

Draft Spatial Portrait, Spatial Vision, Core Strategy Objectives and Core Strategy Issues

Waverley Borough Council | Core Strategy Topic Paper 1

1 Waverley Borough, which has a population of 116,000, is located in the southwest corner of Surrey. It is predominantly rural and extends to some 345 sq km (133 sq miles).

2 INSERT MAP

3 The Borough contains four principal urban settlements of varying size. Each has a defined town centre area and one or more conservation areas as well as a high number of listed buildings. About 72% of the population of Waverley live within one of the four main centres.

4 Waverley has a large number of villages of varying size and character, and there are 21 separate town/parish councils in the borough. The number of shops and services, including the presence of a post office and health facilities vary according to the size of village.

- **Farnham** is the largest settlement, having a population of approximately 36,000. Functionally, it has links with other centres outside Waverley, including Guildford and the string of settlements in the Blackwater Valley.
- **Godalming** has a population of approximately 21,000. The size and range of services is less than Farnham, and it is significantly influenced by Guildford, which is only 10 km (6.2 miles) away via good road and rail links.
- **Haslemere**, which has a population of approximately 15,000, lies in the southwest corner of the Borough, close to the boundaries with West Sussex and Hampshire. This small country town has a large rural catchment, which extends into Hampshire and West Sussex.
- **Cranleigh** has a population of approximately 12,000. It has a more limited range of services within its large village centre, but these are very good for a settlement of its size and location.

5 All four towns have a good range of leisure and cultural facilities and shops. The Borough's shopping centres retain a good percentage of resident's expenditure. Waverley has a good number of primary schools across the Borough, particularly in the more urban areas, and each has at least one secondary school. There are also opportunities for further education and a relatively high number of private schools spread right across the area.

Roads

6 The main road connections in Waverley are north-south, with relatively poor connections east-west. There are no motorways within the Borough and the only national trunk road is the A3 London-Portsmouth road. Hindhead is significantly affected by this road, and work has started on a major Highway scheme, which involves taking the traffic through a tunnel bypassing it. This work is due to be completed in 2011.

Rail Services

7 In terms of rail links, Farnham is on the London – Alton line; with Farncombe, Godalming, Milford, Witley and Haslemere all on the London – Portsmouth line. Cranleigh does not have a rail link and there are no direct east-west rail links in the Borough. Waverley's railway lines are very well used, and there is growing concern from users about the current and future capacity of the trains.

Bus Services

8 Bus services are relatively frequent within the main urban areas, and considered stronger in these locations, but services are much more patchy and infrequent within the rural areas. Buses across Waverley are at capacity at school travel times.

9 The limited road connectivity and the limited public transport infrastructure, particularly in rural areas, does affect the accessibility for residents, particularly those without access to a car, to jobs and services/facilities such as shops, education facilities, health services and leisure and recreational facilities.

Age

10 Waverley has an ageing population, with a relatively high proportion of people above retirement age. This trend is set to continue with a significant percentage increase forecast in the number of people over 60 over the next 20 years. The results of this are striking, and are consistent with forecast national trends. These increases have implications for maintaining residents' independence, longer-term care services and community safety. There is expected to be a decline in the number of people aged 40-49 of some 8.5% in Waverley over the next 20 years.

Ethnic Groups

11 Some 97% of the Borough is white, with just under 2% being black, Indian, Pakistani or mixed origin. The remaining 1% is made up from other ethnic groups.

Deprivation

12 The 2007 Indices of Multiple Deprivation shows that Waverley is the 7th least deprived area in the whole of Britain. Some wards however, score relatively highly in terms of barriers to housing because of a lack of affordability. The Borough does not score very well in some parts on access to services such as supermarkets, secondary schools, libraries, doctors and banks because of the rural character of the area.

Health

13 Waverley is generally a healthy borough. 75% of the population said that their health was 'good' in the 2001 Census. It has a low mortality rate generally, with a correspondingly high life expectancy. The Borough is well served for doctor's surgeries, however, some village residents do need to travel by car to access their nearest facility,

and there is no accident and emergency facility at any of the hospitals in the Borough. Many of the health problems experienced are those associated with an ageing population.

Housing

14 Waverley is an affluent area, as demonstrated by high house prices, high incomes, households with more than two cars and the relatively high proportion of children who attend private schools. However, there are identified small pockets of relative deprivation, typically in medium- sized housing estates on the periphery of the main settlements.

15 Waverley is an area of high demand for housing. The average house price is twelve times the average household income, and some 75% higher than the average for England and Wales. There is therefore a significant need for affordable housing across the Borough. The quality of the housing stock in Waverley is generally good. and 80% of properties in Waverley are owner occupied.

Economic Profile

16 Waverley has a buoyant economy, with low unemployment. There are a limited number of single large employers, with majority of businesses employing less than ten people. A significant percentage of the resident workforce travels outside Waverley to their place of work. There are also many people who work in Waverley but live outside the Borough, due in part, to the relatively high house prices. A concern identified in the Regional Economic Strategy is that a lack of affordable housing is a threat to sustainable growth in the region.

17 A high number of people working within Waverley are employed in knowledge-driven occupations such as business and finance and computer/ telecommunications, and the Borough's residents have a high knowledge score.

18 Employment growth over the past decade has been modest, being constrained by the relatively scarce supply of undeveloped employment land in the District. Despite performing a relatively local employment role, the borough's businesses serve a customer base which extends well beyond the geographical boundary.

19 Waverley's towns tend to compete with those outside the Borough rather than with each other, due to the geography of the Borough and the indirect links between the towns. Guildford influences all four towns, but others include Aldershot, Camberley and Basingstoke to the northeast, Petersfield and Chichester to the southwest, and Horsham and Dorking to the south and east. Each town has a number of well-established employment areas that complement the retail and business opportunities in its town centre. There are a number of small industries located within the more rural parts of

the borough, and while these may not be considered to be in the best locations, they are historically well established and provide useful and valued local employment opportunities.

Environmental Profile

20 The distinctive natural environment in Waverley is generally of a very high quality. Some 80% of the countryside is designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). There are also significant ecological assets within and close to the Borough, and numerous areas which have one or more local or national policies to protect them. However, there is the need for awareness that these habitats could alter in response to climate change. Waverley's landscape has a distinctive wooded character, at 31%, which is the highest proportion in the country.

21 Waverley has a rich historic heritage, with 45 Conservation Areas, and over 1,600 listed buildings.

22 Many of the residential parts of Waverley have a distinct semi-rural character. Haslemere and Godalming have wooded hillsides surrounding them, while in Cranleigh there is a much more rapid transition from urban to rural, with common land extending into the heart of the shopping centre. A number of the villages have produced Village Design Statements, carried out by local organisations in partnership with Waverley, and these seek to identify the principles, design features and quality standards that they value.

23 The Borough also has, in common with Surrey as a whole, relatively high car ownership, and the impact of vehicles has contributed to the identification of three Air Quality Management Areas in Waverley. These affect parts of the centres in Farnham, Godalming and Hindhead.

Cross - Border Issues

24 Waverley's geographical location means that it has common boundaries with not only two other Surrey districts, but five districts in two other counties. The impact of these areas, and any significant new development in them on Waverley is an issue to be considered. The most significant cross-border to consider may well be the potential Eco- town at Bordon and Whitehill in East Hampshire.

Main Issues arising from the Spatial Portrait

25 Waverley clearly benefits from an attractive environment and has an enviable general level of prosperity. Nevertheless, there are a number of specific issues that need to be addressed:

- In line with national trends, Waverley has an ageing population. Meeting the varying needs of older people in terms of service provision will be a challenge, whilst ensuring that the Borough remains attractive and accessible to young people

- House prices in Waverley are amongst the highest in the region. Achieving the delivery of new housing which meets local needs will be one of the most critical issues to be addressed. Within the context of the scale of provision determined by the South East Plan, the particular need evident in Waverley is to achieve more housing which is affordable – to provide for first time buyers and others with a need to live in the District, but who are currently unable to pay market house prices
- The impact of the relatively high levels of traffic, high car dependency and the limited public transport facilities in some parts of Waverley have social, economic and environmental consequences.
- The need to understand and take into account the significance and impact of cross-border issues on the range of Waverley's services and environment.
- Having regard to the dispersed settlement pattern and the range of sizes of Waverley's settlements, a key issue will be in relation to access to services and determining the best approach to the provision of housing and related development across the borough.
- Ensuring that when new development is proposed, an appropriate level of investment in local infrastructure takes place.
- Supporting Waverley's economy, recognising key characteristics such as the high proportion of small firms, the rural economy and the impact on business of factors like the need for more affordable housing and the high levels of in and out commuting for work.
- Take into account the potential effects of climate change when considering future development
- Sustaining the attractive environment will remain a key objective in planning for Waverley's future.
- Ensuring that the design of new development takes proper account of the distinctive character and environment of Waverley.

Sources:

- Local Knowledge,
- 2001 Census,
- 2007 Indices of Multiple Deprivation,
- Surrey's Interim Sustainable Community Strategy 2008: Surrey County Council

26 The emerging issues for the LDF Core Strategy have been derived from a variety of sources. The principal sources have been:-

1. The draft Spatial Portrait;
2. The Surrey Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS);
3. Outcomes from the on-going community and stakeholder consultations and events, including the recent joint Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) and Planning Policy Special Interest Group (SIG) event;
4. The emerging evidence base;

The main issues are as follows:-

- How best to deliver the new housing required, whilst safeguarding the character of the towns, villages and countryside.
- Having regard to the dispersed settlement pattern and the range of sizes of Waverley's settlements, a key issue will be in relation to access to services and determining the best approach to the provision of housing and related development across the borough.
- Ensuring that provision is made for the infrastructure needed to support new development.
- House prices in Waverley are amongst the highest in the region. Achieving the delivery of new housing which meets local needs will be one of the most critical issues to be addressed. Within the context of the scale of provision determined by the South East Plan, the particular need evident in Waverley is to achieve more affordable housing – to provide for first time buyers and others with a need to live in the District, but who are currently unable to pay market house prices.
- Providing the right mix and type of market and affordable housing.
- In line with national trends, Waverley has an ageing population. Meeting the varying needs of older people in terms of service provision will be a challenge, whilst ensuring that the Borough remains attractive and accessible to young people.
- Meeting the housing and accommodation needs of other particular groups, including Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople.
- Supporting Waverley's economy, recognising key characteristics such as the high proportion of small firms, the rural economy and the impact on business of factors like the need for more affordable housing and the high levels of in and out commuting for work.
- Future trends in employment and how these will affect Waverley (for example more home working).
- Balancing good quality of life and protecting the environment with economic and demographic pressures.
- Sustaining the attractive environment of Waverley.
- The impact of the relatively high levels of traffic, high car dependency and the limited public transport facilities in some parts of Waverley have social, economic and environmental consequences.
- The need to understand and take into account the significance and impact of cross-border issues on the range of Waverley's services and environment.
- Ensuring that the design of new development takes proper account of the distinctive character and environment of Waverley.
- In the context of a generally affluent area, recognizing that there are certain areas within Waverley with particular needs
- Recognising the diverse character of the towns and villages in Waverley.
- Supporting the different roles that the four main centres in Waverley play.
- Issues arising from locations where significant change is expected during the plan period for the Core Strategy (such as the implications for Hindhead resulting from the new A3 tunnel scheme).

27 It is necessary for the LDF Core Strategy to conform with national and regional planning policy. It should not repeat these policies, but should provide the local application, where this is necessary. Set out below are the key overarching issues contained in national policy and some specific issues in the emerging South East Plan that will need to be considered in the LDF.

National Policy (see Planning Policy Statement 1 – Delivering Sustainable Development)

- Supporting sustainable economic growth.
- Promoting urban and rural regeneration to improve the well being of communities, improve facilities, promote high quality and safe development and create new opportunities for people living in those communities.
- Promoting communities which are inclusive, healthy, safe and crime free, whilst respecting the diverse needs of communities and the special needs of particular sectors of the community.
- Bringing forward sufficient land of suitable quality in appropriate locations to meet the expected needs for housing, industrial, commercial and retail development.
- Providing improved access for all to jobs, health, education, shops, leisure and community facilities, open space, sport and recreation, by ensuring that new development is located where everyone can access services and facilities on foot, bicycle or public transport, rather than having to rely on access by car, whilst recognising that this may be difficult in rural areas.
- Focus large developments attracting a large number of people in existing centres to promote vitality and viability, social inclusion and more sustainable patterns of development.
- Reducing the need to travel and encouraging accessible public transport provision.
- Promoting more efficient use of land through higher density, mixed-use development and the use of suitably located previously developed land and buildings.
- Enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character.
- Addressing the causes and impacts of climate change, the management of pollution and natural hazards, safeguarding of natural resources, and the minimisation of impacts from the management and use of resources.

Draft South East Plan

- Delivering the required amount of new housing.
- Developing a strategy that contributes to meeting the regional targets, for example the regional targets for affordable housing provision and CO2 reduction
- Addressing the local implications of the draft South East Plan Policy relating to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA)

Draft Spatial Vision

28 Having set out a portrait of the social, environmental and economic characteristics of Waverley as it is today, the next step in the production of the Core Strategy is to set out the Spatial Vision for Waverley in the future. The Core Strategy must look forward at least 15 years and it has been decided, therefore, that the plan should cover the period up to 2026, which corresponds with the plan period for the South East Plan.

29 The Vision for the Core Strategy needs to support the vision for the Surrey Sustainable Community Strategy where relevant. The Spatial Vision also draws on the Core Strategy issues, which identify matters where change is needed or where steps need to be taken to protect what already exists.

30 The following statement is a summary of what Waverley should be like in 2026. It is, therefore, the principal aim of the Core Strategy.

WAVERLEY IN 2026

31 By 2026, the vitality and attractiveness of Waverley will have been maintained and where possible enhanced.

32 New development will be taking place in a planned way, which takes account of the wide range of social, environmental and economic aspirations of the community and the needs of future generations. New building will have contributed to the creation of sustainable communities, which are safe, attractive and inclusive and where the design of new development makes a positive contribution to the area in which it is located. The unique and diverse character of Waverley's towns, villages and countryside will be cherished and preserved. New development will have taken account of this diverse character and of the different roles and functions of the settlements in Waverley.

33 New development will be in the most sustainable locations possible, with the best access available to jobs, services, housing, leisure and recreation and community facilities, so as to minimise the need to travel and maximise the opportunities available to travel by means other than the car.

34 The location, type and size of new housing will have taken account of local needs, transport and the level of services available in the towns and villages. Where necessary, provision will have been made for the new or improved infrastructure and services required to support new development.

35 Housing and accommodation will be available to meet the needs of the community. This will include an increase in the amount of subsidised affordable housing to meet the needs of those who would otherwise not be able to afford their own home.

36 The local economy in Waverley will have been supported, so that provision has been made for the accommodation requirements of existing and new businesses. Important employment assets will have been retained and, where necessary, new development will have contributed to the diverse stock of employment premises, meeting the employment needs both within the towns and in the rural areas.

37 The vitality and viability of the town centres will have been safeguarded in a way that takes account of the distinctive roles that each centre plays. This will have been achieved partly through carefully planned development, which meets the needs of these centres, whilst recognising the importance of preserving and enhancing their historic character.

38 Waverley will be more sustainable through measures to combat and adapt to the effects of climate change. CO₂ emissions will be lower, new buildings will be more energy efficient and there will be greater use of renewable and low-carbon forms of energy.

39 The biodiversity of Waverley will have been preserved and where possible enhanced, with appropriate measures taken to mitigate the impact of development on particularly sensitive locations.

40 The rich heritage of historic buildings, features and archaeology in Waverley will have been preserved and where possible enhanced, and the wildlife and landscapes safeguarded.

41 Access through and into Waverley will have been improved as a result of the completion of the A3 tunnel at Hindhead. The effect of this on the role and character of Hindhead will have been addressed and development opportunities arising from this will have been planned to meet the needs of residents, businesses and visitors to this part of Waverley.

Core Strategy Objectives

42 The aim of the LDF and particularly the Core Strategy is to address the identified issues and deliver the Spatial Vision for Waverley in 2026. In order to achieve this a number of key objectives for the Core Strategy have been identified as follows: -

- To deliver sustainable development that meets the needs of the existing community, whilst not compromising the quality of life for future generations.
- To ensure that sufficient land is available to meet both local and regional housing needs.
- To deliver a balance of housing and employment growth that takes account of both the need for additional housing and the need to safeguard and, if necessary, enlarge the supply and mix of premises available to meet the needs of local businesses.
- To ensure that where needed, infrastructure and services are provided to support new development.

- To ensure that the design, form and location of new developments contribute to the creation of communities that are attractive, safe and inclusive.
- To contribute to the delivery of sustainable communities, by directing new development towards the most sustainable locations, where there is the best available access to jobs, schools, health services, leisure and recreation and community facilities, particularly by public transport, cycling and on foot.
- To ensure that the accommodation needs of the community can be met by delivering a range of housing, including affordable housing and other accommodation required to meet the needs of specific groups within the community.
- To support the vitality and diversity of the local economy in both the towns and the countryside.
- To support the vitality and viability of the town centres in Waverley, together with the distinctive roles they play and their links with surrounding areas.
- To safeguard the rich historic heritage and the diverse and attractive landscapes and townscapes in Waverley, and ensure that new development takes proper account of the character and distinctiveness of the area in which it is located.
- To protect and enhance the diversity of the wildlife and habitats that are within and around Waverley.
- To deliver development that is sustainable and that is located, designed and built in such a way that it addresses the causes of climate change and, where necessary, is adapted to cope with the effects of climate change.
- To deliver planned development in areas of significant change, including planned development in Hindhead that meets the needs of residents, businesses and visitors, as a result of the changes brought about by the new A3 tunnel scheme.