

PLANNING POLICY AND CONSERVATION Service Delivery Plan 2027 – 2030

THREE RIVERS DISTRICT COUNCIL

Service Area	Planning Policy and Conservation	Directorate	Director of Finance

Introduction

The service plans are a key component of Three Rivers District Council's corporate planning process. They describe our ambitions, priorities, targets and how each service area is working towards delivering the councils' themes detailed in the Council Plan. They are reviewed and updated annually considering budgets, performance, internal and external factors, arising throughout the year.

Service Plans are monitored in the following ways:

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

SERVICE OVERVIEW

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

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

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SERVICE OVERVIEW cont.

Guidance is provided to the local community to assist with their production of Neighbourhood Plans.

The council maintains the Right to Build Register, which is a list of individuals that have expressed an interest in building their own homes within the district.

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

BUDGET

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

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SERVICE PURPOSE AND CORE FUNCTIONS

Council Plan Theme	Service's contribution to the Council Plan Theme
	Planning Policy
Healthy, safe and thriving communities	The local plan allocates land for development ensuring access to services, green spaces and infrastructure that promotes social cohesion and well being. It includes specific policies aimed at improving public health by promoting high quality design, protecting open spaces and encouraging active travel.
A green and sustainable future	The Local Plan shapes the district's development pattern, ensuring that housing needs and other economic, social, and environmental priorities are met. It prioritises low-carbon development, efficient land use, and sustainable transport. It allocates land in the most sustainable locations and encourages walking and cycling.
A prosperous and vibrant district	The local plan encourages economic growth and investment. The protection of employment areas and town centres through Article 4 Directions ensures that local businesses can thrive, supporting job creation and a strong local economy. The Self-build Register gives members of the local community an opportunity to build their own properties rather than relying on developers
A well-run Council	The Local Plan's preparation follows a structured legislative process, including multiple stages of evidence gathering and public consultations, which exemplifies transparent and participatory leadership. Monitoring the performance of Local Plan policies through the preparation of the Annual Monitoring Report, ensures that the leadership remains accountable and responsive to the community needs. The council's 5 Year Housing Land Supply calculation and Housing Delivery Test Action Plan help measure the Council's performance in delivering much needed housing. Supporting preparation of Neighbourhood Plans empowers local communities, ensuring their needs and visions for development are recognized and integrated into broader strategic plans.

SERVICE PURPOSE AND CORE FUNCTIONS

Council Plan Theme	Service's contribution to the Council Plan Theme
	Planning Policy
Healthy, safe and thriving communities	Historic buildings preserve cultural heritage, helping to create shared identity and pride.
A green and sustainable future	Protecting the historic built environment retains embodied carbon and reduces demolition waste. In terms of social sustainability preserving historic buildings helps maintain community identity and heritage, fostering a sense of place and belonging. The implementation of Article 4 Directions reflects a proactive approach to preserving the character of specific areas, demonstrating a commitment to sustainable development.
A well-run Council	Provision of specialist comments on planning applications/appeals in relation to Heritage Assets (Listed Buildings, Conservation Areas), and Locally Listed Buildings. This service is outsourced to Place Services and paid for through the vacant Senior Planning and Conservation Officer Post. Designation of Conservation Areas and updating Conservation Area Appraisals. We are responsible for the designation of Conservation Areas which are defined by the National Planning Policy Framework as 'designated heritage assets. We maintain a List of Locally Important Buildings (Local List) (over 160 entries) which are important buildings or structures of historical, or architectural, interest to the local community. Inclusion on the List means that its conservation as a non-designated heritage asset is a material consideration when determining planning applications.

PROJECTS

Council Plan Theme	Project Title	Project Description & Proposed Outcome(s)	Project Start Date (Month/Year)	Projected End Date (Month/Year)	Internal/External Partners	Additional Capital or Revenue cost and/or saving
All themes	Local Plan	Delivery of the council's local plan, allocating land for development and containing planning policies.	July 2017	Sept 2027	HCC External consultants assisting with evidence base: BNP Paribas, TRL Ltd, Exacom/ESRI, Lovell John, Place Services, Hatch Regeniris, Iceni, SLR, WSP	TBC
All themes	Rickmansworth Conservation Area Appraisal	Update to the Rickmansworth Conservation Area Appraisal	March 2026	Dec 2026	HCC, Place Services	TBC
All themes	Review CIL Charging Schedule	Prepare new CIL Charging Schedule for the district, including evidence to justify fees included	January 2027	November 2027	Viability Consultants and Planning Inspectorate	Circa £50,000 cost

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All themes	Sarratt (The Green) Conservation Area Appraisal	Update to the Sarratt (The Green) Conservation Area Appraisal	September 2026	March 2027	HCC, Place Services	TBC
All themes	Sarratt (Church End) Conservation Area Appraisal	Update to the Sarratt (Church End) Conservation Area Appraisal	September 2026	March 2027	HCC, Place Services	TBC
All themes	Article 4 Direction removing permitted development rights for small HMOs	Introduction of non-immediate Article 4 Direction removing permitted development rights for small HMOS, which will come into force in June 2027	June 2026	June 2027	N/A	None

POLICIES AND STRATEGIES

Policy or Strategy	Name of Policy or Strategy	New or existing Policy or Strategy	Renewal date	Additional comments

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO SUPPORT THE COUNCIL PLAN

Key Performance Indicators enable us to track how we are performing against our targets and over time. They are reviewed quarterly and/or annually to ensure accountability and to drive continuous improvement.

KPI Ref	KPI Title	2025/26 Actual	2026/27 Target	2027/28 Target	2028/29 Target	2029/30 Target
PPC01	Net additional homes provided within the district each year	TBC (Autumn 2026)	752	TBC (can't be confirmed until Jan/Feb)	TBC	TBC
PPC02	Number of affordable homes delivered (gross) within the district each year	TBC (Autumn 2026)	374	TBC (can't be confirmed until Jan/Feb)	TBC	TBC
PPC03	Housing Land Supply (in years) compared to the National Planning Policy Framework requirement for Councils to provide a 5 year housing land supply'	TBC (currently 1.2)	5	5	5	5
PPC04	Percentage of new homes built on previously developed land	TBC (Autumn 2026)	60%	60%	60%	60%
PPC06	Percentage change in employment floorspace across the district	TBC (Autumn 2026)	5%	5%	5%	5%
PPC09	Vacancy rate for town and district centres (snapshot)	8.3%	<6%	<6%	<6%	<6%
PPC10	Produce 2 Conservation Area Appraisals a year	1	2	2	2	2
PPC12	Respond to planning policy requests from Development Management within 21 days	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

SERVICE VOLUMES

These are monitored internally by the individual service area and not reported on externally.

Description	Projected annual volume for 2027/2028	Estimated annual volume for 2028/29	Notes / explanation for estimated change
Conservation advice on planning applications (outsourced)	200 applications	200 applications	Dependent on number of planning applications that impact heritage assets
Planning Policy advice	35 applications	35 applications	Dependent on number of planning applications and the number development management officers need policy support with
Consultation Responses for Local Plan consultation	500	500	No consultation currently scheduled for 2027/28 though there will be a consultation on the main modifications to the plan following examination. In 28/29 we will begin consulting on the early stages of the next plan.

RISK MANAGEMENT

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