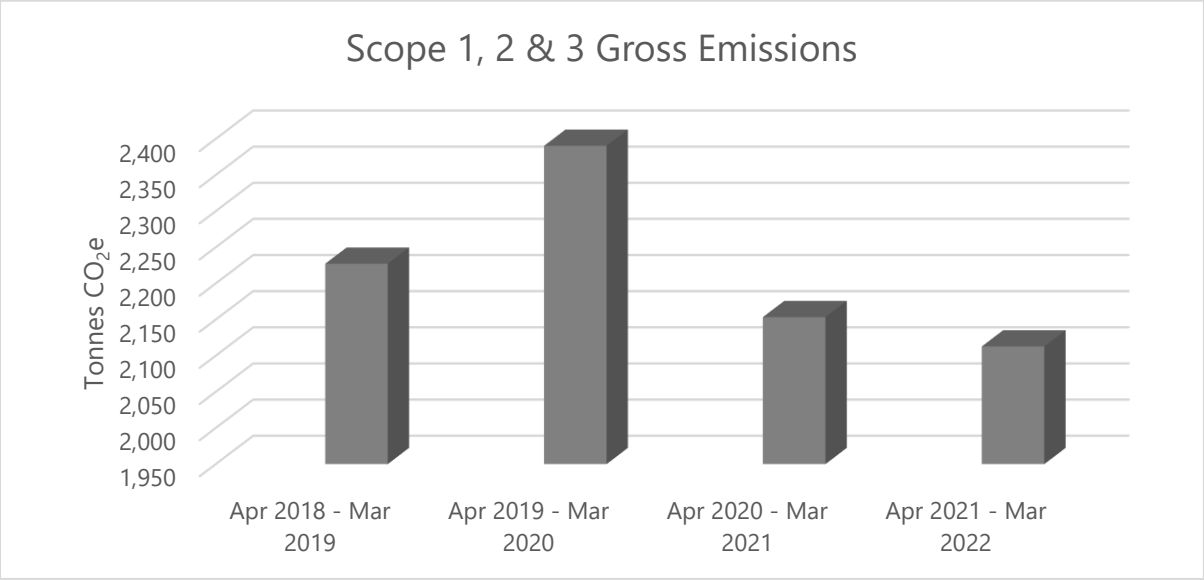
Chart 7: Breakdown of Scope 3 carbon emissions by year



Note.

The category 'Leased assets' refers to leisure centres and the golf club.

Chart 8: Scope 1, 2 & 3 carbon emissions by source by year



Overall, the gross carbon emissions across all scopes during the April 2021 – March 2022 period has decreased by 11.6% compared to the most recent relevant reporting period (April 2019 – March 2020).

3 Notes and Observations

3.1 Scope 1 & 2

Appendix A is an Excel spreadsheet that shows a breakdown of the emissions by source and makes a comparison between 2018/19 to 2021/22. This can be used to develop a carbon strategy by identifying and approaching assets with the highest emissions.

The sites below are recorded as having zero consumption between 2019 and 2022 as the utility companies will not provide meter reading and charges:

- Baldwins Lane Pavilion;
- King George V Pavilion;
- Oxhey Bowls Pavilion.

The annual cost for electricity and gas has been calculated based on a unit rate of 0.20 £/kWh and 0.033 £/kWh, respectively. However, it is possible these rates could be much higher due to current volatility of the energy market.

The Council provided data for both fuel consumption in litres and distance travelled in miles for its owned vehicles. The data for fuel consumption has been utilised for the

carbon reporting in accordance with best practice as this is deemed as more accurate as the emissions from miles travelled are directly related to the efficiency of the vehicle.

Consumption data was only provided for Council owned vehicles in 2020/21, not for 2018/19 or 2019/20. The Council had been recording the average emissions from vehicles through the last 9 years and the average is 858, which has been used for the missing years - 2018/19 and 2019/20.

3.2 Scope 3

The Council acknowledge that there is a lot of missing data for water consumption. Going forward water supply and treatment data should be recorded as it is issued from the supplier. The wastewater volumes were calculated based on the supply water volume.

Water usage for leisure centres which have been leased out to third-party operators was taken into consideration in calculating the associated Scope 3 CO_2e emissions based on the organisational boundary defined by financial responsibility. Hence, if the Council is not financially responsible for the water bill then this should be excluded from the reporting. However, water supply and treatment only account for 0.6% of the total emissions in the reporting period so any changes would make a marginal difference.

The water usage at Oxhey Pavilion was reported as 289,027 m^3 for the 2021/2022 period. From experience this is abnormally high, therefore the Council should carry out an investigation to confirm if this is accurate. It is possible that this could be correct if there was a severe leak which might have occurred during the reporting period. Consequently, the water consumption data for Oxhey Pavilion was excluded from the carbon reporting.

4 Recommendations for Gathering Data Going Forward

4.1 Scope 1 and 2 Emissions

The Council should develop a procedure for gathering and storing data as it is made available. The benefit of this is that the carbon reporting process is streamlined and progress towards targets can be tracked.

4.2 Scope 3 Emissions

Scope 3 emissions are separated into 15 different categories which includes waste, staff travel and the purchased goods supply chain. Scope 3 emissions can amount to a higher proportion of total emissions than Scope 1 and 2 combined and represent the most significant opportunity to reduce carbon emissions and the impact to climate change. So, understanding these risks through accurate and consistent measurement, evaluation and reporting should improve both resilience and reputation.

ASPE Energy can provide further guidance on how to gather Scope 3 data from third parties and assist in calculating emissions.

5 Conclusion and Recommendations

- Use carbon footprint data and Appendix A to develop a strategy to become net zero carbon.
- Sense check all data to confirm accuracy.
- Develop policies and procedures for improving the capturing of data going forward to report on Scope 3 emissions.
- Develop policies to request emissions data from suppliers to gather Scope 3 data.

6 Glossary

Term	Definition
BMS	Building Management System – Automated control for building services.
Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e)	The carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e) allows the different greenhouse gases to be compared on a like-for-like basis relative to one unit of CO_2 and includes the six greenhouse gases with the greatest global warming potential (GWP).
Carbon footprint	A carbon footprint measures the total greenhouse gas emissions caused directly and indirectly by a person, organisation, event or product. A carbon footprint is measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (tCO2e).
Council Vehicles	Vehicles that are owned or controlled by the Council. This does not include employee-owned vehicles that are used for business purposes.
Degree Day	A heating degree day (HDD) is a measurement designed to quantify the demand for energy needed to heat a building. It is the number of degrees that a day's average temperature is below a baseline temperature, which is the temperature below which buildings need to be heated.
Electricity	Electricity used at sites owned/controlled by the Council. This is reported as a Scope 2, indirect emission. The conversion factors used are for the electricity supplied by the grid that the Council purchase - they do not include the emissions associated with the transmission and distribution of electricity.
Employee Vehicles	Travel for business purposes in assets not owned or directly operated by the Council. This includes mileage for business purposes in cars owned by employees, public transport, hire cars etc.
[Natural] Gas	Primary fuel sources combusted at a site or in an asset owned or controlled by the Council.
MPAN & MPR	The MPAN (Meter Point Administration Number) and MPRN (Meter Point Reference Number) are unique numbers assigned to

	the electricity and gas supplies. This information has been provided as a reference and can be used to identify each meter.
Solar PV	Solar Photovoltaic panels to generate renewable electricity from the sun.
Transmission and Distribution	Transmission and distribution (T&D) factors are used to report the Scope 3 emissions associated with grid losses (the energy loss that occurs in getting the electricity from the power plant to the premises).
Wastewater	Water returned into the sewage system through mains drains.
Water Supply	Water delivered through the mains supply network.
Well to Tank	Fuels have indirect Scope 3 emissions associated with the production, extraction, refining and transport of the fuel before their use known as Well-to-tank (WTT). WTT emissions have been recorded for: • Electricity • Gas • Transmission and Distribution • Council Owned Vehicles

Appendix A – A separate Excel spreadsheet showing a breakdown of the emissions by source and a comparison between 2018/19 and 2021/22

Appendix B – Data that should be gathered to report on Scope 3 emissions

The reporting of Scope 3 emissions is discretionary. The table below provides further guidance on the information required to calculate emissions from Scope 3.

Item	Category	Details Required
1	Purchased goods and services	This category includes all upstream (i.e. cradle-to-gate) emissions from the production of products purchased or acquired by the Council in the reporting year. Products include both goods (tangible products) and services (intangible products). This category includes emissions from all purchased goods and services not otherwise included in the other categories of upstream scope 3 emissions (i.e. category 2 through category 8 below). Cradle-to-gate emissions include all emissions that occur in the life cycle of purchased products, up to the point of receipt by the Council. Cradle-to-gate emissions may include: • Extraction of raw materials • Agricultural activities • Manufacturing, production, and processing • Generation of electricity consumed by upstream activities • Disposal/treatment of waste generated by upstream activities • Land use and land-use change • Transportation of materials and products between suppliers • Any other activities prior to acquisition by the reporting company Relevant purchases to the Council may include capital goods, such as office supplies, office furniture, computers, telephones, travel services, IT support, outsourced administrative functions, consulting services, janitorial, landscaping services, maintenance, repairs and operations. For accurate carbon reporting emissions, the Council should request cradle-to-gate emission factors for materials used by

		suppliers to produce purchased goods such as Environmental Product Declarations (EPDs). It is likely that many suppliers will not be able to provide all the emission data. If an EPD cannot be provided, supplementary information required includes the volume of product (kg) and the carbon emission factor (kg CO_2e). A policy should be developed so that suppliers in the supply chain are required to provide this data as part of the contract, where the volume of goods is noteworthy.
2	Capital goods	Capital goods are final products that have an extended life and are used by the Council to manufacture a product, provide a service, or sell, store, and deliver merchandise. Capital goods are treated as fixed assets or as plant, property, and equipment (PP&E). Examples of capital goods include equipment, machinery, buildings, facilities, and vehicles. The required information is the same as Category 1 above. A policy should be developed so that suppliers in the supply chain are required to provide this data as part of the contract.
3	Fuel- and energy related activities (not included in Scope 1 or Scope 2)	Transmission and distribution (T&D) losses have been included and calculated from the data provided in Scope 2.
4	Upstream transportation and distribution	Category 4 includes emissions from: • Transportation and distribution of products purchased in the reporting year, between suppliers and its own operations in vehicles not owned or operated by the Council. •

		• Third-party transportation and distribution services purchased by the Council in the reporting year (either directly or through an intermediary), including inbound logistics, outbound logistics (e.g. of sold products), and third-party transportation and distribution between the Council's own facilities. The Council requires data on: • Quantities of fuel (e.g., diesel, petrol, jet fuel, biofuels) consumed • Amount spent on fuels • Distance travelled • Vehicle type This may include managed assets - Vehicles that are used by the Council but are not owned by the organisation and generally do not appear on the organisation's balance sheet, for example, maintenance contractor vehicles, outsourced refuse and recycling trucks, road sweepers, grounds maintenance mowers etc. A policy should be developed so that suppliers using their own vehicles are required to provide this data as part of the contract.
5	Waste generated in operations	This includes emissions from third-party disposal and treatment of waste generated in the Councils owned or controlled operations in the reporting year. This category includes emissions from disposal of both solid waste and wastewater. The Council should request volume and emissions data from the waste treatment company applicable to **its own waste stream**. If this cannot be provided, the emissions can be calculated by requesting the volume of waste, type and disposal method: Example of data required: Total weight (kg) of waste type and disposal method e.g. • 5,000kg municipal waste to landfill

		• 500kg organic garden waste to composting • 1,000kg metal recycled • 1,000kg plastic recycled • 1,000kg paper recycled Data is required for the volume of supply and wastewater in cubic metres (m^3) from water bills. Local authorities have an important role in waste prevention and sustainable waste management through awareness-raising campaigns, providing separate collection for recycling and food waste, and implementing waste-to-energy schemes. It is therefore voluntary on whether the Council choose to include the emissions from waste associated with the whole borough, or just the Council's own operation.
6	Business travel	Travel for assets not owned or directly operated by the Council. This includes mileage for business purposes in cars owned by employees, public transport, hire cars etc. Require details for: <u>Vehicle</u> Fuel type, size of vehicle and distance for: • Car • Motorbike • Taxis • Bus • Rail <u>Flights</u> • Airport travelled to/from • Number of passengers • Class type • Distance

		Ferry • Foot or car passenger • Distance
7	Employee commuting	This category includes emissions from the transportation of employees between their homes and their worksites. Emissions from employee commuting may arise from: • Car • Bus • Rail • Other modes of transportation Staff would be required to provide method of transport and distance travelled. It may be difficult and time consuming to collect accurate data.
8	Upstream leased assets	This category is applicable from the operation of assets that are leased by the Council. If the Council procures the energy then this should be considered as Scope 1 and 2. If the landlord is responsible for the Scope 1 and 2 emissions, the Council should include the reporting under Scope 3. An example may include an office that the Council lease from a private landlord. All energy bills may be included as part of the lease and the energy contract is under the name of the landlord. The Council should therefore request the energy data from the landlord and include this under Scope 3. Data required include the Scope 1 and 2 data from the leased asset.

9	Downstream transportation and distribution	This category includes emissions that occur in the reporting year from transportation and distribution of sold products in vehicles and facilities not owned or controlled by the Council in the reporting year. It is assumed that this category is not applicable to the Council as it does not manufacture and sell products.
10	Processing of sold products	It is assumed that this category is not applicable to the Council as it does not manufacture and sell products.
11	Use of sold products	It is assumed that this category is not applicable to the Council as it does not manufacture and sell products.
12	End-of-life treatment of sold products	It is assumed that this category is not applicable to the Council as it does not manufacture and sell products.
13	Downstream leased assets	This category is applicable where the Council is the landlord to a lessee. If the Council procures the energy on behalf of a lessee then this should be considered as Scope 1 and 2. An example of this is where the Council may lease a premises to a lessee and include all energy costs as part of the lease. The energy contract is under the name of the Council and is therefore reported under Scope 1 and 2. If the lessee is responsible for the Scope 1 and 2 emissions, the council should include the reporting under Scope 3. An example of this is a shop that the Council own and the occupant pays for the energy bills and the contract is under their name. The Council should request the energy data from the shop occupier and report this under Scope 3.

		Data required include the Scope 1 and 2 data from the leased asset.
14	Franchises	It is assumed that this category is not applicable to the Council as it does not operate any franchises.
15	Investments	This category includes scope 3 emissions associated with the Council's investments in the reporting year, not already included in scope 1 or scope 2. This category is applicable to investors (i.e. organisations that make an investment with the objective of making a profit) and organisations that provide financial services. This category also applies to investors that are not profit driven (e.g. multilateral development banks). Investments are categorised as a downstream scope 3 category because providing capital or financing is a service provided by the organisation. Category 15 is designed primarily for private financial institutions (e.g., commercial banks), but is also relevant to public financial institutions (e.g., multilateral development banks, export credit agencies) and other entities with investments not included in scope 1 and scope 2. The Councils scope 3 emissions from investments are the scope 1 and scope 2 emissions of investees. For purposes of greenhouse gas accounting, this standard divides financial investments into four types: • Equity investments • Debt investments • Project finance • Managed investments and client services An example of the information required is the Scope 1 and 2 emissions from the bank where an investment is in place. This is based on the Council's proportional share of investment in the investee. If the Council has £1million invested in the bank and the banks total investments amount to £100million, the

		Council should report on 1% of the banks Scope 1 and 2 emissions. It is assumed that this information will be difficult to collate from third parties and that the total emissions will be proportionally small compared to other emission sources and these emissions could be excluded from the reporting.


NEW MUNICIPALISM
Delivering for local people and local economies

Short Equality Impact and Outcome Assessment (EIA) Template

EIAs make services better for everyone and support value for money by getting services right first time.

EIAs enable us to consider all the information about a service, policy or strategy from an equalities perspective and then action plan to get the best outcomes for staff and service-users[1] .They analyse how all our work as a council might impact differently on different groups [2]

They help us make good decisions and evidence how we have reached these decisions.[3]

See end notes for full guidance. For further support or advice please contact the Community Partnerships Team

Equality Impact and Outcomes Assessment (EIA) Template

First, consider whether you need to complete an EIA, or if there is another way to evidence assessment of impacts, or that an EIA is not needed [4]

Title [5]	Draft Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy 2023-2026	**ID No [6]**	**2022.CP001**
Team/Service[7]	Community Partnerships		
Focus of EIA [8]	A core objective of the new Corporate Framework is to achieve carbon net zero and be climate resilient. This draft Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy 2023-26 is a high level strategic document that sets how the Council will achieve this overarching objective. It will be delivered by all service areas across the Council. It will involve partnership working for example on procured retrofit projects. Everyone in the district will have a role to play in the delivery of the strategy ranging from being a recipient of retrofit measures, taking part in a group purchasing schemes for renewable energy, working together in a community garden to making individual choices at home to reduce personal carbon footprints. The outcome for the Council and the District is to make substantive reductions in carbon emissions. The current Climate and Emergency Sustainability Strategy is being refreshed to reflect the insight gained from commissioned reports on climate emissions for the Council and the district, to reflect new opportunities for funding, and changes in legislation.		
Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations [9]			
The Strategy contains a number of high-level aims and objectives supported by an action plan which spans all service areas of the Council. The Action Plan will detail those individual projects / tasks. Our aim is to maximise equality and inclusion, which is a co-benefit for tackling emissions because everyone, no matter what their protected characteristic maybe, is critical in tackling the climate emergency. Many of the			

actions that will deliver our Strategy will lead to further co-benefits of improving health and wellbeing, social inclusion, reductions in bills and associated fuel poverty, as well as improving resilience to adverse weather impacts.	
Potential Issues	**Mitigating Actions**
There are no negative impacts identified as arising from the proposals within the Strategy	Achievement of the aims of this Strategy will promote inclusion. Much of the work to tackle district emissions will require more community cohesion working at street level, no matter the diversity within an area. The grant funded retrofit projects naturally select deprived areas as they are more likely to meet the funding criteria namely EPC level and household income. If issues are found which could hinder inclusion e.g. hoarding or anxiety then support is provided to tackle the problem to enable participation in the scheme.
Actions Planned [10]	
The proposed Strategy is a strategic document to enable the council to achieve net zero. The Strategy will be subject to stakeholder, community and wider public consultation, the feedback from which will inform the final ambitions, priorities and actions. Equality Impact Assessments will be carried out for specific actions and proposals on a project by project basis. The actions in the Strategy touch on a wide range of services and consequently will at some point bring all Three Rivers citizens into scope, particularly our most vulnerable residents who are most likely to benefit from grant funded house retrofits. We will ensure that due regard is given to any potential impact of specific proposals on protected characteristics by conducting Equality Impact Assessments for specific actions and proposals as required. This process is designed to help maximise positive impacts and ensure we are thoughtful and intentional about designing inclusivity and equity in to our work. It also helps us identify potential negative impacts and how we can eliminate, minimise or mitigate these.	

EIA sign-off: (for the EIA to be final an email must sent from the relevant people agreeing it or this section must be signed)

Equality Impact Assessment officer: Emma Sheridan **Date:** 10th February 2023

Equalities Lead Officer: Emma Sheridan **Date:** 10th February 2023

Guidance end-notes

[1] The following principles, drawn from case law, explain what we must do to fulfil our duties under the Equality Act:

- Knowledge: everyone working for the council must be aware of our equality duties and apply them appropriately in their work.

• Timeliness: the duty applies at the time of considering policy options and/or before a final decision is taken – not afterwards.

• Real Consideration: the duty must be an integral and rigorous part of your decision-making and influence the process. • Sufficient Information: you must assess what information you have and what is needed to give proper consideration.

• No delegation: the council is responsible for ensuring that any contracted services which provide services on our behalf can comply with the duty, are required in contracts to comply with it, and do comply in practice. It is a duty that cannot be delegated.

• Review: the equality duty is a continuing duty. It applies when a policy is developed/agreed, and when it is implemented/reviewed.

• Proper Record Keeping: to show that we have fulfilled our duties we must keep records of the process and the impacts identified.

NB: Filling out this EIA in itself does not meet the requirements of the equality duty. All the requirements above must be fulfilled or the EIA (and any decision based on it) may be open to challenge. Properly used, an EIA can be a tool to help us comply with our equality duty and as a record that to demonstrate that we have done so.

2 Our duties in the Equality Act 2010

As a council, we have a legal duty (under the Equality Act 2010) to show that we have identified and considered the impact and potential impact of our activities on all people with 'protected characteristics' (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership.

This applies to policies, services (including commissioned services), and our employees. The level of detail of this consideration will depend on what you are assessing, who it might affect, those groups' vulnerability, and how serious any potential impacts might be. We use this EIA template to complete this process and evidence our consideration

The following are the duties in the Act. You must give 'due regard' (pay conscious attention) to the need to:

- avoid, reduce or minimise negative impact (if you identify unlawful discrimination, including victimisation and harassment, you must stop the action and take advice immediately).
- promote equality of opportunity. This means the need to: – Remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by equality groups – Take steps to meet the needs of equality groups – Encourage equality groups to participate in public life or any other activity where participation is disproportionately low – Consider if there is a need to treat disabled people differently, including more favourable treatment where necessary

- foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not. This means: – Tackle prejudice – Promote understanding

[3] EIAs are always proportionate to:

- The size of the service or scope of the policy/strategy
- The resources involved
- The numbers of people affected
- The size of the likely impact
- The vulnerability of the people affected

The greater the potential adverse impact of the proposed policy on a protected group (e.g. disabled people), the more vulnerable the group in the context being considered, the more thorough and demanding the process required by the Act will be.

[4] When to complete an EIA:

- When planning or developing a new service, policy or strategy
- When reviewing an existing service, policy or strategy
- When ending or substantially changing a service, policy or strategy
- When there is an important change in the service, policy or strategy, or in the city (eg: a change in population), or at a national level (eg: a change of legislation)

Assessment of equality impact can be evidenced as part of the process of reviewing or needs assessment or strategy development or consultation or planning. It does not have to be on this template, but must be documented. Wherever possible, build the EIA into your usual planning/review processes.

Do you need to complete an EIA? Consider:

- Is the policy, decision or service likely to be relevant to any people because of their protected characteristics?
- How many people is it likely to affect?
- How significant are its impacts?
- Does it relate to an area where there are known inequalities?

How vulnerable are the people (potentially) affected? If there are potential impacts on people but you decide not to complete an EIA it is usually sensible to document why.

[5] **Title of EIA**: This should clearly explain what service / policy / strategy / change you are assessing

[6] I**D no:** The unique reference for this EIA. This will be added by Community Partnerships

[7] **Team/Service**: Main team responsible for the policy, practice, service or function being assessed

[8] **Focus of EIA**: A member of the public should have a good understanding of the policy or service and any proposals after reading this section. Please use plain English and write any acronyms in full first time - eg: 'Equality Impact Assessment (EIA)'

This section should explain what you are assessing:

- What are the main aims or purpose of the policy, practice, service or function?
- Who implements, carries out or delivers the policy, practice, service or function? Please state where this is more than one person/team/body and where other organisations deliver under procurement or partnership arrangements.
- How does it fit with other services?
- Who is affected by the policy, practice, service or function, or by how it is delivered? Who are the external and internal serviceusers, groups, or communities?
- What outcomes do you want to achieve, why and for whom? Eg: what do you want to provide, what changes or improvements, and what should the benefits be? • What do existing or previous inspections of the policy, practice, service or function tell you?
- What is the reason for the proposal or change (financial, service, legal etc)? The Act requires us to make these clear.

[9] **Assessment of overall impacts and any further recommendations**

- Make a frank and realistic assessment of the overall extent to which the negative impacts can be reduced or avoided by the mitigating measures. Explain what positive impacts will result from the actions and how you can make the most of these.
- Countervailing considerations: These may include the reasons behind the formulation of the policy, the benefits it is expected to deliver, budget reductions, the need to avert a graver crisis by introducing a policy now and not later, and so on. The weight of these factors in favour of implementing the policy must then be measured against the weight of any evidence as to the potential negative equality impacts of the policy,
- Are there any further recommendations? Is further engagement needed? Is more research or monitoring needed? Does there need to be a change in the proposal itself?

[10] **Action Planning:** The Equality Duty is an ongoing duty: policies must be kept under review, continuing to give ‘due regard’ to the duty. If an assessment of a broad proposal leads to more specific proposals, then further equality assessment and consultation are needed.

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE – 13 MARCH 2023

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – 15 MARCH 2023

PART I - DELEGATED

9. THREE RIVERS NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY

(DCES)

1 Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to summarise the content and implications of the Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy, and recommend that the final version of the Strategy is adopted by Three Rivers District Council.

1.2 Appendix A details the Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy.

2 Background and Context

2.1 The Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy is a new document for the Council, which will address the authority's approach to nature conservation, and habitat management and enhancement within the District.

2.2 The strategy broadly sets out the natural environments present within the District, their current value to wildlife and the local community, as well as the challenges they currently face.

2.3 It is important to make clear that the Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy is not intended to be one of the Local Nature Recovery Strategies; or to address Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), as outlined in the Environment Act 2021 (Part 6, section 98-106).

2.4 The strategy and action plan will be reviewed and updated in five years' time and any new actions identified.

2.5 A draft version of the strategy was consulted on during December 2022 and January 2023. A brief summary of the main areas of feedback received is provided (Appendix C), including a response from officers.

2.6 Edits have made to the strategy and the final version will be presented to the Policy & Resources committee on 13th March 2023, and the Leisure, Environment and Community committee on 15th March 2023.

3 Final Strategy

3.1 The final strategy covers the main areas as follows:

- Biodiversity within Three Rivers District
- Relevant legislation protecting nature and wildlife in the UK
- Biodiversity and Climate Change
- Natural Environments in Three Rivers:
    - Rivers and Wetlands

- Trees and Woodlands
- The Countryside
- The Urban Environment

4 Public Consultation

4.1 Following approval from the Policy & Resources Committee and Leisure, Environment & Community Committee in November 2022, a period of public consultation took place between 12th December 2022 and 22th January 2023 (6 weeks)

4.2 A total of 43 responses were received, outlining a variety of views on the strategy and biodiversity throughout the District.

4.3 Appendix C of the report provides a summary of the main issues raised (ranked 1 to 9, from most frequently raised, to least frequently raised) with an officer response to each issue, and how it is addressed in the strategy.

4.4 As a result of the consultation further information has been added on climate adaption and rewilding; amendments to the action plan; and a number other minor edits to text and formatting. Details of this are included in the consultation report in Appendix C.

5 Outcomes and Recommendations

5.1 That the Policy & Resources Committee and the Leisure, Environment & Community Committee approve the Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy.

6 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

6.1 Option 1 – For P&R to Approve the Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy. A final version will then be presented to the LEC Committee on 15th March 2023. If the LEC Committee also approves the Strategy, it will then be formally adopted by Three Rivers District Council.

6.2 Option 2 - Not approve the Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy. Officers will make further changes to the strategy, before presenting the final version to a future P&R and LEC committee. This may result in a delay to the implementations of some of the actions within the strategy.

7 Policy & Budget Reference and Implications

7.1 The purpose of this strategy is to clearly set out the Council's approach to a wide range of nature conservation and habitat management issues, and identify areas for change and improvement according to best practice.

7.2 The proposed policy will have the impacts stated below on the following performance indicators:

- CP01 – Satisfaction with parks and open spaces
  Impact: To provide more information on the management of green space with the aim of benefitting biodiversity and the local community.
- CO02 – Public perception of how well informed they feel about public services
  Impact: An improved ability for the public to gain an understanding of the Council's approach to habitat management and conservation in the district.

- EP16 – Satisfaction with quality/provision of parks and open spaces
  Impact: To provide more information to the public on management of the Council's open spaces, parks and nature reserves.
- LL34 – To maintain accreditation for Green Flag
  Impact: To ensure all the Council's opens spaces are safe and managed in accordance with best practice meeting the standards of Green Flag.
- LL35 – To ensure that all of our key parks and open spaces are in positive management.
  Impact: Support the production of new management plans for TRDC open space
- LL39 – Number of new trees planted by TRDC
  Impact: Contribute to the planting of trees within TRDC open spaces
- LL40 – Production of a new Biodiversity Strategy (Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy)
  Impact: Completion following committee approval.

8 Financial Implications

8.1 The Action Plan within the strategy contains high level action points, with a priority on investigating opportunities to realise the biodiversity benefits identified.

8.2 It is anticipated that Officers will work closely with partners to deliver the action plan and source external funding to achieve this.

8.3 The cost of some of the actions will be assessed during the production of future Management Plans for major open spaces – this will be supported by the recently agreed £142,000 UK Shared Prosperity Fund for 2024/25.

8.4 It is anticipated that the majority of development work and the review would be carried out by existing Trees & Landscape staff. However parts of the strategy will be dependant upon the success of external funding bids and if funding is not forthcoming it may be necessary to reassess priorties.

8.5 Where additional investment is required a business case will be developed to make the case for funding. All requests for additional funding are evaluated against Council priorities set out in the Corporate Framework and are considered in the context of the Council's overall financial position to ensure that resources are allocated appropriately.

9 Legal Implications

9.1 The Policy & Resources Committee and the Leisure, Environment & Community Committee are asked to approve the Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy. Cosultations took place between 12 December 2022 and 22 January 2023 and the main issues raised by consultees are set out in Appendix C of the Report. There are no legal implication arising from the report.

10 Equal Opportunities Implicatopms

10.1 Relevance test:

Has a relevance test been completed for Equality Impact?	Yes
Did the relevance test conclude a full impact assessment was required?	No

11 Staffing Implications

11.1 The development of the Nature Recovery Strategy will be managed by the Community Biodiveristy Officer and the Principal Trees and Landscapes Officer.

11.2 It is anticipated that the majority of development work and the review would be carried out by existing Trees & Landscape staff. However parts of the strategy will be dependant upon the success of external funding bids and if funding is not forthcoming it may be necessary to reassess priorities and resource implications.

12 Environmental Implications

12.1 The adoption and implementation of the strategy will help ensure the Council's parks, open spaces and nature reserves are managed to the highest environmental standards.

12.2 The strategy will ensure that the natural world is protected within the District, and is maintained and enhanced while delivering co-benefits for climate change mitigation and adaptation in-line with the Council's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy.

Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment:

12.3 A score of 3.8 was generated when completing the Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment; where a positive and strong score is anything over 3. The implementation of this score via the action plan will be dependent on the available funding as discussed at 8.4.

Climate and Sustainability Impact Assesment Summary	
Homes, buildings, infrastructure, equipment and energy	N/A
Travel	N/A
Goods and Consumption	N/A
Ecology	4.00
Adaptation	3.50
Engagement and Influence	4
Total Overall Average Score	**3.8**

13 Public Health Implications

13.1 A body of evidence is growing which explains the benefit people can experience from contact with the natural world; for example, increased prominence of social prescribing by clinicians for walking or gardening to alleviate symptoms.

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-environment/state-of-the-environment-health-people-and-the-environment

13.2 During a recent (2021) survey of people using Leavesden Country Park, over 80% said that being able to use the park was either very important or important to their

health and wellbeing and 98% of people said using the park enhanced their quality of life.

13.3 Trees and greenery may boost lifespan, this has been studied for 8 years by Harvard researchers and published in April Environmental Health Perspectives.

https://health.usnews.com/wellness/articles/2016-12-09/the-many-health-benefits-of-trees

14 Community Safety Implications

14.1 None Specific.

15 Customer Services Centre Implications

15.1 The strategy will assist CSC, providing call centre staff with clear guidance on the Council's approach to approach to nature conservation and habitat management.

16 Communications and Website Implications

16.1 Information contained with the strategy will also be placed on the Council's website to enable residents to self-serve, rather than rely on CSC staff to answer queries.

16.2 A new webpage is also being designed to sit within the Trees & Landscape section of the new Three Rivers District Council website which will be titled "Nature Recovery." The webpage will include information on the biodiversity opportunities audit, biodiversity related news, updates and more.

17 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

17.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at http://www.threerivers.gov.uk 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.

17.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Community Services Plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this plan.

17.3 The strategy sets out clear processes for deadling with Council owned and managed green space, so that the risk of these sites is managed effectively.

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response *(tolerate, treat terminate, transfer)*	Risk Rating *(combination of likelihood and impact)*
The Council fails in its legislative duties	Legal, Reputational and finanicial implications	Proactively manage Council owned green spaces in line with national legislation assisted by adopting a new Nature Recovery Strategy	Treat	4
Negative impact on the natural environment within Three Rivers	Reputational implications Significant impact on the biodiversity of Three Rivers	Proactively manage Council owned green spaces and by adopting a new Nature Recovery Strategy	Treat	4
Negative impact on the Council's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy	Reputational implications Significant impact on the biodiversity of Three Rivers	Proactively manage Council owned green spaces and by adopting a new Nature Recovery Strategy	Treat	4
Not adopting the NR strategy would lead to the Council not prioritising actions to assist the recovering of nature in the distict	Potential reputational damage Potentially missed opportunities to make significant improvements to biodiversity	Adoption of the strategy	Treat	2
Adopting the strategy could lead to an increased financial burden on the Council	Potential reputational damage Biodiversity projects are prioritised over other greenspace improvement project	Careful costing of actions to keep them within agreed budgets	Treat	3

17.4 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.

Likelihood: Very Likely ▼ Remote				
	Low 4	**High** 8	**Very High** 12	**Very High** 16
	Low 3	**Medium** 6	**High** 9	**Very High** 12
	Low 2	**Low** 4	**Medium** 6	**High** 8
	Low 1	**Low** 2	**Low** 3	**Low** 4
	Impact			
	Low ▶			**Unacceptable**

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

17.5 In the officers' opinion none of the risks above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational.

18 Recommendation

18.1 That the Policy and Resources Committee and the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee: Approve the final strategy as outlined in Appendix A.

Report prepared by:

Jess Hodges, Community Biodiversity Officer

Data checked by:

Alex Laurie, Principal Tree and Landscape Officer

Data rating:

1	**Poor**	
2	**Sufficient**	**x**

3	**High**	

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy – separate document provided

Appendix B: Relevance Test

Appendix C: Public Consultation Report

Appendix D: Climate and Sustainability Impact Assesment Summary – separate document provided

Appendix B: Relevance Test

Function/Service Being Assessed: Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy

Officer completing form: Jess Hodges Date of completion: 16/02/2023

1. Populations served/affected:

☒ Universal (service covering all residents)?

☐ Targeted (service aimed at a section of the community –please indicate which)?

2. Is it relevant to the general equality duty?

Which of these three aspects does the function relate to (if any)?:

☐ 1 – Eliminating discrimination, harassment and victimisation

☒ 2 – Advancing equality of opportunity

☐ 3 – Fostering good relations

Is there any evidence or reason to believe that some groups could be differently affected?

☐ Yes

☒ No

Which equality categories are affected?

☐ Race

☐ Age

☐ Sexual Orientation

☐ Disability

☐ Gender

☐ Religion

☐ Gender reassignment

☐ Marriage / civil partnership

☐ Maternity / Pregnancy

3. What is the degree of relevance?

In your view, is the information you have on each category adequate to make a decision about relevance?

☒ Yes

Are there any triggers for this review (for example is there any public concern that functions/services are being operated in a discriminatory manner?) If yes please indicate which:

☐ Yes

☒ No

4. Conclusion

On the basis of the relevance test would you say that there is evidence that a medium or high detrimental impact is likely? (See below for definition)

☐ Yes

☒ No

Appendix C: Public Consultation Report

Consultation Response Theme	Rank	Background	Officer Response
Planning	**1**	Number of concerns raised relating to the green belt, green infastructure and the new Local Plan. Request to take into account biodiversity when building, for example including nest boxes on all new buildings.	Issues relating to planning will be addressed in the Local Plan and are not covered within the scope of the Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy. Where applicable Herts Ecology assess planning applications to advise planning officers. In addition to this, the Environment Act: including both Biodiversity Net Gain and Local Nature Recovery Strategies (to be developed at a larger scale) will also address the impacts of developments on biodiversity. The Guide to Greening Your Home is a document related to the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy which is distributed and advises on options to incorporate biodiversity within the home and garden.
Action Plan	**2**	Desire for the action plan to include greater level of detail with timescales, quantifiable targets and budgets to achieve the actions.	The strategy contains a 5-year action plan and aims to implement all of the actions within these years. Throughout the 5 years, the action plan will be reviewed and then new targets will be set at the end of the action plan timeframe. Officers will review the action plan to outline the actions that can be encoroporated within current budgets and then the actions that will require further funding to be sought.
Habitat issues (E.g. management, loss & connectivity)	**3**	A variety of comments highlighting need for habitat connectivity, wildlife corridors and preventing habitat loss. This included comments to reduce grass cutting especially on verges and suggesting converting conservation cut areas to hay meadow management.	The Council commissioned a Biodiversity Opportunities Audit throughout the District outlining opportunities for ecological gains and improved connectivity District-wide through Council owned land. Several other documents assist in addressing this issue including the Hertforshire State of Nature Report by Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust, the Biodiversity Baseline created at Hertfordshire County Council and the new Local Nature Recovery Strategy as part of the Environment Act 2021 which will be created in the future.
Climate Change	**4**	Concerns raised regarding the impact of climate change and suggestions to mitigate it including: adaptation of drainage, managing grassland as carbon stores and making space for nature to naturally adapt. Also a request for more detail on the climate emergency.	As a result of this consultation officers have drafted an additional section on Adaptation to Climate Change. The Council's Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy also covers in detail this topic and the intention is for the strategies to dove-tail in with eachother.

Community/ Engagement	**5**	Many comments highlighting value of education, engagement and partnership working.	The Strategy highlights some examples of current partnership working especially within the Rivers & Wetlands section. There are also several actions covering partnership working and education throughout the District within the Action Plan.
Trees	**6**	Desire for more action regarding hedgerows and planting of trees on pavements to create "tree-lined streets."	The Council's approach to trees are outlined in the Tree Strategy 2022-2027. Hedge planting and hedge restoration are also management prescriptions within the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit.
Enforcement	**7**	Concerns raised in regards to pollution of watercourses, in particular the chalk streams and the consequencs of this.	The District Council does not hold the authority to prosecute water companies; this would lie with the relevant authority for example: the Environment Agency, Natural England or the Police. However, the Environment Act 2021 addresses the issues with discharging sewage into watercourses and plans to reduce this.
Pesticides	**8**	General comments regarding pesticides, encouraging people and businesses within the District to stop using them.	The Council only uses pesticides to treat non-native invasive species and on occasion tree stumps when there is no other option- in this instance only a specific dose is used to limit impact.
Rewilding	**9**	Various comments on the topic of rewilding, including opportunities for land to be allocated for "biological rewilding" and protect areas that can springboard recovery via a mix of approaches.	As a result of this consultation officers are drafting an additional section on the topic of rewilding.

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Three Rivers District Council

Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy

2023-2028

February 2023

Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy Foreword

- To follow -

Introduction

1 Biodiversity encompasses all life on earth from fungi and bacteria to plants and animals, it forms a complex web of interactions between species providing everything needed for life on earth to exist. Although complex it is also delicate, a fine balance of species. However, human activity and, in particular climate change are taking the natural world off –balance.

2 For example, birds are laying their eggs earlier, then cannot find enough food to feed their young as invertebrates have not yet emerged from hibernation, and their food plants have not yet flowered. Invasive plants and animals not naturally found in Britain have been introduced, some accidently, to ecosystems and are outcompeting our native wildlife; dominating habitats and diminishing their value to native species.

3 In 2019 Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) declared a Climate Emergency, recognising the detrimental impact increasing global temperatures are having on Biodiversity, in addition to the many other climate challenges the world faces.

4 To address this TRDC published its Climate Change Emergency and Sustainability Strategy in 2021, which considered the Ecological Emergency and value of the natural world when building climate resilience. The Council is committed to achieving net-zero by 2030 for its own carbon emissions, and net-zero for the District by 2045: protection of the natural world will be vital to achieving this.

5 The Council's Tree Strategy (2022-2027) sets out TRDC's roles and responsibilities; as a landowner; regulator; and advocate for trees. Including the legal protection of trees; the maintenance and safety of TRDC trees, and trees in in relation to planning and development. The Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy will support The Tree Strategy, acknowledging that trees are a key component of the biodiversity present in the District and outlining approaches to tree and woodland management with the aim to benefit the ecosystem.

6 It is important to clarify that the Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy is not one of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy as part of the Environment Act 2021 (Part 6, section 104-106). Such a strategy may be produced at a county or regional level at some point in the future.

7 The Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy specifically addresses the Council's approach to protection of the natural world within the District. At the heart of the strategy is a 5-year Action Plan, which identifies and prioritises actions to be undertaken for the benefit of Biodiversity.

8 The strategy also recognises the rich diversity of wildlife already present within the District, both within protected nature reserves as well as public open space, residential gardens, grass verges, and more. It is accompanied by an outline of national legislation and policy relating to wildlife and the protection of habitats and species, in particular the recent Environment Act which became law in November 2021.

9 However, the strategy doesn't contain a huge amount of detailed information on species and habitats present in the district, or their health and condition. This has recently been considered in some detail in the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust's (H&MWT's) excellent 2020 State of Nature report. In addition, a biodiversity baseline for Hertfordshire has been prepared by the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership. The Hertfordshire Environmental Records Centre hold data on wildlife in the County.

10 The strategy is based on four main themes; Rivers & Wetlands; Trees & Woodlands; The Urban Environment and The Countryside. Broader than specific habitats, the themes aim to encompass the key natural environments found in Three Rivers, with each accompanied by a case study. For each theme a number of actions have been identified, and which aim to address key priorities for biodiversity in those environments.

Biodiversity in Three Rivers

12 Three Rivers District is approximately 89 km^2 (34 square miles), underlain by several types of geology including: various forms of Chalk bedrock, Lambeth Group geology and London Clay. Other than the London Clay, the other forms of bedrock provide a level of permeability which give the potential for water supply and aquifer properties.

13 The underlying geology of an area is one of the key factors in determining its biodiversity, as geomorphological processes played a key role in creating our ecosystems and habitats and are frequently involved in maintaining them in a dynamic form.

14 Three Rivers is a complex mix of landscapes and habitats from rural to urban areas that include woodland, grassland, wetland and farmland, among others. Approximately 6 km^2 (2 square miles) of the District is within The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB), comprising of a mosaic of grassland, woodland, arable land and its distinctive chalk streams.

15 Three National Character Area (NCA) profiles have been identified within the District (Natural England, 2014) which describe the character of the area in terms of landscape, geology, land use and habitats. Covering the TRDC area are the following profiles: The Chilterns, Northern Thames Basin and Thames Valley. The profiles can be viewed in full at: www.nationalcharacterareas.co.uk

16 At a finer scale the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Areas (LCA) define the landscape character of every area of the county. The Three Rivers district has been described and assessed in 13 different statements, the full statements can be viewed at: www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/landscape

17 77% of the District is designated Metropolitan Green Belt and supports a wealth of environments, including woodlands, wetlands, grasslands, orchards and greenspace. One of the key aims of Green Belt is to prevent urban sprawl into rural areas by preventing inappropriate development.

18 Within the district there are five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's), a formal conservation designation from Natural England (the government's advisor on Nature Conservation), which gives statutory protection to wildlife due to rare species that are present on site, and / or special geological or physiological features. The District Council owns one of these sites, Croxley Common Moor SSSI – which comprises of approx. 39ha of lowland acid grassland, fen and scrub.

19 There are also eight Local Nature Reserves (LNR's) in the district, six of which were designated by Three Rivers District Council and are owned and managed by the Council. The aim of LNRs is to recognise the importance of local wildlife and geological features, and their educational and intrinsic value to residents and local people.

20 The LNR's in the District include: Croxley Common Moor, Oxhey Woods, Prestwick Road Meadows, Rickmansworth Aquadrome, The Withy Beds and Chorleywood House Estate. The additional two LNR's are Stockers Lake, owned by Affinity Water, managed by Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust and Chorleywood Common owned and managed by Chorleywood Parish Council.

21 In addition to these site designations there are also approximately 147 Local Wildlife sites (LWS's) in Three Rivers District. These are areas which have been identified as important for their wildlife; they do not have statutory protection, but are given some consideration within the planning process. They are monitored by the Herts &Middlesex Wildlife Trust, who also advise owners on their management.

Biodiversity and Climate Change

Adaptation

22 Adaptation is the process of adjusting to the actual or expected climate and its effects, aiming to prevent or minimise the consequential damage. To successfully adapt to the risks, the likely impacts of climate change must be understood to be able to develop targeted actions that increase the resilience of habitats and environments.

23 This can be approached from many perspectives, including: flood mitigation; water resource management and soil health. When considering wildlife and habitats adaptation is predominantly focused on increasing their resilience to the changing climate and related pressures they face.

24 Many of the methods to mitigate climate change serve multiple purposes, for example: tree planting is not only beneficial for biodiversity, it also assists with cooling by creating shade, and increases carbon sequestration and storage. In addition, locating new tree planting close to areas of recreation provides shade, so that people can spend time outside even in periods of hot weather, hence benefitting the local community, mental health and wellbeing.

25 Therefore, when considering climate mitigation, adaptation, habitat management and conservation, a versatile approach should be adopted to ensure multiple purposes and benefits can result.

Rewilding

26 During the 20th Century, nature conservation, particularly in Britain, relied on people and machinery managing the land through traditional rural crafts, farming techniques and targeted habitat management works, to conserve declining habitats. However, in the last twenty years, the concept of 'Rewilding' as an approach to nature restoration and environmentally sensitive land management has gained prominence.

27 In essence Rewilding enables the landscape to be shaped and managed by more natural processes. Often key to this has been a range of large grazing herbivores (both wild animals and livestock), whose actions (e.g. grazing, rootling, trampling and gnawing of vegetation) creates and maintains a dynamic and intimate mosaic of natural habitats. These varied habitats can include, bare disturbed ground; open water, short turf grassland; tall herb; dense scrub and high forest.

28 Other Rewilding techniques include re-naturalising rivers and streams, for example by; removing hard concrete structures such as weirs and culverts and reinstating meandering channels and bankside vegetation.

29 There are now many rewilding schemes in Britain and around the world, at a whole ranges of scales, such as Yellowstone National Park in the USA, Oostvaardersplassen in the Netherlands, and the Knepp Estate in the UK. A common element of these are large contiguous areas of land across which grazing animals can roam.

30 However, even at a much smaller scale, grazing animals can be employed to manage open space in more natural way, which benefits biodiversity; maintains soil health (and hence carbon sequestration and storage); and reduces the need for machinery (a source of carbon emissions).

31 Often known as conservation grazing, Three Rivers District Council has reintroduced this practice to a number of its open spaces in the past twenty years. Most notably at Croxley Common Moor SSSI and LNR (Site of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserve), a site with a range of grassland and wetland habitats. The wet and uneven nature of the ground supports over 300 species of wild plant and associated wildlife, with grazing by cattle and wild rabbits being key to maintaining a diverse range of habitats.

32 More recently the term Rewilding has taken on a slightly different meaning, particularly in the urban context. Here, changes to areas of short grass and more formal planting, such as flower beds, have been made to benefit wildlife in our towns and cities. Large expanses of grass can be left to grow long over the spring and early summer as cover and foraging for birds and small mammals, and nectar-rich flower varieties can be used in place of less beneficial plants.

33 For its larger open spaces, such as Croxley Common Moor, the district council already has detailed plans in place to conserve and enhance their biodiversity. However, in addition the Council have recently carried out an audit of its smaller, and more urban open spaces to look for opportunities to manage these areas in a more natural way.

34 In addition to this Biodiversity Opportunities Audit, a council motion was passed unanimously in November 2021, which committed the district council to increasing the area of its grasslands managed for Biodiversity.

35 In 2022 work began to implement the BOA and a programme of Alternative Grassland Management for the benefit of wildlife. Over the coming years, work will continue to make a whole range of improvements, including hay meadow management; tree wildflower planting; and hedge restoration.

Legislation

36 A variety of legislation protects biodiversity from being damaged or destroyed and ensures not only its protection but that, where necessary, attempts are made to return what has been lost. The legislation described below is far from exhaustive, but seeks to give an overview of the main protection for biodiversity in the UK.

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981

37 The primary legislation protecting the natural world in Great Britain is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 covering plants, animals and habitats. Formed of 4 parts and broken down in 17 schedules; as an overview, the act covers: Wildlife, its protection and preventing the introduction of non-native species; Nature conservation and establishment of protected designated areas; Public rights of way; and other miscellaneous provisions. The act has since been amended and supplemented by a number of other pieces of legislation; all to protect the natural world.

38 It is the relevant legislation which supports the protection of land, for SSSI's this would be the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 whereas for the LNR's it would be the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. As mentioned in the previous section, there are five Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's) and nine Local Nature Reserves (LNR's) within the district.

The Environment Act 2021

39 The Environment Act 2021 aims to protect the environment in a variety of ways: from improving air and water quality, tackling waste and improving biodiversity. The act also created the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP) which will have various environmental governance roles including enforcement of breaches of environmental law.

40 Additionally, subsequent legislation under this act is expected furthering the protection of the environment. One element of the act will include the creation of Local Nature Recovery Strategy's which together will cover the entirety of England and will include a statement of biodiversity priorities for the area as well as a local habitat map.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

41 A key element of the Environment Act 2021 is BNG. It is not a new concept as planning policy has long promoted biodiversity improvement; however, until the environment act there has been no statutory requirement. Using measurable improvements, it aims to both create new habitats and enhance existing ones. BNG is an approach to development and land management which aims to leave the natural environment in a better state than it was prior to development.

42 In England from November 2023, the environment act will require LPAs (Local Planning Authorities) such as TRDC to only grant planning permissions that will deliver a

minimum of 10% biodiversity gain, with minimal exceptions. Any ecological improvements that are made must then be protected and managed for at least 30 years.

Other legislation

43 There are other more specific pieces of legislation that consider only particular groups of species, or even single species. For example, the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, the Deer Act 1991 and the Weeds Act 1959.

44 In addition, part 8 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 contains the relevant law concerning tree protection. Tree Preservation Orders (TPO's) are made by the local planning authority to protect trees or woodlands of significant amenity value. Trees may also be protected if they are situated within a Conservation Area.

45 Important hedgerows may also be protected by the Hedgerow Regulations Act 1997 if they meet the criteria for length, location and are ecologically or historically important.

46 For more information on the protection of trees, please see the Council's Tree Strategy 2022-2027:

https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/media/project_tr/document/tree-strategy-2022.pdf

Three Rivers Environments

Rivers & Wetlands

48 Rivers and freshwater wetlands could be described as the arteries of the landscape, providing a home to a vast array of species as well as providing refuge and connectivity for many species as they move through the landscape and migrate. Freshwater systems that are healthy and resilient are key to sustainable water, food, energy and combatting climate change. Although the pressures facing these habitats can be observed at a national or even global scale, it is locally at river basin scale that the issues can be addressed.

49 Waterways are key to Three Rivers District and the Council takes its name from the three rivers that pass through the District: The River Chess, and River Gade which both feed the River Colne. All three of these rivers are classed as chalk streams, although they intersect with other water sources at various points along their length. The Grand Union Canal also runs through the district, alongside the River Gade and then on into the Colne Valley.

50 The River Colne is a tributary of the Thames, rising in North Mymms near Potters Bar with at least half of its course in Hertfordshire, and continues all the way through to Staines in Surrey. The Colne Valley is a mosaic of habitats that begins within the District at Rickmansworth Aquadrome.

51 Gravel extraction in the Valley over the last century has created a series of lakes and a wildlife corridor which is now a Regional Park approximately 111 km^2 (43 square miles) in size and a hub for biodiversity. Within the Regional Park there are thirteen SSSI's (including Old Park Wood); part of a National Nature Reserve (Ruislip Woods); as well seven LNRs- one of which is Rickmansworth Aquadrome.

Chalk Streams

52 Worldwide, there are approximately only 300 chalk streams with the majority of these found in the UK, France and Denmark, making these globally important habitats. Chalk streams are fed by groundwater aquifers and are heavily influenced by the chalk bedrock, which results in clean, clear water that maintains a relatively stable temperature.

53 It is these conditions which make Chalk streams such a valuable habitat to wildlife, utilised by fish, birds and a vast array of freshwater invertebrates including mayflies- whose larval stage is aquatic. The diversity of Mayflies and other freshwater flies are a particularly good indicator of water quality as they are only able to survive in clean water conditions. Chalk streams are considered to be the most botanically diverse rivers in the UK with a wide variety of plant life.

54 The River Chess, which passes through the District, like all chalk streams is an important habitat for a variety of fish including: Brown Trout *Salmo trutta*, Brook lamprey *Lampetra planeri*, Grayling *Thymallus thymallus* and Bullhead *Cottus gobio*. Many other

key species also rely on the river including Water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* and Water shrew *Neomys fodiens*.

55 However, chalk streams face threats that are fragmenting, damaging and destroying the habitat. Threats include over abstraction of water, poor water quality as a result of run-off from roads, agriculture, industry; sewerage discharge; invasive species (such as Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* and Signal Crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus*); and habitat loss resulting from erosion and over-grazing.

The Grand Union Canal

56 The Grand Union Canal also passes through the District, this man-made watercourse links London to Birmingham and today is maintained by the Canal & Rivers Trust. The canal is a valuable piece of green infrastructure and acts as a wildlife corridor providing refuge for a variety of species. The man-made watercourse also provides a travel and leisure link for people.

Wetlands

57 Rivers and other watercourses connect various wetlands throughout the district. Wetlands are unique habitats which for at least part of the year are saturated with water, this makes them very dynamic ecosystems which are entirely influenced by the environmental conditions (for example, drought, flooding etc.). They can be separated into a number of categories, such as, rivers, ditches, fen and reedbed.

58 TRDC owns and maintains a range of wetland habitats and stretches of river across the district. However, one of the most important aspects of maintaining healthy and biodiverse wetlands environments is taking a holistic approach to their management. The flow of clean water is vital to many of these environments as pollution, soil run-off and invasive species released into water courses up stream can cause serious damage to habitats and wildlife further downstream.

59 For example, the Withy Beds is wetland site in Moor Park, adjacent to the River Colne, with a variety of habitats including: ditches, ponds, wet woodland, wet grassland and backwaters. Backwaters are ponds which are connected to the river, they provide areas of still water which act as refuge areas to fish, birds, plants and invertebrates. Much of the site floods in the winter months; however, the site functions like a wetland “sponge” which helps to manage both flood and drought conditions. The soils and ponds are able to store floodwaters and then in times of drought, the river flow can be maintained for an increased period as the stored water is slowly released.

60 The Council has for many years, sought to work in partnership with other organisations on wetland improvement projects. In the future the Council will continue look to work along river catchments and engage with a range of partners to identify improvements. The Council will also aim to increase networking between partners to share ideas, knowledge and successes.

Case Study – Partnership working

61 The Council is currently involved in a number of wetland conservation initiatives. On the River Chess at Scotsbridge the council is working with Countryside Management Service (CMS) to identify a range of in-channel improvements to diversify the aquatic habitat of the river. Further upstream at Chorleywood House Estate, plans are also being developed to create new offline pools alongside the Chess.

62 In-channel improvements seek to restore the river and return it to more natural condition; this both creates habitats and also assists with the flow of water increasing or decreasing its flow rate as appropriate.

63 The Council, working with the Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust has cleared a stretch of the River Gade of overgrown trees and litter to enable water voles to transit safely between a population at Croxley Common Moor and another at Croxley Hall Fisheries. This will promote their survival by allowing the two groups to mix.

64 As part of The Rickmansworth Aquadrome Management Plan, a range of organisations (including the Environment Agency, Affinity Water, CMS, HMWT and local anglers) have been developing ideas for habitat improvements along the River Colne.

65 The Council are engaged in the development of two Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUDs) schemes with Hertfordshire County Council. This involves the installation of green infrastructure to slow down the flow of water in periods of high rainfall and hence reduce flooding. This project will work in conjunction with TRDC's alternative grassland management regime to ensure that both wildlife and flood prevention are addressed concurrently.

66 In addition to the above the Council attend the Colne Valley Partnership and support the work of the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) to assist in the delivery of the HCCSP Water Action Plan across the county. TRDC also host a Water Partnership with stakeholders; a key objective is to support the restoration and improvement of the Chess, Gade and Colne.

Trees & Woodlands

67 At the end of the last glacial period (approx. 10,000 years ago), conditions in Britain were optimal for trees and plants to colonise, resulting in much of the land being covered by woodland. Throughout this post-glacial period, people have had a major impact on woodland as agriculture was introduced and populations increased, so much so that by 1086 the Doomsday book records that approximately only 15% of England was covered by woodland.

68 In 1919 the Forestry Commission was formed with the aim to reforest the country to protect the timber resource. Today, woodlands cover approximately 13% of the UK (3.2 million hectares) and have a number of benefits; such as a natural asset; as a tool in combatting climate change and reducing air pollution; and helping to cool urban areas.

69 The Council is a major tree and woodland owner throughout the district, from large woodlands to individual trees standing in parks or cemeteries. In 2022, the Council published a Tree Strategy which outlines the Council's responsibilities towards trees and related issues. Of the woodland owned by the Council, approximately 300 ha of this is classified as Ancient Woodland, a unique and irreplaceable habitat.

Ancient Woodland

70 Ancient Woodlands are generally classified as areas that have been continuously wooded since at least 1600 and are a unique habitat that cannot be replicated, for example Carpenters Wood, located in Chorleywood. Currently only 2.5% of the UK is covered by this valuable habitat. The communities of invertebrates, birds, mammals, plants and fungi that exist in ancient woodlands are rich, complex and slow colonisers thriving on the soil which has been undisturbed for centuries, fuelled by dead wood and other decaying material.

71 Ancient woodland sites are often separated into two broad categories: Firstly Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) that have naturally developed with little human disturbance. Historically, these sites may have been used for timber or charcoal production, proving that they are not only valuable sites for wildlife but for people and historic value also.

72 Secondly, Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) are areas that have had the native tree species of the woodland removed, often to be replaced by dense stands of non-native conifer for timber production. However, they are considered to be remnants of ancient woodland that can be restored.

73 During the first half of the 20th Century, due to war many ancient woodlands were felled and replanted to provide a stable timber resource for the future. This has negatively impacted the biodiversity due to densely planted trees resulting in continuous shade, the acidification of the soil from conifer needle drop, and damage due to felling.

74 The restoration of ancient woodland aims to improve biodiversity, enhance ecosystem resilience and increase production of vital environmental services - especially those in relation to climate change. It is a reactive and targeted management regime where identified threats to the ancient woodland are removed, creating a more complex ecosystem with greater variation. The recovery of the ecosystem can slowly be achieved with regular and continual management.

Wet Woodlands

75 Another valuable woodland habitat is wet woodland; occurring on, at least seasonally wet soils, often on floodplains, along rivers and adjacent to lakes. This habitat can be seen within the District in the woodlands at Rickmansworth Aquadrome. Willow, Alder and Birch are often the dominant tree species accompanied by a wealth of biodiversity. The high humidity allows fungi and mosses to thrive along with plants such as marsh marigold, meadowsweet, yellow flag.

76 In addition to being a valuable habitat, wet woodlands are also important for their ability to clean water, providing a buffer against pollutants and mitigating the long-term impacts of climate change as carbon is taken from the atmosphere and stored. Despite the importance of this habitat, wet woodlands face threats from urban development, poor river management, conversion to agriculture and invasive species such as Himalayan balsam.

Individual trees

77 Alongside woodland habitats, individual trees can also be of great value to wildlife. As a general rule the older a tree becomes, the more wildlife it is able to support. The oldest living trees are often referred to as being 'ancient' and may be hundreds, or even thousands of years old. Many are well known, even famous specimens of exceptional size and age.

78 Whilst the Council doesn't own any ancient trees, it does care for many veteran trees, which can be several hundred years old. Whilst not as old as ancient trees, veteran specimens can still support a wide variety of insects, fungi and protected species, such as Bats.

79 Due to their age they can sometimes present a safety risk to visitors and the general public, but the Council will seek to retain these valuable trees for as long as possible by carrying out work to remove dangerous limbs or divert visitors away from beneath the canopy.

Tree Strategy

80 The TRDC tree strategy sets out in detail how the Council approaches the management of its own trees. In relation to individual trees, the Council is implementing a risk based tree safety strategy to ensure large trees in high risk locations are in a safe condition. Major open spaces and woodlands, have detailed five-year Greenspace Action plans

created, in partnership with the Countryside Management Service (CMS) at Hertfordshire County Council which identify key features and set actions for the conservation and enhancement of habitats.

81 The recently produced Biodiversity Opportunities Audit also identifies numerous opportunities for new tree and woodland planting on the Council's smaller open spaces across the district. In the future the aim is to produce brief management plans for the Council's smaller open spaces and woods.

Case Study – Bishops Wood County Park

82 Bishops Wood is a 38.5 ha woodland of largely of ASNW and PAWS. The site is managed by the Council in partnership with CMS who produce the Greenspace Action plan for this site and many others. Aerial photography indicates that historically parts of the woodland were once more open and 'heathy' in nature, and most likely grazed by livestock. There are also many signs that traditional woodland management was practiced across the site, such as coppicing and pollarding of trees.

83 In 1970 the site was designated a SSSI for its varied woodland and wetland flora, and was the only known site in Hertfordshire for the Southern Wood Ant. However, management of the wood and loss of open habitats within the woodland altered the floristic diversity and the site was de-notified as a SSSI.

84 Since the early 2000's the Council has been undertaking work to gradually fell the conifers. This work has restored a number open areas and enabled young woodland of native trees to return in many areas.

85 Future plans include returning grazing to parts of the site to restore areas of wood pasture and thinning of the regenerating native trees. Trees will also be coppiced along the main paths through the woods to create sunny glades for butterflies and other insects.

86 In 2019 a project began to re-introduce Southern Wood Ants to Bishops Wood, which was previously the only site in Hertfordshire with a population. Listed as near-threatened on the IUCN Red List for Threatened Species, Wood Ants are a fascinating species. They are Britain's largest ant species with a complex social structure and the builders of striking above ground nests. They play a crucial role in the ecosystem, aiding tree growth by eating tree pests; have great benefits to soil communities; and are a source of food for other species including Green Woodpeckers and Badgers.

87 A population were translocated from Burnham Beeches to parts of the woodland with suitable, open sunny habitat. The protection and enhancement of the population at Bishops Wood is vital to the survival of Southern Wood Ant species and the biodiversity of the site.

The Urban Environment

88 The Climate and Biodiversity emergencies that are currently being faced world-wide have highlighted the link between people and the environment they live in, this can be seen most clearly in the urban environment (where urban relates to towns, cities, or densely populated areas).

89 Approximately 8% of land in England is classed as urban, making England one of Europe's most built up countries. However, urban areas are not purely concrete, and there are still many opportunities for nature as approximately 30% of urban areas are classified as natural land cover (golf courses, grassland, allotments etc.). Similarly, gardens are a hugely valuable resource to wildlife, creating a corridor and refuge for nature.

90 In towns and cities habitats are often degraded and fragmented, with noise, light and water pollution negatively impacting habitats and damaging wildlife. As a result, urban habitats are often lower in biodiversity than natural and semi-natural habitats in more rural areas.

91 Evidence also suggests that increasing urbanisation is increasing the risk of mis-timing between plants and pollinators, meaning that the two are not ready at the same time reducing the opportunity for pollination due to local changes in climate.

92 However, the urban environment can still support a wide variety of wildlife and there is much that can be done to increase biodiversity. Urban parks, gardens, verges and allotments not only provide habitats for wildlife, but also many other environmental benefits. These habitats are classed as natural capital which includes any natural features (grasslands, trees, rivers etc.) that provide benefit to the community.

93 There are also many species that have adapted to survive in the urban environment. Sometimes known as Urban Specialist Species (USS) they can include birds such as swifts, house martins, house sparrows and collared doves, which can be very good indicators of the health of the urban environment. These USS can also be considered as generalists with broad environmental tolerance, so are less sensitive to human disturbance and therefore can be more dominant within urban areas.

94 However, despite the wide distribution of USS, since the mid 1990's a decline in abundance of USS bird species has been observed, likely due to habitat loss, from re-developments, demolitions, renovations, and roof repairs.

95 Insects provide many ecosystem services from pollination to soil formation and natural control of pest species. Some pollinating insects may be benefitting from the urban environment due to a high number and range of plants in gardens, window boxes and parks. Recent studies suggest that urban sites can hold a greater diversity of bee species when compared to local agricultural land.

96 However, the impact of urbanisation is likely to differ between regions and local climates; generally, good quality urban habitats will be able to support strong populations of pollinating insect as well as other biodiversity.

97 There are a range of ways for schools, businesses and residents to contribute to urban biodiversity. With approximately 24 million gardens in the UK, there are plenty of opportunities for wildlife to co-exist within the urban landscape: be it, by installation of a bird or bat nesting box, leaving a pile of logs in the shade, providing wildlife with a water source year round with a bird bath and much more.

98 The Council has produced a guide for residents to making wildlife and environment improvements at home "A guide to Greening your Home", which can be viewed at: www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/a-guide-to-greening-your-home

99 The majority of the Council's public open space is within or on the edge of urban areas. These spaces provide a vital link for many residents and local community to the natural world and are highly valued for quiet recreational use. Many people also like to get actively involved in their local open space, and there are a number of 'Friends of' groups in district. These groups of volunteers, supported by the Council and CMS, undertake a range of practical tasks to help care for wildlife and the environment.

100 In addition, the Council has recently appointed a Community Biodiversity Officer to facilitate and lead activities and events across the district, to enable people to find out more about their local wildlife.

Case Study – The Biodiversity Opportunities Audit

101 Following the climate emergency declared in 2019, the need for public green space to offer more to wildlife has become increasingly clear especially in the context of climate change and species loss. In response, Three Rivers commissioned a Biodiversity Opportunities Audit (BOA), undertaken by CMS of its smaller open spaces that don't currently have detailed management plans for biodiversity.

102 The aim was to identify opportunities to improve biodiversity on sites across the District while taking into account the recreational value of an area to the local community. The audit also provides opportunities for carbon sequestration, the process of capturing and storing carbon dioxide which is a contributor to global warming as a greenhouse gas.

103 The Council began implementation of the BOA in 2022 with a focus on managing grasslands for wildlife. Over winter 2022/23, the Council is planting over 50 standard trees on sites identified in the audit and spring flowering wildflower bulbs are also being planted across the district as an early source of nectar for insects.

104 More information on the BOA can be viewed on the Council's website, and feedback submitted at: https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/grassland-management

The Countryside

105 The term countryside or rural area generally describes open, often agricultural or farmland with few houses or other buildings and far less densely populated than in urban areas. Hertfordshire County Council estimate that around half of the County is classed as agricultural land, which is reflected in the amount of farmland in Three Rivers district.

106 Agricultural land is classified into several categories (Agricultural Land Classification – ALC), where class one is the highest quality and class 5 is the poorest quality land, other land is then classed as "non-agricultural" or "urban".

107 In Three Rivers, the majority of agricultural land falls into class 3- of good to moderate quality, with smaller areas of class 2 (very good quality) and class 4 (poor quality). A total of 60% of land in the Three Rivers District falls into either class, 2, 3 or 4 for agricultural land, with the remaining 40% constituting non-agricultural and/or urban land.

108 Farmland wildlife relies on a network of habitats with plenty of connectivity including: grassland, orchards, arable fields, hedgerows, and ponds. Since the Second World War, modern intensive farming has led to substantial declines in farmland wildlife. The use of pesticides and chemical fertilisers have led to changes in the fertility, structure and acidity of the soil; pollution of groundwater; and nutrification of land and waterways.

109 However, ecological restoration of farmland and sustainable agricultural practices which benefit not only biodiversity but also the sustainability, and potentially productivity of the farm, are now widespread. Some generic ecological restoration solutions include: reducing the use of pesticides and fertilisers or substituting them for more sensitive products; increasing the size of patches of habitats and the connectivity between them; diversifying the species of crops; staggering the timing of maintenance works and removal of invasive species that may be outcompeting native wildlife.

110 Organic farming and restorative agricultural techniques, which do not add excessive nutrients into the process and help reduce biodiversity loss; often make farms richer with wildlife than conventionally farmed land. In Three rivers, at Wood Oaks farm in Maple Cross, the Soil Association demonstrates sustainable farming practices across their 300 acres to produce food, whilst protecting wildlife. They also welcome and engage local people in find out about environmentally sustainable food protection.

111 The majority of land in the countryside is farmed, and is privately owned. The Council has for many years worked in partnership with Countryside Management Service (CMS) part of Hertfordshire County Council, who advise farmers on environmentally sensitive farming and assist them in joining agri-environment schemes. These schemes provide farmers and land managers with support and funding to farm in ways that enhance biodiversity, the landscapes and improves the quality of soil, water and air.

Hedgerows

112 Hedgerows are considered to be the most widespread semi-natural habitat in the UK, providing food and shelter to wildlife as well as ecosystem services, such as carbon capture, reducing flooding, cleaning air. They also have significant heritage value; as up to 40% of UK hedges are considered ancient.

113 It is believed that hedges have been used as boundaries since the bronze age some of which will still be in existence and will be classed now as ancient hedges. Due to the continuity of the habitat, variety of species present and undisturbed soil, ancient hedges are of immense value to wildlife. Therefore, ancient hedges- like ancient woodlands- are irreplaceable both in terms of habitat value and heritage.

114 In rural areas hedgerows often contain a wide variety of shrub species such as Hawthorn, Hazel, Field Maple and Blackthorn, and larger tree species such as Ash, Oak and Hornbeam. In urban areas single species hedges of Yew, Privet, Box and Holly are more common, but still provide a valuable resource for wildlife and the environment.

115 Since the 1950's, at least 118,000 miles of hedgerow have been lost, mostly due to agricultural intensification; however, hedgerows face other threats including disease. In the past English Elm would have been a major hedgerow tree species, but Dutch Elm disease has severely reduced the number of these. It is particularly unfortunate that Elm has in many cases has been replaced by Ash which now faces the threat from Ash Dieback.

116 Adequate management is key to the health and value of hedges to wildlife and the wider landscape. Traditionally, hedges would have been laid every 10 - 15 years to maintain dense stock proof barriers that were also of great benefit to wildlife. In recent years the mechanical flailing of hedges on an annual basis has become widespread; however, this severely reduces the number of flowers the following spring, and can damage hedges over the long term.

117 Today, hedges are often cut after the harvest in late summer or early autumn; however, this decimates the winter food sources that overwintering birds need. Therefore, much later cutting is encouraged in February or March and for the frequency of these cuts to be reduced from every year to every 3 years.

Case Study – Chorleywood House Estate

118 Chorleywood House Estate Local Nature Reserve was purchased by the local authority in 1940, and has a rich history prior to becoming a public open space. The site is managed following a 5-year Greenspace Action Plan created in partnership with CMS. The House and Estate were largely shaped in the 19th Century as the land formally occupied two separate farms. Lady Ela Russell developed the Estate to be as self-sufficient as possible. The site occupies 65ha of countryside within the Chilterns Area

of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the management of this site aims to conserve its history and maintain the traditional management techniques.

119 Grasslands which are managed by sensitive grazing support a wealth of biodiversity; especially native plants. Grazing enhances the diversity of wildflowers which results in a varied grass sward, of different heights and structure. In turn, the habitat is able to support a greater diversity of species from invertebrates to mammals, birds and even reptiles. Traditionally, it is likely that the entire site would have been grazed in compartments; and today the management plan aims to reflect this as several sections of the site are grazed in a conservation regime during the summer months.

120 Another remnant of its agricultural past is in the hedgerows of Chorleywood House Estate. Hedgerows across the site form a network connecting habitats and facilitating wildlife corridors. Some of the hedges have previously been layed, a traditional management technique which encourages new growth of the hedge, providing a stock proof barrier, dense cover for wildlife, and a source of food and nectar.

121 Since the Second World War the condition of hedges in the countryside have declined as fences were favoured and traditional management declined. Effective management of hedgerows, by hedgelaying, is important for preserving the countryside environment, providing wildlife corridors between habitats and the wider landscape while forming a strong, sheltering boundary.

122 Orchards are another valuable farmland habitat, and in addition to being an important source of food, have been part of the landscape since the Roman times. In traditional orchards, trees were widely spaced and the grassland managed by grazing. The Community Orchard at Chorleywood House Estate was created in 2008 and has 140 fruit trees, many of which are local varieties and contributes to the mosaic of habitats across the site, echoing earlier uses of the Estate; including market gardening.

Action Plan

No.	Section	Action	Resource:	Timescale:
1	Three Rivers Biodiversity	Develop and improve the habitat mapping of TRDC land to aid management of open space for biodiversity using the Biodiversity Baseline, surveys and investigations.	Existing Staff resource	March 2024
2	Three Rivers Biodiversity	Supply Grounds Maintenance with a basic wildflower and grass seed mix for the reinstatement of grassed areas following works, or other ground disturbance.	Existing Staff resource	March 2023
3	Legislation	Support and engage with the development of the Environment Act's Local Nature Recovery Strategy and implementation of Biodiversity Net Gain on TRDC owned land where applicable.	Existing Staff resource	On-going
4	Wetlands	Continue to develop Chalk Stream Recovery projects on TRDC open space (e.g. Chorleywood House Estate, Scotsbridge, The Aquadrome).	Potential additional funding required	On-going
5	Wetlands	Undertake a hydrological study and options appraisal of Rickmansworth Aquadrome LNR a flood plain, and deliver the recommendations.	Additional funding required	March 2024
6	Wetlands	Implement natural flood management (NFM) opportunities throughout Oxhey Woods.	Additional funding required	March 2025
7	Wetlands	Investigate de-culverting and naturalising the water courses through South Oxhey Playing Fields.	Additional funding required	March 2025
8	Wetlands	Continue to develop partnerships with a range of local organisations., including: Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust, Colne Can or Colne Valley Regional Park.	Existing Staff resource	On-going
9	Woodlands	Develop detailed plans for conservation grazing at Bishops Wood Country Park.	Existing Staff resource	March 2025
10	Woodlands	Implement Forestry Commission woodland management plans for major woodlands.	Additional funding required	March 2025
11	Countryside	Assess the condition of TRDC owned hedgerows and review their management and whether restoration works may be desirable, such as hedgelaying, coppicing and replanting.	Additional funding required	March 2024

12	Countryside	At Chorleywood House Estate investigate the potential of creating an area to represent the historic farming of the site with introduction of cornfield wildflower species and cereals in a small pilot area.	Existing Staff resource	March 2024
13	Countryside	Continue to support CMS to undertake farm advisory and woodland creation visits to support landowner in the district to take advantage of Agri-environmental schemes.	Existing Staff resource	On-going
14	Urban	Deliver the recommendations of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit	Existing Staff resource	As opportunities arise, or by March 2033 at the latest
15	Urban	Investigate opportunities to support urban specialist species on TRDC buildings, including installation of swift nesting boxes, bat boxes and other nesting and roosting opportunities.	Existing Staff resource	On-going
16	Urban	Investigate opportunities to use wildflower mixes to benefit pollinating insects within urban settings (e.g. flower beds, planters, around the base of newly planted trees).	Existing Staff resource	March 2028
17	Urban	Develop knowledge of biodiversity in the urban areas of the District by surveying and use of citizen science (e.g. Butterfly transects, RSPB bird surveys, ancient tree hunt).	Existing Staff resource	March 2028
18	Urban	Create Biodiversity themed educational material to be distributed to the local community and schools via the Council's website and social media.	Existing Staff resource	March 2025
19	Urban	Continue to support local conservation volunteering groups throughout the District; including the Hertfordshire County Council volunteer group operated by CMS	Existing Staff resource	On-going


THREE RIVERS
DISTRICT COUNCIL

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TRDC Climate and Sustainability Impact Assesment

Score / Colour Code	Impact and Recommendation
Dark green (4)	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.
Light green (3)	Some positive impact for sustainability. Recommendation to further enhance this aspect where possible and proceed.
Yellow (2)	Some possible negative impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to review these aspects and find mitigations where possible.
Red (1)	**Considerable inconsistency with the council's sustainability objectives. Strong recommendation to review these aspects and find mitigations.**
Grey (0)	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.

Guidance for use
Please answer all questions from the drop-down options in the 'impact' column (C), including 'not applicable' as needed.

Please email your completed copy of the form to Joanna.Hewitson@threerivers.gov.uk.

Key to the colour coding of answers is given at the top of the page.

Name of project/policy/procurement and date		Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy
Brief description (1-2 sentences):		The Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy specifically addresses the Council's approach to protection of the natural world within the District. At the heart of the strategy is a 5-year Action Plan, which identifies and prioritises actions to be undertaken for the benefit of Biodiversity.

Homes, buildings, infrastructure, equipment and energy

	Question	Impact (select from list)	Score (-1 to 4)	Justification or mitigation	Impact (select from list)	Revised Score (1-4)
1	**What effect will this project have on overall energy use (electricity or other fuels) e.g. in buildings, appliances or machinery?**	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this	0
2	**What effect will this project have on the direct use of fossil fuels such as gas, petrol, diesel, oil?**	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this	0
3	**Does this project further maximise the use of existing building space? *E.g. co-locating services; bringing under-used space into use; using buildings out-of-hours***	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this	0
4	**Will any new building constructed or refurbished be highly energy efficient in use? *(e.g. high levels of insulation, low energy demand per sq. m., no servicing with fossil fuels such as gas heating, EPC***	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this	0
5	**Does this make use of sustainable materials / unputs in your project? *E.g. re-used or recycled construction materials; timber in place of concrete***	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this	0
6	**Does this use more sustainable processes in the creation of the project? *E.g. modular and off-site construction; use of electrical plant instead of petrol/diesel,***	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0
7	**Will this increase the supply of renewable energy? e.g. *installing solar panels; switching to a renewable energy tariff***	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this	0
8	**Do any appliances or electrical equipment to be used have high energy efficiency ratings?**	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this	0
	Average Score		**0.00**			**0.00**

Ways to optimise sustainability and work towards net zero carbon:

- Insulate buildings to a high standard.
- Include energy efficiency measures when carrying out refurbishment to deliver improvement in EPC ratings.
- Replace gas boilers with renewable heating, such as heat pumps. Consider District Heat Networks where appropriate.
- Construct new buildings to Passivhaus standard.
- Design and deliver buildings and infrastructure with lower-carbon materials, such as recycled material and timber frames.
- Use construction methods that reduce overall energy use, such as modular, factory-built components, or use of electrical plant on-site.
- Install solar panels or other renewable energy generation, and consider including battery storage.
- Switch to a certified renewable energy provider e.g. utilise power purchase agreements (PPA)
- Use energy-efficient appliances.
- Install low-energy LED lighting.
- Install measures to help manage building energy demand, such as smart meters, timers on lighting, or building management systems.

Travel

	Question	Impact	Score (0-4)	Justification or mitigation	Impact (select from list)	Revised Score (0-4)
9	Reducing travel: what effect will this project have on overall vehicle use?	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0
10	Will this project use petrol or diesel vehicles or EV, hybrid?	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0
11	Will this support people to use active or low-carbon transport? *E.g. cycling, walking, switching to electric transport*	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0
12	Will it be easily accessible for all by foot, bike, or public transport, including for disabled people?	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0
13	Has the project taken steps to reduce traffic? *Using e-cargo bikes; timing activities or deliveries to be outside peak congestion times*	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0
	Average Score		**0.00**			**0.00**

Ways to optimise sustainability and work towards net zero carbon:

- Reduce the need to travel e.g. through remote meetings, or rationalising routes and rounds.
- Share vehicles or substitute different modes of travel, rather than procuring new fleet.
- Specify electric, hybrid, or most fuel efficient vehicles for new fleet or for services involving transport.
- Support users and staff to walk, cycle, or use public transport e.g. with cycle parking, training, incentives.
- Use zero-emission deliveries
- Model and mitigate the project's effect on traffic and congestion e.g. retiming the service or deliveries

Goods and Consumption

	Question	Impact	Score (0-4)	Justification or mitigation	Impact (select from list)	Revised Score (0-4)

Ways to optimise sustainability and work towards net zero carbon:

14	Has this project considered ways to reuse existing goods and materials to the greatest extent possible, before acquiring newly manufactured ones?	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this	0
15	Does it reduce reliance on buying newly manufactured goods? *E.g. repair and re-use; sharing and lending goods between services or people; leasing or product-as-a-service rather than ownership*	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0
16	Does it use products and resources that are re-used, recycled, or renewable?	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this	0
17	Does it enable others to make sustainable choices within their lifestyles, or engage people about this?	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this	0
18	Is there a plan to reduce waste sent to landfill in manufacture?	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this	0
19	Is the material used able to be re-used, re-purposed, or recyled at end of its life?	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this	0
20	Has it taken steps to ensure any food it offers is more sustainable? *E.g. less and high-quality (high welfare) meat and dairy; minimises food waste; seasonal produce; locally sourced.*	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this	0
	Average Score		**0.00**			**0.00**

- Procure goods through sharing, leasing, or product-as-a-service models rather than ownership.
- Use pre-owned and reconditioned goods, and reduce reliance on procuring new goods.
- Use recycled materials, and procure items that can be reconditioned or recycled at end-of-life.
- Use lifecycle costing in business cases to capture the full cost of operation, repair and disposal of an item.
- Ensure meat and dairy is high-quality, high-welfare.
- Design waste, including food waste, out of business models e.g. separating (and composting) food waste; replacing single-use items with reusable items.
- Use contact points with residents, community groups and businesses to engage and enable them to adopt low-waste, low-carbon behaviours.

Ecology

	Question	Impact	Score (0-4)	Justification or mitigation	Impact (select from list)	Revised Score (0-4)
21	What effect does this project have on total area of non-amenity green/blue space? (Amenity green space = playing fields, play areas, sporting lakes etc. Non-amenity= e.g. woodland, grassland, wetland, gardens, lakes, rivers, ponds etc.)	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4	The strategy aims to address the Council's approach to protection of the natural world, influence how it is managed, enhance and protect it.	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4
22	Does the project create more habitat for nature? E.g. native plants, trees, and flowers	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4	The strategy aims to address the Council's approach to protection of the natural world, influence how it is managed, enhance and protect it.	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4
23	Does it make changes to existing habitats and have a negative impact on nature? *E.g. use of pesticides, reduced extent and variety of plants, planting non-native species*	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4	The strategy aims to address the Council's approach to protection of the natural world, influence how it is managed, enhance and protect it.	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4
24	Does it help people understand the value of biodiversity, and encourage residents to support it in their private and community spaces?	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4	Within the strategy the value of partnership working, engagement and involvement with the community are all important factors along with education.	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4
	Average Score		**4**			**4**

Ways to optimise sustainability and work towards net zero carbon:
(Seek advice from Landscapes Team if required)

- Avoid converting green space to hard surfacing.
- Use underutilised space for planting, such as green roofs and walls.
- Plant native plants and perennials, rather than non-native ornamental species, to encourage biodiversity.
- Reduce trimming of grass and hedges, and avoid use of synthetic pesticides.
- Provide space for animals e.g. long grass areas, bird boxes, bat boxes, 'insect hotels', ponds, hedgehog hides and passages, log piles
- Consider the ecological impacts from manufacture and use of procured goods, e.g. water pollution; water consumption; land use change for farming; pesticide use; organic/regenerative farming methods

Adaptation

	Question	Impact	Score (0-4)	Justification or mitigation	Impact (select from list)	Revised Score (0-4)
25	Does any planned project, construction or building use include measures to conserve water?	Some positive impact for sustainability. Recommendation to further enhance this aspect where possible and proceed.	3	Mitigating the use of water by planting at the right time, planting the right species and use of hydration bags where neccessay	Some positive impact for sustainability. Recommendation to further enhance this aspect where	3
26	Does anythe project , consider how to sustainably protect people from extreme weather?	Some positive impact for sustainability. Recommendation to further enhance this aspect where possible and proceed.	3	Hedge restoration, tree planting all positive for flood prevention and shade provision, along with potential for more sustainable drainage solutions.	Some positive impact for sustainability. Recommendation to further enhance this aspect where	3
27	Has any planned building work or infrastructure considered how to mitigate flood risk? *E.g. Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS); de-paving areas; green roofs*	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4	Hedge restoration, tree planting all positive for flood prevention and shade provision	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4
28	Does any planned infrastructure or building work increase the overall footprint of hard surfacing? (as opposed to green or permeable surfacing)	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	N/A	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this	0
29	Has the project considered its own resilience to future extreme heat, flood risk, or water shortage?	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4	right plant, right place, fire risk planning,and planting at the right time will all be done to prevent plant death through exteme	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4
	Average Score		**3.7**			**3.50**

Ways to optimise sustainability and work towards net zero carbon:
- Install water-saving devices in taps, showers and toilets
- Re-use grey water in new developments
-Capture and re-use rainwater where possible e.g. water butts for use in car washing, watering garden, toilets
- Ensure all new building or refurbishment (especially of homes) models and mitigates future overheating risk, with adequate ventilation and shading
- Avoid increasing areas of hard surfacing.
- Convert hard surfacing to green and permeable surfacing where possible, and install Sustainable Drainage systems (SUDS).
- Plant drought-tolerant plants and mulch landscapes to avoid water loss through evaporation.

Engagement and Influence

	Question	Impact	Score (0-4)	Justification or mitigation	Impact (select from list)	Revised Score (0-4)
30	Does this project raise awareness and understanding of the climate and ecological emergency, and the steps that people can take?	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4	Potential for increased partnership working, environmental themed events and increased educational messaging via social media etc.	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4
	Average Score		**4**			**4**
	Total Overall Average Score		**1.94**			**1.9**

Ways to optimise sustainability and work towards net zero carbon:
- 'Make every contact count', by using contact points with residents, businesses and community groups to promote understanding of the climate emergency.

Now assesment is compelete copy and paste box into your business case, committee report. (under environmental implications 6).Whole assesment can be an appendix. Procurement tenders are expected to submit complete report with application.

Climate and Sustainability Impact Assesment Summary

Homes, buildings, infrastructure, equipment and energy	N/A
Travel	N/A
Goods and Consumption	N/A
Ecology	4.00
Adaptation	3.50
Engagement and Influence	4
Total Overall Average Score	**3.8**

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LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE - 15 MARCH 2023

PART I - DELEGATED

10. BIODIVERSITY OPPORTUNITIES AUDIT, ALTERNATIVE GRASSLAND MANAGEMENT AND TREE STRATEGY UPDATE

(DCES)

1 Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit (BOA), the Alternative Grassland Management (AGM) initiative adopted in March 2022, and the Tree Strategy adopted in January 2022 and to make recommendations for future years.

2 Background and Context

2.1 The BOA identifies and quantifies opportunities for ecological gain in the District's minor open spaces, which historically have had only a basic level of maintenance. The report set out opportunities that could be implemented on these minor open spaces to improve biodiversity and enhance habitats, whilst balancing the needs of formal and informal recreation uses. Major open spaces (e.g. Leavesden County Park, The Aquadrome & Oxhey Woods) were not included in the BOA as they already have detailed management plans in place.

2.2 The AGM initiative was established to supplement the findings of the BOA to address a Council motion that was unanimously passed at the Leisure Environment and Community in November 2021, which stated "…*This motion will aim to decrease grass cutting by up to 50% of TRDC owned land and achieve concurrent gains in biodiversity*…"

2.3 The final version of the Three Rivers Tree Strategy was approved by Policy and Resources in December 2021 and Leisure, Environment and Community Committee in January 2022.

2.4 The strategy contains an Action Plan of key tasks for Community Services to achieve over the 5 year period 2022-2027, subject, in some cases, to the necessary resources being available.

2.5 The BOA, AGM and Tree Strategy also aim to help deliver the Council's Climate Change Emergency and Sustainability Strategy, and meet its commitment to be carbon neutral following the Council's declaration of a Climate Emergency in 2019.

3 Update on the BOA Action Plan

3.1 The BOA included an Action Plan for the delivery of improvements identified. Year 1 of the Action Plan and the progress so far are as follows:

Habitat Management	**Year 1 Tasks** (2022-2023)	**Progress**

Grassland Management	To implement a Hay Meadow Cut, Conservation Cut, Enhanced amenity cutting and Ride management throughout the district.	Year one grassland management for sites identified in the BOA & AGM has been completed.
Grassland Enhancements	Mark out Rewilding areas. Plan and conduct spring wildflower planting on selected sites	Following assessment of the areas and fire risk, officers are proposing to amend the locations for implementation next year. Spring wildflower planting took place in the Autumn at two sites: Cassiobridge Play Area and Hayling Road verges.
Woodland & Trees	Planting of 53 standard trees throughout the district	Standard tree planting took place in January in locations identified in the BOA. (Appendix A)

4 Update on the AGM initiative progress

4.1 As agreed in the March 2022 Committees: in various areas throughout the District, the grass cutting regimes were modified and / or reduced for the benefit of biodiversity.

4.2 This AGM has commenced across the District, and has included:

- Marking out, both on the ground and on maps, areas of longer grass to be left uncut, and then managed as hay meadow, ride management or conservation cut. As well as marking out areas to be left to rewild.
- Paths were cut through areas of longer grass to maintain access to sites.
- The Grounds team began the Enhanced Amenity cutting of relevant sites, including TRDC owned roadside verges.
- Cattle arrived at the Horses' field as part of a new conservation grazing regime. Existing site that already have areas of grazing, include Chorleywood House Estate, Croxley Common Moor and the Withy Beds.
- The first hay cut was completed in August by a contractor, who collected and disposed of the grass.

4.3 The BOA and AGM collectively aimed to achieve an increase in the percentage of grassland managed for biodiviersity, as follows:

Grassland management type	Description	2022

		All grass* - *estimated* %	**Available grass** – *estimated* %**	**All grass* - *actual* %**	**Available grass** – *actual* %**
Cut & Lift (Hay Meadow & Conservation Cut)	Cut once or twice per year	22	25	25	28
Reduced cut	Cut on rotation	3	3	3	4
Uncut	Rewilded	6	7	6	7
Conservation grazing	Light grazing for biodiversity benefit	27	31	27	31
Enhanced Amenity Grass	Reduced frequency / increased height of cutting	10	11	11	12
General Amenity Grass	Cut regularly for general recreation	20	23	16	18
Permanent Amenity Grass	Sports pitches / event grounds / open cemeteries	12	N/A	12	N/A

* Includes areas of permanent amenity grass for sports provision, events, open cemeteries, etc.

**excludes areas of permanent grass for sports pitches events, open cemeteries, etc.

4.4 To note, the AGM initiative is applied to grassland TRDC are responsible for managing and maintaining - this has been termed Available Grass as it excludes areas of permanent amenity grass for sports pitches, play areas, events, open cemeteries, etc. 88% of TRDC grassland is deemed “available grass”. Available grass areas are then managed with the benefit of biodiversity balanced with the requirement for recreation/leisure.

4.5 The expected percentages outlined in the table at 4.3 have been broadly met this year, there was a slight reduction in the area of cut and lift at Chorleywood Road Cemetery due to the impracticality of lifting grass.

4.6 However, a larger area of South Oxhey Playing Field was cut and lifted than oringianlly planned, as agreed with the Lead Members and local ward Councillors. It was later observed that there was significantly less grass growth than was anticipated, highlighting the year to year varience in grass growth. Overall the area of cut and lift grass was higher in 2022 than estimated.

4.7 Further details on the first year of the alternative grassland management initiative are detailed from point 4.15 onwards.

Update on the Tree Strategy Action Plan

4.8 The table detailed at Appendix G reports on the progress made against the agreed actions within the Tree Strategy.

4.9 A number of actions remain “On hold”. In short, this has arisen due to emerging and changing priorities, in particular implementation of the BOA, and the delivery of tree planting for the Queens Green Canopy, which have significantly increased the workload within the Trees and Landscapes team.

4.10 In addition, Oak Processionary Moth and Ash Dieback are causing an increase in workload across the district and this will be a focus for Officers in the next few years.

4.11 However, a number of actions have been achieved, including the recruitment to the post of Community Biodiversity Officer; implementation of the action plan to deliver the recommendations of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit, including tree planting; and creating a public portal for residents to be able to access Tree Preservation Order (TPO) information online.

4.12 In addition, the Queen’s Green Canopy scheme was successfully delivered during the 2021/22 tree planting season, with 3 trees planted in each main population centre within the district along with a commemorative plaque, which equated to a total of 24 trees, including English Oak, Walnut, Wild Cherry and Sergeants Cherry.

4.13 During the end of November and early December, two new areas of woodland were created as part of the QGC at The Horses’ Field, Leavesden Country Park and Denham Way Playing Fields, Maple Cross. These were community events and resulted in the planting of approximately 800 whips.

4.14 During the planting season, November 2022 to March 2023, approximately 975 new trees/whips have been planted on TRDC land. The Council has also advised on and supported the planting of 600 whips at West Herts Cremetorium, on the district boundary at Bedmond.

Discussion – Alternative Grassland Management

Highlights

4.15 In this initial year of widespread changes to grassland management in the district, officers visited the vast majority of sites during the growing season, in particular those that had areas of long grass for the first time. All sites had some diversity of wildflowers, although most were dominated by a range of grass species. Though many sites showed some signs of agricultutral improvement, most still retain much of the character of more traditional grasslands.

4.16 No systematic botantical recording was undertaken, however initial assessment would suggest that National Vegetation Classification (NVC) would place many sites within MG6 (a dry neutral grassland type). These grasslands are described by NVC as being typical of ‘recreational sites such as village greens, road verge and lawns’, although further work would be required to confirm these intial assessments.

4.17 Highlights included Fortune Common and Romily Drive, both of which had good numbers and diversity of wildflowers, and Leavedsen Country Park where there was another good show of Pyramidal Orchid (Appendix E). In addition, at Fortune Common, Cuckoo flower and Marsh Foxtail were recorded, both plants typical of older damp meadows.

4.18 During the growing season officers also identified opportunities to extend the areas of hay cutting on some sites next year, in particular at Scotsbridge, South Oxhey Playing Fields, and Romilly Drive. Production of a new management plan for

Chorleywood House Estate will also consider opportunities to extend areas of long grass on the site (Appendix C outline proposals).

4.19 In autmn, spring flowering wildflowers were planted on road verges on Hayling Road, South Oxhey, to become a welcome burst of colour in the Spring. In addition, a community planting event took place in the October half term holiday at Cassiobridge Play Area in Croxley Green.

Weather

4.20 There was a dry start to the growing season this year, and by May and June many of the BOA & AGM sites were full of colour. However, as the dry weather progressed it became the hottest, and one of the driest summers on record. As a result, grass growth was substantially lower than previous years and by mid-July many sites were very dry.

4.21 Although longer grass can create cooler microclimates within grassland, and help to reduce moisture loss by shading bare soil, the extreme heat and lack of rain substantially increased the risk of wildfires. A number of sites were affected by grass fires in July and August, as a result the decision was taken to cut firebreaks in locations with long grass, close to residential property (e.g. The Horses' Field).

4.22 Due to the fire risk an amendment was made to the hay cut specification, in that the hay (arisings) was immediately collected, rather than being left on site for a few days to enable insects to escape and seeds to drop to the ground. However, the cutting that took place in the latter part of August, allowed many insects to complete their lifecycle and for seeds to ripen and fall to the ground.

4.23 Due to the fire risk and the challenges in procuring cut and lift services, undertaking the cut and lift earlier in the season may be the solution. This would also avoid the harvest season when farmers are understandably busy, but this may be subject to weather conditions if sites are too wet to access without causing ground damage.

4.24 On the whole, despite the weather, the trees planted during the recent tree planting season are growing well. Out of the trees planted, only 2 did not survive. One due to vandalism and one likely due to poor quality stock.

Procurement

4.25 Procurement of a contractor to undertake the first hay cut and lift commenced in early June with Officers seeking quotes from a number of contractors in the area. However, this was a challenge for a number of reasons:

- Contractors with suitable machinery tend to be farmers, who are often busy during the harvest period from mid July onwards.
- Farmers may not always be able to quickly meet the health and safety requirements for contractors working on public open space (such as suitably trained operatives and necessary insurance).
- The current interest in grassland management initiatives and demand for cut and lift services appears to have increased in recent years, resulting in a lack of capacity in local contractors.

As a result, the hay cut was delayed, with work taking place in mid-August, slightly beyond the agreed timeframe of between late June and early August.

4.26 Despite these challenges local farmers proved to be the solution this year, with the nescessary large machinery able to efficiently complete the cut, carried out by trained and experienced operatives.

4.27 In future years, awarding a multi-year contract for hay cutting services may make it easier to secure a contractor to carry out the work at the right time.

4.28 Grounds Maintenance were due to undertake some of the cut and lift of smaller areas, however, despite being ordered in March (following approval from the March Policy and Resources Committee), there was a significant delay to the delivery of a new cut & lift machine from the manufacturer.

4.29 This is not a situation unique to Three Rivers and was highlighted as an issue in the March LEC and P&R report. Due to the delay it was not possible to cut and lift smaller sites in 2022. The new machinery ordered has now been received by the Grounds Maintenance team.

Grass disposal

4.30 As part of the process to increase the area of cut and lift in the district, officers have been investigating means of disposing of large volumes of hay and / or cut grass. In most situations, due to litter, Ragwort and dog mess, the cut hay is not of sufficient quality to be fed to livestock. Also because of the large volumes of grass and resulting fire risk, it was not felt appropriate to attempt to compost the grass on-site.

4.31 The alternative includes composting off-site, but this is complicated by the transportation of grass to green waste facilities. It is generally more cost-effective to move hay as bales, however green waste sites will not accept baled grass as it is too tightly compressed to compost efficiently. As a result the baled grass would have to be disposed of in landfill, at an additional cost.

4.32 One of the major benefits to the use of contractors for the large scale cut and lift has been the disposal of the grass sustainably. Farming contractors who undertook the work this year were able compost the grass on their farm, before spreading it on arable fields as a soil improver, with any better quality hay fed to livestock.

4.33 For this reason, and the anticipated cost of purchasing, storing and servicing large scale hay cutting machinery, officers recommend continuing to use contractors to complete the large scale hay cutting for the period of the BOA, with a review at the end of this period.

Site Access

4.34 The hay cut, conducted by contractors was completed efficiently, largely due to the large-size of machinery used. However, one drawback to the use of large machinery was issues with access to some sites, due to the width and angle of gates.

4.35 In some situations the access to sites is purposely narrow to prevent unauthorised access, but as a result this restricts the size of machinery that can be used. Officers will be reviewing access to some sites and looking for means of improving access for larger machinery, whilst ensuring sites remain secure.

Public perception

4.36 Information on the initiative has been provided on the Council's website and feedback received has been logged by officers throughout the season. Consultation is ongoing with residents, the local community and councillors. A social media campaign is also

currently being used to encourage people to share their views and opinions on the changes and suggest amendments or additional opportunities. The website can be accessed at: https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/grassland-management

4.37 In total 65 members of the public have submitted comments on the Alternative Grassland Management initiative, of which 10 responded via the survey. In addition 55 comments were received during the grass cutting period. The consultation report is detailed at Appendix F.

4.38 A summary of positive comments includes:

- Particularly at the beginning of the season, there were a number of positive comments, complementing the wildflowers and the Council's management of grassland for biodiversity.

- The comments appreciated the benefit the initiatve has had to biodiversity and requested that more land is incorpoated with an emphasis on "fostering wildflowers, especially the less competitive ones", which prior to the initiative would not have had the opportunity to flower.

4.39 A summary of negative comments includes:

- The negative comments were mainly around the following topics: grasslands appearing untidy and overgrown, which inturn were leading to increased antisocial behaviour in the form of littering and not picking up dog poo. Health and safety concerns were raised in relation to dog health and potential road incidents along with confusion over land ownership.

- As the season progressed, there were a number of negative comments (11 in total) in relation to the hot, dry weather as people began to worry about the risk of fires.

- Some respondents expressed displeasure at the timing of cutting; for example when the HCC section of Tudor Way was cut early in the season, highlighting that last year it was "packed with wild flowers."

4.40 These comments have been considered as part of the recommendations for the 2023 grass cutting season.

Ash Dieback (ADB) and Oak Processionary Moth (OPM)

4.41 OPM is a moth species specific to Oak trees (*Quercus sp*.) thought to have been imported into Britain via infected trees from mainland Europe where it is native. Whilst in some years large infestations can substantially defoliate trees, the moth is primarily an issue for human health.

4.42 Fine hairs produced by the moth caterpillars as a defence mechanism for their nests can be a serious irritant to human skin and respiratory system, although it is unlikely to result in serious illness in most cases. Animals, in particular people's pets, may also suffer from contact with the hairs.

4.43 OPM is currently a notifiable pest, meaning that landowners are required to report sightings to the Forestry Commission (FC). The FC are currently conducting surveillance of OPM across the region. When detected, the FC will normally issue a plant health notice to a tree owner, which requires them to undertake control of the infestation.

4.44 It is anticipated that OPM will become more widespread, due to warmer and dryer summers resulting from Climate Change. In the future it is possible that control of OPM will be managed via a risk-based strategy, with control limited to areas of highest public use.

4.45 OPM is frequently identified by tree officers and tree surgeons when carrying out their work – a substantial number of cases were also identified during the Council's recent tree safety inspection.

4.46 On a number of occasions works to Oak trees have been significantly delayed by the need to treat OPM infestations, which have in several cases doubled the cost of undertaking works to infected trees.

4.47 Trees and Landscapes currently have an annual budget of £17,000 to deal with OPM. Currently this budget is sufficient to deal with OPM and any variances will be reported through budget monitoring.

4.48 In addition to OPM, site visits and tree inspections by officers in recent months have revealed an increasing number of Ash trees in declining health with Ash Dieback, in particular at Chorleywood House Estate, Oxhey Woods, Batchworth Heath and Carpenters Wood.

4.49 ADB (Ash Die Back) is caused by an airborne fungus, and affects a range of Ash species (*Fraxinus sp*.). But notably Common Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) our native species, which is widespread across Three Rivers district.

4.50 The disease has a high mortality rate (60-70%) rapidly killing saplings and young Ash trees. In mature specimens, it may re-infect trees in successive years, leading to a gradual decline in health. Eventually trees may succumb to ADB; become infected by other tree pathogens, and/or reach an unsafe condition and have to be felled.

4.51 Current advice on management of ADB recommends a risk-based approach, only felling trees where their condition poses a safety risk. This approach is also designed to avoid pre-emptive felling which may lead to the removal of Ash trees that may recover from the disease; be unaffected by it; or provide significant biodiversity benefits by being retained as standing deadwood.

4.52 The Council currently takes a risk based approach to managing Ash, as approved as part of the Council's Tree Strategy. However, in recent months it has become clear that increasing numbers of Ash trees in the district are in poor health due to ADB. For example there are large numbers of trees in Carpenters Wood and Chorleywood House Estate which are now in poor health, and will need to be removed in the near future due to safety reasons. Similarly there are significant numbers close to main roads in Oxhey Woods and at Batchworth Heath.

4.53 Officers anticipate managing ADB over future years in order to use Council resources as efficiently and effectively as possible, by actively managing the impact of Ash Dieback. A budget of £25,000 per year was approved at P&R 23 January 2023 for financial years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 for ADB.

4.54 This would include identifying and inspecting areas of Ash in high risk locations (including within parks and open spaces and woodland areas with high visitor numbers) and developing a programme of works to fell or prune Ash in decline to remove the risk of its failure at a later date.

4.55 This approach would be more cost effective and less disruptive to residents within the district, and would reduce the safety risk these trees will pose in the future.

4.56 Much of the Ash is growing in woodland situations, where the natural regeneration of other tree species will replace felled trees. Creating temporary gaps in the woodland canopy will also have some ecological benefit. However, some replanting may be necessary in some locations.

Summary of recommendations for 2023 and future years

Grass Cutting

4.57 Appendix B, C & D outlines future proposals for the Alternative Grassland Management initiative.

4.58 Throughout the growing season, maintain areas of short grass as firebreaks close to residential areas.

4.59 Undertake the majority of the first hay cut and collect in late June / early July (subject to weather conditions) to reduce the fire risk, and to avoid busier times in the farming calendar.

4.60 Due to access issues, focus hay cutting by contractors to a smaller number of larger, more accessible sites.

4.61 Following assessment of long grass areas, increase the area of hay cutting and edge succession management and reduce the area of conservation cut grass. Appendix H outlines the changes to grass cutting regimes for the 2023 grass cutting season.

4.62 Due to the difficulties and uncertainties of grass disposal, continue to use contractors for the first cut of the larger hay meadow areas.

4.63 Tender for a contractor to carry out the first hay cut & collect, and award a multi-year contract. A budget of £30,000 a year was agreed at P&R 23 January 2023 for financial years 2023/24, 2024/25 and 2025/26 for AGM.

4.64 Where possible, improve vehicle access to sites to facilitate the access of larger machinery, whilst keeping the site secure.

4.65 Continue to make improvements to the mapping of TRDC open space on GIS, to assist with communication of management regimes between Landscapes & Leisure, Grounds Maintenance, Contractors and the public.

4.66 Continue to update the website and social media to keep the local community informed of the different grass cutting regimes and the benefits these have for biodiversity.

4.67 Consider, where relevant and budget allows, interpretation at larger sites on the regimes and their biodiversity benefits.

4.68 Enable officers to make modifications to the timing and specification of cutting regimes during the growing season, based on weather conditions in any particular year.

4.69 The recommendations for 2023 will result in the following:

Grassland management type	Description	2023	
		All grass* - estimated %	Avaialble grass** - estimated %
Cut & Lift (Hay Meadow & Conservation Cut)	Cut once or twice per year	24	27
Reduced cut	Cut on rotation	6	7
Uncut	Rewilded	6	7
Conservation grazing	Light grazing for biodiversity benefit	26	30
Enhanced Amenity Grass	Reduced frequency / increased height of cutting	13	14
General Amenity Grass	Cut regularly for general recreation	13	15
Permanent Amenity Grass	Sports pitches / event grounds / open cemeteries	12	N/A

* Includes areas of permanent amenity grass for sports provision, events, open cemeteries, etc.

**excludes areas of permanent grass for sports pitches events, open cemeteries, etc.

4.70 Comparing the figures within the table at point 4.3 and within the table at 4.69, the percentage of available grass, which will undertake an alternative grass cutting regime for biodiversity benefits will change from:

- 77% (2022 estimated), 82% (actual 2022) and 85% (2023 estimate)

4.71 Percentages also take into account the recommendation to introduce a firebreak as outlined previously.

4.72 For 2023, estimates are slightly lower than 2022 for Hay Meadow management. This reflects habitat assessment carried out by officers during the growing season, which observed that it would be more appropriate to manage some areas (particularly under the canopy of mature trees) as woodland edge habitat rather than meadow (Appendix B & C). This has resulted in a slight decline in Hay Meadow management, but an increase in Reduced Cut (Edge Succession & Ride Management).

Biodiversity Opportunities Audit (BOA)

4.73 The annual budget for community biodiversity projects of £7,000 will be used towards several elements such as standard tree planting, hedge restoration and spring wildflower planting, as outlined within the BOA. In addition, Officers have secured £50,000 from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for 2024/25 to deliver a range of community biodiversity activities, which will support the delivery of the action plan.

4.74 Officers will continue to review the BOA and identify further opportunities for improvements, enhancements and funding (Appendix B & D). Officers will also propose amendments to actions on an annual basis to take advantage of new opportunites, in particular those that involve the local community in implementation of the audit.

4.75 In addition an annual work programme and summary of the achievements for the year will be shared within the Members Information Bulletin towards the end of each financial year.

Tree Strategy

4.76 Officers will continue to work through the Tree Strategy action plan as and when resources allow. Initially the focus will be on the risk management of Ash Dieback across the District..

5 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

5.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit (BOA), the Alternative Grassland Management (AGM) initiative adopted in March 2022, the Tree Strategy adopted in January 2022 and to make recommendations for future years.

6 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

6.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policies and budgets.

6.2 The recommendations in this report relate to the achievement of the following performance indicators.

- CP02/EP16 - Satisfaction with Parks and Open Spaces – enhancing biodiversity across the district is strongly supported by community groups and residents – including Sustainable Three Rivers. By introducing a number of schemes and projects and through showing investment in these spaces, residents are more likely to be satisfied with our parks and open spaces.
- LL34 - To Maintain Accreditation with Green Flag – biodiversity and sustainability are key requirements within the Green Flag assessment and these projects will support the Council in achieving Green Flag across the 4 main sites.
- LL35 - To ensure all our key open spaces have a current management plan in place – how the Council implements different biodiversity projects and tree planting intiatives are detailed within the agreed management plans
- LL39 - Number of new trees planted by TRDC Trees and Landscapes Officers – the BOA Action Plan and Tree Strategy supports and recommends future tree planting opportunities across the district.
- CP50 – Climate Emergency and Sustainability Action Plan – improving the biodiversity of the district is within the action plan – failure to do this will have an impact on the action plan.

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

- The implementation of the AGM initiative, BOA action plan and Tree Strategy will support the Council with achieving the Corporate Framework

Priority Themes, delivering against Key Performance Indicators and Service Performance Indicators for Leisure and Landscapes, Environmental Protection and Community Partnerships.

7 Financial Implications

7.1 The following table details the revenue budget, which have been allowed for within the current budgets for 2023/24 to 2025/26:

7.2 These costs are as follows:

REVENUE IMPLICATION	2023/24 £ *(estimated)*	2024/25 £ *(estimated)*	2025/26 £ *(estimated)*
Biodiversity Opportunities Audit	7,000	7,000 50,000 (UKSPF)	7,000
Alternative Grassland Management	30,000	30,000	30,000
Ash Dieback	*25,000*	*25,000*	*25,000*

8 Legal Implications

8.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit, the Alternative Grassland Management initiative adopted, the Tree Strategy and to make recommendations for endorsement. As such, there are no legal implications arising from the report.

9 Staffing Implications

9.1 The delivery of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit Action Plan, Alternative Grassland Management and management of Ash Dieback will require the time of staff within Leisure and Landscapes and Environmental Protection.

10 Environmental Implications

10.1 Continued implementation of the BOA, Tree Strategy and AGM will enable a varied and diverse development of habitats, which will have a positive impact on the flora and fauna across the district.

10.2 The alternative management regimes for the Council's grassland areas, that enables vegetation to flower and support invertebrates, and other wildlife will have a positive effect on biodiversity in the district.

11 Public Health Implications

11.1 A body of evidence is growing which explains the benefit people can experience from contact with the natural world; for example, increased prominence of social prescribing by clinicians for walking or gardening to alleviate symptoms.

12

https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/state-of-the-environment/state-of-the-environment-health-people-and-the-environment

11.2 During a recent (2021) survey of people using Leavesden Country Park, over 80% said that being able to use the park was either very important or important to their health and wellbeing and 98% of people said using the park enhanced their quality of life.

11.3 Trees and greenery may boost lifespan, this has been studied for 8 years by Harvard researchers and published in April Environmental Health Perspectives.

https://health.usnews.com/wellness/articles/2016-12-09/the-many-health-benefits-of-trees

12 Customer Services Centre Implications, Community Safety Implications

12.1 None Specific

13 Communications and Website Implications

13.1 Information on the initiative is included on the Council's website to outline the changes to the grassland management regimes.

https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/grassland-management

14 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

14.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at http://www.threerivers.gov.uk 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.

14.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Environmental Protection and Leisure and Landscapes Service Plans. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

14.3 If the recommendations are rejected the risks are as follows;

Nature of Risk	**Consequence**	**Suggested Control Measures**	**Response** *(tolerate, treat terminate, transfer)*	**Risk Rating** *(combination of likelihood and impact)*
Environmental Protection and Leisure and Landscapes are unable to implement the actions from the BOA and alternative	The Council is criticised for not progressing with alternative grass management Reputational damage and potential	Communications can be managed around ensuring residents are aware that the Council does have a Climate Change Strategy.	Treat	4

grassland management intiative	complaints from some residents	Members to agree the recommendations		
Objectives of the Climate Change Strategy are not achieved	Corporate Framework implications Reputational damage and potential complaints	Members to agree the recommendations	Treat	4
Tree failure as a result of Ash Dieback causes damage to property, rail accident/disaster, loss of life/serious injury	Financial implications, Budget implications, legal implications and reputation	Members to agree the recommendations Tree inspections undertaken regulary by tree officers, Budget has been allocated to manage ash dieback over future years. New Tree Strategy approved - risk management of trees in high risk areas - dealt with as a priority.	Treat	4

14.4 If the recommendations are accepted the risks are as follows;

Nature of Risk	**Consequence**	**Suggested Control Measures**	**Response** *(tolerate, treat terminate, transfer)*	**Risk Rating** *(combination of likelihood and impact)*
Continued complaints from some residents, particularly in urban areas who perceive the enhanced amenity cut grass on verges, as 'untidy' or 'unsightly', and a cost cutting measure	Reputational damage and potential complaints from some residents	Continue with marketing and comms on the scheme Continue to make ammendments to plans where possible to address concerns	Treat	4
Operational uncertainties, e.g. grass disposal, weather impacts	Additional costs incurred Works delayed or changes	Officers to report any financial implications through in year budget monitoring	Treat	4

	made to specifications			
Grounds Maintenance team is overwhelmed by additional cut and lift works required in the autumn and is unable to complete them before sites become too wet for machinery	Grass is left uncut, or sites are left muddy and rutted during the winter months	This would need to be monitored – additional contractor work may be required to complete the tasks or arisings may need to be left on site.	Tolerate	6
Tree failure as a result of Ash Dieback causes damage to property, rail accident/disaster, loss of life/serious injury	Financial implications, Budget implications, legal implications and reputation	Members to agree the recommendations Tree inspections undertaken regulary by tree officers, Budget has been allocated to manage ash dieback over future years. New Tree Strategy approved - risk management of trees in high risk areas - dealt with as a priority.	Treat	4

o 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.

Likelihood				
Very Likely ----------▶ Remote	**Low 4**	**High 8**	**Very High 12**	**Very High 16**
	Low 3	**Medium 6**	**High 9**	**Very High 12**
	Low 2	**Low 4**	**Medium 6**	**High 8**
	Low 1	**Low 2**	**Low 3**	**Low 4**
	Impact **Low ----------▶ Unacceptable**			

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

14.5 In the officers' opinion none of the risks in paragraphs 14.3 and 14.4 above, were they to come about, would seriously prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and are therefore operational risks. The effectiveness of the management of operational

15 Recommendation

That the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee:

15.1 Agree the recommendations for future grass cutting seasons, biodiversity opportunities audit implementation and Tree Strategy focus as outlined in points 4.57 to 4.76.

Report prepared by:

Charlotte Gomes, Landscapes and Leisure Development Manager

Alex Laurie, Principal Tree and Landscape Officer

Jess Hodges, Community Biodiversity Officer

Data checked by:

Alex Laurie, Principal Tree and Landscape Officer

Jess Hodges, Community Biodiversity Officer

Data rating:

1	**Poor**	
2	**Sufficient**	**x**
3	**High**	

APPENDICES

Appendix A: Standard Tree Planting Locations

Appendix B: Proposed amendments to BOA plans

Appendix C: Proposed ammendments to AGM initiative - plans

Appendix D: Proposed additional new BOA site - plan

16

Appendix E: Site Highlights

Appendix F: Consultation Summary and Response

Appendix G: Update on the Tree Strategy Action Plan

Appendix H: Alternative Grassland Management

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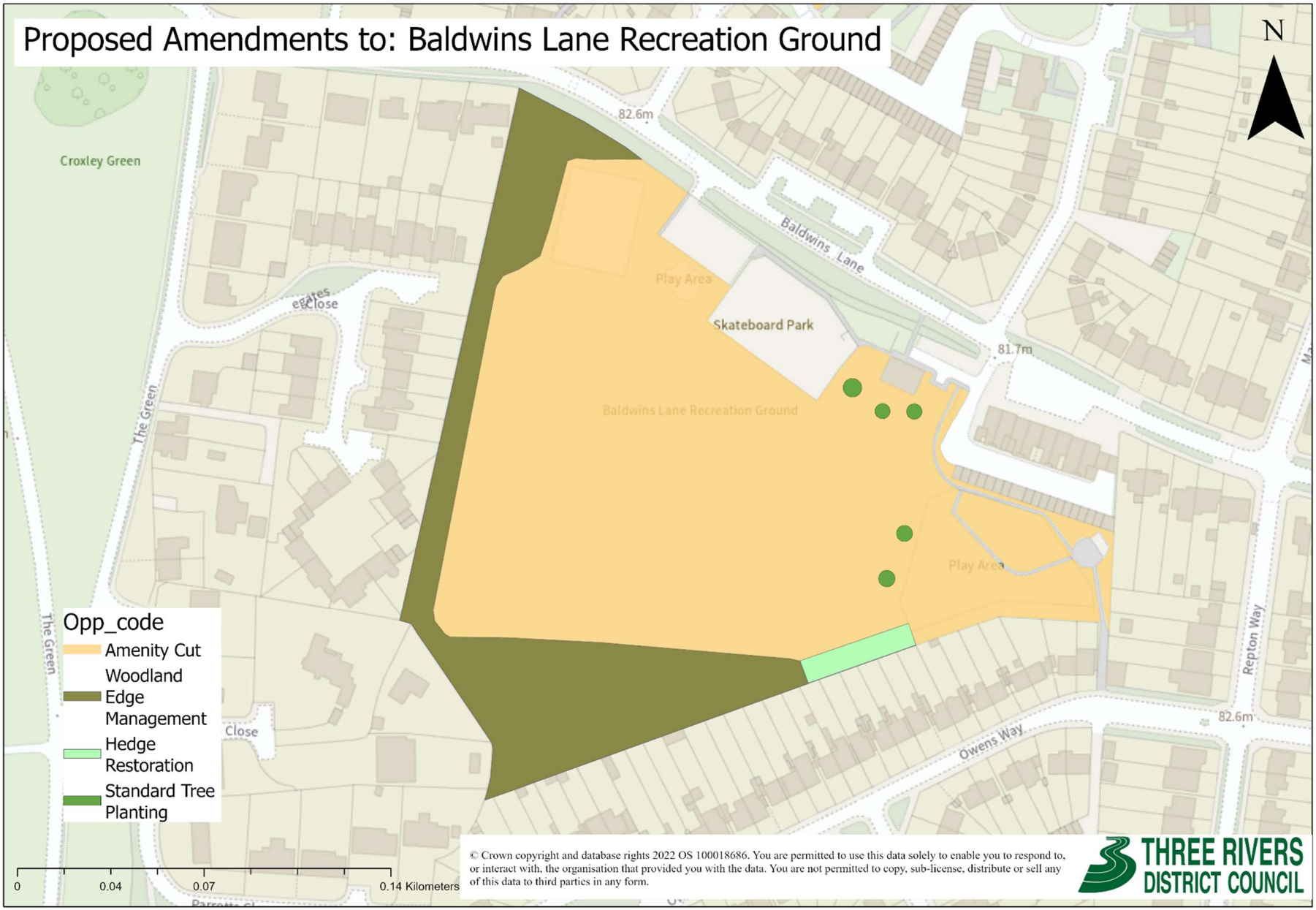
Appendix A – Standard Tree Planting Locations

Planting locations of standard trees Winter 2022-23 (one or more trees) at:

- Anne Shaw Gardens
- Ashburnham Drive Play Area
- Baldwins Lane Playing Field & Play Area
- Coombe Hill Road Open Space
- Hayling Road Play Area
- Huntercrombe Gardens
- Jacketts Field
- Land to the rear of The Queens Drive
- Rickmansworth Park
- The Swillet Playing Field
- Woodhall Lane

Appendix B – Proposed amendments to some BOA plans


Proposed Amendments to: Baldwins Lane Recreation Ground
N
Croxley Green
82.6m
Baldwins Lane
Play Area
Skateboard Park
81.7m
Baldwins Lane Recreation Ground
The Green
Close
Repton Way
Owens Way
82.6m
Opp_code
Amenity Cut
Woodland Edge Management
Hedge Restoration
Standard Tree Planting
0
0.04
0.07
0.14 Kilometers
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Proposed Amendments to: Barton Way Recreation Ground
N
Opp_code
Amenity Cut
Woodland Edge Management
Hedge Restoration
Meadow Cut
Standard Tree Planting
Woodland Creation
Fuller Way
Barton Way
Recreation Ground
Sports Court
Play Area
Springfield Close
Winton Crescent
Allotment View
Red Cross Centre
Croxley Green Library
Shelter
TCB
El Sub Sta
78.6m
75.0m
0
0.03
0.06
0.12 Kilometers
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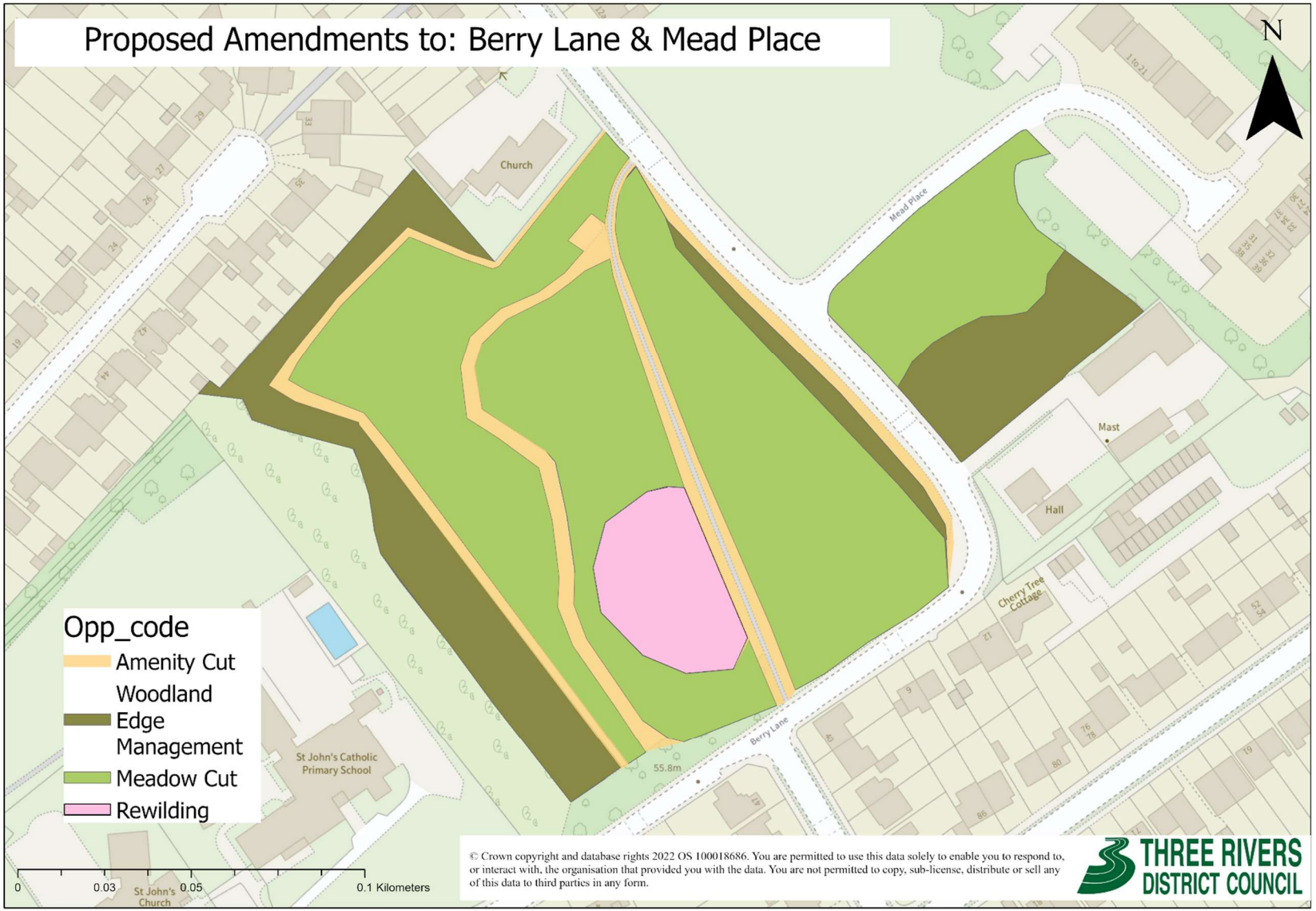
Proposed Amendments to: Berry Lane & Mead Place
N
Church
Mead Place
Mast
Hall
Cherry Tree Cottage
Berry Lane
55.8m
St John's Catholic Primary School
St John's Church
Opp_code
Amenity Cut
Woodland Edge Management
Meadow Cut
Rewilding
0
0.03
0.05
0.1 Kilometers
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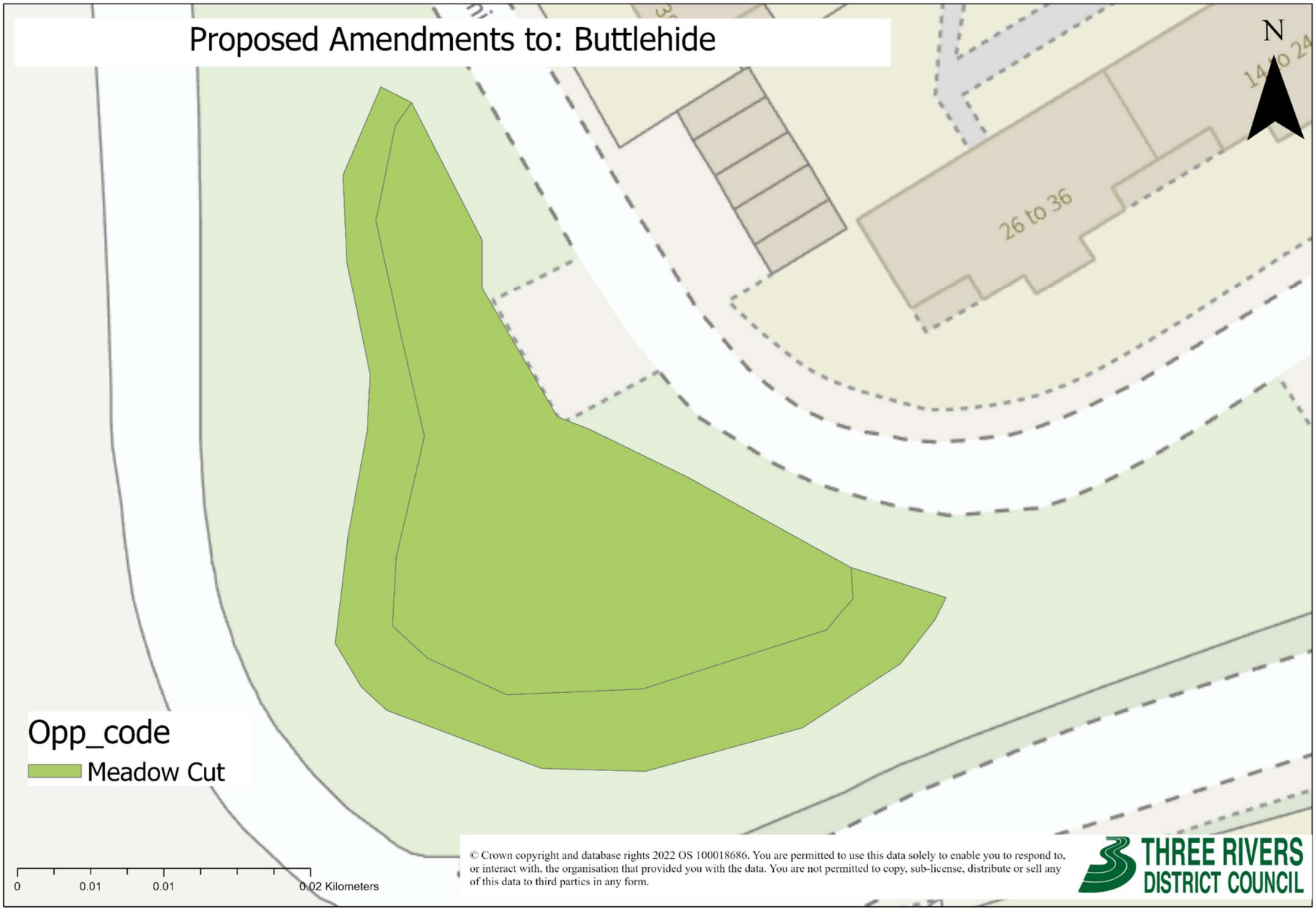
Proposed Amendments to: Buttlehide
N
26 to 36
Opp_code
Meadow Cut
0
0.01
0.01
0.02 Kilometers
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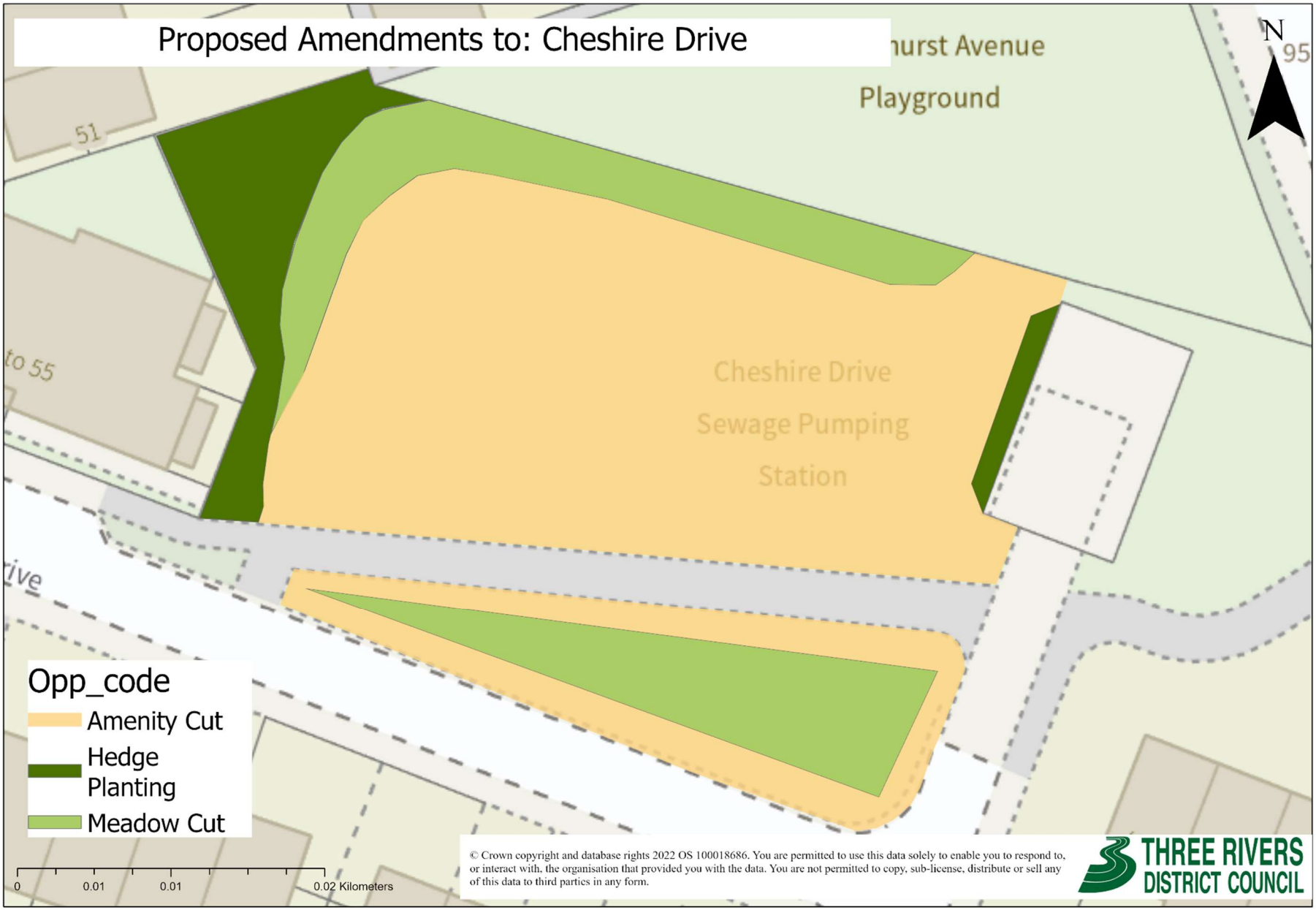
Proposed Amendments to: Cheshire Drive
hurst Avenue
Playground
51
to 55
Cheshire Drive
Sewage Pumping
Station
N
95
Opp_code
Amenity Cut
Hedge Planting
Meadow Cut
0
0.01
0.01
0.02 Kilometers
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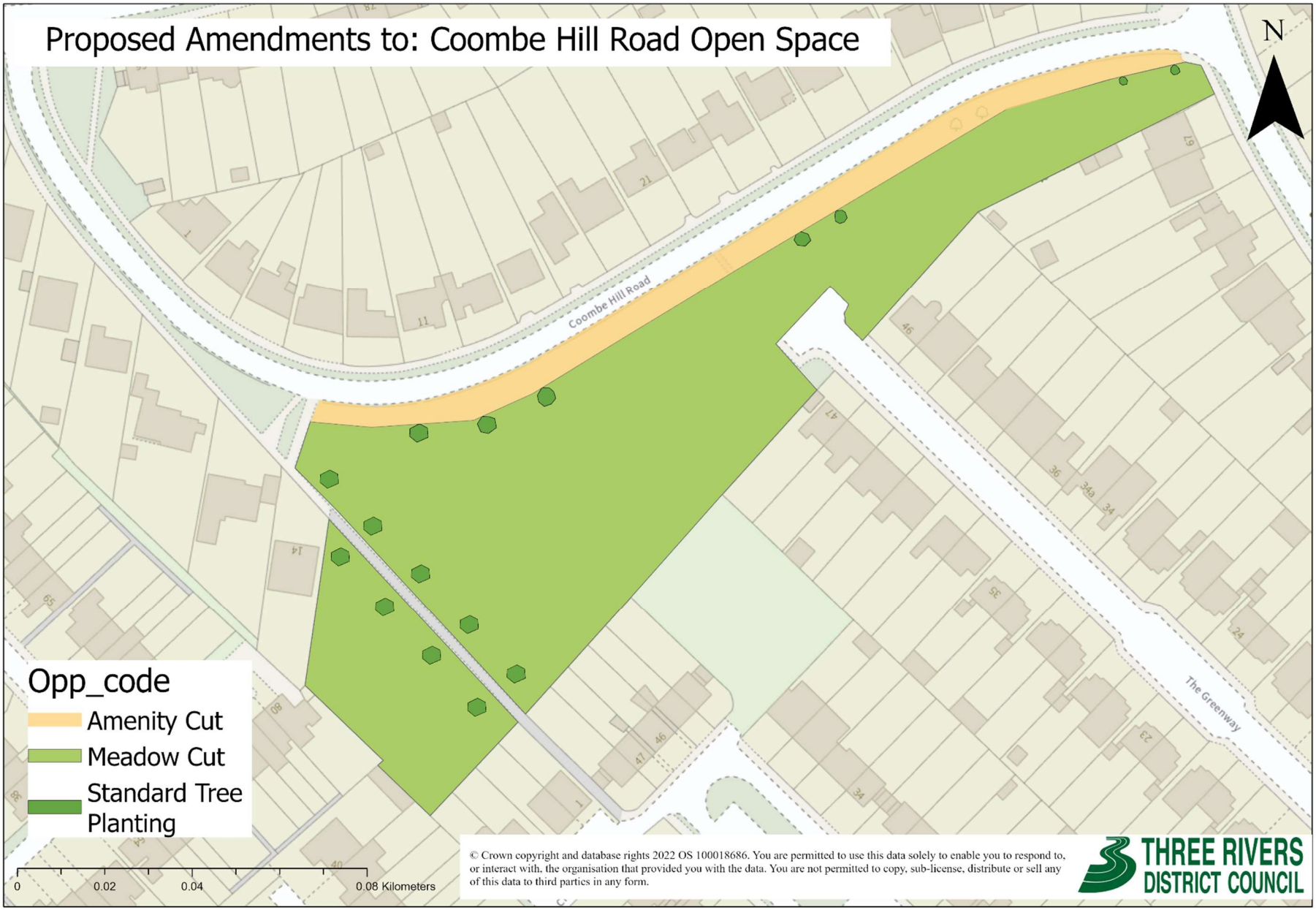
Proposed Amendments to: Coombe Hill Road Open Space
N
Coombe Hill Road
The Greenway
Opp_code
Amenity Cut
Meadow Cut
Standard Tree Planting
0
0.02
0.04
0.08 Kilometers
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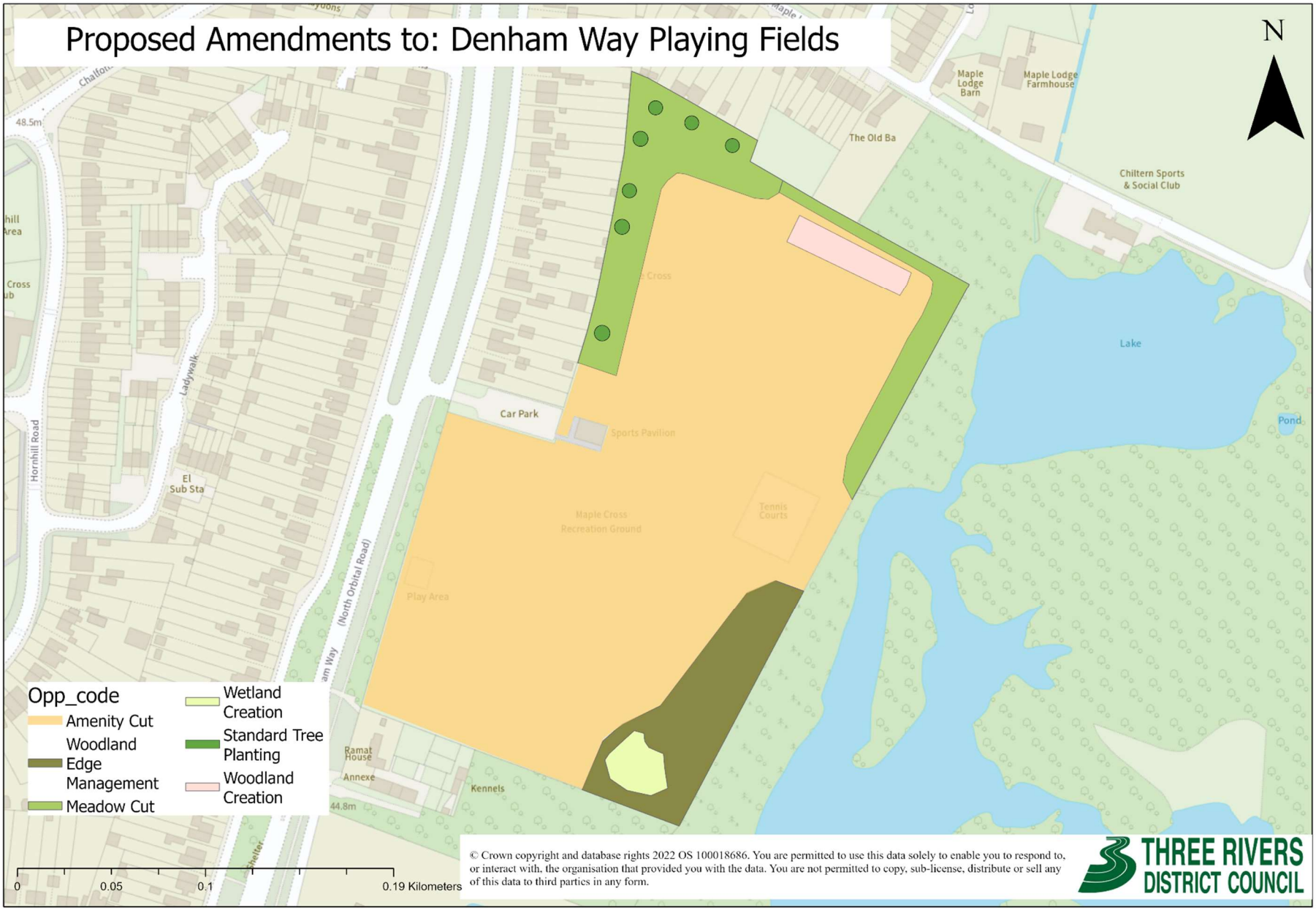
Proposed Amendments to: Denham Way Playing Fields
N
Maple Lodge Barn
Maple Lodge Farmhouse
The Old Ba
Chiltern Sports & Social Club
Lake
Pond
Car Park
Sports Pavilion
Maple Cross Recreation Ground
Tennis Courts
Play Area
Ramat House
Annexe
Kennels
44.8m
48.5m
Ladywalk
Hornhill Road
El Sub Sta
(North Orbital Road)
Opp_code
Amenity Cut
Woodland Edge Management
Meadow Cut
Wetland Creation
Standard Tree Planting
Woodland Creation
0
0.05
0.1
0.19 Kilometers
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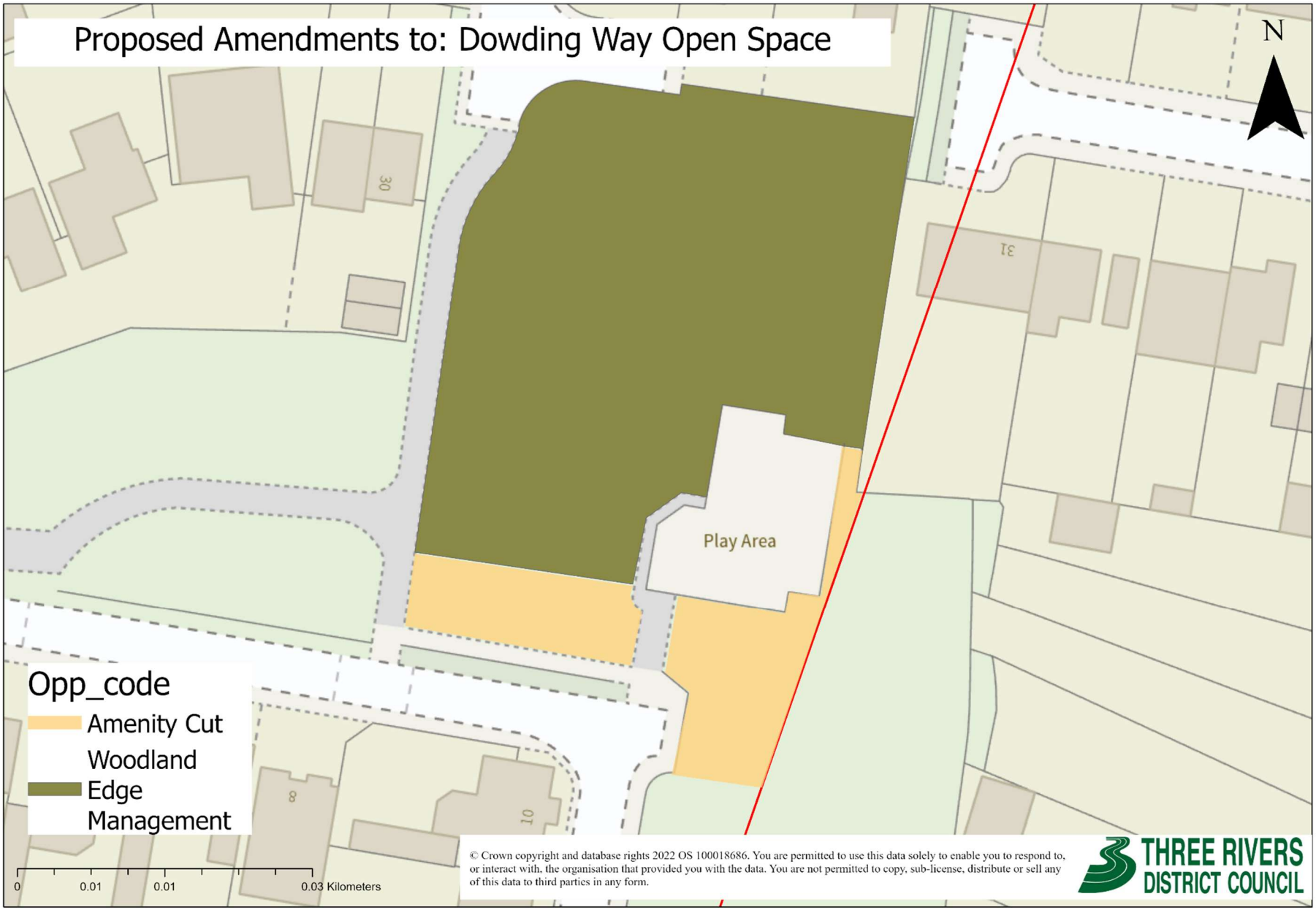
Proposed Amendments to: Dowding Way Open Space
N
30
31
Play Area
8
10
Opp_code
Amenity Cut
Woodland
Edge
Management
0
0.01
0.01
0.03 Kilometers
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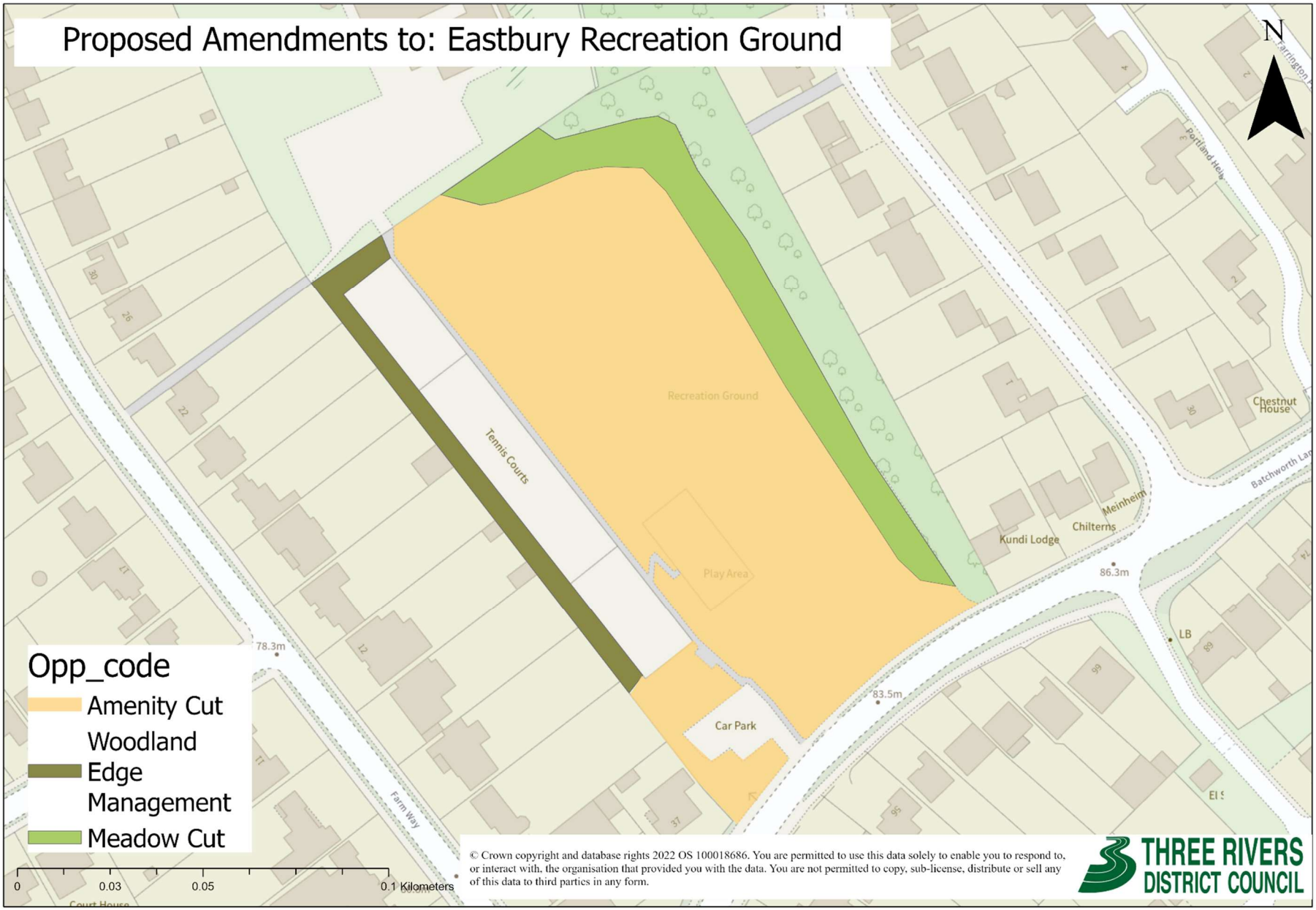
Proposed Amendments to: Eastbury Recreation Ground
N
Recreation Ground
Tennis Courts
Play Area
Car Park
Chestnut House
Meinheim
Chilterns
Kundi Lodge
Batchworth La
Portland Hts
86.3m
83.5m
78.3m
LB
Farm Way
Opp_code
Amenity Cut
Woodland Edge Management
Meadow Cut
0
0.03
0.05
0.1 Kilometers
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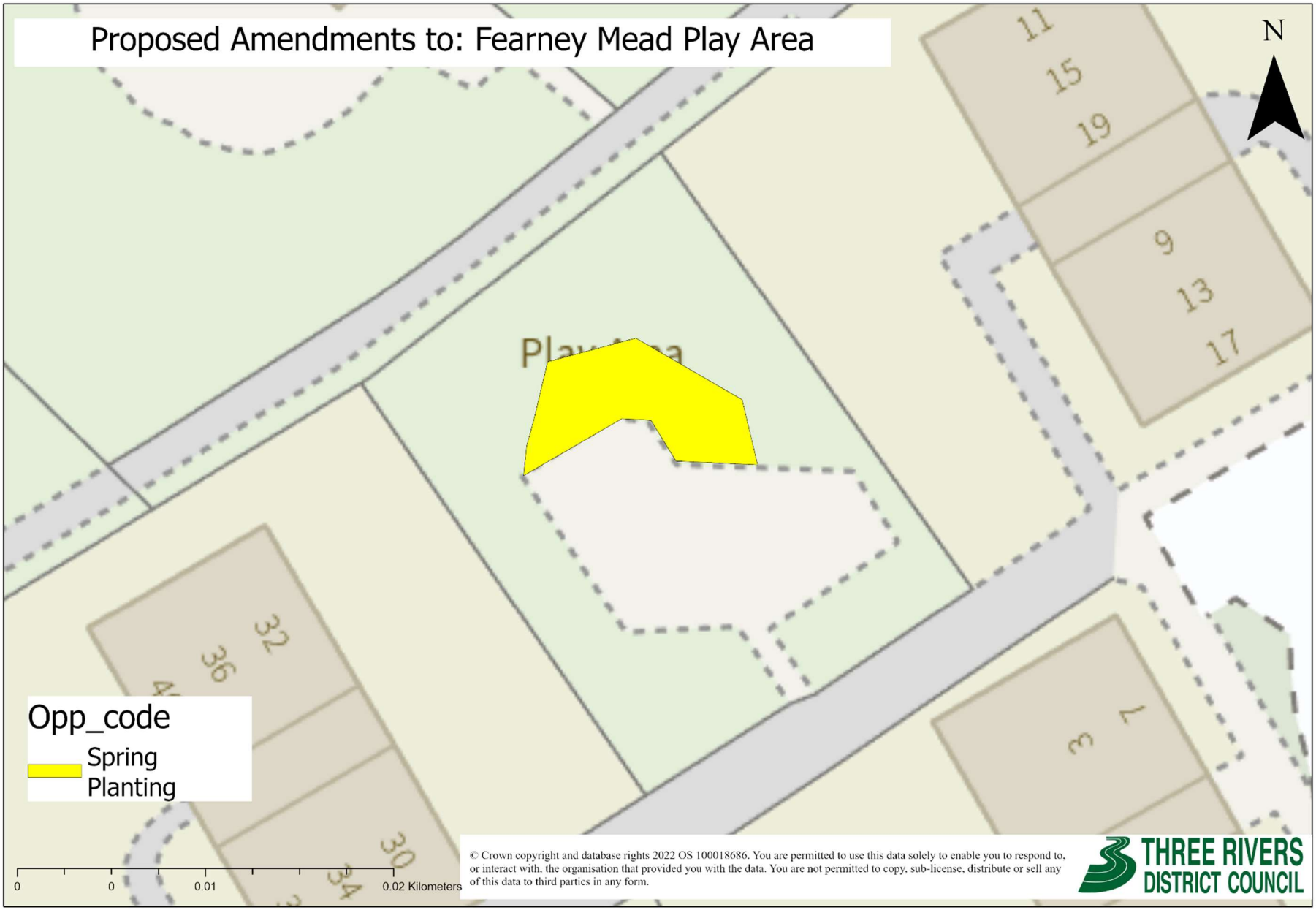
Proposed Amendments to: Fearney Mead Play Area
N
11
15
19
9
13
17
32
36
30
34
7
3
Opp_code
Spring Planting
0
0
0.01
0.02 Kilometers
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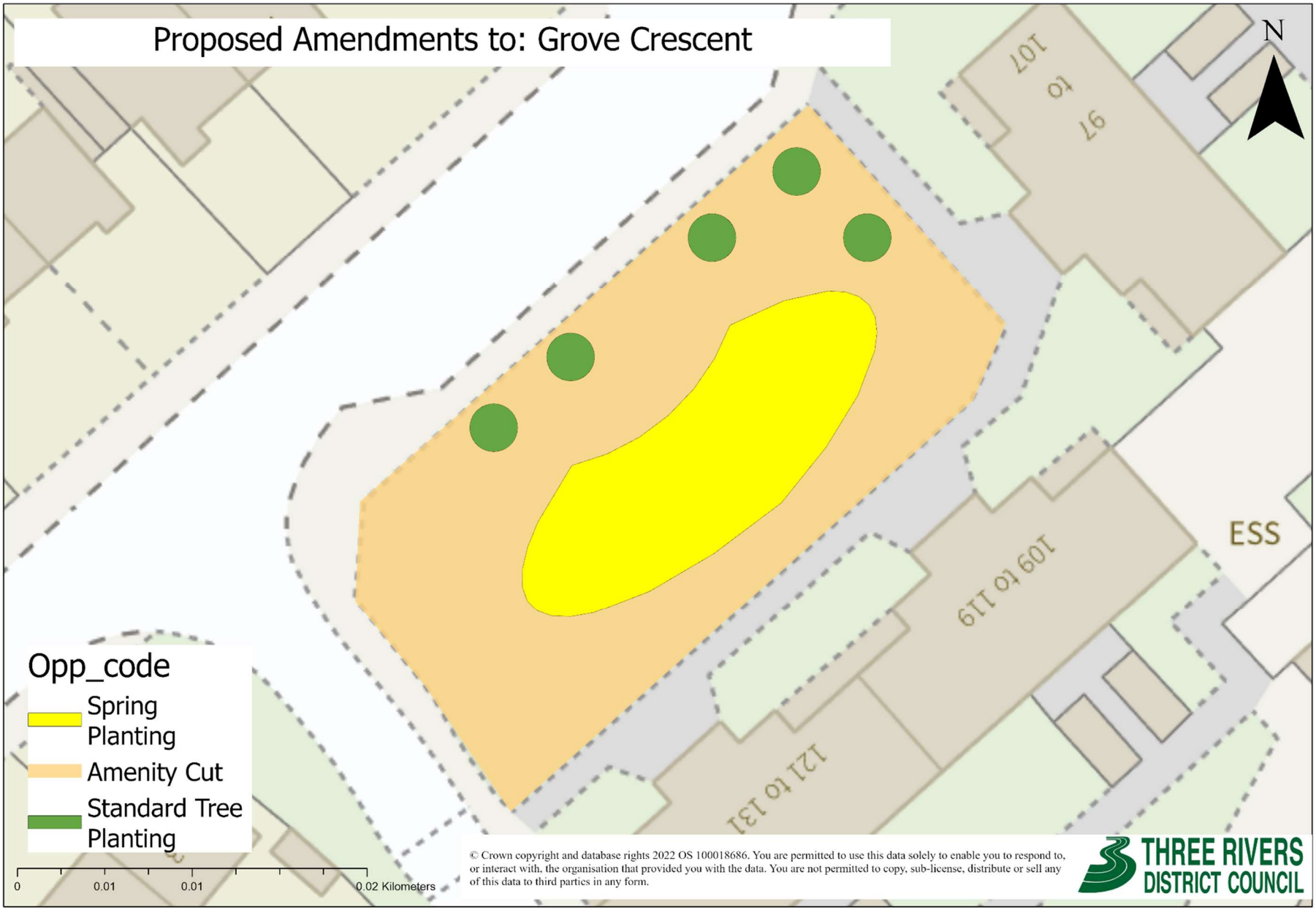
Proposed Amendments to: Grove Crescent
N
107 to 97
109 to 119
121 to 131
ESS
Opp_code
Spring Planting
Amenity Cut
Standard Tree Planting
0
0.01
0.01
0.02 Kilometers
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Proposed Amendments to: Rickmansworth Park
N
Opp_code
Amenity Cut
Woodland Edge Management
Meadow Cut
Standard Tree Planting
0
0.02
0.04
0.08 Kilometers
Park Road
FB
57.0m
Tank
Gas Governor
El Sub Sta
Note: this site will be cut and lifted prior to the school's sports day
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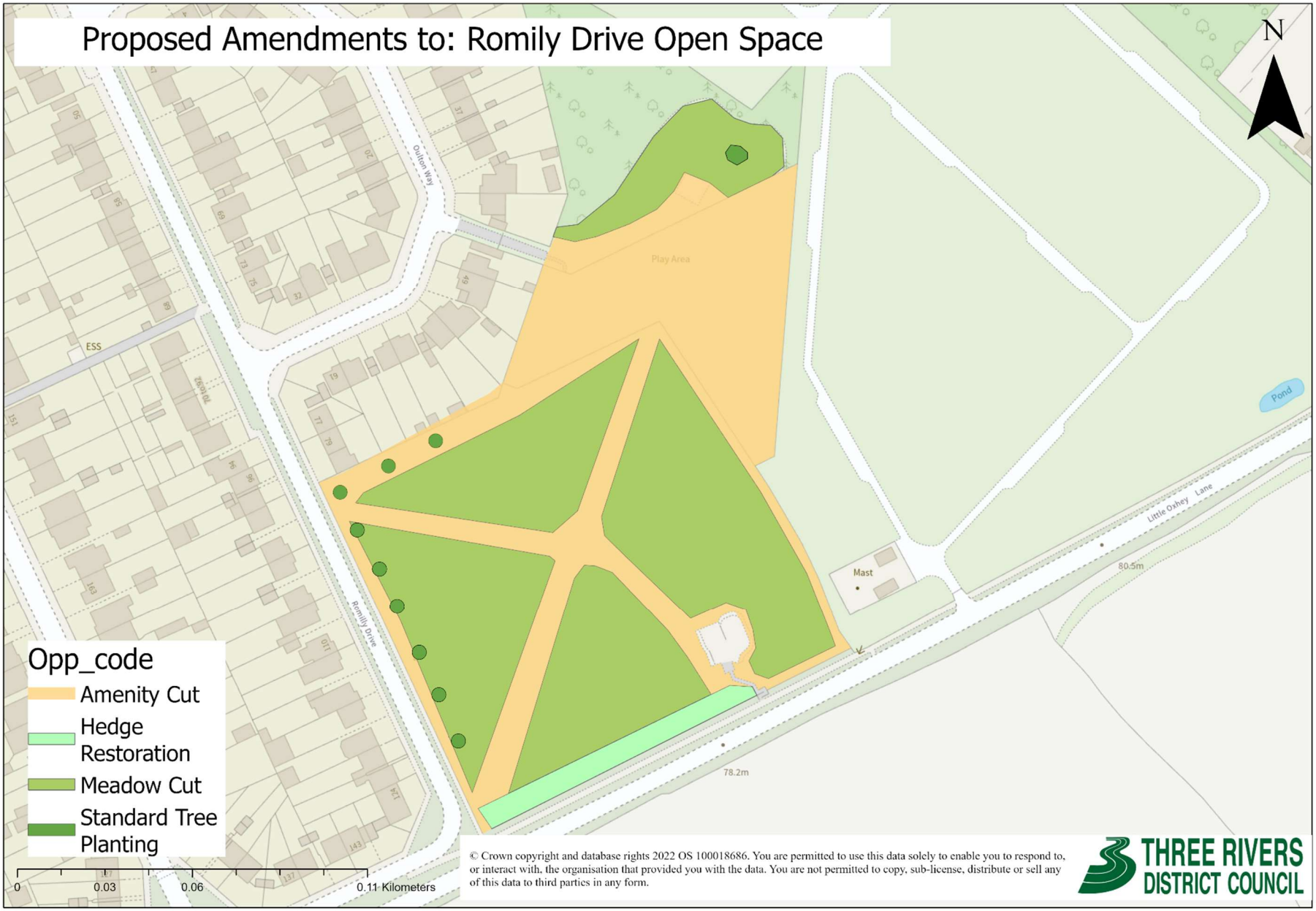
Proposed Amendments to: Romily Drive Open Space
N
Play Area
Pond
Mast
Little Oxhey Lane
80.5m
78.2m
Outton Way
Romilly Drive
ESS
Opp_code
Amenity Cut
Hedge Restoration
Meadow Cut
Standard Tree Planting
0
0.03
0.06
0.11 Kilometers
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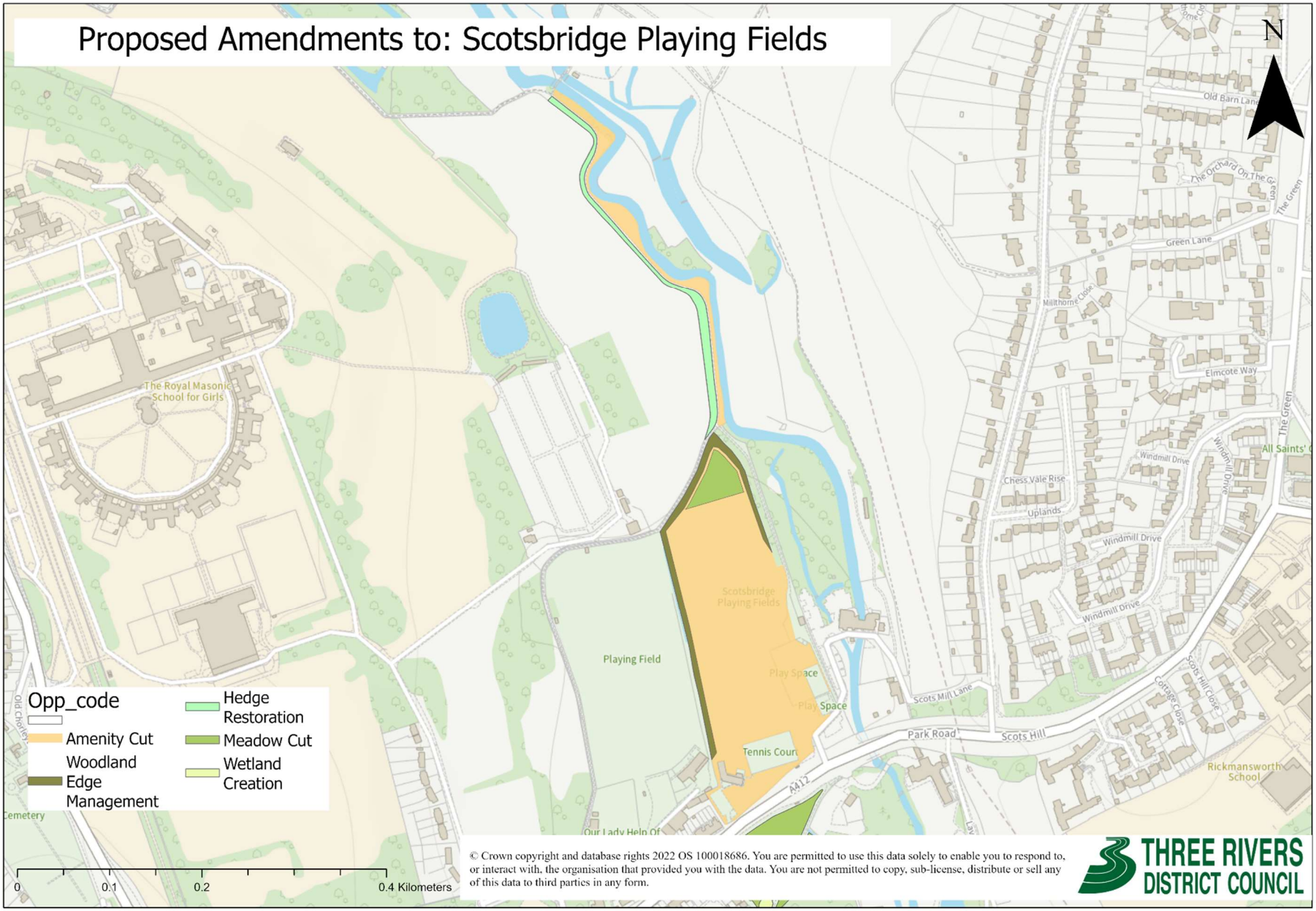
Proposed Amendments to: Scotsbridge Playing Fields
N
Opp_code
Amenity Cut
Woodland Edge Management
Hedge Restoration
Meadow Cut
Wetland Creation
0
0.1
0.2
0.4 Kilometers
The Royal Masonic School for Girls
Scotsbridge Playing Fields
Playing Field
Play Space
Tennis Court
Old Barn Lane
The Orchard On The Green
Green Lane
Millthorne Close
Elmcote Way
The Green
Windmill Drive
Chess Vale Rise
Uplands
Scots Mill Lane
Park Road
Scots Hill
Scots Hill Close
Cottage Close
A412
Rickmansworth School
All Saints'
Old Chorley
Cemetery
Our Lady Help Of
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Proposed Amendments to: The Swillett Recreation Ground
N
Trelawny
Cranford
Fistral
Shuh-shuh
Gah
Tonquin
High
Ash
124.1m
Play Area
Recreation Ground
THE SWILLETT
Allotment
Gardens
121.0m
Opp_code
Amenity Cut
Woodland Edge Management
Hedge Planting
Standard Tree Planting
0
0.02
0.04
0.08 Kilometers
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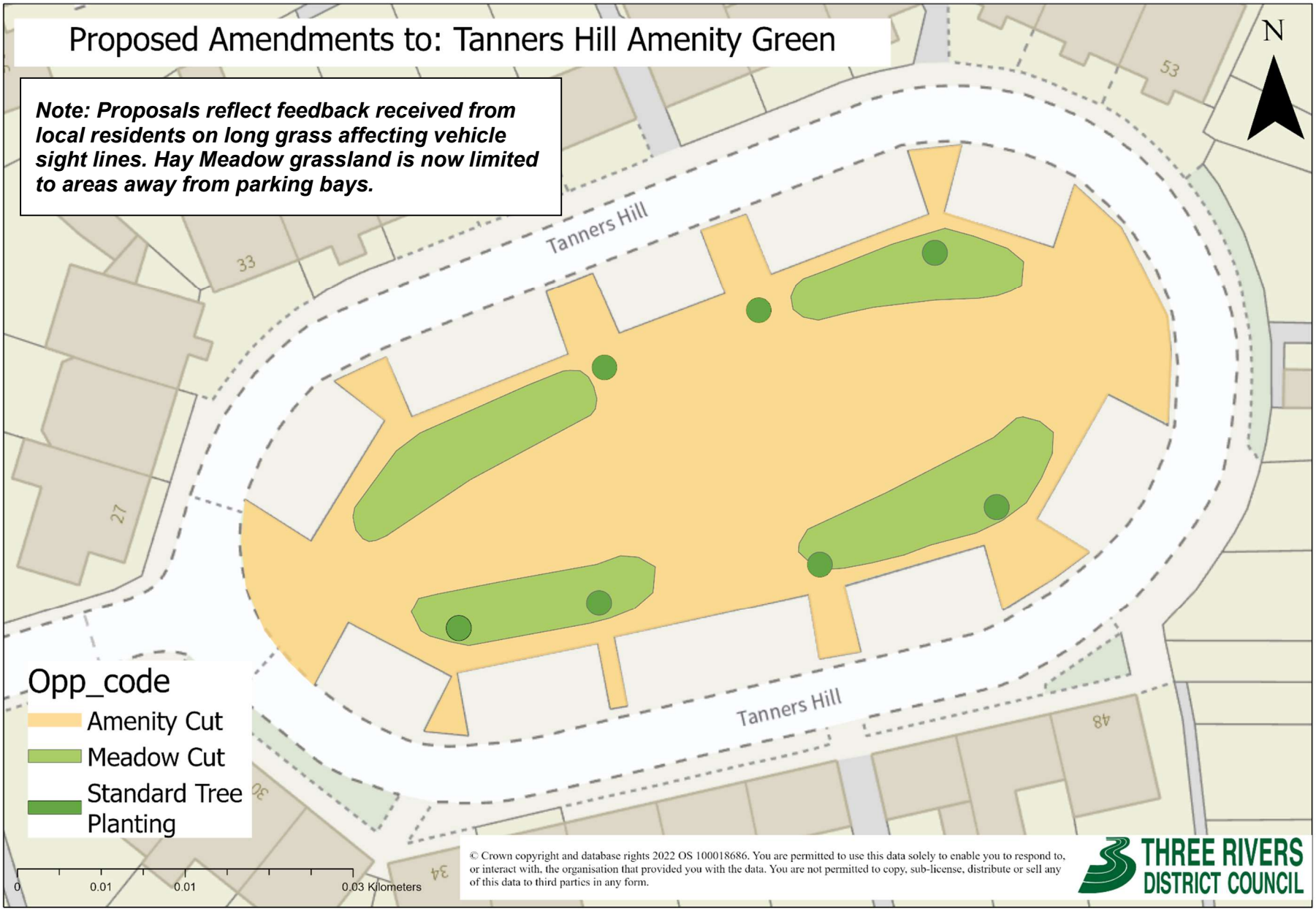
Proposed Amendments to: Tanners Hill Amenity Green
Note: Proposals reflect feedback received from local residents on long grass affecting vehicle sight lines. Hay Meadow grassland is now limited to areas away from parking bays.
N
Tanners Hill
Tanners Hill
33
27
53
48
Opp_code
Amenity Cut
Meadow Cut
Standard Tree Planting
0
0.01
0.01
0.03 Kilometers
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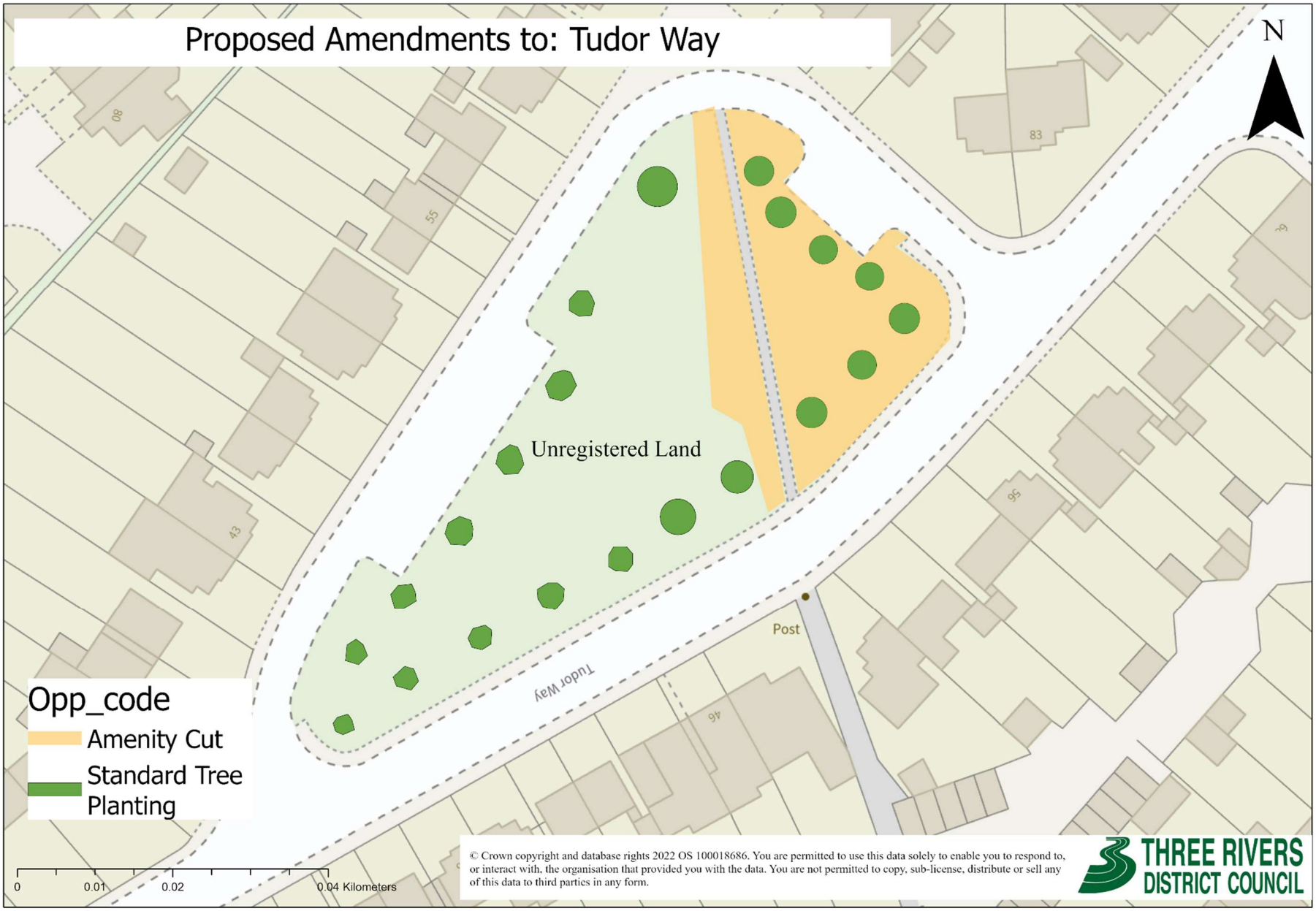
Proposed Amendments to: Tudor Way
N
Unregistered Land
Tudor Way
Post
Opp_code
Amenity Cut
Standard Tree Planting
0
0.01
0.02
0.04 Kilometers
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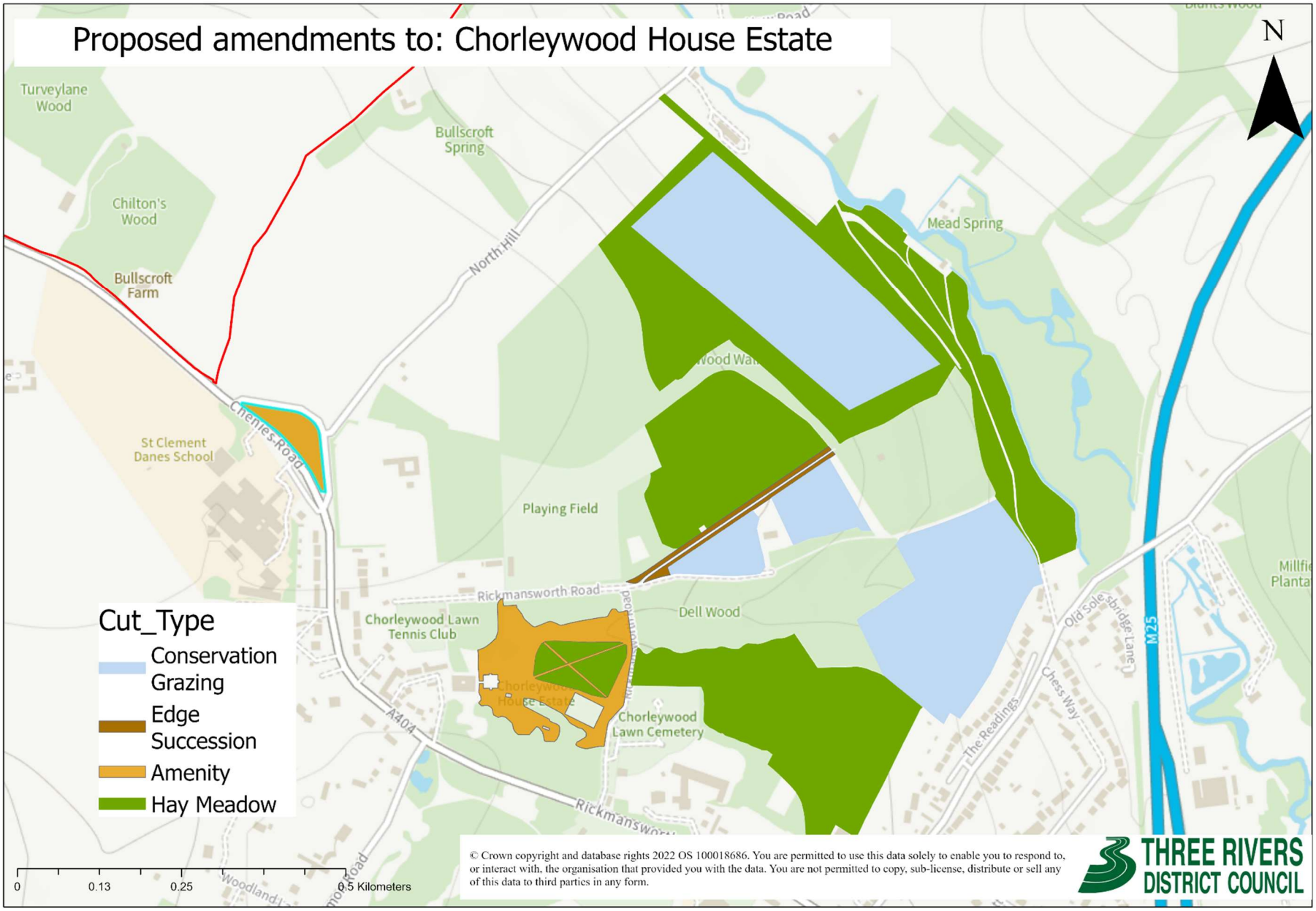
THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Appendix C: Proposed amendments to AGM initiative

Note: this is subject to the approval of the site Management Plans.


Proposed amendments to: Chorleywood House Estate
N
Turveylane Wood
Bullscroft Spring
Chilton's Wood
Bullscroft Farm
North Hill
Mead Spring
Chenies Road
St Clement Danes School
Playing Field
Rickmansworth Road
Chorleywood Lawn Tennis Club
Dell Wood
Chorleywood House Estate
Chorleywood Lawn Cemetery
A404
M25
Old Solesbridge Lane
Chess Way
The Readings
Cut_Type
Conservation Grazing
Edge Succession
Amenity
Hay Meadow
0
0.13
0.25
0.5 Kilometers
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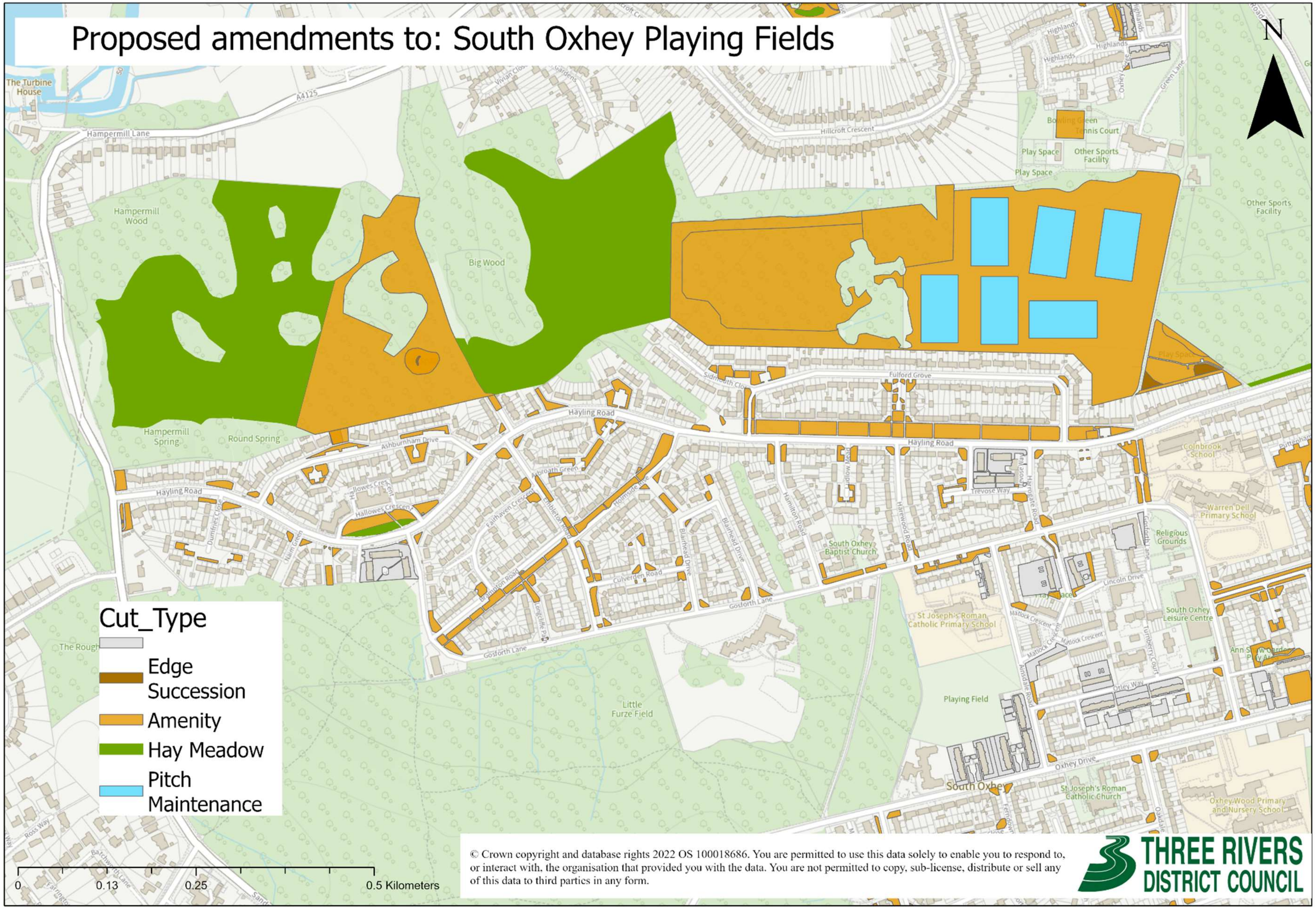
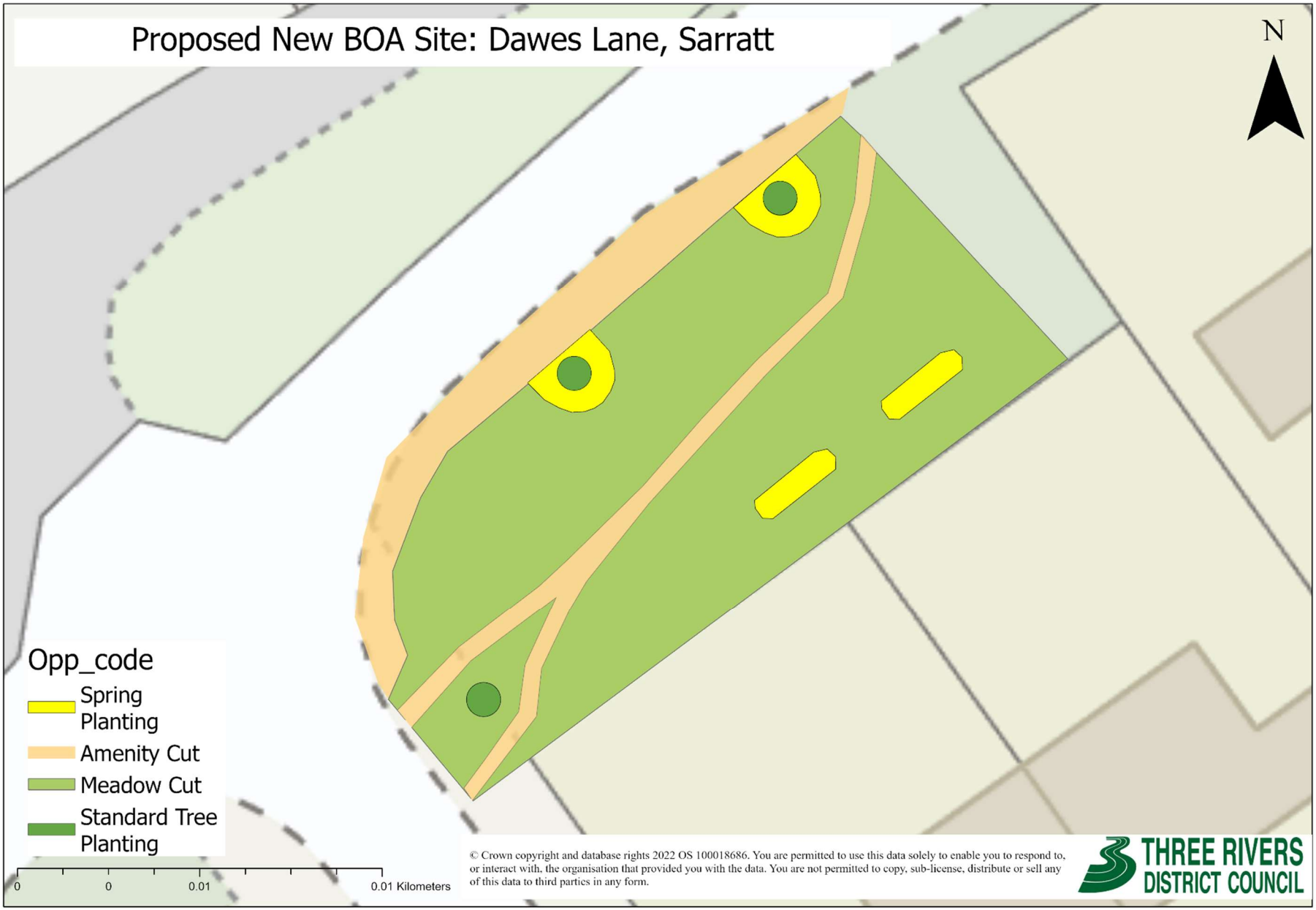
Proposed amendments to: South Oxhey Playing Fields



Appendix D: Proposed additional new BOA sites


Proposed New BOA Site: Dawes Lane, Sarratt
N
Opp_code
Spring Planting
Amenity Cut
Meadow Cut
Standard Tree Planting
0
0
0.01
0.01 Kilometers
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Appendix E – Site Highlights

Fortune Common, and Cockoo Flower (inset)

Romilly Drive Open Space

Pyrimdal Orchid at Leavesden Country Park

Coombe Hill Road Open Space – Hawksbeard seed head

Appendix F - Consultation Summary and Response

No.	Issue	Background	Officer Response
1	Health & Safety	Comments relating to longer grass near roads impacting the vision of drivers and pedestrians. Concerns over health risks to pets in long grass areas.	Grass verges and other areas of grass adjacenet to roads to be under the Enhanced Amenity Regime which results in the grass being only slightly longer than the usual amenity cut and therefore not impacting the vision of drivers. One metre wide buffer strips will be cut regularly and kept short, along foot path edges, roads, around benches side and other areas where short grass is required.
2	Overgrown & Untidy Appearance of Grasslands	General comments that longer grass looks messy and not maintained.	A 1m buffer strip is to be cut regularly adjacenet to paths, around parkland furnature (bins, benches etc.) as well as the perimeter of sites where appropriate. Paths or swathes are also cut through areas of longer grass promoting access while also providing a visual representation of the management being undertaken.
3	Fire Risk	Concerns over the increased risk and potential severity of fires due to the hot weather over the summer in longer grass areas.	Fire breaks are to be cut throughout the season between areas of long grass and properties with aim to reduce the risk of fires spreading to neighbouring property. During periods of hot weather Council communications highlighted the risk of fire, and advising that barbeques and other type of fire are not permitted on Council land.
4	Anti-Social Behaviour & Pests	Comments highlighting potential risk of increased antisocial behaviour: littering and not picking up dog poo, and vermin (rodents and flies) that are being attracted.	Bins are present and accessible on many Council owned and managed sites. Members of the public are encouraged not to drop litter, deposit it in a designated litter bin or take it home with them. Depositing of litter not in a bin carries a fixed penalty notice of £150 if witnessed by Environmental Enforcement Officers and Police Community Support Officers. A Public Spaces Protection Order also applies across the District allowing the Council to deal with irresponsible dog owners and continues to encourage a culture of responsible dog ownership.
5	Query over Ownership	Confusion over landownership, predominantly between TRDC, HCC and housing associations.	Officers take this on board and as part of the Three Rivers Nature Recovery Strategy will be improving the mapping system of Council owned and managed green space to provide clarity.

Appendix G - Update on the Tree Strategy Action Plan

Section	Actions	Timescale	Status
TRDC Trees	Review TRDCs tree asset register and add any additional sites	March 2022	**On hold**
	Revise the current tree inspection zoning system prior to the start of a new 18 month inspection cycle	June 2023	**Not due for completion until 2023**
	Set up annual safety inspection and recording process for Tree Officers	December 2021	**In progress**
	Set up tree database (Ezytreev) training for key users within TRDC	June 2021	**Completed**
	Organise basic tree safety training for relevant TRDC staff	June 2022	**In progress**
	Establish a formal system of dealing with TRDC owned trees outside of normal office hours	December 2021	**In progress**
	Establish process of annual checks of tree contractors health, safety and insurance details	March 2022	**Completed**
	Prepare generic management plans for minor open spaces and woodlands	March 2025	**Not due for completion until 2025**
	Commission woodland inventory work to obtain data to feed into a district tree ecosystem services survey.	March 2022	**On hold**
	Consult on the findings of the Biodiversity Opportunities Audit and develop a five year plan for new tree planting on minor open spaces	From March 2022	**Completed ahead of schedule**
	Consider recruiting a community / education officer to work with local communities on biodiversity and tree planting schemes on TRDC owned land	November 2021	**Completed**
	Investigate arboricultural training and development for a member of the ground maintenance team to specialize in tree establishment and early year's maintenance	May 2022	**In progress**

	Develop plans for specific locations and tree varieties for new memorial / sponsored tree planting and publicise opportunities to encourage support	December 2022	**On hold**
Protected Trees	Undertake desk top review of existing TPOs and identify those that may require updating	March 2022	**On hold**
	Develop a bid to fund resurveying and serving of replacement TPOs where necessary	June 2023	**On hold**
	Migrate TPO data to Ezytreev portal to enable public access to TPO information	From December 2021	**Completed**
	Review TRDC's TPO making process and make changes and improvements, if necessary.	March 2022	**On hold**
Planning	Review existing standard tree & landscape conditions and make revisions if necessary	March 2022	**On hold**
Trees in the District	Update the Tree & Landscape section of the TRDC website to provide more information and guidance on third party owned trees	March 2022	**In progress**

Appendix H – Alternative Grassland Management

Site	Management Area cut 2022-2023 (ha)	Cutting Plans for 2023-2024 (ha)
Aquadrome	Meadow Cut	Meadow Cut
Ashburnham Drive	Amenity Cut	Amenity Cut
Ashburnham Drive Play Area	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
Baldwins Lane Play Area	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
Baldwins Lane Play Area	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
Barton Way Play Area	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
Batchworth Heath	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
Beechen Wood Recreation Ground (Hornhill Rec)	Meadow Cut	Meadow Cut
Berry Lane & Mead Place	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
Berry Lane & Mead Place	Meadow Cut	Meadow Cut
Berry Lane & Mead Place	Rewilding	Rewilding
Birkdale Gardens	Amenity Cut	Amenity Cut
Bishops Wood	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
Bury Meadows	Woodland Edge Management	Meadow Cut
Buttlehide	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
Buttlehide	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
Cassiobridge Rec	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
Chenies Open space	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
Cheshire Drive	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
Chorleywood House Estate	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
Chorleywood House Estate	Conservation Grazing	Conservation Grazing
Chorleywood House Estate	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
Chorleywood House Estate	Meadow Cut	Meadow Cut
Chorleywood Road Cemetary	Amenity Cut	Amenity Cut
Coombe Hill Open Space	Meadow Cut	Meadow Cut
Croxley Common Moor	Conservation Grazing	Conservation Grazing
Denham Way Playing Fields	Meadow Cut	Meadow Cut
Denham Way Playing Fields	Rewilding	Rewilding
Dowding Way	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
Dowding Way	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
East Lane Cemetery	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
Eastbury Playing Fields	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
Fortune Common	Meadow Cut	Meadow Cut
Furtherfield Old Tip	Rewilding	Rewilding

Grass verges + Greens	Amenity Cut	Amenity Cut
Hallowes Crescent	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
Hayling Road	Amenity Cut	Amenity Cut
Hayling Road	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
Hayling Road Play Area	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
Hayling Road Play Area	Amenity Cut	Amenity Cut
Horses Field	Conservation Grazing	Conservation Grazing
Horses Field (perimeter)	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
Jacketts Field	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
Juniper Dell	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
King George V Playing Fields	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
King George V Playing Fields	Meadow Cut	Meadow Cut
Langley Lane Play Area	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
Leavesden Country Park	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
Moortown Play Area	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
Oaklands Avenue Play Area	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
Oxhey Woods Car park & Rides	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
Park Road	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
Pheasants Wood	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
Prestwick Road Meadows	Meadow Cut	Meadow Cut
Prestwick Road Verges	Amenity Cut	Amenity Cut
Rickmansworth Golf Course	Amenity Cut	Amenity Cut
Rickmansworth Park	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
Rickmansworth Park	Meadow Cut	Meadow Cut
River Chess	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
Romily Drive Open Space	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
Romily Drive Open Space	Meadow Cut	Meadow Cut
Rosehill Gardens	Amenity Cut	Amenity Cut
Scotsbridge Playing Fields	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
Scotsbridge Playing Fields	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
Scotsbridge Playing Fields	Meadow Cut	Meadow Cut
Skidmore Way	Woodland Edge Management	Woodland Edge Management
South Oxhey Playing Fields	Amenity Cut	Amenity Cut
South Oxhey Playing Fields	Meadow Cut	Meadow Cut
Stones Orchard	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
Tanners Hill Amenity green	Amenity Cut	Amenity Cut
Tanners Hill Amenity green	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut

Tanners Wood (verge)	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
The Green	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
The Queens Drive Open Space	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
The Swillett	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
The Withey Beds	Conservation Grazing	Conservation Grazing
The Withey Beds	Conservation Cut	Meadow Cut
Toms Lane Old Tip	Rewilding	Rewilding
Tudor Way (Half HCC)	Amenity Cut	Amenity Cut
Warring's Field Chorleywood	Conservation Cut	Woodland Edge Management
Woodcock Hill Cemetery	Meadow Cut	Meadow Cut
Woodhall Lane	Conservation Cut	Amenity Cut
Woodhall Lane	Amenity Cut	Amenity Cut

LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE – 15 MARCH 2023

PART I - DELEGATED

11. WORK PROGRAMME

1. Summary

1.1 To agree the Committee's work programme.

2. Details

2.1 Attached, as an appendix to this report, is the Leisure, Environment and Community Committee work programme.

2.2 The work programme has been amended to include information to Members on the purpose of the item being considered, how the work will be completed, the responsible officer and the outcome expected.

3. Policy/Budget Implications

3.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets.

4. Financial, Legal, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Customer Services Centre, Website and Risk Management Implications

4.1 None specific to this report.

5. Recommendation

5.1 That the Committee agrees the items included in the work programme.

Report prepared by Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

Background Papers

Leisure, Environment and Community Committee – 2021/22

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix A – Work Programme

Data Quality

Data sources: Leisure, Environment and Community Committee minutes and previous work programmes

Data checked by: Sarah Haythorpe, Principal Committee Manager

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	
3	High	✓

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LEISURE, ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME

No.	Item to be considered	Date of Meeting	Purpose of the Report	How the work will be done	Responsible Officer	Outcome Expected
Leisure						
1.	Leisure Management Contract Presentation	5 July 2023	Update on Leisure Management Contract		Everyone Active & Leisure Contracts and Landscape Projects Officer	To note the presentation
2.	Budget Monitoring Report (Period 4)	11 October 2023	Present financial position	Written Report from Policy and Resources	Finance Business Partner	To note action taken
3.	Budget Monitoring Report (Period 6)	10 January 2024	Present financial position	Written Report from Policy and Resources	Finance Business Partner	To note action taken.
4.	Draft Service Plan – Community Services & Environmental Services 2024-27	10 January 2024	To consider the draft Service Plan	Written Report	Head of Community Services	To note and comment on the Community Services draft Service Plan for 2024-27

No.	Item to be considered	Date of Meeting	Purpose of the Report	How the work will be done	Responsible Officer	Outcome Expected
5.	Budget Monitoring Report – (Period 10)	13 March 2024	Present financial position	Written Report from Policy and Resources	Finance Business Partner	To note action taken
Environmental Services & Sustainability						
1.	Budget Monitoring Report (Period 4)	11 October 2023	Present financial position	Written Report from Policy and Resources	Finance Business Partner	To note action taken
Community Safety and Partnerships						
1.	No more service evaluation	5 July 2023	To receive a report	Written report	Head of Community Partnerships	To note action taken
2.	Biannual Update of the Climate Emergency Sustainability Strategy	11 October 2023	To consider the update		Interim Head of Community Partnerships	October and March updates agreed on 7/7/21 LEC 07/21

No.	Item to be considered	Date of Meeting	Purpose of the Report	How the work will be done	Responsible Officer	Outcome Expected
3	Citizen's Advice Service in Three Rivers Annual Report 2022/23 and presentation	11 October 2023	For information	Presentation	CASTR	To note action taken
4	Budget Monitoring Report (Period 4)	11 October 2023	Present financial position	Written Report from Policy and Resources	Finance Business Partner	To note action taken
5	Budget Monitoring Report (Period 6)	10 January 2024	Present financial position	Written report from P&R Committee	Finance Business Partner	To note action taken.
6	Draft Service Plans – Community Partnerships 2024-27	10 January 2024	To consider the draft Service Plan	Written Report	Interim Head of Community Partnerships	To note and comment on the draft Service Plan for 2024-27.
7	All Service Level Agreements Review (every three years)	13 March 2024	To consider the action taken	Written Report	Interim Head of Community Partnerships	To consider the action taken
8	Budget Monitoring Report (Period 10)	13 March 2024	Present financial position	Written Report from Policy and Resources	Finance Business Partner	To note action taken

No.	Item to be considered	Date of Meeting	Purpose of the Report	How the work will be done	Responsible Officer	Outcome Expected
9	Review of Environmental Terms of Reference	March 2025	To receive a report	Written report	Interim Head of Community Partnerships/ Strategic Climate Change and Sustainability Officer/ Domestic Sustainability Officer	To consider the recommendations
10	Anti-Social Behaviour To be reviewed August 2024	To be confirmed	To receive a report	Written report	Head of Community Partnerships	To receive any recommendations.
Regulatory Services (elements which fall within the LEC Committee)						
1.	Draft Service Plan – Regulatory Services	10 January 2024	To consider the draft Service Plan for the areas relevant to this Committee	Written Report	Head of Regulatory Services	To note and comment on the sections relevant to this Committee from the Regulatory Services draft Service Plan for 2024-27
Customer Experience						

No.	Item to be considered	Date of Meeting	Purpose of the Report	How the work will be done	Responsible Officer	Outcome Expected
1.	Watersmeet Presentation	To be provided outside of the LEC meeting as a stand alone presentation (October 2023)	Update on Watersmeet Performance	Presentation	Watersmeet General Manager and Head of Customer Experience	To note the presentation and report.

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