



Godalming
Town Council

Supporting Our Community

**Farncombe Village & Binscombe
Community Vision For A Greener Cleaner
Sustainable Future**

Draft 2 Issued 27 July 2022

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Context for Farncombe Village & Binscombe Community Vision

1. Preamble

The aim of this report is to:

- Provide the context and raise awareness of specific issues affecting Farncombe Village and the Binscombe Community areas.
- Identify current activity being delivered by Godalming Town Council (GTC) to support the general well-being of residents and the economic sustainability of the village centre and locality retail areas.
- Identify ways in which GTC can provide direct action, influence or support improvements within the Farncombe Village and Binscombe Community areas.
- Provide a basis for community engagement for the enhancement of the area.

2. Introduction¹

The built environment has a significant impact on people's general feeling of well-being. In considering how the built environment or 'place' can impact on those whose lives it touches, decision makers would do well to consider that the very large majority of research evidence points in the same broad direction; better place quality adds value economically, socially and with regard to health and environmental outcomes. The impacts of place are profound, contribute benefits to society over short, medium and long-term time horizons, and reverberate throughout the lives of citizens across all socio-economic strata.

Place quality is not an aspiration only to be considered when things are good or only for the wealthy. Instead, as the research evidence indicates, it is a basic necessity of urban life with profound and far-reaching impacts on the lives of citizens today and tomorrow. It is so important to basic well-being that it should be the expectation of all. This knowledge can be used to advance the case for quality when place-shaping policy, project or investment decisions are being made.

A VERY strong positive association between place derived value of all types (health, social, economic and environmental) and six qualities: greenness in the built environment (notably the presence of trees, grass, water, and open space – the latter if of good quality); a mix of uses (notably the diversity of land uses within a neighbourhood); low levels of traffic; the walkability and bike ability of places (derived from their strategic street-based connectivity and the quality of the local public realm); the use of more compact (less sprawling and fragmented) patterns of development; and ready, convenient connection to a good public transport network.

3. Area Characteristics

Farncombe village lies within a gently sloping area to the northwest of the Lammas lands; the floodplain to the River Wey. A defining characteristic of this relatively compact area being extensive views of the surrounding hills and woodland

Farncombe village is mainly residential interspersed with small business and retail outlets in the village centre. The Victorian village of Farncombe straddles the railway from the existing station down to the site of the original station (now Jewsons) with roads branching from a framework of earlier roads: Hare Lane, St John's Street, Farncombe Street, Summers Road, Lower Manor Road and Nightingale Road. The infill roads form an informal grid lined with housing predominantly of the Victorian era from small terraced

¹ Matthew Carmona (2019) Place value: place quality and its impact on health, social, economic and environmental outcomes, *Journal of Urban Design*, 24:1, 1-48, DOI: [10.1080/13574809.2018.1472523](https://doi.org/10.1080/13574809.2018.1472523)

cottage to semi-detached houses and larger "villas". Most houses are set back from the pavement with a garden proportionate to the building's size. Similarly plots and buildings are in proportion to each other.

The Farncombe area expanded throughout the 20th century with the boroughs first social housing being constructed in 1920 around the Oval and Broadwater Lanes. Between the wars the village continued to grow with developments spreading north beyond George Road creating the 'Tudors'.

Post war, and particularly during the 1950's, growth continued with the then Borough Council building the Binscombe extension which linked Farncombe Village with the historic hamlet of Binscombe. The Binscombe estate is a planned network of residential roads in the low lying land leading off and between Binscombe Lane, Green Lane/ Bourne Road and Furze Lane. The houses are relatively generous in size, generally set back from the road with good size front gardens many of which are used for car parking.

A notable feature of the area is the network of footpaths linking the housing and village centre as well as the town centre of Godalming. The ownership of these alleyways & footpaths is complicated, whilst Godalming Town Council has no direct responsibility for their maintenance, it does advocate on behalf of the community for their upkeep.

As well as housing development, the 1950's saw the industrial area of Farncombe around the Silo's decline to be replaced with housing and the opening of Broadwater Secondary School. The Long Gore Estate and development towards the upper reaches of Farncombe Hill and Northbourne area being the last major housing developments of the 20th Century in Farncombe.

Typically of the housing building programmes of the 1930's onwards, the area beyond George Road primarily consists of roads of very similar or identical houses, some hedges and greenery is present, as are some allotments, but more often than not is dominated by fairly featureless patches of grassed areas with limited benefits for wildlife. The Verges, areas of grass and communal play areas located throughout the area are often scruffy and poorly maintained.

At the outer reaches of the Parish, the 1960's and 1970's also saw development around the historic Binscombe settlement with the construction of 'Guildway Homes' as well as the Copse Side and Badger Close area along with the creation of new local schools. Within the Victorian and Edwardian centre of Farncombe village infill housing development continued throughout, in areas such as Llanaway Close, Little Thatch and other former small industrial and manufacturing sites.

The 21st century has seen continued pressure on land use for housing with new developments off Furze Lane and the removal of land from the greenbelt between Binscombe and Copse Side.

4. Conservation Areas

Binscombe Conservation Area is a medieval hamlet around Binscombe Farm. The farm has a Georgian brick façade but is timber framed at the back, and together with three other timber framed buildings forms a picturesque group in spite of more recent development.

The CA area map can be found at:

https://www.waverley.gov.uk/Portals/0/Documents/services/planning-and-building/heritage-and-trees/Heritage/Binscombe%20Conservation%20Area%20Boundary%20Map.pdf?ver=wQU42kOhsl-CIvOLqn_K0g%3d%3d

5. Public Services and the Public Realm

The provision of public services and facilities in the urban environment has a significant impact on the quality of life that residents and others enjoy. Good quality local public services, including education and training opportunities, health care and community facilities, are identified as one of the key elements for a Sustainable Communities Plan connected with crime reduction and community safety².

A home to live in is clearly the first and most vital consideration for everyone. Beyond this, most people wish their home to be set within an attractive and healthy environment. 'Green space' is not just good to look at, it provides room for outside leisure. Plants and trees contribute to air and water quality and we have a duty to manage our environment for the benefit of the flora and fauna that we share it with. A good environment helps to keep us health, both physically and mentally.

Traditionally we have tended to like roadside verges mown, woodland cleared of dead branches and open land free from brambles, nettles and ragwort. However, this is rarely the best management plan for nature. Setting aside land for nature reduces the space available for more utilitarian uses and there can be an indirect cost associated with managing land for its aesthetic or environmental benefit, which is why initiatives such as no-mow May and creating 'bug hotels' in woodlands etc should be especially important to local authorities in making best use of their green spaces budgets

There is a limit to the amount of land that that can be set aside for outdoor recreation, i.e. parks, play areas and playing fields. Many popular sports demand a significant amount of space and it is increasingly difficult to satisfy this demand. Nevertheless, these activities provide great benefit and must be accommodated as far as possible but it is recognised that informal, outdoor leisure is also important to health and well-being and a balance must be struck between the provision of formal and informal recreation space.

6. Community – Open Spaces, Sport & Recreation

If parks and green spaces are well managed, research has shown that communities use their local spaces more, have better relationships with their local councils and take some pride in the area where they live.³

Parks and green spaces contribute to all aspects of health and well-being including increasing levels of physical activity which could alleviate pressures on the NHS. Simply being outside in a green space can promote mental wellbeing, relieve stress, overcome isolation, improve social cohesion and alleviate physical problems.⁴

Parks provide spaces where people can get some fresh air, go for a walk, play, exercise or just enjoy the surroundings. Research by Keep Britain Tidy found that: "Visits to green spaces with friends and extended family groups were highly valued for enabling social bonding in largely natural and frequently picturesque surroundings."⁵

6.1 Broadwater Park

Broadwater Park is one of three significant public parks in Godalming owned and Managed by Waverley Borough Council, the others being the Burys and Phillips

² Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (2004) *Safer Places - The Planning System and Crime Prevention*

³ CBE Space. (2010). Urban Green Nation: Building the Evidence Base
https://www.designcouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/asset/document/urban-green-nation_0_0.pdf

⁴ CBE. (2009). Future Health: Sustainable places for health and well-being

⁵ Keep Britain Tidy. (2010). People Places and their Green Spaces

Memorial Park and Holloway Hill recreation Ground. However, Broadwater Park at 73 acres is considerably larger and contains within its curtilage a number of areas designated for specific sports, Rugby, Football, Cricket, Tennis and Angling. Broadwater Park holds Green Flag Status.

Additionally, Broadwater Park is also home to the Godalming Leisure Centre, The Godalming Band Room, The Waverley Rangers workshop, the Godalming Angling Society Club House, Broadwater Park Community Centre – owned and operated by Godalming Town Council, as well as the former stable buildings owned by WBC and used to support local community groups. Clustered around these facilities are the residential houses of the park which were historically the estate workers homes of the former Broadwater House. These homes are now all private residences.

6.2 Parkrun at Broadwater Park

Parkruns are free weekly community 5k runs which take place every Saturday morning at 9am all over the UK and internationally. Supported by GTC and following a delayed start due to Covid 19, the first weekly Parkrun was held in the summer of 2021 and is now an established weekly event utilising a course agreed with WBC.

It is important that the Park Run continues in a way that does not have a negative impact on other users of the park.

6.3 Former Golf Course

Fronting onto Meadow and adjacent to the Godalming Town Football Ground, the former Broadwater Golf Club offers a significant opportunity for additional new or alternative leisure and recreational facilities. Whilst not in its ownership, following a presentation by a young campaigner for Biking and Skateboarding, Godalming Town Council has publically expressed support for repurposing some parts of Broadwater Golf Club site to include a combined Skateboard, BMX, scooter and outdoor activity hub with associated infrastructure, incorporating nature trails and environmental enhancements. Godalming Town Council has indicated its willingness to work with Waverley Borough Council for such facilities to be provided. However, GTC's will consider any proposal brought forward for this site on its merits and overall benefit for the community.

6.4 Godalming Leisure Centre

Opened in 2012, the leisure centre was built on a greenfield site fronting Summers Road, with car parking provided on land that had formed part of Broadwater School's playing field. The site of the old swimming pool which the new centre replaced, was returned to green space.

6.5 Godalming Leisure Centre - Extension

In 2018, Waverley Borough Council agreed a plan to extend the Leisure Centre, including developing just under 4,000m² of additional parking on a disused part of Broadwater school playing fields, in exchange for funding to build a new 3G pitch at the school.

In considering the extension of the Leisure Centre, Godalming Town Council would wish to see a robust business case before any further development is allowed to take place in this, already significantly developed area of the park. Such business case should take into account the existing supply of recreational and fitness facilities in the area, including community facilities such as Broadwater Park School Community Gym, private membership fitness centres and multi-sports facilities in neighbouring areas such as the Surrey Sports Park as well as the specific needs of the community. Additionally, in light of Waverley Borough Councils declared climate emergency, GTC would question the

desirability to focus additional facilities at the existing Leisure Centre location, as opposed to expanding opportunities at other locations, such as Godalming 6th Form College in Busbridge Ward or at Rodborough School in Milford, thus reducing the need for extended vehicle movements across the local road networks.

Additionally, Godalming Town Council would also wish to see comprehensive traffic analysis that model the impact of any extension of the Leisure Centre, especially in relation to any culminate affect associated with the expansion of Broadwater School. Additionally, although potentially exempt by virtue of development for recreational purposes, Godalming Town Council would be concerned with the over-riding of Green Belt protection to provide additional car parking spaces. This is especially true as the land in question also forms part of the existing school playing fields.

6.6 Farncombe Cricket/Sports Ground

Farncombe Cricket Ground is located on Broadwater Park, fronting to Summers Road. The ground consist of two cricket pitches used by Farncombe Cricket Club and Farncombe Wanderers. The club houses and grounds of each club are leased from WBC. Farncombe Cricket Club, in addition to the traditional men's cricket teams, also has both youth and ladies cricket teams.

Out of season the outfield of the cricket pitches are also marked out as football pitches that are available for hire through WBC. Both Cricket and Football are supported by publicly owned changing facilities. In 2020 GTC conducted a feasibility for the renovation of these facilities and applied Neighbourhood CIL funding. The refurbishment project lies with WBC who are responsible for the changing rooms.

In order to achieve a greater public benefit from the Changing Rooms and Broadwater Park, GTC has entered into a lease arrangement with WBC that will see the repurposing of part of the building for community use with the intention to relocate the Godalming & Villages Community Store to Farncombe.

6.7 Guildford Rugby Club & Broadwater Pavilion

Founded in 1922, lying on the north-eastern section of Broadwater Park, Guildford Rugby Club's grounds straddling the border of Waverley and Guildford Boroughs. The first team pitch, which is also flood lit for evening training, as well as the Club House are on the Godalming side of the boundary.

The club house is a relatively modern facility which in addition to accommodating the clubs changing rooms and fitness area, also boasts not only the club bar, but also one of the largest private venue hire facilities with on-site catering in the area. The venue area of the club is known as Broadwater Pavilion.

The Rugby club is a Community Amateur Sports Club and is keen to be able to utilise its grounds and facilities for community events which is an objective that GTC are keen to support.

6.8 Godalming Town Football Club

Godalming Town Football Club is a semi-professional football club, which currently plays in the Combined Counties League Division One. Run with a community emphasis, the football ground is located at Wey Court on the southern edge of Broadwater Park.

In addition to the playing pitch and associated training area, the football ground also has a club house that is hired as a venue, predominately used on a paid basis as an after school club as well as a polling station and a range of community meetings.

As with the other sports clubs located on Broadwater Park, Waverley Borough Council are their landlords who are charged with the care and custody of this prime community assets.

6.9 Farncombe Youth Football Club - Meades Park – Green Lane

Meades Park is home to the Farncombe Youth Football Club, which is one of, if not the largest, provider of youth activity in Farncombe and potentially the whole town. Supporting over 500 boys and girls, FYFC is a key community facility. As with most grass roots sports clubs, better facilities would enable greater support for young people. The main areas of concern at Meades Park include the need for flood lights to enable after school training during the winter months, and the provision of an artificial pitch to allow for all weather provision.

6.10 Canon Bowring Recreation Ground

Owned and managed by WBC, the Canon Bowring recreation ground is accessible from Lower Manor Road and Wolseley Road. Within the recreation ground is an informal football pitch, children's playground and basketball hoop, which needs upgrading. The recreation ground is used by Godalming Junior School and has, in the past been the location for local fetes. This site had traditionally not been accessible to dogs which meant it was a `safe space` for those with young children and the pupils at Godalming Junior School. This designation was removed from the recreation ground as a whole when the Waverley Public Space Protection Order Number 2 (Dog Control)⁶ and now only applies to the children's play and the basketball court area. For the remainder of the recreation ground, dogs should be kept on a lead at all time.

The protection order is in place until December 2022 when it is scheduled for review, as part of the review, GTC would wish to see the recreation ground revert to the previous designation as being a dog exclusion zone.

6.11 St John's Church Quiet Garden

The churchyard at St John's has been closed to new burials for many years. Over the decades it had become untidy and served little useful purpose. In 2008 the churchyard was cleared and new paths and planting areas were laid out to create a focal point for the people of Farncombe to meet, sit and chat – a sort of enclosed Village Green. Thus the Quiet Garden came into being.

The Quiet Garden was created with support from a number of organisations including including Living Spaces, Breathing Places, Waverley Borough Council, Godalming Town Council, Surrey County Council, Loseley Christian Trust and the E R Thomas Trust. Farncombe residents donated plants, trees and benches and the garden is maintained by volunteers who give much of their time and skills to provide this tranquil place in the centre of the village.

6.12 Combe Road Recreation Ground

Accessed from Combe Road and Green Lane, the Combe Road recreation ground is an informal grassed area with a small children's play area within. The facilities for young children are of rather poor quality and there have been local requests for them to be upgraded.

Godalming Town Council believes that the Combe Road recreation ground should be a 'safe space' for children to play. As such, it should enjoy the same designation as those

⁶ <https://www.waverley.gov.uk/Services/Benefits-and-community-support/Crime-and-safety/Public-Space-Protection-Orders-PSPOs/Dog-control-PSPOs>

expressed for the Cannon Bowring recreation ground. Subject to consultation, Godalming Town Council would wish, as part of the December 2022 review of the Public Space Protection Order, for this area to also be a designated dog exclusion zone.

6.13 Allotments

The majority of Godalming & Farncombe's allotment land (83%) is owned by Godalming Town Council with the remaining 17% being a private allotment owned by the Farncombe & District Allotment Association. The bulk of the Town Council's allotment land is leased to the Farncombe & District Allotment Association.

Seventy Six (76%) of Godalming & Farncombe's allotment land is concentrated in two areas, Meadow/Catteshall and the 'Tudors' area of Farncombe.

The allotment sites in Farncombe are:

- George Road – 1.25 acre – Council Owned – Leased to the Allotment Association
- More Road – 4 acre – Council Owned – Leased to the Allotment Association
- Green Lane – 2.5 acres – Farncombe and District Allotment Association owned

George Road Allotments/More Road Allotments are within 200 metres of each other. Although adjacent to More Road allotment site, the Farncombe & District Allotment Association's site at Green Lane there is no inter-connection between the sites.

The Council owned allotments in Farncombe are all classified as Statutory Allotments. Although there is no legal number of allotment plots that the Town Council must provide, a figure often quoted, from the 1969 Thorpe Report,⁷ is 15 plots per 1000 households. On this basis Godalming would be providing for approximately 150 plots. At present, excluding Green Lane, Godalming's publically owned allotments can in theory provide 192 x 10 Rod Plots. However, in practice not all plots are 10 Rods as these are considered to be too large for many to manage, allowance must also be made for footpaths and non-cultivated areas. However, at present the availability of allotment plots is meeting demand.

There is the potential that more land could be made available at Meadow to provide additional plots if required in future.

6.14 Play Areas

In developing its play area strategy⁸, Waverley Borough Council has identified seven wards that fall below the borough average for both equipped play provision and the Fields-in-Trust standard for informal play space. These include Godalming Binscombe, with Long Gore particularly poorly served with no play areas to the North of Green Lane.

Additionally, the provision for those with disabilities is also poor with the play areas offering an accessible roundabout or swing, but little else. Most of the area's playgrounds are accessed over grass, which limits accessibility.

With the exception of the Multi Use Games Area at Broadwater Park and a rather sad basketball hoop at the Canon Bowring Recreation Ground, there are no activity play facilities for teenagers.

⁷ The National Archive, Kew – Department of the Environment: Directorate of Rural Affairs, Departmental Committee of Inquiry into Allotments 'The Thorpe Report': submission of report to Ministers; drafting, 1970, Ref: AT 26/26

⁸ Waverley Borough Council (2015) *Waverley Play Area Strategy 2014-2024*

Outside of Broadwater Park, the other play areas managed by Waverley Borough Council within the Farncombe village and Binscombe areas are:

- Canon Bowrings recreation ground
- Longbourne Green Play Area
- Combe Road Park

Non local authority owned play areas are provided on the Northbourne Estate and within the Greensand Way development.

7. Natural Environment – Trees

In considering the natural environment of Farncombe and Binscombe, the starting point should be that as we face climate change and that as ambitious by the declaration of Climate Emergencies from Godalming Town, Waverley Borough and Surrey County councils, the first actions we should be taking is the protection of our existing natural environment.

The best tree for helping carbon reduction is the one that is already planted, as such, the protection of our existing tree stock should be of paramount importance to the community. Binscombe & Farncombe overall have far less tree cover than the rest of Godalming yet few protections exist to look after them.

Trees within the Binscombe Conservation area are subject to some protection, as are those individual trees that are subject to Tree Preservation Orders (TPO). However there are many mature, yet common trees, which have no protection whatsoever and are at the mercy of whoever happens, at the time, to own the land they grow upon. Godalming Town Council does not believe this to be good or appropriate stewardship of assets that are of such important to both the community and its immediate and future well-being.

8. Community Meeting Places

8.1 Broadwater Community Centre – Youth Centre

Broadwater Park Community Centre (BWPC) is a relatively modern (30 years old) purpose built community centre located adjacent to Godalming Leisure Centre and the only secondary school located within the Parish of Godalming. Opened in 1991, Broadwater Park is an exception to the majority of other users of the park, in as much as the grounds upon which it sits, including its car parking area, are held freehold by the Town Council.

The Community centre was built in the grounds of the former walled garden of Broadwater manor. The surviving boundary wall is known as a 'crinkle-crankle' wall or serpent wall and is Grade II listed.

The Community centre was until September 2021 a general use community building hired out for a range of activities. However, following its closure during the 2020/21 pandemic, Godalming Town Council re-designated the centre as a stand-alone youth centre facility for young people of secondary school age, staffed and managed by professional youth workers employed by GTC.

8.2 Binscombe Church

Binscombe Church usage has exceeded the current building's capacity and facilities, as such a number of activities being temporarily held at Broadwater School. Binscombe

Church had gained planning permission for a major development on their existing site in Barnes Road. However, in order to carry out the work significant funds are required, as of October 2021, approx 75% of the fundraising target of £1.7m had been reached. The church holds various activity sessions and is also used as a polling station.

8.3 St John's Farncombe

St John's opened in 1849 as the Anglican Parish Church of Farncombe. In addition to a place of worship, the church building and the adjoining St John's Hall is used by a range of community groups and clubs, including the Farncombe Music Club, which hold regular music gigs in the church.

8.4 Farncombe Day Centre

Adjoining Bowring House, a retirement housing complex run by Waverley Borough Council, the Farncombe Day Centre is a registered charity supported by Waverley Borough Council and Godalming Town Council that provides a welcome for people, mainly over the age of 50, living in Farncombe & Binscombe as well as the wider area. It provides lunches, socialising and activities. The Centre also offers hairdressing, chiropody and bathing services.

The Community Meal service is operated from the Day Centre's kitchen.

8.5 Baden Hall

Built at the end of the 19th century, the Baden Hall located in Tottenham Road is home to the Farncombe Scout & Guide Group. As with many community buildings of its age, Baden Hall has a number of challenges to enable it to become a more energy efficient and environmentally friendly building. The Scout Group has an ambition to increase the insulation value of the building to make it not only more efficient and cost effective to operate, but also more attractive for other community hire when not used for scouting.

9. Schools

9.1 Primary & Secondary State Schools

Farncombe and Binscombe is served by four schools, see table below⁹.

School	Age	School Type	School Capacity	School role (Jan 2022)	% of children eligible for Free School Meals
Farncombe CofE Infant	4-7	Voluntary Controlled	150	149	12.5%
Godalming Junior	7-11	Foundation	240	239	7.5%
Loseley Fields Primary	4-11	Academy Converter	420	348	25.3%
Broadwater	11-16	Academy Converter	600	572	15.4%

Points of note are:

- Broadwater School is the only secondary school in the Civil Parish of Godalming.
- There is no state (local authority) nursery school provision in the Farncombe and Binscombe area.

⁹ <https://get-information-schools.service.gov.uk>

- Loseley Fields Primary school is the only school for pupil under 11 in Godalming with a specified Special Educational Needs provision – providing for Moderate Learning Difficulties with 14 pupils supported from a capacity of 14.
- Broadwater School has a specified Special Educational Needs provision for 11-16 year old pupils with Speech, Language and Communication Needs (SLCN)

9.2 Pre-School and Family Centre Provision

Although as stated at 8.2 there are no local authority nurseries in the Farncombe and Binscombe area, although there are three privately operated pre-school nurseries that accept government funded clients. Alongside a universal provision for 15 hours per week of funded childcare over a 38 week period for children aged 3 & 4, the government provide a number of other childcare funding options depending on individual circumstances.¹⁰

Targeted, referral based family support is provided by the Barnardo's charity on behalf of Surrey County Council at the former Loseley Fields Sure Start Centre, which is now known as Loseley Fields Family Centre.¹¹

10. **Medical, Dental & Well-Being**

Although served by two pharmacies, located in Farncombe Street and at 106 Binscombe within the Binscombe Medical Centre, Farncombe & Binscombe has only one dental practice operating within its area located at Binscombe Crescent close to Binscombe Medical Centre and has no opticians.

10.1 The Binscombe Medical Centre

A medium sized practice looking after the health needs of just over 10 000 patients in the Godalming area, was opened in 1990 at its current location. The Godalming & Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan states that Binscombe Medical practice is considered by the senior partner as having reached capacity. Moreover, the practice has stated a desire to relocate to a much larger, purpose-built, environmentally sustainable medical facility within the current practice area. The practice owners would envisage this facility offering additional services to the local community including upgraded pharmacy and physiotherapy in addition to outpatient facilities for the Royal Surrey Hospital consultants to provide community-based clinics.

10.2 Farncombe Community Garden

GTC made an introduction between the Binscombe Medical Centre and SCC which has led to the Binscombe Medical Centre reaching agreement to lease a plot of land from Surrey County Council on Summers Road (beside Broadwater Lodge). A business plan has been developed for submission to the Charity Commission. Whilst the Medical Centre has provided the seed funding there is a need for a lot of fund raising to take place and an application has been made to the Your Surrey Fund and Waverley Borough Council's Strategic CIL funds.

10.3 Public Toilets

GTC operates public toilets located at the junction of Farncombe Street and Station Road. The toilets are a unisex accessible facility.

10.4 Street Furniture – Benches, Shelters and Planters and Public Notice Boards

There are five bus shelters located within the Farncombe and Binscombe area, the shelters located at Furze Lane and St Johns Street are the responsibility of Godalming

¹⁰ <https://www.childcarechoices.gov.uk>

¹¹ <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/what-we-do/services/waverley-family-centres-2-sites-hale-and-loseley>

Town Council. The shelters located on Meadow by Kings Road, Elizabeth Road and at the Meadow/Bridge Road Roundabout layby are the responsibility of WBC.

GTC has installed a number of public benches within the Farncombe and Binscombe area. Public benches provided by GTC are located at Marshall Road adjacent to the railway footbridge, Long Gore shopping parade as well as by the bus stops at Spring Grove and Green Lane (opposite Barnes Road) additional on street public seating is located by the Binscombe Crescent Shops and St Johns Church Garden and at the Meadow end of Church Walk adjacent to Wey Court. Public seating is also provided by WBC within the Cannon Bowring recreation ground and Broadwater Park, including around Broadwater Lake and along the edge of the park on the Guildford Road.

WBC are planning on providing public seating on Binscombe Field located between Binscombe Lane and Mark Way.

There are a number of bus stops, notably along Farncombe Street and Binscombe Lane which could benefit from adjacent public seating.

GTC also provides and maintains a number of Public Notice boards, which in addition to the posting of statutory public notices, such as election notices, are available for use by residents. GTC periodically clears the public noticeboards to remove out of date notices and to carry out maintenance and repair. Notice board provided by GTC are made of recycled materials and are of a uniform design throughout the area. Notice board in Farncombe and Binscombe are located at:

- Green Lane by Long Gore shopping parade
- Elizabeth Road and the junction of Farncombe Hill
- St John's Street towards the junction with Farncombe Street
- Meadow/Kings Road bus stop (to be replaced 2022)

Additional public noticeboards could be located on Binscombe Lane by the Binscombe Crescent Shopping parade.

With the exception of litter bins which have been replaced by both GTC and WBC, the maintenance of the public realm has predominately fallen to GTC to manage. Prior to 2019, this was undertaken by out-sourcing repairs. Following the appointment of GTC direct maintenance staff, the repair and refurbishment of the public realm street furniture will now be, wherever possible and safe to do so, undertaken by the GTC maintenance team.

In relation to highways infrastructure, GTC remains actively engaged with SCC Highways for the identification and reporting of highway defects as well as working with Surrey Members to identify areas in need of improvement or intervention by SCC Highways.

11. Transport – Accessibility, Walkability and Bikeability

Although Farncombe and Binscombe rises towards Farncombe Hill, the general topography is relatively gentle with the lower lying areas being predominately on the flat, this should mean that walking and cycling around the area is reasonably accessible. However, reliance on the car as a means of getting about is high, it being the predominant mode of travel for the community of Godalming and Farncombe. Many of the journeys are short, local journeys within Godalming and Farncombe, which could potentially be replaced by walking or cycling, particularly through effective use of techniques that serve to change how road space is used and prioritised in terms of who

uses it. The Godalming and Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan identified that every working day, approximately 1,600 commuters travel within the Neighbourhood Plan area to get to work with 45% doing so by car.

11.1 Walking

Walking around Binscombe and Farncombe is relatively simple. The established network of lanes and alley's provides easy links between most areas and facilities. However, the majority of the alleys and lanes are bordered by hedges with the responsibility for the maintenance of the hedges being a mix of either the adjoining landowner, SCC or WBC. The maintenance of the hedges is varied and often results in overgrowth causing difficulties for pedestrians, especially wheelchair users and those with push chairs and buggies.

Whilst GTC has in the past been funded by SCC to carryout hedge cutting on a number of alleyways, following the restructuring of SCC Highways maintenance delivery, the continuance of this arrangement is uncertain.

11.2 Accessibility

Walking around Binscombe and Farncombe is an easy option for a large proportion of residents. However, due to the inconsistent provision of dropped kerbing at road junctions and crossing desire points, examples being by bus stop locations, walking is made more challenging for those with reduced or limited mobility, including parents with buggies and toddlers, the elderly, wheelchair users and those requiring the support of walking aids. The poor condition of pavements, especially around the Spring Grove area of Binscombe and the general lack of traffic calming measures at a number of strategic locations – specifically the key walking routes to schools' - also adds to the difficulties faced by some residents.

11.3 Bikeability

Cycling and walking along most roads within the Farncombe and Binscombe area is relatively safe but is less so along busy roads such as Binscombe Lane, Summers Road, Bourne Road and Green Lane. Calming measures are needed to reduce traffic speed along these roads and to increase the space available to pedestrians and cyclists. This would be a positive step towards achieving a shift from cars to more active forms of travel. Additional secure cycle parking would also be of benefit.

Within Farncombe's Victorian centre such as George Road, Kings Road and Wolseley Road and in some parts of the Binscombe residential estate, the reduction of road width due to the volume of on-street parking creates challenges for cyclists, whereas around the retail centre of St Johns Road and Farncombe Street the increased traffic volumes and speed are a cause of concern.

The Godalming & Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan identified that more people cycling locally would mean reduced pressure on parking in the town centre and reduce congestion on the roads at key times. This is particularly the case if cycling is used as a mode of travel to work when the roads are busiest. For instance, around 1,000 vehicles travel into Godalming along Meadow/Bridge Road between 8am and 9am each weekday morning. Evidence gathered to inform the Neighbourhood Plan suggests that as much as a quarter of these cars may be coming from as close as Farncombe or Binscombe and travelling elsewhere in Godalming. Even if only a third of these trips could be shifted to bike (or walking) this would contribute greatly to improving traffic circulation and reducing the impact of traffic.

11.4 Guildford-Godalming Greenway

Many people find road traffic intimidating and are discouraged from cycling as a result. Parents are understandably reluctant to allow their children to cycle on or near busy roads. The provision of a well-designed and largely off-road route would offer a protected and suitable environment in which children and others can be safe and secure. This is the principal aim of the Guildford to Godalming Greenway, the provision of an alternative route suitable for day to day activities such as getting to school, going shopping, commuting to work or simply enjoying time out in the fresh air that will alleviate the concerns associated with busy roads.¹²

Whilst the spine of the Guildford to Godalming Greenway is to provide a safe route between the two conurbations, it is equally important that safe routes are provided from the residential areas of Binscombe and Farncombe to the spinal route travelling either towards Godalming or Guildford.

GTC has engaged with the Godalming Cycle Campaign, Waverley Borough Council and Surrey County Council to support the Greenway. In doing so, GTC's priority has been to ensure that feeder routes are able to connect to the spine. Additionally GTC wishes the spine to traverse across Godalming to enable Farncombe and Binscombe to be safely linked to Godalming Town Centre and onwards towards Ockford Ridge, Milford and Witley.

In pursuance of that aim, GTC funded a feasibility study for the cross Godalming section and put forward proposals that would link the greenway's spine from Broadwater Park, through Farncombe and onwards towards Godalming. Both SCC and WBC have consulted on route options.

12. Transport – Car Use

Whilst Binscombe and Farncombe could not to be considered as a gridlocked area, surveys conducted for the Neighbourhood Plan indicated that reliance on the car as a means of getting about is high and is the predominant mode of travel for the community of Godalming and Farncombe. Although the goal of any transport policy must be to reduce car use, there is a balance to be struck between discouraging car use where possible and providing for needs where appropriate.

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. As such, until public transport becomes resident's first choice, there does need to be satisfactory provision of parking to help the local centres to thrive.

Whilst it could be argued that local centres such as the Binscombe Crescent and Long Gore shops have adequate parking facilities to match their needs, the same argument may not necessarily hold true for the Farncombe retail centre. The combinations of activities within this area, be it retail, assemblies in the church or the day centre, social gatherings in the café's or the need for practical services such as the pharmacy or laundrette, individually and collectively place a strain on the adequacy of the available on-street and retail off-street parking

Although Farncombe as an area has at 71% the lowest access to a car, compared to an average of 85% across the town and 96% in some other areas, it is faced with similar, parking problems around its retail centres as other locations. Parking issues around the Farncombe village retail centre could of course be seen as a sign of a successful local

¹² http://www.guildfordgodalminggreenway.com/?page_id=30

centre. Whilst the ideal would be for people to walk or cycle to the local retail centres, if residents are using their vehicles to access a retail offering, it is preferable that they support the local centres rather than travelling further afield.

Parking and road safety issues in and around the centre of Farncombe are further compounded by the prevalence of commuter traffic. Much of which, according to anecdotal evidence, travels in from outside the area to make use of the free parking spaces and the opportunity to get a seat on the train before Guildford. The level of commuter traffic appears to be particularly acute on the residential roads around the station.

12.1 Electric Vehicle Charging Points

In considering private vehicle use, with the government announced phasing out of internal combustion engines (ICE), the need/demand for appropriate infrastructure to support electric vehicles (EV) must be addressed.

For many EV drivers the need for on-route EV charging is a logistical requirement that is largely met by private provision on retail and business sites, for the majority of EV users the ability to charge overnight is a greater everyday need. Whilst changes in planning regulations will require all new build premises with parking facilities to provide EV charging points and government grants are likely to be available for a number of years to support householders who are able to provide for off-road EV charging, for residents who do not have off-street parking facilities the transition from ICE to EV holds more challenges.

Government figures show that around 40% of Britain's 33 million cars belong to households without off-street parking, with the percentage increasing towards 60% in areas of higher population density. It is estimated that between 400,000 and 500,000 on-street EV chargers will be required by 2030 when half of the UK's cars should be electric. However, if the infrastructure isn't there then people will hesitate to buy an electric car unless they are forced to. Good infrastructure will be essential to convincing more and more residents to go electric¹³

The provision of EV charging facilities within residential areas with predominantly on-street parking needs to be addressed in order to support the transition to EV. With a clear cessation date for the sale of private ICE vehicles, it could be argued that it is the responsibility of government agencies at all levels to push for the installation of on-street EV charging facilities even in the face of opposition from current residents. GTC will work closely with WBC and SCC on their roll-out programmes and push hard for on street EV provision that reflects the constraints of the local environs.

12.2 Twenty Is Plenty

Godalming Town Council believes that the implementation of a wide-area 20mph speed limit on residential roads, combined with a public information campaign, would have immediate beneficial impacts on road safety, air quality, active transport and community well-being and would support the Council's climate emergency objectives. The creation of a 20mph zone within the main residential areas of Binscombe and Farncombe, could not only create a safer environment, but also a cleaner and healthier place to live.

¹³ <https://www.reuters.com/technology/rocking-down-electric-avenue-good-luck-charging-your-car-2021-10-13/>

13. Transport – Public Transport

13.1 Bus Services

Bus services are an important part of creating a strategic shift away from the private car. Bus routes need to serve key locations such as the town centre and the railway stations more frequently and more reliably in order to increase bus use.

Other than direct Godalming/Guildford routes along Meadrow, Farncombe & Binscombe are served in varying degrees by the Number 46, 42, 503 and 523 bus services.

No. 46. Aldershot, Farnham, Elstead, Shackleford, Hurtmore, Godalming, Farncombe, Compton and Guildford - This route serves part of Green Lane, Barnes Road/Spring Grove, Binscombe Lane/Farncombe Street and Nightingale Road. Towards Godalming the route is served by 12 buses Mon – Fri (roughly 1 per hour between 06.45 and 18.49) and 11 on a Saturday (roughly 1 per hour starting at 08.29) and 11 busses towards Guildford Mon-Sat from approx 07.30 to 18.51

No.42. Cranleigh, Nanhurst Corner, Alfold Crossways, Dunsfold, Loxhill, Hascombe, Busbridge, Godalming, Catteshall, Farncombe and Guildford. - This route serves Furze Lane, Birch Road, Silo Drive and Silo Road, Warren Road, Elizabeth Road, Farncombe Street, St Johns Road and Hare Lane. On a weekday there are 7 buses on this route.

No 503 between Hambledon - Milford – Guildford operates one service a day via Farncombe on a Monday, Wednesday and Friday serving Summers Road, St John's Street and Hare Lane. - This service provides a public transport route to the Mill Medical Practice and the Sainsbury's Superstore. The pickup from St John's Farncombe being at 10.49 with a return journey towards Guildford arriving at St John's Street at 12.50.

No 523 between Guildford, Farncombe, Godalming, Busbridge and Milford Hospital operates two services service a day via Farncombe on a Tuesday and Thursday Friday serving Summers Road, St John's Street and Hare Lane. - This service provides a public transport route to Milford Hospital. The pickup from St John's Farncombe being at 09.50 and 12.50 with the return journeys toward Guildford arriving at St Johns Street at 10.30 and 13.30

No buses run in Farncombe or Binscombe on a Sunday or Public Holiday, there are no bus routes that drop off or pick up outside Farncombe Station or at the Binscombe Medical Centre and the frequency of the bus services from Binscombe and Farncombe towards Godalming and Guildford is considered inadequate and does little to encourage the use of public transport as a realistic, viable alternative for private car use for short local journeys. Additionally, the many sport facilities reached, via Summers Road, on Broadwater Park are also not well served with only a three day a week service which excludes Saturdays when the Park Run is held.

13.2 Railway Services

As with bus services, the railway should be an integral part of the public transport network serving the needs of the community.

Until March 2021, Farncombe Station had historically been serviced by 4 trains per hour during peak periods and two trains per hour during the off-peak period, reducing to one off-peak train per hour on a Sunday. However, as part of the railways response to changes in services due to changes in rail travel during and post the Covid pandemic, the train services stopping at Farncombe were reduced to 3 trains during peak travel times and 1 train per hour during off-peak times.

Godalming Town Council and many community groups were proactive in pushing for this the service to be re-instated to pre-covid levels. Initially SWR indicated that the service would be re-instated as part of a service review for the train schedules from December 2022¹⁴. However, pleasingly the 2nd off peak service was re-instated 11 months earlier in January 2022.

It has been the aspiration of many to also see the Saturday and Sunday service increased to two trains per hour to promote leisure travel. This would not only service visitors who wished to visit the area or access the Surrey Hills, but would also provide greater choice for residents to travel along the main line to Portsmouth or London or many other destinations for leisure.

13.3 Rail/Bus Integration

Although the Neighbourhood Plan supports the redesign of the forecourt at Godalming and Farncombe railway stations so that buses can stop outside the entrance and create an environment suitable for all users, at present no buses stop at Farncombe Station.

Passengers arriving from the Portsmouth direction seeking onward travel by public transport would need to walk either to Nightingale Road bus stop D for routes towards Guildford/Compton (Watts Gallery) or to St John's Street bus stop B for routes towards Dunsfold/Cranleigh direction. If buses do not stop directly at a railway station, then clear unambiguous signage and information boards are needed to assist visitors to easily transit from rail to bus and to promote local places of interest, shops and café's that are available during the waiting time between bus and train and visa-versa.

It is also important that, in order to minimise journey times, the rail and bus timetabling is also integrated. When considering the onward journeys from Farncombe Station the two most likely journeys are to either Watts Gallery in Compton (No.46 bus) or towards Winkworth Arboretum (No 42 Bus).

For Journeys from the Portsmouth end of the line the weekday and Saturday integration towards Compton has an average of 43 minutes between train arrival and bus service, this allows for a relaxed transit and the opportunity to take advantage of the Station Café or other outlets in Farncombe. However, whilst a morning transit to Winkworth would result in a reasonable 30 minute wait between train arrival and bus departure, the afternoon timetabling of the Non42 bus sees it depart 1 minute after the arrival of the Portsmouth train, meaning that passengers will likely experience nearly an hour's wait.

For trains arriving from the London direction, whilst the onward journey on the No 42 bus towards Winkworth would average a 45 minute wait, for those wishing to visit Watts Gallery the wait would be extended to 55 minutes.

With no bus services on a Sunday, the public transport option to Watts Gallery is more challenging and would mean a 2^{1/2} mile walk or cycle and for those planning on visiting Winkworth the distance is 3 miles.

14. **Economic Profile and Potential Forces for Change**

Waverley in general is an affluent area with a buoyant local economy and low level of unemployment. Farncombe village and the locality shopping parades at Binscombe offer a mix of retail, professional services and residential. Despite the economic shock experienced by the retail sector during the Coronavirus pandemic, the level of

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unoccupied retail units remained low, with the September 2021 Waverley retail unit vacancy survey showing no vacant units in the Farncombe retail area. However, by Spring 2022, the picture had changed when a number of retail units had become vacant during the same quarter. This has had the effect of significantly altering the feel of the village retail area.

Retail Vacancy Rates - Waverley Retail Centres for February 2022

Location	Retail Premises	Vacant	Vacancy Rate
Farnham	240	9	4%
Milford	23	1	4%
Farncombe	40	5	13%
Godalming	202	18	9%
Haslemere	119	8	7%
Bramley	30	3	10%
Wey Hill	72	2	3%
Cranleigh	113	8	7%

The table above provides a comparative indication for February 2022. Farncombe had seen 5 of its 40 retail units become vacant which created a 13% vacancy rate. Whilst the highest rate since 2018 at the time of writing, a planning application for one unit to become a restaurant was being considered by the planning authority.

Despite the above, there remains a strong presence of shops in Farncombe and Binscombe and residents continue to be served by several independent and national retailers, as well as takeaway food outlets, cafes and charity shops. Within the area there are three convenience supermarkets, a white goods retailer, a post office, restaurants, barbers, hairdressers and smaller convenience stores as well as a laundrette, vets and a garage with car showroom.

Although there is no longer any banks operating in the Farncombe or Binscombe. Most services that were available within a locality bank can be done at the post office. This adds to the importance of the Farncombe Post Office. As at December 2021, the area also has three externally accessible cashpoint machines.

Despite the Neighbourhood Plan identifying that the retail needs of the expanding population would be best served through small scale expansion of Farncombe Local Centre (NP Policy GOD 4)¹⁵ and Waverley Local Plan Policy TCS2 of the LPP1 providing some safeguards to local centres¹⁶ the conversion of commercial properties to residential has already been experienced in Farncombe in the loss of the bank building, dry cleaners and the former bakery and pet shop as well as the Owen Road development.

Whilst Waverley as the Local Planning Authority was able in April 2019 to make an Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights that allow the change of use from commercial uses to residential in the commercial area of Beacon Hill near

¹⁵ <https://godalming-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Godalming-NP-Referendum-Version-April-2019-Part-1.pdf>

¹⁶ https://www.waverley.gov.uk/Portals/0/Documents/services/planning-and-building/planning-strategies-and-policies/local-plan/LPP1_July_2019_web.pdf?ver=M4C0VK_SH7V54tLWEaTftA%3d%3d (page 98)
https://www.waverley.gov.uk/Portals/0/Documents/services/planning-and-building/planning-strategies-and-policies/local-plan/LPP1_July_2019_web.pdf?ver=M4C0VK_SH7V54tLWEaTftA%3d%3d (page 98)

Hindhead¹⁷, achieving the same protection for the retail centre of Farncombe has, due to changes announced in July 2021 (see para 14), been made more challenging. However, this is a move that the Town Council would support.

A further concern is that the range of retail outlets on Farncombe Street has become more restricted in recent years. Whilst local residents would like to see a greater variety of shops, the reality is that the market determines the available retail offering. However, whilst local authorities cannot influence or prevent individual retailers operating within existing 'Class of Use' of a property, they can, if appropriate, manage changes of the class of use of a property. This does afford an opportunity to influence planning decisions towards a suitable balance of retail outlets.

15. Restricting Article 4 Directions

New text was added to Paragraph 53 of the National Planning Policy Framework in July 2021 on Article 4 Directions (areas where certain permitted development rights are unavailable) to make it tougher for Local Planning Authorities to secure blanket A4Ds. Additional text also requires that A4Ds be restricted to the smallest geographical area possible and based on robust evidence.

The new wording seeks to limit the use of A4Ds to core primary shopping areas. The policy prioritises the high street uses over residential uses, albeit only where a change to residential would "include the loss of the essential core of a primary shopping area which would seriously undermine its vitality and viability"

16. Business Improvement District

Godalming Town Council, alongside The Godalming & District Chamber of Commerce and Waverley Borough Council are supporting the development of a Business Improvement District (BID) within the Godalming Area. As part of that process GTC will seek opportunities to explore whether the Farncombe and Binscombe retail areas might be able to benefit from being either a formal part of a BID area or from opportunities that might be available as businesses although not part of the formal BID area.

17. Built Environment

17.1 Development

Farncombe and Binscombe are areas with a relatively high density of housing and little land for significant further development. Public parks and allotment sites form the majority of the open space in the area. As such, with the notable exception of land taken out of the Green belt on the outskirts of Binscombe, the amount of potential development land is predominately limited to infill land and the redevelopment/conversion of exiting developments.

17.2 Permitted Development Rights

Since 2013 the scope of Permitted Development Rights (PDR) available under the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 ("the Order") as amended¹⁸. Part 1 of Schedule 2 to the Order sets out the permitted development rules concerning what enlargements, improvements, alterations and other additions a householder may make to their house and the area around it without the need for an application for planning permission.

¹⁷ <https://www.waverley.gov.uk/Services/Planning-and-building/Planning-strategies-and-policies/Article-4-directions>

¹⁸ The Order and subsequent amendments can be found at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596>

Although PDRs do not remove requirements for permissions or consents under other regimes such as the building regulations¹⁹ and the Party Wall Act²⁰, they do allow householders to improve and extend their homes without the need to apply for planning permission where that would be out of proportion with the impact of works carried out. Larger single storey rear extensions are subject to a neighbour consultation scheme.

Additionally, The Government has implemented significant changes to the use classes system in England (Use Class Order 1987) through the new Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) (Amendment) (England) Regulations 2020. The main driver of change has been a need to enable the repurposing of buildings on high street and town centres.

The new permitted development rights significantly extend the scope of new development which can be carried out without planning permission.

Taken together, the changes represent a very significant shift in control away from local authorities and the communities they represent, into a significantly less regulated environment. Overall, the local planning authority has lost a significant degree of control over changes of use.

17.3 Land South East of Binscombe

A review of the Green Belt boundary in Waverley was undertaken in 2014. The purpose of the Review was to assess the performance of the Green Belt designation against NPPF criteria and to then consider specific areas of search for boundary adjustments. The study made a number of recommendations and identified land that could be removed from the Green Belt.²¹

Subsequently as part of the Local Plan process, an area of land to the south east of Binscombe was removed from the Green Belt and designated for housing development. This land now forms part of the settlement area of Godalming and is no longer be within the Area of Great Landscape Value.²²

17.4 Telecoms Masts

There are continuing ad hoc attempts by the telecoms companies to install 20 meter monopoles to support their 5G networks. These are often in inappropriate locations (two attempts in Marshall Road; at the bottom of the Farncombe Hill open green space by Binscombe Crescent). Fortunately, WBC Planning have rejected some of the very inappropriate developments. GTC remains convinced of the need for coordinated planning of telecoms infrastructure by the telecoms companies working with WBC, GTC and other local stakeholders. GTC will continue to lobby for this more rational, proactive and inclusive approach to planning.

¹⁹ Information on building regulations can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/building-regulations-approval/whenyou-need-approval>

²⁰ Guidance on the Party Wall etc. Act 1996 can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/party-wall-etc-act-1996-guidance>

²¹ Waverley Borough Council Green Belt Review Parts 1 and 2: August 2014
<https://haslemeretc.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/02/WBC-Green-Belt-Review-Part-1.pdf>

²² https://www.waverley.gov.uk/Portals/0/Documents/services/planning-and-building/planning-strategies-and-policies/local-plan/LPP1_July_2019_web.pdf?ver=M4C0VK_SH7V54tLWEaTftA%3d%3d page 113 – 114.
https://www.waverley.gov.uk/Portals/0/Documents/services/planning-and-building/planning-strategies-and-policies/local-plan/LPP1_July_2019_web.pdf?ver=M4C0VK_SH7V54tLWEaTftA%3d%3d page 113 – 114.

18. House Prices and the Need for Social Housing

Just over 100 years ago, in response to the housing crisis that existed at the time, the then Godalming Borough Council built the first social (Council) housing at The Oval in Farncombe. The same Council continued with the building of Council Housing to deal with housing crisis in the area and created what became known as the Tudors followed by the Binscombe extension in the 1950's. Nearly 70 years on the Farncombe and Binscombe area still faces a housing crisis centred on the ability of local residents to be able to afford a decent home, be it as owners or renters.

At £602,000, Surrey has the second highest average house prices out of 55 England and Wales counties. Only greater London is more expensive,²³ and although the average house price in the GU7,3 postcode area (Farncombe and Binscombe) of £526,138 is some £76,000 lower than the Surrey average, the median salary in Waverley Borough is £3,300 lower than the Surrey average and some £14,000 below the median salary in the highest earning borough in Surrey (Runnymede).²⁴

Within Waverley Borough the median salary in 2021 of £28,400 was £2,900 lower than the UK average. Likewise, the average salary in Waverley at £32,800 was also below the UK average of £38,300²⁵.

However, with a below average income level, the average property prices in GU7,3 post code area, which covers Farncombe and Binscombe, shows a stark and alarming disparity when compared with the average property prices for England.

At the lower end of the housing market, the average sale price for flats and maisonettes in Farncombe and Binscombe, as reported by Zoopla for the previous 12 months of sales from the date of this report, was nearly 37% higher than the average in the UK.²⁶ Likewise, significant higher prices in comparison to the UK average are experienced when purchasing a terraced property (+50%), semi-detached properties (+64%) and detached properties at (+69%).

Taken as a whole, with a median salary of £28,400 and an average house price for the area of £526,138, a Farncombe household with two median earners would have a house cost to earnings ratio of 9.2. Even at the lower end of the housing market the ratio would be in the region of 6.55. This compares with an average ratio for England of 5.26 for the average house and 4.33 at the lower end of the market.

With house prices to income ratios being so high, many in the GU7,3 postcode area have little option other than to rent. However, the average rental price of property in the GU7 area of £1,502²⁷ takes a much higher proportion of household income than would be the case in many other areas of the country. A household with two median incomes in Farncombe would be paying approximately 40% of their income in rent, whereas the average rent for a household with the same income living in Lincoln would be just 15%.

When considering the median salary vs housing costs, many essential workers will be earning below the median wage. As well as nurses with starting salaries of £25,655, a healthcare assistant at £17,699, a primary school teacher starting on £25,714 or a newly qualified police constable with a starting salary of £21,402 who will take 5 years to reach the median salary, will all be better off working in other areas of the country with lower

²³ <https://www.plumplot.co.uk/Surrey-house-prices.html>

²⁴ <https://www.plumplot.co.uk/Surrey-salary-and-unemployment.html>

²⁵ <https://www.plumplot.co.uk/Surrey-salary-and-unemployment.html>

²⁶ <https://www.zoopla.co.uk/house-prices/uk/>

²⁷ https://www.home.co.uk/for_rent/godalming/current_rents?location=godalming

housing costs. As workers with portable skills and nationally agreed pay structures, the danger of essential worker skill shortages serving the Farncombe and Binscombe area is very real. There are many more essential workers who serve or support the community such as cleaners, classroom assistants and shop workers who are equally challenged by high housing costs in Farncombe and Binscombe.

In setting out the housing cost challenge faced by many in the community, Godalming Town Council believes that a sustainable solution for the lowest paid, but essential workers in our community, can only be achieved through the provision of affordable rented housing.

As such, whilst there are few development sites in the Farncombe and Binscombe area, GTC would wish that if development is to occur on sites such as the Land to the East of Binscombe then any development should be first and foremost for the provision of socially rented housing.

In Considering options for socially rented developments, Godalming Town Council would wish to see WBC exploring as many options as possible, including in a similar fashion to that undertaken at Ockford Ridge, the regeneration of some of the older social housing stock in the area as well as innovative developments utilising factory made modular building that would not only speed up the delivery of social housing but would also reduce the carbon footprint associate with traditional building techniques.

notes:

1. The median salary is the middle income for the population. i.e. half the population earn below that amount and half earn above that amount. The average salary is the mathematical mean for all salaries earned by the population.
2. Waverley Borough is the lowest level that salary figures could be determined.

19. Community Use of the Built Environment

The built and green environment of Farncombe and Binscombe is used by residents to access day-to-day facilities, but it is also used to provide a focal point for a variety of organised activities.

For a number of years, St John's Church have held a number of community events including the 'Village Show' which is a local produce show. Likewise the Day Centre holds a summer fete, a Christmas bazaar and hosts the Farncombe Village Christmas Lights switch on event.

Godalming Town Council had for 3 years organised a village fete on the Canon Bowring recreation ground, this was then passed on to the community to run. Unfortunately, without the input of the Council this event became unsustainable for the resources available and is no longer held on the recreation ground. However, a number of the local schools hold annual fetes and Christmas sales.

As stated earlier a parkrun is now held each Saturday morning at Broadwater Park

Outwith of the Farncombe village area, an annual firework event is organised by the Farncombe Youth Football club and held at Meades Park, and a number events are held at the Rugby Club at Broadwater Park, including the NCT low bangs firework display.

In 2020 Godalming Town Council lobbied WBC to enable Farncombe Street between the Junction with St John's Road and the Western Railway Crossing to be used for on-street trading. As such, the possibility exists for an occasional market to be held at that

location. Use of the Farncombe Station Car Park has also been mooted as a possible location for holding occasional markets.

19.1 Farncombe Station Signal Box

In 2023 the signalling requirements for the London to Portsmouth will be operated from an operational control centre located at Basingstoke, as such the signal boxes along the line will become redundant. Whilst negotiations are taking place between Network Rail, the Community Rail Network and the Railway Heritage Trust to determine whether the listed signal box at Haslemere Station can be preserved as a railway heritage museum, it is likely that Farncombe's signal box will be mothballed or demolished.

The building itself is unsuitable for re-purposing to other uses without considerable expense, Godalming Town Council consider that a beneficial outcome for the community would be for the railway operators to remove the building and structures so that the land it currently occupies could be used to provide a small garden area with shelter for use by those waiting at the crossing whilst the barriers are down.

19.2 Telephone boxes.

Godalming Town Council has adopted the phone box in Spring Grove. The council plans to undertake the refurbishment, painting, replacement glass and electrical safety as required by the adoption agreement with BT. Additionally the Council will apply for any planning permission required to change its use from a telephone Kiosk to whatever purpose is finally agreed. Local Councillors will consider options for the future use to which the kiosks should be put.

20. **Public Art**

With the exception of the picture boards installed on the Southbound platform and artworks displayed in the waiting rooms of Farncombe Station, there is a notable absence of street art within Farncombe and Binscombe. However, there are a number of places where art could add to the street scene, such as the gable walls of the public toilets, the green at The Oval or by the Day Centre

A number of organisations, including the Centre for Active Design, set out that a vibrant public art programme offers a range of benefits and opportunities for enhancing the urban environment, increasing the use and enjoyment of public space and building social cohesion. Public Art provides a means of celebrating culture, diverse communities and shared history. It contributes to civic pride and helps forge a positive identity for the town. Through art the town can project its collective identity and vision, while individuals and community groups are also empowered to express their unique identities.

Public art supports the creative industries, creating opportunities for artists and designers. Public art can also:

- energise public spaces;
- expand thinking;
- transform the places where we live, work and play;
- create places of interaction; and
- lead to a sense of civic pride.

21st century, public art does not need to be considered as statues and monuments whose meanings fade into obscurity. In this context public art could be graffiti walls, murals or paintings as well as sculpture. It can be permanently displayed as part of the street scene or it could be transient art displayed or provided in a publicly accessible building such as the station waiting rooms.

GTC's Role in the Farncombe Village & Binscombe Area

21. Public Realm and Built Environment

21.1 Planning

GTC reversed a previous decision to disband its planning committee by the establishment in January 2020 of the Environment & Planning Committee (E&P). The E&P is responsible for providing advocacy on behalf of local residents to ensure that the character of the Farncombe Village and Binscombe Community area is not adversely impacted by developments.

21.2 Guildford to Godalming Greenway – Linking Residential Areas

Whilst the Guildford to Godalming Greenway is potentially an important step towards providing a practical alternative option for travel between the two towns, the Town Council also wishes it to be a catalyst to provide safe routes for local residents to walk and cycle from Farncombe and Binscombe into the town centre.

21.3 Benches & Bus Stops & Notice Boards

There are a number of bus stops, notably along Farncombe Street and Binscombe Lane which could benefit from adjacent public seating. An audit of potential locations and an installation plan, based on available funds, should be agreed. Likewise both the St John's and Meadow bus stops could benefit from refurbishment and where appropriate additional locations suitable for bus stop provision should be identified.

Although private land, GTC should seek to acquire permissions to install a public notice board at Binscombe Crescent Shops.

21.4 Farncombe Station Signal Box

To investigate and work with Network Rail and the Community Rail Partnership to explore options for use of the land current occupied by the signal box for when the signal box becomes defunct.

22. Business & Economic Development

22.1 Regeneration and Supporting the Local Economy

GTC, in common with all other Town & Parish Councils, has very few statutory duties. However, it does hold The General Power of Competence. The General Power of Competence (GPC) was introduced by the Localism Act 2011 and took effect in February 2012. In simple terms, it gives councils the power to do anything an individual can do provided it is not prohibited by other legislation.

The GPC will allow GTC to support its community by being a positive actor in working for greater economic growth and resilience in the local communities. The GPC provides both a legal power on which to act and/or giving greater confidence to work in new and innovative ways.

GTC's role is, as far as possible, to ensure that the Farncombe and Binscombe retail areas remains a visually attractive and vibrant location for businesses to operate.

23. Transport

23.1 EV Charging Points

The provision of EV charging facilities within residential areas with predominantly on-street parking need to be addressed in order to support the transition to EV. With a clear cessation date for the sale of private ICE vehicles, it could be argued that it is the responsibility of government agencies at all levels to push for the installation of one-street EV charging facilities even in the face of opposition from current residents. GTC works with both WBC and SCC to identify potential locations for EV Charging points.

23.2 Twenty Is Plenty

On 11 March 2021, Godalming Town Council approved a motion calling on SCC to support the creation of 20mph zones in and around Godalming. In doing so Godalming Town Council stated that it believes that the implementation of a wide-area 20mph speed limit on residential roads, combined with a public information campaign, would have immediate beneficial impacts on road safety, air quality, active transport and community well-being and would support the Council's climate emergency objectives. The creation of a 20mph zone within the main residential areas of Binscombe and Farncombe, could not only create a safer environment, but also a cleaner and healthier place to live.

23.3 Transport and Access Master Plan

While the Council will continue to advocate for improvements in infrastructure and accessibility, there is a need to develop a more strategic plan addressing road usage and routes. This needs to be developed in consultation with local residents, schools, businesses, and other stakeholders, to form a coherent plan of improvement which will make routes from/to and through Farncombe and Binscombe safer and greener.

This would also look in more detail at 20mph limits, Greenway connections, changes in road layouts, pavements, traffic calming, buses at Farncombe Station and more widely etc.

24. **Green Environment**

24.1 Floral Godalming (Farncombe & Binscombe)

Floral displays softens the built environment by providing colour and interest, helps support pollinating insects and provides a sense of civic pride and well-being.

Troughs, baskets and planters installed in key locations complement those businesses and property owners who also strive to brighten up the area with floral displays. If Floral Godalming were to be extended into the Farncombe and Binscombe area, the public display element would be planted up, installed, watered and maintained by GTC staff in as economical and sustainable way as possible. However, whilst GTC does seek to attract sponsorship of the floral displays, in terms of staff time, infrastructure and plants etc, the majority of the costs lie with GTC.

In looking to expand into the Farncombe and Binscombe area, for the scheme to have a significant impact, it is important that the local community and not just the Town Council, are involved in creating displays. Displays need not be limited to planters but may involve the planting of verges and other poorly maintained/minimal diversity grassed areas.

24.2 Tree Planting

With a focus on residential areas and verges for tree planting, as a community within a wider borough, GTC would wish to see tree planting being undertaken in

line with the Waverley Tree Planting Strategy. Location of sites and type of trees should be identified through consultation with local residents, businesses and schools.

24.3 Protection of Trees

In order to provide added protection to trees not subject to a TPO, Godalming Town Council would wish to see WBC add all trees lying within a conservation area, protected woodland or other area where trees are subject to protection by a local policy from felling, topping, lopping, uprooting, wilful damage or wilful destruction with a trunk diameter of 75mm or more when measured at 1.5m above ground level, added to the WBC digital mapping system

Godalming Town Council will, as part of its review of the Godalming & Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan, as is already the case for the wooden hillside of the town, seek to establish an area protection for the tree stock within the Farncombe and Binscombe area.

24.4 Allotments

GTC to explore future availability of additional allotment sites.

25. Community Facilities, Events, Venues.

25.1 Farncombe Youth Football Club - Meades Park – Green Lane

Meades Park, home to the Farncombe Youth Football Club, is one of the largest, provider of youth activity in Farncombe and Binscombe. As a key community facility, GTC to work with the FYFC management team to support bids for ground improvements that will benefit the future members of the club without inversely impacting on the surrounding neighbourhood.

25.2 Broadwater Park Changing Rooms

The changing rooms at Broadwater park are an underused asset to the community, due to their dilapidate state. GTC believe they need to be refurbished in order to utilise their full potential and become a valued community facility. GTC will continue to work with WBC to support the funding applications for improving the changing rooms and providing an operating base for the Godalming and Villages Community Store.

25.3 Community Events

GTC recognises the importance of events within the community and stated its commitment to their delivery, both directly and indirectly by adopting a clear policy position to support community events.²⁸

In 2020 Godalming Town Council lobbied WBC to enable Farncombe Street between the Junction with St John's Road and the Western Railway Crossing to be used for on street trading. As such, the possibility exists for an occasional market to be held at that location.

²⁸ <https://godalming-tc.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/Community-Events-Support-Policy-30-April-2020.pdf>

25.4 Baden Hall

As with many community buildings of its age, Baden Hall has a number of challenges to enable it to become a more energy efficient and environmentally friendly building. As one of the few buildings available for community hire GTC wishes to work with the Baden Hall management group to support its future availability.

25.5 Telephone boxes.

Godalming Town Council has adopted the phone box in Spring Grove. The council plans to undertake the refurbishment, painting, replacement glass and electrical safety as required by the adoption agreement with BT. Additionally the Council will apply for any planning permission required to change its use from a telephone Kiosk to whatever purpose is finally agreed. Local Councillors will consider options for the future use to which the kiosks should be put.

25.6 Public Art

Godalming has a thriving arts community, be it art group collectives where individual artists collaborate to create exhibitions, commercial galleries, artisan craft makers, drama groups or artistic performers.

GTC to work with local art groups, WBC and other land owners to determine options for public art within the Farncombe and Binscombe area.

GTC Action Plan

26. Action Plan - Context

GTC's Programme 2019-2023 informs many individual work strands being considered or actioned by the Council. However, whilst providing the generality of aims and objectives, the programme leaves the detail to be considered elsewhere.

This report seeks to consider in the round a number of the aims and objectives contained within the programme as they pertain to the Farncombe Village and Binscombe Community areas. Having looked at what GTC is either currently doing, planning to do or could do if it so wished, a table of current or potential actions is set out below.

27. Table of Actions

Action 1 Planning

Continue to provide an opportunity for the public to express their views on planning matters and to provide advocacy for the protection of the character of the Farncombe and Binscombe locality. Utilise GTC's social media to promote knowledge of how residents are able to express concerns to Members at meeting of the council or its committees.

Work to ensure, by advocacy and planning comments and objections, that the character of the Farncombe Village and Binscombe Community area is not adversely impacted by developments.

Farncombe retail; PDR etc.

Support affordable and social housing for the community.

Action 2 Guildford to Godalming Greenway – Linking Residential Areas

Support the Greenway and advocate for it to be a catalyst to provide safe routes for local residents to walk and cycle from Farncombe and Binscombe into Godalming town centre.

Action 3 Community Events

Continue to support local community events.

Support local market events in the Farncombe Station area via the Rail Partnership Consult on the desirability of holding market events in Farncombe Street between the Junction with St John's Road and the Western Railway Crossing.

Action 4 Floral Godalming (Farncombe & Binscombe)

Work with the local community to expand Floral Godalming into the Farncombe and Binscombe area. Displays need not be limited to planters but may involve the planting of verges and other poorly maintained/minimal diversity grassed areas.

Floral Godalming (Farncombe & Binscombe) should also consider locations for tree planting within the area.

Action 5 Benches & Bus Stops & Notice Boards

Conduct an audit of potential locations for new benches and agree an installation plan, based on available funds. Refurbish the St John's and Meadow bus stop shelters Identify additional locations suitable for bus shelter provision.

Action 6 Farncombe Signal Box

Work with Network Rail and the Community Rail Partnership to explore options for use of the land current occupied by the signal box for when the signal box becomes defunct.

Action 7 Telephone Kiosks

The Council has adopted the phone box in Spring Grove. The council plans to undertake the refurbishment, painting, replacement glass and electrical safety as required by the adoption agreement with BT. Additionally the Council will apply for any planning permission required to change its use from a telephone Kiosk to whatever purpose is finally agreed. Local Councillors will consider options for the future use to which the kiosks should be put.

Action 8 Public Art

GTC to work with local art groups, WBC and other land owners to determine options for public art within the Farncombe and Binscombe area, including, for instance, the gable walls of the GTC-operated public toilets in Station Road.

As far as possible GTC will also support the preservation of historic signage and 'Ghost Advertisements/Brickads' within the village centre.

Action 9 Regeneration and Supporting the Local Economy

GTC's role is, as far as possible, to ensure that the Farncombe and Binscombe retail areas remain a visually attractive and vibrant location for businesses to operate

If required, GTC will work with and support the Local Planning Authority for the making of an Article 4 Direction for the Farncombe retail centre to remove the permitted development rights that allow the change of use from commercial to residential.

Through its Environment and Planning Committee. GTC will seek to influence planning decisions that contribute to creating and maintaining a balanced retail offering and hospitality offering.

Action 10 Baden Hall

As one of the few buildings within the area available for community hire, GTC will work with the Baden Hall management group to support works to improve the energy efficiency and equality provision to allow the building to meet community needs.

Action 11 EV Charging Points

GTC will work with both WBC and SCC to identify potential locations for EV Charging points.

Action 12 Twenty is Plenty

The Council will lobby the Highways Authority to consult with residents for the creation of a 20mph zone within the main residential areas of Binscombe and Farncombe, to not only create a safer environment, but also a cleaner and healthier place to live.

Action 13 Farncombe Youth Football Club - Meades Park – Green Lane

GTC to work with the FYFC management team to support bids for ground improvements that will benefit the future members of the club without adversely impacting upon the surrounding neighbourhood.

Action 14 Allotments

GTC to explore future availability of additional allotment sites

Action 15 Youth Provision

Godalming Town Council is committed to the provision of the Godalming and Farncombe Youth Centre and Drop-In-Centre for young people of Secondary School age located at Broadwater Park. GTC will, where possible, seek to expand its youth provision to match the local need.

Action 16 Alleyways and Footpaths

Continue to advocate for the upkeep of alleyways and footpaths (which are the responsibility of SCC, WBC and local residents)

Action 17 Godalming & Villages Community Store

Support the relocation of the Godalming & Villages Community Store to new premises located at Broadwater Park, Farncombe.

Action 18 Recreation Grounds

Advocate for Waverley Borough Council to consult with residents to review the Public Spaces Protection Order at the end of 2022 to establish support for the Canon Bowring Recreation Ground to revert to its previous designation as a dog exclusion zone.

Similarly, GTC will support consultation for the Combe Road Recreation Ground to also become a dog exclusion zone in the same review.

Advocate for improved provision for those with disabilities, including improved access to existing facilities.

Support the repurposing of some parts of the former Broadwater Golf Club site to include a combined Skateboard, BMX, scooter and outdoor activity hub with associated infrastructure, incorporating nature trails and environmental enhancements.

Notwithstanding the above Godalming Town Council remains open to other proposals brought forward for this site on its merits and overall benefit for the community.

Action 20 Public Notice Boards

Investigate provision of a public noticeboard on Binscombe Lane by the Binscombe Crescent shopping arcade. GTC to identify improved noticeboard designs as part of future replacement program.

Action 21 Rail/Bus Integration

Advocate for the redesign of the forecourt at Farncombe railway station so that buses can stop outside the entrance, as envisaged by the Neighbourhood Plan and for the 46 Bus to stop at Farncombe Train Station.

Action 22 Highways Infrastructure

Remain actively engaged with SCC Highways for the benefit of the local area and to engage the Surrey County Councillor for Godalming North in identifying areas in need of improvement or intervention by SCC Highways.

Action 23 Accessibility, Walkability and Bikeability

Advocate for effective use of techniques to change how road space is used and prioritised in terms of who uses it in line with the recently revised Highways Code – priority for pedestrians, cyclists and horses. Support a campaign to publicise the revised priorities.

Action 24 Transport and Access Master Plan

Produce a transport and access master plan that looks at improvements in infrastructure and accessibility, road usage and routes. Developed in consultation with local residents, schools, businesses, and other stakeholders, the aim would be to produce a coherent

plan of improvement which will make routes from/to and through Francombe and Binscombe safer and greener.

Action 26 Rugby Club

Identify whether the Council is able to support community events held at Broadwater Pavilion and the Rugby Club grounds.

Action 27 Possible Extension of Godalming Leisure Centre

To review and comment upon the WBC business case for any extension of the Godalming Leisure Centre, takes the following into account in determining observations and Godalming Town Council's support or otherwise:

- That the specific recreational, leisure and fitness facility needs of the community have been identified.
- The identified needs of the community have been measured against the existing supply of recreational, leisure and fitness facilities within the area, including community facilities such as Broadwater Park School Community Gym, private membership fitness centres and multi-sports facilities in neighbouring areas such as the Surrey Sports Park.
The desirability of focusing any additional facilities identified by the community needs analysis at the existing Godalming Leisure Centre location, as opposed to expanding opportunities at other locations, such as Godalming 6th Form College, Rodborough School in Milford, or new facilities located in areas of significant residential expansion such as Milford, or Dunsfold Park, thus reducing the need for extended vehicle movements across the local road networks.
- the desirability of provision of additional car parking spaces in light of WBC's declaration of a climate emergency
- the over-riding of Green Belt protection and loss of school playing fields to provide additional car parking spaces at Godalming Leisure Centre.

Godalming Town Council would also wish to see a comprehensive traffic analysis that models the impact of any extension of the Leisure Centre, especially in relation to any cumulative effect associated with the expansion of Broadwater School

Action 28 Protection of Trees

In order to provide added protection to trees not subject to a TPO, Godalming Town Council will:

- Request that WBC adds all trees lying within a conservation area, protected woodland or other area where trees are subject to protection by a local policy from felling, topping, lopping, uprooting, wilful damage or wilful destruction with a trunk diameter of 75mm or more when measured at 1.5m above ground level, added to the WBC digital mapping system
- Through the review process of the Godalming & Farncombe Neighbourhood Plan review process seek to establish an area protection order for the tree stock within the Farncombe and Binscombe area

Action 29 Encourage Tree Planting

In collaboration with the Waverley Tree Planting Strategy and consultation with local residents, businesses and schools, identify potential sites within the Farncombe and Binscombe area with a focus on residential areas and verges for tree planting.

Action 30 Social Housing

In consultation with local residents, GTC will support improvement to the existing social housing stock by WBC and for future provision of properties to be made available as social rented homes.