

# **Waverley's Cultural Strategy**

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## **WAVERLEY BOROUGH CULTURAL STRATEGY 2009-2014**

### **1. Background**

Culture describes the common interests shared by a community or group of people. We use the term 'Culture' in this document in its broadest sense to define activities which people may undertake in their leisure time. These activities can be summarised under the following broad headings:-

- Arts
- Sport and Recreation
- Museums
- Countryside and Open Spaces
- Community development

Cultural activities help communities share a sense of identity, bring people together and help stimulate creativity and innovation. Culture can improve the quality of life for all, allowing people both to derive pleasure and to fulfil their own potential and broaden their horizons. Evidence shows that cultural activity has a role to play in tackling many social issues such as promoting safer communities, improving health, regenerating areas, stimulating life-long learning and tackling social exclusion within our communities.

Culture and Leisure has been identified as one of the five main priorities for Waverley in its Sustainable Community Plan. The other priorities, - improving lives, value for money, affordable housing and the environment are all referenced throughout the action plan whenever a specific action coincides with the delivery of that priority.

### **2. What is Waverley's Local Cultural Strategy?**

The Cultural Strategy for Waverley sets out the vision and direction for the development of cultural services, facilities and activities within the borough over the next five years. The Strategy has been produced following consultation with key partners and stakeholders including the public and private and voluntary agencies operating within the Borough. However, the intention is that this Strategy will be primarily web-based and subject to periodic review. The Strategy also takes into account the views of the community to identify needs and requirements, including consultation events and activities in the Market Town Healthchecks within the main communities in the Borough. The Strategy will be a practical action plan which will promote a co-ordinated approach to the development of cultural activities within Waverley. It will be continually monitored, evaluated and updated.

### **3. Benefits of the Local Cultural Strategy**

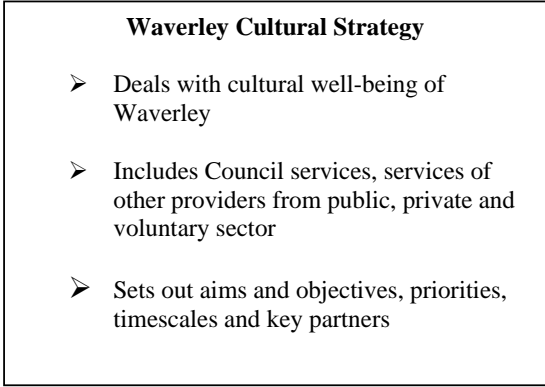
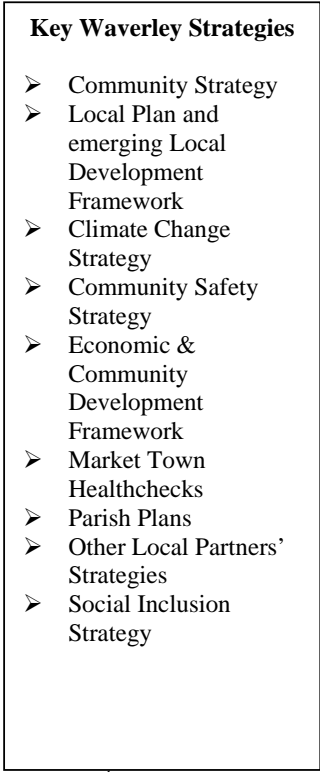
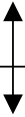
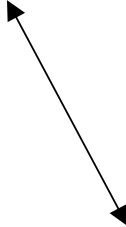
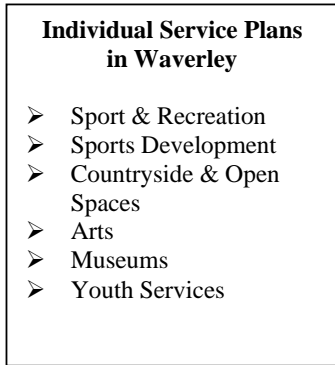
Listed below are some of the anticipated benefits of the Waverley Cultural Strategy. It will:

- provide a framework for the development of cultural activity within the Borough by the local authority and other providers
- demonstrate the benefits and importance of developing culture within our communities
- assist in identifying needs and prioritising developments based on needs
- direct the work of Waverley's Community Services and demonstrate clearly how culture contributes to delivering the corporate plan priorities of the Borough Council
- encourage and promote partnership working and a pooling of resources to maximise opportunities
- act as a lever for gaining external funding from external agencies and funding bodies
- promote equality and inclusion and increase opportunity for all to access cultural activities
- protect and enhance the environment
- contribute towards the regeneration and economic development of the Borough
- give people the opportunity actively to engage and participate in enjoyable and stimulating activities in their free time
- Identify and develop opportunities for learning and discovery about the local environment

#### **4. The Wider Context**

Waverley's Cultural Strategy sets the agenda for delivering local cultural priorities and these themselves contribute to other local, regional and national strategies. The intention is to create, deliver and to promote co-ordinated activities and strategies that complement each other.

The diagram below sets out the wider strategic context in which the Waverley Cultural Strategy interlinks with and reflects other strategic policies and plans. This Cultural Strategy will impact upon and have regard to these other strategies.



## **5. About Waverley**

### **.....its history and geography**

Waverley is in the south-west corner of Surrey, bordering the South Downs in West Sussex and Hampshire, and comprising most of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty. Covering an area of 345 sq. km (133 sq. miles) it is the largest district council in Surrey with a population of 116,000.

Waverley takes its name from a 12<sup>th</sup> century Cistercian Abbey situated near Farnham. Although still predominantly rural, with over 60% of the area in the Green Belt and 77% of the land still in use for agriculture or woodland, much of its character derives from the four distinctive communities of Farnham, Godalming, Haslemere and Cranleigh. The four centres possess strong individual characteristics derived in part from history but also from their relative distance from each other. Farnham, with its 12<sup>th</sup> century castle, was once a well-known coaching-stop en route to Winchester. Its most famous residents include William Cobbett, author of 'Rural Rides' and also the person who established the written proceedings of Parliament (Hansard) as well as Mike Hawthorn, the first British driver to win the Formula One World Drivers' Championship. More recently both England Cricketer Graham Thorpe and Rugby star Jonny Wilkinson come from Farnham as does Rachel Morris who won a cycling gold medal at the 2008 Paralympic Games in Beijing. Haslemere, with its wooded hills, has been described as "little Switzerland" and was home to Sir Arthur Conan Doyle at Undershaw and Alfred (Lord) Tennyson. Godalming was formerly Surrey's main wool town as well as home to England cricketer Julius Caesar, Jack Phillips, the wireless operator on the Titanic, and Edwin Lutyens (Thursley) who worked with the garden designer Gertrude Jekyll. Cranleigh boasts of having the first cottage hospital in the country in the 1800's and St Nicolas Church in Cranleigh was the inspiration of Lewis Carroll's 'Cheshire Cat'. Of the present population in Waverley, 70% live in these towns and the remainder in 17 rural parishes containing more than 20 villages.

### **.....the people who live here**

According to the 2001 national census the age structure of those living in the area peaks at between 30 and 45, and 46 and retirement age. Overall, about one-half of Waverley's population is described as "economically active", employed on a regular full-time or part-time basis, of whom about 50% travel outside the area to work, with London and Guildford being major employment areas. Most of these workers are in professional and managerial occupations, whilst unemployment in Waverley is below both the national and regional average. The area has a higher than average population of people above the age of 75.

The area is an expensive place in which to live, with over three-quarters of dwellings owner-occupied and over 40% of homes detached. Average house prices at September 2008 are almost double the national average at £427,202 (national average £224,064).

The high value of housing and the high cost of living means that some people are capital-rich but income-poor which leads to pockets of relative deprivation in a

number of areas. People with special needs and the elderly represent a significant proportion of the local population, and recent surveys depict an aging population with a forecast decline in all age groups under 50 years up to 2020 with significant increases in the 55-64 group and over 85s.

#### .....cultural provision

**Arts, Galleries & Entertainment** – Waverley benefits from having two multi-arts facilities in the Borough. Farnham Maltings and the Cranleigh Arts Centre offer a wide range of arts events and activities ranging from theatre and cinema to comedy, children's workshops, adult education, music and dance as well as providing flexible space for events and conferences plus valuable artists' studio space. Other important facilities such as the New Ashgate Gallery in Farnham, the James Hockey Gallery at the University of Creative Arts, Farnham, also play an important role in the cultural life of the Borough and attract many visitors from outside the area as well as locally as do special annual events such as the VivArtis arts festival at King Edward's School Witley, the Haslemere Haslemere Festival and the Godalming Music Festival.

The Borough Council, through its Arts Development Service, provides a wide range of participatory community arts projects working with key partners and target groups across the Borough. Within the Borough there are a number of community halls, which provide venues for regular entertainment including the Memorial Hall in Farnham, the Borough Hall in Godalming, the Haslemere Hall and various village and church halls which also provide valuable spaces for cultural activity.

**Sports & Recreation-** Each of the four towns has its own sports centre. Farnham, Haslemere (the Herons and the Edge) Godalming and Cranleigh centres are managed by a private sector contractor on behalf of the Council. There are some commercial leisure operators providing health & fitness facilities within the Borough and schools with extensive dual-use facilities open to the public.

The Council is the major provider of outdoor sports pitches in the Borough and these are predominantly located on sports and recreation grounds. These areas are managed by the Parks and Landscape service and are mainly maintained by the Council's grounds maintenance contractor.

Through its Sports Development service, Waverley supports and promotes a wide range of community sports events including the Mayor's Challenge, Surrey Youth Games and the 'kwik-cricket' Festival. The Borough also benefits from having four independent Sports Councils who, as independent umbrella organisations, support the development of voluntary sports provision within the Borough by providing advice, information and grant aid. A number of locations in the Borough have bid to be training camps for the 2012 Olympics including King Edward's School, Charterhouse, Frensham Heights School and the Edge sports centre.

Waverley is a member of the Surrey Active Sports Partnership (Active Sports being the nationwide sports programme co-ordinating the delivery of sports development across the country) with local sports clubs actively participating in the scheme. This

scheme provides a continuum for young people through all stages of sports development from taster sessions to competition.

**Museums & Heritage** – There are four museums in Waverley. The Museum of Farnham is owned and operated by Waverley Borough Council and is a former finalist in the European Museum of the year; Godalming Museum is run in partnership by Waverley Borough Council and an independent Trust. Haslemere Educational Museum and the Rural Life Centre at Tilford are independent. Groups and organisations such as Godalming Trust, Farnham Society, Farnham Building Preservation Trust, Haslemere Society, English Nature, Surrey Archaeological Society and other local history groups, support and promote the preservation of the heritage of the area. They provide public talks and events, guided walks and local heritage awards as well as participating in Heritage Open Days Weekend in September. Waverley has over 40 conservation areas and the number of listed buildings and archaeological sites all contribute to a unique sense of place.

**Countryside, Parks & Open Spaces** - Over 60% of Waverley is Metropolitan Green Belt and over three quarters of the Borough, amounting to some 26,700 hectares (over 100 square miles) is designated as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Area of Great Landscape Value. Waverley manages 1,000 hectares of countryside areas for public use, and these sites, managed by the Council's Countryside Section, range from small areas of woodland and village greens through to areas such as Farnham Park and Frensham Common. The countryside rangers manage Waverley's 'Action for Wildlife', which provides opportunities for volunteering in countryside conservation work and involving communities in helping to maintain their local areas of countryside. Farnham Park and Frensham Common are Areas of Special Historic Landscape Value.

Waverley owns and manages approximately 180 hectares of public open space on nearly 400 sites borough-wide. This provision consists of 9 formal ornamental parks and gardens, 26 sports and recreation grounds, 40 open spaces and approximately 50 hectares of amenity land. The diversity of provision on the recreation grounds includes bowling greens, cricket tables, tennis courts, and numerous winter sports pitches.

Waverley is also responsible for the upkeep and improvement of 60 children's playgrounds across the Borough, and 4 skate parks – one in each of the main towns. These areas are managed by the Parks & Landscape service, with maintenance being carried out by an appointed grounds maintenance contractor.

In addition to the Council managed facilities, there are numerous recreational facilities owned and managed by private clubs and Parish Councils.

#### .....tourism

Tourism in Waverley supports over 2600 jobs and is worth around £150million for the local economy, according to the South East England Tourist Board. One in five new jobs are created in the tourism sector and tourism plays an important part in the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area. However, recruitment in this sector can be particularly difficult as jobs tend to be lower paid.



The term 'tourism' relates to people who travel to a destination for a variety of temporary purposes. Tourists therefore include people who:

- visit the area for business or pleasure;
- stay in hotels and bed and breakfast accommodation;
- stay with friends and relatives
- visit the area for a day or half a day and spend money locally on sport or culture, in shops and attractions or in tearooms, pubs and restaurants.

Waverley works with the town partnerships to develop events and activities which provide visitor guides and activities for visitors. It supports the provision of visitor information at locations such as Haslemere Museum and through websites created by the Town Initiatives in Haslemere and Cranleigh and the Town Councils in Godalming and Farnham.

#### **.....education**

Waverley has a high standard of educational provision. In the state sector there are well-regarded schools at infant, primary and secondary levels; there are also two sixth form colleges – Farnham College (now part of the Guildford College) and the nationally regarded Godalming College. In the private sector too there are many well-known and highly-regarded schools. The Borough now contains university level education, following the creation of the University College of the Arts as a result of the union of The Surrey Institute of Art & Design, University College and the Kent Institute of Art & Design. The University College campus in Farnham is one of Europe's largest colleges specialising in art, design, media and communication, with over 3,000 students. Around 30% of the Borough's businesses are classified as being within the creative sector.

Waverley Borough Council offers vocational training, apprenticeships and an alternative schools programme through Waverley Training Services.

#### **.....transport**

Waverley and South West Surrey are easily accessible, with Heathrow, Gatwick and Southampton International Airports and the ports of Southampton and Portsmouth all within an hour's drive. The A3 joins the M25 at junction 10, just 13 miles outside the Borough; the Blackwater Valley Road A331 joins the A31 at Farnham to the M3 at Camberley.

Farnham station is served by South West Trains mainline service to London Waterloo via Woking. Farncombe, Godalming, Milford, Witley and Haslemere are on the South West Trains Waterloo – Portsmouth mainline service.

Owing to the rural nature of the Borough there are significant issues in relation to transport networks connecting the towns and rural areas and crossing the Borough in an east-west direction. Young people have particular difficulties in accessing cultural services if they live in the outlying villages, in terms of affordable and regular public transport.

## **6. Research and Consultation**

This document is based on the first Cultural Strategy, developed in 2003, which was the culmination of an exercise that has involved consultations and feedback from individuals, clubs, owners/managers, and societies in the area as well as other key agencies. As a result, it is hoped that the revised strategy and action plan will bring users and providers closer together and help to unlock potential funding resources for projects and programmes, a common theme identified in the consultation process.

### **.....whom we consulted**

Waverley is very keen to hear from local people about cultural pursuits and facilities in the area and the ways in which improvements could be made. Although it was not possible to canvas the entire local electorate, the new strategy has been built on evidence found in recent Market Town Healthchecks (in Godalming, published 2008, and Cranleigh and Haslemere – major consultation exercises as part of the healthcheck reviews in 2008). In addition the document has drawn on other published research such as the County Council surveys as part of the Local Area Agreement and Surrey Community Strategy development.

As well as the two methods outlined above, feedback from previous research and consultation was also reviewed and taken into account, particularly where there has been little change since the previous surveys. This included user surveys from Godalming Leisure Needs Study, non-user surveys relating to Farnham, Haslemere and Cranleigh Sports Centres, feedback from Friends Groups, Youth Surveys and existing strategies.

Neighbouring local authorities have been consulted where appropriate. Key user groups and consultative groups have been involved and relevant organisations and individuals have been consulted. It is proposed that the Cultural Strategy should reside primarily on Waverley's web, where it can be regularly reviewed and updated during the period of its currency, although hard copies will be available on request.

## **Feedback from Clubs, Societies and Venues**

In Waverley, the voluntary sector is by far the largest provider of opportunities for leisure. Whilst these are predominantly sports-based, there are nevertheless a whole range of artistic and environmental organisations operating out of church and village halls, as well as arts and countryside centres.

### **Local issues relating to the voluntary and private sectors**

Knowledge of sectors included from previous surveys and other evidence:

#### *Sports*

Sports club facilities, both indoor and outdoor in the area, include a mix of publicly and privately-owned sites. In both sectors the responses pointed to a general need for improvement; partly because of constant use over the years and partly to accommodate expansion plans. Money, or the lack of it, was a recurring theme, with many clubs looking for funding partners to supplement their own resources, usually a combination of member fees and subscriptions and small grants and donations. Even where special fund-raising efforts were being made this was still felt to be inadequate. Yet the responses revealed that a number of clubs are already actively working with partners such as Waverley Borough Council in trying to achieve their ambitions.

#### *Arts & Entertainment*

In the arts sector, where most facilities are privately-owned and run, there appeared to be more emphasis on self-help, with support being sought in other ways from partners, e.g. for publicity and special equipment. In the related sector of entertainments the need for improved or new facilities was a more common concern, with the need for help and sponsorship from outside agencies repeatedly flagged.

#### *Historic and Museums*

There are three town museums and one rural museum in Waverley, two privately run, one owned by the Council and one run in partnership. There are also many historic trusts and societies. Their most pressing need appears to be in receiving more assistance on marketing and ancillary fronts. The educational sector is geared specifically to youth needs and facilities which are dependent on voluntary effort for their survival. In this sector the lack of suitable facilities was a source of complaint, and sponsors and grant aid were lacking.

## *Youth Sector*

Youth sector needs have been subject to a number of specific local studies in the past few years e.g. Waverley Borough Council's Best Value Review for Services to Young People, Surrey County Council Youth Service Review and the Health Checks, which highlighted the need for an increase in the following cultural activities:

- Information on services for young people
- Safe places for young people to meet, such as youth cafés
- Improved safe public transport both in the towns and villages
- Fixed facilities, such as sports use games areas and skateparks
- Creative arts, as a means of expressing their feelings
- Health Checks

Crime and disorder was a major issue for young people with a real fear expressed of being bullied or mugged. The need was expressed for more safe places to meet and provision for young people in rural areas were also issues.

## *Parks and Countryside*

In the outdoor environment, where land ownership is shared among various local, county and national organisations, volunteer groups exhibited an enthusiasm to work with these partners in helping to manage and preserve the surrounding countryside. They recognised the need to achieve greater awareness and access for those people with special needs. The Healthchecks show the higher priority that local people put on their local environment and wildlife.

## *Education*

The Countryside Section's programme of talks and conservation tasks helps to engender an interest and pride in the surrounding countryside.

In summary and using a SWOT approach (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) the following findings can be observed from the consultations with voluntary clubs, groups and societies:

*Strengths: Strong and wide-ranging sports and recreation sector  
Active and versatile entertainment groups  
Enthusiasm for educational/ environmental activities.*

*Weaknesses: Limited availability or accessibility to external funds  
Worn-out and sub-standard facilities in sports and entertainment sectors  
Over- reliance on small band of volunteers in youth provision and environmental conservation  
Limited provision of youth facilities*

*Opportunities: Enhanced profile for "partnership-working" in strategy*

*Properly resourced programme to refurbish and enhance facilities  
More creative and varied use of art and educational centres*

*Threats: Budgetary constraints in public sector  
Continuing difficulties in sourcing grants*

## **Delivering Tourism**

The Tourism sector has been identified as a key sector to be supported as part of Waverley's Economic Strategy agreed by the Council in April 2007. Detailed actions were also identified through the Council's Tourism Strategy *Visitors Mean Business*, published in 1999. Although dated, this document is still relevant. The sector plays a key part in helping to sustain the rural economy, and there are clear links between the sustainability of arts and culture, rural crafts and tourism.

Waverley has limited resources allocated for tourism, and as a result works with a range of partner organisations to add value and create a co-ordinated approach over a wider area. In particular Waverley works with and through the Visit Surrey Partnership, re-established in 2007 with a strong mix of private and public sector partners.

Waverley's main areas of activity in its tourism role are:

- To undertake strategic research and planning which will help others focus their activities;
- To co-ordinate and progress actions which will help signpost and direct visitors particularly in partnership with the individual town partnerships
- To promote (in a modest way) the Borough and its attractions under the South West Surrey brand
- To support training for specific parts of the sector to help raise standards of provision (such as the bed and breakfast development courses, Welcome to Excellence and events targeted at chefs and retail businesses)
- Policy advice to support other Waverley activities