

Three Rivers House Northway Rickmansworth Herts WD3 1RL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

NOTICE AND AGENDA

For a meeting to be held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth on Monday, 8 September 2025 at 7.30 pm

Members of the Policy and Resources Committee:-

Councillors:

Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE (Chair)

Oliver Cooper Stephen Cox Steve Drury Vicky Edwards Rue Grewal Philip Hearn Sarah Nelmes (Vice-Chair)

Chris Lloyd
Chris Mitchell
Louise Price
Reena Ranger
Jon Tankard

Joanne Wagstaffe, Chief Executive Friday, 29 August 2025

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public on agenda items at the Policy and Resources 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 will be 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 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.

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To note any apologies for absence.

2. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 16)

To approve the minutes of the meeting held on 21 July 2025.

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 Chair to rule on the admission of such items.

4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest.

5. THREE RIVERS HOUSE SOLAR PANELS ARRAY EXTENSION

(Pages 17 - 58)

That:

Policy and Resources Committee instruct officers to install the proposed PV Solar Array on Three Rivers House, to be installed by Chiltern Solar who were the successful bidder from the competitive tender process.

The Policy & Resources Committee provide delegated authority to the Assistant Director For Environment to appoint the recommended solar PV installer at a cost of £50,813 (excl. VAT).

6. THREE RIVERS EQUALITY FORUM

(Pages 59 - 76)

That:

Council provide any feedback or suggestions for membership to the Forum.

Council agree the draft Terms of Reference for the Equalities Forum.

That public access to the report be immediate.

That public access to the decision be immediate.

7. BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2025

(Pages 77 - 126)

To Council:

That the revenue budget virements as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.

That the revenue budget supplementary estimates as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.

That the revenue variances to be managed as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be noted.

That the capital variances as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.

8. SARRATT NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN DECISION NOTICE

(Pages 127 -

That:

370)

The Policy & Resources Committee agree the Decision Notice for the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan (subject to ongoing work), which would allow the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan to proceed to public referendum.

9. AV SYSTEM PROCUREMENT EXEMPTION

(Pages 371 -

That:

374)

Members note the action taken regarding the procurement exemption and agree to enter into a contract with Auditel.

11. WORK PROGRAMME

(Pages 375 -

To note the Work Programme.

378)

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 paragraph X 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.)

1. OTHER BUSINESS - IF APPROVED UNDER ITEM 3 ABOVE

To receive any declarations of interest.

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



Agenda Item 2



Three Rivers House Northway Rickmansworth Herts WD3 1RL

Policy and Resources Committee MINUTES

Of a meeting held in the Penn Chamber, Three Rivers House, Rickmansworth, on Monday, 21 July 2025 from Times Not Specified

Present: Councillors Councillor Sarah Nelmes

Oliver Cooper, Steve Drury, Vicky Edwards, Chris Lloyd, Chris Mitchell, Louise Price, Jon Tankard, Andrea Fraser, Raj Khiroya, Stephen King, Paul Rainbow and Ciaran Reed

Also in Attendance:		
Officers in Attendance:		
External in Attendance:		

PR124 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors Jon Tankard with Paul Rainbow substituting, Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE with Raj Khiroya is substituting, Reena Ranger OBE with Ciaran Reed substituting, Philip Hearn with Andrea Fraser substituting, Stephen Cox with Stephen King substituting, Rue Grewal.

PR224 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings held on Monday 09 June 2025 and Monday 23 June 2025 were confirmed as a correct record.

PR324 NOTICE OF OTHER BUSINESS

There were no items of other business.

PR424 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

PR524 COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY 2025-2028

Members received a verbal update on the Communications Strategy The strategy outlines the role of communications, the audiences, channels, and structure of the department. It also outlines the progress made at transforming the department and its strategy since 2019, and what the next steps are for continuing what has been establish as a dramatic departure from the processes and approach that came before.

Some Members raised concerns about the political bias of the Councils Press Releases towards the administration and would welcome non administration groups being featured by the Council more frequently in particular group leaders. A Member highlighted that each other council in the County had under 3 Press releases featuring the Leader of the Council whereas the Council had released 8 Press releases featuring the Leader.

Councillor Cooper raised an amendment to the strategy to be added under 'Vision' on page three:

"For the sake of clarity, this Council will abide by the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Government Publicity and any other codes of practice issued under section 4 of the Local Government Act 1986 in full, whether or not this Council has been subject to a ministerial direction."

Some members felt that the Council should abide by the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Government Publicity without the requirement of ministerial direction to ensure impartiality and fairness and bring the Council in line with other councils within the county.

Councillor Cooper called for a recorded vote with Councillor Edwards and Fraser in favour.

For: Councillors Cooper, Edwards, Reed, Fraser, King, Mitchell (6) Against: Councillors Rainbow, Price, Lloyd, Drury, Khiroya, Nelmes (6)

As the vote was tied, the Vice Chair had the casting vote and voted against causing the amendment to fall.

Councillor Cooper raised a second amendment to add under Actions regarding Objective 1 on pages 7-8

"Reduce the number of press releases issued to the median across Hertfordshire districts and boroughs, and reduce quotes attributed to the Leader and Lead Member, including quoting officers when officers' recommendations are adopted."

Some members felt that due the Council being criticised in the past for not updating the public at frequent enough level that press releases had become an important way to communicate with residents.

The amendment moved to a vote; with 4 votes in favour and 6 against with 2 abstentions, the amendment fell.

Councillor Edwards raised an amendment to add under Actions regarding Objective 1 on pages 7-8

"To expand and improve the council's website including but not limited to:

- adding a Freedom of Information disclosure log to the council's website, so that all Freedom of Information requests and responses to them are published, with information anonymised;
- expanding the number of policies and documents available and accessible on the council' website, so that all policies and frameworks can be easily found online; and
- using the Modern.gov architecture to upload decisions and the forward plan to the council's website, so councillor and the public know what is due to be proposed when."

Officers informed the committee that, with regard to Freedom of Information (FOI), the Councils Scheme of Delegation is currently available on the website. However, producing a full disclosure log would require a significant amount of officer time. It was noted that most policies and documents are available on the website with internal policies available on the intranet.

Some members noted that it is common practice for FOI responses to be published on the Council website. While compiling a disclosure log may take officer time, it could ultimately save time by reducing individual FOI requests if the public can access previously requested information online. It was also noted that the Council website only contains records going back two or three years, and that some historic policies and agendas are no longer accessible.

The amendment moved to a vote; with 4 votes in favour and 5 against with 3 abstentions, the amendment fell.

A member raised a concern over the use of "Council Language" and requested plain English be used in press releases and communicating with the public.

The Vice Chair called for a vote on the substantive motion and with 8 votes in favour and 4 against, the motion was carried.

PR624 CORPORATE COMPLIMENTS & COMPLAINTS POLICY AND VEXATIOUS & UNREASONABLE CUSTOMER BEHAVIOUR POLICY

Members received a verbal update detailing the Compliments and Complaints Policy and the Vexatious & Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy

The updated Compliments & Complaints Policy ensures greater clarity, consistency, and transparency in how complaints are handled across the council. It aligns with current best practice and recent changes to the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman (LGSCO) guidance, set out in the Complaint Handling Code. It aims to strengthen accountability and clarifies what constitutes a complaint versus other forms of feedback, service requests, or appeals. The policy also introduces clearer timelines, roles, and escalation routes, improving the customer experience and supporting early resolution.

The Vexatious & Unreasonable Customer Behaviour Policy replaces the Vexatious & Unreasonable Complaints Policy clarifying the scope of the policy to cover all customer contact not just complaints. It sets out a fair and proportionate approach to managing customer interactions that are persistent, abusive, or disproportionate, which can undermine effective service delivery and impact staff wellbeing.

The proposal was moved by Councillor Mitchell, seconded by Councillor Nelmes and agreed by general assent.

PR724 DRAFT RICKMANSWORTH CONSERVATION AREA APPRAISAL

Members received a verbal update on the Draft Rickmansworth Conservation Area Appraisal highlighting that the Appraisal was due to go to out to consultation for 6 weeks.

Councillor Andrea Fraser proposed an amendment to amend the proposed Conservation Area statement to:

"Include the areas of the north-eastern end of the High Street, including the Cloisters, and the southern end of Church Street that have proposed for removal from the Conservation Area, and to add an appraisal of those areas, including whether

individual buildings in those areas so re-added make a positive, neutral, or negative contribution."

Some members expressed concerns about removing less attractive buildings, noting that retaining them offers greater control over visually significant gateway areas. The Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan was noted for its emphasis on maintaining town gateways. Officers clarified that while there had been a suggestion to remove The Cloisters, it remains included as a character area for now. Other buildings were proposed for removal due to their lack of historic significance and neutral contribution to the conservation area.

Other members supported the amendment but raised concerns about misinterpretation of Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 and emphasised that the section includes consider of special characteristics, not solely historical value. Some members felt that the removal of buildings at major gateways like the High Street/Park Road junction, would be unjust as the buildings have a neutral contribution rather than negative and do not dilute the conservation area.

Officers clarified that consultants initially recommended excluding certain spaces but discussions led to their inclusion in the current consultation draft. Consultants believed retaining neutral contributing sites at the edges of the Conservation Area weakened then overall significance but acknowledged that including them would not significantly harm the plan.

A listed building south of the canal (Batchworth Bridge Listing 1100875) not being included within the conservation area. Officers confirmed that as a listed building, the site receives stronger protection than the conservation area plan could offer.

The timing of the public consultation occurring during the holiday period was noted and a suggestion to defer the consultation to December when community engagement would be higher was raised.

The amendment was put to the vote and with 9 votes For, 1 vote Against and 1 Abstention the amendment was carried.

The Vice Chair called for a vote on the substantive motion and was carried by general assent.

PR824 DATA MANAGEMENT POLICIES

Members received a covering report which set out the various policies to be updated. The updated documents aim to ensure compliance with legal obligations, enhance transparency and protect the rights of individuals regarding their personal data.

- Data Protection Policy (update to existing policy)
- Privacy Policy (new)
- Subject Access Request (SAR) Policy (previously contained within the Data Protection Policy)

- Freedom of Information (FOIA) and Environmental Information Regulations (EIR)
 Policy (replaces current FOIA guidance for staff)
- Data Retention Policy (update to existing policy)
- Special Category Personal Data and Criminal Offence Data Policy (new)

Councillor cooper raised an amendment to add under 13. Data Sharing and Transfers on page 8 of the Data Protection Policy:

"In accordance with the Information Commissioner Office's "Guide to International Transfers" dated 29th May 2025 and the EDPS "Guidelines 05/2021 on the Interplay between the application of Article 3 and the provisions on international transfers as per Chapter V of the GDPR" dated 14th February 2023, use of a device by an employee or councillor outside the UK will not be considered a transfer under this or any other council policy, and they shall therefore not be prohibited from accessing or require prior notification or approval to access their emails."

Officers clarified that while data transfer outside of the UK is not prohibited, all listed policies require adequate safeguards when transferring data internationally. Each request for international access is reviewed on its own merits, considering data protection laws and cyber security risks in the destination country. Notably, Australia is no longer on the approved list due to GDPR considerations. Officers further noted that the IT policy on working abroad builds on an existing policy and is not part of this current data set. Reviews include legal compliance and cyber security implications.

Some members felt that although the EU adequacy framework is understood, councillor access to emails while abroad had been inconsistently applied. Members felt that accessing council emails while overseas via a secure device should not always constitute a formal data transfer and denials of access have occurred without full consideration. Officers clarified that past rejections were appealed and subsequently reviewed, affirming that each case is assessed individually, with cybersecurity risk as a primary concern.

Officers noted that councillors should not correspond with officers via personal email accounts and highlighted that all systems must pass an annual security inspection. It was clarified that verbal communication via phone call while abroad was allowed.

The amendment moved to a vote; with 4 votes in favour and 5 against with 3 abstentions, the amendment fell.

The Vice Chair called for a vote on the substantive motion and was carried by general assent.

PR924 PARKING SERVICES AND PARKING ACCOUNT UPDATE INCLUDING THE PROPOSED EXTENSION OF THE PARKING ENFORCEMENT CONTRACT

Members were updated on the Parling Services situation, it was noted that the update seeks an extension to parking services for another 3 years in light of Local Government Reorganisation.

A member requested confirmation that the objective of the review is not to generate a surplus or profit from motorists. Officers clarified that the council is significantly below a surplus and reminded the group of the legal requirement to reinvest any surplus from parking into transportation related services.

Some members felt that generating a surplus cannot be the aim of any parking policy or fee structure, it was stated that setting fees to intentionally make a surplus would be unlawful and suggested all references implying this objective be removed. Officers responded that the parking account is currently in a significant deficit. Any surplus would be incidental, not intentional. Officers agreed to rephrase the wording to reflect that the primary objective of the review is to manage the parking account appropriately.

Members queried the high costs associated with Civil Enforcement Officers and supervisors. Concerns were raised that as the issuing of PCNs declines due to motorists becoming more aware and compliant there would be less need for Civil Enforcement Officers. Another concern raised included whether contracts allowed for cost adjustments if fewer officers were required. Clarification was also sought on third-party payments, particularly if they include consultant fees or infrastructure improvement.

Officers clarified that the current service includes 4 Civil Enforcement Officers and 1 Supervisor, with an overall service supervisor included in the new reported cost of £40,000. Third party payments reflect both the cost of the service delivery and the contractual agreement with the provider. A new piece of work is underway to assess the capacity of current schemes, eligibility for additional spaces, and potential improvements, particularly in Rickmansworth. The paring review will include recommendations on tariffs and will be presented to the committee in due course. Officers emphasised that PCN issuance should be focused on education and compliance.

The proposal was moved by Councillor Nelmes, seconded by Councillor Drury and put to the vote. With 8 votes For and 4 Against, the substantive item was carried.

PR1024 LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

To agree that this in a fit state now to be presented to county

LCWIP is a strategic approach to planning, improve routes for people, walking cycling or wheeling or other modes of transport, can apply for national funding, project run jointly, following adoption goes to HCC for adoption, any changes will be have to undertake a feasibility study. document has been amended on the public consultation, routes have been updated, revisions have been approved by committee in November 2024.

Councillor Chris Mitchell proposed an amendment to the LCWIP, Seconded by Councillor Nelmes

"The final feasibility for route 2 to include consideration of using quieter roads and a full local consultation"

Some members emphasized that consistent and careful wording would be helpful throughout the document. And felt it was legitimate to add a comment that the finer details will be addressed at a later stage.

Officers stated that every route would be part of a future feasibility study, and the routes must align with the guidance within the LCWIP, especially the principle of directness. It may not be possible to consider every alternative route but any consultation during the feasibility stage will be open to all. Officers suggested a caveat to the amendment that officers proceed with careful wording as these routes have been consulted on with the public already, they have already gone through a heavy inspection.

Some members sought clarification on whether the technical work carried out by Hertfordshire County Council, beyond just the design stage, would also be subject to consultation, particularly on roads that have already been consulted on. Officers responded that the LCWIP is a dynamic evolving policy that is reviewed every 4 to 5 years, major changes to routes should not be made solely during the feasibility stage without further public consultation. Small amendments however could be accommodated within the feasibility study.

Officers further clarified that the document outlines priority routes which have already undergone multiple review stages, these routes are intended to provide the most direct paths from point A to B. A detailed feasibility study will still be undertaken but fundamental changes to routes are not anticipated at this stage.

With the amendment to the amendment to apply to all areas of the LCWIP not just Route 2. The amendment was put to the vote and carried by general assent.

A concern was raised by Councillor Edwards regarding the suitability of the proposed route for a priority cycle route W17. Some members were unhappy to designate the route as a priority due to the potential consequences. Which included the implementation of cycling interventions could result in either a one way system or a dedicated cycling route which could lead to bottlenecks, slower car journeys and discourage pedestrians. With this in mind Councillor Edwards raised an amendment to the LCWIP, seconded by Councillor Cooper.

"To remove route W17 from the LCWIP."

Officers clarified that if the route was removed from the plan now, it would not proceed to the feasibility study, meaning there would be no opportunity to address the concerns. There is no current proposal for a one way system with Three Rivers on this route. If the route were removed, the council would lose leverage for securing developer contributions which are essential for funding and developing cycling infrastructure. Without an approved route, there is no design phase and without design, there is no justification to seek developer funding.

Officers further noted that the Route W17 had not objections lodged against it. The route was also a key connector between Watford and Dacorum.

Some members felt that developer contributions needed more scrutiny. Concerns had been raised about developers using the cycle route as a material consideration in

planning application. It was argued that this could be harmful to the area and not in the public interest, even if perceived as a benefit.

The amendment was put to the vote and with 4 votes For, 7 Against and 1 Abstention, the amendment fell.

Councillor Reed proposed an amendment to the LCWIP, seconded by Councillor Cooper

"To remove routes 8 and 14 from the LCWIP

Concerns were raised for both Route 8 and 14, with route 8 received 96 comments against following consultation and 101 against route 14. There had been developments in the area since the initial consultation, and the conversations currently happening were disconnected from the prior discussions with the public.

Further concerns were raised by some members in regard to Route 8 having significant issues, particularly with a narrower section where cycling provisions would overlap with pedestrian pathways. The concern was raised that this could result in a de facto closure of the pavement which is not supported as it would limit pedestrian access. Concerns were also raised about narrowing lanes in sections of the roads that frequently accommodate large vehicles which would not be feasible. The lack of subsequent public consultation was highlighted; there has been no return to the community for updated feedback after the original consultation.

Issues were raised with Route 14, particularly school access and being a part of the local plan with substantial development scheduled. The route also passed through a quiet lane with limited traffic and there was concern that restricting this road would restrict access to leisure facilities and schools.

Other members expressed strong disagreement with removing the routes, emphasising that removing the routes would prevent scrutiny and further feasibility study and limite the possibility of finding workable solutions. The Parish Council and residents' association had previously supported the extension of one of the routes. It was noted that objections to the routes may have been influenced by local political campaigns.

A further concern was raised in regard to developer planning gain, as developers may claim planning gain if the routes are included in the LCWIP and secure funding however if the routes are removed, the developer obligations or contributions related to the routes would be lost, which could result in missed opportunities for the development of infrastructure.

Councillor Reed called for a recorded vote with Councillor Cooper and Edwards in favour. The amendment was put to the vote:

For: Councillors Cooper, Edwards, Reed and Fraser

Against: Councillors Rainbow, Price, Lloyd, Drury, Khiroya and Nelmes

Abstain: Councillors King and Mitchell

With 4 votes for, 6 against and 2 abstentions, the amendment fell.

Councillor Fraser raised an additional amendment to the LCWIP, seconded by Councillor Cooper:

"To remove the part of route 2 between the High Street and Solomon's Hill from the LCWIP."

Some members expressed concern on the feasibility of amending Route 2 due to the unstable nature of the path including stairs and steep drops which cannot be expanded upon.

The amendment was put to the vote with 4 votes For, 6 Against and 2 Abstentions, the amendment fell.

Councillor Edwards raised a further amendment to the LCWIP, seconded by Councillor Cooper

"To add to the LCWIP a new Priority Walking Area in Abbots Langley, including pedestrian improvements that would not affect vehicular traffic at:

- Tibbs Hill Road, including but not limited to a signalised crossing
- Tibbs Hill Road to Bedmond
- Existing footpaths connecting Tibbs Hill Road to Langley Road, Marlin Square, and the Crescent
- The Crescent and Breakspeare Close, connecting these existing footpaths to Abbots Langley High Street
- Langley Road and the existing footpaths to Wadham Road and Berkeley Close via Trowley Rise
- Abbots Langley High Street, including but not limited to pavement improvements from Hannover Gardens and Breakspeare Place to the village centre, and a pedestrian crossing near Vine House
- Gallows Hill Lane, including but not limited to improvements to bench provision
- Gallows Hill to Station Road, replacing or in addition to footpath under the railway arch

For illustrative purposes, this would cover:

Typical interventions would include:

- Increasing the width of footways
- Public realm improvements, including:
- o Prioritised repairs to footways
- o Insetting of footpaths away from roads
- o Continuous level footways
- o Raised tables

- Provision of high-quality street furniture and provision of benches
- Improving of pedestrian facilities at traffic signal junctions, including:
- o Additional pedestrian crossings
- o Reduction in crossing distances
- o Adding pedestrian railings
- o Changing 'staggered' to 'straight across' pedestrian crossings.
- Street lighting improvements
- Decluttering and maintenance
- Dropped kerbs and tactile paving.
- Wayfinding
- Measures to assist with access to/by other modes i.e. bus stops, stations, disabled parking."

Some members noted the positives of the LCWIP such as the encouragement of pedestrians within the district, particularly in Carpenders Park and Chorleywood. However it was noted that a priority walking route for Abbotts Langley had not been drafted, which could be a missed opportunity.

Members were reminded that the LCWIP at its current stage had gone through numerous rounds of scrutiny and any substantial amendments may have to be assessed as a review once the plan had been made but work to routes within Abbotts Langley could be undertaken separately to the LCWIP.

Councillor Edwards called for a recorded vote which was supported by Councillors Cooper and Fraser.

For: Councillors Cooper, Edwards, Reed and Fraser

Against: Councillors Rainbow, Price, Lloyd, Drury, Khiroya and Nelmes

Abstain: Councillors King and Mitchell

With the amendment put to the vote with 4 votes For, 6 Against and 2 Abstentions the amendment fell.

The Vice-Chair called for a vote on the substantive motion, seconded by Councillor Price, with 8 votes For and 4 votes Against, the substantive motion was carried.

PR1124 COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE REVIEW

Members received a verbal report surrounding undertaking a Community Governance Review aiming to parish the two unparished areas within the district.

Some members opposed the timing of the review. Government advice had been that Parish and Community Governance Reviews should not proceed in the context of potential Local Government Reorganisation. A member questioned the rationale behind initiating this process

now, particularly when a prior substantive CGR had included a referendum whereas this does not. Officers noted that the Terms of Reference include the provisions for public consultation.

Officers clarified that the review had been brought forward to clarify governance arrangements across the district, especially given the likely coexistence of parished and unparished areas under any new authority. It was emphasised that this is not an attempt to circumvent LGR, but rather to create consistency and local accountability.

Members raised a concern about unparished areas with significant assets, asking whether these would be disadvantaged in the redistribution of assets if a new governance structure is implemented. Officers clarified that this review would not be about asset transfer but rather about ensuring local representation and influence over community matters.

The Vice Chair moved to a vote to not undertake the CGR at this time but to keep the door open. With 10 votes For, 1 vote Against and 1 Abstention, the recommendations fell.

CHAIR



Agenda Item 5

Three Rivers District Council

Committee Report
Outline Business Case for the
Installation of Additional Rooftop
Solar PV at Three Rivers House

Date: 19/08/25



Policy and Resources Committee 8th September 2025

PART I

Outline Business Case for the Installation of Additional Rooftop Solar PV at Three Rivers House

1 Summary

- 1.1 This report proposes that additional rooftop solar PV is installed at Three Rivers House, funded by council capital budget and repaid electricity savings.
- 1.2 The solar PV system is predicted to generate 35,646 kWh of solar electricity which represents 8% of TRH's electricity usage. The solar PV system will save 6 tCO2 and £8,635 per year in utility costs, resulting in a capital payback period of 7.4 years and a Net Present Value of £88,410.75 over 25 years
- 1.3 This report recommends that the Outline Business Case (OBC) is recommended to the Joint Leadership Team and from there the Policy & Resources Committee. This report provides background context and a high-level overview of the OBC, which can be found in Appendix 1.

2 Details

- 2.1 Three Rivers District Council are committed to achieving net zero by 2030 for our own emissions and to inspire and enable a net zero district by 2045. Achieving net carbon zero and being climate resilient is one of four core pillars of the corporate framework. Residents endorsed this as a priority in the recent resident survey conducted in February-March 2024 when environment/climate change ranked as the 3rd biggest concern for households.
- 2.2 Most of the council's carbon emissions are emitted from two main sources 1) council buildings and 2) council vehicle fleet. To achieve net zero, the council must reduce carbon emissions from its vehicle fleet by ~850 tonnes per year by 2030 and reduce carbon emissions from its "core buildings" (excluding small buildings like pavilions) by ~838 tonnes per year by 2030.
- 2.3 In 2022, the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) conducted a survey of the council's core buildings to establish a baseline of emissions. The survey revealed that the core buildings emitted 942 tons (t) of carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the 2019/20 fiscal year. APSE also projected a trajectory towards netzero based on the completion of a suite of building decarbonisation projects. One of the projects recommended by APSE was the installation of additional rooftop solar PV at Three Rivers House (TRH).
- 2.4 Significant carbon savings have already been made at TRH primarily through the installation of a rooftop solar PV system to two roof aspects of the west wing (2018), a server room upgrade (2022/23) and the installation of an Air Source Heat Pump (2023/24). These decarbonisation projects helped reduce TRH's carbon emissions by 95 tonnes (or 40%) in 2023/24 compared to the previous year.

- 2.5 While significant progress has been made, TRH consumed 430,297 kWh of electricity in 2023 and is one of the biggest electricity consuming buildings in the council estate. Therefore, the installation of additional rooftop solar PV would have a meaningful impact on the council's efforts to become net zero by 2030.
- 2.6 In February 2025, the council allocated £500k of additional capital funding per year (for financial years 2025/26, 26/27, and 27/28) for decarbonisation projects to help the council to achieve its net zero target.¹
- 2.7 As such, council officers recommend the installation of additional rooftop solar PV at TRH and an Outline Business Case has been created which can be found in Appendix 1.
- 2.8 We acknowledge that local government reform introduces uncertainty around the future ownership of Three Rivers House. However, with a payback period of only 7.4, combined with the added benefits of improving the building's saleability and rentability, council officers suggest installation of additional solar PV is still a sensible investment.

2.9 Solar PV Design

- 2.10 Normally, a feasibility study would be undertaken to confirm the viability of installing rooftop solar PV at TRH. However, the presence of existing rooftop solar PV already demonstrates its viability. Additionally, in 2023, a structural roof survey was completed which raised no significant concerns about the installation of additional rooftop solar PV at TRH.
- 2.11 Development Management have been consulted, and full planning permission is not required but prior approval is, as it is likely it can be installed under permitted development.
- 2.12 To facilitate the creation of the Outline Business Case a competitive tender process was completed in May 2025, supported by Watford Borough Council. That tender process identified the optimum solar PV design and installer to a maximum budget of £50,000.
- 2.13 The council received ten tender proposals which were scored on quality (60%) and price (40%). The highest scoring proposal was submitted by Chiltern Solar.
- 2.14 Chiltern Solar is a Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) accredited solar PV installer established in 2011 and based in Chesham, Buckinghamshire. Chiltern Solar installed the existing solar PV system at TRH in 2018 utilising Fronius Symo invertors.
- 2.15 Chiltern Solar have proposed a 47.70 kWp comprising of 106 450w PV panels. The PV panels will be connected to 2 Fronius Symo invertors which will convert Direct Current (DC) electricity in mains electricity (AC).
- 2.16 Figures 1 identifies the roof area where the proposed solar PV system will be installed.

 $^{^1}$ https://moderngov.threerivers.gov.uk/documents/g1461/Agenda%20frontsheet%2025th-Feb-2025%2019.30%20Full%20Council.pdf?T=0

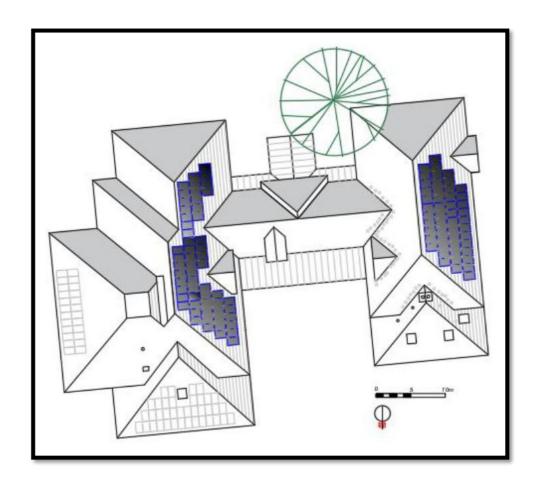


Figure 1 Proposed Solar PV Locations (Plan)

- 2.17 More information on the proposed solar PV system and how it will be installed can found in the Outline Business Case (Appendix 1).
- 2.18 The warranties are 25 years for the solar panels, 10 years for the inverters and 2 years for installation and workmanship.

2.19 Outline Business Case Summary

- 2.20 The quoted cost of the solar PV system is £48,038 (excluding VAT).
- 2.21 Please note that this cost does not include two additional items that council officers would recommend:
- 2.21.1 Structural Survey: Chiltern Solar did not specify a structural survey because one was carried out in 2023. However, that structural survey was not based on a specific solar PV design. Now we have the proposed design (roof location, number of panels, panel layout etc) another, more specific structural survey could be completed. The estimated cost of the survey is £1,075 (exc VAT).
- 2.21.2 Bird Blocker: A bird blocker is a mesh that stops birds nesting under the PV panels. The estimated cost is £1,700 (exc VAT).
- 2.22 Including the above items increases the project cost to £50,813 but would help mitigate the risk of significant structural and operational issues in the future.
- 2.23 The system will be self-cleaning, and due to prohibitive access issues to the roof a maintenance contract will not be included, operating like the existing array. Instead, the business case, **and Sustainability Fund Financial Appraisal**

- (Appendix 4) includes a provision of £1,000 per annum towards ad hoc maintenance, repairs and equipment replacement.
- 2.24 The solar PV system is predicted to generate 35,646 kWh of solar electricity which represents 8% of TRH's electricity usage. Additionally, the solar PV system will save 6 tCO2 and Appendix 4 Sustainability Fund Financial Appraisal shows it save ~ £8,635 per year in utility costs, resulting in a capital payback period of 7.4 years and a Net Present Value of £88,410.75 over 25 years.

3 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 3.1 The council has the option of not installing additional rooftop solar PV at TRH. However, this option results in Strategic Risk 10: Failure to deliver net-zero carbon commitments Impacts negatively on the council's ability to achieve net zero by 2030.
- 3.2 The council has the option to wait until more grant funding becomes available. However, at the time of writing no grant funding is available. Please note that grant funding is often awarded through a competitive process, so even if eligible grant funding becomes available, there is no guarantee the council will be successful in its grant application.

4 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 The programme to decarbonise council buildings is set out in the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy (2023-2027).
- 4.2 Installing rooftop solar PV at TRH will contribute to 3 key themes in the Corporate Framework 2023-2026:
- 4.3 "Net Carbon Zero & Climate Resilient": The rooftop solar PV will remove 6 tCO₂ annually and 152 tCO₂ over its lifetime. The council class carbon emissions from TRH as Scope 1 (direct) emissions. Therefore, reducing TRH's carbon emissions will support the council's commitment to be net zero by 2030. The programme to decarbonise council buildings is set out in the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy (2023-2027).
- 4.4 "Provide responsive and responsible local leadership": By installing additional rooftop solar PV on our headquarters, we will show residents and businesses that we are leading by example and will encourage others to follow.
- 4.5 "Support and enable sustainable communities": The rooftop solar PV will help improve both the environmental and financial sustainability of TRH. TRH is an important community building which rooftop solar PV will help make cleaner, greener and more resilient.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 It is recommended that existing council capital budget is used to fund this project. Therefore, it is recommended that the OBC should be considered by the Policy & Resources Committee on the 8th September 2025.

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 climate change contained in the Climate Change Act 2008.

6.2 A TRDC design and build standard contract will be agreed, which will require legal approval.

7 Staffing Implications

7.1 None

8 Equal Opportunities Implications

8.1 A Short Equality Impact and Outcome Assessment has been completed and can be found at Appendix 2. There are no negative impacts identified as arising from the project.

9 Climate Change and Sustainability Implications

9.1 A sustainability impact assessment can be found at Appendix 3 with an average total score of 3.13.

Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment Summary				
Homes, buildings, infrastructure, equipment and energy	3.40			
Travel	N/A			
Goods and Consumption	3.00			
Ecology	N/A			
Adaptation	N/A			
Engagement and Influence	3.00			
Total Overall Average Score	3.13			

10 Community Safety Implications

- 10.1 None.
- 11 Public Health implications
- 11.1 None.
- 12 Customer Services Centre Implications
- 12.1 None.
- 13 Communications and Website Implications
- 13.1 Once installed the website will be updated, and communication will be required.

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 with the climate emergency listed as a strategic risk.

14.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Climate and Sustainability service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

14.3

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Res pon se	Risk Rating
The Council fails to act to reduce its' CO ₂ emissions	The council net zero target of 2030, corporate framework net zero carbon theme and requirements of the Climate and Emergency Sustainability Strategy are unlikely to be met 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 note and continue to provide a mandate for officers to progress decarbonisation projects.	Treat	0
Damage to the leisure centre roof due to solar PV installation.	There is an inherent risk with solar PV of damaging the roof either during installation or afterwards because of the additional weight.	This risk will be mitigated by carefully reviewing (with help from the Property Team) the panel mounting system and installation method the solar PV design recommends. A structural roof survey before installation to confirm the roof can support the weight.	Treat	6

14.4 In officer's opinion the risk that the council fails to act to reduce its emissions would prejudice the achievement of the Strategic Plan and therefore presents a strategic risk.

Recommendation

14.5 That:

Policy and Resources Committee instruct officers to install the proposed PV Solar Array on Three Rivers House, to be installed by Chiltern Solar who were the successful bidder from the competitive tender process.

The Policy & Resources Committee provide delegated authority to the Assistant Director For Environment to appoint the recommended solar PV installer at a cost of £50,813 (excl. VAT).

Report prepared by: Joanna Hewitson, Climate and Sustainability Strategy Officer,

Background Papers

None

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Appendix 1: Outline Business Case for the Installation of Rooftop Solar PV at Three Rivers House

Appendix 2: Short Equality Impact and Outcome Assessment Appendix 3: Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment Appendix 4: Sustainability Fund Financial Appraisal





OUTLINE BUSINESS CASE 05/06/2025

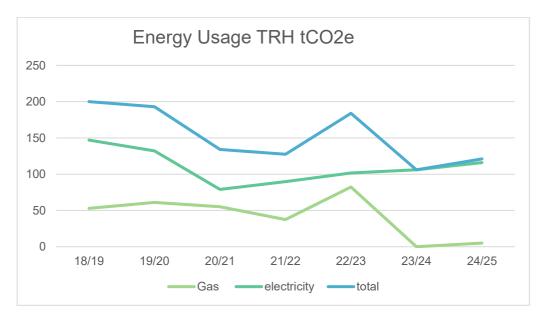
Installation of additional rooftop solar PV at Three Rivers House funded by council capital budget and repaid through electricity cost savings



1. Executive Summary & Recommendations

Provide a summary of key points of the Business Case and recommendations for the governance group to consider.

- 1.1 This Outline Business Case (OBC) recommends that additional rooftop solar photovoltaic (PV) is installed at Three Rivers House (TRH), funded by council capital budget and repaid through electricity cost savings.
- 1.2 A full feasibility study has not been undertaken, as the presence of existing rooftop solar PV at TRH already demonstrates its viability.
- 1.3 The cost of the solar PV system is £50,813 (excluding VAT) which has been identified through a competitive tender process.
- 1.4 The solar PV system is predicted to generate £8,635 of electricity cost savings per year (after allowance for repairs, maintenance and equipment replacement), resulting in a capital payback period of 7.4 years.
- 1.5 The solar PV system is forecasted to save 6 tonnes of CO₂ (tCO₂) per year and 152 tCO₂ over its lifetime. The estimated embodied carbon of the rooftop solar PV is 28 tCO₂ resulting in a payback period of 4.6 years.
- 1.6 The installation of additional solar PV will complement the server room upgrade (2022/23) and Air Source Heat Pump installation (2023/24) which helped reduce the buildings carbon emissions by 63 tonnes (or 34%%) in 2024/25 compared to the pre installation year.
- 1.7 Figure 1 demonstrates the significant reduction in energy consumption since 2018/19, even when considering the impacts of the COVID years. The PV extension will support the cost of the running the ASHP.



Tonnes							
CO2e	18/19	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24	24/25
Gas	53	61	55	38	82	0	5
electricity	147	132	79	90	102	106	116
total	200	193	134	127	184	106	121

Figure 1 Three Rivers House Gas and Electricity use

1.8 We acknowledge that local government reform introduces uncertainty around the future ownership of Three Rivers House. However, with a payback period of 7.4 years, combined with the added benefits of improving the building's saleability and rentability, we suggest installation of additional solar PV is still a sensible investment.

2. Objectives

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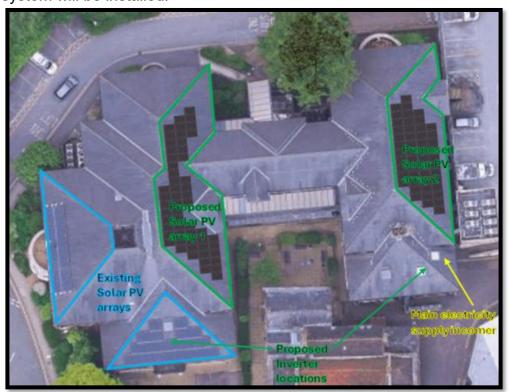
- 2.1 The objective of this project is to contribute to the council having a net zero building estate and to meet its ambitions, as set out in the approved Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy, where the council committed to achieving net zero by 2030 for our own emissions. An important element of the council's ambition to achieve net zero is the decarbonisation of council buildings. The installation of additional rooftop solar PV at Three River House will support the council's corporate plan objective to achieve carbon net zero.
- 2.2 A second objective is to reduce the running costs of the electrical requirement of Three Rivers House.

3. Background and context

- 3.1 In 2018, a 17.5 kw solar PV system was installed at TRH consisting of 65 x Seraphim All Black 265w panels connected to a Fronius Symo-7.0 7kw Invertor and a Fronius Symo-10.0 10kw invertor. The solar PV system generates ~10MWh per year.
- 3.2 In 2022, the Association for Public Service Excellence (APSE) completed energy surveys of the council's core buildings. The APSE surveys identified a range of potential projects that could reduce the carbon emissions of the buildings. APSE recommended the installation of additional rooftop solar PV at TRH.
- 3.3 In 2023, a structural roof survey was completed which raised no significant concerns about the installation of additional rooftop solar PV at TRH.
- 3.4 In February 2025, the council allocated £500k of additional capital funding per year (for financial years 2025/26, 26/27, and 27/28) for decarbonisation projects to help the council to achieve its net zero target.¹
- In May 2025 a competitive tender process was completed, , to identify the optimum solar PV design and installer to a maximum budget of £50,000.
- 3.6 The council received ten tender proposals which were scored on quality (60%) and price (40%). The highest scoring proposal was submitted by Chiltern Solar.
- 3.7 Chiltern Solar is a Microgeneration Certification Scheme (MCS) accredited solar PV installer established in 2011 and based in Chesham, Buckinghamshire. Chiltern Solar installed the existing solar PV system at TRH in 2018 utilising Fronius Symo invertors.

¹ https://moderngov.threerivers.gov.uk/documents/g1461/Agenda%20frontsheet%2025th-Feb-2025%2019.30%20Full%20Council.pdf?T=0

- 3.8 Chiltern Solar have proposed a 47.70 kWp comprising of 106 450w PV panels. ² The PV panels will be connected to 2 Fronius Symo invertors which will convert Direct Current (DC) electricity in mains electricity (AC).
- 3.9 Using 2 additional Fronius Symo invertors enables the solar generation of both the existing and new PV systems to be monitored through one online monitoring tool. This is an advantage as it will enable solar PV performance reporting at TRH to be undertaken through one monitoring tool, rather than two (i.e. having separate monitoring tools for the existing and new PV systems).
- 3.10 Figures 2 and 3 identifies the roof area where the proposed solar PV system will be installed.



Blue Box = Existing solar PV
Green Box = Proposed roof area for new solar PV
Green Arrow = Proposed invertor locations for new solar PV
Yellow Arrow = Main electricity meter location

Figure 2 Proposed Solar PV Locations (Aerial Photograph)

² kWp stands for kilowatt-peak, and it refers to the maximum output of a solar power system under ideal conditions. 450w means a PV panel can generate 450 watts of electricity when exposed to full sunlight.

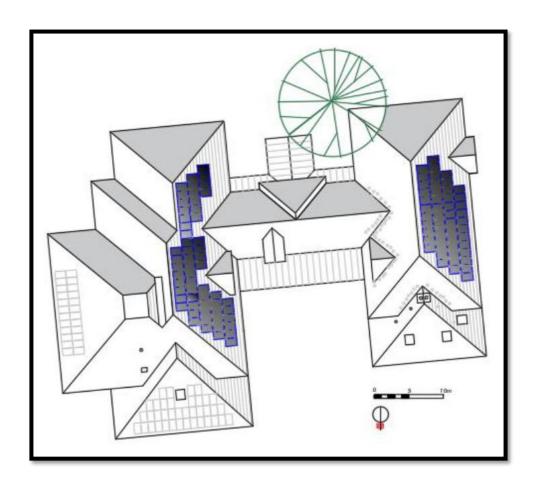


Figure 3 Proposed Solar PV Locations (Plan)

- 3.11 The solar PV panels will be mounted to the roof using the Fastensol pitched roof mounting system. The mounting system will be black, as will the PV panels, so the new PV system matches the existing system. A product called Solar Flash will be used to help ensure the installation of the mounting brackets does not cause water ingress in the building.
- 3.12 Chiltern Solar predict that the solar PV system will take 10 working days on-site to install the solar PV system which will require scaffolding.
- 3.13 Chiltern Solar propose scaffolding with a working platform along the two main east floor roof gutter lines, along with edge protection (with meshing and toe boards) up each roof. A hoist will be used, guided by two banksmen, to lift the PV panels onto the roof. The exact location of the scaffolding and the secure storage compound is to be agreed with the Property & Major Projects Team.
- 3.14 The warranties are 25 years for the solar panels, 10 years for the inverters and 2 years for installation and workmanship.
- 3.15 Building tenants will be informed of the works before work starts on-site. A one-hour power shutdown will be required for the final system connection. The power shutdown will be undertaken in partnership with Projects & Facilities Manager to ensure a safe shutdown and minimal disruption to tenants.
- 3.16 Development Management have advised planning permission is not required and the work therefore falls within permitted development rights. A prior approval application will need to be submitted.

- 3.17 The solar PV system is predicted to generate 35,646 kWh of solar electricity and save 6 tCO₂ and ~£8,635 per year, and capital payback period of 7.4 years.
- 3.18 The quoted cost of the solar PV system is £48,038 (excluding VAT). Please note that this cost does not include several items the council may want to consider, at an additional cost:
 - Structural Survey: Chiltern Solar did not specify a structural survey because one was carried out in 2023. However, that structural survey was not based on a specific solar PV design. Now we have the proposed design (roof location, number of panels, layout etc) another, more specific structural survey could be completed. The estimated cost of the survey is £1,075 (exc VAT).
 - Bird Blocker: A bird blocker is a mesh that stops birds nesting under the PV panels. The estimated cost is £1,700 (exc VAT).
 - Building Consumption Monitoring: Additional functionality that enables
 the electricity consumption of the building from the grid, and solar
 electricity export to the grid, to be monitored through the same online
 tool as solar PV generation. This enables more detailed performance
 reporting (e.g. peak electricity demand periods vs peak solar
 generation periods). The estimated cost is £1,000 (exc VAT).
 - Annual Maintenance & Repair Contract: A contract with the solar PV installer to visit TRH on an annual basis to clean, test, maintain and repair the solar PV system. The estimated cost is unknown.
- 3.19 It is recommended that a structural survey and bird blocker are added to the project as it helps reduce the risk of significant structural and operational issues in the future.
- 3.20 The new solar PV array is forecasted to generate 8% of TRH's electricity needs and therefore export minimal electricity to the grid. Therefore, it is suggested Building Consumption Monitoring is not needed and can be easily added later if required.
- 3.21 While regular maintenance and repair is best practice to maintain the efficiency of the solar PV system, access to the roof at TRH is challenging and would require costly scaffolding to undertake the works. Therefore, it is suggested that an Annual Maintenance & Repair Contract is not included, but like the existing system repairs, maintenance and equipment replacement are done on an ad hoc basis. A provision of £1000 per annum has been made in the business case.
- 3.22 Appendix 4 details the Sustainability Funds Financial Appraisal and is summarised in Table 1 based on the tendered cost of £50,813:

Table 1 Sustainability Funds Financial Appraisal

Capital Cost (inc structural survey & bird blocker)	£50,813
Forecasted Annual Electricity Saving (after allowance for	£8,635
repairs/maintenance/equipment replacement)	
Capital Payback Period (in years)	7.4
Net Present Value (25 years at 3.5% discount rate)	£88410.5

3.23 Installing rooftop solar PV at TRH will contribute to 3 key themes in the Corporate Framework 2023-2026:

- 3.24 "Net Carbon Zero & Climate Resilient": The rooftop solar PV will remove 6 tCO2 annually and 152 tCO2 over its lifetime. The council class carbon emissions from TRH as Scope 1 (direct) emissions. Therefore, reducing TRH's carbon emissions will support the council's commitment to be net zero by 2030. The programme to decarbonise council buildings is set out in the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Strategy (2023-2027).
- 3.25 "Provide responsive and responsible local leadership": By installing additional rooftop solar PV on our headquarters, we will show residents and businesses that we are leading by example and will encourage others to follow.
- 3.26 "Support and enable sustainable communities": The rooftop solar PV will help improve both the environmental and financial sustainability of TRH. TRH is an important community building which rooftop solar PV will help make cleaner, greener and more resilient.

What other programmes, projects or services does it link to?

Property and Major Projects

4. Options

	Option 1 –	Option 2 – Recommended	Option 3 – Wait for grant
	Do Nothing	-	funding
Description of the Option A brief description including what is in and out of scope	Do not install additional solar PV at TRH.	Rooftop solar PV is installed at TRH funded by council capital budget and repaid through electricity cost savings	Wait for grant funding to become available to fund the additional solar PV at TRH negating the need for the council to fund the solar PV.
Timing Approximate start, end and delivery dates Include key milestones	N/A	Corporate Management Team – 24 th June Joint Leadership Team – 8 th July Policy & Resources Committee – 8 th September Project Start – Q4 2025	Timing unknown. At the time of writing no grant funding is available. The primary source of funding for solar PV to public buildings (excluding schools and hospitals) is the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. However, the PSDS focuses on heat decarbonisation. So, while the PSDS will provide grant funding for solar PV, it must be installed in conjunction with a heat pump. TRH already has a heat pump (part funded by the PSDS) and so will not be eligible for PSDS funding in the future. Please note that grant funding is often awarded through a competitive process, so even if eligible grant funding becomes available, there is no guarantee the council will be successful in its grant application.
Costs and resources Include capital and revenue costs Include staffing requirements	£0	£48,038 quoted cost for solar PV system £1,075 estimated cost for structural survey £1,700 estimated cost for bird blocker	£0
Cashable Benefits High level benefits that will deliver savings against a specific budget code	N/A	£8,635 - forecasted annual electricity savings, after allowance for £1000/ annum for ad hoc repairs, maintenance and equipment replacement	None – until grant funding becomes available.

Non-Cashable	None	6 Scope 1 tCO ₂ emissions	None – until grant funding
Benefits		saved per year.	becomes available.
Benefits such as efficiency savings and increased		152 lifetime Scope 1 tCO ₂ emissions savings.	
customer satisfaction		Demonstrates best practice.	

Risks and
Opportunities
High level risks
and
opportunities
associated with
the option

Risks: Strategic Risk 10 – Failure to deliver netzero carbon commitments -Impacts negatively on the council's ability to achieve net zero by 2030.

Opportunities: None

Risks:

There is an inherent risk with solar PV of damaging the roof either during installation or afterwards because of the additional weight. This risk will be mitigated by carefully reviewing (with help from the Property Team) the panel mounting system and installation method the solar PV design recommends. Additionally, we will commission another structural roof survey, based on the proposed PV design, before installation to confirm the roof can support the weight.

The solar PV could generate less electricity than forecast which would reduce the electricity cost savings to the council and lengthen the payback period. Alternatively, the solar PV could overperform forecast and generate more benefits than estimated in this OBC.

Opportunities:
The opportunity is for the council to install solar PV on one of the council's biggest electricity consuming buildings.

Risks:

No grant funding becomes available for which the project is eligible, or the council is not successful in its grant application resulting in:

Strategic Risk 10 – Failure to deliver netzero carbon commitments - Impacts negatively on the council's ability to achieve net zero by 2030.

Opportunities:

In December 2024 the UK Government published the Clean Power 2030 Action Plan. The mass deployment of solar PV is a key strategic action.
While the Action Plan doesn't promise new, or more, solar PV grants, it is reasonable to assume that solar PV grants will be available in the future.

1. Engagement with support services

1.1 The Property & Major Projects, Climate Change & Sustainability, Procurement teams, and Director of Finance collaborated to undertake the solar PV tender and create this OBC.

2. Data Protection

2.1 A Data Privacy Impact Assessment is not required.

3. Equalities Impact

3.1 A Short Equality Impact and Outcome Assessment has been completed. There are no negative impacts identified as arising from the project.

4. Sustainability Impact

- 4.1 The Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment has been completed as per the table below.
- 4.2 The project scores highly in the homes, buildings, infrastructure, equipment and energy section as it will improve energy efficiency and reduce grid electricity use.
- 4.3 The project scores highly in the goods and consumption section because solar PV panels can be recycled.
- 4.4 The project scores highly in the engagement & influence section as installing solar PV on a community building and point of local interest will demonstrate best practice.
- 4.5 All other sections are not applicable due to limited nature of the project.

Climate and Sustainability Impact Assessment Summa	ry
Homes, buildings, infrastructure, equipment and	
energy	3.40
Travel	N/A
Goods and Consumption	3.00
Ecology	N/A
Adaptation	N/A
Engagement and Influence	3.00
Total Overall Average Score	3.13

5. Decision making and governance

- 5.1 This OBC has been reviewed by the Head of Property & Major Projects, Associate Director for Environment and Director of Finance.
- 5.2 And will be considered by:
 - Joint Leadership Team on 19/08/25
 - Policy and Resources Committee on 08/09/25.
 - The Climate Change & Sustainability Team will produce quarterly and annual reports to track solar PV key performance indicators.

6. Next steps

• Instruct officers to install a 47.7kwp Solar PV array on the roof of Three Rivers House, appointing Chiltern Solar as the installer.

Meeting where authority to proceed was obtained	Date of meeting
JLT	19/08/25





Equality impact Assessment



	Project Information				
Project Name This should clearly explain what service / policy / strategy / change you are assessing	Three Rivers House Solar PV Project				
Service Area Main team responsible for the policy, practice, service or function being assessed	Climate Change and Sustainability Property and Major Projects				
EIA Author Name and Job Title	Joanna Hewitson, Climate Change and Sustainability Manager				
Date EIA drafted	06/06/25				
ID number This will be added by the Strategy and Partnerships Team	CC005				

Executive summary

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:

- If the EIA is attached to a report, summarise the report.
- Provide information on whether any of the following communities could be affected by the policy, practice, service or function, or by how it is delivered?
- (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership) in addition, TRDC recognises other communities may be vulnerable to disadvantage, this includes carers, people experiencing domestic abuse, substance misusers, homeless people, looked after children, (ex) armed forces personnel.

This Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) evaluates a project to install solar photovoltaic (PV) panels to the roof of Three Rivers House in Rickmansworth.

Three Rivers House is the council's headquarters and is among the highest electricity-consuming council buildings. The installation of solar PV panels will reduce the carbon emissions of the building and help the council to achieve its aim of carbon net zero operations by 2030.

Reducing carbon emissions is essential to tackling climate change, as excess carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases trap heat in the atmosphere, leading to global warming and its associated environmental impacts

This EIA accompanies a report which outlines the proposed rooftop solar PV design for Three Rivers House. The report also identifies the environmental benefits and financial costs and savings of that design.

Because the project is limited to the roof of Three Rivers House it has no impact on the wider community and will not disadvantage residents, including those residents with protected characteristics.

Mitigations					
Protected Characteristic	Potential Issue Against each protected characteristics, make a frank and realistic assessment of what issues may or do occur	Mitigating Actions How can the negative impacts be reduced or avoided by the mitigating measures? Is further engagement with specific communities needed? Is more research or monitoring needed? Does there need to be a change in the proposal itself?			
Age	None	N/A			
Disability	None	N/A			
Gender reassignment (or affirmation)	None	N/A			
Pregnancy or maternity	None	N/A			
Race	None	N/A			
Religion or belief	None	N/A			
Sex	None	N/A			
Sexual Orientation	None	N/A			
Marriage and Civil Partnership	None	N/A			
The council recognises other communities may be vulnerable to disadvantage, this includes carers,	None Page 43	N/A			

people experiencing domestic abuse, substance misusers, homeless people, looked after children	
looked after children and care leavers, (ex)	
armed forces personnel.	

Actions Planned

In this section you can add information on additional or proactive steps you are taking that enhance equity, engagement or equality of access to services, as well as those mitigating actions identified in the section above that will be undertaken.

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.

None

Additional Information

Space to provide any additional information in relation to protected characteristics or equity, diversity, equality and inclusion.

None

Sign off:

Equalities Lead Officer	Date
Shivani Davé	06/06/2025





TRDC Climate and Sustainabilit	ty Impact Assesment
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Score / Colour Code	Impact and Recommendation			
Dark green (4)	een (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.				
Considerable inconsistency with the council's sustainability objectives. Strong recommendation to review these aspects and fin				
Red (1)	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 th top of the page.

	Name of project/policy/procurement and date Installation of Additional Rooftop Solar PV at Three Rivers House			
0	Brief description (1-2 sentences):	The proposal aims to install rooftop solar PV at Three Rivers House. The assessment has been scored to show risk of not refinancing the climate change team (column E), and the benefits (row f) of taking action to provide a finacially resileint workforce.		
the				

Homes, buildings, infrastructure, equipment and energy					
Question		Score (1 to 4)	Justification or mitigation	Impact (select from list)	Revised Score (1-4)
What effect will this project have on overall energy use (electricity or other fuels) e.g. in buildings, appliances or machinery?	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4	Solar PV will reduce grid electricity use at Three Rivers House.	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4
What effect will this project have on the direct use of fossil fuels such as gas, petrol, diesel, oil?	Some positive impact for sustainability. Recommendation to further enhance this aspect where possible and proceed.	3	Solar PV will provide renewable electricity to the Air Source Heat Pump that replaced the	Some positive impact for sustainability. Recommendation to further enhance this aspect where possible and proceed.	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	Not Applicable	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0

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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 "A" or BREAM "excellent").	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4	of the building by reducing the requirement	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4
		Some possible negative impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to review these aspects and find mitigations where possible.		Solar PV panels are not made from recycled	Some possible negative impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to review these aspects and find mitigations where possible.	2
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	Not Applicable	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0
Page 7	Will this increase the supply of renewable energy? e.g. installing solar panels; switching to a renewable energy tariff	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4	Solar PV will increase the supply of	Strong positive impacts for sustainability. Recommendation to proceed as is with this aspect.	4
4 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	Not Applicable	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0
	Average Score		3.40			3.40

	Travel					
	Question	Impact	Score (0-4)	Justification or mitigation	Impact (select from list)	Revised Score (0-4)
		Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how			Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how	
	Reducing travel: what effect will this project have	benefits could be achieved in this area,			benefits could be achieved in this	
9	on overall vehicle use?	but otherwise proceed.	0	Not Applicable.	area, but otherwise proceed.	0
		Neutral or not applicable.			Neutral or not applicable.	
		Recommendation to consider how			Recommendation to consider how	
	Will this project use petrol or diesel vehicles or EV,				benefits could be achieved in this	
10	hybrid?	but otherwise proceed.	0	Not Applicable.	area, but otherwise proceed.	0
	Will this support people to use active or low-carbon	Recommendation to consider how			Recommendation to consider how	
	transport? E.g. cycling, walking, switching to	benefits could be achieved in this area,			benefits could be achieved in this	
11	electric transport	but otherwise proceed.	0	Not Applicable.	area, but otherwise proceed.	0

Question	IIIIpact	30016 (0-4)	Justinication of fillingation	impact (Select Irolli list)	30016 (0-4
Question	Impact	Score (0-4)	Justification or mitigation	Impact (select from list)	Revised Score (0-4
Goods and Consumption		_			
Average Score		#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
Using e-cargo bikes; timing activities or deliveries to be outside peak congestion times	benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0	Not Applicable.	benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0
Has the project taken steps to reduce traffic?	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how			Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how	
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	Not Applicable.	Neutral or not applicable. Recommendation to consider how benefits could be achieved in this area, but otherwise proceed.	0

14 possible, before acquiring newly manufactured Not Applicable 0 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 15 ownership 0 Not Applicable 0 Page Does it use products and resources that are re-16 used, recycled, or renewable? 0 0 Not Applicable Does it enable others to make sustainable choices 17 within their lifestyles, or engage people about this? Not Applicable 0 Is there a plan to reduce waste sent to landfill in 18 manufacture? Not Applicable 0 Some positive impact for Some positive impact for sustainability. sustainability. Recommendation to Recommendation to further enhance this Is the material used able to be re-used, refurther enhance this aspect where 19 purposed, or recyled at end of its life? aspect where possible and proceed. 3 Yes. Solar PV panels can be recycled. possible and proceed. 3 Has it taken steps to ensure any food it offers is

	Ecology					
						Revised
	Question	Impact	Score (0-4)	Justification or mitigation	Impact (select from list)	Score (0-4)
Ī	What effect does this project have on total area of	Neutral or not applicable.			Neutral or not applicable.	
	non-amenity green/blue space? (Amenity green	Recommendation to consider how			Recommendation to consider how	
21	space = playing fields, play areas, sporting lakes	benefits could be achieved in this area,	0	Not Applicable	benefits could be achieved in this	0

0

3.00

Not Applicable

0

3.00

more sustainable? E.g. less and high-quality (high

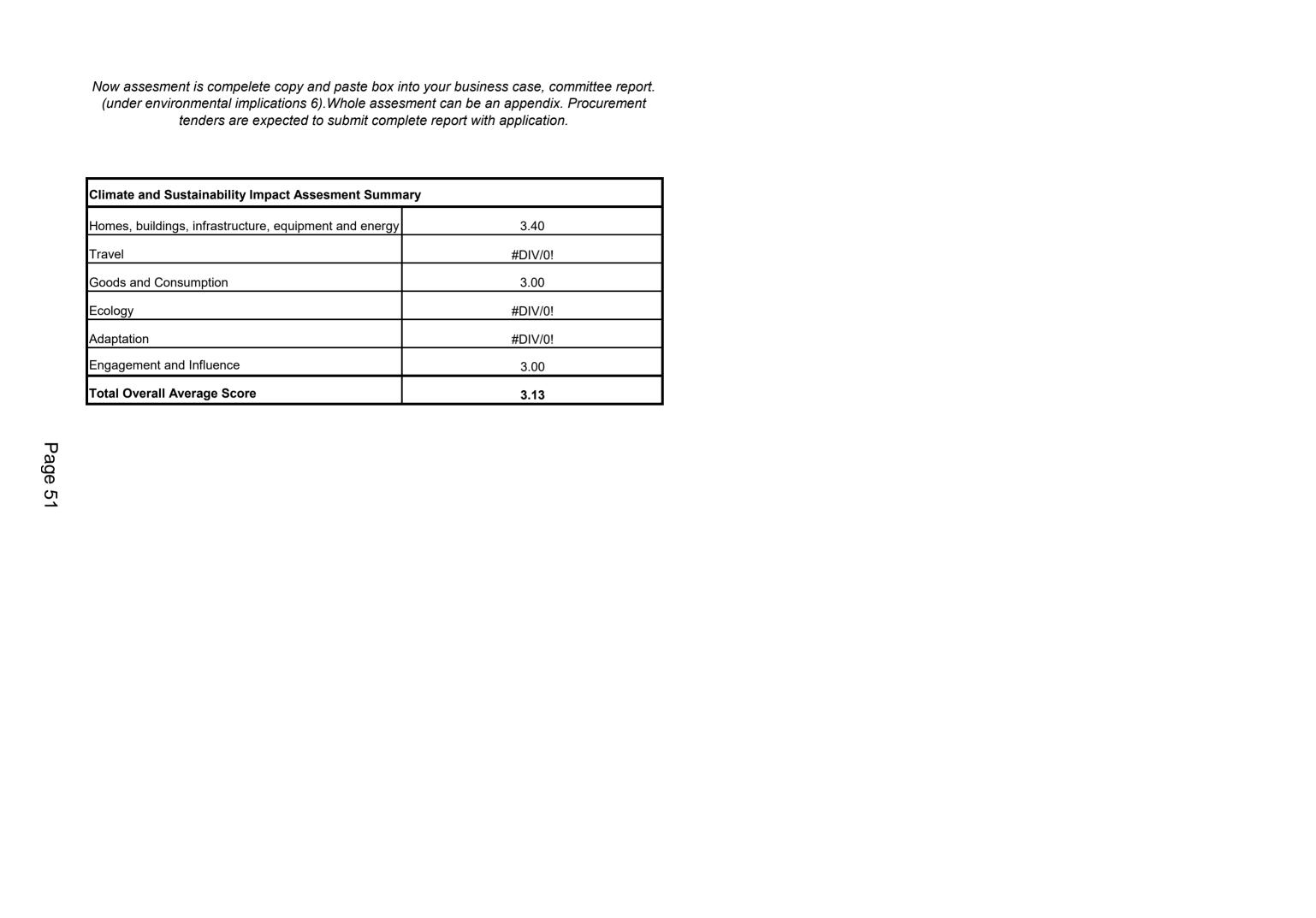
20 | welfare) meat and dairy; minimises food waste;

Average Score

Average Score		#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!
in their private and community spaces?	benefits could be achieved in this area,	0	Not Applicable	benefits could be achieved in this	0
biodiversity, and encourage residents to support it				Recommendation to consider how	
Does it help people understand the value of	Neutral or not applicable.			Neutral or not applicable.	
pesticides, reduced extent and variety of plants,	benefits could be achieved in this area,	0	Not Applicable	benefits could be achieved in this	0
have a negative impact on nature? E.g. use of	Recommendation to consider how			Recommendation to consider how	
Does it make changes to existing habitats and	Neutral or not applicable.			Neutral or not applicable.	
E.g. native plants, trees, and flowers	benefits could be achieved in this area,	0	Not Applicable	benefits could be achieved in this	0
Does the project create more habitat for nature?	Recommendation to consider how			Recommendation to consider how	
	Neutral or not applicable.			Neutral or not applicable.	

Adaptation						
Question		Impact	Score (0-4)	Justification or mitigation	Impact (select from list)	Revised Score (0-4)
		Neutral or not applicable.			Neutral or not applicable.	
Does any planned project, construction	on or building	Recommendation to consider how			Recommendation to consider how	
25 use include measures to conserve wa	ater?	benefits could be achieved in this area,	0	Not Applicable	benefits could be achieved in this	0
		Neutral or not applicable.			Neutral or not applicable.	
Does anythe project , consider how to	o sustainably	Recommendation to consider how			Recommendation to consider how	
26 protect people from extreme weather		benefits could be achieved in this area,	0	Not Applicable	benefits could be achieved in this	0
Has any planned building work or infr		Neutral or not applicable.			Neutral or not applicable.	
considered how to mitigate flood risk	? E.g.	Recommendation to consider how			Recommendation to consider how	
ີປ 27 Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuD	S); de-paving	benefits could be achieved in this area,	0	Not Applicable	benefits could be achieved in this	0
Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuD	uilding work	Neutral or not applicable.			Neutral or not applicable.	
increase the overall footprint of hard	surfacing? (as	Recommendation to consider how			Recommendation to consider how	
opposed to green or permeable surfa	icing)	benefits could be achieved in this area,	0	Not Applicable	benefits could be achieved in this	0
		Neutral or not applicable.			Neutral or not applicable.	
Has the project considered its own re	silience to	Recommendation to consider how			Recommendation to consider how	
29 future extreme heat, flood risk, or wa	ter shortage?	benefits could be achieved in this area,	0	Not Applicable	benefits could be achieved in this	0
Average Score			#DIV/0!			#DIV/0!

	Engagement and Influence					
						Revised
	Question	Impact	Score (0-4)	Justification or mitigation	Impact (select from list)	Score (0-4)
				By installing rooftop solar PV on one of our		
				core buildings we will show residents and businesses that we are leading by example		
				and will encourage others to follow	Some positive impact for	
	Does this project raise awareness and	Some positive impact for sustainability.			sustainability. Recommendation to	
	understanding of the climate and ecological	Recommendation to further enhance this			further enhance this aspect where	
30	emergency, and the steps that people can take?	aspect where possible and proceed.	3		possible and proceed.	3
	Average Score		3			3
	Total Overall Average Score		3.13			3.1



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Appendix 4 Sustainability Fund Financial Appraisal

Project Name	Three Rivers House Solar PV Project (2025)
Project Description	Installation of a 47.70 kWp solar PV system comprising of 106 450w PV panels to the eastern facing roof aspects of both wings of Three Rivers House.
Investment Required	£50,813
Benefits of Project	The solar PV system will reduce grid electricity costs and carbon emissions.
Expected useful life of asset created (years)	25
Financing Cost Interest Rate (PWLB 20 yer rate)	5.63%
Discount rate for NPV (Treasury Red book)	3.50%

							Subsequent
	Year 0 £000	Year 1 £000	Year 2 £000	Year 3 £000	Year 4 £000	Year 5 £000	Years £000
Initial Investment							
Equipment and installation	48038.0						
Other Costs 1 (Structural Survey)	1075.0						
Other Costs 2 (Bird Blocker)	1700.0						
Total Investment	50813.0						
Annual Costs							
Provision For Ad Hoc Repairs, Maintenance & Equipment Replacement		1000.0	1000.0	1000.0	1000.0	1000.0	1000.0
Total Costs		1000.0	1000.0	1000.0	1000.0	1000.0	1000.0
Income							
Income Stream 1 (electricity savings)		9635.0	9635.0	9635.0	9635.0	9635.0	9635.0
Total Income		9635.0	9635.0	9635.0	9635.0	9635.0	9635.0
Net Income before Capital Financing Costs		8635.0	8635.0	8635.0	8635.0	8635.0	8635.0
Capital Financing Costs							
Interest		1778.5	1778.5	1778.5	1778.5	1778.5	1778.5
Minimum Revenue Provision		2032.5	2032.5	2032.5	2032.5	2032.5	2032.5
Revenue Budget Impact		4824.0	4824.0	4824.0	4824.0	4824.0	4824.0
Net Present Value							88410.5
Capital Payback Period (Years)							7.4

NPV							
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6
Investment	-50813						
Net income		8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635
	-50813	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635
NPV	£88,410.51						

7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15
8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635
8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635

16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24
8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635
8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635	8635



COMMIT REPORT 05/08/2025

Three Rivers District Council Equalities Forum



POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

PART I

Three Rivers District Council's Equalities Forum (ADCCC)

1 Summary

- 1.1 At Annual Council held on 20 May 2025, it was agreed that the Equalities Sub Committee would change to an Equalities Forum, and for Councillor Winter and Councillor Raeburn to be the Chair and Vice Chair respectively.
- 1.2 This change was made to improve opportunities for community groups or organisations supporting residents with protected characteristics to engage with the council
- 1.3 This report presents the draft terms of reference for the Equalities Forum, and a proposed list of representatives for the meeting.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 That:
- 2.2 Council provide any feedback or suggestions for membership to the Forum.
- 2.3 Council agree the draft Terms of Reference for the Equalities Forum.

That public access to the report be immediate.

That public access to the decision be immediate.

Report prepared by: Shivani Davé, Partnerships and Inclusion Manager

3 Details

- 3.1 The purpose of the Equalities Forum is to create a partnership to address and improve issues relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion to support the objectives of the Corporate Framework and Community Strategy.
- 3.2 The Equalities Forum can receive motions received by Full Council, and provide recommendations.
- 3.3 The Equalities Forum will not be a decision making body, but will create an opportunity for consultation and input on joint initiatives and the Equalities Objectives.
- 3.4 The Equalities Forum will be a public meeting, with all councillors invited to meetings and representatives from partner organisation not included in the membership encouraged to attend.
- 3.5 The following objectives are proposed for the Equalities Forum:
- 3.5.1 Be an inclusive body of organisations

- 3.5.2 Work in partnership where possible to improve equity and inclusion for residents from diverse and under-represented communities.
- 3.5.3 Understand the challenges that affect under-represented groups and develop actions that address areas of concern.
- 3.5.4 Provide leadership and act as a voice for the people and communities of Three Rivers.
- 3.5.5 Integrate the voices of groups with protected characteristics into discussions about the future shape of the district.
- 3.5.6 Consult and engage with residents and community representatives in a meaningful and inclusive manner, ensuring choice, access and equality are available to all.
- 3.5.7 Ensure that activities complement the work of the Three Rivers Corporate Framework/Council Plan and the Three Rivers Community Strategy.
- 3.6 The organisations (all with formal constitutions or articles of association) below are proposed for membership to the Forum:
- 3.6.1 **Watford African and Caribbean Association:** A local charity delivering community initiatives, health awareness and support for residents of Three Rivers & Watford from the African and Caribbean Community. We have previously supported them with funding to recruit an administrative officer to progress initiatives around health inequalities.
- 3.6.2 **Ark Synagogue:** Previously known as Northwood and Pinner Liberal Synagogue. Although based in Northwood, Hillingdon, Three Rivers residents attend this Synagogue.
- 3.6.3 **One Vision:** Local Charity focussing on South West Herts, predominantly improving access to services and arranging community events for South Asian communities. Delivery on some health and wellbeing, and community safety initiatives.
- 3.6.4 **Herts Pride:** Hertfordshire based organisation that deliver Herts Pride in Cassiobury Park on an annual basis. One of the founders has also developed the "Ask for Clive" campaign which aims to promote inclusivity and safety for LGBTQ+ communities at hospitality venues.
- 3.6.5 **Impactful Governance/Lives:** Sister charities, one that focusses on research and the other on service delivery for LGBTQ+ residents in Hertfordshire. Impactful Lives arrange community events and spaces, and provide support and mentoring to improve mental wellbeing and tackle domestic abuse.
- 3.6.6 **Mission Employable:** Charity based in Chorleywood that supports young people with learning disabilities to develop employability skills. Young people receive on site training and work experience in the café, as well as other work experience opportunities provided by external organisations.
- 3.6.7 **Watford Mencap:** Charity supporting local residents with learning disabilities. They provide a range of advice and information, hold activities and support residents from Watford, Three Rivers and Hertsmere.
- 3.6.8 **Watford and Three Rivers Trust:** Charity providing support and funding to the community and voluntary sector in Watford and Three Rivers. They also manage

- and are developing the Dig Deep site, support vulnerable residents, and deliver lunch clubs across the district for older residents.
- 3.6.9 **Jummah in Chorleywood:** A community group hiring a space in Chorleywood for Muslim residents to attend Friday Prayers. Their sermons are held in English which makes the prayers more accessible to Muslim people from a range of ethnic backgrounds.
- 3.6.10 **Herts Mind Network:** Mental health charity based in South West Hertfordshire. We currently fund them (since 2017) to deliver the Community Support Service, individually tailored support for people with mental health challenges to reduce impact on crisis services.
- 3.6.11 Carpenders Park and South Oxhey Methodist Church: Church in South Oxhey that additionally hosts the South Oxhey Foodbank.
- 3.6.12 **Gate Herts:** Hertfordshire wide charity that supports residents from Gypsy, Roma and Traveller backgrounds. We will be giving them funding from Household Support Fund
- 3.6.13 **Watford and Three Rivers Refugee Partnership:** Local charity providing support and signposting to refugees living in the area. We will be giving them funding from Household Support Fund
- 3.6.14 **Former Players Club CIC:** The Veterans Together project based in Abbots Langley is delivered by the Former Players Club to bring together veterans living in the district, to reduce isolation and increase access to support.
- 3.7 Three Rivers Councillors will be invited to attend the meeting, and attendance from partner organisations will not be limited to members. Additional organisations will be added and agreed by the Equalities Forum when new community groups emerge. This approach is being taken to enhance opportunities for information sharing, understanding and collaboration. Appointment of the Chair and Vice Chair will be made at Annual Council and will be Councillors.

4 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 Improved engagement relating to council initiatives, including Local Plan and Local Government Reorganisation from community leaders.
- 4.2 Increased opportunity for information to be shared with residents from underrepresented communities through community leaders.
- 4.3 Increased opportunity for collaboration between organisations to address intersectional challenges.
- 4.4 Increased opportunity for all councillors to engage with and to be aware of issues relating to communities with protected characteristics or underrepresented communities.
- 4.5 The Equalities forum needs a Terms of Reference to ensure governance.

5 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

5.1 The recommendations in this report are within the Council's agreed policy and budgets. The relevant policy is entitled Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy and was agreed on 12 December 2023 by Full Council.

- The recommendations in this report relate to the achievement of the following Equality Objectives:
- 5.2.1 To promote equality of opportunity in employment and training
- 5.2.2 To improve equality and access to services for all residents
- 5.2.3 To strengthen knowledge and understanding of all Three Rivers communities
- 5.2.4 To celebrate diversity, promote inclusion and enhance community life in partnership with communities.
- 5.3 The impact of the recommendations on these objectives will:

Strengthen knowledge and understanding of Three Rivers communities

Improve equality and access to services by understanding and address the barriers to access.

Promote inclusion and enhance community life through partnership working and collaboration.

Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

Opportunities to engage with under represented community groups on public consultations and issues relating to the above.

6 Financial Implications

Work on the Equalities Forum is within existing staffing resource. No additional funding is sought for the Forum.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 None Arising

8 Equal Opportunities Implications

8.1 Relevance Test

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

8.2 Impact Assessment

No negative impact on residents with protected characteristics.

9 Staffing Implications

9.1 The Forum will be managed by officers within the Strategy and Partnerships Team. Administrative support will be provided by Committee Services.

10 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

10.1 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.

The subject of this report is covered by the Strategy and Partnerships service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this/these plan(s).

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (tolerate, treat terminate, transfer)	Risk Rating (combin ation of likelihoo d and impact)
Lack of engagement or representation from community organisations	Community groups represented by those organisations may miss out on opportunities to collaborate and provide feedback to the district council	One to one engagement by Strategy and Partnerships Team with community organisations to encourage engagement. Development of meeting agenda's that are relevant to a range of community groups. Engagement from councillors in identifying new community organisations .	treat	4

10.3 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.

Voru	Likelih ood	Low	High	Very High	Very High
	<u>~</u>	4	8	12	16

Low	Medium	High	Very High
3	6	9	12
Low	Low	Medium	High
2	4	6	8
Low	Low	Low	Low
	2	3	4

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%))

10.4 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.

Background Papers

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Equalities Forum - Draft Terms of Reference



Equality impact Assessment



Project Information		
Project Name This should clearly explain what service / policy / strategy / change you are assessing	Equalities Forum – Terms of Reference	
Service Area Main team responsible for the policy, practice, service or function being assessed	Strategy and Partnerships	
EIA Author Name and Job Title	Shivani Davé, Partnerships and Inclusion Manager	
Date EIA drafted	30/07/2025	
ID number This will be added by the Strategy and Partnerships Team	CP008	

Executive summary

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:

- If the EIA is attached to a report, summarise the report.
- Provide information on whether any of the following communities could be affected by the policy, practice, service or function, or by how it is delivered?
- (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation, and marriage and civil partnership) in addition, TRDC recognises other communities may be vulnerable to disadvantage, this includes carers, people experiencing domestic abuse, substance misusers, homeless people, looked after children, (ex) armed forces personnel.

In May Full Council it was agreed the Equalities Sub Committee would change to an Equalities Forum. This change was agreed to create a Forum where community organisations representing communities with protected characteristics, or under represented, could engage with the council and improve equality, equity and inclusion through diversity.

This report presents the terms of reference for the Equalities Forum.

Mitigations			
Potential Issue Against each protected characteristics, make a frank and realistic assessment of what issues may or do occur	Mitigating Actions How can the negative impacts be reduced or avoided by the mitigating measures? Is further engagement with specific communities needed? Is more research or monitoring needed? Does there need to be a change in the proposal itself?		
Not represented within the Forum	Watford and Three Rivers Trust have been included within the proposed membership as they support lunch clubs within the district, and provide the Community & Voluntary Sector support within the district.		
Not represented within the Forum	Watford Mencap, Mission Employable and Herts Mind Network have been included within the proposed membership.		
Not represented within the Forum	Impactful Lives and Herts Pride Society have been included within the proposed membership.		
Not represented within the Forum			
Not represented within the Forum	Watford African and Caribbean Association, One Vision and Gate Herts have been included within the proposed membership.		
Not represented within the Forum	One Vision, Ark Synagogue, Jummah in Chorleywood and Carpenders Park & South Oxhey Methodist Church have been included within the proposed membership.		
Not represented within the Forum			
Not represented within the Forum	Impactful Lives and Herts Pride Society have been included within the proposed membership.		
	Potential Issue Against each protected characteristics, make a frank and realistic assessment of what issues may or do occur Not represented within the Forum Not represented within the Forum		

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Marriage and Civil Partnership	Not represented within the Forum	
The council recognises other communities may be vulnerable to disadvantage, this includes carers, people experiencing domestic abuse, substance misusers, homeless people, looked after children and care leavers, (ex) armed forces personnel.	Not represented within the Forum	Former Players Club CIC have been included within the proposed membership. Many of these groups are already represented through other partnership structures managed by council officers.

Actions Planned

In this section you can add information on additional or proactive steps you are taking that enhance equity, engagement or equality of access to services, as well as those mitigating actions identified in the section above that will be undertaken.

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.

None additional

Additional Information

Space to provide any additional information in relation to protected characteristics or equity, diversity, equality and inclusion.

Sign off:

Equalities Lead Officer	Date





Three Rivers Equalities Forum Terms of Reference

1. Purpose of the Group

The Equalities Forum works to address and improve issues relating to equality, diversity, inclusion and equity for the people of Three Rivers by working in partnership to create a better place to live, work and visit.

The Equalities Forum provides an opportunity for organisations, charities and community groups to collaborate and jointly develop initiatives. This Forum provides residents an opportunity to hear about the work being undertaken.

The Forum can also support and act as a consultee for the development of equalities objectives and policy or other strategies such as the Three Rivers Community Strategy.

The Forum is not a decision-making body.

The Forum can make recommendations to Full-Council on motions received relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion.

2. Objectives

In order to achieve the Equalities Forum will:

- Be an inclusive body of organisations / groups.
- Work in partnership where possible to improve equity and inclusion.
- Understand the challenges that affect marginalised groups and develop actions that address areas of concern.
- Provide leadership and act as a voice for the people and communities of Three Rivers.
- Integrate the voices of protected groups into discussions about the future shape of the district.
- Consult and engage with residents and community representatives in a meaningful and inclusive manner, ensuring choice, access and equality are available to all.
- Ensure that activities complement the work of the Three Rivers Corporate Framework and Three Rivers Community Strategy.

3. Meetings

Meetings and the work of the Equalities Forum will be open and transparent. The meetings will be serviced by officers of Three Rivers District Council, and agendas and minutes will be published on the website of Three Rivers District Council. The agenda will be published a week in advance of the meeting.

Meetings will be open to the public to watch or attend if in person.

The Equalities Forum will meet twice a year using a hybrid forum. It may wish to hold extra meetings or workshops as required in person.

All members will have equal rights and representation. To ensure this, members may send substitutes from their organisation and must notify Three Rivers District Council Committees Team of any substitutions.

The meeting dates will be agreed in advance and published on the Three Rivers District Council meeting calendar.

4. Position of the Chair

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the Equalities Forum will be Councillors who are appointed at Annual Council.

The role of the Chair (or Vice-Chair when the Chair is unable to fulfil their duties) will be to:

- Lead and inspire the Equalities Forum
- Promote the development and learning of the Forum.
- Promote a common sense of purpose.
- Ensure the Forum remains relevant and topical.

5. The Role of Forum Members

Position	Organisation
Councillor (Chair)	Three Rivers District Council
Councillor (Vice-Chair)	Three Rivers District Council
Chair	Watford African and Caribbean Association
Chief Executive	One Vision
Trustee	Herts Pride Society
Rabbi	Ark Synagogue
Chief Executive	Impactful Lives
Chair	Mission Employable
Centre Manager	Watford Mencap
Operation Manager	Watford and Three Rivers Trust
Trustee	Jummah in Chorleywood Prayer Group
Service Manager	Herts Mind Network
Trustee	Carpenders Park and South Oxhey
	Methodist Church
Chief Executive	Gate Herts
Trustee	Watford Three Rivers Refugee Partnership
Director	Former players club CIC (Veterans
	Together)

Members of the Forum will be expected to:

- Contribute to the work of the forum by contributing to the discussion, raising awareness of best practice, and raising issues within the community.
- Maintain knowledge of emerging policy and best practice
- Attend Forum meetings
- Be the link for the Forum and their organisations, networks and communities.

- Be aware of cross-cutting issues and be responsive to the impact and causes of inequality.
- To respect the dignity, diversity and human rights of all members of the forum, the council, supporting staff and the public.

All councillors for Three Rivers District Council will be invited to attend the Forum meetings.

Additional partner organisations will be welcome to attend the meetings even if not listed as forum members. Membership will be reviewed by the Equalities Forum when necessary to allow for additional partners to join.

6. Financial Procedures

There are currently no financial implications for the Forum.

Should the Forum be allocated funds 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 2 years.

Date of Next review: October 2027.



POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

8 SEPTEMBER 2025

PART I

BUDGET MONITORING REPORT TO 30 JUNE 2025 (DIRECTOR OF FINANCE)

Budget Monitoring Summary

- 1.1 Budget monitoring report is a key tool in scrutinising the Council's financial performance and is designed to provide an overview to all relevant stakeholders. It is essential that the council monitors its budgets throughout the year to ensure that it is meeting its strategic objectives within its resource limits and, where necessary, corrective action is taken. A key principle of budgetary control is to align the budget holders' financial responsibilities and their management responsibilities.
- 1.2 This report shows the expected financial position over the three year medium term based on the Council's actual financial performance at the end of Period 3 (30 June 2025) set against the latest budget.

1.3 **Revenue Summary**

- 1.3.1 The original 2025/26 budget as approved by Council on 25 February 2025 was £14.677m. The latest budget which totals £15.108m includes the variances previously reported to Policy & Resources Committee in March 2025 (Period 10 Budget Monitoring) and approved by urgent decision in July 2025 (2024/25 year end report). The forecast year end position for 2025/26 at Period 3 is estimated to be £15.105m giving a favourable variance of (£0.003m).
- 1.3.2 The table below shows how the forecast year end position has been constructed:

Revenue Budget 2025/26					
Original Net Revenue Budget	14,677				
Carry Forward from 2024/25 (Year end report approved by urgent decision July 2025)	431				
Original Budget Plus Carry Forwards from 2024/25	15,108				
Supplementary Estimates to budget reported at Period 3 (to be approved)	(13)				
Variances to budget reported at Period 3 (to be noted)	10				
Forecast Total Net Expenditure 2025/26	15,105				

1.3.3 The main variances are shown in the table below:

			2025/26	Revenue A	ccount - G	eneral Fun	d Summary	
			(C)	(A)		(B)	(B-A)	(B-C)
Committee	Original Budget	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget	Previous Forecast	Net Spend to Date	Latest Forecast	Supplimentary Estimates and Variances	Variation to Latest Budget
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
General Public Services & Community Engagement	6,030	6,106	6,106	6,106	(1,236)	6,131	25	25
Climate Change & Leisure	1,504	1,573	1,573	1,573	160	1,573	0	0
Policy & Resources	4,885	5,172	5,172	5,172	4,473	5,144	(28)	(28)
Total Service Budgets	12,419	12,851	12,851	12,851	3,397	12,848	(3)	(3)
Corporate Costs (Interest Earned/Paid) and Parish Precepts	2,258	2,258	2,258	2,258	1,207	2,258	0	0
Net General Fund	14,677	15,109	15,109	15,109	4,604	15,105	(3)	(3)

1.3.4 The significant supplementary estimates and variances above include changes in the shared services agreements with Watford Borough Council, a request from Salary Contingency to facilitate the employment of a part-time Housing Enforcement Assistant on a 2 year fixed term secondment, increase in planning subscription costs and an increase in rental income from Herts Constabulary due to a rent review and using additional space.

1.4 **Capital Summary**

1.4.1 The original 2025/26 capital budget as approved by Council on 25 February 2025 was £5.522m. The latest budget which totals £14.829m for 2025/26 includes the variances previously reported to Policy & Resources Committee in March 2025 (Period 10 Budget Monitoring) and approved by urgent decision in July 2025 (2024/25 year end report). The forecast Year end position for 2025/26 is estimated to be £14.829m, which reflects rephasing of £9.307m from 2024/25.

1.4.2 The table below shows how the forecast Year end position has been constructed:

Capital Investment Programme 2025/26					
Original Budget	5,522				
Rephasing from 2024/25 (year end report approved by urgent decision in July 2025)	9,307				
Latest Budget (To be approved at Council October 2025)	14,829				
Variances to budget reported at Period 3 (to be approved)	0				
Forecast Capital Expenditure 2025/26	14,829				

1.4.3 The forecast variances to agreed budget are shown in the table below:

Description	£000
Basing House – Whole Life Costing	
No Planned works this year – Budget virement of £60,000 requested to Temporary Accommodation – All Sites, primarily for 38 Lincoln Drive	(60)
Temporary Accommodation – All Sites	
Budget virement of £60,000 from Basing House – Whole Life Costing requested to facilitate internal works, primarily to 38 Lincoln Drive	60
Total Capital Variance	0

1.5 **Reserves Summary**

1.5.1 The potential effect of both the revenue and capital variances upon on each reserve at summary level is shown in the table below. A list of reserve balances is shown at Appendix 7.

Description	Balance at 1 April 2025 £000	Movement £000	Balance at 31 March 2026 £000
Capital Reserves	(9,721)	(87)	(9,808)
Earmarked Reserves	(24,118)	(312)	(24,430)
Economic Impact Reserve	(1,382)	347	(1,035)
General Fund	(4,903)	472	(4,431)
Total	(40,125)	421	(39,704)

Details

2.1 Revenue Budget

- 2.1.1 The Council's latest approved services budget (excluding corporate budgets) is £12.851m. The Forecast year end position is now estimated to be £12.848m which results in a favourable service variance of (£0.003m). After taking account of Corporate Costs, the total favourable variation is (£0.003m)
- 2.1.2 The table below shows the supplementary estimates and variances to be managed against each Committee. The position of each cost centre and an explanation of the main variances for each committee are set out in the detailed committee monitoring reports at Appendices 1 to 3 and within the Corporate Costs Medium Term Revenue Budget at appendix 4.

Committee	Supplementary Estimates £000	Variances to be managed/Virements £000	Total £000
General Public Services and Community Engagement	13	12	25
Climate Change and Leisure	0	0	0
Policy and Resources	(26)	(2)	(28)
Total	(13)	10	(3)
Corporate Costs (Interest Earned/ Paid) and Parish Precepts	0	0	0
Net General Fund	(13)	10	(3)

- 2.1.3 Within appendices 1 to 3, annex B sets out the supplementary estimates, variances to be managed, and budget virements requested for each committee.
- 2.1.4 The budget virements requested enable effective budget management by ensuring that budgets are aligned to service activity, management responsibilities, and reflect grant income and planned use of reserves. Budget virements must always net to zero across the Council's budget. Policy and Resources Committee is recommended to approve the budget virements at paragraph 10.1.
- 2.1.5 Supplementary estimates totalling (£0.013m) are requested at the end of Period 3. Supplementary estimates are requested when there is certainty that a budget pressure will arise, and the pressure cannot be managed within the service area. Supplementary estimates are funded by an increase in the contribution from General Balances and if agreed, result in the latest budget being updated to reflect the agreed expenditure. The impact of agreeing the additional budget is taken into account in the General Fund reserves forecast at paragraph 2.2.1. Policy and Resources Committee is recommended to approve the budget virements at paragraph 10.2.
- 2.1.6 At the end of Period 3, variances to be managed total £0.010m. The Policy and Resources Committee is recommended to note these variances at paragraph 10.3.

2.2 Revenue Reserve Position

2.2.1 The effect of all Period 3 variances on the Council's General Fund Reserve over the medium term is shown in the table below:

		202	2026/27	2027/28		
Movement on General Fund Balance	Original £000	Latest Budget £000	Previous Forecast £000	Latest Forecast £000	Latest £000	Latest £000
Balance Brought Forward at 1 April	(4,903)	(4,903)	(4,903)	(4,903)	(4,431)	(3,756)
(Surplus)/Deficit for Year	391	823	823	472	675	883
Closing Balance at 31 March	(4,512)	(4,080)	(4,080)	(4,431)	(3,756)	(2,872)

- 2.2.2 A prudent minimum general fund balance of £2.000m is considered appropriate. The general fund balance is forecast to remain above this minimum level over the medium term.
- 2.2.3 The Council also has the Economic Impact Reserve which is held to manage the impact of economic fluctuations. The reserve will be used in 2025/26 to fund the shortfall on the SLM management contract income as a result of the impact of COVID-19 on the leisure contract and the reprofiling of the management fee and to fund the Local Plan in the following table:

		202	2026/27	2027/28		
Movement on Economic Impact Reserve	Original	Latest Budget	Previous Forecast	Latest Forecast	Latest	Latest
	£000	000 £000 £000		£000	£000	£000
Balance Brought Forward at 1 April	(1,383)	(1,383)	(1,383)	(1,383)	(1,035)	(1,035)
Covid-19 Impact for year	0	0	0	348	0	0
Closing Balance at 31 March	(1,530)	(1,530)	(1,530)	(1,035)	(1,035)	(1,035)

2.2.4 After taking account of the Economic Impact Reserve, the Council's unrestricted reserves position is forecast to remain above the £2.0m risk assessed level across the MTFP at £3.908m as at 31 March 2028 see Appendix 6.

2.3 Investment Portfolio

- 2.3.1 The Council's Property Investment Board was allocated up to a total of £20.000m in 2017 to invest in acquiring property with a specific remit of achieving a 5% return (yield) on the investment. The table below shows those properties that the Council has acquired, the 2025/26 receivable rent, and the resulting yield.
- 2.3.2 The total rent due is forecast to be £0.871m which will achieve an average yield of 5.72%, above the 5% target.

2.3.3 The governance of property investments is covered in the Property Investment Strategy.

Investment Property	2024/25 rent £000	Total cost of property £000	Yield %	Comments
Nottingham	(205)	4,469	4.59%	Acquisition of freehold interest located in the city centre of Nottingham let to commercial tenants, for a combined rental of £227,600pa on a 10 year lease from Feb 2018 which is subject to upward only rent reviews in Feb 2023. With effect from the Feb 2023, Barclays Bank Plc rent has been negotiated and agreed at £145,000 pa. This will be to lease end Feb 2028. Due to financial difficulties Robinson Webster (Jigsaw) Ltd was under a Company Voluntary Agreement (CVA). Effective from the 2/9/20 to 8/4/2023, paying only a concessionary rent of £12,000 pa as opposed to the contracted rent of £60,000 pa. Market Rent Valuation has now been agreed by TRDC and Jigsaw of £60,369pa. from the end of the CVA (8/4/23).
Norwich	(521)	7,169	7.27%	Acquisition of a freehold interest located in the city centre of Norwich. Let to commercial sitting tenants for 20 year lease from December 2007. The rent due wef 21-12-21 was £468,670. The rent is reviewed annually in line with RPI, with a collar and cap arrangement of 3% and 5% respectively. However the lease requires that every 5th year a market rent review is undertaken. A rent review was undertaken wef 21-12-22 resulting in an uplift by the cap rate of 5%; totalling an annual rental figure of £492,103.58. The rents have been reviewed since and the uplifts from Dec 2023 is £516,708.80 and Dec 2024 £534,568.63. We are awaiting signoff for the rent uplifts from the tenant.
Lincoln Drive (South Oxhey)	(145)	2,740	5.29%	The purchase of a Temporary Accommodation hostel at Lincoln Drive, South Oxhey. This comprises of 20 units with a mixture of 1, 2 and 3 bedrooms. This represents the net rent after the deduction of the management fee payable to Watford Community Housing which includes voids and the provision for bad debts.
Total	(871)	14,378	5.72%	Average Yield

2.4 **Capital Programme**

- 2.4.1 The Council's capital programme has been designed to support and enhance its core services and priorities. The Council's Medium Term Capital Investment Programme is shown by scheme by each Committee at Annex C in Appendices 1 to 3 and includes variances and commentary from officers.
- 2.4.2 The latest Capital budget including re-phasing from 2024/25 is £14.829m. The forecast year end position for capital expenditure by Services at Period 3 remains at £14.829m. The Policy and Resources Committee is recommended to approve a revised capital programme budget taking account of the budget variations as set out in appendices 1 to 3 at paragraph 10.4.

2.4.3 The table below shows the 2025/26 original budget, latest budget, forecast year end position, spend to date and variance for Period 3.

Committee	Original Budget £000	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Rephasing	Latest Budget £000	Spend to Date £000	Year end Forecast £000	Variance £000
General Public Services and Community Engagement	2,569	4,905	4,905	522	4,905	0
Climate Change and Leisure	1,566	2,332	2,332	200	2,332	0
Policy & Resources	887	1,372	1,372	210	1,372	0
Total Service	5,022	8,609	8,609	932	8,609	0
Major Projects: South Oxhey Parking	500	500	500	0	500	0
Property Investment Board Local Authority Housing Fund	0	0 5,720	0 5,720	2 0	0 5,720	0 0
Total Capital	5,522	14,829	14,829	934	14,829	0

- 2.4.4 As at the end of Period 3, the spend totalled £0.934m and represents 6.30% of the latest budget.
- 2.4.5 The capital programme is mainly supported by three income streams; capital receipts (derived from the sales of assets), grants and contributions, and the use of reserves. In addition, the Council may prudentially borrow to fund its capital programme. Decisions on borrowing (amount and duration) will be taken when the need arises. Funding of the capital investment programme over the medium term is shown at Appendix 5.

2.5 Key Risk Areas

2.5.1 Resources are allocated in the revenue and capital budgets to support the achievement of The Council's corporate plan. The Council's budget is exposed to risks that can potentially impact on service level provision. The key risks highlighted as part of this quarter's monitoring are;

Inflation

The 12 month Consumer Price Index (CPI) was 3.6% for June 2025 and the Retail Price Index (RPI) was 4.4%. Inflation drives costs across the Council's budgets with the most significant impact on pay, fuel and energy costs. The impact on the Council's budget is set out section 2.6 below.

• Pay Award

The pay award for 2025/26 was agreed at 3.2% for all employees on 23rd July 2025 and will be reflected in the committee budgets at Period 6 (September). The central contingency is sufficient to meet the pay award.

Business Rates & Council Tax

The cost of living crisis, low economic growth and risk of recession will continue to place pressure on households and businesses throughout 2025/26 and may impact on the collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates (NNDR - National Non Domestic Rates). The table below shows the impact on collection rates in the first three months of this year:

Fund	P3 2025/26 Target	P3 2025/26 Actual	Difference
Council Tax	24.51%	30.3%	5.79%
Business Rates (NNDR)	24.75%	31.63%	6.88%

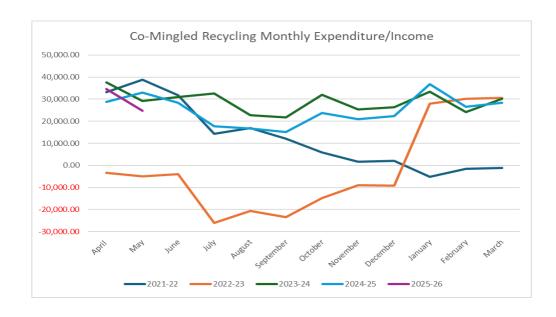
As at 30 June, collection rates for Council Tax and NNDR are ahead of target, this reflects the profile of payment plan options such as the payment of Council Tax over 10 months of the year rather than 12. Year on year, the collection of Council Tax is marginally behind the position reported at 30 June 2024 when 31.1% (-0.8%) of Council Tax due had been collected and Business Rates is ahead when 24.06% (7.57%) of Business Rates due had been collected.

Any impact on collection rates will feed through the Collection Fund to impact on council spending power in 2026/27 through the Collection Fund surplus or deficit.

Recycling Costs

The Council has a contract for the disposal of recycling. The cost of the contract is variable and is linked to the global commodities market. The price can fluctuate significantly and when demand for recyclable materials is high the Council receives income for the recycling. Currently, the Council faces a cost to dispose of recycling as demand for materials has reduced. Recent economic performance data released from China, where the economy appears to have entered a recession, suggests that demand for recyclable materials could remain low for longer, increasing the cost to the Council.

At present the Council is being prudent in its forecasting and assuming that recyclable income will not recover. The graph below shows the cost of, or the income received for the last 4 years to/from our recycling contractor and illustrates how this position can change in year.



Interest Rates

The Bank of England's response to high inflation has been to utilise monetary policy by increasing the Bank of England Base Rate. This has impacted on the cost at which government can borrow and has fed through to the rates at which Councils can borrow from HM Treasury through the Public Works Loans Board (PWLB), rates that can be achieved from deposits with HM Treasury through the Debt Management Office (DMO), local authority to local authority lending and borrowing, and the interest rates offered by banks on current accounts and fixed deposits. The Council's cashflow forecasts indicate that the Council does not have a borrowing requirement during 2025/26. Therefore, the risk to the Council is on the upside, as higher interest rates mean that the Council will be able to generate more income from investing cash balances. The Council's Treasury Management activity is reported to the Audit Committee and the performance against budget is contained within this report in Appendix 4.

• PCN (Penalty Charge Notices) Write-Off

Approval is sought to "write off" an irrecoverable debt from Penalty Charge Notices issued by our parking enforcement provider, Hertsmere Borough Council, as the sum in question is above the delegated authority of the Director of Finance.

The sum of £3,846 pertains to 31 PCN's issued to one vehicle during the period 20/10/2021-5/5/2022. The owner of the vehicle has not been traced.

Hertsmere Borough Council have provided the Council's parking enforcement service since April 2018. A "Penalty Charge Notice Write Off Policy" for irrecoverable debts arising from unpaid Penalty Charge Notices exists and has been implemented. The debt is only considered irrecoverable once the recovery procedures have been fully exhausted.

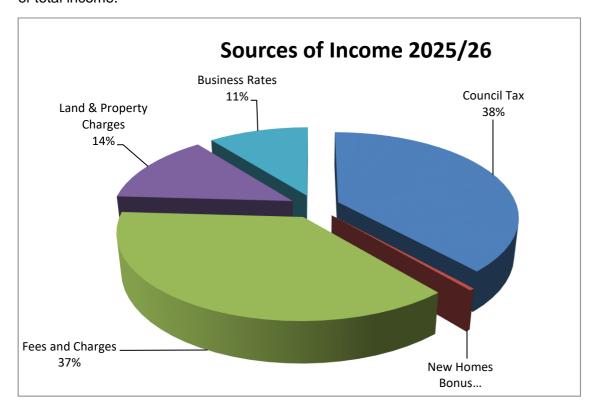
2.5.2 The Council's overall key financial risk matrix is shown at Appendix 7. These are reported and monitored and reviewed by the Council's Audit Committee on a quarterly basis. The latest matrix was presented to the Audit Committee on 25 March 2025.

2.6 Impact of inflation

2.6.1 Energy costs are expected to continue to place pressure on budgets in year although the pressure has not materialised in actual costs to 30 June 2025. As far as possible, services will be expected to absorb increased costs by managing other expenditure.

2.7 Council Income

2.7.1 The chart below shows the amount of income for each source as a percentage of total income.



- 2.7.2 Particular income generating items can fluctuate depending on the economic climate, popularity and affordability. The main risks that are considered the most critical and their financial position are shown in the table below. It should be noted that the income receivable from the Planning Services and Parking Enforcement are not linear and are subject to peaks and troughs throughout the financial year.
- 2.7.3 Environmental Services, trade waste is invoiced to customers half yearly in April and October and garden waste for existing customers is charged for in one instalment at the beginning of the financial year.

2.7.4 Garage rents are charged on a weekly basis and are collected by a monthly direct debit. Licensing income relates licences which are issued on a one, three and five year basis.

Service	Income Stream	2025/26 Original Budget £	2025/26 Latest Budget £	2025/26 Actual to date £	2025/26 Year end Forecast £	2025/26 Varianc e £
Regulatory Services	Applicatio n Fees	(846,420)	(846,420)	(327,774)	(846,420)	0
Services	Licenses	(208,685)	(208,685)	(74,668)	(208,685)	0
Parking	Penalty Charge Notices	(115,000)	(115,000)	(53,475)	(115,000)	0
	Pay and Display	(220,000)	(220,000)	(61,058)	(220,000)	0
	Trade Refuse	(930,570	(930,570)	(436,316)	(930,570)	0
Environment	Garden Waste	(1,703,20 0	(1,703,20 0)	(1,659,81 5)	(1,703,20 0)	0
al Protection	Clinical Waste	(126,925)	(126,925)	(52,830)	(126,925)	0
	Cemeterie s	(248,283)	(248,283)	(36,461)	(248,283)	0
	Garages	(1,180,12 0)	(1,180,12 0)	(274,759)	(1,180,12 0)	0
Property	Shops	(210,000)	(210,000)	(85,818)	(210,000)	0
Services	Investmen t Properties	(982,225)	(982,225)	(374,910))	(982,225)	0

2.7.5 Further details on the Council's key budget indicators for revenue service income streams (including volumes and trends) are shown in the detailed Committee Monitoring Reports at Appendices 1 to 3.

2.8 **Debtors (invoicing)**

- 2.8.1 The Council charges its customers for various services by raising debtor invoices. If the debt remains outstanding, then a variety of recovery methods are employed including rearranging the payment terms, stopping the provision of the service or pursing the debt through the legal recovery process.
- 2.8.2 As at the end of Period 3 (June), the total outstanding debt was £0.841m. This is equivalent to 2.97% of total budgeted income of £28.341m. Debts less than one month old total £0.320m (38.1% of total debt) and it is considered that this sum will be recovered. Outstanding debt over a year old is £0.228m (27.07%) of the total debt) which mainly relate to Temporary Accommodation and rent on a Commercial Property where the tenant was subject to a CVA, which has now come to an end, and a payment plan is now in place as a result of a rent review and back dated rent owed. The Council's debt recovery team will continue to chase these debts and initiate payment plans (instalments) wherever possible.

2.8.3 The table below shows a summary of the outstanding debt by the three main aged categories.

Aged debt	Services	Under 1 Month	Over 1 Month to year	Over a year	Total
Committee		£	£	£	£
Comoral	Community Partnerships	117,235	12,141	790	130,166
General Public	Economic Development and Planning Policy	0	2,058	7,463	9,521
Services and Community Engagement	Housing, Public Health and Wellbeing	6,297	34,626	60,880	101,803
Lingagement	Public Services	4,098	68,947	2,693	75,738
Climate	Leisure	6,671	9,048	976	16,695
Change and Leisure	Sustainability & Climate	0	0	0	0
Policy &	Resources	186,047	165,375	154,600	506,022
Resources	Leader	0	643	220	863
Total		320,348	292,838	227,622	840,808

2.9 **Treasury Management**

2.9.1 The Council has managed its cash flows and adhered to its Treasury Management policy during the period to 30 June. The interest earned on the investments made by the Council supports the funding of the services it provides. The Council set an original budget of £0.690m on short-term interest investment for 2025/26. The Bank of England base interest rate was 4.50% on 1st April 2025 and was reduced to 4.25% in May 2025. The base rate was therefore 4.25% at the end of the period.

2.10 Staff Vacancy Monitoring

2.10.1 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. The table below summarises the level of vacancies at the end of June 2025 with a detailed analysis by service within appendices 1 to 3.

Committee	Vacancies
General Public Services and Community Engagement	1
Climate Change and Leisure	1
Policy & Resources	4
	6

2.10.2 The percentage of vacant posts at the end of the second quarter is 1.66% when compared against the total number of 362 Council posts. In some cases, vacant posts will be covered by agency staff to ensure service delivery.

Options and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 The recommendations below enable the Committee to make recommendations to Council to agree the allocation of financial resources to deliver Council services.

Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

- 4.1 In accordance with the Council's Constitution and Financial Procedure Rules, if the recommendations are accepted, this will amend the Council's budgets for 2025/26, and over the MTFP.
- 4.2 There are no substantial changes to Council policy resulting from this report.

Financial Implications

5.1 The following revenue and capital variations have been identified for all service committees at 30 June 2025:

Variance	2025/26 £	2026/27	2027/28
Revenue - (Favourable)/ Unfavourable	(3,306)	(3,936)	(2,912)
Capital - Increase / (Decrease)	0	0	0

5.2 The explanations relating to these variations are set out in the main body of this report and supporting appendices.

Legal Implications

6.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

Equal Opportunities Implications

7.1 Relevance Test

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

Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications and Website Implications

8.1 There are no relevant implications directly arising from this report.

Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 The Financial and Budgetary risks are set out in Appendix 8 and are also reported to each meeting of the Audit Committee. FIN07, which captures the

- risk that the medium term financial position worsens, is also reported within the Council's Strategic Risk Register.
- 9.3 The risks set out in Appendix 8 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.

Recommendation

To Council:

- 10.1 That the revenue budget virements as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.
- That the revenue budget supplementary estimates as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.
- 10.3 That the revenue variances to be managed as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be noted.
- 10.4 That the capital variances as set out in appendices 1 to 3 be approved and incorporated into the three-year medium-term financial plan.

Data Quality

Data sources:

Council's financial ledger

Data checked by:

Sally Riley, Finance Business Partner

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	
3	High	✓

Background Papers

Budget papers to Council - February 2025

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

- Appendix 1 General Public Services and Community Engagement Committee Detailed Monitoring Report
 - Annex A Medium term revenue budget by service
 - Annex B Explanations of revenue variances reported this Period
 - Annex C Medium term capital investment programme
 - Annex D Explanations of capital variances reported this Period
 - Annex E Key Income Streams
- Appendix 2 Climate Change and Leisure Committee Detailed Monitoring Report
 - Annex A Medium term revenue budget by service
 - Annex B Explanations of revenue variances reported this Period
 - Annex C Medium term capital investment programme
 - Annex D Explanations of capital variances reported this Period
- Appendix 3 Policy and Resources Committee Detailed Monitoring Report
 - Annex A Medium term revenue budget by service
 - Annex B Explanations of revenue variances reported this Period
 - Annex C Medium term capital investment programme
 - Annex D Explanations of capital variances reported this Period
 - Annex E Key Income Streams
- Appendix 4 Corporate Costs Medium Term Revenue Budget
- Appendix 5 Funding the capital programme
- Appendix 6 Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-2028
- Appendix 7 Reserves Forecast 2025/26
- Appendix 8 Budgetary Risks



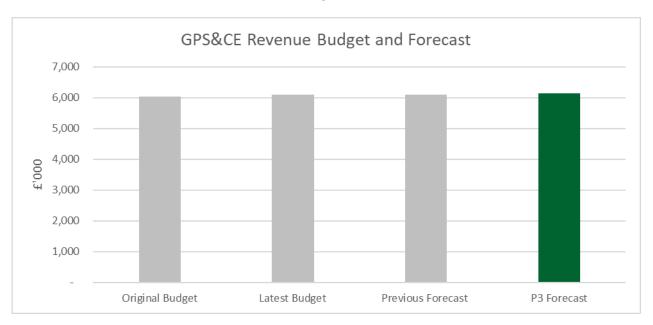
General Public Services and Community Engagement Committee Detailed Monitoring Report

Overview

1. This appendix sets out the detailed financial monitoring position for budgets within the scope of the General Public Services and Community Engagement (GPS&CE) Committee for the 2025/26 financial year. The forecast is based on the position as at Period 3 which covers the period from 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025.

Revenue

2. The latest forecast is net expenditure of £6.131m against the latest budget of £6.106m. This is an unfavourable variance of £0.025m. The detailed revenue budgets and MTFP forecast is set out in Annex A.



Service Area	Original Budget £000	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Carry Forwards £000	Latest Budget £000	Previous Forecast £000	Latest Forecast £000	Variation to Previous Forecast £000	Variation to Latest Budget £000
Community Partnerships	1,075	1,097	1,097	1,097	1,097	0	0
Economic Development and Planning Policy	886	886	886	886	898	12	12
Housing	496	496	496	496	509	13	13
Public Services	3,573	3,627	3,627	3,627	3,627	0	0
Total	6,030	6,106	6,106	6,106	6,131	25	25

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

4. Income Streams

The key income streams are detailed in Annex E. All are currently on target to achieve budget income levels in 2025/26.

Capital Investment Programme

- 5. The latest capital investment programme for 2025/26 is £4.905m. No variation is reported.
- 6. Detailed Capital budgets 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.
- 8. The following table sets out the vacancies as at 30 June 2025.

Department	Job Title	Comments	Total
Environmental Protection	Assistant Environmental Support Manager	Subject to restructure	1.00
Total General Public Services &			1.00
Community Engagement			1.00

Annex A GPS&CE Committee Medium Term Revenue Budget Service

General Public Servic	es and Commu	ınity Engagemer	nt							
Community Partnerships	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2025/26	Previous Forecast 2025/26	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2025/26	Variance @ P3	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Officer Comments
	£		£		£	£	£	£	£	
Citizens Advice Bureaux	288,340	288,340	288,340	288,340	129,645	288,340	0	288,340	288,340	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Community Development	4,500	12,066	12,066	12,066	(111,111)	12,066	0	4,500		Income and Expenditure budgets of £104,668 required for Ringfenced Household Support Fund grant
Community Safety	357,154	371,239	371,239	371,239	96,786	371,239	0	376,918	376,918	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Community Partnerships	209,797	209,797	209,797	209,797	49,069	209,797	0	209,797	209,797	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Env Health - Commercial Team	209,790	209,790	209,790	209,790	195	209,790	0	209,790	209,790	Budget currently forecast to be spent - awaiting 1st invoice
Licensing	(61,606)	(61,606)	(61,606)	(61,606)	(41,291)	(61,606)	0	(61,606)	(61,606)	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Community & Leisure Grant	67,500	67,500	67,500	67,500	22,800	67,500	0	67,500	67,500	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Total	1,075,475	1,097,126	1,097,126	1,097,126	146,093	1,097,126	0	1,095,239	1,095,239	

Economic Development and Planning Policy	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2025/26	Previous Forecast 2025/26	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2025/26	Variance @ P3	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Officer Comments
O	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
(C)	16,971	16,971	16,971	16,971	(39,961)	16,971	0	40,561	40,561	Income and Expenditure budgets required for Land Charges Transition Grant of £36,356 and New Burdens Local Land Charges Grant of £14,949
Street Naming & Numbering	7,130	7,130	7,130	7,130	2,652	7,130	0	7,130	7,130	Budget currently forecast to be spent
elopment Management	220,386	220,386	220,386	220,386	(71,395)	232,386	12,000	190,134		Variance to be managed of £12,000 on Publications due to increased planning subscription costs
Development Plans	546,755	546,755	546,755	546,755	56,602	546,755	0	353,138	355,011	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Hertfordshire Building Control	37,500	37,500	37,500	37,500	33,346	37,500	0	37,500	37,500	Budget currently forecast to be spent
HS2 Planning	0	0	0	0	(808)	0	0	0	0	Income received from HS2
GIS Officer	56,860	56,860	56,860	56,860	14,090	56,860	0	56,860	56,860	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Total	885,602	885,602	885,602	885,602	(5,473)	897,602	12,000	685,323	690,765	

Housing, Public Health and Wellbeing	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2025/26	Previous Forecast 2025/26	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2025/26	Variance @ P3	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Housing Services Needs	559,622	559,622	559,622	559,622	198,032	559,622	0	582,749	571,140	Income and Expenditure budgets required for use of Homes 4 Ukraine grant of £5,609 held in reserves
Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme	5,110	5,110	5,110	5,110	0	5,110	0	5,110	5,110	Demand led service
Homelessness General Fund	(148,740)	(148,740)	(148,740)	(148,740)	(761,157)	(148,740)	0	(148,740)	(148,740)	Income and Expenditure budgets required for ringfenced Domestic Abuse New Burdens grant of £39,444
Housing Associations	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)	0	(5,000)	0	(5,000)	(5,000)	Income will be received by year end
Refugees	C	0	0	0	(86,588)	0	0	0	0	Transfer to/from reserves at year end
Env Health - Residential Team	85,305	85,305	85,305	85,305	24,411	98,177	12,872	112,685	100,742	Budget Virement request from Salary Contingency to facilitate the employment of a part-time Housing Enforcement Assistant on a 2 year fixed term secondment
Public Health	C	0	0	0	(8,868)	0	0	0	0	Income and Expenditure budgets required of £28,745 for Health Hubs Grant and Place Based Health Inequalities Grant
Total	496.297	496.297	496.297	496.297	(634,170)	509.169	12.872	546.804	523,252	

GPS&CE Committee Medium Term Revenue Budget Service cont.

Public Services	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2025/26	Previous Forecast 2025/26	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2025/26	Variance @ P3	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Decriminalised Parking Enf	250,508	300,588	300,588	300,588	(72,310)	300,588	0	212,525	214,872	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Car Parking-Maintenance	110,466	110,466	110,466	110,466	(2,067)	110,466	0	110,466	110,466	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Dial A Ride	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	0	40,000	0	40,000	40,000	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Sustainable Travel Schemes	1,500	5,566	5,566	5,566	0	5,566	0	1,500	1,500	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Associate Director of Environment	101,898	101,898	101,898	101,898	29,089	101,898	0	101,898	101,898	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Refuse Domestic	(24,290)	(24,290)	(24,290)	(24,290)	952	(24,290)	0	(24,290)	(24,290)	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Refuse Trade	(107,017)	(107,017)	(107,017)	(107,017)	(409,540)	(107,017)	0	(106,680)	(106,334)	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Better Buses Fund	101,762	101,762	101,762	101,762	0	101,762	0	101,762	101,762	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Recycling General	750	750	750	750	(1,009)	750	0	750	750	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Garden Waste	(734,515)	(734,515)	(734,515)	(734,515)	(1,552,959)	(734,515)	0	(733,538)	(733,240)	Income is received at the beginning of the financial year and expenditure against the income is made throughout the year. Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Oli nical Waste	(39,007)	(39,007)	(39,007)	(39,007)	(42,728)	(39,007)	0	(39,007)	(39,007)	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Recycling Kerbside	1,387	1,387	1,387	1,387	29,078	1,387	0	1,387	1,387	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Andoned Vehicles	250	250	250	250	1,105	250	0	250	250	Demand led service, will continue to monitor
Public Conveniences	3,600	3,600	3,600	3,600	600	3,600	0	3,600	3,600	Budget currently forecast to be spent
fordshire Fly Tipping	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		The cost of clearing fly tipping is recharged to the perpetrator if known, or funded from a specific reserve.
Environmental Protection	398,787	398,787	398,787	398,787	120,141	398,787	0	400,347	400,347	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Depot-Batchworth	55,225	55,225	55,225	55,225	1,007	55,225	0	55,225	55,225	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Waste Management	2,699,685	2,699,685	2,699,685	2,699,685	973,586	2,699,685	0	2,700,378	2,701,271	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Street Cleansing	711,970	711,970	711,970	711,970	182,801	711,970	0	711,970	711,970	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Total	3,572,959	3,627,105	3,627,105	3,627,105	(742,253)	3,627,105	0	3,538,543	3,542,427	
Total General Public Services and Community Engagement	6,030,333	6,106,130	6,106,130	6,106,130	(1,235,803)	6,131,002	24,872	5,865,909	5,851,683	

Annex B GPS&CE Committee Explanations of revenue supplementary estimates, variances to be managed and virements reported this Period

Supplementary Estimates

General Public Services and Com	munity Engagement					
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	
Env Health - Residential Team	12,872	26,167	13,300			
	Total Housing, Public Health and Wellbeing					
	12,872	26,167	13,300			

Variances to be managed ©

General Public Services and C	ommunity Engagement					
Description Main Group Heading		Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £	
Development Management	evelopment Management Supplies and Services Increase in Publications budget required due to increased planning subscription costs					
	Total Public Services					
	12,000	12,000	12,000			

Virements

General Public Services and Co	mmunity Engagement				
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
Community Development	Supplies and services	To spend ringfenced Household Support Fund grant	104,668	0	0
Community Development	Income	Receipt of ringfenced Household Support Fund grant	(104,668)	0	0
	Tota	al Community Safety	0	0	0
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
	Supplies and services	To spend Land Charges Transition Grant	36,356	0	0
Land & Property Info Section	Income	Receipt of Land Charges Transition Grant	(36,356)	0	0
Land & Property into Section	Supplies and services	To spend New Burdens Local Land Charges Grant	14,949	0	0
	Income	Receipt of New Burdens Local Land Charges Grant	(14,949)	0	0
Page	Total Economic [Development and Planning Policy	0	0	0
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
Lloveing Comice Needs	Supplies and Services	To spend Homes 4 Ukraine grant held in reserves	5,609	0	0
Housing Service Needs	Income Funded from Reserves	Homes 4 Ukraine grant held in reserves	(5,609)	0	0
Homelessness General Fund	Supplies and Services	To spend ringfenced Domestic Abuse New Burdens grant	39,444	0	0
Hornelessness General Fund	Income	Receipt of ringfenced Domestic Abuse New Burdens grant	(39,444)	0	0
Public Health	Supplies and Services To spend Health Hubs grant and Place Based Health Inequalities grant		28,745	0	0
T dolle Fleatti	Income	Reecipt of Health Hubs grant and Place Based Health Inequalities grant	(28,745)	0	0
	Total Housing	g Public Health and Wellbeing	0	0	0
	Total General Public	Services and Community Engagement	0	0	0

Annex C GPS&CE Medium term capital investment programme

General Public Services and Community Engage	ement												
Community Partnerships	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budgets Plus 2024/25 Rephasing	Latest Budget 2025/26	P3 Spend to Date	Forecast Outturn 2025/26	Variance	Latest Budget 2026/27	Proposed 2026/27	Variance	Latest Budget 2027/28	Proposed 2027/28	Variance	Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Capital Grants & Loans	20,000	20,000	20,000		,	0		20,000	0		20,000	1	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Community CCTV	6,000	0	0	Ü		0	-,	3,236	0	-,			No budget for 2025/26
Sub-total Community Partnerships	26,000	20,000	20,000	0	20,000	0	23,236	23,236	0	26,000	26,000)
Economic Development and Planning Policy	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budgets Plus 2024/25 Rephasing	Latest Budget 2025/26	P3 Spend to Date	Forecast Outturn 2025/26	Variance	Latest Budget 2026/27	Proposed 2026/27	Variance	Latest Budget 2027/28	Proposed 2027/28		Comments
Lintad Building Cranta	£	£	£ 2.500	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	Demand led contine. No applications to date
Listed Building Grants CIL Community Grants	2,500	2,500 1,362,403	2,500 1,362,403		,	0	,	2,500	0	,	2,500		Demand led service - No applications to date
Sub-total Economic Development and Planning	ů				7			-					Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Policy	2,500	1,364,903	1,364,903	0	1,364,903	0	2,500	2,500	0	2,500	2,500	()
₩ lsing, Public Health and Wellbeing	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budgets Plus 2024/25 Rephasing	Latest Budget 2025/26	P3 Spend to Date	Forecast Outturn 2025/26	Variance	Latest Budget 2026/27	Proposed 2026/27	Variance	Latest Budget 2027/28	Proposed 2027/28		Comments
bled Facilities Grant	£ 586,000	£ 678,443	£ 678,443	£ 141,159	£ 678,443	£	£ 586,000	£ 586,000	£	£ 586,000	£ 586,000	£	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Repairs Assistance	2,000	2,000	2,000		2,000	0		2,000	0				Demand led service - No applications to date
Sub-total Housing, Public Health and Wellbeing	588,000	680,443	680,443		680,443	0	588,000		0	,			D
Public Services	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budgets Plus 2024/25 Rephasing	Latest Budget 2025/26	P3 Spend to Date	Forecast Outturn 2025/26	Variance	Latest Budget 2026/27	Proposed 2026/27	Variance	Latest Budget 2027/28	Proposed 2027/28	Variance	Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Transport and Infrastructure	279,000		344,171		344,171	0		179,000	0				Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Disabled Parking Bays	2,500	2,500	2,500	0	2,500	0	,	2,500	0	,			Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Waste Plant & Equipment Waste Services Depot	25,000	32,070 147,257	32,070 147,257		32,070 147,257	0		25,000	0	-,			Budget is currently forecast to be spent Budget is currently forecast to be spent - awaiting lighting to complete
EV Charging Points	0	535,938	535,938		535,938	0		0	0				Budget is currently forecast to be spent Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Controlled Parking	25,000	49.144	49,144		49,144	0		25,000	0				Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Replacement Bins	54,000	54,000	54,000	28,557	54,000	0		115,000	0				Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Waste & Recycling Vehicles	1,045,000	1,063,000	1,063,000	121,709	1,063,000	0	800,000	800,000	0	800,000	800,000	-	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Car Park Restoration	250,000	313,131	313,131	61,969	313,131	0	250,000	250,000	0	250,000	250,000		Budget is currently forecast to be spent. Works to The Bury, Ebury Road Talbot Road and Cemetery car parks instructed
Estates, Paths & Roads	47,000	47,000	47,000	0	47,000	0	20,000	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	(Budget is currently forecast to be spent. Survey has been completed which will identify programme of works
TRDC Footpaths & Alleyways	225,000	251,413	251,413	19,689	251,413	0	205,000	205,000	0	215,000	215,000		Budget is currently forecast to be spent. Programme of works identified this has started with works completed in Rickmansworth and Batchworth Heath
Sub-total Public Services	1,952,500	2,839,624	2,839,624	380,742	2,839,624	0	1,621,500	1,621,500	0	1,631,500	1,631,500	()
Total General Public Services and Community	0.500.000	4,904,970	4,904,970	521,901	4,904,970		2,235,236			2,248,000			

Annex D

GPS&CE Explanations of capital variances reported this Period

Nothing to report this monitoring period

Annex E GPS&CE Key Income Streams

Regulatory Service	s								
Car Park Enforcement	Month	2022	2/23	2023	/24	2024	/25	2025/26	
Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs)		£ Volume		£	Volume	£	Volume	£	Volume
	April	(7,700)	176	(5,410)	114	(12,845)	292	(18,195)	369
	May	(7,955)	153	(8,830)	135	(18,465)	372	(18,050)	362
	June	(6,960)	144	(8,180)	152	(16,355)	313	(17,230)	323
	July	(7,386)	113	(10,735)	248	(21,030)	359		
	August	(6,814)	122	(13,495)	289	(21,830)	337		
	September	(6,134)	114	(11,650)	236	(16,290)	326		
	October	(9,526)	249	(13,707)	247	(20,620)	391		
	November	(9,118)	194	(13,715)	219	(18,400)	349		
	December	(7,845)	134	(11,725)	212	(18,810)	363		
	January	(8,913)	154	(12,865)	316	(20,380)	368		
	February	(9,020)	172	(18,307)	233	(18,655)	345		
	March	(10,329)	135	(14,753)	296	(17,060)	315		
	Total	(97,700)	1,860	(143,372)	2,697	(220,740)	4,130	(53,475)	1,054

Comments: The Original budget for 2025/26 is £115,000. The charging structure is based on the severity of the contravention. The charge relating to a serious contravention is £70 and payable within 28-days (reduced to £35 if paid within 14 days). The charge relating to a less serious contravention is £50 payable within 28 days (reduced to £25 if paid within 14-days). The no of PCN's issued can reduce due to greater parking compliance.

Car Park Enforcement	Month	2022	2/23	2023	/24	2024	/25	2025/26	
Pay & Display Tickets		£ Volume		£	Volume	£	Volume	£	Volume
	April	(11,910)	7,037	(15,346)	8,197	(19,257)	10,009	(20,758)	11,918
	May	(12,841)	7,097	(17,473)	8,412	(20,212)	10,433	(20,982)	12,325
	June	(15,058)	7,062	(17,912)	9,036	(18,090)	9,441	(19,318)	11,455
	July	(13,121)	7,362	(17,937)	9,271	(19,394)	10,191		
	August	(13,742)	7,326	(16,564)	8,531	(16,320)	9,241		
	September	(14,086)	7,387	(17,540)	9,075	(20,204)	8,752		
	October	(14,702)	7,878	(18,978)	9,450	(16,532)	11,149		
	November	(14,587)	7,411	(19,091)	9,633	(19,932)	10,730		
	December	(17,110)	8,354	(20,515)	10,337	(22,453)	12,168		
	January	(16,778)	7,573	(20,475)	9,612	(19,597)	11,067		
	February	(14,471)	7,823	(19,453)	10,041	(20,048)	11,437		
	March	(19,225)	9,882	(21,063)	10,893	(21,517)	12,655		
	Total	(177,631)	92,192	(222,347)	112,488	(233,556)	127,273	(61,058)	35,698

Comments: The Original budget for 2025/26 is £220,000. There are different charging regimes for different car parks within the district. However most pay & display car parks in Rickmansworth operate the following regulations - Monday - Friday, 8.30am - 6.30pm max stay up to 24 Hours - charge £4 with the first hour being free.

GPS&CE Key Income Streams Cont.

Waste Ma	anagement								
Trade Refuse	Mande	2022	/23	2023	3/24	2024	/25	2025/26	
Contract fees	Month	£	Volume	£	Volume	£	Volume	£	Volume
	April	(374,524)	925	(408,151)	900	(432,709)	865	(433,542)	886
	May	(2,105)	929	2,040	897	2,897	856	630	861
	June	(297)	930	200	879	1,981	849	(1,446)	894
	July	(328)	930	1,007	882	(120)	851		
	August	(1,417)	920	(3,049)	871	(324)	857		
	September	(1,221)	925	(1,635)	872	(1,651)	860		
	October	(376,644)	926	(402,130)	873	(430,584)	862		
	November	(7,399)	920	464	867	(5,727)	858		
	December	(738)	908	337	860	351	855		
	January	(2,476)	916	(940)	867	(883)	854		
	February	(1,298)	917	(5,573)	870	(2,115)	851		
	March	(5,356)	913	(2,436)	867	(750)	866		
	Total	(773,803)	913	(819,866)	867	(869,634)	866	(434,358)	

Comments: The original 2025/26 budget is £930,570. 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	Month	2022/23		2023	/24	2024	/25	2025/26		
Bin Charges	Month	£	Volume £		Volume	£	Volume	£	Volume	
	April	(1,173,068)	21,649	(1,392,490)	21,254	(1,515,550)	21,389	(1,617,260)	21,280	
	May	(18,910)	405	(31,450)	516	(23,624)	356	(21,225)	262	
	June	(17,232)	237	(17,754)	273	(17,574)	255	(16,320)	168	
	July	(8,724)	163	(6,786)	107	(9,899)	137			
	August	(5,778)	96	(7,494)	111	(6,009)	82			
	September	(3,129)	49	(4,346)	56	(3,090)	34			
	October	(2,480)	80	(3,254)	89	(3,790)	94			
	November	(1,589)	51	(1,781)	50	(2,037)	57			
	December	(324)	14	(645)	16	(366)	9			
	January	(956)	26	(204)	15	0	0			
	February	0	0	30	0	655	0			
	March	0	0	0	0	0	0			
	Total	(1,232,190)	22,770	(1,466,174)	22,487	(1,581,284)	22,413	(1,654,805)	21,710	

Comments: The original 2025/26 budget is £1,703,200. The standard charges for 2025/26 are £70 for the first bin and £115 each for a second or third bin. Customers in receipt of certain benefits pay a concession fee of £60 for the first bin.

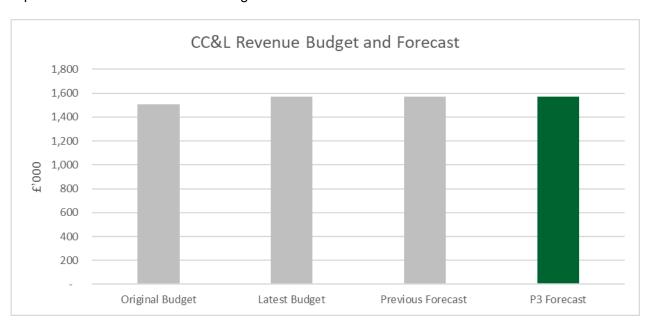
Climate Change and Leisure Committee Detailed Monitoring Report

Overview

1. This appendix sets out the detailed financial monitoring position for budgets within the scope of the Climate Change and Leisure (CC&L) Committee for the 2025/26 financial year. The forecast is based on the position as at Period 3 which covers the period from 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025.

Revenue

2. The latest forecast is net expenditure of £1.573m against the latest budget of £1.573m. There is no variance reported. The detailed revenue budgets and MTFP forecast is set out in Annex A.



Service Area	Original Budget £000	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Carry Forwards £000	Latest Budget £000	Previous Forecast £000	Latest Forecast £000	Variation to Previous Forecast £000	Variation to Latest Budget £000
Leisure	1,173	1,173	1,173	1,173	1,173	C) 0
Sustainability and Climate	331	399	399	399	399	C) 0
Total	1,504	1,573	1,573	1,573	1,573	C	0

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

Capital Investment Programme

- 4. The latest capital investment programme for 2025/26 is £2.332m. No variation is reported.
- 5. Detailed Capital budgets and explanation of key variations are set out in Annex C and Annex D respectively.

Staff Vacancy Monitoring

- 6. 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.
- 7. The following table sets out the vacancies as at 30 June 2025.

Department	Job Title	Comments	Total
Watersmeet	Venue Technician	Not yet advertised	1.00
Total Climate Change & Leisure			1.00

Annex A CC&L Committee Medium Term Revenue Budget Service

Climate Change	and Leisure									
Leisure	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2025/26	Previous Forecast 2025/26	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2025/26	Variance @ P3	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Leavesden Country Park	0	0	0	0	11,402	0	0	0	C	Income and Expenditure Budgets required for the use of £100,000 of \$106 monies and to use £24,787 of National Lottery Heritage Fund held in reserves for the management of Leavesden Country Park, which will be actioned at year end
Watersmeet	47,251	47,251	47,251	47,251	3,082	47,251	0	34,788	35,718	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Leavesden Ymca	(35,000)	(35,000)	(35,000)	(35,000)	(19,105)	(35,000)	0	(35,000)	(35,000)	Income is received quarterly
Oxhey Hall	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)	(3,000)	(1,032)	(3,000)	0	(3,000)	(3,000)	Income is received quarterly
Museum	(700)	(700)	(700)	(700)	(700)	(700)	0	(700)	(700)	Budget met
Playing Fields & Open Spaces	127,450	127,450	127,450	127,450	(8,956)	127,450	0	127,450	127,450	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Maple Lodge BNG	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0		Income and Expenditure budgets required of £9,133 for the use of S106 monies for the implementation of the BNG agreement secured through planning for Maple Lodge
Scotsbridge River Chess Project	0	0	0	0	(57,773)	0	0	0	C	Income and Expenditure budgets required of £57,773 for funding received from Thames Water
Acuadrome Project	0	0	0	0	11,820	0	0	0	C	Income and Expenditure Budgets required for the use of grant funding from HS2 Colne Valley Mitigation Panel for the Rickmansworth Aquadrome Project of £32,802 and match funding of £50,000 for the National Lottery Heritage fund, held in reserves
()uadrome	64,615	64,615	64,615	64,615	23,213	64,615	0	64,615	64,615	Budget currently forecast to be spent
The Bury Green Space	0	0	0	0	(30,210)	0	0	0	C	Awaiting final invoice
eisure Venues	(709,455)	(709,455)	(709,455)	(709,455)	934	(709,455)	0	(709,455)	(709,455)	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Sure Activities	124,507	124,507	124,507	124,507	3,435	124,507	0	124,507	124,507	Income and Expenditure budgets required of £4,050 grant funding from HAPpy for holiday playschemes
_eisure Development	680,239	680,239	680,239	680,239	182,438	680,239	0	694,460	702,264	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Grounds Maintenance	877,513	877,513	877,513	877,513	209,137	877,513	0	877,513	877,513	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Total	1,173,420	1,173,420	1,173,420	1,173,420	327,684	1,173,420	0	1,175,178	1,183,912	

Sustainability and Climate	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2025/26		Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2025/26	Variance @ P3	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Officer Comments
	£	£	£		£	£	£	£	£	
Energy Efficiency	9,500	27,900	27,900	27,900	0	27,900	0	9,500	9,500	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Climate Change & Sustainability Projects	207,432	257,567	257,567	257,567	(198,162)	257,567	0	294,965	294,965	Income and Expenditure Budgets required of £229,877 to repay unused 2024/25 ringfenced Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund grant
Innovate UK	0	0	0	0	16,389	0	0	0	(Project complete. Grant claimed retrospectively as per grant conditions
Pest Control	12,755	12,755	12,755	12,755	1,785	12,755	0	12,755	12,755	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Environmental Maintenance	25,970	25,970	25,970	25,970	11,998	25,970	0	25,970	25,970	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Animal Control	65,829	65,829	65,829	65,829	18,316	65,829	0	67,220	67,220	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Cemeteries	(234,233)	(234,233)	(234,233)	(234,233)	(30,040)	(234,233)	0	(234,233)	(234,233)	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Trees And Landscapes	243,580	243,580	243,580	243,580	12,193	243,580	0	243,580	243,580	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Total	330,833	399,368	399,368	399,368	(167,520)	399,368	0	419,757	419,757	
Total Climate Change and	1,504,253	1,572,788	1,572,788	1,572,788	160,164	1,572,788	0	1,594,935	1,603,669	

Annex B CC&L Committee Explanations of revenue supplementary estimates, variances to be managed and virements reported this Period

Virements

Climate Change and Leisure					
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
	Supplies and services	To spend S106 for the management of Leavesden Country Park	100,000	0	0
Abbots Langley Project	Income	Receipt of S106 for the management of Leavesdden Country Park	(100,000)	0	0
	Supplies and services	To spend Grant funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund for the Management and Maintenance of Leavesden Country Park, held in reserves	24,787	0	0
	Income Funded from Reserves	Grant funding from National Lottery Heritage Fund for the Management and Maintenance of Leavesden Country Park, held in reserves	(24,787)	0	0
Maple Lodge BNG	Supplies and Services	To spend S106 for the implementation of the BNG agreement secured through planning for Maple Lodge	9,133	0	0
	Income	To spend S106 for the implementation of the BNG agreement secured through planning for Maple Lodge	(9,133)	0	0
otsbridge River Chess Project	Supplies and Services	To spend grant funding from Thames Water for the Scotsbridge River Chess Project	57,773	0	0
	Income	Receipt of grant funding from Thames Water for the Scotsbridge River Chess Project	(57,773)	0	0
Aquadrome Project	Supplies and services	To spend grant funding from HS2 Colne Valley Mitigation Panel for the Rickmansworth Aquadrome Project - match funding for The National Lotttery Heritage Fund, held in reserves	50,000	0	0
	Income Funded from Reserves	Grant funding from HS2 Colne Valley Mitigation Panel for the Rickmansworth Aquadrome Project - Match funding for The Natinal Lottery Heritage Fund, held in reserves	(50,000)	0	0
	Supplies and services	To spend grant funding from HS2 Colne Valley Mitigation Panel for the Rickmansworth Aquadrome Project, held in reserves	32,802	0	0
	Income Funded from Reserves	Grant funding from HS2 Colne Valley Mitigation Panel for the Rickmansworth Aquadrome Project held in reserves	(32,802)	0	0
Leisure Activities	Supplies and Services	To spend grant funding from HAPpy for holiday playschemes	4,050	0	0
Leisure Activities	Income	Receipt of grant funding from HAPpy for holiday playschemes	(4,050)	0	0
		Total Leisure	0	0	0
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
Climate Change and Sustainability	Supplies and services	To repay unused 2024/25 ringfenced Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund grant	229,877	0	0
Projects	Income	Receipt of 2024/25 Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund grant	(229,877)	0	0
	0	0	0		
	0	0	0		

Annex C CC&L Medium term capital investment programme

Climate Change and Leisure													
Leisure	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budgets Plus 2024/25 Rephasing	Latest Budget 2025/26	P3 Spend to Date	Forecast Outturn 2025/26	Variance	Latest Budget 2026/27	Proposed 2026/27	Variance	Latest Budget 2027/28	Proposed 2027/28	Variance	Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Aquadrome Bridge Replacement	0	438,740	438,740	179,141	438,740	0	0	0	0	0	0	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
eavesden Country Park Gate	0	17,191	17,191	7,514	17,191	0	0	0	0	0	0	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Watersmeet Electrical	0	100,110	138,443	0	138,443	0	0	0	0	0	0	C	Budget currently forecast to be spent. Project out for tender
Watersmeet Fire Doors	75,400		75,400	0	75,400	0	0	0	0	0	0	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Scotsbridge-Chess Habitat	0	8,190	8,190	0	8,190	0	0	0	0	0	0	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Open Space Access Improvements	60,000	118,320	118,320	0	118,320	0	60,000	60,000	0	60,000	60,000	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Improve Play Area-Future Schemes	120,000	211,238	211,238	7,456		0	120,000	120,000	0	120,000		C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Aquadrome-Whole Life Costing	11,000	11,000	11,000	1,479	11,000	0	11,000	11,000	0	11,000	11,000	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Replacement Ground Maintenance Vehicles	696,800	696,800	696,800	0	696,800	0	540,000		0	540,000		C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Watersmeet-Whole Life Costing	20,000	31,303	31,303	3,203		0	20,000	20,000	0	20,000	20,000	0	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Pavilions-Whole Life Costing	11,000	12,984	12,984	0	12,984	0	11,000	11,000	0	11,000	11,000	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Sub-total Leisure	994,200	1,759,609	1,759,609	198,793	1,759,609	0	762,000	762,000	0	762,000	762,000	0	
Sustainability and Climate	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budgets Plus 2024/25 Rephasing	Latest Budget 2025/26	P3 Spend to Date	Forecast Outturn 2025/26	Variance	Latest Budget 2026/27	Proposed 2026/27	Variance	Latest Budget 2027/28	Proposed 2027/28		Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Sustainability Schemes	500,000	500,000	500,000	0	000,000	0	500,000	500,000	0	500,000	500,000		Budget is currently forecast to be spent
KShared Prosperity	0	0	0	1,395	0	0		0	0		0	0	Awaiting confirmation of 2025/26 grant allocation
Centetery-Whole Life Costing	72,342	72,342	72,342	0	72,342	0	5,000	5,000	0	5,000	, ·	С	Budget is currently forecast to be spent. Planned works Woodcock Hill Cemetery, awaiting quotes
Sub-total Sustainability and Climate	572,342	572,342	572,342	1,395	572,342	0	505,000	505,000	0	505,000	505,000	0	
Total Climate Change and Leisure	1.566.542	2.331.951	2,331,951	200.188	2.331.951	0	1.267.000	1.267.000	0	1.267.000	1.267.000	0	

Annex D

CC&L Explanations of capital variances reported this Period

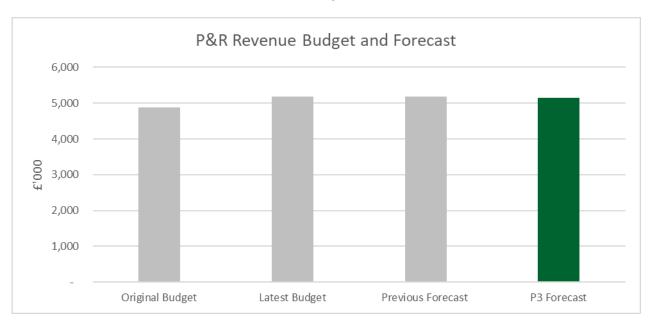
No variances reported this monitoring period

Policy and Resources Committee Detailed Monitoring Report

1. This appendix sets out the detailed financial monitoring position for budgets within the scope of the Policy and Resources (P&R) Committee for the 2025/26 financial year. The forecast is based on the position as at Period 3 which covers the period from 1 April 2025 to 30 June 2025.

Revenue

2. The latest forecast is expenditure of £5.144m against the latest budget of £5.172m. This is a favourable variance of (£0.028m). The detailed revenue budgets and MTFP forecast is set out in Annex A.



Service Area	Original Budget £000	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Carry Forwards £000	Latest Budget £000	Previous Forecast £000	Latest Forecast £000	Variation to Previous Forecast £000	Variation to Latest Budget £000
Resources and Leader	6,948	7,010	7,010	7,010	6,995	(15)	(15)
Garages and Shops	(1,372)	(1,372)	(1,372)	(1,372)	(1,372)	0	0
Investment Properties	(982)	(982)	(982)	(982)	(982)	0	0
Vacancy Provision	(180)	(180)	(180)	(180)	(180)	0	0
Salary Contingency	472	697	697	697	684	(13)	(13)
Total	4,885	5,172	5,172	5,172	5,144	(28)	(28)

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 2025/26.

Capital Investment Programme

- 5. The latest capital investment budget for 2025/26 is £14.829m. A variation of £0.000m is reported.
- 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.
- 8. The following table sets out the vacancies by service as at 30 June 2025.

Department	Job Title	Comments	Total
Revenues & Benefits	Data Analysis Officer	Recently advertised	1.00
Legal & Committee	Associate Director, Legal, Democratic Service & Monitoring Officer	Not currently advertised	1.00
Finance	Head of Finance	Covered by interim	1.00
Customer Service Centre	Customer Service Centre Representative	Currently advertised	1.00
Total Policy & Resources			4.00

Annex A
P&R Committee Medium Term Revenue Budget Service

Policy & Resources	5									
Resources	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2025/26	Previous Forecast 2025/26	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2025/26	Variance @ P3	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Corporate Management	341,741	341,741	341,741	341,741	(251,131)	341,741	0	0 ,		Budget currently forecast to be spent
Major Incident Planning	118,836	118,836	118,836	118,836	30,878	118,836	0	119,641		Budget currently forecast to be spent
UK Shared Prosperity Fund	0	0	0	0	13,576	0	0	0		Awaiting 2025/26 grant income
West Herts Crematorium	0	0	0	0	1,976,226	0	0	0		All spend will be recharged to West Herts Crematorium
Miscellaneous Income & Expend	(1,224,500)	(1,224,500)	(1,224,500)	(1,224,500)	(18,977)	(1,224,500)	0	(1,141,500)		Budget currently forecast to be spent
Non Distributed Costs	59,000	59,000	59,000	59,000	441	59,000		59,000		Budget currently forecast to be spent
Director Of Finance	140,418	140,418	140,418	140,418	67,487	140,418	0	140,417	140,417	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Learning and Development	0	0	0	0	0	87,040	87,040	83,840	83,840	Staff Training Budget of £76,840 transferred from HR Client due to changes to Shared Service Agreement and Staff Day budget of £10,200 transferred from Communications
Miscellaneous Properties	(76,958)	(76,958)	(76,958)	(76,958)	(70,549)	(76,958)	0	(76,958)	(76,958)	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Office Services	190,810	190,810	190,810	190,810	48,162	190,810	0	190,810	190,810	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Asset Management - Property Set vices	971,951	971,951	971,951	971,951	206,103	971,951	0	916,016	916,016	Budget currently forecast to be spent
0 (mance Services	454,868	454,868	454,868	454,868	249,288	477,612	22,744	481,312	483,046	Reduction in Income due to the change in Shared Service agreement % recharges with Watford Borough Council. Was 60/40 now 58/42
Council Tax Collection	348,753	348,753	348,753	348,753	184,927	366,073	17,320	367,546	368,044	Reduction in Income due to the change in Shared Service agreement % recharges with Watford Borough Council. Was 61/39 now 59/41
Benefits & Allowances	723,791	723,791	723,791	723,791	364,332	690,381	(33,410)	693,234	694,750	Increase in Income due to the change in Shared Service agreement % recharges with Watford Borough Council. Was 57/43 now 59/41
NNDR	62,213	62,213	62,213	62,213	5,584	65,404	3,191	65,404	65,404	Reduction in Income due to the change in Shared Service agreement % recharges with Watford Borough Council. Was 61/39 now 59/41
Revs & Bens Management	43,659	43,659	43,659	43,659	11,460	45,898	2,239	45,898	45,898	Reduction in Income due to the change in Shared Service agreement % recharges with Watford Borough Council. Was 61/39 now 59/41
Fraud	90,706	90,706	90,706	90,706	18,489	90,706	0	90,706	90,706	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Garages & Shops Maintenance	(1,372,320)	(1,372,320)	(1,372,320)	(1,372,320)	(349,468)	(1,372,320)	0	(1,372,320)	(1,372,320)	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Chief Executive	200,340	259,653	259,653	259,653	58,803	259,653	0	200,340	200,340	Budget currently forecast to be spent

P&R Committee Medium Term Revenue Budget Service cont.

Resources	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2025/26	Previous Forecast 2025/26	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2025/26	Variance @ P3	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Investment Properties	(982,225)	(982,225)	(982,225)	(982,225)	(374,910)	(982,225)	0	(/		Budget currently forecast to be spent
Performance Mgt & Scrutiny	79,684	79,684	79,684	79,684	20,889	79,684	0	81,707	82,553	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Debt Recovery	236,156	236,156	236,156	236,156	125,033	248,266	12,110	249,293	250,758	Reduction in Income due to the change in Shared Service agreement % recharges with Watford Borough Council. Was 61/39 now 59/41
Associate Director Strategy, Partnerships & Housing	118,697	118,697	118,697	118,697	29,446	118,697	0	118,697	118,697	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Three Rivers House	340,898	340,898	340,898	340,898	(11,870)	301,398	(39,500)	301,398	301,398	Increase in rent for Herts Constabulary of £37,200 due to rent review and additional space and £2,300 services charges for Citizens Advice Bureau
Basing House	(10,140)	(10,140)	(10,140)	(10,140)	2,198	(10,140)	0	(10,140)		Budget currently forecast to be spent
Oxhey Drive	10,250	10,250	10,250	10,250	0	10,250	0	10,250	10,250	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Wighbledon	(500,000)	(500,000)	(500,000)	(500,000)	(384,973)	(500,000)	0	(500,000)	(500,000)	Budget currently forecast to be spent
cers' Standby	6,140	6,140	6,140	6,140	0	6,140	0	6,140		Budget currently forecast to be spent
ancy Provision	(180,000)	(180,000)	(180,000)	(180,000)	0	(180,000)	0	(180,000)	(180,000)	Budget currently forecast to be spent
D ance Client	15,998	15,998	15,998	15,998	28,654	15,998	0	16,016	16,016	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Business App Maintenance	257,875	257,875	257,875	257,875	245,570	257,875	0	260,875		Budget currently forecast to be spent
ICT Client	862,308	862,308	862,308	862,308	238,865	862,308	0	863,443	864,577	Budget currently forecast to be spent
nternal Audit Client	55,968	55,968	55,968	55,968	0	55,968	0	55,968	55,968	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Council Tax Client	(126,879)	(126,879)	(126,879)	(126,879)	(1,400)	(126,879)	0	(126,879)	(126,879)	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Benefits Client	(470,660)	(470,660)	(470,660)	(470,660)	665,405	, ,	0	(470,660)	(470,660)	This holds the housing benefits payments and recovery from DWP and further grants from DWP relating to the provision of benefits. There is timing difference between payments made to claimants and income received from Government.
Nndr Cost Of Collection	(107,090)	(107,090)	(107,090)	(107,090)	50	\ - //	0	(101,000)		This is received at year end
Fraud Client	2,690	2,690	2,690	2,690	0	=,000		,		Budget currently forecast to be spent
Insurances	542,520	542,520	542,520	542,520	370,414	542,520	0	542,520		Budget currently forecast to be spent
Debt Recovery Client Acc	(6,140)	(6,140)	(6,140)	(6,140)	(375)	(6,140)	0	(6,140)	(, ,	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Benefits New Burden	0	0	0	0	(6,837)	0	0	0		Budget currently forecast to be spent
Benefits DHP	0	0	0	0	(42,563)	0	0	0		Actioned at year end
Benefits Non Hra	1,020	1,020	1,020	1,020	(89,616)	1,020	0	1,020	1,020	Actioned at year end
HR Client	375,171	375,171	375,171	375,171	102,015	298,331	(76,840)	299,552	300,763	Staff Training budget transferred to new Learning and Development cost centre due to changes to Shared Service Agreement
Contingency	471,651	696,651	696,651	696,651	0	683,779	(12,872)	674,378	927,667	Budget Virement request to Environmental Health - Residential to facilitate the employment of a part-time Housing Enforcement Assistant on a 2 year fixed term secondment
Total	2,067,200	2,351,513	2,351,513	2,351,513	3,461,625	2,333,535	(17,978)	2,305,940	2,568,464	

P&R Committee Medium Term Revenue Budget Service cont.

Leader	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2025/26	Previous Forecast 2025/26	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2025/26	Variance @ P3	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Register Of Electors	36,800	36,800	36,800	36,800	(248)	36,800	0	36,800	36,800	Budget currently forecast to be spent
District Elections	76,320	76,320	76,320	76,320	79,639	76,320	0	76,320	76,320	Recharge to be done for county election
Customer Service Centre	1,014,348	1,014,348	1,014,348	1,014,348	243,412	1,014,348	0	1,023,355	1,029,314	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Democratic Representation	341,951	341,951	341,951	341,951	104,814	341,951	0	341,951	341,951	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Customer Contact Programme	68,453	68,453	68,453	68,453	80,651	97,503	29,050	97,503	97,503	Social Media budget of £17,000 and Software Licences Budget of £12,050 transferred from Communications
Customer Experience	103,464	103,464	103,464	103,464	25,866	103,464	0	103,464	103,464	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Communication	378,971	382,171	382,171	382,171	82,870	342,921	(39,250)	396,523	396,523	Social Media budget of £17,000 and Software Licences Budget of £12,050 transferred to Customer Contact Programme and £10,200 Staff Day budget transferred to new Learning & Development cost centre
Legal Practice	457,870	457,870	457,870	457,870	147,657	457,870	0	458,580	459,304	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Committee Administration	185,754	185,754	185,754	185,754	53,488	185,754	0	187,786	187,786	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Elections & Electoral Regn	153,595	153,595	153,595	153,595	62,882	153,595	0	155,627	155,627	Budget currently forecast to be spent
Parsh Elections	0	0	0	0	57	0	0	0	0	No scheduled parish elections in 2025/26
Qunty Elections	0	0	0	0	102,509	0	0	0	0	Recharges to Herts County Council to be done
arliamentary Elections	0	0	0	0	46,882	0	0	0	0	July 2024 election claim with Cabinet Office
Referendums	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	Awaiting final figures for recent Neighbourhood Planning Referendum
Police Commissioner Election	0	0	0	0	(19,382)	0	0	0	0	Advanced monies from 2024 PCC election to be repaid in 2025/26
Total	2,817,526	2,820,726	2,820,726	2,820,726	1,011,096	2,810,526	(10,200)	2,877,909	2,884,592	
Total Policy and Resources	4,884,726	5,172,239	5,172,239	5,172,239	4,472,721	5,144,061	(28,178)	5,183,849	5,453,056	

Annex B
P&R Committee Explanations of revenue supplementary estimates, variances to be managed and virements reported this Period

Supplementary estimates

Policy and Resources					
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
Finance Services	Income	Reduction in Income due to the change in Shared Service agreement % recharges with Watford Borough Council. Was 60/40 now 58/42	22,744	22,920	23,002
Council Tax Collection	Income	Reduction in Income due to the change in Shared Service agreement % recharges with Watford Borough Council. Was 61/39 now 59/41	17,320	17,523	17,548
Benefits & Allowances	Income	Increase in Income due to the change in Shared Service agreement % recharges with Watford Borough Council. Was 57/43 now 59/41	(33,410)	(33,548)	(33,622)
NNDR	Income	Reduction in Income due to the change in Shared Service agreement % recharges with Watford Borough Council. Was 61/39 now 59/41	3,191	3,190	3,190
Revs & Bens Management	Income	Reduction in Income due to the change in Shared Service agreement % recharges with Watford Borough Council. Was 61/39 now 59/41	2,239	2,238	2,238
bt Recovery	Income	Reduction in Income due to the change in Shared Service agreement % recharges with Watford Borough Council. Was 61/39 now 59/41	12,110	11,241	12,232
<u>Three</u> Rivers House	Income	Increase in rent for Herts Constabulary due to rent review and additional space	(37,200)	(37,200)	(37,200)
ntingency Funds	Employees	Budget Virement request to Environmental Health - Residential to facilitate the employment of a part-time Housing Enforcement Assistant on a 2 year fixed term secondment	(12,872)	(26,167)	(13,300)
		Total Resources	(25,878)	(39,803)	(25,912)
	T	otal Policy and Resources	(25,878)	(39,803)	(25,912)

Variances

Policy and Resources					
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
Three Rivers House	Income	Budget required for Service Charge income from Citizens Advice Bureau	(2,300)	(2,300)	(2,300)
	T	otal Resources	(2,300)	(2,300)	(2,300)
	Total F	Policy and Resources	(2,300)	(2,300)	(2,300)

P&R Committee Explanations of revenue supplementary estimates, variances to be managed and virements reported this Period cont.

Virements

Policy & Resources					
Description	Main Group Heading	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
Learning & Development	Employees	Staff Training Budget of £76,840 transferred from HR Client due to changes to Shared Service Agreement	76,840	76,840	76,840
	Supplies and Services	Staff Day budget transferred from Communications	10,200	7,000	7,000
HR Client	Employees	Staff Training budget transferred to new Learning and Development cost centre due to changes to Shared Service Agreement	(76,840)	(76,840)	(76,840)
		Total Resources	10,200	7,000	7,000
Customer Contact Programme	Supplies and Services	Social Media budget of £17,000 and Software Licences Budget of £12,050 transferred from Communications	29,050	29,050	29,050
Communications	Supplies and Services	Social Media budget of £17,000 and Software Licences Budget of £12,050 transferred to Customer Contact Programme and £10,200 Staff Day budget transferred to new Learning & Development cost centre	(39,250)	(36,050)	(36,050)
Pa		Total Leader	(10,200)	(7,000)	(7,000)
ge	Т	otal Policy and Resources	0	0	0

Annex C
P&R Medium term capital investment programme

Policy and Resources													
Leader and Resources	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budgets Plus 2024/25 Rephasing	Latest Budget 2025/26	P3 Spend to Date	Forecast Outturn 2025/26	Variance	Latest Budget 2026/27	Proposed 2026/27	Variance	Latest Budget 2027/28	Proposed 2027/28	Variance	Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Professional Fees-Internal	157,590	157,590	157,590	0	157,590	0	157,590	157,590	0	157,590	157,590	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Election Equipment	6,000	6,000	6,000	7,560	6,000	0	6,000	6,000	0	6,000	6,000		Replacement polling booths, awaiting final costs
Members' IT Equipment	0	0	0	0	0	0	48,780	48,780	0	0	0		No budget for 2025/26. Councillor Laptop refresh due in 2026/27
Rickmansworth Work Hub	0	3,200	3,200	0	3,200	0	0	0	0	0	0		Budget is currently forecast to be spent
ICT-Managed Project Costs	60,000	188,471	188,471	0	188,471	0	60,000	60,000	0	60,000	60,000	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
ShS-Hardware Replace Prog	40,000	40,000	40,000	0	40,000	0	40,000	40,000	0	40,000	40,000	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Garage Improvements	150,000	178,538	178,538	0	178,538	0	150,000	150,000	0	150,000	150,000	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
ICT Website Development	0	11,000	11,000	0	11,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
ICT Hardware Replacement Prog	45,000	169,824	169,824	185,683	169,824	0	45,000	45,000	0	45,000	45,000	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent. Staff Laptop refresh programme has commenced
Whole Life Costing	270,000	406,949	406,949	4,780	406,949	0	170,000	170,000	0	170,000	170,000	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent. Access Control replacement, fire doors, patio doors, 5 new toilets and fuse boards are currently out to tender
ing House-Whole Life Costing	67,914	67,914	67,914	0	7,914	(60,000)	60,000	60,000	0	60,000	60,000	C	No planned works this year - Budget Virement of £60,000 requested to Temporary Accommodation - All Sites primarily for 38 Lincoln Drive
Business Application Upgrade	90,000	130,000	130,000	0	130,000	0	90,000	90,000	0	90,000	90,000	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Temporary Accommodation - All Sites	0	0	0	12,486	60,000	60,000	0	0	0	0	0	C	Budget Virement of £60,000 from Basing House requested to facilitate internal works, primarily 38 Lincoln Drive
e Rivers House Transformation	0	12,412	12,412	0	12,412	0	0	0	0	0	0	C	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Sub-total Leader and Resources	886,504	1,371,898	1,371,898	210,509	1,371,898	0	827,370	827,370	0	778,590	778,590	C	
Major Projects	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budgets Plus 2024/25 Rephasing	Latest Budget 2025/26	P3 Spend to Date	Forecast Outturn 2025/26	Variance	Latest Budget 2026/27	Proposed 2026/27	Variance	Latest Budget 2027/28	Proposed 2027/28	variance	Comments
0 4 0 4 0 1 1	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
South Oxhey Parking Property Investment Board	500,000	500,000	500,000	2,500		0	0	0	0	0			Budget is currently forecast to be spent Spending requirements for 2025/26 are currently being calculated. An
Local Authority Housing Fund		5,720,103	5,720,103	0	5,720,103	0	0	0	0	0	0		update will be provided at P6 (September 2025) Budget is currently forecast to be spent
			6,220,103	Ü	, ,	0	0		·				
Sub-total Major Projects	500,000	6,220,103	6,220,103	2,500	6,220,103	0	- 0	- 0	0		- 0		
Total Policy and Resources	1.386.504	7.592.001	7.592.001	213.009	7.592.001	0	827.370	827.370	0	778.590	778.590		

Annex D
P&R Explanations of capital variances reported this Period

Description	Details of Outturn Variances to Latest Approved Budget	2025/26 £	2026/27 £	2027/28 £
Policy and Resources				
Basing House-Whole Life Costing	No planned works this year - Budget Virement of £60,000 requested to Temporary Accommodation - All Sites primarily for 38 Lincoln Drive	(60,000)	0	0
Temporary Accommodation - All Sites	Budget Virement of £60,000 from Basing House requested to facilitate internal works, primarily 38 Lincoln Drive	60,000	0	0
Total Policy and Resources		0	0	0

Annex E P&R Key Income Streams

Garages and Shops									
Garages	Month	2022	2/23	2023	3/24	2024	/25	2025/26	
Rent		£	Volume	£	Volume	£	Volume	£	Volume
	April	(76,062)	17%	(79,962)	18%	(84,907)	8%	(89,801)	8%
	May	(74,883)	17%	(70,669)	16%	(90,903)	7%	(92,049)	8%
	June	(75,841)	16%	(80,973)	16%	(89,983)	8%	(65,811)	8%
	July	(76,597)	16%	(82,085)	14%	(94,267)	8%		
	August	(72,188)	16%	(81,588)	14%	(89,655)	7%		
	September	(74,631)	16%	(81,247)	14%	(90,008)	7%		
	October	(75,002)	16%	(82,104)	14%	(93,797)	6%		
	November	(73,282)	15%	(80,289)	14%	(89,644)	7%		
	December	(74,000)	16%	(82,367)	11%	(90,244)	7%		
	January	(75,231)	16%	(80,210)	9%	(91,618)	6%		
	February	(74,914)	18%	(81,581)	9%	(90,863)	7%		
	March	(72,721)	17%	(80,968)	8%	(92,504)	7%		
	Total	(895,352)		(964,043)		(1,088,393)		(247,661)	

Comments: The original budget for 2025/26 is £1,180,120. There are currently 1,056 rentable garages. The void percentage is based on the rentable stock only.

Shops	Month	2022	2/23	2023	3/24	2024/	25	2025/26		
Rent		£	Volume	£	Volume	£	Volume	£	Volume	
	April	(46,495)	n/a	(39,495)	n/a	(35,353)	n/a	(47,966)	n/a	
	May	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a	
	June	(37,853)	n/a	(37,853)	n/a	(37,463)	n/a	(37,853)	n/a	
	July	(8,250)	n/a	(8,250)	n/a	(4,890)	n/a			
	August	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a			
	September	(38,244)	n/a	(31,244)	n/a	(37,870)	n/a			
	October	(8,250)	n/a	(14,773)	n/a	(4,500)	n/a			
	November	0	n/a	0	n/a	0	n/a			
	December	(37,853)	n/a	(37,853)	n/a	(40,376)	n/a			
	January	(8,250)	n/a	(8,250)	n/a	(21,750)	n/a			
	February	0	n/a	0	n/a	2,915	n/a			
	March	(7,000)	n/a	(7,017)	n/a	(49,017)	n/a			
	Total	(192,195)		(184,735)	0	(228,303)	0	(85,818)	0	

Comments: The original 2025/26 budget is £210,000. There are 20 shops in the district which are predominantly let as self repairing leases. Each shop rent is negotiated at the best market rate taking into consideration local factors regarding usage, availability, affordability and community benefit.

Corporate costs Medium Term Revenue Budget

Corporate Costs	Original Budget 2025/26	Original Budget Plus 2024/25 Carry Forwards	Latest Budget 2025/26	Previous Forecast 2025/26	Spend to Date	Latest Forecast 2025/26	Variance @ P3	Forecast 2026/27	Forecast 2027/28	Officer Comments
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Interest Earned	(1,110,000)	(1,110,000)	(1,110,000)	(1,110,000)	(99,618)	(1,110,000)	0	(1,060,000)	(1,010,000)	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Interest Paid	755,266	755,266	755,266	755,266	396	755,266	0	825,296	864,796	Budget is currently forecast to be spent
Parish Precepts	2,612,285	2,612,285	2,612,285	2,612,285	1,306,143	2,612,285	0	2,664,530	2,717,820	Paid half yearly in April & September
Total Corporate Costs	2,257,551	2,257,551	2,257,551	2,257,551	1,206,920	2,257,551	0	2,429,826	2,572,616	

CAPITAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMME 2025-2028 - FUNDING

		2025/26		2026/27	2027/28
Capital Programme	Original Budget	Latest Budget	Outturn Forecast at P3	Forecast	Forecast
	£	£	£	£	£
Balance Brought Forward					
Govt Grants: Disabled Facility Grants	(1,396,500)	(1,396,500)	(1,396,500)	(1,396,500)	(1,396,500)
Section 106 Contributions	(1,342,808)	(1,342,808)	(1,342,808)	(1,342,808)	(1,342,808)
Capital Receipts Reserve	0	0	0	0	C
LAHF	(1,114,593)	(1,114,593)	(1,114,593)	0	(
Future Capital Expenditure Reserve New Homes Bonus Reserve	0	0	0	0	(
Total Funding Brought Forward	(3,853,901)	(3,853,901)	(3,853,901)	(2,739,308)	(2,739,308)
Total Funding Brought Forward	(3,653,901)	(3,653,901)	(3,653,901)	(2,739,306)	(2,739,300)
Generated in the Year					
Govt Grants: Disabled Facility Grants	(586,000)	(678,443)	(678,443)	(586,000)	(586,000)
Section 106 Contributions	0	0	0	0	C
Capital Receipts Reserve	(1,000,000)	(1,000,000)	(1,000,000)	(1,000,000)	(1,000,000)
LAHF	0	0	0	0	C
Future Capital Expenditure Reserve	0	0	0	0	C
New Homes Bonus Reserve	(116,500)	(116,500)	(116,500)	0	(
Total Generated	(1,702,500)	(1,794,943)	(1,794,943)	(1,586,000)	(1,586,000)
Use of Funding					
Govt Grants: Disabled Facility Grants	586,000	678,443	678,443	586,000	586,000
Section 106 Contributions	0	. 0	Ó	. 0	·
CIL Contributions	0	2,408,399	2,408,399	0	C
Capital Receipts Reserve	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000	1,000,000
LAHF	0	1,114,593	1,114,593	0	(
Future Capital Expenditure Reserve	0	0	0	0	(
New Homes Bonus Reserve	116,500	116,500		0	C
Borrowing	3,819,546	9,510,987	9,510,987	2,743,606	2,707,590
Total Use of Funding	5,522,046	14,828,922	14,828,922	4,329,606	4,293,590
Balance Carried Forward					
Govt Grants: Disabled Facility Grants	(1,396,500)	(1,396,500)	(1,396,500)	(1,396,500)	(1,396,500)
Section 106 Contributions	(1,342,808)	(1,342,808)	(1,342,808)	(1,342,808)	(1,342,808
Capital Receipts Reserve	Ó	0	Ó	Ó	(
LAHF	(1,114,593)	0	0	0	(
Future Capital Expenditure Reserve	0	0	0	0	(
New Homes Bonus Reserve	0	0	0	0	(
Total Funding Carried Forward	(3,853,901)	(2,739,308)	(2,739,308)	(2,739,308)	(2,739,308)
South Oxhey Initiative					
Balance Brought Forward	0	0	0	o	C
Generated in the Year (Land Receipts)	0	0	0	0	(
Repayment of Borrowing	0	0	0	0	(
Total	0	0	0	0	Q
Total Expenditure Capital Investment Programr	ne 5,522,046	14,828,922	14,828,922	4,329,606	4,293,590

Medium Term Financial Plan 2025-2028

Medium Term Financial Plan - Consolidated Revenue	Account (Gene	eral Fund)					
			2025/26			2026/27	2027/28
Funding	Original	Original Budget plus Carry Forwards from 2024/25	Latest Budget	Previous Forecast	Latest Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Council Tax Base (No.) Council Tax Base Increase (%) Band D Council Tax (£) Council Tax Increase - TRDC (%) Council Tax (£)	40,038.90 0.00 206.36 0.00 (8,262,427)	0.00 206.36	40,038.90 0.00 206.36 0.00 (8,262,427)	40,038.90 0.00 206.36 0.00 (8,262,427)	40,038.90 0.00 206.36 0.00 (8,262,427)	40,439.30 0.99 212.53 2.99 (8,594,564)	40,843.7 0.9 218.8 2.9 (8,939,869
Parish Precepts (£)	(2,612,285)	(2,612,285)	(2,612,285)	(2,612,285)	(2,612,285)	(2,664,530)	(2,717,820
Total Taxation (£)	(10,874,713)		(10,874,713)	(10,874,713)	(10,874,713)		(11,657,689
Business Rates (£) Collection Fund Surplus (£) New Homes Bonus Grant (£) Government Funding (£) Total Grant Funding (£)	(3,000,000) 124,592 (116,296) (419,117) (3,410,821)	(3,410,821)	(3,000,000) 124,592 (116,296) (419,117) (3,410,821)	(3,000,000) 124,592 (116,296) (419,117) (3,410,821)	(3,000,000) 124,592 (116,296) (419,117) (3,410,821)		(2,495,000 (445,000 (2,940,000
Total Taxation & Grant Funding (£)	(14,285,534)	(14,285,534)	(14,285,534)	(14,285,534)	(14,285,534)	(14,399,094)	(14,597,689
Financial Statement - Summary	Original	Original Budget plus Carry Forwards from 2024/25	2024/25 Latest Budget	Previous Forecast	Latest Forecast	2025/26 Forecast	2026/27 Forecast
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Committee - Net Cost Of Services							
General Public Services and Community Engagement Climate Change and Leisure Policy and Resources	6,030,333 1,504,253 4,884,726	6,106,130 1,572,788 5,172,239	6,106,130 1,572,788 5,172,239	6,106,130 1,572,788 5,172,239	6,106,130 1,572,788 5,172,239	5,827,742 1,594,935 5,225,952	5,826,383 1,603,669 5,481,268
Period 3 Variances	0	0	0	0	(3,306)	(3,936)	(2,912
Sub-Total	12,419,312	12,851,157	12,851,157	12,851,157	12,847,851	12,644,693	12,908,408
Other Parish Precepts Interest Payable & Borrowing costs Interest Received Period 3 Variances	2,612,285 755,266 (1,110,000) 0	2,612,285 755,266 (1,110,000) 0	2,612,285 755,266 (1,110,000) 0	2,612,285 755,266 (1,110,000) 0	2,612,285 755,266 (1,110,000)	2,664,530 825,296 (1,060,000)	2,717,820 864,796 (1,010,000
Sub-Total	2,257,551	2,257,551	2,257,551	2,257,551	2,257,551	2,429,826	2,572,61
Net Expenditure	14,676,863	15,108,708	15,108,708	15,108,708	15,105,402	15,074,519	15,481,024
Income from Council Tax, Government Grants & Business Rates	(14,285,534)		(14,285,534)	(14,285,534)	(14,285,534)		(14,597,689
(Surplus)/Deficit Before Use of Earmarked Reserves	391,329	823,174	823,174	823,174	819,868	675,425	883,335
Planned Use of Reserves: Economic Impact Reserve	0	0	0	0	(347,587)	0	(
(Surplus) / Deficit to be funded from General Balances	391,329	823,174	823,174	823,174	472,281	675,425	883,335

			2025/26			2026/27	2027/28
Movement on General Fund Balance	Original	Original Budget plus Carry Forwards from 2024/25	Latest Budget	Previous Forecast	Latest Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	£		£		£	£	£
Balance Brought Forward at 1 April	(4,903,506)	(4,903,506)	(4,903,506)	(4,903,506)	(4,903,506)	(4,431,225)	(3,755,800
Revenue Budget (Surplus)/Deficit for Year	391,329	823,174	823,174	823,174	472,281	675,425	883,335
losing Balance at 31 March	(4,512,177)	(4,080,332)	(4,080,332)	(4,080,332)	(4,431,225)	(3,755,800)	(2,872,465
			2025/26			2026/27	2027/28
Movement on Economic Impact	Original	Original Budget plus Carry Forwards from 2024/25	Latest Budget	Previous Forecast	Latest Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	£	£	£		£	£	£
Balance Brought Forward at 1 April	(1,382,901)	(1,382,901)	(1,382,901)	(1,382,901)	(1,382,901)	(1,035,314)	(1,035,314
COVID-19 Impact for Year	0	0	0	0	347,587	0	(
losing Balance at 31 March	(1,382,901)	(1,382,901)	(1,382,901)	(1,382,901)	(1,035,314)	(1,035,314)	(1,035,314
			2025/26			2026/27	2027/28
Total Reserves Impact	Original	Original Budget plus Carry Forwards from 2024/25	Latest Budget	Previous Forecast	Latest Forecast	Forecast	Forecast
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
alance Brought Forward at 1 April	(6,286,407)		(6,286,407)	(6,286,407)	(6,286,407)	(5,466,539)	(4,791,114
npact for Year	391,329		823,174	823,174	819,868	675,425	883,335
losing Balance at 31 March	(5,895,078)	(5,463,233)	(5,463,233)	(5,463,233)	(5,466,539)	(4,791,114)	(3,907,779
	·	-					

Reserves Forecast 2025/26

Category	Opening Balance	Net Movement in Year	Closing Balance	Purpose
emege.,	01/04/2025		31/03/2026	, an pool
	£	£	£	
0	1			
General Reserves	(4.000.500)	470.004	(4.404.005)	
General Fund	(4,903,506)			Working balance to support the Council's revenue services. £2M is a suggested prudent minimum
Economic Impact (EIR)	(1,382,901)			To support the funding of unexpected/unplanned Council expenditure as a result of fluctuations in the economy.
Total Revenue	(6,286,407)	819,868	(5,466,539)	
	i			
Capital Reserves				
Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)	(7,209,399)	(87,296)	(7,296,695)	Developers contributions towards Infrastructure
Capital Receipts	0	0	0	Generated from sale of Council assets
Grants & Contributions	(2,511,093)	0	(2,511,093)	Disabled Facility Grants and other contributions
serve for Capital expenditure	0	0	0	Reserve set aside for supporting capital expenditure
Ctal Capital	(9,720,492)	(87,296)	(9,807,788)	
(D				
Other Earmarked Reserves				
ĺ				
New Homes Bonus	0			Government grant set aside for supporting capital expenditure
Section 106	(2,479,701)	(311,869)		Developers contributions towards facilities
Leavesden Hospital Open Space	(733,888)	0		To maintain open space on the ex hospital site
Abbots Langley - Horsefield	(749,415)			Developers contributions towards maintenance of site
Environmental Maintenance Plant	(97,688)			Reserve to fund expenditure on plant & machinery
Building Control	(350,596)			To provide against future losses and/or borrowing against Hertfordshire Building Control Ltd
Commercial Risk Reserve	(9,305,716)	0	(9,305,716)	To manage timing of cashflows and risks in relation to commercial ventures
Collection Fund Reserve & HB	(7,841,278)	0	(7.841.278)	To manage timing differences on the Collection Fund and to provide against future deficits on the Housing Benefit account
Equalisation	, , , , , ,			
Grants & Contributions	(2,260,044)			Revenue Grants earmarked for use in future years
Planning Reserve	(200,000)			To allow for conservation area appraisals, the local plan timetable to be accelerated and other planning advice
Local Government Reform Reserve	(100,000)		, ,	To allow for advice for the proposed Local Government Reform
Total Other	(24,118,326)	(311,869)	(24,430,195)	
Total All	(40,125,225)	420.703	(39,704,522)	

Budgetary Risks

ad	te risk ded to gister	Risk ref	Risk owner	Category	Risk description	Comment	Likelihood score (inherent)	Impact score (inherent)	Inherent risk score	Risk controls	Risk control owners	Likelihood score (residual)	Impact score (residual)	Residual risk score	Risk direction	Action plan	Action plan owners	Action plan completion dates
Sep	p-15		Director of Finance	Strategic	The Medium term financial position worsens.	The Council has set its budget for 2025/26 and beyond. The budget is	3	4	12	The Council maintains a healthy level of balances and continues to actively	Head of Finance	3	2	6	->	Regular budget monitoring reports to committees; Budgetary and Financial Risk Register reviewed and	Heads of Service/ Head of	Continuous
						balanced for 2025/26 but the Medium Term Financial Plan is showing a total gap of £1.7M for				monitor its budgets, taking action in year where necessary. Currently the Council is benefitting from a						updated as part of the budget monitoring process; identification of budgetary pressure when reviewing the medium term financial plan	Finance	
						years 2&3. This is due to taking a view of the impact of the Government's 'Fair Funding' reform and the business rate reset.				high level of interest income due to higher than anticipated interest rates and high levels of cash balances. A review of the						during the budget setting process which includes a risk assessment for the prudent level of general balances and an assessment of financial resilience with reference to		
J Ap	r-06	FINO8	Director	Budgetary	The pay award exceeds	Forecasts will be produced by Government in the	3	3	9	position will be taken when exemplifications of 'Fair The pay award is covered by	Head of	3	2	6	•	the CIPFA Financial resilience index. A review of the position will be The Council's 3 year Medium term	Head of	Continuous
ľ			of Finance		estimates included in the MTFP resulting in unplanned and unsustainable use of	Medium term Financial Strategy includes forecast pay awards for the next three years. 2% has been				the contingency within the budget. Maintain reserves to guard against risk. Early identification of new	Finance				·	Financial Strategy includes forecast pay awards for the next three years. The Council maintains reserves to guard against risk including setting a	Finance	
					reserves.	allowed for 2025/26 as part of the budget.				pressures through Budget Monitoring.						prudent minimum level for general balances. Early identification of new pressures through Budget Monitoring enable the Council to take steps to bring the budget back		
Ар	r-06 I	FINO9	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Other inflationary increases exceed estimates included in the MTFP resulting in unplanned and unsustainable use of reserves.	Other than contractual agreements, budgets are cash limited where possible and budget managers are expected to manage increases within existing budgets.	2	3	6	Monitor future inflation projections. Actively manage budgets to contain inflation. Maintain reserves.	Service Heads/He ad of Finance	2	2	4	₩	into balance. Monitor future inflation projections. Actively manage budgets and contracts to contain inflation. The Council maintains reserves to guard against risk including setting a prudent minimum level for general balances. Early identification of new pressures through Budget Monitoring enable the Council to	Head of Finance	Continuous
Jan	-15	FIN10	Director of Finance	Budgetary	Interest rates increase or decrease resulting in significant variations in estimated interest income (investments) or interest expense (borrowing)	The Council remains cash positive so is experiencing a short term benefit from higher interest rates. Over the longer term rates are expected to come down allowing the Council to borrow for future capital projects.	3	2	6	The Council has a Treasury Management Strategy which is reviewed annually. The Council is looking to lend out over a longer period to maximised the benefit from temporary higher rates.	Head of Finance	3	2	6	⇒	take steps to bring the budget back The Audit Committee receives two reports per year on Treasury Management activity and interest income and expenditure is moniored through the Budget Monitoring Report.	PIB	Continuous

²age 12:

Date adde regis		isk ref	Risk owner	Category	Risk description	Comment	Likelihood score (inherent)	Impact score (inherent)	Inherent risk score	Risk controls	Risk control owners	Likelihood score (residual)	Impact score (residual)	Residual risk score	Risk direction	Action plan	Action plan owners	Action plan completion dates
Apr-0	6 FIN	c	Director of Finance		Inaccurate estimates of fees and charges income and / or estimates of cost of delivering chargeable services result in budgetary pressure.		3	2	6	Budget levels realistically set and closely scrutinised	Service Heads/ Head of Finance	2	2	4	*	Fees and charges, including and surplus or loss are monitored through budget monitoring with key income streams reported to CMT.	Service Heads	Continuous
Apr-0		F	of Finance		The Council loses the ability to recover VAT as a result of exceeding the partial expemption threshold resulting in budgetary pressure.		2	4	8	VAT Planning and opt to tax on schemes. VAT advisers employed.	Head of Finance	1	4	4	•	Partial Exemption Review is undertaken annually with support provided by the Council'sexternal tax advisors, PS Tax. The Council continue to opt to tax land where appropriate.	Head of Finance	Continuous
Dec-1	3 FIN	C	Director of Finance	Budgetary	The estimated cost reductions and additional income gains set out in the MTFP are not achieved resulting in an unplanned and unsustainable use of reserves.	Savings identified and included in the budget will be monitored as part of the budget monitoring process. See fees and charges above. MTFS agreed for next three	2	3	6	Service Heads to take responsibility for achieving savings. Budget monitoring to highlight any issues to allow corrective action to be taken.	Service Heads/He ad of Finance	2	2	4	⇒	Budget process to clearly identify savings to be achieved and ensure clarity over responsibility over delivery. Savings to be challenged.	Head of Finance	Continuous
Apr-C	6 FIN	0	Director of Finance		The Council is faced with potential litigation and other employment related risks.	Thurrock has recently issued proceedings against 23 members of APSE. Whilst the Council is not one of these three it is an APSE member and may be drawn in at a later date. A stay of litigation has been issued by the court whilst separate activity takes place to resolve.	2	3	6	Council procedures are adhered to. These will be reviewed in respect of member orgainsation and advice issued.	Solicitor to the Council	2	2	4	*	Adherence to council procedures to be monitored and procedures maintained.	Solicitor to the Council	ongoing

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ac	lded to	Risk ref	Risk owner	Category	Risk description	Comment	Likelihood score	Impact score	Inherent risk score	Risk controls	Risk control	Likelihood score	Impact score	Residual risk score	Risk direction	Action plan	Action plan owners	Action plan completion
r	egister						(inherent)	(inherent)			owners	(residual)	(residual)					dates
De	sc-13		Director of Finance	Budgetary			3	4	12	Maintain reserves against risk.	Head of Finance	2	2	4	*	Hertfordshire CFOs continue to work with LG Futures to maximise revenue from the business rate pool for 2025/26. The scale of appeals is still unknown but this is likley to become clearer over the next 24 months as transitional relief reduces for businesses impacted by the increases in rateable value.	Finance	Continuous
Ju	-16		Director of Finance	Budgetary		The Council's integrated Financial Management System (FMS) is held on an ICT platform. If this were to fail then potentially there will be a loss of functionality occurring during any downtime. BCPs have recently been updated.	m	2	6	System migrated to latest version. Payments system updated.	Head of Finance	1	2	2	4	Monitor reliability	Head of Finance	Continuous
J			of Finance	Budgetary		The Property Investment Board manage its property portfolio in order to secure additional income to support its general fund.	2	3	6	Portfolio to be actively managed to maintain income levels. Income to be reviewed regularly when MTFP is updated.	Head of Property Services	1	3	3	*	PIB to assume responsibility for ongoing oversight.	Head of Property Services	Continuous
Se			Director of Finance	Budgetary		The Council has limited options to further improve self sustainability through commercial investment.	м	2	6	Oversight mechanisms put in place to ensure oversight by PIB.	Head of Finance	2	2	4	1	Monitor new developments. Investments overseen by the cross party Shareholder and Commercial Ventures Panel.	Head of Property Services	Continuous
No	w-19		Director of Finance	Service	Loss of Key Personnel	As the Council becomes more complex in its financial arrangements, key skills become more important.	3	4	12	Improve depth of skills and knowledge. Bring in temporary additional resources as necessary.	Head of Finance	1	3	3	•	The Finance team is currently fully staffed and an interim Head of Finance has been appointed to cover the period either side of the departure of the current Head of Finance. All staff have an annual Personal Development Review which	Chief Executive/ Director of Finance	Continuous

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Agenda Item 8

Three Rivers District Council

Committee Report

Date 8th September 2025



POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE 8th September 2025

PART I

Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Referendum (DoF)

1 Summary

1.1 The purpose of this report is to enable the Policy and Resources Committee to consider agreeing the publishing of the Decision Statement on the Council's website and allowing the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan to proceed to referendum on 6 November 2025.

2 **Background**

- 2.1 Neighbourhood planning was introduced through the Localism Act 2011. New powers allowed qualifying bodies (Parish, Community or Town Councils) to produce Neighbourhood Development Plans (NDP). NDPs allow communities to set planning policies for their area.
- 2.2 Once adopted, NDPs become part of the development plan for the District and they must be considered when planning decisions are made, along with the Local Plan and national planning policy.
- 2.3 NDPs must be examined by a suitably qualified independent person, appointed by the Council and agreed by the qualifying body (Parish/Community Council). Neighbourhood plans must also pass a referendum of local voters by a simple majority. If a plan passes referendum, the Council must 'make' (adopt) it, unless it breaches EU¹ obligations or human rights legislation.
- 2.4 The Sarratt NDP (the Plan) has been produced by Sarratt Parish Council in conjunction with the local community. The Plan does not seek to allocate sites for housing but provides policies which are to be considered in the determination of planning applications for development within the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- 2.5 The Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Area was designated by resolution of the Policy and Resources Committee on 22 July 2019.
- 2.6 The Council has a duty to provide technical advice and support to communities producing a Neighbourhood Plan. Officers have assisted the Parish Council by providing technical advice, feedback on draft versions of the Plan and supporting documents.

3 **Details**

3.1 In November 2022, Sarratt Parish Council formally submitted the draft Sarratt NDP and supporting documents to the District Council. On receipt of the Plan, legislation requires us only to determine whether the following legal

¹ Substituted by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018/1232 which came into force on 31 December 2020

requirements have been submitted by the qualifying body (Sarratt Parish Council):

- A map or statement which identifies the area to which the proposed neighbourhood development plan relates;
- A consultation statement;
- The proposed neighbourhood development plan;
- A statement explaining how the proposed neighbourhood development plan meets the 'basic conditions' as set out in the legislation; and
- Information to enable appropriate environmental assessments if required.
- 3.2 Once satisfied that the legal requirements had been met, we undertook a statutory six-week consultation (Regulation 16 Consultation) between 27 June–8 August 2023. Following guidance from the examiner, a second consultation occurred between 23 July–11 September 2024 and a final consultation took place between 28 February–13 April 2025.
- 3.3 Three Rivers District Council, with the agreement of Sarratt Parish Council, appointed Ann Skippers BSc (Hons) MRTPI FRSA AoU, as the independent Examiner of the Plan. The representations received from the formal consultation were considered by the Examiner.
- 3.4 The Examiner is required to check whether a NDP:
 - Has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body
 - Has been prepared for an area that has been properly designated for such plan preparation
 - Meets the requirements to:
 - i) specify the period to which it has effect
 - ii) not include provision about excluded development
 - iii) not relate to more than one neighbourhood area, and
 - That its policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.
- 3.5 The Examiner also has to consider whether a neighbourhood plan meets the Basic Conditions. In order to do this, the Plan must:
 - Have regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State
 - Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
 - Be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the development plan for the area, and
 - Be compatible with European Union obligations² and, not breach, nor be in anyway incompatible, with the European Convention on Human Rights.

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² Substituted by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018/1232 which came into force on 31 December 2020

- 3.6 The Independent Examiner's Final Report on the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan was issued on 29th July 2025 (see Appendix 1). The report was forwarded to the Parish Council for their information.
- 3.7 The Examiner has recommended:
 - modifications to the Plan to ensure that the Basic Conditions and statutory requirements are satisfactory met;
 - that the Plan, subject to modifications, should proceed to referendum;
 - that the referendum area should be the same as the Neighbourhood Plan Area.
- 3.8 The Regulations set out that within 5 weeks, the Council should consider each of the recommendations in the Examiner's Report and decide what action to take in response to each recommendation.
- 3.9 Officers have drafted a Decision Statement (Appendix 2), setting out that modifications proposed by the Examiner's Report have been accepted, the draft Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan has been altered as a result of it and that the Council intends the Plan to proceed to referendum. Officers are requesting Members confirm the Decision Statement and agree the Neighbourhood Plan progress to referendum.
- 3.10 The modified Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan is attached as Appendix 3. The plan's supporting documents including the Important Views & Local Green Space Assessment is attached as Appendix 4 and the Sarratt Housing Needs Assessment is attached as Appendix 5.
- 3.11 It is officers' opinion that following the modifications, the Plan is robust, meets the Basic Conditions and comprises a user-friendly and efficient document. On this basis, the modified Plan should proceed to a referendum in the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Area to determine whether local people support it.
- Following discussions with the Council's election team, it has been agreed that the referendum takes place on Thursday 6th November 2025.
- 3.13 Should the referendum return a positive result the Council must 'make' (adopt) the plan within eight weeks of the referendum date unless legal issues arise which are unresolved by the end of this eight-week period.
- 3.14 Subject to the result of the referendum and any legal issues, the intention is for the Plan to be brought to the next available Full Council meeting after the referendum with a recommendation that the Plan be made.

4 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 The officer recommendation is that the Policy & Resources Committee agree the publishing of the Decision Statement on the Council's website and that the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum which is proposed for 6th November 2025.

5 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

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

6 Financial Implications

- A Government backed neighbourhood planning grant allows LPAs to claim £20,000 from when they issue a decision statement detailing their intention to send the plan to referendum. This will cover the costs of the referendum.
- 6.2 Producing an NDP allows Parish and Town Councils to increase the amount of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds they receive from developments within their area from 15% to 25%.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 The Council's discretion with regards to proceeding to referendum or otherwise is strictly limited by statute and in this case the requirements for proceeding to referendum have been following modifications to the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan.

8 Communications and Website Implications

8.1 All the documents relating to the Examination of the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan are available on the Council's website. Electoral Services will be responsible for any communications relating to the referendum.

9 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 The subject of this report is covered by the Planning Policy and Conservation service plan. Any risks resulting from this report will be included in the risk register and, if necessary, managed within this plan.

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (tolerate, treat terminate, transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of likelihood and impact)
Reputational damage of failing to agree Neighbourhoo d Plan proceed to referendum	The Council has a duty to support the Parish Council in their preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. It could be negatively perceived if the Council does not follow the examiners recommendations without a strong reason for doing so.	Agree the NDP proceed to referendum	Tolerate	Low 3

9.3 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.

Very Likely	Low	High	Very High	Very High
Ę.	4	8	12	16
ely	Low	Medium	High	Very High
	3	6	9	12
Likelihood	Low	Low	Medium	High
&	2	4	6	8
₩	Low	Low	Low	Low
Re	1	2	3	4
Remote	Low	lmp	oact ► Unaccept	able

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%))

9.4 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.

10 Staffing Implications

10.1 The referendum will be organised by Electoral Services.

11 Environmental Implications

11.1 Part of the role of the Independent Examiner is to consider whether the neighbourhood plan would breach, or otherwise be incompatible with retained European Union obligations³. The Examiner was satisfied that the neighbourhood plan meets this requirement.

12 Customer Services Centre Implications

12.1 The Customer Service Centre will be briefed about the referendum.

13 Recommendation

- 13.1 That the Policy & Resources Committee agree the publishing of the Decision Statement on the Council's website and that the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to referendum which is proposed for 6th November 2025.
- 13.2 Report prepared by: Aaron Roberts (Senior Planning Policy Officer)

14 Background Papers

National Planning Policy Framework (December 2024)

Planning Practice Guidance

Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended by the Localism Act 2011)

Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (as amended)

15 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Examiner's Final Report on the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan

Appendix 2: Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement

Appendix 3: Modified Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan

Appendix 4: Important views & Local Green Space Assessment

Appendix 5: Sarratt Housing Needs Assessment

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³ Substituted by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018/1232 which came into force on 31 December 2020



Three Rivers District Council

Sarratt Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2037

Independent Examiner's Report

By Ann Skippers MRTPI FHEA FRSA AOU

29 July 2025

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Summary

I have been appointed as the independent examiner of the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan.

Sarratt village is about four miles north of Ricksmanworth. The whole of the Parish falls within the Green Belt, including Sarratt village. Part of the Chilterns National Landscape falls within the Parish. There are two Conservation Areas and a number of listed buildings. The village is served well by a number of services and facilities. The M25 also crosses the Parish.

The Plan covers a number of different topics. A Design Code has been prepared and a Housing Needs Assessment supports the policies on housing. Other policies cover the historic environment, transport and Local Green Spaces.

I found it necessary to go back to the Parish Council with a number of concerns including about the adequacy of key supporting documents. As a result, further work was carried out. Public consultation was undertaken. Whilst this delayed the progress of the Plan, the work now carried out has, I believe, resulted in a much better Plan which will achieve the local community's aspirations over the coming years.

It has been necessary to recommend some modifications. In the main these are intended to ensure the Plan is clear and precise and provides a practical framework for decision-making as required by national policy and guidance. These do not significantly or substantially alter the overall nature of the Plan.

Subject to those modifications, I have concluded that the Plan does meet the basic conditions and all the other requirements I am obliged to examine. I am therefore pleased to recommend to Three Rivers District Council that the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan can go forward to a referendum.

In considering whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area I see no reason to alter or extend this area for the purpose of holding a referendum.

Ann Skippers MRTPI Ann Skippers Planning 29 July 2025



1.0 Introduction

This is the report of the independent examiner into the Sarratt Parish Neighbourhood Development Plan (the Plan).

The Localism Act 2011 provides a welcome opportunity for communities to shape the future of the places where they live and work and to deliver the sustainable development they need. One way of achieving this is through the production of a neighbourhood plan.

I have been appointed by Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) with the agreement of the Parish Council, to undertake this independent examination.

I am independent of the qualifying body and the local authority. I have no interest in any land that may be affected by the Plan. I am a chartered town planner with over thirty years experience in planning and have worked in the public, private and academic sectors and am an experienced examiner of neighbourhood plans. I therefore have the appropriate qualifications and experience to carry out this independent examination.

2.0 The role of the independent examiner and the examination process

Role of the Examiner

The examiner must assess whether a neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions and other matters set out in paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended).

The basic conditions are:

- Having regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State, it is appropriate to make the neighbourhood plan
- The making of the neighbourhood plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development
- The making of the neighbourhood plan is in general conformity with the strategic policies contained in the development plan for the area
- The making of the neighbourhood plan does not breach, and is otherwise compatible with, retained European Union (EU) obligations²
- Prescribed conditions are met in relation to the neighbourhood plan and prescribed matters have been complied with in connection with the proposal for the neighbourhood plan.

¹ Set out in paragraph 8 (2) of Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)

² Substituted by the Environmental Assessments and Miscellaneous Planning (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2018/1232 which came into force on 31 December 2020

Regulations 32 and 33 of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) set out two additional basic conditions to those set out in primary legislation and referred to in the paragraph above. Only one is applicable to neighbourhood plans and was brought into effect on 28 December 2018.³ It states that:

■ The making of the neighbourhood development plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

The examiner is also required to check⁴ whether the neighbourhood plan:

- Has been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body
- Has been prepared for an area that has been properly designated for such plan preparation
- Meets the requirements to i) specify the period to which it has effect; ii) not include provision about excluded development; and iii) not relate to more than one neighbourhood area and that
- Its policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

I must also consider whether the draft neighbourhood plan is compatible with Convention rights.⁵

The examiner must then make one of the following recommendations:

- The neighbourhood plan can proceed to a referendum on the basis it meets all the necessary legal requirements
- The neighbourhood plan can proceed to a referendum subject to modifications or
- The neighbourhood plan should not proceed to a referendum on the basis it does not meet the necessary legal requirements.

If the plan can proceed to a referendum with or without modifications, the examiner must also consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the neighbourhood plan area to which it relates.

If the plan goes forward to referendum and more than 50% of those voting vote in favour of the plan then it is made by the relevant local authority, in this case TRDC. The plan then becomes part of the 'development plan' for the area and a statutory consideration in guiding future development and in the determination of planning applications within the plan area.

³ Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018

⁴ Set out in sections 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act and paragraph 11(2) of Schedule A2 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended)

⁵ The combined effect of the Town and Country Planning Act Schedule 4B para 8(6) and para 10 (3)(b) and the Human Rights Act 1998

Examination Process

It is useful to bear in mind that the examiner's role is limited to testing whether or not the submitted neighbourhood plan meets the basic conditions and other matters set out in paragraph 8 of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and paragraph 11 of Schedule A2 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended).⁶

Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) confirms that the examiner is not testing the soundness of a neighbourhood plan or examining other material considerations.⁷

In addition, PPG is clear that neighbourhood plans are not obliged to include policies on all types of development. ⁸ Often representations suggest amendments to the submitted policies or new policy areas or put forward other alternative suggestions. It is my role only to consider the submitted plan and not whether any new policies should be included. Where I find that the submitted policies do meet the basic conditions, it is not necessary for me to consider if further amendments or additions are required.

PPG⁹ explains that it is expected that the examination will not include a public hearing. Rather the examiner should reach a view by considering written representations. Where an examiner considers it necessary to ensure adequate examination of an issue or to ensure a person has a fair chance to put a case, then a hearing must be held.¹⁰

I set out my interim findings to both Councils on 5 September 2023 alongside some questions of clarification. This note is attached to this report as Appendix 2.

The interim findings stage highlighted a number of matters which are detailed in Appendix 2. In summary, there were concerns about the adequacy of the Consultation Statement and the Basic Conditions Statement; the adequacy of supporting evidence for three of the draft policies (Policies 3, 7 and 11); and various queries of a more common nature on some of the policies.

After further work to the Plan, its supporting documents and its evidence base, it was decided to hold a further period of consultation which was held between 23 July - 11 September 2024.

The examination then resumed, but unfortunately there were still some outstanding matters. I sent some further questions of clarification on 29 November 2024 which are attached to this report as Appendix 3. In essence, the Plan and its supporting documents were further reviewed and updated by the Parish Council. This led to a further Regulation 16 period of consultation being held between 28 February – 13 April 2025.

⁶ Paragraph 11(3) of Schedule A2 to the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (as amended) and PPG para 055 ref id 41-055-20180222,

⁷ PPG para 055 ref id 41-055-20180222

⁸ Ibid para 040 ref id 41-040-20160211

⁹ Ibid para 056 ref id 41-056-20180222

¹⁰ Ibid

It is this suite of most recent documents (dated February 2025) which are the ones I assess in this report.

In 2018, the Neighbourhood Planning Independent Examiner Referral Service (NPIERS) published guidance to service users and examiners. Amongst other matters, the guidance indicates that the qualifying body will normally be given an opportunity to comment upon any representations made by other parties at the Regulation 16 consultation stage should they wish to do so. There is no obligation for a qualifying body to make any comments; it is only if they wish to do so.

The Parish Council were given an opportunity to comment on the representations received during all three submission periods of consultation and made comments which I have taken into account.

This examination has been unusual in the length of time and the holding of three submission periods of consultation. I am very grateful to both Councils. Marko Kalik and Aaron Roberts at TRDC have helped to ensure that, despite its complexities, the examination has reached a satisfactory conclusion. I am also mindful, and must acknowledge, the work of the Parish Council and the establishment of a new subcommittee to take this work forward for the Parish Council following the very sad death of the Chairman of the Neighbourhood Planning Working Group in November 2023. I am very grateful for the work carried out over a long period of time by the subcommittee and the patience and dedication shown to achieve a robust Plan.

I made an unaccompanied site visit to familiarise myself with the Plan area on 29 April 2025.

During this course of the examination, the Government published a new NPPF on 12 December 2024. Transitional arrangements set out in the document¹¹ explain that the policies in the updated NPPF will only apply to those neighbourhood plans submitted from 12 March 2025 onwards. As a result, this examination has continued with the NPPF updated in December 2023.

Modifications and how to read this report

Where modifications are recommended they appear in a bullet point list of **bold text**. Where I have suggested specific changes to the wording of the policies or new wording these appear in **bold italics** in the bullet point list of recommendations. Modifications will always appear in a bullet point list.

As a result of some modifications consequential amendments may be required. These can include changing policy numbering, section headings, amending the contents page, renumbering paragraphs or pages, ensuring that supporting appendices and other documents align with the final version of the Plan and so on.

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¹¹ NPPF December 2024, para 239

I regard these issues as primarily matters of final presentation and do not specifically refer to all such modifications, but have an expectation that a common sense approach will be taken and any such necessary editing will be carried out and the Plan's presentation made consistent.

3.0 Neighbourhood plan preparation

A Consultation Statement was submitted, but I found this did not satisfy the requirements (see Appendix 2 of this report for more details). The Consultation Statement (dated February 2024) was therefore revised and resubmitted and reconsulted upon in 2024. However, unfortunately due to some administrative errors, this still did not meet the necessary requirements and so the Consultation Statement was further revised and updated and is now dated February 2025. This document has been subject to a further period of public consultation.

Work began on the Plan in late 2018 and built on earlier work on a Parish Plan. From the outset, the Parish Council was keen that the Plan should not be solely perceived as a Parish Council initiative and set up a Working Group.

As part of the commendable engagement strategy outlined in the Consultation Statement, one of the first actions was to obtain local views based on the Parish Plan survey through direct engagement with a cross section of stakeholders and businesses.

A leaflet delivered to every household in the Plan area outlined draft policy ideas and two well-attended public meetings were held on 6 and 11 September 2021. They were publicised in the Sarratt Church magazine (Spotlight) delivered to all properties in the Plan area. A stall was taken at the Freshers Fair. Feedback from these activities helped to redraft the Plan.

Throughout, Working Group meetings were held in public, posters advertised meetings and events, updates were published regularly in Spotlight, delivered to every household, and leaflets were delivered. A dedicated neighbourhood plan website was set up.

Pre-submission (Regulation 14) consultation took place between 13 September – 31 October 2021.

A second pre-submission consultation was then held between 12 August – 25 September 2022. This was conducted online.

I consider that the consultation and engagement carried out is satisfactory.

Submission (Regulation 16) consultation was carried out between 27 June – 8 August 2023. This Regulation 16 stage resulted in 12 representations.

As I outline in the previous section, a second period of submission (Regulation 16) consultation was carried out between 23 July – 11 September 2024. The second Regulation 16 stage resulted in five representations.

Then, a third period of submission (Regulation 16) consultation was held between 28 February – 13 April 2025. This stage resulted in 10 representations.

I refer to some of the representations by name in my report and not others. However, I have considered all of the representations and taken them into account in preparing my report.

A representation from Bidwells on behalf of the St Albans Diocesan Board of Finance raises concern about the consultation process. Given the nature of the Plan, the amount of engagement carried out and the opportunities presented to interested parties as well as the five stages of consultation carried out at pre-submission and submission stages, which is unprecedented in my experience, I consider there has been ample opportunities for interested parties to put forward their views.

I note that a representation from the Defence Infrastructure Organisation explains that development can form a physical obstruction to the safe operation of aircraft and the creation of environments attractive to large and flocking bird species can pose a hazard to aviation safety in identified safeguarding zones. As a result the Ministry of Defence should be consulted on certain applications within the safeguarding zones. This is primarily a matter for development management at TRDC level.

4.0 Compliance with matters other than the basic conditions

Qualifying body

Sarratt Parish Council is the qualifying body able to lead preparation of a neighbourhood plan. This requirement is satisfactorily met.

Plan area

The Plan area is coterminous with the administrative boundary for the Parish. TRDC approved the designation of the area on 22 July 2019. The Plan relates to this area and does not relate to more than one neighbourhood area and therefore complies with these requirements. The Plan area is shown on pages 8 and 9 of the Plan.

Plan period

The Plan period is 2024- 2039. This is shown on the front cover of the Plan and helpfully confirmed in the Basic Conditions Statement. This requirement is satisfactorily met.

Excluded development

The Plan does not include policies that relate to any of the categories of excluded development and therefore meets this requirement.

Development and use of land

Policies in neighbourhood plans must relate to the development and use of land. Sometimes neighbourhood plans contain aspirational policies or projects that signal the community's priorities for the future of their local area, but are not related to the development and use of land. If I consider a policy or proposal to fall within this category, I will recommend it be clearly differentiated. This is because wider community aspirations than those relating to development and use of land can be included in a neighbourhood plan, but actions dealing with non-land use matters should be clearly identifiable. ¹²

5.0 The basic conditions

Regard to national policy and advice

The Government revised the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) on 19 December 2023 and updated it on 20 December 2023. This revised NPPF replaces the previous NPPFs published in March 2012, revised in July 2018, updated in February 2019, revised in July 2021 and updated in September 2023.

The NPPF is the main document that sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

In particular it explains that the application of the presumption in favour of sustainable development will mean that neighbourhood plans should support the delivery of strategic policies in local plans or spatial development strategies and should shape and direct development that is outside of these strategic policies.¹³

Non-strategic policies are more detailed policies for specific areas, neighbourhoods or types of development. They can include allocating sites, the provision of infrastructure and community facilities at a local level, establishing design principles, conserving and enhancing the natural and historic environment as well as set out other development management policies. 15

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¹² PPG para 004 ref id 41-004-20190509

¹³ NPPF para 13

¹⁴ Ibid para 28

¹⁵ Ibid

The NPPF also makes it clear that neighbourhood plans gives communities the power to develop a shared vision for their area. 16 However, neighbourhood plans should not promote less development than that set out in strategic policies or undermine those strategic policies. 17

The NPPF states that all policies should be underpinned by relevant and up to date evidence; evidence should be adequate and proportionate, focused tightly on supporting and justifying policies and take into account relevant market signals. 18

Policies should be clearly written and unambiguous so that it is evident how a decision maker should react to development proposals. They should serve a clear purpose and avoid unnecessary duplication of policies that apply to a particular area including those in the NPPF. 19

On 6 March 2014, the Government published a suite of planning guidance referred to as Planning Practice Guidance (PPG). This is an online resource available at www.gov.uk/government/collections/planning-practice-guidance which is regularly updated. The planning guidance contains a wealth of information relating to neighbourhood planning. I have also had regard to PPG in preparing this report.

PPG indicates that a policy should be clear and unambiguous²⁰ to enable a decision maker to apply it consistently and with confidence when determining planning applications. The guidance advises that policies should be concise, precise and supported by appropriate evidence, reflecting and responding to both the planning context and the characteristics of the area.²¹

PPG states there is no 'tick box' list of evidence required, but proportionate, robust evidence should support the choices made and the approach taken. 22 It continues that the evidence should be drawn upon to explain succinctly the intention and rationale of the policies.²³

Whilst this has formed part of my own assessment, the revised Basic Conditions Statement dated February 2025 sets out how the Plan's objectives and policies correspond to the NPPF.

Contribute to the achievement of sustainable development

A qualifying body must demonstrate how the making of a neighbourhood plan would contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.

¹⁶ NPPF para 29

¹⁸ Ibid para 31

¹⁹ Ibid para 16

²⁰ PPG para 041 ref id 41-041-20140306

²² Ibid para 040 ref id 41-040-20160211

²³ Ibid

The NPPF confirms that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development.²⁴ This means that the planning system has three overarching and interdependent objectives which should be pursued in mutually supportive ways so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives.²⁵

The three overarching objectives are:²⁶

- a) an economic objective to help build a strong, responsive and competitive economy, by ensuring that sufficient land of the right types is available in the right places and at the right time to support growth, innovation and improved productivity; and by identifying and coordinating the provision of infrastructure;
- a social objective to support strong, vibrant and healthy communities, by ensuring that a sufficient number and range of homes can be provided to meet the needs of present and future generations; and by fostering well-designed, beautiful and safe places, with accessible services and open spaces that reflect current and future needs and support communities' health, social and cultural well-being; and
- c) an environmental objective to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.

The NPPF confirms that planning policies should play an active role in guiding development towards sustainable solutions, but should take local circumstances into account to reflect the character, needs and opportunities of each area.²⁷

Whilst this has formed part of my own assessment, the revised Basic Conditions Statement sets out how the Plan helps to achieve each of the objectives of sustainable development as outlined in the NPPF.

General conformity with the strategic policies in the development plan

The development plan consists of a number of different documents.

The Three Rivers Core Strategy 2011 – 2026 (CS) covers the whole of the District and sets out in broad terms how future development will be planned for as well as promoting more sustainable development in general. It was adopted on 17 October 2011.

The Development Management Policies (DMP) sets out the criteria against which all planning applications within the District will be considered, alongside those set out in

²⁴ NPPF para 7

²⁵ Ibid para 8

²⁶ Ibid

²⁷ Ibid para 9

the adopted Core Strategy. It was adopted on 26 July 2013.

The Site Allocations Local Development Document (SALDD) supports the delivery of the Core Strategy and allocates specific sites to meet needs for housing, employment, education, shopping and open spaces. As part of this, changes are made to the Green Belt boundary. It was adopted on the 25 November 2014.

In addition to the above documents, the Hertfordshire Minerals Local Plan 2002 – 2016 and Waste Core Strategy and Development Management Policies 2011-2026 and Waste Site Allocations Development Plan Document 2011-2026 covering the whole County and produced by Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) relate to minerals and waste form part of the development plan alongside other made neighbourhood plans.

Whilst this has formed part of my own assessment, the Basic Conditions Statement sets out how the conform to relevant development plan policies.

Where I have not specifically referred to a strategic policy, I have considered all strategic policies in my examination of the Plan.

Emerging policy

TRDC is preparing a new Local Plan which will provide the planning policies and proposals for the District to 2041. Most recently, a call for sites was held in January – February 2025. It is anticipated that a Regulation 19 draft of the Local Plan will be prepared by February 2026 although efforts are being made to publish this earlier.

There is no legal requirement to examine the Plan against emerging policy. However, PPG²⁸ advises that the reasoning and evidence informing the local plan process may be relevant to the consideration of the basic conditions against which the Plan is tested.

Furthermore qualifying bodies and local planning authorities should aim to agree the relationship between policies in the emerging neighbourhood plan, the emerging local plan and the adopted development plan with appropriate regard to national policy and guidance.²⁹

Retained European Union Obligations

A neighbourhood plan must be compatible with retained European Union (EU) obligations. A number of retained EU obligations may be of relevance for these purposes including those obligations in respect of Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment, Habitats, Wild Birds, Waste, Air Quality and Water matters.

²⁸ PPG para 009 ref id 41-009-20190509

²⁹ Ibio

With reference to Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) requirements, PPG³⁰ confirms that it is the responsibility of the local planning authority, in this case TRDC, to ensure that all the regulations appropriate to the nature and scope of the draft neighbourhood plan have been met. It states that it is TRDC who must decide whether the draft plan is compatible with relevant retained EU obligations when it takes the decision on whether the plan should proceed to referendum and when it takes the decision on whether or not to make the plan.

Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment

The provisions of the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations 2004 (the 'SEA Regulations') concerning the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment are relevant. The purpose of the SEA Regulations, which transposed into domestic law Directive 2001/42/EC ('SEA Directive'), are to provide a high level of protection of the environment by incorporating environmental considerations into the process of preparing plans and programmes.

The provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (the 'Habitats Regulations'), which transposed into domestic law Directive 92/43/EEC (the 'Habitats Directive'), are also of relevance to this examination.

Regulation 63 of the Habitats Regulations requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) to be undertaken to determine whether a plan is likely to have a significant effect on a European site, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The HRA assessment determines whether the Plan is likely to have significant effects on a European site considering the potential effects both of the Plan itself and in combination with other plans or projects. Where the potential for likely significant effects cannot be excluded, an appropriate assessment of the implications of the Plan for that European Site, in view of the Site's conservation objectives, must be carried out.

A SEA and HRA Screening Report prepared by Place Services and dated September 2022 was originally submitted. It was not clear to me whether it had been subject to the requisite consultation with the statutory bodies. As a result of this query, the SEA and HRA Screening Report was updated (March 2024) and then reviewed again in February 2025. This was consulted upon during the third period of submission consultation.

With regard to SEA, the Screening Report concludes that the Plan does not allocate any land for development purposes and seeks to strengthen the protection and enhancement of natural and heritage assets at the local level.³¹ It concludes that the Plan is therefore unlikely to have significant environmental effects and has been screened out.

The updated Screening Report explains that consultation with the statutory consultees was undertaken and all three concur with the conclusions of the Screening Report.

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³⁰ PPG para 031 ref id 11-031-20150209

³¹ SEA and HRA Screening Report page 55

I have treated the updated Screening Report to be the statement of reasons that the PPG advises must be prepared and submitted with the neighbourhood plan proposal and made available to the independent examiner where it is determined that the plan is unlikely to have significant environmental effects.³²

Taking account of the characteristics of the Plan, the information put forward and the characteristics of the areas most likely to be affected, I consider that retained EU obligations in respect of SEA have been satisfied.

Turning now to HRA, the Screening Report identifies two habitats sites lying within a 20km distance of the Plan area. These are the Burnham Beeches and Chilterns Beechwoods Special Areas of Conservation (SAC). The Plan area also falls within the Zone of Influence for the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC for predicted recreational impacts.

The updated Screening Report concludes that no likely significant effects are predicted, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.³³ The Screening Report explains that Natural England concur with the findings.

On 28 December 2018, the basic condition prescribed in Regulation 32 and Schedule 2 (Habitats) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) was substituted by a new basic condition brought into force by the Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018 which provides that the making of the plan does not breach the requirements of Chapter 8 of Part 6 of the Habitats Regulations.

Given the distance from, the nature and characteristics of the European sites and the nature and contents of the Plan, I agree with the conclusion of the updated Screening Report and consider that the prescribed basic condition relating to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 is complied with.

Conclusion on retained EU obligations

PPG establishes that the ultimate responsibility for determining whether a plan meets retained EU obligations lies with the local planning authority.³⁴ TRDC does not raise any concerns in this regard.

European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)

The Basic Conditions Statement contains a statement in relation to human rights and equalities.³⁵ Having regard to the Basic Conditions Statement, there is nothing in the Plan that leads me to conclude there is any breach or incompatibility with Convention rights.

 $^{^{32}}$ PPG para 028 ref id 11-028-20150209

³³ SEA and HRA Screening Report page 55

³⁴ PPG para 031 ref id 11-031-20150209

³⁵ Basic Conditions Statement (February 2025) page 22

6.0 Detailed comments on the Plan and its policies

In this section I consider the Plan and its policies against the basic conditions. Where modifications are recommended they appear in **bold text**. As a reminder, where I suggest specific changes to the wording of the policies or new wording these appear in **bold italics**.

The Plan contains 12 policies. There is a foreword which sets the scene and a helpful "quick reference" contents page at the start of the Plan. The Plan contains many photographs of the local area which give it a distinctive feel.

Introduction

This is a helpful introduction to the Plan which also contains a process diagram explaining the different stages of plan making. Some natural updating may be necessary as the Plan progresses to the next stages.

References to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty should be updated as necessary throughout the Plan to the new title of National Landscape. This modification is not repeated elsewhere in this report.

 Update references to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the Chilterns National Landscape throughout the Plan

Parish Overview

This section details the characteristics of the Plan area in a straightforward, informative way supported by helpful maps and diagrams.

Part of the Parish lies within the Chilterns National Landscape (NL). I asked the Parish Council and TRDC to consider the duty amended by the Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023³⁶ on relevant authorities in respect of their functions which affect land in NLs. Relevant authorities must now 'seek to further' the statutory purposes of Protected Landscapes. This replaces the previous duty on relevant authorities to 'have regard to' their statutory purposes. Guidance³⁷ was issued by the Government which gives further information about how the duty should be applied. As a result, I recommend that additional wording be incorporated into the Plan at various junctures.

The first of these is to amend the second paragraph on page 15 of the Plan.

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³⁶ Levelling up and Regeneration Act 2023 s245

³⁷ Guidance issued 16 December 2024

Amend the sub heading and the second paragraph on page 15 of the Plan to read:

"Chilterns National Landscape

Sarratt Parish is located on the eastern edge of the Chilterns National Landscape. Whilst only a relatively small proportion of the wider neighbourhood plan area falls within the National Landscape, a large proportion of the west (particularly south-west) of the plan area is situated within the National Landscape. National Landscapes, formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs), are legally designated areas recognised for their exceptional natural beauty under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

There are several features which contribute to the Chilterns National Landscape's natural beauty, including chalk streams, a chalk escarpment, chalk grassland, extensive woodland and common land with a comprehensive rights of way network, together with distinctive buildings, including those associated with its industrial heritage, and sites of archaeological significance. Full details of the National Landscape's special features and how they should be managed and protected are established within the Management Plan published by the Chilterns National Landscape: https://www.chilterns.org.uk/what-we-do/future-proofing-the-chilterns/management-plan/."

 Insert map on page 15 showing the Plan area and extent of the NL [this will effectively be an update to the existing map on page 15]

Objectives

Whilst there is no overall vision for the Plan, seven objectives based on economic, social and environmental themes have been identified. They all have actions associated with them and a link to the relevant policies in the Plan which is principles-based.

Policies

Policy 1: Development in Villages and Hamlets

The whole of the Parish falls within the Green Belt. This includes the village of Sarratt which is washed over. Sarratt is identified as a "Village" in the CS's settlement hierarchy. The CS's spatial strategy explains that limited development to meet local needs will take place in Sarratt, recognising the need to sustain the more rural areas.

CS Policy PSP4 sets out expectations for development in the Villages of Bedmond and Sarratt. Development will be strictly controlled to protect the character, landscape, heritage and wildlife of the countryside and the openness of the Green Belt. There is some scope for limited small-scale development in or on the edge of the village to meet local community and business needs and to sustain the vitality of the village.

Around 1% of the District's housing requirements over the CS plan period including affordable housing are to be provided in the Villages. A number of specific projects in Sarratt are identified: improving the facilities at Frogmore Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), creating a play area and expanding school provision.

CS Policy CP4 supports small-scale affordable housing within and immediately adjacent to the village of Sarratt and through rural exception sites.

DMP Policy DM2 refers to the Green Belt setting out the exceptions.

The SALDD allocates one site, the Royal British Legion, Church Lane as a rural exception site for eight dwellings and identifies the King George V P Fields as publicly accessible local space.

The NPPF indicates that if it is necessary to restrict development in a village primarily because of the important contribution which the open character of the village makes to the openness of the Green Belt, the village should be included in the Green Belt.³⁸

The NPPF confirms that inappropriate development is, by definition, harmful to the Green Belt and should not be approved except in very special circumstances.³⁹ It lists a number of exceptions which include limited infilling in villages, limited affordable housing for local community needs (including rural exception sites) and the limited infilling or the partial or complete redevelopment of previously developed land in certain circumstances.⁴⁰

Policy 1 sets out expectations for development within Sarratt village and the hamlets. It refers to sustainable development, encourages the use of previously developed land and only supports edge of settlement development on a small-scale and where this meets an identified local need. It refers to major development and requires them to be comprehensively planned.

The first part of the policy reads a little clumsily; some modifications are made to make the policy clearer. I have then recommended changing the wording from "protect" to "conserve"; this is usually regarded as maintaining and managing the built environment in an appropriate way, but is more sustainable and flexible than protection which often resists anything at all. This also ties up with the language associated with Conservation Areas for example.

³⁸ NPPF para 149

³⁹ Ibid para 152

⁴⁰ Ibid para 154

The Spatial Vision of the CS supports growth which provides for the needs of local communities. Although Policy 1 places emphasis on previously developed land, one of the strategic objectives of the CS is to make efficient use of previously developed land and so the priority given to that in Policy 1 aligns with this. The language used in Policy 1 about edge of village and hamlet development generally conforms to the strict control and limited small-scale development referred to in CS Policy PSP4.

Given the Plan area falls wholly in the Green Belt, there is no need to define settlement boundaries; to do so would, in my view, create a very different set of policies and be a fundamentally different approach to the applicable strategic policies. The concept of a principles-led Plan is appropriate. There is no obligation or any need for the Plan to select or allocate any sites for development and therefore no call for sites was necessary. It is important to remember that it is the previous NPPF of December 2023 which applies to this examination; therefore the issue of grey belt for example does not arise.

I note Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) ask for the inclusion of a reference to access to sustainable transport. However, I do not consider this to be essential given the reference to sustainable development which would include this consideration.

With these modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions by having regard to the NPPF, being in general conformity with the relevant development plan policies referred to above and helping to achieve sustainable development.

Revise the policy to read:

"New development must accord with the principles of sustainable development outlined in the NPPF and TRDC Development Plan. To help achieve this, sustainable development that makes the use of previously developed land will be particularly encouraged.

All new development must:

- respond positively to its local context and
- conserve the historic character of the core village of Sarratt and hamlets of Belsize and Bucks Hill.

Proposals for development on the edge of the village and hamlets will only be supported where they are small scale and meet an identified local need, with priority given to previously developed sites.

All major applications shall be comprehensively planned to prevent piecemeal development, having regard to the timely and coordinated provision of infrastructure, services, open space and facilities made necessary by the development. They shall also be accompanied by a statement of community engagement to detail how the local community has been engaged prior to any planning application being made."

Policy 2: Design Principles

The NPPF states that good design is a key aspect of sustainable development, creates better places in which to live and work and helps make development acceptable to communities. ⁴¹ Being clear about design expectations is essential for achieving this. ⁴² It continues that neighbourhood planning groups can play an important role in identifying the special qualities of an area and explaining how this should be reflected in development. ⁴³ It refers to design guides and codes to help provide a local framework for creating beautiful and distinctive places with a consistent and high quality standard of design. ⁴⁴

It continues that planning policies should ensure developments function well and add to the overall quality of the area, are visually attractive, are sympathetic to local character and history whilst not preventing change or innovation, establish or maintain a strong sense of place, optimise site potential and create places that are safe, inclusive and accessible. 45

CS Policy PSP4 indicates development should be well-designed and inclusive, in keeping and in scale with the location and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness. CS Policy CP1 seeks to protect and enhance natural, built and historic environments from inappropriate development and improve the diversity of wildlife and habitats. CS Policy CP12 seeks a high standard of design.

Policy 2 is a short policy which, in essence, seeks to deliver locally distinctive development of a high quality that protects, reflects and enhances local character leading in from the NPPF and the CS policies referred to above. This policy has been amended from the originally submitted draft policy which was long and used selective extracts from the Sarratt Design Code of January 2020. I felt the Design Code in its entirety was important and so the policy has been simplified. However, some further changes are recommended.

The policy refers to an emerging policy option in the emerging Local Plan. Given the stage the emerging Local Plan has reached and the possibility of change to this policy, it is not appropriate to cross-reference it in this policy.

The supporting text on page 28, whilst informative is a little repetitive. A modification is made to help address this.

With these modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions by having regard to the NPPF, being in general conformity with strategic policies and especially CS Policies PSP4, CP1 and CP12 and helping to achieve sustainable development.

43 Ibid para 132

⁴¹ NPPF para 131

⁴² Ibid

⁴⁴ Ibid para 133

⁴⁵ Ibid para 135

Reword Policy 2 to read:

"All development proposals will be required to be of the highest standard of design and take account of the design guidelines in the Sarratt Design Code (January 2020) and any successor document.

It is expected that a proportionate statement will accompany any planning application to demonstrate how the Design Code has been taken into account."

Revise the supporting text on page 28 of the Plan to read:

As the Parish overview sets out, Sarratt is a historic village that includes part of the Chilterns National Landscape. In addition, the parish contains four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): Sarratt Bottom, Frogmore Meadows, Whippendell Wood, and Westwood Quarry.

There are two conservation areas within the parish, both of which were established in 1969; The Green Conservation Area and Church End Conservation Area. The former encompasses The Green and surrounding properties in the village core, whereas the latter forms a cluster around the Church of Holy Cross to the south-west of the main settlement. There are 93 listed buildings within the parish, most of which are Grade II. The parish also contains many unlisted buildings of architectural interest, and the Green is protected. Some of the most prominent listed buildings and landmarks include:

The Church of the Holy Cross (Grade II*)
The Grove (Grade II*)
Sarratt Hall (Grade II)
The Boot public house (Grade II)
The Cock Inn public house (Grade II),
The pump on the green (Grade II)

The aim of this policy is to ensure that future developments consider local character and, through design proposals, they further enhance local distinctiveness by creating good quality developments, thriving communities and prosperous places in which to live."

Policy 3: Historic Character

The Plan area has a number of listed buildings and two Conservation Areas; the Green and Church End. Policy 3 refers to development within or affecting the setting of the two Conservation Areas. It seeks to ensure that such proposals conserve and enhance

their distinctive characters. It cross-references the Conservation Area Appraisals, both dated 1994.

Lastly, it refers to important views in and out of the Conservation Areas indicating that development which adversely affects the views will not be supported.

The NPPF is clear that heritage assets are an irreplaceable resource and should be conserved in a manner appropriate to their significance.⁴⁶ It continues⁴⁷ that great weight should be given to the assets' conservation when considering the impact of development on the significance of the asset.

The conservation and enhancement of the historic environment is a strategic objective of the CS. CS Policy PSP4 indicates development should be well-designed and inclusive, in keeping and in scale with the location and sensitive to the character of the countryside and local distinctiveness.

CS Policy CP1 seeks to protect and enhance natural, built and historic environments from inappropriate development and improve the diversity of wildlife and habitats.

CS Policy CP12 seeks a high standard of design and expects all proposals to have regard to local context and conserve and enhance natural and heritage assets.

DMP Policy DM3 refers to the historic environment. It also refers to important open spaces and other elements of the area's established development pattern and important views in and out of (as well as within) the Conservation Areas.

A number of issues arise. Firstly, Section 72 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 refers to the desirability of preserving or enhancing the character or appearance of that area. I therefore recommend a modification to the wording of the policy to reflect this statutory duty.

Secondly, the glossary in the NPPF defines setting as the surroundings in which a heritage asset is experienced. A modification is therefore made to the wording of the policy to reflect the duty and the importance of setting.

Thirdly, the policy makes reference to the Conservation Area Appraisal and Townscape Assessments for each Conservation Area. These are now from some years back although still relevant today. A modification is made to take them into account and to future proof the policy.

The policy refers to the current balance between buildings and open space. Whilst this aim of the policy is supported by the Conservation Area Appraisal and Townscape Assessment for the Green in particular which refers to the relationship between built structures and open spaces as an important feature, this will be difficult to determine over the years of the Plan period. A modification is therefore made to address this and

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⁴⁶ NPPF para 195

⁴⁷ Ibid para 205

the language used which refers to control; again a difficult concept to quantify in decision making.

Finally, the policy refers to important views. This was one of the areas where considerable further work has been undertaken by the Parish Council. The views have been identified through the rounds of public engagement. 11 views are now identified and shown on a Map on page 32 of the Plan. Photographs of each view are also included in the Plan. In response to my original concerns, an Important Views and Local Green Spaces Assessment (IVLGSA) dated February 2025 has been submitted in support of this policy and Policy 7 and consulted upon as part of the additional consultation carried out.

I have considered each of these views at my site visit. For those views I was not able to see, I was able to understand the extent and context of these views. I consider all of the views have been appropriately identified, but View 9 should be deleted from the Plan as the view of the open gap shown is now a development site. I also note that the IVLGSA refers to this view as an "example", but policies should be precise.

A modification is made to the wording to refer to the key features of the important views which are now usefully identified in the IVLGSA. This will mean that the wording of the policy will not prevent any development per se, but rather seek to ensure that any development does not have a detrimental impact on the key features of any view. I consider this to be an appropriate and sufficiently flexible approach.

With these modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions by having regard to national policy. It is in general conformity with strategic policies, particularly CS Policies PSP4, CP1 and CP12 and DMP Policy DM3. The policy will especially help to achieve sustainable development.

- Delete View 9 View West from the centre of the Village Green Conservation
 Area from the map on page 32 of the Plan and the photograph on page 35 of the Plan
- Add a Map reference and number to the Map on page 32 of the Plan [to align with the new wording of the policy]
- Add the text from the Important Views and Local Green Spaces Assessment to the photographs of the retained views on pages 33, 34 and 35 of the Plan
- Amend the policy to read:

"Development proposals within *the* Green Conservation Area and *the* Church End Conservation Area, *or* which affect the *settings* of *either Conservation* Area, should conserve *or* enhance their distinctive character *or appearance*.

All proposals should take into account the Green, Sarratt Conservation Area Appraisal 1994 and the Church End, Sarratt Conservation Area Appraisal 1994

or any successor documents. In particular, proposals should ensure that the relationship between built structures and open spaces and amount of open space in the Green Conservation Area is conserved as this is a particularly important feature characteristic of this Conservation Area.

Development that adversely affects the *key features of the* important views in and out of the Conservation Areas *identified on Map XX and described in the Important Views and Local Green Spaces Assessment* will not be supported."

Policy 4: Housing Mix

The NPPF states that to help support the Government's objective of significantly boosting the supply of homes, it is important that a sufficient amount and variety of land comes forward where it is needed, that the needs of groups with specific housing requirements are addressed and that land with permission is developed without unnecessary delay. It continues that the overall aim should be to meet as much of an area's identified housing need as possible, including with an appropriate mix of housing types for the local community. 49

Within this context, it is clear that size, type and tenure of housing needed for different groups in the community should be assessed and reflected in policy. ⁵⁰ These groups include affordable housing, families with children, older people and those with disabilities. ⁵¹

Policy 4.1 specifies the size of the housing mix based on a well-written Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) by AECOM. It refers to the practical split of 50%, 30% and 20% of three, two and one bedroom dwellings respectively and local need. This means that the most up to date data can be used at the time of any planning application. In addition it does not specify the type of property or tenure giving more priority to smaller dwellings which is supported by the HNA.

However, the HNA makes it clear that this mix operates on the assumption that households will move freely around the stock of existing housing which is not realistic and therefore there will be some demand for larger units which are characteristic of the Parish. The provision of larger houses should not therefore be prevented whilst it is clear that the evidence supports smaller units. The reference to local need will ensure that priority can be given to the size of dwellings most needed without preventing larger units in principle. A modification to future proof the policy is made. A further modification is made to the date of the HNA referred to in the policy.

50 Ibid para 63

⁴⁸ NPPF para 60

⁴⁹ Ibid

⁵¹ Ibid

⁵² HNA para 144

The second part of the policy supports bungalows, accessible homes and self-build. The HNA supported the delivery of bungalows and other age appropriate provision although no reference was made to self-build.

The NPPF supports self-build as part of its drive towards delivering a sufficient supply of homes. ⁵³ I note that HCC supports this given the evidence of the need for older persons housing across the District. The policy seeks to ensure that the provision of such units are kept in perpetuity.

With regard to viability considerations, up to date assessments on housing need will demonstrate the local housing mix sought at any given time and this will help applicants decide whether particular site circumstances warrant a viability assessment at application stage or any other change in circumstances to justify a departure from policy.

With these modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions. It has regard to national policy, contributes to the achievement of sustainable development and is in general conformity with strategic policy, and is a local expression of CS Policy CP1 which seeks to provide housing across a range of tenures and types and CS Policy CP3 which promotes high quality residential development which provides a range of housing types and sizes including the provision of housing for older people.

Amend Policy 4.1 to read:

"Development proposals for all housing types should have a size mix consisting of dwellings of three bedrooms (50%), two bedrooms (30%) and one bedroom (20%) as recommended by the Sarratt *Housing* Needs Assessment 2020 [Appendix IV], or as near to this as practical, subject to the available and most up to date evidence of local need."

Policy 5: Affordable Housing

The NPPF supports the provision of limited affordable housing for local community needs in the Green Belt under policies set out in the development plan (Including policies for rural exception sites).⁵⁴

The CS's Spatial Vision supports improved access to affordable housing across the whole District. One of its strategic objectives is to increase provision. In particular it indicates that rural affordable housing will also be provided within Sarratt village where this meets identified local needs. The principle is therefore acceptable.

⁵⁴ Ibid para 154

⁵³ NPPF para 70

CS Policy PSP4 supports the allocation of sites as rural exception sites for affordable housing. It also seeks to provide approximately 1% of the District's housing requirements to include affordable housing to meet local needs.

CS Policy CP4 seeks around 45% of all new housing across the District to be affordable housing. It states that all new development resulting in a net gain of one or more dwellings is expected to contribute to the provision of affordable housing. It sets out a guide of 70% social rented and 30% intermediate. Commuted sum payments for offsite provision can be considered for sites of between 1-9 units. It specifically permits small-scale affordable housing within and immediately adjacent to Sarratt village on the basis of need through the rural exception site route.

This policy seeks to set out a local requirement for the provision of affordable housing. The HNA found that some 170 dwellings were needed over the Plan period. It recommended a 70/30% split between social/affordable rent and routes to home ownership products.

The Plan explains that evidence from the HNA and a Parish Plan Survey in 2018 shows that a supply of affordable routes to remain resident in Sarratt and for homes which are age appropriate for those in larger properties to move to, is key. TRDC's policy of accepting commuted sums for smaller site is considered to detract from the goal of addressing local demand.

The NPPF expects provision to be met on site unless off-site provision or an appropriate financial contribution in lieu can be robustly justified.⁵⁵ It is clear that the provision of affordable housing should not be sought for residential developments that are not major development, other than in designated rural areas (which include National Landscapes) where policies may set out a lower threshold of five or fewer units.⁵⁶

Policy 5.1 therefore requires proposals of 1+ units to provide at least 40% affordable housing provision with a commuted sum only being acceptable in exceptional circumstances. A modification is made to help with clarity.

The second part of the policy splits proposals for 75% social rent and 25% for First Homes affordable shared ownership products. This does not reflect the HNA suggested split or TRDC's current position at July 2025 on First Homes which has been updated following the NPPF December 2024, but does reflect Government policy on First Homes which requires a minimum of 25% of all affordable housing units secured through developer contributions to be First Homes and secured in perpetuity⁵⁷ and reflects the NPPF December 2023.

The specification also has regard to the NPPF which indicates that where a need is identified, the type of affordable housing should be specified.⁵⁸

56 Ihid para 65

58 NPPF para 64

⁵⁵ NPPF para 64

 $^{^{57}}$ Written Ministerial Statement Affordable Homes Update May 2021

The third element of the policy requires integration so that homes are not distinguishable by tenure.

The last part of the policy seeks to give local residents priority. This would have regard to the NPPF's supportive stance for limited affordable housing for identified local community needs.⁵⁹

With these modifications to clarify and future proof the policy, the policy will have regard to the NPPF and its stance on boosting housing supply and affordable housing as it is based on the latest available evidence, is a local expression of CS Policies PSP4, CP1, CP3 and CP4 and will help to achieve sustainable development and thereby meet the basic conditions.

Amend the first sentence of Policy 5.1 to read:

"Development proposals resulting in a net gain of 1 or more units are required to provide 40% of the units as Affordable Housing."

Amend Policy 5.2 to read:

"Proposals for Affordable Housing will usually be required to be 75% for social rent, 25% First Homes affordable shared ownership products but the precise split will be determined on a case by case basis using the latest available evidence of local need."

Policy 6: Biodiversity

The NPPF states that policies should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment including through the protection of valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity value, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and, minimising impacts on, and providing net gains for, biodiversity. ⁶⁰

To protect and enhance biodiversity, the NPPF encourages plans to identify and map and safeguard local wildlife rich habitats and ecological networks, wildlife corridors and promote priority habitats as well as pursuing net gains for biodiversity.⁶¹

One of the strategic objectives of the CS is to conserve and enhance the countryside and the diversity of different landscapes within the District is celebrated.

CS Policy PSP4 strictly controls development to protect the character, landscape, heritage and wildlife of the wider countryside and the openness of the Green Belt.

60 Ibid para 180

⁵⁹ NPPF para 154

⁶¹ Ibid para 185

CS Policy CP1 seeks to protect and enhance natural, built and historic environments from inappropriate development and improve the diversity of wildlife and habitats.

DMP Policy DM6 protects sites of biodiversity value in accordance with their position in the hierarchy and explains there should be no net loss of biodiversity value across the District as a whole as a result of new development.

This detailed policy seeks to protect and enhance the natural environment including through biodiversity net gain. It seeks to ensure that priority habitats and species, wildlife corridors and trees and other natural features are protected or mitigated if loss or harm is unavoidable. It reflects the NPPF which is clear that if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided or adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated, permission should be refused.⁶²

The first element of the policy refers to biodiversity net gain and needs to be more robust given the NPPF's stance and more recent statutory requirement to deliver a 10% biodiversity net gain on all development sites, subject to a few exceptions. A modification is also made to policy 6.3 criterion i. to reflect this position.

Policy 6.1 refers to any mitigation being within the Parish. Whilst this is an understandable aim, a modification is made to make this element of the policy more flexible, but remain close by given the nature and character of this particular Plan area.

Part of the policy 6.2 refers to the maps and financial burden and responsibility. This paragraph should form part of the supporting text.

Criterion iii. of policy 6.2 includes a comment rather than a policy and so a modification to delete this is recommended.

Lastly, a representation makes the point that certain types of application may not need to submit the details some aspects of this policy requires upfront. A modification is made to criterion i. of policy 6.3 to help address this.

With these modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions by having regard to national policy and guidance, adding a local layer to, and being in general conformity with, the relevant strategic policies, in particular CS Policies PSP4 and CP1 and DMP Policy DM6 and helping to achieve sustainable development.

- Delete the words "...where it is feasible and proportionate to do so..." from policy 6.1 i.
- Amend the second sentence of policy 6.1 criterion ii to read "...Where mitigation and/or compensation are proposed, any sites that may be put forward for compensatory planting should, as a first resort, be as close to the

⁶² NPPF para 186

development as possible, as a second resort be elsewhere in the Parish and then in adjoining Parishes and as a last resort elsewhere in the District."

- Move the paragraph in policy 6.2 on page 39 of the Plan which begins "The first map opposite..." to the end of criterion i. to the supporting text
- Delete the sentence that begins "It is worth noting that adverse impacts are almost always avoidable..." in criterion iii. of policy 6.2
- Amend the words "Development should always seek a net gain to biodiversity and..." in policy 6.3 criterion i to "Development should provide biodiversity net gain in line with statutory requirements. All development is encouraged to provide biodiversity net gain and to create..."
- Add the words "As appropriate" to the start of the third sentence in policy 6.3 criterion i. that [currently] begins "Evidence will be required..."

Policy 7: Landscape

This is a short policy that seeks to ensure any new development respects and, where possible, enhances the special and distinctive character and features of the landscape.

The policy refers to views as examples of this. This is too imprecise for a policy and a modification is made in the interests of clarity.

I originally raised a query about evidence for inclusion of these views and they are now supported by the Important Views and Local Green Spaces Assessment dated February 2025. The five views are pictured on page 42 of the Plan and identified on a map on page 43. The inclusion of a description of the views and their key attributes and features would also be helpful and a modification is made to this effect.

I have considered each of these views at my site visit. For those views I was not able to see, I was able to understand the extent and context of these views. I consider all of the views have been appropriately identified. However, view 17, Holy Cross Church, needs some amendment as the photograph and viewpoint do not appear to tie up.

The policy is in general conformity with the CS's strategic objective of recognising and safeguarding the District's distinctive character.

With regard to the Chilterns NL, a new paragraph is added to the policy. In addition, some amendments to the supporting text are recommended.

With these modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions. It will have regard to the NPPF, be in general conformity with CS Policies PSP4 and CP1 and DMP Policy DM6 in particular and help to achieve sustainable development.

- Add the text from the Important Views and Local Green Spaces Assessment to the photographs of the views on page 42 of the Plan
- Add a title and number to the map showing the Important Views on page 43 of the Plan
- Ensure that view 17, Holy Cross Church has a corresponding viewpoint and photograph in the Plan [consequential amendments may be needed to the Important Views and Local Green Spaces Assessment document]
- Amend the policy to read:

"Development proposals will be required to respect and, wherever possible, enhance the special characteristics, value and visual amenity of the parish landscapes.

A number of Important Views of the Chess Valley and of the open fields that surround habitations have been identified on Map XX and are described in the Plan and the Important Views and Local Green Spaces Assessment. New development should ensure that there is no detrimental effect on the key features of these identified views.

Planning permission for any proposal within the Chilterns NL or which affects its setting within the NP area, will only be granted when it:

- Conserves and enhances the Chilterns NL's special qualities and natural beauty in accordance with national planning policy and the overall purposes of the NL designation;
- Supports the Chilterns NL Management Plan, including any actions set out for any objective, policy or principle in the Management Plan; and
- Has regard to any supplementary guidance, position statements or technical supporting documents as relevant."
- Add a new fourth paragraph on page 41 of the Plan [retaining existing fourth and fifth paragraphs as new fifth and sixth paragraphs] that reads:

"Part of the Parish lies within the Chilterns National Landscape. The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan plays an important contribution to the setting of the National Landscape (NL). The requirement for neighbourhood plans to reflect NL designations is set in legislation with the 2023 Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (s245) and subsequent 2024 Government guidance, placing a duty on those bodies preparing a neighbourhood plan to further the purposes of the NL.

Therefore, this Neighbourhood Plan must consider how the duty has been met. The vision and objectives of the Plan are broadly supportive of the NL and align with Chilterns NL Management Plan 2025 – 2030 and there is a specific

objective which refers to the NL. In addition, there are several policies throughout the Plan which directly underpin and further the delivery of the duty. Policy 7 directly refers to the NL and the 'Parish Overview' section includes more detail and a link to the Management Plan 2025 - 2030."

Policy 8: Footpaths and Bridleways

The NPPF is clear that planning policies should protect and enhance public rights of way (PROW) and access including taking opportunities to provide better facilities for users. 63 Such networks can also help with providing opportunities and options for sustainable transport modes. 64 Planning policies should provide for attractive and well-designed walking and cycling networks with supporting facilities such as secure cycle parking. 65 The health and leisure benefits of a strong network are also well documented.

The CS's Spatial Vision promotes sustainable transport options.

The Plan explains there is over 27 miles of footpaths and bridleways in the Parish and that these are much valued by the local community.

Policy 8 sets out a presumption against the loss of a public footway or bridleway. Where new development requires rerouting, then this should be of an equivalent or better quality and in a suitable location.

I consider the policy has regard to the NPPF, is in general conformity with CS Policy PSP4 in particular as this policy supports the increased use of sustainable modes of transport and that it will help to achieve sustainable development. It therefore meets the basic conditions and no modifications are recommended.

Policy 9: Community Facilities

To support a prosperous rural economy, the NPPF expects planning policies to enable the retention and development of accessible local services and community facilities such as local shops, meeting places, sports venues, open space, cultural buildings, public houses and places of worship. 66 It also states that policies should guard against the unnecessary loss of valued facilities and services as part of its drive to promote healthy and safe communities, particularly where this would reduce the community's ability to meet day to day needs. 67

The CS recognises that the villages play an important role in supporting the local

⁶³ NPPF para 104

⁶⁴ Ibid para 108

⁶⁵ Ibid para 110

⁶⁶ Ibid para 88

⁶⁷ Ibid para 97

economy and that there is some scope for development within the Villages, but that this will be limited and be small-scale to help sustain the rural communities through the provision of improved services and facilities. CS Policy PSP4 seeks to improve the viability, accessibility and community value of existing services and facilities. CS Policy CP1 seeks to sustain the viability and vitality of the Villages. DMP Policy DM12 deals with community, leisure and cultural facilities.

This policy seeks to protect existing services and facilities permitting their loss only subject to a number of criteria such as viability and local need. All the criteria are appropriate, but they differ from those in DMP Policy DM12 which also includes provision for an equivalent facility to be provided. A modification is made to include this in Policy 9 as it is important there is general conformity with DMP Policy DM12.

The policy also supports the enhancement and provision of community facilities. This reflects the stance of DMP Policy DM12, but again the strategic policy refers to locations accessible by sustainable modes of transport. In addition, Sarratt Parish falls within the Green Belt and this should be recognised. A modification is therefore recommended to reflect this, but in the local context of Sarratt.

With these modifications, the policy will have regard to national policy, be in general conformity with the relevant strategic policies referred to above and will help to achieve sustainable development.

Amend Policy 9 to read:

"The loss of any community facility will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that:

- its continued use as a community facility is no longer viable or
- it is no longer required by the community or
- the facility or service lost will be satisfactorily provided elsewhere in an appropriate, convenient and accessible location and
- there is no reasonable prospect of securing an alternative community use of the land or premises.

Proposals that ensure the retention, improve the quality, and/or extend the range of community facilities in a suitable and accessible location will be supported. Applications for the development of recreation land and facilities must be accompanied by an assessment of the current or last use of the facilities and their viability, together with any proposals to mitigate any material loss to the community."

Policy 10: Car Parking

The Plan explains that many of the roads in the Parish are too narrow to accommodate parking. In the village, some on-street parking is provided informally. Car ownership levels are high.

Policy 10 resists the loss of car parking provision in the village unless the loss of parking will not have a severe adverse impact on provision or road safety or that alternative suitable provision is made.

New housing is required to demonstrate why on-street parking would be appropriate where applicable. Sufficient visitor spaces should also be provided. The policy refers to TRDC's parking standards.

HCC suggests that greater emphasis should be placed on creating improved provision for shorter journeys by active transport modes. I agree and a modification is made.

With this modification, the policy will have regard to national policy, is in general conformity with strategic policies and will help to achieve sustainable development in this predominately rural area given the nature of the Plan area.

Add a new paragraph at the end of the policy which reads:

"New development should create or improve provision for active travel modes such as walking and cycling."

Policy 11: Local Green Spaces

The Plan proposes four areas as Local Green Space (LGS). They are shown on a Map on page 52 of the Plan. More information about each proposed LGS is given in the Important Views and Local Green Spaces Assessment.

The NPPF explains that LGSs are green areas of particular importance to local communities. The designation of LGSs should be consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and complement investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services. It is only possible to designate LGSs when a plan is prepared or updated and LGSs should be capable of enduring beyond the end of the plan period. Plan period.

The NPPF sets out three criteria for green spaces. ⁷¹ These are that the green space

⁷⁰ Ibid

⁶⁸ NPPF para 105

⁶⁹ Ibid

⁷¹ Ibid para 106

should be in reasonably close proximity to the community it serves, be demonstrably special to the local community and hold a particular local significance and be local in character and not be an extensive tract of land. Further guidance about LGSs is given in PPG.

I saw the proposed areas on my site visit.

- 1. Sarratt Bottom/Chess River Valley is valued as a riverside green space primarily for recreation. It forms part of the Chess Valley walk.
- 2. Commonwood Common is valued as a green space.
- Dawes Common provides valuable natural green space for local residents with attractive views and flora and fauna and was awash with bluebells at the time of my visit.
- 4. The Green, Sarratt is at the heart of the village. It provides valuable natural green space for local residents, both for walking and meeting.

A number of additional green spaces and woodland are identified on page 50 of the Plan, but are not referred to in the policy.

Based on the information in the supporting document and my site visit, in my view, all of the proposed LGSs meet the criteria in the NPPF satisfactorily. No representations have been made that lead me to a different conclusion.

The proposed LGSs to be retained are demonstrably important to the local community, are capable of enduring beyond the Plan period, meet the criteria in paragraph 106 of the NPPF and their designation is consistent with the local planning of sustainable development and investment in sufficient homes, jobs and other essential services given other policies in the development plan and this Plan.

In line with PPG advice,⁷² I have also considered whether there is any additional benefit to be gained by the designation for sites located in the Green Belt or falling within other designations such as a Conservation Area or National Landscape. Different designations often achieve different purposes and I consider that the LGSs will send a signal and recognise the particular importance these spaces have for the local community.

Turning now to the wording of the policy, it designates the LGSs and states that development in the LGSs will be consistent with national policy for Green Belts. This has regard to the NPPF which is clear that policies for managing development within a Local Green Space should be consistent with those for Green Belts.⁷³ A modification is however made to future-proof this part of the policy.

With these modifications, the policy will meet the basic conditions.

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⁷² PPG para 010 ref id 37-011-20140306

⁷³ NPPF para 107

 Delete the words "...and the requirements of NPPF paragraph 103" from Policy 11.2

Policy 12: Renewable Energy & Green Infrastructure

The NPPF defines green infrastructure (GI) as a network of multi-functional green and blue spaces and other natural features, urban and rural, which is capable of delivering a wide range of environmental, economic, health and wellbeing benefits for nature, climate, local and wider communities and prosperity.

The NPPF states that policies should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment including through the protection and enhancement of valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity value, recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside and minimising impacts on, and providing net gains for, biodiversity.⁷⁴

As part of its drive to promote healthy and safe communities, the NPPF recognises the provision of safe and accessible GI can enable and support healthy lifestyles.⁷⁵

The NPPF indicates that plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account long-term implications and support appropriate measures to ensure that communities are resilient to climate change impacts.⁷⁶

As part of this drive, new development should be planned in ways that, amongst other things, utilise GI as appropriate adaptive measures.⁷⁷

In relation to meeting the challenge of climate change, flooding and coastal change, the NPPF states that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future. The planning system should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure. The planning system should support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure.

It continues that plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating from rising temperatures.⁸⁰

⁷⁴ NPPF para 180

⁷⁵ Ibid para 96

⁷⁶ Ibid para 158

⁷⁷ Ibid para 159

⁷⁸ Ibid para 157

⁷⁹ Ibid

⁸⁰ Ibid para 158

To help increase the use and supply of renewable and low carbon energy and heat, the NPPF states that plans should provide a positive strategy for energy from these sources.⁸¹

Community-led initiatives taken forward through neighbourhood planning should be supported by local planning authorities, including for developments outside areas identified in local plans or other strategic policies.⁸²

In relation to locations in the Green Belt, the NPPF indicates that elements of many renewable energy projects will comprise inappropriate development.⁸³ In such cases the NPPF states that developers will need to demonstrate very special circumstances if projects are to proceed.⁸⁴ Such very special circumstances may include the wider environmental benefits associated with increased production of energy from renewable sources.⁸⁵

Policy 12 seeks to achieve this. The first part of this long policy refers to conflicts with other policies and sets out that policies on CAs for example will take precedence over others, but that practical exemptions should be applied. The example of solar panels is used; they can be located in CAs but not on street-facing aspects.

There are a number of issues here. The first is that the policy does not allow the decision maker to take all relevant policies and other material considerations into account. The second is that it contains examples and it does not follow that all solar panels on non-street facing aspects will be acceptable. The third is that it refers to emerging policies at TRDC level which might well change.

The second element to the policy looks on development that exceeds energy efficiency and environmental impact regulations favourably.

The third element refers to energy demand, consumption and sources.

The fourth element encourages a number of measures in new development. These include sustainable construction methods, performance related matters, materials, sustainable transport modes, electric charging points and surface water management. HCC refer to the importance of SuDs in their representation.

The intention of the policy is to be supported.

However, the Government introduced national technical standards for housing in 2015. A Written Ministerial Statement (WMS)⁸⁶ explains that neighbourhood plans should not set out any additional local technical standards or requirements relating to the construction, internal layout or performance of new dwellings.

82 Ibid para 161

⁸⁵ Ibid

⁸¹ NPPF para 160

⁸³ Ibid para 156

⁸⁴ Ibid

⁸⁶ Written Ministerial Statement 25 March 2015

That WMS is now effectively moot in this respect following a Government Statement on Planning – Local Energy Efficiency Standards Update.⁸⁷ This embeds a general rule of thumb that policies which propose standards or requirements that go beyond current or proposed standards should be rejected at examination if they do not have a well-reasoned and robustly costed rationale. I consider the principle is applicable here.

I therefore recommend modification of the policy to deal with the issues outlined above and to reflect the WMS, but retaining as much content as appropriate. In line with earlier recommendations, the references to the emerging Local Plan Preferred Policy Options are recommended for deletion as part of the modification to the policy.

With this modification, the policy will meet the basic conditions. It will have regard to the NPPF. It will be in general conformity with CS Policies CP1 which sets out a number of criteria aimed at contributing to the sustainability of the District and CP12 which seeks a high standard of design including through taking climate change into account in particular. It will help to achieve sustainable development.

Reword Policy 12 to read:

"Development proposals are encouraged to achieve the highest standards of sustainability, decarbonisation and energy efficiency.

The incorporation of the following in all developments is encouraged:

- Sustainable construction methods that reduce the impact of the build process;
- A fabric first approach that includes materials and aspect and orientation of layout;
- Renewable and low-carbon or zero carbon technologies such as photovoltaic panels, solar thermal panels and heat pumps;
- Locally produced materials (such as flints) and recycled materials (such as old bricks) that both meet design guidelines and have a lower carbon footprint owing to fewer transport miles;
- Steps to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport - such as an undercover bike park for every house;
- Electric Vehicle charging points for all new residential developments;
- Recycling of water resources;
- Management of surface water including the use of SuDs features where appropriate; and
- Measures to support biodiversity."

⁸⁷ Statement made on 13 December 2023

Appendices

Appendix 1 is called "frequently asked questions". This contains some interesting questions and explanation. It is not however referred to in the Plan. In addition, at these latter stages of Plan production, this is arguably now not needed.

Appendix II contains a number of photographs titled "Village Asset Photos". I am not clear of their relevance or purpose and the appendix is referred to briefly, but without context, in the Plan. It should therefore be removed from the Plan. The photographs could be incorporated into the main body of the Plan if desired.

Appendix III is the Design Code document produced by AECOM.

Appendix IV is the Housing Needs Assessment produced by AECOM. This is usually a standalone document. There is no need to append it to the Plan as it is a supporting evidence document and in any case the information will be updated on a regular basis. This appendix should be removed from the Plan. A link to it could be included in the relevant part of the Plan if desired.

Appendix V is titled The Green Appraisal. It contains the Conservation Area Appraisal and Townscape Assessment for the Green CA. It is not necessary to append this standalone document. In addition, the same document for Church Green is not appended and so in the interests of consistency, a link to both documents could be included in the relevant part of the Plan if desired.

Appendix VI is the Schedule of Local Green Spaces.

- Delete Appendices I, II, IV and V from the Plan
- Consequential amendments will be required

8.0 Conclusions and recommendations

I am satisfied that the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan, subject to the modifications I have recommended, meets the basic conditions and the other statutory requirements outlined earlier in this report.

I am therefore pleased to recommend to Three Rivers District Council that, subject to the modifications proposed in this report, the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan can proceed to a referendum.

Following on from that, I am required to consider whether the referendum area should be extended beyond the Neighbourhood Plan area. I see no reason to alter or extend

the Plan area for the purpose of holding a referendum and no representations have been made that would lead me to reach a different conclusion.

I therefore consider that the Sarratt Neighbourhood Development Plan should proceed to a referendum based on the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan area as approved by Three Rivers District Council on 22 July 2019.

Ann Skippers MRTPI Ann Skippers Planning 29 July 2025

Appendix 1 List of key documents specific to this examination

Sarratt Parish Neighbourhood Plan February 2025

Basic Conditions Statement August 2022

Consultation Statement Undated

Basic Conditions Statement February 2025

Consultation Statement Revised February 2025

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report September 2022 (Place Services)

Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) & Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Report February 2025 (TRDC) which includes the SEA and HRA Screening Report Updated March 2024 (Place Services)

Important Views and Local Green Spaces Assessment February 2025

Sarratt Design Code Final Report January 2020 (AECOM)

Housing Needs Assessment January 2020 (AECOM)

The Green, Sarratt Conservation Area Appraisal and Townscape Assessment March 1994 (BEAMS)

Church End, Sarratt Conservation Area Appraisal and Townscape Assessment March 1994 (BEAMS)

Chilterns AONB Management Plan 2025 - 2030 (Chilterns Conservation Board)

Chilterns Buildings Design Guide (Chilterns Conservation Board)

Review of the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan v1.1 November 2021 and Appendix 1 (Capita) and PC Response

Core Strategy adopted 17 October 2011

Development Management Policies Local Development Document adopted July 2013

Site Allocations Local Development Document adopted November 2014

Various documents and maps on www.sarrattneighbourhoodplan.org

Earlier versions of the Neighbourhood Plan and its supporting documents

Appendix 2 Questions of Clarification and Note of Interim Findings

Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Examination

Questions of Clarification and Note of Interim Findings from the Examiner to the Parish Council (PC) and Three Rivers District Council (TRDC)

Having completed my assessment of the Neighbourhood Plan (the Plan), I am writing to set out some interim findings which will necessitate a decision from the PC as to how best to proceed.

I also set out some questions of clarification which either relate to matters of fact or are areas in which I seek clarification or further information.

I would be grateful if both Councils (as appropriate) could kindly assist me as appropriate. Please do not send or direct me to evidence that is not already publicly available at this stage.

Interim Findings and Likely Recommended Modifications to the Plan and its policies

A The adequacy of supporting documents

Consultation Statement

Unfortunately I do not consider that the Consultation Statement satisfactorily meets the requirements which are set out in Regulation. These are that the Consultation Statement should give details of the persons and bodies who were consulted about the proposed Plan, explain how they were consulted, summarise the main issues and concerns raised by the persons consulted and describe how these issues and concerns have been considered and, where relevant addressed in the Plan.

It is not clear to me from the Consultation Statement:

- what engagement was carried out prior to the pre-submission (Regulation 14) stage of consultation
- when the pre-submission consultation took place (six week period)
- iii) who was consulted at Regulation 14 stage
- iv) how people and the consultation bodies were consulted at Regulation 14 stage i.e. how was this stage publicised, where was the Plan available to view, how representations could be made and
- v) the outcomes of the engagement carried out.

It appears from the document, that Regulation 14 consultation took place at some point between 12/15 August – 25 September 2022 after two consultation days held the year before and following feedback from TRDC. The comments received are briefly summarised in Appendix 1.

I suspect that engagement has been carried out and that the pre-submission stage may well have been carried out appropriately and for a period of six weeks. However, I am not clear on how the consultation was publicised and how the Plan could be accessed or viewed by interested persons, whether there were any events held and so on.

Overall I consider that the Consultation Statement should be redone to make it clearer and more robust. A timeline could perhaps usefully be included. There are many good examples of Consultation Statements that the PC might find it useful to look at in revising the Consultation Statement.

Basic Conditions Statement

Unfortunately the Basic Conditions Statement makes no mention of the requirements the examiner has to check:¹

- Has the Plan been prepared and submitted for examination by a qualifying body
- Has it been prepared for an area that has been properly designated for such plan preparation
- Does it meet the requirements to i) specify the period to which it has effect; ii) not include provision about excluded development; and iii) not relate to more than one neighbourhood area and
- Whether its policies relate to the development and use of land for a designated neighbourhood area.

The statement offers little discussion of national policy and guidance and no discussion on how the Plan is in general conformity with development plan policies except for referring readers to the Plan itself. There is little discussion in the Plan itself with regard to the National Planning Policy Framework or to the Core Strategy and other development plan policies.

There is reference to European Union Regulations, but no mention of the Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Screening Report.

An Equality Impact Assessment is referred to, but is not included with the documentation.

Overall I consider that the Basic Conditions Statement should be redone to make it robust.

Other Supporting Evidence for Policies 3, 7 and 11

A1. Policy 3 (Historic Character) refers to "important views". These are shown on a map and the Plan includes photographs of each viewpoint. This is to be welcomed. However, it is not clear to me how these views were selected and on what basis. It is important that the rationale for the views is included either in the Plan or as a supporting document. I suspect there is evidence and a rationale for selecting these particular views, but it has not been submitted. Is there evidence to support this part of the policy?

A2. Policy 7 (Landscape) refers to views and some examples of the views have been included in the Plan. Examples are difficult to include in policies which should be precise. Therefore it is likely that a recommendation to plot them on a map would be made. However, there is an earlier stage; similar to Policy 3, how have these views been selected? Is there evidence to support this part of the policy?

A3. Policy 11 (Local Green Spaces). Whilst I note some information in Appendix VI Local Green Spaces: Schedule, there is little information to support the proposed designations. Usually, proposed designations are accompanied by comprehensive information on how they meet the criteria set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. Is there any [further] evidence to support this policy which has not already been submitted?

¹ Set out in sections 38A and 38B of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as amended by the Localism Act

B Potential Changes to the Plan

At this stage, I would also like to make the Parish Council aware that unfortunately I have found that it will be necessary to make quite a lot of modifications to policies and some of the supporting text. In some cases, I regard these changes to be minor revisions, but others may be regarded as more significant by those involved in the production of the Plan and of course by the local community.

C Queries on the Policies

There are a number of queries across the policies which I set out below:

- Policy 2 (Design Principles) lists a number of extracts from the Design Code. It is not clear to
 me why some elements of the Design Code have been selected as more important than
 others. This to me seems to devalue the whole of the Design Code. I intend to shorten the
 policy to the effect that the Design Code must be taken account of and planning applications
 should be accompanied by a statement to show how it has been taken account of.
 - I invite comments on this proposed course of action from the PC and TRDC.
- Policy 5 (Affordable Housing). How has the 75% social rent and 25% First Homes split been derived? This is not to say the split is not appropriate, but an explanation with evidence is needed to support it.
- Policy 8 (Footpaths and Bridleways). Hertfordshire County Council make some suggested amendments to this policy. I invite comments on the suggested amendments from the PC.
- 4. Policy 11 (Local Green Spaces). There are a number of queries associated with this policy:
 - 1) Evidence to support the designations as set out in Section A of this Note.
 - 2) Although the proposed Local Green Spaces (LGS) are shown on a Map on page 47 of the Plan, it will be important for more detailed and scaled maps to be included in the Plan so that the precise boundaries of the LGSs can be discerned.
 - 3) A number of "other green spaces and woodlands" and "open space allocations" are identified on the Map page 46 of the Plan. They are not referred to in Policy 11. It is not clear to me what these various other designations are or why they are shown on the Map. Please can this be clarified?
 - 4) The final part of the policy refers to recreational land and facilities. This is not referred to in the supporting text. It is not appropriate to combine this in a LGS policy. Does the PC have a view on the way forward?
- I consider it important that a Policies Map is included with the Plan to show any designations the Plan itself makes.

Questions of clarification and other matters

 Please could the Plan period of 2023 – 2038 (as indicated in the Basic Conditions Statement) be confirmed?

- 7. Please could the Equality Impact Assessment referred to in the Basic Conditions Statement be forwarded to me?
- 8. Please could TRDC confirm 12 representations were submitted at Regulation 16 stage?
- Please could TRDC send me the representation from Boyer in full? I am simply checking I have not missed anything.
- 10. A Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulation Assessment Screening Report has been submitted. Was the Screening Report subject to the requisite consultation with the statutory bodies? Assuming it was, please forward a copy of their responses to me (or confirm no responses were received). If it was not, this may require further consultation.
- 11. Please could the appendix in the Independent Review Report be forwarded to me?
- On 5 September 2023, the Government updated the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF).

The update focused on national policy for onshore wind. Transitional arrangements are set out in the updated NPPF. These explain that the policies on renewable and low carbon energy and heat only apply to local plans that have not reached Regulation 19 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 or would reach that stage within three months of the publication of the updated NPPF.

Although that relates to Local Plans, I consider the same principle can pragmatically be applied to this Plan. I therefore consider that even if the updates are relevant to this Plan, the updates do not apply and it is not necessary to have further consultation on this. I invite comments on this proposed course of action from the QB and TRDC.

Conclusions and Way Forward

To summarise, I have concerns about the adequacy of the Consultation Statement and the Basic Conditions Statement. In my view, both need to be redone. After additional work, they would both be submitted again. This would necessitate a six week period of public consultation organised by TRDC (i.e. Regulation 16 would need to be rerun).

There are then some concerns about the adequacy of supporting evidence for three of the draft policies (Policies 3, 7 and 11). It may well be that the evidence is available or simply needs to be collated into a suitable supporting evidence document. The opportunity could be taken to provide this evidence at the same time as the reworked Consultation Statement and Basic Conditions Statement and submit it so it can be consulted upon at the same time. Any evidence that the Plan relies on which has not already been subject to Regulation 16 consultatation would need to be consulted upon in any case.

The more detailed maps of each Local Green Space could also be produced at the same time and form part of the package of documents to be re-consulted upon.

Then, as the Plan is currently drafted, there are likely to be modifications recommended on all of the draft policies. Some of these I would regard as minor and in the main in the interests of

making the policies more precise. Others might be regarded as more significant, particularly by the PC.

In addition, there are queries on Policies 2, 3, 5, 7, 8 and 11 (including the apparent lack of evidence to support some of the policies' content) and other questions of clarification. Some of the queries and questions such as whether the Screening Report was consulted upon may also have a bearing on whether the Plan meets the basic conditions. Others such as the lack of the Equality Impact Assessment being submitted can also be tied up in a rerun of the Regulation 16 consultation.

I understand this will be disappointing news to those involved in the production of the Plan. I am drawing the Parish Council's attention to this scenario now as finding the Plan does not meet the basic conditions and/or recommending numerous changes can come as an unpleasant surprise on receipt of my report and mean that community ownership of the Plan becomes diluted. I must also ensure I am not rewriting the Plan (and indeed would not wish to, or be appropriate for me to, do so) in making modifications.

In terms of a way forward, there are a number of options:

Option 1 – continue with the examination which is likely to result in a recommendation that the Plan does not proceed to referendum. I do not consider that this option benefits anyone.

Option 2 – suspend the examination whilst the remedial work is carried out and collated and a new period of Regulation 16 consultation is undertaken by TRDC. The examination would then recommence after the consultation had ended. Please note however, that a Regulation 14 period of consultation may also need to be carried out if it is found that the pre-submission stage already carried out is deficient.

Option 3 – withdraw the Plan from examination so the Plan and its component documents can be reworked. This would be likely to necessitate a period of Regulation 14 and a Regulation 16 consultation period to be carried out.

It is of course, up to the PC as to how to proceed. My preferred option is Option 2. This is because although I have identified a number of deficiencies at this stage, I consider all can be remedied with some extra work and a rerun Regulation 16 stage. This would make the Plan much more robust for the future.

I appreciate that asking the PC to carry out additional work can be disheartening. I feel sure TRDC would be supportive as far as resources allow and there may be other assistance from bodies such as Locality that the PC could call upon. In addition there are many examples of good practice on Basic Conditions Statements, Consultation Statements and evidence documents for Views and Local Green Spaces which perhaps could be useful as templates and for the PC to see the breadth and depth of evidence needed.

Furthermore we would develop a mutually agreed programme of what needs to be done and a timetable to progress the work, Regulation 16 and restart and end of the examination to ensure that momentum is maintained.

Please could the PC let me know your decision as to how you would like to proceed by 6 October 2023. Of course if the decision is to suspend or withdraw, the other queries and questions do not

need to be answered at this time, but can be addressed as part of the further work to be carried out. However, it would be helpful to confirm the period for the pre-submission, Regulation 14, consultation period at this stage so I can confirm whether this also needs to be rerun.

I am also not seeking, and will not accept, any representations from other parties regarding any of the matters covered in this Note at this stage.

This note will be a matter of public record and should be placed on the relevant websites at earliest convenience.

With many thanks,

Ann Skippers MRTPI Independent Examiner 8 September 2023

Appendix 3 Further Questions of Clarification

Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Examination
Further Questions of Clarification from the Examiner to the Parish Council (PC) and Three Rivers
District Council (TRDC)

Thank you for the hard work on the Plan so far. Following the second period of Submission (Regulation 16) consultation which ended on 11 September 2024, I have continued to work on the examination. Unfortunately, there are still some further questions of clarification and outstanding matters on which I would be grateful for your kind assistance.

- The Consultation Statement Revised February 2024. Please direct me to the information
 which details who was consulted at both pre-submission stages, the comments they made
 and the action taken (if any). Please confirm that the appendix which indicates it does
 this, covers all respondents and was available during the latest submission period of
 consultation.
- Please update me in relation to the two sites in Church Lane which were subject to appeal.
 Have the appeals been determined? If so, please send me copies of the appeal decision.
 Please advise me of any implications that may arise for View 2 shown on page 30 of the
 Plan
- Please can the additional four views shown on pages 40 and 41 of the Plan in relation to Policy 7 be mapped. As View 15 identified in the Key Views Assessment is not included in the Plan, it cannot be taken forward unless further consultation is carried out.
- 4. Descriptions of all the [retained] views in Policies 3 and 7 require brief descriptions to be included in the Plan or an appendix/supporting document which details their key features and attributes. I have already given some examples of the level of detail I might expect to see.
- 5. Detailed maps of the proposed Local Green Spaces (Policy 11) have already been requested, but I do not seem to have received them (?) and they do not seem to have been consulted upon as part of the most recent submission stage consultation. Please provide the maps and confirm accordingly. It is essential to have larger scale maps as I otherwise cannot assess these spaces properly.

Once I have received this information, I should be able to continue the examination with a view to completing it promptly.

This note will be a matter of public record and should be placed on the relevant websites at earliest convenience.

With many thanks for your continued assistance,

Ann Skippers MRTPI Independent Examiner 29 November 2024





Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement (Regulation 18 (2))

8th September 2025

1 Summary

- 1.1 Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), Three Rivers District Council has a statutory duty to assist communities in the preparation of neighbourhood development plans and orders and to take plans through a process of examination and referendum. The Localism Act 2011 (Part 6 chapter 3) sets out the Local Planning Authority's responsibilities under Neighbourhood Planning.
- 1.2 This statement confirms that the modifications proposed by the Examiner's Report have been accepted, the draft Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan has been altered as a result of it; and that this plan may now proceed to referendum which is proposed to take place on Thursday 6th November 2025.

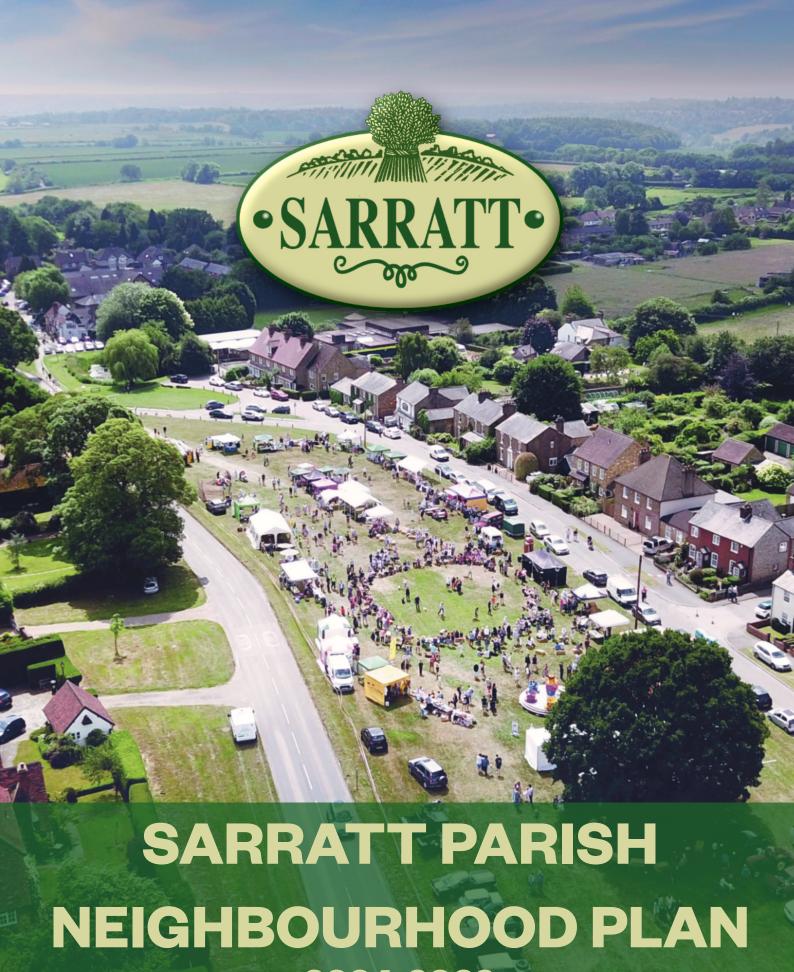
2 Details

- 2.1 The Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan relates to the area that was designated by Three Rivers District Council as a Neighbourhood Area on 22 July 2019.
- 2.2 In November 2022 Sarratt Parish Council formally submitted the draft Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents to the District Council.
- 2.3 Once satisfied that the legal requirements had been met, a statutory six-week consultation (Regulation 16 Consultation) was undertaken between 27 June–8 August 2023. Following guidance from the examiner, a second consultation occurred between 23 July–11 September 2024 and a final consultation took place between 28 February–13 April 2025.
- 2.4 Three Rivers District Council, with the agreement of Sarratt Parish Council, appointed Ann Skippers BSc (Hons) MRTPI FRSA AoU as the Independent Examiner for the Plan. The Examiner's role was to determine whether the Plan met the Basic Conditions as set out in Schedule 4B of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, and whether the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum.
- 2.5 The examiner set out their findings in the Independent Examiner's Report issued on 29th July 2025. The Examiner recommended: that modifications be made to the Plan to ensure that the Basic Conditions and legal requirements are satisfactorily met; that the Plan as modified should proceed to referendum; and that the referendum area should be the same as the Sarratt Neighbourhood Area.

3 Decision and Reasons for Recommendations

3.1 The Neighbourhood (General) Regulations 2012, Regulation 18 require the local planning authority to outline what action to take in response to the recommendations of made by the Independent Examiner in a report under paragraph 10 of Schedule 38A of Schedule 4A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as applied by Section 38A of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

- 3.2 Having considered the recommendations made by the Examiner's Report, and the reasons for them, Three Rivers District Council has agreed to accept the modifications made to the draft plan under paragraph 12(6) of Schedule 4B to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Having made these modifications, Three Rivers District Council is satisfied that the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan meets the Basic Conditions and should proceed to referendum.
- 3.3 To meet the requirements of the Localism Act 2011 a referendum which poses the question, 'Do you want Three Rivers District Council to use the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Sarratt Neighbourhood Area?' will be held in the area formally designated as the Sarratt Neighbourhood Area.
- 3.4 The referendum is proposed for Thursday 6 November 2025 and a Referendum Statement will be produced and publicised on our website in due course.
- 3.5 National Planning Policy Guidance states that where a Local Planning Authority has issued a Decision Statement detailing its intention to send a Neighbourhood Plan to referendum, that plan can be given significant weight in decision-making, so far as the plan is material to the application. Therefore, following the publication of this decision statement on 8 September 2025, the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan can be given significant weight in determining planning applications where the plan is material to the application.



2024-2039

John Carter

John passed away on 17 November 2023. He was the Chairperson of the Neighbourhood Plan Working Committee from its inception, through the public and statutory consultation processes to the preparation of the final document.

The Neighbourhood Plan is dedicated to his memory.

Quick Reference

Page (clickable)	Direct link to Associated Policy (clickable)
11	
14	
23	
26	Policy 1
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30	Policy 3
36	Policy 4
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38	Policy 6
41	Policy 7
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48	Policy 9
49	Policy 10
52	Policy 11
55	Policy 12
	(clickable) 11 14 23 26 28 30 36 37 38 41 46 48 49 52





FOREWORD

The residents of the parish of Sarratt take immense pride in the area they live in – the unique history and character and the inclusive and vibrant community spirit that enables our area to thrive. To preserve and build on this legacy for future generations, they have developed this Neighbourhood Plan.

The Neighbourhood Plan expresses the development policies of the village to 2036 and beyond, collectively defined by its residents. The Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Working Group has led the process of drawing up this plan with community members. Key stages of development have been a first public consultation in September 2021 together with presentation to Three Rivers District Council (TRDC). The plan was then amended taking account of the various comments and suggestions and a second public consultation held in August/September 2022. A final draft of the plan is due to be provided to TRDC and will form the basis of a final public consultation prior to going to a referendum in 2023.

In drawing up this document, the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Working Group consulted extensively with national and local agencies, including Three Rivers District Council (TRDC) and many special interest groups in the parish. Work was undertaken within the national legislative and regulatory framework, including the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.

I should like to thank all those who have helped to compile the plan.

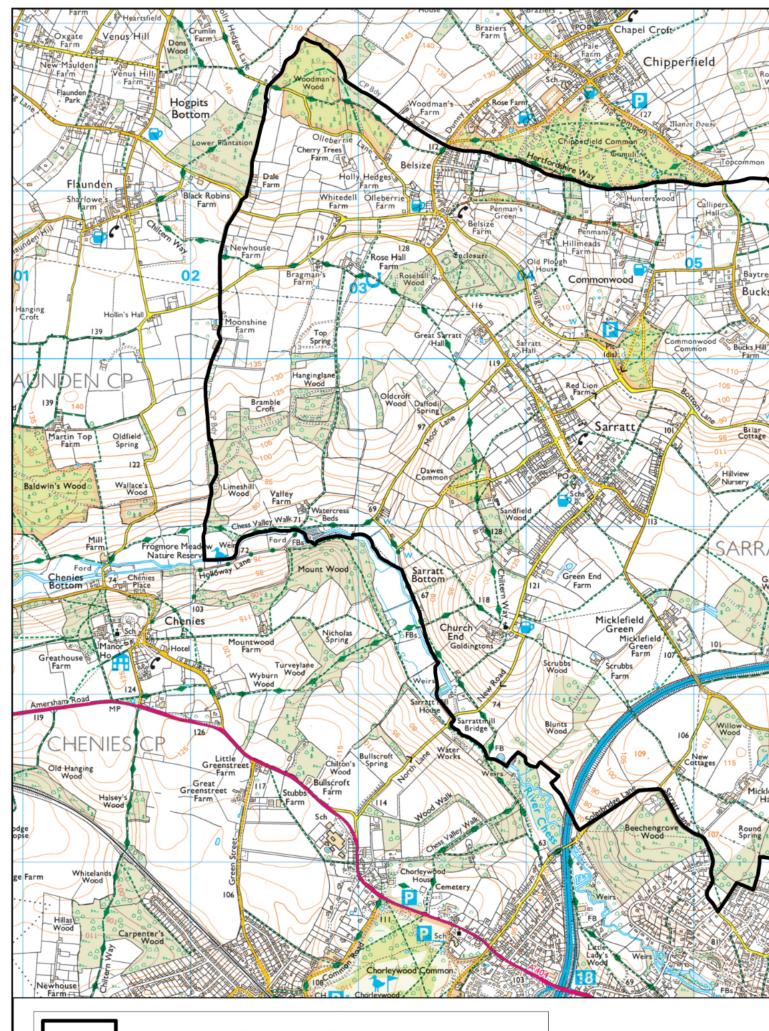
John Carter
Chairperson
Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Working Group

The Sarratt Parish Neighbourhood Plan Working Group: Clare Bennett, Tony Bond, John Carter, Lee Gilmour, Will Hobhouse, and Anthony Soothill

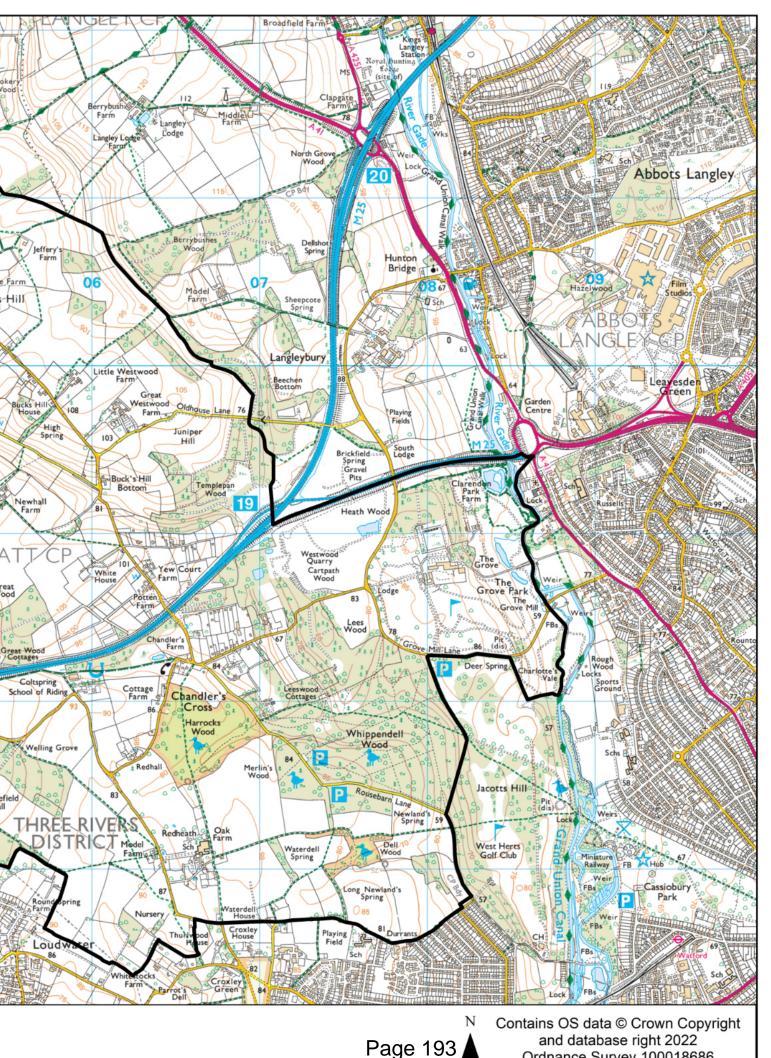
Typesetting, Layout, and Website: Michael Edmund







Sarratt Neighbouthood Area



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Ordnance Survey 100018686 1:15,500

WHY DEVELOP A NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN FOR SARRATT?

At the end of 2018, Sarratt Parish Council decided that in anticipation of the Local Planning Authority (Three Rivers District Council) issuing a New Local Plan to address housing development targets set by central government, Sarratt would benefit from a Neighbourhood Plan, as provided for in the Localism Act 2012.

Whilst the parish of Sarratt is entirely Green Belt, whose aim is to prevent urban sprawl (with 5% included within the Chilterns National Landscape), TRDC's New Local Plan will provide the means to move or lift Green Belt boundaries.

The Localism Act 2011 gives communities the legal right to prepare a Neighbourhood Plan that will set out policies to direct development and the use of land in a neighbourhood plan area.

This decision enabled Sarratt to benefit from the provisions of the National Planning Policy Framework, which allows communities to use Neighbourhood Plans to set out more detailed policies for specific area (para.28), and to:"...develop a shared vision for their area...and help deliver the sustainable development..." (para.29);

This plan does not address how much development there should be – that is for others to decide. It sets out policies that will help ensure that future development protects the rural nature and historic feel of the core hamlets and villages *and* meets local needs, so that the parish remains a vibrant community. Most importantly, whilst it does not provide a right of veto, it is a legal requirement that the Local Planning Authority (TRDC) MUST consider the policies within relevant Neighbourhood Plans when making a determination on planning applications. Therefore, having a Neighbourhood Plan is one of the best ways of preventing inappropriate development in our parish. All neighbourhood plan documents are available from the website: *sarrattneighbourhoodplan.org*

WHAT WAS THE PROCESS FOR DEVELOPING THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

In 2018 Sarratt Parish Council resolved that the Neighbourhood Plan, in line with best practice, should be community-led. The Parish Council asked residents to volunteer to help develop a Neighbourhood Plan and a Neighbourhood Plan Working Group was formed from volunteers in 2018 with an independent Chairperson. Experienced consultants (Bell Cornwell) were engaged to support the work of the lay Neighbourhood Plan Working Group and specialists AECOM were engaged to produce specific reports. These include the Sarratt Design Code that has already been adopted by Sarratt Parish Council. After some delays due to Coronavirus restrictions in 2020 and the first half of 2021, a public consultation was scheduled in September 2021, to canvass the views of residents on the draft Neighbourhood Plan.

Following a review of the public consultation, an initial draft of the Neighbourhood Plan was submitted to TRDC for review. After further consultation, the plan will be finalised and sent to TRDC for approval prior to a conducting a public referendum before it is formally adopted, before TRDC's New Local Plan, expected in 2026.

WHAT ARE THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN?

As set out in section 2.3 of the Basic Conditions Statement, an early key decision during the consultation process was that the plan should be future-proofed. As such, it is principles-based and does not address specific sites that may be considered for development, either now or in the future. Therefore, it does not include (or exclude) recommendations regarding sites for development; and hence there is no associated map in the SNP.

In brief the plan includes an introduction to the area, an overview of the process of producing and ratifying the overall plan, a list of policies and references to the Housing Needs Assessment and Sarratt Design Code produced by AECOM.

THE PLAN PROCESS

Stage 1

Gather Baseline Information

Review relevant policies and plans

Three Rivers Settlement Appraisal

TRDC Local Plan Sustainability Appraisal working note

2018 Parish Plan

Stage 2

Early stage public consultation and independent evidence

Fact finding questionnaire sent to a cross section of Parish organisations and business, key stakeholders

Attendance at the Sarratt Freshers Fair

AECOM Housing Needs Assessment

AECOM Design Code

Stage 3

Develop Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

Use information gathered in steps 1 and 2 to draw down a list of issues identified and amend draft plan appropriately

Formulate objectives for the Neighbourhood Plan

Stage 4

Develop List of Policies

Formulate policies that will deliver Plan objectives

Stage 5

Mid-stage public consultation

Consultation Forums to evaluate legitimacy of Plan's objectives and policies

Revise Plan based on feedback from consultations

Make revised Plan publicly available for 6 weeks as pre submission consultation in compliance with Regulation 14

Stage 6

Submit draft Plan to TRDC

The Plan will be submitted to TRDC, who will carry out a 6-week public consultation (Regulation 16). Following this, an independent Examiner will be appointed to carry out an independent examination of the Plan

Examiners Report received

Stage 7

Referendum

Stage 8

Adoption of the Plan









PARISH OVERVIEW

Sarratt is a village and a civil parish in Three Rivers District, Hertfordshire, England. It is situated 4 miles (6.4 km) north of Rickmansworth on high ground near the county boundary with Buckinghamshire. The chalk stream, the River Chess, rising just north of Chesham in the Chiltern Hills, passes through Sarratt Bottom in the valley to the west of the village to join the River Colne in Rickmansworth.

The village is much loved by residents and is located within the Chilterns National Landscape. Evidence of human habitation and cultivation go back over 4,000 years and include Roman occupation.

It is suggested that a village existed in the 8th century, but written confirmation of a village/parish community does not come until the building of Holy Cross Church around 1190. It is likely that this replaced a previous Saxon place of worship. Until the 18th century Sarratt was a hamlet, a cluster of properties surrounding the church, nearly a mile from the hamlet of Sarratt Green. The latter began to expand during the 17th century and eventually the name of Sarratt was applied to the whole, by which time very little of the development around the church had survived. Farming was the only trade in the village throughout this time and the population would have comprised a small number of the gentry and agricultural workers.

The population of Sarratt Parish in 1831 was about 450, rising to 654 in 1871. This reflects a surge in shops and trades that grew around the Green along with some new housing. The 20th century saw the first significant (by Sarratt standards) housing expansion. Several council house developments were completed between the World Wars and after 1945. Flats in Downer Drive, The Briars and Caroon Drive were built in the 1970s and the Wards Nurseries site was developed in 2005.

Today, the population is around 2,600, including the hamlets of Belsize, Chandlers Cross, Commonwood and parts of Bucks Hill. Sarratt is located in the Green Belt of Hertfordshire and as such is protected by policies related to this. It includes part of the Chilterns National Landscape, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), two Conservation Areas; and the Green in Sarratt has 25 Grade II listed buildings.



Water Pump, Sarratt Village Green

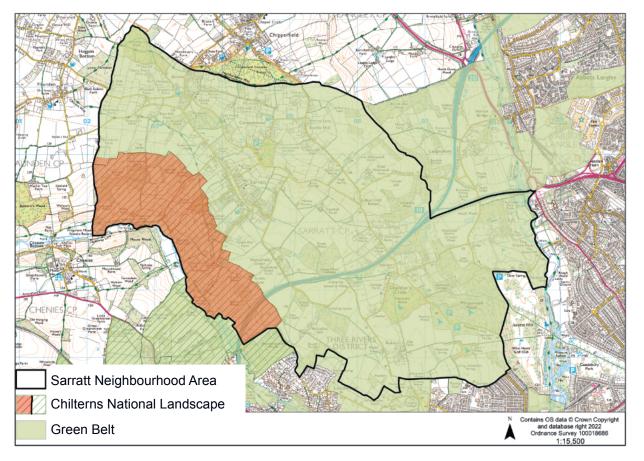
Green Belt

100% of the Parish is currently in the Green Belt which gives Sarratt much of its green open character and local distinctiveness. The Government gives great importance to Green Belts, which were put in place to prevent urban sprawl by keeping land permanently open. This means that the construction of new buildings is inappropriate apart from the exceptions set out within the NPPF. These exceptions include limited infilling in villages, limited affordable housing for local community needs and, in some cases, limited infilling or redevelopment of previously developed land. These exceptions are consistent with the approach to development that is set out in this Neighbourhood Plan.

Chilterns National Landscape

Sarratt Parish is located on the eastern edge of the Chilterns National Landscape. Whilst only a relatively small proportion of the wider neighbourhood plan area falls within the National Landscape, a large proportion of the west (particularly south-west) of the plan area is situated within the National Landscape. National Landscapes, formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs)*, are legally designated areas recognised for their exceptional natural beauty under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

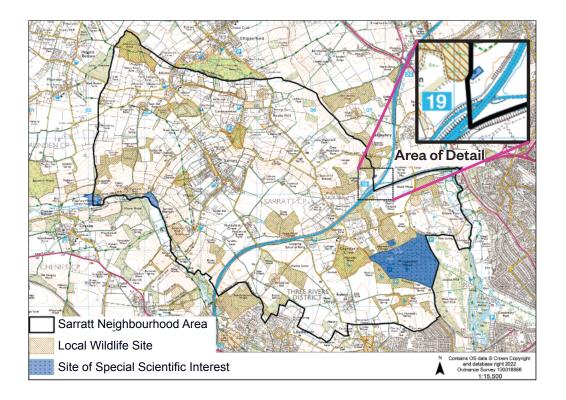
There are several features which contribute to the Chilterns National Landscape's natural beauty, including chalk streams, a chalk escarpment, chalk grassland, extensive woodland and common land with a comprehensive rights of way network, together with distinctive buildings, including those associated with its industrial heritage, and sites of archaeological significance. Full details of the National Landscape's special features and how they should be managed and protected are established within the Management Plan published by the Chilterns National Landscape: https://www.chilterns.org.uk/what-we-do/future-proofing-the-chilterns/management-plan/.



^{*} NOTE Some third party documents refer to ADMI produced prior to the name change

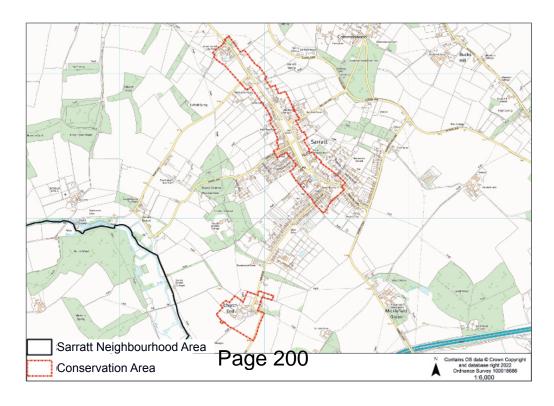
SSSI

Natural England selects sites that have features of special interest, such as its wildlife, geology or landform. These are then protected from any development and it is an offence to deliberately or recklessly damage the special features of an SSSI.



Conservation Areas

We have two Conservation Areas in Sarratt. Residents and businesses in a conservation area may need permission from the Local Planning Authority before making alterations such as cladding, inserting windows, installing satellite dishes and solar panels, adding conservatories or other extensions, laying paving or building walls. Demolition of a building within a conservation area will usually require planning permission: it is now a criminal offence to carry out demolition in a conservation area without planning permission.

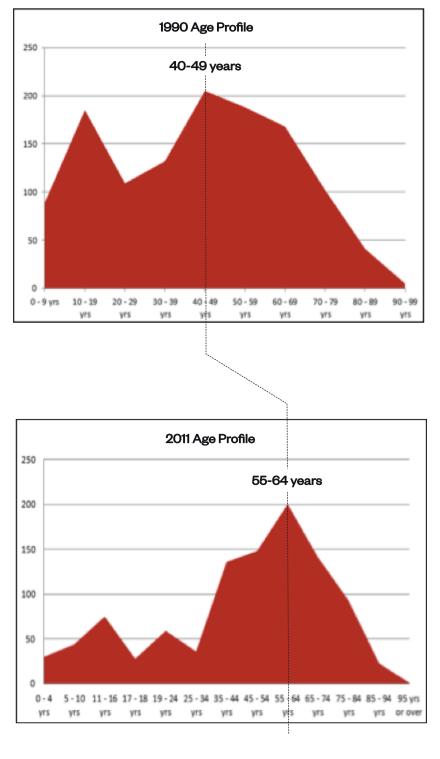


Demographics

The 2012 Parish Plan Survey showed a population of the the parish unsurprisingly heavily skewed towards Sarratt with 60% of the total; the only other area with over 10% of the population is Belsize with 12%. 55% of residents have lived in the Parish for more than 50 years and a further 26% for 6 -15 years.

Given this continuity of residence, it is unsurprising that the age distribution across the Parish in the decade to the last Census figures has moved significantly up.

It is now a Parish with a predominantly older population.



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Housing Stock

The Housing Needs Assessment produced by AECOM shows that the proportion of detached homes is more than double that of Three Rivers or the national average, while all other dwelling types exist at correspondingly lower proportions. For example, the proportion of flats in Sarratt is less than one-third that in Three Rivers. Strongly linked to this finding is the fact that Sarratt has generally larger dwellings than Three Rivers, with a greater proportions of all size categories above six rooms, and lower proportions of all smaller dwelling sizes.

Proportions of Housing Types in Sarratt, Three Rivers, and in England

Source: ONS 2011 Census, AECOM calculations

Dwelling Type

House or bungalow	Sarratt	Three Rivers	England
Detached	57.8%	26.3%	22.4%
Semi-detached	19.3%	35.0%	31.2%
Terraced	14.1%	19.1%	24.5%
Flat or maisonette			
Purpose-built block of flats	4.3%	16.7%	16.4%
Part of a converted or shared house	1.3%	3.8%	3.8%
In commercial building	0.8%	1.0%	1.0%

Community

The Parish has a rich and diverse set of community activities, with more than 50 clubs and events, societies or activities.

Two organisations typify the strong community spirit in the Parish: Sarratt Care is a highly unusual volunteer organisation, providing such services as transport for hospital appointments, meals on wheels and a luncheon club for the whole Parish. Sarratt Spotlight is a Parish magazine funded by the Church that has become the go-to source of news and information on what's happening in the Parish.

The following Community Activities have been identified:

Allotments Sarratt Singers

Beavers/Cubs/Scouts/Explorers Sarratt WI

Bell Ringers Spotlight

Book Clubs Sunrise & Sunset Club

Bowls Club Sustainable Sarratt

Bridge Club Tennis Club

Brownies U3A

Church Home Group Wildlife Volunteers

Days Almshouse Charity Youth Club

Football Club

Friends of Holy Cross Community Events

Grey Knights

Antique Fairs

Horticultural Society

Apple Festival

Local History Society Firework Display

Neighbourhood Watch Boxing Day Vintage Car Rally

Pony Club Flower Festival

Residents Associations: Friendship Club

Belsize; Chandlers Cross/Bucks Hill/Penmans Grapevine Movies

Green/Commonwood

May Fair Royal British Legion (Sarratt Branch)

Sarratt C of E School

Sunday Markets

Sarratt Care Horticultural Shows

Sarratt Community Garden Pantomime (SPLAT)

Sarratt Evening WI Sarratt Freshers Fair (biennial)

Sarratt Parents Association Village Day (biennial)

Sarratt Rebels (youth football) Village Picnic







OBJECTIVES

These objectives are drawn from the findings of the community engagement and evidence gathering process outlined Section 2 above. They are organised into three broad themes of Economic, Social and Environmental Impact.

OBJECTIVE	ACTION	ASSOCIATED POLICIES
ECONOMIC Maintain the viability of the businesses and services that are key to the area: Village Shop Pubs Garage Doctors' surgery • Village Hall	Ensure any property development in the parish consists of a mix of properties that best meets the housing needs of the community, promoting a thriving and balanced population that will maintain the viability of these businesses and services.	
SOCIAL		
Ensure that community spirit is supported and enhanced.	Protect sites important for communit interaction, such as village hall, church playing fields.	
	If the community grows, ensure there is adequate provision of facilities for community interaction.	
Develop a housing stock that meets the needs of all demographics with in the community.	Ensure new developments consist of mix of housing that promotes a thriving balanced population.	
ENVIRONMENTAL		
Maintain the rural nature of the village and conserve its important historical and environmental features.	Protect key historical assets: • Church • ancient settlements • conservation areas • listed buildings	3
	Protect environmental assets: • Chilterns National Landscape. • 4 SSSIs • 4 county wildlife sites	6, 7, 11
	Protect distinctive nature of paris settlements	h 1, 2, 3
Wherever possible, reduce the community's contribution to climate change	Promote the use of environmentally friendly building materials and building design.	
	Promote the use of renewable forms of energy.	of 12
Preserve the character of the settlements within the parish.	Ensure where development occurs it is of a quality and design that enhance the local environment and is in keepin with local design features. Refer to Design Code (Appendix II)	s g
Keep the impact of any development on traffic in the area to a minimum	Ensure there is adequate provision for parking within any new development and design of roads should be in keepin with other Page 207	<u>-,</u>

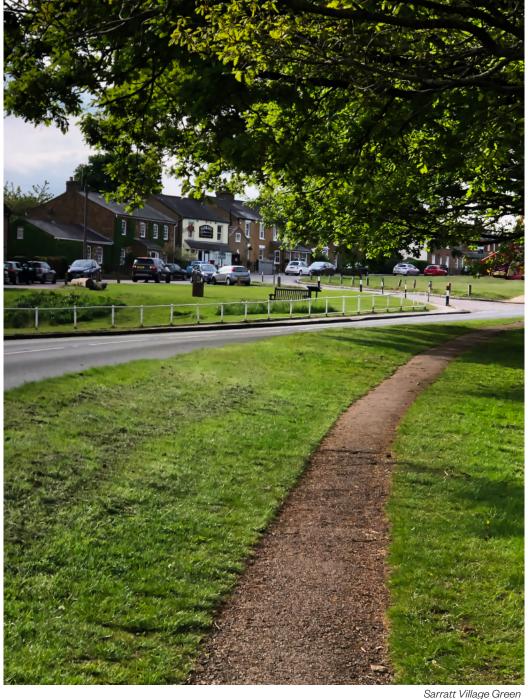




POLICIES

Section 1: Development in Villages and Hamlets

Context: The 2018 Parish Plan survey established that residents had a strong preference for protecting the character of the core village of Sarratt and the hamlets of Belsize and Bucks Hill; and for preventing village extensions.





Properties facing Sarratt Village Green

Policy 1: Development in Villages and Hamlets

New development must accord with the principles of sustainable development outlined in the NPPF and TRDC Development Plan. To help achieve this, sustainable development that makes the use of previously developed land will be particularly encouraged.

All new development must:

- · respond positively to its local context and
- conserve the historic character of the core village of Sarratt and hamlets of Belsize and Bucks Hill.

Proposals for development on the edge of the village and hamlets will only be supported where they are small scale and meet an identified local need, with priority given to previously developed sites.

All major applications shall be comprehensively planned to prevent piecemeal development, having regard to the timely and coordinated provision of infrastructure, services, open space and facilities made necessary by the development. They shall also be accompanied by a statement of community engagement to detail how the local community has been engaged prior to any planning application being made.

Section 2: Design Principles

As the Parish overview sets out, Sarratt is a historic village that includes part of the Chilterns National Landscape. In addition, the parish contains four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): Sarratt Bottom, Frogmore Meadows, Whippendell Wood, and Westwood Quarry.

There are two conservation areas within the parish, both of which were established in 1969; The Green Conservation Area and Church End Conservation Area. The former encompasses The Green and surrounding properties in the village core, whereas the latter forms a cluster around the Church of Holy Cross to the south-west of the main settlement. There are 93 listed buildings within the parish, most of which are Grade II. The parish also contains many unlisted buildings of architectural interest, and the Green is protected. Some of the most prominent listed buildings and landmarks include:

The Church of the Holy Cross (Grade II*)

The Boot public house (Grade II)

The Grove (Grade II*)

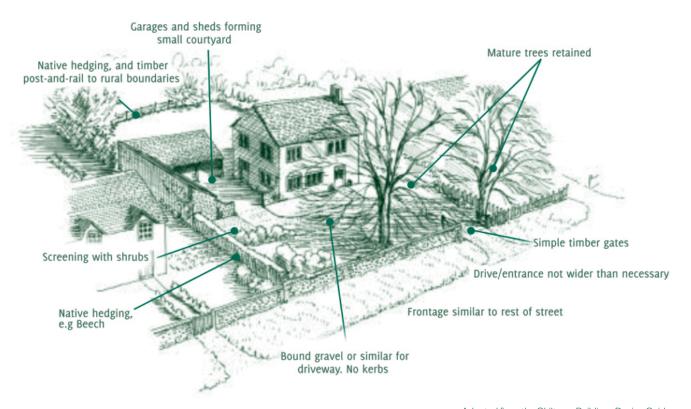
The Cock Inn public house (Grade II),

Sarratt Hall (Grade II)

The pump on the green (Grade II)

The aim of this policy is to ensure that future developments consider local character and, through design proposals, they further enhance local distinctiveness by creating good quality developments, thriving communities and prosperous places in which to live.

GOOD PRACTICE



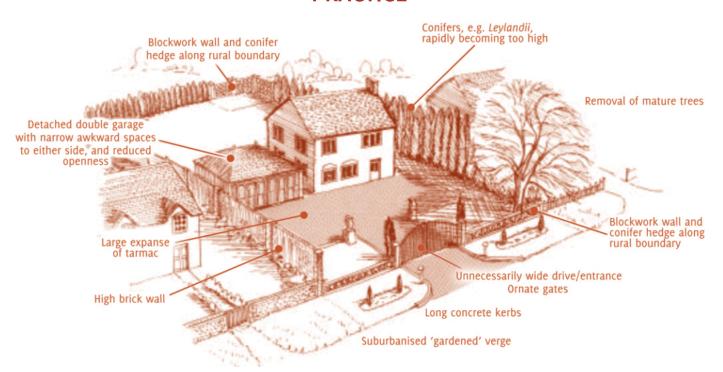
Adapted from the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide

Policy 2: Design Principles

All development proposals will be required to be of the highest standard of design and take account of the design guidelines in the Sarratt Design Code (January 2020) and any successor document.

It is expected that a proportionate statement will accompany any planning application to demonstrate how the Design Code has been taken into account.

POOR PRACTICE



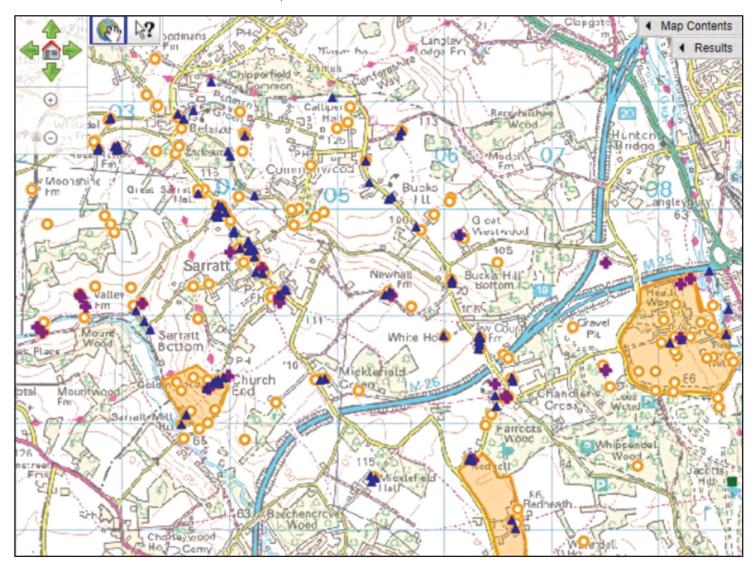
Adapted from the Chilterns Buildings Design Guide

Section 3: Historic Character

Context: Historically, the parish comprised several small medieval hamlets, with Sarratt Green lying centrally in the manor of Sarratt. The settlement is an ancient ribbon development alongside the well preserved green. Sarratt Green had changed very little since the medieval period beyond infilling between existing buildings, until a number of small developments in the 20th century.

The extent of this historic heritage can be seen on this map of Parish assets taken from the national Heritage Gateway record. It emphasises the need to both protect the integrity of these sites and, where appropriate, the viewing corridors of which they are an integral part. Residents were asked during the consultations for their favourite views of the Parish, which were then assessed against a review of the landscape features of the Parish and of the Conservation Area.

The community was asked throughout the consultation process for its input on "important views", which were then considered by the NPWG in the context of both this heritage and of village aspects as a whole, to ensure that they were represented. This was a continuous and iterative process - for example, the output from all previous submissions was included in the second Regulation 14 consultation during the summer of 2022 - thus enabling a process of continued refinement to ensure that the important views were indeed those of the community.



Legend

- Listed Building (NHLE)
- Local HER*record points
- Local HER record polygons
- Church Heritage Record (Non Statutory Data)
 NMR Exage 214 Index

Sarratt has retained its identity as a village:

- · Low-key development and vernacular architecture on a domestic scale
- Mixture of building styles and dates from the 16th century to the present day
- · Warm brick nestles next to flint and timber framing
- · The rich textures of brick and brick and flint boundary walls
- · Presence of boundary walls, railings or hedges provide interest to the street scene
- The Green and associated ponds
- · The Conservation areas: The Green and Church End
- The shop, garage, village pubs, community garden, village hall, parish church, primary school and KGV playing fields
- The wide range of societies, clubs and organisations reflecting the interests of a diverse range of inhabitants
- The easy access to the countryside and many footpaths: both ancient rights of way and many permissive paths

Sarratt possesses a range of views across valleys and fields that are intrinsic to the rural character of the Parish and to the setting of its two conservation areas. During the consultations, people were asked about their favourite views, which were matched against a review of the landscape features of the Parish. These views include:

- Views across the Chess valley from the west-facing valley slopes above Sarratt Bottom and northwards towards Latimer
- Views across the Bottom Lane valley to the east of the village
- Extensive views over open fields surrounding the village and between the M25 and Whippendell Woods.
- The Green itself, with an uninterrupted view up and down its spine, and an additional open space at the southern end, bounded by trees on one side.

Policy 3: Historic Character

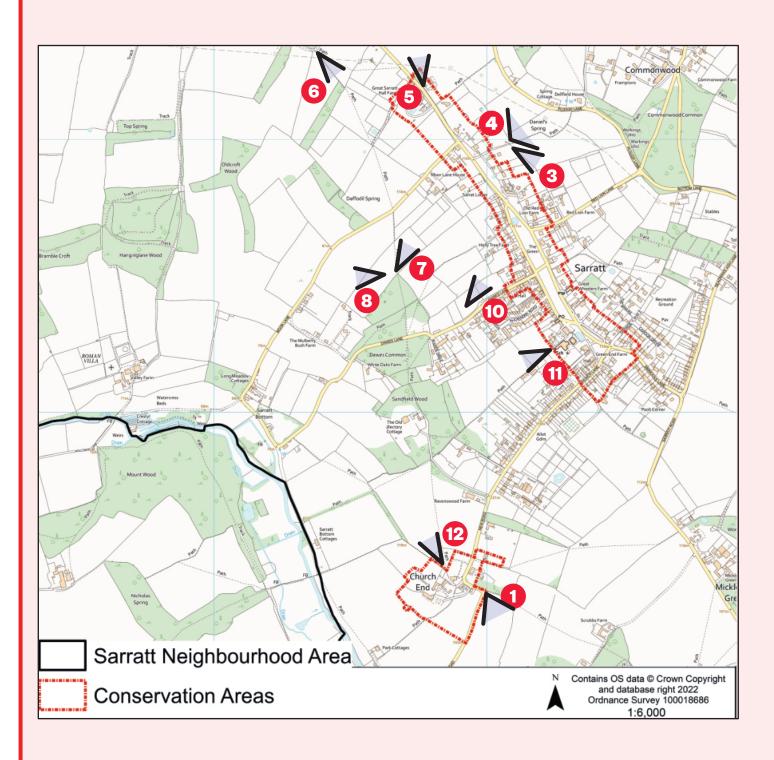
Development proposals within the Green Conservation Area and the Church End Conservation Area, or which affect the settings of either Conservation Area, should conserve or enhance their distinctive character or appearance.

All proposals should take into account the Green, Sarratt Conservation Area Appraisal 1994 and the Church End, Sarratt Conservation Area Appraisal 1994 or any successor documents. In particular, proposals should ensure that the relationship between built structures and open spaces and amount of open space in the Green Conservation Area is conserved as this is a particularly important feature characteristic of this Conservation Area.

Development that adversely affects the key features of the important views in and out of the Conservation Areas identified on Map 3 and described in the Important Views and Local Green Spaces Assessment will not be supported.

Map 3: Important views

Click on a number to view the corresponding image enlarged online



Map 3

Policy 3: Important views



View from the Church Conservation Area SE towards the M25

This view is of the Chilterns National Landscape to the south of the Parish. It reinforces the rural openness and separation from surrounding conurbations. It is viewed regularly by many residents and visitors. Any development in this landscape would interrupt this view and its purpose.



3 View towards Chipperfield from the East Village Conservation Area boundary

This view encompasses ancient farmlands and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers. Any developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village.



View towards Commonwood from the East Village Conservation Area boundary

This view encompasses ancient woodland and farmland and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers. Any developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village.

Policy 3: Important views



View from North end of the Village Conservation Area boundary towards Plough and Debardine Woods

This view encompasses ancient farmlands and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers. Any developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village.



View towards Northern end of the Village Conservation Area, with Great Sarratt Hall visible through the trees

This view is part of the historic Chiltern Way and encompasses ancient farmlands and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers. Any developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village and this recognised significant right of way.



View towards the North-West Village Conservation Area boundary

This view is part of the historic Chiltern Way and encompasses ancient farmlands and provides an open separation between the south of the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers. Any developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village and this recognised significant right of way.



View across the Chess Valley (Chilterns National Landscape)

This view is part of the historic Chiltern Way and encompasses extensive view of Chilterns National Landscape and Chess Valley. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers. Any developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village and this recognised significant right of way.

Policy 3: Important views



10
View showing the hedge forming
West Village Conservation Area boundary on the lower Green

This view encompasses ancient hedgerow and pasture and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers. Any developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village.



View SE towards Sandfield Wood from the West Village Conservation Area boundary behind the Village Shop

This view encompasses ancient farmlands and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers using a very frequently used right of way. Any developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village.



Chiltern Way heading North from the Church

This view encompasses ancient farmlands and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers. Any developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village.

Section 4: Housing Mix

Context: The Housing Needs Assessment (AECOM, Jan 2020) identified an acute shortage of three bed properties in Sarratt that has been caused over the last few decades by owners typically converting 2 or 3 bed bungalows into 4 or 5-bed houses. Specifically, its conclusions state:

"142. Seen in the context of Sarratt's comparatively large stock of dwellings, trends towards older households and single occupancy may warrant a Neighbourhood Plan policy intervention to restrict the future supply of larger dwellings to some extent. It may also be the case that the declining number of families in Sarratt is a function of the limited number of dwellings that are both appropriately-sized and affordable to younger families, so it may be beneficial also to encourage the provision of mid-sized housing suitable for this demand segment.

143. The results of a life-stage modelling exercise, which looks at the sizes of dwelling occupied by different age groups and projects the growth and decline of those age groups over the Plan period in order to understand what should be built, corroborates this finding. The recommended size mix of new housing focuses on dwellings of three bedrooms (around 50%) and those with one (20%) and two (30%) bedrooms, further suggesting that no further large dwellings are needed."

Replenishing the 3-bed housing stock as well as building new 1 and 2-bed units will ensure better balance in our housing stock that addresses local needs (including damping spikes in rents for certain property types).

In addition, the need for accessible homes to enable residents to downsize whilst remaining in the community was identified in both the 2018 Parish Plan as well as the Housing Needs Assessment, and self-build as one of the most cost-effective routes to home ownership is to be encouraged.



Properties facing Sarratt Village Green

Policy 4: Housing Mix

Policy 4.1

Development proposals for all housing types should have a size mix consisting of dwellings of three bedrooms (50%), two bedrooms (30%) and one bedroom (20%) as recommended by the Sarratt Housing Needs Assessment 2020, or as near to this as practical, subject to the available and most up to date evidence of local need.

Policy 4.2

Development proposals where the provision of bungalows, accessible homes and all types of self-build properties as part of the housing allocation mix above will be looked upon favourably, provided they are 3 bedrooms or fewer, unless a specific identifiable local need can be demonstrated. Permitted development rights shall be removed so as to prevent future development into larger dwellings without planning permission.

Section 5: Affordable Housing

Context: The Housing Needs Assessment identified that social rented homes for those on the lowest incomes are the greatest priority in Sarratt. This backed up the findings from the 2018 Parish Plan survey that indicated housing stock was in short supply and too expensive for family members to be able to stay in Sarratt. A supply of accessible homes for the elderly to be able to downsize and remain in Sarratt was also an important conclusion, which additionally has the benefit of freeing up larger properties and hence a desirable trickle-down effect.

A supply of affordable routes to remain resident in Sarratt through social rental, shared home ownership, First Homes, and accessible homes for the elderly is key to the long-term sustainability of the community.

Whilst TRDC applies an affordable housing requirement to minor sites (with a net gain of 1+ dwellings), for small scale developments commuted sums for affordable housing are generally acceptable. However, this practice does not help address local demand within this rural community where delivery of affordable housing is essential. The policies therefore recognise this specific special local need. The Housing Needs Assessment report by AECOM stated that "The recommended tenure split for Sarratt, based on the HNA and SHMA calculations, and Three Rivers policy, is for 70% of Affordable Housing to be for social or affordable rent, and 30% to be for affordable home ownership products." Following the launch of the First Homes initiative and discussion with TRDC, this recommendation was amended to conform to TRDC's recommended split of 75% /25% respectively.



Clutterbucks, Sarratt

Policy 5: Affordable Housing

Policy 5.1

Development proposals resulting in a net gain of 1 or more units are required to provide 40% of the units as Affordable Housing. Commuted payments towards provision off site will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances to ensure delivery of affordable housing to the local community.

Policy 5.2

Proposals for Affordable Housing will usually be required to be 75% for social rent, 25% First Homes or affordable shared ownership products but the precise split will be determined on a case by case basis using the latest available evidence of local need.

Policy 5.3

Affordable homes will be integrated into developments in design, layout and location so as not to be distinguishable from other homes on the development.

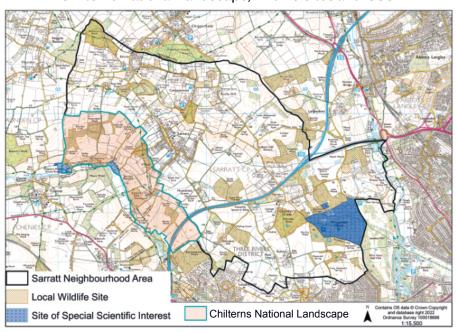
Policy 5.4

Affordable Housing of all types will be looked upon favourably if provided with a Locality Protection Provision, which gives priority to local residents in perpetuity, but without restricting allocation should no local need be identified in the first instance, whether or not as part of a Rural Exception site.

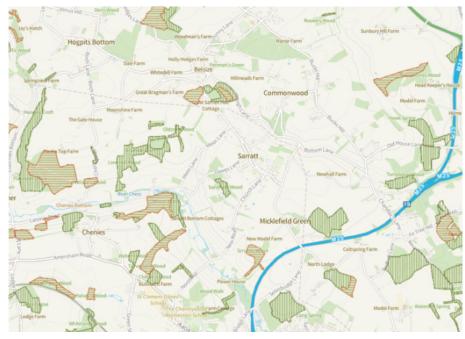
Section 6: Biodiversity

Context: Nature conservation is an integral part of the planning system, and should be taken into consideration in any development. Ensuring that future generations can enjoy the neighbourhood's rich geological and biological inheritance as well as the wider experience that a healthy, functioning natural environment can provide means that we must continue to improve the protection and management of what we have today. Across the UK, biodiversity is shrinking, and our essential ecosystems are losing the robustness and resilience on which our food supplies rely, as well as the beauty and richness that they bring to an area. Any development must not further undermine these systems. The first map opposite shows the National Landscape, local wildlife sites (hatched) and SSSIs (blue) that form part of the plan area. The second map shows ancient woodland – green hatching indicates ancient and semi-natural woodland, and brown hatching, ancient replanted woodland. Sarratt Parish is incredibly fortunate to count 18% of its total land area as woodland, compared to the national average of 12%. This brings with it a significant financial burden and depth of responsibility which is willingly shouldered by the parish council, and evidently valued by both parishioners and visitors to the parish.

Chilterns National Landscape, Wildlife Sites and SSSI



Ancient Woodland



Policy 6: Biodiversity

Policy 6.1: General

- i. All proposals should achieve a net gain in biodiversity, as measured by the Natural England Biodiversity Metric; and should avoid harm to, or loss of, features that contribute to the local and wider ecological network.
- ii. Proposals will be expected to apply the mitigation hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation and compensation, as set out in the NPPF, and integrate ecologically- beneficial planting and landscaping into the overall design this must be approved by a certified ecologist. Where mitigation and/or compensation are proposed, any sites that may be put forward for compensatory planting should, as a first resort, be as close to the development as possible, as a second resort be elsewhere in the Parish and then in adjoining Parishes and as a last resort elsewhere in the District.

Policy 6.2: Locally-Designated Nature Conservation Sites

- i. Development proposals, land use or activity (either individually or in combination with other developments) which are likely to have a detrimental impact which adversely affects the integrity of a designated site, will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there are material considerations which clearly outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site, and any broader impacts on the international, national, or local network of nature conservation assets.
- ii. Evidence will be required in the form of up-to-date ecological surveys undertaken by a competent ecologist prior to the submission of an application. The type of evidence required will be commensurate to the scale and location of the development, the likely impact on biodiversity and the legal protection or other status of a site. Where insufficient data is provided, permission will be refused.
- iii. Proposals should avoid impacts on sites of nature conservation value and wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, measures to mitigate the impact should be sought, commensurate to the importance of the site in terms of its status in the hierarchy and the contribution it makes to wider ecological networks.

Policy 6.3: Species and Habitats

- i. Development should provide biodiversity net gain in line with statutory requirements. All development is encouraged to provide biodiversity net gain and to create opportunities for wildlife. Proposals must demonstrate how the development improves the biodiversity value of the site and surrounding environment. As appropriate, evidence will be required in the form of up-to-date ecological surveys undertaken by a competent ecologist prior to the submission of an application. Plans must be submitted that determine the maintenance programme for any newly planted trees/hedgerows/ new ponds, and this will be the responsibility of the developer. Thought must be given to water supply and soil type before permission is given for new plantings, as this will determine whether they will survive. The Biodiversity value of a site pre and post development will be determined by applying the Natural England Biodiversity Metric where appropriate. Submitted information must be consistent with BS 42020 2013. Where insufficient data is provided, permission will be refused.
- ii. Proposals should detail how required mitigation, compensation or enhancement measures of physical features will be maintained in the long term.
- iii. Development which would result in the loss or significant damage to trees, hedgerows or ancient woodland sites will not be permitted. The Council will seek their reinforcement by additional planting of native species whenever appropriate. Protective buffers of complementary habitat will be expected to adjoin these features, sufficient to protect against root damage and support improvement of their long-term condition. A minimum buffer zone of 10m (or greater if required), and of 15m for ancient woodland, is considered appropriate. Replacement of existing woodland or hedges with new plantings will not be accepted, even if the size of the land for replacement is significantly bigger than the original.
- iv. Proposals will be expected to protect and enhance locally important biodiversity sites and other notable ecological features of conservation value.
- v. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, exceptional circumstances exist that outweigh any harm or damage to a species or habitat, appropriate mitigation and compensation measures must be employed, commensurate with the importance, the legal protection or other status of the species or habitat. Where appropriate, the Council will impose conditions / planning obligations which seek to:
 - a. Facilitate the survival of existing populations as well as encouraging the establishment of new populations;
 - b. Reduce disturbance to a minimum;
 - c. Provide adequate alternative habitats to sustain at least the current levels of populations.
- vi. Development adjoining rivers or streams must provide a minimum of an 8m buffer of complementary habitat between the built environment and top of the bank of the watercourse. Details must be supplied of ongoing ecologically beneficial management of buffer habitats. Where possible, opportunities should be taken to restore degraded aquatic environments to a more semi natural condition.
- vii. Integrated bird (e.g. swift) and bat boxes will be expected in all buildings bordering public green space and beneficial habitat.
- viii. Protected species: Sarratt Parish hosts a number of species protected by the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act. These include badgers, water voles, bats, great crested newts and breeding birds (seasonal). It also welcomes deer (both Muntjac and Roe), foxes and a large variety of birds. According to Natural England, the area contains level 3 'Arable Assemblage farmland birds', which includes the turtle dove, snipe, and yellow wagtail. The Herts & Middx Wildlife Trust has also undertaken a number of lengthy, well-documented and comprehensive surveys of flora and fauna in the Parish. Any development that would undermine the slow recovery of these valued species would be unfavourably looked on.

Section 7: Landscape

Context: Sarratt is a predominantly rural parish with a rich history based on agricultural and rural activities. The way in which people visually experience the parish landscape, their visual amenity, is critical to maintaining this heritage for the future enjoyment of parishioners and visitors. Adverse visual effects occur through the intrusion into established views of features out of keeping in terms of scale and the, crucially, composition of the view.

However, visual effects may also be beneficial where an attractive focus is created in a previously unremarkable view or the influence of previously detracting features is reduced. The significance of effects will vary, depending on the nature and degree of change experienced and the perceived value and composition of the existing view

The maps in the introductory section show the Parish in the wider landscape, including the Chilterns National Landscape, local wildlife areas and Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Conservation areas. All of these contribute context for visual amenity over and above the natural beauty of the Chiltern Hills and valleys.

Part of the Parish lies within the Chilterns National Landscape. The area covered by the Neighbourhood Plan plays an important contribution to the setting of the National Landscape (NL). The requirement for neighbourhood plans to reflect NL designations is set in legislation with the 2023 Levelling Up and Regeneration Act (s245) and subsequent 2024 Government guidance, placing a duty on those bodies preparing a neighbourhood plan to further the purposes of the NL.

Therefore, this Neighbourhood Plan must consider how the duty has been met. The vision and objectives of the Plan are broadly supportive of the NL and align with Chilterns NL Management Plan 2025 – 2030 and there is a specific objective which refers to the NL. In addition, there are several policies throughout the Plan which directly underpin and further the delivery of the duty. Policy 7 directly refers to the NL and the 'Parish Overview' section includes more detail and a link to the Management Plan 2025 - 2030.

Sarratt offers residents and visitors easy access to the countryside through the network of footpaths, both statutory and permitted: these visual amenities form a regular part of village life and the enjoyment of the local environment.

The iterative process of matching the community's favourite views against a review of the landscape features of the Parish, described in Policy 3 above, also applied during the preparation of Policy 7 - as illustrated on the images and map that accompany it.

Policy 7: Landscape

Development proposals will be required to respect and, wherever possible, enhance the special characteristics, value and visual amenity of the parish landscapes.

A number of Important Views of the Chess Valley and of the open fields that surround habitations have been identified on Map 7 and are described in the Plan and the Important Views and Local Green Spaces Assessment. New development should ensure that there is no detrimental effect on the key features of these identified views.

Planning permission for any proposal within the Chilterns NL or which affects its setting within the NP area, will only be granted when it:

- Conserves and enhances the Chilterns NL's special qualities and natural beauty in accordance with national planning policy and the overall purposes of the NL designation;
- Supports the Chilterns NL Management Plan, including any actions set out for any objective, policy or principle in the Management Plan; and
- Has regard to any supplementary guidance, position statements or technical supporting documents as relevant.

Policy 7: Landscape



13
View WSW across the Chess Valley

This view is of the Chilterns National Landscape and the Chess (chalk river) valley. This landscape draws ramblers from surrounding areas to enjoy the unspoilt ancient landscape. Any development in this area would disrupt this outstanding view and rural setting.



View ENE across the Chess Valley towards Holy Cross and Church End Conservation Area

This view in the Chilterns National Landscape includes the historically significant Goldingtons. This landscape draws ramblers from surrounding areas to enjoy the unspoilt ancient landscape. Any development in this area would disrupt this outstanding view and disturb the setting of the historic building.



15

View E across Mount Wood towards Latimer

This view is of the Chilterns National Landscape and the Chess (chalk river) valley. This extensive landscape draws ramblers from surrounding areas to enjoy the unspoilt ancient landscape. Any development in this area would disrupt this outstanding view and rural setting.



View from Sandfield Wood towards Sarratt

This landscape view encompasses ancient farmlands and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers using a very frequently used right of way. Any developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village.

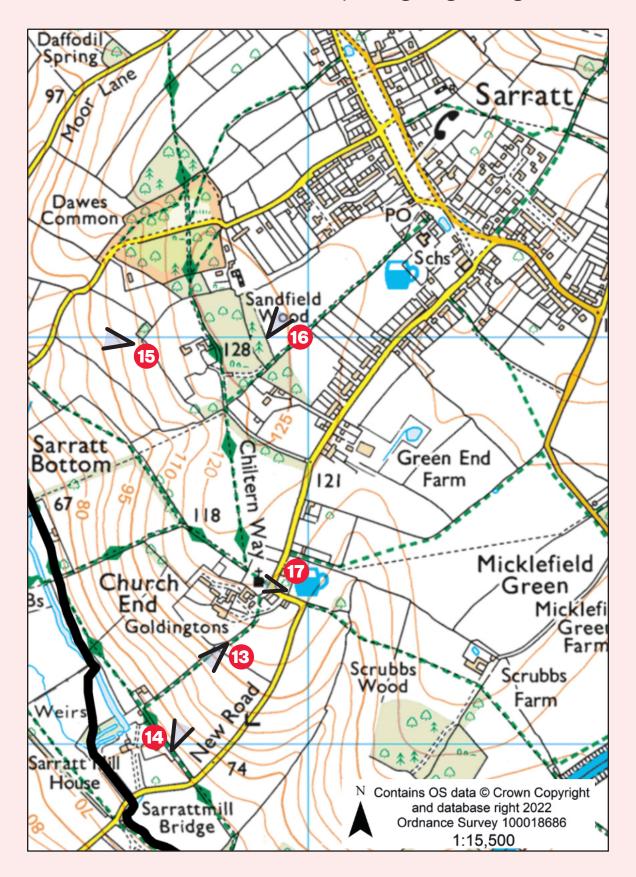


17 Holy Cross Church (12th Century)

The 12th Century Church and surrounding cemetery provides significant historical character at one of the entrances to the village. Unsympathetic development could have a detrimental effect on the setting of the Church.

Map 7: Landscape

Click on a number to view the corresponding image enlarged online



Section 8: Public Rights of Way

Context: With over 27 miles of public footpaths, bridleways and restricted byways in the parish, their use for active travel for short trips within the village and for recreation for residents and visitors underlines their importance. This was emphasised during the consultation process, which also identified width as of particular concern for a wide variety of users, including the elderly and disabled.



Dawes Common

Policy 8: Public Rights of Way

There is a presumption against the loss of a Public Right of Way. Where a proposal requires any existing Public Right of Way to be re-routed, the applicant will be expected to provide evidence that shows public rights of way will be re-provided elsewhere and will be of the same or enhanced status/quality (including width) and in an equally suitable location to service their function. Rural, unmade footpaths should not be replaced by tarmac ones.

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Dawes Common

Section 9: Community Facilities

Context: Its facilities fulfil an integral role within a community and their loss could begin or accelerate a process of decline. Sarratt has a long history of providing and sustaining community facilities, including the church, built in the twelfth century, through the Alms Houses, gifted to the community by a local benefactor in the nineteenth century, to the KGV Playing Fields, established as a charity in the early twentieth century. The village hall was rebuilt at the Millennium, and the village shop bought by over 80 local residents in 2010 and set up as a Community Interest Company, and subsequently registered as an Asset of Community Value to protect it and its Post Office for the benefit of the community.

The rural nature of the parish means that a number of other premises provide a valuable community facility, either in their primary function (e.g. doctors' surgery and dispensing chemist) or as a secondary function for both informal and formal village organisations. Examples include: Pints of View, a church-based outreach discussion group held monthly in The Plough pub in Belsize and Book Club meetings held in the Cricketers Pub. A significant factor in this latter case was identified in the Herts CC consultation response to the consultation: that in Sarratt, there is an absence of community library facilities.

The following Community Facilities have been identified:

Doctors' surgery in Church Lane, Sarratt

The allotments in Church Lane, Sarratt.

Holy Cross Church The Café on the Green, Sarratt

KGV Playing Fields, including Children's Play Area The Boot public house, Sarratt

Sarratt Alms Houses, Church End, Sarratt.

The Cart & Horses public house, Commonwood

Sarratt C. of E. Primary School The Cock public house, Sarratt

Sarratt Community Garden, The Green, Sarratt

The Cricketers public house, Sarratt

Sarratt Community Post Office Stores, The Green, Sarratt The Plough public house, Belsize

Sarratt Village Hall, The Green, Sarratt

The Prime Steak House, Chandler's Cross

Policy 9: Community Facilities

The loss of any community facility will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that:

- its continued use as a community facility is no longer viable or
- it is no longer required by the community or
- the facility or service lost will be satisfactorily provided elsewhere in an appropriate, convenient and accessible location and
- there is no reasonable prospect of securing an alternative community use of the land or premises.

Proposals that ensure the retention, improve the quality, and/or extend the range of community facilities in a suitable and accessible location will be supported. Applications for the development of recreation land and facilities must be accompanied by an assessment of the current or last use of the facilities and their viability, together with any proposals to mitigate any material loss to the community.

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Section 10: Car Parking

Context: In the village centre, the Green as well as some sections of the adjacent streets such as Church Lane, Alexandra Road, and Dawes Lane provide informal on-street parking. Farther away from the village centre, most roads are too narrow to accommodate on-street parking. Most properties provide on-plot residential parking in the form of front yard parking.

While there are numerous issues involving parking, major continuing ones arise from:

- Parking around Sarratt School and access to the school for HGVs.
- Improved parking for Village Hall area (currently 33 spaces).
- · Improved parking for the Dawes Lane area.

Where communal unallocated off-street parking space is provided, the number of parking spaces can be proportionately reduced. Where off-street parking is within a garage, this should be of a sufficient size to accommodate modern car designs and provide cycle storage.

The challenge is to accommodate the inevitable increase in cars in the village while maintaining its rural nature.



George V Way

Policy 10: Car Parking

There is a presumption against the loss of car parking provision in Sarratt Village unless applicants can provide evidence as follows:

- a. It can be demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Three Rivers District Council in consultation with Sarratt Parish Council and the Highway Authority that the loss of parking will not have a severe adverse impact on parking provision and/or road safety in the village; or;
- b. Adequate and suitable replacement car parking provision is provided on or adjacent to the site or a nearby suitable location in the village.
- c. All new housing development schemes will need to demonstrate why any roadways where on-street parking is proposed would be appropriate. Sufficient unallocated parking provision for visitors should be provided and to be marked as such.

For the avoidance of doubt, the standards for residential off-street parking for new residential development are set by TRDC, but are considered a minimum level of provision. However, provision above these standards must be justified specifically in relation to any particular proposed development, as over-provision would be detrimental to the rural nature of the village.

New development should create or improve provision for active travel modes such as walking and cycling.



Sarratt Village Hall



Entrance to Church Lane from the Green

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Section 11: Local Green Spaces

Context: Given the rural nature of Sarratt Parish, local green spaces are an intrinsic part of community life. The footpath network throughout the valley allows access to the Chess valley to the west and the Bottom Lane valley to the east as well as the fields and woods in between. Beyond that to the east lie Commonwood Common and Bucks Hill, to the North the woods towards Belsize and Penman's Green and to the south, Chandlers Cross and the extensive Whippendell Woods. These all give residents and visitors the opportunity to experience green spaces and diversity of flora and fauna in natural habitats.

The village sits above the Chess River valley, which is partly within the Chilterns National Landscape. Chalk stream are rare environments: of the 260 chalk streams globally, 224 of them run through the English countryside. The Chess supports several key species listed in the Government's UK Biodiversity Action Plan:

- Mammals, such as the water vole
- Birds include the green sandpiper, grey heron, grey wagtail, little egret, osprey, mute swan, stonechat, water rail, and kingfisher
- Flora, such as water crowfoot, purple loosestrife, hemp agrimony, water forget-me not, and branched bur-reed
- Freshwater fish include brown trout, grayling, and bullhead
- Invertebrates and insects include the mayfly, which provide a rich diversity of life supporting the fish population

The Parish has 5 Commons (registered with Herts C.C.). All are protected by statute, under the Commons Registration Act, 1965. These are designated * in both tables below.

Additionally, local green spaces are recognised as an essential requirement for the health and well-being of residents; their preservation is an important social benefit. This policy seeks to assist the management of development applications that may impact on local green spaces. Local Green Spaces may be designated where those spaces are demonstrably special to the local community. The following Local Green Spaces are identified below.

Local Green Spaces

(see Appendix I for National Planning Policy Framework assessment)

Sarratt Bottom/Chess River Valley *Dawes Common

*Commonwood Common The Green, Sarratt

Additional green spaces and woodlands have been identified within the Parish. Some are privately-held.

*Belsize Quickmoor pond and orchard, Commonwood

*Penmans Green Rosehall Wood *Rosehall Green Sandfield Wood

Blunts Wood Sarratt Bottom SSSI

Debardine Wood Scrubbs Wood Frogmore Meadows SSSI (Wildlife Trust) Sheepcote Wood **Great Wood** Sheepyard Spring Hanginglane Wood Templepan Wood Harrocks Wood The Grove Woodlands

High Spring Wood Whippendell Wood SSSI (Watford Borough Council)

Mead Spring Willow Wood

Oldcroft Wood

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Policy 11: Local Green Spaces

Policy 11.1

Subject to the provisions of the NPPF, the land identified on the maps below will be designated 'Local Green Space' due to its mixture of community, recreational, historic or environmental value, as assessed against proximity to the village, significance to the community and relevance to the character of the plan area.

- 1. Sarratt Bottom/Chess River Valley
- 2. Commonwood Common
- 3. Dawes Common
- 4. The Green, Sarratt

The maps below should be viewed in conjunction with the following official sources:

- Natural England's government-mandated National Landscape
 https://national-landscapes.org.uk/news/welcome-to-national-landscapes
- 2. DEFRA's Commons Register

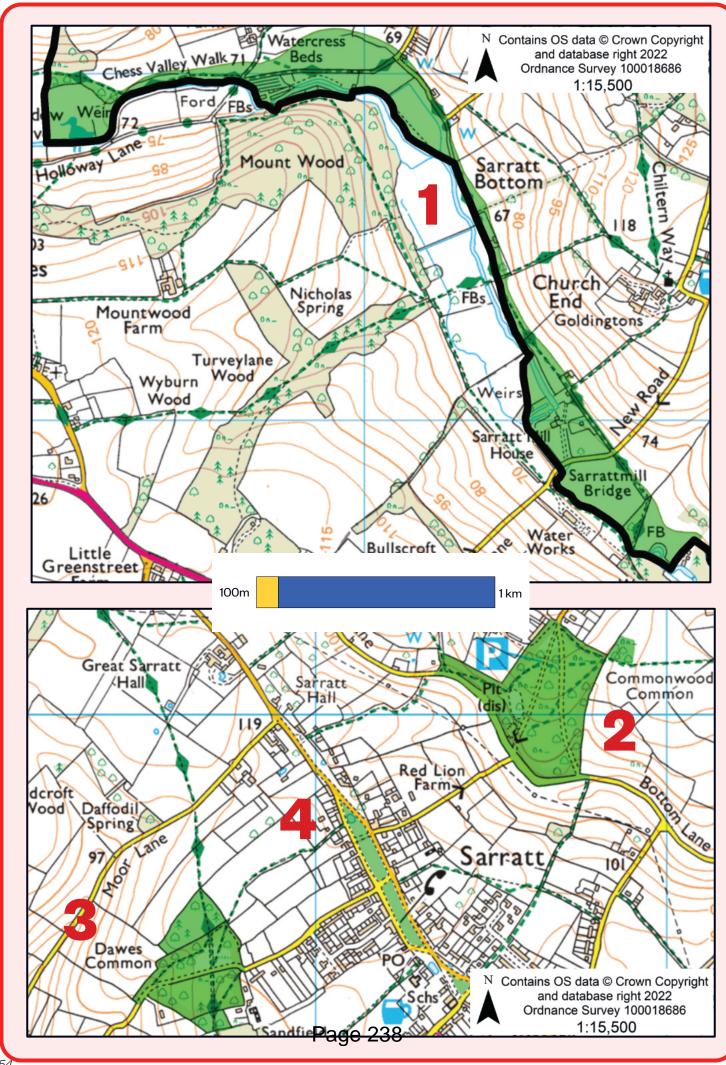
https://www.data.gov.uk/dataset/05c61ecc-efa9-4b7f-8fe6-9911afb44e1a/database-of-registered-common-land-in-england

3. The Green Conservation Area

https://cdn.threerivers.gov.uk/files/2023/02/9f851060-b1dd-11ed-a36d-4ffc695009c9-the-green-sarratt-conservation-area-appraisal-1994.pdf

Policy 11.2

The management and development within areas of Local Green Space will be consistent with that for development within Green Belt.



Section 12: Renewable Energy & Green Infrastructure

Context: As a rural parish the protection and sustainability of the environment is highly valued. In response to the rapidly evolving green agenda, the Parish Council appointed a Lead for Sustainability for the first time in 2021 and as sponsor of the Neighbourhood Plan is keen to show leadership in local policies, particularly recognizing the opportunities and challenges of a rural parish (e.g. sustainable transport) and the long-term impacts that planning decisions now will have on the community and planet.

Policy 12: Renewable Energy & Green Infrastructure

Development proposals are encouraged to achieve the highest standards of sustainability, decarbonisation and energy efficiency.

The incorporation of the following in all developments is encouraged:

- · Sustainable construction methods that reduce the impact of the build process;
- · A fabric first approach that includes materials and aspect and orientation of layout;
- Renewable and low-carbon or zero carbon technologies such as photovoltaic panels, solar thermal panels and heat pumps;
- Locally produced materials (such as flints) and recycled materials (such as old bricks) that both meet design guidelines and have a lower carbon footprint owing to fewer transport miles;
- Steps to encourage the use of sustainable modes of transport including walking, cycling and public transport such as an undercover bike park for every house;
- Electric Vehicle charging points for all new residential developments;
- · Recycling of water resources;
- · Management of surface water including the use of SuDs features where appropriate; and
- · Measures to support biodiversity.

Appendices

- I Local Green Spaces: Schedule
- II Sarratt Design Code

Appendix I

Local Green Spaces: Schedule

Green Space	Proximity	Special significance to the community	Local in character
Chess River Valley/ Sarratt Bottom	Forms part of the Chess Valley Walk. Accessible to cars and cycles and on foot.	Provides valuable riverside natural green space for local residents, particularly families ands children.	Limited to the stretch from the M25 to the footbridge over the river between New Road and Moor Lane
Commonwood Common	Easy walking distance. Accessible to cars and cycles.	Provides valuable natural green space for local residents.	Clearly defined triangular area, bounded by fields.
Dawes Common	Easy walking distance.	Provides valuable natural green space for local residents with attractive views and flora and fauna.	Limited in extent with clearly defined boundaries.
The Green, Sarratt	In the core of the village. Easily accessible to cars and cycles. In the core of the village. Easily accessible to cars and cycles.	Provides valuable natural green space for local residents, both for walking and meeting.	Limited in extent with clearly defined boundaries. A defining feature of the core of the village.



Appendix II
Sarratt Design Code







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1. Introduction

This section provides context and general information to introduce the project and its location.

1.1.Introduction

Through the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) Neighbourhood Planning Programme led by Locality, AECOM has been commissioned to provide design support to Sarratt Parish Council. The support is intended to provide design codes to the group'swork in producing the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan (SNP).

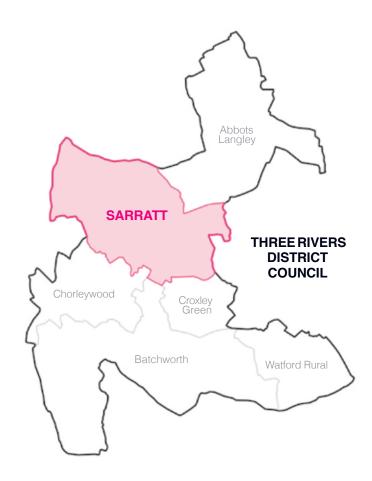
1.2 bjective

The main objective of this report was agreed with Sarratt Parish Council at the outset of the project. This report aims to provide design guidance that willinfluence the form of new development that willcome forward in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The design codes willapply not only to infilland village extension sites, but also to potential large new settlements outside the settlement boundaries. A particular emphasis will be put on retaining the scenic character of the area, which is subject to increased development pressures.

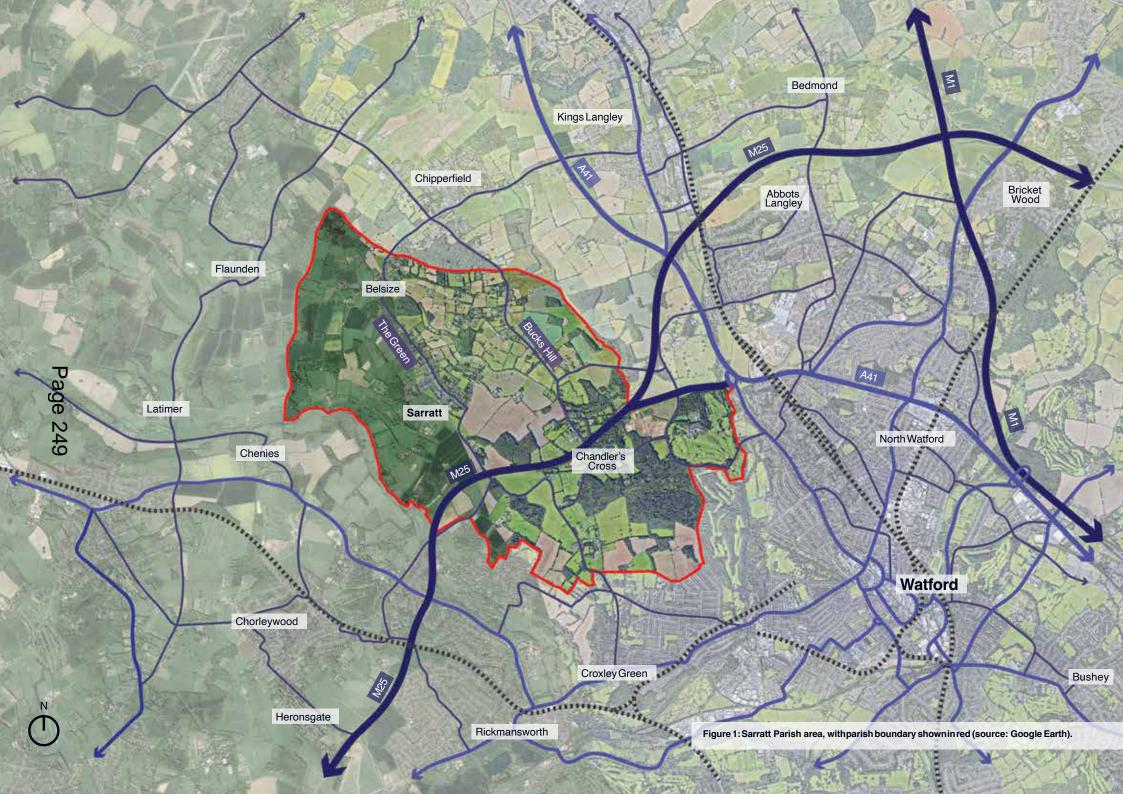
1.3. Process

Following an inception meeting and a site visit with Sarratt Parish Council members, AECOM carried out a highlevel assessment of the village. The following steps were agreed with the group to produce this report:

- Initial site visit;
- Urban design analysis;
- Desktop research;
- Preparation of a draft report, subsequently revised in response to feedback provided by Sarratt Parish Council; and
- Submission of a finalreport.



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1.4. Area of Study

Location

Sarratt is a village and civil parish in Three Rivers District, Hertfordshire. It is located approximately 6.5 km north of Rickmansworth near the Buckinghamshire county boundary, 10.5 km north-west of Watford, and 31 km north-west of London. The M25 crosses the southern half of the parish and forms a natural boundary between Sarratt and the London metropolitan area.

The dish includes the village of Sarratt as well as smaller settlements such as Bucks Hill, Commonwood, Belsize, Chandlers Cross and Micklefield. The parish remains largely ruralion haracter despite its location between the London metropolitan area and (sub) urban settlements such as Watford, Hemel Hempstead, Amersham, and Chesham. The parish is surrounded by fields and bordered to the south by the River Chess and the Chess Valley, designated as an 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty' (AONB). The entire parish is located within the London Metropolitan Green Belt.

The main settlement is located in the Sarratt Plateau area of the Hertfordshire Landscape Character Area. The village centre evolved from ancient ribbon development alongside a village green, with gradual infillingon both sides of Sarratt Green since the medieval period. The Church of the Holy Cross, which is used as the parish church, is situated in the distinct settlement of Church End located over 1 kmaway from the main settlement. The village core occupies an elevated position on a plateau in the middle of the parish that dominates the surrounding countryside. This position enables long outward views but also exposes the settlement to views from across the valley and from the AONB, which constrains the location, size, and design of any new settlements in the parish.

The closest railway stations are Chorleywood and Kings Langley, both located within a 15 minutes drive from the village. Watford J unction station, located within a 20 minutes drive to the south-east, provides direct links to London, St Albans, and Hatfield.

Sarratt has a community-owned village shop, a post office, and six public houses in addition to over 35 local clubs and societies and over 80 small businesses. Within the parish there are two schools -Sarratt Village School and YorkHouse Preparatory School. The King George V sports and recreation field is also located within the village.

At the 2011 census the resident population was 1,849 in the parish and 918 in the built-uparea.

Designations

The parish includes part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There are two conservation areas within the parish, both of which were established in 1969; The Green Conservation Area and Church End Conservation Area. The former encompasses The Green and surrounding properties in the village core, whereas the latter forms a cluster around the Church of Holy Cross to the south-west of the main settlement.

There is a total of 93 listed buildings within the parish, most of which are Grade II. The parish also contains many unlisted buildings of architectural interest, and the Green is protected as an Area of Archaeological Significance.

Some of the most prominent listed buildings and landmarks include:

- The Church of the Holy Cross (Grade II*)
- The Grove (Grade II*)
- Sarratt Hall (Grade II)
- The Boot and Cock Inn, public houses (Grade II)
- The pump on the green (Grade II)

In addition, the parish contains four Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI): Sarratt Bottom, Frogmore Meadows, Whippendell Wood, and Westwood Quarry. Chorleywood Common is a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) located directly outside of the parish boundaries to the south-west. The parish shares one Registered Park and Garden, Cassiobury Park, with the neighbouring district of Watford.

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Figural The Old School House, part of the Green at Sarratt conservation area.



Figure 4: Sarratt CommunityPost OfficeStores.



 $\label{prop:continuous} \textbf{Figure 3: Long distance view across the river Chess towards Church End.}$



Figure 5: Terraced houses along Dawes Lane.

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2. Local Character Analysis

This section outlines the broad physical, historical, and contextual characteristics of Sarratt. It analyses the pattern and layout of buildings, hierarchy of movements, building heights and roofline, and parking. Images in this section have been used to portray the builtformof Sarratt.

2.1. Introduction

The way of listed buildingsreflects the architectural diversity and historic quality of Sarratt, whose village centre has been proted by a conservation area since 1969. There are 93 listed wildings within the parish boundaries of Sarratt, most of which are Grade II listed, as well as a number of noteworthy (unlisted) buildings such as the Cricketers pub on the Green and the former Providence Mission Hallon Dawes Lane. Cassiobury Park, a Registered Park and Garden, straddles the boundaries of Sarratt and Watford. In addition, the parish includes part of the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).



Figure 6: Red brick and knapped flintbuilding with red brick decoration to accentuate details.



Figure 8: Church of the Holy Cross (late 12thcentury) - knapped flintinfill, ashlar and red brick quoins, and clay plaintile roof.



Figure 7: Yellowstock brick and slate roof building with recent porch addition.



Figure 9: Building with red brick windowtrims and quoins and flint infilling.





Figure 11:Red brick building with clay plaintile roof.



Figure 12: Panoramic view from the Green.



Figure 13: Grade Il listed K6telephone kiosklocated on the Green.

2.2. Local Character Analysis

2.2.1. Streets and Public Realm

Sarratt Green forms the linear armature of the village and is the convergence point of most roads in the parish. Most roads have an organic and meandering layout. In some places they lack pavements and have retained the width of historic country lanes. These characteristics contribute to the informal and rural character of the village. A minority of roads built in the 20th and 21st centuries, such as Wards Drive and the Briars, were laid out an sul-de-sacs. In a few locations near the village centre, somegections are narrow and framed directly by buildings with little of ho setbacks. Outside the historic centre and in outlying settlements, they are bordered with landscaping, mature trees low walls, and some include planted verges. Although the street network in Sarratt is limited by its topography and rural nature, it is complemented by a dense network of interconnected footpaths that provide pedestrians with a wider choice of routes than the road network suggests.

The M25 constitutes an important severance in the parish but its location 1kmaway from the main settlement limits its visual and sensory impact.

2.2.2. Pattern and Layout of Buildings

The Green forms a long open corridor as the nucleus of the historic village and has strongly shaped the linear development of the village. Most properties that front the Green are detached and semi-detached houses site on large plots. The gently undulating topography and the wedge shape of the Green gives the settlement an informal rural character, with buildings with various heights and setbacks clustered around the Green. The interaction between this singular pattern and the moderate building density helps the village centre achieve

a successful balance between enclosure and openness. Successive additions to the built-upareaconsist mainly in linear developments along roads that branch away from the Green. This pattern is particularly visible along Church Lane, Dawes Lane, and Deadman's Ash Lane. Properties along these roads are a mixof detached, semi-detached, and terraced houses. There is a large variety of plot sizes and recesses, however most houses are set back from the highwayby a front garden.

Branching away from side roads are modest areas of 20th and 21st century infilling. Cul-de-sac developments along Caroon Drive, the Briars, and Wards Drive are typically detached houses sited on large plots. Alexandra Road and Downer Drive have a mix of detached and terraced houses as well as flats.

Despite gradual infilling, the village mostly retains a one-house deep linear pattern. As a result, the village edges retain a high degree of openness to the countryside and green spaces.

Outlying areas in the parish are characterised by lower-density settlements and dispersed farmsteads. Bucks Hill, for example, has an elongated linear shape with most houses builtalong the main road and facing open fields. Belsize, in contrast, is clustered around a village green and is more compact in layout.

2.2.3. Building Height and Roofline

Building heights vary between one and two storeys. Typically, the roofline is pitched and punctuated by gables, dormers, and chimneys. There is a high diversity of roof and gable orientation, height, and materials, the most common being clay plaintiles and slate. Due to the low building height and the abundance of mature trees, the canopy conceals most of the settlement from inward long-distance views.

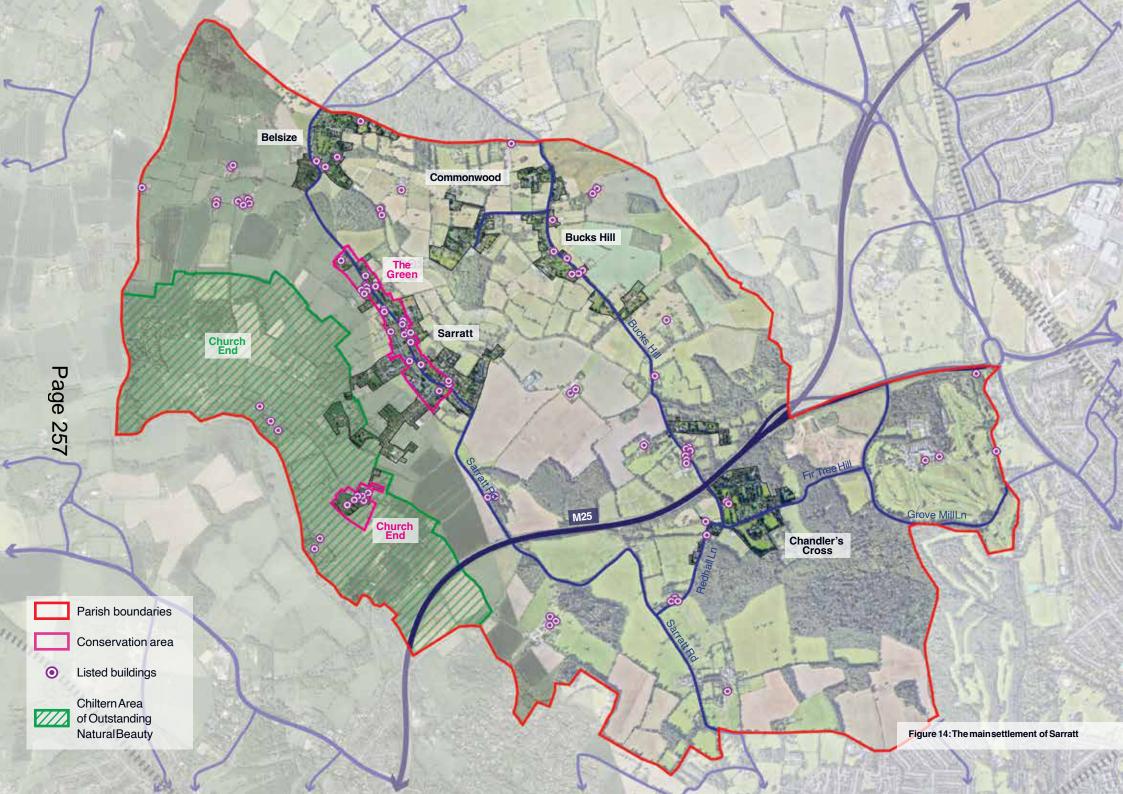
2.2.4. Car Parking

Car parking solutions vary depending on the location. In the village centre, the Green as well as some sections of the adjacent streets such Church Lane, Alexandra Road, and Dawes Lane provide informal on-street parking. Farther away from the village centre, most roads are too narrow to accommodate on-street parking.

Most properties provide on-plotresidential parking in the form of front yard parking. Most are screened by a combination of soft landscaping, hedges, and low-levelmasonry walls. A minority of locations, most notably along Downer Drive, have front or back courtyard parking. In a minority of properties, the lack of front yard screening dilutes the overall rural quality of the village by replacing it with a car-and driveway-dominated character.

2.2.5. Open Space & Landscape

The parish is set in an undulating landscape within the London Metropolitan Green Belt and the Chiltern AONB, designations that have helped preserve large swaths of land from development. As a result, the parish remains secluded from the London metropolitan area as well as larger (sub) urban settlements. Due to the linear settlement pattern of the village, many properties either face or back on green areas. The village owes much of its open character to its spatial organisation around the Green, which is further enhanced by the Green's elongated shape and incorporation of mature trees and ponds.



2.3. Architectural Details

The following section showcases some local building details which should be considered as positive examples to informthe design guidelines that follow.





Consistency of arched windowand door shapes across the main elevation.



Façade climbing plants and soft landscaping in a shallow front yard.



Quoins and windowtrims in yellow stock brick with knapped flint infilling. Detailed brickwork highlightingeaves and house entrance. Boundary wall with matching materials.



Large front yard with an attractive mix of boundary treatments (painted timber gate, low masonry wall, and soft landscaping) that mitigates the presence of automobiles.



Yellowstock brick house with a symmetrical elevation emphasised by an even distribution of sash windows and consistent treatment of window details.



Bay windowina Victorian terraced house.



Former Providence Mission Hall with bicolour brickwork around openings.



Gable withblack weatherboarding.



Sarratt House (left) and the White Cottage (right), two listed houses with prominent verandahs (frontgarden cast-ironrailings of Sarratt House also listed).



The Boot, a white-paintedbrick period cottage (source: Sarratt Parish Council).



Green End Farmhouse -red brick façade with upper floor horizontal sliding sash windows and ground floor multi-panecasement windows with cambered heads.





3. Design Guidelines

This section outlines key design elements and principles to consider when assessing applications for village extensions and larger new settlements.

3.1. General questions to ask and issues to consider when presented with a development proposal

Base on established good practice, this section provides a number of questions against which the design proposal should be evaluated. The aimis to assess all proposals by objectively answing the questions below. Not all the questions will apply to every development. The relevant ones, however, should provide an assessment as to whether the design proposal has taken into account the context and provided an adequate design solution. As a first step there are a number of ideas or principles that should be present in the proposals. The proposals or design should:

- Integrate with existing paths, streets, circulation networks and patterns of activity;
- 2. Reinforce or enhance the established village character of streets, greens and other spaces;
- Respect the ruralcharacter of views and gaps;
- Harmonise and enhance existing settlement in terms of physical form, architecture and land use;

- Relate well to local topography and landscape features, including prominent ridge lines and long distance views.
- Reflect, respect and reinforce local architecture and historic distinctiveness;
- 7. Retain and incorporate important existing features into the development;
- Respect surrounding buildings in terms of scale, height, form and massing;
- 9. Adopt contextually appropriate materials and details;
- 10. Provide adequate open space for the development in terms of both quantity and quality;
- Incorporate necessary services and drainage infrastructure without causing unacceptable harm to retained features;
- 12. Ensure all components e.g. buildings, landscapes, access routes, parking and open space are well related to each other:
- 13. Make sufficient provision for sustainable waste management (including facilities for kerbside collection, waste separation and minimisation where appropriate) without adverse impact on the street scene, the local landscape or the amenities of neighbours; and
- 14. Positively integrate energy efficient technologies.

To promote these principles, there are number of questions related to the design guidelines outlined later in the document.

Street Grid and Layout

- Does it favour accessibility and connectivity over cul-desac models? If not, why?
- Do any new points of access and street layout have regard for all users of the development; in particular pedestrians, cyclists and those with disabilities?
- What are the essential characteristics of the existing street pattern; are these reflected in the proposal?
- How will the new design or extension integrate with the existing street arrangement?
- Are the new points of access appropriate in terms of patterns of movement?
- Do the points of access conform to the statutory technical requirements?

Local Green Spaces, Views and Character

- What are the particular characteristics of this area which have been taken into account in the design; i.e. what are the landscape qualities of the area?
- Does the proposal maintainor enhance any identified views or views in general?
- Has the proposal been considered in its wider physical context?
- Has the impact on the landscape quality of the area been taken into account?
- Influentations, has the impact of the development on the transpullity of the area been fully considered?
- Have does the proposal affect trees on or adjacent to the
- How does the proposal affect the character of a rural location?

- How does the proposal impact on existing views which are important to the area and how are these views incorporated in the design?
- Can any new views be created?
- Is there adequate amenity space for the development?
- Does the new development respect and enhance existing amenity space?
- Have opportunities for enhancing existing amenity spaces been explored?
- Will any communal amenity space be created? If so, how this will be used by the new owners and how will it be managed?

Gateway and Access Features

- What is the arrival point, how is it designed?
- Does the proposal maintainor enhance the existing gaps between villages?
- Does the proposal affect or change the setting of a listed buildingor listed landscape?
- Is the landscaping to be hard or soft?

Buildings Layout and Grouping

- What are the typical groupings of buildings?
- How have the existing groupings been reflected in the proposal?
- Are proposed groups of buildings offering variety and texture to the townscape?
- What effect would the proposal have on the street scape?
- Does the proposal overlook any adjacent properties or gardens? How is this mitigated?

Building Line and Boundary Treatment

- What are the characteristics of the buildingline?
- How has the buildingline been respected in the proposals?
- Have the appropriateness of the boundary treatments been considered in the context of the site?

Building Heights and Roofline

- What are the characteristics of the roofline?
- Have the proposals paid careful attention to height, form, massing and scale?
- If a higher than average building(s) is proposed, what would be the reason for making the development higher?

Building Materials and Surface Treatment

- What is the distinctive material in the area, if any?
- Less the proposed material harmonise with the local materials?
- Does the proposal use high quality materials?
- Have the details of the windows, doors, eaves and roofs been addressed in the context of the overall design?
- Does the new proposed materials respect or enhance the existing area or adversely change its character?

Car Parking Solutions

- What parking solutions have been considered?
- Are the car spaces located and arranged in a way that is not dominant or detrimental to the sense of place?
- Has plantingbeen considered to soften the presence of cars?
- Does the proposed car parkingcompromise the amenity of adjoining properties?

Architectural Details

- If the proposal is within a conservation area, how are the characteristics reflected in the design?
- Does the proposal harmonise with the adjacent properties?
 This means that it follows the height, massing and general proportions of adjacent buildings and how it takes cues from materials and other physical characteristics.
- Does the proposal maintainor enhance the existing landscape features?
- Has the local architectural character and precedent been demonstrated in the proposals?
- If the proposal is a contemporary design, are the details and materials of a sufficiently highenough quality and does it relate specifically to the architectural characteristics and scale of the site?

Household Extensions

- Does the proposed design respect the character of the area and the immediate neighbourhood, and does it have an adverse impact on neighbouring properties in relation to privacy, overbearing or overshadowing impact?
- Is the roofform of the extension appropriate to the original dwelling (considering angle of pitch)?
- Do the proposed materials either match or complement those of the existing dwelling?
- In case of side extension, does it retain important gaps withinthe street scene and avoid a 'terracing effect'?
- Are there any proposed dormer roof extensions set within the roofslope?
- Does the proposed extension respond to the existing pattern of window and door openings?
- Is the side extension set back from the front of the house?

Sustainability and Eco Design

- What effect willservices have on the scheme as a whole?
- Can the effect of services be integrated at the planning design stage, or mitigated if harmful?
- Has adequate provision been made for bin storage, waste separation and relevant recycling facilities?
- Has the location of the binstorage facilities been considered relative to the travel distance from the collection vehicle?
- Has the impact of the design and location of the binstorage facilities been considered in the context of the whole dependent?
- Conid additional measures, such as landscaping be used to help integrate the binstorage facilities into the development?
- Has any provision been made for the need to enlarge the bin storage in the future without adversely affecting the development in other ways?

- Have allaspects of security been fully considered and integrated into the design of the building and open spaces?
 For standalone elements (e.g. external bin areas, cycle storage, etc.) materials and treatment should be of equal quality, durability and appearance as for the main building.
- Use of energy saving/efficienttechnologies should be encouraged. If such technologies are used (e.g.solar, panels, green roofs, water harvesting, waste collection, etc.), these should be integrally designed to complement the buildingand not as bolt-onsafter construction. Ideally a fabric-firstapproach would be adopted to ensure energy efficiency in addition to add-ontechnologies.

3.2. Design Guidelines

The aimof this section is to ensure that future developments consider local character and throughdesign proposals they can further enhance local distinctiveness by creating good quality developments, thriving communities and prosperous places to live. It is set out in a way that is straightforward to interpret. It is accompanied by descriptive text, general guidelines and principles, images from Sarratt or other relevant case studies, illustrations, and diagrams. The design elements that this section covers are organised according to the following themes:

- Built forms;
- Street design, including dimensions as well as pedestrian and cycle connectivity;
- Parking solutions;
- Local green spaces and views;
- Traditional materials and architectural details;
- Sustainability; and
- Building extensions.

3.2.1. Built Form

Pattern and Layout of Buildings

- The existing rural character must be appreciated when contemplating new development, whatever its size or purpose.
- Where an intrinsic part of local character, properties should be clustered insmall pockets showing a variety of types.
 The use of a repeating type of dwelling along the entirety of that treet should be avoided (to create variety and interest in estreetscape).
- Boundaries such as walls or hedgerows, whichever is a propriate to the street, should enclose and define each street along the back edge of the pavement, adhering to a consistent buildingline for each development group.
- Properties should aim to provide rear and front gardens or at least a small buffer to the public sphere where the provision of a garden is not possible.
- The layout of new development should optimise the benefits of daylightingand passive solar gains as this can significantly reduce energy consumption.



Figure 15: Terraced cottages with short front garden.



Figure 17: Houses along the Green showing a variety of building recesses and front yard depths.



Figure 16: Terraced cottages on the Green with little building setback.



Figure 18: Semi-terraced houses along Alexandra Road with large front yards and driveways.

Developments of 3+homes

landscaping to shape views and enclose space

Open space benefiting from

Developments to provide sufficient front and back gardens. Front gardens to be 3m deep minimum, ideally 6m

Change in paving materials denoting

traffic-calmed junction and residential

Buildings to be oriented to "turn the corner," and blank

Network of public rights of way to be retained and enhanced in new development proposals

walls to be avoided

informal surveillance by

overlooking properties

to front streets in small

Use oftrees and

clusters

Visually intrusive developments to be prevented throughscreening and appropriate scale A variety of housing types – the use of a repeating type of dwelling along an entire stretch must be avoided Informal street layout to provide visual interest, evolving views, and traffic calming Houses acting as gateway elements to signal site entrance speed designed for low speed and traffic Informal arrangement of buildings Parking provision integrated into building plot, with soft landscaping and permeable paving to minimise car-dominated character and impervious surfaces

Figure 19: Illustrative planfor a small development highlightingmany of the elements of the Sarratt code where they relate to the pattern and layout of buildings.

Gateway and Access Features

- For any future development, the design proposals should consider placing gateway and builtelements highlighting the access or arrivalto the new developed site.
- Gateway and landmark buildings should reflect local character. This means larger houses in local materials with emphasis on the design of chimneys and fenestration, as well as well laid and cared for landscape.
- Besides buildingelements acting as gateways, highquality landscaping features, gates or monuments could be sidered appropriate to fulfill the same role.

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Figure 20: A gateway for a shared frontyard framed by masonry pillars and landscaping.



Figure 21: Entrance to Clutterbucks. The sense of arrival is highlighted by the change in paving materials and the careful landscaping that frames the road.

Building Line and Boundary Treatment

- Buildings should be aligned along the street with their mainfaçade and entrance facing it, where this is in keeping with local character. The buildingline should have subtle variations in the form of recesses and protrusions but will generally form a unified whole.
- Buildings should be designed to ensure that streets and/ or public spaces have good levels of natural surveillance from buildings. This can be ensured by placing groundfloor habitable rooms and upper floor windows overlooking the street.
- Endary treatments should reinforce the sense of tinuity of the property line and help define the street, appropriate to the rural character of the area, without in mairing natural surveillance.
- Well vegetated front gardens with low walls or hedges are crucial in maintaining the rural character. The depth of front gardens in new constructions should be 3 m minimum, ideally 6 m.
- If placed on the property boundary, waste storage should be integrated as part of the overall design of the property. Landscaping could also be used to minimisethe visual impact of bins and recycling containers.
- Entrance gates should preserve an adequate level of visibility and opportunities for interactions between the private and public spheres. Tallgates must be avoided.



Figure 22: Well-kept shrubs acting as a boundary between public and private spaces.



Figure 23: Low shrubs concealing low metal fence.



Figure 24: Boundary treatment combining alow masonry wall with landscaped hedges.



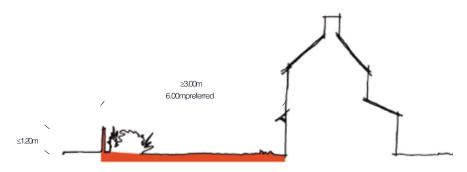


Figure 26: Recommended front garden depth-andboundary height.

Building Heights/Roofline

Creating a good variety in the roofline can be a significant element of designing attractive places. The following elements can be used as guideline in achieving a good variety of roofs:

- The scale of the roof should always be in proportion with the dimensions of the building itself;
- Monotonous building elevations should be avoided, therefore subtle changes in roofline should be ensured dujing the design process. Roofs that combine too many durent shapes and pitches must however be avoided;
- Domers can be used as design element to add variety and integer to roofs. However, care needs to be taken with their design elements, proportions, and how they are positioned on the roof; and
- To minimise the visual impact of guttering and down pipes these should be integrated with the design of the roof and façade.



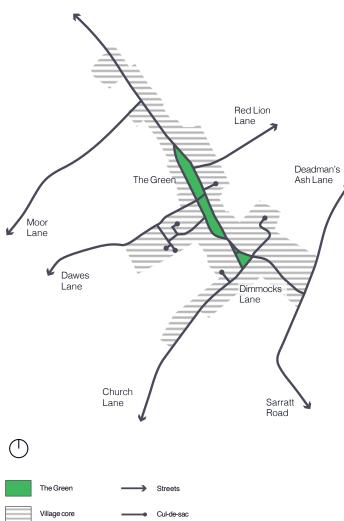
Figure 27:A group of buildings exhibiting a variety of roof heights types. The purple line highlights roofline variations.



Figure 28: Street-facing buildings exhibiting an even roofline punctuated by brick chimneys. The purple line highlights roofline variations.

3.2.2. Roads

- Streets must meet the technical highways requirements as well as be considered a 'place' to be used by all, not just motor vehicles. It is essential for the design of new development to include streets and junctions that incorporate the needs of pedestrians, cyclists, and if applicable, public transport users. It is also important that on-street parking, where introduced, does not impede the access of pedestrians and other vehicles.
- Within existing and new settlement boundaries, streets must not be builtto maximisevehicle speed or capacity. Streets and junctions must be builtor retrofitted to ensure the safety and accessibility of vulnerable groups such as codren and wheelchair users. They may introduce a range of traffic calming measures such as raised junction tables and kerb extensions/build-outs.
- New streets must tend to be linear. Gentle meandering may be introduced to provide interest and evolving views while helping with orientation. Routes must be laid out in a permeable pattern allowing for multiple connections and choice of routes, particularly on foot. Any cul-de-sacs must be relatively short and provide onward pedestrian links.
- Streets must incorporate opportunities for tree planting, landscaping, green infrastructure, and sustainable drainage to mitigate the effects of climate change.
- The nextpages introduce suggested guidelines and design features including a range of indicative dimensions for street types innew residential areas.



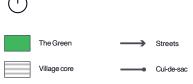


Figure 29: Street grid in Sarratt.



Figure 30: Low-trafficmeandering carriageway along the Green, fronted by buildings on one side and green space on the other.



Figure 31: Horses and riders crossing a junction along the Green.

Primary Roads

- Primary roads are the widest neighbourhood roads and constitute the mainaccesses intonew settlements, connecting the neighbourhoods with each other. They are also the main routes used for utility and emergency vehicles, as well as buses, if any.
- The design and character of primary roads must fulfiltheir place-making role at the heart of the new community while serving as through routes for vehicles.
- Ponary roads must be defined by strong buildinglines with gerous set-backs. Blank frontages must be avoided. The quality of the public realm must be of a high standard and consistent throughout the whole primary road, for example through the planting of trees and/orgreen verges along the road.
- Because primary roads are designed for comparatively higher speed and traffic volumes, they are more appropriate locations for cycle ways that are segregated from traffic, for instance in the form of green ways shared between cyclists and pedestrians.
- Direct access to individual residential car parking must be avoided to minimise disruptions to the relatively high levels of traffic on primary roads. Access to parking servicing buildings that front primary roads can instead be provided via parallel lanes, side streets, or from the rear.

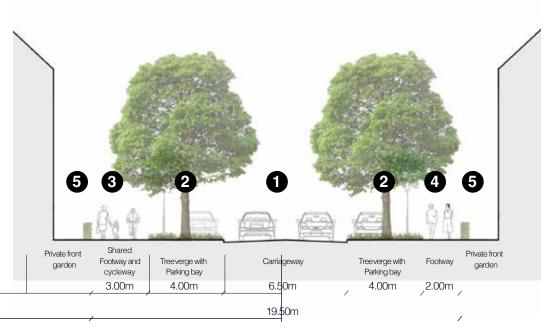


Figure 32: Section showing indicative dimensions for primary roads. In some places trees may be omitted from one or both sides although they help with placemaking, contribute to local biodiversity, and create a positive micro-climate

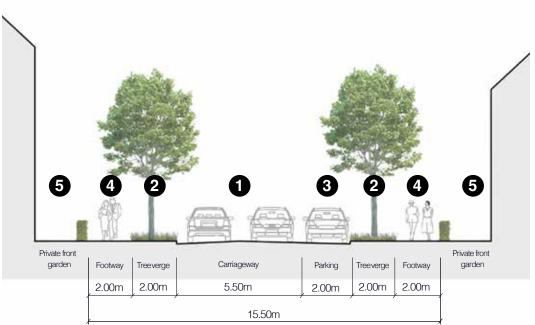
- Carriageway (village-wide traffic).
- Green verge withtall trees.
 The latter are optional but wouldbe positive additions.
 Parking bays to be inset into the verges to avoid impeding moving traffic or pedestrians.
- Shared footway and cycleway
 -cyclists to be segregated
 From vehicle traffic.
- 4. Footway.
- Residential frontage with boundary hedges and front gardens.



Figure 33: Primary road framed by wide tree verges in a residential neighbourhood. It is recommended that cycle provisions are separated from moving traffic and that parking bays, where required, are inset into the verges to avoid impeding the movement of pedestrians and vehicles.

Secondary Roads

- Secondary roads provide access between primaryroads and neighbourhoods and clusters. They must emphasise the humanscale and be designed for lower traffic volumes compared to primary roads.
- Secondary roads must accommodate carriageways wide enough for two-way traffic and on-street parallel car parking bays. They may also include tree verges on one or both sides. On-street parking may consist either inmarked bays or spaces inset into green verges.
- Cariageways must be designed to be shared between novehicles and cyclists. Vertical traffic calming features sysh as raised tables may be introduced at key locations such as junctions and pedestrian crossings.



- Shared carriageway (neighbourhoodtraffic). Traffic calming measures may be introduced at key locations.
- Green verge withmedium trees. The latter are optional but would be positive additions.
- Parking bay (may also be inset into verges).
- Footway.
- Residential frontage with boundary hedges and front gardens.

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Figure 34: Section showing indicative dimensions for secondary roads. In some places tree verges may be omitted From one or both sides, and parking bays may alternate with tree verges.



Figure 35: Example of a secondary road, Brentham (note: parking bays may be inset into verges).

Tertiary Roads

- Tertiary roads have a strong residential character and provide direct access to residences from the secondary roads. They must be designed for low traffic volumes and low speed.
- Carriageways must accommodate two-way traffic and parking bays. They may also include green verges with small trees on one or both sides. Verges may alternate with parking to form inset parking bays. These roads must also accommodate footways with a 2m minimum width on either see, and must be designed for cyclists to mixwith motor verticles. Traffic calming features such as raised tables can be used to prevent speeding.
- Private front garden Footway Parking/Triee verge 2.00m 2.00m 2.00m 2.00m 2.00m 2.00m 13.00m
- Carriageway (local access).
 Traffic calming measures
 may be introduced at key
 locations.
- Green verge withsmall trees.
 The latter are optional but wouldbe positive additions.

 Parking bays on both sides of the carriageway to alternate with trees to avoid impeding moving traffic or pedestrians.
- Footway.
- Residential frontage with boundary hedges and front gardens.

Figure 36: Section showing indicative dimensions for tertiary roads. In some places tree verges may be omitted from one or both sides.

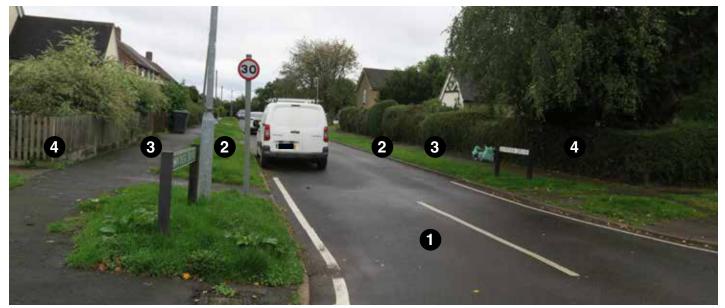


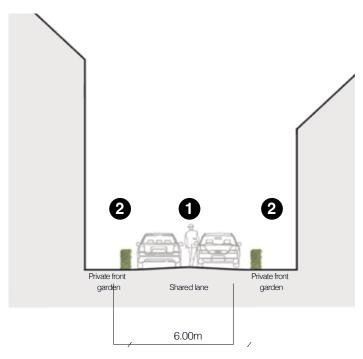
Figure 37: Downer Drive, a tertiary road framed by green verges planted hedges. It is recommended that footways along the street are minimum2mwide and that parking is provided in the form of inset bays to avoid impeding traffic.

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Lanes/Private Drives

- Lanes and private drives are the access-only types of streets that usuallyserve a small number of houses. They must be minimum6mwide to ensure sufficient space for parkingmanoeuvre. They must serve all types of transport modes including walking and cycling.
- Opportunities to include green infrastructure, hedges, and/ or private gardens to soften the edges must be maximised.





 Shared lane (local vehicle access, cyclists, and pedestrians).

2. Residential frontage with front hedges and gardens

Figure 38: Section showing indicative dimensions for lanes and private drives.



Figure 39: Alow traffic lane shared between vehicles, cyclists, and pedestrians in Long Stratton, Norfolk.

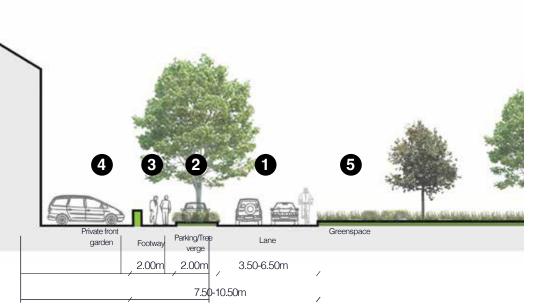


Figure 40: Example of a lane/private drive in Cambridge, with a shared surface for all road users.

Edge Lanes

- Edge lanes are low-speed and low-trafficroads that front houses withgardens on one side and a green space on the other. Carriageways typically consist of a single lane of traffic in either direction and are shared with cyclists.
- The lane width can vary to discourage speeding and introduce a more informal and intimate character. Variations in paving materials and textures can be used instead of kerbs or road markings.

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 Shared lane(local access) width to vary.

- Green verge withtrees. The latter are optional but would be positive additions. Parking bays may be interspersed with trees to soften the impact of parked cars.
- Footway.
- Residential frontage with boundary hedges and front gardens.
- 5. Green space.

Figure 41:Section showing indicative dimensions for edge lanes. The lane width may vary to discourage speeding or provide space for parking.





Figure 42: Examples of edge lanes in Dorchester, with low-speedroads shared between motor vehicles and cyclists, and opportunities for on-street parking (note: some localities may prefer clearly defined footways and parking bays).

Pedestrian and Cycle Connectivity

- It is important that all newly developed areas must provide direct and attractive footpaths between neighbouring streets and local facilities. Establishing a robust pedestrian network a) across any new development and b) among new and existing development is key in achieving good levels of permeability among any part of the parish.
- Pedestrian paths must be included in new developments and be integrated with the existing pedestrian routes.
- A permeable street network at all levels provides people with a choice of different routes and allows traffic to be different routes and allows traffic to be different routes and allows traffic to be ributed in general more evenly across the network raffer than concentrated on to heavily trafficked roads.
- Design features such as barriers to vehicle movement, getes to new developments, or footpaths between high fences must be kept at a minimum and the latter must be avoided.
- On high-trafficand/orhigh-speed roads, cyclists must be kept away frommoving traffic and parked vehicles as much as possible through the use of traffic calming, physical separation, and road markings and signage. On narrow streets with lower traffic and speed limits no higher than 20 mph, the road can be shared between different modes.
- Within residential areas, safe pedestrian crossing points must be provided at regular intervals to retain pedestrian connectivity.

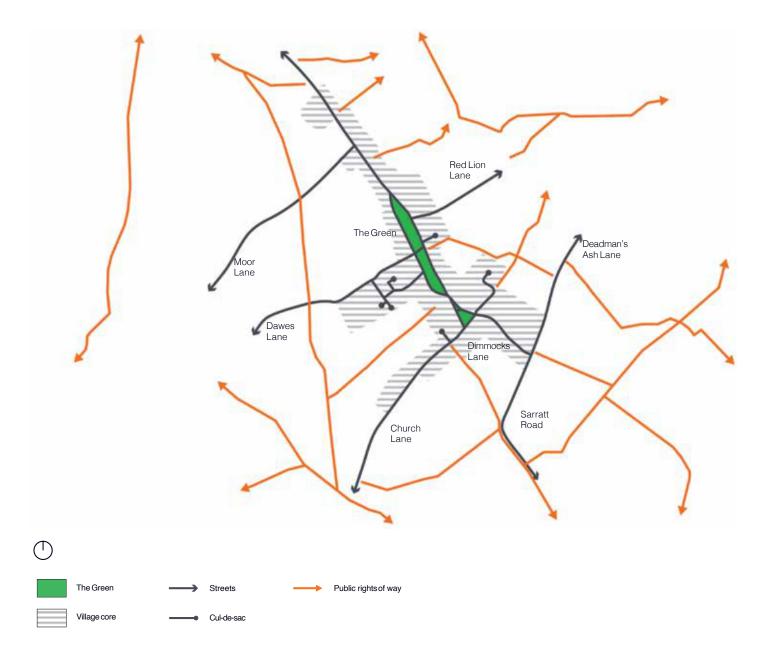


Figure 43: Public rights of way overlaid on the street grid in Sarratt.

J unctions and Pedestrian Crossings

- Crossing points that are safe, convenient, and accessible for pedestrians of all abilities must be placed at frequent intervals on pedestrian desire lines and at key nodes.
- J unctions must enable good visibility between vehicles and pedestrians. For this purpose, street furniture, planting, and parked cars must be kept away from visibility splays to avoid obstructing sight lines -see table and diagram opposite.
- Traffic calming measures should be introduced at crossing points to increase safety and discourage speeding. Along points treets, for example, kerb buildouts can be used reduce pedestrian crossing distances and reduce the speed of turning vehicles. At junctions withminorroads, the arriageway surface can be raised across a pedestrian crossing to prioritise pedestrian movements.
- Traffic signals, where they are introduced, must be timed to enable the elderly, children, and disabled to cross safely and comfortably.
- Along low-trafficlanes and residential streets, crossing points can be more informal. For example, pedestrians may cross at any section of a street whose surface is shared between differentusers.



Figure 44: Example of a raised mid-blockpedestrian crossing on a 20 mph street on Goldsmith Street, Norwich (note: many councils require blister tactile pavers at crossings to guide visually disabled pedestrians).





Figure 45: Example of a raised crossing across a mainroad in Cambridge, with contrasting paving materials and space for low-level planting and street furniture (note: traditional paving materials and muted colours are often preferred inconservation areas).

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The stopping sight distance (SSD) is the distance withinwhich drivers need to be able to see ahead and stop from given speed. The SSDs for various speeds between 16-60kph(10-37mph)as held withinManual for Streets (MfS) are as shown in the table below.

The distance back along the minorarm from which visibility is measured is known as the X distance; MfS states that an X distance of 2.4m should normally be used in most built-up situations, as this represents a reasonable maximum distance between the front of the car and the driver's eye.

The Y distance represents the distance that a driver who is about to exit from the minorarm can see to his left and righten ng the main alignment In accordance with MfS, the required visibility splay for a junction within an area where 85th percenters are 30mph is 2.4mx43m.

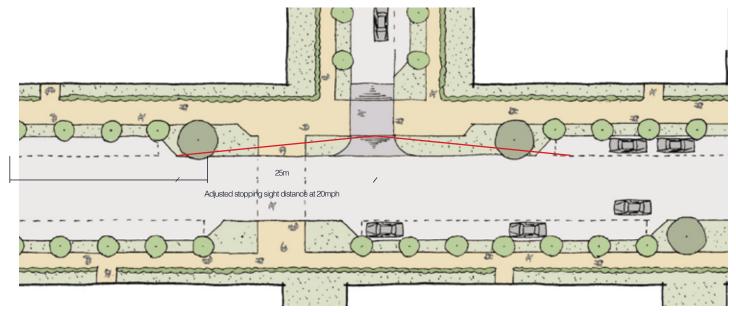


Figure 46: Indicative plan of a junction showing a visibility splay at a junction along a 20 mphprimary road -see table belowfor details. Across the major arm, kerbs are built out to shorten pedestrian crossing distances. Across the minorarm, the carriageway is raised along the pedestrian crossing and can be built with contrasting materials for higher awareness.

Speed	Kilometre per hour	16	20	24	25	30	32	40	45	48	50	60
	Miles per hour	10	12	15	16	19	20	25	28	30	31	37
Stopping sight distance (SSD) in metres		9	12	15	16	20	22	31	36	40	43	56
Stopping sight distance adjusted for bonnet length		11	14	17	18	23	25	33	39	43	45	59

Figure 47: Stopping sight distances (SSD) for visibility splays (source: Department for Transport).

3.2.3. Vehicle Parking

- When needed, residential car parking can be a mixof on-plotside, front, garage, and courtyard parking, and complemented by on-street parking.
- For family homes, cars must be placed at the side (preferably) or front of the property. For small pockets of housing, a rear court is acceptable. Multiple garage parking is encouraged.
- Capparking design must be combined with landscaping to number imisethe presence of vehicles.
- Parking areas and driveways must be designed to minimise ir pervious surfaces, for example through the use of perpeable paving.
- When placing parking at the front, the area must be designed to minimise the visual impact of cars and driveways, which must blend with the existing streets cape and materials. The aimis to keep a sense of enclosure and to break the potential of a continuous area of car parking infront of the dwellings. This can be achieved by means of walls, hedging, planting, and the use of quality paving materials.
- Parking bays and spaces must be designed for easy access by wheelchairs, loading carts, and buggies.
- The followingpages provide an array of complementary car parkingsolutions that can be employed in Sarratt.



Figure 48: On-street parking with inset bays (left).



Figure 50: Disabled parking bay in Cambridge with a ramp for easy wheelchair access.



Figure 49: Informal on-street parking on the Green.



Figure 51: Front yard parking with gravel surface.

On-PlotSide or Front Parking

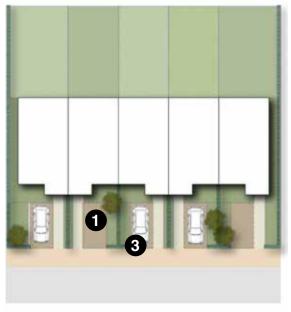
- On-plotparking can be visually attractive when it is combined with high quality and well designed soft landscaping. Front garden depth frompavement back must be sufficient for a large family car.
- Boundary treatment is the key element to help avoid a car-dominated character. This can be achieved by using elements such as hedges, trees, flower beds, low walls, and high quality paving materials between the private and public space.
- Hard standing and driveways must be constructed from phous materials such as permeable paving or gravel to minimise surface water run-off.

28,



 $Figure \, 52: Gravel \, fronty ard \, parking \, with \, landscaped \, property \, boundaries \, preventing \, a \, car-dominated character.$

- Front parking with part of the surface reserved for soft landscaping. Permeable pavement to be used whenever possible.
- Side parking set back from the main building line. Permeable pavement to be used whenever possible.
- Boundary hedges to screen vehicles and parking spaces.



 $\label{prop:prop:sigma} \textbf{Figure 53:} \ \textbf{Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-plotfront parking.}$

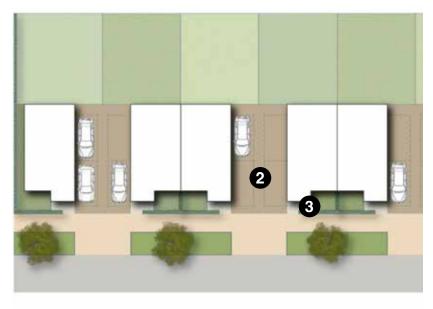


Figure 54: Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-plotside parking.

On-PlotGarages

- Where provided, garages must be designed either as free standing structures or as additive form to the main building. In both situations, it must complement and harmonise with the architectural style of the main building rather than forming a mismatched unit.
- The garage should not obscure the dwelling from the street nor dominate the front garden. Garages should not be placed in front of the building at any time to avoid prominence on the streetscape and overshadowing of the normal building.
- Garages may be used as a design element to create a link bayeen buildings, ensuring continuity of the buildingline.
- Note that I is a second be noted that many garages are not used for storing vehicles, and so may not be the best use of space.
- Considerations must be given to the integration of bicycle parking and/orwaste storage into garages.



Figure 55: Side garage (left) designed as a secondary mass to the main residential building and built with a matching material palette.

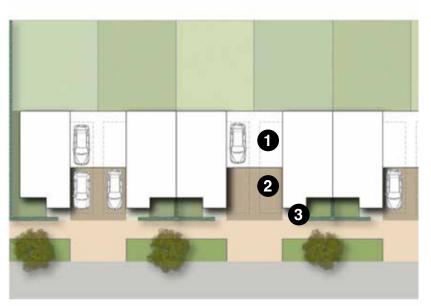


Figure 56: Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-plotparking with garages.

- Side parking set back from the main building line. Permeable pavement to be used whenever possible.
- Garage structure set back from main building line. Height to be no higher than the main roofline
- Boundary hedges to screen vehicles and parking spaces.

Rear Parking Courtyards

- This parking arrangement can be appropriate for a wide range of land uses. It is especially suitable for apartments and townhouses fronting busier roads where it is impossible to provide direct access to individual parking spaces.
- Ideally all parking courts should benefit from natural surveillance.
- Parking courts should be an integral part of the public realm, hence it is important that high quality design and materials, both for hard and soft landscaping elements, are used.
- Paking bays must be arranged into clusters with widths of aces maximumand interspersed with trees and soft landscaping to provide shade, visual interest, and to reduce base heat island effects and impervious surface areas.



 $\label{prop:signal} \textbf{Figure 57:Small rear parking courtyard benefiting from natural surveillance and shading.}$

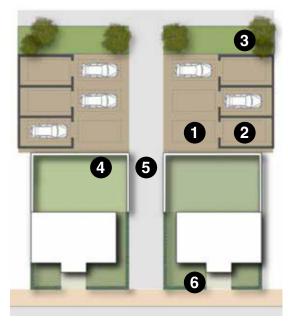


Figure 58: Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-plotrear courtyard parking.

- Rear courtyard parking with soft landscaping.
 Parking bays to be arranged in clusters of maximum4 spaces maximum.Permeable pavement to be used whenever possible.
- 2. Sheltered parkingspace (optional).
- Trees and/orsoft landscaping to prevent car dominance and add shading.
- Rear of residential properties

 balance to be sought
 between natural surveillance

 and privacy.
- 5. Pedestrian link to main residential frontage.
- Boundary hedges to screen vehicles and parking spaces.

On-Street Parking

As we move forward into a future of electric vehicles, every opportunity must be taken to integrate charging technologies into the fabric of road and street furniture, including induction plate technologies and street lamphook ups alongside independent charging posts as standard street furniture in the public realm.

- On-street parking can be arranged either perpendicular or parallel to the carriageway.
- Onstreet parking must be designed to avoid impeding the of pedestrians, cyclists, and other vehicles, and can serve a useful informal traffic calming function.
- Pring bays can be inset between kerb buildouts or street trees. Kerb buildouts between parkingbays can shorten pedestrian crossing distances and can host street furniture or green infrastructure. They must be sufficiently wide to shelter the entire parkingbay inorder to avoid impeding traffic.
- On low-trafficresidential streets or lanes that are shared between vehicles and pedestrians, parkingbays can be clearly markedusing changes of construction material instead of markings but must be of a different level to the pedestrian way e.g. with a kerb. This willprovide drivers with an indication of where to park. The street must be sufficiently wide so that parked vehicles do not impede motor vehicles or pedestrians.
- Opportunities must be created for new public car parking spaces to include electric vehicle charging points. Such provision must be located conveniently throughout the village and designed to minimisestreet clutter.



Figure 59: Parking bays arranged between street trees in Dorchester.



Figure 60: Inset parking with electric vehicle charging points.

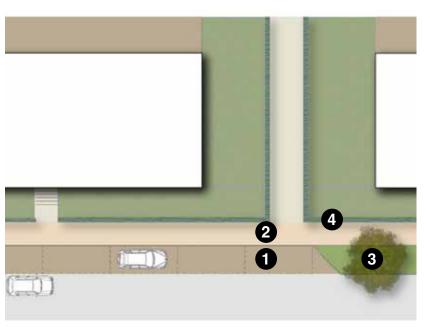


Figure 61:Illustrative diagram showing an indicative layout of on-street inset parking.

- On-street parking bay inset between kerb extensions.
- Footway -additional green verge ifstreet widthpermits.
- Planted kerbextensions width to be sufficient to fully shelter parking bay. Trees are optional but would be positive additions.
- Boundary hedges.

Bicycle Parking

- A straightforward way to encourage cycling is to provide secured covered cycle parking within all new residential developments and publicly available cycle parking in the public realm.
- For residential units, where there is no garage on plot, covered and secured cycle parkingmust be provided within the domestic curtilage. The use of planting and smaller trees alongside cycle parking can be used to mitigate any visual impact on adjacent spaces or buildings.
- Bit cle stands in the public realm should be sited in leastions that are convenient and that benefit from aggrate natural surveillance. They should be placed in locations that do not impede pedestrian mobility or kepside activities.



Figure 62: Example of public cycle parking (left) and sheltered cycle parking garage (right)in Cambridge.



Figure 63: Example of kerbside on-street cycle stands.

3.2.4. Local Green Spaces and Views

- Development adjoining public open spaces and important gaps should enhance the character of these spaces by either providing a positive interface (i.e. properties facing onto them to improve natural surveillance) or a soft landscaped edge.
- Any trees or woodland lost to new development must be replaced.
- The spacing of development should reflect the rural contracter and allow for long distance views of the entryside form the public realm.
- Landscape scheme should be designed and integrated
 was the open fields that currently border the village to avoid
 coalescence and prevent rural settlements from merging
 with larger existing settlements or large new settlements.
- Native trees and shrubs should be used to reinforce the rural character of the village and incorporated into the design of new areas.



Figure 64: Long distance views towards the village fromNorth Hill. Mature trees screen most of the village fromoutside views.



Figure 65: North-western view along The Green in the centre of the village, highlighting the undulating terrain.

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Figure 66 Equestrian route along the Green.



 $Figure \, 67: An \, undeveloped \, street \, corner \, at the \, junction \, between \, Dawes Lane \, and \, Downer \, Drive. \, Houses \, on \, the \, right face \, an \, open \, field \, concealed \, by \, tall \, hedges \, on \, the \, left.$



Figure 68: Panorama of the south-westernvillage edge highlighting the relative height of the buildings and the mature trees, which concealed much of the village from long-distance inward views.

3.2.5. Materials and Building Details

The materials and architectural detailing in Sarratt contribute to the rural character of the area and the local vernacular. It is therefore important that the materials used in proposed development are of a high quality and reinforce local distinctiveness. Any future development proposals should demonstrate that the palette of materials has been selected based on an understanding of the surrounding built environment.

This section includes examples of buildingmaterial that contribute to the local vernacular of Sarratt which could be used informfuture development.

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Mixed tonality red brick



Red brick trimand knapped flint infilling



Red brick trim and yellow brick infilling



Knapped Hertfordshire puddingstone



Grey paintrendering



Slate roof



Mixed red and yellow bricks



Black weatherboarding



Clay plaintileroof



Gabled porch



Wall dormer



Double casement windows



Landscaped boundaryhedge



Flint and brick gabled porch



Sash windows



Painted low-leveltimber gate



Low masonry wallwith landscaped hedge



Pointed arch window



Bull's eye windowwith red brick trim



Knapped flintand red brick boundary wall



Red brick chimney

Fenestration

- Fenestration on public/privatespaces increase the natural surveillance and enhance the attractiveness of the place.
 Long stretches of blank(windowless) walls should be avoided. Overall, considerations for natural surveillance, interaction, and privacy must be carefully balanced.
- Windows must be of sufficient size and number for abundant natural light.
- Site ayout and buildingmassing should ensure access to subshine and avoid overshadowing neighbouring buildings.
 Very developments should also maximise opportunities for long distance views.
- Sistent windowstyles and shapes must be used across a given façade to avoid visual clutter and dissonance.
- In proximity to historic areas, fenestration must reflect an understanding of locally distinctive features such as scale, proportions, rhythm, materials, ornamentation, and articulation. This should however not result in pastiche replicas.



Figure 69: Façades with a consistent arrangement of multi-panewindows with attractive brick ornamentation and articulations.



Figure 70: Traditional house with upper floor horizontal sliding multi-panesash windows and ground floor casement windows with cambered heads.

Traditional Architecture

The gradual evolution of the village over the centuries has resulted in an organic character to development. Each building has its own individuality resulting invariations in height, the pattern of openings and detailing. This variety is balanced in several ways; through the proximity of each property to each other and broad similarities in scale, width, design and materials. Buildings are predominantly 2 storeys and the change in roof heights and the presence of chimneys contribute to the visual interest of the historic core.

Quarry flintis one of the most popular buildingstones in Hertherdshire. This is reflected is Sarratt's traditional archiecture as well, where a good part of its heritage assets have been built utilising this fine-grained stone. Whereas, Hertiped shire Pudding stone is one of the most distinctive stone pes within the county. Less distinctive building materials but that still make a good percentage of traditional architecture are yellow stock brick and red brick.



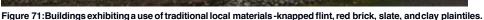




Figure 72: Church yard wall built with local flint.







Figure 73: New wall using a mix of traditional local materials © Sarratt Parish Council.

Contemporary Architecture

Within the neighbourhood plan area, there are a few examples of successful contemporary architecture that blend harmoniously with their physical context. It is suggested that this trend continues to further expand with additional eco design features incorporated in future developments. New buildings, when referencing traditional architecture, must however avoid combining elements from too many different architectural styles or employing low-qualityimitations of traditional materials. A clear understanding of local and nonlocal stream and materials is also required.



Figure 74:A group of affordable housingunits on Clutterbucks, with well-defined private and public spaces as well as attractive landscaping and construction materials.



Figure 75: A recently renovated house along the Green, with consistent fenestration and a contemporary treatment of traditional materials.

Public Realm Materials

- High quality landscaping and paving materials should be used across new developments. Factors such as durability, attractiveness, and maintenance must be considered in addition to the cost of installation. An effort should be made to (re)use traditional local materials when available.
- High quality stone, gravel, granite, and bricks can provide durable and attractive hard surface throughout the public realm. Special materials such as sandstone and limestone could also be used to further enhance the quality of particular spaces such as conservation areas.
- Variations inmaterials, colours, and textures can be used togefine boundaries between different highway uses payements, parking bays, cycleways, and carriageway.
 Secial care should be taken when considering finishes a textures to avoid impeding the mobility and safety of disabled and visually impaired users.
- Opportunities to incorporate permeable paving and green infrastructure must be sought to reduce stormwater runoffs and reduce impervious surfaces.



Figure 76: Flint boundary wall of Church of the Holy Cross.



Figure 77: Natural stone paving in front of the Cricketers.



Figure 78: Granite kerbs along the Green.



Granite setts



Granite block vehicle crossover



Darkgrey concrete block paving



Natural stone slabs/flags

Street Furniture

- The appearance of street furniture elements should be coordinated and contribute to the overall public realmand placemaking strategy.
- The siting of street furniture items such as benches, bins, and street signs must not impede pedestrian mobility or conflict with kerbside activities such as loading, refuse collection, and parking.
- Opportunities should be sought to consolidate different functions to reduce street clutter, for example by combining lighting columns (where appropriate) with electric vehicle charging points and supports for street signs.
- Transport number and size of street signs and signposts should be reduced to the minimum required. The appearance of signposts must not distract from the visual quality of the surrounding area.
- Public seating must be provided in convenient locations at regular intervals, especially in high footfall areas.



Figure 79: Timber bench on the Green.



Figure 81: Red letter box encased in masonry.



Figure 80: Timber shelter on the Green.

3.2.6. Sustainability and Eco Design

Energy efficient or ecological design combines allaround energy efficient construction, appliances and lightingwith commercially available renewable energy systems, such as solar water heating and solar electricity.

Starting from the design stage, there are strategies that can be incorporated towards passive solar heating, cooling and energy efficient landscaping which are determined by local climate and site conditions.

The aim of these interventions is to reduce overall domestic energy use and to do so as cost effectively as the circumstances allowfor.

æ

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Figure 82: Frog habitat corridor.

Wildlife-friendly environment

New developments should always aimto strengthen biodiversity and the natural environment. This can be done by creating new habitats and wildlifecorridors, ensuring the continuity of habitats between gardens and public spaces, and linkingthem with existing ecological assets. Hedges, wildflower meadows, old trees, ponds, hard landscaping features (such as rock piles), nest boxes installed at the eaves of the buildings, frog habitat corridors, dry stone walls, and bug houses can all make a significant contribution to species diversity.

Protecting and enhancing existinglandscape assets is crucial. The aimshould always be to minimise the damage to natural habitats, add to the character and distinctiveness of a place, and contribute to climate change adaptation.

Solar roof panels

Solar panels on roofs should be designed forminimalvisual impact. On new builds, they should be designed in from the start, formingpart of the design concept. Some attractive options are solar shingles and photovoltaic slates or tiles. In this way, the solar panels can be used as a roofing material in their own right.

On retrofits, designers should:

- Analyse the proportions of the building and roof surface in order to identify the best location and sizing of panels;
- Aim to conceal wiringand other necessary installations; and,
- Consider introducing other tile or slate colours to create a composition with the solar panel materials.



Figure 83: Example of eco design led architecture.



Figure 84: Integrated design for solar panels.



Figure 85: Water harvesting tank.



Figure 86: Bug and bee house.

Rainwater harvesting

This refers to the systems allowing the capture and storage of rainwater as well as those enabling the reuse in-situof grey water. These systems involve pipes and storage devices that could be unsightly if added without an integral vision for design. Therefore some design recommendation would be to:

- Conceal tanks by cladding them in complementary materials;
- Use attractive materials or finishing for pipes;

 photo nbine landscape/planters with water capture systems;
- erground tanks; and, Utilise water bodies for storage.







Permeable pavements

Pavements add to the composition of the building. Thus permeable pavements should not only perform its primary function which is to let water filter through but also:

- Respect the material palette;
- Help to frame the building;
- Create an arrival statement:
- Be in harmony with the landscape treatment of the property; and,
- define the property boundary.

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Waste collector integrated design

With modern requirements for waste separation and recycling, the number of household bins quantumand size have increased. This poses a problemwith the aesthetics of the property if bins are left without a solution. Thus we recommend the following:

- Create a specific enclosure of sufficient size for all the necessary bins;
- Place it withineasy access from the street and, where, possible, able to open on the pavement side to ease retrieval;
- Refer to the materials palette to analyse which would be a complementary material;
- Use it as part of the property boundary;
- Add to the green feel by incorporating a green roof or side planting element to it; and,
- Combine it with cycle storage.



Figure 88: Integrated design for differentiated waste collectors.



Figure 89: Integrated design for differentiated waste collectors and cycle storage.



Figure 90: Permeable brick paving.



Figure 91: Permeable concrete paving.

3.2.7. Building Modifications, Extensions, and Plot Infills

Extensions to dwellings can have a significant impact not only on the character and appearance of the building, but—also on the street scene withinwhich it sits. A well-designed extension can enhance the appearance of its street, whereas an unsympathetic extension can have a harmful impact, create problems for neighbouring residents and affect the overall character of the area.

The Renning Portal¹ contains more detailed information on build prodifications and extensions, setting out what is usually permitted without planning permission (permitted development) as well as what requires planning permission. Sarrar arish, for example, contains designated land² such as conservation areas or AONBs, where planning permission is required.

- Extensions should be appropriate to the scale, massing and design of the main building and complement the streetscape.
- Alterations and extensions of historic buildings should respect the host building. Replacement of historic and traditional features, such as timber windows and doors with uPVC and other non-traditionalmaterials should be avoided.
- ¹ Planning Portal. https://www.planningportal.co.uk/info/200234/home_improvement_projects
- ² Designated land is land withina conservation area, an area of outstanding natural beauty (AONB), an area specified by the Secretary of State for the purposes of enhancement and protection of the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside, the Broads, a National Park or a World Heritage Site.

- Extensions are more likely to be successful if they do not exceed the height of the original or adjacent buildings. Twostorey extensions should be constructed with the same angle of pitch as the existing roof.
- The design, materials and architectural detailing of extensions should be high quality and respond to the host buildingand the local character of the neighbourhood plan area.
- The impact on the space around the buildingshould consider overlooking, overshadowing and overbearing.

The following diagrams illustrate key dimensions for household extensions, roof extensions, porches, and outbuildings under both permitted development conditions and in designated land.

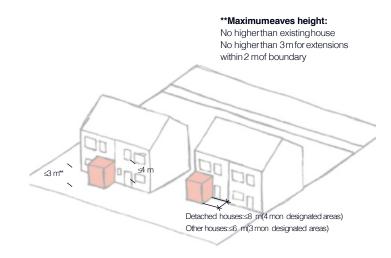


Figure 92: Single-storey rear extensions.

**Maximumeaves height: No higher than existing house No higher than 3 m for extensions within 2 mof boundary Note: not permitted on designated areas. smain roof height building width

Figure 93: Side extension to a single-storey building.

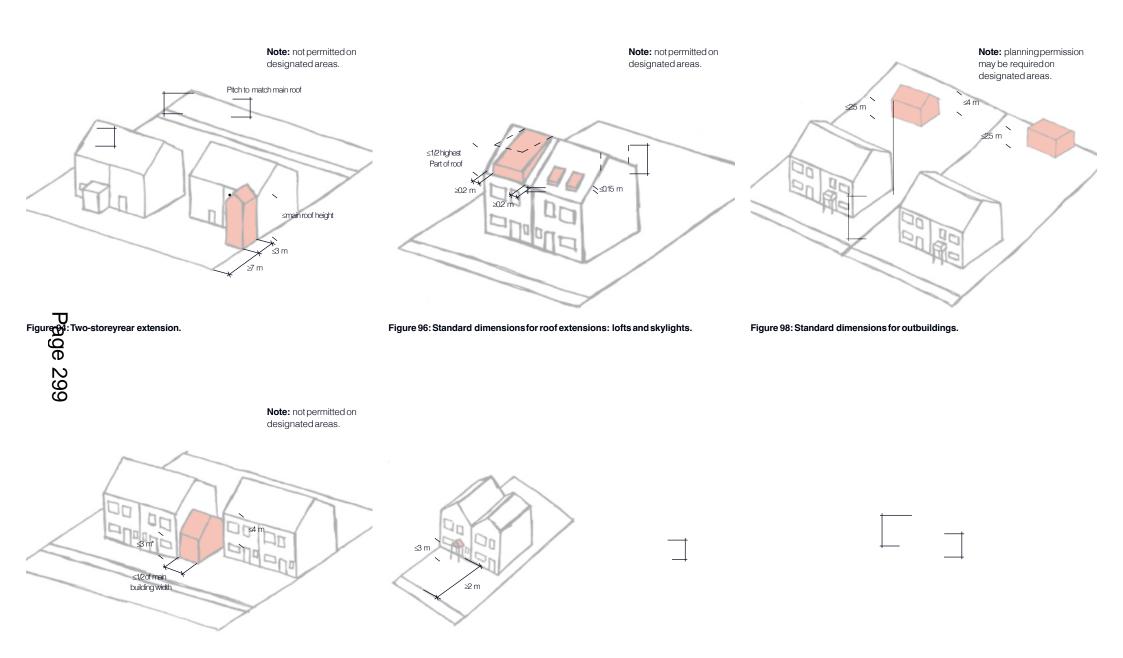


Figure 95: Side extension to a two-storey building.

Figure 97: Standard dimensions for porches.









4. Delivery

This section concludes the report with recommendations on how to embed findings in the Neighbourhood Plan and engage with Three Rivers Council to develop policies supporting the guidelines.

HOW THEY WILL USE THE DESIGN GUIDELINE	S ACTORS
As a guide to community and Local Planning Authority expectations on design, allowin a degree of certainty – they will be expected to follow the Guidelinesas planning conse is sought.	
As a reference point, embedded in policy, against which to assess planning application	s. Local PlanningAuthority
The Design Guidelines should be discussed with applicants during any pre-application discussions.	
As a guide when commenting on planning applications, ensuring that the Designidelines are complied with.	gn Parish Council
As a tool to promote community-backed development and to inform comments of planning applications.	on Community organisations
As a reference point when commenting on planning application	s. Statutory consultees

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SARRATT PARISH NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Important Views and Local Green Spaces Assessment

Introduction

As part of the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, an assessment of important views was undertaken. The findings of this assessment are contained in this report, which forms a supporting document for the Sarratt Parish Neighbourhood Plan.

Identifying Important Views

Important views were identified to support policy 3 Historic Character and Policy 7 Landscape. The purpose of identifying key views is to identify scenes that notably contribute to the rural and historical character and sense of place, in order that this contribution can be conserved in the future.

By identifying how they contribute to sense of place, a framework for their protection can be justified. It will aid policy making, to take account of key views when considering the impact that new development might have in any given location. It can be used to help make a judgement about how a proposed development or change in land use will alter views and, consequently, whether this change is likely to be acceptable.

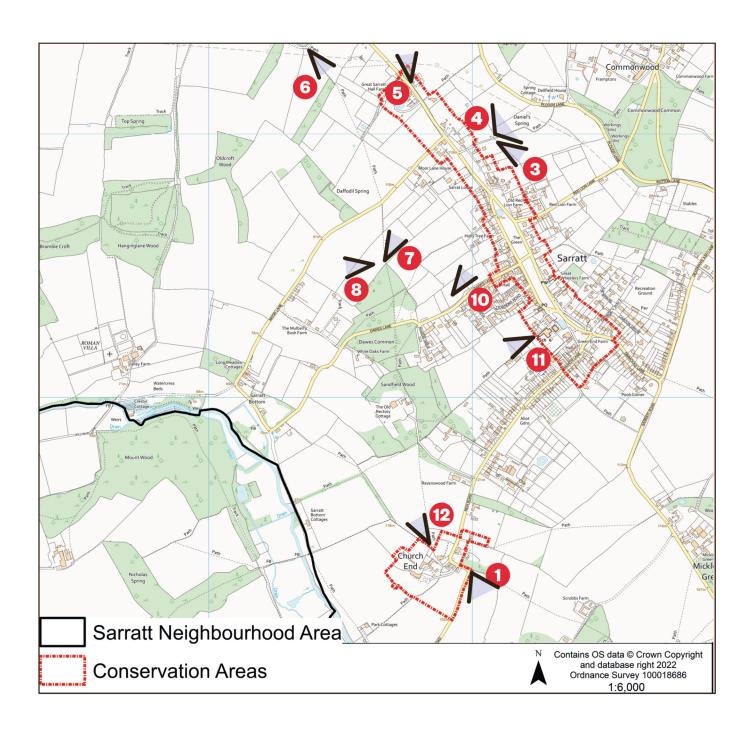
In consultation with local residents, including a call for key view nominations in Spotlight (local Parish magazine), noticeboards and online, the key views that were accessible from a public space were selected using the following criteria:

- A. Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- B. Important rights of way Sarratt Parish is renowned for the quality of public right of way network and attracts a significant number of visitors from surrounding areas.
- C. View contributes to the setting of a Heritage or environmental asset
- D. Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area
- E. Landmark feature

All nominated views were included in the process and plan as they all met more than one of the criteria. All views were mapped, photographed and included in the full consultation process.

The Important viewpoints from publicly accessible locations are identified on the map below. An assessment of the potential impact of any development on these views has been made.

The outcomes of this assessment are tabulated on the following pages.



VIEW 1 View from the Church Conservation Area SE towards the M25





This view is of the Chilterns National Landscape to the south of the Parish. It reinforces the rural openness and separation from surrounding conurbations. It is viewed regularly by many residents and

visitors. Any development in this landscape would interrupt this view and its purpose.

Criteria:

- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- Important rights of way Sarratt Parish is renowned for the quality of public right of way network and attracts a significant number of visitors from surrounding areas.
- Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area

There is no VIEW 2

VIEW 3

View towards Chipperfield from the East Village Conservation Area boundary





This view encompasses ancient farmlands and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers. Any developments in this landscape would

Issue date: August 2025

break the rural open setting of the village.

- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- Important rights of way Sarratt Parish is renowned for the quality of public right of way network and attracts a significant number of visitors from surrounding areas.
- Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area

VIEW 4View towards Commonwood from the East Village Conservation Area boundary





This view encompasses ancient woodland and farmland and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed

by residents and ramblers. Any developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village.

Criteria:

- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- Important rights of way Sarratt Parish is renowned for the quality of public right of way network and attracts a significant number of visitors from surrounding areas.
- Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area

VIEW 5

View from North end of the Village Conservation Area boundary towards Plough and Debardine Woods





This view encompasses ancient farmlands and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers. Any developments in this landscape would

break the rural open setting of the village.

Criteria:

Page 5

- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- Important rights of way Sarratt Parish is renowned for the quality of public right of way network and attracts a significant number of visitors from surrounding areas.
- Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area

VIEW 6

View towards Northern end of the Village Conservation Area, with Great Sarratt Hall visible through the trees





This view is part of the historic Chiltern Way and encompasses ancient farmlands and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers.

Any developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village and this recognised significant right of way.

Criteria:

- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- Important rights of way Sarratt Parish is renowned for the quality of public right of way network and attracts a significant number of visitors from surrounding areas.
- Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area
- Great Sarratt Hall is a landmark historical feature

VIEW 7View towards the North-West Village Conservation Area boundary





This view is part of the historic Chiltern Way and encompasses ancient farmlands and provides an open separation between the south of the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by

residents and ramblers. Any developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village and this recognised significant right of way.

- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- Important rights of way Sarratt Parish is renowned for the quality of public right of way network and attracts a significant number of visitors from surrounding areas.
- Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area

VIEW 8 View across the Chess Valley AONB





This view is part of the historic Chiltern Way and encompasses extensive views of the Chilterns National Landscape and Chess Valley. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers. Any developments in this landscape would

break the rural open setting of the village and this recognised significant right of way.

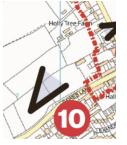
Criteria:

- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- Important rights of way—Sarratt Parish is renowned for the quality of public right of way network and attracts a significant number of visitors from surrounding areas.
- View contributes to the setting of a Heritage or environmental asset
- Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area

There is no VIEW 9

VIEW 10 View showing the hedge forming West Village Conservation Area boundary on the lower Green





This view encompasses ancient hedgerow and pasture and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers. Any

developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village.

- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- Important rights of way—Sarratt Parishis renowned for the quality of public right of way network and attracts a significant number of visitors from surrounding areas.
- Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area

VIEW 11

View SE towards Sandfield Wood from the West Village Conservation Area boundary behind the Village Shop





This view encompasses ancient farmlands and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers using a very frequently used right of way. Any

developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village.

Criteria:

- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- Important rights of way Sarratt Parish is renowned for the quality of public right of way network and attracts a significant number of visitors from surrounding areas.
- Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area

VIEW 12Chiltern Way heading North from the Church





This view encompasses ancient farmlands and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers. Any developments in this landscape would

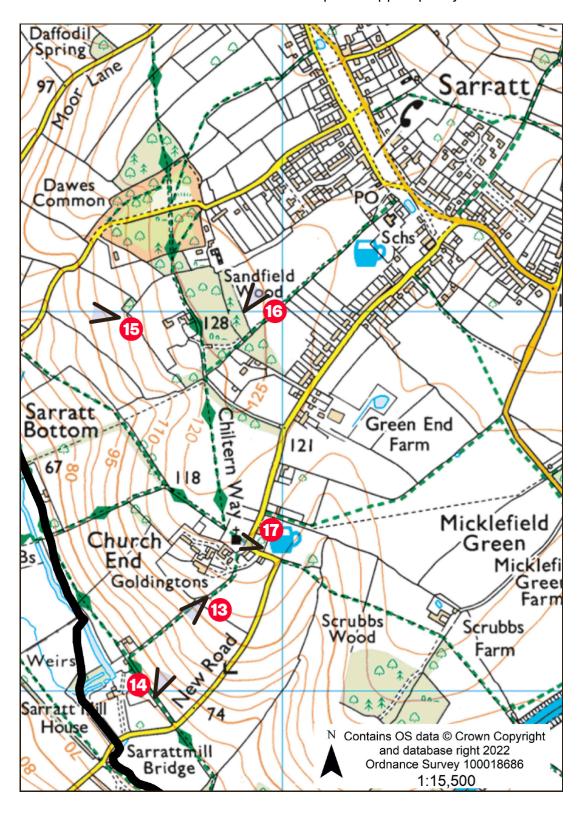
Issue date: August 2025

break the rural open setting of the village.

- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- Important rights of way Sarratt Parish is renowned for the quality of public right of way network and attracts a significant number of visitors from surrounding areas.
- View contributes to the setting of a Heritage or environmental asset
- Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area

Landscape

The following were selected as representative examples of the key elements of the rural and historic context of the Sarratt Parish landscape to support policy 7.



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View 13 View WSW across the Chess Valley





This view is of the Chilterns National Landscape and the Chess (chalk river) valley. This landscape draws ramblers from surrounding areas to enjoy the

unspoilt ancient landscape. Any development in this area would disrupt this outstanding view and rural setting.

Criteria:

- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- Important rights of way Sarratt Parish is renowned for the quality of public right of way network and attracts a significant number of visitors from surrounding areas.
- View contributes to the setting of a Heritage or environmental asset
- Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area

View 14View ENE across the Chess Valley





This view in the Chilterns National Landscape includes the historically significant Goldingtons. This landscape

draws ramblers from surrounding areas to enjoy the unspoilt ancient landscape. Any development in this area would disrupt this outstanding view and disturb the setting of the historic building.

- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- Important rights of way Sarratt Parish is renowned for the quality of public right of way network and attracts a significant number of visitors from surrounding areas.
- View contributes to the setting of a Heritage or environmental asset
- Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area

View 15
View East across Mountwood towards Latimer





This view is of the Chilterns National Landscape and the Chess (chalk river) valley. This extensive landscape draws ramblers from surrounding areas to enjoy the unspoilt ancient landscape. Any development in this area would disrupt this outstanding view and rural

setting.

Criteria:

- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- View contributes to the setting of a Heritage or environmental asset

View 16View from Sandfield Wood towards Sarratt





This landscape view encompasses ancient farmlands and provides an open separation between the village and the surrounding area. This view is enjoyed by residents and ramblers using a very

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frequently used right of way. Any developments in this landscape would break the rural open setting of the village.

- Scenic value relating to the composition of rural views and openness
- Important rights of way Sarratt Parish is renowned for the quality of public right of way network and attracts a significant number of visitors from surrounding areas.
- Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area

View 17 Holy Cross Church (12th Century)





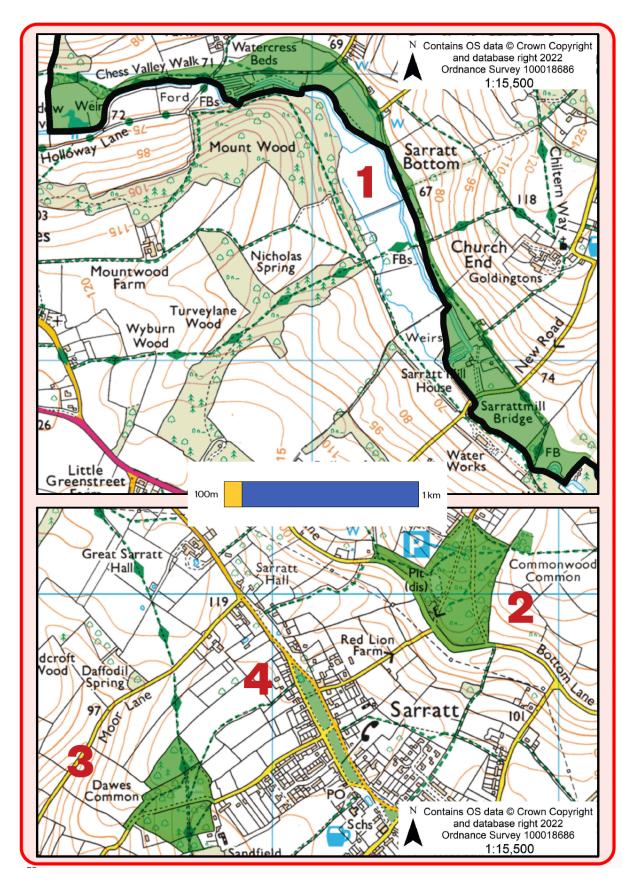
The 12th Century Church and surrounding cemetery provides significant historical character at one of the entrances to the village. Unsympathetic development could have a detrimental effect on the setting of

the Church.

- View contributes to the setting of a Heritage or environmental asset
- Number of people likely to be experiencing it the view is known to be visited frequently by significant number of local residents and visitors to the area
- Landmark feature

Local Green Spaces

The following were identified as the Local Green Spaces that support policy 11.



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1. Chess River Valley/Sarratt Bottom

- Forms part of the Chess Valley Walk. Accessible to cars and cycles and on foot.
- Special significance to the community:
 Provides valuable riverside natural green space for local residents, particularly families and children.
- Local in character:
 Limited to the stretch from the
 M25 to the footbridge over the
 river between New Road and
 Moor Lane



2. Commonwood Common

- Easy walking distance.
 Accessible to cars and cycles.
- Special significance to the community:
 Provides valuable natural green space for local residents.
- Local in character:
 Clearly defined triangular area,
 bounded by fields.



3. Dawes Common

- Easy walking distance
- Special significance to the community:
 Provides valuable natural green space for local residents with attractive views and flora and fauna.
- Local in character:
 Limited in extent with clearly defined boundaries.



4. The Green, Sarratt

- In the core of the village. Easily accessible to cars and cycles. the core of the village. Easily accessible to cars and cycles.
- Special significance to the community:
 Provides valuable natural green space for local residents, both for walking and meeting.
- Local in character:
 Limited in extent with clearly defined boundaries. A defining feature of the core of the village.



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January 2020

Quality information

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- 3
sing Research Consultant

Revision History

Revision	Revision date	Details	Authorized	Name	Position
V1	Dec 2019	First Draft	KS	Karlene Stubbs	Graduate Planner
V2	Jan 2020	Reviewed draft for group comment	PA	Paul Avery	Housing Research Consultant
V3	Jan 2020	Group review completed	AS	Anthony Soothill	Sarratt Parish Council
V4	Jan 2020	Locality review	PA	Paul Avery	Housing Research Consultant
V5	Jan 2020	Final report	PA	Paul Avery	Housing Research Consultant

3

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Disclaimer

This document is intended to aid the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan, and can be used to guide decision making and as evidence to support Plan policies, if the Qualifying Body (i.e. the neighbourhood planning group) so chooses. It is not a neighbourhood plan policy document. It is a 'snapshot' in time and may become superseded by more recent information. The Qualifying Body is not bound to accept its conclusions. If any party can demonstrate that any of the evidence presented herein is inaccurate or out of date, such evidence can be presented to the Qualifying Body at the consultation stage. Where evidence from elsewhere conflicts with this report, the Qualifying Body should decide what policy position to take in the Neighbourhood Plan and that judgement should be documented so that it can be defended at the Examination stage.

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List of acronyms used in the text:

AH Affordable Housing (NPPF definition)

AMH Affordable Market Housing

AONB Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

HNA Housing Needs Assessment

HNF Housing Need Figure

Housing LIN Housing Learning and Improvement Network

HRP Household Reference Person

LHN Local Housing Need

LPA Local Planning Authority

LQAR Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio

LTHPD Long-Term Health Problem or Disability

MAR Median Affordability Ratio

MH Market Housing

MHCLG Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (formerly DCLG)

NA Neighbourhood (Plan) Area

NDO Neighbourhood Development Order

NDP Neighbourhood Development Plan

NP Neighbourhood Plan

NPPF National Planning Policy Framework

ONS Office for National Statistics

PPG Planning Practice Guidance

PRS Private Rented Sector

RQ Research Question

SHLAA Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

SHMA Strategic Housing Market Assessment

VOA Valuation Office Agency

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Tenure

- 1. The tenure profile of Sarratt is dominated by home ownership at 82% of all households, with the remaining households evenly split between private and social renting. The number of social rented dwellings declined between 2001 and 2011, likely due to take-up of the Right to Buy scheme, while private renting has become slightly more common.
- 2. House prices have grown steadily over the past ten years (to 2018), with semi-detached homes experiencing moderately greater price rises than other types.
- 3. The median gross annual household income across the Sarratt area in 2015/16 was £59,200, while the lower quartile earnings of single-earning households across Three Rivers in 2018 was £15,815, meaning that dual-earning households on lower quartile incomes can be estimated to have gross total earnings of £31,630.
- 4. These income levels are compared against the estimated levels of income needed to afford various tenures of housing in Sarratt. Single-earning households on lower quartile incomes are unable to afford any of the housing tenures under consideration, and so will be in need of social rented accommodation (the most affordable tenure) or other options allowing them to make use of housing benefits and other forms of support.
- 5. For dual-earning households on LQ incomes, most tenures are within reach if those households are able to spend a slightly higher proportion of their incomes than 30% (used in the estimated here) on housing costs. For this group it is also apparent that shared ownership dwellings and starter homes are an achievable option that would also help bridge the wide affordability gap between social renting and private renting (which is unusually costly in Sarratt).
- 6. Those on median incomes appear to be able to afford all tenures in Sarratt. However, it should be noted that entry-level market purchase and two-bedroom market rent were under consideration, but higher value market homes were not. Many of these will remain unaffordable to median earners.
- 7. Bringing this evidence together, it is apparent that social rented homes for those on the lowest incomes are the greatest priority in Sarratt, while the supply of affordable routes to home ownership (currently very rare in the area) would also serve a very useful function in the market. The continued provision of entry-level market homes should be encouraged, as homes for purchase appear to be within reach of local people, although renting remains expensive possibly due to a lack of supply that would be counteracted if more new homes were put up for rent at entry-level prices.
- 8. The South West Hertfordshire SHMA (2016) identified the need for 357 affordable rented homes per annum in Three Rivers from 2013-2036. Pro-rating this figure to Sarratt (at a rate of 2.12%, which is the percentage of the Three Rivers population who live in the NA) gives an estimate of 7.6 affordable homes per annum over the Plan period needed in Sarratt.
- An additional estimate undertaken in the HNA calculates that demand for affordable routes to home ownership from households who cannot afford to buy their own home but cannot afford to rent amounts to 3 households per annum over the Plan period.
- 10. The total estimated Affordable Housing need over the Plan period 2020-2036 is therefore 122 (rounded) affordable rented homes and 48 affordable home ownership dwellings. Given Three Rivers's strategy for housing delivery, which suggests that new development in Sarratt should be minimal, it is unlikely that this scale of need will be satisfied through Affordable Housing contributions from market housing delivery. The Parish Council may therefore consider whether delivering Affordable Housing through other means, such as an exception site, may be desirable.
- 11. The recommended tenure split for Sarratt, based on the HNA and SHMA calculations, and Three Rivers policy, is for 70% of Affordable Housing to be for social or affordable rent, and 30% to be for affordable home ownership products.

1.2 Type and Size

- 12. In terms of Sarratt's existing stock of housing, the data shows that the proportion of detached homes is more than double that of Three Rivers or the national average, while all other dwelling types exist at correspondingly lower proportions. For example, Sarratt has less than a third the proportion of flats as Three Rivers.
- 13. Strongly linked to this finding is the fact that Sarratt has generally larger dwellings than Three Rivers, with greater proportions of all size categories above six rooms, and lower proportions of all smaller dwelling sizes. In particular, Sarratt has a persistent lack of one- and two-room units.
- 14. In terms of demographics, Sarratt has a substantially higher percentage of residents over the age of 45, and a lower percentage of those 44 or younger, compared to Three Rivers and the national average. Though Census data shows

that this trend has been exacerbated since 2001, the current population of those around the age of 65 is likely to result in yet more apparent ageing over the Plan period.

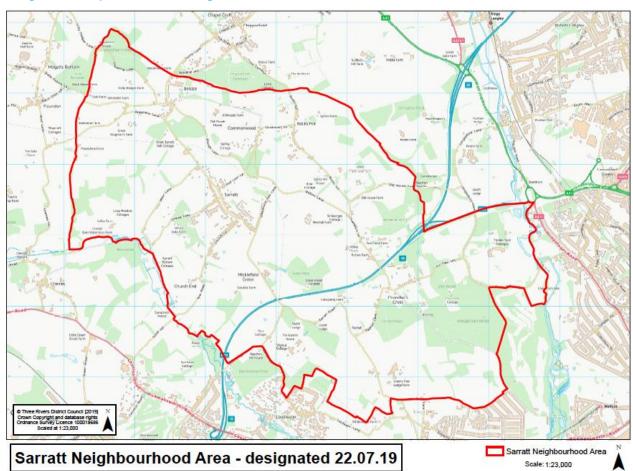
- 15. Seen in the context of Sarratt's comparatively large stock of dwellings, trends towards older households and single occupancy may warrant a Neighbourhood Plan policy intervention to restrict the future supply of larger dwellings to some extent. It may also be the case that the declining number of families in Sarratt is a function of the limited number of dwellings that are both appropriately-sized and affordable to younger families, so it may be beneficial also to encourage the provision of mid-sized housing suitable for this demand segment.
- 16. The results of a life-stage modelling exercise, which looks at the sizes of dwelling occupied by different age groups and projects the growth and decline of those age groups over the Plan period in order to understand what should be built, corroborates this finding. The recommended size mix of new housing focuses on dwellings of three bedrooms (around 50%) and those with one (20%) and two (30%) bedrooms, further suggesting that no further large dwellings are needed.
- 17. This model, however, operates on the assumption that households can and will wish to move freely around the stock of existing housing, which is not a realistic prospect. It is natural, then, that demand should continue for some larger dwellings. The provision of larger homes should not be inhibited entirely (though some of that demand will be met by natural churn within the market), but to the extent that the neighbourhood plan may be used to influence the size mix of housing coming forward, smaller homes should be the priority.
- 18. This analysis provides an indication of the likely need for different types and sizes of homes based on demographic change. It is important to remember that other factors should be considered in determining the dwelling mix that is required for Sarratt or on any particular site. These include the characteristics of the existing stock of housing, the role of the NA or site within the wider housing market area (linked to any Local Planning Authority strategies) and site-specific factors which may justify a particular dwelling mix.
- 19. In terms of the types of dwellings required, some unmet demand for generally more affordable dwelling types presently lacking in Sarratt, such as terraced homes, should be addressed. The size recommendation for two- and two-bedroom homes would help to achieve this. It is also advisable to promote the delivery of bungalows or other forms of age appropriate housing in order to meet the needs of the ageing population and to reflect the fact that other smaller dwelling types, such as apartments, may not in practice be popular market propositions in a rural parish like Sarratt.

2. Context

2.1 Local context

- Sarratt is a Neighbourhood Plan area located in the district of Three Rivers, Hertfordshire. The Neighbourhood Area (NA) boundary follows the existing boundary of Sarratt Parish and was designated in July 2019.
- 21. The proposed Neighbourhood Plan period starts in 2020 and extends to 2036, therefore comprising a planning period of 16 years.
- 22. Sarratt Parish is the largest parish by area in Three Rivers District, and includes the villages of Sarratt, Belsize, Chandlers Cross, Commonwood, Micklefield and Bucks Hill. Bisected by the M25 motorway, the whole of the parish is classified as Green Belt with a section of the parish along the Chess Valley forming part of the Chilterns AONB. Sarratt also has two Conservation Areas: The Green and Church End.
- 23. Within the parish there are two schools (Sarratt Village School and York House Preparatory School), as well as the King George V sports and recreation field, a community owned village shop and post office, and six public houses.
- 24. The parish is located 6.4km north of Rickmansworth and is 1.6km north of the M25 London orbital motorway. Junction 18 (M25) is on the Chorleywood Road (the A404), 3.2km from the parish. Sarratt is located 32 miles north-west of London.
- 25. The statistics show that in the 2011 Census the Neighbourhood Plan area had a total of 1,849 residents.
- 26. A map of the Plan area appears below in Figure 2-1.

Figure 2-1: Map of the Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan area¹



Source: Sarratt Neighbourhood Area Designation Notification

¹ Available at https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/egcl-page/sarratt-neighbourhood-area.

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2.2 Planning policy context

27. In line with the Basic Conditions² of neighbourhood planning, neighbourhood plans are required to be in general conformity with adopted strategic local policies.³ Consequently, the relevant elements of the Local Plan are reviewed as part of this Housing Needs Assessment (HNA).

- 28. In the case of Sarratt, the relevant Local Plan for Three Rivers consists of:
 - i. The Core Strategy (adopted October 2011);
 - ii. The Development Management Policies LDD (adopted July 2013); and
 - iii. The Site Allocations LDD (adopted November 2014).
- 29. A process to produce a new Local Plan for Three Rivers is ongoing, with the preparatory work on a revised Local Plan beginning in 2015 with the commissioning of the Strategic Housing Market Area Assessment (SHMA) and the Functional Economic Markey Area Assessment, both published in 2016.
- 30. In Spring 2018, Three Rivers, Dacorum, Hertsmere, St Albans and Watford Councils gave formal endorsement to begin work on a Joint Strategic Plan (JSP) for South West Hertfordshire. By working together, the South West Herts Councils intend to be in a stronger position to deliver and better fund essential transport, health services and educational facilities that local people want to see alongside new homes and jobs.
- 31. Each Council will still be responsible for preparing its own Local Plan but the JSP will provide the platform to consider how the challenges of growth in the wider South West Hertfordshire area can be addressed in the longer term (i.e. to 2050).

2.2.1 Policies in the adopted local plan⁴

Table 2-2: Summary of Three Rivers District Council adopted policies having relevance to Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Assessment

Policy	Source	Provisions
PSP4- Development in Villages (Bedmond, Sarratt)	Three Rivers Core Strategy 2011-2026	Development in villages will be controlled to protect the character, landscape, heritage and wildlife of the wider countryside, and the openness of the Green Belt. It will be designed and inclusive, keeping in scale with its location. Some small-scale development in or on the edge of villages will be allowed to meet local community and business needs, seeking to tackle deprivation in these villages particularly related to housing.
		Development will allocate and release sites solely for affordable housing using a Rural Exception Site Policy approach to accommodate households which contain current residents or have an existing family or employment connection in perpetuity. These will be identified through a subsequent Site Allocations document. The Villages will provide approximately 1% of the District's housing requirements over the Plan period to include affordable housing to meet local needs as informed by the 2010 SHMA, 2009 Development Economics Study and 2010 SHLAA.

² Available at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/neighbourhood-planning--2#basic-conditions-for-neighbourhood-plan-to-referendum

³ However, this does not affect the potential for the evidence base underpinning the emerging local plan to inform or form part of the evidence base for the neighbourhood plan.

⁴ Note that only those policies considered relevant to this Housing Needs Assessment have been reviewed, and that the policies reviewed may have been edited for relevance and/or clarity. As such, this summary of relevant policies should not be considered a full summary of the Local Plan in question.

Policy	Source	Provisions			
CP2- Housing Supply	Three Rivers Core Strategy 2011-2026	The Council will identify sufficient land for housing in the District to meet the Three Rivers housing target of 180 dwellings per year until 2026.			
		Housing provision will be made primarily from within the existing urban area (approximately 75% of total housing development between 2001-2026) and also from housing sites at the most sustainable locations on the edge of existing settlements, in the Green Belt (approximately 25% of total supply between 2001-2026).			
		60% of the housing requirements will be met in the Key Centres as defined in the settlement hierarchy, likely achieved in part through significant development at Leavesden Aerodrome and South Oxhey.			
		In identifying sites for future development, the Site Allocations Development Plan Document will set out an indicative phasing strategy for the development of sites.			
		The supply of housing post-2026 will need to be reassessed at a later date within the context of a review of the Core Strategy taking into account housing needs and capacity.			
CP3- Housing Mix and Density	Three Rivers Core Strategy 2011-2026	The Council will require housing proposals to take into account the range of housing needs, in terms of size and type of dwellings as identified by the SHMA and subsequent updates. New development will also provide a range of house types and sizes to reflect the existing and future needs of the Three Rivers population and the characteristics of housing in the area.			
CP4- Affordable Housing	Three Rivers Core Strategy 2011-2026	In order to increase the provision of affordable homes in the District and meet local housing need as informed by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, the Council will:			
		a) In view of the identified and pressing need for affordable housing in the District, seek an overall provision of around 45% of all new housing as affordable housing, incorporating a mix of tenures. All new development resulting in a net gain of one or more dwellings will be expected to contribute to the provision of affordable housing			
		b) As a guide, seek 70% of the affordable housing provided to be social rented and 30% to be intermediate			
		c) Allocate specific sites, at higher or lower proportions of affordable housing depending on site circumstances, location and density of development. In some cases a target of 50% or above may be appropriate. Site specific targets will be set through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document			
		d) Require the affordable housing provided to reflect the mix of size and type required for future housing, as identified in the Strategic Housing Market Assessment and subsequent updates and Council priorities for provision which is currently for family sized dwellings to meet the most urgent housing needs in the District			
		e) In most cases require affordable housing provision to be made on site, but in relation to small sites delivering between one and nine dwellings, consider the use of commuted payments towards provision off site. Such payments will be broadly equivalent in value to on-site provision but may vary depending on site circumstances and viability			
		f) Permit small-scale affordable housing within and immediately adjacent to the village core areas of Sarratt and Bedmond on the basis of need through the release and allocation of Rural Exception Sites. Allocations will be made through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document.			
CP11- Green Belt	Three Rivers Core Strategy 2011-2026	The Council will maintain the general extent of the Metropolitan Green Belt in the District and where appropriate, make minor revisions through the Site Allocations Development Plan Document to the detailed Green Belt boundaries around the main urban area, to accommodate development needs.			

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3. Approach

3.1 Research Questions

- 32. Research Questions, abbreviated to 'RQ;' are formulated at the start of the project through discussion with the Parish Council. They serve to direct the research and provide the structure for the HNA.
- 33. The RQs relevant to this study, as discussed and agreed with Sarratt Parish Council, are set out below.

3.1.1 Tenure and Affordability

- 34. The neighbourhood planning group would like to understand the needs of the community for housing of varying tenures, as well as the relative affordability of the tenures that should be provided to meet local need now and into the future.
- 35. This evidence will allow Sarratt to establish the right conditions for new development to come forward that is affordable, both in the broader sense of market housing attainable for first-time buyers, and as Affordable Housing for those who may be currently priced out of the market.
 - RQ 1: What quantity and tenures of Affordable Housing should be planned for over the Neighbourhood Plan period?

3.1.2 Type and Size

- 36. The Parish Council is seeking to determine what size and type of housing would be best suited to the local community. The Parish Council sees a need for affordable, smaller homes to suit the needs of young families and those wishing to downsize.
- 37. The aim of this research question is to provide evidence on the types and sizes needed by the local community. This will help to shape future development so that it better reflects what residents need.
 - RQ 2: What type (terrace, semi, bungalows, flats and detached) and size (number of bedrooms) of housing is appropriate for the Plan area over the Neighbourhood Plan period?

3.2 Relevant Data

3.2.1 Local authority evidence base

- 38. It is appropriate for neighbourhood planners to refer to existing needs assessments prepared by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) as a starting point. As Sarratt Neighbourhood Area is located within Three Rivers District Council's planning area, we therefore turned to the relevant Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), which is known as the 2016 South West Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment.
- 39. For the purpose of this HNA, data from Three Rivers's own evidence base to support their housing policies has been considered applicable and relevant unless it conflicts with more locally specific and/or more recently-produced evidence. The housing market evidence draws upon a range of data including population and demographic projections, housing market transactions, and employment scenarios. As such, it contains a number of points of relevance when determining housing need within the Neighbourhood Plan area, and has been referenced as appropriate.

3.2.2 Other relevant data

- 40. In addition to the Three Rivers District Council evidence base, we have assessed other evidence to ensure our study is robust for the purposes of developing policy at the NP level and is locally specific. This includes data from both Census 2001 and 2011, as well as from a wide range of other data sources, including:
 - Land Registry data on prices paid for housing within the local market;
 - Population and household projections produced by the Office of National Statistics (ONS);
 - Information on current property asking prices, for housing for sale or rent, from home.co.uk;
 - Neighbourhood-level survey and consultation work giving further detail. In the case of Sarratt, this comprises the Sarratt Parish Plan Survey 2018.

4. RQ 1: Tenure and Affordability

RQ 1: What Affordable Housing (eg social housing, affordable rented, shared ownership, intermediate rented) and other market tenures should be planned for in the housing mix over the Neighbourhood Plan period?

4.1 Introduction

- 41. Tenure refers to the legal arrangements in place that enable a household to live in their home; it determines householder rights and influences the level of payments to be made in return for these rights. Broadly speaking, tenure falls into two categories, Affordable Housing and market housing, depending on whether the household benefits from a subsidy of some sort to enable them to live in their home.
- 42. This section will examine the tenure of dwellings in the current stock and recent supply. Then, looking at affordability, it will make an assessment on whether continuation of these trends would meet future needs. We will also investigate whether there are misalignments between the supply of different tenures of housing and local need. Such misalignments can justify policies that guide new developments to prioritise certain tenures, to bring supply and demand into better alignment.⁵

4.2 Definitions

- 43. It is necessary at this stage of the study to make clear the distinction between Affordable Housing as planning terminology and the colloquial meaning of the phrase. In the course of this study, we refer to Affordable Housing, abbreviated to 'AH'. AH comprises those forms of housing tenure that fall within the definition of Affordable Housing set out in the current NPPF: social rent, affordable rent, affordable private rent (brought forward by build to rent schemes), and forms of AH designed to offer affordable routes to home ownership.⁶
- 44. The definition of Affordable Housing set out in the NPPF makes clear the Government's commitment to home ownership, but recognises the important role of social, affordable, and private rent tenures for those not currently seeking home ownership.
- 45. The revisions seek to broaden the definition of AH (which had previously referred only to social and intermediate housing) to include a range of low-cost housing opportunities for those aspiring to own a home, including starter homes.
- 46. In paragraph 64 of the NPPF, the Government introduces a recommendation that "where major housing development is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership". In line with PPG,⁷ the assumption should be that a 'major housing development' can be defined as a site of 10 dwellings or more, and that affordable home ownership includes starter homes, shared ownership homes, and homes available for discount market sale.

4.3 Current tenure profile

- 47. In order to set a baseline for our examination of tenure, it is necessary to present a picture of the Neighbourhood Plan area (NA) based on the most recent reliable data. Table 4-1 below presents Census data from 2011; this table shows the distribution of how households occupy their homes in Sarratt, compared to the rest of Three Rivers and England.
- 48. As seen at higher level geographies, the vast majority of homes in Sarratt are owned. However, the rate of ownership is 10 percentage points higher than in Three Rivers and 20 higher than across England. Accordingly, rates of social and private renting are much lower in Sarratt than both wider areas. Sarratt is, however, unusual in that the share of social renting households is significantly higher than that of private renting households. The relative lack of private rented stock may contribute to affordability challenges for those households who are not eligible for financial support but also cannot afford to buy, and for those who would otherwise be able to rent in Sarratt using housing benefit. The lack of rented supply may also be a contributor to the relatively high cost of renting in Sarratt, which is explored in Appendix A.

⁵ PPG Paragraph: 021 Reference ID: 2a-021-20160401, available at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/housing-and-economic-development-needs-assessments

⁶ NPPF 2019.

⁷ PPG 031 Reference ID: 23b-031-20161116, available at https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-obligations

Table 4-1: Tenure (households), 2011

Tenure	Sarratt	Three Rivers	England
Owned; total	81.7%	72.7%	63.3%
Shared ownership	0.5%	0.6%	0.8%
Social rented; total	7.7%	15.1%	17.7%
Private rented; total	7.4%	10.6%	16.8%

Sources: Census 2011, AECOM Calculations

49. Table 4-2 below shows the changes in the way households have occupied housing in Sarratt during the intercensal period. While rates of ownership are stable, as across Three Rivers and England, Sarratt has seen a significant decline in social renting (possibly due to the Right to Buy scheme removing units from the stock) and an increase in private renting of a similar scale. While social rented accommodation is falling across the country, it is falling much faster in Sarratt, meaning that the options for those on the lowest incomes are becoming scarcer faster than elsewhere. Rate of private renting have not increased as fast in Sarratt as elsewhere. The growth in shared ownership is, however, relatively similar. Though it is worth noting that Sarratt's growth rate of 33.3% only represents an increase from three to four dwellings.

Table 4-2: Rates of tenure change, 2001-2011

Tenure	Sarratt	Three Rivers	England
Owned; total	0.2%	-0.4%	-0.6%
Shared ownership	33.3%	47.0%	30.0%
Social rented; total	-14.1%	0.3%	-0.9%
Private rented; total	16.0%	140.0%	82.4%

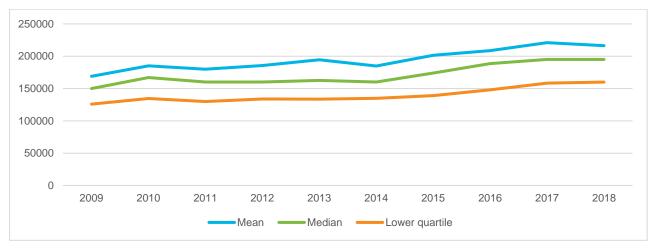
Sources: Censuses 2001 and 2011, AECOM Calculations

4.4 Affordability

4.4.1 House prices

- 50. Before considering the affordability of various tenures in relation to local incomes, the price of market housing should be established in particular the costs of entry-level dwellings. An entry-level dwelling can be understood as one suitable for a household comprising two or three individuals. In order to be in conformity with Government guidance on overcrowding, such a home would require three habitable rooms (i.e. a flat or house with one or two bedrooms). Entry-level properties can therefore also be understood as one or two-bedroom flats/houses.
- 51. Figure 4-1 below examines selected measures of house prices in Sarratt. It shows that house prices in all categories have steadily but gently increased over the 10-year period, leading to a gradual decline in affordability.

Figure 4-1: Average house prices Sarratt between 2009 and 2018



Source: Land Registry PPD

52. Table 4-3 below breaks down house prices by type of house, as recorded by Land Registry Price Paid Data (PPD). From this it is clear that the detached houses that make up nearly 60% of all homes in Sarratt are the most expensive house type by far. Semi-detached houses, however, have appreciated in price the fastest. The price evolution of flats over time has been relatively volatile. This is due to the fact that there are only 52 flats in the NA, so the average sales price in each year is highly skewed by which particular flats happen to be sold in a given year.

Table 4-3: House prices by type in the Sarratt plan area, 2008-2017

Туре	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	Growth
Detached	£254,453	£282,581	£260,702	£261,742	£302,818	£287,290	£304,947	£300,250	£329,931	£311,917	22.6%
Semi-detached	£162,524	£177,820	£170,530	£163,859	£176,700	£177,229	£191,348	£193,232	£211,232	£215,623	32.7%
Terraced	£142,587	£153,784	£153,411	£150,591	£148,414	£156,641	£161,676	£160,857	£171,507	£178,952	25.5%
Flats	£104,206	£110,773	£123,064	£111,381	£110,215	£110,824	£118,357	£115,069	£113,854	£107,239	2.9%
All Types	£168,924	£185,038	£180,000	£185,574	£194,537	£184,828	£201,454	£208,540	£220,975	£216,271	28.0%

Source: Land Registry PPD

4.4.2 Income

- 53. Household incomes determine the ability of households to exercise choice in the housing market, and consequently the level of need for affordable housing products. As such, two sources of data for household incomes in the NA have been used.
- 54. The first is locally specific but limited to the median total household income. This is the average household income estimates published by ONS at the level of the Middle-layer Super Output Area (MSOA). In the case of Sarratt the MSOA most suitable for use as a proxy for the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary is E02004958. Further details on the extent of this MSOA, including a map, and why it was selected as a proxy for the Neighbourhood Plan area, are set out in Appendix A.
- 55. The median gross annual household income across the MSOA in 2015/16 was £59,200.
- 56. The second source of data provides the Lower Quartile (LQ) average income that is helpful for understanding affordability challenges among those with lower than average incomes, but it is only available at district level and so is less locally-specific. It is derived from ONS annual estimates of paid hours worked and earnings for UK employees to local authority level in 2018.
- 57. Three Rivers's gross LQ annual income for 2018 was £15,815. This is the LQ income before taxes (or benefits) for individual earners and so only correlates with the measure of household incomes above for single-person households. To estimate the income of LQ-earning households with two earners, the annual income is doubled, to £31,630.

4.4.3 Affordability Thresholds

- 58. In order to gain a clearer understanding of local affordability, it is also useful to understand what levels of income are required to afford different tenures. This is done using 'affordability thresholds'. Purchase thresholds denote the standard household income needed to access mortgage products, and income thresholds denote the maximum share of a family's income that should be spent on accommodation costs.
- 59. Thresholds have been determined for: entry-level market purchase; entry-level private rent; shared ownership at 25%, 50%, and 75%; affordable rent set at 80% of private rents, and social rent. These calculations are detailed in Appendix A. The key assumptions made in assessing the affordability of different tenures are explained alongside the calculations, but is worth noting here that we have assumed that the maximum percentage of household income that should be spent on rent is 30% and that mortgage financing will be offered at a maximum of 3.5 times household income. These assumptions will not apply in all circumstances, and it is perhaps more realistic to expect that most households will spend a higher percentage than 30% of their incomes on housing costs.
- 60. Table 4-4 below shows the annual cost of different tenures and the income and deposit required to support these costs within Sarratt.

Table 4-4: Affordability thresholds in Sarratt

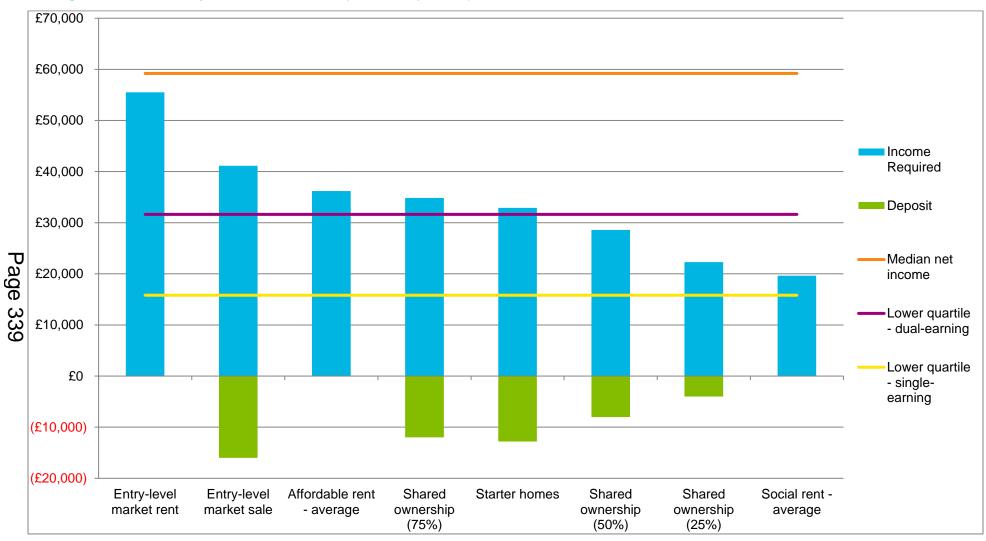
Tenure	Cost of purchase	Annual rent	Income required	Deposit required
Entry-level market rent		£16,668	£55,504	
Entry-level market sale	£160,000		£41,143	£16,000
Affordable rent – 2 bed		£10,866	£36,184	
Shared ownership (75%)	£120,000	£1,000	£34,857	£12,000
Starter Homes	£128,000		£32,914	£12,800
Shared ownership (50%)	£80,000	£2,000	£28,570	£8,000
Shared ownership (25%)	£40,000	£3,000	£22,286	£4,000
Social rent – 2 bed		£5,895	£19,629	

Source: AECOM Calculations

- 61. The income required to afford the different tenures is then benchmarked, in Figure 4-2 below, against the three measurements of household income set out previously. These are the median gross household income for the local area at £59,200 and the lower quartile gross household earnings for Three Rivers at £15,815 for single-person households and £31,630 for dual-earning households.
- 62. Looking at the affordability thresholds set out in the table and graph, it is apparent that single-earning households on lower quartile incomes are unable to afford any of the housing tenures under consideration. However, the lower quartile income data is gross, and therefore does not reflect housing benefits or other forms of financial assistance. For this reason it is possible that many such single-person households would also be able to meet their housing needs in 1 bedroom social rented dwellings or privately rented rooms in shared houses using housing benefit (though neither appear to be well-supplied in Sarratt at present).
- 63. For dual-earning households on LQ incomes, most tenures are within reach were those households able to spend a slightly higher proportion of their incomes on housing costs. For this group it is also apparent that shared ownership dwellings and starter homes are an achievable option that would also help bridge the wide affordability gap between social renting and private renting (which is unusually costly in Sarratt).
- 64. While market housing for rent is the least accessible tenure, the cost of market sale is relatively affordable, and certainly within reach of those on median incomes.
- 65. Bringing this evidence together, it is apparent that social rented homes for those on the lowest incomes are the greatest priority in Sarratt, while the supply of affordable routes to home ownership (currently very rare in the area) would also serve a very useful function in the market. The continued provision of entry-level market homes should be encouraged, as homes for purchase appear to be within reach of local people, although renting remains expensive possibly due to a lack of supply that would be counteracted if more new homes were put up for rent at entry-level prices.
- 66. Government policy aimed at tackling the housing crisis continues to focus on helping those on modest incomes and others who are unable to afford market housing for purchase, such as younger buyers, to access affordable routes towards homeownership.⁸. In the case of Sarratt, the most appropriate tenure to help implement this policy goal locally is shared ownership, while starter homes also appear to be affordable. As explored in greater detail in Appendix A, the cost of starter homes may be higher still in practice due to ambiguity in the way that prices are set, and it is worth bearing in mind that the price of a lower quartile dwelling used as a baseline throughout this analysis includes existing housing and so may not reflect the price premium normally associated with new build housing.

⁸ See the White Paper 'Fixing Our Broken Housing Market', at

Figure 4-2: Affordability thresholds in Sarratt (income required, £)



Source: AECOM Calculations

4.4.4 Affordable Housing- quantity needed

- 67. The South West Hertfordshire SHMA (2016) provides evidence on the need for Affordable Housing within Three Rivers. This study identified the need for 357 affordable homes per annum in Three Rivers from 2013-2036. This figure can be pro-rated to Sarratt (at a rate of 2.12%, which is the percentage of the Three Rivers population who live in the NA) and equates to 7.6 affordable homes per annum.
- 68. AECOM's review of this SHMA suggests that the Affordable Housing need identified is focused on households living in unsuitable housing and unable to afford to rent in the market. There is some additional analysis on the role of intermediate housing but the SHMA does not quantify the need (or rather, potential demand) for Affordable Housing from households who can afford to rent but cannot afford to buy and would prefer to do so. The needs and aspirations of this group have become a priority of Government in recent years and is now reflected in revisions to the NPPF which include affordable home ownership products within the definition of Affordable Housing.
- 69. In order to provide an estimate for those who cannot afford to buy in the market in Sarratt, to complement the SHMA's calculation for those who require affordable rented products, AECOM has produced an additional estimate.
- 70. Table 4-5 estimates the number of households who might need affordable home ownership. This is a simplified assessment of the needs of these households but considered reasonable and proportionate for the purposes of neighbourhood planning. These are households who can afford to rent in the market but cannot afford to buy and may prefer to do so. These households are additional to the 7.6 households per annum identified in the SHMA (although there may be some overlap at the margins). This estimate suggests there may be potential demand for around 3 affordable home ownership dwellings per annum over the plan period.
- 71. The total estimated Affordable Housing need over the Plan period 2020-2036 is therefore 122 (rounded) affordable rented homes and 48 affordable home ownership dwellings.

Table 4-5: Estimate of the need for affordable home ownership housing, Sarratt

Stage and Step in Calculation	Total	Description
STAGE 1: CURRENT NEED		•
1.1 Current number of renters in NA	710.7	Census 2011 number of renters x national % increase to 2018
1.2 Percentage renters on housing benefit in LA	17.3%	% of renters in 2018 on housing benefit (based on LA proportion)
1.3 Number of renters on housing benefits in NA	12.2	1.1 x 1.2
1.4 Current need (households)	43.9	Current renters minus those on HB and minus 25% assumed to rent by choice
1.5 Per annum	2.7	1.4/ plan period
STAGE 2: NEWLY ARISING NEED		
2.1 New household formation	181.8	LA household projections for plan period (2014 based) pro rated to NA
2.2 % of households unable to buy but able to rent	5.9%	Current % of households in PRS
2.3 Total newly arising need	10.7	2.1 x 2.2
2.4 Total newly arising need per annum	0.6	2.3/ plan period
STAGE 3: SUPPLY OF AFFORDABLE	HOUSING	
3.1 Supply of affordable housing	6.1	Number of shared ownership homes in NA (Census 2011 + new build to 2018/19)
3.2 Supply - intermediate resales	0.3	3.1 x 5% (assume rate of re-sale)
NET SHORTFALL (OR SURPLUS) PER	RANNUM	
Shortfall (per annum)	3.0	Shortfall = (Step 1.5 + Step 2.4) – 3.2

Source: AECOM model, using Census 2011, English Housing Survey 2018, CLG 2014 based household projections and net additions to affordable housing stock. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

72. Affordable housing is typically provided and made financially viable by its inclusion as a proportion of larger market developments, as guided by Local Plan policy, and implemented by the Local Planning Authority. It should be noted that Sarratt and other villages are expected to deliver just 1% of Three Rivers's housing needs overall, and so this avenue to Affordable Housing provision is unlikely to meet the scale of need identified here and in the SHMA.

- 73. However, if the community wishes to boost the supply of affordable housing, there are other, more proactive routes available for its provision. For example, using community development orders, identifying exception sites or developing community land trusts are all tried and tested ways of boosting the supply of affordable housing above the minima indicated by Local Plan policy.
- 74. It is important to state there is no policy or legal obligation on the part either of the Local Authority or neighbourhood planners for it to be met in full, either within or outside the Neighbourhood Plan area, though there are tools available to neighbourhood planners, as outlined above, that can help ensure that it is met to a greater extent if resources permit.
- 75. It is also important to remember that even after the Sarratt, or indeed any other, Neighbourhood Plan is adopted, the assessment of need for affordable housing, its allocation to those in need and the management of the housing waiting list all remain the responsibility of the local authority rather than neighbourhood planners.
- 76. In this sense, it must be acknowledged that neighbourhood plans are by their nature relatively constrained in terms of the extent to which they can meet affordable housing need, unless there is a specific policy on the housing supply-side (e.g. the identification of one or more housing exception sites over and above those required by the Local Plan).

4.5 Tenure Split

- 77. In terms of the tenure split, it is important to reference Three Rivers's affordable housing policy, as set out in the adopted Local Plan, which recommends a balance within any affordable housing provision of 70% Social Rent or Affordable Rent and 30% affordable home ownership.
- 78. This balance very closely aligns with the results of the exercise above and that presented in the SHMA. Those calculations produced a need for 122 affordable rented units and 48 affordable ownership units over the Plan period. As a proportion of the total of 170 Affordable Housing units, the balance between those figures is 71.7% to 28.3%.
- 79. The recommended tenure split for Sarratt, based on the calculations above and Three Rivers policy, is presented in Table 4-6 below. Each headline tenure category is also broken down into sub-tenures in accordance with the evidence arising from the affordability analysis earlier in this chapter.

Table 4-6: Recommended tenure split (Affordable Housing)

Routes to home ownership, of which	30%
Discounted market sale e.g. starter homes	10%
Shared ownership	20%
Affordable Housing for rent, of which	70%
Social rent	50%
Affordable rent	20%

Source: AECOM calculations

- 80. The emphasis on affordable rented housing is further justified by the fact that households needing social/affordable rent have little other choice and have the most urgent housing needs. This group includes homeless households and families living in temporary accommodation. Social/affordable rented housing meets the need of households on the lowest incomes. It is likely to be the priority for affordable housing delivery in Sarratt, and the analysis above showed that single-earners on lower quartile incomes can only afford social rented accommodation. For this reason the balance between social and affordable rent in the table above is weighted towards social rented provision.
- 81. However, our affordability analysis and estimate of the demand for affordable home ownership also point to the role that shared ownership and forms of discounted market housing can play in meeting the needs of those in Sarratt who do not require social rented accommodation but are unable to meet the unusually high cost of market renting for the size and type of home they need. For these reasons, the provision of affordable routes to home ownership should be promoted. Because shared ownership appeared to be the most accessible intermediate tenure in the affordability analysis, it is weighted higher in the above table than Start Homes and other forms of discounted market housing. Note that the precise ownership share to be offered in shared ownership products is not something that it is in the power of neighbourhood planning policies to enforce.
- 82. While AECOM has made suggestions for the split of different products within the tenure split, though this should be considered indicative as it will be subject to wider considerations of costs, viability and the availability of funding for particular products.

- 83. Indeed, the precise mix of affordable homes at the site specific level will be influenced by factors other than the scale of need. The mix will be influenced by viability considerations, the views of Registered Providers including whether they wish to manage small numbers of affordable homes in a rural location, the existing stock mix and other policy objectives. It is important to state that the estimates of need in this HNA or elsewhere do not directly determine affordable housing policies because of these wider policy considerations.
- 84. The tenure split in Table 4-6 should be considered a guideline for the ideal mix of tenures to be delivered within the NA. As such, it will be a useful point of reference when planning applications are considered but may not represent sufficient justification for the tenure split to be enforced precisely through a Neighbourhood Plan policy.
- 85. Where the neighbourhood planners wish to craft policy that enforces this split more rigidly, it is important that they liaise with the LPA to gather more detailed income and viability information, and to ensure that departures from the district-level policy context have the LPA's support. Another option is to add caveats to the policy in question, to the effect that the precise mix of affordable housing will be considered on the basis of site-by-size circumstances in addition to this evidence.

4.6 Conclusions - Tenure and Affordability

- 86. The current tenure profile of Sarratt is dominated by home ownership at 82% of all households, with the remaining households evenly split between private and social renting. The number of social rented dwellings declined between 2001 and 2011, likely due to take-up of the Right to Buy scheme, while private renting has become slightly more common.
- 87. House prices have grown steadily over the past ten years (to 2018), with semi-detached homes experiencing moderately greater price rises than other types.
- 88. The median gross annual household income across the Sarratt area in 2015/16 was £59,200, while the lower quartile earnings of single-earning households across Three Rivers in 2018 was £15,815, meaning that dual-earning households on lower quartile incomes can be estimated to have gross total earnings of £31,630.
- 89. These income levels are compared against the estimated levels of income needed to afford various tenures of housing in Sarratt. Single-earning households on lower quartile incomes are unable to afford any of the housing tenures under consideration, and so will be in need of social rented accommodation (the most affordable tenure) or other options allowing them to make use of housing benefits and other forms of support.
- 90. For dual-earning households on LQ incomes, most tenures are within reach if those households are able to spend a slightly higher proportion of their incomes than 30% (used in the estimated here) on housing costs. For this group it is also apparent that shared ownership dwellings and starter homes are an achievable option that would also help bridge the wide affordability gap between social renting and private renting (which is unusually costly in Sarratt).
- 91. Those on median incomes appear to be able to afford all tenures in Sarratt. However, it should be noted that entry-level market purchase and two-bedroom market rent were under consideration, but higher value market homes were not. Many of these will remain unaffordable to median earners.
- 92. Bringing this evidence together, it is apparent that social rented homes for those on the lowest incomes are the greatest priority in Sarratt, while the supply of affordable routes to home ownership (currently very rare in the area) would also serve a very useful function in the market. The continued provision of entry-level market homes should be encouraged, as homes for purchase appear to be within reach of local people, although renting remains expensive possibly due to a lack of supply that would be counteracted if more new homes were put up for rent at entry-level prices.
- 93. The South West Hertfordshire SHMA (2016) identified the need for 357 affordable rented homes per annum in Three Rivers from 2013-2036. Pro-rating this figure to Sarratt (at a rate of 2.12%, which is the percentage of the Three Rivers population who live in the NA) gives an estimate of 7.6 affordable homes per annum over the Plan period needed in Sarratt.
- 94. An additional estimate undertaken in the HNA calculates that demand for affordable routes to home ownership from households who cannot afford to buy their own home but cannot afford to rent amounts to 3 households per annum over the Plan period.
- 95. The total estimated Affordable Housing need over the Plan period 2020-2036 is therefore 122 (rounded) affordable rented homes and 48 affordable home ownership dwellings. Given Three Rivers's strategy for housing delivery, which suggests that new development in Sarratt should be minimal, it is unlikely that this scale of need will be satisfied through Affordable Housing contributions from market housing delivery. The Parish Council may therefore consider whether delivering Affordable Housing through other means, such as an exception site, may be desirable.

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96. The recommended tenure split for Sarratt, based on the HNA and SHMA calculations, and Three Rivers policy, is for 70% of Affordable Housing to be for social or affordable rent, and 30% to be for affordable home ownership products.

5. RQ 2: Type and Size

RQ 2: What type (terrace, semi, bungalows, flats and detached) and size (number of bedrooms) of housing is appropriate for the Plan area over the Neighbourhood Plan period?

5.1 Introduction

- 97. The Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan may include policies informed by evidence on what sizes and types of housing would be best suited to the local community. This will help ensure that future developments give local people options within the housing market at all stages of life.
- 98. Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) recommends a consideration of the existing housing provision and its suitability, having regard to demographic shifts in age and household composition, to address future, as well as current community need. For this reason, we firstly consider the type and size of the existing housing stock in Sarratt. Demographic shifts in age and household composition will then be considered. Finally, the future demand for housing by size and type is determined by applying future demographic projections to the way different household types occupy their dwellings currently.

5.2 Existing types and sizes

5.2.1 Background and definitions

- 99. Before beginning our consideration of dwelling type and size, it is important to understand how different types of households occupy their homes. Crucially, and unsurprisingly, household 'consumption' of housing (in terms of housing size) tends to increase alongside wages, with the highest earning households consuming relatively more (i.e. larger) housing than those on lower incomes. Similarly, housing consumption tends to increase, alongside wealth, income, and age, such that older households tend to have larger homes than younger households, often as a result of cost and affordability.
- 100. In this context, even smaller households (those with fewer than three inhabitants) may be able to choose to live in larger homes than they require, and would be defined in Census terms as under-occupying their homes. This is a natural feature of the housing market, and can distort considerations of future housing needs, with market dynamics and signals giving a very different picture to demographics, household type and size.
- 101. In order to understand the terminology surrounding dwelling size analysis, it is important to note that the number of rooms recorded in Census data excludes some rooms such as bathrooms, toilets and halls. Dwelling size data is collected by determining the number of rooms being occupied by each household. In the section that follows, 'dwelling sizes' can be translated as follows9:
 - 1 room = bedsit
 - 2 rooms = flat/house with one bedroom and a reception room/kitchen
 - 3 rooms = flat/house 1-2 bedrooms and one reception room and/or kitchen
 - 4 rooms = flat/house with 2 bedroom, one reception room and one kitchen
 - 5 rooms = flat/house with 3 bedrooms, one reception room and one kitchen
 - 6 rooms = house with 3 bedrooms and 2 reception rooms and a kitchen, or 4 bedrooms and one reception room and a kitchen
 - 7+ rooms = house with 4 or more bedrooms
- 102. It is also useful to clarify the Census terminology around dwellings and households spaces. These can be confusing where different terminologies such as flats, apartments, shared and communal dwellings, and houses in multiple occupation, are used. Dwellings are counted in the Census by combining address information with Census returns on whether people's accommodation is self-contained. As such, all dwellings are classified into either "shared" or "unshared" dwellings. Household spaces make up the individual accommodation units forming part of a shared dwelling.
- 103. The key measure of whether a dwelling is shared or unshared relates to the Census' definition of a household. A household is defined as "One person living alone or a group of people (not necessarily related) living at the same address who share cooking facilities and share a living room or sitting room or dining area." On this basis, where

⁹ At https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/census/2011/qs407ew

¹⁰ At https://www.gov.uk/guidance/dwelling-stock-data-notes-and-definitions-includes-hfr-full-guidance-notes-and-returns-form

¹¹ Ibid.

unrelated *residents* of a dwelling share rooms other than a kitchen, this would be considered a single household in an unshared dwelling, whilst where only a kitchen is shared, each resident would be considered their own household, and the dwelling would be considered shared.

5.2.2 Dwelling type

104. The 2011 Census shows that there were 788 households in Sarratt, living in 482 detached houses, 161 semi-detached, 118 terraced houses, and 53 flats. Table 5-1 below shows that the housing type mix in Sarratt is very different from that of Three Rivers and England. Sarratt has more than double the percentage of detached houses – the Parish's most common dwelling type by far – than either Three Rivers or England. Accordingly, the percentage of every other dwelling type in Sarratt is much lower than the two comparator areas. In particular, Sarratt's proportion of flats is less than a third of the England and district averages.

Table 5-1: Accommodation type (households), Sarratt 2011

Dwelling type		Sarratt	Three Rivers	England
Whole house or bungalow	Detached	57.8%	26.3%	22.4%
	Semi-detached	19.3%	35.0%	31.2%
	Terraced	14.1%	19.1%	24.5%
Flat, maisonette or apartment	Purpose-built block of flats or tenement	4.3%	16.7%	16.4%
	Parts of a converted or shared house	1.3%	1.1%	3.8%
	In commercial building	0.8%	1.0%	1.0%

Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

5.2.3 Dwelling size

105. Table 5-2 below sets out the distribution of the number of rooms by household space. The housing stock in Sarratt is characterised by generally larger dwellings than that of Three Rivers, with greater proportions than the district of all size categories with seven or more rooms, and lower proportions of two- to six- room dwellings. Most striking is the percentage of dwellings with nine or more rooms, of which Sarratt has more than double than the district.

Table 5-2: Number of rooms per household in Sarratt, 2011

	2011	2011
Number of Rooms	Sarratt	Three Rivers
1 Room	0.0%	0.4%
2 Rooms	0.6%	2.1%
3 Rooms	7.4%	9.6%
4 Rooms	10.7%	17.6%
5 Rooms	14.5%	21.5%
6 Rooms	17.6%	19.2%
7 Rooms	13.2%	10.9%
8 Rooms or more	11.2%	7.8%
9 Rooms or more	24.9%	10.8%

Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

106. It is also relevant to consider how the number of rooms occupied by households changed between the 2001 and 2011 Censuses. The evolution of Sarratt's dwelling mix in terms of size again diverges strongly from trends observed for the wider geographies of Three Rivers and England. One notable change from the 2001 Census is that Sarratt's proportion of two-room dwellings decreased by 16.7%, whereas the comparator geographies saw notable growth in this category. However, a similar trend was observed for five-room dwellings. It is remarkable overall how many dwelling size categories experienced a decrease between 2001 and 2011 in Sarratt. This is most likely due to a low rate of new building, combined with the extension and reconfiguration of existing dwellings.

Table 5-3: Rates of change in number of rooms per household in Sarratt, 2001-2011

Number of Rooms	Sarratt	Three Rivers	England
1 Room	0.0%	-18.6%	-5.2%
2 Rooms	-16.7%	17.3%	24.2%
3 Rooms	18.4%	20.4%	20.4%
4 Rooms	-13.4%	0.3%	3.5%
5 Rooms	-24.0%	-2.1%	-1.8%
6 Rooms	1.5%	-5.9%	2.1%
7 Rooms	-13.3%	13.2%	17.9%
8 Rooms or more	19.3%	21.2%	29.8%

Source: ONS 2001-2011, AECOM Calculations

107. Returning to the most recent Census data, it is also useful to consider data pertaining to the number of bedrooms in each dwelling. Table 5-4 below summarises the proportion of households occupying each size of home in terms of the number of bedrooms. This data further emphasises the fact that dwellings in Sarratt are generally larger than those across Three Rivers and England as a whole.

Table 5-4: Number of bedrooms in household spaces in Sarratt, 2011

Bedrooms	Sarratt		Three River	S	England	
All categories: no. of bedrooms	788	100.0%	35,108	100.0%	22,063,368	100.0%
No. bedrooms	0	0.0%	55	0.2%	54,938	0.2%
1 bedroom	58	7.4%	3,848	11.0%	2,593,893	11.8%
2 bedrooms	155	19.7%	8,576	24.4%	6,145,083	27.9%
3 bedrooms	260	33.0%	13,902	39.6%	9,088,213	41.2%
4 bedrooms	196	24.9%	5,974	17.0%	3,166,531	14.4%
5 or more bedrooms	119	15.1%	2,753	7.8%	1,014,710	4.6%

Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

5.3 Household composition and age structure

108. Having established the current stock profile of Sarratt and identified recent changes in its composition, the evidence assembled below examines the composition and age structure of households in the 2011 Census and in future years. Through a consideration of the types of households projected to form over the Neighbourhood Plan period, and the mix of age groups suggested by demographic projections, it becomes possible to consider the size of housing needed in the Neighbourhood Plan area by the end of the planning period.

5.3.1 Age structure

109. The 2011 Census data reveals that Sarratt has a higher percentage of people over the age of 45 than both wider geographies, and a lower percentage of people aged 44 or younger (see Figure 5-1 below). Sarratt's proportion of those between 45-84 is substantially larger than Three Rivers, whereas it is substantially lower in the 25-44 bracket.

35% 30% 25% Percentage of Population 20% 15% 10% 5% 0% 0-15 16-24 25-44 45-64 65-84 85 and over ■Sarratt ■Three Rivers ■England

Figure 5-1: Age structure in Sarratt, 2011

Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

- 110. In terms of the changing age structure of the population, Census data shows that since 2001 Sarratt's population has seen a modest decline in its proportion of children and young adults (see Table 5-5 below). Most noticeable is the 25-44 range, which shrunk at a rate of more than four times that of Three Rivers.
- 111. Interestingly, there has been only a slight increase in those aged between 65 and 84 as compared with wider geographies. However, given the large population of those aged 45-84 currently, these age groups can be expected to expand significantly in future (or to already have done so during the nine years since the 2011 Census).

Table 5-5: Rate of change in the age structure of Sarratt population, 2001-2011

Age group	Sarratt	Three Rivers	England
0-15	-3.6%	2.4%	1.2%
16-24	-7.3%	13.7%	17.2%
25-44	-14.5%	-3.6%	1.4%
45-64	3.2%	13.9%	15.2%
65-84	5.4%	5.6%	9.1%
85 and over	4.2%	19.1%	23.7%

Source: ONS 2001-2011, AECOM Calculations

5.3.2 Household composition

- 112. Household composition (ie. the mix of adults and children in a dwelling) is an important factor in driving the size (and to an extent, the type) of housing needed over the Neighbourhood Plan period.
- 113. In assessing Census data on household composition, we see that Sarratt differs from Three Rivers in that there are more households with families aged 65 or over and with no children, and fewer single person households under the age of 65 (Table 5-6). Note that non-dependent children refer to households in which adult children are living at home, or which students still call their primary residence despite living for most of the year near to university.

Table 5-6: Household composition (by household), Sarratt, 2011

Household composition		Sarratt	Three Rivers	England
One person household	Total	25.5%	27.7%	30.2%
	Aged 65 and over	14.5%	12.6%	12.4%
	Other	11.0%	15.1%	17.9%
One family only	Total	68.0%	66.1%	61.8%
	All aged 65 and over	13.1%	8.9%	8.1%
	With no children	20.8%	16.5%	17.6%
	With dependent children	23.9%	29.8%	26.5%
	All children Non-Dependent ¹²	10.3%	10.9%	9.6%
Other household types	Total	6.5%	6.2%	8.0%

Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

- 114. Again, it is relevant to consider rates of change in this indicator during the period between Censuses. Between 2001 and 2011 the proportion of one person households in Sarratt increased at a slower rate than Three Rivers, while the number of family households declined overall while remaining stable at both wider geographies (see Table 5-7 below).
- 115. Although the trend in Sarratt is therefore towards more single occupancy of households, it is perhaps surprising that the growth in this category is driven by those aged under 65. This is also the case at both wider geographies.
- 116. Sarratt's population of other household types (such as multi-family and shared households) grew at the same time as that category expanded in both the District and England. This is understood to be due to the rising frequency of house sharing and student living across the country and especially in cities though this trend that is not frequently seen in rural areas.

Table 5-7: Rates of change in household composition, Sarratt, 2001-2011

Household type		Percentage change, 2001-2011			
		Sarratt	Three Rivers	England	
One person household	Total	3.6%	8.5%	8.4%	
	Aged 65 and over	-4.2%	-8.9%	-7.3%	
	Other	16.0%	29.3%	22.7%	
One family only	Total	-5.0%	2.8%	5.4%	
	All aged 65 and over	-15.6%	-7.2%	-2.0%	
	With no children	-9.4%	-4.6%	7.1%	
	With dependent children	9.9%	8.7%	5.0%	
	All children non- dependent	-10.0%	9.3%	10.6%	
Other household types	Total	18.6%	13.7%	28.9%	

Source: ONS 2001-2011, AECOM Calculations

117. Seen in the context of Sarratt's comparatively large stock of dwellings, the trends towards ageing and single occupancy point toward a need for smaller dwellings. This hypothesis will be tested in the sections below.

¹² Refers to households containing children who are older than 18 e.g students or young working people living at home.

5.4 Dwelling mix determined by life-stage modelling

- 118. Recognising the fact that households of different ages may have different housing needs, the housing mix needed to meet demographic change by the end of the Plan period is estimated by an approach based on current occupation patterns that is, the propensity of households of different ages to occupy different types of accommodation will persist into the future. For example, projected growth in households aged under 24 will lead to an increase in the need for the type of housing currently occupied by households of that age.
- 119. It is important to keep in mind that this exercise provides an estimate based on demographic trends and occupancy patterns alone. It does not take into account income and wealth, other than in an indirect way through the propensity of households to occupy more or less space than they 'need'. This approach also embeds existing patterns of occupancy which may or may not be desirable. This is particularly important to keep in mind in areas where housing affordability has worsened because it may mean that many households are forced to occupy less space than they need or want.
- 120. However, no data on housing size occupation by age of the Household Reference Person (HRP- a more modern term for 'head of household') is available at neighbourhood level. For this reason, LPA-level data needs to be used as the closest proxy.
- 121. Figure 5-2 below sets out the relationship in the 2011 Census at district level between the age of the HRP and the size of dwelling occupied. This provides the starting point for determining the most appropriate dwelling size mix by the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period.
- 122. The data shows that while a majority of Three Rivers residents under the age of thirty live in one- or two-bedroom dwellings, the proportion of households occupying these smaller dwellings declines steeply as households age, until they are again occupied by a majority of households only from the age of 85 onwards. Three-bedroom dwellings are the most common dwelling size for ten of the 14 age bands considered here. The occupation of dwellings with four or more bedrooms follows a similar pattern to that of two-bedroom dwellings, but peaks at the ages of 50-54, while the occupation of one-bedroom dwellings is consistently low, in accordance with the fact that only 11% of dwellings in Three Rivers contain just one bedroom.

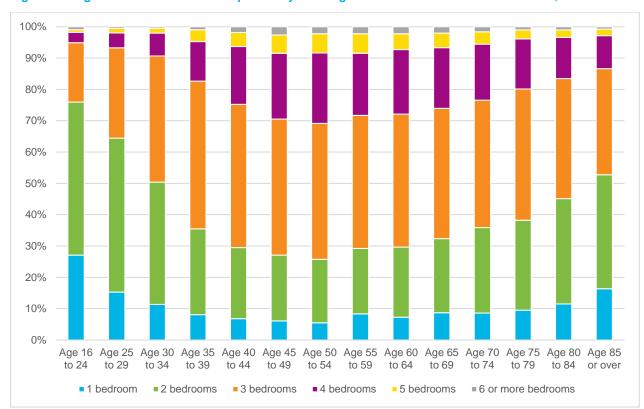


Figure 5-2: Age of household reference person by dwelling size in Three Rivers District Council, 2011

Source: ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

123. Household projections provided by MHCLG are then used to understand the future distribution of households by the age of the HRP. Again, this data is only available at the district level and for the years 2014 and 2039. Therefore, the

distribution of households by the age of the HRP would be in 2036 (i.e. the end of the Neighbourhood Plan period) is estimated and provided in red in Table 5-8 below.

Table 5-8: Projected distribution of households by age of HRP, Three Rivers District Council

Year	Age of HRP 24 and under	Age of HRP 25 to 34	Age of HRP 35 to 54	Age of HRP 55 to 64	Age of HRP 65 and over
2011	584	3,965	14,791	6,344	9,424
2014	560	3,977	15,092	6,134	10,625
2036	578	3,697	16,650	8,249	16,973
2039	581	3,659	16,863	8,538	17,839

Source(s): MHCLG 2014-based household projections, ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

124. It is then necessary to extrapolate from this district-level data an estimate of the corresponding change in the age structure of the population in Sarratt. To do so, the percentage increase expected for each group across Three Rivers District Council, derived from the data presented above is mapped to the population of Sarratt. The results of this calculation are given in Table 5-9 below. It is here that we see most clearly the different growth rates expected for different age groups, with the youngest households in decline and the oldest households increasing the fastest.

Table 5-9: Projected distribution of households by age of HRP, Sarratt

Year	Age of HRP 24 and under	Age of HRP 25 to 34	Age of HRP 35 to 54	Age of HRP 55 to 64	Age of HRP 65 and over
2011	2	39	273	192	282
2014	2	39	279	186	318
2036	2	36	307	250	508
% change 2011- 2033	-1%	-7%	13%	30%	80%

Source: AECOM Calculations

125. To complement the two stages in Table 5-10 below sets out the distribution of dwellings of different sizes according to the age of the HRP as they appeared in Census 2011. This provides the basis for a modelled estimate of the proportion of dwelling sizes that will be occupied by each age band across Three Rivers District Council by the end of the plan period. This is the same data presented in Figure 5-2 above, but with fewer age band groupings used.

Table 5-10: Age of household reference person to size, grouped, Three Rivers District Council, Census 2011

Size	Age of HRP 16 to		Age of HRP 35 to 54		Age of HRP 65 and over
1 bedroom	38.3%	18.3%	7.5%	8.6%	13.9%
2 bedrooms	41.9%	43.2%	20.6%	17.9%	25.9%
3 bedrooms	16.4%	30.5%	42.4%	41.2%	39.4%
4 bedrooms	2.2%	5.4%	20.0%	21.5%	15.1%
5+ bedrooms	1.2%	2.5%	9.5%	10.9%	5.8%

Source(s): MHCLG 2014-based household projections, ONS 2011, AECOM Calculations

- 126. Finally, having established the likelihood shown by households at different life-stages to occupy dwellings of different sizes, and the approximate number of households in Three Rivers District Council and Sarratt falling into each of these stages by the end of the Plan period in 2036, it is possible to estimate how Sarratt's housing stock should evolve in terms of size over the Neighbourhood Plan period in response to demographic change.
- 127. Table 5-11 below takes in turn each projected age group in 2036, estimating how many of the households in that age bracket will want or need to occupy each size of dwelling. This is repeated for each age bracket and added together to arrive at an estimation of what proportion of each size of dwelling will be required overall.
- 128. It is clear that the dominant age group of those aged 65 and over (who have started to occupy smaller dwellings than the second biggest group those aged 35-54) has the greatest impact on the need for dwellings of different sizes.

Table 5-11: Likely dwelling size distribution in Sarratt by the end of the Plan period, based on modelled household life-stages (totals may not sum due to rounding)

Size	Age of HRP 16 to 24	Age of HRP under 35	Age of HRP 35 to 54	Age of HRP 55 to 64	Age of HRP 65 and over	Total households requiring dwelling sizes
Households (1,103)	2	36	307	250	508	-
1 bedroom	1	7	23	21	71	122
2 bedrooms	1	16	63	45	131	256
3 bedrooms	0	11	130	103	200	444
4 bedrooms	0	2	62	54	77	194
5+ bedrooms	0	1	29	27	29	87

Source: Census 2011, AECOM Calculations. Figures may not sum due to rounding

- 129. It is now possible to compare the 2011 housing mix in terms of size with the projected requirement based on the estimates set out in Table 5-11 above.
- 130. Table 5-12 below indicates that, by 2036, the size distribution of dwellings in Sarratts should be more focused on the smaller end of the size spectrum than it is currently, with the proportions of homes with one to three bedrooms needing to increase and the proportions of homes with four or more bedrooms in lower demand.

Table 5-12: 2011 housing sizes compared to likely distribution at end of Plan period, Sarratt

Number of bedrooms	2011		2036	
1 bedroom	58	7.4%	122	11.1%
2 bedrooms	155	19.7%	256	23.2%
3 bedrooms	260	33.0%	444	40.3%
4 bedrooms	196	24.9%	194	17.6%
5 or more bedrooms	119	15.1%	87	7.9%
Total households	788	100.0%	1,103	100.0%

Source: Census 2011, AECOM Calculations

131. Table 5-13 below sets out the estimated misalignment between future demand for housing, based on the modelled preferences of households at different life-stages, and the current stock available in the Neighbourhood Plan area.

Table 5-13: Future potential misalignments of supply and demand for housing, Sarratt

Number or bedrooms	f 2011	2036	Change to hous mix	ing Recommended split
1 bedroom	58	122	64	18.4%
2 bedrooms	155	256	101	28.8%
3 bedrooms	260	444	184	52.8%
4 bedrooms	196	194	-2	0.0%
5 or more bedrooms	119	87	-32	0.0%

Source: AECOM Calculations

132. Note that the changes to the housing mix given above for four or more bedroom dwellings are negative numbers. Because in light of the national and local housing shortage, it is rarely advisable or practicable to remove dwellings from the available stock, as would otherwise be suggested here for dwellings with three or more bedrooms, we have instead set the recommended split at 0% rather than a negative number, and rebalanced the other sizes as percentages of the additional dwellings they represent in total.

- 133. The results of this exercise suggest that, to accommodate the changing age structure of the population, around half of new homes should have three bedrooms, with the remaining half split between homes with one and two bedrooms. The model indicates that no further dwellings with four or more bedrooms are required.
- 134. Efforts to change the dwelling mix in this smaller direction would help to allow a growing older cohort of households to rightsize within their existing community if they wish to, and younger people to be able to move into suitably sized first homes, while leaving enough of the larger existing homes to meet demand from families and the still-prominent 35 to 54 age group.
- 135. However, this recommendation should be applied with a degree of flexibility because it may not be reasonable in practice strictly to limit the provision of dwellings with four or more bedrooms, and in fact, such a restriction has the potential to negatively impact the viability of sites that could help to deliver Affordable Housing or other community priorities. It should also be noted that this report is concerned with demand in the sense of need rather than in the sense of the preferences of potential occupants, which will likely include demand for larger homes. There may also be good reasons to deliver larger properties in the NA as part of a housing mix strategy in the district as a whole

5.5 SHMA findings

- 136. The 2016 South West Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA), having conducted a similar exercise for the whole of Three Rivers, found that future housing need can be expected to shift towards a requirement for smaller dwellings relative to the distribution of existing housing. This is understandable given the fact that household sizes are expected to fall slightly in the future particularly as a result of a growing older population living in smaller households.
- 137. The recommended dwelling size mix for Three Rivers is reproduced in Table 5-14 below. While this recommendation is similar to the HNA recommendation for Sarratt in the proportions of two- and three-bedroom homes needed (27.8%/28.8% and 52.8%/41.5% respectively), the district mix places a greater emphasis on larger homes and a lower emphasis on smaller ones than the HNA model. This is amply explained by the significant difference in the existing dwelling stock in Sarratt, which includes a much higher proportion of larger homes already. It is therefore logical that Sarratt requires fewer new large properties than Three Rivers.

Table 5-14: Estimated dwelling requirement by number of bedrooms for Three Rivers (2013-2036)

Number of bedrooms	% of new dwellings required
1 bedroom	7.7%
2 bedrooms	27.8%
3 bedrooms	41.5%
4 or more bedrooms	23.0%

Source: 2016 SHMA

5.6 Conclusions- Type and Size

- 138. This analysis provides an indication of the likely need for different types and sizes of homes based on demographic change. It is important to remember that other factors should be considered in determining the dwelling mix that is required for Sarratt or on any particular site. These include the characteristics of the existing stock of housing, the role of the NA or site within the wider housing market area (linked to any Local Planning Authority strategies) and site specific factors which may justify a particular dwelling mix.
- 139. In terms of Sarratt's existing stock of housing, the data shows that the proportion of detached homes is more than double that of Three Rivers or the national average, while all other dwelling types exist at correspondingly lower proportions. For example, Sarratt has less than a third the proportion of flats as Three Rivers.
- 140. Strongly linked to this finding is the fact that Sarratt has generally larger dwellings than Three Rivers, with greater proportions of all size categories above six rooms, and lower proportions of all smaller dwelling sizes. In particular, Sarratt has a persistent lack of one- and two-room units.
- 141. In terms of demographics, Sarratt has a substantially higher percentage of residents over the age of 45, and a lower percentage of those 44 or younger, compared to Three Rivers and the national average. Though Census data shows that this trend has been exacerbated since 2001, the current population of those around the age of 65 is likely to result in yet more apparent ageing over the Plan period.

- 142. Seen in the context of Sarratt's comparatively large stock of dwellings, trends towards older households and single occupancy may warrant a Neighbourhood Plan policy intervention to restrict the future supply of larger dwellings to some extent. It may also be the case that the declining number of families in Sarratt is a function of the limited number of dwellings that are both appropriately-sized and affordable to younger families, so it may be beneficial also to encourage the provision of mid-sized housing suitable for this demand segment.
- 143. The results of a life-stage modelling exercise, which looks at the sizes of dwelling occupied by different age groups and projects the growth and decline of those age groups over the Plan period in order to understand what should be built, corroborates this finding. The recommended size mix of new housing focuses on dwellings of three bedrooms (around 50%) and those with one (20%) and two (30%) bedrooms, further suggesting that no further large dwellings are needed.
- 144. This model, however, operates on the assumption that households can and will wish to move freely around the stock of existing housing, which is not a realistic prospect. It is natural, then, that demand should continue for some larger dwellings. The provision of larger homes should not be inhibited entirely (though some of that demand will be met by natural churn within the market), but to the extent that the neighbourhood plan may be used to influence the size mix of housing coming forward, smaller homes should be the priority.
- 145. In terms of the types of dwellings required, some unmet demand for generally more affordable dwelling types presently lacking in Sarratt, such as terraced homes, should be addressed. The size recommendation for two- and two-bedroom homes would help to achieve this. It is also advisable to promote the delivery of bungalows or other forms of age appropriate housing in order to meet the needs of the ageing population and to reflect the fact that other smaller dwelling types, such as apartments, may not in practice be popular market propositions in a rural parish like Sarratt.

6. Conclusions

6.1 Overview

147. Table 6-1 below sets out in full the conclusions and recommendations of this Neighbourhood Plan housing needs assessment, based on the evidence reviewed and analysed.

Table 6-1: Summary of study findings specific to Sarratt with a potential impact on Neighbourhood Plan housing policies

Issue	Evidence	Recommendations
Housing tenure and affordability	82% of occupied dwellings in Sarratt are owned, with social and private renting comprising a relatively even proportion of the remainder. The median gross annual household income across the Sarratt area in 2015/16 was £59,200, while the lower quartile earnings of single-earning households across Three Rivers in 2018 was £15,815, meaning that dual-earning households on lower quartile incomes can be estimated to have gross total earnings of £31,630. Single-earning households on lower quartile incomes are unable to afford any of the housing tenures under consideration, dual-earning households can access the majority of tenures if they are able to spend a higher proportion than 30% of their income on housing costs, and median earning households can afford all of the tenures considered. It is estimated that 122 households will be in need of affordable rented housing, and 48 households in need of affordable ownership options during the Plan period.	It is apparent that social rented homes for those on the lowest incomes are the greatest priority in Sarratt, while the supply of affordable routes to home ownership (currently very rare in the area) would help bridge the wide affordability gap between social renting and private renting. The continued provision of entry-level market homes should be encouraged, as homes for purchase appear to be within reach of local people, although renting remains expensive – possibly due to a lack of supply that would be counteracted if more new homes were put up for rent at entry-level prices. Given Three Rivers's strategy for housing delivery, which suggests that new development in Sarratt should be minimal, it is unlikely that the scale of Affordable Housing need identified will be satisfied through Affordable Housing contributions from market housing delivery. The Parish Council may therefore consider whether delivering Affordable Housing through other means, such as an exception site, may be desirable. The recommended balance within Affordable Housing, based on the HNA and SHMA calculations, and Three Rivers policy, is for 70% of Affordable Housing to be for social or affordable rent, and 30% to be for affordable home ownership products.

Issue	Evidence	Recommendations
Housing type and size	The proportion of detached homes in Sarratt is more than double that of Three Rivers or the national average. The NA is also characterized by generally larger homes than the wider district. Sarratt has a substantially higher percentage of residents over the age of 45, and a lower percentage of those 44 or younger, compared to Three Rivers and the national average. Though Census data shows that this trend has been exacerbated since 2001, the current population of those around the age of 65 is likely to result in further ageing over the Plan period.	Seen in the context of Sarratt's comparatively large stock of dwellings, trends towards older households and single occupancy may warrant a Neighbourhood Plan policy intervention to restrict the future supply of larger dwellings to some extent. The recommended size mix of new housing in Sarratt focuses on dwellings of three bedrooms (around 50%) and those with one (20%) and two (30%) bedrooms, further suggesting that no further large dwellings are needed. The provision of larger homes should not be inhibited entirely (though some of that demand will be met by natural churn within the market), but to the extent that the neighbourhood plan may be used to influence the size mix of housing coming forward, smaller homes should be the priority. In terms of the types of dwellings required, some unmet demand for generally more affordable dwelling types presently lacking in Sarratt, such as terraced homes, should be addressed. The size recommendation for two- and two-bedroom homes would help to achieve this.

6.2 Recommendations for next steps

- 148. This Neighbourhood Plan housing needs assessment aims to provide Sarratt with evidence on a range of housing trends and issues from a range of relevant sources. We recommend that the neighbourhood planners should, as a next step, discuss the contents and conclusions with Three Rivers District Council with a view to agreeing and formulating draft housing policies, bearing the following in mind:
 - All Neighbourhood Planning Basic Conditions, but in particular the following: Condition A, namely that the Neighbourhood Plan has regard to national policies and advice contained in guidance issued by the Secretary of State; Condition D, that the making of the Neighbourhood Plan contributes to the achievement of sustainable development; and Condition E, which is the need for the Neighbourhood Plan to be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted development plan;
 - The views of Three Rivers District Council in particular in relation to the quantity of housing that should be planned for;
 - The views of local residents and other relevant local stakeholders, including housing developers and estate agents;
 - The numerous supply-side considerations, including local environmental constraints, the location and characteristics of suitable land, and any capacity work carried out by Three Rivers District Council, including but not limited to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA);
 - · The recommendations and findings of this study; and
 - The impact of the Government's Standard Methodology on calculating housing need for Three Rivers District Council and the neighbourhood plan areas within it.
- 149. This assessment has been provided in good faith by AECOM consultants on the basis of housing data, national

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- guidance and other relevant and available information current at the time of writing.
- 150. Bearing this in mind, it is recommended that the Neighbourhood Plan steering group should monitor carefully strategies and documents with an impact on housing policy produced by the Government, Three Rivers District Council or any other relevant party and review the Neighbourhood Plan accordingly to ensure that general conformity is maintained.
- 151. At the same time, monitoring on-going demographic or other trends over the Neighbourhood Plan period will help ensure the continued relevance and credibility of its policies.

Appendix A: Calculation of Affordability Thresholds

A.1 Assessment geography

- As noted in the Tenure and Affordability chapter above, affordability thresholds can only be calculated on the basis of data on incomes across the Neighbourhood Plan area. Such data is available at MSOA level but not at the level of neighbourhood plan areas.
- 2. As such, when calculating affordability thresholds, an MSOA needs to be selected that is a best-fit proxy for the Neighbourhood Plan area. In the case of Sarratt, it is considered that MSOA E02004958 is the closest realistic proxy for the Neighbourhood Plan area boundary, and as such, this is the assessment geography that has been selected. Note that while the MSOA is dominated by Sarratt Parishes, it also includes a few other small neighbourhing parishes. As no smaller geography is available for local income data, this is the most robust available proxy. A map of the MSOA appears below in Figure A-1.

Bucks Hill

Sarratt

Belsize

Kings Langley

Leavesdyn

Leavesdyn

Leavesdyn

Charleywood

Charl

Figure A-1: MSOA E02004958 used as a best-fit geographical proxy for the Neighbourhood Plan area

Source: ONS

A.2 Market housing

- 3. Market dwellings for sale and rent are increasingly accessible only to people on higher incomes. Choices in the housing market are driven principally by spending power, life stage, and personal taste.
- 4. The operation of the housing market is, in most circumstances, the best means of addressing the demand for different types of housing for sale. For this reason, it is important that planning policy does not place unnecessary burdens on the market that prevent its ability to respond to demand.
- 5. In this sense, the notion of development viability is essential. It is important not to deter development in the context of clear housing need; to do so will not only frustrate the delivery of new housing but also may deprive the community of resources for infrastructure improvements.

6. To determine affordability in market housing, we consider two primary indicators: income thresholds, which denote the maximum share of a family's income that should be spent on accommodation costs, and purchase thresholds, which denote the standard household income required to access mortgage products.

i) Market sales

- 7. The starting point for calculating the affordability of a dwelling for sale (i.e. the purchase threshold) from the perspective of a specific household is the loan to income ratio which most mortgage companies are prepared to agree. This ratio is conservatively estimated to be 3.5.
- 8. To produce a more accurate assessment of affordability, both the savings available for a deposit and the equity in the home from which the buyer is moving (if not a first-time buyer) should be taken into account. However, this data is not available for Sarratt. As such, a reasonable assumption is therefore made that a 10% purchase deposit is available to the prospective buyer.
- 9. The value of an entry-level dwelling is considered the best representation of the segment of market housing most likely to be accessible to those on lower incomes.¹³ The value of an entry level dwelling used here is the lower quartile average house price from sales data from Land Registry over the year 2018. Though this is not necessarily reflected in the currently available properties on the local market, the larger sample size across 2018 as a whole and the difference between paid prices as recorded by Land Registry and asking prices visible on the market, render the 2018 Land Registry data more accurate for the purpose of this calculation.
- 10. The calculation is as follows:
 - Value of an entry level dwelling = £160,000;
 - Purchase deposit = £16,000 @10% of value;
 - Value of dwelling for mortgage purposes = £144,000;
 - Loan to income ratio = value of dwelling for mortgage purposes divided by 3.5;
 - Purchase threshold (i.e. annual income needed to afford entry-level market housing) = £41,143.

ii) Private Rented Sector (PRS)

- 11. Income thresholds are used to calculate the affordability of rented and affordable housing tenures. Households are deemed able to afford a private rent property if the lower quartile private rent does not exceed 30% of net household income.
- 12. It is assumed that lower quartile private rent equates to the average rent paid in the Neighbourhood Plan area for a two-bedroom dwelling (enough living space for two or three individuals). In order to be in conformity with the Government guidance on overcrowding, 14 such a home would require three habitable rooms (a flat or house with two bedrooms).
- 13. The property website Home.co.uk shows rental values for property in the Neighbourhood Plan area. The best available data is derived from properties available for rent within the WD3 postcode area, which does not align exactly with the Plan area itself but can be used as a reasonable proxy for it. Moreover, because covers forms a larger geography with a greater number of rental properties offered, the larger sample size is likely to generate more robust findings.
- 14. According to Home.co.uk, there are 20 two-bedroom properties currently listed for rent across the plan area, with an average rent of £1,389 per calendar month. This is significantly higher than the median rent for Three Rivers as a whole cited in the SHMA of £963. However, the SHMA data is from 2014, since which time rents are likely to have increased, and is the overall median not the two-bedroom average. Additionally the rural WD3 rural area has higher housing costs than the wider district, which includes urban centres with smaller and less expensive units.
- 15. It is possible to derive from this data the estimated income threshold for private rental sector dwellings in the Neighbourhood Plan area; the calculation is therefore:
 - Annual rent = £1,389 x 12 = £16,668;

¹³ 'Entry-level dwelling' can be understood to comprise a property that costs the average value of dwellings falling into the lower quartile of house prices in the Neighbourhood Plan area, as set out in the Tenure and Affordability chapter above.

¹⁴ This is based on the concept of the 'room standard', which indicates a dwelling is legally overcrowded if two people of the opposite sex have to share a room to sleep in (this does not apply when couples share a room). See: http://england.shelter.org.uk/housing_advice/repairs/overcrowding

Multiplied by 3.33 (so that no more than 30% of income is spent on rent) = income threshold of £55,504.

A.3 Affordable Housing

- 16. There is a range of tenures that constitute the definition of Affordable Housing within the 2019 NPPF: social rent and affordable rent, starter homes, discounted market sales housing, and other affordable routes to home ownership.
- 17. This variety of tenures reflects an ambition by the Government to provide a pathway to home ownership for more sectors of the population, as well as introducing market principles into the provision of subsidised housing for rent. The aim is to divide affordable housing into a series of products designed to appeal to different sectors of the market and, by changing eligibility criteria, bring rents closer in line with people's ability to pay.
- 18. Each of the Affordable Housing tenures is considered in turn below.

i) Social rent

- 19. Rents in socially rented properties reflect a 'formula rent' based on a combination of individual property values and average earnings in each area, resulting in substantial discounts to market rents. As such, this tenure is suitable for the needs of those on low incomes and is subject to strict eligibility criteria.
- 20. To determine social rent levels, we used the data and statistical return from Homes England. This data is only available at the Local Authority level so Three Rivers must act as a proxy for Sarratt. This data provides information about rents and the size and type of stock owned and managed by private registered providers and is presented for Three Rivers in the table below.
- 21. To determine the income needed, we continue to operate on the assumption that no more than 30% of income should be spent on rent. The two-bedroom income threshold of £19,629 is taken forward for the analysis in the Tenure chapter for consistency with the two-bedroom market rental and entry-level market purchase indicators used.

Table A-1: Social rent levels (£)

Size	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds
Average weekly social rent	£93.17	£113.36	£127.28	£139.52
Annual average	£4,845	£5,895	£6,619	£7,255
Income needed	£16,133	£19,629	£22,040	£24,159

Source: Homes England, AECOM Calculations

ii) Affordable rent

- 22. Affordable rent is controlled at no more than 80% of the local market rent. As we have seen, the annual entry-level rent in Sarratt is £16,668. In the event of a 20% reduction in rent to £13,334, the income threshold would reduce to an estimated £44,402. This tenure is usually only accessible to those on local authority and housing association waiting lists.
- 23. However, although affordable rent at 80% of market rent is permitted, in practice most registered providers seek to cap rents so that they are affordable to those on universal credit, which is the group of people who will be accessing this tenure. This may be done by determining a percentage of the maximum benefit available to a household that should be spent on housing costs: for example, it might be set at 40% of the maximum universal credit amount of £20,000, meaning that affordable rent for larger homes for families would be capped at £8,000 per year.
- 24. Given that the cost of renting is so high in Sarratt, and the income required exceeds that needed to purchase an entry-level dwelling, it is very unlikely that the 20% discount on market rents will be realistic and applied in Sarrat. Because registered providers' approach will differ across the area and is not published, another indicator is used.
- 25. Three Rivers's Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates for 2019-20 are also provided in Table A-2 below. Affordable Rent levels can also be set with reference to the housing allowance that will be paid to the tenant, and this measure is considered to be a more reliable measure of the Affordable Rent tenure in this instance. A housing association would be within their rights to charge the full LHA amount, and so we will take forward the LHA-derived figure in the comparative analysis at the end of this chapter. Because a weighted average is not available, we use the cost of a two-bedroom unit in line with the proxy used elsewhere for an entry-level dwelling.

Table A-2: Three Rivers (South West Herts) Local Housing Allowance levels

Size	1 bed	2 beds	3 beds	4 beds
Average rent per calendar week	£165.50	£208.96	£262.26	£358.80
Annual average rent	£8,606	£10,866	£13,638	£18,658
Income needed	£28,657	£36,184	£45,415	£62,131

Source: http/lha-direct.voa.gov.uk

iii) Intermediate tenures

- 26. Intermediate housing includes homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels, subject to the criteria in the affordable housing definition above. They can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing.
- 27. In paragraph 64 of the NPPF 2019, the Government introduces a recommendation that "where major housing development is proposed, planning policies and decisions should expect at least 10% of the homes to be available for affordable home ownership".

Starter homes

- 28. The Housing and Planning Act 2016 introduced a duty on planning authorities in England to promote the supply of 'starter homes', and to require a minimum number or proportion of starter homes on certain residential development sites
- 29. A starter home is a new build home with a discounted value not exceeding £250,000 (or £450,000 in London); they are eligible for first time buyers aged 40 or younger.
- 30. Whether to treat discounted market sale homes as affordable housing or not depends on whether lowering the asking price of new build homes of a size and type suitable to first time buyers by 20% would bring them within reach of people currently unable to access market housing for purchase.
- 31. To provide a conservative assessment of the suitability of discounted market sale homes, it is appropriate to apply the value we have estimated for an entry-level dwelling, namely £160,000.
- 32. Applying a discount of 20% provides an approximate selling price of £128,000. Allowing for a 10% deposit further reduces the value of the property to £115,200. The income threshold at a loan to income ratio of 3.5 is £32,914.
- 33. However, this method of estimating the cost of Starter Homes is based on an assumption that they will be priced with reference to the value of lower quartile dwellings, with a discount of 20% applied. In practice, there is nothing in national regulations to require that their price is set in this way. Developers could instead set prices with reference to average new build prices or a market value they establish themselves based on their sales prices in the area, both of which tend to be much higher than lower quartile prices. This ambiguity means that the cost of Starter Homes can in reality be much higher than the optimistic calculation presented here.

Shared ownership

- 34. Shared ownership involves the purchaser buying an initial share in a property typically of between 25% and 75% and paying rent on the share retained by the provider. Shared ownership is flexible in two respects, in the share which can be purchased and in the rental payable on the share retained by the provider. Both of these are variable. The share owned by the leaseholder can be varied by 'staircasing'. Generally, staircasing will be upward, thereby increasing the share owned.
- 35. In exceptional circumstances (for example, as a result of financial difficulties, and where the alternative is repossession), and at the discretion of the provider, shared owners may staircase down, thereby reducing the share they own. Shared equity is available to first-time buyers, people who have owned a home previously and council and housing association tenants with a good credit rating whose annual household income does not exceed £80,000.
- 36. To determine the affordability of shared ownership, calculations are based on the lower quartile house price of £160,000.¹⁵ The deposit available to the prospective purchaser is assumed to be 10% of the value of the dwelling, and the standard loan to income ratio of 3.5 is used to calculate the income required to obtain a mortgage. The income

¹⁵ It is important to note that current shared ownership models are only available for new build homes, which are assumed to cost more than this average taken from all open market housing, which also includes property re-sale.

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- required to cover the rental component of the dwelling is based on the assumption that a household spends no more than 30% of the income on rent (as for the income threshold for the private rental sector).
- 37. A 25% equity share of £160,000 is £40,000, from which a 10% deposit of £4,000 is deducted. The mortgage value of £36,000 is then divided by 3.5. To secure a mortgage of £36,000, an annual income of £10,286 is therefore needed. In addition to mortgage costs, rent is charged on the remaining 75% shared ownership equity, i.e. the unsold value of £120,000. An ongoing annual rent equivalent to 2.5% of the value of the unsold equity is assumed, which is £3,000 and requires an income of £12,000. Therefore, an income of around £22,286 (£10,286 + £12,000) is required to afford a 25% shared equity purchase of an entry-level house with annual rent.
- 38. The same calculations are repeated for shared ownership at a 50% and 75% equity share, producing affordability thresholds of £28,571 and £34,857 respectively.

Appendix B: Housing Needs Assessment Glossary

Adoption

This refers to the final confirmation of a local plan by a local planning authority.

Affordability

The terms 'affordability' and 'affordable housing' have different meanings. 'Affordability' is a measure of whether housing may be afforded by certain groups of households. 'Affordable housing' refers to particular products outside the main housing market.

Affordability Ratio

Assessing affordability involves comparing housing costs against the ability to pay. The ratio between lower quartile house prices and the lower quartile income or earnings can be used to assess the relative affordability of housing. The Ministry for Housing, Community and Local Governments publishes quarterly the ratio of lower quartile house price to lower quartile earnings by local authority (LQAR) as well as median house price to median earnings by local authority (MAR) e.g. income = £25,000, house price = £200,000. House price: income ratio = £200,000/£25,000 = 8, (the house price is 8 times income).

Affordable Housing (NPPF Definition)

Housing for sale or rent, for those whose needs are not met by the market (including housing that provides a subsidised route to home ownership and/or is for essential local workers); and which complies with one or more of the following definitions:

- a) Affordable housing for rent: meets all of the following conditions: (a) the rent is set in accordance with the Government's rent policy for Social Rent or Affordable Rent, or is at least 20% below local market rents (including service charges where applicable); (b) the landlord is a registered provider, except where it is included as part of a Build to Rent scheme (in which case the landlord need not be a registered provider); and (c) it includes provisions to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision. For Build to Rent schemes affordable housing for rent is expected to be the normal form of affordable housing provision (and, in this context, is known as Affordable Private Rent).
- b) Starter homes: is as specified in Sections 2 and 3 of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 and any secondary legislation made under these sections. The definition of a starter home should reflect the meaning set out in statute and any such secondary legislation at the time of plan-preparation or decision-making. Where secondary legislation has the effect of limiting a household's eligibility to purchase a starter home to those with a particular maximum level of household income, those restrictions should be used.
- c) Discounted market sales housing: is that sold at a discount of at least 20% below local market value. Eligibility is determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices. Provisions should be in place to ensure housing remains at a discount for future eligible households.
- d) Other affordable routes to home ownership: is housing provided for sale that provides a route to ownership for those who could not achieve home ownership through the market. It includes shared ownership, relevant equity loans, other low-cost homes for sale (at a price equivalent to at least 20% below local market value) and rent to buy (which includes a period of intermediate rent). Where public grant funding is provided, there should be provisions for the homes to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households, or for any receipts to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision, or refunded to Government or the relevant authority specified in the funding agreement.

Affordable rented housing

Rented housing let by registered providers of social housing to households who are eligible for social rented housing. Affordable Rent is not subject to the national rent regime but is subject to other rent controls that require a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent (including service charges, where applicable). The national rent regime is the regime under which the social rents of tenants of social housing are set, with particular reference to the Guide to Social Rent Reforms (March 2001) and the Rent Influencing Regime Guidance (October 2001). Local market rents are calculated using the Royal Institution for Chartered Surveyors (RICS) approved valuation methods¹⁶.

¹⁶ The Tenant Services Authority has issued an explanatory note on these methods at http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/1918430.pdf

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Age-Restricted General Market Housing

A type of housing which is generally for people aged 55 and over and the active elderly. It may include some shared amenities such as communal gardens but does not include support or care services.

Annual Monitoring Report

A report submitted to the Government by local planning authorities assessing progress with and the effectiveness of a Local Development Framework.

Basic Conditions

The Basic Conditions are the legal tests that are considered at the examination stage of neighbourhood development plans. They need to be met before a plan can progress to referendum.

Backlog need

The backlog need constitutes those households who are eligible for Affordable Housing, on account of homelessness, over-crowding, concealment or affordability, but who are yet to be offered a home suited to their needs.

Bedroom Standard¹⁷

The bedroom standard is a measure of occupancy (whether a property is overcrowded or under-occupied, based on the number of bedrooms in a property and the type of household in residence). The Census overcrowding data is based on occupancy rating (overcrowding by number of rooms not including bathrooms and hallways). This tends to produce higher levels of overcrowding/ under occupation. A detailed definition of the standard is given in the Glossary of the EHS Household Report.

Co-living

Co-living denotes people who do not have family ties sharing either a self-contained dwelling (i.e., a 'house share') or new development akin to student housing in which people have a bedroom and bathroom to themselves, but share living and kitchen space with others. In co-living schemes each individual represents a separate 'household'.

Community Led Housing/Community Land Trusts

Housing development, provision and management that is led by the community is very often driven by a need to secure affordable housing for local people in the belief that housing that comes through the planning system may be neither the right tenure or price-point to be attractive or affordable to local people. The principle forms of community-led models include cooperatives, co-housing communities, self-help housing, community self-build housing, collective custom-build housing, and community land trusts. By bringing forward development which is owned by the community, the community is able to set rents and/or mortgage payments at a rate that it feels is appropriate. The Government has a range of support programmes for people interested in bringing forward community led housing.

Community Right to Build Order¹⁸

A community right to build order is a special kind of neighbourhood development order, granting planning permission for small community development schemes, such as housing or new community facilities. Local community organisations that meet certain requirements or parish/town councils are able to prepare community right to build orders.

Concealed Families (Census definition)¹⁹

The 2011 Census defined a concealed family as one with young adults living with a partner and/or child/children in the same household as their parents, older couples living with an adult child and their family or unrelated families sharing a household. A single person cannot be a concealed family; therefore one elderly parent living with their adult child and family or an adult child returning to the parental home is not a concealed family; the latter are reported in an ONS analysis on increasing numbers of young adults living with parents.

¹⁷ See https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/english-housing-survey-2011-to-2012-household-report

¹⁸ See https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework/annex-2-glossary

¹⁹ See http://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160107160832/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_350282.pdf

Equity Loans/Shared Equity

An equity loan which acts as a second charge on a property. For example, a household buys a £200,000 property with a 10% equity loan (£20,000). They pay a small amount for the loan and when the property is sold e.g. for £250,000 the lender receives 10% of the sale cost (£25,000). Some equity loans were available for the purchase of existing stock. The current scheme is to assist people to buy new build.

Extra Care Housing or Housing-With-Care

Housing which usually consists of purpose-built or adapted flats or bungalows with a medium to high level of care available if required, through an onsite care agency registered through the Care Quality Commission (CQC). Residents are able to live independently with 24 hour access to support services and staff, and meals are also available. There are often extensive communal areas, such as space to socialise or a wellbeing centre. In some cases, these developments are included in retirement communities or villages - the intention is for residents to benefit from varying levels of care as time progresses.

Fair Share

'Fair share' is an approach to determining housing need within a given geographical area based on a proportional split according to the size of the area, the number of homes in it, or its population.

Habitable Rooms

The number of habitable rooms in a home is the total number of rooms, excluding bathrooms, toilets and halls.

Household Reference Person (HRP)

The concept of a Household Reference Person (HRP) was introduced in the 2001 Census (in common with other government surveys in 2001/2) to replace the traditional concept of the head of the household. HRPs provide an individual person within a household to act as a reference point for producing further derived statistics and for characterising a whole household according to characteristics of the chosen reference person.

Housing Market Area

A housing market area is a geographical area defined by household demand and preferences for all types of housing, reflecting the key functional linkages between places where people live and work. It might be the case that housing market areas overlap.

The extent of the housing market areas identified will vary, and many will in practice cut across various local planning authority administrative boundaries. Local planning authorities should work with all the other constituent authorities under the duty to cooperate.

Housing Needs

There is no official definition of housing need in either the National Planning Policy Framework or the National Planning Practice Guidance. Clearly, individuals have their own housing needs. The process of understanding housing needs at a population scale is undertaken via the preparation of a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (see below).

Housing Needs Assessment

A Housing Needs Assessment (HNA) is an assessment of housing needs at the Neighbourhood Area level.

Housing Products

Housing products simply refers to different types of housing as they are produced by developers of various kinds (including councils and housing associations). Housing products usually refers to specific tenures and types of new build housing, such as Starter Homes, the Government's flagship 'housing product'.

Housing Size (Census Definition)

Housing size can be referred to either in terms of the number of bedrooms in a home (a bedroom is defined as any room that was intended to be used as a bedroom when the property was built, any rooms permanently converted for use as bedrooms); or in terms of the number of rooms, excluding bathrooms, toilets halls or landings, or rooms that can only be used for storage. All other rooms, for example, kitchens, living rooms, bedrooms, utility rooms, studies and conservatories are counted. If two

Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Assessment

rooms have been converted into one they are counted as one room. Rooms shared between more than one household, for example a shared kitchen, are not counted.

Housing Type (Census Definition)

This refers to the type of accommodation used or available for use by an individual household (i.e. detached, semi-detached, terraced including end of terraced, and flats). Flats are broken down into those in a purpose-built block of flats, in parts of a converted or shared house, or in a commercial building.

Housing Tenure (Census Definition)

Tenure provides information about whether a household rents or owns the accommodation that it occupies and, if rented, combines this with information about the type of landlord who owns or manages the accommodation.

Income Threshold

Income thresholds are derived as a result of the annualisation of the monthly rental cost and then asserting this cost should not exceed 35% of annual household income.

Intercensal Period

This means the period between the last two Censuses, i.e. between years 2001 and 2011.

Intermediate Housing

Intermediate housing is homes for sale and rent provided at a cost above social rent, but below market levels subject to the criteria in the Affordable Housing definition above. These can include shared equity (shared ownership and equity loans), other low-cost homes for sale and intermediate rent, but not affordable rented housing. Homes that do not meet the above definition of affordable housing, such as 'low-cost market' housing, may not be considered as affordable housing for planning purposes.

Life Stage modelling

Life Stage modelling is forecasting need for dwellings of different sizes by the end of the Plan period on the basis of changes in the distribution of household types and key age brackets (life stages) within the NA. Given the shared behavioural patterns associated with these metrics, they provide a helpful way of understanding and predicting future community need. This data is not available at neighbourhood level so LPA level data is employed on the basis of the NA falling within its defined Housing Market Area.

Life-time Homes

Dwellings constructed to make them more flexible, convenient adaptable and accessible than most 'normal' houses, usually according to the Lifetime Homes Standard, 16 design criteria that can be applied to new homes at minimal cost: http://www.lifetimehomes.org.uk/.

Life-time Neighbourhoods

Lifetime neighbourhoods extend the principles of Lifetime Homes into the wider neighbourhood to ensure the public realm is designed in such a way to be as inclusive as possible and designed to address the needs of older people, for example providing more greenery and more walkable, better connected places.

Local Development Order

An Order made by a local planning authority (under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) that grants planning permission for a specific development proposal or classes of development.

Local Enterprise Partnership

A body, designated by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, established for the purpose of creating or improving the conditions for economic growth in an area.

Local housing need (NPPF definition)

Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Housing Needs Assessment

The number of homes identified as being needed through the application of the standard method set out in national planning guidance (or, in the context of preparing strategic policies only, this may be calculated using a justified alternative approach as provided for in paragraph 60 of this Framework).

Local Planning Authority

The public authority whose duty it is to carry out specific planning functions for a particular area. All references to local planning authority apply to the District Council, London Borough Council, County Council, Broads Authority, National Park Authority or the Greater London Authority, to the extent appropriate to their responsibilities.

Local Plan

This is the plan for the future development of the local area, drawn up by the local planning authority in consultation with the community. In law this is described as the development plan documents adopted under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. Current core strategies or other planning policies form part of the Local Plan and are known as 'Development Plan Documents' (DPDs).

Lower Quartile

The bottom 25% value, i.e. of all the properties sold, 25% were cheaper than this value and 75% were more expensive. The lower quartile price is used as an entry level price and is the recommended level used to evaluate affordability; for example for first time buyers.

Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio

The Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio reflects the relationship between Lower Quartile Household Incomes and Lower Quartile House Prices, and is a key indicator of affordability of market housing for people on relatively low incomes.

Market Housing

Market housing is housing which is built by developers (which may be private companies or housing associations, or Private Registered Providers), for the purposes of sale (or rent) on the open market.

Mean (Average)

The mean or the average is, mathematically, the sum of all values divided by the total number of values. This is the more commonly used "average" measure as it includes all values, unlike the median.

Median

The middle value, i.e. of all the properties sold, half were cheaper and half were more expensive. This is sometimes used instead of the mean average as it is not subject to skew by very large or very small statistical outliers.

Median Affordability Ratio

The Lower Quartile Affordability Ratio reflects the relationship between Median Household Incomes and Median House Prices, and is a key indicator of affordability of market housing for people on middle-range incomes.

Mortgage Ratio

The mortgage ratio is the ratio of mortgage value to income which is typically deemed acceptable by banks. Approximately 75% of all mortgage lending ratios fell below 4 in recent years²⁰, i.e. the total value of the mortgage was less than 4 times the annual income of the person who was granted the mortgage.

Neighbourhood Development Order (NDO)

An NDO will grant planning permission for a particular type of development in a particular area. This could be either a particular development, or a particular class of development (for example retail or housing). A number of types of development will be excluded from NDOs, however. These are minerals and waste development, types of development that, regardless of scale, always need Environmental Impact Assessment, and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

Neighbourhood plan

A plan prepared by a Parish or Town Council or Neighbourhood Forum for a particular neighbourhood area (made under the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004).

Older People

People over retirement age, including the active, newly-retired through to the very frail elderly, whose housing needs can encompass accessible, adaptable general needs housing for those looking to downsize from family housing and the full range of retirement and specialised housing for those with support or care needs.

Output Area/Lower Super Output Area/Middle Super Output Area

An output area is the lowest level of geography for publishing statistics, and is the core geography from which statistics for other geographies are built. Output areas were created for England and Wales from the 2001 Census data, by grouping a number of households and populations together so that each output area's population is roughly the same. 175,434 output areas were created from the 2001 Census data, each containing a minimum of 100 persons with an average of 300 persons. Lower Super Output Areas consist of higher geographies of between 1,000-1,500 persons (made up of a number of individual Output Areas) and Middle Super Output Areas are higher than this, containing between 5,000 and 7,200 people, and made up of individual Lower Layer Super Output Areas. Some statistics are only available down to Middle Layer Super Output Area level, meaning that they are not available for individual Output Areas or parishes.

Overcrowding

There is no single agreed definition of overcrowding, however, utilising the Government's bedroom standard, overcrowding is deemed to be in households where there is more than one person in the household per room (excluding kitchens, bathrooms, halls and storage areas). As such, a home with one bedroom and one living room and one kitchen would be deemed overcrowded if three adults were living there.

Planning Condition

A condition imposed on a grant of planning permission (in accordance with the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) or a condition included in a Local Development Order or Neighbourhood Development Order.

Planning Obligation

A legally enforceable obligation entered into under section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to mitigate the impacts of a development proposal.

Purchase Threshold

Purchase thresholds are calculated by netting 10% off the entry house price to reflect purchase deposit. The resulting cost is divided by 4 to reflect the standard household income requirement to access mortgage products.

²⁰ See https://www.which.co.uk/news/2017/08/how-your-income-affects-your-mortgage-chances/

Proportionate and Robust Evidence

Proportionate and robust evidence is evidence which is deemed appropriate in scale, scope and depth for the purposes of neighbourhood planning, sufficient so as to meet the Basic Conditions, as well as robust enough to withstand legal challenge. It is referred to a number of times in the PPG and its definition and interpretation relies on the judgement of professionals such as Neighbourhood Plan Examiners.

Private Rented

The Census tenure private rented includes a range of different living situations in practice, such as private rented/ other including households living "rent free". Around 20% of the private rented sector are in this category, which will have included some benefit claimants whose housing benefit at the time was paid directly to their landlord. This could mean people whose rent is paid by their employer, including some people in the armed forces. Some housing association tenants may also have been counted as living in the private rented sector because of confusion about what a housing association is.

Retirement Living or Sheltered Housing

Housing for older people which usually consists of purpose-built flats or bungalows with limited communal facilities such as a lounge, laundry room and guest room. It does not generally provide care services, but provides some support to enable residents to live independently. This can include 24 hour on-site assistance (alarm) and a warden or house manager.

Residential Care Homes and Nursing Homes

Housing for older people comprising of individual rooms within a residential building and provide a high level of care meeting all activities of daily living. They do not usually include support services for independent living. This type of housing can also include dementia care homes.

Rightsizing

Households who wish to move into a property that is a more appropriate size for their needs can be said to be rightsizing. This is often used to refer to older households who may be living in large family homes but whose children have left, and who intend to rightsize to a smaller dwelling. The popularity of this trend is debatable as ties to existing communities and the home itself may outweigh issues of space. Other factors, including wealth, health, status and family circumstance also need to be taken into consideration, and it should not be assumed that all older households in large dwellings wish to rightsize.

Rural Exception Sites

Small sites used for affordable housing in perpetuity where sites would not normally be used for housing. Rural exception sites seek to address the needs of the local community by accommodating households who are either current residents or have an existing family or employment connection. Small numbers of market homes may be allowed at the local authority's discretion, for example where essential to enable the delivery of affordable dwellings without grant funding.

Shared Ownership

Housing where a purchaser part buys and part rents from a housing association or local authority. Typical purchase share is between 25% and 75%, and buyers are encouraged to buy the largest share they can afford. Generally applies to new build properties, but re-sales occasionally become available. There may be an opportunity to rent at intermediate rent level before purchasing a share in order to save/increase the deposit level

Sheltered Housing²¹

Sheltered housing (also known as retirement housing) means having your own flat or bungalow in a block, or on a small estate, where all the other residents are older people (usually over 55). With a few exceptions, all developments (or 'schemes') provide independent, self-contained homes with their own front doors. There are many different types of scheme, both to rent and to buy. They usually contain between 15 and 40 properties, and range in size from studio flats (or 'bedsits') through to 2 and 3 bedroomed. Properties in most schemes are designed to make life a little easier for older people - with features like raised electric sockets, lowered worktops, walk-in showers, and so on. Some will usually be designed to accommodate wheelchair users. And they are usually linked to an emergency alarm service (sometimes called 'community alarm service') to call help if needed. Many schemes also have their own 'manager' or 'warden', either living on-site or nearby, whose job is

²¹ See http://www.housingcare.org/jargon-sheltered-housing.aspx

to manage the scheme and help arrange any services residents need. Managed schemes will also usually have some shared or communal facilities such as a lounge for residents to meet, a laundry, a guest flat and a garden.

Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment

A Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) is a document prepared by one or more local planning authorities to establish realistic assumptions about the availability, suitability and the likely economic viability of land to meet the identified need for housing over the Plan period. SHLAAs are sometimes also called LAAs (Land Availability Assessments) or HELAAs (Housing and Economic Land Availability Assessments) so as to integrate the need to balance assessed housing and economic needs as described below.

Strategic Housing Market Assessment (NPPF Definition)

A Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) is a document prepared by one or more local planning authorities to assess their housing needs under the 2012 version of the NPPF, usually across administrative boundaries to encompass the whole housing market area. The NPPF makes clear that SHMAs should identify the scale and mix of housing and the range of tenures the local population is likely to need over the Plan period. Sometimes SHMAs are combined with Economic Development Needs Assessments to create documents known as HEDNAs (Housing and Economic Development Needs Assessments).

Specialist Housing for the Elderly

Specialist housing for the elderly, sometimes known as specialist accommodation for the elderly, encompasses a wide range of housing types specifically aimed at older people, which may often be restricted to those in certain older age groups (usually 55+ or 65+). This could include residential institutions, sometimes known as care homes, sheltered housing, extra care housing, retirement housing and a range of other potential types of housing which has been designed and built to serve the needs of older people, including often providing care or other additional services. This housing can be provided in a range of tenures (often on a rented or leasehold basis).

Social Rented Housing

Social rented housing is owned by local authorities and private registered providers (as defined in Section 80 of the Housing and Regeneration Act 2008.). Guideline target rents for this tenure are determined through the national rent regime. It may also be owned by other persons and provided under equivalent rental arrangements to the above, as agreed with the local authority or with Homes England.²²

²² See http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/doc/1980960.doc#Housing

COMMITTEE REPORT 08/09/2025



POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE 08 September 2025

AV Equipment in the Penn Chamber (ADCCC)

1 Summary

1.1 To update Members on actions taken in relation to the AV equipment refresh in the Penn Chamber. A procurement exemption was approved by the Director of Finance under exceptional circumstances as permitted by the Council's Constitution.

Following the exemption, approval is required by Policy and Resources Committee to enter into a contract with the chosen supplier, Auditel.

2 Recommendation

2.1 That:

Members note the action taken regarding the procurement exemption and agree to enter into a contract with Auditel.

3 Details

- 3.1.1 Members will be aware that the existing equipment in the Penn Chamber has not been effective for some time. The existing provider, Carillion, have advised that the microphones and battery packs are now end of life. They are no longer supported or being replaced by the provider. There had been numerous issues with the existing provider and so confidence in them has been lost.
- 3.1.2 Officers did review two quotes from Carillion and Auditel respectively. Officers believed that the best option was to pursue the quote from Auditel,. who are a well-established company that work with many councils for this purpose, including many across Hertfordshire.
- 3.1.3 In the interest of urgency due to the ongoing issues during meetings, an exemption may be considered by the Chief Executive or a Director when there are exceptional circumstances. This applies in the case of the AV system refresh.
- 3.1.4 The exemption was given for the engagement of a supplier to provide a complete refresh to the AV system including digital wireless microphone system, control system for the Chair, 22 microphones with voting capabilities, 1 Chair microphone with voting capabilities, batteries and charging stations, hybrid meeting link, 3 follow me cameras, a new audio visual system, 3 98in trolley screens, 14 speakers and 2 amps, a wireless handheld mic, installation, delivery and training included.
- 3.1.5 The exemption was given under the Exceptional Circumstances exemption as permitted by the Council's Constitution.

3.1.6 The cost of the works is £83,120 therefore permission is required from Policy and Resources Committee to enter into a contract with Auditel.

4 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

- 4.1 The Constitution requires that a report is taken to the Policy and Resources Committee on the action taken in the event that an exemption to the procurement process is approved.
- 5 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications
- 5.1 The recommendations in this report are set out within the Councils' Constitution.
- 6 Legal, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications
- 6.1 None specific.

7 Financial Implications

The costs associated with signing the contract with Auditel are £83,120. These costs will be met from the Three Rivers House capital budget.

Report prepared by: (Lucy Smith Committee and Elections Manager)

Data Quality

Data sources:

Data checked by: Lucy Smith, Committee and Elections Manager

Data rating: Tick

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	X
3	High	

Background Papers

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS



Agenda Item 11

Policy and Resources

Work Programme

No.	Items to be considered	Date of Next Meeting	Purpose of the Report	Responsible Officer
1.	Budget Monitoring Report to 30 June 2025	08/09/2025		Sally Riley, Finance Business Partner
2.	Management Plan For the Green & Stones Orchard	08/09/2025		Jess Hodges, Community Biodiversity Officer
3.	Sarratt Neighbourhood Plan Decision Note	08/09/2025		Marko Kalik, Head of Planning Policy and Conservation
4.	Three Rivers Equality Forum	08/09/2025		Shivani Dave, Partnerships Manager
5.	Three Rivers House Solar Panel Array Extension	08/09/2025		Joanna Hewitson, Climate Change & Sustainability Strategy Officer
6.	Budget Monitoring Report to 30 September 2025	10/11/2025		Sally Riley, Finance Business Partner

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7.	Housing Allocations Policy Review 2025	10/11/2025	Jason Hagland, Strategic Housing Manager
8.	Biodiversity Duty Report 2026	26/01/2026	Jess Hodges, Community Biodiversity Officer
9.	Lendology Report	26/01/2026	Ellie Nathan, Net Zero Innovation Project Officer
10.	Officer Budget Report (2026- 2030) including Budget Monitoring Report to 30 November 2025	26/01/2026	Sally Riley, Finance Business Partner
11.	Budget Monitoring Report to 31 January 2026	09/03/2026	Sally Riley, Finance Business Partner
12.	Cemetery Rules and Regulations	09/03/2026	Jennie Probert, Environmental Strategy Manager
13.	Public Health Funerals	09/03/2026	Jennie Probert, Environmental Strategy Manager

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14. Vehicle Maintenance 09/03/2026 Craig Thorpe, Waste and Environment Manager	14.	Vehicle Maintenance Provision	09/03/2026		Craig Thorpe, Waste and Environment Manager
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