Appendix 1 - Preferred Policy Option 12 Carbon Dioxide Emissions and On-site Renewable Energy

a) Applications for all new residential development of one unit and above and for all new commercial development will be required to submit an Energy Statement demonstrating that development proposals will ~~produce 20% less carbon dioxide emissions than Building Regulations Part L requirements (2013~~) achieve a reduction in carbon emissions of at least of 31% in residential buildings and a reduction in carbon emissions of at least 27% in other buildings measured against the relevant Target Emission Rate (TER) set out in the Building Regulations (as amended) (Part L) having regard to feasibility and viability. If these standards are superseded during the plan period, it is expected that the maximum standard required under national planning policy or Building Regulations that apply at the time are met. Developments that go beyond these standards and contribute to further reducing carbon emissions will be favourably considered.

b) This may be achieved through a combination of energy efficiency measures; incorporation of onsite low carbon and renewable technologies; connection to a local, decentralized, renewable or low carbon energy supply (this would be broadly equivalent to 25% of all energy used) and / or efficiency measures. The development of renewable, low and zero carbon and decentralised energy, are supported and encouraged.

c) Proposals for zero carbon development are strongly supported, subject to meeting other policies in the Local Plan.

Reasoned justification

7.0 Minimising our contribution to climate change by continuing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions is a key consideration for the new Local Plan. Despite reductions in greenhouse gas emissions in recent years, the effects of climate change are projected to continue with the potential for hotter, drier summers and milder, wetter winters, along with an increase in the frequency of intense rainfall events.

7.1 In response to climate change the Climate Change Act 2008 requires a reduction in greenhouse gas emissions from the 1990 baseline of at least 34% by 2020 and 80% by 2050. The Act (amended 2019) commits the UK government to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 100% of 1990 levels (net zero) by 2050. The Government intend to deliver this by setting and meeting five-yearly carbon budgets for the UK for that period.

7.2 In May 2019, the Council declared a climate emergency and is committed to use all practical means to greenhouse gas emissions. In March 2021, in response to the declaration, the Council adopted the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy which sets a target to assist the District to achieve net zero by 2045. The Tyndall Report 2023[1], shows that for Three Rivers to make its fair contribution to delivering the Paris Agreement's commitment to staying "well below 2°C and pursuing 1.5°C" global temperature rise, then an immediate and rapid programme of decarbonisation is needed. At 2017 CO2 emission levels, Three Rivers will exceed the recommended budget available within 6 years from 2020. To stay within the recommended carbon budget Three Rivers will, from 2020 onwards, need to achieve average mitigation rates of CO2 from energy of around -14.1% per year. This will require that Three Rivers rapidly transitions away from unabated fossil fuel use.

7.3 The government has proposed national standards through the most recent update to the Building Regulations[2].New dwellings and non-residential buildings buildings must achieve reductions in carbon emissions of at least 31 per cent and at least 27 per cent respectively through the provision of appropriate low and zero carbon energy technologies in the locality of the development and improvements to the energy performance of the building. These standards apply to new construction as well as to any building alteration or change of use involving replacement of a thermal element (roof, wall or floor).

7.4 The baseline for the carbon reduction is the relevant Target Emission Rate set out in the Building Regulations 2010 (as amended). The 2010 Building Regulations have been subject to a number of amendments, including changes to carbon emissions standards in 2013. The baseline for the carbon reduction is therefore the relevant 2013 Target Emission Rate.

7.5 The carbon emission standard applies to each new building individually.

7.6 Improvements to building standards will be necessary if the UK is to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050 and Three Rivers to meet its target of zero carbon across the District by 2045. Domestic emissions alone account for 30.2 per cent of total emissions in in Hertfordshire in 2020. The government has signalled its intention to implement a national low carbon standard for homes and buildings (the Future Homes and Future Buildings standards, expected to be implemented by 2025). This policy functions as an interim step.

[1] Local and Regional Implications of the United Nations Paris Agreement on Climate Change (manchester.ac.uk)

[2] The draft Part L standards are available online at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/buildingregulations-approved-documents-l-f-and-overheating-consultation-version