

Three Rivers District Council

**Environment
Forum
Terms of Reference
DRAFT**

15 March 2023

1. Purpose of the Environmental Forum

- 1.1. The Environmental Forum works to improve the quality of the environment and support the climate change agenda for the people of Three Rivers by working in partnership to create a better place to live, work and visit.
- 1.2. The Environmental Forum provides an opportunity for organisations, charities, community groups and residents to hear what others are doing in Three Rivers to tackle climate change, improve and maintain the environment. The Forum also provides an opportunity to develop joint initiatives and collaborate.
- 1.3. The Forum can also support the development and act as a consultee for the purpose of developing new Council or Partnership Strategies for Three Rivers such as the Climate Change and Sustainability Strategy.
- 1.4. The forum is not a decision making body or formal council committee.
- 1.5. The Council host the environmental forum and provide administration to the forum.

2. Objectives of the Environmental Forum

- 2.1. In order to achieve the above, the Environmental Forum will:
 - 2.1.1. Be an inclusive body of organisations / groups, representative of different sectors, which have a focus in Three Rivers.
 - 2.1.2. Work in partnership where possible to improve the environment and tackle climate change.
 - 2.1.3. Provide leadership and act as a voice for the people and communities of Three Rivers.
 - 2.1.4. Consult and engage with citizens, residents, community representatives and local businesses in a meaningful and inclusive manner, ensuring that choice, access and equality are available to all.
 - 2.1.5. Ensure that its activities are in line with government guidance, and complement the work of countywide partnerships including the Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership
 - 2.1.6. Promote sustainability, provide advice and expertise and raise awareness and understanding of the potential impacts of climate change in Three Rivers.
 - 2.1.7. Identify and encourage measures to retain and increase biodiversity across Three Rivers by providing advice, sharing expertise and raising awareness and understanding.
 - 2.1.8. Champion a better and more resilient natural environment in Three Rivers.

3. Meetings

- 3.1. Meetings and the work of the Environmental Forum will be open and transparent. The meetings will be serviced by officers of Three Rivers District Council, and agendas and minutes published on the website of Three Rivers District Council.
- 3.2. Meetings will be open to the public.
- 3.3. The Environmental Forum will meet at least three times a year. It may wish to hold extra meetings or workshops as required. Meetings will be held virtually using conferencing facilities. This will be advertised and broadcast so that as wide a possible audience can engage in the work of the Forum.
- 3.4. The venue of the Environmental Forum meetings will normally be at Three Rivers District Council or virtually.
- 3.5. All members will have equal rights and representation. To ensure this, partners may send substitutes from their organisation.
- 3.6. The meetings dates will be agreed in advance and will be arranged and supported by Three Rivers District Council.
- 3.7. To facilitate the information exchange between attendees of the forum, attendees will be asked to submit a brief update on their work prior to meeting taking place
- 3.8. Members will be encouraged to submit any questions for the Council prior to the meeting taking place, so an answer can be sought from the appropriate officer
- 3.9. Each Meeting will address a theme from the Climate and Emergency Sustainability Strategy

4. Positions of Chair and Vice Chair of the Environmental Forum

- 4.1 The Chair of the Environmental Forum shall be a Councillor who is appointed at Annual Council.
- 4.2 The role of the Chair will be to:
 - Lead and inspire the Environmental Forum.
 - Promote the development and learning of the Environmental Forum
 - Promote a common sense of purpose and consensus
 - Resolve conflict and promote problem solving.
 - Be the link with the supporting Officer Group from the council.
 - Ensure the forum remains relevant and topical

- 4.3 The Vice Chair of the Environmental Forum shall be a Councillor who is appointed at Annual Council.
- 4.4 The role of the Vice Chair will be to take on the Chair's responsibilities when the Chair is unable to fulfil their duties

5. The role of Environmental Forum members

- 5.1. Contribute to the work of the forum by contributing to the discussion of the forum and raising awareness of best practice as well as raising issues in the community.
- 5.2. Maintain knowledge of emerging policy and best practice in their area of responsibility.
- 5.3. Identify resources – financial and other, which can be pooled.
- 5.4. Attend forum meetings on a regular basis.
- 5.5. Report and communicate arrangements of the work of the Environmental Forum within their respective organisations and networks.
- 5.6. Be aware of cross-cutting issues and be responsive to the needs of socially excluded or disadvantaged groups.
- 5.7. To respect the dignity, diversity and human rights of all members of the forum, the Council, supporting staff and the public.

6. Financial Procedures

- 6.1. There are currently no financial implications for the forum. Three Rivers District Council provide the administrative support including hosting the meetings. Should the forum be allocated funds for use by the Council or secure external funding these will be subject to the Financial Standing Orders and Procedures of Three Rivers District Council and reported through the Annual Accounts of Three Rivers District Council.

7. Review of the Terms of Reference

- 7.1. Three Rivers District Council will review the terms of reference every three years. The next review will take place in 2026.

