



Farnham

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Community

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From Design Statement to
Neighbourhood Plan



Farnham
Town Council

From Design Statement to Neighbourhood Plan Infrastructure constraints on future development in Farnham

Foreword

In both Waverley's current Local Plan and the government's new Planning Policy Framework the need for sustainable development is emphasised. Both documents also seek to protect the environment for future generations and to preserve the individual character of local areas.

It is important that the meaning of sustainable development is clear. Farnham is a most attractive place to live but, with increasing population, come increasing pressures on the fragile infrastructure of a small market town. The road system is inadequate for existing traffic levels and both rail and bus services are limited. Air pollution is already above permitted levels, the sewerage system cannot cope with increased demand and there is a shortage of school places at all levels.

If sustainability assumes that car usage will be limited by appropriate development, the infrastructure has to be in place, to minimise the need for people to travel by car. At present, there is no alternative in Farnham. Rail commuters to London and elsewhere need to travel to the station by car, as there are no evening buses and thousands of workers drive between neighbouring boroughs on a daily basis. As all these centres expand, congestion and air pollution will increase. Shortage of school places in the town adds to the current congestion, as parents are forced to drive longer distances, to access a school place for their child.

Farnham occupies a unique place in both history and geography. The historic town is surrounded by Hampshire and any development in Aldershot, Farnborough and Bordon will have a great impact on the town's local roads, schools and medical facilities. Development in Farnham, whether commercial or residential, must take into account what is happening across the border.

Farnham is surrounded by open countryside and contains many green spaces but much of this countryside will lose its protection under the new planning policy framework. Countryside beyond the green belt will be under threat from development, until Waverley's new Local Plan is in place and the natural transition from countryside to town centre will be lost forever.

These green areas add to the character of the town and are vital to the well-being of wildlife and residents. Despite the pressure for development, Farnham has retained its special character and it is important that we enhance the biodiversity within and around the town for future generations to experience. Open countryside, large gardens, woodland, streams and footpaths are all part of the green network, which must be preserved, to minimise the impact on climate change and improve the environment for all.

The Special Protection Areas, which surround the town, are an essential feature of that green network. Both the Thames Basin Heaths and the Wealden Heaths provide important habitats for threatened species. **Both heaths are protected by the European Birds and Habitats Directive and it would be not only irresponsible but also unlawful to destroy such special places and to deny future generations the chance to see the varied wildlife, which we have been privileged to enjoy.**

Farnham Town Council September 2011

Introduction

This document has been produced after consultation with residents' associations, businesses, local developers and conservation groups across the town and in neighbouring boroughs. After a series of workshops and other meetings, a draft went out to consultation for further comment. The views of all the organisations and their members are represented as fairly as possible, together with those of individual members of the public. This is in line with current government thinking, which seeks to give a greater say on planning for the future to local communities. It is part of the process, which will lead to the development of a full Neighbourhood Plan for the town and its surrounding villages.

In 2010 the residents of Farnham produced a Farnham Design Statement, which listed the following aims:

- To develop guidelines, which will have a positive influence on the town
- To represent the views of local residents about future development in the areas in which they live
- To raise awareness of the important features of the town and its surrounding villages and countryside
- To conserve the best of the architecture, by ensuring that any new development respects and complements the area's character
- To ensure a sustainable and attractive environment for future generations
- To assist developers and architects in providing developments, which are appropriate to Farnham

This document follows the guidance in the new draft framework for planning policy, which seeks to allow local authorities to produce their own plans, in order to reflect the distinctive needs and priorities of each area. It also follows the main aim in the Localism Bill, which seeks to allow local communities to influence the future of the places in which they live. Residents welcome development in the town but they wish that development to be sensitive to the town's nature and history. New development must be readily absorbed into the town, without damage to its essential character and structure.

Waverley Borough Council policy background

The main policies in the current Local Plan are designed to deliver the keynote policy:

"The council, through the Local Plan, will seek to help maintain and improve the quality of life in Waverley without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs and to enjoy a high quality environment. This means protecting and enhancing the borough's environmental quality and providing for homes, jobs, infrastructure and services, without undermining the value of built, natural and man-managed environmental resources."

The plan also states in its foreword that it:

"aims to make the best use of previously developed land within urban areas. The Plan seeks to ensure that the design of new development is of a high quality that contributes to the special and distinctive character of our towns and villages."

Farnham is one of the main settlements defined in the Waverley Draft Settlement Hierarchy. The distinctive character of the town, from the “network of passages that link the historic core” to the “wooded hills to the north and south of the town” is described in detail. Paragraph 5.9 is of particular importance:

“open spaces such as the water meadows and other more formal green spaces give the town a spacious setting. To the south of the town are several low-density residential areas, which have been protected since 1974. The preservation of the character of these areas has proved successful for over 25 years and, in consequence, this residential part of the town has retained an unusually semi-rural appearance, despite ongoing pressure for development.”

In Appendix C on environmental designations, there is a heading at C.43 “Protecting the Character of the Built-Up Areas.” Among three listed residential areas, which warrant special protection, is Great Austins Conservation Area and among four Areas of Special Environmental Quality is South Farnham. The character of these areas will be preserved only by rigorous defence of local policies.

National Guidance

The government has recently amended Planning Policy Statement (PPS)3 (Housing).

- Private residential gardens are now excluded from the definition of previously developed land.
- The Inspectorate has issued guidance to its officers, stating clearly that parks, private residential gardens, recreation grounds and allotments are all removed from the definition of previously developed land.

Other boroughs have issued guidance to say that this ruling means that this type of residential development will now be contrary to their Local Plan in certain areas **but Waverley Borough Council has not done so.**

- Residents and developers in Farnham complain that local policy H4, taken in conjunction with density levels, can produce inappropriate patterns of development on certain sites.
- Small blocks of flats have been built, when family homes would be more in keeping with the surrounding properties. Site-specific developments would deliver a better balance of properties in correct areas, as recommended at paragraph 109 in the Draft National Planning Policy Framework.

Cross-Border Development – planning strategically across local boundaries

Government guidelines in the Draft National Planning Policy Framework (DNPPF) state very clearly **that there must be cross border co-operation. Farnham is surrounded on three sides by Hampshire.** Aldershot, Farnborough, Fleet, and Alton are all nearer

neighbours than either Godalming or Haslemere. It is quicker by car to drive to settlements in East Hampshire or Rushmoor than to visit Godalming, Haslemere or Cranleigh in Waverley.

It is essential that Waverley takes into account the current and future development plans of towns in neighbouring boroughs, when planning the future development of Farnham.

Rushmoor Borough Council

In Aldershot

- 200 homes under construction,
- 500 more planned, including 200-300 additional new homes in North Town
- 4,500 in the Aldershot Urban Extension.

In Farnborough

- 920 homes under construction (376 at Farnborough Business Park and 399 at Queensgate)
- A further 330 homes are planned.

In all, the provision is for 6,350 net new dwellings in the borough of Rushmoor up to 2027. The centre of Aldershot is three miles away from the centre of Farnham and Farnborough is just six miles away.

Plus

- 164,000 square metres of new employment space
- 23,600 square metres of retail space up to 2019
- Probability of a further 56,400 metres of retail space by 2027.

Permission has already been given and work has begun on the Westgate Scheme in Aldershot, a mixed use development with a large foodstore, cinema, hotel, retail units and a small amount of housing.

Hart District Council

Hart is planning:

- 4840 homes up to 2028.
- The large developments at Fleet and Church Crookham (1040 dwellings) and the Queen Elizabeth Barracks (872 dwellings) will have an impact on Farnham's infrastructure. Cross-border commuting will increase.

Hart's policy on employment land:

"There is already to be significant development within centres that immediately surround Hart, including major business development at Farnborough Business Park and also in Basingstoke and evidence indicates that Hart has a surplus of employment space."

In Hart's policy on Town, District and Local Centres, it is clearly stated that, *"The aim is for Hart's centres to complement, not compete with, each other and neighbouring centres."*

Hart's spatial strategy does not identify any new areas for office or industrial uses. This cross-border approach has to be applied in Waverley, if Farnham is to succeed. It cannot and should not compete with its neighbours but should seek to complement development just over the borders.

East Hants District Council

- The Whitehill/Bordon Eco-town is the only cross-border development mentioned in Waverley's draft core strategy but its effect will be no greater than that from development in Rushmoor and Hart.
- It makes provision for 5,500 homes and 7,000 jobs. It is stated that the use of the motor-car will be discouraged but offers nothing more than a promise to provide "communication links" both within the town and to other destinations.
- There are no plans to upgrade any of the main road links between Surrey and Hampshire.
- The A3 will be promoted to potential investors as the strategic route that serves the community of the new town but there are no plans to upgrade the A325, already congested as it enters Farnham.
- **Hampshire County Council has objected to Waverley's Core Strategy on the grounds that the A31, which bisects Farnham, will not be able to cope with increased traffic.**

Protecting and enhancing the environment

Farnham is surrounded by open green space and contains many important areas of green space within its boundaries. Much of the green space around the town is "Countryside beyond the Green Belt", which is currently protected by local policy C2. This protection will not continue, when the DNPPF becomes law, if there is no new Local Plan in place, as is the case in Waverley. Residents are actively seeking to conserve all the town's green areas for future generations, as advised in the new framework.

- **Areas of countryside beyond the green belt** extend into Farnham and it is vital that development in these areas is strictly controlled, in order to retain the natural transition from open countryside to built-up area.
- **The Green Belt, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will continue to enjoy protection under the new framework**
- **Areas of Great Landscape Value (AGLV), Areas of Strategic Visual Importance (ASVI) and Areas of Special Environmental Quality (ASEQ) are under threat.** Residents feel that these local designations should be retained and strengthened to protect the distinctive character of the areas on the fringes of the town and to prevent the coalescence of settlements.

- **In the new guidance in PPS3**, private residential gardens are removed from the definition of previously developed land, as are parks, recreation grounds and allotments. Waverley Borough Council is urged to strengthen its guidance on this policy change, to afford greater protection in the future.
- **The Aldershot/Farnham Strategic Gap** is a special area and is currently protected by local policy C4. Retention of this open space will assume greater significance as the intensification of development in the built-up areas on both sides of the local border continues to increase.
- Limited development in the villages near Farnham would be of benefit. Villages also need to thrive and there are villages, which have seen no development over the last ten years.
- Redundant sites should be used for housing, where possible, if there is a local need.

Maintaining and enhancing biodiversity in Farnham

Farnham occupies a unique position at the western end of the Weald of Kent, Sussex and Surrey. Habitats range from sandy heath-land to chalk grassland and from ancient woodland to flood meadows of the river Wey. The boundary of the Surrey Hills AONB runs through south Farnham, there are two SSSIs and the river Wey is a designated chalk stream. Development in the town has been influenced by the Thames Basin Heaths SPA (Special Protection Area) and will be influenced by the Wealden Heaths SPA. Farnham is surrounded by areas of Biodiversity Opportunity and the river Wey is a Biodiversity Opportunity Area in its own right.

However, a single narrow corridor will not meet the complex needs of the range of wildlife present in this area. There needs to be a network of open spaces, a green infrastructure, which complements the necessary human infrastructure.

This infrastructure exists in the built-up area of Farnham, with playing-fields, school grounds, residential gardens and footpaths. It contributes to the well-being of the residents of the town and connects children with nature. This green infrastructure must be preserved.

In common with other parts of the country, the effects of climate change are being seen across Farnham. There have been changes in the patterns of behaviour of both flora and fauna, as well as the arrival of new species and the decline of others.

It is essential that Waverley works closely with Surrey Wildlife Trust and other agencies to ensure that the necessary independent environmental surveys take place, before permissions are granted and that any conditions are upheld.

Trees, woodlands and hedgerows all add to the beauty and biodiversity within and around the town. Residents seek to resist the loss of any of these features, especially where they make a significant contribution to the landscape or streetscape, especially in the town's Conservation Areas or where they are essential for wildlife.

There should be much greater protection for trees in the Conservation Areas. Planning application forms should be standardised, to enable Waverley officers to assess all the trees on each site accurately. Stricter enforcement will be necessary, as development increases and the threat to trees and hedgerows grows.

The Special Protection Areas (SPA)

Heath-land is safeguarded by a European Directive, which cannot be ignored. Farnham has the Thames Basins Heaths (TBH) to the North and the Wealden Heath to the South. **Both enjoy European Special Protection Area status.**

- The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area lies to the north of Farnham and affects any new homes built within 5km. Farnham Park has been put forward by Waverley Borough Council as a suitable SANGS but Natural England admits there is no evidence that SANGS (Suitable Alternative Natural Green Space) work.
- The provision of mitigation or avoidance is the responsibility of the developer. There has never been any public assent to the proposition that Waverley Borough Council should assist developers to build within the 5km zone of the SPA by providing SANGS nor is there any legal necessity so to do.
- **Guidance was very clear in NRM6 that priority should be given to directing development to those areas where potential adverse effects can be avoided without the need for mitigation measures.**
- The South East Panel Report (August 2007), paragraph 26.85, allocated WBC 5,000 houses for the plan period on the assumption that all the 5,000 houses “*could be provided outside the 5km zone of the TBH.*”
- In November 2006 at the Examination in Public of the last core strategy, the Inspector made the same point and held that “*there does not appear to have been any proper evaluation of development options, which might have reduced the effects which gave rise to the need for mitigation in the first place.*”

The pressure on the SPAs is increasing and paragraph 170 of the DNPPF states clearly that development likely to have a significant effect on sites protected under the Birds and Habitats Directive would not be sustainable under the terms of the presumption in favour of sustainable development. The Wealden Heaths SPA lies to the south of the town and will be equally affected by large-scale development in south Farnham. For all these reasons it must be accepted that development within 5k of the Thames Basin Heath Spa and Wealden Heaths SPA must be limited and the cumulative effect of successive development must be closely monitored.

Air pollution

It is widely accepted that Farnham is an attractive historic town, blighted by the volume of traffic, which passes into and through the town centre, using a road system unsuited to the needs of today. Noise and fumes are both unpleasant and harmful to health and the town centre has long been designated as an Air Quality Management Area by Waverley Borough Council. Despite this, there has been no remedial action by Surrey County Council.

- Nitrogen dioxide levels in Farnham town centre are unacceptably high.
- Air quality readings are at dangerous levels – 23% higher than the maximum set by the EU.
- Traffic is the primary cause of air pollution and further development will increase the density of traffic.
- For the first time recently, a large-scale application was refused on the basis of air quality.
- Air pollution levels in The Borough, Downing Street, Dogflud Way, Hickleys Corner and Station Hill are subject to an on-going DEFRA report.

Air quality issues must be a major consideration, when considering future development in the town centre and beyond. New development must continue to be restricted, where it would have an adverse effect on air quality.

Sewage Treatment Works

All of the sewage and waste water of Farnham and its settlements is treated at the Farnham Sewage Treatment Works, situated in Monkton Lane. For over twenty years now, near neighbours have complained about the smell from the process. However, over the past 5-7 years, the smell has become so bad that it has seriously affected the quality of life of many, who live within a mile of the works and who have cause to travel or work nearby (including Sainsbury Water Lane).

Local residents are unable to open their windows or doors and children are unable to play in the garden. The smell invades residents' homes and permeates clothes, washing, carpets, and curtains – it even permeates their wall-paper.

The plant is the responsibility of Thames Water. About two years ago, as the process was causing so much distress, a committee was formed of local residents and councillors to put pressure on Thames Water to take remedial action. After a battle Thames Water invested £700k in plant improvements. The plant was in a poor state and, even after the work was completed, the smell was just as bad. Further work was carried out on the removal of the sludge cake and there has been an improvement generally with the occasional breakdown causing a return to the production of serious odours.

The capacity of the sewage treatment works according to Thames Water is 37,000 people – that figure must include those that work in Farnham but live elsewhere as well as local residents. The plant is therefore running at full capacity and further major development would lead to a serious breakdown. None of the recent investment was designed to increase the capacity.

To increase the capacity of the plant will require a major rebuild and the cost would be many millions of pounds. Whilst the land is available, the funding is not. This is a serious infrastructure deficiency, which could lead to health problems.

Traffic

Farnham's traffic system is notoriously inadequate. The town centre is crossed by two 'A' roads and many of the town's roads are very narrow. There is an outdated one-way system in the town and frequent gridlock. The residential roads are subject to 'rat running'.

- Car ownership level in Farnham is one of the highest in the country and has increased by 15% over the last 5 years due to development since 2007
- **The level crossing**, when closed, causes substantial delays to traffic both north and south. For about 18 hours of the day, the gates are closed for a minimum of 14 minutes every hour. This equates to a 25% road closure.
- Particularly critical is the rapid build-up of traffic northwards to Hickley's Corner, causing queuing on the A31 and blocking road access to the station itself and on the Approach Road, which is also a bus route. This is particularly so at peak periods and any increase in frequency of service will worsen this problem.
- Restrictions on traffic, caused by the railway bridge on the A325 at Wrecclesham, result in heavy vehicles being routed through residential roads and over the level crossing, adding to the congestion.
- **Inadequate car parking at the station**, linked to current charging practices, leads to extensive on-street parking in residential areas south of the station, which results in inconvenience for residents, affects traffic flow and causes deterioration of the local environment. There are three schools close by, together with a hospice, which has a regional training facility and advanced proposals for a nursing-home with 54 beds.

Rushmoor Borough Council states quite clearly that modelling has indicated that, if existing car usage trends continue in the borough and only planned investment in the motorway network is completed, then by 2026 the M3 to the north of the borough will not be able to cope with demand. It also states that there is a mismatch between types of jobs and housing supply in Farnborough, which results in high levels of in/out commuting. Current figures show that 23,700 residents travel out of Rushmoor to work and 26,500 travel in. Many of these use the infrastructure in and surrounding Farnham.

Growth in Farnham, itself and in neighbouring boroughs means that current problems will only become more acute. Residents wish to see HGVs re-routed away from the town centre and it is widely believed that a Western by-pass is the only long-term solution to the traffic problems in the town, which increase with every new dwelling. Upper Hale Road is the only relief from the town centre to the north and north-west and cannot cope with existing traffic levels at peak times. Residents also continue to lobby for a Wrecclesham by-pass, to alleviate the congestion on the A325, as traffic passes through the village, before entering the town or joining the A31. As stated earlier, Hampshire County Council has objected to Waverley's Core Strategy on the grounds that the A31 will not be able to cope with the increase in traffic.

Public Transport

There remains a significant proportion of the population, which is reliant on public transport. The local bus network in Farnham currently meets only basic needs. Many areas of Farnham do not have an evening or a Sunday bus service and many bus-stops are too far away from residential roads to be accessible to the elderly or those with a mobility problem.

- The only services, which operate in the evenings or on Sundays are route 5 (Farnham to Aldershot) and route 18 (Aldershot to Whitehill, via Farnham).
- There is no reliable alternative to the car in vast areas of the town and it would be irresponsible to describe the existing bus service as adequate for future sustainable development.
- Farnham's station, with its half-hourly service to London Waterloo is a significant factor in the town's attraction as a place to live but the service is slow (58 mins) compared to Farnborough (37 mins) and Haslemere, with its non-stop trains.

SUMMARY OF BUS ROUTES SERVING FARNHAM – SEPTEMBER 2011

Route	Operator	Monday to Saturday Daytime Frequency	Monday to Saturday Evening Frequency	Sunday and Public Holiday Frequency
4/5 Farnham – Aldershot via Sandy Hill	Stagecoach	Every 15 minutes	Every 60 minutes	Every 120 minutes
16/17 Weybourne – Rowledge Via Farnham	Stagecoach	Every 60 minutes	No Service	No Service
18 Aldershot – Haslemere via Farnham, Wrecclesham, Bordon and Whitehill	Stagecoach	Every 30 minutes	Every 60 minutes to and from Whitehill only	Every 120 minutes Every 60 minutes from 18.30
19 Aldershot – Haslemere Via Farnham and Lower Bourne	Stagecoach	Every 60 minutes	No Service	No Service
46 Aldershot – Godalming via Badshot Lea and Farnham	Stagecoach	Every 60 minutes	No Service	No Service
X65 Guildford – Alton Via Farnham	Stagecoach	Every 60 minutes	No Service	No Service
71 Farnham – Fleet - Yateley	Fleet Buzz	3 Journeys Monday to Friday only	No Service	No Service
031 Portsmouth – London Via Farnham	National Express	One Journey in each direction per day	No Service	One Journey in each direction

Employment and Economic Development

There is a need to carry out a thorough review of employment land in the town, in order to comply with the guidance at paragraph 75 of the DNPPF. Farnham has several areas of land, which were used for industrial purposes but which have now become unsuitable, mainly due to their size or town-centre location. There is currently a large quantity of empty office space.

- It is important that Farnham defines what sort of employment it will be able to provide, bearing in mind the provision in Aldershot (mainly retail and industrial) and Farnborough (mainly high-tech industries). Employment in Farnham should complement this provision, not compete with it.
- Much employment in Farnham is related to art and design. The town is a main campus for the University for the Creative Arts and there will be increasing opportunities for business related to the university in the future, as the student body increases.
- Local companies employ an average of 15 people and the town is better suited to this small-scale pattern of employment than towns in the neighbouring boroughs.
- Locating employment on sites with easy access to the A31, such as the Coxbridge Estate or on land adjacent to the Farnham Trading Estate could free up much previously developed land along the Guildford Road, which would lend itself to residential development.
- Modern accommodation is needed to replace outdated employment space, in order to attract successful companies.
- Redundant office space above shops in the town centre could be brought back into use as habitable accommodation.

Communications Infrastructure

Farnham suffers with regard to provision of broadband and other high-speed data and voice lines, due to the mixed nature of the infrastructure and the age of certain installations.

- BT is the only fixed-line provider with coverage across the whole town. However, large parts of the area rely on ageing overhead lines, which can carry only relatively low-speed broadband, regardless of the speed available to the local cabinet. BT appears to have no immediate plans to upgrade these lines and the Surrey Superfast Broadband initiative has no specific plans to address this in the near future.
- Virgin provides significantly better fixed-line broadband connections. However its network covers only the northernmost parts of the area and does not cover the town centre or to the south.
- Alternatives to fixed-line services have not been taken up widely in Farnham and its surrounding villages but could provide a solution in some circumstances.
- Ready access to high-speed fixed-line broadband should be a key consideration, when planning new developments for business and domestic use in the town. Many people run small businesses from home and there is a move towards flexible working across all sectors. At present, businesses in the town are struggling to compete with neighbouring businesses across the border in Rushmoor or Guildford.

Farnham is a most attractive town, surrounded by beautiful countryside. Much wealth is made by residents outside of the town and villages and many wealth earners aspire to live in Farnham. Commercial development is essential for a balanced community but the type and location of business accommodation must be carefully assessed. Provision of very high-speed, reliable voice and data communications should be a major consideration, when planning developments in the town.

Education

Both primary and secondary schools in Farnham are filled or over capacity. This is the result of uncontrolled development since April 2007, when the Avoidance Strategy to the European Directive EC/79/409 was introduced and the failure to provide more school capacity to match the scale of development. There is a shortage of places at every level and parents are not being offered places at the schools of their choice.

Problems exist at primary school level. There are seven primary schools in Farnham and four infant schools, which feed into the primary schools:

- Schools in north Farnham are coping with the current situation and only over-subscribed by 0.21% against the PAN (Published Admission Numbers). To achieve this, Potters Gate is to be provided with extra temporary 30-pupil classrooms in 2011 and 2012.
- In south Farnham, the problems are greater. St. Andrew's is over-subscribed by 50% with no room to expand. The Bourne School has now amalgamated with South Farnham School and is over-subscribed as a school of first choice by 100% and by 265% at all preference levels, despite the addition of two temporary classrooms. **There is no room for further expansion.**
- St. Peter's Primary School is over-subscribed by 90% at first choice and by 283% at all preferences. It is now a two-form entry school, with no plans for the provision of further reception classes at present.
- Pilgrims Way has been provided with two temporary classrooms. The school failed its last two Ofsted reports but is full to capacity because children are placed there against parents' wishes. **There are no plans for further expansion.**
- St Polycarp's, a Catholic faith school, is also in south Farnham but it restricts places mainly to pupils of the Catholic faith and attracts pupils from a wider area.

The problems continue at secondary school level:

- Weydon and Heath End serve all the primary schools in Farnham, including Rowledge, a Hampshire primary school, whose pupils have automatic entry into Weydon. All Hallows, like St. Polycarp's, serves mainly Catholic pupils from both the town and a wider catchment area.
- Weydon has a PAN of 252 and has provided two additional classrooms. This year 317 parents applied to the school as their first choice, and 218 as their second and third choices. Because of the pressure for places, many children in south Farnham, living

within walking distance, cannot get a place. **Weydon is now an Academy and Surrey County Council has no plans to increase the size of the school further.**

- Farnham Heath End has a PAN of 170 and there are plans to increase this to 230. There were 187 parent applications this year from as first choice, and 128 as second.
- For many children in south Farnham, Heath End is the nearest school, as the crow flies but the road distance is greater. These children cannot get a place, as more children from north Farnham and Aldershot live nearer. 'The Woolwich Appeal' confirmed that school places should not recognise county or borough boundaries.
- **Many students in south Farnham have no access to state secondary education in the town.**

Surrey County Council already busses children 12 miles to school in Camberley, to meet its obligation to provide education. Shortages of places make parents drive children to school every day and the buses and cars exacerbate the traffic delays and pollution mentioned above.

This year has seen considerable unrest among parents in south Farnham at the lack of school choice. There have been public meetings, visits to Parliament and many appeals.

As long as there is no money available for additional schooling, further housing development is unsustainable.

Farnham is the only settlement in Waverley, where uncontrolled housing development has been allowed, without adequate educational provision. This is contrary to guidance on sustainable development in sustainable communities at paragraph 124 of the DNPPF.

Town Centre Planning

East Street Development

It was not the intention of the Town Council, when it was agreed that it would produce this document, to comment on the East Street Development Plan.

However, the future of the East Street area has been brought up by stakeholders in every workshop or meeting and it was felt that these opinions should be represented in some way.

- It was widely agreed that there should be a thorough appraisal of land in Farnham town centre, to decide where housing, commercial development and retail provision should be focused, before East Street, the Woolmead, Guildford Road and the Police Station are redeveloped. The general agreement is that the East Street scheme should be rethought.
- Residents are worried that the existing contract with CNS, based on facts available in 2003, is out of date. Once again, residents and developers question whether Farnham

needs the level and type of development, which has been agreed, when the Westgate Centre in Aldershot, just across the border, is currently under construction.

- Local developers and planning agents tell us that the large number of small flats proposed will not sell. There is no market for flats in Farnham. Townhouses would be more appropriate on that site.
- Developers and residents alike understand the need to protect and enhance the special character of the town, which makes it so appealing to many young families. There remains a need for good quality smaller houses both for older people and first-time buyers. The East Street scheme will not deliver the type of housing required in the town centre.

Key Sites

A number of key sites will shortly be or could become available in the Town Centre. These sites should not be considered individually but as a whole:

- Police Station
- Woolmead
- East Street
- Guildford Road
- The Bourne Mill

These sites, in the main, are adjacent to the historic Conservation Area. They are of extreme importance.

There is the best opportunity since the 1930s to plan the future of the town as a whole.

Conclusion

Farnham is an historic town – one of the most attractive in Surrey if not the country. It has more listed Georgian buildings than Chester despite the fact that no building has been listed since 1800! The road system was laid out more than 1000 years ago.

The settlements around the town each have a distinguished and historic character. Surrounding the town and the settlements is open countryside of great beauty – much of it not protected by planning law. Farnham Town is, however, within the protected zone of the Thames Basins Heath Spa.

The town and its settlements are located in a strategic part of the South East but the infrastructure is lacking on many counts and has not kept pace with uncontrolled and sometimes inappropriate development. Land is a scarce commodity.

It is the responsibility of this generation to ensure that Farnham is passed to the next generation in better shape, by respecting its history and ensuring that it grows with empathy – we are only caretakers.

As Roderick Gradige says, “*Farnham is generally considered one of the finest of English Georgian towns, an ordinary market town which seems to have survived intact until recent years*”.

Farnham needs to grow but future development must be strictly controlled in both size and place. No longer can development applications be viewed in isolation but town and country planning needs to be applied, as it has been for generations past in Farnham. This is sadly lacking now.

This document along with the already accepted Farnham Design Statement will lead to a full Neighbourhood Plan for the town and its surrounding settlements, which will guide Farnham's future.

Appendix: List of organisations participating in the preparation of this document.

The following organisations participated in workshops held in July and August 2011:

Badshot Lea Community Association, Vail Williams, Stedman and Blower Associates, Bourne Residents Association, Arcadia Ventures, WHETA, Sandy Hill Residents Association, Searle Road Residents Association, Farnham Society, Bishops Meadow Trust, The Bourne Residents Association, Trafalgar Court Residents Association, Michael Conoley Associates, Dippenhall, Runwick & Doras Green Residents Association, St Johns Residents Association, Parkview Residents Association, Elsmore Construction, Gong Hill Residents Association, Parkview Residents Association. Friends of Farnham Park, Highfield Close Residents Association, Kents Property, WHETA, Moor Park Residents Association, Tilford Road Residents Association, Great Austins Preservation Trust, SOFRA, Castle Street Residents Association, Lyons, Sleeman, Hoare Ltd, South Farnham Residents Association, North West Farnham Residents Association, Wrecclesham Residents Association, Cedarways Residents Association, Old Church Lane Residents Association, Hale Corner Residents Association, Bourne Residents Association, Rowledge Residents Association, SOFRA, Wadham and Isherwood, Runfold Action Group, Bellamanda Investments Ltd, Chantry's Residents Association, High Park Road Residents Association, East Street Action Group, Guildford Road Residents Association, Farnham Castle, Traynor Ryan, Lancaster Avenue Residents Association.

This was in addition to workshop participation by all the councillors of Farnham Town Council.

Advice provided by Philip James, planning consultant, former Planner at the London Borough of Sutton, and of London Planning Aid.

All participating organisations have also had the opportunity to comment on draft versions of this document.