Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan

23/11/2026

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE

PART I

Minor Amendments to Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan (DoF)

1 Summary

1.1 The Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan has been updated with minor amendments to bring the Neighbourhood Plan in line with Three Rivers' latest Local Plan evidence where the Settlement Appraisal (2025) categorises Abbots Langley as a small town in the settlement hierarchy.

2 Recommendation

2.1 That:

The Members of the Policy and Resources Committee recommend to Full Council to agree the minor amendments and adopt the updated Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan in Appendix 2

Report prepared by: Aaron Roberts, Senior Planning Policy Officer

3 Details

3.1 The Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan was adopted at Full Council on 1 June 2026, forming part of the Development Plan for the district.

3.2 Within the Neighbourhood Plan there are multiple references to Abbots Langley as a village. The Parish Council, and many residents refer to Abbots Langley colloquially as a village and it is for this reason that the plan contains reference to Abbots Langley being a village.

3.3 It is not the role of a Neighbourhood Plan to categorise settlements, this is done through the Local Plan and its supporting evidence such as the Settlement Appraisal.

3.4 The current adopted Local Plan categorises Abbots Langley as a 'Key Centre' in its Settlement Hierarchy. The Settlement Hierarchy clearly differentiates between villages and other levels of settlement within the district with Sarratt and Bedmond being the only villages in the district.

3.5 The Settlement Appraisal (2025) provides an updated Settlement Hierarchy in support of the emerging Local Plan. This places Abbots Langley under the hierarchy as a 'small town'. Abbots Langley was given a 'Good' sustainability score.

3.6 The sustainability score is assessed mainly considering access to key services and facilities as well as public transport provision. Within Abbots Langley there are multiple primary schools, a GP surgery, local shops, open space, sports/leisure facilities, a library and community halls. This level of services and facilities is much more characteristic of a town than a village (which would be expected to have a more limited range of services).

3.7 On this basis officers reviewed the suggested minor amendment (additional paragraph) provided by the Parish Council, coming to the conclusion that the amendment was reasonable.

3.8 Consideration was given to whether the suggested amendment could be considered a minor amendment. The additional paragraph does not fundamentally alter the plan's policies or objectives, rather only adds to the supporting text (before the main section of the Plan starts). As such, officers are satisfied that the update to the Plan is a minor amendment and therefore no public consultation is required on the change to the Plan as set out in Planning Practice Guidance.

3.9 The additional paragraph was inserted into the document immediately after the acknowledgements and prior to the Executive Summary. The wording of the paragraph is as follows:

In planning terms, Abbots Langley (the settlement) is defined within the Settlement Hierarchy of the Adopted Local Plan as a "Key Centre". It is not defined as a "village", which is a separate category of settlement. The Regulation 19 Local Plan (emerging) proposes to amend the Settlement Hierarchy and classifies Abbots Langley as a "Small Town/Large Suburban Settlement". Any reference to the term "Village" within the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan should therefore be understood as reflecting the way in which the community identifies with and describes the settlement, rather than as a reference to its formal planning designation.

3.10 As a result of the above change, references to the Plan as being a "referendum version" were removed, and the date of the Plan was changed from March 2026 to December 2026 (when it is expected to be formally adopted).

4 Options and Reasons for Recommendations

4.1 The council is proposing to update the Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan with minor amendments to bring it in line with the Local Plan. Failing to make these changes could leave the Neighbourhood Plan unaligned with the Local Plan.

5 Policy/Budget Reference and Implications

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

6 Financial, Legal, Equal Opportunities, Staffing, Environmental, Community Safety, Public Health, Customer Services Centre, Communications & Website, Risk Management and Health & Safety Implications

6.1 None specific.

7 Risk and Health & Safety Implications

7.1 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.

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

Nature of Risk	Consequence	Suggested Control Measures	Response *(tolerate, treat terminate, transfer)*	Risk Rating *(combination of likelihood and impact)*
The Neighbourhood Plan could be perceived to not be in accordance with the Local Plan	The Plan could have reduced weight in planning decisions	Adopt the Plan	Tolerate	4

7.3 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.

Likelihood				
Very Likely	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
Remote	Low 1	Low 2	Low 3	Low 4
	Impact			
	Low ----------▶			Unacceptable

Impact Score	Likelihood Score
4 (Catastrophic)	4 (Very Likely (≥80%))
3 (Critical)	3 (Likely (21-79%))
2 (Significant)	2 (Unlikely (6-20%))
1 (Marginal)	1 (Remote (≤5%))

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

Background Papers

Planning Practice Guidance
Three Rivers Settlement Appraisal (2025)

Three Rivers Core Strategy (2011)

APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan Referendum Version (March 2026)

Appendix 2 – Updated Abbots Langley Neighbourhood Plan (December 2026)

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