

To: All Members of the EXECUTIVE

When calling please ask for:

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**Policy and Governance**

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Date: 27 September 2019

**Membership of the Executive**

Cllr John Ward (Chairman)  
Cllr Paul Follows (Vice Chairman)  
Cllr David Beaman  
Cllr Andy MacLeod  
Cllr Mark Merryweather

Cllr John Neale  
Cllr Nick Palmer  
Cllr Anne-Marie Rosoman  
Cllr Steve Williams

Dear Councillors

A meeting of the EXECUTIVE will be held as follows:

DATE: TUESDAY, 8 OCTOBER 2019

TIME: 6.00 PM

PLACE: COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES, THE BURYS,  
GODALMING

The Agenda for the Meeting is set out below.

Yours sincerely

ROBIN TAYLOR  
Head of Policy and Governance

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## **NOTES FOR MEMBERS**

Contact Officers are shown at the end of each report and members are welcome to raise questions, make observations etc. in advance of the meeting with the appropriate officer.

**Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Leader, Deputy Leader or an appropriate Portfolio Holder to respond to any informal questions from members of the public, for a maximum of 15 minutes.**

*[Questions will be taken in the order in which questioners register with the Democratic Services Officer prior to the start of question time. When read out, each question must be concluded within 2 minutes. In the event that it is not possible to give a verbal response, a written response will be provided following the meeting.]*

## **AGENDA**

1. **MINUTES**

To confirm the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3 September 2019.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive apologies for absence.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS**

To receive from members, declarations of interest in relation to any items included on the agenda for this meeting, in accordance with the Waverley Code of Local Government Conduct.

4. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

The Chairman to respond to any questions received from members of the public for which notice has been given in accordance with Procedure Rule 10.

The deadline for receipt of questions is 5pm on Tuesday 1 October 2019.

5. **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

The Chairman to respond to any questions received from Members in accordance with Procedure Rule 11.

The deadline for receipt of questions is 5pm on Tuesday 1 October 2019.

6. LEADER'S AND PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' UPDATES

7. DUNSFOLD PARK GARDEN VILLAGE - WAVERLEY'S PROJECT GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (Pages 7 - 12)

[Portfolio Holder: Councillor John Ward]  
[Wards Affected: Alfold Cranleigh Rural and Ellens Green;  
Chiddingfold and Dunsfold]

To agree the Council's internal governance arrangements to support the implementation and delivery of Dunsfold Park Garden Village (DPGV).

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that Executive agrees the implementation of the governance structure as set out in this report, and agrees the Councillor membership of the Waverley Strategic DPGV Governance Board and DPGV Advisory Group.

8. SURREY HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020-2025 (Pages 13 - 52)

[Portfolio Holder: Portfolio Holder for Policy & Customer Services]  
[Wards Affected: All except Farnham, Godalming and Cranleigh]

The adoption of an up to date AONB Management Plan is a statutory requirement for those local authorities that are covered by the AONB. The current Management Plan is from 2014 to 2019. This report recommends approval of the revised Surrey Hills AONB Management, 2020 – 2025, following a 'light touch' review. The Management Plan has been prepared by the Surrey Hills AONB Board on behalf of, and in collaboration with, the five Surrey Hills AONB districts and boroughs and Surrey County Council.

**Recommendation**

That the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 be adopted as the statutory AONB Management Plan for Waverley Borough Council.

9. STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT - REVIEW OF PROPOSED AMENDMENTS (Pages 53 - 56)

[Portfolio Holder: Councillor Andy MacLeod]  
[Wards Affected: All Wards]

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted at Council on 16 July 2019. During the debate, some amendments to the document were tabled. It was agreed that officers would consider if the proposed amendments should be made to the newly adopted SCI. This report assesses the proposed amendments and makes recommendations as to whether the adopted SCI should be changed.

### **Recommendation**

That the Executive agrees that no further changes are required to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for the reasons set out in the report.

10. PROPERTY MATTER - PROPERTY INVESTMENT ADVISORY BOARD  
(Pages 57 - 64)

[Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mark Merryweather]

[Wards Affected: All Wards]

This report proposes revised Terms of Reference of the Investment Advisory Board to clarify the objectives of the Board, and ensure that the membership supports the Council's ambitions.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive approves the revised membership and Terms of Reference of the Property Investment Advisory Board.

11. PROPERTY MATTER - ASSET TRANSFER TO TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS (Pages 65 - 102)

[Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mark Merryweather]

[Wards Affected: All Wards]

This report seeks approval for a number of asset transfers from the Council to Town and Parish Councils to coincide with the start of the new Grounds Maintenance Contract on the 1 November 2019.

This enables Town and Parish Councils to have full control over local green spaces in their respective areas and removes Waverley Borough Council from the responsibility and cost for grounds maintenance of those key sites.

### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that:

1. The leasehold transfer of assets, as detailed in Annexe 1 be approved.
2. The tapered funding arrangement for the leasehold transfers be approved.
3. The freehold transfer of the Gostrey Meadow, Farnham to Farnham Town Council be approved.
4. Delegated authority is given to officers to finalise the heads of terms and complete the necessary legal document(s) with the Town and Parish Councils for the transfer of assets, with detailed terms and conditions to be agreed by the Strategic Director, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).

12. PROPERTY MATTER - HOLLOWAY HILL BOWLING CLUB, GODALMING - SURRENDER/GRANT OF A LEASE (Pages 103 - 110)

[Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mark Merryweather & Councillor David Beaman]

[Wards Affected: Godalming Holloway]

Holloway Hill Bowling Club has approached the Council for consent to surrender its existing lease of the Pavilion land and to take a new long lease of both the Pavilion land and the Bowling Green itself.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive agrees to the surrender of the current lease to Holloway Hill Bowling Club and the simultaneous grant of a new lease on terms and conditions set out in Exempt Annexe 2, with other terms and conditions to be negotiated by the Estates and Valuation Manager.

13. PROPERTY MATTER - GODALMING AND FARNCOMBE BOWLING CLUB, GODALMING - SURRENDER/GRANT OF A LEASE (Pages 111 - 118)

[Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mark Merryweather & Councillor David Beaman]

[Wards Affected: Godalming Central and Ockford]

Godalming and Farncombe Bowling Club has approached the Council for consent to surrender its existing lease of the Pavilion land and to take a new long lease of both the Pavilion land and the Bowling Green itself.

**Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive agrees to the surrender of the current lease to Godalming and Farncombe Bowling Club and the simultaneous grant of a new lease on terms and conditions set out in Exempt Annexe 2, with other terms and conditions to be negotiated by the Estates and Valuation Manager.

14. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider the following recommendation on the motion of the Chairman:-

Recommendation

That, pursuant to Procedure Rule 20, and in accordance with Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item(s) on the grounds that it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted or the nature of the proceedings, that if members of the public were present during these items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information (as defined by Section 100I of the Act) of the description specified at the meeting in the revised Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972.

15. ANY OTHER ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED IN EXEMPT SESSION

To consider matters (if any) relating to aspects of any reports on this agenda which, it is felt, may need to be considered in Exempt session.

**For further information or assistance, please telephone  
Fiona Cameron, Democratic Services Manager & Deputy Monitoring  
Officer, on 01483 523226 or by email at  
fiona.cameron@waverley.gov.uk**

**WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE**

**8 OCTOBER 2019**

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**Title:**

**DUNSFOLD PARK GARDEN VILLAGE  
– WAVERLEY’S PROJECT GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS**

**[Portfolio Holders: Cllr Andy MacLeod; Cllr John Neale, Cllr Nick Palmer]  
[Wards Affected: Chiddingfold & Dunsfold; Alfold;  
Cranleigh Rural and Ellens Green]**

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**Summary and purpose:**

To agree the Council’s internal governance arrangements to support the implementation and delivery of Dunsfold Park Garden Village (DPGV).

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**How this report relates to the Council’s Corporate Strategy:**

Dunsfold Park Garden Village will create a successful, high quality sustainable place. It will provide much needed homes of various types and tenures as well as associated services and facilities (school, nursery, open space and community facilities) to support the development. In addition, the new development will build on the success of the existing business park, providing additional employment opportunities both for future residents and the surrounding community. The development and supporting governance structure therefore accords with the Council’s new Corporate Strategy.

**Equality and Diversity Implications:**

None.

**Financial Implications:**

There are no direct finance implications from this report. Staff resource will be from current approved establishment budgets or funded through the Planning Performance Agreement already in place.

**Legal Implications:**

There are no direct legal implications associated with this report.

**Climate change implications:**

There are no climate change implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

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## **Background**

### **Current planning position:**

1. DPGV is identified in the Local Plan Part 1 as a strategic site allocation (the largest such site in the Plan) with the expectation to delivery 2,600 dwellings and 26,000 sq. m of business floor space over the plan period (to 2032). A hybrid planning application for 1,800 homes and 24,699 sq. m (plus various other uses) was granted permission by the Secretary of State on 29 March 2018 (WA/2015/2395). Recently the prestigious car manufacturer (Gordon Murray) has secured planning permission for a new corporate headquarters on the site – the floor space contributing towards the total floor space for the wider Dunsfold Park development.
2. Local Plan Part 1 includes two policies associated with Dunsfold: Policy SS7 – New Settlement at Dunsfold Aerodrome and Policy SS7A – Dunsfold Aerodrome Design Strategy. Together these policies provide a comprehensive framework for development and delivery of the Dunsfold Park new settlement and include tools and mechanisms for delivering a high quality new place (including design review and details on the masterplan).
3. A Planning Performance Agreement (PPA) is in place to support Dunsfold Park over a period of 5 years (with review points). This includes requirements to ensure that the masterplan is subject to design review and public consultation A full planning application has been submitted for a new road from the A281 into the site. In addition the developers are currently working to evolve the masterplan for the site, and initial design panel workshops have happened, supporting that work. On 27 June 2019, the Secretary of State for Communities, Housing and Local Government announced the delivery of 19 new garden villages. Dunsfold Park was granted this status as part of this announcement – this supports the vision of Dunsfold Airport Limited (DAL – owners of the site) and policies within LPP1. Whilst no funding was initially anticipated, the announcement confirmed that Dunsfold would benefit from £150,000 to bring forward the delivery of the development.

## **Managing the planning position**

### **Preparatory work to date**

4. An internal Planning Team was set up some time ago which meets weekly to keep abreast of relevant matters and developments associated with the DPGV. The meeting will continue to support the delivery of the onward planning process of the new settlement. This is chaired by the Planning Projects Team Leader and attended by officers from across the service (and more widely when required).
5. The PPA is between the Council, Surrey County Council (SCC) and DAL and provides various recourses to support the development over a period of five years.
6. In addition the PPA requires that the developer fund and participate in design review panels for relevant application, and ensures that the masterplan is subject to at least a 21 day public consultation. All parties have also agreed to enter into a Design Quality Charter which is currently being developed.



7. The PPA covers pre-application advice but does not cover the fees normally associated with planning applications.
8. Following the Garden Community Bid announcement, Homes England and the Ministry will have an involvement in the development going forward, but further information is awaited as to what this might look like.
9. Monthly officer progress meetings take place with DAL to consider the project programme, review relevant planning applications and discuss delivery.

**Wider support and involvement:**

10. In addition to the work undertaken to date, the scale of the DPGV is such that further groups/meetings need to be convened to support the development and delivery of the settlement, as shown in Annexe 1. These groups and meetings are as follows:
  - Continue the monthly progress meetings with DAL (officer/operational – planning focused).
  - Dunsfold Liaison Group – an existing group comprising local members, DAL, Planning and Environmental Health Officers. Its purpose is to encourage an open dialogue between the Council, Councillors and DAL in respect of enforcement issues, complaints and other planning matters regarding the site. It is expected that this will continue in its current form to continue to monitor existing lawful temporary uses but also to oversee the implementation of DPGV. This group meets six-monthly but may increase in frequency during the construction phase (as necessary).
  - DPGV Advisory Group – a new group comprising Councillors (from Joint Planning Committee), DAL, Planning Officers and other relevant officers (as necessary). This group will be officer-led and non-decision making. It will facilitate pre-application and within-application Member engagement commensurate with normal practices e.g. Member briefings on reserved matters applications. This group will support the implementation and delivery of the new settlement and is likely to meet quarterly (or as necessary depending on the programme).
  - Waverley Strategic DPGV Governance Board - a group comprising the Leader, relevant Executive Members, Directors and relevant Heads of Services. It could also include representatives from Surrey County Council. This group will go beyond the planning issues associated with DPGV and consider the corporate and strategic matters that come with delivering a new settlement. This could meet quarterly (or as necessary).
11. Almost all local authorities officers contacted when researching this paper that are currently progressing large-scale developments have indicated that strategic governance arrangements within the local authority are critical to the support, implementation and overall success of the scheme. It will also ensure that there is a clear communication method about the project at the strategic level. However, it is important to keep the strategic, corporate discussions separate from the planning

discussions to ensure a clear division when considering and determining planning applications.

12. In addition to the above proposed structure, a Design Quality Charter for DPGV is currently being developed – this is a document that would set out the joint visions and objectives of the developer and WBC. The document will be based around the existing principles established in both the outline planning permission and Policies SS7 and SS7A of LPP1. It is suggested that DAL as promoter/developer and the Leader of the Council sign this commitment not only to ‘launch’ DPGV, but also set out the vision to which the development can be assessed against. This is a new approach endorsed and suggested by the Town and Country Planning Association, and can be a useful tool for long term review.

### **Conclusion**

13. In order to deliver a successful and high quality new settlement at Dunsfold Park, it is critical to have a suitable governance structure in place. This structure will bring together all the relevant elements of the Council to support the delivery of the settlement in a timely manner.

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### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that Executive agrees the implementation of the governance structure as set out in this report, and agrees the Councillor membership of the Waverley Strategic DPGV Governance Board and DPGV Advisory Group.

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### **Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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### **CONTACT OFFICER:**

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Planning Projects Team Leader

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**Dunsfold Park Garden Village Governance Chart**

**Waverley Strategic DPGV Governance Board**

Councillor led group to discuss and make decisions corporate and strategic matters associated with the new settlement.

Membership:

- Leader (Chair)
- Relevant Executive Members
- Local Members
- Directors
- Heads of Service
- Surrey County Council (as necessary)
- DAL

Meet quarterly or as necessary.

**DPGV Advisory Group**

Officer led, non-decision making group to discuss planning matters both pre, during and post application.

Membership:

- Councillors (from JPC)
- Planning Officers
- Internal officers (as necessary)
- DAL

Meet quarterly or as necessary.

**Dunsfold Liaison Group**

Officer led, non-decision making group to discuss enforcement issues and complaints associated with Dunsfold Park.

Membership:

- Local Members
- Planning Officers
- Environmental Health Officers
- DAL

Meet half yearly or as necessary.

**Monthly progress meetings**

Officer and DAL led, regular meetings to discuss project timetable, planning issues, resources and review of PPA.

Membership:

- Planning Officers
- DAL

Meet monthly (or as necessary).

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## WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE

8 OCTOBER 2019

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#### Title:

### **SURREY HILLS AREA OF OUTSTANDING NATURAL BEAUTY (AONB) MANAGEMENT PLAN 2020 - 2025**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Macleod]**

**[Wards Affected: All wards except Farnham, Cranleigh and Godalming]**

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#### Summary and purpose:

The adoption of an up to date AONB Management Plan is a statutory requirement for those local authorities that are covered by the AONB. The current Management Plan is from 2014 to 2019. This report recommends approval of the revised Surrey Hills AONB Management, 2020 – 2025, following a 'light touch' review. The Management Plan has been prepared by the Surrey Hills AONB Board on behalf of, and in collaboration with, the five Surrey Hills AONB districts and boroughs and Surrey County Council.

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#### How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Strategy:

The Management Plan deals with a number of issues relating to the management of the AONB including natural resource use, biodiversity, heritage, the appearance of an area, jobs, services and facilities; rural proofing and the rural economy. The Management Plan accords with new corporate strategy.

#### Equality and Diversity Implications:

There are no implications arising from this report. Disabled access to the AONB and the likelihood of ethnic minorities visiting the Surrey Hills AONB was raised at the Symposium held at Surrey University last November. However none of the policies in the review of the AONB Management Plan prevent these issues being addressed.

#### Resource/Value for Money implications:

It is not anticipated that the Council will have to contribute any more to implementing the Plan than the £ 5,279 it already contributes annually as a core funding partner of the Surrey Hills Board. DEFRA contributes the majority of the Surrey Hills Unit's running costs. The four other Districts and Surrey County Council fund the balance of the AONB Unit's core income.

#### Legal Implications:

The preparation of a Management Plan for the Surrey Hills AONB, and its review within five years, is a statutory requirement for local authorities under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. The constitution for the Surrey Hills Board, as a Joint Management Committee, is to prepare and keep under review the Management Plan. However, it is for the constituent local authorities to independently adopt it. Local authorities are required to

have regard to the Management Plan and the purposes of the AONB in carrying out their functions.

### **Climate Change Implications:**

The AONB Management Plan sets out policies for the sustainable management of the countryside. It seeks to balance development pressure, community development and conservation objectives. Paragraph 1.4 of the Management Plan promotes an 'ecosystems approach', which values the interrelationship between different natural resources from water to woodland, in line with the key goals set out in the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan.

The review of the Management Plan has been subject to sustainability environmental assessment which assesses the aims and policies of the Plan against a number of indicators including climate change. The SA concludes that there is potential for adverse impacts on climate change as a result of development needed and changes in land management practices. However, it considers that specific measures to mitigate are best dealt with through the determination of planning applications under local plan policies. In terms of land management practices, mitigation is best achieved through the promotion and provision of information and advice about low carbon approaches to farming.

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## **1.0 The Management Plan Review**

- 1.1 Designated landscapes cover a significant proportion of Waverley. 77 % of the Borough is an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and or area of Great landscape Value. Sections 89 and 90 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) require local authorities and conservation boards to produce AONB Management Plans that are covered by an AONB and to review adopted and published plans at intervals of not more than five years.
- 1.2 The first Management Plan for the Surrey Hills was produced by the Surrey Hills Board which was published in April 2004 to cover the period up to 2009. It was subsequently reviewed in 2009 and in 2014. The current plan runs to 2019 and therefore under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act it is required to be updated.

## **2.0 The Surrey Hills Board**

- 2.1 The Surrey Hills AONB covers parts of Waverley Tandridge, Reigate and Banstead, Guildford and Mole Valley. In order to ensure that there is a coordinated approach to the conservation, enhancement and management of the AONB a Joint Advisory Committee was set up some years ago, known as the 'Surrey Hills Board'. The Board is made up of representatives of the constituent local authorities, including Surrey County Council, and partner organisations such as The National Trust and Surrey Wildlife Trust.
- 2.2 The AONB Board has sought over recent years to diversify its funding and resource base to help deliver the AONB Management Plan. This has created a Surrey Hills 'family' of organisations including the Surrey Hills Society (a membership charity), the Surrey Hills Trust Fund (raising funds for projects and established in partnership with the Community Foundation for Surrey) and the Surrey Hills Enterprises (a community interest company that promotes rural economic development and tourism).

- 2.3 The Board prepares the AONB Management Plan for the local authorities with assistance from officers from the AONB unit and the local authorities. However, responsibility for the Plan remains with the local authorities, and each one is required separately to adopt it. The purpose of this report is to explain the revised Management Plan, 2020-2025, the changes as a result of the review, and to recommend that it be approved.

### **3.0 AONB Boundary Review and Glover Review**

- 3.1 The Review of the AONB Management Plan takes place within the context of two important pieces of work. The first is a long-promised review of the boundaries of the AONB to be undertaken by Natural England which may begin towards the end of this year or beginning of 2020. The outcome of the review could result in areas that are currently designated as AGLV being included within the AONB.
- 3.2 The second piece of work is the Government's review of protected landscapes, known as the Glover Review. The Review has just been published which makes some recommendations with regard to the funding, role and management of AONBs, including their role in the planning system. This Review does not affect the process of adopting the AONB Management Plan as it will be the Government's response to the Review that will provide any changes relating to governance, financing and the statutory purposes of AONBs. However, for this reason the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan review is 'light touch' in approach until the Government's response to the Glover Review is clearer.

### **4.0 Preparation of the Review of the AONB Management Plan**

- 4.1 In March 2019, the Surrey Hills Board agreed a draft of the Management Plan and is recommending its adoption by the constituent local authorities. This was the result of several months of work during which officers have reviewed the previous Management Plan and carried out targeted consultations.
- 4.2 Prior to the Management Plan review, the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Surrey Hills AONB designation was marked by a symposium at Surrey University. This looked at various themes including climate change and recreational pressures. The discussions were documented and helped to provide background information for the review. A series of videos under the title of 'My Surrey Hills' explored personal connections to the Surrey Hills and the values these individuals ascribed to the landscape. This helped to stimulate discussion on the role of landscape in people lives. Another strand to the consultations was an on-line survey which showed a high degree of support for existing Management Plan policies and for the Vision and Statement of Significance.
- 4.3 Part of the preparatory work for the review was a screening exercise to ensure that the policies in the review do not have a significant detrimental impact on the environment. Subsequently, Strategic Environmental Assessment and Habitats Regulations Assessment on the review of the Management Plan have been carried out.
- 4.4 The SEA has concluded that potential for adverse impacts is concentrated around those aspects of the Management Plan that would give rise to direct interventions in the landscape, in terms of changes in land management practices or changes to

built development, including the re-use of existing buildings and structures and the creation of new ones. For built development and changes of land use the planning system would provide the principal means of addressing the potential for harm that might arise from a given scheme. For land management practices and other activities that fall outside the remit of the planning system, any potential for harm would be addressed through best practice dissemination initiatives and schemes.

- 4.5 The HRA has concluded that implementation of the revised Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan is not likely, alone or in combination with other plans or development, to give rise to significant adverse impacts on the integrity of any of the SPAs or SACs covered by the assessment, subject to a minor change to the wording of Policy B1 to provide protection of the SPA and /or Ramsar Site. The text of Policy B1 has been amended to deal with this and now includes the wording *“The importance of designated sites and the need for their protection and management will be promoted to the wider AONB community through information and awareness campaigns.”*
- 4.6 Subject to the decisions of the AONB local authorities, the AONB Board will meet to agree arrangements for the publication and launch of the Management Plan towards the end of this year.
- 4.7 The policy context is provided by national policies contained in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Local Plan Part 1. In essence, these planning policies emphasise the importance of the conservation of the landscape character of the AONB, having regard also to the conservation of wildlife and cultural heritage. The purpose of the AONB Management Plan is to provide a context for the various initiatives that support the conservation and enhancement this nationally important landscape. A number of organisations will play a role in this alongside the local authorities. The Management Plan helps to unify the approach taken to a range of issues relating to landscape conservation, recreation and enjoyment of the AONB and community development.

## **5.0 Summary of Main Changes to the 2014 – 2019 Management Plan**

- 5.1 A copy of the draft Management Plan 2020-2025 is attached as Annexe 1. Set out below is a summary of the amendments to the existing Management Plan. The changes have been made in order to update it and to ensure it responds to changing circumstances, the results of the consultation and the priorities of the local authority and other partners.
- 5.2 Section 1 - Introduction: there are minor changes which provide the overall context for the Plan.
- 5.3 Section 2 – The Policy Framework:
- the Statement of Significance and Vision have remained largely unchanged, reflecting the high degree of support for both during the consultation. There is specific mention now made to the health and well-being benefits of the landscape.
  - An opportunity has been taken to redraft the policies covering agriculture to make them simpler and more understandable without altering their emphasis. The policy on farm diversification has been amended to make it more responsive to creating opportunities to increase biodiversity.



- The coverage of woodlands has been expanded to include hedgerows and veteran trees. The policies have been amended slightly to improve readability and include reference to biosecurity in relation to disease control.
- Additional wording has been added to the wording of B1 to meet the recommendations of the HRA. The Biodiversity policy has also been amended to include water resources in recognition of the importance of wetland habitats. In the supporting text reference is made to the catchment partnerships and the work being undertaken to enhance the river catchments and meet Water Framework Directive targets. A second additional paragraph links to the section of the NPPF on biodiversity with its references to biodiversity net gain. A change to Policy B4 seeks biodiversity gains through the planning process.
- The Historic and Cultural policy area has been subject to very minor changes to improve readability.
- In relation to policies for Recreation and Tourism, the term 'Wellbeing' has been added to the title. Other revisions are minor with the exception of the removal of policies relating to sustainable tourism and development criteria for recreation enterprises which are now covered within the planning policies.
- In the policies on Planning, the main changes are to the supporting text to provide additional guidance on the landscaping of developments, developments resulting in the loss of agricultural land and external lighting.
- Transport policies remain unchanged but there is additional supporting text relating to schemes designed to declutter rural roads and the value of sensitive verge management to biodiversity objectives.
- The Development and the Local Economy policies have been retitled Economy, Tourism and Community Development. Policies have been made clearer with an emphasis on sustainable development, the promotion of local services and produce, affordable housing and community transport.

#### 5.4 Section 3 – The Delivery Strategy:

- Some minor redrafting. It explains the role and function of the Surrey Hills 'family', the Surrey Hills Brand and the strategic targets underlying the Plan. Finally there is a section on monitoring which remains unchanged.

5.5 The Management Plan redrafting does not result in major changes to any of the policies or supporting text. Changes have been introduced to improve readability and to reflect recent initiatives in relation to biodiversity net gain, for example and previous omissions such as hedgerows.

## 6.0 Consideration of the changes

6.1 The review of the AONB Management Plan is 'light touch'. The main changes to the document have been a restructuring of the document to make it more concise and to remove any information that could be found in other documents. Most of the policies have been, unchanged or only slightly amended to make it clearer or to add a new emphasis.

6.2 The AONB Management Plan is a material planning consideration. However, the small changes means that there is no conflict between the AONB Management Plan and the adopted Local Plan Part 1.

## **7.0 Conclusion**

7.1 The existing Management Plan is a document that can inform the development control process and has been the source of many enhancement projects in the AONB. It is an authoritative and comprehensive Plan for the AONB. The revised Management Plan, 2020-2025 will ensure that the management of the AONB continues successfully, and merits the full support of the Council.

### **Recommendation**

That the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan 2020-2025 be adopted as the statutory AONB Management Plan for Waverley Borough Council.

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### **Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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# **Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan (2020 – 2025)**

**Post Consultation Draft  
For Surrey Hills AONB Board**

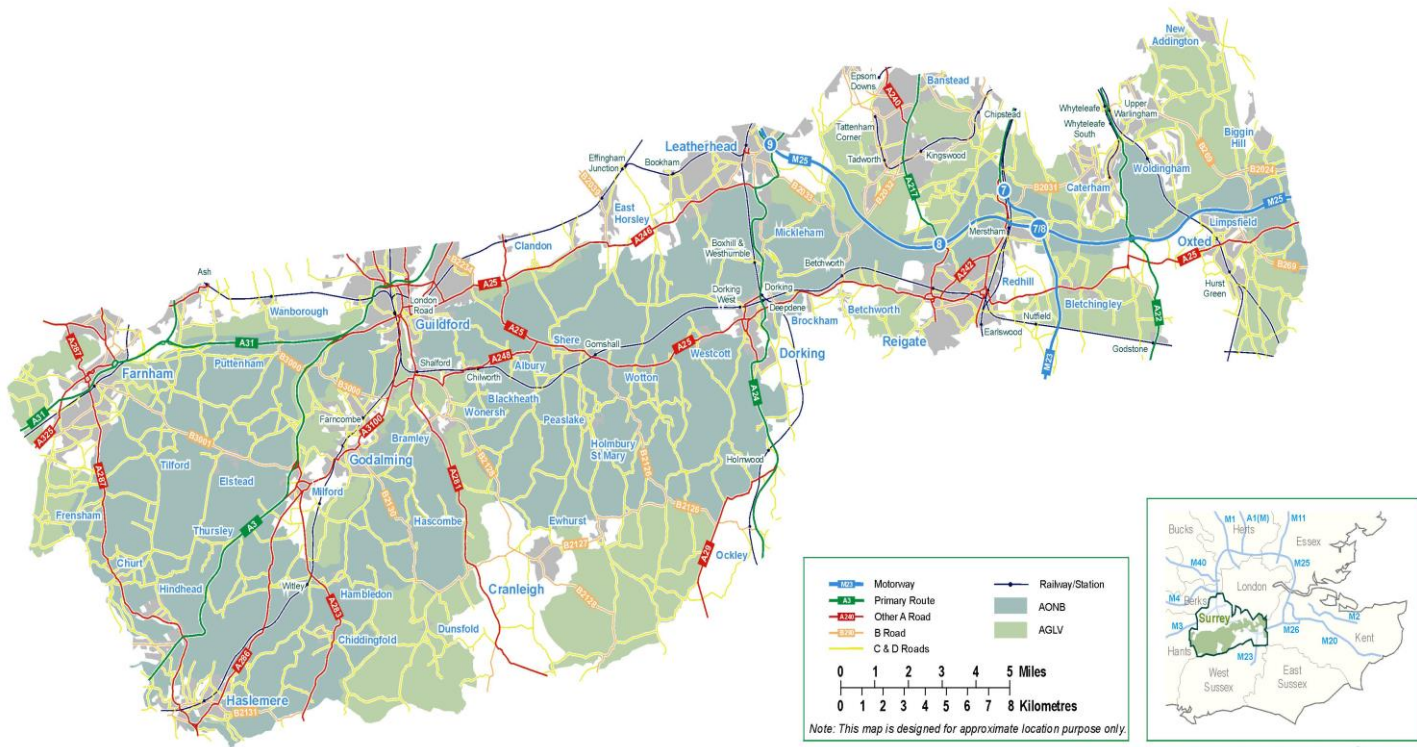
**August 2019**

## Preface

The Surrey Hills was one of the first landscapes in the country to be designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1958. It is now one of 37 AONBs in England and has equal status in planning terms to a National Park. The Surrey Hills AONB stretches across rural Surrey, covering about a quarter of the county.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) placed a statutory duty on AONB local authorities to produce and review management plans that will formulate their policy for the management of the area. The Management Plan is being prepared by the Surrey Hills AONB Board and will need to be adopted by Guildford Borough Council, Mole Valley District Council, Reigate and Banstead Borough Council, Tandridge District Council, Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council.

### [To include national and regional context maps]



## Ministerial Foreword

I am fortunate that England's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are part of my Ministerial responsibilities. Whether it be rolling hills, sweeping coastline or a tranquil village, spending time in an AONB can stir the heart and lift the spirit.

This is a pivotal moment for all AONBs. The Government has set its ambition in the 25 Year Environment Plan which states clearly the importance of natural beauty as part of our green future, while AONBs retain the highest status of protection for landscape through national planning policy. Leaving the EU brings with it an opportunity to develop a better system for supporting our farmers and land managers, who play such a vital role as stewards of the landscape. And the Review of National Parks and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty led by Julian Glover - the first of its kind for generations - will make recommendations to make sure our designated landscapes can flourish in the years ahead.

In my visits to AONBs around the country, I have been struck by the passion of many people - farmers, volunteers, and hard-working staff - for the beautiful places they live and work. In this spirit I am delighted to welcome publication of this Statutory Management Plan for the Surrey Hills. It is significant that this plan will be delivered in partnership by those who value the Surrey Hills. I would like to thank all those involved in preparation of this document, and wish you the best of success in bringing it to fruition.

Lord Gardiner

Minister for National Parks



Department  
for Environment  
Food & Rural Affairs

INSERT

My Surrey Hills Preface (photo collage to be included on inside cover)

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## **SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 The Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty?**

The Surrey Hills was one of the first landscapes in the country to be designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) in 1958. The Surrey Hills AONB stretches across Surrey's North Downs, from Farnham in the west to Oxted in the east of the county. It also includes the Greensand Hills which rise in Haslemere and stretch eastwards to Leith Hill, the highest point in Southern England. Over the centuries, its mosaic of farmland, woodland, heaths, downs and commons has inspired some of the country's greatest artists, writers and architects. The Surrey Hills attract millions of visitors every year and they make an important contribution to the economy of Surrey.

### **1.2 Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty**

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) is a designation for an area of land that is of national importance for its natural beauty. The origins of AONBs and National Parks lie in the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act of 1949.. In June 2000, the Government confirmed that AONBs have the same level of landscape quality and share the same level of protection as National Parks.

The primary purpose of AONB designation is 'to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area'. All public bodies have a legal duty to 'have regard' to the purpose of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of an AONB.

### **1.3 The global, national and regional context**

The Surrey Hills AONB is one of 34 AONBs in England. Together, they cover over 15% of the land surface. The distinctive character and natural beauty of England's AONBs make them some of the most special and cherished places in England. AONBs are living, working landscapes that contribute some £16bn every year to the national economy. Over two thirds of England's population live within half an hour's drive of an AONB and around 150 million people visit the English AONBs every year, spending in excess of £2bn.

AONBs are part of the global network of protected landscapes. The International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources has six management categories covering all types of protected areas. Our AONBs and National Parks fall into Category V – landscapes managed mainly for conservation and recreation.

As a protected landscape, the Surrey Hills AONB is playing a key role in the implementation of the European Landscape Convention, ratified by the UK in 2006. The Convention aims to improve the protection and management of important landscapes and to increase co-operation across Europe. The Surrey Hills AONB Board is an active member of the National Association for AONBs and through this association works with other AONBs across the country.

### **1.4 An ecosystems approach**

A healthy natural environment underpins the health and wellbeing of our society and our economy. The natural resources – or 'Natural Capital' – of the Surrey Hills includes its trees and woodland, rivers and streams, aquifer and other water bodies, farmland and grassland, soils, landscape and cultural assets. The benefits or services that we get from these natural resources are known as Ecosystems Services.



The policies and targets for the management of the Surrey Hills must conserve and enhance our natural capital and the benefits which society receives from this natural capital. In doing so, they will contribute to delivering the aims of the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan. This plan calls for an approach to agriculture, forestry, land use and fishing that puts the environment first. One of its key goals is to use resources from nature more sustainably and efficiently by:

- a) sustainably managing land and water environments
- b) protecting and providing more, better and joined up natural habitats
- c) conserving water resources and improving water quality
- d) improving the Surrey Hills resilience to, and mitigation of, climate change
- e) increasing the ability to store carbon through new planting or other means
- f) conserving and improving soils
- g) reducing litter and environmental pollution, especially air pollution
- h) managing and mitigating the risk of flooding
- i) supporting the sustainable production and local use of food, forestry and raw materials
- j) improving opportunities for peoples' health and wellbeing
- k) stimulating sustainable tourism and economic activity
- l) delivering high-quality sustainable design that protects the local distinctiveness of the Surrey Hills

## **1.5 The relationship with the National Planning Policy Framework**

The primary legislation in relation to AONB designation is the CRoW Act (2000) and before that the 1949 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act. Policy in relation to land use in AONBs set out is contained within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Revised 2019), Local Plans and Neighbourhood Plans.

The National Planning Policy Framework, confirms the requirement in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 that planning applications should be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. The NPPF provides specific planning guidance for plan makers and decision takers in relation to AONBs and confirms (para 172) that: "Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues." It goes on to state that "the scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited".

AONBs and their Management Plans are material considerations in the planning system. The 'great weight test' is significant and one of the most stringent legal tests that can be applied under planning law. In specific relation to major development the NPPF states that planning permission should be refused for major developments in AONBs except in exceptional circumstances and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. It then sets a series of tests that have to be assessed in relation to major development. What constitutes 'major development' has not been defined. However, the NPPF states that it "is a matter for the decision maker taking into account its nature, scale and setting and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined".

It should be recognised that the "presumption in favour of sustainable development" in the NPPF does not override the imperative to conserve and enhance landscape and scenic beauty within AONBs (paragraph 11 footnote 6 of the NPPF). CHECK

The NPPF confirms that local planning authorities should set out the strategic priorities for their areas within Local Plans and accordingly deliver the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. The NPPF also confirms that allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value (counting the AONB as the highest value), that local planning authorities should set criteria based policies against which proposals for any development on or affecting landscape areas will be judged (development affecting AONBs includes impact on their setting), and that planning should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Local Plans should set out policy for AONBs for their areas and define their special qualities making reference to other relevant planning policy documents including the AONB Management Plan. Further to this, the existence of an AONB designation should be considered at the very outset in Local Plan preparation and should influence the Local Plan in terms of the strategic location of development, access issues, green infrastructure, Community Infrastructure Levy, use of natural resources and landscape and environmental protection. Simply including a single policy reference to AONBs in determining planning applications does not demonstrate that local planning authorities have met their legal duty under Section 85 of the CRoW Act to have proper regard to the purposes of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of the AONB.

## **1.6 The Statutory AONB Management Plan**

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty are designated by the Government for the purpose of ensuring that the special qualities of the finest landscapes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland are conserved and enhanced. The primary purpose of AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area, as confirmed by Section 82 of the *Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000* (CRoW Act).

The Government has confirmed that the landscape qualities of National Parks and AONBs are equivalent, so the protection given by the land use planning system to natural beauty in both types of area should also be equivalent. The AONB designation is also of international importance, recognised as a Category V Protected Landscape by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

Sections 88 and 89 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000) state that each local authority and Conservation Board must prepare and publish a Management Plan for their AONB, which must then be reviewed at intervals of no more than five years. AONB Management Plans are adopted by the partner local authorities and the policies contained within these plans carry statutory force.

Legislation relating to AONBs places additional responsibilities on local authorities and the planning system:

- AONBs are defined within the EIA Regulations for specific consideration as a “sensitive area”.
- The CRoW Act, Section 85-Duty of Regard, requires all public bodies down to parish council level to consider the nationally protected status given to AONBs in any land use related decisions. This includes the determination of planning applications and the formulation of Local and Neighbourhood Plans.
- AONB Management Plans have been recognised as a ‘material consideration’ in the planning decision making process.

- Land within AONBs is recognised differently under the Town and Country Planning Act as Article 1(5) land (which for example restricts certain permitted development rights).

As well as formulating the policy of local authorities in relation to their AONBs, AONB Management Plans are intended to:

- highlight the special qualities and the enduring significance of the AONB and the importance of its landscape, wildlife and cultural heritage, identifying those features that are vulnerable to change
- present an integrated vision for the future of the AONB as a whole, in the light of national, regional and local priorities, regardless of administrative boundaries
- set out agreed policies which will help secure that vision
- identify what needs to be done, by whom and when, in order to achieve these objectives
- stimulate action aimed at helping people to discover, enjoy and understand the local landscape and its natural and cultural features
- identify actions which will support those economic and social activities which in themselves contribute to the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

The AONB Management Plan is not intended to be a panacea for all the perceived problems which local communities might face, nor is it intended to duplicate or replace other statutory plans which affect the area. It is, however, the only document with a focus on the whole of the AONB and the only one that is primarily focused on the purpose of AONB designation, which is the conservation and enhancement of natural beauty.

## **1.7 How the AONB Management Plan was prepared**

This Management Plan was prepared by the Surrey Hills AONB Board, a Joint Committee, on behalf of the six local authorities that have a statutory duty to adopt the Plan. The AONB Unit was supported in this work by members of the AONB's Officers Working Group, Partnership Members and people from a wide range of organisations covering areas such as conservation, land management and tourism. It was also informed by reviewing the existing AONB Management Plan (2014 – 2019) and consulting on the extent to which it should evolve in the light of progress and change.

The Surrey Hills Symposium on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2018 was a celebration of the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the AONB designation and an opportunity to debate a vision for the Surrey Hills over the next 60 years. Attended by over 300 delegates, the debate highlighted:

- The importance of the London City region context, particularly in relation to the Green Belt, development and recreation pressures on the Surrey Hills
- The need for improvements to recreation infrastructure and catering for all users, including those with limited mobility.
- Climate change as a major threat to the existing land management regimes and habitats, whilst at the same time stimulating the development of strategies and technological opportunities to counter global warming. Viticulture as a major land use and economic development opportunity but one that raises questions about the scale of land use change in terms of landscape and, labour supply and infrastructure including visitor centres
- The branding and profile of the Surrey Hills including whether AONBs could be designated as National Parks

- Creating wild places for people to explore, wild camp and undertake other ‘experiential’ activities whilst at the same time protecting areas of ecological value

An on-line survey was launched at the Surrey Hills Symposium and was live until 14<sup>th</sup> January 2019. 293 individuals and organisations completed the survey which has informed revisions to the Plan.

The Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan is one of a national family of Plans. It reflects best practice in management planning following advice and guidance developed by the National Association for AONBs. For more information on AONBs visit the National Association for AONBs website: [www.landscapesforlife.org.uk](http://www.landscapesforlife.org.uk)

## 1.8 Environment Report

The Surrey Hills AONB Office has commissioned the report, and the strategic environmental assessment (SEA) of which it forms the principal output, as part of the preparation of this revised Management Plan. This environmental report was prepared by Surrey County Council’s in-house environmental assessment service,

The report explains how the likely significant environmental impacts of the revised Management Plan have been identified, and how that information has been fed into the review of the Plan. The report is prepared in response to the requirements set out in the Environmental Assessment of Plans & Programmes Regulations 2004 (Statutory Instrument 2004 No.1633). The preparation of this report was undertaken during 2019, and the report is based on the information available to Surrey County Council during the said period of time. A full copy of the report and the non-technical summary are available on the website portal.

## 1.9 Defining the ‘Natural Beauty’ of the Surrey Hills AONB

“ Natural Beauty is not just the look of the landscape but includes landform and geology, plants and animals, landscape features and the rich history of human settlement over the centuries” <sup>1</sup>. Dr Nicola Bannister, landscape historian, has stated “The term ‘natural’ in the designation title is a misnomer as no part of the Surrey Hills is ‘natural’ in the wild sense; rather it is less intensively managed compared with other parts of Surrey, retaining landscape features and semi-natural habitats which have a high ecological diversity and interest.” <sup>2</sup>

Although the Surrey Hills is now one of the most wooded of the nationally protected areas in the country, it is still an intriguingly diverse landscape characterised by hills and valleys, traditional mixed farming, a patchwork of chalk grassland and heathland, sunken lanes, picturesque villages and market towns. It has associations with many of the country’s great artists, writers, musicians and designers. It is often regarded as the first real countryside south of London and is a rural retreat for many thousands of daily commuters.

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<sup>1</sup> Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty: A Guide for AONB Partnership Members, Countryside Agency, 2001 (CA 24))

<sup>2</sup> Surrey Hills AONB: Historic landscape descriptions, Dr Nicola R Bannister, July 2002 (unpublished)

The Hills stretch across the chalk North Downs that run from Farnham in the west, above Guildford, Dorking and Reigate, to Oxted in the east. They contain a mosaic of woodland, scrub and open downland with combes, spring lines, chalk pits, quarries and striking cliffs. To the south are the Greensand Hills that include Black Down, the Devil's Punch Bowl and Leith Hill, with ancient sunken lanes and geometric fields that have been enclosed from heaths and wooded commons. In between are the valleys of the Wey, Tillingbourne and Mole rivers, and the heaths of Frensham, Thursley and Blackheath. The Low Weald forms the southern fringe of the AONB, with its extensive woodlands and small irregular fields, hedgerows and wooded shaws.

Although geology, soils and climate have created the bones of the landscape, the appearance of the Surrey Hills has been shaped for centuries by the changing patterns of land use and settlement. Over much of the Surrey Hills the historic settlement pattern remains largely intact: small picturesque villages of Saxon and medieval origin in the valleys; isolated farmsteads on chalk slopes, valley bottoms and in clearings won from the woodland; large country houses with designed landscapes, including parkland; market towns; and remnants of seventeenth and eighteenth century industry.

The consultation on this Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan has sought feedback on the features that define the special character of the Surrey Hills. These features are as follows, each with their own contribution to landscape significance and subject to a range of threats and pressures:

- Views
- Woodland
- Heathland
- Tranquillity
- Commons
- Country lanes
- Downland
- Historic buildings
- Dark skies
- Farmland
- Parkland

### **1.10 The Landscape Character of the Surrey Hills AONB**

The Surrey Hills Landscape Character Assessment (updated in 2012) carried out to support evidence for a review of the boundary of the AONB, identified 13 local landscape character areas:

The North Downs: The Hog's Back and Puttenham Vale  
The North Downs: Ranmore and Hackhurst Downs  
The North Downs: The Mole Gap  
The North Downs: Scarp and Holmesdale  
Greensand Valley: The Upper Wey  
Greensand Valley: Pippbrook and Tillingbourne  
Greensand Plateau: Shackleford  
Greensand Plateau: Witley and Churt  
Greensand Hills: Hindhead

Greensand Hills and Wooded Weald: Hascombe  
Greensand Hills: Leith Hill  
Wooded Weald: Chiddingfold  
Wooded Weald: Wonersh to Holmwood

For each of these character areas the annex to the Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan includes a statement of significance, and identifies the key features and issues. This assessment has helped to inform the Management Plan policies and the strategy to target action to certain parts of the AONB. Further information on the Landscape Character Areas listed above can be found on the website Management Plan portal.

### **1.11 Activities associated with the Surrey Hills**

The consultation process identified the principal activities associated with the Surrey Hills and views on how the Management Plan has and should respond to the issues and challenges associated with them. The activities are listed below, with the main activities being identified first:

- Walking
- Dog walking
- Visit to pub, restaurant, tea rooms etc
- Mountain biking
- Photography
- Horse riding
- Road cycling
- Running
- Visiting attractions
- Leisure drive
- Shopping

### **1.12 The key pressures and threats:**

Many changes have taken place since the Surrey Hills was designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1958. Although it is still a beautiful and protected area, and despite being contained wholly within the London Metropolitan Green Belt, the threats and pressures on its special character and the vitality of its communities have come in many forms. The key pressures and threats were identified during the process of developing the Management Plan, in order of concern, were:

- Housing development
- Traffic
- Energy (oil, gas, fracking)
- Loss of local services
- Off road vehicles
- Excavation of minerals
- Aircraft noise
- Climate change
- Recreation pressure
- Changes in agriculture

These pressures are the result of the great many environmental, social and economic forces that are often external to the Surrey Hills AONB, particularly the effect of the London City Region on Surrey. Although it is recognised that it will be difficult to address these pressures in the Management Plan, a purpose of the Plan is to ensure that the impact of these forces on the Surrey Hills is recognised and that the local authority partners and other stakeholders exercise the duty under statute to conserve and enhance the AONB by having regard to the AONB Management Plan policies as set out in Section 2.

### **1.13 Monitoring the Condition of the Surrey Hills AONB**

Monitoring the condition of the Surrey Hills AONB will play an important role in identifying the key issues and in assessing the appropriateness and effectiveness of Management Plan policies. The establishment of a monitoring mechanism through the use of simple but meaningful Surrey Hills AONB headline indicators provides a means of assessing and communicating change over time to inform the five-yearly reviews of the Plan. The headline indicators for the Surrey Hills are each related to achieving the vision statements that in turn relate to the character of the landscape and the enjoyment and understanding of it, and thus to the purposes of the designation.

A State of the Surrey Hills AONB Report will be prepared by the Surrey Hills Board. This report will provide: baseline data for each of the headline indicators; details for the rationale that underlies each of the indicators; the data sources and monitoring systems that will be used; and links to other targets and indicators such as the Local Transport Plan.

### **1.14 Reviewing the AONB Management Plan**

The Surrey Hills Management Plan is required under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CroW) 2000 to be reviewed at intervals not less than every five years after its publication. The review process is planned to start in 2022 to produce a plan to cover the period 2025 - 2030. The preparation of the new Plan will be informed by monitoring the implementation of this Plan and an assessment of the condition of the Surrey Hills AONB with the preparation of the State of the Surrey Hills report. It will also need to take account any changes in the national approach to Designated Landscapes following the Government's response to the Glover Review. The new Plan will summarise the achievements in the preceding five years. The Plan will also review the planning and policy context and provide an opportunity for widespread consultation on the key issues the new plan needs to address.

### **1.15 The implications of a Surrey Hills AONB Boundary Review**

Significant parts of the Surrey countryside adjacent to the AONB are designated at a county level as Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). These areas have acted as a buffer to the AONB but they also have their own inherent landscape quality and are significant in conserving the landscape setting of some towns and villages. Although AGLV land is not a national designation, previous Surrey Hills AONB Management Plans recognised the importance of AGLV land in protecting the integrity of the Surrey Hills AONB landscape, particularly views to and from the AONB. The application of the Management Plan policies and actions to AGLV land has been instrumental in helping to conserve and enhance the Surrey Hills.

In October 2013, the Surrey Hills AONB Board formally requested that Natural England consider modifying the AONB boundary. In 1958 the Surrey Hills AONB was the second landscape to be designated an AONB, and there has never been a review of the boundary. A purpose of the review will be to establish whether land designated at a County level as AGLV should be included in the AONB. Following a comprehensive landscape character assessment of the AONB and AGLV land, candidate areas that meet the AONB criteria have been identified. In February 2014, Natural England agreed to progress a Modification Order. It is anticipated that this process will take about two to three years to progress. The aim will be to generate a consensus on the land to be included in the AONB, particularly amongst the six AONB local authorities, in order to reduce any need for a lengthy and expensive Public Inquiry.



The decision to pursue the modification of the AONB boundary will have a significant impact on the review process, but such a process is expected to take two to three years to complete. It is therefore expected that the implications of a reviewed AONB will be consolidated within the next AONB Management Plan 2025 – 2030, but this will be kept under review during the course of this AONB Management Plan and Government advice.

## **SECTION 2: THE POLICY FRAMEWORK**

### **2.1 Introduction**

All public bodies, including local authorities, Government agencies, and statutory undertakers must, in accordance with Section 85 of the Countryside and Right of Way (CroW) Act 2000, have “due regard” to the purposes of AONB designation in the carrying out of their functions. The policies in this Plan will guide them in the fulfilment of their duty under the Act.

### **2.2 Statement of Significance**

In guiding the policies, the Management Plan includes the following statement which states the value of the Surrey Hills AONB:

The Surrey Hills AONB is one of England’s finest landscapes, equivalent in beauty to a National Park and designated an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1958.

Its landscape mosaic of farmland, woodland, heaths, downs and commons has inspired some of the country’s greatest artists, writers and architects over the centuries. The AONB includes internationally and nationally important priority habitats which support protected species.

Surrey Hills attract millions of visitors every year who contribute to the economy of the area . The Hills are protected as part of London’s Metropolitan Green Belt and provide an outstanding natural resource for London and Surrey residents to enjoy outdoor pursuits, taste local food and drink, and to explore market towns and picture-postcard villages.

### **2.3 The Vision**

The purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve the natural beauty of the landscape. Yet the landscape, along with the rest of the English countryside, is not just a result of natural forces. It is constantly evolving as a result of the many social and economic forces placed upon it. The vision for the Surrey Hills recognises that the landscape will change but it needs to ensure that it changes in a way that conserves and enhances its special qualities. In doing so, it also needs to maintain the social and economic viability of the Surrey Hills in a sustainable manner.

The following long term vision statement sets the context and guides the Management Plan policies:

- The Surrey Hills AONB is recognised as a national asset in which its natural and cultural resources are managed in an attractive landscape mosaic of farmland, woodland, heaths, downs and commons. It provides opportunities for business enterprise and for all to enjoy and appreciate its natural beauty for their health and well-being.

## 2.4 Agriculture

The beauty of the Surrey Hills is largely the result of the way the land has been shaped and maintained by farmers, landowners and estate managers over the centuries. This has created a beautiful landscape composed of a mosaic of small to large fields enclosed by hedgerows, shaws and copses, and farm buildings, many of which demonstrate building traditions dating back to medieval times and constructed of local materials. Having a viable and diverse farming economy reduces the pressure to fragment the landscape, which then becomes more vulnerable to development and inappropriate management.

The high land and labour prices, together with the depression in agricultural incomes, create a massive pressure to give up farming, to intensify production or to diversify into activities that may not necessarily protect and enhance the special character of the area. The Surrey Farm Study 2014 highlighted the pressures that farming is under in Surrey, but there are new opportunities to diversify, for example into viticulture, which could have a major impact on the landscape, the rural economy and new ways to enhance biodiversity. There is a particular concern with the loss of farmland to the keeping of horses as this can degrade the landscape.

With the Government's commitment to new environmental land management schemes following the planned exit from the European Union, the Plan seeks to ensure that farming remains a viable enterprise in the Surrey Hills and continues to play a positive role in maintaining its outstanding landscape. This means raising awareness of the important role that farmers play, supporting them as custodians of the landscape, and exploiting commercial opportunities to capitalise on the millions of people who cherish the Surrey Hills as a place to live, work and visit.

### **Aim: Agriculture plays a positive role in maintaining the outstanding and diverse character of the Surrey Hills**

#### **Agricultural Management Policies:**

- F1 Farming as a viable and sustainable enterprise, within and adjacent to the AONB, will be supported through the development of initiatives consistent with good management of land, make a positive contribution to increasing biodiversity and conserving or enhancing landscape character.
- F2 The availability of advice and financial assistance through the Government's Environmental Land Management schemes will be designed to encourage sustainable land management practices alongside the maintenance and enhancement of traditional landscape features.
- F3 Farm diversification schemes will be supported where they help to maintain and enhance the special landscape character of the AONB and have a demonstrable, positive amenity impact, lead to an increase in biodiversity and contribute to the vitality of the Surrey Hills economy.
- F4 Development leading to a loss of farmland will normally be resisted unless there is an overriding public interest.
- F5 A wider understanding and awareness of agricultural practice will be promoted where this encourages and supports the creation and maintenance of the outstanding landscape character of the Surrey Hills.

## State of the AONB Indicators for Agriculture:

- Area of land in registered agricultural use and average farm holding size
- Area of agricultural land in agri-environment schemes

### 2.5 Woodland, Hedgerows and Veteran Trees

The Surrey Hills is one of the most wooded of all the National Parks or Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty in the country with approximately 40% woodland cover. Its character varies from the patchwork of irregular woods, to old coppice and shaws of the Wooded Weald, to the conifer plantations of large estates on the Greensand Hills, to the ancient yew and box woodlands on the North Downs. The 1947 woodland census suggests that the Surrey Hills landscape has changed from a predominantly open landscape with coppiced woodland to a landscape with largely unmanaged secondary woodlands extending onto former commons, heathland and downland.

The major threats to the woodland habitats in the 21<sup>st</sup> century arise from their fragmentation and loss, lack of management and inappropriate planting of non-native species. Small woodland ownership has increased within the Surrey Hills but many owners are unaware of what management should be undertaken. Although the Management Plan consultation demonstrated the great value that people attach to woodlands, the consequences of fragmentation and neglect include the loss of biodiversity and a perception that woodland is of little use and therefore little value. In addition, the uncontrolled expansion of woodland and scrub can be at the expense of other more important semi-natural habitats, particularly heathland and chalk downland. Woodlands are also prone to disease and climate change, which is already having a major impact on the Surrey Hills landscape.

Hedgerows and veteran trees are an important landscape feature and important wildlife corridors linking woodland habitats. They are also important elements of the historic landscape. They need to be appropriately managed to maintain their diversity and health. The Surrey Wildlife Trust's hedgerow proposal will target in particular the management of hedges in the chalk hills of the North Downs. This project will encourage the dissemination of traditional hedgerow management techniques, particularly hedge-laying.

The Management Plan policies seek to raise awareness and understanding amongst the public and small woodland owners of the value of woodlands and the need for management. There need to be financial incentives to cover the cost of management through well-resourced and targeted grant schemes. New markets for woodland products need to be developed, such as opportunities to work with local saw mills on added value products for craft related uses, highway signs and fencing. There is a particular opportunity in the Surrey Hills area to develop wood fuel projects and build on the success of the annual Wood Fair through Surrey Hills Enterprises.

**Aim: Woodlands, hedgerows and veteran trees are sustainably managed and linked to conserve and enhance the landscape, ecological, archaeological and recreational value of the wider Surrey Hills landscape**

#### Woodland Management Policies

W1 Woodland owners and managers will be supported to manage all woodlands, hedgerows and veteran trees that contribute to the landscape character.

- W2 Markets for timber and other forest products will be identified, promoted and supported in order to generate incomes to help sustain appropriate woodland management.
- W3 The wider importance of trees and woodlands and the need for their management, including disease control and bio-security, will be promoted through the provision of advice, information on grant schemes and public awareness campaigns.
- W4 The benefits of removing inappropriate trees and secondary woodland, particularly for the restoration of heathland and chalk grassland, will be promoted to improve biodiversity and enable the reinstatement of views.
- W5 Opportunities will be taken to extend and link woodland / hedgerow habitats for landscape, nature conservation, recreation and educational purposes.

**State of the AONB Indicators for Woodland:**

- Area of Ancient Woodland and other important woodland under positive management
- Area of woodland cover

## 2.6 Biodiversity and Water Resources

The Surrey Hills is an area rich and diverse in wildlife due to its varied geology, landform and traditional land management. It contains internationally important sites for nature conservation ranging from the extensive lowland heaths on the Greensand to the chalk grassland and yew and box woodlands on the North Downs. The Surrey Hills landscape also contains an important matrix of smaller features like hedgerows, shelterbelts, woodland coppice and ponds.

The Management Plan consultation highlighted the need for robust policies and regulation to protect designated sites. There were, however, comments that more should be done beyond designated sites, including opportunities to adapt to climate change and link habitats. The fragmentation and general decline in traditional land management practices has led to a tremendous pressure on maintaining the rich biodiversity of the Surrey Hills. There is often little public awareness and understanding of the need for appropriate management, particularly grazing, and there is a general lack of resources to coordinate and implement positive management regimes.

Wetland habitats are important to the overall ecology of the AONB and the Wey and Mole and their tributaries are significant landscape features. Catchment partnerships for both river catchments have been working towards meeting Water Framework Directive targets. The partnerships are an important platform that bring together various agencies to ensure a coordinated approach to the management of wetland features. The development of sensitive flood alleviation measures and the implementation of natural flood risk measure on the headwaters of the Pipp Brook on Leith Hill, funded by DEFRA, will be monitored closely.

Additional impetus has been given through efforts directed at reversing the loss of biodiversity nationally as a result of changes to the NPPF (paragraph 170[d]) which includes the principle that 'planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by...minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures'. Added to this is the UK's Biodiversity Strategy 'Biodiversity 2020' that sets a target of no net loss of biodiversity by 2020 and the Government's 25 Environment Plan which have led to the current work by DEFRA to introduce a mandatory requirement to deliver biodiversity net gain through the land use planning system.

It is in this context that the Management Plan policies seek to enhance the biodiversity of the area through sustaining the management and extension of the designated sites and important features in the wider AONB landscape. This involves promoting awareness, and generating resources for practical land management through new environmental land management schemes and biodiversity off-setting. There is also the need to ensure collaboration between landowners and land managers, and partner organisations through the Surrey Nature Partnership and farm clusters. Partner local planning authorities will need to ensure that they secure biodiversity improvements when determining planning applications, including within the AONB.

**Aim: The biodiversity and water resources of the Surrey Hills are conserved and enhanced**

**Biodiversity Management Policies:**

- B1 Existing designated sites (SSSIs, SPAs & SACs) within the AONB will be conserved, enhanced & managed by partners with the support of Natural England, to ensure that all such sites are brought into or maintained in 'favourable' condition. The importance of designated sites and the need for their protection and management will be promoted to the wider AONB community through information and awareness campaigns."
- B2 Important habitats, such as chalk grassland and heathland, will be managed and used in ways that conserve and enhance their nature conservation value.
- B3 Opportunities will be taken to restore, extend and link habitats for nature conservation, and educational purposes, with the creation of new habitats and corridors informed by landscape character to establish functional ecological networks with resilience to climate change.
- B4 The enhancement of biodiversity will be maximised through the targeting of advice and grants, and applicants for planning permission will be expected to deliver biodiversity gains as part of their proposals secured through planning conditions or legal agreements where appropriate.
- B5 Measures required to meet Water Framework Directive targets for the river catchments will be supported to conserve and enhance the ecological value of river landscapes, wetland habitats and water quality affecting the environmental quality and landscape of the Surrey Hills.

**State of the AONB Indicators for Biodiversity:**

- Extent and condition of designated areas (SSSI, SAC, SPA, RIGS, SNCI)
- Extent and condition of habitats of principal importance as listed in Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

## 2.7 Cultural Heritage

The beautiful landscape features of the Surrey Hills, particularly the historic buildings, settlements, country lanes, hedgerows, parkland, commons, heath and downland, provide evidence of a rich historic and cultural past. This is a landscape that has provided inspiration to many of the country's great artists, writers, designers and architects, particularly during and since Victorian times. Village greens and commons are highly favoured recreational areas for local people and visitors alike.

The consultation on the Management Plan highlighted a general sense that the historic and cultural heritage of the Surrey Hills is greatly under appreciated, particularly the artistic associations and industrial heritage. There is a lack of awareness of how the landscape has evolved and the inspiration that it has provided. There has also been a general loss of local distinctiveness and traditional rural character through the decline in traditional land management practices and the standardisation of design and materials.

The Management Plan seeks to ensure that the historic features and the rich cultural heritage that define the special sense of place are recorded, protected, managed and celebrated by present and future generations. The Delivery Strategy identifies the need for partnership working, including the many local history societies that keep local history alive, the Surrey Hills Society and the Surrey Archaeological Society with support from the Heritage Lottery Fund.

**Aim: The cultural heritage that defines the distinctive sense of place within the Surrey Hills is recorded, protected, managed and celebrated**

### **Cultural Heritage Management Policies:**

- HC1 A historic perspective of how the AONB landscape has evolved will be promoted, including its traditions, industries, buildings and settlement patterns.
- HC2 Heritage assets, including historic buildings, archaeological sites and historic parks and gardens, will be conserved, managed and recorded.
- HC3 Development proposals will have due regard to the locally distinctive character of rural settlements and the setting of historic buildings.
- HC4 The rich artistic traditions of the Surrey Hills will be promoted. New artistic interpretations of the landscape and its heritage will be commissioned with the involvement of local communities.

### **State of the AONB Indicators for Cultural Heritage:**

- Number and condition of registered historic parks and gardens, and local historic gardens and historic landscapes of interest.
- Number (%) of listed buildings "at risk"



## 2.8 Recreation, Health and Wellbeing

Some of the most familiar beauty spots in England are found within the Surrey Hills, including Box Hill, Leith Hill and the Devil's Punch Bowl. With the North Downs Way National Trail and the extensive rights of way, open commons, sunken lanes, easy access trails, picnic sites, attractive market towns and villages, it has been a favourite playground for local people and visitors keen to enjoy the fresh air and outstanding scenery.

Although little information exists about the current number and profile of visitors, there is little doubt that the area receives millions of day visitors every year. The consultation on the Management Plan highlighted the conflict between promoting the Surrey Hills as a national asset against the primary purpose of the designation to conserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. Visitors can place a great strain on the area and can lead to conflict between users and local communities, particularly ones with popular village greens such as Tilford and Abinger. Visitors may also add to the congestion of traffic and increase the erosion of footpaths and bridleways as well as the peace and tranquillity of the area.

The Management Plan seeks to recognise that the Surrey Hills, as a nationally important landscape is managed so that local people and visitors have the opportunity to enjoy the area in a way that has minimal impact on its beauty and the lives of its residents. There is the opportunity for Surrey Hills Enterprises and tourism partnerships, such as Visit Surrey and the National Trails' Great Walks project, to ensure that the spending power of visitors contributes significantly to the local economy. This includes linking local food to tourism, and ensuring that visitor facilities enhance local people's enjoyment and understanding of the Surrey Hills AONB.

**Aim: The Surrey Hills will be enjoyed and cherished as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty for its own intrinsic qualities and in ways that contribute to people's health and wellbeing**

### **Recreation, Health and Wellbeing Management Plan Policies:**

- RT1 Visitors and facilities that enhance people's health, enjoyment and understanding of the Surrey Hills will be encouraged, whilst conserving or enhancing the landscape character and biodiversity.
- RT2 Information will be made accessible for a diverse range of potential visitors in order to foster a greater understanding and enjoyment of the Surrey Hills AONB
- RT3 Significant viewpoints and vistas will be identified, conserved and enhanced.
- RT4 The design and development of new visitor facilities, and the maintenance of existing facilities, will have regard to the needs of people of all abilities to access and enjoy the Surrey Hills landscape.

### **State of the AONB Indicators for Recreation, Health and Wellbeing:**

- Number and range of high quality access opportunities that meet the needs of all users
- Monitoring the impact of the Inspiring Views programme

## 2.9 Planning

The prime purpose of the AONB designation is to conserve and enhance the natural and scenic beauty of the landscape. A fundamental role of the local planning authorities is to ensure that the very features that make the Surrey Hills special and worthy of its AONB designation are protected. This is achieved by strict development plan policies and through the vigilant exercise of development management powers. This Plan seeks to ensure that both are applied in a consistent manner across the AONB. Development proposals should take into account any Landscape Character Assessments for the locality and the Surrey Hills publication "Building in Design".

London and the South East's economic success, combined with the attractive environment of the Surrey Hills, creates substantial demand for development that is constrained by environmental restrictions. These pressures are expected to increase and justify especially stringent controls of development. The cumulative effects of many, often small, developments over decades and centuries would reduce the landscape and scenic beauty of the Surrey Hills and spoil it for future generations. These and other pressures and threats outlined in Section 1.8 are considered to justify the policies below for strict controls of development in this most sensitive of landscapes.

The increasing impact of replacement buildings in parts of the Surrey Hills is an issue. Special care needs to be taken over their siting, volume and design to ensure that their impact on the landscape does not become progressively greater over the years and takes into account any previous building enlargement. Similarly, the conversion of farm buildings to other uses can often individually and collectively spoil the landscape. Some such buildings are unattractive but met functional agricultural needs. The retention through conversion can detract from the landscape and no longer be justified for land management purposes.

To mitigate the visual impact of a development in the AONB that has been justified, effective landscaping and tree screening of native species can render the proposal acceptable. Where appropriate a condition should be applied to the permission to provide for the long term retention of the tree screening. Farmland in the Surrey Hills has diminished, often going to equestrian uses, yet it is important to conserving landscape character. Consequently development resulting in the loss of agricultural land will be resisted. To avoid proposed developments in remote locations causing light pollution, large areas of glazing and roof lights should be avoided without automatic blinds or shutters being operative in times of darkness and poor light. Any necessary external lighting will normally be resisted but where special circumstances exist it should be designed to minimize light pollution.

In seeking to identify in development plans sufficient land to meet Councils' future housing requirements, any proposed housing land allocations impacting upon the AONB should be avoided and be shown to be a last resort. Any such proposals will need to demonstrate that other sites have been investigated but would have greater adverse effects on the public interest.

**Aim: New development enhances local character and the environmental quality of its nationally important setting**

**Planning Management Policies:**

- LU1 In balancing different considerations associated with determining planning applications and development plan land allocations, great weight will be attached to any adverse impact that a development proposal would have on the amenity, landscape and scenic beauty of the AONB and the need for its enhancement.
- LU2 Development will respect the special landscape character of the locality, giving particular attention to potential impacts on ridgelines, public views and tranquility. The proposed use and colour of external building materials will be strictly controlled to harmonize within their related landscape and particularly to avoid buildings being incongruous. In remoter locations, with darker skies, development proposals causing light pollution will be resisted.
- LU3 Development proposals will be required to be of high quality design, respecting local distinctiveness and complementary in form, setting, and scale with their surroundings, and should take any opportunities to enhance their setting.
- LU4 Proposals that would assist in the continuation of direct agricultural and forestry businesses or benefit the social and economic well-being of residents, including small scale affordable housing, will be supported, providing they do not conflict with the aim of conserving and enhancing the beauty of the landscape.
- LU5 Proposals to redevelop or convert farm buildings that would render the associated farmed landscape unviable will be resisted
- LU6 Development that would spoil the setting of the AONB by harming public views into or from the AONB will be resisted.

**State of the AONB Indicators for Land Use Planning:**

- Any changes in development impact on the landscape and area under built development

## 2.10 Transport and Traffic

The Surrey Hills has historically been an accessible landscape well served by rail, road and an extensive network of footpaths and bridleways. Many of the important and distinctive features of the Surrey Hills are associated with transport. These include sunken lanes, traditional signs, boundary walls and fences, and the general use of local materials, such as ironstone paving and sandstone kerbs.

As Surrey has a higher level of car ownership than any other county, the impact of traffic on the Surrey Hills is perhaps greater than on any other AONB or National Park. This is largely due to its close proximity to London and other urban areas, resulting in high volumes of traffic passing through the area. The consultation on the Management Plan highlighted the blight caused by major transport infrastructure such as the M25 and M23, and also highlighted that the Surrey Hills has become a key destination for cycling. The increasing volume of traffic leads to a loss of tranquillity, damage to features such as verges, and the introduction of highway engineering solutions that can detract from the rural character of the area. The relatively high car ownership contrasts with a lack of convenient public and community transport.

The Management Plan aims to raise awareness of the impact that traffic has on the Surrey Hills and to promote measures that reinforce the rural character of the area through sensitive design and maintenance. Working with local communities in the AONB, the County Council has implemented schemes to declutter transport infrastructure assisted by a more flexible approach to the provision of highway signage introduced with the Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2016. These projects also seek opportunities to enhance the wider environment in villages in ways that reinforce local character and reduce the impact of road traffic. There is also a need to provide safe and convenient non-motorised access by working with rail and bus operators and through initiatives to promote walking, cycling and horse riding for people who live in, work in or visit the Surrey Hills.

Transport routes can also act as important green corridors, linking habitats and promoting biodiversity. Sensitive verge management required the cooperation of a range of partners and the application of good practice pioneered in other parts of the country, notably the County of Devon.

**Aim: Transport measures reinforce the rural character of the area and provide for a range of safe and sustainable travel alternatives**

### **Traffic and Transport Management Policies:**

- TT1 Measures to ensure opportunities for all members of society to access the Surrey Hills will be supported.
- TT2 The impact of development proposals on the surrounding Surrey Hills road network, including any highway mitigation measures, will be given great weight when assessing the acceptability of the development.
- TT3 Design and enhancement of the rural road network will conserve and enhance the AONB to influence the behaviour of road users for public safety and enjoyment.
- TT4 Transport infrastructure and associated landscaping, including verge management, will respect and enhance the local landscape quality, character and biodiversity

TT5 Major transport infrastructure will have due regard to the AONB designation. Measures will need to be taken to integrate it into the Surrey Hills landscape.

**State of the AONB Indicators for Traffic and Transport:**

- Type, amount and quality of road signs, kerbs and road furniture
- Area of road verge managed positively for biodiversity

## 2.11 The Economy, Tourism and Community Development

The Surrey Hills AONB is a major economic asset to the County and the Region. The quality of the landscape contributes to the economic success of the region as a place to live, work and invest. Being a generally prosperous and attractive area means high land and property values often undermine the viability of rural businesses such as farming and village shops by making staff recruitment difficult. These businesses help maintain the landscape and community life. GLOVER CAPITAL

A Defra study (2013 unpublished), by Professor Peter Bibby of the University of Sheffield, has identified the Surrey Hills as an "Elite Residential Enclave" 43.1% of dwellings in the AONB having a registered company director in residence. This relative prosperity creates major issues relating to affordable housing and means that local people who do not have access to everyday facilities, jobs or a car can be excluded from participating fully in community life.

The AONB Management Plan seeks to ensure that the protection and enhancement of the environmental quality of the AONB leads to the Surrey Hills being an attractive place to live in, invest in and visit for all members of the community. Particular regard needs to be given to promoting those sustainable forms of social and economic development, such as sustainable tourism, affordable housing and the development of local food initiatives, which in themselves contribute to conserving the environment by generating income for land management and a reduction in the need to travel. The work of Surrey Hills Enterprises in promoting and marketing high quality local businesses and products will be supported.

**Aim: The Surrey Hills is an attractive and sustainable place to live, work and invest**

### **The Economy, Tourism and Community Development Policies:**

- CE1 The Surrey Hills will be promoted as a destination for sustainable tourism and recreation.
- CE2 Initiatives that promote and market high quality Surrey Hills produce and services will be supported.
- CE3 The provision and retention of affordable housing for local people and key workers will be supported.
- CE4 Initiatives that result in affordable and reliable community transport and infrastructure for recreation, employment and access to local services will be supported.
- CE5 Opportunities to develop land management and conservation skills through vocational training, volunteer work and paid employment will be identified and actively promoted.
- CE6 Greater awareness of the Surrey Hills AONB will be supported to foster a pride of place that encourages community action to protect, enhance and enjoy its landscape.

**State of AONB Indicators for Community Development & Local Economy:**

- Community involvement and awareness in the conservation and enhancement of the AONB
- Number and access to community transport schemes

## **SECTION 3: THE DELIVERY STRATEGY**

### **3.1 Introduction**

It is intended that the policies set out in the AONB Management Plan will be embraced and acted upon by all those organisations that have a role to play in the management of the Surrey Hills landscape and the wellbeing of its local communities. This includes landowners, voluntary organisations, interest groups, local authorities, parish councils, statutory agencies, regional Local Enterprise Partnerships and Government departments.

It is recognised that many ongoing activities of partners already help to contribute to the Management Plan policies. This section of the AONB Management Plan, however, provides a strategy that identifies specific opportunities for partners to work together to help translate their commitment to the vision and policies into practical action.

### **3.2 The Surrey Hills AONB Board**

The Surrey Hills AONB Board is a Joint Committee that leads on the preparation, monitoring and review of the AONB Management Plan on behalf of its constituent bodies and other partner organisations. The AONB Board also plays a leading role in developing an image and sense of identity for the Surrey Hills AONB, and developing and supporting initiatives that implement the AONB Management Plan policies.

The work of the AONB Board is achieved through the Surrey Hills AONB Unit taking forward a range of initiatives that promote the special character of the Surrey Hills, establish partnerships, secure funding, ensure implementation and monitor effectiveness. In recognition that the Surrey Hills AONB is a nationally important landscape, 75% of the Unit's core costs are funded by central government through DEFRA with 25% of core costs from the six local authorities to reflect their statutory responsibilities towards the AONB.

### **3.3 The National Association for AONBs**

The National Association for AONBs (NAAONB) is a charity that provides a strong collective voice for the UK's 46 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs). Its objectives are to

- promote the conservation and enhancement of AONBs,
- advance the education, understanding and appreciation by the public of AONBs, and
- promote the efficiency and effectiveness of those promoting or representing AONBs, other protected areas and those areas for which designation might be pursued.

It does this by taking a collaborative and partnership-based approach to working with its membership and other organisations at a national level to achieve shared goals.

The Association is involved in the planning and management of around 8,000 square miles of outstanding and cherished landscapes in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Membership includes most of the AONB partnerships, as well as some of those Local Authorities with statutory responsibility for AONBs, together with a number of voluntary organisations.



### 3.4 Surrey Hills AONB Family

Although the fundamental purpose of the Management Plan will be to encourage co-ordinated action by all organisations, agencies and individuals, over the last five years the Surrey Hills AONB Board has established a Surrey Hills group of organisations (the Surrey Hills Family) to help support the delivery of the AONB Management Plan. The driver has been the recognition that Government funding is heavily constrained, so working collaboratively through the family provides an opportunity to diversify and broaden the resource base, including access to skills, funding and volunteering.

The Surrey Hills Family includes the Surrey Hills AONB Board, serviced by the AONB Unit, working collaboratively with the following organisations:

- **Surrey Hills Enterprises:** This Community Interest Company's mission is to promote the Surrey Hills as a national asset for the benefit of local businesses in order to enhance our community and conserve our unique heritage. Controlled by a Board of Directors, including representatives of the AONB Board, it organises events and offers membership to commercial partners under a licence agreement with Surrey County Council on behalf of the Surrey Hills AONB Board. Through the award of The Trademark, the businesses become ambassadors for the Surrey Hills.
- **Surrey Hills Society:** This charity is a membership organisation established to recruit and inform individuals with an interest in the Surrey Hills by running a range of walks, talks and projects that enhance the public's understanding and enjoyment of the Surrey Hills.
- **Surrey Hills Trust Fund:** This is a dedicated fund established under the umbrella of The Community Foundation for Surrey to attract donations from individuals and companies to ensure the continued success in implementing the aims of the AONB Management Plan. Where development proposals would cause harm to the AONB, in spite of any avoidance or mitigation measures, but the decision maker considers such development should be permitted in the public interest, this charitable fund provides the opportunity for those progressing them to make a voluntary contribution towards measures to enhance parts of the AONB. This contributions is designed to offset, to a degree, the harm caused. Any offer to contribute will not be taken into account in the determination of a planning application.

### 3.6 The Surrey Hills Brand

Although the Surrey Hills as a designated landscape and place name cannot be protected, the Surrey Hills AONB Board has developed an emblem for the Surrey Hills that has been protected by Surrey County Council as a trademark. What unites the Surrey Hills Family is that they all have a legal requirement to benefit the Surrey Hills and have use of the Surrey Hills trademark. They share the brand vision:

“Creating a legacy for the Surrey Hills”

The Brand Values are:

Passionate, Energetic, Enterprising, Creative and Collaborative

These brand values need to be reflected throughout all AONB activities in order to build understanding and to protect its reputation. The Surrey Hills brand needs to be used consistently by the Surrey Hills family. This is achieved through the Surrey Hills Marketing

Group to provide a synergy across the Surrey Hills Family in developing and protecting the integrity of the Surrey Hills brand.

### **3.7 Strategic Targets**

With the continued constraints in public financing, the Delivery Strategy seeks to reduce the reliance on public funding. This will be achieved by growing the membership and activities of the Society, growing the business sector's involvement and revenue streams through Surrey Hills Enterprises and generating income through the Surrey Hills Trust Fund in support of the implementation of the AONB Management Plan. A Surrey Hills Family Delivery Plan will detail how the strategic objectives set out in the AONB Management Plan will be delivered.

**The strategic targets identified for the next five years are themed under the following pillars:**

#### **3.7.1 Pillar 1. Planning**

- Influence planning policy and decisions by advising on the preparation of Local Plans and developments affecting the AONB
- Raise awareness among the public and relevant bodies of the pressures on the Surrey Hills and the need for tight controls on development through a variety of channels including the Surrey Hills Newsletter
- Support Natural England in the process of the AONB Boundary Review

#### **3.7.2 Pillar 2. Landscape Conservation and Enhancement**

- Support the DEFRA family to test and trail new approaches to Environmental Land Management to ensure more, bigger and less fragmented areas for wildlife, with no net loss of priority habitat and an increase in the overall extent of priority habitats
- Support the development and extension of Farm Clusters across the Surrey Hills, including Greenscapes and the North Downs Facilitation Groups/
- Work with the Surrey Nature Partnership to enhanced wildlife habitats with 90% of priority habitats in favourable or recovering condition and at least 50% of SSSIs in favourable condition, while maintaining at least 95% in favourable or recovering condition.
- Reduce the impact of overhead lines in the Surrey Hills by implementing schemes with SSE and UK Power Networks
- Develop best practice and support schemes that promote and reinforce the rural character of the Surrey Hills country lanes and villages

#### **3.7.3 Pillar 3. Access, Enjoyment and Understanding**

- Develop and extend the Cycle and Equestrian Surrey Hills programmes.
- Establish the Surrey Hills Access Fund, with the Surrey Hills Society and Community Foundation for Surrey, to secure investment into countryside access and support for volunteers.
- Inspire and engage new audiences through the Surrey Hills Arts programme, including delivering Surrey Unearthed, events, new work and creative health walks.
- Develop an Inspiring Views programme to open up and maintain up to two important views per annum to and from the Surrey Hills AONB.

- Increase the membership, profile, events programmes and volunteering opportunities through the Surrey Hills Society with a target of 2,000 members by 2025.
- Support the governance arrangements for the North Downs Way National Trail and help to deliver the Pilgrimage and Great Walks of England programme.
- Deliver the Forgotten Landscapes HLF to raise awareness and understanding of medieval settlements and how they have shaped the contemporary landscape.
- Support the annual Surrey Hills Challenge and Festival of Sport at Denbies as an opportunity to promote the Surrey Hills Trust Fund and shared use and enjoyment of the Surrey Hills.
- Increase attendance at the Surrey Hills Wood Fair to over 5000 visitors per annum to promote awareness of woodland management issues and rural business.

#### **3.7.4 Pillar 4. Growing the Surrey Hills Economy**

- Support the development of Surrey Hills Enterprises CIC to increase its membership (target no of members and income/).
- Help secure the continuation of a Surrey Rural LEADER programme to benefit the economy of the Surrey Hills area.
- Maximise the benefits of rural tourism in partnership with Visit Surrey, regional and national tourism bodies.
- Develop relationship and investment opportunities through Local Enterprise Partnerships including Coast to Capital and Enterprise M3.

#### **3.7.5 Pillar 5 Advocacy, Partnership and Coordination**

- Ensure sound governance, reporting and monitoring of the AONB Management Plan through quarterly meetings of the Surrey Hills AONB Board.
- Develop the Surrey Hills Trust Fund with the Community Foundation for Surrey with a target of £100k through flow project funding per annum and £500k endowment by 2025.
- Organise an annual Surrey Hills Partnership as an opportunity to oversee and scrutinise the work of the Surrey Hills family.
- Establish a revised constitution for the Surrey Hills AONB Board and secure funding support from DEFRA and local authority partners by 2025.
- Review the AONB Management Plan and deliver a new Management Plan for adoption by 2025.
- Develop policy and strategy with central and local government through active membership of the NAAONB attending Conference and AGM.
- Establish a methodology and a baseline by 2025 to monitor landscape change to help identify the types of change taking place and how these are affecting the landscape character and natural beauty of the Surrey Hills AONB.

### **3.8 Monitoring implementation of the AONB Management Plan**

The Surrey Hills AONB Board will take the lead in monitoring the implementation of the Plan. This will be achieved by establishing a monitoring mechanism for partners to report on the extent to which the Management Plan targets have been met. This will provide the basis for the assessment as to the effect they have in conserving and enhancing the AONB landscape and the enjoyment and understanding of it. The Surrey Hills Board will keep under review the Delivery Strategy, publish quarterly e-bulletins on progress and publish an annual report

**WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE**

**8 OCTOBER 2019**

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**Title:**

**STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT  
– REVIEW OF PROPOSED OF AMENDMENTS**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr MacLeod]  
[Wards Affected: All]**

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**Summary and purpose:**

The Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was adopted at Council on 16 July 2019. During the debate, some amendments to the document were tabled. It was agreed that officers would consider if the proposed amendments should be made to the newly adopted SCI. This report assesses the proposed amendments and makes recommendations as to whether the adopted SCI should be changed.

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**How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Strategy:**

The Statement of Community Involvement accords with the new Corporate Strategy.

**Equality and Diversity Implications:**

There are no implications with regard to this report.

**Financial Implications:**

There are no implications with regard to this report.

**Legal Implications:**

There are no implications with regard to this report.

**Climate Change Implications:**

There are no implications with regard to this report.

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**1.0 Background**

- 1.1 The SCI sets out the Council's approach to community engagement on both planning policy matters and for development management applications. The latest SCI was formally adopted by the Council on 16 July 2019. During the debate at the Council meeting, an amendment was tabled, which contained several suggested changes to the SCI. Officers have assessed the proposed changes and have made recommendations as detailed below.

## **2.0 Consideration of the tabled amendments**

2.1 The proposed amendments to the SCI tabled at the Council meeting are set out in bold followed by the Officers' comments on the proposal and recommendation.

### **2.2 1) That the Revised Statement of Community Involvement 2019 to be adopted as an extension to the 2014 document, subject to**

**(a) The insertion of "9.16 The Tests of Soundness are:", prior to the relevant text box, and the changing the reference in paragraph 9.21 from "9.15" to "9.16", as appropriate,**

2.3 Officers' comments: These were alterations that would improve the look of the document and were an incorrect reference.

2.4 Officers' recommendations: These amendments have already been incorporated into the adopted 2019 SCI which is now published on the website. Therefore no further change to the SCI is required.

### **2.5 (b) (i) the correction of para 5.2:**

2.6 Officers' comments: Paragraph 5.2 of the recently adopted SCI on the website says:

*The Local Plan is central to delivering Waverley's vision for the future. It sets out how the Borough will grow over the next 15 to 20 years. It includes planning policies for how much housing we need to provide as well as broad policies for land uses such as employment, town centres and transport. Details of Waverley's new Local Plan documents are set out in our Local Development Scheme on the website.*

2.7 Paragraph 22 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that "*Strategic policies should look ahead over a minimum 15 year period (officer emphasis) from adoption, to anticipate and respond to long-term requirements and opportunities, such as those arising from major improvements in infrastructure*".

2.8 The SCI is not part of the Development Plan (Planning Act 2008 180 (4) (b)) and is a document which is reviewed on a maximum five year cycle which does not necessarily coincide with the timetable of the Local Plan. The statement in the SCI relating to the timescales of a local plan indicate the approximate time limits from the adoption of any plan, not necessarily the plan adopted in February 2018.

2.9 Officers' recommendation: No amendment to the adopted SCI 2019 is required as the time frame of the SCI is explicit that it is not the same as the Local Plan.

### **2.10 b) (ii) The reinstatement of consultation upon changes to the SCI in para 8.4:**

2.11 Officers' comments: Paragraph 8.4 of the previous SCI adopted in 2014 stated:  
*In addition to Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents, you can also comment on:*

- *The Statement of Community Involvement*
- *Conservation Area appraisals*

*These documents are explained in greater detail at section 9.*

- 2.12 Paragraph 8.4 of the recently adopted SCI July 2019 now says:

*In addition to Local Plans and Supplementary Planning Documents, you can also comment on Conservation Area appraisals.*

*These documents are explained in greater detail at section 10.*

*The progress and success of these documents is monitored annually through the Authority's Monitoring Report.*

- 2.13 Para 8.4 of the newly adopted SCI 2019, does not require comment via consultation for the adoption of the SCI. The National Planning Policy Guidance on Plan-making states:

*"There is no requirement for local planning authorities to consult when reviewing and updating their Statement of Community Involvement." (Paragraph: 035 Ref: 61-035-20190723)*

- 2.14 This was also a light touch review of the existing SCI with very few changes, just those reflecting changes in legislation. There appears to be no significant gain from consulting on documents that set the methods of consultation.

- 2.15 Officers' recommendation: That no changes are required to paragraph 8.4 of the adopted SCI 2019.

- 2.16 b) (iii) the insertion of a paragraph clearly explaining the Council's Policy regarding the provision of advice and assistance in making and modifying Neighbourhood development Plans, if necessary to ensure compliance with s18 subsection 2 of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004,**

- 2.17 Officers' comments: Paragraph 2.5 of the SCI adopted in 2019 states:  
*The approach taken to engaging and involving local residents, business and other stakeholders is a matter for the Parish or Town Council. As local communities are responsible for the development of these plans, it is up to them to decide how they involve people and undertake any consultation. However, the Council does have some statutory functions regarding the development of Neighbourhood Plans, which are set out in the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012.5 These include publicising the intention to produce a Neighbourhood Plan on its website, undertaking consultations when the NP is submitted, facilitating the examination and publishing the examiner's report.*

- 2.18 The Council does not have a specific policy as such to deal with neighbourhood planning. However, we undertake assistance and help as detailed by legislation.

- 2.19 The legislation quoted above relates to modifications of neighbourhood plans. This was outlined in the Neighbourhood Planning Act 2017 which included a new Schedule A2 to The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004. This schedule details the process of modifications, outlining the scope of the process.

2.20 Although the SCI does not contain a direct reference to modification of neighbourhood plans it is explicit that this is the case. As members are aware assistance would and is provided, as exemplified by the recent Farnham Neighbourhood Plan Review.

2.21 Officers' recommendation: No change to the adopted SCI 2019 is required as it is covered within the current wording.

**2.22 2) That Members instruct Officers to prepare an assessment of the effectiveness of the SCI as a priority, to inform a public consultation upon the appropriate revision and adoption of an improved SCI as soon as is reasonably possible.**

2.23 Officers' comments: The SCI sets out how the Council will engage with the community on planning matters. Its effectiveness will be gauged by how the public engages with us and gives feedback on policy issues such as the preparation of the local plan and the determination of planning applications. Therefore, there is no need to consult on the SCI to assess its effectiveness at this stage.

2.24 Officers' recommendation: That no further change is required to the adopted SCI.

### **3.0 Conclusion**

3.1 That the proposed amendments to the SCI that were tabled at the Council meeting when it was adopted on 16 July 2019 are not required.

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### **Recommendation**

That the Executive agrees that no further changes are required to the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) for the reasons set out in the report.

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### **Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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**WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE**

**8 OCTOBER 2019**

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**Title:**

**PROPERTY MATTER - PROPERTY INVESTMENT ADVISORY BOARD  
– TERMS OF REFERENCE**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllr Mark Merryweather]  
[Wards Affected: All]**

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**Summary and purpose:**

This report proposes revised Terms of Reference of the Investment Advisory Board to clarify the objectives of the Board, and ensure that the membership supports the Council's ambitions.

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**How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Strategy:**

The Council's General Fund Medium Term Financial Plan is supported by the work of the Investment Advisory Board to identify and evaluate opportunities for property investments that will provide a source of revenue to support delivery of the Corporate Strategy.

**Equality and Diversity Implications:**

There are no equality and diversity implications arising from this report.

**Financial Implications:**

The Property Investment Advisory Board supports the delivery of the Property Investment Strategy, which is a major work stream supporting the General Fund Medium Term Financial Plan.

**Legal Implications:**

The Property Investment Strategy is made possible by the "general power of competence" introduced by Section 1 of the Localism Act 2011. Local authorities now have a general power that enables them to do anything that a private individual is entitled to do, subject to certain statutory limitations. The power is designed to give local authorities considerable breadth of operation.

There are, however, some specific restrictions and it is important that each individual investment proposal is thoroughly examined before proceeding. The Investment Advisory Board receives detailed legal advice on the Council's property investment powers throughout its consideration of investment opportunities.

**Climate change implications:**

There are no climate change implications arising from this report.

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## **Background**

1. In 2016, the Council decided that it should seek to add to its General Fund Property Portfolio (“GFPP”) both to increase its income and, where possible, to support the local Borough economy by ensuring the availability of suitable office and other commercial space. Investment decisions are taken by the Council’s Executive on advice provided by the Investment Advisory Board (“IAB”) which comprises elected Members advised by relevant officers and external professional advisers.
2. In March 2018, the Council adopted a Property Investment Strategy which had been developed by the Customer Service and Value for Money Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This Strategy is being reviewed and an updated Strategy will be brought forwards later in the year that reflects updated legal advice on the powers of the Council to undertake different types of property investment using its own funds or through borrowing.
3. The Portfolio Holder for Finance, Assets and Commercial Services has reviewed the terms of reference of the IAB and proposes minor changes to the membership and terms of reference which reflect the updated legal advice, and the Council’s new Corporate Strategy 2019-23, which puts a greater emphasis than previously on provision of housing.
4. The proposed membership and terms of reference are attached at Annexe 1, which shows as tracked changes from the existing terms of reference which were agreed in March 2018.
5. It is also proposed that the IAB be called the Property Investment Advisory Board, to clarify that its remit excludes the Council’s treasury investments.

## **Conclusion**

The Portfolio Holder’s proposed revised terms of reference of the Property Investment Advisory Board will enable the Council to respond promptly and effectively to investment opportunities that arise, and support its aim of generating income for the Council’s General Fund.

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## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive approves the revised membership and Terms of Reference of the Property Investment Advisory Board.

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## **Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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# Property Investment Advisory Board

## Terms of Reference

### Membership: (Proposed 2019)

- Portfolio Holder for Finance, Assets & Commercial Services (Chairman)
- Portfolio Holder for Place Shaping<sup>1</sup>
- Portfolio Holder for Housing<sup>2</sup>
- Non-Executive Councillor
- Non-Executive Councillor

### *Membership: (Current, agreed 2018)*

- *Portfolio Holder for Finance and Property (Chairman)*
- *One other Executive Member*
- *Non-Executive Councillor*
- *Non-Executive Councillor*
- *Non-Executive Councillor*
- *Non-Executive Councillor*

### *Membership: (establishment - 2016)*

- *Leader of the Council*
- *Deputy Leader of the Council*
- *Portfolio Holder for Finance*
- *Portfolio Holder for Economic Development*
- *Non-Executive Councillor*

**The Property Investment Advisory Board (“PIAB”) will be supported and advised by the following officers of the council:**

- Strategic Director
- Head of Finance & Property
- Democratic Services Manager
- Borough Solicitor or Deputy Solicitor
- [Estates and Valuation Manager]

The PIAB will be supported and advised as required by other officers of the council, and by external professional advisors commissioned by the PIAB when deemed

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<sup>1</sup> Includes Economic Developments and LEP liaison

<sup>2</sup> Includes Housing Delivery & Operations

necessary in relation to specific investment proposals and/or its commercial and investment strategies.

## 1. Scope

The Property Investment Advisory Board (“PIAB”) has been established to consider all significant Council property investment activity including, but not limited to:

- 1.1 the acquisition and development of General Fund property and land; and
- 1.2 the identification of opportunities to maximise the return or value of existing Council-owned assets, including disposals.

## 2. Strategic approach

The Council’s strategic approach to investment is based on:

- allocation of the Council’s cash reserves and balances to create a Property Investment Fund (“PIF”);
- use of the PIF and, when necessary and desirable, borrowed funds to fund property investments to increase the General Fund Property Portfolio (“GFPP”) **as a source of revenue to support the delivery of the Corporate plan**: ~~generate additional income for the Council for the delivery of functions and services~~; *Note: legal advice says the GF budget gap is not strong enough justification for borrowing for purely investment income.*
- investment in high-quality properties to strong covenants that maintain an adequately diversified GFPP so that the additional income generated is achieved in return for an acceptable level of risk;
- investment in properties that have the potential to support economic growth in the Borough and the Council’s corporate priorities;
- investment, where appropriate, to improve existing or newly-acquired GFPP assets to enhance future income generation; and
- disposal, when appropriate, of existing GFPP assets to generate funds for re-investment.

## 3. Responsibility

- 3.1 The PIAB is responsible for recommending to the Executive that an investment proposal should be approved. The Executive is solely responsible for deciding whether to approve the proposal **(subject to delegated authority of £10m per acquisition, otherwise it is a council decision)** and to authorise officers to conduct due diligence and, if satisfactory, proceed to completion.

## 4. Function

- 4.1 The PIAB will consider all investment proposals submitted by [the Estates Team] that comply with the principles set out in paragraph 4 of the Property Investment Strategy (“the Strategy”) and meet the criteria set out in paragraph 6 of the Strategy. The PIAB will review each proposal in respect of each of the criteria to decide if the business case in favour of investment is sufficiently strong.

4.2 The PIAB will also consider proposals submitted by [the Estates Team] for the disposal of GFPP assets.

## 5. Tests

Before deciding to recommend to the Executive that an investment proposal or disposal should be approved, the PIAB must satisfy itself that:

- **The investment is in line with the Council's strategies and specific underlying justification including the legal powers being relied upon to support the investment;**
- it has properly considered advice from its professional advisors, whether internal or external;
- the business case is sufficiently strong;
- the investment or disposal is within the Council's legal powers;
- the investment or disposal is reasonable;
- proper consideration has been to the balance between risk and reward;
- making the investment or disposal would not be a breach of the Council's fiduciary duty;
- making the investment or disposal will represent value for money; and
- the proposed funding method provides the best value for money after considering all relevant financial considerations, including taxation.

## 6. Use of funds

6.1 The PIAB is entitled to recommend the use of the PIF to meet:

- initial revenue costs of appropriate initiatives that deliver income in the longer term, and
- the cost of external professional advice including property, legal, financial, and taxation advice.

6.2 The PIAB may also make or consider proposals to supplement the use of the PIF with funding from other internal or external sources.

## 7. Meetings and reports

7.1 The PIAB will have scheduled meetings on a quarterly basis with further meetings arranged as required to consider investment proposals promptly or when required for other purposes. Meetings may be cancelled if there are no items to be discussed.

7.2 The quorum for a meeting of the PIAB is three members of which one must be the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Assets and Commercial Services or their appointed deputy.

7.3 The Chairman will approve the agenda for each meeting. The agenda and papers for consideration must be circulated at least two working days before the meeting. After each meeting, the Chairman will approve the meeting notes and the actions agreed

7.4 The PIAB will receive quarterly Performance Reports in respect of recently acquired properties and the GFPP as a whole in accordance with section 11 of the Property Strategy.

7.5 The PIAB will receive reports twice a year regarding the status of the PIF.

8. **Review of Terms of Reference**

The PIAB will review its Terms of Reference annually.



## WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE

8 OCTOBER 2019

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#### Title:

#### **PROPERTY MATTERS - ASSET TRANSFER TO TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS**

**[Portfolio Holders: Councillor Beaman  
& Councillor Merryweather]**

**[Wards Affected: Farnham, Haslemere, Witley & Wonersh]**

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#### **Note pursuant to Section 100B(5) of the Local Government Act 1972**

This report contains exempt annexes by virtue of which the public is likely to be excluded during the item to which the report relates, as specified in the following paragraph of the revised Part 1 of Schedule 12 A to the Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 3 Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

#### **Summary and purpose:**

This report seeks approval for a number of asset transfers from the Council to Town and Parish Councils to coincide with the start of the new Grounds Maintenance Contract on the 1 November 2019.

This enables Town and Parish Councils to have full control over local green spaces in their respective areas and removes Waverley Borough Council from the responsibility and cost for grounds maintenance of those key sites.

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#### **How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Strategy:**

The proposed asset transfers support the Council's ambition to see devolution of responsibility for delivering services devolved to Towns and Parishes where appropriate.

The new Ground Maintenance Contract tendering process allowed the opportunity to transfer the maintenance of greenspace assets to Towns and Parishes. All Towns and Parishes were asked if they wished to take on the maintenance requirement of the sites in their areas and ensures the sites continue to be used for the benefit of their local communities.

#### **Equality and Diversity Implications:**

There are no Equality & Diversity implications as a result of this report

#### **Financial Implications:**

The Council will relinquish the grounds maintenance responsibilities for the sites transferred. The saving will be achieved over a five year period as tapered funding will be given to Towns and Parishes under leasehold transfers.

### **Legal Implications:**

The Council has power under the Local Government Act 1972 (section 123) to dispose of land in any manner they wish, including sale of their freehold interest or granting a long lease. The only constraint is that a disposal must be for the best consideration reasonably obtainable, unless the Secretary of State consents to the disposal. Under Circular 06/03: Local Government Act 1972 general disposal consent (England) 2003, the Council may dispose of land for less than the best consideration in which the authority considers will help it “to secure the promotion or improvement of the economic, social or environmental well being of its area.” This applies in the case of the freehold and leasehold transfers of land to the Parish and Town Councils.

In relation to the freehold transfer, the Council should ensure that it complies with normal and prudent commercial practices, including an independent valuation.

The Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations 2006 (“TUPE”) needs to be considered for the Gostrey freehold transfer to Farnham Town Council and any implications for employees working at the site. It is expected that this could affect one person.

Lease heads of terms have not been fully agreed by the Council and the Town and Parish Councils, however all have received draft leases.

### **Climate change implications:**

There are no climate change implications as a result of the transfer of assets to Town and Parish Councils.

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### **Background**

1. The re-tendering of the Council’s grounds maintenance contract offered an opportunity to give Town and Parish Councils the chance to take over management and maintenance of sites within their area through asset transfers. This transfer requires the Council to relinquish its grounds maintenance responsibilities for these sites, make a financial saving and give the Town and Parish Councils the opportunity to take over the maintenance requirements without being encumbered by the Council’s contract, providing more local control.
2. All Town and Parish Councils were asked in 2017 whether they wished to consider taking over more maintenance and management responsibilities of sites through asset transfers in their area. Whilst most declined, four Town and Parish Councils indicated they would like to take up asset transfers; Farnham and Haslemere Town Councils and Witley and Womersley Parish Councils. The sites involved are detailed in Annexe 1.
3. The majority of transfers will be leasehold transfers for a term of 125 years. Under the lease arrangements the Town and Parish Councils will take on full repair and maintenance responsibilities of the land in its entirety, all associated costs, utilities, inspections and liabilities. The proposed Heads of Terms of the lease agreement are detailed in Exempt Annexe 2. Currently, Witley is the only Council to have formally

agreed these; Wonersh, Farnham & Haslemere are yet to provide their formal approval.

4. Whilst all the formal approvals are yet to be provided, general agreements in principle have been given by the Clerks, to enable the sharing of draft lease documents to keep the process moving along, due to the current grounds maintenance contract ending at the end of October 2019. The draft leases have been shared with all Councils by our appointed solicitors and comments fed back from the Town & Parish council appointed solicitors. Farnham, Haslemere Town Council and Wonersh Parish Council are sharing the same solicitor. Witley Parish Council have approved the lease on 5 September 2019 and Wonersh Parish Council are seeking approval in October.
5. In addition to the leasehold transfers, members of the Executive asked officers to work up a proposal for a freehold transfer of Gostrey Meadow to Farnham Town Council given its scale and location. The proposed heads of terms and detail of the transfer is set out in Exempt Annexe 3, and this has been shared with Farnham Town Council.
6. The freehold transfer requires a property valuation to determine whether Farnham Town Council would need to pay Waverley a one-off capital sum for the acquisition. The site has been valued by an external valuer on the basis of open space for community use together with the numerous existing rights which will prevent development, and on the basis of full cost transfer at point of acquisition. The valuation and associated report can be viewed by the link in Exempt Annexe 4.
7. It is proposed that the leasehold transfers will be subject to a tapered funding arrangement over five years. The arrangement will achieve savings to the Council in the Grounds Maintenance contract as follows:

Year of contract	Funding arrangement % of cost met by WBC	Cumulative Saving
2020/2021	100%	£44,038*
2021/2022	75%	£59,948
2022/2023	50%	£76,625
2023/2024	25%	£94,099
2024/2025	0%	£112,399

\*The freehold transfer to Farnham Town Council of the Gostrey Meadow will not be subject to a tapered funding arrangements so will deliver a full year saving of £44,038 from 2020/2021.

8. The asset transfers need to be completed by the start of the new Grounds Maintenance Contract, which commences on 1 November 2019, to provide certainty to our new grounds maintenance contractor and to enable the finalisation of the contract bill of quantities.

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### **Recommendation**

It is recommended that:

1. The leasehold transfer of assets, as detailed in Annexe 1 be approved;
2. The tapered funding arrangement for the leasehold transfers be approved; and
3. The freehold transfer of the Gostrey Meadow, Farnham to Farnham Town Council be approved.
4. Delegated authority is given to officers to finalise the heads of terms and complete the necessary legal document(s) with the Town and Parish Councils for the transfer of assets, with detailed terms and conditions to be agreed by the Strategic Director, in consultation with the relevant Portfolio Holder(s).

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### Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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## **Sites to be transferred**

### Farnham Town Council

- Battings
- Evelyn Borelli Garden of Rest
- Gostrey Meadow (freehold)
- Halifax Gardens
- Haren Gardens
- Homepark
- Riverside Hatchmill
- Riverside Maltings

### Haslemere Town Council

- Crown & Cushion Junction (Clements Corner)
- St Christopher's Green
- Town Meadow
- Weydown Road car park (Grass and hedges areas around car park, not the carpark)
- Grovers Garden
- Tilford Play Area/Marchants Hill
- Woodcock Green

### Witley Parish Council

- Amberley Road play area

### Wonersh Parish Council

- Shamley Green – The Common
- Lords Hill Common
- Lords Hill Cottages
- Wonersh Common
- Blackheath Grove

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## WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

### EXECUTIVE

8 OCTOBER 2019

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**Title:**

**PROPERTY MATTERS – HOLLOWAY HILL BOWLING CLUB, GODALMING –  
SURRENDER OF EXISTING LEASE AND GRANT OF A NEW LEASE**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllrs M Merryweather & D Beaman]  
[Wards Affected: Godalming Holloway]**

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**Note pursuant to Section 100B(5) of the Local Government Act 1972**

An annexe to this report contains exempt information by virtue of which the public is likely to be excluded during the item to which the report relates, as specified in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 3            Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

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**Summary and purpose:**

Holloway Hill Bowling Club has approached the Council for consent to surrender its existing lease of the Pavilion land and to take a new long lease of both the Pavilion land and the Bowling Green itself. The pavilion land is shown hatched and the green outlined on the plan at Annexe 1.

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**How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Strategy:**

This report supports the continued provision of sporting activities within the Borough while obtaining value for money.

**Equality and Diversity Implications:**

By supporting the Bowling Club, the Council is seeking to maintain the long-term provision of facilities that encourage active and healthy lives.

**Financial Implications:**

The club is taking on a 30 year lease which is assumed to be in excess of the useful life of the irrigation system, therefore the Council should not be paying any contribution towards this equipment under the terms of a full repair and maintenance arrangement.

**Legal Implications:**

Each party to meet its own legal costs in the preparation of this lease. This site is a Fields in Trust (Queen Elizabeth II protected site) site which will require the approval by Fields in Trust of the new Heads of Term and the granting of a new lease.

## **Climate change implications:**

There are no climate change implications arising from the surrender and grant of a lease.

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## **Introduction**

1. Holloway Hill Bowling Club currently leases the land from Waverley on which the pavilion building sits. The lease for this expires in 2035. The club hires the bowling green for an annual fee.
2. The pavilion is maintained by the Bowling Club. The irrigation system for the green is also maintained by the Club, although Waverley contributes towards the irrigation system maintenance contract costs. The maintenance of the bowling green its surrounding grass and hedges are Waverley's responsibility, which is partly subsidised by the licence fee. In total, the maintenance costs incurred by the Council exceed the revenue received, resulting in an annual net shortfall, as set out in the Exempt Annexe 2.
3. Waverley is looking to ensure the long term future of its facilities by encouraging organisations that use them to take over their management. This has the added advantage that the clubs will also be able to seek grant funding from external organisations to improve them, a route unavailable to the Council and also provide the club with full control over the maintenance of their playing and ancillary facilities.
4. This arrangement is considered to be beneficial to Waverley in this instance in that it will ensure that the management and maintenance of the green and the majority of its associated costs will be passed to the Bowling Club under a proper lease arrangement.
5. Outline terms have therefore been agreed for a simultaneous surrender of the existing lease of the Pavilion land, and the grant of a new 30 year lease encompassing the pavilion land and bowling green, at a rent which is detailed in the Exempt Annexe 2

## **Conclusion**

6. The consent being sought offers financial and management benefits to both Waverley Borough Council and Holloway Hill Bowling Club and it is proposed to structure a new lease that reflects the way the Club and land is used.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive agrees to the surrender of the current lease to Holloway Hill Bowling Club and the simultaneous grant of a new lease on terms and conditions set out in Exempt Annexe 2, with other terms and conditions to be negotiated by the Estates and Valuation Manager.

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## **Background Papers**

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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Head of Finance

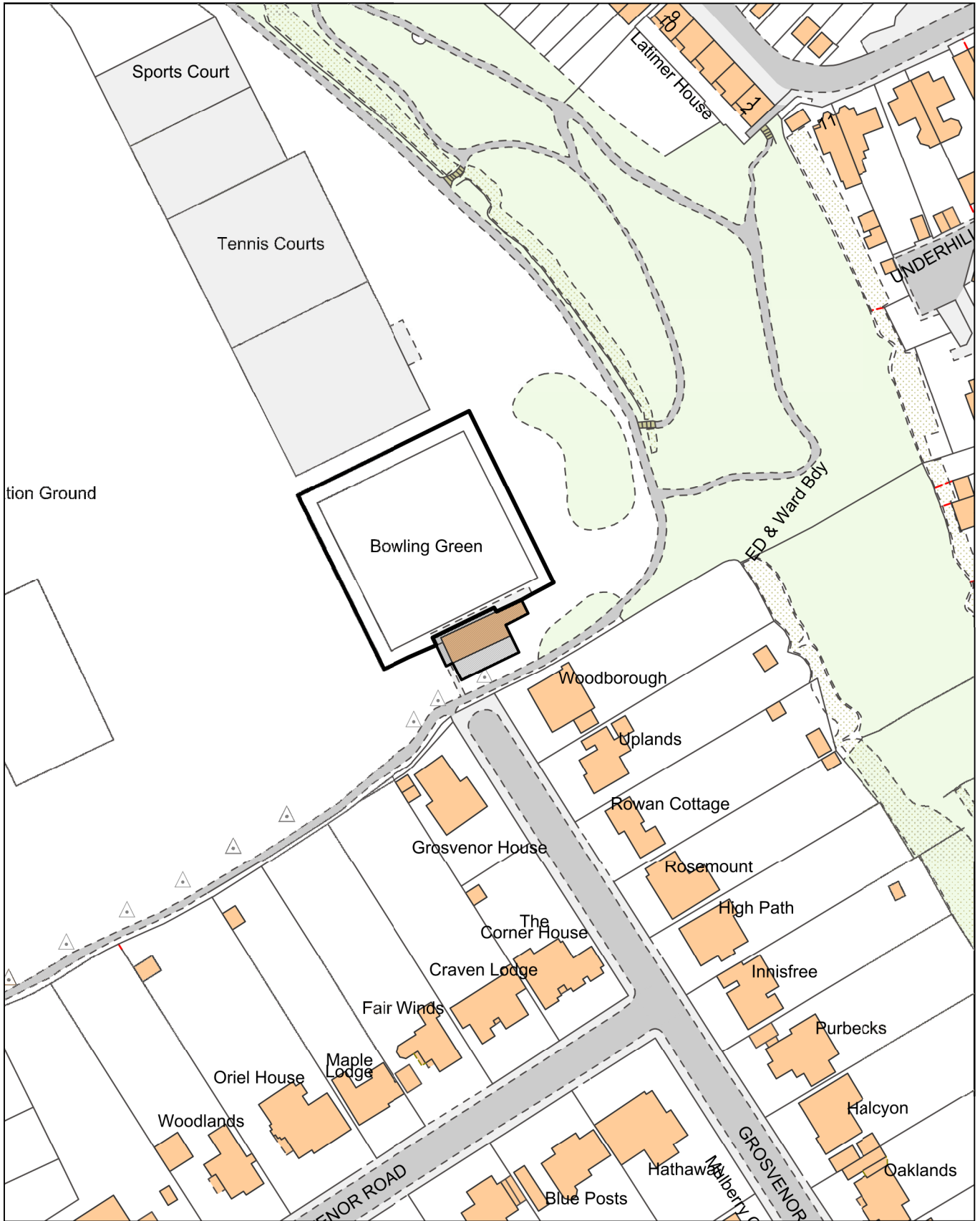
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Waverley Borough Council  
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**Holloway Hill Bowling Club  
 Holloway Hill Recreation Ground  
 Grosvenor Road  
 Godalming**

Scale 1: 1,250

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**WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**EXECUTIVE**

**8 OCTOBER 2019**

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**Title:**

**PROPERTY MATTER - GODALMING AND FARNCOMBE BOWLING CLUB -  
SURRENDER OF EXISTING LEASE AND GRANT OF A NEW LEASE**

**[Portfolio Holder: Cllrs M Merryweather & D Beaman]  
[Wards Affected: Godalming Central and Ockford]**

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**Note pursuant to Section 100B(5) of the Local Government Act 1972**

An annexe to this report contains exempt information by virtue of which the public is likely to be excluded during the item to which the report relates, as specified in Paragraph 3 of Part I of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972, namely:

Paragraph 3            Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

---

**Summary and purpose:**

Godalming and Farncombe Bowling Club has approached the Council for consent to surrender its existing lease of the Pavillion land and to take a new long lease of both the Pavilion land and the Bowling Green itself. The pavilion land is shown hatched and the green outlined on the plan at Annexe 1.

---

**How this report relates to the Council's Corporate Strategy:**

This report supports the continued provision of sporting activities within the Borough while obtaining value for money.

**Equality and Diversity Implications:**

By supporting the Bowling Club, the Council is seeking to maintain the long-term provision of facilities that encourage active and healthy lives.

**Financial Implications:**

The granting of a new lease will generate a small saving to the Council as set out in the Exempt Annexe.

**Legal Implications:**

Each party will meet its own legal costs in the preparation of this new lease.

## **Climate change implications:**

There are no climate change implications arising from the surrender and grant of a lease.

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## **Introduction**

1. Godalming and Farncombe Bowling Club currently leases the land shown hatched on the plan annexed on which the pavilion building sits. The lease for this expires in 2034. The club hires the adjoining bowling green shown outlined for an annual fee.
2. The pavilion is maintained by the Bowling Club under the terms of the lease. The irrigation system for the green is also maintained by the Club, though Waverley contributes towards the water bill. The maintenance of the bowling green its surrounding grass and hedges are Waverley's responsibility, which is partly subsidised by the licence fee. In total, the maintenance costs incurred by the Council exceed the revenue received, resulting in an annual net shortfall, as set out in Exempt Annexe 2.
3. Waverley is looking to ensure the long term future of its facilities by encouraging organisations that use them to take over their management. This has the added advantage that the clubs will also be able to seek grant funding from external organisations to improve them, a route unavailable to the Council and also provide the club with full control over the maintenance of their playing and ancilliary facilities.
4. This arrangement is considered to be beneficial to Waverley in this instance in that it will ensure that the management and maintenance of the green and the majority of its associated costs, including water usage, will be passed to the Bowling Club under a proper lease arrangement.
5. Outline terms have therefore been agreed for a simultaneous surrender of the existing lease of the Pavilion land, and the grant of a new 30 year lease encompassing the pavilion land and bowling green, at a rent which is detailed in Exempt Annexe 2.

## **Conclusion**

6. The transaction that consent is being sought for offers financial and management benefits to both Waverely Borough Council and Godalming and Farncombe Bowling Club and it is proposed to structure a new lease that reflects the way the Club and land is used.

## **Recommendation**

It is recommended that the Executive agrees to the surrender of the current lease to Godalming and Farncombe Bowling Club and the simulatenous grant of a new lease on terms and conditions set out in Exempt Annexe 2, with other terms and conditions to be negotiated by the Estates and Valuation Manager.

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## Background Papers

There are no background papers (as defined by Section 100D(5) of the Local Government Act 1972) relating to this report.

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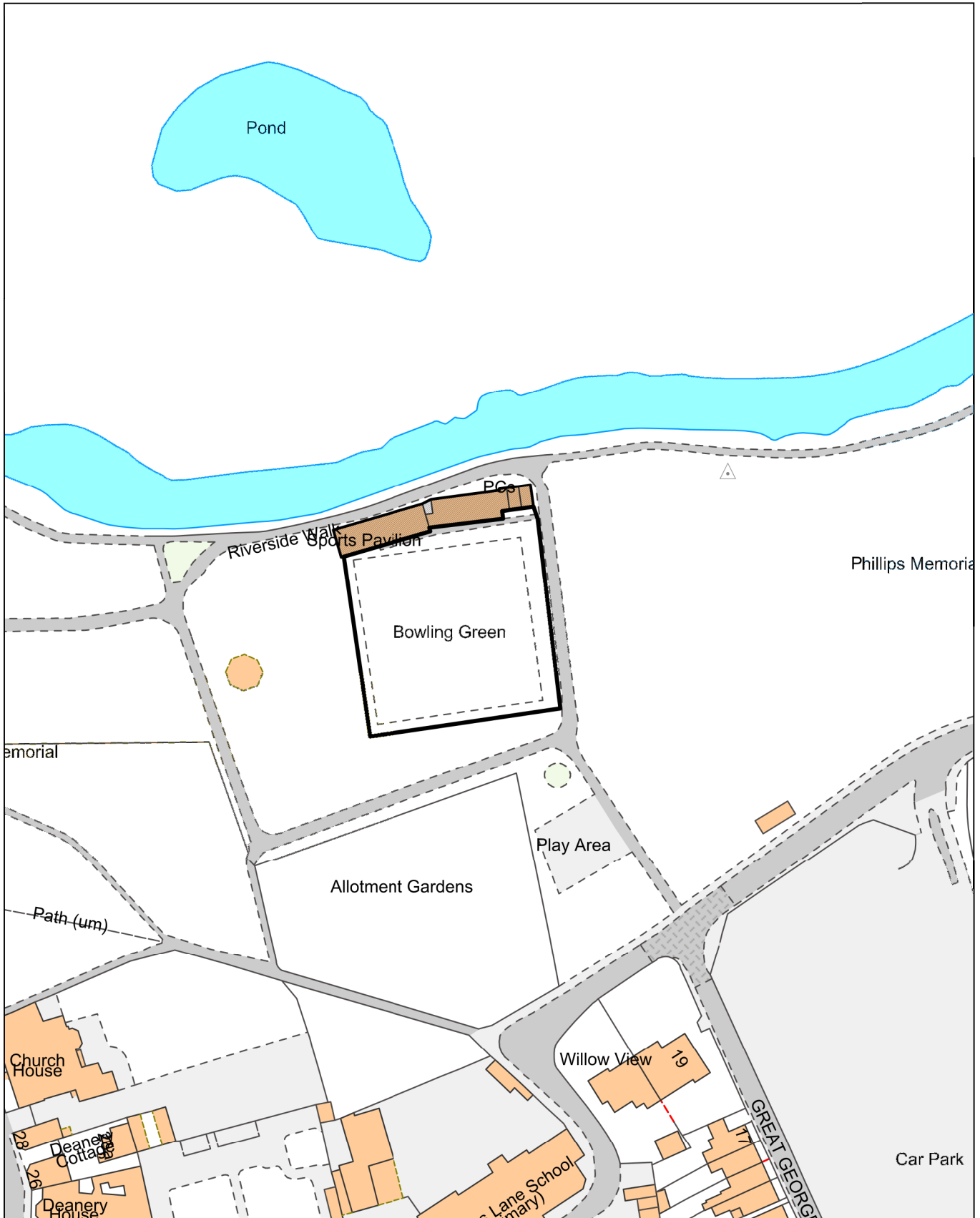
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**Godalming and Farncombe BOWLS Pavilion and Green  
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 The Bury Godalming**

Scale 1: 1,250

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