FARNHAM NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN CONSULTATION STATEMENT

INTRODUCTION

Neighbourhood planning regulations set out the need for and content of a Consultation Statement. This document seeks to fulfil the obligations of the current regulations.

The aim of the Neighbourhood Planning team is to create a plan, which has been based on the views of the town's residents and businesses. These key stakeholders have been involved in the Neighbourhood Planning process from the very first meeting.

Public engagement has occurred regularly throughout the formation of the Neighbourhood Plan. Every version of the evolving document has been available for comment in all formats and widely publicised across local media.

THE DECISION: DECEMBER 2011

Throughout October and November 2011 there were discussions with local councillors and presentations to local residents' associations on the possibility of creating a Neighbourhood Plan for Farnham. The positive feedback form these early discussions led to the decision to proceed with a Neighbourhood Plan and the decision was taken by Farnham Town Council on I December 2011.

THE FIRST EXPLORATORY WORKSHOPS: FEBRUARY, MARCH AND NOVEMBER 2012

February 2012

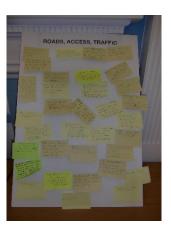
On 16th February 2012, the first workshop was held with residents' associations, local societies and individual residents. This meeting took place between 7pm and 9.30pm in the Farnham Council Chamber and around 30 people attended, representing residents from across the town. Notes of this meeting in a question and answer format, including a list of attendees, are attached at Appendix 1.

After a brief introduction about the purpose of a Neighbourhood Plan, participants were encouraged to comment on any aspect of life in their ward or anywhere across the town. There were four main themes, represented by different colour post-it notes:



- Yellow for transport and infrastructure issues
- Pink for housing and environmental issues
- Green for community issues, including leisure and recreation
- Orange for economic and business development

There were white boards for individual wards and the town centre placed around the Council Chamber and participants used post-it notes to identify and comment on any local issue that was important to them. This session was followed by a question and answer session. A summary of these initial comments is attached at Appendix 2.



The main issues raised were:

- Lack of infrastructure particularly school capacity; station parking; water and sewage capacity
- Traffic problems in different areas of the town, including town centre congestion and pollution
- Importance of distinctive character of individual areas
- Smaller homes for young and old; affordable housing and specialist elderly housing schemes
- Protection of green-field sites on outskirts of town as strategic gaps and recreation areas
- SPAs and Farnham Park SANG
- Maintenance of green infrastructure
- Protection and enhancement of biodiversity
- Lack of facilities for young people
- Business development; such as broadband and other technical infrastructure, support for small businesses and re-use of former farm buildings
- Local centres; concern over the closure of small, local shops and the need to drive to shops for basic needs: essential to safeguard what remains
- Town centre: importance of small shops and independent retailers; re-evaluate East Street development
- Protect and expand cultural facilities (theatre/ cinema)

March 2012

On 8th March 2012 a meeting was held with developers and architects in the Farnham Town Council offices. Notes from this meeting are attached at Appendix 3.

The main points raised were:

- Importance of design
- Possible housing locations
- Need to maintain a vibrant town rather than dormitory town
- Mix of employment opportunities essential: retail, office and industry
- Shortage of employment land possible locations: land near Shepherd and Flock roundabout (owned by WBC/ FTC) and extension of Riverside.
- Greenfield release necessary for housing
- Infrastructure with development
- Possible extension of village boundaries
- Re-evaluation of East Street proposal and consideration of Woolmead and parts of Guildford Road

As a way of feeding back a summary of the main issues from the initial workshops, a document was produced containing the introduction from the Farnham Design Statement forming a portrait of the area as well as a summary of the emerging key themes and issues. The comments from the workshops were also used as the basis for a draft vision and objectives for the area.

The chapters were headed as follows:

- Introduction
- Portrait of Farnham
- Vision
- Infrastructure
- Employment and Economy
- Leisure and Recreation
- Biodiversity
- Town Centre
- Location and type of housing

In May 2012 a skeleton document was sent to all stake-holders and placed on the Farnham Town Council website for comment. The document was accompanied by a letter, explaining its content and seeking comments on any aspect of the first version. A copy of the skeleton document is attached at Appendix 4.

Comments on this document were received electronically, by phone or in hard copy and have all been retained.

The main points raised were:

- Importance of the Aldershot and Farnham Strategic Gap
- Preservation of local characteristics when building new homes
- New land required for sports pitches
- Concerns over new housing locations and their distances from amenities
- Support for a Western Bypass in the town
- Need for business parks and infrastructure improvements to serve these
- Lack of parking and traffic congestion
- Impact on Farnham of large scale developments in surrounding towns such as Whitehill/Bordon and Aldershot
- Mix of house types required
- Protection and enhancement of biodiversity
- A theatre should be added to cultural offering

November 2012

On 29th November a further workshop was held at the Farnham Maltings. Those who had previously attended workshops were invited, as were all residents via local press releases, the Town Council website and Town Council noticeboards. A copy of the invitation poster is attached at Appendix 5.

The workshop was attended by 62 people, including representatives of the businesses and residents associations. A list of attendees is attached at Appendix 6.

The main points raised were:

- Definition of the Town Centre area
- East Street not fully reflected in the skeleton document
- Insufficient emphasis on bypasses for the town
- Infrastructure issues:
 - Flooding
 - o Traffic congestions
 - Air quality
- Impact of development in surrounding areas
- Student accommodation plans for the future
- School capacities and increasing residential numbers
- Retail provision to support new housing
- Lack of emphasis in skeleton document about public transport issues
- New employment space/land
- Industrial sand extraction
- Future safety, security and policing

- Protecting Gostrey Meadow
- Protection of Farnham's distinctive identity
- Improvements to pedestrian access in to the town centre
- Concerns over lack of alternative SANGs provision
- Can emergency planning be included in the plan?
- Consultation with young people is essential

THE SECOND DEVELOPMENTAL WORKSHOPS: MAY 2013

Following designation of the Farnham Neighbourhood Plan area in February 2013, workshops were arranged to begin to develop the Neighbourhood Plan.

On 7th May 2013 there was a special workshop for town councillors at which an updated skeleton document (attached at Appendix 7) and comments received from the public were discussed and 12 town councillors attended this meeting.



On 8th May 2013, all the previously listed stakeholders and individuals were invited to a further workshop in the Maltings at 7pm and around 50 people were in attendance. Notes of this meeting including a list of attendees are attached at Appendix 8.

After an hour's discussion, comments were recorded on flipcharts and are noted below:

- The accuracy of the population numbers
- The absence of a full list of brown-field sites
- The effect of East Street not fully reflected
- The need for a by-pass (Wrecclesham and/or Western)
- Position of Dunsfold Park in relation to housing in the borough
- Lack of infrastructure, including water and sewage
- Shortage of jobs for young people
- Possible expansion of business parks
- Impacts of cross-boundary development
- Location of new development in the town
- Definition of open green spaces
- Mix of housing planning should be site-specific
- Retail in East Street does not meet current need
- Location of new business
- Location of new school provision not clear
- Importance of Strategic Gap for Badshot Lea should be stressed

- Possible development near The Chantrys should be explored
- Development should be directed away from Conservation Areas
- Continuing problem of air pollution pedestrianisation not possible without Western bypass
- Map of schools not accurate
- Shortage of school places strain on housing in certain catchment areas
- Traffic associated with schools a problem across town
- Parking hours and charges discouraging visitors and workers
- Farnham must define its USP and acknowledge effect of internet on retail provision
- River Wey should be developed as a feature in town
- Brambleton Park (former Weydon Landfill site) could become a nature reserve
- Need for new secondary school possible expansion at Weydon / Waverley Abbey
- Need for affordable housing not defined
- Inclusion of car ownership not necessary
- Need for balance between housing and retail
- Lack of infrastructure and public transport very important
- Paragraphs should be numbered
- Document negative towards WBC
- Evidence of statistics lacking
- Too little emphasis on culture
- Value of Maltings underestimated
- Need for a performance space
- Weak on employment
- Nothing on climate change
- Problem of level crossing and resulting air pollution
- Local cycle routes and their use
- Bishops Meadow (owned by a local Trust) should have higher profile
- Importance of SPAs and SANG
- Absence of comments on safety and policing

Following the meeting, the document was sent to every organisation or individual who was unable to attend and was made available on-line or in the Farnham Town Council offices for comment.

In June 2013 Waverley Borough Council's emerging Core Strategy was criticised for the amount of housing provision and site allocations and the draft Neighbourhood Plan was changed, to reflect the fact that there was no agreed up to date housing need. Subsequently the interim borough housing target was raised from 230 to 250 dwellings per annum.

Work began on a further version of the document, based on the comments from the workshop and individuals. This became the July 2013 version, which is attached at Appendix 9.

EXHIBITIONS AND SURVEY: AUGUST, SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER 2013

In August, September and October 2013 there was a touring exhibition, illustrating the process so far and the current draft of the Neighbourhood Plan (July 2013). There were boards highlighting the main issues and a table for people to complete a short survey or to make comments. This exhibition went to nine venues across the town including the Farnham library, where it stayed for a fortnight and the Maltings Arts Centre, where it remained in the foyer for a week.

The dates and venues of the touring exhibition were as follows:

- 13th and 14th September: the exhibition was on display at the Town Council Offices which were open for the Heritage Weekend event. Around 200 people attended the Council Offices during the weekend and the exhibition was made available to them all. Over 80 leaflets were taken away
- 17th September: Indigo Community Cafe from 9.30 until
 12.30 (25 30 attendees)
- 19th September: Brightwells Gostrey Centre for elderly people between 10am and 2pm (40 attendees)
- 21st September: Rowledge Village Hall from 10am to 1pm (30-40 attendees)
- 24th September: Wrecclesham Community Centre from 10am to 1pm (25 attendees)
- 25th September: Sandy Hill Bungalow from 4pm to 7pm (6 attendees)
- 28th September: Hale Institute from 10am to 1pm (50 attendees)
- Ist October: 40 Degreez Young People's Centre from 4pm to 7pm (7 attendees)
- 7th IIth October: The Maltings Arts Centre







The exhibition was manned the majority of the time at all venues and postcards were freely available with contact details for those times, when the table was unattended. There were also notepads for general comments. It is difficult to estimate the total number of residents who visited the exhibition but both the library and the Maltings are used by hundreds of people a week.

The exhibition included a survey on the July 2013 document which formed the basis for the exhibitions. Residents were free to leave comments at the exhibition venue, fill in the survey in hard copy or take details on how to complete the survey online. A copy of the, exhibition material and survey is attached at Appendix 10.

A total of 334 people completed the survey, the detailed responses of which are attached at Appendix 11 and the summary of results are set out below:

Main Issues from the Survey and Exhibition

- Character of the town and its villages
- · Design and amount of new housing
- Green spaces
- Traffic
- Education
- Shopping and parking
- Leisure facilities
- Employment

Results in Numbers

- 84.9% of respondents regularly shop in the town
- 78.5% of respondents use local restaurants
- 71% of respondents visit The Maltings Arts Centre
- 54.1% of respondents think sports facilities are adequate
- 52.7% of respondents would use a cinema in Farnham
- 51.4% of respondents use their local village shop but 30.3% do not have a local shop
- 81.1% of respondents are satisfied with their village shop
- 90.8% of respondents see traffic as a problem in Farnham
- 61.6% of respondents say they would not use a park and stride facility
- 56% of respondents think public transport is inadequate
- 92.5% of respondents feel that there are insufficient school places
- 81.9% of respondents think the waste and sewage system is adequate
- 92.9% of respondents think biodiversity is an important factor in Farnham's future development
- 63.6% of respondents feel that there is a need for semi-detached housing but there
 was a general support for all other types
- 92.7% of respondents feel that new housing should reflect the style of surrounding properties
- 57.4% of respondents feel that there is no shortage of employment opportunities

Character of the town and its villages

This is very important to the residents of Farnham. The town centre remains a fine Georgian market town, which people seek to conserve. However, most residents are equally concerned to protect the individual characteristics of each of the villages, which make up the town. Most people feel that this will only be achieved by site-specific planning decisions. What is right in one part of the town might not be acceptable in another.

Design and amount of new housing

Residents do not want to see new housing which fails to reflect the character of surrounding properties. New housing should merge in well with existing buildings. There was also a general feeling that large developments on the outskirts of the town were less preferable. There were sites, which could take a certain amount of housing but residents wished to see more, smaller sites considered for development.

Green Spaces

Farnham enjoys a spacious green setting and has many green spaces on the outskirts of and within the town. Residents value the biodiversity, which these spaces offer and also express the need to protect these for leisure purposes, both formal and informal. The shortage of playing pitches was raised and the need to protect large gardens in certain areas from inappropriate development to protect the character of certain areas currently protected by BE3 and BE6 Local Plan 2002 policies.

Traffic

Farnham is blighted by heavy traffic and residents have long campaigned for the removal of HGVs from the town centre. The one-way system is not effective. Traffic was raised in every forum.

Education

Residents raised the chronic shortage of school places at all levels. Many linked the issue to traffic, as parents have to make long journeys to access a school place. The need for a new secondary school was raised.

Shopping and Parking

Many residents wanted to retain the independent shops and encourage more, smaller businesses into the town. The question of high parking fees was raised, as was the need to build on Farnham's history as a town of arts and crafts.

Leisure Facilities

Residents commented on the shortage of playing-pitches, as mentioned earlier and the need to restore neglected facilities. The shortage of swimming-pool space was also raised.

There is a cinema promised in the long-awaited East Street scheme and some residents raised the issue of theatre space, which is no longer available in a purpose-built facility.

The Maltings was highly praised for its activities.

Employment

Residents feel that they wish to see a flourishing local economy but accept that employment in the town will always be on a small scale. It is generally felt that Farnham cannot compete with Guildford and Farnborough but should try to complement these other centres. There was some support for a business park, located near the A31.

Throughout this initial process there were regular articles in the local press, updates on the Farnham Town Council Neighbourhood Plan website and comments on The Neighbourhood Plan Facebook page and Twitter feed.

There was also information available in the Farnham Town Council Information Tent at the Music in the Meadows concerts, which are held on almost every Sunday throughout the summer and attended by upwards of 200 people and at the Picnic in the Park, which was attended by well over 500 people.

The Information Tent also carried information and copies of the survey at the monthly Farmers' Markets, which are regularly attended by around 1,000 people.

THE THIRD DEVELOPMENTAL WORKSHOP: NOVEMBER 2013

After a full analysis of the survey's findings a revised version of a draft Neighbourhood Plan was drawn up in November 2013. Certain residents' groups had sent in requests to the Town Council for green spaces, which they wished to see protected and these had been noted by the team.

- A petition had been received from the North West Farnham Residents' Association, concerning the Hop Fields on Beavers Road
- South Farnham Residents' Association had prepared a report on Compton Fields on Waverley Lane
- Badshot Lea Community Association had surveyed the entire village, to decide the priority of possible development sites
- Rowledge Residents' Association put in a request for protection of green sites on the outskirts of the village

Copies of these documents are available at Appendix 12 (i-iv).

On 13th November 2013 at 7pm a further workshop was held in The Maltings, to look at the SHLAA sites in the built up area in Farnham, which were included within Waverley

Borough Council's document and to discuss those green spaces, which community groups wished to protect from development. The need to protect the two Special Protection Areas, the Thames Basin Heaths and Wealden Heaths, which are affected by all residential development in the town, was discussed in depth. This workshop was attended by 50 representatives of residents' associations, community groups and commercial interests across the town, including property agents, local developers and the chamber of commerce.

Large maps with the sites in the built up area in the latest Waverley SHLAA document were posted around the hall in the Maltings and smaller plans, with more detail on the sites, were readily available for the participants to study. Once again, discussions were carried out around tables and participants were urged to mix with other groups.

Feedback from each table was recorded on a flip-chart. Notes of this are attached at Appendix 13.

The workshop settled on two main green-field sites for development which were Coxbridge Farm and Land at South East Badshot Lea.

The chosen sites and cases for protection, which emerged from this workshop, formed the basis of a questionnaire, which was advertised as widely as possible. In January and February 2014 a postcard was sent to every address in the Neighbourhood Plan area to promote the questionnaire (see Appendix 14).

There were also press releases and updates on the Farnham Town Council website, to explain the group's wish to gain residents' views and to raise awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan.

The questionnaire asked people whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements and there was a box for comments with every question:

- Farnham should retain its character as a Market Town
- Large developments on the outskirts of the town should be avoided
- New development must respect the character and density of distinctive areas
- The guidelines in the Habitats Regulations should be followed
- Residential development should be on brown-field sites
- Redundant office space and redundant light industrial space should be used for residential development
- Alternative employment space should be provided, if existing sites are lost to housing
- The Hop Fields should be protected
- Compton Fields should be protected
- Browns Walk in Rowledge should be protected
- Land east of Rowledge should be protected
- Land south of Rowledge, which separates the village from Frensham, should be protected

- Choice of housing numbers
- If all brown-field land has been exhausted, Farnham should decide which green-field sites to develop
- Coxbridge should be the first green-field site to be developed
- Development at Coxbridge should not exceed 250 homes
- More than 200 houses in Badshot Lea would be unacceptable
- Any development in Badshot Lea must include improved landscaping on the strategic gap between Farnham and Aldershot and provide new recreational space
- No planning permission can be granted, before SANGS are identified
- Development must respect the character of distinctive areas in terms of scale, density, design and construction materials
- Large gardens in certain parts of the town are essential both to the Green Infrastructure and local character
- Development in gardens is unacceptable, where the local character would be harmed

The last date for comments on the survey was 31st March 2014. The main findings from the questionnaire are set out below:

- 98% of respondents said that maintaining a character of Farnham as a compact market town was important
- 90% of respondents agreed that developments on the outskirts of the town should be avoided
- The vast majority of residents wishes to see new development concentrated on brownfield sites
- 94% of respondents said that redundant office space above shops and redundant light industrial units should be converted to residential use
- 84% of respondents (493) wished to protect the Hop Fields from development (Land off Crondall Lane)
- 94% of respondents (537) wished to protect Compton Fields from development (Land at Waverley Lane)
- 82% of respondents (451) wished to protect Land east of Brown's Walk, Rowledge from development
- 82% of respondents (446) wished to protect the area to the east of Rowledge Village from development
- A majority of respondents said that they thought Farnham could accommodate up to 600 new homes
- A majority of respondents said that development at Badshot Lea should be limited to 200 dwellings and that new development should contribute towards additional recreational space in the village
- 98% of respondents said that all development should respect the character, density and design of existing development
- 92% of people who responded felt that large gardens formed part of many areas in the town

• 92% of residents felt development of gardens was unacceptable

A full set of responses is included at Appendix 15.

REGULATION 14 CONSULTATION: PREFERRED OPTIONS

The results of the questionnaire and related comments were taken into account in developing the next draft document, together with all the information from previous workshops. Policies were strengthened and details added to illustrate the views of residents more clearly.

Full copies of the regulation 14 consultation documents are available online at www.farnhamgov.uk/shapefarnham and a copy of the questionnaire is attached at Appendix 16.



Throughout the production of the consultation document, the team continued to attend meetings across the town, to increase awareness of the Neighbourhood Plan among residents and businesses and to make sure that there was robust evidence, to support the plan's strategy and policies. The team was available at 10.00 every Friday morning in the Farnham Town Council offices, to answer any questions from residents' associations or local businesses.

The completed Regulation 14 draft was considered and approved by Farnham Town Council on 23rd October 2014. It was agreed to put the draft before the public and the consultation period ran from the 31st October 2014 until 15th December 2014. Throughout the consultation period, the team was out and about across the town with exhibitions, presentations and information points. A full list of these events is included at Appendix 17.

The team tried to reach out to all ages and interests. Once again, an exhibition visited nearly every venue in the town, including the Brightwells Day Centre for the elderly, the 40 Degreez youth centre and several primary school Christmas Fairs. It went to most of the village halls across the town and into The Maltings Arts Centre and there were separate exhibitions in the Farnham Town Council Offices at varying times.

In addition, the team created an all-day pop-up cafe in Castle Street on two Saturdays and had an Information Tent at the Christmas Market. There were brightly-wrapped Chinese fortune cookies, to attract people of all ages but particularly children. Each cookie contained a message for the adults, with





different mottos promoting participation in the Neighbourhood Plan process.

In addition to the postal and street presence, the consultation was advertised on the Town Council's website, Facebook (1000 followers) and twitter (2000 followers) accounts, as well as other local social media sites. On 5th and 10th December, Councillors and Officers were available for an online interactive online question and answer session on Facebook and twitter. In addition to this engagement, three newsletters were sent to over 1,000 subscribers.

Summary of attendance at events:

- Visits to Neighbourhood Plan pages on website: Over 4,000
- Number of people at roadshow events: 260
- Number of at pop-up cafés: 200
- Number of seen at school fairs: 285



In early 2015, responses from the Regulation 14 consultation were analysed and suggested changes to the document proposed. Meetings were arranged with infrastructure providers (appendix 18), developers (appendix 19), commercial agents (appendix 20) and Natural England (appendix 21).

Work continued on updating the evidence base, particularly the availability of SANG. There were frequent updates in newsletters for those organisations and individuals, who had been instrumental in the production of the draft Neighbourhood Plan. There were also regular updates to full council and on the Farnham Town Council website and the team was represented at most of the Music in the Meadow concerts throughout the summer.

Representatives from residents' groups and the Farnham Society were invited to discuss progress on development sites in their area and the team continued to attend Residents' Associations Annual General Meetings, to explain the issue of SANG.

In early 2016 Waverley Borough Council revised its Avoidance Strategy, which freed up more capacity in Farnham Park and production of the Regulation 15 draft could continue apace. A meeting was held with around 60 stakeholders to explain the changing situation and to answer questions on the Regulation 15 Plan. A copy of the list of attendees is attached at appendix 22.

A series of meetings was also held throughout the day on Saturday, 6th February 2016 with residents from across the town, to discuss development briefs for sites within their area.



Invitations were sent to the following:

• Wrecclesham Residents' Association

- Rowledge Residents' Association
- Highfield Close Residents' Association
- Badshot Lea Community Association
- Weybourne Residents' Association
- North West Farnham Residents' Association
- Chantrys Residents' Association
- Park View Residents' Association
- Crundwell Court Residents' Association
- Guildford Road / Forge Close Residents' Association
- Moor Park Residents' Association
- Farnham Society
- Ward councillors
- Re-crafting Farnham

Several representatives attended each session and the atmosphere was lively and informative throughout the day. The main plea was for high quality, well-planned layout and design, which reflect the existing characteristics of the area and for retention of green boundaries. Design policies for all allocated sites are included in the regulation 15 document.

On 24th March 2016 there was a full presentation to the Annual Meeting of Electors, which attracted 70 attendees. The current status of the plan was discussed, together with the future timetable.

Following comments on the Regulation 14 Neighbourhood Plan, revisions were made in accordance with the proposed amendments and updated evidence base. The completed Regulation 15 Neighbourhood Plan was considered and approved by Farnham Town Council on 21st July 2016. It was agreed to submit Farnham Neighbourhood Plan to Waverley Borough Council to undertake formal consultation.

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