

What is a Neighbourhood Plan?

Put simply a neighbourhood plan is a land-use plan to direct future development in Godalming & Farncombe. The plan can address the type of new development (and supporting infrastructure) in our community, its location and its appearance. It represents an unparalleled opportunity to influence the future development of our town. Waverley Borough Council still has to produce the high level (strategic) plan but the local detail can be determined by those who know best...and that is YOU!

Where the Neighbourhood Plan fits in

National Planning Policy Framework
(Central Government)

Local Plan (Waverley Borough Council)

Neighbourhood Plan (Us!)

Stage 1: Defining the Neighbourhood



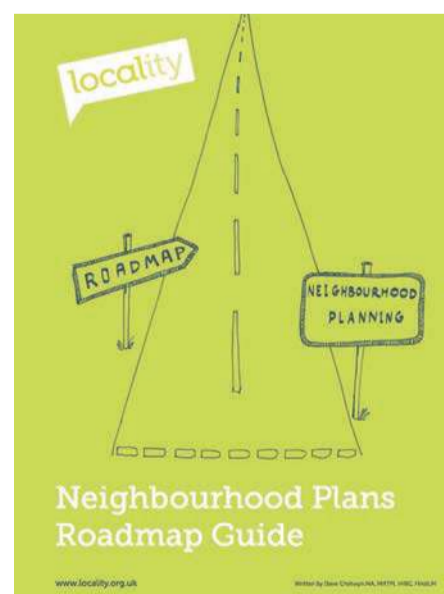
In areas with a parish or town council, the parish or town council will take the lead on neighbourhood. For our town this is Godalming Town Council and the Town Council applied to Waverley Borough Council for designation of the whole town area.

On 16 July 2013 – the neighbourhood area was designated as being the same as that covered by the Town Council – broadly speaking it's the area covered by the GU7 postcode.

Stage 2: Preparing the Plan

A neighbourhood plan must follow some basic ground rules:

- it must generally be in line with local and national planning policies
- it must be in line with other laws
- if the local planning authority says that an area needs to grow, then communities cannot use neighbourhood planning to block the building of new homes and businesses; they can, however, use neighbourhood planning to influence the type, design, location and mix of new development
- neighbourhood plans must contribute to achieving sustainable development



With a neighbourhood plan, communities are able to establish general planning policies for the development and use of land in a neighbourhood. They will be able to say, for example, where new homes and offices should be built, and what they should look like. The neighbourhood plan will set a vision for the future. It can be detailed, or general, depending on what local people want.

This stage is where we are currently.

Stage 3: Independent Check

Once a neighbourhood plan or order has been prepared, an independent examiner will check that it meets the right basic standards.

If the plan or order doesn't meet the right standards, the examiner will recommend changes. Waverley Borough Council will then need to consider the examiner's views and decide whether to make those changes.

If the examiner recommends significant changes, then the Town Council may decide to consult the local community again before proceeding.

Stage 4: Community Referendum

Waverley Borough Council will be responsible for organising a referendum on a neighbourhood plan that meets the basic standards. This ensures that the community has the final say on whether a neighbourhood plan or order comes into force.

People living in the neighbourhood who are registered to vote in local elections will be entitled to vote in the referendum.

If more than 50% of people voting in the referendum support the neighbourhood plan then Waverley Borough Council must bring it into force.



Stage 5: Legal Force

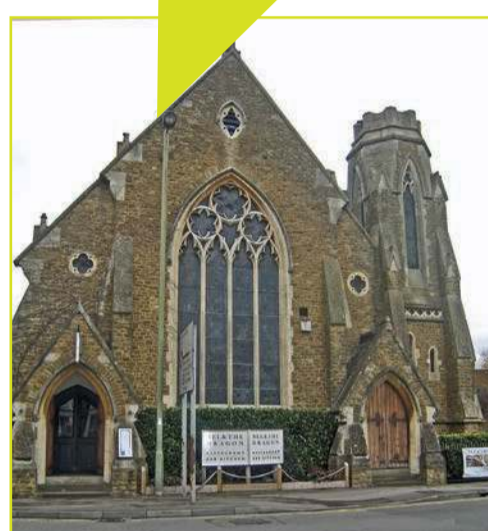
Once a neighbourhood plan is in force following a successful referendum, it carries real legal weight. Planners would be obliged to consider proposals for development in our town in line with the Neighbourhood Plan.

What is Heritage?

Social/Welfare?



Religious?



Industrial?



Educational?



Transport?

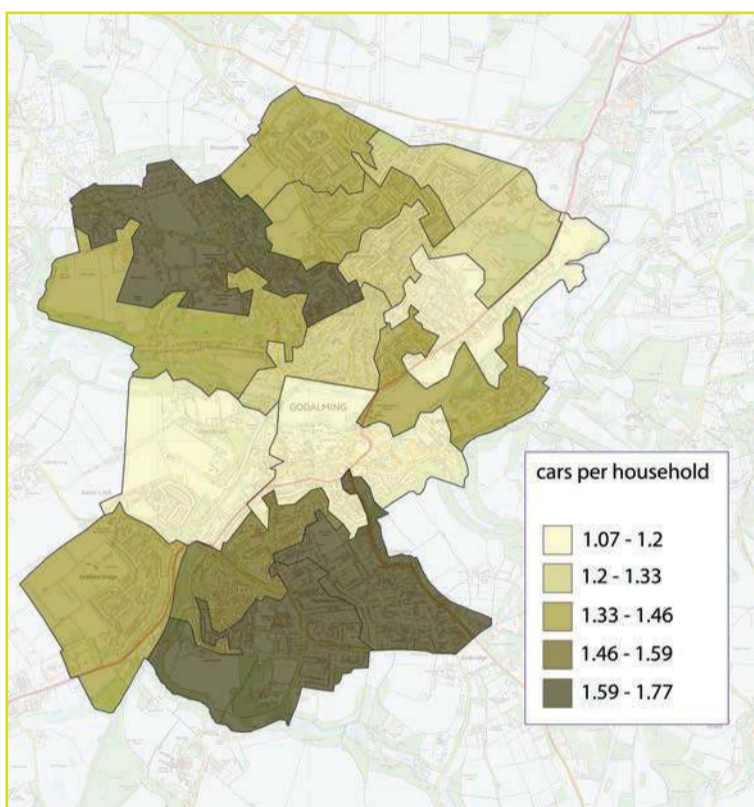


Landscape?

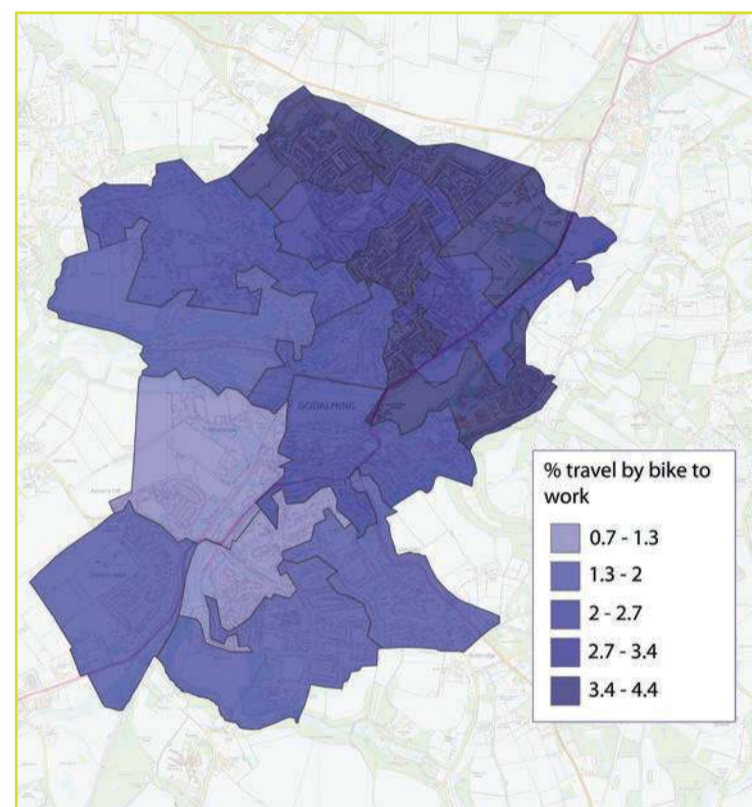


How we use Transport

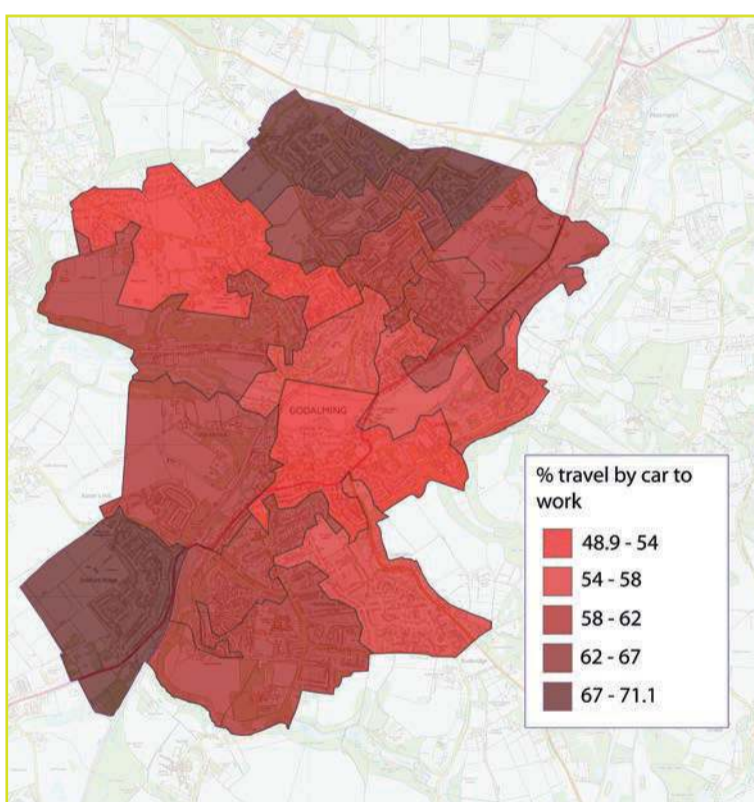
Car ownership levels: The level of car ownership in Godalming ranges from 1.07 cars per household in the Meadow area of Farncombe (where 29% of households have no car) to 1.77 in Charterhouse/Mark Way (where only 4% of households have no car).



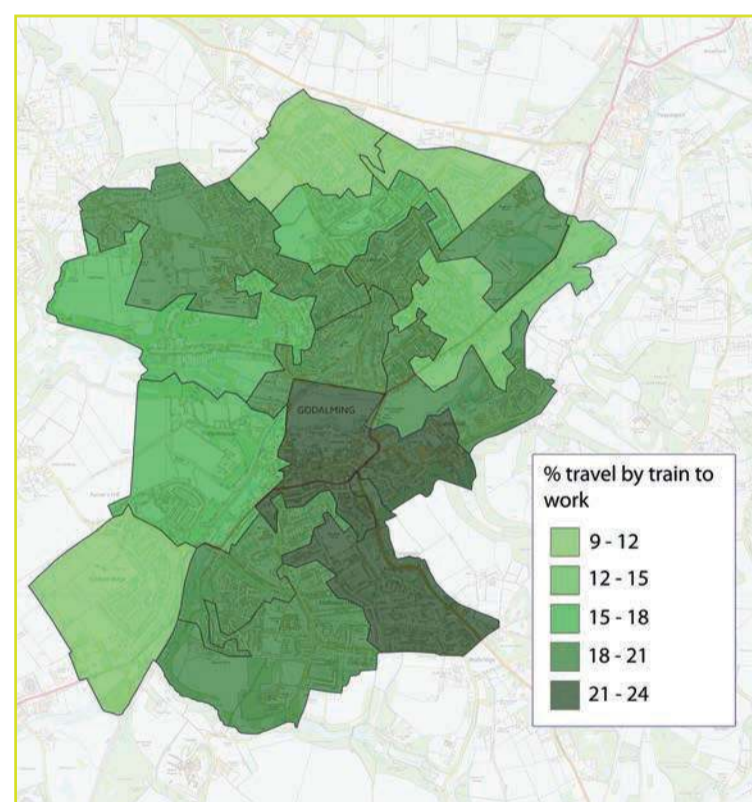
Bike commuting: Just 285 people used a bike to travel to work in 2011, 2.5% of the total. The rate of cycling varied from 4.2% in the Binscombe/Green Lane area, to less than 1% in Shackstead Lane/Busbridge Lane. Better conditions for cycling could help increase levels of cycling.



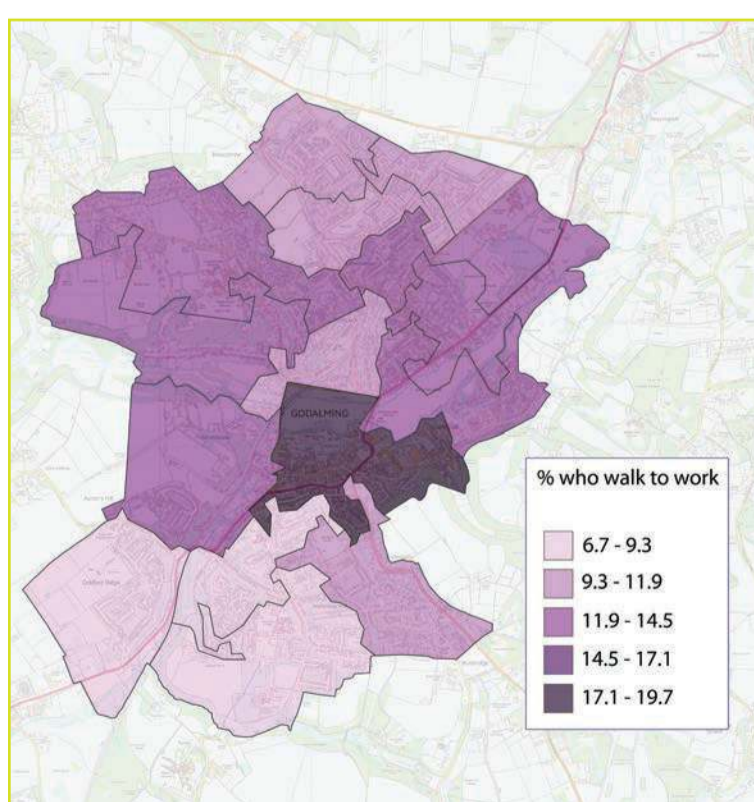
Car commuting: Most people in Godalming and Farncombe use cars, vans or motorbikes to commute - 6,771 people in 2011, 60% of the total. This varies considerably between parts of the town with less than 49% of the workers in Godalming town centre commuting by car, but over 70% in Ockford Ridge.



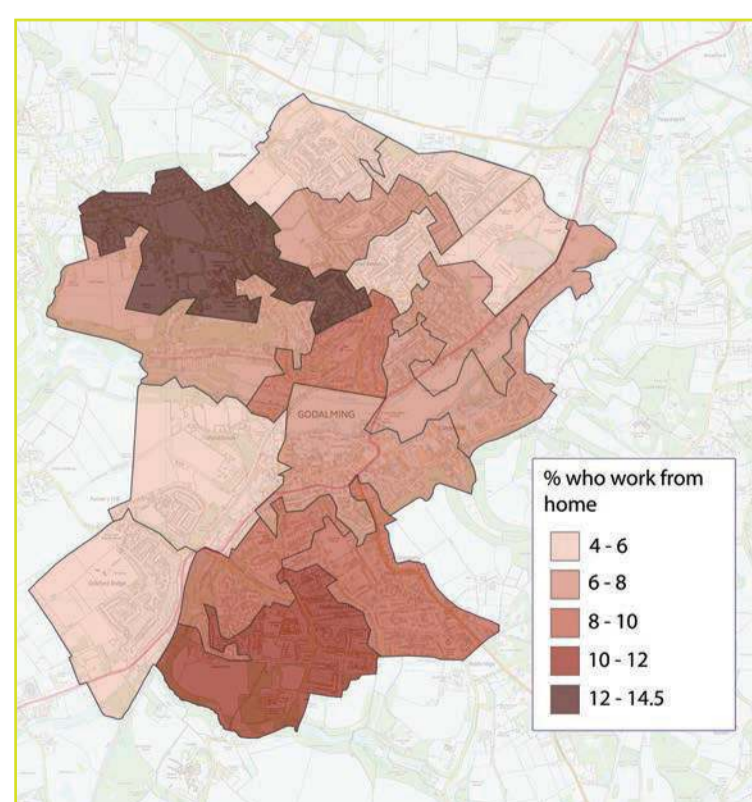
Rail commuting: Overall 17% of residents, 1,930 people, commute by rail, which is far higher than the national average. Almost a quarter of residents from the area around the top of Brighton Road/The Drive commute by train, but less than 10% of those living in Northbourne or Binscombe do so. Many hundreds more people drive to Godalming to get on board the train at the stations.



Walking to work: 1,290 people commute on foot - 11% of the total, but 30% of those work in Godalming. This ranges from almost 19% in the town centre to under 7% on the edges of the town. If some of the 1000 or so people who drive to work within Godalming chose to go by bike or foot it would greatly reduce rush-hour congestion.



Working from home: 815 already work from home in Godalming, with the highest levels in the Charterhouse area (presumably connected to the school). It is likely that more people will work from home on occasions in the future, as workplaces become more flexible. This will help to reduce congestion and improve quality of life for many.



Housing Priorities

The Neighbourhood Plan's Housing Group has identified four sectors in which the housing market is failing to meet local needs. Priority must be given to addressing these failings when planning new developments over the next 30 to 50 years.

The four are:

1. Lack of suitable accommodation for the over 55's, who represent the town's fastest growing resident group and who will increasingly be needing to cope with mobility disabilities and illness, especially dementia.
2. Lack of reasonably priced accommodation for young and growing families.
3. Difficulties experienced by many young people in securing their first independent accommodation.
4. General lack of social housing.

"A lack of choice of suitable homes to downsize into is having a negative effect, not just on older people's health and wellbeing, but on the rest of the housing chain, as 85 per cent of larger family homes owned by older people only become available when someone dies"

The Top of the Ladder by Claudia Wood pub. Demos 2013.

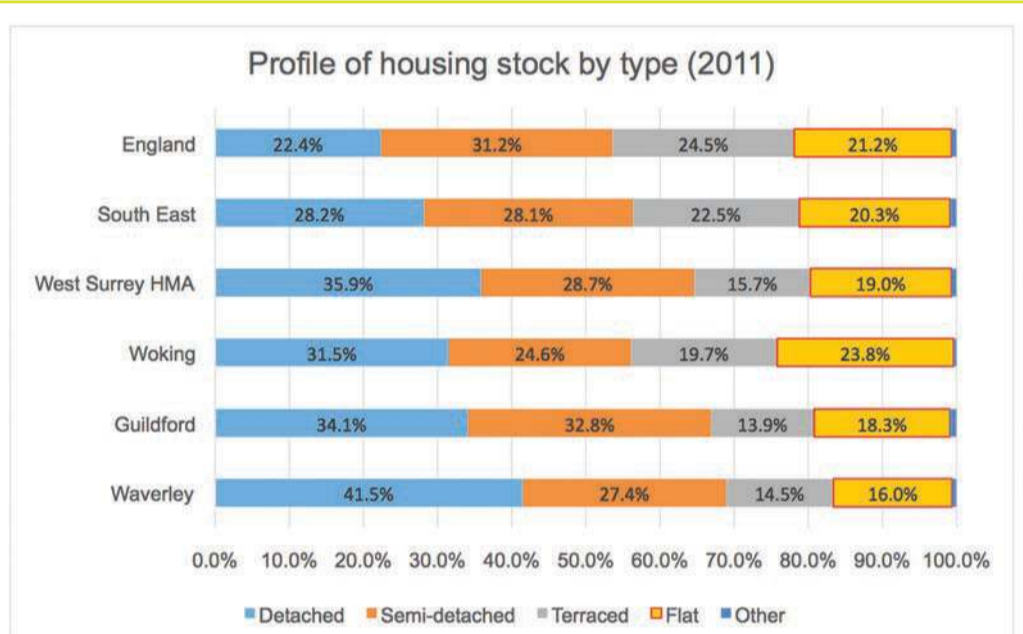
"The "phenomenon" of under-occupation is particularly borne out of ageing demographics and reasonable affluence which particularly drive "empty nester" households. In Waverley, this is arguably made more acute by the dominance of larger properties and the relative lack of downsizing options. Given the demographic and socio-economic profile of Waverley, this issue is likely to continue to rise in future, reducing liquidity in the market for larger properties in the area.

Whilst the encouragement of downsizing is an inexact science (and driven as much by attitude as stock availability), there may be an argument for increasing the supply of smaller units in these areas but with the product focussed on the types (houses rather than flats) and quality of units which are attractive to older households."

Waverley & West Surrey Strategic Housing market Assessment pub. Waverley Borough Council 2013.

"Young adults priced out of our major cities appear, simply, to be concentrated in the areas where their parents live..... Adults living at home with their parents into their 20s and 30s, even if working, is just one of the many symptoms of the housing crisis."

The Clipped Wing Generation pub. Shelter 2014.



Source: Census 2011

Over crowding and Under-occupation (2011)

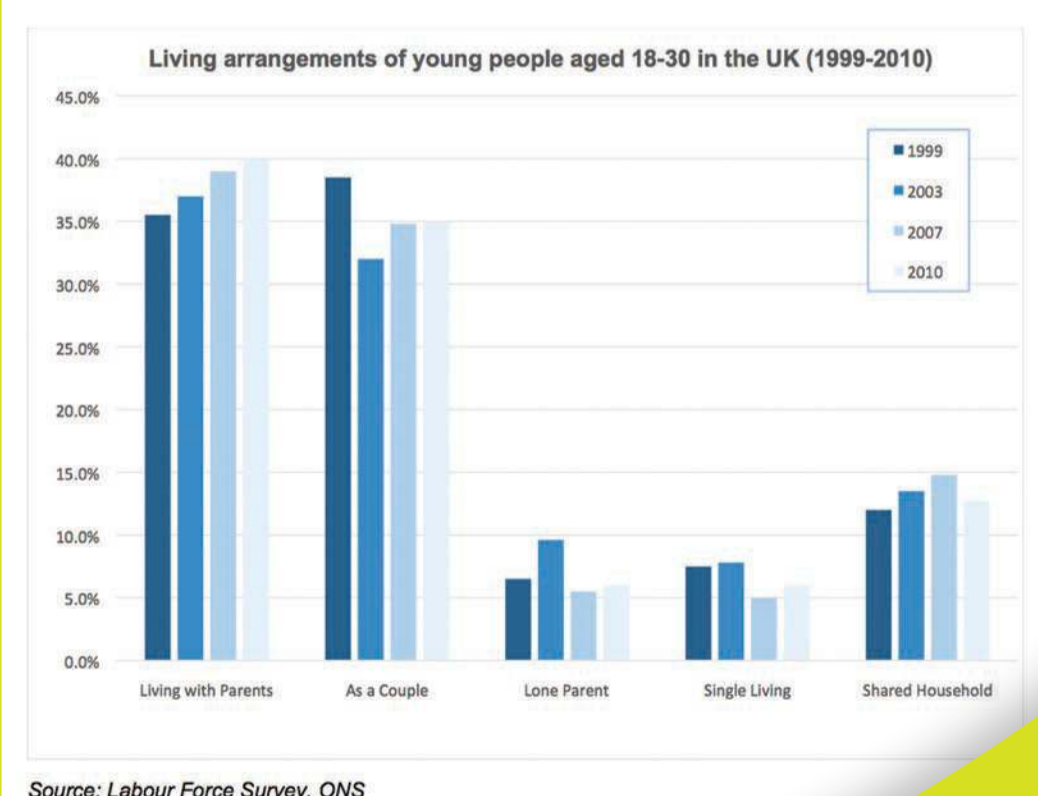
	Overcrowded (No.)	Overcrowded(%)	Under occupied (%)
Waverley	1,211	2.5%	76.6%
Guildford	1,980	3.7%	71.5%
Woking	1,889	4.8%	68.8%
West Surrey	5,080	3.6%	72.5%
South East	133,570	3.8%	70.7%
England	1,060,967	4.8%	68.7%

Source: Census 2011

"Affordability: is assessed by comparing household income...against the cost of suitable market housing (to either buy or rent), summarised as:

- a household is considered able to afford to buy a home if it costs 3.5 times the gross household income
- a household is considered able to afford market rented housing where the rent payable would constitute no more that 30% of gross income"

Waverley & West Surrey Strategic Housing market Assessment pub. Waverley Borough Council 2013



Source: Labour Force Survey, ONS

What have we done so far?



Launched the process with a packed public meeting on 23 January 2014 (*you can still watch the video of that meeting on YouTube*)



In working on the Neighbourhood Plan our volunteers have been divided into six groups working on different themes, though there are inevitably overlaps between those themes. The themes are Community Infrastructure; Economy; Environment; Heritage & Design; Housing and Transport. Different groups have progressed in different ways and are at different stages in their evidence gathering. Each group has offered a contribution to this exhibition.



Recruited more than 60 volunteers who have been working on the detail and maintained contact with hundreds of residents who have said that they are interested in knowing what's going on.



Networked with other Neighbourhood Planners

#GOFARNP

Used the hashtag #GOFARNP and Twitter & Facebook to keep people informed



We've gathered lots of evidence, some of that evidence is empirical for example, the detailed figures from the 2011 Census.



Much of that evidence has come from you; we've spoken to hundreds of you at community events; and we've sent out a questionnaire to all households in the town (and more than 2,000 of you were kind

enough to fill it in and send it back). We've interviewed experts and stakeholders; we've conducted focus groups and we've brought together this exhibition to further inform and engage with you.



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Transport Priorities

The Neighbourhood Plan's Transport Group has identified key issues where specific policies may be justified and reports as follows:

Evidence base

Transport is used principally for people to access services: education, healthcare, shopping, jobs and leisure. Enabling people to access these services as easily as possible, and preferably as close as possible to where they live, minimises cost, time and use of resources.

Analysis of the 2011 Census shows that:

- 15% of households in Godalming do not have access to a car, rising to 29% in some locations of Farncombe, but as low as 4% in the Charterhouse area, reflecting differing incomes and ability to access facilities locally.
- There are 12,323 cars or vans owned by Godalming's 8,954 households – 1.38 per household. However, again, this ranges from a low of 1.07 cars per household in the Meadow area of Farncombe to 1.77 in Charterhouse.
- In 2011, 7,395 residents of the town commuted to work, and 6,543 worked in the town, of whom 2,500 (38%) came from within Godalming.
- 17% of Godalming's working residents commute by train, 14% on foot or by bike, 2% by bus, but the majority (60%) get to work by car or van. The remaining 7% work from home.

Pedestrian routes

Issues: More people would walk into the town if the routes for pedestrians were improved. Many key pedestrian routes lack safe crossing points – for instance, access to schools, railway stations and other facilities. There are places on busy roads without footways and there are places where repairs or slight changes to the footways would make use by pedestrians and wheelchair users much easier. Some footways are obstructed, for instance by parked cars.

Policy justification: The recommended work on pedestrian routes would improve access to the town and reduce motor traffic. Efforts should be made to ensure that pedestrian routes are kept clear giving proper access for disabled and able pedestrians.

Train and Bus Services

Issues: Usage of Godalming and Farncombe Stations has increased by 47% over the last ten years and is expected to grow even more particularly when Dunsfold aerodrome is developed. Parking in the town for commuters is already difficult and – unless controlled - the situation is expected to worsen. Bus services are expected to be reduced making it more difficult for some residents to get into town.

Policy justification: Public transport into Godalming and Farncombe needs to be improved, not reduced, particularly in the light of the considerable addition to housing and population now taking place. Car commuting into the town is at saturation point and better public transport is a valuable way to reduce the pressure.

Speed restrictions

Issues: One of the most powerful responses to the survey was that 77% of respondents agreed that "the roads in the area have generally become more dangerous for cyclists, walkers and unsupervised children." There is strong support amongst the written comments to the survey for measures to reduce traffic speeds and volumes of traffic.

Policy justification: Further speed restriction would improve safety for pedestrians. There is evidence that a 20mph speed limit in residential areas reduces accidents to pedestrians.

Policy: Seek to reduce traffic volume and speed through strategic use of access controls, speed limits and speed reducing road design (ie, raised tables at junctions, kerb-build outs etc).

Cycle lanes and paths

Issues: Cycling in the town is more hazardous than it need be. Many are put off from cycling by the perceived lack of safety.

Policy justification: Dedicated cycle lanes and paths would improve cyclists' safety, encourage more people especially schoolchildren, to cycle and so reduce car traffic. The highest priority route identified is a route between the existing Marshall Road path (Bridge Road/Chalk Road/Meadow roundabout) and the town centre. This would provide the 'missing link' between the town centre and Farncombe. The 2002 Waverley Local Plan outlined the need for a link through the Lammas Lands, including new bridges over Hell Ditch and the Wey (near Homebase), but this was never completed. The new plan must maintain the momentum and complete this vital route.

Parking

Issues: 1,123 people drive from parts of the town to other parts of the town to get to work; trips of usually a mile or less. Ensuring that the alternatives (walking, cycling, buses) are better, will help reduce this huge demand and therefore ensure more parking is available for those making longer trips.

Policy justification: Demand for parking should be dealt with first by trying to improve the alternatives, particularly for the large number of short trips within the town.

Transporting children to and from school

Issues: Large numbers of children are taken to and from school in individual cars holding only one or two children each. These cars are a major cause of slow moving rush hour traffic in the town.

Policy justification: The provision of better public transport for school children would ease traffic flow at rush hours together with safer cycling and safer walking.

Dunsfold

Issues: Large numbers of people 'railheading' (driving to park at stations) from outside Godalming add to the congestion, road danger, pollution and create parking problems around stations. A larger development at Dunsfold might enable better public transport links to divert some of this traffic.

Policy justification: Already significant numbers of people from the Dunsfold area commute by train – around 9% of the total. Most of these people are likely to be driving to Witley, Milford, or the Godalming stations. Large numbers of people living at the proposed site in Dunsfold will aim to drive to these stations as they prove to be easier to access than Guildford. A site of 1,800 homes will likely generate roughly another 2,500 active workers. Assuming 9% of these will aim to travel by train, that is another 225 people travelling by car to park around the stations (in addition to those travelling to work in Godalming/Farncombe). This is unlikely to be large enough to support a dedicated connecting bus service. If the Dunsfold development takes place controlled parking should be considered as a way of mitigating the impact of commuter traffic and parking on the town.

Policy: Implement stricter parking and access controls close to Godalming and Farncombe Stations.

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Environment

The Neighbourhood Plan's Environment Group has been looking at land-based issues, such as the town's green space, surrounding countryside, wildlife and so on. It has also been looking at water-based issues, like enjoyment of our open waters, flooding, drainage etc.

Issues

The Environment Group has examined the enhancement of existing green space in Godalming and Farncombe and how that space can be managed for the benefit of the community. The group has also explored the possibility of new green space.

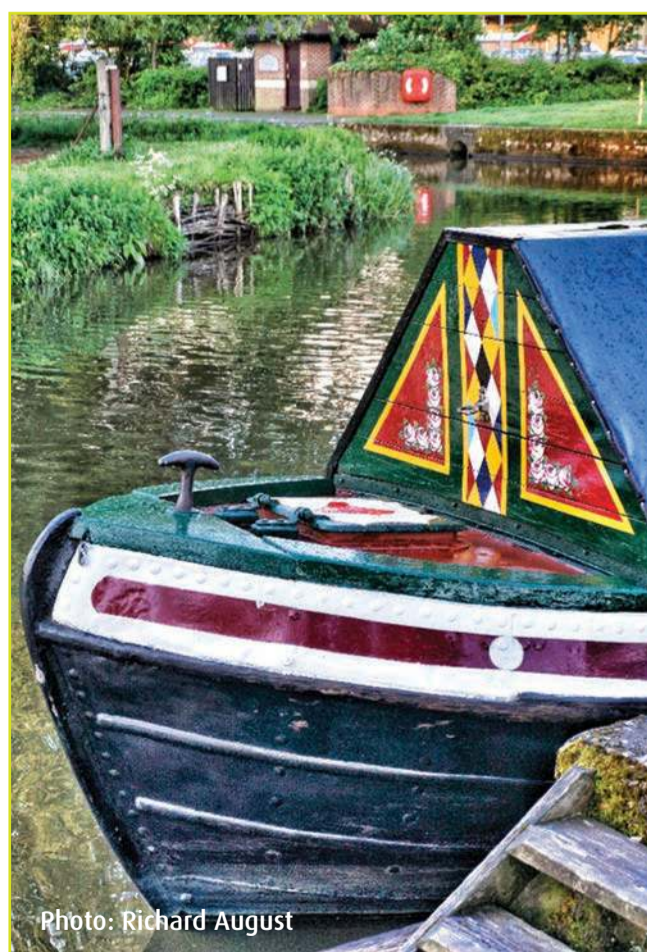
The protection and enhancement of the town's biodiversity assets and the possibility of improving wildlife corridors has also been looked at.

"There is a chance that the environment will be compromised by the need for housing."



Having established that the areas of open water in the town – the River Wey, the Wey Navigation and Broadwater Lake – are very popular, the group has explored whether these resources can be better protected and yet enhanced and made more accessible to all. The possibility of diversifying leisure use and enjoyment has been discussed.

"Manage water levels and drainage to ensure new development does not damage existing sites, buildings and countryside."



The Neighbourhood Plan was launched just weeks after parts of the town were significantly flooded at Christmas 2013 and flooding along the Wey valley is acknowledged as an extremely important issue. The group's volunteers have examined the implementation of measures to manage flooding and minimise its effects on property at risk; they have also looked at the likely increase in rainfall as a result of climate change

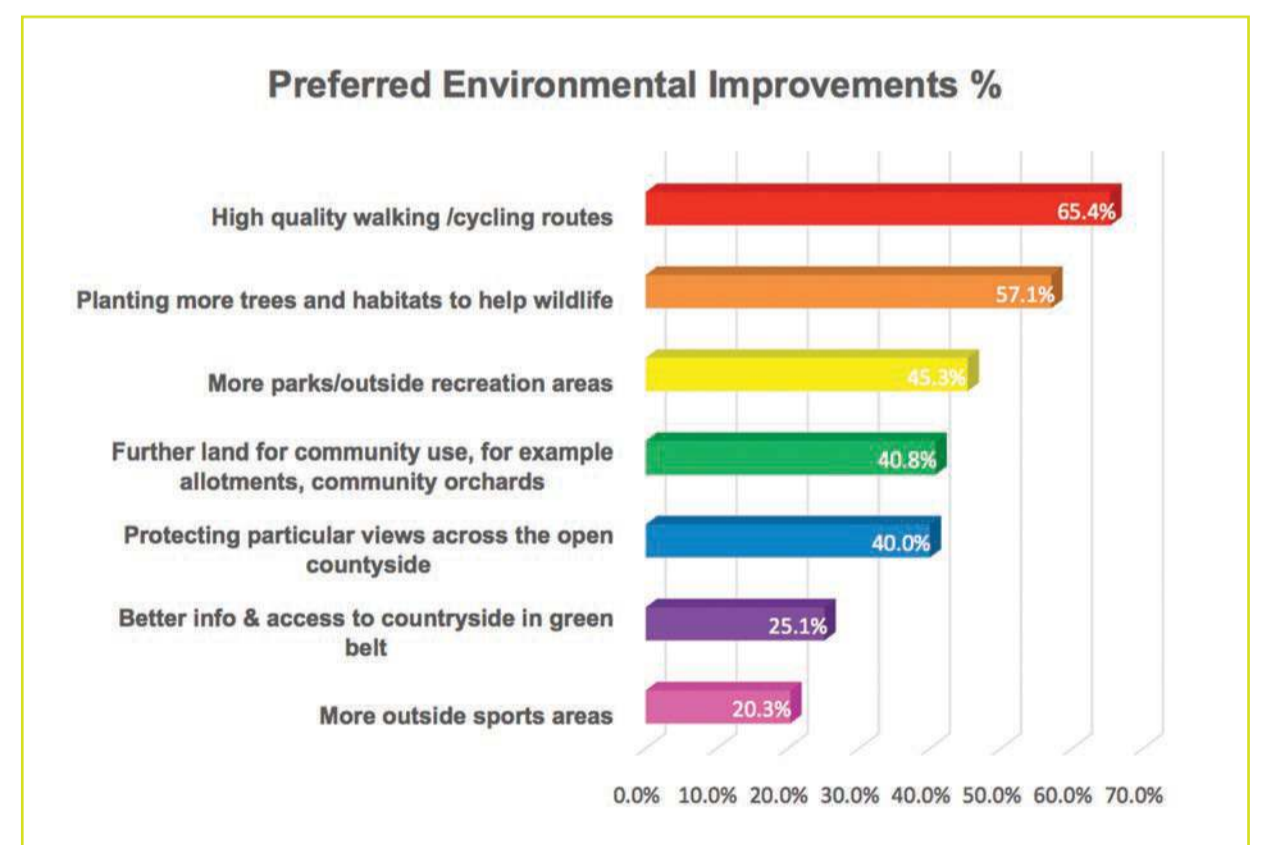
and explored how the Neighbourhood Plan might address the better management of run-off and drainage.



Photo: Richard August

"Wooded areas are part of the landscape of Godalming and are integral to the Town's identity and environment."

In the questionnaire to all households the environment group asked respondents to identify their top three priorities for environmental improvements. The answers are summarised in the graph below.



"The fact that we are nestled in the wonderful green and lush countryside is one of the most attractive parts of Godalming and should be preserved."

Economy

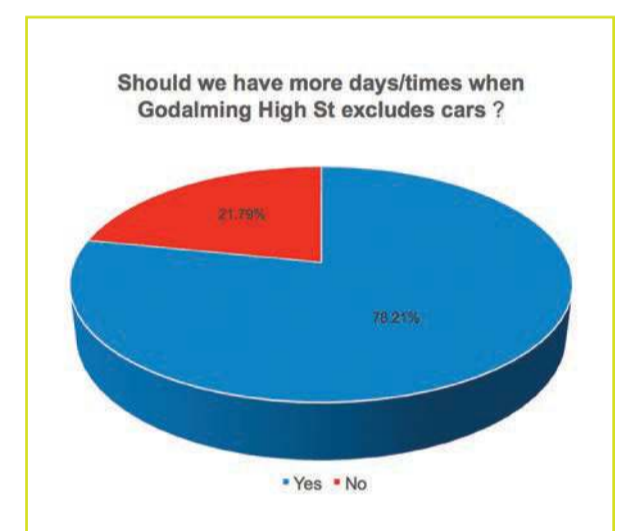
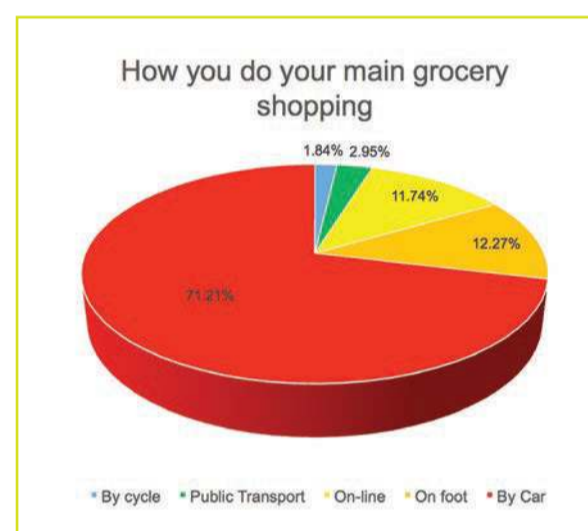
The Neighbourhood Plan's Economy Group has explored the importance of maintaining a vibrant economy in Godalming & Farncombe.

With increasing demand for housing and values for residential land being significantly higher than those for commercial land, there is a constant challenge of keeping commercial activity within the town. The Neighbourhood Plan needs to address that challenge, what that commercial activity might look like in the future and how changing employment patterns can be accommodated.

Did you know?

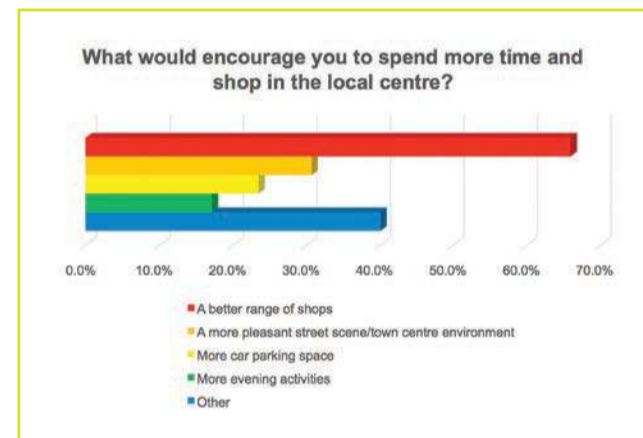
That from 2013 it has been possible to convert office buildings into residential homes without planning permission (i.e. it is permitted development). For 2015 those permitted development rights apply to light industrial units too. This means that employment land can be lost without giving us, as a community, the opportunity to debate whether or not that is what we need. Examples of Godalming offices converted to flats include the former home of WWF (who moved to new offices in Woking in 2013) in Catteshall Lane; the site is currently being marketed by Hamptons International as "Weirview Place".

"Too many charity shops in Godalming. Too many fast food restaurants in Farncombe"



"Godalming has seemingly fallen behind Haslemere and Cranleigh with regard to 'quality' of shops and diversity in town centre businesses."

In its questions to residents the Economy Group focussed on the importance of the retail economy asking households how they do their main grocery shopping, what would encourage them to spend more time in the local centre (be that Farncombe village centre or Godalming High Street); and specific to Godalming High Street whether there should be more times when the High Street excludes cars. The answers to those questions are summarised graphically here. In narrative answers about what would encourage residents to spend more time and shop in Godalming & Farncombe



"Farncombe is great as it is"



sufficient quality hotel accommodation locally.

The Economy Group continues with its work and at the time of writing (21 March 2016) is just launching an on-line survey of the town's business community. The survey will research what local businesses feel are the obstacles to the growth of their business in our community; what facilities (transport, parking etc.) are needed to attract employees; whether there is

"Godalming is lovely"



centres the majority referred to either free parking or cheaper parking. Where reference was made to a better range of shops, answers fell into two distinct categories; the first can be summed up by the following answer "a better range of independent shops" the second is expressed by the following "open the High Street to all shops, i.e.: Poundland, Wilkos or McDonalds etc."



Godalming Farncombe

Neighbourhood Plan

our town, our future



292 Brownfield sites already allocated in Waverley Plan for next 5 years

148 New Brownfield sites with recent planning applications

342 Actively promoted in the Greenbelt by owners

Planning Housing in Godalming - where are we?

In 2014 the Waverley Draft Plan proposed Godalming deliver 950 houses on Brownfield land and 100 on Greenfield sites over the next 15 years. In 2016 Godalming is 73 houses short of meeting that 15 year Brownfield target. No housing has been allowed yet on Greenfield sites, although there are two significant areas that will require your views - Franklyn Road/Upper Eashing and land at New Pond Road, Farncombe.

There are 1558 people on Waverley's Social Housing waiting list, of which 26% **405** live in Godalming area.

The requirements are for:

	Godalming	Farncombe
1 Bed:	134	87
2 Bed:	88	51
3 Bed+ :	22	23

The average waiting time for Social Housing is 1222 days (over 3 years).

(Source Waverley Housing Update Oct 2014)

221
1 beds

What Social Housing is being built in Godalming?

- Station Road: 14
- Riverside: 37
- Farncombe: 7
- Ockford Ridge: 34
- Godalming College 14
- Furze Lane 20 (if planning consent)
- Woodside Park 27 (if planning consent)

Total: 153 dwellings planned over the next 15 years

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Community & Infrastructure

It is a self-evident truth that with more homes and more residents comes the need for more community infrastructure to support that increased population. The Neighbourhood Plan's Community & Infrastructure Group has been exploring the town's existing infrastructure (for example healthcare, schools, leisure activities) and whether or not that meets existing demand. The group is also working on what additional infrastructure will be required and how that might be provided. (Note that roads and other transport infrastructure are being considered by the Transport Group.)



In the questionnaire to all residents the Community & Infrastructure Group asked questions about how people perceived the availability of healthcare

facilities and educational establishments. A number of respondents suggested that we should already have this data. Of course we have the numerical data but the gap between that data and residents' perceptions was evidence in its own right. For example a third of respondents think there are insufficient primary schools locally while the empirical evidence is that not all available primary school places in the town are used.

Residents were also asked what community facilities that they thought were lacking and the main messages from 867 narrative responses may be summarised as below:

- There was a wish for more of a community hub in some parts the town, particularly Busbridge, Binscombe/ Northbourne and Catteshall. Commercial enterprises such as shops, cafes and pubs are seen as community facilities that create a hub.
- There needs to be better distribution of play areas for young children and places for play and socialising for toddlers and their parents e.g. soft play.
- There is support for more venues for racquet sports (squash, tennis and table tennis) and a sports hall space for flexible indoor use. The leisure centre is used as a gym and swimming pool and not able to cater for these activities. For example, it was stated that the Godalming Table Tennis Club has 8+ teams and plays in Guildford.
- The range of facilities available for young people of youth club age is considered by many to be non-existent or inadequate. The comments made include references to outdoor facilities such as skate parks and sport activities and social meeting places etc. that are affordable.
- The effect of increased demand from new development on the provision of doctors surgeries, dentists and school places. The comments were expressions of concern and few provided any anecdotal evidence of lack of supply.

