



**THREE RIVERS  
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**As a result of greenhouse gas emissions our climate is changing. Whilst the most severe impacts may be in other countries, changes and impacts such as warmer and wetter winters, hotter and drier summers, and more severe weather will also affect our region.**

**Three Rivers District Council aims to continue to reduce its impact on the local and global environments. We have developed a strategy which sets out how the Council can improve and lead by example in its own operations. It also sets out how we will work with and assist the residents and businesses in our area to reduce their impact on the environment, improve sustainability and also adapt to a changing climate.**

## **We have already:**

- Installed solar panels and ground source heat pumps on our premises
- Reduced electricity use on our offices
- Installed more efficient computers
- Introduced more fuel efficient vehicles
- Improved office recycling
- Improved our water efficiency

The strategy set out the following aims and objectives :

## **A Energy and Climate Change**

**Aim:** To reduce energy use and emissions which contribute to climate change

Reducing carbon emissions from energy use is key to limiting the impact of climate change. As a Council we can do this directly through our own operations and indirectly through our planning powers and we are well placed to encourage the improvement of energy efficiency of existing properties which will also help to alleviate fuel poverty.

**Objective 1:** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from Council operations

**Objective 2:** Minimise greenhouse gas emissions from new developments in the District

**Objective 3:** Reduce greenhouse gas emissions from existing properties in the District.

## **B Biodiversity**

**Aim:** To maintain our natural habitats, green spaces and wildlife

Three Rivers has a rich diversity of habitats and we are keen to continue to manage these sustainably and use our powers to protect them if they are under threat so that wildlife can flourish and everyone can enjoy them and gain health benefits from doing so.

**Objective 4:** Sustainably manage woodland sites, local nature reserves, and parks and open spaces owned by the Council for wildlife and people

**Objective 5:** Continue to use powers to maintain and improve habitats and biodiversity in the District

**Objective 6:** Encourage residents to interact with and to enhance habitats and biodiversity.

## **C Waste**

**Aim:** To reduce the amount of waste produced and manage it sustainably

Landfill sites are still the source of around a third of methane emissions which is a very potent greenhouse gas and by reducing waste we can save dwindling resources.

**Objective 7:** Further reduce waste and increase recycling from Council buildings

**Objective 8:** Provide services and work in partnership to minimise the amount of household waste sent to landfill and maximise the opportunities for recycling.

## **D Reducing Water Use and Flooding**

**Aim:** Use water efficiently and reduce flood risk

The availability of water and increasing risk of flooding are both key issues which may be affected by climate change in the future. The District has above average water consumption so reducing this will be important to maintaining supplies in the future.

**Objective 9:** Reduce the Council's water use

**Objective 10:** Reduce water consumption from homes and businesses in the district

**Objective 11:** Work with Hertfordshire County Council where appropriate to prevent and reduce the impact of local flooding

## **E Sustainable Transport**

**Aim:** To reduce the impact of transport on the environment

The transport sector produces about a quarter of all emissions. Petrol and diesel vehicles emit a wide variety of pollutants which are not only a threat to our climate but also a threat to clean air and have an impact on health. Walking and cycling have benefits for health in terms of both increasing exercise which also has a positive effect on health. Whilst the Council is not responsible for the transport network it can help to make improvements.

**Objective 12:** To work with Hertfordshire County Council and other partners to encourage 'greener' and healthier forms of travel

**Objective 13:** The Council will promote local public transport and improve cycle routes.

**Objective 14:** The Council will seek to reduce the impact on the environment of travel associated with Council operations.

## **F Sustainable Procurement and Fair Trade**

**Aim:** To reduce the impact of procurement on the environment

Three Rivers District Council understands that it is in a position to lead by example with an obligation to act responsibly and that through this can have a positive influence to bring about wider improvements. Sustainable procurement should consider 'whole-of-life' costs and disposal costs, and suppliers will have to provide this information at tender stage.

Three Rivers officially launched as a Fair Trade district in May 2008 and operates a Fair Trade Group.

**Objective 15:** To procure goods and services sustainably taking into account whole life costs, disposal costs and where appropriate Fair Trade

**Objective 16:** The Council will only buy recycled, certified or sustainable and legal timber products.

## Cross-cutting themes

Cross-cutting themes throughout this strategy are partnerships, inclusion, education and promotion, and health.

Effective partnership working with a wide range of stakeholders and organisations including those responsible for social housing, schools, hospitals and public transport, will be key to the successful achievement of many of the aims of this strategy.

To enable the aims of this strategy to be fully realised it is important to consider the needs of different people and ensure that they are not excluded due to the way the service or information is provided. Education and promotion will also be key as many of the aims of this strategy require residents and businesses to change the way they do things.

The health of our planet and our health are closely linked. Energy use produces emissions which are affecting the climate and also pollutants which are affecting health. Climate change is also having an effect on health and wellbeing. Further to this, many of the actions which people can take to reduce their impact on the environment also improve their health, such as walking or cycling instead of taking the car.

## **Next Steps:**

Three Rivers District Council would like to hear your views on this strategy.

Please send any comments by 31 Jan 2013 to:

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or by post to:

Sustainability

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