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Introduction

How can we improve the quality of life of people who live and work in the Three Rivers District?

The Community Strategy takes a fresh approach to this challenge by bringing together the work of people from a variety of statutory and voluntary organisations across the District, led by the Local Strategic Partnership.

Building on the large amount of good work that is already taking place, the Strategy also gives local people the opportunity to get involved in developing and implementing “Local Community Plans” in their own part of the District.

The Community Strategy concentrates on four main themes, taken from the priorities of the Local Strategic Partnership and the communities they serve. These are:

- Healthy communities
- Prosperous communities
- Safer communities
- Sustainable communities

More detailed targets and actions for each of these are set out on pages 8 - 19 and in the separate strategies and plans of the partners within the Local Strategic Partnership.

The Three Rivers Community Strategy will run for five years from March 2003. We look forward to learning from experience and will keep the Strategy under constant review during this time.

We welcome your comments and suggestions on any aspect of the Strategy. We would also encourage you to take opportunities to get involved in the areas of the Strategy that interest you most.

A summary of this document is also available. For copies, telephone George Robertson on 01923 727231 or Rachel Dawson on 01923 727241.
Part 1 – A Community Strategy for the Three Rivers District

The Three Rivers District

Three Rivers is located in South West Hertfordshire and is on the outer fringe of London. The District benefits from excellent road and rail links including the M1, M25, the West Coast mainline and Metropolitan line into central London.

Covering 34 square miles, the District includes large rural areas and has 12 villages and small towns. 64% of the District is located in the Green Belt.

Some 90,000 people were resident in Three Rivers in 2000. The total population has increased by almost 13% between 1991 and 1999.

Three Rivers District Council operates inside a three-tiered system of local government. Within Three Rivers, the responsibility for the delivery of services is divided between the District Council, Hertfordshire County Council and 5 local Parish Councils.

What is a community strategy?

Community Strategies are being developed by all local authorities to bring together the work of various organisations and voluntary groups within their area. The strategies are a requirement of the Local Government Act 2000 and aim to promote social, economic and environmental well-being in each local authority area.

The Community Strategy is about identifying and co-ordinating overall direction and priorities across the Three Rivers District. It is also about delivering actions that will make a real difference on the ground through joined up thinking and working across a range of agencies and groups.

The Strategy is not necessarily about bringing in more resources, but rather about making better use of existing ones by avoiding duplication and targeting key priorities.

The aim is to co-ordinate and build on work that is already being done, rather than necessarily seeking something new.

The Local Strategic Partnership

The Community Strategy has been developed by the Local Strategic Partnership whose members are:

- Three Rivers District Council
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Hertfordshire Constabulary
- Watford and Three Rivers Primary Care Trust
- Three Rivers Council for Voluntary Service
- Hertfordshire Health Authority
- Hertfordshire Police Authority
The Local Strategic Partnership has agreed that it will be led by Three Rivers District Council, taking on the community leadership role with partners.

In producing this Community Strategy, the role of the Partnership has been to bring District wide agencies together so that common ground as well as differences in roles and priorities can be highlighted, to avoid duplication and fill in any gaps.

The Local Strategic Partnership has been meeting to look at how agencies can provide better services to the local community through joint working and by using resources to tackle those issues of most concern to people.

The organisations first involved are those that operate as a minimum on a District level. This was primarily for practical considerations in terms of numbers. More local groups who do not necessarily operate on a District wide level are also crucial to this Strategy. Tenants and residents associations, businesses, parish councils and faith communities for example will be vital in developing and delivering “Local Community Plans” for specific areas within the District.

**Choosing the main themes and priorities**

The organisations making up the Local Strategic Partnership have their own aims and objectives (see Appendix 1). These have been identified through consultation with the local community and link to national government priorities (see Appendix 2).

This strategy document does not attempt to provide a comprehensive list of all the aims and actions of various organisations relating to the Three Rivers District. The first task has been to establish common ground that can most effectively be taken forward by joint working and agree priorities to form the basis of the work of the Partnership for the next 5 years.

These have been brought together under four common themes which make up the basis of this Community Strategy:

- Healthy communities
- Prosperous communities
- Safer communities
- Sustainable communities.

These four themes are all in line with the aim of the Community Strategy as tackling them requires the involvement of more than one agency or department as well as actions by individuals and local communities.

The themes all address challenging areas of public policy about which the local community is concerned, and where improvements in delivery and outcomes are required.

Key priorities and targets within each theme have been identified to make sure that the Local Strategic Partnership delivers an impact on the local area over the next 5 years (see pages 8-19 for details).

People who are vulnerable or disadvantaged, older people and young people are a priority within each of the four themes.
Local community plans

Three Rivers District is made up of many communities who will have their own views on how issues affect them and should be tackled.

To ensure that local people’s views are included, and that real results are delivered within a locality, the District has been split into eight geographic areas. A “Local Community Plan” will be developed for each of these eight geographic areas over the next five years (see Section 2 for more details about this).

Consultation

The Local Strategic Partnership has noted the consultation guidelines included in the Local Government Act 2000 and the ODPM guidance *Preparing community strategies (June 2000)* available from www.odpm.gov.uk.

These make it clear that the following groups in particular need to be involved:

- Voluntary/community groups
- Local people
- Businesses
- Ward Councillors
- Parish Councils
- Harder to reach groups

Consultation on the District wide strategy

Consultation on the District wide strategy has been carried out at a high level in order to confirm and rank priorities in order of importance. This is in recognition of the fact that the District-wide themes have been identified from the Local Strategic Partnership’s objectives. These have in the main been identified and agreed in consultation with the local communities they serve.

Consultation on local community plans

Where local communities and the people providing front line services to them will be most crucial is in the development of the more detailed “Local Community Plans” (see page 20). Careful consultation will take place in order to capture local needs and aspirations without raising expectations where they cannot be matched.

Equally important will be the use of “Community Profiles” which will provide a more objective picture of what is happening in local communities and against which local opinion and experiences can be balanced (see page 20).

The Local Strategic Partnership has learned some important lessons from our experience of consulting local people on the South Oxhey local community plan and is also developing a Participation and Consultation Toolkit based on what has been shown to work in the District and elsewhere (see Appendix 3).

Community involvement

Encouraging, supporting and involving the local community in the delivery of this strategy will be the key to success.

Residents and visitors to the District have a wide range of skills, experience and knowledge of the local area which can add to and enhance those of the business community and the public sector agencies. In addition, the voluntary sector i.e. local
groups, clubs and charities inject significant energy, skill and enthusiasm to enable local people in Three Rivers to undertake activities that are important locally.

A key element of this Strategy will be for the Partnership to co-ordinate, support and harness this energy to meet the priorities and targets detailed in the District wide Strategy and Local Community Plans.

**Resources**

The development of the District wide Community Strategy and the Local Community Plans does not necessarily mean allocating new resources. These are seen as an opportunity to evaluate current activities, identify opportunities for joint working and target resources where they will best meet local community needs.

The individual partners making up the Local Strategic Partnership will also take the information gathered through the community planning process and use this to inform the development of their own corporate plans and budgets.

The valuable resource offered by the local community – both groups and individuals – is also recognised. The Local Strategic Partnership will seek to identify and harness these within local community plans as the process develops, placing a particular emphasis on building the capacity of local communities to take ownership of projects in order to ensure that they are sustainable.

**Monitoring and reporting on progress**

The Local Strategic Partnership is committed to regular monitoring and review of the Community Strategy to ensure that actions are being delivered on the ground and that priorities continue to match those of the local community.

Within the Local Strategic Partnership, separate organisations will take the lead on the key themes to ensure that work is co-ordinated and actions delivered (see pages 8-19 for details).

It is acknowledged that the precise arrangements for monitoring, review and reporting back to the community will need to develop alongside the Strategy itself.

To assist in this process, the Local Strategic Partnership is developing a suite of Quality of Life Indicators for top level monitoring which will be published on an annual basis. On a more local level, we are open to the possibility of developing additional indicators tailored to the circumstances of individual communities.

In addition, Three Rivers District Council has recently recruited 1,700 local people to a new Residents Panel. They will have a key role to play in giving feedback on a variety of issues, including those incorporated in the Community Strategy, through surveys carried out by the Local Strategic Partnership.

Local people have expressed a preference for feedback in local newsletters such as the Three Rivers Times. Information will also be made available on the Three Rivers District Council website and in the local media. This will give regular updates on progress as well as making sure that people are aware of the opportunities to get involved in the community planning process and benefit from projects and initiatives in their area.
Healthy communities

Background information

In comparison with the average for Hertfordshire, Three Rivers has:

- An older population - with a smaller proportion of residents aged under 25 years and a higher proportion aged over 45 years
- Higher life expectancy – the highest in the county, and above the national average

An ageing population is associated with a range of health factors, such as support needs for elderly people to stay living in their own homes, heart disease and injuries resulting from falls.

- Rates of heart disease and cancer which are average for the county and slightly lower than national figures.

However, it is important to note that there are wide differences across the District, with some locations having significantly higher numbers of incidents than others.

- Generally across Hertfordshire the use of prescription medicines to treat mental health issues, such as depression, has increased in recent years.

Three Rivers has a thriving leisure infrastructure, established through the hard work of many organisations, agencies and volunteers. Cultural and leisure services are key to health improvement and central to the promotion of a healthy lifestyle. This includes not only physical health but also mental health and well being.

Priorities

The main priorities for action are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority area</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Promoting new health initiatives in Three Rivers</td>
<td>To actively work towards implementing the coronary heart disease National Service Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>To demonstrate that mechanisms are in place in primary care to better detect those at risk or, or with early heart disease including the identification and management of high blood pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing high quality health and support services</td>
<td>To actively work towards implementing the mental health National Service Framework</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reducing deaths caused by heart disease and cancer</td>
<td>To actively contribute to the implementation of the Calman Hine programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increasing the mental and physical wellbeing of</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>the Three Rivers community through leisure</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>services including sports, arts, play, general</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recreation and relaxation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Accidents</strong></td>
<td>To continue the development of smoking cessation services, particularly for young women and pregnant women. To ensure ongoing development of accident prevention initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Young people</strong></td>
<td>To take forward and support with partners the Healthy School Programme in Watford and Three Rivers and to promote healthy lifestyles by addressing issues such as sexual health and substance abuse. To reduce the rate of teenage pregnancies (under age 20) from a baseline at 1996, in line with county strategy and national guidelines and to reduce social exclusion by optimising their physical, mental and emotional well-being along with that of their babies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Homelessness</strong></td>
<td>To develop at least one initiative to improve access to local health, social, voluntary and Council services for the homeless in partnership with other agencies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Families</strong></td>
<td>To continue provision of the parenting programme currently offered in Watford and Three Rivers. In partnership with key agencies, improve the initial uptake in the rate of breast feeding, targeting areas where it is traditionally low.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Diabetes</strong></td>
<td>Demonstrate that mechanisms are in place in primary care to better detect those at risk of diabetes within the ethnic minority population. To develop systems for implementation of the diabetes National Service Framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Older people</strong></td>
<td>To actively work towards implementing the National Service Framework. To promote and facilitate healthy lifestyles in the elderly and develop a network of care to provide better support to this client group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Increasing physical activity</strong></td>
<td>To increase physical activity amongst young people. To develop a range of leisure activities for older people. To establish GP Referral Programmes and the Cardiac Rehabilitation Programme.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contacts and further information**

| Lead organisation within the Local Strategic Partnership | Watford and Three Rivers Primary Care Trust |
| Contact | Peter Wright - Public Health Manager 01923 711345 peter.wright@watford3r-pct.nhs.uk |
| Existing partnership already working in this area | Health Partnership Board – through the Local Health Delivery Plan and the Accident Prevention Group |
| Links to other plans and strategies | The Primary Care Trust Health Delivery Plan www.watford3r-pct.nhs.uk Three Rivers District Council Cultural Strategy www.threerivers.gov.uk |
Prosperous communities

Background information

Three Rivers has:

- 24,000 jobs, of which 30% are located at hotels and restaurants (1998 figures).
- An unemployment rate of 1.8% which is above the county average of 1.5% but below the national average of 5.1% (May 2002)
- More people travelling out of the District to work each day than coming in.

According to the 1991 Census information, around 64% of the resident workforce had jobs located outside the District. Transport patterns indicate an increase on this level will be shown when the 2001 Census information becomes available.

- Areas where there are substantial numbers of people on a low income and suffering from severe financial hardship on a daily basis, despite much of the District being affluent.
- Primary schools located across the District, whereas secondary schools are less evenly distributed.

A number of young people are have some distance to travel to schools both within and outside of Three Rivers. Educational attainment varies greatly. Those young people in the less well-off areas of the District tend to perform less well and attend schools with lower educational attainment when compared to others in the District.

Priorities

The main priorities for action are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority area</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Giving the vulnerable a better deal – such as those who are on benefits or unemployed, young people at risk and children and families who need help</td>
<td>To encourage the creation and growth of new small business enterprises, particularly in areas with high levels of unemployment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with businesses to increase economic prosperity and protect jobs</td>
<td>To work with other agencies to pursue applications for grant aid to support economic development initiatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving educational standards and access to skills training for everyone and particularly for children and young people who need support</td>
<td>To support Hertfordshire Youth Enterprise Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ensuring that by the time every child goes to school, he/she has developed the skills necessary to benefit from education and continues to develop social skills, confidence and independence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving job opportunities and employability for people who find it difficult to get work – such as the long term unemployed and young people</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Targets and actions

Following on from these priorities, the following targets and actions have been set:
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority area</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>and the Prince’s Youth Business Trust.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To support the WENTA bid to the European Social Fund to assist small retailers in the District.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unemployment</td>
<td>• To continue developing the Youth Employment Transition Project which helps young people access suitable employment/training/skills development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• To continue to support Breakthrough (long term unemployment project) which assists adults who have been out of work for at least 12 months to find employment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poverty</td>
<td>• To seek to harness the services, facilities and funding of the UK and European organisations to assist in areas of higher unemployment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning</td>
<td>• To use the Council’s planning powers to achieve beneficial local economic development through the development of a sustainable infrastructure system.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development</td>
<td>• To work with Watford Council and Hertfordshire County Council to ensure that the employment created by the development of Leavesden Airfield benefits the local economically active population.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Town centre</td>
<td>• To work with local stakeholders on regeneration and revitalisation initiatives for town centres, retail centres and parades.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>improvements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leisure services</td>
<td>• Continue to develop the Learning for Leisure Partnership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop the Active Communities Development Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Continue to work with local schools to support work placement students and the Extended Work Placement Programme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Continue to develop affordable childcare programmes for the most vulnerable across the District</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>• Support the development and opening of Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative places</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Monitor their quality and develop links with other projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Keep the Childcare Tax Credit under review, monitor intake and improve take up</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Contacts and further information**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead organisations within the Local Strategic Partnership</th>
<th>Hertfordshire County Council and Three Rivers District Council</th>
</tr>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contacts</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pam Mogford - Community Strategy Officer (HCC)</td>
<td>01923 354516</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:pam.mogford@hertscc.gov.uk">pam.mogford@hertscc.gov.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>George Robertson - Head of Corporate Development (TRDC)</td>
<td>01923 727231</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:george.robertson@threerivers.gov.uk">george.robertson@threerivers.gov.uk</a></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing partnership already working in this area</th>
<th>Learning Skills Council through the Local Learning Partnership and the Hertfordshire Prosperity Forum</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Links to other plans and strategies | Three Rivers District Council Economic Development Strategy and Local Development Plan *  
|                                      | Contaminated Land Strategy  
|                                      | Hertfordshire Early Years Development Plan  
|                                      | Three Rivers District Council Cultural Strategy  
|                                      | www.threerivers.gov.uk  
|                                      | * From April 2004, Local Development Plans will be replaced by Local Development Frameworks. These will provide communities with a clear way of getting involved in the planning process and will have close links with Community Strategies. |
Safer communities

Background information

Three Rivers is a safe place to live and work. Compared to the rest of Hertfordshire, Three Rivers has the lowest number of incidents in most recorded crime and disorder categories.

Compared to national figures, 37% less offences were committed in Hertfordshire than the average for England and Wales in 2000/01.

The key crime and disorder issues of greatest concern in Three Rivers are:

- Anti social behaviour and criminal damage
- Vehicle crime
- Road safety
- Burglary
- Racial harassment
- Domestic violence
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Domestic violence

Source: Three Rivers Crime and Disorder Audit 2001

Priorities

The main priorities for action are:

- Preventing and reducing anti social behaviour and criminal damage – such as noise, graffiti, abandoned vehicles and nuisance behaviour
- Preventing and reducing vehicle crime – including theft of and theft from vehicles and damage to vehicles
- Preventing and reducing burglary – from both homes and businesses
- Preventing and reducing domestic violence and racial harassment

Targets and actions

Following on from these priorities, the following targets and actions have been set. These are being delivered through the Three Rivers Community Safety Strategy.

Anti social behaviour and criminal damage

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority area</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in the number of public disorder incidents per 1,000 population</td>
<td>Target to be set April 2003 (Due to changes in the way the police will be recording and classifying anti social behaviour and criminal damage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in the number of pupils permanently excluded during the year from all school maintained by the local education authority per 1,000 pupils at all maintained schools</td>
<td>Primary Schools – reduction from 7 pupils in 2001 to 5 pupils in 2004/05 Secondary schools – reduction from 7 pupils in 2001 to 6 in 2004/05 (These targets have been set within a context of a recent increase in the number of exclusions in Hertfordshire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in the number of criminal damage offences</td>
<td>Target to be set April 2003 (Due to changes in the way the police will be recording and classifying anti social behaviour and criminal damage)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging young people in a range of diversionary leisure activities</td>
<td>Sustain the Mill End Project and continue to monitor the impact on improving community safety Roll out the project to the other areas within the District</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Vehicle Crime

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority area</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in the number of vehicle crimes – both theft of vehicles and theft from vehicles</td>
<td>Reduce by 2% a year for the next 3 years.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That is a reduction to –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>949 crimes 2002/03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>930 crimes 2003/04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>911 crimes 2004/05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Reductions based on the baseline figure forecast for 2001/02 of 968 incidents)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Burglary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority area</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in the number of domestic burglaries per 1,000 households (this include artifice burglary)</td>
<td>Reduce by 22% by 31\textsuperscript{st} March 2005 to 10.08 per 1,000 households.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That is a reduction of –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8% in 2002/03 to 360 crimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7% in 2003/04 to 331 crimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7% in 2004/05 to 305 crimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Reductions based on the baseline figure forecast for 2001/02 of 391 incidents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in the percentage of domestic properties where the property has been burgled in the previous 12 months</td>
<td>Reduce by 10% per year for the next 3 years</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in the number of burglary other incidents recorded by the police – this include commercial burglary and burglary from sheds and garages</td>
<td>Reduce by 22% by 31\textsuperscript{st} March 2005 to 10.08 per 1,000 households.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>That is a reduction of –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8% in 2002/03 to 411 crimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7% in 2003/04 to 378 crimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>7% in 2004/05 to 349 crimes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Reductions based on the baseline figure forecast for 2001/02 of 447 incidents)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduction in the percentage of burglary other where the property has been burgled in the previous 12 months</td>
<td>Reduce by 10% per year for the next 3 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Domestic violence and racial harassment

Increase reporting of domestic violence incidents to the police

Reduction in the percentage of domestic violence incidents where victims had reported an incident in the previous 12 months

Increase the number of racially motivated incidents reported

Increase the percentage of reported racist incidents where further investigative action is taken
## Contacts and further information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead organisation within the Local Strategic Partnership</th>
<th>Hertfordshire Constabulary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Contact                                                  | Chief Inspector Chris Moulder
01923 472443
chris.moulder@herts.pnn.police.uk |
| Existing partnership already working in this area        | Three Rivers Community Safety Partnership |
| Links to other plans and strategies                      | Three Rivers Community Safety Partnership 2002-05 Community Safety Strategy and annual action plan.
Three Rivers District Council Cultural Strategy www.threerivers.gov.uk |
Sustainable communities

Background information

The Bruntland Commission report of 1998 defines sustainable development as “meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”. This clearly runs throughout the whole of the Community Strategy and is taken into consideration across all of the four themes.

The element of the Strategy dealing with sustainable communities includes the following areas - transport, air and water quality, planning and the Green Belt, conservation issues, access to local services and access to affordable housing.

Transport
Much of the District has excellent transport links, both for private car use and public transport. However, there are pockets of deprivation. Some areas have extremely poor access to services and shops along with inadequate public transport and low levels of car ownership.

Affordable housing
House prices varied in 2001-02 from an average of £138,477 for a flat to £341,863 for a detached house in the District. This is above the county-wide average of £97,895 for a flat, and £315,168 for a detached house.

Despite the District having a reasonably prosperous income profile, access to the home ownership is denied to many. Around 41% of households in the District have incomes below the national average of £22-23,000, including 18% with an income below £10,000. First time buyers need a household income in excess of £45,000 to access the flats or maisonettes market.

The Three Rivers District Council Housing Needs Survey 2001 found that the total affordable housing need in Three Rivers is 394 units each year, and total supply is 249. This leaves a shortfall of 145 units each year.

Air quality
Air quality in the District is primarily affected by emissions from road vehicles, and our major trunk roads are always very heavily burdened with traffic. The major source is the M25, and the secondary roads that serve it. Not surprisingly the homes closest to the motorway are the worst affected, and for these areas the Council declared, in 2001, five air quality management areas for two major pollutants – nitrogen dioxide and fine particles.

Further studies this year will indicate whether public health based air quality standards might continue to be breached in these areas in the future, and what action the Council could reasonably take to encourage an improvement in air quality. It is not within the Council’s power to tackle this problem alone. Measures to limit trunk road congestion remain the responsibility of the Highways Agency, while secondary roads fall to the local Highways Partnership with Herts County. Any permanent measures proposed to control congestion will also need to be assessed for the likely impact on local levels of pollution, and thereby public health.

Water quality
A plentiful supply of clean water is central to our quality of life. The consumption of water across Hertfordshire is increasing above the national average – with the average being 175 litres per day compared to 150 litres ten years ago. Most locally supplied water is from wells and boreholes, and “groundwater” is of a very high quality, requiring minimal treatment before distribution.
The quality of water in the District’s rivers is very high on the whole. This means that the river environments are pleasant areas for recreation and ensure sustainable habitats for wildlife.

**Planning**

Planning decisions in the District are guided by the adopted Local Plan. This provides for development which takes into account the needs of those living and working in the District as well as the wider context. All the non-urban parts of the District are within the Metropolitan Green Belt which means they are important to London residents as well as local people.

The built heritage is also a significant factor in the quality of the District’s environment. Of the 32,000 buildings, 270 are Listed Buildings, and many more are recorded as being “locally important buildings”.

There are 17 Conservation Areas in the District, based around the historic cores of works, village greens and canal locks. These have been identified as places where the appearance of the area needs to be taken into account when developments and commercial activities are proposed.

Three Rivers has a wide range of parks, open spaces, play areas, pitches, woodlands and countryside, all available free of charge to the community. These facilities and services offer the local community a wide range of sustainable recreational activities.

**Priorities**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>The main priorities for action are:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Protecting and improving the District’s environment – including not only the special nature reserves but also the general open spaces of Three Rivers and the Green Belt, improving air and water quality, reducing all forms of waste and promoting green/conservation issues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving the local transport network, including public transport</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving opportunities for cycling and walking and encouraging people to enjoy the many opportunities offered by the District’s countryside and recreational facilities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providing sufficient sustainable and affordable housing (which takes into account the range, cost, size and location of housing need) required by local people and specific groups to meet changing demographic needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Targets and actions**

Following on from these priorities, the following targets and actions have been set:

**Affordable housing**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Priority area</th>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Closing the gap between supply and demand by promoting choice</td>
<td>• Investigate the benefits of a common housing register (by Oct 2003)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Transfer bedsit bungalows to a partner registered social landlord as they become vacant (by 2004)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Develop new affordable housing with partner registered social landlords: 78 (2002/3) 49 (2003/4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Priority Area</td>
<td>Targets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------</td>
<td>---------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Air quality | - To review the research that indicated in 2001 that Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) were required for local communities residing close to the M25. To enlarge or reduce the size of the AQMAs accordingly.  
- To carry out another major review of air quality to assess whether other areas of the District are likely to be at risk from poor air quality now, or in the future.  
- To form a working and co-operative relationship with the Highways Agency, similar to that forged with Hertfordshire County Council Highways Partnership and transport planners.  
- To advise the South West Herts Transportation Study upon air pollution issues from transport.  
- To consult with the community and major stakeholders upon the findings of the review, and the options available to deal with areas of poor air quality. |
| Water consumption | - To encourage reduction of the average per capita water consumption from 175 litres per head per day to equal to or below the national average. |
| Water quality | - To avoid use on Council land of pesticides and herbicides that have been found to contaminate local water supplies and encourage other organisations and individuals to do likewise.  
- To promote maintenance methods of land adjoining rivers and waterways which will retain the current high water quality of rivers.  
- To monitor the quality of private water supplies in the District and to take enforcement action where these are found to be contaminated. |
| Planning | - To use the planning process to achieve a range of environmental improvement initiatives such as tree planting. |
### Priority Area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>planting, countryside management, traffic calming and other transport improvements.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Transport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To implement the South West Herts Transportation Study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To support the County TravelWise and Business TravelWise initiatives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Trees

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To develop a programme to inspect all Council owned trees on a regular basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To review the Tree Preservation Order processes and provide information to local residents.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Habitat conservation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To support the targets for habitat and species conservation in the Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Recreation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Targets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increase the awareness of the local community of the range of recreation facilities available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implement the Three Rivers District Council Play Plan</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Contacts and further information

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lead organisations within the Local Strategic Partnership</th>
<th>Three Rivers District Council and Hertfordshire County Council</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Contacts</th>
<th>Pam Mogford - Community Strategy Officer (HCC) 01923 354516 <a href="mailto:pam.mogford@hertscc.gov.uk">pam.mogford@hertscc.gov.uk</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contacts</td>
<td>George Robertson - Head of Corporate Development (TRDC) 01923 727231 <a href="mailto:george.robertson@threerivers.gov.uk">george.robertson@threerivers.gov.uk</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Existing partnerships already working in this area</th>
<th>Hertfordshire Environmental Forum Three Rivers Cycling Forum Travelwise WasteAware</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>* From April 2004, Local Development Plans will be replaced by Local Development Frameworks. These will provide communities with a clear way of getting involved in the planning process and will have close links with Community Strategies.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 2 - Developing Local Community Plans

Three Rivers is made up of many communities who will have their own views on the issues that affect them and how these should be tackled.

To ensure that local people’s views are included and that real results are delivered within a locality, the District has been split into eight geographic areas:

- Abbots Langley
- Chorleywood
- Sarratt
- Croxley Green
- Rickmansworth and Moor Park
- Maple Cross, Mill End and Penn
- Oxhey Hall and Carpenders Park *
- South Oxhey – Northwick, Hayling and Ashridge *

* Watford Rural Parish has been split due to significant differences in local needs

The Local Strategic Partnership agreed that it would not be possible to develop a local community plan for each of the eight geographic areas simultaneously and that priority order should be decided on the grounds of need.

Information supplied by the National Office of Statistics is widely acknowledged as both robust and impartial. Maps of Three Rivers District were prepared by staff at Hertfordshire County Council, which show relative indices of deprivation on a number of themes (see Appendix 4).

Maps were prepared to show relative indices of deprivation for the following -

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>· Health</th>
<th>· Employment</th>
<th>· Access</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>· Income</td>
<td>· Education</td>
<td>· Overall</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The maps show three distinct areas within the Three Rivers District where issues are more acute than elsewhere. One of these, South Oxhey, has already attracted SRB funding and prior to the launch of the Local Strategic Partnership partners were working both individually and collectively on a range of different projects.

The South East and North of the District also face similar issues. In particular, the south east of the District (Mill End/Maple Cross/Penn) has particular problems around access to services which will affect the whole community.

A Local Community Plan for South Oxhey was published in March 2002. Work has started on Mill End/Maple Cross/Penn and the other areas will follow.

Community Profiles

The views of the local community are essential to the development of a Local Community Plan. However, these need to be underpinned by an objective analysis of the local social, economic and environmental well being of a locality. This analysis, known as a “Community Profile” provides a defensible base for developing a range of options and priorities.

The objective of developing a Community Profile is to build up an accurate picture of how a community operates, what services are on offer and how the community sees itself.
It also enables the development of an overview of the community’s needs and resources to inform recommendations on which issues to take up and the development of feasible strategies to deliver action on the ground.

The aim of developing a Community Profile is to:
- Get a feel for the community
- Gather factual information about the community – facts and figures
- Gain an understanding of some of the issues in the community
- Gain “entry” into the community
- To get a view of what services and resources (and lack of) are available in the community
- Gain a knowledge of what active community groups there are.

Methods for collecting this information include:
- Factual information gathering
- Talking to people in the community
- Observations

It is important to be aware of how biases and omissions may distort the picture and it is crucial to be as representative of the community as possible. Key questions to ask might include:

- How does the community define itself?
- Are there any geographical boundaries?
- What is the history?
- Who chooses to belong to the community?
- Who chooses not to?
- What is the demographic make up of the community?
- What resources and facilities are available to the community?
- What human strengths and resources are available to it?
- What problems and issues face people in the community individually and collectively?
- How is information communicated in the community?
- Who are the influential people?
- What conflicts and differences operate within the community?

Consultation

Once a Community Profile has been produced, the next stage is to develop an appropriate consultation process to try to fill in any gaps in knowledge and test the priorities identified against local views.

The consultation will allow local people to express their aspirations, needs and priorities whilst attempting to manage expectations by being candid about resource issues and what can realistically be achieved.

The Local Strategic Partnership will seek to encourage the local community to participate in the development of Local Community Plans in a more detailed way than in developing the District wide strategy. This will include setting local priorities and objectives and developing, implementing and monitoring the plan for their locality.

It is recognised that in some localities, more work will be required to develop the capacity of the community to take a full role in the process and appropriate work will be done to enable this.
This could include providing additional information to people, working with local groups to engage them and the people they have contact with and providing both formal and informal training. Local ward Councillors will play an important part in the process of developing plans and ensuring their delivery.

A Consultation and Participation Toolkit has been developed and will form the basis for engaging with communities to develop local community plans (see Appendix 4).

The objectives of the consultation are to:

- Offer the community within a locality the opportunity to participate in the development and implementation of the local community plan

- Work with the community to encourage them to take ownership of the process and plan for their locality to ensure longer term changes and the sustainability of the work

**Suggested project plan**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Timescale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consult on the draft priorities for the locality identified from the Community Profile and start to identify actions</td>
<td>8 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Events with local ward Councillors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Events with key groups and individuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Displays and questionnaires at key locations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Notices in the local media about taking the opportunity to participate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult on the draft Local Community Plan for the area</td>
<td>4 weeks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Events with key groups and individuals</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Displays and questionnaires at key locations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Notices in the local media about opportunities to participate</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Action plans – their development and monitoring success**

Taking the information from the Community Profile and consultation together, proposals for action can be identified and developed to ensure they are feasible. Once resources have been identified and agreed, projects can be implemented and actions taken on the ground.

These should then be monitored and evaluated as part of feedback on progress, and to ensure that the projects deliver the benefits that were envisaged. The local community needs to be involved in this to ensure that people feel a real difference has been delivered through the local community plan.
Appendix 1

Local Strategic Partnership – summary of aims and objectives of member organisations

Hertfordshire Constabulary
Creating a Safer Hertfordshire

Ministerial priorities
• To identify and reduce local problems of crime and disorder in partnership with local authorities, other local agencies and the public
• To increase the trust, confidence and satisfaction of all groups within the community, particularly members of minority ethnic communities, with the quality of service they receive

Additional Hertfordshire objectives
• To target and reduce violent crimes of concern to the general public of Hertfordshire
• To increase public confidence and satisfaction with the way in which the Constabulary deals with emergency calls
• To contribute to effective partnership working in relation to:
  • Drug related crime
  • Reducing road traffic collisions that result in death or serious injury
• Youth offending
• To review the transfer of policing responsibilities for the southern part of the county of Hertfordshire, previously served by the Metropolitan Police, to ensure the continuity, consistency and quality of local policing services across the whole of Hertfordshire


Hertfordshire Health Authority

The Health Authority’s role is to plan and commission health care for the residents of West Hertfordshire. We aim to provide better health care for local people by planning and securing high quality health services

Public health priorities:
• Health inequalities
• Coronary heart disease
• Cancer
• Communicable diseases
• Mental health
• Teenage pregnancy

Source - Annual Health Report 2000
Watford and Three Rivers Primary Care Trust

Key ambitions

- To develop a comprehensive Health Improvement Programme which is based on a robust assessment of needs
- guides the commissioning of services
- ensures the active involvement of key statutory and voluntary partners
- To develop the range, organisation and quality of services available through primary care
- To work with colleagues in primary and secondary care to improve the organisation and quality of a number of services
- To become recognised as a good employer
- To develop new systems and approaches for the management and monitoring of waiting times
- To develop new approaches to the management of emergency services
- To develop a comprehensive strategy for engaging the public in the work of the PCT

Three Rivers Council for Voluntary Service

Objectives

- To promote any charitable purpose for the benefit of the community in the local government district of Three Rivers, in particular, the advancement of education, the protection of health and the relief of poverty, distress and sickness
- To promote and organise co-operation in the achievement of the above purpose and to that end bring together in council representatives of the voluntary organisations and statutory authorities in the area of benefit, provided that in carrying out these charitable purposes, the council will seek to challenge all forms of oppression and inequality and to give priority to working with people whose full participation in society is limited by economic, political and social disadvantage.


Three Rivers District Council

Vision
That Three Rivers should be a prosperous, safe and healthy place where people want and are able to live and work.

Aims
- Protect and enhance the environment
- Give the vulnerable a better deal
- Develop safe, secure communities
- Achieve open, accessible and effective government
- Support the sustainable development of the local economy and promote prosperity for all
- Provide quality services that meet local needs and provide value for money
- Be a good employer

Source - Best Value Performance Plan March 2001
Hertfordshire County Council

Our fundamental aim is to make sure that the people of Hertfordshire benefit from effective public services that meet their needs

To make Hertfordshire a better place to live and a prosperous place to work, we will:

- Cut the number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads
- Continue to work with the police to reduce youth crime
- Work with business to increase prosperity, protect jobs and improve standards of living for local people
- Improve education to give children a better future
- Help people to lead independent lives and involve and serve the public
- Work with the NHS, voluntary organisations and other councils to improve health and care services
- Improve employment prospects for disadvantaged people
- Improve support to children and families
- Promote equality and improve access to our services, employment and buildings
- Give local communities a better voice

Hertfordshire Police Authority

An independent body, made up of 17 members – nine county councillors, three magistrates and five independent members.

- Sets the budget for the Constabulary
- Sets annual targets, priorities and objectives in the Policing Plan
- Monitors the performance of the Police, including how complaints are handled
- Consults the public
- Organises Independent Custody Visitors to monitor the welfare of people detained in police cells
- Appoints chief officers
Appendix 2

Links with the National Agenda

The Government, in partnership with the Local Government Association, has developed a draft list of shared priorities. These reflect closely the four themes identified by the Local Strategic Partnership, and the links are shown in the table below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Government’s shared priority</th>
<th>Three Rivers Local Strategic Partnership Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Raising standards across our schools</td>
<td>• Prosperous Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improving quality of life</td>
<td>• Healthy Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- children, young people and families at risk</td>
<td>• Prosperous Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- older people</td>
<td>• Safer Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Healthier communities and reducing health inequalities</td>
<td>• Healthy Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creating safer and stronger communities</td>
<td>• Safer Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sustainable Communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transforming our local environment</td>
<td>• Sustainable Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meeting local transport needs more effectively</td>
<td>• Sustainable Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promoting the economic vitality of localities</td>
<td>• Prosperous Communities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sustainable Communities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Links with other plans and strategies

There is a considerable number of plans and strategies for the District of Three Rivers. These are produced both by individual organisations, and those working in partnership. The District-wide Community Strategy is intended to serve as an umbrella document to many of these. This role will develop over time as other plans and strategies will be reviewed in light of the District wide strategy and Local Community Plans.

The key plans and strategies to which this Community Strategy has links with are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan/Strategy</th>
<th>Timescale runs for</th>
<th>Lead officer and organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Three Rivers District Council Best Value Performance Plan</td>
<td>Produced annually April/May</td>
<td>George Robertson TRDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Rivers Community Safety Strategy</td>
<td>2002-05 Next due April 2005</td>
<td>Sian Caine Community Safety Co-ordinator TRDC/Police</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housing Strategy</td>
<td>2002-05 Next due May 2005</td>
<td>Helen Ratcliffe TRDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Air Quality Action Plan</td>
<td>2003-6</td>
<td>John Scott TRDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environmental Strategy for Three Rivers</td>
<td>Published 1997</td>
<td>Peter Kerr TRDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development Plans*; Local Plan</td>
<td>1996-2011</td>
<td>Peter Kerr TRDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Cultural Strategy</td>
<td>2001-05</td>
<td>Chris Hope TRDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economic Development Strategy</td>
<td>2002-04</td>
<td>Peter Kerr TRDC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary Health Care Trust Local Health Delivery Plan</td>
<td>Produced annually</td>
<td>Peter Wright, PCT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hertfordshire Local Transport Plan</td>
<td>2001-2006</td>
<td>David Humby HCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hertfordshire Biodiversity Action Plan</td>
<td>Published 1998</td>
<td>Esther Collis HCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adult Care Services Plan</td>
<td>2002-3</td>
<td>Sarah Pickup HCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plan</td>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Responsible Person(s)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
<td>-------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prosperity in Hertfordshire</td>
<td>2000-5</td>
<td>Hertfordshire Prosperity Forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Environment Department Service Plan</td>
<td>2002-4</td>
<td>John Wood HCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information E Government Plan</td>
<td></td>
<td>Bob Breaky HCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Annual District Library Plan</td>
<td>Produced annually</td>
<td>Marie Staunton HCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Schools and Families Plan</td>
<td>2002-5</td>
<td>Ray Shostak HCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children Schools and Families Unit Plan</td>
<td>2002-5</td>
<td>David Ring</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Years Development and Childcare Plan</td>
<td>2001-2004</td>
<td>Helen Ashdown HCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Fire Safety Plan</td>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Steve Seaber HCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local Activity and Best Value Performance Plan</td>
<td>2002-3</td>
<td>Geoff Seaman HCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cultural Strategy for Herts</td>
<td>2002-2007</td>
<td>Annie Hawkins HCC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Three Rivers District Council Play Plan</td>
<td>2002-6</td>
<td>Sue Topping TRDC</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* From April 2004, Local Development Plans will be replaced by Local Development Frameworks. These will provide communities with a clear way of getting involved in the planning process and will have close links with Community Strategies.
Appendix 3

Participation and Consultation Toolkit

1. Introduction to the Toolkit
The aim of this toolkit is to provide people with a range of techniques to engage the local community in projects in their local area. It is based on what has been shown to work in the District and elsewhere.

The toolkit should be used as a guide, recognising that each community will have unique characteristics and different perceptions of very similar issues.

2. Why engage with the community?
Engaging with the community is important to make sure that the services being delivered and projects being developed really do tackle the issues as perceived by the local community. It also helps us to set priorities recognising that both resources and the capacity to deliver are limited.

Reasons to engage might include –
- Fulfilling the role of community leadership and helping to identify those issues of greatest concern to the community
- To assess the extent to which community expectations, preferences and aspirations differ from those assumed in providing current services
- To encourage ownership of projects by the community, so raising their chances of success and improving sustainability in the longer term

Effective engagement is about –
- More than just passing on information about decisions already made
- Setting up a real, practical dialogue and relationship with the community about things that affect their lives
- A commitment to the local community to take their views into account when decisions are made
- Creating access for people who don’t usually get heard

3. Setting your objectives
Before starting any form of engagement, the objectives of what you are seeking to do need to be clearly specified and agreed. The objectives will help you to find the best technique to engage with your target audience, and help set the framework for gathering information and/or involving people.

4. Levels of involvement
Four levels of involvement have been identified. The level used will depend on your objectives, and the amount of time and resources available. The four levels are as follows:

Level 1 – Information – people are told what is happening. Information tends to flow one way with little opportunity for the community to comment or influence decisions.

Level 2 – Consultation – people are presented with a number of options and comments are received and taken into account when making decisions. The community has no real decision making power.

Level 3 – Participation – agencies work with the community to identify that is needed, and decide and agree with the community what to do. The community will have a role to play in the “doing” along with the agencies.
**Level 4 – Partnerships** – agencies and the local community act together to decide what is needed, and then form a partnership to undertake the actions identified.

The level of involvement will depend on a variety of factors. When looking at which level is most appropriate, the following issues need to be considered:

- Understanding ideas and resources – people only give time and resources when they understand what they are getting involved with – that is why clear objectives are essential.

- Accountability – for some projects this can limit the extent to which power can be delegated. Make sure you don't invite people to participate at a level that is not viable or expectations will be raised above what can above delivered.

- Freedom of action – if there is only one option then tell the community – there is no purpose in asking for ideas when there is only one option. Honesty is the best policy.

- Ownership of ideas – in many cases proposals for action will be more successful if the community is involved in their identification, development and implementation.

- Community interest – the community may not wish to become actively involved in decision making processes. Involvement will need to reflect the appropriate level and may need to change over time as the community develops its capacity to engage in the decision making process.

- Time – it takes time to develop trust and confidence needed for the higher level of community involvement and this needs to be recognised.

5. **Who is the target audience?**

It is important to know who you are dealing with, for example is it the whole community or a specific group within that community? Is it a community identified on a geographic basis, or is it a community of interest?

In most cases the audience will fall within one of the following –

**General community** – all residents living within the geographic area you wish to engage with – this could be one road, a ward or the whole District.

**Organisations** – agencies and interest groups within the geographic area you wish to engage with.

**Key target groups** – these are groups with particular needs, and may be termed as those “harder to reach” groups. These groups might include –

- Young people;
- People from minority ethnic groups;
- People with disabilities;
- The elderly and housebound;
- Homeless people;
- Gay and lesbian people;
- Victims of, for example crime and disorder; and
- People with mental health issues.

**Businesses** – small, medium and larger businesses within the geographic area you wish to engage with.
It should be noted that some people will fall into one or more of the above categories. For example you may live in a specific geographic area, work for a large business there, have a disability and be part of a faith community.

6. Consultation fatigue
Lack of co-ordination and an ad hoc approach will result in the same people being asked the same or similar things again and again and so the willingness of the community to participate will diminish.

The community strategy process must co-ordinate and manage consultation on a District wide basis, and the Local Community Plans on a geographic basis to take account of other work being planned and/or undertaken at the same time by the partners making up the Local Strategic Partnership.

7. Tools for engaging with the community
When deciding on the best tool to use, the following checklist may be helpful to run through:

- Why do you want to consult?
- What is the issue(s) you want to consult on?
- How much time do you have?
- What resources are available – staff time and financial?
- Are the outcomes actionable?
- Whose views are you seeking – the audience?
- Will some people’s views count more than others?
- How representative do you need the views to be?
- What would be an acceptable level of engagement?
- How will you consult/engage with the identified audience?
- How will you encourage people to put their views forward?
- How can you best attract the people whose views you are seeking?
- How much information will you give people and how can it best be presented?
- At what stage in the project/process do you need to engage the community – timescales?
- What are you going to use the results of any engagement for? What value does it add to the process?
- How will you feed back the results of engagement to the community?
- Is there a need for a regular mechanism for engaging with the community?
- What systems will you set up to ensure that the results inform both policy and improving services? How will work programmes be changed to deliver?

The following are a summary of some of the tools that could be used –

**Level 1**

- **Community Forum** – this is a regular meeting to which local groups and residents are invited to discuss local issues and set priorities, share information, set future actions and monitor progress.

- **Public meeting** – this is a one off meeting to which local residents are invited to discuss a particular issue.

- **Consultation documents** – these are draft documents circulated to key groups and individuals within an area for comment. They can be accompanied by a questionnaire to assist with feedback from people.
Level 2

- **Community Forum** – as above.

- **Public meeting** – as above.

- **Small group meetings** – these offer an opportunity for people to meet to discuss very localised issues, ie their street, and to develop ideas to tackle those issues.

- **Questionnaires** – can be designed and sent out to all local people within an area, or sent to a representative sample of people. They can be either -
  - Postal
  - Telephone
  - Door to door
  - Street corner.

- **Focus groups** – can be held with people who come from the same locality, or with people who have a common interest. They offer an opportunity to discuss an issue in detail and to capture people's views using a tape recording which is later transcribed and used to summarise the group's work.

- **Consultation documents** – as above.

- **Interactive website** – this offers those with access to the internet an opportunity to have their say by sending in views using the Council's website eg on a consultation document, or answering a questionnaire. This may be particularly useful for engaging with particular groups, such as young people and businesses.

- **Residents panel** – this enables a representative sample of people to be regularly sent questionnaires on a range of subjects to which they have agreed to participate and reply. Residents Panels usually secure a higher than average response rate and allow for regular consultation without the risk of consultation fatigue.

Level 3

- **Community Forum** – as above.

- **Small group meetings** – as above.

- **Planning for real** – this offers an opportunity for local people to participate in a visual exercise to identify issues and priorities within an area. It is often combined with a fun/community event. Young people from the area help to construct a model of the area. At the event, people can stick colour coded flags into the model to show where they think issues are occurring.

- **Focus groups** – as above.

- **Interactive website** – as above.

- **Open days/roadshow events** – these are often used to engage with people on a wide range of issues. They are often combined with a fun/community event and advice is can also be available, such as benefits and housing advice. Open days and roadshows usually allow people to come and go throughout the day.
Level 4

- **Community planning weekends** – bringing together a multi-disciplinary team of professionals, community representatives and statutory agencies to develop a plan for the area. It is organised around an intensive 2-3 days of briefings, site visits and public events culminating in the development of a plan.

- **Service agreements** – this is an agreement between agencies and local groups and/or the community that lays out who will be doing what to tackle an issue or deliver a plan for an area. Everyone involved develops the plan to ensure local ownership, and then signs up to it.

- **Establishing constituted groups to develop and run projects** – working with local people to set up voluntary or community groups to meet local needs and establishing them as constituted, these are stand alone groups who are able to be self-sufficient.

8. **Barriers to community engagement**

Barriers might include the following, and some suggestions for overcoming them are made:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Seek to overcome by</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Attitudes of official organisations</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Negative attitude to community engagement</td>
<td>- Tell of the benefits of engagement, and the dangers of not doing it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Loss of decision making powers</td>
<td>- Do a pilot project to show how it works in practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- The skills and procedures of official organisations</td>
<td>- Training and assessment for staff, encourage openness and honesty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Lack of experience of working with the local community</td>
<td>- Change bureaucratic procedures so it can be more user friendly</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Official ways of doing things can discourage people from getting involved</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The capacity and skills of the community organisations, representatives and individuals</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Distrust of officialdom and perceived failure to deliver in the past</td>
<td>- Takes effort and time to break down negative attitudes – be open and honest about what you are doing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Poorly developed network of community organisations</td>
<td>- Organise fun events to bring people together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Antagonisms between groups and individuals</td>
<td>- Educate about internal policies and processes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix 4

Maps showing relative indices of deprivation on a number of themes across the Three Rivers District
Index of Multiple Deprivation

Source: DETR & Ordnance Survey

OVERALL Score

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