**Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan Decision Statement (Regulation 18 (2))**

**7th February 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 Batchworth 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 1 May 2025.

## 2 Details

2.1 The Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan relates to the area that was designated by Three Rivers District Council as a Neighbourhood Area on 18 June 2018.

2.2 In January 2024 Batchworth Community Council formally submitted the draft Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan and supporting documents to the District Council.

2.3 Following the formal submission of the Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan, Three Rivers District Council undertook a statutory six-week consultation between 23 July 2024 – 11 September 2024.

2.4 Three Rivers District Council, with the agreement of Batchworth Community 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 Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan should proceed to referendum.

2.5 The examiner set out their findings in the Independent Examiner's Report issued on 6 January 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 Batchworth Neighbourhood Area.

## 3 Decision and Reasons for Recomendations

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 Batchworth 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 Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan to help it decide planning applications in the Batchworth Neighbourhood Area?' will be held in the area formally designated as the Batchworth Neighbourhood Area.

3.4 The referendum is proposed for Thursday 1 May 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 7 February 2025, the Batchworth Neighbourhood Plan can be given significant weight in determining planning applications where the plan is material to the application.