

## 4 HOUSING

- 4.1 The work undertaken with the community to inform the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan identified four sectors in which the housing market is failing to meet local needs:
- Lack of suitable accommodation for the over 55s, who represent the town's fastest growing resident group; and who will increasingly be needing to cope with mobility disabilities and illness, especially dementia.
  - Lack of reasonably priced accommodation for young and growing families.
  - Difficulties experienced by many young persons in securing their first independent accommodation.
  - General lack of social housing.
- 4.2 Approximately 60% of house re-sales in Waverley are to people from outside the borough, particularly London commuters. Accordingly, new house building, renovations and extensions have focused on creating large houses, particularly those with four bedrooms or more. As a result, gaps in housing provision have arisen.
- 4.3 The 2015 West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA)<sup>5</sup> estimated that the net annual housing need in Godalming and Farncombe was 62 dwellings. Over the 15-year plan period this equates to 930 dwellings but a large proportion of this requirement has already been granted planning permission. Whilst many of these sites in the planning pipeline will be addressing the particular needs in respect of dwelling mix, it is likely that the need for specific types of housing to address the needs of younger people and older downsizers will continue
- 4.4 The need identified in the SHMA was as follows for Godalming and Farncombe:

**Table 4.1: Estimated Need by Number of Bedrooms, Godalming and Farncombe, 2013-2033**

Size of property	Affordable housing <sup>6</sup>	Market housing <sup>7</sup>
1-bed	41%	12%
2-bed	35%	36%
3-bed	22%	37%
4-bed or more	2%	14%

Source: 2015 SHMA

- 4.5 This suggests that the predominant need for smaller houses has been recognised and, as is being reflected in Waverley emerging Local Plan policy<sup>8</sup>, is being addressed. Strong support is given for

<sup>5</sup> GL Hearn (2015) *West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment*, for Guildford, Waverley and Woking Borough Councils

<sup>6</sup> GL Hearn (2015) *West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Waverley Sub Area Addendum*, for Waverley Borough Council, table 15

<sup>7</sup> GL Hearn (2015) *West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment – Waverley Sub Area Addendum*, for Waverley Borough Council, table 18

<sup>8</sup> Policy AHN1 (Affordable Housing on Development Sites) and Policy AHN3 (Housing Types and Size) both require new development to provide a mix of housing in line with the requirements of the 2015 SHMA.

this policy approach which should go some way to addressing the needs of young families and first-time buyers. For this reason, the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan does not seek to duplicate this by trying to address issues relating to the needs of younger people or older people who do not have particular needs in terms of supported housing and care.

- 4.6 However, what this does not address are other types of accommodation that are needed to support the ageing population. Over the period to 2032, Waverley borough's population of people aged over 65 is forecast to grow by approximately 50%. In addition to considering how the number and proportion of older people is expected to change, one needs also to take into account specific illnesses (especially dementia-related) and disabilities (particularly mobility problems). The proportion of the population with a long term health problem or disability increases dramatically with age, with the vast majority of any increase concentrated among the over-65s.
- 4.7 The rising cost of social care, coupled with a falling demand for residential care, has meant that new models of extra-care housing have emerged. These aim to meet the needs of those who require high levels of care and support, alongside those who are still generally able to care for themselves. These models often allow for changing circumstances in situ rather than requiring a move.
- 4.8 Across Waverley the requirement for places will increase from the current 686 units to 2,926 by 2032. The need for extra-care and extended care housing developments that can cope with such specialist demands is clear if large numbers are going to avoid being isolated in specialist units, possibly separated from their partners.
- 4.9 Evidence from a major provider of extra care facilities which has delivered them in a range of locations nationally is that such development can be secured and delivered viably with the right policy framework. Whilst the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan has not identified any sites that are suitable for such provision, it seeks to encourage provision if sites become available.
- 4.10 Extra care is not the only requirement for the ageing population. Increasingly, older people are retaining their independence for longer and wish to remain in their own homes rather than move into an institutional setting. The provision of the right type of housing to address this need is paramount. Smaller dwellings are in strong demand from older people but what they are seeking is often different to the first-time buyer, with many requiring homes that are on one level. Typically, older buyers are looking to downsize from large, family homes and therefore have significant amounts of equity. So a smaller home may well be a spacious two or three-bedroom property with a small garden. It is important that new development provides for these needs. This will also have the benefit of freeing up family homes as currently, many of these older people prefer to stay in their family homes rather than move out of their local community. Other factors such as the cost of stamp duty on a house sale deters some from moving, the lack of supply of smaller properties is also a significant factor.
- 4.11 This is supported by the West Surrey Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2015 which identified a need for nearly three-quarters of market dwellings and well over 50% of affordable dwellings in Godalming to be two or three-bed properties<sup>9</sup>. It is important that all new development properly reflects this need which will go a long way to addressing the needs of older people.
- 4.12 Under certain circumstances, delivery of a high proportion of two and three-bed properties may not be possible, e.g. in a high density flatted scheme close to the town centre. Under such

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<sup>9</sup> GL Hearn (2015) *West Surrey SHMA – Waverley Sub Area Addendum*, for Waverley Borough Council, Table 17

circumstances, provided it can be demonstrated that such a mix is not viable or deliverable, then an alternative mix can be provided.

- 4.13 Policies that support Self or Custom building dwellings can help to provide delivery of affordable housing. Waverley LLP2 proposed policy (DM15) is strongly supported.

**POLICY GOD1: ADDRESSING THE RESIDENTIAL NEEDS OF GODALMING**

- A. All new residential developments (Use Class 3) of at least 10 dwellings should provide at least the required percentage percentage of two and three-bedroom properties as indicated for the Godalming area in the West Surrey SHMA Waverley Sub Area Addendum (November 2015)**
- B. Proposals to deliver extra care facilities (Use Class C2) in Godalming and Farncombe will be strongly encouraged.**

## 5 ECONOMY

5.1 Waverley Borough Council's 2015-2020 Economic Strategy<sup>10</sup> has six key objectives:

- Safeguard the borough's attractive character and quality of life
- Maintain/enhance attractiveness and vitality of main settlements
- Provide high quality infrastructure
- Manage employment growth and encourage skilled well paid jobs
- Support businesses
- Provide affordable housing for key workers

5.2 Work to inform the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan identified that the management of the future economy of Godalming and Farncombe and the need to support businesses was key to its success. Godalming has seen a significant reduction in its business base in recent years. Whilst it is well located, with access to the major A3 and A31 roads, proximity to Guildford and rail links via two stations to London, this has served to have the opposite effect, with increased numbers of residents leaving in the morning to access jobs elsewhere. Whilst there are a significant number of in-commuters to Godalming and Farncombe each day, many of the jobs they are accessing are low paid, service jobs in sectors such as retail. This also highlights the problems that such people have with accessing affordable residential property locally.

5.3 One of the casualties of the national economic downturn, exacerbated by national changes to permitted development rights allowing conversion of employment space to residential, has been the loss of employment land and premises. This has been particularly significant in the main commercial employment area of Catteshall Lane, with the loss to residential use of Thornbrook House and Panda House at Weyside Park, Dolphin Works/Drumbeat House (as part of the Flambard Way Key Site development), the English Chain Company and Southern House.

5.4 It is not within the power of the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan to reverse this trend of loss of employment (this being national policy) and Local Plan Part 1 Policy EE2 (Protecting Existing Employment Sites) seeks to protect employment sites as best it can. The focus therefore is on developing the employment space required by the commercial sectors and activities which Godalming and Farncombe are well placed to thrive in over the plan period.

### **Key Sectors and Activities**

5.5 Waverley lies within the Enterprise M3 Local Economic Partnership (EM3 LEP), a partnership between local authorities and businesses to help determine local economic priorities and undertake activities to lead economic growth and create jobs.

5.6 EM3 LEP's vision<sup>11</sup> is to be 'the premier location in the country for enterprise and economic growth, balanced with an excellent environment and a high quality of life'. The EM3 LEP's objective is to achieve this vision through a number of interventions that support interlinked elements of the local economy. These comprise:

- enterprise development and competitiveness
- the generation and commercialisation of innovation

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<sup>10</sup> Waverley Economic Strategy 2015 -2020, February 2015

<sup>11</sup> Working for a Smarter Future, EM3 Strategic Economic Plan 2014 – 2020

- the growth of high value industries
- the development of skills needed by employers.

5.7 This focus is very much on quality of commercial activity rather than quantity. In the context of high value sectors, this means that the activity of small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) is key and the Waverley Economic Strategy focuses on providing flexible, high quality space for these businesses.

### **Small Scale Start-up Space**

5.8 As stated above, the focus is on the high value SME sector. Policy EE1 in the emerging Waverley Local Plan seeks to deliver at least 16,000m<sup>2</sup> of office and research and development space to facilitate this.

5.9 However, it is also considered that, in order to develop SME businesses, and ultimately grow larger businesses off the back of that, then it is necessary first to nurture even smaller businesses – micro-businesses. Nationally there has been strong growth in self-employment and this has been mirrored in Godalming and Farncombe – in 2011, 12% of residents aged 16 to 74 in the parish were self-employed, compared with a figure of 10% nationally and 11% in the South East region. Not all of these businesses will require employment space, as many people will work from home. However, for some micro-businesses, the ability to access workspace on flexible, 'easy-in, easy-out' terms helps to provide the foundation to grow a business. Godalming and Farncombe has a well-qualified workforce and this foundation creates the potential for new businesses to be started up by local residents who are keen to also work locally. There is also the potential to link in with some of the best economic drivers in the UK, particularly the Blackwater Valley high-tech corridor and the Surrey Research Park in Guildford. With the provision of business incubator space, this could help to turn a small, home-based business into a major high-tech business.

5.10 However, as was noted in the 2016 Waverley Employment Land Review<sup>12</sup>, Godalming has a very limited supply of employment premises for business start-ups. Despite this, the study considered that Godalming provided opportunities to create employment provision which was sufficiently flexible to respond to future business requirements.

5.11 In February 2017, permission was granted for a mixed use development of the Local Plan Part 1 allocation at Woodside Park in Catteshall Lane which included over 500m<sup>2</sup> of B1 office floorspace. This will help to make a contribution to addressing these small scale needs. However, over the lifetime of the Plan, further provision of flexible B1 floorspace is needed.

5.12 Strong support will therefore be given to the provision of small-scale businesses premises, ideally on flexible rental terms.

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<sup>12</sup> Atkins (2016) *Waverley Employment Land Review Update*, paras. 4.17-4.18.

## **POLICY GOD2: SMALL-SCALE EMPLOYMENT DEVELOPMENT**

Development proposals to provide small-scale B-class employment opportunities, including as part of residential led-, mixed use site allocations in the Waverley Local Plan Part Two, will be encouraged. This could either be through:

- provision of new buildings or conversion of existing non-residential buildings within the settlement boundary of Godalming and Farncombe; or
- conversion of existing buildings outside the settlement boundary, subject to:
  - i. the impact of provision on the highway network and parking; and
  - ii. it being an appropriate use within the Green Belt (where applicable) which preserves its openness and does not conflict with the purposes of including land in the Green Belt.

### **Town and Local Centres**

- 5.13 Godalming and Farncombe has two important shopping centres which serve many of the needs of the town's residents. Godalming is a large town centre with a range of convenience and comparison shopping. It is anchored at one end by the Waitrose supermarket which is close to a Sainsbury's supermarket on the edge of the town centre. The High Street has a range of shops, with many housed in older, listed buildings – much of the area is within the Conservation Area, so there are limitations on changes that can be made to those buildings. Generally there is very limited capacity for the town centre to expand. At the western end of the High Street and in Church Street, the town centre is faring less well, with lower footfall and fewer attractions which will draw people to it.
- 5.14 Farncombe has a smaller local centre on Farncombe Street and St John's Street. This has a more limited range of shops but they serve an important local function. For example, the Co-op store is seen as vital for 'top-up' food shopping and there are a number of other retailers that provide key local services, e.g. newsagents, pharmacy, hairdressers, etc,
- 5.15 It is important that both these centres are supported to ensure that they retain their vitality and viability.

### **Pop Up Uses in Godalming Town Centre**

- 5.16 In Godalming Town Centre Area, the Primary Shopping Area, as defined on the Policies Map provides the main retail service to the community of Godalming and Farncombe. Much of the community engagement informing the Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan revolved around the Town Centre Area, with varying views about the retail offer, parking and access, the role of the supermarkets which anchor its offer and possible ways of improving its vibrancy and vitality.
- 5.17 The Waverley Retail Study<sup>13</sup> identifies that the convenience shopping offer – anchored by Sainsbury's and Waitrose at the eastern end of the town – is very successful. However, comparison retail is less so, with shopping for these types of goods happening elsewhere, in Guildford and increasingly online (which is a national trend).
- 5.18 Whilst vacancies in late 2012, when the Retail Study survey was undertaken, were lower than the national average at 7%, this still equated to 13 units. With the growing threat to the comparison

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<sup>13</sup> Chase & Partners (2013) *Town Centres Retail Study Update*, for Waverley Borough Council

retailers in the Primary Shopping Area from Guildford and online retailing, it is likely to become increasingly difficult to fill vacant units and keep others from becoming vacant.

- 5.19 It is important that Godalming town centre Area continues to attract people to it to spend money and contribute towards its long term commercial health. But it is important that a balance is achieved between retail, residential and other commercial uses. The change to residential use is national policy so cannot be prevented. However, there are other actions that can help to maintain vitality.
- 5.20 Certainly in recent years given the economic slowdown, the risk of starting new commercial ventures has increased, as has the difficulty given the need for finance. One of the highest costs is premises and often there is a desire to take space on a flexible short-term lease in order to see if there is potential in the business. This in itself provides more opportunity to focus investment in the actual business.
- 5.21 The Primary Shopping Area has vacant units that could be taken by commercial ventures on short term, flexible leases to see if the business has potential. Often these businesses are not those that are permitted on the High Street without the need for planning permission – a further and potentially quite significant cost for a new business. Yet it is not to say that these non-retail businesses would not thrive and fit in well on the High Street. There are examples elsewhere of businesses as diverse as ceramics manufacturers, artists and web designers not only taking space and thriving in a High Street location, but providing life and diversity to the offer and bringing new people in that wouldn't have otherwise visited.
- 5.22 To encourage footfall across the Primary Shopping Area, 'pop up' cultural and entertainment events will generally be supported. This should help to ensure shops on the High Street and close by are kept viable through mechanisms that do not lead to higher rentals and business rents. Other incentives to attract the 'higher-spend, longer-stay' tourist by working together to create a 'cultural and leisure offer' that makes it worthwhile to stay longer in the Town Centre will generally be supported.
- 5.23 Therefore, the use of 'pop up' shops and cultural, creative, and leisure-orientated activities to help Godalming Town Centre become a niche leisure and cultural destination, building on the existing heritage offer and festivals programme, is supported.
- 5.24 Most Use Class A1 units (i.e. shops) now have extensive Permitted Development (PD) rights under the General Permitted Development Order, with a change of use allowed for up to two years. However these PD rights do not apply to listed properties so, therefore, the provision of 'pop-up' shops in such properties will require the necessary permissions. In addition, these PD rights do not extend to changes from retail to Use Class D which includes art galleries, exhibition halls, cinemas and concert halls.

**POLICY GOD3: NON-RETAIL USES IN THE PRIMARY SHOPPING AREA**

- A. In the Primary Shopping Area of Godalming shown on the Policies Map, the use of Class A retail and service premises for temporary uses will be encouraged. Such uses include 'pop up' shops and cultural, creative and leisure uses introduced on a temporary basis or for specific events.**
- B. Such non-retail uses must demonstrate that they will not have a detrimental impact on the amenity of neighbouring uses, particularly residential through excessive noise and pollution.**
- C. Such non-retail uses will generally not be considered appropriate if the operation of the business requires large amounts of parking or a large area for servicing in order to function.**

**5.25** With the limited ability of the Godalming Primary Shopping Area to physically expand, the growing retail needs of the expanding population would be best served through small scale expansion of Farncombe Local Centre. Some existing sites in the area are under-used and there is less restriction on re-development than in Godalming Primary Shopping Area because it is not in a Conservation Area and has few listed buildings. **Policy TCS2 of the LLP1 provides safeguards to local centres and supports provision of new small scale facilities. Opportunities to expand retail provision in or adjacent to the existing Local Centre in Farncombe will, therefore, be supported. The potential to develop adjacent to the existing centre boundary reflects a necessarily flexible approach.**

**POLICY GOD4: RETAILING IN FARNCOMBE LOCAL CENTRE**

**Proposals to provide new retail premises (Use Classes A1 to A5) or to redevelop existing buildings for retail uses in or adjacent to the Farncombe Local Centre, as shown on the Policies Map, will be strongly encouraged.**

## 6 HERITAGE AND DESIGN

- 6.1 One of the defining features of Godalming and Farncombe is its built heritage. This is demonstrated by the fact that it has five conservation areas and 227 listed buildings, of which two, St Peter and St Paul's Church and Wyatt's Almshouses are Grade I listed. These buildings and areas are well protected by planning policy, both at national and borough level.
- 6.2 Whilst it has grown over time, the town has not seen any significant dilution of this heritage. There was a considerable expansion to the area in the late 1800s to early 1900s and during this time the population trebled. It is important that the future growth of the town continues to recognise and pay due regard to this heritage whilst recognising that innovation in design should not be restricted. Innovative design does not have to mean a building clearly out of keeping with those around it.
- 6.3 Up to the late 1800s-early 1900s, buildings were made from local wood, brick and stone.



*Church Street shows a range of the architectural styles from 16-20C*



*The Georgians added brick frontages to traditional timber framed buildings*



*From the mid-1850s onwards the railway extended the materials used in building*



*There were further increases in the town between the wars and from 1970s onwards*

6.4 The photographs below show a development close to Church Street completed in 2016 that has used elements of the style and finishes without being a pastiche. This won a civic design award from the Godalming Trust in 2016.



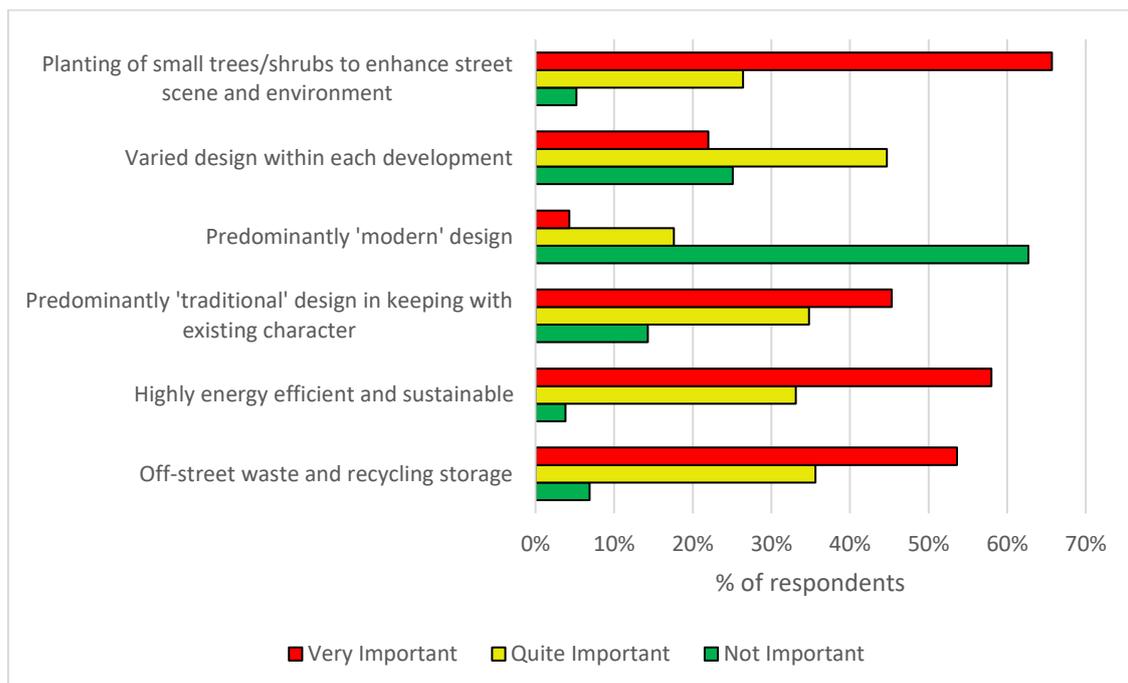
## Character Areas

6.5 Adverse impacts of inappropriate developments can include the following:

- Loss of significance to heritage assets, including impacts on setting
- Changes to the grain<sup>14</sup> and overall density which defines local character
- Loss of amenity, overshadowing, overlooking
- Noise
- Loss of green links/trees /hedgerows/vegetation
- Visual intrusion
- Visual separation
- Loss of parking
- Difficulties with recycling and waste collections/bin storage

6.6 The public questionnaire identified a number of issues relating to the character and design of development, as shown in Figure 6.1.

**Figure 6.1: Issues relating to character and design from public questionnaire**



6.7 Matters such as boundary planting, traditional design and providing appropriate storage for waste and recycling are all issues that can be addressed by well designed development.

<sup>14</sup> 'Grain' is defined as the combined pattern of blocks and streets, taking into account the character of street blocks and building height and size, and how they all work together to create and enable movement and access.

- 6.8 Waverley Local Plan Policy D4 (Design and Layout) addresses a lot of these issues, but it is important to reinforce the particular issues of importance within the local Godalming and Farncombe context.
- 6.9 The Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan has not prescribed a fixed palette of materials for new development. However, the evidence gathered along with the strong support identified through responses to the public questionnaire mean that development is required to be sympathetic to, and enhance, its immediate surrounding area, whatever the predominant style. This is guided by the Character Assessments for the specific identified character areas shown in Figure 6.2.