



Planning Policy and Conservation Service Delivery Plan 2025 – 2028

Service Area

**Planning Policy &
Conservation**

Directorate

Finance

Introduction

The service plans are a key component of Three Rivers District Council's corporate planning process. They describe our ambitions, priorities, targets and how each service area is working towards delivering the Councils' objectives detailed in the Corporate Framework [HERE](#). They are reviewed and updated annually considering budgets, performance, internal and external factors, arising throughout the year.

Service Plans are monitored in the following ways:

- Through regular discussion between, service heads, managers and their teams.
- Key Performance Indicator are reviewed by the Corporate Management Team on a quarterly and annual basis.
- Mid-year review of service plans

Service Overview

The planning policy team produce the policies and plans which shape development in Three Rivers. In particular, the service is responsible for producing the Local Plan for the district. This plan forms the blueprint for how we will sustainably develop the district, including managing needs for housing, jobs and supporting infrastructure – for example, shops, community facilities, transport, open spaces, schools and healthcare. The Local Plan identifies possible sites for development and sets out the policies against which we assess planning applications.

The policy team also produce the Council's Annual Monitoring Report (AMR), which monitors the impact of the Council's Local Plan and planning policies. A key component of the AMR is the 5 Year Housing Land Supply update which calculates whether the pipeline of new houses through existing allocations and planning permissions is sufficient to supply 5 years' worth of housing against the government's annual housing target.

The conservation service (currently provided by Place Services) advise on the protection and enhancement of the historic built environment. It is also responsible for updating the district's conservation area appraisals.

Budget

(Table to give topline financials. This will be added post the Service Plans and Budget being agreed at Full Council before being published.)

Service purpose and core functions

Corporate Framework Objective	Service's contribution to the Corporate Framework Objectives
	Planning Policy
Provide responsive and responsible local leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Plan's preparation follows a structured legislative process, including multiple stages of evidence gathering and public consultations, which exemplifies transparent and participatory leadership. • Monitoring the performance of Local Plan policies through the preparation of the Annual Monitoring Report, ensures that the leadership remains accountable and responsive to the community needs. • The council's 5 Year Housing Land Supply calculation and Housing Delivery Test Action Plan help measure the Council's performance in delivering much needed housing. • Collaboration on the South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan, showcases a commitment to broader, cooperative leadership that extends beyond local boundaries. • Supporting preparation of Neighbourhood Plans empowers local communities, ensuring their needs and visions for development are recognized and integrated into broader strategic plans.
Expand our position as a great place to do business	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Plan serves as a robust policy framework that addresses not only housing needs but also economic, social, and environmental priorities, creating a balanced and attractive environment for businesses. • Preparation of Article 4 Directions protects the District's employment areas and town centres.
Support and enable sustainable communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Plan shapes the district's development pattern, ensuring that housing needs and other economic, social, and environmental priorities are met. • The Self-build Register gives members of the local community an opportunity to build their own properties rather than relying on developers.
Achieve net carbon zero and be climate resilient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Local Plan allocates land in the most sustainable locations and incorporates infrastructure that supports a low carbon future. The plan also provides a policy framework that requires new development to meet our net zero targets. • The South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan allows for a coordinated effort in addressing the broader challenges of climate change and sustainability. • The Brownfield Land Register encourages use of previously developed land, which reduces pressure on greenfield land.

Service purpose and core functions

Corporate Framework Objective	Service's contribution to the Corporate Framework Objectives
	Conservation
Provide responsive and responsible local leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of specialist comments on planning applications/appeals in relation to Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas), and Locally Listed Buildings. This service is outsourced to Place Services and paid for through the vacant Senior Planning and Conservation Officer Post. • Designation of Conservation Areas and updating Conservation Area Appraisals. We are responsible for the designation of Conservation Areas which are defined by the National Planning Policy Framework as 'designated heritage assets'. • We maintain a List of Locally Important Buildings (Local List) (over 160 entries) which are important buildings or structures of historical, or architectural, interest to the local community. Inclusion on the List means that its conservation as a non-designated heritage asset is a material consideration when determining planning applications
Support and enable sustainable communities	The implementation of Article 4 Directions reflects a proactive approach to preserving the character of specific areas, demonstrating a commitment to sustainable development.

Projects, Policies and Strategies

Corporate Framework Objective	Project Title	Lead Officer	Project Description & Proposed Outcome(s)	Projected End Date (Month/Year)	Internal/External Partners	Additional Capital or Revenue cost and/or saving
RRLL GPB SC NZCR	Local Plan	Head of Planning Policy & Conservation	Delivery of the council's district plan, allocating land for development and containing planning policies.	March 2026 (expected adoption)	HCC External consultants assisting with evidence base: BNP Paribas, TRL Ltd, Exacom/ESRI, Lovell John, Place Services, Hatch Regeniris, Icen	TBC
RRLL GPB SC NZCR	South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan	Head of Planning Policy & Conservation	Strategic plan prepared by TRD, DBC, SADC, HBC and WBC in collaboration with HCC. Sets high level strategic planning policies, broad areas for growth and infrastructure.	Adoption date not yet agreed. Further Regulation 18 consultation expected in 2025.	SW Herts JSP team, DBC, HBC, SADC, WBC and HCC External consultants assisting with evidence base: DLP, Arup, Havas, Icen	
RRLL SC NZCR	Conservation Area Appraisal (location to be determined)	Head of Planning Policy & Conservation	Updating conservation area appraisals	March 2026	Place Services	TBC

Key Performance Indicators to support the Corporate Framework

KPI Ref	KPI Title	2023/24 Actual	2024/25 Target	2025/26 Target	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target
ESD01	Net additional homes provided	TBC	640	TBC	TBC	TBC
ESD02	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross)	TBC	224	TBC	TBC	TBC
ESD03	Housing Land Supply in years	TBC	5	5	5	5
ESD04	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	TBC	60%	60%	60%	60%
ESD06	Percentage change in employment floorspace across the district (as a result of development and/or conversions)	TBC	+/-5%	+/-5%	+/-5%	+/-5%
ESD09	Vacancy rate for town and district centres	TBC	<6%	<6%	<6%	<6%
New	Produce 2 Conservation Area Appraisals a year	TBC	2	2	2	2
New	Respond to planning policy requests from Development Management within 21 days	TBC	100%	100%	100%	100%

Service Volumes

These are monitored by the service area and not reported on externally. Details can be provided if required.

Description	Projected annual volume for 2024/2025	Estimated annual volume for 2025/26	Notes / explanation for estimated change
Conservation advice on planning applications (outsourced)	TBC	200 applications	
Planning Policy advice	TBC	35 applications	
Consultation Responses for Local Plan consultation	20,000	N/A	No consultation currently scheduled for 2025/26

Risk Management

Our [Risk Register Summary](#) is published on our website and updated quarterly. These include; our strategic, operational and climate change risks.