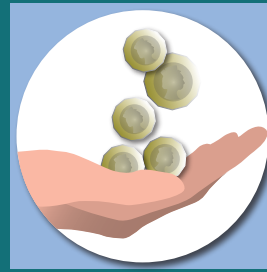


CORPORATE FRAMEWORK 2020-2023





Three Rivers District Council Corporate Framework 2020 - 2023

Three Rivers is undeniably a great place to live, work and grow. The district is the most prosperous in the East of England and our residents enjoy a very high quality of life with access to good schools, transport and communication links, housing, employment, culture and environment.

The health of the district's residents is very good with the percentage of our residents who are physically active being above the county average and the percentage who are overweight or smoke being below average. The number of stays in hospital for alcohol related harm are also better than the average for England.

However, the district is a place of contrasts and, just as there is no one single Three Rivers' community, it is also true that there is no single picture of our residents' lives. Despite a growing older population the life expectancy gap across the district is 7.5 years lower for men and 7.9 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Three Rivers (South Oxhey) than in the least deprived areas (Moor Park and Eastbury).

There are also clear inequalities in childhood obesity and alcohol related harm within Three Rivers wards. We need to continue to take a population health approach by promoting wellbeing and focus on prevention in our communities consequently reducing the health inequality gap in our district.

With our three rivers, the Grand Union Canal, our local lakes and 76 percent of our land space designated as Green Belt, the district is undoubtedly home to some very special environmental features that provide spaces for wildlife, recreation and relaxation as well as serving as the green lungs for our residents and our precious climate.

We are home to an internationally important cluster of creative industries, centred on Leavesden studios and to the Head Quarters of some major companies – including those such as RES and Skanska with strong sustainability credentials. The district is also home to innovation – from the development of the Chorleywood bread process to the world's first pocket digital radio.

However, the very things that make us successful also bring challenges. Demand for housing is increasing, especially as many of our families worry about the

affordability and supply of homes for their children and future generations, meaning we need to plan for significant new development in the district.

The proportion of residents claiming unemployment related benefits has also been increasing since 2017 partly due to the introduction of universal credit as more claimants are required to look for work. There are areas in Three Rivers with unemployment rates in the 40% most deprived nationally, and more areas where education skills and training are in the 40% most deprived.

So, the job for the Council is to ensure we manage the future growth and development of the district whilst also protecting our precious environment, rising to the challenge of climate change and ensuring people can lead active, healthy, safe and fulfilling lives with positive employment and opportunities.

In addition to this, the funding arrangements for Councils continues to change and create pressures for us in balancing our budgets whilst providing high quality services. So in addition to our role in the wider district, we also need to focus on the continued transformation of the Council – ensuring that we deliver the right services at the best cost to residents and local businesses.

Vision

We want Three Rivers to be a place for everyone where all our communities enjoy a healthy and sustainable future with access to good quality housing and open spaces, high quality services, and a successful economy.

This document outlines the Council's priority themes for the next three years.

Sara Bedford
Leader of Three Rivers District Council



Housing and Thriving Communities

We need to ensure an increase in the supply and affordability of housing in the district – but these homes need to be delivered in safe, sustainable communities with access to a wide range of quality services, open spaces, leisure and cultural opportunities.

We will work with developers, housing associations and partners to deliver homes that meet our district's needs but also achieve the highest standards of environmental performance and sustainability.

Whilst much of the District falls within the least 20% deprived in the country, there are areas within South Oxhey, Maple Cross, Abbots Langley, Bedmond, Leavesden and Mill End that fall within the 40% most deprived in terms of income deprivation, employment rates, education levels, crime, and health and disability. We will work with partners to address these inequalities.

Objectives

- We will work on a local plan to deliver sufficient housing and adopt that plan by 2021
- Through our joint ventures and partnerships we will take all available practicable action to increase the supply of affordable homes in the district
- We will complete the delivery of the main and learner pools and refurbishment to the leisure venue at South Oxhey
- We will seek to increase the number of Green Flag accredited parks and open spaces
- We will work towards reducing inequalities, prevent homelessness and encourage healthy lifestyles
- We will continue to work with partners to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour and secure investment in priority interventions.



Sustainable Environment

The Council has a proud record as a leader in environmental performance – from the highest recycling rates in the county, to the use of an innovative ground source heat pump that reduces the CO2 emissions from our own office building, to managing local nature reserves. The challenges faced by the local and global environment continue to increase and the Council recently declared a climate emergency in recognition that we need a step-change in our thoughts and actions.

We need to continue to improve our own environmental performance to reduce the impact of our operations and work with our partners and residents to inform their behaviour.

Objectives

- We will produce and deliver a Climate Change Strategy and action plan
- We will continue to improve the energy efficiency of the Council's buildings
- We will deliver and implement a Cycling and Walking Strategy
- We will seek to maintain our position as the highest recycling authority in Hertfordshire.



Successful Economy

The district is the most prosperous in the East of England and is home to the head quarters of a number of nationally and internationally recognised companies. The successes of the Warner Brothers' Studios, the Harry Potter Experience and The Grove mean that Three Rivers also has a global presence – which should be further recognised.

The Council will continue to support its vibrant and successful economy, whilst ensuring that its benefit is felt locally – through the provision of good jobs for the local community. We will ensure that we work with businesses to understand their future needs both in terms of employment space, access to a skilled, local workforce and local services. This will then allow us to better meet their future needs.

Objectives

- We will undertake a review of the Council's role in relation to the economy and agree an economic strategy
- We will continue to participate in the Hertfordshire Growth Board and South West Herts Partnership and engage the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership to support the economy
- Three Rivers will be recognised as a great place to do business
- We will continue to improve our relationship with the local business community
- We will continue to support Visit Herts and promote Three Rivers as the home of the internationally significant Warner Bros Studios.



High Performing, Financially Independent Council

Funding for district councils has been through a period of sustained reduction over the past 10 years. Not only has average funding for district councils fallen by 30 percent but the Government has also completely withdrawn its grant, leaving us dependant on business rates income. With proposed changes in the coming few years, funding for the Council is likely to become more unstable, even though demand for our services will continue to grow.

If we are going to balance the challenge of increasing demands of residents whilst traditional income continues to shrink we will increasingly have to rely on resources we generate ourselves. The Council currently receives £6.8 million a year in council tax and our ability to increase this in line with inflation is limited both by the Government and our own wish not to over-burden our residents. Our alternative sources of income, apart from business rates, come largely from investment and fees and charges for services. These currently generate £5.1 million and we will need to look to increase them, whilst continuing to reduce our costs through service transformation if we are to provide the services our communities expect and deserve.

Objectives

- We will generate enough income to continue to provide services for the district
- We will develop and deliver an improved Property Investment Strategy to maximise income from our assets and support the Commercial Strategy
- We will progress our Customer Service Strategy that provides a range of contact channels for customers and sets out corporate expectations of how they should be treated
- We will produce an Organisational Development Strategy to support the Council in delivering its priorities and objectives.

Financial independence allows the Council to:

- Develop and maintain a medium term forecast that is not dependent upon the decisions and short term viewpoint of central government allowing it to plan services and invest in priorities in a structured way
- Be resilient to unforeseen changes in resource levels and demand for services
- Invest in service transformation to ensure that our services continue to meet the needs of our community, including direct investment in infrastructure and housing
- Provide excellent customer care whilst providing great services as efficiently as possible
- Have an impact greater than its size in developing the wider Hertfordshire region.