



Godalming & Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan 2017-2032

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	1
2	LOCAL CONTEXT	5
	History of Godalming and Farncombe.....	5
	Profile of the Community Today	6
	Local Infrastructure	12
	Local Plan Policy	13
3	VISION AND OBJECTIVES	15
	Challenges for Godalming and Farncombe	15
	Vision for Godalming and Farncombe	16
	Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan Objectives.....	17
4	HOUSING	18
5	ECONOMY	21
	Small Scale Start-up Space	22
	Town and Local Centres	23
6	HERITAGE AND DESIGN	26
	Character Areas.....	28
	Design of Residential Parking.....	35
	Shopfront Design and Advertising	38
	Protected Views.....	42
7	TRANSPORT AND MOVEMENT	44
	Movement Routes.....	50
	Public Car Parking.....	52
	Electric Vehicles.....	53
8	ENVIRONMENT	55
	Land.....	55
	Water	60
	Air.....	61

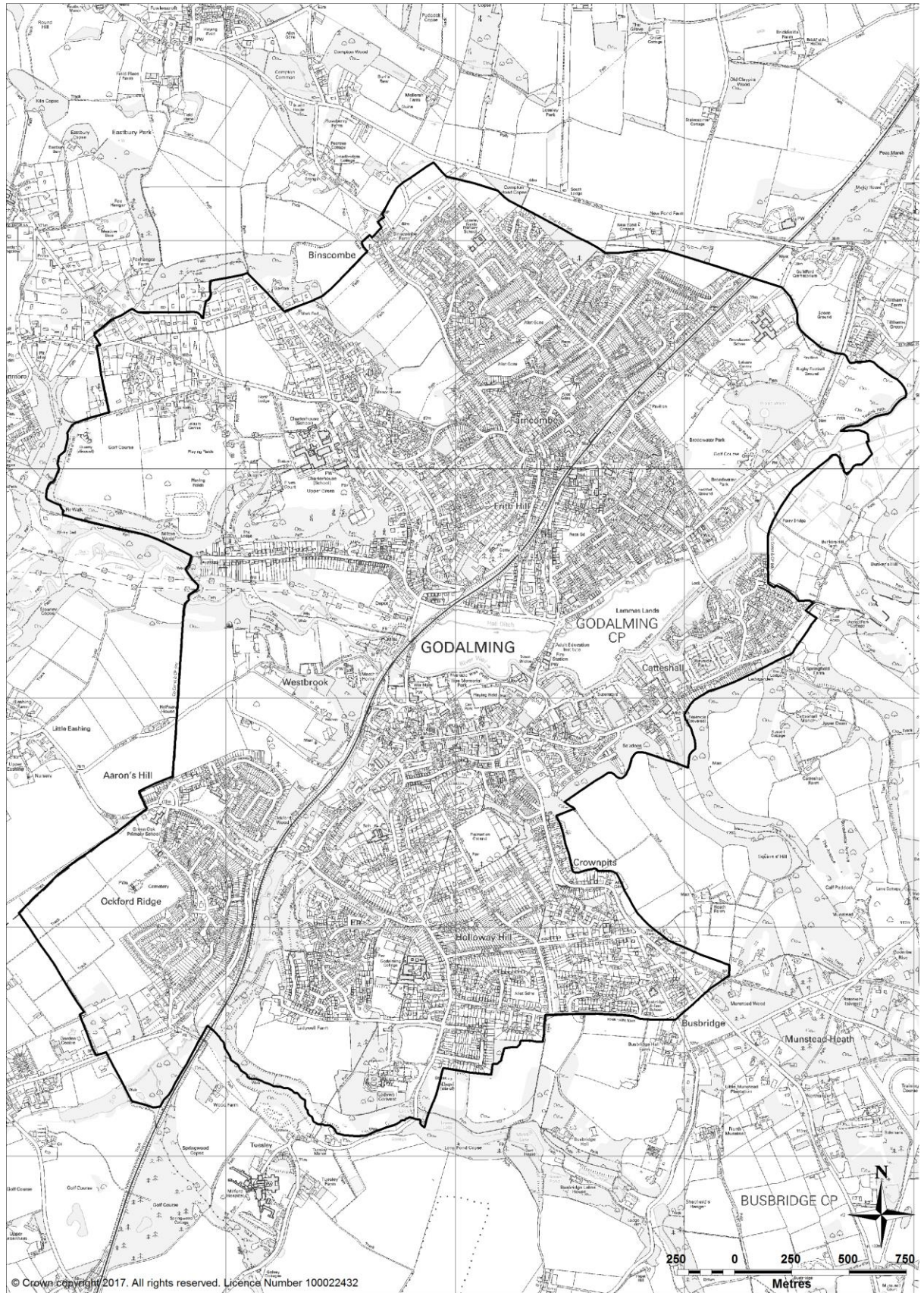
9	COMMUNITY AND INFRASTRUCTURE.....	63
	Health Provision	63
	Community Infrastructure	64
	Education Provision.....	67
10	NON-LAND USE ISSUES	69
	POLICIES MAPS	74
	GLOSSARY.....	76

Appendix A Building for Life 12 criteria

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document represents the Godalming & Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan (Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan) for Godalming parish. It represents one part of the development plan for the parish over the period 2017 to 2032, the other part being the Waverley Local Plan Part 1 (2018). It is important that the Neighbourhood Plan has due regard for the strategic policies in the Local Plan Part 1. In addition, Waverley Borough Council is preparing a Local Plan Part 2: **Site Allocations and Development Management Policies**. This will complement the Local Plan Part 1 and the Neighbourhood Plan policies and is due for adoption in 2019.
- 1.2 Waverley Borough Council, as the local planning authority, designated a Neighbourhood Area for the whole of Godalming parish in July 2013 to enable Godalming Town Council to prepare the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan. The Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan has been prepared by the community through the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan Group.
- 1.3 The GFNP is being prepared in accordance with the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the Localism Act 2011 and the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012. The Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan Group has prepared the plan to establish a vision for the future of the parish and to set out how that vision will be realised through planning and controlling land use and development change over the plan period 2015 to 2032.
- 1.4 The map in Figure 1.1 shows the boundary of the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan area, which is contiguous with the boundary of Godalming parish.
- 1.5 The purpose of the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan is to guide development within the parish and provide guidance to any interested parties wishing to submit planning applications for development within the parish. The process of producing a plan has sought to involve the community as widely as possible and the different topic areas are reflective of matters that are of considerable importance to Godalming and Farncombe, its residents, businesses and community groups.
- 1.6 Each section of the plan covers a different topic. Under each heading there is the justification for the policies presented which provides the necessary understanding of the policy and what it is seeking to achieve. The policies themselves are presented in the blue boxes. It is these policies against which planning applications will be assessed. It is advisable that, in order to understand the full context for any individual policy, it is read in conjunction with the supporting text.

Figure 1.1: Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan Area



National Policy

- 1.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states:

"Neighbourhood planning gives communities direct power to develop a shared vision for their neighbourhood and deliver the sustainable development they need. Parishes ... can use neighbourhood planning to set planning policies through neighbourhood plans to determine decisions on planning applications (para.183).

Neighbourhood planning provides a powerful set of tools for local people to ensure that they get the right types of development for their community. The ambition of the neighbourhood should be aligned with the strategic needs and priorities of the wider local area.

Neighbourhood plans must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan. To facilitate this, local planning authorities should set out clearly their strategic policies for the area and ensure that an up-to-date Local Plan is in place as quickly as possible. Neighbourhood plans should reflect these policies and neighbourhoods should plan positively to support them. Neighbourhood plans and orders should not promote less development than set out in the Local Plan or undermine its strategic policies (para.184).

Outside these strategic elements, neighbourhood plans will be able to shape and direct sustainable development in their area. Once a neighbourhood plan has demonstrated its general conformity with the strategic policies of the Local Plan and is brought into force, the policies it contains take precedence over existing non-strategic policies in the Local Plan for that neighbourhood, where they are in conflict. Local planning authorities should avoid duplicating planning processes for non-strategic policies where a neighbourhood plan is in preparation (para.185)".

- 1.8 The Local Plan for Waverley Borough consists of the **Local Plan Part 1 (2018) and retained policies from the 2002 Local Plan**. This is an up-to-date plan and therefore provides the strategic framework for growth in Godalming and Farncombe.
- 1.9 The Waverley Local Plan Part 1 covers the period to 2032. It identifies Godalming as one of the main settlements for accommodating the residential and commercial growth required across the borough. It is the role of the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan to provide a spatial framework for the delivery of this growth.

Consultation

- 1.10 The Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan Group has developed the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan through extensive engagement with the community.
- 1.11 In October 2013, Godalming Town Council agreed to promote and resource the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan process for Godalming and Farncombe and engaged professional planning consultants to advise on the process. A public meeting was held in January 2014 at the Borough Hall, with nearly 300 people attending; the event had to be streamed live into the adjoining Council Chamber as well as being streamed live on a webcast.

- 1.12 From this meeting residents were asked to complete feedback forms from which over 70 volunteers came forward to form six working groups - Transport, Community & Infrastructure, Natural Environment & Water Management, Housing, Economy and Heritage and Design. These groups started their investigations and evidence gathering phase in March 2014, with an oversight steering group being set up in September 2014.
- 1.13 The working groups gathered information and evidence through a number of processes including online surveys and public consultations at the main town events; Godalming Town Show, Farncombe Fete, Spring Show, Farmers Markets, Spring and Summer Festival Markets.
- 1.14 From the feedback received via these events, the Steering Group collated information from the individual working groups to create the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan Survey, which over the period September 2015, was distributed via the Royal Mail to all postal addresses within the GU7 area, approximately 9,500 addresses. In conjunction with the postal survey an online version was made available via the Godalming Town Council website. In total, 2,084 responses were received.
- 1.15 The survey information was collated during November 2015, with the results being used to inform debate within twelve Focus Group sessions held at various times and locations throughout March 2016. During the same period, themes identified from the survey were explored with the Godalming & District Chamber of Commerce.
- 1.16 Having identified the main issues of concern within the community, a public exhibition of the work of the volunteer groups was held at Godalming Museum during April 2016, with representatives of the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group being in attendance to assist and inform the visitors to the exhibition.
- 1.17 During July 2016 and October 2017, a further online survey was conducted with local businesses, followed by a call for sites to establish any potential sites that might be allocated for development in the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan.
- 1.18 Throughout the process, updates were published within the Town Council's newsletters which were distributed to all GU7 households.
- 1.19 The beginning of 2017 saw an end of the evidence gathering phase and the submission of Working Group Reports to the Steering Group in order to produce the first draft Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan Report. Throughout a series of meetings the Steering Group reviewed the draft report, with the final version forwarded for scrutiny by Godalming Town Council prior to the Pre-Submission Consultation.

2 LOCAL CONTEXT

History of Godalming and Farncombe

- 2.1 Godalming, located within the Borough of Waverley, was first mentioned in the Domesday Book. It is an historic market town with some 22,000 inhabitants. Located in south-west Surrey the town is four miles from Guildford and 30 miles from London. Being on the route from London to Portsmouth the town is close to the A3 and served by two railway stations with regular services to and from London Waterloo.
- 2.2 Godalming has a strong sense of identity and community. Widely considered to be a very desirable place to live, the town straddles the River Wey and its most important distinguishing landscape feature is the large water meadow area, central to the town, known as the Lammas Lands. Its hillsides that rise from either side of the meadow very much assist in defining its character. These features, along with the presence of the Green Belt around much of the town and the recognition of the quality of the landscape through the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty to the west and north and the Area of Great Landscape Value in the west and north-west of the parish, represent significant environmental assets that need to be protected as Godalming and Farncombe grow.
- 2.3 The town has a long history and a built environment that reflects that heritage. There are five conservation areas in and around Godalming and 227 listed buildings. The town is still growing with twenty-first century development sitting beside older buildings.
- 2.4 The administrative area that is Godalming encompasses a number of different communities including Farncombe, Binscombe, Frith Hill, Aarons Hill, Ockford Ridge, Catteshall, Crownpits, Charterhouse and (almost all of) Busbridge. Of these, the Farncombe community has a distinctive 'village' identity of its own and is served by one of the train stations.
- 2.5 Farncombe was initially established around the Manor which was located where Manor Gardens is now. The second phase of its development came with the railway in 1849.
- 2.6 Godalming is regarded as an expensive residential town, partly due to its visual appeal, favourable transport links and high proportion of private housing¹. **Between 1950 and 1980**, Godalming experienced a large expansion in housing with new estates being built on previous greenfield sites in Binscombe, South Hill, Farncombe Hill/Twycross, Bargate Wood and Aarons Hill areas of the town. In addition, there have been a growing number of developments in the once industrial area of Catteshall Road, resulting in the loss of industrial buildings and land.
- 2.7 The Borough of Waverley, which includes Godalming, was judged in 2013 to have the highest quality of life in Great Britain² and in 2016 to be the most prosperous place in the UK³. Although predominantly a prosperous area Godalming is not without areas of difficulty. The 2015 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) showed that Aarons Hill in Godalming and the Northbourne/Long Gore/Furze Lane area of Farncombe remain two of the three most disadvantaged Super Output Areas (SOAs) in Waverley borough (although Aarons Hill has improved from sixth to 26th in Surrey).⁴

¹ Dyckhoff, Tom (19 September 2009). "Let's move to Godalming, Surrey". The Guardian. London. Retrieved 19 September 2009.

² Bingham, John (29 March 2013). "Waverley tops list of best places to live". Daily Telegraph. London. Retrieved 29 March 2013.

³ "The 22 happiest, richest, healthiest, and most crime-free areas in Britain". The Independent. London. 13 October 2016

⁴ <https://mycouncil.surreycc.gov.uk/documents/s26451/PRIORITY%20NEIGHBOURHOODS%20AND%20DATA.pdf>

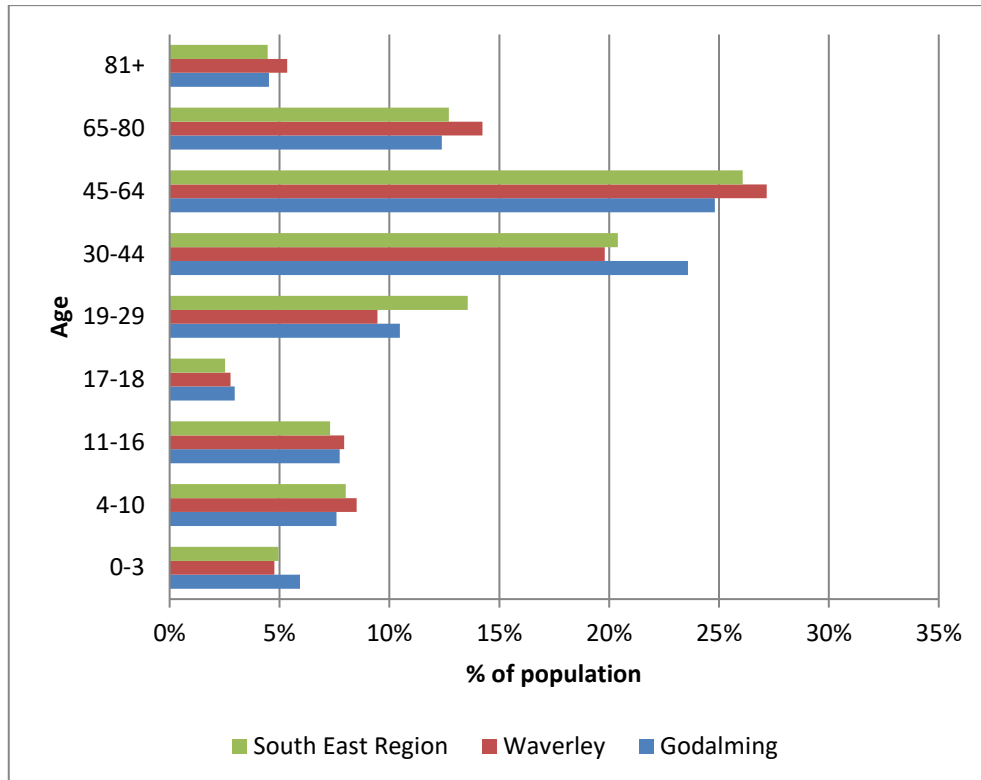
Profile of the Community Today

2.8 Unless stated otherwise, the profile of the community has come from the 2011 Census.

Population

2.9 In 2011, the population of the parish was 21,804. Godalming has a significantly higher proportion of people aged 30-44 than Waverley or the South East region (see Figure 2.1).

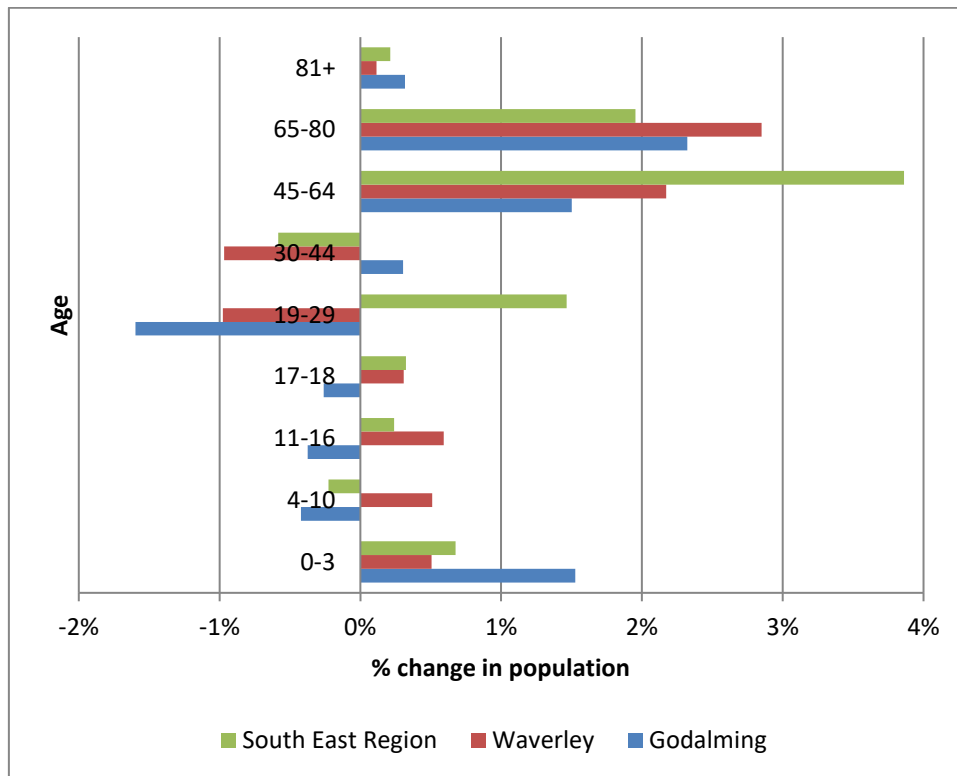
Figure 2.1: Population Profile, 2011



Source: 2011 Census

2.10 Between 2001 and 2011 the population of the parish grew by 700 persons, or 3%. This is below the growth in Waverley (5%) and the South East region (8%).

Figure 2.2: Change in Population, 2001-2011



Source: 2011 Census

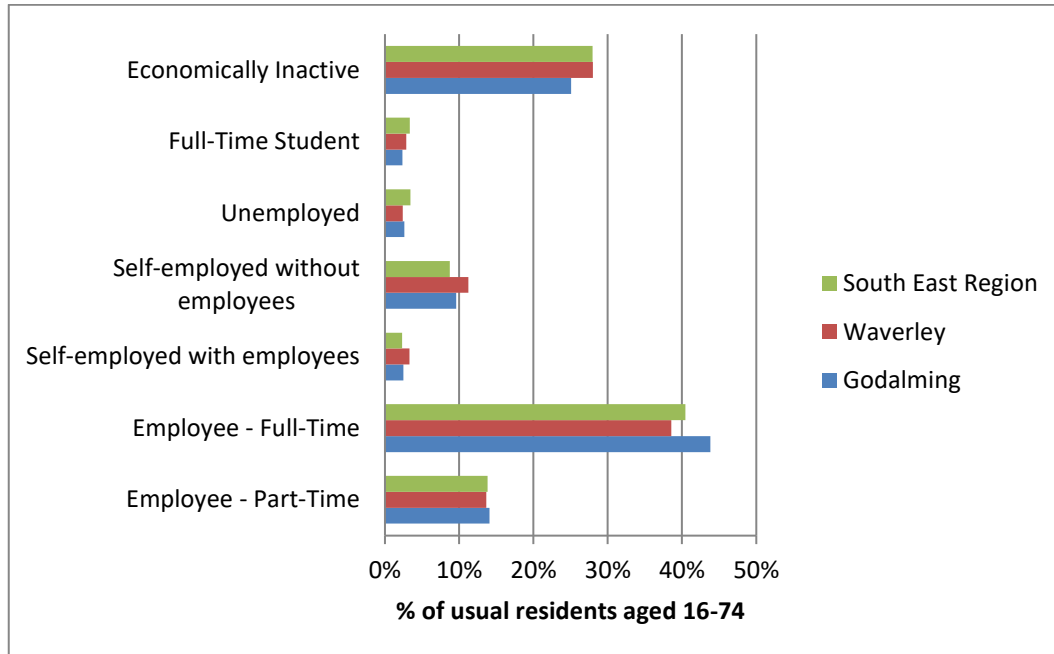
- 2.11 Godalming has seen a significantly higher percentage of its growth in very young children aged 0-3 years. By contrast, it has seen a decline in the population of all other young people (aged 4-18) when the borough and region have all seen growth over the same period. This is shown in Figure 2.2.

Godalming is a place where young families live but is seeing growth increasingly of the retirement age population.

Work

- 2.12 The proportion of Godalming's population of working age (16 to 74) is high, with 44% in full-time employment compared to 39% in Waverley borough and 40% across the South East region.
- 2.13 The economically inactive population is low due to the comparatively low proportion of retirees in Godalming.
- 2.14 There is a good proportion of people in self-employment, at 12%. This is shown in Figure 2.3.

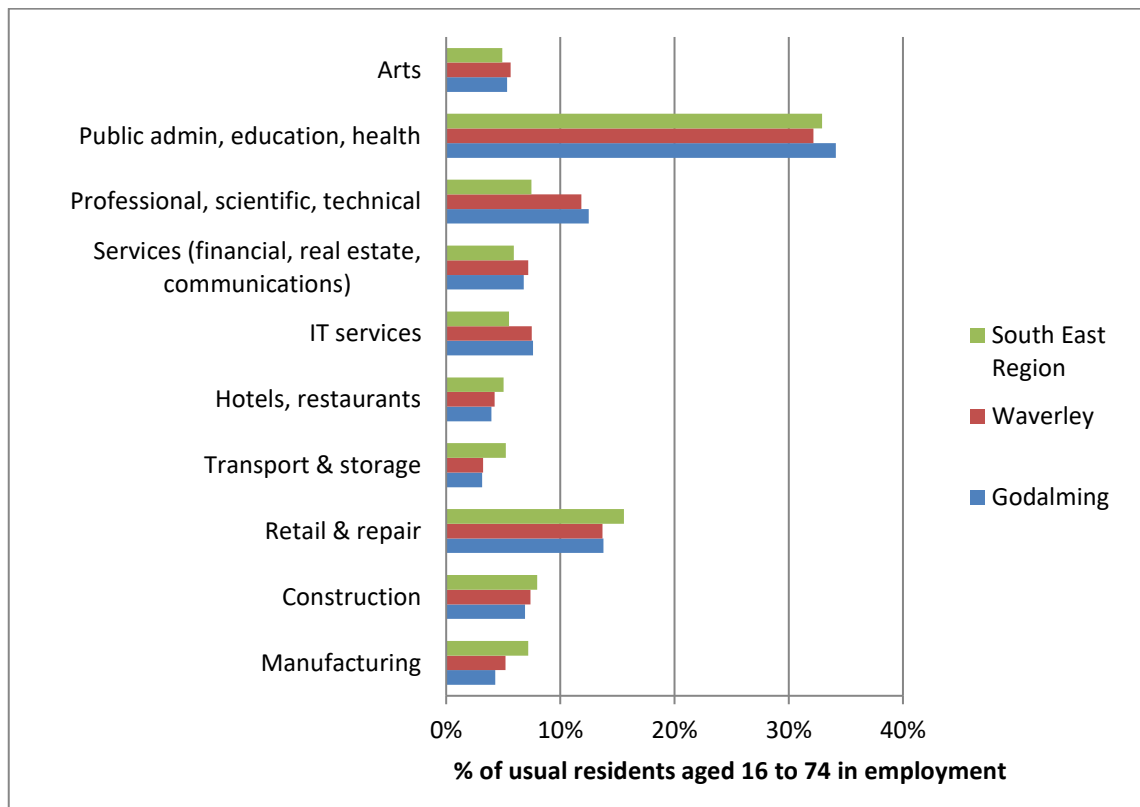
Figure 2.3: Economic Activity, 2011



Source: 2011 Census

2.15 Godalming is strongly represented by workers in the public administration, education and health sectors. It also has above-average numbers of people working in the professional, scientific, technical industries. This is shown in Figure 2.4.

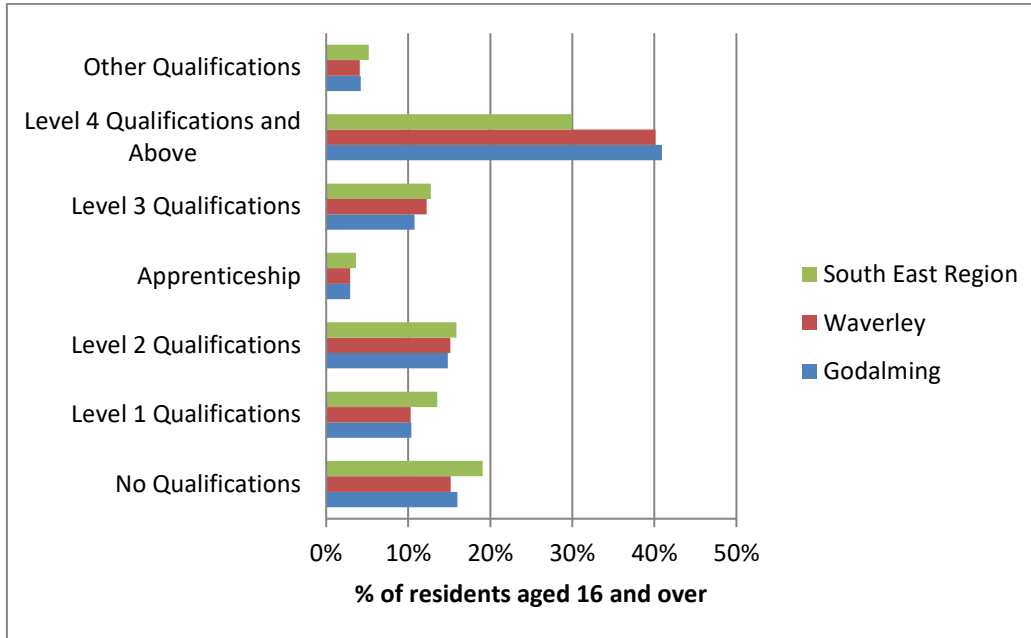
Figure 2.4: Type of Industry, 2011



Source: 2011 Census

- 2.16 Figure 2.5 shows that nearly 41% of the population is educated to Level 4 or above (degree level), which is above the borough average and well above the South East region. Those only qualified to Level 1 or unqualified is below that of Waverley or the South East region.

Figure 2.5: Qualifications of Residents Aged 16 and Over



Source: 2011 Census

Godalming has a high proportion of well-educated people working in professional occupations.

- 2.17 The large majority of those who travel to work do so by car, with most driving themselves. This is supported by the figures on households with access to a car. On an average, each Godalming household has access to 1.38 cars. This compares to 1.58 cars per household in Waverley borough and 1.36 cars per household across the South East region. When compared with the average across England of 1.16 cars per household, this represents reasonably high levels of car ownership.
- 2.18 Whilst average car ownership in Godalming is below the borough average, the high proportion of non-detached houses (semi-detached, terraced and flats), as shown in Figure 2.6, means that the town has a higher density of built development than average. It also has limited off-street parking as a result of this mix of housing stock, which creates significant problems with on-street parking despite the below-average levels of car ownership.

Typical Levels of On-street Parking in Godalming



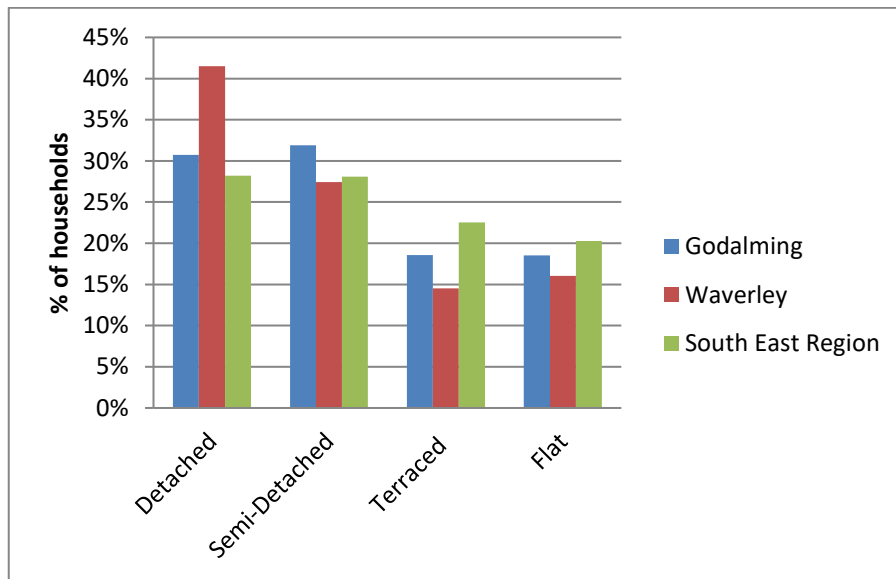
- 2.19 With the area being well served by rail links to several major employment centres, 17% of Godalming's working residents commuting by train
- 2.20 With the 2011 census showing that 14% of work related journeys were either on foot or by bike, this is significantly greater than the 2% who travel by bus, but is very much lower than the 60% who travel by car either as a driver or passenger.

Godalming has relatively high car ownership and its built structure means that the impact of on-street parking is significant. Commuting by train is a well-used alternative to the private car.

Housing

- 2.21 Godalming nearly has an equal proportion of its housing stock accounted for by detached and semi-detached housing. In total, these account for 31% and 32% respectively. The proportion of detached properties in Godalming is well below that of Waverley and the South East region.
- 2.22 There is also an equal proportion of terraced housing and flatted development of 19%. These are higher proportions than across Waverley borough, reflecting Godalming's function as one of the larger settlements in the borough. This is shown in Figure 2.7.

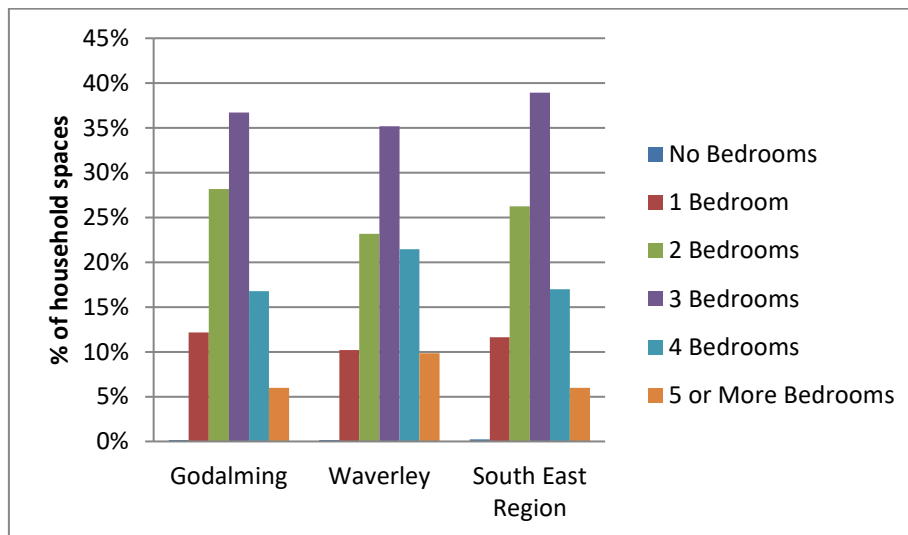
Figure 2.6: Type of Dwelling



Source: 2011 Census

2.23 This is reinforced when looking at the number of bedrooms that properties in Godalming have. Figure 2.7 shows that it has a higher proportion of 2-bed properties. By contrast, the proportion of 5-bed properties is very low. Its predominant stock is of 3-bed properties which is a typical size for semi-detached houses.

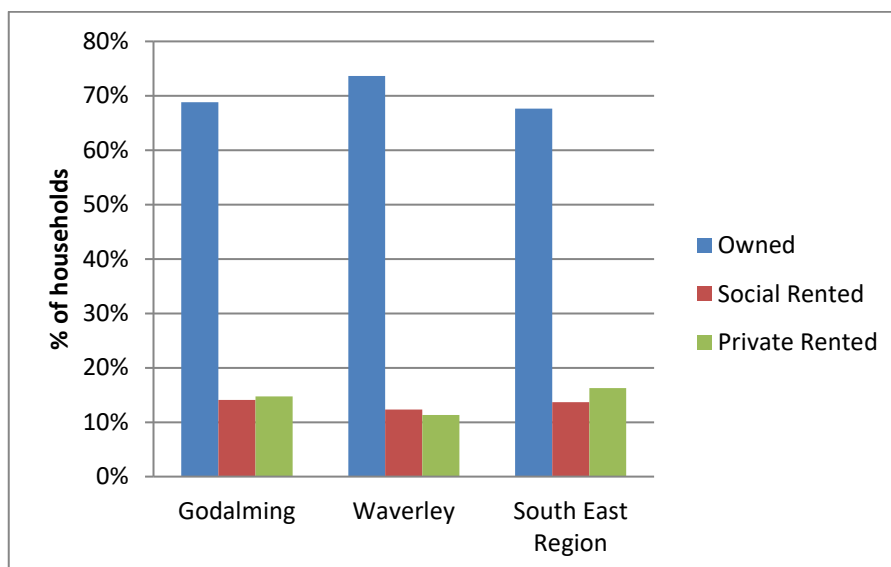
Figure 2.7: Number of Bedrooms



Source: 2011 Census

2.24 The ownership profile of these dwellings reinforces the profile of Godalming as an affluent area. Figure 2.8 shows that a high proportion of people own their property – in excess of 60%. In fact, 33% of the properties in Godalming are owned outright with no mortgage on them.

Figure 2.8: Ownership Profile



Source: 2011 Census

- 2.25 By contrast, Godalming has a slightly above-average proportion of social rented housing stock, at 14%, but this is not significantly higher than the borough level and is actually below the regional average.

Godalming has a significant stock of owner-occupied 2 and 3-bed properties which likely reflects a combination of the demand in the area and the relatively high density that has shaped development of the town.

Local Infrastructure

- 2.26 One of the distinctive characteristics, as well as a defining geographical restriction of Godalming is its location set in the Wey Valley with large water meadows and surrounding hillsides. Whilst the valley floor sets the North/South direction of the main arterial transport routes, rail (London to Portsmouth main line) and road (A3100), the ability to expand the capacity of either is limited. The easterly road links towards the A281 is severely restricted in its ability for increased capacity by the built environment, particularly within the Brighton Road area. Similarly, the western road links towards the A3 are limited by height restricted bridges. Expansion within the town boundaries will inevitably result in increased traffic movements both within the town itself and along the arterial routes. Increased housing within the hinterland surrounding Godalming, particularly to the east at Dunsfold Park and South at Milford, has the potential to place significant strain on the road infrastructure, with the likelihood of increased private transport journeys being exacerbated by the paucity of public transport operating in the east/west direction. Associated with any increase in vehicle movements into Godalming is the shortage of parking at journey's end, both public and private car parking, including on-road parking spaces.
- 2.27 Hand in hand with any further expansion of population within Godalming and, to a large extent, within the immediate hinterland is the provision of medical facilities. Whilst the majority of residents surveyed as part of the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan process felt that there is easy access to primary health provision (doctors 77%, dentist 68% and Pharmacy 95%), a number of concerns emerged surrounding timely appointments, insufficient parking and

availability of public transport to and from both Medical Centres. Although an additional bus service was introduced to the Mill Medical Practice post survey date, its frequency of 1 per hour remains a limiting factor in people's choice of transportation methods to this medical facility.

- 2.28 Of the two medical practices, The Mill does have capacity for further expansion of medical provision. However, its parking provision will not be able to increase in line with any expansion. Of the other medical practice, Binscombe Surgery is considered by the senior partners to have reached capacity and they believe that within the next 5-10 years it will need to relocate to a larger purpose built facility as, "there is no doubt our current practice would be insufficient in size and GP numbers to cope with additional large numbers of new patients [new] housing developments would bring to the area". No suitable location has been identified for any potential relocation.
- 2.29 As with other areas of local infrastructure current school provision would be placed under additional strain if large scale housing development took place within the town or surrounding areas. Whilst primary schooling provision should be adequate to meet demand, both within the town and surrounding areas, population expansion could see a shortage of Secondary School provision, especially if large scale developments take place outside the town's boundaries but within the Godalming School Planning Area. Expansion of either of the secondary schools within the Godalming School Planning Area due to increased population within the surrounding villages, especially Dunsfold Park, could also see significant travel journeys on the already vulnerable eastern transport routes.
- 2.30 Although, as housing need numbers are met and the population increases, transport (including parking provision), health care provision and schooling remain the areas of greatest concern relating to local infrastructure, challenges also exist around the softer edges of local infrastructure, such as affordable child care provision, play areas for younger children and safe spaces for older children, especially youth provision within the 12–18 year age groups and the provision of such facilities to meet the demands/requirements of an increased population.

Local Plan Policy

- 2.31 The Local Plan Part 1 (covering strategic policies and sites) was adopted in February 2018.
- 2.32 The Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan must be in general conformity with the strategic policies of the adopted Local Plan Part 1.
- 2.33 The Local Plan Part 1 seeks to deliver at least 11,210 dwellings over the period to 2032. The main location where approximately one-quarter of this growth is to be delivered is at Dunsfold Park. The remaining focus for development is in the main towns, one of which is Godalming. In total, Godalming is expected to deliver 1,520 dwellings between 2013 and 2032 although a significant proportion of that figure has already either been built, is under construction, has planning permission or is allowed for as windfall (1,168 dwellings in total as at 1st April 2017).
- 2.34 **The Local Plan identifies that a further 352 dwellings are to be allocated in the Local Plan Part 2, which is being prepared and is planned to be adopted in 2019**
- 2.35 The Local Plan Part 1 has made amendments to the Green Belt, including the removal of land south-east of Binscombe and land between Aaron's Hill and Halfway Lane. This does not automatically mean that these sites will be allocated for development in the Local Plan Part 2 but it does create the opportunity for them to come forward as, for example, housing sites.
- 2.36 Sustainable transport is a key theme of the Local Plan Part 1, with Policy ST1 seeking to ensure that development is located where it is accessible by means other than the private car and placing a focus on the improvement of networks for cycling and walking. Equally, infrastructure is a vital

part of the strategy, with Policy ICS1 seeking to protect existing infrastructure and secure new infrastructure for wider community benefit.

- 2.37 The Local Plan Part 1 stresses the importance of the borough's town centres and the need to protect and promote a range of uses there so that they retain and enhance their vitality and viability (Policy TCS1). It also recognises the importance of Farncombe as a Local Centre (Policy TCS2).

3 VISION AND OBJECTIVES

Challenges for Godalming and Farncombe

3.1 The Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan seeks to address, as far as is possible, the challenges and opportunities that face the community of Godalming and Farncombe. In summary the identified challenges are:

- The ageing population and the need for residential and social care provision to address people's needs as they age.
- The importance of protecting the considerable heritage of Godalming and Farncombe and ensuring development enhances the character of the town.
- Retaining and enhancing the vitality and retail offer of the High Street and Farncombe village centre so that local residents choose to shop in Godalming and Farncombe.
- Significant road congestion on an historic network, which was not designed for the levels of traffic that use it.
- Making use of sustainable modes of transport more attractive by improving the provision for walking and cycling.
- Retaining and enhancing the community infrastructure which serves a growing town.
- Recognising the impact that strategic scale development at Dunsfold Park will have on Godalming and Farncombe and, in particular, through use of the railway stations as well as on the road infrastructure.
- Parking issues for all types of development, with the particular need to improve accessibility for alternative modes of travel at the railway stations.
- Protecting the sensitive natural environment in which Godalming and Farncombe sits, which is defined by the River Wey and the Lammas Lands, along with the hillsides that rise up and provide a very visible setting for the town.
- The loss of employment in the town through the loss of employment sites and premises to housing, as well as the lack of provision for the needs of modern businesses.

Vision for Godalming and Farncombe

- 3.2 In consultation with the community, the established vision for Godalming and Farncombe is as follows:

'In 2032, Godalming and Farncombe has successfully retained its distinctive historic feel whilst sustainable growth has enabled it to address the challenges that its people have faced.

The historic core of the town has been protected and the increased footfall in the town has helped to retain the vitality of its shops and services. High quality external finishes to new shopfronts and signage have helped to give the community back its High Street that is distinctly 'Godalming'.

The increased footfall has been helped by a recognition that the car has been choking a town unable to resolve its congestion by providing new roads. Instead, pavements, footways and cycle paths have been created and improved along key routes so now more people leave the car at home and instead come to shop, take their children to school or go to work on foot, by bicycle or by bus (including school buses).

Whilst traditional employment has fallen in Godalming and Farncombe, the highly skilled population has taken the opportunity created by the development of more modern workspaces. Small-scale, flexible workspaces and co-working hubs have been developed across the area which have encouraged a growing entrepreneurial spirit and the development of new companies which can share space and network. This has been complemented by the roll-out of faster broadband. Godalming and Farncombe have adapted in order to remain competitive.

This has all helped to encourage more young people with families to live in Godalming. This has been assisted by family housing being freed up by older people who have been able to move into newly built housing and facilities that are specifically designed to address their needs. Whilst this development has been modern in its thinking, it has been designed to be in keeping with the character of the area in which it sits; innovation in design is encouraged but in a way that still means new buildings sit comfortably within their surroundings.

The growing population has not been to the detriment of Godalming and Farncombe's environment or infrastructure. Existing community facilities have been protected and new facilities delivered alongside growth. Equally, new development has protected and enhanced the high quality natural environment which defines the setting of the town and has been designed to maximise sustainability. Godalming and Farncombe has grown, but not at the expense of the environment or the health and wellbeing of its people.'

Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan Objectives

3.3 The objectives of the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan as identified through engagement with the community are as follows:

Housing

- To address the housing and social care needs of the population of Godalming and Farncombe.

Transport

- To increase walking and cycling as alternatives to the private car.
- To improve public transport networks and availability.
- To address parking problems, particularly at Godalming and Farncombe stations.

Economy

- To provide modern, flexible employment space for start-ups and growing micro-businesses.
- To ensure a flexible approach to Godalming town centre and Farncombe village centre which helps to preserve and enhance their vitality.

Community and Infrastructure

- To safeguard existing community infrastructure and to ensure new development provides the community facilities that are lacking in the town.
- ~~To improve communications infrastructure so that Godalming and Farncombe remain competitive.~~

Heritage and Design

- To ensure that development respects the character of the area.
- To ensure that shopfronts in the town centre protect and enhance the heritage of the Town Centre Conservation Area.

Environment

- To protect and enhance the sensitive natural environment in which Godalming and Farncombe sits.
- To ensure development enhances the potential for local flora and fauna to thrive.
- To ensure that development is sustainable, particularly in its use of water and energy.
- To ensure development minimises air pollution and removes the need for Air Quality Management Areas.