

Local Plan Regulation 18

Newly Submitted Sites and New Policies

July 2025

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Foreword by Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst, Deputy Leader of the Council and Lead Member on the Local Plan and Infrastructure, Three Rivers District Council

Dear Fellow Residents,

Following the change in government and updates to national planning policy, the Council agreed to delay submitting its new Local Plan to undertake a further green belt review and other key evidence that could potentially enable it to submit a plan for a lower housing number than the government says it wants for the area. The government has set a mandatory target of 13,312 homes for Three Rivers over the next 16 years. This is an increase on previous government figures.

We are committed to protecting as much of our green belt as possible. The government's new policies now require us to provide clear evidence that release of green belt would fundamentally undermine its function across the district. Effectively, this means preventing merging of communities in our area, a key function of the green belt. We have already undertaken extensive work on green belt sites, promoted by developers, and excluded harmful Green Belt sites from our last plan, which received large support from residents and community and environmental groups.

This additional evidence work, whilst delaying submission of the plan, gives us the best chance to avoid having to submit a plan for 13,312 new homes. Unfortunately, it had become clear that pursuing the previous low growth approach of fewer than 5,000 new homes was not an option as it would be rejected by the government inspector at examination. Naturally, had we thought that there was a chance of success for the low growth plan this is the approach we would have taken.

We are consulting on newly submitted sites, and a few amended sites, as well as some policies that have not been previously consulted on. We are still assessing the sites and undertaking evidence work to inform those site assessments. We are looking for your views to help inform decisions on which sites should be included in the local plan going forwards.

At this stage, we are not saying that any of these sites will necessarily be in the local plan, merely that they are under consideration. We have set out which sites we consider potentially suitable and where we have some concerns or significant concerns.

Following this consultation, we will consider your comments and the evidence being prepared before deciding which sites we propose to include in the draft Local Plan. We will also make final amendments to the policies before consulting on the whole draft Local Plan that we propose to submit for examination by an independent government inspector.

We remain committed to a Local Plan that ensures we have the right amount of housing while protecting as much of our green belt as possible.

We are giving our communities another chance to comment and express their views on the sites and policies we are considering for the Local Plan before we go out for final consultation on the whole plan. Your voice matters, so please have your say.

So please let us have your views.

Kind regards



Stephen Giles-Medhurst

Councillor Stephen Giles-Medhurst OBE

How to Respond to this Consultation

We are interested to hear the views of everyone including residents, businesses, community groups and all other stakeholders. All comments received will contribute towards the new Local Plan that will be submitted to the Government next year.

This document, supporting documents and representation forms can be viewed and downloaded from the Council's website at: [xxxxxxxxxx](#)

You can send representations in the following ways:

Online at: [xxxxxxxxxx](#)

By post to: Planning Policy, Three Rivers District Council, Three Rivers House, Northway, Rickmansworth, Herts, WD3 1RL

The consultation period starts on XX July 2025 and runs for a period of six weeks, ending at 5pm on XX August 2025.

Please note that Three Rivers will only consider comments by respondents who provide their full name and address. Your name, organisation and response will be made publicly available once we publish responses; any comments made in your response therefore cannot be treated as confidential (published comments will exclude your personal contact details).

Inappropriate, offensive or racist comments will not be accepted.

We cannot consider matters that are outside the boundaries of the planning process and are likely to be civil matters between parties. These include representations in relation to loss of property value, loss of view from property, private access rights, moral issues and restrictive covenants.

Decisions on sites will not be based solely upon how many responses of support or objection are received but will primarily be based on the impact of the development assessed against local and national policy and the requirements that a Local Plan must meet.

An updated sustainability appraisal working note has been prepared. This document appraises the environmental, social and economic implications of the sites and can also be viewed on the Council's website.

Notification of Future Consultations

If you would like your email address to be added to the Local Plan consultation database so that you are notified of future Local Plan consultations, please request this by emailing localplanconsult@threerivers.gov.uk including your full name and email address.

If you need this information in large print,
braille or another format call 01923
776611 Minicom 01923 727303

If you would like this information translated into another
language please contact Three Rivers District Council
on 01923 776611

કામગીરી અંગતપણે વર્ગીકરણ કરવામાં આવે છે અને તેને સુરક્ષિત રાખવામાં આવે છે. કામગીરી અંગતપણે વર્ગીકરણ કરવામાં આવે છે અને તેને સુરક્ષિત રાખવામાં આવે છે. કામગીરી અંગતપણે વર્ગીકરણ કરવામાં આવે છે અને તેને સુરક્ષિત રાખવામાં આવે છે. કામગીરી અંગતપણે વર્ગીકરણ કરવામાં આવે છે અને તેને સુરક્ષિત રાખવામાં આવે છે. કામગીરી અંગતપણે વર્ગીકરણ કરવામાં આવે છે અને તેને સુરક્ષિત રાખવામાં આવે છે. કામગીરી અંગતપણે વર્ગીકરણ કરવામાં આવે છે અને તેને સુરક્ષિત રાખવામાં આવે છે.	અમને ખબર છે કે તમે આ માહિતીની જરૂર છે. અમે તમને આ માહિતીની જરૂર છે. અમે તમને આ માહિતીની જરૂર છે. અમે તમને આ માહિતીની જરૂર છે. અમે તમને આ માહિતીની જરૂર છે. અમે તમને આ માહિતીની જરૂર છે. અમે તમને આ માહિતીની જરૂર છે. અમે તમને આ માહિતીની જરૂર છે. અમે તમને આ માહિતીની જરૂર છે. અમે તમને આ માહિતીની જરૂર છે. અમે તમને આ માહિતીની જરૂર છે. અમે તમને આ માહિતીની જરૂર છે.
સ્થાનિક સેવાઓ અને કાઉન્સિલ દ્વારા પુરી પડતી સેવાઓ વિશે અમારે તમારા અભિપ્રાય જાણવા છે. જો આ માહિતી તમારે બંગાળી, ગુજરાતી, હિન્દી, ઉર્દુ અથવા બીજી કોઈ ભાષામાં મેળવવી હોય તો અહેરબાની કરી સંપર્ક કરો.	સ્થાનિક વિસ્તાર અને કાઉન્સિલ દ્વારા પુરી પડતી સેવાઓ વિશે અમારે તમારા અભિપ્રાય જાણવા છે. જો આ માહિતી તમારે બંગાળી, ગુજરાતી, હિન્દી, ઉર્દુ અથવા બીજી કોઈ ભાષામાં મેળવવી હોય તો અહેરબાની કરી સંપર્ક કરો.

This information is also available on our
website at www.threerivers.gov.uk

Contents

1. Introduction	9
2. New Sites Under Consideration Explanatory Text	15
3. New Sites for Potential Allocation: Housing	20
Abbots Langley/Hunton Bridge	23
NCFS1: Chequers House, Chequers Lane	23
NCFS2: Fortunes Farm	24
NCFS3: The Old Dairy, Chequers Lane	25
NCFS4: High Elms Manor	26
NCFS6: Land to the East of Watford Road	27
Bedmond	28
NCFS8: Land off St Albans Lane	28
NCFS9: Land to the North-West of Woodstock	29
Belsize	30
NCFS31: Land to the South-East of Poles Hill	30
NCFS32: Land to the South-West of Bragmans Lane	31
Bricket Wood	32
NCFS7: Waterdell	32
Bucks Hill/Langleybury	33
NCFS10: Great Westwood Equestrian Park	33
Carpenders Park	34
NCFS11: Grange Wood	34
NCFS12: Land East of Oxhey Lane	35
Chorleywood	36
NCFS13: Catlips Farm	36
NCFS14: Land at Homefield Road	37
NCFS15: Chorleywood Library	38
NCFS16: Land at Stag Lane	39
NCFS17: North Hill Farm	40
Croxley Green	41
NCFS21: Land South of Scots Hill	41
NCFS36: Land North of Little Green Lane	42

Kings Langley	43
NCFS19: Land Adjacent to 60 Harthall Lane	43
NCFS20: Lonsdale, Hyde Lane	44
Loudwater	45
NCFS18: Land to the East of Sarratt Lane	45
Rickmansworth.....	46
NCFS22: Nine of Herts Golf Club	46
NCFS23: Primrose Lodge, London Road.....	47
NCFS24: The Island, land off Church Street	48
NCFS25: The Vicarage, Bury Lane.....	49
NCFS26: Meresworth Care Home, Field Way	50
Sarratt.....	51
NCFS27: Green End Farm	51
NCFS28: Ravenswood.....	52
NCFS29: New Model Farm.....	53
NCFS30: Sarratt Lodge	54
South Oxhey	55
NCFS34: Pinewood Lodge	55
5. New Sites for Potential Allocation: Employment	56
West Hyde.....	56
NCFS35: Land South of Chalfont Lane	56
4. Additional Policy Options	57
Biodiversity.....	57
Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	64
Northwood Headquarters (MOD).....	65
Net Zero	66
X A – Net Zero Operational Carbon in New Residential Development.....	66
X B – Net Zero Operational Carbon in New Build Non-Residential Development	73
X C – Climate-adapted Design and Construction	77
X D – Embodied Carbon and Waste	80
X E – Reducing Carbon Emissions in Existing Buildings	83

1. Introduction

What is the role of the Local Plan

- 1.1. The Government requires local planning authorities to draw up a Local Plan that will guide future decisions about how land will be used. This consists of policies and site allocations that are used in the determination of planning applications once the Plan has been adopted.
- 1.2. The new Local Plan will set out how much land should be provided to accommodate new homes and jobs that are needed within Three Rivers up to 2041, and where this should be located. It will consider the need for new homes and jobs alongside the need for associated infrastructure such as shops, community facilities, transport, open space, sport and recreation, health services, and education facilities. The Local Plan will also set out the policy framework which will be used to determine proposals for new development across the District.
- 1.3. The Government's objectives are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2024). The NPPF places Local Plans at the heart of the planning system, so it is important that they are prepared and kept up to date. It makes it clear that local authorities should:

Apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which for plan-making means that:

- a) *all plans should promote a sustainable pattern of development that seeks to: meet the development needs of their area; align growth and infrastructure; improve the environment; mitigate climate change (including by making effective use of land in urban areas) and adapt to its effects;*
 - b) *strategic policies should, as a minimum, provide for objectively assessed needs for housing and other uses, as well as any needs that cannot be met within neighbouring areas, unless:*
 - i. *the application of policies in this Framework that protect areas or assets of particular importance provides a strong reason for restricting the overall scale, type or distribution of development in the plan area⁷; or*
 - ii. *any adverse impacts of doing so would significantly and demonstrably outweigh the benefits, when assessed against the policies in this Framework taken as a whole.*
- 1.4. Footnote 7 in the NPPF sets out that the policies referred to in paragraph 11 are those in the Framework relating to: habitats sites (and sites specified by the NPPF) and/or designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest; land designated as Green Belt, Local Green Space, a National Landscape, a National Park or defined as Heritage Coast; irreplaceable habitats; designated heritage assets (and other heritage assets or archaeological interest specified by the NPPF); and areas at risk of flooding or coastal change.

- 1.5. It is therefore clear that the Local Plan needs to balance meeting the development needs for the area with preserving land designated for protection such as Green Belt and National Landscape.

Arriving at Additional Policy Options and New Sites Under Consideration

- 1.6. In arriving at the Additional Policy Options and New Sites for Potential Allocation that are set out in this consultation, the Council has taken into consideration the following:

- The views arising from previous public consultation involving a range of stakeholders in the District including residents, businesses, statutory bodies, local groups, and individuals with interest in Three Rivers. Previous Local Plan consultations were:
 - Issues and Options & Call for Sites (2017)
 - Additional Call for Sites (2017)
 - Potential Sites Consultation (2018)
 - Preferred Policy Options and Sites for Potential Allocation Consultation (2021)
 - Additional Sites for Potential Allocation (2023)
 - Call for Brownfield Sites (2023)
 - Three Rivers' Preferred Local Plan Lower Housing Growth Option Protecting More Green Belt Land (2023)
 - New Call for Sites (2025)

Further details of these consultations are available on our website.

- National planning policy requirements and other plans and strategies affecting the area.
- The long-term priorities for Three Rivers as defined by local people and main service providers in the area.
- The rigorous testing of options and alternatives primarily through a sustainability appraisal process, taking into account environmental, social, and economic impacts of choices.
- The Government's principles of sustainable development, whereby development helps to maintain high and stable levels of employment, achieves social progress which recognises the needs of everyone, provides effective protection of the environment and represents the prudent use of natural resources.
- The extensive research and technical studies known as the Evidence Base that the Council has compiled in order to understand the needs of the area and opportunities and constraints that exist.

- 1.7. To date the following studies have been completed to form the evidence base:

- Strategic Housing & Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA)
- Urban Capacity Study
- Edge of Settlement/New Settlement Scoping Study
- South West Hertfordshire Local Housing Needs Assessment
- South West Hertfordshire Economic Study
- South West Hertfordshire Retail & Leisure Study

- Gypsy & Traveller Accommodation Assessment
- South West Hertfordshire Level 1 Strategic Flood Risk Assessment
- Three Rivers District Council Level 2 SFRA
- Hertfordshire Water Study
- Heritage Impact Assessments
- Landscape Sensitivity Assessments
- Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study
- Three Rivers District Council & Watford Borough Council Green Belt Review Strategic Analysis (Stage 1)
- Stage 2 Green Belt Assessment for Three Rivers District and Watford Borough Council
- Three Rivers District Council Green Belt Study Stage 3: New Settlement Analysis

The Evidence Base can be viewed at:

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/planning/planning-policy/new-local-plan#Evidence%20base>

Sustainability Appraisal

- 1.8. Sustainable development is the key principle underpinning the Three Rivers new Local Plan and is critical to the delivery of many of the Council's and community's aspirations. It requires social progress which recognises the needs of everyone, effective protection of the environment, prudent use of natural resources and the maintenance of stable levels of economic growth and employment.
- 1.9. The Local Plan has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal (incorporating Strategic Environmental Assessment) at each stage of production to assess the options and inform the plan preparation and decision making process. The full Sustainability Appraisal¹ and Strategic Environmental Assessments are available on our website and on the consultation portal. Comments on the Sustainability Appraisal are welcomed.

Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment

- 1.10. A key piece of technical evidence underpinning the Local Plan is the Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment (SHELAA). The SHELAA provides an assessment of land supply in the District, helping to ensure that sufficient land is identified for new housing and employment uses across the plan period, now 2025 to 2041, and informs decisions on potential site allocations. It is, however, a technical piece of evidence work and does not in itself allocate sites for development.
- 1.11. The sites included in the SHELAA assessments have been put forward by land owners and site promoters where the sites are available for development. The Council can only include available sites in the Local Plan.

¹ Including additional Sustainability Appraisal Working Notes as we continue to consider options and alternatives.

- 1.12. The identification of potential development sites within the SHELAA as deliverable does not mean the Council will grant planning permission for development. All planning applications will continue to be considered against the appropriate policies in the Local Plan and any other material considerations.
- 1.13. The SHELAA was completed in 2020 informing the Regulation 18 Part 1 Preferred Policy Options and Part 2 Sites for Potential Allocation consultation (2021). Addendums to the SHELAA were produced in support of the Regulation 18 Part 3 Additional Sites for Potential Allocation consultation (2023) and subsequent Part 4 Three Rivers' Preferred Local Plan Lower Housing Growth Option Protecting More Green Belt Land (2023).
- 1.14. Prior to this Part 5 consultation, an additional Call for Sites exercise was undertaken (January 2025) for new sites/sites with boundary changes to provide an updated position on land availability.
- 1.15. New SHELAA site assessment proformas have been completed for newly submitted sites and updated site assessment proformas have been produced where new information has been included or where there have been site boundary changes.
- 1.16. The Council is still undertaking evidence work on the newly submitted sites, and as such the SHELAA site assessments still need additional information. The SHELAA's therefore have not yet determined whether sites are suitable or deliverable/developable at this stage.
- 1.17. The additional site-specific supporting evidence that will be added to the SHELAA's following the consultation are as follows:
- Green Belt Assessment
 - Highways and access
 - Landscape Sensitivity Assessments
 - Heritage Impact Assessments
 - Flood Risk Assessments
- 1.18. Following an initial assessment, the Council has set the suitability of sites into three categories. Those sites that are considered 'potentially suitable', where the Council has 'some concerns' and where the Council has 'significant concerns'.
- 1.19. The SHELAA report and site assessments can be viewed on the evidence base page on the Council's website.

Scope of this Consultation

- 1.20. The Council undertook a Regulation 18 consultation in the summer of 2021. This was presented in two parts. Part 1: Preferred Policy Options and Part 2: Sites for Potential Allocation.
- 1.21. Part 1 of the Regulation 18 consultation asked for views on the Council's preferred policy options that will guide future development. We have considered the responses to these parts

of the consultation and have been updating the Local Plan policies based on comments received as well as taking on board changes to national policy and regulations. The updated policies will be presented as part of the Regulation 19 stage draft Local Plan. The minutes of the Local Plan Sub-Committee meetings where these policies have been considered can be viewed on the Council's website at:

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/planning/planning-policy/new-local-plan>.

- 1.22. In early 2023 the Council undertook an additional Regulation 18 consultation on sites that had been submitted following the 2021 Parts 1 and 2 Regulation 18 consultation. This document was Part 3 of the Local Plan Regulation 18 consultation and set out additional potential sites where development could take place, how much additional development may take place, and when. All the additional sites identified as having potential for allocation were for residential development and associated infrastructure.
- 1.23. Finally, in late 2023, the Council undertook a further Regulation 18 consultation on 'Three Rivers' Preferred Local Plan Lower Housing Growth Option Protecting More Green Belt Land'. The focus of the Part 4 consultation was specifically on residential development and associated infrastructure, considering potential growth options and setting out the potential housing sites and associated infrastructure to meet the Council's preferred 'Low Growth' option.
- 1.24. Please refer to Part 2 (2021), Part 3 (2023) and Part 4 (2023) Regulation 18 consultations for the previously recommended sites for housing as well as the following land uses: gypsy and traveller and travelling showpeople accommodation, employment (including Leavesden Studios), town centre and retail development, open space, and education. Part 2 of the consultation also included the proposed revision of the Green Belt boundary in relation to Bedmond. The responses to Parts 2, 3 and 4 have been collated and considered in preparing this consultation. Responses to all of the different Parts of Regulation 18 consultation, including this consultation, will be considered in preparing the Regulation 19 draft Local Plan.
- 1.25. This is not the final stage of the Plan as we are still awaiting some key pieces of evidence, including an updated Green Belt Assessment, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, Strategic Transport Modelling, and Whole Plan Viability Assessment. Your views submitted as part of this consultation will help inform the Regulation 19 stage of the plan. The Regulation 19 document is the final draft of the Local Plan that is proposed to be submitted to the Secretary of State.
- 1.26. Following submission to the Secretary of State, there will be an examination by an independent Inspector before the Council can adopt the new Local Plan². During the Local Plan examination, the Inspector will consider whether the draft Local Plan meets the tests of legal soundness. A key part of this is whether the plan meets national policy and legislation. The Inspector may find the plan unsound in which case the Council will have to go back to the beginning of the process. The Inspector may pause the examination and ask the Council to find more sites if they feel the Council is not adequately meeting its development needs. They may also suggest particular sites be added back in to the plan to help meet needs.

² Details of the timetable are set out in the Local Development Scheme at:

<https://www.threerivers.gov.uk/services/planning/planning-policy/local-development-scheme>

1.27. Maps of the district including the sites and their respective initial assessment can be viewed in the appendices to this document.

REGULATION 18 PART 5:

Additional Policy Options and New Sites Under Consideration

2. New Sites Under Consideration Explanatory Text

- 2.1. The New Call for Sites (January 2025) allowed for the submission of both residential sites and employment sites.

Housing Sites

- 2.2. With initial regard to the housing sites, national planning policy requires that the Council meets objectively assessed needs for housing (OAN), including any unmet needs from neighbouring authorities where it is practical to do so and is consistent with achieving sustainable development. Councils should identify needs in their area, and respond positively to wider opportunities for growth.
- 2.3. With a growing population, an ageing population and future changes in household make-up, the need for housing within Three Rivers continues to be high. The facilitation of new development is an important responsibility that we have in order to help ensure that future generations can find homes of their own. However, we also acknowledge that this cannot be addressed at the cost of harming existing communities and resulting in unacceptable harm to the Green Belt.
- 2.4. The new Local Plan is anticipated to be adopted in late 2026 in accordance with the Local Development Scheme (December 2024). National policy requires that a Local Plan should plan for a minimum 15-year period following adoption to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities, including the allocation of sufficient land for housing to meet identified needs. Following recent changes to the NPPF, the implications of which are discussed further below, the new Local Plan period will be 2025-2041.
- 2.5. To establish how many sites to allocate over the plan period, the housing need for the district was initially established within the South West Hertfordshire Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA, 2016), which concluded a requirement for 514 dwellings per annum (dpa) over a 2013-2036 plan period. However, the Government subsequently introduced the standard method for calculating housing needs in 2018, which resulted in the Council needing to recalculate the previous 514 dpa target based on the Government's new method.
- 2.6. The 2018 standard method uses a formula that incorporates a baseline of local housing stock/household projections (depending on the new/old, pre-2024, version) which is then adjusted upwards to reflect local affordability pressures to identify the minimum number of homes expected to be planned for. Due in part to the acute affordability pressures within Three Rivers District, the 2018 standard method resulted in an increase to the District's housing need of 101 dpa, to a new total requirement of 615 dpa.
- 2.7. Evidence produced by Three Rivers District Council, namely the Local Housing Needs Assessment (2020), which is an updated version of the SHMA 2016, concluded that there

were no exceptional circumstances that justified a deviation from the requirement for 615 dpa. This identified housing need fed into a 2021 consultation on the draft Local Plan, which at the time accounted for a 2018-2038 plan period resulting in a total requirement of 12,624 dwellings. Taking account of completions (dwellings already built within the plan period), commitments (dwellings with outstanding permission) and windfall allowance (a reasonable allowance based on past delivery for non-allocated dwellings over the plan period), the draft Local Plan at the time failed to meet the target, falling short by 1,705 dwellings.

- 2.8. As a result of this 2021 consultation, a further 18 sites were submitted for the Council's consideration and a further three sites were re-submitted with updated proposals to attempt to meet the shortfall. Of the submitted sites, six sites were considered appropriate for potential allocation within the Local Plan, adding 825 dwellings to the total. These sites were consulted on during 2022/23, within the Additional Sites for Potential Allocation document. In the meantime, however, a number of sites were removed or had dwelling capacities altered (due to site constraints or wider issues), leaving the deficit to the housing target at 1,318 dwellings.
- 2.9. Whilst this consultation was taking place, in December 2022 proposals were made to reform the planning system, with one of the key changes being alterations to the application of the standard method, which would still be used for calculating housing need, albeit the resulting figure would be used as a guide that is not mandatory. The proposed changes also emphasised that local planning authorities are not expected to review the Green Belt to deliver housing, which represents a key constraint for delivering housing in Three Rivers. Subsequently, a low growth strategy (Green Belt constraint led approach) was agreed by the Council, which was consulted on between October and December 2023. This approach delivered below the required housing need, on the basis that the Council could not reasonably meet its targets whilst protecting the Green Belt.
- 2.10. Whilst the approach received a great deal of support, concern was raised by officers that the approach represented a risk due to the low likelihood of success at examination over providing just 4,852 homes over the plan period, or less than half of the standard method target. It was advised by officers at this stage that even a 'moderate growth' approach meeting around 70% of the Government's standard method target would be unlikely to be successful, and that going below this figure would only increase the risk of the plan being found unsound at examination.
- 2.11. Notwithstanding this, members agreed to continue with the Green Belt constraint led approach at the July 2024 Local Plan Sub-Committee. However, at this stage, following the 2024 UK general election, the new Government was in the process of consulting on a new NPPF, with the Minister of State advising in July 2024 that authorities should not submit deficient plans (i.e. those which do not meet their housing targets), believing that Inspectors will use significant time and resources during examinations to 'fix' them. It also sets out the government's expectation that Inspectors will apply pragmatism to examinations only where it is likely that a plan is capable of being found sound with limited additional work.
- 2.12. Having considered the implications of the draft NPPF and the Minister's letter in the context of the draft Local Plan failing to provide sufficient allocations to meet housing need by less than half, it was agreed at the October 2024 Local Plan Sub Committee that the Local Plan should be paused for further evidence work to be completed. This decision was ratified at the

December Full Council where a new Local Development Scheme was agreed with the Regulation 19 publication of the local plan expected in February/March 2026. This was followed by a special meeting of Full Council where it was agreed that officers would endeavour to produce the Regulation 19 publication version of the plan by November 2025.

- 2.13. Following consultation, the updated NPPF was published in December 2024 alongside a new standard method for calculating housing need, which the new Local Plan is now required to be prepared against. The Council are required to plan for at least 15 years post adoption, and as such the new Local Plan period has been updated to 2025-2041.
- 2.14. The newly introduced standard method for calculating housing need has resulted in a requirement of 832 dwellings per annum, or 13,312 dwellings over the entire plan period. This represents an increased requirement of 1,846 dwellings over the plan period, or an increase of 217 dpa, when compared to the previous Regulation 18 consultation. Taking account of commitments which are anticipated to be completed during the plan period and windfall allowance, this leaves a residual housing target of approximately 11,500 dwellings which we need to plan for through site allocations in order to meet the government's housing target.
- 2.15. The Council is preparing evidence that will inform its decision on whether the government's target is achievable. This includes the updated Green Belt Assessment that considers the impact of proposed development on the Green Belt, and the Transport Assessment that considers the impact of development on the transport network.
- 2.16. The Council undertook a call for sites in January 2025, asking landowners and developers to come forward with potential sites that we have not yet considered. This exercise helps to both bring previously unconsidered sites forward to contribute towards meeting housing need, and also demonstrates that the Council has considered all options available.
- 2.17. The call for sites process yielded a total of 36 sites for consideration (34 residential sites and two employment sites), which are presented for consultation within this document. All sites received have been initially assessed through the SHELAA (Strategic Housing and Employment Land Availability Assessment) which forms part of this consultation. There remains outstanding information that needs to be considered before the SHELAA's are completed. As such the SHELAA's have not concluded whether sites are suitable or deliverable/developable. Rather, they have been split into three categories: 'potentially suitable', 'some concerns' and 'significant concerns'.
- 2.18. Following the consultation and completion of outstanding evidence work the SHELAA's will be updated prior to informing decisions on which sites should be included in the final Regulation 19 draft plan.
- 2.19. The sites consulted on in this consultation will then be compared against existing sites when compiling a draft list of suitable sites. Once this assessment is completed, an updated SHELAA report will be produced covering all the sites assessed throughout the whole process, thereby covering all sites which are planned to contribute towards the Council's identified housing need, and those that are being rejected by the Council.

- 2.20. It is important to take into consideration that the updated 2024 NPPF has put more emphasis on the need for local authorities to update and review Green Belt boundaries where they cannot meet their identified need for homes, commercial or other developments without Green Belt release. The NPPF states at Paragraph 146 that exceptional circumstances for Green Belt release include instances where an authority cannot meet its identified development needs through other means. If that is the case, authorities should review Green Belt boundaries to meet those needs in full, unless doing so would fundamentally undermine the purposes (taken together) of the remaining Green Belt, when considered across the area of the plan as a whole.
- 2.21. Given that our housing needs cannot be met in full without releasing Green Belt land, we have to undertake a Green Belt Review to assess whether altering Green Belt boundaries would fundamentally undermine the purposes of the remaining Green Belt, when considered across the area of the plan. If it is considered that Green Belt land should be released, this would be undertaken using a sequential approach. Accordingly, some of the sites promoted by developers are located within the Green Belt and are subject to the findings of the Green Belt review.
- 2.22. It should be noted that the indicative dwelling capacities have been calculated using the Council's draft housing density policy of 50 dwellings per hectare on the developable area of the site (subject to site constraints). As such it may differ to the dwelling numbers put forward by the promoter of the site, which can be viewed in the SHELAA forms. The Council has chosen this high density level in order to make efficient use of land and avoid the release of more Green Belt land than required to meet housing needs.
- 2.23. Site NCFS33 (Oxhey Park Golf Centre, Prestwick Road) was submitted as part of the call for sites process. The site is owned by Three Rivers District Council but was not promoted by the Council. The site is not available for development and therefore is not being progressed in the emerging Local Plan and does not form part of this consultation.

Employment Sites

- 2.24. With respect to employment sites, in addition to providing a significant increase in the quantum of new housing delivered in line with the Government's new standard method, the economic development of the District also needs to be considered. This includes meeting the projected need for a range of employment uses including office uses; industry and warehousing uses; public and community uses; leisure and tourism uses; and main town centre uses.
- 2.25. Three Rivers has a thriving economy which has been growing at a strong rate supported by falling levels of unemployment. The South West Herts Economic Study (2024) (SWHES) concludes that no new office space and the land associated with it is required over either the 2021-41 or 2041-50 periods. The report found that as of July 2023 there was 162,000 sqm of available office space in south-west Hertfordshire, of which 124,000 sqm was identified as vacant. There is also a further 36,000 sqm of office space commitments (development with planning permission) in the District. Accordingly, it is not necessary to plan for further office space via Local Plan site allocations. However, existing employment allocations will remain in

place protecting the employment uses across the District. These are supported by an Article 4 Direction that protects existing employment and town centre uses.

- 2.26. Two employment sites were submitted to the call for sites. These are NCFS35: Land South of Chalfont Lane and NCFS5: Land off Bedmond Road – Data Centre. NCFS5 had an outline application 23/1068/OUT for construction of a Data centre and creation of a country park refused on 25th January 2024. The decision has been appealed and an inquiry held in October 2024. The site was approved by the Secretary of State on 12/05/25. This site is therefore not included in this consultation as it is already coming forwards through the planning application process.

3. New Sites for Potential Allocation: Housing

- 3.1. The potential housing site allocations under consideration from the New Call for Sites, including both brownfield and Green Belt sites, are shown in site tables below for each settlement area, as listed below:

Abbots Langley/Hunton Bridge
Bedmond
Belsize
Bricket Wood
Bucks Hill/Langleybury
Carpenders Park
Chorleywood
Croxley Green
Kings Langley
Loudwater
Rickmansworth
Sarratt
South Oxhey
West Hyde

- 3.2. The site tables for the potential housing allocations include the following information:

- Site reference, name and map
- Site size (ha)
- Current use
- Indicative dwelling capacity
- Information on whether or not the site is located in the Green Belt and whether its allocation would require removal of the site from Green Belt
- Whether the site represents greenfield or brownfield land
- Anticipated phasing for development (1-5 years, 6-10 years, 11-15 years and 16 years plus 6); this indicative timescale is based on ownership, physical limitations or constraints and the amount of time likely to be taken to develop the site in full.
- An initial assessment of suitability, whether the site is considered potentially suitable, or whether we have some concerns or significant concerns.
- Site specific requirements/measures

- 3.3. The comments section in the site tables set out site-specific requirements and/or measures that would need to be addressed in proposals for the sites. It should be noted that these are in addition to matters set out in the detailed SHELAA, available to view as part of this consultation. The site-specific requirements/measures do not represent an exhaustive list, but instead seek to aid future considerations by identifying key constraints and considerations which are specific to sites. All future proposals would need to comply with the full suite of policies in the Local Plan.

- 3.4. The site tables for the 34 potential housing allocations are set out below. Each site has been assessed for its initial suitability to be taken forward in the Local Plan. This initial suitability is labelled as “Potentially Suitable”, “Some Concerns” and “Significant

Concerns”. Those considered to be “Potentially Suitable” are the most likely sites to be taken forward within the Local Plan. Sites with “Some Concerns” may be taken forward if the issues that have arisen from the initial assessments are resolved. Those with “Significant Concerns” are unlikely to be taken forward.

3.5. It should be noted that this does not mean that a potentially suitable site, or any other site in this consultation will necessarily be taken forward, just that it is under consideration as a site that has potential to be taken forward. There is additional information that will be gathered through this consultation and from further evidence work that will inform future decisions on which sites will come forwards. This includes information on Green Belt, highways and access, landscape sensitivity, heritage, and flooding.

3.6. Sites which have not been taken forward in previous Regulation 18 stages are set out below for information:

- Regulation 18 Part Two: Sites for Potential Allocation 2021: <https://cdn.threerivers.gov.uk/files/2023/01/67c617a0-9e6e-11ed-8d80-6dc425ce7e94-appendix-2-sites-not-taken-forward-compressed.pdf>
- Regulation 18 Part Three: Additional Sites for Potential Allocation 2021: <https://cdn.threerivers.gov.uk/files/2023/03/c3fe1070-ceed-11ed-8ef9-5d849f65f7b4-appendix-1-sites-not-being-taken-forward-regulation-18-additional-sites-doc.pdf>
- Regulation 18 Part Four: Three Rivers' Preferred Local Plan Lower Housing Growth Option – Protecting More Green Belt Land: <https://cdn.threerivers.gov.uk/files/2023/10/4fc89780-74b6-11ee-b56c-7b53d1ba03b1-Appendix%201%20-%20Sites%20Not%20Proposed%20for%20Development%20by%20TRDC.pdf>

3.7. A summary of the sites within the following section is provided below for ease of reference:

Site Ref.	Site Name	Initial Classification	Dwellings
NCFS1	Chequers House, Chequers Lane	Significant concerns	147
NCFS2	Fortune Farm, High Elms Lane	Significant concerns	142
NCFS3	The Old Dairy, Chequers Lane	Significant concerns	35
NCFS4	High Elms Manor	Significant concerns	35
NCFS6	Land to the east of Watford Road	Some concerns	333
NCFS7	HCC Waterdell, Bricket Wood	Significant concerns	63
NCFS8	Land off St Albans Lane, Bedmond	Significant concerns	56
NCFS9	Land to the north-west of Woodstock, Bedmond	Significant concerns	20
NCFS10	Great Westwood	Significant concerns	455
NCFS11	Grange Wood, Carpenders Park	Potentially suitable	49
NCFS12	Land East of Oxhey Lane, Carpenders Park	Some concerns	381
NCFS13	Catlips Farm	Significant concerns	440
NCFS14	Land at Homefield Road, Chorleywood	Significant concerns	10
NCFS15	HCC Chorleywood Library	Potentially suitable	5
NCFS16	Land at Stag Lane	Significant concerns	23
NCFS17	North Hill Farm	Some concerns	57

NCFS18	Land to the East of Sarratt Lane	Significant concerns	32
NCFS19	Land adjacent to 60 Harthall Lane	Significant concerns	35
NCFS20	Lonsdale, Hyde Lane	Some concerns	10
NCFS21	Land south of Scots Hill	Some concerns	30
NCFS22	Nine of Herts Golf Club and surrounding land	Significant concerns	980
NCFS23	Primrose Lodge, London Road	Significant concerns	27
NCFS24	The Island, Rickmansworth	Significant concerns	16
NCFS25	The Vicarage, Rickmansworth	Significant concerns	9
NCFS26	HCC Meresworth, Rickmansworth	Potentially suitable	12
NCFS27	Green End Farm, Sarratt	Some concerns	39
NCFS28	Ravenswood, Sarratt	Some concerns	18
NCFS29	New Model Farm, Sarratt	Significant concerns	110
NCFS30	Sarratt Lodge, Sarratt Green	Significant concerns	8
NCFS31	Land to the South-East of Poles Hill	Significant concerns	102
NCFS32	Land to the southwest of Bragmans Lane	Significant concerns	122
NCFS34	HCC Pinewood Lodge, South Oxhey	Potentially suitable	18
NCFS35	Land south of Chalfont Lane (Employment)	Significant concerns	N/A
NCFS36	Land North of Little Green Lane	Significant concerns	35

Abbots Langley/Hunton Bridge

NCFS1: Chequers House, Chequers Lane

Site Ref:	NCFS1	Site:	Chequers House, Chequers Lane	Size (ha):	4.19
				Current use:	Grassland
				Dwelling capacity:	147
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Mixed (mainly greenfield)
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
Our significant concerns relate to the unsustainable site location. It is not located directly adjacent to a settlement, has poor access to public transport and has narrow vehicle access. The narrow vehicle access does not benefit from suitable pedestrian access. Notwithstanding the above, any development of the site would need to take account of issues relating to the adjacent Public Right of Way, pedestrian and vehicular access and highway impacts. Development would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 1. Do you think that site NCFS1 is an appropriate development site?

Question 2. Please explain your answer.

NCFS2: Fortunes Farm

Site Ref:	NCFS2	Site:	Fortunes Farm	Size (ha):	4.047
				Current use:	Residential and pasture
				Dwelling capacity:	142
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/Brownfield	Mixed (mainly greenfield)
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
Our significant concerns regarding this site relate to its unsustainable location as it is not situated adjacent to an existing settlement. Although there is a public right of way nearby, vehicular access is narrow onto High Elm Lane and potentially not suitable for the additional volume of traffic brought on by the suggested scale of development. Subsequently, any development of the site would need to take account of issues relating to the adjacent Public Right of Way, pedestrian and vehicular access and resulting highways impacts. Development would be required to provide open space and children's play space					

Question 3. Do you think that site NCFS2 is an appropriate development site?

Question 4. Please explain your answer.

NCFS3: The Old Dairy, Chequers Lane

Site Ref:	NCFS3	Site:	The Old Dairy, Chequers Lane	Size (ha):	1
				Current use:	Pasture
				Dwelling capacity:	35
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
Our significant concerns regarding this site relate to its unsustainable location. The site is not adjacent to a settlement and subsequently suffers from poor access to services and public transport. Although there is a public right of way nearby, vehicular access is narrow onto High Elm Lane and may subsequently not be suitable for further development. Therefore, any development of the site would need to take into account issues relating to highway access and impacts. Development on the site would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 5. Do you think that site NCFS3 is an appropriate development site?

Question 6. Please explain your answer.

NCFS4: High Elms Manor

Site Ref:	NCFS4	Site:	High Elms Manor	Size (ha):	4 (1ha developable)
				Current use:	Woodland and scrubland
				Dwelling capacity:	35
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
We have significant concerns relating to this site, as despite its relatively sustainable location within a key settlement, it has designated ecological protection. Highway access onto High Elms Lane is of additional concern, given its narrow nature and possible unsuitability to accommodate extra vehicular traffic. Subsequently, any development would need to take account of issues relating to protected woodland (LWS) access and highways. Due to protected woodland constraints which occupy a large area of the site, only 1ha of the site would be deemed as developable. Development of the site would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 7. Do you think that site NCFS4 is an appropriate development site?

Question 8. Please explain your answer.

NCFS6: Land to the East of Watford Road

Site Ref:	NCFS6	Site:	Land to the East of Watford Road	Size (ha):	9.5
				Current use:	Grassland
				Dwelling capacity:	333
				Phasing:	11-15 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Some Concerns			
Comments					
We have some concerns regarding this site, primarily relating to the access off the A41 dual carriageway, that is also situated on a curve in the road thereby potentially limiting visibility when egressing from the site. Additionally, areas of the site are within in flood zones 2 and 3. Consultation with Highways England and the Environment Agency are essential to establishing a firmer position on the site's suitability. Although the site is not directly adjacent to the settlement of Kings Langley, it is likely to be sufficiently close to be considered sustainable, with pedestrian access along the canal towpath or along the A41. Subsequently, any development of the site would need to take account of issues relating to access from the A41, pedestrian routes to Kings Langley Station and flood mitigation. Development would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 9. Do you think that site NCFS6 is an appropriate development site?

Question 10. Please explain your answer.

Bedmond

NCFS8: Land off St Albans Lane

Site Ref:	NCFS8	Site:	Land off St Albans Lane	Size (ha):	1.57
				Current use:	Pasture
				Dwelling capacity:	56
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Mixed (mainly greenfield)
Initial Assessment:	Significant Concerns				
Comments					
Our significant concerns relate to access to the site. The lane leading to the site predominantly constitutes a single-track lane and is unlikely to be suitable for accommodating additional traffic movements. There are no footpaths alongside the road which is likely to lead to an increased reliance on private vehicles as a form of transportation, even into the village.					
Any development of the site would need to account for issues relating to pedestrian access, vehicular access, highway impacts and protected trees. Development would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 11. Do you think that site NCFS8 is an appropriate development site?

Question 12. Please explain your answer.

NCFS9: Land to the North-West of Woodstock

Site Ref:	NCFS9	Site:	Land to the North-West of Woodstock	Size (ha):	0.56
				Current use:	Pasture
				Dwelling capacity:	20
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Mixed (mainly greenfield)
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
Our significant concerns relating to this site are primarily from an access point of view. The lane leading to the site is mainly single-track and is unlikely to be suitable for accommodating additional traffic movements. There are no footpaths alongside the road, or for any other access into the site, increasing reliance on private vehicles for all journeys, even into the village. Access may theoretically be available through NCFS8, but that site suffers from the same access issues, given it is also accessed from St Albans Lane. Accordingly, any development of the site would therefore need to take into account issues relating to pedestrian access, vehicular access and highway impacts.					

Question 13. Do you think that site NCFS9 is an appropriate development site?

Question 14. Please explain your answer.

Belsize

NCFS31: Land to the South-East of Poles Hill

Site Ref:	NCFS31	Site:	Land to the South-East of Poles Hill	Size (ha):	2.91
				Current use:	Agricultural
				Dwelling capacity:	102
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
We have significant concerns over the allocation of this site for development. The site is in Belsize, which is outside of the settlement hierarchy, and thus considered to be unsuitable for this scale of development due to the unsustainable location. Sarratt lies several hundred meters to the south, but the access to the village is down a narrow country lane with no footpath, likely limiting almost all journeys to private vehicles. Any development of the site would also need to take into account issues relating to the impact upon the adjacent Local Wildlife Site and ancient woodland, the site's location within the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC zone of influence given the potential scale of development, as well as the aforementioned character of Belsize and the Public Right of Way that runs through the centre of the site. Development would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 15. Do you think that site NCFS31 is an appropriate development site?

Question 16. Please explain your answer.

NCFS32: Land to the South-West of Bragmans Lane

Site Ref:	NCFS32	Site:	Land to the southwest of Bragmans Lane	Size (ha):	3.49
				Current use:	Agricultural
				Dwelling capacity:	122
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
We have significant concerns in relation to the allocation of this site for development. The site lies to the south of Bedmond, which is deemed to be an unsustainable settlement. Further to this, the site also extends a long way south of the existing settlement limit. There is poor vehicular access and poor pedestrian access due to the narrow, often single-track lanes and the lack of public footpaths/pavements alongside them. Therefore, any development of the site would need to take into account issues relating to pedestrian access, vehicular access and the impact on the character of Belsize and the adjacent Local Wildlife Site. The site is also located within the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC zone of influence. Development would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 17. Do you think that site NCFS32 is an appropriate development site?

Question 18. Please explain your answer.

Bricket Wood

NCFS7: Waterdell

Site Ref:	NCFS7	Site:	Waterdell	Size (ha):	1.81
				Current use:	Grassland
				Dwelling capacity:	63
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
Our significant concerns predominantly relate to site access, insofar the site cannot be accessed directly unless a larger site in St Albans district is allocated. The promoter has acknowledged this, stating that site could only come forward when combined with the larger site located outside of TRDC. However, St Albans have not taken forward the adjoining site to its Regulation 19 Consultation and therefore the smaller TRDC section cannot be taken forward in isolation due to a lack of an appropriate access point. Should the site come forward, development would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 19. Do you think that site NCFS7 is an appropriate development site?

Question 20. Please explain your answer.

Bucks Hill/Langleybury

NCFS10: Great Westwood Equestrian Park

Site Ref:	NCFS10	Site:	Great Westwood Equestrian Park	Size (ha):	22
				Current use:	Forestry, leisure
				Dwelling capacity:	455
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Mixed (mainly greenfield)
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
Our significant concerns predominantly relate to the site’s unsustainable location and access. It is well over 1km from the nearest settlement boundaries. Access is taken from the primarily single-track Old House Lane and access onto the nearby M25 junction does not appear possible. Although there is a great need to protect heritage assets and protected woodland, sites of this size can often mitigate impact to these features through their layout. Any development of the site would need to protect heritage assets in the vicinity of the site and adjacent protected woodland. The promoter has proposed the site to be mixed use development with only 13ha available for residential use. Development would be required to provide open space, children’s play space, a primary school and a community centre.					

Question 21. Do you think that site NCFS10 is an appropriate development site?

Question 22. Please explain your answer.

Carpenders Park

NCFS11: Grange Wood

Site Ref:	NCFS11	Site:	Grange Wood	Size (ha):	1.4
				Current use:	Residential
				Dwelling capacity:	49
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Mixed
Initial Assessment:		Potentially Suitable			
Comments					
The site is potentially suitable as it is situated in a sustainable settlement with good transport links. It is also a brownfield site.					
Any development of the site would need to protect heritage assets in the vicinity of the site and adjacent to protected woodland. Development would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 23. Do you think that site NCFS11 is an appropriate development site?

Question 24. Please explain your answer.

NCFS12: Land East of Oxhey Lane

Site Ref:	NCFS12	Site:	Land East of Oxhey Lane	Size (ha):	12.7
				Current use:	Grassland
				Dwelling capacity:	381
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Some Concerns			
Comments					
We have some concerns as the development will protrude into open countryside. However, despite this key concern, there are few others to consider at this stage, aside from minor flood risk concerns relating to a small part of the site, a footpath and hedgerow easements. This is an amended version of a previously submitted site (CFS69: Land at Carpenders Park Farm) and adjacent to the proposed secondary school site to the north. Any development of the site may need to contribute towards improved pedestrian infrastructure along Oxhey Lane. Development would be required to provide open space, children's play space, a primary school and a community centre.					

Question 25. Do you think that site NCFS12 is an appropriate development site?

Question 26. Please explain your answer.

Chorleywood

NCFS13: Catlips Farm

Site Ref:	NCFS13	Site:	Catlips Farm	Size (ha):	34.5
				Current use:	Mixture of residential, equestrian, storage and grassland
				Dwelling capacity:	440
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Mixed (mainly greenfield)
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
We have significant concerns relating to the development of this site, that mainly relate to the two potentially unsustainable single lane country roads that lead to it and the associated lack of public footpath access on these narrow lanes. While information has been submitted to address this in the form of a preliminary transport assessment, we are yet to consult statutory bodies on this. Further to this, the site lies in a gap between Chorleywood and Rickmansworth that could be considered bridged by this development. Any development would need to provide suitable mitigation to address issues relating to transport, access and impact upon adjacent Local Wildlife Site. Development would potentially be required to provide open space, children's play space, a primary school, community centre, local shops and a health centre/GP.					

Question 27. Do you think that site NCFS13 is an appropriate development site?

Question 28. Please explain your answer.

NCFS14: Land at Homefield Road

Site Ref:	NCFS14	Site:	Land at Homefield Farm	Size (ha):	0.4
				Current use:	Residential / Care
				Dwelling capacity:	10
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	No
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Mixed
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
We have significant concerns relating to the development of this site. These concerns primarily relate to the overdevelopment of what is currently 5 detached plots. The overdevelopment of the site is of particular concern due to its location within a conservation area. Further to this, in terms of availability, the ownership and availability of two of the plots has not been confirmed. Accordingly, we are unable to conclude that the site is available at this stage. Any development would need take account of protected trees in/adjacent to the site, noise concerns on the site given the proximity to the railway to the south and its location within the Chorleywood Common Conservation Area.					

Question 29. Do you think that site NCFS14 is an appropriate development site?

Question 30. Please explain your answer.

NCFS15: Chorleywood Library

Site Ref:	NCFS15	Site:	Chorleywood Library	Size (ha):	0.1
				Current use:	Library
				Dwelling capacity:	5
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	No
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Brownfield
Initial Assessment:		Potentially Suitable			
Comments					
We consider this site to be potentially suitable. It is in a sustainable location within a sustainable settlement on previously developed land. We await statutory comments for confirmation of this. Additionally, the retention of the library ground floor use would be strongly encouraged. The preservation of the ground floor of the building as a public library and should mitigate against possible contamination, resulting from the previously developed nature of the site.					

Question 31. Do you think that site NCFS15 is an appropriate development site?

Question 32. Please explain your answer.

NCFS16: Land at Stag Lane

Site Ref:	NCFS16	Site:	Land at Stag Lane	Size (ha):	0.65
				Current use:	Open space
				Dwelling capacity:	23
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
We have significant concerns relating to the development of this site. The main concern is the fact that the site is in protected Open Space and therefore is safeguarded from development. Furthermore, the accompanying information states that the site is suitable for 2 or 3 dwellings, which falls below our threshold for inclusion in the SHELAA.					
Any development of the site would also need to take account of the Public Right of Way running through the centre of the site.					

Question 33. Do you think that site NCFS16 is an appropriate development site?

Question 34. Please explain your answer.

NCFS17: North Hill Farm

Site Ref:	NCFS17	Site:	North Hill Farm	Size (ha):	3.24
				Current use:	Mixture of residential and campsite
				Dwelling capacity:	57
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Mixed
Initial Assessment:		Some Concerns			
Comments					
We have some concerns over the allocation of this site, mainly due to its location in the Chilterns National Landscape and proximity to a conservation area. However, this does not preclude the principle of development and particularly with regard to the previously developed area; subsequent Heritage Impact Assessment and Landscape Visual Impact Assessment work could result in sympathetic redevelopment of the site. The previously developed brownfield section of the site to the north is proposed to be the only section of the site to be developed. The previously developed area of the site constitutes 1.13ha, which is what the indicative capacity calculations are based upon. The greenfield section of the site to the south is to be retained as greenspace. Subsequently, development would need to take account of protected trees immediately adjacent to the site's boundaries and its impact upon the Chiltern's National Landscape and the conservation area. Development would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 35. Do you think that site NCFS17 is an appropriate development site?

Question 36. Please explain your answer.

Croxley Green

NCFS21: Land South of Scots Hill

Site Ref:	NCFS21	Site:	Land South of Scots Hill	Size (ha):	0.87
				Current use:	Scrubland
				Dwelling capacity:	30
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Some concerns			
Comments					
Whilst the site is in a sustainable location within Croxley Green settlement boundary and in close proximity to Rickmansworth and associated public transport infrastructure, some concern is raised over the constrained access and pylons present on the site. The pylons located on the site present a concern for the realistic size of the site's developable area. Accordingly, statutory consultee comments will be important to inform the suitability of this site moving forwards, particularly from National Grid and any other relevant bodies, due to the electricity pylon located in the northwest corner of the site, as well as associated electricity cables running above the site from north to south. In addition, comments will be required from Hertfordshire Highways with respect to the site access. Any development would require for protected trees located along the western and northern boundaries of the site will also need to be taken into consideration. Development would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 37. Do you think that site NCFS21 is an appropriate development site?

Question 38. Please explain your answer.

NCFS36: Land North of Little Green Lane

Site Ref:	NCFS36	Site:	Land North of Little Green Lane	Size (ha):	1
				Current use:	Agricultural
				Dwelling capacity:	35
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
We have significant concerns over the allocation of this site for development. The main issue is the suitability of the site access; Little Green Lane is narrow, and access to the east has been closed with a TRO, and the narrow access from the west is unsuitable for a further 35 dwellings' worth of vehicles. It is possible that application 24/2073/OUT could provide a solution if approved, but this cannot be relied upon at this stage. Any development of the site would need to take into account the issues relating to access and highway impacts. Also, impact upon the nearby Croxley Green Conservation Area, Local Wildlife Site and Ancient Woodland will need to be taken into account. Development would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 39. Do you think that site NCFS36 is an appropriate development site?

Question 40. Please explain your answer.

Kings Langley

NCFS19: Land Adjacent to 60 Harthall Lane

Site Ref:	NCFS19	Site:	Land Adjacent to 60 Harthall Lane	Size (ha):	1
				Current use:	Pasture
				Dwelling capacity:	35
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
We have significant concerns relating to the development of this site due to its unsustainable location. Harthall Lane does not have a pavement or footpath and is often single-track in nature. Subsequently, even if development was considered appropriate on this narrow road, future residents would be heavily reliant on private vehicles as their primary method of transport. Any development of the site would need to take account of issues relating to pedestrian access, vehicular access, and highway impacts. Development would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 41. Do you think that site NCFS19 is an appropriate development site?

Question 42. Please explain your answer.

NCFS20: Lonsdale, Hyde Lane

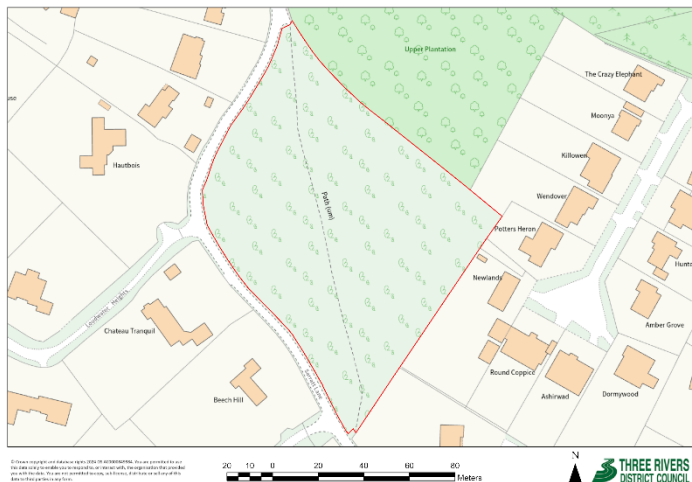
Site Ref:	NCFS20	Site:	Lonsdale, Hyde Lane	Size (ha):	1.6
				Current use:	Residential
				Dwelling capacity:	10
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Mixed
Initial Assessment:		Some Concerns			
Comments					
We have some concerns associated with the allocation of this site, primarily relating to the sites' unsustainable location. The site does not benefit from access on foot and Hyde Lane is narrow, partially single-track. However, there are some public transport options around 600m from the site and it should be noted that nearby application 22/1692/FUL secured a condition for a scheme of highway improvement works, thus it may be possible to secure a similar outcome for the site above, or separate pedestrian access onto Lower Road subject to Highways advice. The previously developed brownfield section of the site to the west is proposed to be the only section of the site to be developed. The previously developed area of the site constitutes 0.2ha, which is what the indicative capacity calculations are based upon. The greenfield section of the site to the east is to be retained as greenspace. Therefore, any development of the site would need to take account of the issues related to transport, access and the protected trees within the south and west boundaries of the site.					

Question 43. Do you think that site NCFS20 is an appropriate development site?

Question 44. Please explain your answer.

Loudwater

NCFS18: Land to the East of Sarratt Lane

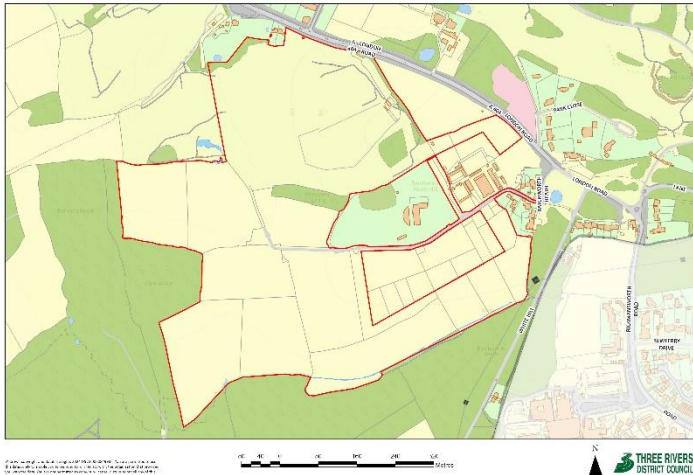
Site Ref:	NCFS18	Site:	Land to the East of Sarratt Lane	Size (ha):	0.9
				Current use:	Grassland
				Dwelling capacity:	32
				Phasing:	0-5
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
We have significant concerns over the development of this site, mainly due to its unsustainable location resulting in a lack of services and public transport. Furthermore, the site is adjacent to a conservation area and has a public footpath running through the center of it, which is likely to further reduce density and lower viability unless an alternative route for the footpath can be agreed. Whilst the presence of a public footpath should normally be seen as positive, it cuts this relatively small site in half and appears to connect to narrow lanes without footpaths at either end, resulting in an undesirable method of travel. Therefore, any development of the site would need to take into account the Public Right of Way, access from Sarratt Lane as well as mitigate issues relating to the site's unsustainable location. Development would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 45. Do you think that site NCFS18 is an appropriate development site?

Question 46. Please explain your answer.

Rickmansworth

NCFS22: Nine of Herts Golf Club

Site Ref:	NCFS22	Site:	Nine of Herts Golf Club	Size (ha):	39.2
				Current use:	Golf course and pasture
				Dwelling capacity:	980
				Phasing:	6-10 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/Brownfield	Mixed (mainly greenfield)
Initial Assessment:	Significant Concerns				
Comments					
We have significant concerns over the allocation of this site for development. The large site, unconnected to any existing settlement in the open countryside, would both have a significant impact on landscape sensitivity and constitute an unsustainable development due to its location and, while large, not being large enough to be largely self-sustaining. Any development of the site would need to take account of issues relating to proximity to Local Wildlife Sites and Batchworth Heath Conservation Area, as well the need to provide infrastructure to mitigate the unsustainable location of the site. Development would potentially be required to provide open space, children's play space, a primary school, community centre, local shops and a health centre/GP.					

Question 47. Do you think that site NCFS22 is an appropriate development site?

Question 48. Please explain your answer.

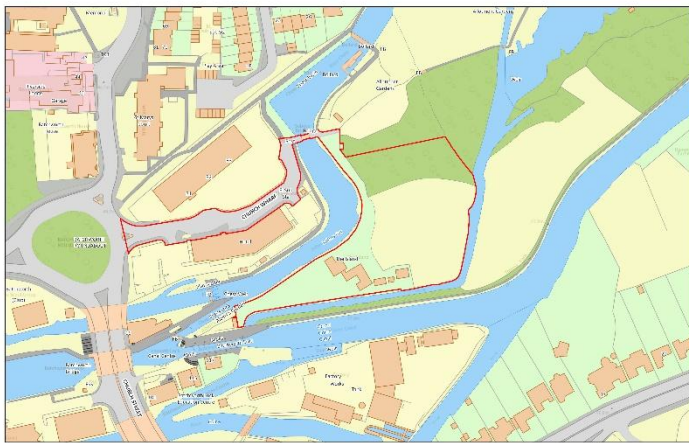
NCFS23: Primrose Lodge, London Road

Site Ref:	NCFS23	Site:	Primrose Lodge, London Road	Size (ha):	0.77
				Current use:	Residential
				Dwelling capacity:	27
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Brownfield
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
We have significant concerns over the allocation of this site for development. The site is in an unsustainable location outside of any recognized settlement, meaning it is a significant distance from services and does not benefit from regular public transport.					
Any development of the site would need to mitigate these issues. Development would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 49. Do you think that site NCFS23 is an appropriate development site?

Question 50. Please explain your answer.

NCFS24: The Island, land off Church Street

Site Ref:	NCFS24	Site:	The Island, land off Church Street	Size (ha):	0.45
				Current use:	Residential
				Dwelling capacity:	16
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/Brownfield	Mixed (mainly greenfield)
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
We have significant concerns over the allocation of this site for development. The primary reason for this is the flood risk associated with the site. Much of the site is located in Flood Zone 3b, meaning it is incompatible with residential development. It has been stated that talks with the Environment Agency by the promoter have resulted in the possible reclassification of the site as Flood Zone 3a, but we have seen no evidence of this, and it would be unlikely to make a material difference to the suitability of the site anyway, following the sequential and exception tests. Therefore, any development of the site would need to mitigate any potential flood risk, pass the sequential and exception tests and mitigate any impact on the neighbouring Local Wildlife Site.					

Question 51. Do you think that site NCFS24 is an appropriate development site?

Question 52. Please explain your answer.

NCFS25: The Vicarage, Bury Lane

Site Ref:	NCFS25	Site:	The Vicarage, Bury Lane	Size (ha):	0.27
				Current use:	Residential
				Dwelling capacity:	9
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	No
				Greenfield/ Brownfield:	Mixed
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments:					
We have significant concerns over the allocation of this site. The primary concern is flood risk, although there are a large number of trees with TPO designations and the site is heavily wooded. The sequential and exception tests would need to be applied, but due to virtually all of the site being in flood zone 3a, it would appear unlikely to pass.					
Any development of the site would be required to mitigate any potential flood risk and any impact on protected trees.					

Question 53. Do you think that site NCFS25 is an appropriate development site?

Question 54. Please explain your answer.

NCFS26: Meresworth Care Home, Field Way

Site Ref:	NCFS26	Site:	Meresworth Care Home, Field Way	Size (ha):	0.33
				Current use:	Former care home
				Dwelling capacity:	12
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	No
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Brownfield
Initial Assessment:		Potentially Suitable			
Comments					
We consider this site to be potentially suitable for development due to its sustainable location on a brownfield site in Rickmansworth.					
Any development would be required to take account of the presence of protected trees along the southern and western boundaries. The site has an indicative dwelling capacity of 12 with 70% of the site deemed to be developable.					

Question 55. Do you think that site NCFS26 is an appropriate development site?

Question 56. Please explain your answer.

Sarratt

NCFS27: Green End Farm

Site Ref:	NCFS27	Site:	Green End Farm	Size (ha):	1.12
				Current use:	Commercial, residential and equestrian
				Dwelling capacity:	39
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Mixed (mainly brownfield)
Initial Assessment:	Some Concerns				
Comments					
We have some concerns over the allocation of this site for development. Although located on the edge of village with some facilities, access into the village is along a narrow lane with no footpath. Subsequently, there is likely to be a heavy reliance on private vehicles for all journeys and therefore the sustainability of the site is questionable. Any development would also need to take into account the site's proximity to the Church End Conservation Area and the Chilterns National Landscape. Any development would be required to provide open space and children's play space. The site could potentially be taken forward alongside NCFS28, Ravenswood.					

Question 57. Do you think that site NCFS27 is an appropriate development site?

Question 58. Please explain your answer.

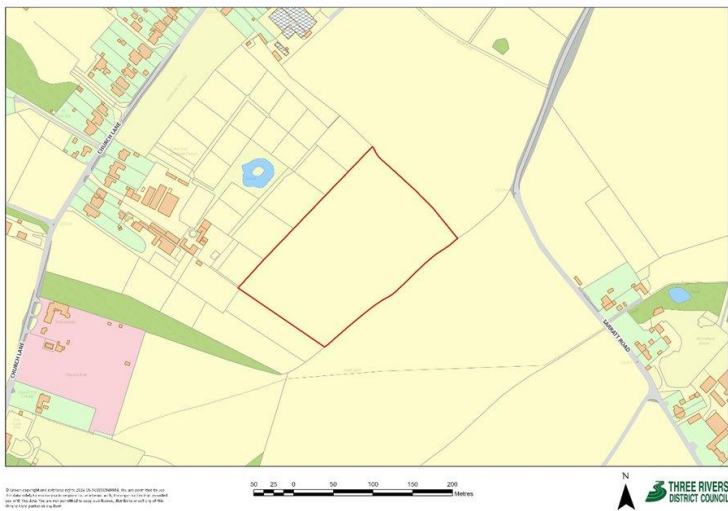
NCFS28: Ravenswood

Site Ref:	NCFS28	Site:	Ravenswood	Size (ha):	0.52
				Current use:	Residential, equestrian and outbuildings
				Dwelling capacity:	18
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Brownfield
Initial Assessment:		Some Concerns			
Comments					
We have some concerns over the allocation of this site. The site is predominantly brownfield, which is positive, but it is on the edge of the village, accessed by the narrow Church Lane, that is unable to accommodate a footpath and is therefore unsuitable for any pedestrian journey, even towards the village.					
Any development would also need to take into account the site's proximity to the Church End Conservation Area and the Chilterns National Landscape. The site could potentially be taken forward alongside NCFS27, Green End Farm.					

Question 59. Do you think that site NCFS28 is an appropriate development site?

Question 60. Please explain your answer.

NCFS29: New Model Farm

Site Ref:	NCFS29	Site:	New Model Farm	Size (ha):	3.13
				Current use:	Farmland
				Dwelling capacity:	110
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
We have significant concerns over the allocation of this site for development. The key concerns relate to the site's location outside the village boundary, together with its spatial isolation from the village (i.e. does not adjoin the boundary). It is also hampered by a lack of suitable access, as it currently is to the rear of Ravenswood and west of Sarratt Lane surrounded by fields.					
Any development of the site would need to take account of these access issues and would be required to provide open space and children's play space.					

Question 61. Do you think that site NCFS29 is an appropriate development site?

Question 62. Please explain your answer.

NCFS30: Sarratt Lodge

Site Ref:	NCFS30	Site:	Sarratt Lodge, Sarratt Green	Size (ha):	0.22
				Current use:	Residential Garden
				Dwelling capacity:	8
				Phasing:	0-5
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
We have significant concerns over the allocation of this site for development. Our main concerns are related to the Sarratt Conservation Area and nearby listed buildings and the density of the development that would be required in order to accommodate 5 dwellings on site given the constraints and relatively low surrounding densities.					
Any development of the site would therefore need to mitigate the impact upon the Sarratt Conservation Area, Site of Archaeological Interest and listed buildings.					

Question 63. Do you think that site NCFS30 is an appropriate development site?

Question 64. Please explain your answer.

South Oxhey

NCFS34: Pinewood Lodge

Site Ref:	NCFS34	Site:	Pinewood Lodge	Size (ha):	0.5
				Current use:	Care home
				Dwelling capacity:	18
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Brownfield
Initial Assessment:		Potentially Suitable			
Comments					
We consider this site to be potentially suitable for development. The site has a care home currently on it, but that is due to close soon. The site is also within the sustainable settlement of South Oxhey and subsequently benefits from good transport links and services. We await comments from statutory consultees, particularly relating to the adjacent Local Nature Reserve of Oxhey Woods.					
Any development would need to take account of the site's location adjacent to the Local Wildlife Site and Nature Reserve of Oxhey Woods. The site has an indicative dwelling capacity of 18 with 70% of the site deemed as developable.					

Question 65. Do you think that site NCFS34 is an appropriate development site?

Question 66. Please explain your answer.

5. New Sites for Potential Allocation: Employment

West Hyde

NCFS35: Land South of Chalfont Lane

Site Ref:	NCFS35	Site:	Land South of Chalfont Lane	Size (ha):	8.4
				Current use:	Farmland
				Dwelling capacity:	n/a
				Phasing:	0-5 years
				Green Belt:	Yes
				Greenfield/ Brownfield	Greenfield
Initial Assessment:		Significant Concerns			
Comments					
We have significant concerns over the allocation of this site for development. The settlement of West Hyde is not considered sustainable within the settlement hierarchy, with no facilities in the village/hamlet. Although the site fronts on to a road with pedestrian access and a relatively wide straight road for good vehicular access, it is around 800m from the nearest point of the site to Maple Cross settlement boundary to the north, with limited public transport options. Any development of the site would need to improve site sustainability, as well as mitigating against potential flood risk.					

Question 67. Do you think that site NCFS35 is an appropriate development site?

Question 68. Please explain your answer.

4. Additional Policy Options

- 4.1. The policies subject to this consultation relate to Biodiversity, the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and the Northwood Headquarters (MOD), in addition to a suite of net zero policies.
- 4.2. The below policies have either not previously been consulted on or have been amended substantially over previous consultation versions following consideration of representations received and any changes to national policy and/or legislation. These policies, once agreed by the Council, will be included in the Regulation 19 publication version of the plan.

Biodiversity

- 4.3. Biodiversity is in decline across England, which is one of the most nature-depleted countries on Earth, something which Three Rivers has not escaped. This, and growing public awareness of this biodiversity emergency was recognised by the Government's 2023 Environmental Improvement Plan which stated:

There is a "... clear, scientific case and growing public demand for a step change in environment protection and recovery."

- 4.4. Whilst much legislation and Government policy that informed the last Local Plan remains valid, other components have evolved, and new laws and guidance created to provide local authorities with the best chance of playing their part in reversing this decline. In terms of legislation, for instance, local authorities now, importantly, have a duty to 'conserve and enhance' (instead of simply 'to have regard to') biodiversity when exercising its functions, a consequence brought about by the Environment Act 2021. Additionally, the terms 'nature recovery' and 'Biodiversity Net Gain' have become embedded in the scientific and public vocabulary, both of which have significant planning implications.
- 4.5. In this context, the primary drivers now influencing the conservation and recovery of nature in Three Rivers include but are not limited to those set out below:
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
 - Circular 06/2005 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation
 - NERC 2006
 - The Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended)
 - The Environment Act 2021
 - [The Environmental Improvement Plan](#) (2023)
 - [National Planning Policy Framework](#) (2024) and associated [Planning Practice Guidance](#)
 - [The Environmental Principles policy statement](#) (2023)

Together, these bring forward a range of aspirational, policy or mandatory requirements which combine to frame the local plan's policies.

- 4.6. National policy states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity. The National Planning Policy Framework requires local authorities to identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks; and promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of important habitats and species. Further, it requires that appropriate weight is given not only to protected sites but also to protected features of biodiversity and geological interest in the wider environment.
- 4.7. In terms of the Local Plan, these drivers can be taken to act together to ensure that local authorities conserve and enhance nature in part by establishing Local Plan policies that ensure that harm to biodiversity within protected sites and, beyond these boundaries, the habitats and species distributed across the rural and built environments is firstly avoided, secondly that harmful impacts are mitigated before they arise, and only as a last resort, that effective compensation is secured for any unavoidable damage that cannot be mitigated. This is the '*mitigation hierarchy*' and its use should be evident both in terms of the allocation of development opportunities and subsequent development proposals. Depending on circumstances, each of the three stages can be heavily influenced by differing legislation, policy and best practice guidance and should not be treated lightly.
- 4.8. More specifically, the Environment Act (2021) promotes positive actions such as the establishment of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS), which will aim to increase the quality and size of existing protected areas, buffer harmful impacts from outside and link these together by creating new wildlife sites as stepping-stones or direct physical connections. In turn, the Hertfordshire LNRS will contribute to the national Nature Recovery Network (NRN) to begin to deliver the aspirations of the Lawton Report for a network that comprises a '*more, bigger, better, better joined*' biodiversity resource (which in turn can help deliver other societal benefits).
- 4.9. Biodiversity is an integral part of the character of Three Rivers and contributes to the high quality of life in the area. The district supports a variety of wildlife in habitats as diverse as wetlands, woodlands, grasslands, orchards, heathlands and urban gardens. Conserving and enhancing the diversity of wildlife and habitats in Three Rivers is a strategic objective.
- 4.10. Further, biodiversity provides numerous benefits, or ecosystem services, for people, such as flood attenuation, softening extremes of temperature and weather, recreation, wellbeing, pollinators and carbon sequestration. Nature conservation and its recovery are therefore not only required but highly desirable.
- 4.11. In these and other ways, the new local plan has a wide remit to take positive steps towards achieving the '*step change*' demanded by the Environmental Improvement Plan and provide the framework by which Government expects it will achieve commitments made in the 25-year Environment Plan.

Biodiversity

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

- 1) All qualifying development must deliver at least 10% measurable biodiversity net gain from the existing baseline value of a site through the use of DEFRA's statutory biodiversity metric. Development should apply the mitigation hierarchy to minimise or mitigate harmful effects on biodiversity. Mitigation and compensation measures must offset any losses in order to achieve the measurable net gain for biodiversity.
- 2) Biodiversity net gain should be delivered using the following biodiversity gain hierarchy:
 1. On-site
 2. A mixture of on and off-site
 3. Off-site
 4. Purchase of statutory biodiversity credits

On-site biodiversity net gain should be prioritised and undertaken wherever possible. Off-site measures will only be considered where it can be demonstrated that, after following the mitigation hierarchy, all reasonable opportunities to achieve measurable net gains on-site have been exhausted or where greater gains can be delivered off-site where the improvements can be demonstrated to be deliverable and are consistent with the Local Nature Recovery Strategy. As a last resort and following the submission of robust and justified evidence that on-site or off-site biodiversity provision will not achieve 10% biodiversity net gain, the Council will consider allowing the developer to purchase statutory biodiversity credits as an alternative approach.

- 3) Biodiversity Gain Plans will be required to demonstrate how BNG will be achieved. This will apply to on-site and / or off-site BNG requirements. Consequently, where it is not possible to avoid or mitigate any or all impacts on site, the Biodiversity Gain Plan should also demonstrate and confirm how any off-site measures proposed will enhance local and nationally important biodiversity priorities.
- 4) To ensure the long-term net gain, all development proposals should prepare a long-term monitoring and maintenance plan for biodiversity and habitat proposals for a minimum period of 30 years, including significant on-site and off-site measures.
- 5) Biodiversity net gain will be secured by condition, conservation covenant, and/or legal agreement, including a requirement to cover the Council's costs associated with the long-term BNG monitoring.
- 6) Where possible, the Council will encourage the delivery of greater than 10% biodiversity net gain.

Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity

- 7) The weight given to the protection of protected sites will be commensurate with their position in the hierarchy:
 1. International
 2. National

3.	Local
4.	Irreplaceable habitats
8)	Proposals that are likely to have, directly or indirectly, an adverse impact on protected sites will not normally be permitted except where the public benefits of development in that location clearly outweigh both the impact on the site and the wider network.
9)	Proposals resulting in, directly or indirectly, the loss or significant harm to a Local Wildlife Site will normally only be permitted if it can be demonstrated there is a need for the development in that specific location and the benefit of the development clearly outweighs the loss or harm.
10)	Proposals resulting in directly or indirectly, in the loss or significant harm of an irreplaceable habitat will normally be refused.
11)	In all cases, the mitigation hierarchy should be used to first avoid, then mitigate and, where necessary and possible, compensate for the loss of biodiversity, and evidence provided to show how this has been followed. Where loss or harm to a European or other designated site cannot be avoided or mitigated, as a last resort, effective compensation must be secured and delivered.
12)	Proposals should further the aims and objectives of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy including via the delivery of biodiversity net gain where applicable.
13)	Proposals should seek to conserve, restore and enhance protected species not addressed by “Biodiversity Net Gain” (as set out in Environment Act 2021) and reduce fragmentation by enhancing the connectivity of their populations and supporting habitats, and promote the functionality of other green infrastructure. It is expected that applicants submit a proportionate and up-to-date ecological survey and assessment where it is likely that a proposal may impact upon a statutorily protected species or their habitats.

Reasoned Justification

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.12. Biodiversity net gain aims to leave the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. The Environment Act (2021) requires that all applicable development shall deliver a net gain of at least 10% against the ecological baseline. Net gain is not intended to facilitate the unnecessary loss of valuable habitats, and all proposals are expected to follow the mitigation hierarchy and the measures required to deliver a net gain go beyond those required to mitigate or compensate any harm after following the mitigation hierarchy.
- 4.13. Net gain is measured using Defra’s Statutory Biodiversity Metric, which quantifies the value of biodiversity in terms of the habitats present and those proposed to be created and/or enhanced. A simplified version (the Small Sites Metric) may be used for sites proposing fewer than ten dwellings on land of less than one hectare. Exemptions for small self-build development exist which fulfil other requirements. Successful applicants will also be required to provide a Biodiversity Gain Plan to be approved in writing by the Council prior to commencement of development.

- 4.14. The creation or enhancement of features to achieve the net gain can be delivered on-site, off-site (or a combination of the two) or, as a last resort, via the purchase of statutory biodiversity credits. On-site solutions are preferred. Off-site solutions should be located in proximity to the development site where possible, certainly within Three Rivers and ideally contribute to the functioning of the emerging LNRS or other green infrastructure networks within the District. All will be secured for a period of at least 30 years via planning conditions, legal agreements and conservation covenants as appropriate.

Protection and Enhancement of Biodiversity

- 4.15. Despite the widespread decline in nature, Three Rivers retains a valuable biodiversity resource albeit fragmented by built development, infrastructure and intensive agriculture. These range from sites of national to local importance, although all will be afforded protection either in law, policy or best practice, but to differing degrees.
- 4.16. The relative importance of these is typically presented as the following hierarchy:

1. Designated (or Protected³) sites and species
2. Irreplaceable habitats
3. Habitats and species of principal importance

Whilst each is described below, there is considerable overlap on the ground with certain features or sites frequently arising in all three categories.

The range of protected sites are shown below in descending importance:

Internationally important sites (Statutory)	Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) Special Protection Areas (SPA) Ramsar sites
Nationally important sites (Statutory)	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) National Nature Reserves (NNR)
Locally important sites	Local Nature Reserves (LNR) (Statutory) Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) (Non-statutory) Local Geological Sites (LGS) (Non-statutory)

- 4.17. SACs and SPAs are afforded the highest levels of protection via the Habitats Directive (transposed into UK law by the Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended)), with Ramsar sites enjoying similar protections though only in national policy. SSSIs, NNRs and LNRs are protected by domestic legislation and LWS and LGS are locally identified. Whilst the levels of protection therefore differ, these are set out in the NPPF, and local plans are expected to reflect this.
- 4.18. Irreplaceable habitats are listed in and protected by the biodiversity net gain legislation as examples of England's most ecologically valuable features that are very difficult to restore, recreate or replace. They include but are not limited to ancient woodlands, ancient and veteran trees and lowland fens. Whilst examples frequently comprise part of a protected site they also

³ Although a frequently used term not all are formally 'designated' and it is better to consider these as 'protected' sites (a term that will be used throughout this chapter).

frequently occur beyond these boundaries and can be distributed across the rural and built environments.

- 4.19. Ancient woodland is also given additional protection from [Government's standing advice](#) which only allows its loss where 'wholly exceptional reasons' apply and where a suitable compensation strategy is in place.
- 4.20. Habitats and Species of Principal Importance are defined and listed in s41 of the NERC Act 2006 and represent those features of particular importance for the overall purpose of conserving biodiversity. The list of 56 habitats and 943 species features was carried forward from the UK's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP), itself a response to the Convention on Biological Diversity in Rio in 1992 but has been adapted, accordingly, along the way.
- 4.21. However, levels of protection can vary widely with some species - for instance great crested newts and all bats - afforded additional protection by the Habitats Regulations, a consequence of their status as 'European species'.

Biodiversity in Three Rivers

- 4.22. Though there are no internationally important protected sites within Three Rivers, it does support a range of other protected sites ranging from nationally designated SSSIs to local identified LNRs and LWSs. These include:

Special Areas of Conservation:

- None within the district (although parts of the district fall within the zone of influence of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Areas of Conservation)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest:

- Frogmore Meadows
- Sarratt Bottom
- Croxley Common Moor
- Whippendell Woods
- Westwood Quarry

Local Nature Reserves at:

- Oxhey Woods
- Stockers Lake
- The Withey Beds
- Croxley Common Moor
- Prestwick Road Meadows
- Chorleywood House Estate
- Rickmansworth Aquadrome
- Chorleywood Common
- Batchworth Heath

There are also 139 Local Wildlife Sites located at least partially within the District, part of a county-wide network of almost 2,000 sites that seeks to maintain key components of the county's biodiversity resource.

4.23. However, HMWT's [State of Nature Report](#) (2020) identified that in the last 50 years, 76 species had become extinct in the county and, of the species assessed, 20% (or 1,524) of those remaining were identified as being of conservation concern and less than 12% of LWS were under beneficial management.

4.24. Although destined to be superseded by the LNRS in 2025, the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP): A 50-Year Vision for the wildlife and natural habitats of Hertfordshire (2006) remains relevant and identifies three key biodiversity areas in Three Rivers:

- Mid-Colne Valley - wetlands (gravel pits) and grassland
- Whippendell Woods and surrounds - woodlands, grasslands and wetland
- River Chess Valley - river, wetlands, grasslands, woodland and heathland

4.25. It is considered likely (although not guaranteed) that these areas will also be highlighted in the emerging LNRS as priority areas for conserving the existing biodiversity resource and the best opportunities for establishing areas of new, high-quality habitats. Consequently, the Council will be likely to refuse applications that have harmful impacts on biodiversity or compromise the effectiveness of the LNRS. In contrast, developments that avoid harmful impacts and make a positive contribution to the aims of the LNRS will be supported.

4.26. Developers should have regard to the potential impact of development proposals on biodiversity, including, for instance, trees, watercourses and woodlands from the outset. Applications should be accompanied by sufficient information to assess the impact of the proposed development on any protected species, trees, watercourses, woodlands or priority habitats. Where not exempt from BNG, there must also be acceptable baseline habitat surveys or assessments to properly inform subsequent BNG calculations using the Statutory or Small Sites Metric (as of 2025). Where it is considered that a habitat/species protected under European or domestic statutory legislation could be affected by development, the Council will require adequate survey information to be submitted at the time of the application together with an assessment of the potential impacts and appropriate mitigation/compensatory measures, these should be integrated into schemes and shown on submitted plans. The surveys should be undertaken and carried out by competent persons and at appropriate times of the year. Surveys and assessments should all follow established CIEEM best practice.

4.27. In accordance with national policy on biodiversity and geology the Council will conserve and, where possible, enhance:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Local Nature Reserves
- Local Wildlife Sites
- Protected Species
- Trees and Ancient Woodlands, and
- Geological and physiographical features.

4.28. When considering development proposals, the Council will take full account of contemporary and rapidly emerging legislation, policy and guidance and other relevant information to:

- Assess the importance of a habitats and species
- Consider the potential impact of development
- Identify ways to conserve and enhance biodiversity in Three Rivers
- Improve connectivity between habitats through establishment and expansion of the LNRS and Green Infrastructure corridors.

4.29. The Council will support measures identified in management plans (including the Thames River Basin Management Plan) and related status reports for Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Local Nature Reserves and other wildlife sites that seek to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity. Where subject to BNG, developers will be required to contribute to improvements in biodiversity as part of their proposals in addition to providing compensation for impacts on protected species, under licence where necessary.

Green and Blue Infrastructure

4.30. In a wider context, biodiversity also represents a key element of Green Infrastructure (networks of green spaces and natural elements including open spaces, waterways, gardens, woodlands, green corridors, wildlife habitats, street trees, natural heritage, heritage assets, earth science interests and open countryside). The Green and Blue Infrastructure Policy identifies key assets for Green and Blue Infrastructure and the existing and potential linkages. It also sets out policy to seek a net gain in the quality and quantity of Green and Blue Infrastructure through the protection and enhancement of assets and the provision of new green spaces.

Question 69. Do you think that the Biodiversity Policy Option for protecting and enhancing the district's biodiversity and ecology is the right approach?

Question 70. Please explain your answer.

Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

4.31. The Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation includes 9 separate sites in the Chiltern Hills and spreads across 3 counties. The Special Area of Conservation is an internationally recognised designation with habitats and species of significant ecological importance.

Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

- 1) Development proposals which are likely to have a significant effect on the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) will be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA). This applies to proposals which are within the zone of influence of the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and which would result in a net increase of 100 units or more.

- 2) Where development proposals are subject to a HRA they will be required to deliver suitable mitigation and / or avoidance measures in order to address potential adverse effects arising from increased recreational disturbance. This includes provision, improvement and / or maintenance of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) (or a suitable financial contribution towards the same).

Reasoned Justification

- 4.32. As part of its emerging local plan, Dacorum Borough Council has found evidence of visitor pressure in Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation as a result of additional residential development from within the zone of influence. The report⁴ identified a 12.6km Zone of Influence (ZOI). As a result, large developments in the ZOI will be required to produce a Habitat Regulations Assessment and may be required to provide mitigation measures.
- 4.33. A small part of Three Rivers falls within the ZOI. It was not included in the 'strategic solution' by Natural England as less than 2% of visitors to the SAC were from Three Rivers. However, the requirement to produce a Habitat Regulations Assessment applies to sites within the ZOI. The Council has set a threshold of 100 dwellings or more on the advice of Natural England.
- 4.34. As part of the Habitat Regulations Assessment, development proposals will be expected to deliver suitable mitigation and / or avoidance measures to address any adverse impact on the SAC. Mitigation measures include the provision of Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) of sufficient size/quality to divert visitors away from the Chiltern Beechwoods SAC and leading to a creation of a semi-natural experience. Any mitigation measures should take into account information in the most recent Mitigation Strategy.
- 4.35. SANGs must also consist of adequate parking for visitors, unless the site is intended for local use (within 400m walk of developments linked to it); aim to enable completion of a circular walk of 2.3 to 2.5km around the SANG; are designed to enhance safety perceptions by users; are free from tree and scrub cover along parts of the walking routes and must incorporate a semi-natural feel with little intrusion of artificial structures.

Question 71. Do you think that the Chiltern Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) Policy Option for mitigating the impact of new development within the district upon the SAC is the right approach?

Question 72. Please explain your answer.

Northwood Headquarters (MOD)

Northwood Headquarters (MOD)

⁴ Visitor survey, recreation impact assessment and mitigation requirements for the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and the Dacorum Local Plan https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/dacorum-recreation-evidence-base-200322.pdf?sfvrsn=fbe079e_0

- 1) New development at Northwood Headquarters that helps to enhance or sustain its operational capability will be supported.
- 2) Redevelopment, conversion and change of use of redundant MOD sites and buildings will be supported.
- 3) Non-military or non-defence related development within or in the areas around the Northwood Headquarters site will not be supported where it would adversely affect military operations or capability, unless the effect can be suitably mitigated against or it can be demonstrated that there is no longer a defence or military need for the site.

Reasoned Justification

- 4.36. National planning policy requires planning policies to take into account defence requirements by recognising and supporting development required for operational defence and security purposes and ensuring that operational sites are not affected adversely by the impact of other development proposed in the area.
- 4.37. Northwood Headquarters is the UK's principal military HQ site for 2,000 personnel. It is home to 5 Operational HQs and HMS Wildfire which is a reserve unit of the Royal Navy. It is identified as a significant defence asset where additional development is envisaged to support National Security needs.

Question 73. Do you think that the Northwood Headquarters (MOD) Policy Option for recognising and supporting development required for operational defence and security purposes, and ensuring that operational sites are not affected adversely by the impact of other development proposed in the area is the right approach?

Question 74. Please explain your answer.

Net Zero

- 4.38. The suite of net zero policies subject to this consultation are set out below, covering the following issues:

- XA – Net Zero Operational Carbon in New Residential Development
- XB – Net Zero Operational Carbon in New Build Non-Residential Development
- XC – Climate Adapted Design and Construction
- XD – Embodied Carbon and Minimising Waste
- XE – Reducing Carbon Emissions in Existing Buildings

X A – Net Zero Operational Carbon in New Residential Development

- 4.39. Operational carbon is an area where policy can ensure the provision of buildings that are fit for the future, both in terms of reduced energy consumption and holistic integration of design

decisions that address climate adaptation. It is essential that housing developers prioritise these metrics and subsequent total energy consumption to best ensure that any on-site renewable energy can feasibly match total regulated energy use. If the energy use of a residential building is not mitigated in the first instance, on site renewable energy generation will likely not be sufficient to deliver a net zero building.

Policy X A - Net Zero Operational Carbon in New Build Residential Development

All new build dwellings (use class C3 and C4) are required to meet the following requirements:

A1.1 - Part L% improvement

- 1) At least a 63% improvement (reduction) on Part L 2021 TER (Target Emissions Rate) from energy efficiency measures.
- 2) Heat pumps are to be calculated as an energy efficiency measure, rather than a renewable energy measure.
- 3) As a measure in aid of this TER target, achieve an improvement (reduction) on Part L 2021 TFEE (Target Fabric Energy Efficiency) as follows:

End terrace: at least a 12% improvement

Mid terrace: at least a 16% improvement

Semi-detached: at least a 15% improvement

Detached: at least a 17% improvement

Bungalow: at least a 19% improvement

Flats/ apartments: at least a 24% (weighted average, whole block) improvement

All of the above should be calculated using SAP10.2 or later version, or the Home Energy Model (HEM, once it has been implemented)

In the event national building regulations exceed the requirements of this policy, the national standards (i.e. the higher standards) would apply.

A1.2 - Energy metrics guidelines

Or –

- 4) Positive weight will be given to development proposals which can demonstrate that the following absolute energy metrics are met:
 - Total energy use: 35 kWh/m²/year
 - Space heating demand: 15 kWh/m²/year
- 5) Performance against these targets must be evidenced using a methodology that accurately predicts buildings' operational energy use. Suitable methodologies include the Passive House Planning Package (PHPP). Where a building achieves Passivhaus certification, it will be deemed to have complied with these targets.

A2 - No Fossil Fuels

- 6) The use of fossil fuels and connection to the gas grid will not be considered acceptable.

A3 - On site renewable energy

- 7) On-site annual renewable energy generation capacity (in kWh) at least equal to the predicted annual total regulated and unregulated energy use (residual energy use in kWh after A1.1 has been achieved, plus unregulated energy use).
- 8) Where an on-site net zero regulated and unregulated energy balance is not possible⁵, it should be demonstrated that the amount of on-site renewable energy generation equates to at least 120kWh/m² projected building footprint/year.
- 9) Where a building in a multi-building development cannot individually achieve the requirements of A3 this shortfall is to be made up across other units on-site. Innovative solutions, for example utilising PV canopies on car parks or solar PV on communal buildings should be demonstrated before carbon offsetting A4 is considered.
- 10) Regulated and unregulated energy use can both be calculated with Part L SAP or BREDEM, but a more accurate method such as PHPP is advised. Any other proposed methods are subject to Council confirmation of acceptability.
- 11) The annual renewable energy generation and the annual energy use are whole-building figures, not per-m² figures.
- 12) Renewable energy output should be calculated in line with MCS guidance for the relevant technology (expected to be PV in most cases).

A4 - Energy Offsetting

- 13) Only in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort where it is demonstrably unfeasible to achieve an on-site net zero regulated and unregulated energy balance, should any shortfall in on-site renewable energy generation that does not match energy use be offset via a S106 financial contribution, reflecting the cost of the solar PV that will need to be delivered off-site.
- 14) The energy offset price shall be determined based on the cost of delivering equivalent off-site solar PV capacity, calculated using the most up-to-date government data on solar PV installation. The methodology will account for capital costs, expected local energy yield, and a reasonable allowance for the administration of the offset fund by the Council or its delivery partners. The total offset contribution shall be calculated as a one-off payment, based on the projected annual shortfall in on-site renewable energy generation, multiplied by the published offset price.

A5 - Reduced Performance Gap

- 15) An assured performance method must be implemented throughout all phases of construction to ensure operational energy in practice performs to predicted levels at the design stage.

A6 - Smart Energy Systems

⁵ Exceptional circumstances where an on-site net zero energy balance is not achieved may only be found acceptable in some cases, for example with taller flatted buildings (4 storeys or above) or where overshadowing significantly impacts solar PV output.

- 16) Proposals should demonstrate how they have considered the difference (in scale and time) of renewable energy generation and the on-site energy demand, with a view to maximising on-site consumption of energy generated on site through energy storage or smart distribution, and overall minimising the need for wider grid infrastructure reinforcement.

A7 - Post-Occupancy Evaluation

- 17) Large-scale development (50 units or more) is to monitor and report total energy use and renewable energy generation values on an annual basis. An outline plan for the implementation of this should be submitted with the planning application. The monitored in-use data is to be reported to the Local Planning Authority for 5 years upon occupation.

Reasoned Justification

- 4.40. As set out in the Climate Change Act 2008, national policy is working towards achieving the legally-binding UK target of net zero by 2050 and carbon budgets are subsequently legislated under the aegis of the act. These carbon budgets are linked to the Climate Change Committee's Balanced Pathway to Net Zero report, which is supported by analysis that sets out that all new buildings must be net zero by 2025. The 2050 net zero target is specifically referenced in the NPPF under paragraph 161.
- 4.41. The Planning and Energy Act 2008 sets out that local standards for energy efficiency in new homes are able to exceed those set in Building Regulations.
- 4.42. In the context of the 2023 Written Ministerial Statement, these policies are fully compliant with the perceived constraints it poses. The WMS only applies to energy efficiency standards where it states that any standards that exceed Building Regulations must be done so using the TER metric. Policy A1 remains within its bounds through the use of TER% reduction as the primary metric. The TFEE target is not additional to, but is a step towards, that TER target.
- 4.43. The 63% reduction target on Part L 2021 TER is set to align with national policy in that it is in line with the Future Homes Standard. Correspondingly, the TFEE target is set to align with the performance of a home that achieves that TER target via the indicative FHS specification set out by the Government in the 2019-21 FHS consultation. This is necessary in order to reduce the space heat demand (which is necessary for the achievement of the UK's carbon budgets. It is also necessary in order to protect the resident from excessive energy bills and potential fuel poverty, as the latest FHS consultation indicated that the FHS carbon target could be achieved just with a heat pump and no fabric improvements, resulting in heating bills approximately double those of a current new build home.
- 4.44. A2 is aligned to the Government's direction of travel indicated by both the options proposed in the Future Home Standard 2023 consultation, in that no fossil fuel heating systems are proposed. A3 and A4 are not impacted because they address renewable energy, which is out of scope of the 2023 WMS.

- 4.45. Policy elements A1, A2 and A3 are to be addressed at the design and post-completion stages, to ensure that the development has been built to intended standards. Post-completion resubmission of the original energy statement including energy performance calculations, informed by the relevant tests to systems and fabric, should be required as a condition as part of the planning application process. A5 and A7 compliance should also be demonstrated post-completion through planning condition.
- 4.46. A1 – A7 are to be demonstrated at the planning application stage through submission of an energy statement, which should include associated output reports from energy modelling software (e.g. SAP, BREDEM, PHPP, or HEM when available for general use).

Smart Energy Systems

- 4.47. In order to maximise energy self-sufficiency of a site, in relation to policy element A6, a number of methods may be considered. These may include smart local grids, energy sharing, energy storage and demand-side response, and/or solutions that combine elements of the above.

The Non-Mandatory Energy Targets in Policy A 1.2

- 4.48. The achievement of the energy efficiency performance levels set out in Policy A1.2 will reduce the amount of solar PV required under A3 for an on-site net zero balance. This can save the applicant costs in renewable energy provision and/or energy offsetting.
- 4.49. Performance against these non-mandatory targets would need to be calculated using a method that accurately predicts energy use. SAP is not suitable for this due to its poor predictive accuracy in the context of high-performance buildings. PHPP (Passivhaus Planning Package) is a suitable methodology, as it is widely recognised for its precision in predicting energy performance, particularly for low-energy buildings. Unlike SAP, PHPP has a proven track record of providing accurate energy use and heating demand predictions, ensuring that the development can meet its energy efficiency targets and reduce operational energy consumption effectively.
- 4.50. The Council may subsequently take a view on whether the incoming Home Energy Model (HEM) may be suitable, when HEM's final form is known.

No Fossil Fuels

- 4.51. The A2 No fossil fuels policy prohibits the use of fossil fuels within the operational phase of the development, specifically for energy purposes within the buildings, including heating, hot water, and electricity. The intent is to ensure that the development aligns with sustainability goals and supporting the transition to low-carbon energy sources. The restriction on fossil fuels does not apply to their use in construction activities or transport.

Steps to Calculating and Narrating Amount of Renewable Energy Provisions

- 4.52. Policy A3 should contain the following steps, to be expressed in an energy statement:
- First calculate the total predicted annual energy use in kWh for all proposed new buildings
 - This can be modelled using SAP, BREDEM or PHPP. PHPP is the preferred model due to its accuracy, to avoid SAP's inaccuracies at predicting actual energy use in operation.

The Council may later take a view on whether the incoming Home Energy Model (HEM) is a suitable method for energy use prediction when the final form of HEM is available.

- Then calculate the annual renewable energy generation for whole site in accordance with the MCS guidance for the relevant renewable energy technology. This does not have to be exclusively on the buildings themselves and can include provision of new standalone renewable energy installations within the site. The figure does not include renewable heat delivered by heat pumps, as that would count instead towards Policy A1.
- Deduct the annual renewable generation from the annual energy use. The result should be zero or less.
- If the result is not zero or less, explore how to provide more on-site renewable energy.
- If it proves unfeasible to increase renewable energy generation on-site to result in an annual balance of energy generation with energy use, then divide the total annual renewable energy generation by the building footprint. If this is impossible, provide evidence as to why this is not possible even with a PV area equivalent to 70% of projected building footprint and reasonably efficient panels available on the market.
- Calculate the residual energy demand (whole building, not per m2) for all proposed new buildings are all measures proposed towards policies A1 and A3, then proceed to use this figure to calculate the required amount of offsetting provision in policy A4.

4.53. If a development cannot generate enough renewable energy on-site to balance the total regulated and unregulated energy use (as calculated after fabric efficiency improvements in Policy A1.1), the policy requires the renewable energy generation to meet a minimum of 120 kWh per square metre of projected building footprint per year.

4.54. Applicants should demonstrate compliance with this fallback target by providing a clear calculation of the renewable energy generated per square metre of the projected building footprint. This can be demonstrated in the Energy Statement by:

- Renewable energy system design, such as PV layouts, system capacities, and expected energy outputs.
- Calculation of the renewable energy generated based on these designs, ensuring it meets or exceeds the 120 kWh/m2 threshold for the total projected building footprint.

4.55. If the 120 kWh/m² target cannot be met, the applicant must provide evidence explaining why, even with renewable energy provision up to the equivalent of 70% of the projected building footprint (including roof overhangs), it is unfeasible to meet this threshold. This should include details on the constraints (e.g., site limitations, technical or financial barriers).

If Applicants Cannot Meet Policies A1.1 and A3

4.56. If the requirements of Policy A1.1 (fabric efficiency) and Policy A3 (on-site renewable energy) cannot be met, applicants must demonstrate compliance through the energy hierarchy:

- Fabric efficiency: The first step is reducing energy demand through fabric efficiency measures (e.g., insulation, airtightness, efficient windows). If these measures can't be met due to technical or site-specific constraints, applicants should provide clear evidence (e.g., feasibility studies or cost analyses) to justify why.

- Renewable energy: After addressing fabric efficiency, applicants must meet energy needs through on-site renewable energy generation. If fabric efficiency measures cannot be fully met, applicants can look to increase renewable energy provision, but they must still comply with overarching policy objectives.
- Submission requirements: Applicants should submit an energy statement that includes:
 - Predicted energy demand (kWh/year).
 - Proposed renewable energy contributions (e.g., PV output in kWh/year).
 - The percentage of energy demand met by on-site renewables.
 - Evidence of site-specific constraints preventing full compliance.

The Offsetting Calculation

- 4.57. The offset is a one-off payment, calculated by multiplying the annual shortfall in on-site renewable energy generation (in kWh) by the energy offset price (£/kWh). This represents the upfront cost of installing the equivalent renewable energy capacity that the developer has not provided on-site. Since it's a one-time contribution to cover this capital cost, it only reflects one year's shortfall – there's no need to factor in the building's lifetime or ongoing energy use.
- 4.58. The current offset price (£2.31/kWh) is based on the national cost of solar PV deployment as published by the Department for Energy Security and Net Zero (DESNZ). This price reflects the average cost of delivering solar PV (including installation), adjusted to include inflation and a 10% uplift to support fund administration and delivery of offset projects. The Council may revise the offset price annually to reflect updated DESNZ cost data.
- 4.59. Flexibility in applying the offsetting requirement may be considered where it is robustly demonstrated that full offsetting would make social or affordable housing unviable due to site-specific costs that exceed assumptions in the Whole Plan Viability Assessment. In these cases, the Council may consider:
- Reducing the scope of energy to be offset, or
 - Applying a discounted offset price where the Council is confident it can still deliver the equivalent renewable generation on a case-by-case basis.

Assured Performance Methods

- 4.60. These are processes to follow throughout design, construction, commissioning and building handover that reduce the energy performance gap (the gap between predicted energy use and actual energy use). These not only help keep the building's actual carbon emissions to a minimum (as opposed to their predicted emissions using inaccurate methods like SAP), but they also help to ensure occupant satisfaction. Suitable methods include (BSRIA Soft Landings, NEF/GHA Assured Performance Process, and Passivhaus certification. Alternative processes proposed by the applicant will be subject to consideration by the Council about their evidence-based merits.

Applicability to Outline Applications

- 4.61. Compliance with the policies will be conditioned at outline stage and must be confirmed in detailed reserved matters. However, the Council accepts that the degree of detail provided in the outline energy strategy will be less than for full and reserved matters applications. It is also recognised that this means the outline energy calculations may be largely based on

assumptions. The aim should be to demonstrate that options have been identified by which the development could comply with the policy targets, taking into account the broad mix of anticipated floorspace, typologies and site conditions. Statements made about estimated carbon and energy performance based on a high degree of assumptions at outline stage should be reassessed at detailed reserved matters, albeit the reserved matters may diverge in how the required compliant performance will be achieved.

- 4.62. Where more detail is known, it should be reflected in the outline application; for example if expecting to connect to a site-specific low-carbon energy source. For a further example, if expecting a limited number of repeated home types, then the energy modelling would ideally reflect similar archetypes and identify a specification by which they could meet the policy targets for energy efficiency and renewable energy (taking into account site conditions). The modelled homes could reflect, for example, a sample of a relevant housebuilder's 'products' most likely to be built on site. This exercise benefits the developer in that it gives an early understanding of the degree of amendment needed to their existing regular specifications, allowing them to set up supply chains and economies of scale well in advance of commencing on site, as outline proposals typically are large-scale and take several years from outline application, to detailed design, to commencement.
- 4.63. Outline applications' estimated offsetting contribution should be stated in the outline Energy Assessment. These will be subject to a Section 106 agreement, but not paid at the time of the outline application. In that case the offset contribution must be recalculated within the subsequent reserved matters application, and paid on or prior to commencement of works on site for the reserved matters scheme. The reason for payment into the offset fund prior to commencement of works is so that the offset fund administrators are able to deliver the offset projects on a timescale not too dissimilar from the timescale for completion and occupation of the development. The aim is to enable, wherever possible, the offsetting project to be producing renewable energy no later than the development's occupants begin to place their demands on the grid.

Question 75. Do you think that Policy X A is the right approach to achieve net zero operational carbon in new residential development?

Question 76. Please explain your answer.

X B – Net Zero Operational Carbon in New Build Non-Residential Development

- 4.64. As per Policy XA (residential), planning policies supporting net zero operational carbon in new build non-residential developments can drive significant improvements in energy efficiency and the reduction of regulated operation carbon in new buildings. This is in line with the Council's commitment to becoming a carbon-neutral District by 2045 and national policy targets to the UK as a whole, becoming carbon-neutral by 2050.

Policy X B - Net Zero Operational Carbon in New Build Non-Residential Development

All new build non-residential development is required to be net zero carbon in operation (regulated energy) through the following requirements:

B1.1 - Part L% improvement

- 1) % improvement on Part L 2021 TER (Target Emissions Rate), or equivalent reduction on future Part L updates through on-site measures as follows:

Offices: at least 25% improvement

Schools: at least 35% improvement

Industrial buildings: at least 45% improvement

Hotels (C2, C5) and residential institutions (C2, C2a): at least 10% improvement

Other non-residential buildings: at least 35% improvement

In the event national building regulations exceed the requirements of this policy, the national standards (i.e. the higher standards) would apply.

B1.2 - Energy metrics guidelines

- 2) Positive weight will be given to development proposals which can demonstrate the following absolute energy metrics:

- Total energy use: 65 kWh/m²/year
- Space heating demand: 15 kWh/m²/year

- 3) Employing absolute energy metrics reduces the amount of solar PV required under B3 for an on-site net zero balance of regulated energy. Applicable methodologies to calculate this include CIBSETM54 and the Passivhaus Planning Package. At present, the Part L calculation method (SBEM) is not considered suitable as it does not provide accurate predictions of a building's actual energy use.

B2 - No fossil fuels

- 4) The use of fossil fuels and connection to the gas grid will not be considered acceptable.

B3 - On-site renewable energy

- 5) On-site annual renewable energy generation capacity to at least equal predicted annual total regulated energy use (residual energy use after B1.1 has been achieved). In buildings subject to Part L's requirement for energy forecasting, that forecasting should be the source of the 'annual total regulated energy' figure.
- 6) Where an on-site net zero regulated energy balance is not possible⁶, it should be demonstrated that the amount of on-site renewable energy generation equates to $\geq 120\text{kWh/m}^2$ projected building footprint/year.
- 7) Where a building in a multi-building development cannot individually achieve the requirements of B3, this shortfall is to be made up across other units on-site before carbon offsetting is considered.

⁶ Exceptional circumstances where an on-site net zero energy balance is not achieved may only be found acceptable in some cases, for example with taller flatted buildings (4 storeys or above) or where overshadowing significantly impacts solar PV output.

- 8) Development should demonstrate that opportunities for on-site renewable energy infrastructure (on-site but not on or attached to individual buildings), such as solar PV canopies on car parks, have been explored.

B4 - Energy offsetting

- 9) Only in exceptional circumstances and as a last resort where it is demonstrably unfeasible to achieve an on-site net zero regulated energy balance, any shortfall in on-site renewable energy generation that does not match regulated energy use is to be offset via a S106 financial contribution, reflecting the cost of the solar PV that will need to be delivered off-site.
- 10) The energy offset price shall be determined based on the cost of delivering equivalent off-site solar PV capacity, calculated using the most up-to-date government data on solar PV installation. The methodology will account for capital costs, expected local energy yield, and a reasonable allowance for the administration of the offset fund by the Council or its delivery partners. The total offset contribution shall be calculated as a one-off payment, based on the projected annual shortfall in on-site renewable energy generation, multiplied by the published offset price.

B5 - Reduced Performance Gap

- 11) An assured performance method must be implemented throughout all phases of construction to ensure operational energy in practice performs to predicted levels at the design stage.

B6 – Smart Energy Systems

- 12) Proposals should demonstrate how they have considered the difference (in scale and time) of renewable energy generation and the on-site energy demand, with a view to maximising on-site consumption of energy generated on site through energy storage or smart distribution and overall minimising the need for wider grid infrastructure reinforcement.
- 13) This may include smart local grids, energy sharing, energy storage and demand-side response, and/or solutions that combine elements of the above.
- 14) Large-scale development (over 5000m² of floorspace) is to monitor and report total energy use and renewable energy generation values on an annual basis. An outline plan for the implementation of this should be submitted with the planning application. The monitored in-use data is to be reported to the Local Planning Authority for 5 years upon occupation.

Reasoned Justification

4.65. As per the Climate Change Act 2008, national policy is working towards achieving the legally binding UK target of net zero by 2050 and carbon budgets are subsequently legislated under the aegis of the act. These carbon budgets are linked to the Climate Change Committee's Balanced Pathway to Net Zero in the Sixth Carbon Budget Report, which sets out that all new buildings should be zero carbon from 2025, with high levels of energy efficiency and low-carbon heat. It is also found that non-residential buildings should phase out high-carbon fossil fuel boilers no later than 2026 and phase out gas boilers in 2030-33. Furthermore, the 2050 net zero target is now specifically referenced in the NPPF under paragraph 161.

- 4.66. Therefore, new buildings today should not have these, to avoid the need for expensive disruptive retrofit less than 10 years after completion which would also waste embodied carbon. The policy supports these targets by prohibiting fossil fuel connection and improving energy efficiency, which mandate a heating technology similarly efficient to a heat pump.
- 4.67. The policy remains consistent with the 2023 Written Ministerial Statement's stipulations, given that the metric for B1 is a % reduction on TER (to be calculated with SBEM, which is the non-residential equivalent of SAP).
- 4.68. B2 is aligned to the Government's direction of travel indicated by both the options proposed in the Future Homes Standard 2023 consultation, in that no fossil fuel heating systems are proposed. B3 and B4 are not impacted because they address renewable energy, which is out of the scope of the 2023 WMS.
- 4.69. Policy elements B1, B2 and B3 are to be addressed at the design and post-completion stages, to ensure that the development has been built to intended standards. Post-completion resubmission of the original energy statement including energy performance calculations, informed by the relevant tests to systems and fabric, should be required as a condition as part of the planning application process. B5 and B7 compliance should also be demonstrated post-completion through planning conditions.
- 4.70. B1 to B7 are to be demonstrated at the planning application stage through the submission of an energy statement, alongside associated output reports from energy modelling software (e.g. SBEM).

Smart Energy Systems

- 4.71. In order to maximise energy self-sufficiency of a site, in relation to policy element A6, a number of methods may be considered. These may include smart local grids, energy sharing, energy storage and demand-side response, and/or solutions that combine elements of the above.

Compliance with Policy B1.1 TER Reductions

- 4.72. These %TER reduction targets are not limited to be solely delivered through energy efficiency measures. Therefore, there could be an element of clean energy supply or renewable energy measures included in these. Further renewable energy will be needed to subsequently meet the requirements of Policy B3, therefore applicants should be advised to pursue energy efficiency measures as far as feasible in the first instance in pursuit of Policy B1.1, so that the subsequent Policy B3 renewable energy requirements are not rendered excessively expensive or unfeasible. Designing to use less energy in the first place reduces the amount of renewable energy needed to match this, and/or the amount of carbon offset payment needed.
- 4.73. In the current Part L for non-domestic buildings, the type of heating system in the 'notional' building (from which the TER is derived) is the same as the type of heating system in the actual proposed building. Therefore, no TER gains will be made by switching from a gas or oil boiler to a heat pump or other all-electric or otherwise low-carbon heat system. However, TER improvements can be made by selecting a heating system that is more efficient than Part L 2021's notional efficiency for that heating type.

Assured Performance Processes for Energy Performance

- 4.74. Regarding assured performance processes, in addition to those mentioned in relation to the equivalent residential policy (A5) in residential, there is also one additional method for non-residential: NABERS UK (administered by CIBSE). NABERS is currently only available for offices but intended to extend to other building types in future.

Offsetting

- 4.75. The requirement for offsetting may be applied flexibly where it is demonstrated that this makes development unviable due to the unique energy use profile of the proposed building and site characteristics, where this results in an offsetting cost uplift significantly higher than assessed in the Whole Plan Viability Assessment. The flexibility could include a reduction in the scope of energy that has to be offset, or a discounted price per kWh if the Local Authority is confident that it can still deliver the required offset projects within this price (when pooled into the offsetting fund which will primarily consist of full price offset contributions). The degree of flexibility will depend on the unique scheme characteristics and evidence submitted to the local authority about what could be viably accommodated. It may also depend on the degree to which the proposed development represents a socially desirable facility that meets unmet community needs (such as for healthcare, education or similar).

- 4.76. See also the reasoned justification for the equivalent residential policies (A1-A7) regarding:

- Calculating renewable energy provision and offset payments,
- Applicability to outline applications, and
- Assured performance processes

Question 77. Do you think that Policy X B is the right approach to achieve net zero operational carbon in new build non-residential development?

Question 78. Please explain your answer.

X C – Climate-adapted Design and Construction

- 4.77. Adapting to and mitigating against the effects of climate change is crucial, particularly as climate change impacts worsen with more extreme and variable temperatures and weather. The need for climate-adapted design and construction for new development is key for current and future occupant comfort and safety, as well as making the built environment more resilient and future-proofed.

Policy X C - Climate-adapted Design and Construction

- 1) All development should mitigate against climate change and adapt to climate change by employing sustainable design and construction principles.

- 2) Applicants are expected to demonstrate that the following elements have been considered, and evidenced where appropriate by the corresponding assessment methodology, in an Energy and Sustainability Statement.

C1 - BREEAM

- 3) New non-residential developments with over 1000sqm of floorspace should achieve the BREEAM 'Excellent' certification, including full water credits for category Wat 01 (water efficiency).

C2 - Sustainable construction

- 4) All new build developments must minimise their carbon footprint and energy impact through sustainable design and construction practices. Proposals should demonstrate efforts to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by considering factors such as site location, building orientation, design, landscaping, and planting strategies, while prioritising a "fabric-first" approach.
- 5) All developments should be designed to enhance resilience to the anticipated effects of climate change. Proposals must incorporate measures to adapt to changing climate conditions, including resilience to extreme weather events, rising temperatures, stronger winds, droughts, heavy rainfall, and snow. Water conservation and storage measures should also be integrated into designs, taking into account best practices and future climate projections.
- 6) All development should demonstrate consideration to reducing carbon emissions and waste through construction. Where development impacts existing buildings, proposals should also comply with Policy XE on 'Reducing Carbon Emissions in Existing Buildings'.

C3 - Cooling Hierarchy

- 7) All development proposals must show how designs have optimised the internal and solar heat gains to balance the need to minimise space heating demand with the need to passively maintain comfortable temperatures during hot summers. This should be shown by demonstrating that overheating risk measures have been incorporated in accordance with the cooling hierarchy which prioritises measures, as follows:
- i. Minimise internal heat generation through energy-efficient design and equipment selection
 - ii. Reduce and manage the amount of heat entering the building in summer using:
 - Building orientation
 - Shading
 - Albedo
 - Fenestration
 - Insulation
 - iii. Manage heat within the building through exposed internal thermal mass and high ceilings
 - iv. Passive ventilation, including cross ventilation through a building wherever possible. Passive stack and wind-driven ventilation, night purging and designing windows to allow effective and secure ventilation. Single aspect developments are discouraged
 - v. Natural cooling measures including green and blue infrastructure
 - vi. Use of mixed-mode cooling such as low-energy mechanical cooling (fan-powered ventilation)

- vii. Mechanical ventilation (which, if it has a heat recovery function, should also have a summer bypass mode)

C4 - Overheating assessment

- 8) All major residential developments should complete CIBSE TM59 overheating assessment (or future equivalent assessment methodology) as their route to compliance with Building Regulations Part O. The simplified Part O route will not be considered acceptable.
- 9) All major non-residential developments should complete *CIBSE TM52* overheating assessment (or future equivalent assessment methodology).

C5 - Resilience to Climate Change

- 10) All development must incorporate measures that increase resilience to extreme weather events and a changing climate, including increasing temperatures urban heat island effects and frequency and intensity of rainfall. All developments should:
- Reduce the risk of flooding and conserve water
 - Employ sustainable urban drainage
- 11) Development proposals should reduce the 'heat island' effect through the use of cool materials and green and blue infrastructure within the development.

Reasoned Justification

- 4.78. The NPPF requires the planning system to take full account of the long-term implications of climate change including the risk of overheating and the need to mitigate and adapt to climate change. It also sets out that policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future health and resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts.
- 4.79. This policy addresses the critical need to mitigate the risks associated with overheating and climate vulnerability. Without effective design, factors such as building orientation and glazing ratios could increase the risk of overheating. To respond to this, this policy includes sections on the cooling hierarchy and overheating assessments, which ensure that new developments do not contribute to unacceptable levels of overheating risk. The cooling hierarchy prioritises passive design measures reduces the need for air conditioning and other energy-intensive systems, reducing cost, energy reliance and providing improved thermal comfort throughout the year.
- 4.80. This policy also recognises the increasing pressure on water resources. For non-residential buildings, water use limits aligned with BREEAM Wat 01 credits promote efficient water consumption.
- 4.81. The comprehensive approach to climate change adaption and mitigation set out in this policy not only reduces the likelihood of future retrofitting (which can be disruptive and costly) but also promotes future proofing of new developments, ensuring long-term sustainability and occupant well-being. The policy is also linked to other Local Plan policies through the integration of green and blue infrastructure as well as reducing flood risk by employing measures such as sustainable urban drainage.

- 4.82. To ensure that buildings are not at risk of overheating, applicants are required to demonstrate compliance with additional assessments beyond the standard requirements set by Building Regulations. C4 of the policy mandates that all major residential developments complete a CIBSE TM59 overheating assessment to assess and mitigate overheating risk, in addition to the basic compliance with Building Regulations Part O (or its future equivalent). For major non-residential developments, a CIBSE TM52 overheating assessment must be completed, or the future equivalent. These additional assessments go beyond the standard regulatory checks to ensure that the building design considers factors such as internal heat generation, ventilation, and shading to avoid uncomfortable indoor temperatures during hot summer months.
- 4.83. The Energy Statement should include the relevant overheating assessment reports, demonstrating that the design of the building effectively addresses overheating risk and includes measures to minimise it.
- 4.84. For BREEAM, applicants are expected to submit a BREEAM pre-assessment to demonstrate that the relevant BREEAM level has been designed into the scheme, and that more than the minimum WAT 01 credits (for the respective certification level targeted) will be achieved. A condition upon any grant of planning permission is expected to ensure that the development is completed in accordance with the BREEAM pre-assessment and that the BREEAM certification is provided once the building is completed.
- 4.85. It is accepted that the level of detail provided by applicants may be lower for householder and minor applications, particularly in relation to the cooling hierarchy.

Question 79. Do you think that Policy X C is the right approach to encourage climate adaptations in new design and construction?

Question 80. Please explain your answer.

X D – Embodied Carbon and Waste

- 4.86. Embodied carbon refers to the emissions associated with materials and construction processes throughout the whole lifecycle of a building or infrastructure. Embodied carbon is an important aspect to consider as it represents the total greenhouse gas emissions from the entire life cycle of a building's materials, ranging from extraction and manufacturing to transport, construction, maintenance and disposal.
- 4.87. The case for addressing embodied carbon is justified by the increasing proportional importance of these emissions as a share of buildings' total carbon footprint as the power grid is decarbonised and buildings become more energy efficient. Unlike operational carbon emissions, embodied carbon has front-loaded impacts as the carbon is released before a building is even first used or occupied. Additionally, once materials are made and installed

their emissions are permanent, so it is important to consider embodied carbon at the earliest opportunity.

Policy X D - Embodied Carbon and Minimising Waste

Residential and non-residential buildings (thresholds given below) must meet the followings requirements:

D1 - Embodied Carbon Reporting

- 1) All major new residential (10 dwellings or more) and non-residential (1000m² of floorspace or more) developments are required to complete a whole-life carbon assessment in accordance with RICS Whole Life Carbon Assessment guidance.

D2 - Limiting Embodied Carbon

- 2) All large-scale major development (50 dwellings or more; 5000m² or more of non-residential floorspace) is required to limit embodied carbon (RICS/BS 15978 modules A1-A5) to 600kgCO₂e/m² GIA.

D3 - Building End-of-Life

- 3) All new buildings should be designed to enable easy material re-use and disassembly, subsequently reducing the need for end-of-life demolition.

D4 - Demolition Audits

- 4) All major development that contains existing buildings/structures to carry out a pre-development and/or pre-demolition audit, following a well-established industry best practice method (e.g BRE) in accordance with Policy XE4.

D5 - Embodied Carbon in Non-Major Development

- 5) Proposals for new development of 1 or more homes or more than 100m² of non-residential floorspace, but below the size thresholds for embodied carbon reporting and targets as noted above (set out in point 1), should include proportionate narrative on options considered (and where possible, decisions made) to minimise embodied carbon of the proposed development.

Reasoned Justification

4.88. Whilst there is no explicit reference to embodied carbon in the NPPF, the NPPF references to 'low carbon development' and 'low carbon economy' could readily include embodied carbon as an implicit part of this. The NPPF also sets out that the full range of potential climate change impacts should be taken into account when preparing and assessing planning applications. Additionally, embodied carbon can be considered as a design issue and therefore would fall under the NPPF's instruction that new development should be planned for in ways that help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, such as through its design.

4.89. By addressing embodied carbon and promoting sustainable construction practices, this policy could deliver a range of co-benefits that extend beyond carbon reduction, supporting wider

economic, environmental, and social goals. This policy seeks to ensure that carbon emissions are limited across the whole life cycle of a building. Without this policy, large amounts of carbon emissions could be missed, given that up to 50% of a building's lifetime carbon emissions result from upfront embodied carbon .

- 4.90. The requirement for whole-life carbon assessments under D1 ensures that all major developments assess and mitigate the full carbon impact of building materials and construction. By limiting embodied carbon in large-scale developments (e.g., to 600 kgCO₂e/m² GIA), D2 plays an important role in reducing the carbon impact of large-scale major construction.
- 4.91. By promoting circular economy principles (particularly within D3 and D4) which focus on material reuse and the ease of disassembly at the end of a building's life, the policy encourages more resource-efficient construction, reducing waste generation and lowering costs of future demolition and disposal. Designing buildings for disassembly and material reuse helps reduce dependency on raw materials and limits costs related to sourcing and transporting new materials. By designing for disassembly and material re-use (D3), new buildings will be more adaptable and future-proofed, capable of being modified, extended, or dismantled with lower environmental impact. This leads to greater building longevity and flexibility, enabling spaces to evolve without the need for significant new construction.
- 4.92. The requirement for demolition audits under D4 ensures that before any building is demolished, the potential for reusing or recycling materials is thoroughly assessed. This reduces the amount of waste sent to landfill and encourages the repurposing of valuable construction materials.
- 4.93. The requirement to provide a narrative on embodied carbon for smaller developments (D5) encourages development of all scales to consider sustainable construction methods and communicate their choices to foster greater awareness and engagement with sustainable practices.
- 4.94. Compliance with D1, D2 and D3 are to be demonstrated within an energy statement. If applicable, output reports for D4 should be submitted alongside an energy statement.
- 4.95. With regards to D3, to ensure buildings can be adapted or dismantled at the end of their life, developers should focus on modular design using dry construction methods (e.g., bolts, screws) to enable easy disassembly. Avoiding permanent adhesives and welds allows materials to be reused or recycled efficiently. Material selection is also important. Low-embodied-carbon materials like timber or recycled steel are preferred for ease of reuse. Designs should prioritise durable, long-lasting materials and incorporate a reuse strategy for managing materials at the building's end of life, including deconstruction and sorting for recycling or reuse.
- 4.96. With regards to D5, it is recognised that the level of detail required will vary depending on the size and scale of the development. Applicants should provide a proportionate narrative in their energy statement, exploring how embodied carbon has been minimised. While detailed

assessments are not required for smaller developments, the following considerations are encouraged:

- Incorporating and repurposing on-site materials or features where possible.
- Designing with a focus on reducing material use, such as through space-efficient layouts or structural design.
- Opting for materials with lower embodied carbon, such as timber, instead of higher-carbon materials like steel, aluminium, or conventional cement.
- Reducing 'product miles' by sourcing materials closer to the site or from manufacturers with demonstrated low-carbon practices.
- Implementing processes that reduce material wastage during construction

4.97. This approach ensures that applicants, even for smaller developments, are considering embodied carbon in a meaningful way, fostering sustainable practices without imposing excessive burdens on projects that do not meet the higher thresholds for formal reporting.

Question 81. Do you think that Policy X D is the right approach for addressing embodied carbon and waste?

Question 82. Please explain your answer.

X E – Reducing Carbon Emissions in Existing Buildings

4.98. Given that a third of the District's emissions arise from existing buildings, the decarbonisation of existing buildings is crucially important to the Council. Whilst local planning policy has only a limited influence on the carbon and energy performance of existing buildings (as policy can only seek changes to buildings where the building owner is seeking to require a change to the building that requires planning permission), the retrofit of existing buildings can be pursued through providing a permissive and supportive policy approach to energy efficiency and carbon improvements to existing buildings.

Policy X E - Reducing Carbon Emissions in Existing Buildings

- 1) Development which would result in considerable improvements to the energy efficiency, carbon emissions and the general suitability and longevity of an existing building will generally be supported, with significant weight attributed to those benefits.

E1 - Prioritise Retrofit- First Principles

- 2) Development should adopt a retrofit-first approach, where options for retrofitting and retention of existing buildings are considered before demolition.
- 3) Development involving existing buildings should demonstrate that a whole building approach and the following hierarchy has been considered:

- a. Refurbishment and upgrading of existing building fabric including wall, roof and floor insulation, windows, doors and thermal bridging
 - b. Installation of low or zero-carbon heating and hot water systems, and the installation of renewable energy generation on-site
 - c. Connection to an existing or planned low carbon heat network
- 4) Where substantial or total demolition is proposed, a feasibility assessment should be submitted. The feasibility assessment should demonstrate:
- a. The whole life carbon of a new building(s) would be less or similar to a suitably comparable retrofit option (as detailed in 3 a-c above)
 - b. The proposed development would deliver public benefits which would not be delivered by a suitably comparable retrofit option
 - c. The feasible reasons retrofit cannot be considered, including operational or structural requirements
- 5) Demolition of existing buildings will only be permitted where applicants can demonstrate that alternative development options have been comprehensively explored and following assessment by the Local Planning Authority, on balance, the whole life carbon of a new building(s) would be less or similar to a suitably comparable retrofit option, the proposed demolition of an existing building(s) secures benefits over and above retention, refurbishing and retrofitting an existing building(s) or is not feasible as set out in the feasibility assessment.

E2 - Embodied Carbon

- 6) For major developments involving substantial or total demolition of an existing building(s), applicants should submit a Whole Life Carbon Assessment in accordance with Policy D1.

E3 - Adapting Heritage Assets to Climate Change

- 7) Development which would result in considerable improvements to the energy efficiency, carbon emissions, resilience and longevity of designated (including within Conservation Areas) or non-designated heritage assets will be supported, providing that the significance of the asset is preserved.
- 8) A whole-building approach should guide interventions to upgrade historic buildings, and direct interventions, where they limit the impact to the significance of the historic buildings or their setting.
- 9) The sensitive retrofitting of energy efficiency measures and the appropriate use of micro-renewables in designated and non-designated heritage assets will be encouraged, providing that the significance, character and appearance of the asset is preserved in a manner appropriate for their significance.

Reasoned Justification

- 4.99. The Climate Change Committee (an independent, statutory body in the UK that advises the government on climate change targets and progress in reducing emissions) has shown that in order for the UK to meet its legally binding carbon reduction goals, it is vital that the existing building stock must be decarbonised. Therefore, Local Plan policy which supports improving the efficiency of existing buildings, reducing the energy demand and carbon emissions of

existing buildings aligns with local and national carbon targets (including the UK's legally mandated Carbon Budget).

- 4.100. The NPPF sets out that local planning authorities should give significant weight to the need to support energy efficiency and low carbon heating improvements to existing buildings, both domestic and non-domestic. It further sets out that where the proposals would affect conservation areas, listed buildings or other relevant designated heritage assets, local planning authorities should also apply the policies set out in the chapter of the framework relevant to conserving and enhancing the historic environment.
- 4.101. The hierarchical approach to retrofitting prioritises fabric upgrades and energy efficiency improvements before incorporating low- or zero-carbon heating, hot water systems, and renewable energy generation, aligns with Policy XA, offering potential benefits including reduced energy bills and longevity of buildings. This policy also closely correlates to Policy XD with regards to reducing embodied carbon and promoting circular economy principles.
- 4.102. This policy aims to ensure that retrofitting of historic buildings and heritage assets are undertaken in a sensitive manner, balancing the important notions of conserving and enhancing the historic environment and decarbonising existing buildings, leading to a more sustainable and resilient historic built environment.
- 4.103. Compliance with E1 should be demonstrated within the energy statement. It is accepted that the level of detail provided may be lower for householder and minor applications. However, where substantial or total demolition is proposed, applicants would still be expected to assess the embodied carbon of alternatives to demonstrate why this level of demolition would be acceptable. It is recommended that applicants engage with the Council early in the development process regarding feasibility assessments and alternative options. Additionally, with regards to applicants demonstrating that a whole building approach are recommended to utilise a nationally recommended recognised assurance scheme such as BSI PAS 2035.
- 4.104. If applicable, output reports for E2 should be submitted alongside an energy statement.
- 4.105. To support applicants in retrofitting existing buildings, various guidance is available including: [LETI Climate Emergency Retrofit Guide \(LETI, 2021\)](#), [Net Zero Carbon Toolkit \(Etude, Elementa, Passivhaus, Levitt Bernstein, 2021\)](#), and [Passivhaus Trust's Retrofit Primer \(2022\)](#).
- 4.106. In respect of historic buildings and heritage assets, guidance is available at [Historic England's Energy Efficiency and Retrofit Guidance](#).

Question 83. Do you think that Policy X E is the right approach to effectively reduce carbon emissions in existing buildings?

Question 84. Please explain your answer.