

**MINUTES AND REPORT OF THE ENVIRONMENT & PLANNING COMMITTEE
HELD ON 17 JULY 2025**

* Councillor Kiehl – Chair
* Councillor Williams – Vice Chair

* Councillor Adam	0 Councillor Holliday
# Councillor Clayton	* Councillor Martin
* Councillor Crowe	* Councillor PMA Rivers
0 Councillor C Downey	* Councillor PS Rivers
0 Councillor S Downey	0 Councillor Steel
* Councillor Duce	* Councillor Thomson
* Councillor Follows	* Councillor Weightman
* Councillor Heagin	

* Present # Absent & No Apology Received 0 Apology for Absence L Late

126. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Meeting held on 5 June 2025 were signed by the Chair as a correct record.

127. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received and recorded as above.

128. DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS AND OTHER REGISTERABLE INTERESTS

Councillor Thomson declared an other registerable interest in Agenda Item 7 – Farncombe Day Centre application, on the grounds that she is a trustee of the Day Centre, in line with the previous dispensation from Standing Order 67 it was in the interests of persons living in the council area for Cllr Thomson to remain in the Chamber to enable her to respond to Members' questions regarding the current and future financial position of the Day Centre as it related to this application. Cllr Thomson did not vote on this matter.

The comments and observations from the following Waverley Borough Councillors were preliminary ones prior to consideration at Borough Council level and were based on the evidence and representations to the Town Council.

Councillor PMA Rivers

129. PETITIONS/STATEMENTS/QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No petitions/statements/questions had been received from members of the public in accordance with Standing Order No 4.

130. QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS

No questions from Councillors were submitted in accordance with Standing Order 6.

131. COMMUNITY ENERGY SCHEME

Community Energy Scheme Proposal at Unstead Weir – Members received a presentation from Mr Steve Bowra, Ms Carol Kemm and Mr Paul Richardson regarding the potential development of a community-owned renewable energy scheme centred around Unstead Weir. The presenters were thanked for their informative and detailed presentation, and for their commitment to exploring sustainable community energy solutions.

On the proposal of Cllr Follows, seconded by Cllr Martin, it was **RESOLVED** that:

Godalming Town Council **supports in principle** the idea of the Unstead Weir community energy project. However, Members expressed **concerns regarding the feasibility of the proposed site**, particularly in relation to site suitability and the necessary regulatory and technical constraints.

Subject to further investigation and clarification, the Council would consider supporting an application for a Phase 1 feasibility study, but it was clearly noted and agreed that **GTC will not make any commitment to establish or participate in any future legal entity related to the project.**

Members further agreed that, should the presenters provide the Town Clerk (CEO) with copies of their correspondence with relevant landowners and agencies – including but not limited to the Environment Agency and the National Trust – the CEO will prepare a report for consideration at a future meeting. This report would assist the Council in determining whether proceeding to the feasibility application stage is viable and appropriate.

It was also noted that the project group intends to present the proposal to Shalford Parish Council on 12 September.

132. CIL APPLICATIONS

Farncombe Day Centre – CIL Application Feasibility Study Support and Recommendation to Full Council

The Committee considered a request submitted on behalf of the Farncombe Day Centre (FDC) seeking an award of £18,600 in Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) funds to support the commissioning of a feasibility study for the future regeneration and modernisation of the Centre.

Members noted the importance of the Farncombe Day Centre as a long-standing and vital community asset delivering critical services to older residents, carers, and the wider Godalming community. The feasibility study aims to underpin a Strategic CIL application to Waverley Borough Council later in 2025 and includes architectural, survey, and project management elements essential to inform the scope and delivery of the proposed capital improvements.

The Committee reviewed the officer evaluation and confirmed that the application met the requirements of Regulation 59C of the Community Infrastructure Levy Regulations 2010 (as amended), as well as the Council's own CIL Policy. In particular, Members were mindful of the project's strategic relevance to local demographic change and growth, as evidenced in Waverley's Infrastructure Delivery Plan and Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. It was noted that the project aligns with an "Essential" category of infrastructure investment.

Resolved:

That the Environment & Planning Committee supports the application by the Farncombe Day Centre for a Neighbourhood CIL award of £18,600 in order to undertake a feasibility study to inform a Strategic CIL bid, subject to the following conditions:

- i. The funded feasibility study shall be completed and submitted to Godalming Town Council no later than 31 October 2025 and used to support a Strategic CIL bid to Waverley Borough Council for the 2025/26 round.
- ii. The Farncombe Day Centre shall maintain formal engagement with Waverley Borough Council's CIL Team and Godalming Town Council throughout the development of the regeneration proposal and provide key outcomes from the feasibility study to the CEO.

- iii. Funds shall only be released by Godalming Town Council upon receipt of valid invoices or in accordance with a formal contract agreed and sighted by the Town Council.

Recommendation to Full Council:

That Full Council **approves a Neighbourhood CIL grant of £18,600** to the Farncombe Day Centre to support the feasibility study described above, on the conditions set out herein.

Guildford Hockey Club – CIL Application Floodlight Replacement Support and Recommendation to Full Council

The Committee considered a request from Guildford Hockey Club (GHC) for a Neighbourhood CIL award of £100,000 towards the replacement of failing floodlighting at their facilities based at Broadwater School, Godalming.

The proposed works involve upgrading the lighting system across the astro hockey pitches, training area, netball courts and adjacent parking with energy-efficient LED units. The project aims to improve light quality to national league standard, reduce energy use by 55%, and extend hours of availability for community use, including Broadwater School and Farncombe Youth Football Club.

The total project cost of £134,400 is to be part-funded (£34,400) from a joint GHC-Broadwater School sinking fund. The Committee noted that the works qualify as infrastructure improvement under Regulation 59C of the CIL Regulations and align with local development plans, the Godalming & Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan, and Waverley's Infrastructure Delivery Plan.

Members acknowledged the community benefit of the project, including youth engagement, health and wellbeing outcomes, and the expansion of women's and disability-inclusive sport.

Resolved:

That the Environment & Planning Committee supports the application by Guildford Hockey Club for a Neighbourhood CIL award of £100,000 in support of the floodlight replacement project, subject to the following conditions:

- i. Guildford Hockey Club is to provide confirmation of contractor appointment and project delivery by 31 October 2025.
- ii. Godalming Town Council will reimburse 74.63% of submitted invoices up to a maximum of £100,000, with the remaining balance funded by the applicant.
- iii. Guildford Hockey Club is to provide Godalming Town Council within 12 months of project completion:
 - Energy savings achieved,
 - Growth in community usage, and
 - A plan to replenish the sinking fund used to part-fund the works.
- iv. Any publicity, media, or signage relating to the floodlight upgrade must acknowledge Godalming Town Council's financial contribution through Neighbourhood CIL.

Recommendation to Full Council:

That Full Council **approves a Neighbourhood CIL grant of £100,000** to Guildford Hockey Club for the above project, subject to the conditions stated.

133. PLANNING APPLICATIONS – CONSULTATION

The Committee considered planning application listed on the attached schedule and commented on them as shown in the fifth column.

134. PLANNING APPLICATIONS – SUBJECTED TO AMENDMENT

There were no planning applications previously considered by this committee for which subsequent amendments had been submitted.

135. STREET NAMING APPLICATION

Land South-East of Binscombe, Godalming

Members considered correspondence from Waverley Borough Council (WBC) regarding a street naming application submitted by Thakeham Homes Limited for a development comprising 1 new highway and 27 dwellings, located on land centred at OS coordinates 496830 146100, south-east of Binscombe, Godalming.

WBC advised that the developer had proposed the name **Petal Close**, which had been assessed and deemed acceptable by WBC's Address Development Team in accordance with their Street Naming and Numbering Policy. The proposal had also been consulted upon with Royal Mail, with no objection received.

Members expressed disappointment that only a single naming option was presented for consideration and felt that the Town Council should have been offered the opportunity to comment on a shortlist or to suggest alternative names, in line with good practice and recognising the importance of local identity in new developments.

Nonetheless, having assessed the name 'Petal Close' against the grounds for objection – namely duplication, difficulty in spelling or pronunciation, or potential to cause offence – **Members raised no objection to the proposed name.**

It was agreed that WBC be informed accordingly, with the Town Council's comments noted. The response deadline of 12 noon on Friday, 18 July 2025 was also acknowledged.

136. FRANKLYN ROAD OAK TREE – TREE PRESERVATION ORDER REQUEST AND RESPONSE FROM WAVERLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL

Following concerns raised by Members in response to the felling of a historic oak tree in Whitewebbs Park, Enfield, attention was drawn to a similarly significant and prominent oak tree located at the junction of Franklyn Road and Seymour Road, Godalming. This tree is widely considered to be the oldest within the Ockford Ridge and Aaron's Hill estate and holds a central place in both the visual landscape and ecological character of the area.

Members were reminded that on 23 May 2025, the CEO, on behalf of Godalming Town Council (GTC), formally requested that Waverley Borough Council (WBC) make a Tree Preservation Order (TPO) in respect of this tree, to ensure its statutory protection (letter attached for reference).

On 13 June 2025, WBC responded through its Principal Arboricultural Officer, acknowledging the tree's amenity value and confirming that it is subject to internal inspection under WBC's Tree and Woodland Policy. However, the response indicated that WBC did not consider it expedient to make a TPO, citing a perceived lack of immediate threat and the fact that the tree is managed in accordance with good arboricultural practice.

Members noted with concern that within a 150-metre radius of the Franklyn Road oak, three trees owned by GTC—a Copper Beech, Horse Chestnut, and Beech—are protected by

TPOs, despite being subject to similar professional arboricultural management and formal inspection regimes.

Members expressed disappointment at WBC's refusal to provide statutory protection and considered that reliance on internal policy, without the legal safeguards provided by a TPO, may not offer sufficient long-term assurance, particularly in the context of potential future administrative or policy changes.

Members strongly reaffirmed their view that this landmark oak tree should be afforded the higher level of protection provided by a TPO, and that this position reflects both local concern and the need to demonstrate robust long-term stewardship of key landscape assets.

Accordingly, it was resolved that the Town Clerk write again to WBC, formally requesting reconsideration of its decision, and reasserting GTC's clear and continued support for the making of a TPO on this important tree.

137. COMMUNICATIONS ARISING FROM THIS MEETING

Members identified no items from this meeting to be publicised.

138. DATE OF NEXT MEETING

The next meeting of the Environment & Planning Committee is scheduled to take place in the Council Chamber on Thursday, 7 August 2025 at 6.30pm.

139. ANNOUNCEMENTS

Members were informed of the wreath laying ceremony due to take place at 09.00 on Friday, 15 August to commemorate the 80th anniversary of VJ Day.