Help us plan Waverley’s future

Waverley needs to draw up a new Local Plan and we hope you will help us to decide where future developments should go.

What is a Local Plan?
Local authorities are required by the Government to prepare a Local Plan to set out the strategy and planning policies to guide the development and future use of all the land within their areas.

A major part of this Local Plan is called the “Spatial Strategy”. This will set out the Council’s policy on where new developments should go.

How will it affect me?
The Waverley area currently contains more than 50,000 homes, but our evidence shows that we may need to find space for about another 8,500 between now and the year 2031. That means that almost all towns and villages in Waverley will have to find space for at least some new housing over the next 17 years. So everyone – including your children – may be affected in some way or another, as everyone needs a place to live.

How can I have my say?
This leaflet – which is being sent to every household and business in Waverley – briefly sets out the key issues that need to be considered in drawing up the new Local Plan. It also sets out four potential scenarios illustrating possible ways in which the new homes could be distributed across the Borough.

Your views will help guide the Council as it draws up the new Local Plan over the next few months, so it’s important to read on and then send us your feedback, preferably via the web address below.

www.waverley.gov.uk/newlocalplan
How many new homes are needed?

In considering how many homes we need to plan for, the starting point is to identify the need for new homes within the area.

Waverley has recently undertaken a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (or SHMA). This has established a need for some 8,450 new homes – or an average of 470 dwellings a year over the course of the Local Plan period from 2013 to 2031.

The Council then has to decide whether the Borough can accommodate this number of homes in a sustainable way.

There are currently more than 50,000 homes in Waverley. These are represented in the bar chart to the right by the darker green houses. Building 470 new homes a year represents a growth rate of less than 1% per year in the total number of homes in the Borough. These new homes are highlighted by the orange houses in the adjacent columns for each year, with the new homes built in the previous years being shown in the lighter green.

The Council has already identified through its Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (or SHLAA) that some 3,400 homes could potentially be built within the existing towns and villages in Waverley. These are on sites where planning permission has already been granted, sites already considered suitable for housing, and – based on past trends – an estimated number of ‘windfall sites’ that are likely to come forward.

So the real challenge is to identify suitable sites across the Borough where the remaining 5,050 new homes could be built.

Government planning policy has changed dramatically in recent years. In preparing their Local Plans, councils must now seek positive opportunities to meet development needs and must objectively assess housing needs. There must also be an overarching presumption in favour of sustainable development.
The bar chart below is indicative of this projected growth in Waverley’s housing stock – with one small house in the chart representing approximately 500 actual homes.

Review of the Green Belt

Much of Waverley is covered by the Metropolitan Green Belt, a planning policy established to prevent London from sprawling outwards across the countryside.

Waverley must consider all reasonable alternatives in assessing whether we can meet the full need for housing. The Council has therefore undertaken a review of the Green Belt to see whether there is scope to remove land from it in order to meet some of the housing need.

This review has identified some areas where there may be scope to remove land from the Green Belt, and has also identified other areas that could be added to the Green Belt. It has also made recommendations about how villages within the Green Belt should be treated in future.

The adjacent table summarises the findings of the review, and the full report can be found on the Council’s website at: www.waverley.gov.uk/newlocalplan

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<tr>
<th>MAIN SETTLEMENTS</th>
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<tr>
<td>Potential to remove land from the Green Belt at Aarons Hill, Binscombe and Farncombe near Godalming</td>
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<th>VILLAGES</th>
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<tr>
<td>Potential to remove the main built-up areas of Chiddingfold, Elstead, Milford and Witley from the Green Belt and their settlement boundaries to be reviewed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Potential for modest changes to the settlement boundaries of Bramley, Churt and Wonersh</td>
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<tr>
<th>POTENTIAL ADDITIONS TO THE GREEN BELT</th>
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<tr>
<td>Land to the south of the Long Road at Farnham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land to the east of Compton, north of Moor Park and south of the A31 at Farnham</td>
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<tr>
<td>Land to the north-west of Cranleigh, including Cranleigh School</td>
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Where could new homes go?

Capacity for new housing within settlements
As already mentioned, the Council’s Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment has identified the potential to deliver some 3,400 new homes within the existing settlements in Waverley.

One issue to consider is whether there is any further scope to increase this amount of new housing within settlements, possibly by increasing the density of new developments. This could potentially reduce the amount of housing that might be required on greenfield sites.

Potential for new homes on the edge of the main settlements
Previously, the Council’s approach was to favour development within settlements, supplemented with selected releases of land on the edge of the main settlements providing they were outside the Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and Areas of Great Landscape Value. It is logical, therefore, to examine whether the additional housing requirement can be met, or met in part, through releasing more land in these areas.

Waverley’s villages
Given the need to deliver significantly more new homes than previously planned for, the Council will have to decide whether the villages could make a greater contribution – potentially through some adjustment to settlement boundaries.

The towns and villages in Waverley vary widely in terms of their size, character and range of services and facilities. Given the overarching aim of the Government’s planning policies to deliver sustainable development, it is logical that, when deciding on the contribution that Waverley’s different settlements can make towards meeting housing needs, account should be taken of their sustainability in terms of access to services, etc, as well as environmental and other constraints.

Rural brownfield land
If land is required outside settlements in order to meet housing and other development needs then the Council’s preferred approach to date has been mainly to favour land on the edge of settlements rather than located away from them. This is because land immediately adjacent to a settlement is generally more likely to have better access to services and facilities than land that is more remote.

However, there are also some previously-developed (brownfield) sites in Waverley that are not adjacent to settlements but where development for housing or other uses may be acceptable as an alternative to existing uses.
The figure of 470 homes a year is from the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which has been carried out in line with Government policy. Waverley Borough Council now needs to establish if this amount of housing in Waverley is sustainable in relation to infrastructure including water, power, transport and facilities.

4 potential scenarios

Overleaf you will find four potential scenarios identified by the Council that show ways in which the new homes could be distributed across Waverley. All these are the subject of on-going testing to determine whether they can deliver this level of housing in a sustainable way.

For example, delivering more homes in the Farnham area would need to be subject to appropriate measures to ensure that any extra housing does not have a significant adverse effect on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA). In particular, this would require the identification of additional Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG).

Similarly, the findings of the Strategic Transport Assessment carried out by Surrey County Council have identified the likely impact on the road network arising from different levels and distributions of housing growth.

We would need to be confident that these impacts could be mitigated, for example, through highways improvements.

In addition, we will need to consider the implications of these scenarios on other infrastructure and services in Waverley.

The result of this further work, along with your views on the four scenarios overleaf, will help the Council to reach a conclusion on:

- The overall number of new homes to be provided in Waverley; and
- The broad distribution of these homes across the Borough.

www.waverley.gov.uk
SCENARIO 1

This option would involve much more development on greenfield land than the other scenarios, but there would be no development at Dunsfold Aerodrome. Highways impacts are likely to be distributed more evenly across the Borough, but would be greatest in Farnham and Cranleigh. This would be the least favourable option in terms of the impact on the Special Protection Areas and would trigger the need for a large amount of additional SANG* as mitigation.

The distribution of homes arising from this scenario would be:
- Farnham 3,800 (45%)
- Godalming 1,050 (12%)
- Haslemere 800 (10%)
- Cranleigh 1,800 (21%)
- Villages 1,000 (12%)

* SANG = Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace.  ** SHLAA = Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

SCENARIO 3

This option would involve more development on greenfield land than scenario 4, but less than scenarios 1 and 2. As it would involve a higher amount of development at Dunsfold Aerodrome, it would be likely to result in similar traffic patterns to scenario 2, but of a greater magnitude on this part of the road network. This would be the second most favourable scenario (after scenario 4) in terms of the impact on the Special Protection Areas, although some additional SANG would be required.

The distribution of homes arising from this scenario would be:
- Farnham 2,100 (25%)
- Godalming 1,050 (12%)
- Haslemere 700 (8%)
- Cranleigh 1,050 (12%)
- Dunsfold 2,600 (31%)
- Villages 950 (11%)
SCENARIO 2

This option would involve more development on greenfield land than scenarios 3 and 4, but far less than scenario 1. As it would involve 1,800 homes at Dunsfold Aerodrome, it would be likely to result in similar traffic patterns to scenarios 3 and 4, but of a lower magnitude than either on this part of the road network. This would be the second least favourable scenario (after scenario 1) in terms of the impact on the Special Protection Areas and would trigger the need for a large amount of additional SANG as mitigation.

The distribution of homes arising from this scenario would be:

- Farnham 2,600 (31%)
- Godalming 1,050 (12%)
- Haslemere 800 (10%)
- Cranleigh 1,200 (14%)
- Dunsfold Aerodrome 1,800 (21%)
- Villages 1,000 (12%)

SCENARIO 4

This option would involve the lowest amount of development on greenfield land but would involve the highest amount of development at Dunsfold Aerodrome. It would be likely to result in a similar traffic patterns to scenario 3, but of a greater magnitude on this part of the road network. This would be the most favourable scenario in terms of the impact on the Special Protection Areas, although some additional SANG would be required.

The distribution of homes arising from this scenario would be:

- Farnham 1,800 (21%)
- Godalming 1,050 (12%)
- Haslemere 700 (8%)
- Cranleigh 650 (8%)
- Dunsfold Aerodrome 3,400 (40%)
- Villages 850 (10%)

NB: Due to rounding, the percentage figures in these scenarios may not add up to 100.
Other important issues

Strategic housing sites
The Government expects the Council to maintain a five-year supply of housing sites. At present, Waverley does not have a five-year supply.

Current evidence suggests that there will not be enough sites coming forward within settlements during the first five years of the plan. In the new Local Plan the Council will therefore identify some strategic housing sites on land outside settlements.

The Council has assessed potential sites against a wide range of sustainability criteria as well as their suitability, accessibility, availability and achievability. Each site has been given a red, amber or green score, indicating whether the site is more (green) or less (red) likely to meet the criteria for allocation. Those that have been given a green or amber score could be considered for allocation in the Local Plan. Full details of these sites can be found in the SHLAA (see page 4).

Land for employment
In assessing the need for employment land, the Council will draw on evidence from the Employment Land Review.

The latest projections indicate that there will be an overall need for additional employment land over the period 2013 to 2031, particularly for offices, research and development. This is because it is unlikely that employment needs can be met by the existing supply of employment land and any light and general industrial land identified as surplus in the same period. It is therefore also important that existing employment land is protected from change to other uses.

Landscape designations
Significant parts of Waverley have high landscape value. These include the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV). There are also the local landscape designations: the Area of Strategic Visual Importance, the Farnham/ Aldershot Strategic Gap, the Godalming Hillsides, and the Areas of Historic Landscape Value. The Council will need to decide whether these local designations continue to be justified. One of the supporting documents is a review of these local landscape designations.

The national body, Natural England, intends to review the boundary of the Surrey Hills AONB and this could result in some existing AGLV land being incorporated into the AONB.

The Council must decide whether housing needs can reasonably be met without the need to use AONB land. While Natural England is reviewing the AONB boundary, the Council intends to retain the existing AGLV designation.

Gypsies, travellers and travelling showpeople
The Council has produced a Traveller Accommodation Assessment, which provides evidence of the local need for accommodation for Gypsies, Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. The Local Plan will include a target for the number of pitches needed over the plan period. At this stage, the Council is seeking views on the approach it should take to identifying sites to meet these needs.

The Council has previously identified a sequential approach starting with the provision of additional pitches on existing sites, followed by suitable extensions to existing sites, and then by the use of suitably located brownfield land. Other criteria include: the potential impact on the environment and local amenities; how accessible sites are to local services; and the access and parking arrangements. Another consideration is that traveller sites in the Green Belt should only be supported in exceptional circumstances.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS AND EVIDENCE

This leaflet seeks to present a brief summary of the issues to be considered in drawing up the new Local Plan and the potential scenarios for where new housing could be located. Clearly, this leaflet cannot cover the whole subject matter and we would therefore encourage you to read the Council’s main document explaining this: “Consultation on Potential Housing Scenarios and Other Issues for the Waverley Local Plan”.

That document, together with all the supporting documents and evidence, can be found on the Council’s website at the address below. It is also available to see at the Council’s offices and at local libraries across the Borough.

www.waverley.gov.uk/newlocalplan

Please send us your feedback by Friday 17th October 2014.

You can either complete the Feedback Form online via the web address below, drop it into the Council’s Godalming office, or post it to: FREEPOST RTJE EUXU RTKT, Waverley Borough Council, Planning Services, Council Offices, The Burys, GODALMING GU7 1HR