

FULL COUNCIL- COUNCIL PLAN 2026- 2029

24/02/2026

FULL COUNCIL

PART I

Council Plan 2026 - 2029 (ADCCC)

1 Summary

- 1.1 The council's current Corporate Framework comes to an end in 2026.
- 1.2 Whilst work continues in collaboration with the other Hertfordshire authorities on local government reorganisation (LGR), it is important that a new Council Plan is adopted by the council in this interim period.
- 1.3 This will ensure that we are prioritising our residents throughout this period and ensuring the council continue to prioritise positive outcomes for them.

2 Recommendation

- 2.1 It is recommended that Full Council adopt the Council Plan 2026-2029.

Report prepared by: Jason Hagland – Strategic Housing Manager
Katie Stacey – Corporate Services Manager

3 Details

- 3.1 As confirmed above, the council's current Corporate Framework comes to an end in March 2026.
- 3.2 Therefore, the development of the new Council Plan for a new three-year period began in early 2025. To ensure a wide range of perspectives on the future direction of the council were considered in the development of this Plan, the following research and engagement was undertaken–
 - 3.2.1 A detailed review of the relevant research related to the district and how this differs from other areas within the UK.
 - 3.2.2 A detailed review of the results of the council's most recently completed Residents Survey. (October 2024 – March 2025, 614 Responses.)
 - 3.2.3 A staff engagement session conducted at the council's Staff Day on 13/05/2026.
 - 3.2.4 An engagement session with members of the council's Corporate Management Team.
 - 3.2.5 An engagement session with members of the administration and the council's Senior Leadership Team.
- 3.3 Following a review of relevant research and the outcomes of engagement undertaken with residents and staff detailed above, four strategic themes for the Council Plan 2026-2029 were identified.

3.4 Under each of these strategic themes, sits a set of individual aims that are more specific to service areas within the council. The delivery of these aims will ensure the delivery of the four strategic themes outlined within the Plan.

3.5 These four strategic themes and the aims that accompany them that will ensure their delivery, are listed below –

3.5.1 Healthy, safe and thriving communities

- Improve access for all ages to health facilities, leisure services and community spaces.
- Work with developers and housing providers to help increase affordable housing within the district.
- Work with our partners in the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) to maintain a low crime, low antisocial behaviour district
- Support planning applications that aim to deliver thriving communities and a healthier environment.
- Work with the voluntary sector to support positive outcomes for vulnerable residents.
- Actively pursue grant opportunities to fund our major projects and services.
- Continue to prevent homelessness in the district.

3.5.2 A green and sustainable future

- Finalise a local plan that delivers on our statutory responsibilities and the priorities of our residents.
- Maintain our performance as a top recycling authority in England.
- Continue to invest in and improve our parks, open spaces and walking routes.
- Focus on restoring nature, boosting biodiversity, protecting trees and woodlands and key habitats.
- Work on adjusting to the impacts of climate change and continue progress on making Three Rivers a more climate resilient district.
- Encourage sustainable transport initiatives and greener vehicle options.
- Champion a greener and more sustainable council and district that strives to reduce our carbon footprint.

3.5.3 A prosperous and vibrant district

- Attract and retain economic investment in the district.

- Continue to build and nourish the council's partnerships with local businesses.
- Encourage and facilitate external investment into our high streets and shopping areas.
- Celebrate and invest in local culture, art and heritage.
- Continue to encourage equal access to council services for all residents.
- Promote inclusive communities and resident participation.
- Collaborate with partners to advance shared economic, environmental, and community goals.

3.5.4 A well-run council

- Ensure the delivery of good quality, efficient and effective services for our residents.
- Maintain a balanced and transparent budget that upholds the council's secure financial position.
- Set clear performance targets that are aligned with our Council Plan to ensure accountability and continuous improvement.
- Guarantee value for money in all council activities.
- Provide clear, timely, and innovative communication to keep residents informed, engaged and empowered.
- Explore the use of existing and developing technology to improve efficiency across the organisation.
- Continue to be responsible, conscientious and proactive landowners across the council's diverse estate.

3.6 The Council Plan 2026-2029 aims to set out a clear vision for the future of the district, built around these strategic themes and aims. These will run like a golden thread through all areas of the council's work, shaping and directing all of the services that we provide.

3.7 Delivery of the plan will be achieved by aligning our service plans and team objectives with these themes and aims, ensuring their delivery over the course of the Plan.

3.8 Therefore, in addition to the engagement listed above, the Plan was developed in ongoing collaboration with Heads of Service and other relevant Officers of the council, who were given opportunities to contribute to the content, ensuring all service areas are, and importantly feel, adequately represented.

3.9 Furthermore, the Plan has been drafted with significant collaboration with the Communications team, ensuring that the Plan developed adheres to the brand guidelines adopted by the council.

3.10 Importantly, all of the photos used within the plan are of areas within the district and these have been approved by Communications.

4 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 It is recommended for Full Council to approve the Council Plan 2026-2029 following approval at Policy and Resources Committee in January 2026.

Adoption of this plan will ensure that, despite the ongoing work on local government reform, the council maintain a strong strategic direction and that all service areas remain aligned in delivering the plan, resulting in improved outcomes for our residents and district.

5 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

5.1 The themes and aims within the Council Plan (once adopted) will feed directly into budget creation and management for the period. Any specific funding required for any objective that will see the delivery of the themes within the Council Plan should be considered.

Staffing, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre Implications

None specific.

6 Financial Implications

6.1 The themes and aims within the Council Plan (once adopted) will feed directly into budget creation and management for the period. Any specific funding required for any objective that will see the delivery of the themes within the Council Plan should be considered.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 None specific.

8 Equal Opportunities Implications

8.1 Relevance Test

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

8.2 Impact Assessment

An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) is contained within the appendices for this report. It is not anticipated that the Council Plan 2026-2029 will have any negative impact on the groups with protected characteristics, with positive impacts on some groups listed

9 Environmental Implications

9.1 The Climate and sustainability impact assessment has been completed and can be viewed at Appendix 2 (see scores below). The 'green and sustainable future'

theme supports sustainability and climate action across council services and initiatives.

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

10 Communications and Website Implications

- 10.1 Once adopted, the Council Plan 2026-2029 will require promotion on the council's website and social media channels. It is proposed that Officers will meet with the Communications team to develop a Communications plan early 2026.

11 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

- 11.1 The Council has agreed its risk management strategy which can be found on the website at <http://www.threerivers.gov.uk>. In addition, the risks of the proposals in the report have also been assessed against the Council's duties under Health and Safety legislation relating to employees, visitors and persons affected by our operations. The risk management implications of this report are detailed below.

11.2

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response (tolerate, treat, terminate, transfer)	Risk Rating (combination of likelihood and impact)
The council do not adopt an updated strategic plan for the period 2026 – 2029.	There is a lack of strategic direction for this period, leading to a reduction in positive outcomes for residents.	For the council to adopt a new Council Plan for 2026 – 2029.	Tolerate	6

11.3 The above risks are scored using the matrix below. The Council has determined its aversion to risk and is prepared to tolerate risks where the combination of impact and likelihood scores 6 or less.

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

Impact Score

- 4 (Catastrophic)
- 3 (Critical)
- 2 (Significant)
- 1 (Marginal)

Likelihood Score

- 4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
- 3 (Likely (21-79%))
- 2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
- 1 (Remote (≤5%))

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

Data Quality

Data sources:

2021 Census

ONS

Fingertips

Natural England

Data checked by:

Jason Hagland/Katie Stacey

Data rating:

1	Poor	
2	Sufficient	X
3	High	

Background Papers

APPENDICES / ATTACHMENTS

Sustainability Impact Assessment
Equalities Impact Assessment
Council Plan 2026 – 2029

