



HASLEMERE TOWN COUNCIL

Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan: Summary

*Beacon Hill, Critchmere, Grayswood,
Haslemere, Hindhead & Shottermill*



Our very first Neighbourhood Plan is now written and a consultation on the policies within it will run from **2nd March to the 27th April 2020**.

It is vital policies receive support to take them forward, so we urge all those (16+) who live or work in the area to respond to the online survey at www.haslemeretc.org/neighbourhood-plan.

The following is a summary of what is included in the 2013-2032 Plan. It is intended as a convenient and helpful guide in completing the survey. For further information sources please see the back cover.

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The Haslemere area Neighbourhood Plan was produced by Haslemere Vision (a community organization of over 80 local volunteers) guided by the views of our community following widespread consultation involving hundreds of people over the last six years.

The Vision (derived from widespread community consultations)

That Haslemere and its villages continue to thrive for all sections of the community; that what is best about the town and its surrounding environments be protected; and that in future a larger, more diverse and vibrant local economy be accommodated with more local workers living and working in the area. The main aims of the Plan are:

- To encourage development of high quality socially and environmentally conscious housing that **meets the needs of the community** and respects the character of the area. In particular to encourage development of more homes for young people, local workers and homes suitable for downsizers
- To **protect and enrich our green spaces**, biodiversity and the natural environment that surrounds us
- To protect existing employment and to **encourage the development of a more diverse range of local employment opportunities** to create an increasingly vibrant and sustainable local economy
- To **re-balance road use** and limit the adverse impact of motor vehicles by improving provision for off-street parking and/or improving facilities for alternative forms of transport

The following summary is divided into *three sections*:

Principles: These key principles, derived from our community consultations, are the ideals which the policies included in the Plan are designed to promote.

Policies: This lists the policies which will be used to help determine future planning applications, encourage the type of development that is in keeping with our area and guide where it should be located. Following a successful referendum, these will have legal effect and will apply to all planning applications in the area.

Opportunities: In the course of our consultations a number of opportunities with broad community support were identified. They lie outside the scope of the Neighbourhood Plan but we strongly commend them for future action.

Principles

Delivering the required housing numbers: The high quality of surrounding countryside, all of which has some form of protected status, combined with past growth and a difficult topography, severely limit available land for new homes.

The Waverley Local Plan Part 1 has identified a need for many new homes within the borough, and recognising the constraints within the Haslemere area, has allocated 990 of these homes to our Neighbourhood Plan area (the “Plan area”). Reflecting the community’s preferences and the ecologically sensitive nature of the area, the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan (the “Plan”) accepts the 990 homes allocated by the Waverley Local Plan but does not propose that additional homes be built during the Local Plan period of 2013 to 2032.

Waverley Borough Council (“WBC”) has taken on assessment of the environmental sustainability of potential development sites and is therefore responsible for designating ‘Allocated Development Sites’ in their Local Plan Part 2. Haslemere Town Council and Haslemere Vision along with other local organisations have been consulted on the allocation and had some influence upon it. However, the primary purpose of our Neighbourhood Plan is to guide the use made of the designated Allocated Sites and any windfall development, ensuring that new developments contribute to our local objectives.

Setting a settlement boundary: 65% of respondents, expressing an opinion on the public consultation, wished to see ‘as many houses as possible’ built ‘within settlements’. The Plan establishes a formal settlement boundary based on the built up areas of the four settlements (Grayswood, Beacon Hill, Hindhead and Haslemere).

The Plan does not foresee a need for any house building outside the new settlement boundary during the life of the Plan as long as sites proposed within the boundary come to fruition and are built at sufficient densities.

Balancing land scarcity and housing development densities: There is not enough suitable land identified to accommodate all the housing the Waverley Local Plan states is needed to 2032 without relying on a reasonable level of windfall development (sites that are as yet unknown). Therefore we should make the most efficient and best use of each site (design standards permitting) to minimize the total land take required. This means building at sufficient densities to minimise the need to encroach into surrounding green spaces in the later years of the Plan.

Respecting the character of the Town: The Plan recognises and supports the objectives of the Haslemere Design Statement and reiterates that its guidance is a material consideration for any planning application. Nothing in this document should be considered to supersede or contradict the policies laid down in the Haslemere Design Statement.

Achieving a suitable housing mix: Community consultations consistently highlighted support for provision of housing affordable to local workers, to younger and to first-time buyers and a growing need for smaller properties suitable for people wishing to downsize. The policies therefore encourage the development of fewer large executive houses and a greater proportion of smaller properties, preferably within walking distance of amenities. This is necessary as without such provision in an area like ours developers prefer to build larger houses for the open market resulting in less efficient use of the land available and fewer affordable homes.

Managing our road network and parking needs: There is substantial growth projected in demand for the railway station, together with associated traffic and parking. The Plan seeks to ensure when development takes place that it facilitates more sustainable or non-motorised forms of transport. Dealing with congestion is the domain of Surrey Highways and not within the scope of the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan, however the Opportunities component of the document highlights the community's priorities and proposals for community action to improve our streets.

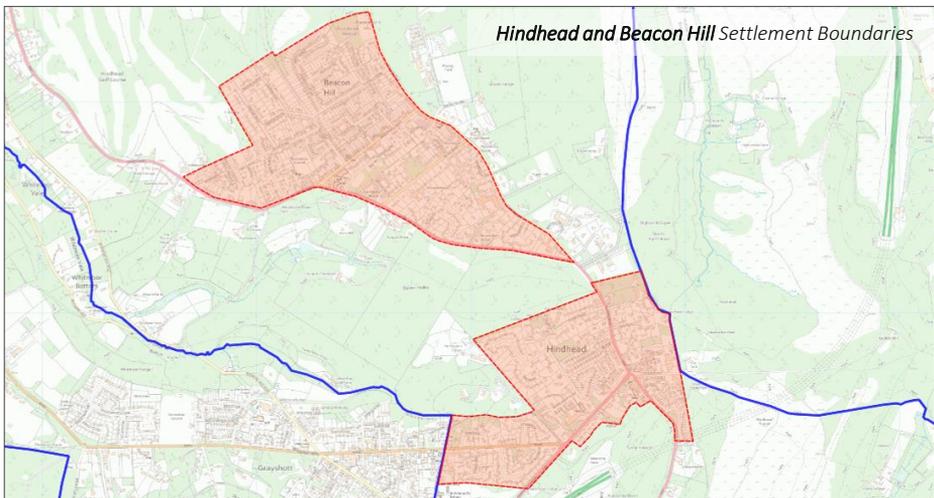
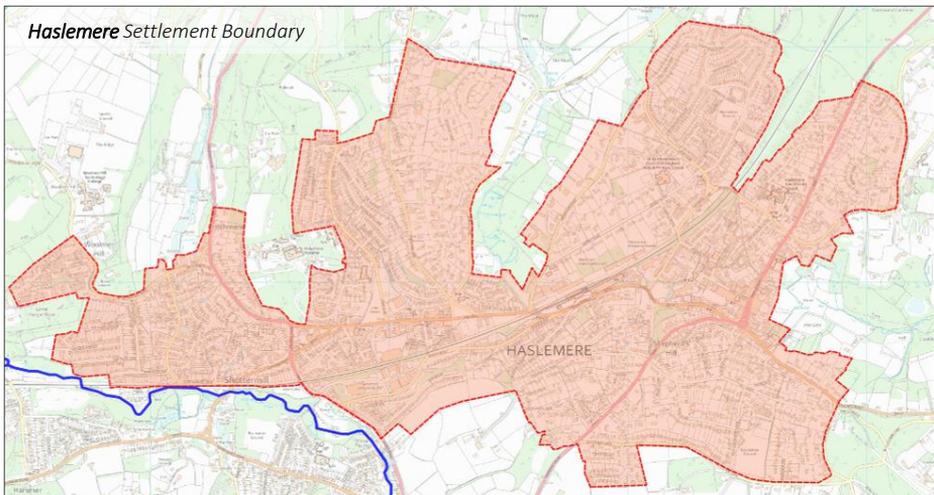
Protecting the local environment: We have a diverse and high quality natural environment with more accessible green space than most other places in the country. The Plan seeks to protect this space from damage and loss. Therefore any development exterior to the settlement boundary is expected to conform to sustainable building standards set higher than national standards.

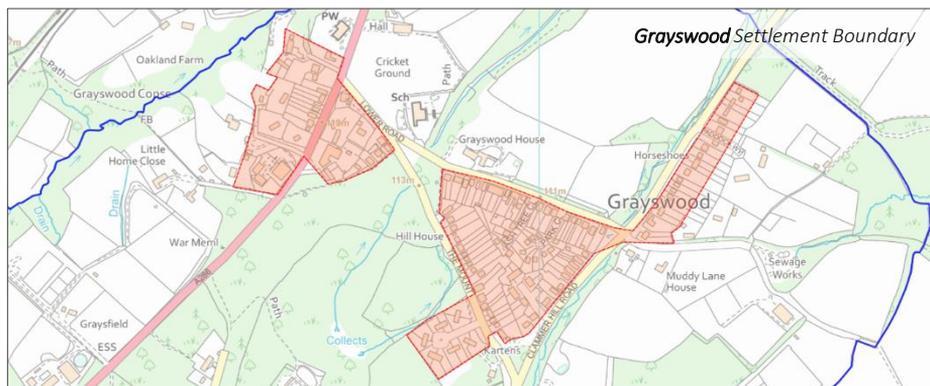
Promoting a vibrant local economy: Retention of local employment promotes a healthy sustainable community; however, there is direct competition between land use for housing and land for employment, with many employment sites having been lost and not replaced. The Plan therefore seeks to promote the retention of existing local employment and the growth of new employment opportunities. Providing employment in other parts of the borough will not be considered a substitute for local employment.



Policies

H1: Adopts formal settlement boundaries, which set a presumption against development of new green land outside the boundary. The maps (below and right) show the proposed settlement boundaries, defined by the built up areas shaded in red. If sites within the boundary are not developed at a rate or density to deliver the homes allocated by the Waverley Local Plan however, it may be necessary to develop one or more sites that include land designated as Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty or Areas of Great Landscape Value. Any such site must demonstrate that delivery rates are not commensurate with achieving required housing numbers.





H1.5: Sets out desired housing densities for developments, so as to develop our available land to produce high quality housing environments in keeping with our existing settlement and at sufficient density to minimise the total required land take within the Plan area. In general, we would expect the best use of all development land within the settlement boundary, with higher densities to be developed in areas closer to the centre of Haslemere, the station and next to areas already developed at higher densities.

H2: Constrains development on existing built land outside the settlement boundary by allowing subdivisions of existing buildings and by limiting any extension of existing property to a maximum of 40% of the baseline footprint.

H3: Requires any new development outside the new settlement boundary to be constructed to a standard at least as rigorous as the BRE's Home Quality Mark 4 star rating and to contribute a net biodiversity gain across the Plan area or be developed as community-led genuinely affordable housing.

H4: Requires developers to consult the local community effectively about proposals for developments of 50 or more properties, prior to the submission of any development application.

H5: Seeks to guide windfall developments (development on sites not allocated by Waverley Borough Council in their plan) by requiring them to demonstrate how they will meet the housing needs of the local community (mix and size of dwellings) and the need for affordable housing for local residents and those that work in the town.



Policies cont.

- H6: Access and transport policy that seeks to ensure new developments are well and safely connected with the existing town. It does this by:
- promoting safe non-motorised routes within sites and connections to the wider pedestrian network including new routes linking the High Street and Wey Hill and on to the Devil's Punch Bowl
 - requiring all new developments to provide sufficient off-street parking for cars and cycles
 - increasing the provision and priority for non-motorised and public transport
 - promoting electric car technologies
- H7.1: Requires developments to conform to the guidelines given in the Haslemere Design Statement, including respecting the character and appearance of the surrounding area and neighbouring plots. This is intended to challenge developers to propose high quality design that responds to its immediate surroundings and is appropriate for the Plan area.
- H7.2: Encourages more green space in larger developments.
- H7.3: Requires developments to accord with the principles of the Building for Life Standards no. 6 “Working with the Site and its Context” and no. 11 “Public and Private Space” (or any successor scheme), to help deliver Haslemere’s vision to remain an attractive, functional, and sustainable place to live, as it grows.
- H8: Ensures new developments provide adequate space as set out in the Nationally Described Space Standards and to provide high speed internet infrastructure to accommodate the growing numbers of people who work and/or study from home.
- H9: Supports the Waverley Local Plan policies that seek to provide sufficient affordable housing in the Haslemere area to meet local needs and to build them as part of the overall mix of properties on each site. The policy seeks to encourage developers to engage with the Community Land Trusts to deliver their affordable homes so they can remain affordable in perpetuity.
- H10: Requires developers to demonstrate that they are providing housing sizes suitable for meeting the needs of the local area. In our case this promotes more smaller properties for first time buyers and downsizers.

- H11: Seeks to protect our trees and hedgerows and the habitats that they shelter and supports development proposals which have a positive net impact on the ecology of the Plan area.
- H12: Designates Natural, Rural and Suburban lighting zones and supports development proposals that seek to limit light pollution from new and existing developments.
- H13: Designates Local Green Spaces which offer the highest level of protection (against development) available within a suburban environment and seeks to protect specific 'green fingers' – areas that can provide safe havens for wildlife and act as vital corridors or stepping stones that connect one habitat to another.
- H14: This policy seeks to retain, protect and enhance biodiversity and extend ecological networks and green infrastructure to assist the migration and transit of wildlife, flora and fauna. It requires development proposals that create a risk to the links between the Wealden Heath Phase II SPA, the 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the 20 SNCIs that lie within the Plan area to demonstrate how any risks will be mitigated.
- H15: Seeks to retain existing employment sites by supporting development that retains the same number of jobs on the site and/or by requiring evidence that an applicant has taken reasonable steps over a sufficient time period to establish there is no reasonable prospect of an employment use before change of use can be granted.
- H16: Encourages the growth of new and existing small businesses by supporting developments that will provide appropriate facilities (including parking and up-to-date technology/communications infrastructure).
- H17.1: Supports small retail businesses by seeking Article 4 directions for the High Street/West Street area of Haslemere, the Wey Hill area of Haslemere and the commercial areas of the London Road and Tilford Road, Hindhead. An application for Beacon Hill is already in progress.
- H17.2: For retail businesses, allows change of use of floors other than the ground floor to residential provided that such a change of use will not negatively impact the operation of the retail premises below.
- H18: Supports the conversion of houses to hotel space and encourages developments of recreational and leisure facilities (class D2) aimed at creating employment and attracting more visitors. This includes new developments and/or conversions outside the current settlement boundary, provided they meet the provisions of other policies in the Plan, are in keeping with the surrounding natural environment and make adequate infrastructure provisions (including parking).

Opportunities for Community Action

Planning policies alone cannot make anything happen and it is important that the community complements the Plan with action. With this in mind Haslemere Vision (“HV”) has already initiated or supported the following projects in the course of preparing the Plan:

- 2013: HV organised a community survey that persuaded WBC to defer the introduction of paid parking on the Wey Hill Fairground.
- 2015: HV volunteers worked with Surrey County Council and Harris Consulting to conduct the station transport survey that informed the new, more pedestrian/ cycle friendly remodelling of the forecourt of Haslemere station.
- 2016: HV became a founding partner in setting up the Haslemere Community Rail Partnership.
- 2016: HV convened a town meeting that backed the idea of forming a Community Land Trust (“CLT”) to seek land and build affordable housing. It then recruited volunteers and supported them in setting up the, now independent, Haslemere CLT.
- 2018: Played a key part in persuading WBC to remove AONB (Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty) protected sites from their proposed list of sites to be allocated in the Waverley Local Plan Part 2.
- 2018: Assisted HTC to set up a working party that now includes HTC, HV, The Chamber of Trade and the Haslemere Society to develop properly costed proposals for the development of the Wey Hill Fairground site.

We hope the Plan will continue to be a catalyst for positive change. The following projects have been identified as having broad community support in the course of our consultations:

1. Develop Wey Hill Fairground with a mixed-use development including affordable housing and parking.
2. Carry out a feasibility study for creation of a new business park with better access to the A3 and subsequent relocation of the industrial units north of Haslemere station to give more space for housing close to the town centre and the station.
3. Develop an overall Central Design Brief to guide the above two projects.
4. Develop a public realm design guide to improve the look of our streets and enhance the effectiveness of signage.

Opportunities cont.

5. Investigate the long-term housing needs of the area (beyond 2032) in preparation for the next Neighbourhood Plan.
6. Create new foot and cycle paths and improve existing routes (e.g. pavement improvements).
7. Improvements to public transport services (e.g. digital displays at bus stops).

None of these will happen without the proactive involvement of local residents. Any readers taking an interest in any of these projects are invited to contact Haslemere Vision at info@haslemerevision.org.uk to find out more, and potentially, to set up a community action group of their own.

What happens now

The Plan has now been published in full for public consultation. The consultation will run from 2nd March to 27th April 2020.

Once responses have been processed, Haslemere Town Council and Haslemere Vision will review support and/or opposition for each of the policies and ascertain if changes need to be made.

The Plan will then be submitted for examination to the relevant authorities, including a government appointed inspector. If successful, it will then be put to the public in the form of a local referendum. If more than 50% of residents vote YES, the policies will become part of planning regulations for the area.



Further information



The full Neighbourhood Plan (including the full wording of the policies) is available to read or download at www.haslemeretc.org/neighbourhood-plan together with the online survey and links to the evidence base.



Public drop-in events are taking place as below, to view the Plan and ask questions of the volunteers responsible for its inception.

- The Town Hall: **7th March 11am-3pm**
- Haslemere Station Hub: **16th March 4.30pm-7.30pm**
- Haslewey: **26th March 12pm-4pm and 6pm-8pm**
- Hindhead British Legion: **31st March 3.30pm-8pm**
- Grayswood Club: **8th April 10.30am-12pm**



Hard copies of the Plan are available to read at Haslemere Library, Haslemere Town Hall, Grayswood All Saints Church, Haslemere Museum, the Station Information Hub, Haslewey, the Hindhead Cookie Bar and the Hub in Beacon Hill. Hard copies of the survey can be collected from these locations, but must be returned to the Town Council offices (address below).



Hard copies of the Plan or the survey can be obtained by telephoning the Town Council on 01428 654305, by email at nplan@haslemeretc.org or via a letter of request to Haslemere Town Council, High Street, Haslemere GU27 2HG.