



WESTCOTT NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF WESTCOTT

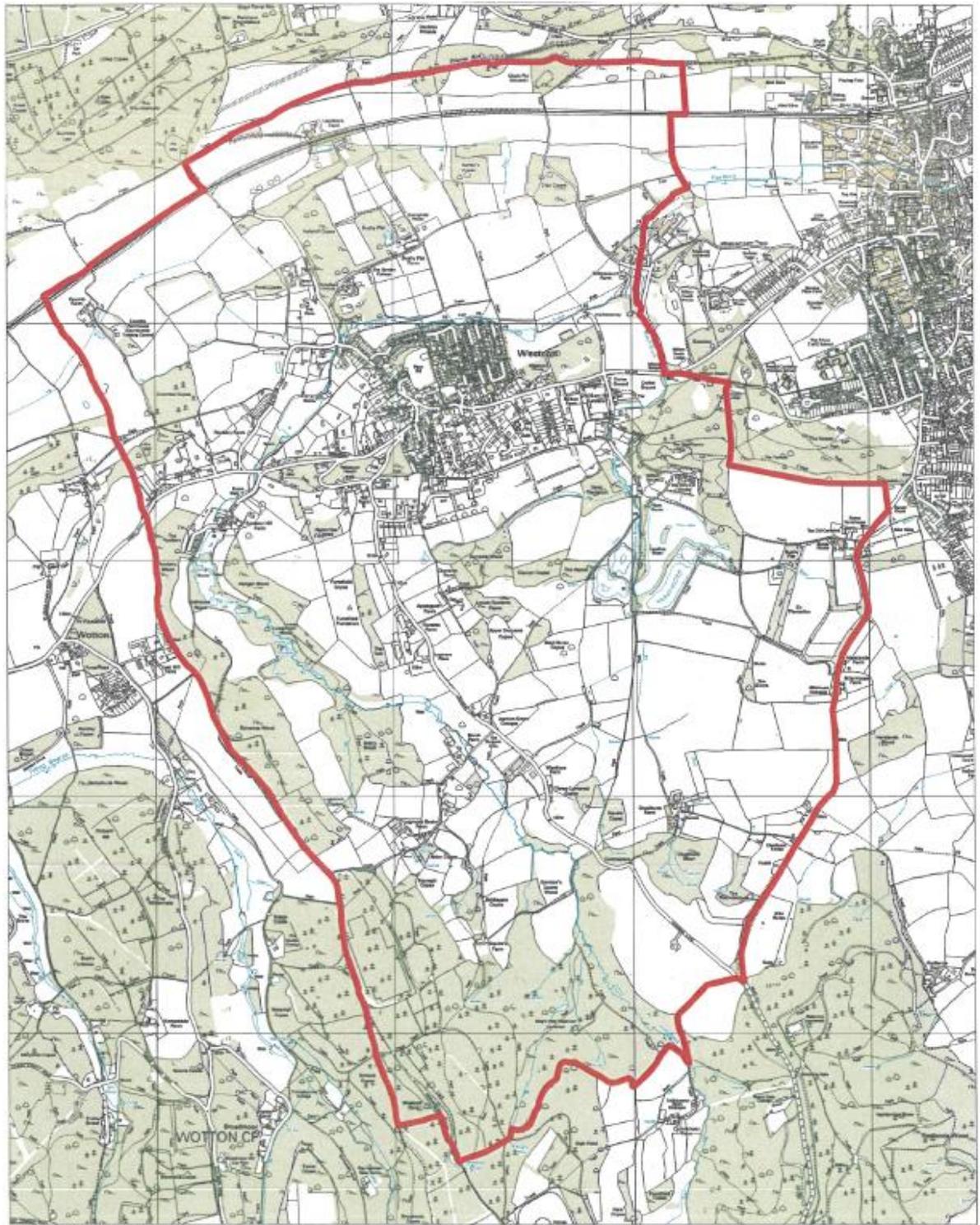


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Westcott Ward and Neighbourhood Plan Area

1. OUR VISION

In 2025 the Ward of Westcott will remain an attractive feature of the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, protecting and enhancing the two conservation areas which sit within it. We expect that its resident population will have grown marginally and the Ward will support a higher number who choose to work in and visit Westcott to make use of its diverse facilities.

The village of Westcott will remain physically distinct and separate from Dorking and surrounding parishes, using the Green Belt to resist the merging of communities and encroachment into the unique character and setting of the surrounding countryside. This is the most important issue emerging from the survey of the villagers of Westcott.

The development needs of the village will be met by small scale developments, restricted to within the boundaries of Westcott Village. Other development within the Green Belt will be restricted to agriculture, leisure, or the other limited activities that comply with National Planning policy and the Mole Valley Local Development Plan.

The Policies set out in this Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) have been designed following needs assessment from a variety of sources, including a comprehensive survey of village residents and businesses. Reflecting this evidence, the aims of the WNDP include:

- Maintaining the character of the village through development style and redevelopment of the land within the existing village core to grow the stock of housing to meet the needs of the aging population
- Create additional leisure facilities and improve connectivity with the open countryside surrounding the village
- Maintaining retail, commercial and community facilities where viable

At the time of preparing this WNDP, the Local Development Plan in Mole Valley in relation to Westcott consists of the saved policies of the Mole Valley Local Plan 2000 and the Mole Valley Core Strategy 2009.

Mole Valley District Council has begun the process of creating a new Local Plan and, should such a plan be adopted, the Westcott Neighbourhood plan will be reviewed to ensure that it remains in general conformity with the policies of the Local Plan.

All development throughout the Ward will conform to policies which preserve or enhance the architectural styles and character of the area, using as much as possible natural materials, finishes and features in keeping with our architectural heritage, and environmental sustainability.



2. INTRODUCTION

2.1. Context

- 2.1.1. The Localism Act 2011 provides that planning policy developed by communities shall, if passed by an independent examination and passed by a local referendum, be adopted by the Local Planning Authority. It is intended to become part of the Statutory Planning Policy Framework and will have the same legal status as the Mole Valley Development Plan.
- 2.1.2. The Westcott Village Forum was established in 2012 for the purpose of developing this Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan (W NDP), by gathering evidence, canvassing the views of the villagers and incorporating these into the Plan.

2.2. Preamble

- 2.2.1. The Policies of the W NDP are amongst the most important for local planning application decision-making alongside the overall planning strategy set by Mole Valley District Council in its Development Plan.
- 2.2.2. These W NDP policies are aimed at making sure that the opportunities that exist for local people to solve their own development issues are positively supported through the planning process. It is vital that the overall strategy for planning in Westcott remains in place and the landscape and character of the village is protected.
- 2.2.3. The W NDP policies are focused on helping provide appropriate housing within the village and premises for appropriate business needs and community requirements.
- 2.2.4. The policies also give much greater weight to the views of Westcott Village through the results of the village survey, in which 75% of households participated. Through the W NDP we have the opportunity to influence the decision making of Mole Valley District Council, and to prevent out of scale development that risks spoiling the character of the village while allowing smaller, more appropriate development.
- 2.2.5. Other policies are also included in the W NDP. For example, one such policy is to ensure that any future development in the village will provide in so far as it is possible for its own parking requirements, so that the on-street parking situation is not worsened.

2.3. Process

- 2.3.1. The process towards achieving a WNDP began with the creation of a Village Forum, formally designated by Mole Valley District Council, in March 2013. Members were recruited to be representative of the village by age, gender and location. Forum meetings were held every three months, and all decisions were made at quorate meetings. The publicity campaign to engage the village throughout the process is in Appendix 1. In brief this consisted of an active website, village meetings, publicity flyers, public open discussions, Parish Magazine articles, a summary of the village survey and a Green Belt boundary walk.
- 2.3.2. In mid-2013 MVDC delegated to the Forum, a Green Belt boundary review as a prerequisite to the consultation being carried out by them on their long term strategic planning. A draft review was prepared following extensive empirical data gathering. It was then consulted on through a series of public meetings and exhibitions. Many villagers also attended a conducted walk of the existing Green Belt boundaries before a final draft was put forward. This was published and approved by the Village Forum.
- 2.3.3. The Green Belt Boundary Review was submitted to MVDC in March 2014 to inform their district wide review of the Green Belt boundaries as part of the evidence base for the district-wide Housing and Traveller Sites Plan (HTSP) which was under preparation at that time. However, in December 2014, MVDC terminated preparation of the HTSP and decided to embark upon the production of a completely new Local Plan. Since changes to the Green Belt boundary are outside the scope of a Neighbourhood Development Plan, the Green Belt boundary review does not form part of this WNDP.
- 2.3.4. In 2013 the Village Forum designed, produced, and distributed to every dwelling and business in the ward a Survey questionnaire, containing questions around housing, the Green Belt, shops and services, business development, facilities and amenities, mobile and internet services, community issues, roads, health, well-being and social issues, parking and travel.
- 2.3.5. 75% of residents completed the survey questionnaire which was then analysed, and the results published in a Survey Results booklet (Appendix 2) which was distributed to every dwelling in the ward.
- 2.3.6. The policies contained in the WNDP refer directly to the answers given by the villagers to the Village Survey.
- 2.3.7. When the WNDP is submitted to Mole Valley District Council, it will include a Basic Conditions statement which proves that the Neighbourhood Plan satisfies these conditions. In order for MVDC to adopt the WNDP, it must be satisfied that the plan is in general conformity with the existing Local Planning Policy and the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This criteria of alignment must be met for the WNDP to succeed.

- 2.3.8. The draft WNDP was approved by the Village Forum, and then consulted on with the residents of the village. Feedback from this consultation process has been analysed and the plan amended as required.
- 2.3.9. This version of the plan has been drafted for the purposes of consultation with statutory authorities, significant local landowners, and the village community at large.
- 2.3.10. In this form the Plan will be sent to Mole Valley District Council who will publish the draft Plan, invite representations and appoint on our behalf an Independent Examiner to appraise the Development Plan.
- 2.3.11. If approved by the Independent Examiner, the plan will be put to a Village Referendum, with a vote to approve or not. The Referendum is expected to take place in early 2018.

3. VILLAGE PROFILE

3.1. Overview

- 3.1.1. Westcott is a village with a population of 2,251 dwelling in 918 households (2011 Census), located about 2km west of Dorking, on the A25. Its origins date back to the Domesday Book and beyond. The village today has a wealth of historic and traditional buildings, reflecting its long history and much of the centre of the village is a designated Conservation Area.
- 3.1.2. The village experienced a key period of expansion in the 19th Century, when agriculture became less profitable and land was made available as building plots. This phase in the history of the village can be seen in the high proportion of Victorian buildings which still remain.
- 3.1.3. The majority of development has taken place within the area of the village that is not attributed as Metropolitan Green Belt. This area is referred to as the “Village Core” and is described as the land inset from the Green Belt as defined in the Mole Valley Local Development Framework Proposals Map.
- 3.1.4. At the heart of the village is the triangular village green. Shops and community facilities including the Reading Room and St John’s Chapel are clustered near the Green. Holy Trinity Parish Church is located on the Western edge of the village, and the Village Hut is also centrally located on Furlong Road.
- 3.1.5. The A25 runs East / West through the heart of the village, with development spread out to the North and South. To the South, the land rises up into the slopes of the Surrey Hills and there are some spectacular changes in gradient. In certain places there are abrupt changes in level, making retaining walls and sunken paths/lanes a recurring feature. To the North, the land is more level, but begins to rise again beyond the village, towards Ranmore. Throughout the village, there are spectacular views north towards the Ranmore escarpment.
- 3.1.6. The village has a strong East/West orientation, hemmed in between these two expanses of higher land. Many residential streets are truncated at the limits of the village. The A25 is a key traffic route, with no alternatives for through traffic. The Dorking / Guildford railway line lies to the North of the village, but there has never been a passenger station for Westcott.
- 3.1.7. Throughout the village, public footpaths and small roads provide a warren of access routes for pedestrians, often bypassing the road layout and creating useful connections throughout the village and out into the surrounding countryside. School Lane, Stones Lane and Parsonage Lane are examples in the Southern part of the village, while a lengthy footpath connects Springfield Road in the North with the parade of shops on the Guildford Road, via the fringes of the recreation ground.

3.2. Landscape Setting

- 3.2.1. Westcott is bounded to the north by the Tillingbourne and Pipp Brook Greensand Valley Landscape Character Area (LCA) which runs parallel to and south of the North Downs. The Southern part of the village rises up into the Leith Hill to Bury Hill Wooded Greensand Hills LCA. The central areas of the village are surrounded by the Metropolitan Green Belt, and the whole village is within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB); its connection with the surrounding landscape is therefore very strong.
- 3.2.2. About 1km north of the village is the prominent ridge of Ranmore Common. The ridge forms a backdrop to many views North from Westcott, often to spectacular effect. The land between the village and Ranmore Common is an open patchwork of rolling fields, punctuated with hedges and small pockets of woodland. The railway line runs East/West through the corridor of lower ground, as does the course of the Pippbrook, which follows the valley basin. There are only a handful of very narrow, winding lanes leading North from the village, providing access to properties scattered on the lower slopes of Ranmore.
- 3.2.3. To the west and south, the village rises up into the edges of the extensive Leith Hill Greensand Ridge – a heavily wooded landscape scored by deeply cut tracks and roads. In reality, the woodland is not so dense here as it is further west, but tree belts along the main A25 route give a strong impression of woodland reaching right into the edges of the village. Even within the outer fringes of the village, there are footpaths, bridleways and lanes cut deep into the sandstone, with deeply sloping sides giving a very strong sense of enclosure. There are also pockets of open farmland, for example off Logmore Lane and Balchins Lane, making for an interesting and varied landscape surrounding the village.
- 3.2.4. The Greensand Way long distance path skirts the southern boundary of the village defining the southern boundary of the Green Belt, and is easily accessed from the network of the footpaths and lanes within the settlement.
- 3.2.5. In the Green Belt land which separates Westcott from Dorking, there is another substantial pocket of woodland at the Bury Hill Estate, although the gradients here are less dramatic. The woodland is punctuated by open fields on the very edge of Dorking and the village sports ground near the junction of the A25 and Milton Street.
- 3.2.6. Within the Village Core there is one small area of ancient woodland adjacent to Cradhurst Recreation Ground. The protection of this ancient woodland is covered by the Mole Valley Core Strategy policy CS15 on Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.

Some of the details above are taken from the Mole Valley District Council Larger Rural Village Character Appraisal SPD.

4. DEVELOPMENT VISION

4.1. Housing Development Vision

4.1.1. The WNDP will encourage a range of dwelling types and tenure to meet local demand for smaller houses. These dwelling types stimulate rotation of ownership in the village enabling older residents to downsize and releasing family housing back onto the market. First-time buyer, rented, and co-ownership will be a priority for any new development. The village survey also identified retirement living as a requirement.

4.1.2. The 2011 Census shows the breakdown of households within the ward:

Accommodation Type - Households	Westcott Ward
Unshared Dwelling; Whole House or Bungalow; Detached	339
Unshared Dwelling; Whole House or Bungalow; Semi-Detached	309
Unshared Dwelling; Whole House or Bungalow; Terraced (Including End-Terrace)	126
Unshared Dwelling; Whole House or Bungalow; Total	774
Unshared Dwelling; Flat, Maisonette or Apartment; Purpose-Built Block of Flats or Tenement	107
Unshared Dwelling; Flat, Maisonette or Apartment; Part of a Converted or Shared House (Including Bed-Sits)	29
Unshared Dwelling; Flat, Maisonette or Apartment; In Commercial Building	7
Unshared Dwelling; Flat, Maisonette or Apartment; Total	143
Unshared Dwelling; Caravan or Other Mobile or Temporary Structure	1
Unshared Dwelling; Total	918
Shared Dwelling	0
All Households	918

Accommodation Type - Household Spaces	Westcott Ward	Proportion
No Bedrooms (Household Spaces)	1	0.1%
1 Bedroom (Household Spaces)	97	10.6%
2 Bedrooms (Household Spaces)	218	23.7%
3 Bedrooms (Household Spaces)	356	38.8%
4 Bedrooms (Household Spaces)	152	16.6%
5 or More Bedrooms (Household Spaces)	94	10.2%
Household Spaces With At Least One Usual Resident (Household Spaces)	918	100.0%

4.1.3. The survey of residents achieved a 74% response rate across the range of housing mix:

Occupied Dwellings	Owner occupied	Rented	Total
Flats	44	32	76
Affordable	3	7	10
Bungalow	32	10	42
1-2 bed house	95	18	113
3-4 bed house	311	42	353
5+ bed	82	6	88
Grand Total	567	115	682

4.1.4. The survey was broadly proportionate to the 2011 Census when measured by housing mix:

Housing Mix Definition	Census 2011	Survey Responses	Survey Variation
Accommodation Type – 3 Bedrooms or more (Household Spaces)	65.6%	64.7%	-0.9%

4.2. Non-Housing Development Vision

4.2.1. Greater access to the Green Belt land will be supported for leisure and recreational purposes, enhancing use of the surrounding open countryside and woodlands. This may include providing better access to cycle paths, bridleways and linking footpaths.

4.2.2. Recognising both resident demand and the need driven by visitors to the Ward, parking will need to be a feature of any future development. The proportion of car or van availability has risen marginally between the 2001 and 2011 Census periods:

Car or Van Availability	Census 2001	Census 2011
Cars: All categories: Car or van availability; measures: Value	884	918
Cars: No cars or vans in household; measures: Value	101	90
Cars: 1 car or van in household; measures: Value	314	345
Cars: 2 cars or vans in household; measures: Value	356	359
Cars: 3 cars or vans in household; measures: Value	76	96
Cars: 4 or more cars or vans in household; measures: Value	37	28
Cars: sum of all cars or vans in the area; measures: Value	1,428	1,484
Average of all cars or vans per household	1.615	1.617

- 4.2.3. Whilst the inherent conflict exists with a greener environment, the development plan acknowledges the inevitability of vehicle ownership growth but seeks to minimise the impact by creating facilities which blend with and are sympathetic to the rural environment. Demonstrated by the presence of a specialist cycling retail premises and three commercial stables, together with a number of private sand schools, the area is a magnet for people riding, cycling and walking and the WNDP will find ways to ensure that these activities co-exist with the needs of residents.
- 4.2.4. Westcott's diverse and thriving social and community activities will be accommodated in modern, accessible facilities with flexible space catering for the varied social, sporting and welfare needs of the community and beyond, and incorporate health, education and other community facilities.
- 4.2.5. Retail facilities will be encouraged to provide choice, and where possible office development will provide the opportunity for local employment reducing the demand for commuting in an already congested part of the country.



5. PLAN CONTEXT

The Summary of the Village Survey results is Appendix 2

5.1. Neighbourhood Plans

5.1.1. Neighbourhood plans must meet certain basic conditions before they can be adopted. They are tested by an Independent Examiner, and checked by the local authority, before being brought back to Westcott Village for a referendum on approval of the plan.

5.1.2. Neighbourhood plans must:

- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development
- have appropriate regard to national planning policy
- be in general conformity with the local strategic policy
- be compatible with EU obligations (if applicable)

5.2. Sustainable Development

5.2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that the purpose of the planning system is to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The NPPF also states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: economic, social and environmental.

5.2.2. The WNDP must contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. Paragraph 14 of the NPPF states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and therefore pursuing sustainable development, including making it easier to:

- create jobs in villages,
- promote gains in biodiversity,
- achieve better quality design,
- improve people's quality of life, and
- provide a wider choice of high quality homes.

5.2.3. Appendix 3 provides a Sustainability Appraisal. This provides a baseline assessment of the village and analyses how the six policies of the WNDP would perform against 19 sustainability objectives. In most cases, the policies have a positive or neutral impact against each objective. Where potential negative impacts are identified, they are capable of mitigation and/or would be addressed through other policies of the Development Plan.

5.3. National Policy

5.3.1. The NPPF strongly supports the principle of neighbourhood planning. It states that Neighbourhood Plans should set out a positive vision for the future of the local area. They should set planning policies to determine decisions on planning applications, including policies which set out the quality of development that should be expected for the area, based on stated objectives for the area's future and an understanding and evaluation of its defining characteristics.

5.4. Regard to Mole Valley District Council Planning Policies

5.4.1. The WNDP has been prepared with due regard to the saved policies in the Mole Valley District Council Local Plan 2000 and Core Strategy 2009.

5.4.2. The WNDP should be read as a whole, in conjunction with those saved policies within the Mole Valley Local Plan, and in conjunction with the Larger Rural Village Character Appraisal Supplementary Policy Document and the operative adopted Surrey Hills AONB Management Plan. The Larger Rural Village Character Appraisal Supplementary Policy Document was adopted by Mole Valley District Council in 2013. It covers the six villages of Beare Green, Brockham, Capel, Charlwood, Hookwood and Westcott. It analyses the character and landscape setting of each village, as well as providing general guidance on character issues.

5.4.3. We have endeavoured to ensure the WNDP objectives below accord with the underlying vision of the planning policies of the Local Plan.

5.4.4. From the 1960s until the present day Westcott has accommodated a series of housing developments, from Pointers Hill to Dairy Close; from Rokefield to The Pound, and St John's Court. Most recently, a development of 14 houses, including some affordable accommodation has been created at Pipp Brook Place and Meadow Close. In total, 64 new homes have been created in the village since 2001, of which 34 were included in the 2011 census. Since that census a further 30 new homes have been developed:

• The Pound	7
• Broomfield Park	2
• Meadow Close & Pipp Brook Place	14
• Logmore Lane	1
• Brooklands & The Paddock	3
• Rookery Drive	3

5.4.5. These new dwellings have been created with either outside of the Metropolitan Green Belt or through redevelopment of the existing developed environment. Reflecting the findings of the village survey, the WNDP

envisages that this focus of development will continue for the period of this plan.

- 5.4.6. The pace of development achieved since 2001, as described in 5.6.3, equates to a 7.2% expansion. Continuing at that rate for the next 20 years would deliver approximately 92 new dwellings within the ward by 2036. Given that Westcott Ward elects 1/41th of the members of Mole Valley District Council, an annual rate of 4.6 new dwellings is equivalent to the 188 per annum identified in the 2009 Strategy. The ability to meet additional housing need described at a much wider geographic level within the emerging evidence of the 2016 Strategic Housing Market Assessment is constrained by the environment and land designations within which sits the ward of Westcott.
- 5.4.7. It is hoped that the introduction of the WNDP will help to continue to preserve the natural historic integrity of the village and at the same time, present an achievable vision for development that aligns with the Local Plan. Our mutual goals, by reference to the Development Plan, are to make provision for the District's growth in a way that will minimise significant harmful changes to its distinctive character, environment and feel, and that the natural built and historic environment will be safeguarded and enhanced.
- 5.4.8. The Development Plan does not indicate a specific housing allocation for Westcott. The village is surrounded by Green Belt, and has two Conservation Areas, one of which is within the centre of the village, and the relevant policies relating to these special areas will be adhered to in any policy within the WNDP. This directive of the WNDP both underpins and supports the Development Plan.
- 5.4.9. During the extensive Green Belt Boundary Review process conducted by the Village Forum during 2013/14 no suitable potential development sites were identified by the Neighbourhood Forum. The WNDP, therefore, has not allocated a site or sites for future development in the village. Any new sites emerging would be considered for development under the policies of the WNDP.

5.5. Monitoring and Review

- 5.5.1. Future Planning applications will be considered against the policies of the WNDP and the Mole Valley Development Plan. This will be monitored by the Westcott Village Association.
- 5.5.2. The review of this Plan should be done by the appropriate body no later than 5 years after its acceptance and to reflect the continuous evolution of national planning policy and, if appropriate, any revised Local Plan for Mole Valley District.

6. OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES:

6.1. Objective 1

6.1.1. This policy is to recognise that large housing developments within a small village are inappropriate and would conflict greatly with the character and setting of the village of Westcott.

6.1.2. **Policy WNDP 1: Size, Architectural Style and Character of Housing Development**

WNDP1: All new housing developments should reflect the surrounding character and minimize overlooking issues. Depending on the size of the plot, new housing developments should be built in small clusters of dwellings of varying and sympathetic architectural styles. Should larger plots be developed these can be subdivided to create multiple clusters of dwellings. The size of units should reflect the housing demand within the village which is for 1 to 4 bedroom properties in small developments (1-4 houses) within the village core, (the land inset from the Green Belt as defined in the Mole Valley Local Development Framework Proposals Map).

6.1.3. **Justification:** The Westcott Ward sits within the Surrey Hills Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) and the Metropolitan Green Belt. The village of Westcott is constrained by these designations. Within the village boundary there are two separate Conservation Areas, which include listed buildings and buildings of historical value. Almost 75% of residents do not believe that more housing is currently needed in the village, but 43% do see the need within the next 10 years. Also, Westcott is one of six Larger Rural Villages to which the Development Plan directs a limited amount of development (Core Strategy Policy CS2).

6.1.4. The nature of property ownership in the village will restrict any development because there is little land of any great size likely to be put forward. Where there are exceptions to this generalization, it would be inappropriate for developers to build developments of cramped style and character.

6.1.5. The village survey indicates that there is some demand for new housing to cater for local needs (from family members) and to stimulate housing stock rotation as residents look to stay within the village but move up and down the housing market as their personal circumstances change with age and family size, as well as migration to and from the village.

6.1.6. The survey identified that half of demand for new housing is likely to be for 1-2 or 3-4 bedrooms houses, including affordable housing. Remaining demand is likely to be divided between flats, bungalows and retirement housing (with and without care).

- 6.1.7. It is recognised that there are already a number of 3 storey dwellings in the village core area, mainly on Guildford Road. The sloping nature of the topography gives the opportunity for development at such height to increase capacity within a minimum footprint without giving rise to concerns of additional overlooking beyond that already existing within the developed environment.
- 6.1.8. No development is permitted in the Green Belt other than for that which accords with the NPPF e.g. agricultural or leisure purposes. This policy is supported by 87% of survey respondents.
- 6.1.9. MVDC Core Strategy Document paragraph 6.1.17-19 and Policy CS3 “Balancing Housing Provision” supports this objective.

6.2. Objective 2

6.2.1. This policy is to recognise the restrictions which exist in potential plot sizes and to give preference to development that provides the opportunity to stimulate movement within the ward housing market. As an example a retired couple living in a 5-bedroom property should be able to move to more appropriate independent living accommodation, but remaining within the village with access to long established social support networks, thus releasing the larger property to the housing market.

6.2.2. Policy WNDP2: Infill and Redevelopment

WNDP2: Proposals for infill or limited redevelopment of large existing gardens, within the Village Core area that is not attributed as Metropolitan Green Belt, will be supported where they increase the stock of 1-3 bedroom housing suitable for new families and older persons seeking to vacate larger dwellings, provided this can be achieved without adversely impacting the character of the village.

6.2.3. **Justification:** The opportunity to meet future requirements and develop new housing and other facilities of the scale identified from the village survey is very restricted. However, within the village there are properties with extensive gardens which could reasonably accommodate new development without significantly altering the average density of development and housing or adversely impacting the character of the village.

6.2.4. According to the residents' survey, 40% of residents have lived in the community for more than 15 years; 33% want to move to more appropriate accommodation within the village; and 26% are now over retirement age with a trend for this to increase significantly over the next 15 years.

6.2.5. This policy is underpinned by MVDC Core Strategy Policy CS2 "Housing Provision and Location" (Para 6.1.12) which states that infilling and limited development including redevelopment will be permitted providing that the proposed development is at an appropriate scale in relation to the size and character of the village.

6.3. Objective 3

6.3.1. This policy is to ensure that residents of the village continue to have cycling, bridleway and footpath access through the village and into the countryside as a priority and any new developments will protect and enhance this access.

6.3.2. **Policy WNDP 3:** Connectivity within the village and into the countryside

WNDP3: Development should maximise pedestrian, bridleway and cyclist access, provide effective storage of cycles and create new rights of way across sites where they abut more than one existing right of way or public highway. Any new development will conform to MVDC supplementary planning document "Designing out Crime" dated December 2011. Existing pedestrian, bridleway and cycle routes must be protected where they exist, and new routes for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists to access the countryside around Westcott should be provided wherever possible in any new development.

6.3.3. **Justification:** According to the residents' survey, almost 70% of residents regularly use footpaths and cycle ways around the village as a means of access, and more than 50% of respondents in the survey identified these as one of the most important aspects of village life.

6.3.4. The 2011 Census demonstrates that more people who live in Westcott cycle to work (2.6%) than the Mole Valley average (1.9%). Since this census, a new cycle path linking Westcott to Dorking has been created. Developments should make provision for cycle access and storage for residents.

6.4. Objective 4

6.4.1. This policy is to recognise that vehicle ownership is unlikely to diminish, that parts of the village are seriously congested by on-street parking, and that Westcott Ward is a magnet for a wide range of leisure activities which draw people to the village at weekends. The provision of parking facilities is seen as the most important priority by villagers after protection of the Green Belt.

6.4.2. Policy WNDP4: Parking Provision

WNDP4: Within the village core (the land inset from the Green Belt as defined in the Mole Valley Local Development Framework Proposals Map), any residential development must provide for a minimum of two cars per dwelling to be parked off street. Development should not add to the current levels of on-street parking.

Development proposals that deliver additional parking above and beyond the needs of the specific proposed development (providing for visitor parking) will be encouraged. Any such parking should be designed in an environmentally acceptable way with extensive landscaping appropriate to the character of the village. Unsympathetic parking development such as multi-storey above ground car parks or intrusive lighting will not be permitted.

6.4.3. **Justification:** According to the residents' survey, residents of Westcott own more than 740 vehicles among them, 84 households owning more than 3 vehicles. 20% of these vehicles are parked on the roads around the village, the north east sector of the village being particularly badly affected. This situation is exacerbated at weekends with visitors adding significantly to these numbers, for the purposes of visiting friends and family, and to pursue recreational activities particularly walking and cycling. The provision of greater amounts of off-street parking would help to relieve the issues experienced in some parts of the village, improving the street scene and the environment for residents.

6.4.4. Surrey County Council Policy (Vehicular and Cycle Parking Guidance) dated January 2012, sets out recommended parking space allocation for new developments, but parts of Westcott village are seriously congested and there is a requirement for each development to take into account existing constraints, and avoid exacerbating the problem.

6.4.5. The 2011 Census demonstrates that there are more cars per household in Westcott (1.62) than the Mole Valley average (1.57) or the Surrey average (1.51). Furthermore, fewer people in Westcott use non-car based means of transport to travel to work (25.4%) than the Mole Valley average (28.1%). This indicates that more space should be created for car parking as well as encouraging alternate means of transport.

6.5. Objective 5

6.5.1. This policy is to encourage and assist appropriate use of Green Belt land for the enjoyment and recreation of local residents.

6.5.2. **Policy WNDP5: Recreational Development**

WNDP5: Within the Metropolitan Green Belt, appropriate facilities to support new opportunities for outdoor recreation and outdoor leisure will be encouraged, especially if they are supported by the local community, provided such proposals comply with paragraph 89 of the National Planning Policy Framework and other relevant Development Plan policies.

6.5.3. **Justification:** Westcott Ward covers some of the most spectacular and open countryside in Surrey and is much sought after as both a place to live as well as a place to enjoy leisure and recreational activities.

6.5.4. Great care is to be taken to protect the Green Belt; this policy will give preference to the provision of land for domestic horticulture (allotments), sporting activities and leisure, all of which have been identified as popular activities by residents in the Survey.

6.6. Objective 6

6.6.1. This policy is to prevent further conversion of retail property use to domestic dwellings, encourage greater diversity of retail offerings within the village, and in particular keep the facility of a village Post Office into the future.

6.6.2. Policy WNDP6: Shops and Commercial Services

WNDP6: The retail premises within the village will be protected, and changes of use away from retail will be opposed unless the owner can provide evidence that marketing of the premises in its existing use over a period of at least twelve months has demonstrated that there is no reasonable prospect of continued retail use. Proposals which are intended to support retail and commercial services, such as the provision of improved access, car and cycle parking, will be supported provided they do not conflict with other policies.

6.6.3. **Justification:** The survey illustrated that a significant proportion of respondents frequently used the village store, newsagents and bakery. The existing facilities provide a very valuable, and in some cases vital, social function. Without them the environmental impact of having to drive to neighbouring towns and villages for basic retail needs would be seriously detrimental.

6.6.4. This policy is underpinned by MVDC Core Strategy Policy CS11 and paragraph 6.2.37 which states that the Council's strategy includes

- Supporting the provision of small-scale local facilities to meet local community needs
- Taking into account the importance of shops and services to the local community in assessing proposals that would result in their loss or change
- Supporting proposals to improve the viability, accessibility or community value of existing services and facilities that play an important role in sustaining village communities

6.7. Objective 7

6.7.1. This policy is to prioritise and support the development of multi-use, flexible, modern community facilities within the village which will cater for a wide range of current and future social, sporting, and recreational village activities.

6.7.2. Policy WNDP7: Enhancement of Community Facilities

WNDP7: Proposals for the provision and maintenance of flexible, accessible and modern community facilities will be supported, where they would help to maintain and extend the vibrant social, sporting, recreational, and educational activities which create a cohesive and supportive village life by creating financially viable and sustainable facilities for residents.

6.7.3. **Justification:** Westcott is a village of around 2,300 residents with 8 principal community facilities: -

- Surrey Hills Church of England Primary School
- Holy Trinity Church
- The Reading Room
- The Hut
- St John's Community Centre
- The Sports Club (cricket and football)
- Faufold (Guiding Association retreat)
- Riverbank Surgery

6.7.4. These cater individually for a very wide range of activities in premises of varying age and quality. The survey showed that most respondents identified facilities for these activities as being important to retain.

6.7.5. Over the next 10-15 years some of these facilities will require significant financial investment in order to remain usable. It is anticipated that there may be opportunities to enhance, re-provide and create new facilities in accordance with the identified needs of the survey. In any new development, research into occupancy and usage of existing facilities would be carried out to ensure that there was no loss of capacity for activities.

6.7.6. Nursery provision within the Ward is a priority. 28% of respondents to the survey (189 households) have young people under 18; 25% of them use or intend to use Little Doves Nursery in Westcott. 34% use or intend to use a Nursery out of the village.

7. SUMMARY

In 2025 this Neighbourhood Development Plan will ensure....

- Westcott is a thriving village set in a Ward of outstanding natural beauty.
- Neighbourhood facilities and amenities can be enjoyed by all that live within the Ward.
- Development will be of a size and character that will enhance the village.
- Planning for the future of Westcott retaining its village identity and not being absorbed into a suburb of Dorking.