

3 Vision and objectives

3.1 Vision

The vision and core objectives for The Plan were developed in consultation with the local community through surveys, questionnaires and a series of community engagement events. They form the foundation of The Plan.

The Area covers two distinct environments: residential areas and the commercial centre. The vision attempts to address the different needs of these.

The Vision Statement

To maintain, enhance and protect The Area's distinctive and special residential character – especially its green spaces – while supporting sympathetic and sustainable development to maintain a vibrant village with improved community facilities and a thriving centre with opportunities for local employment.

At a public consultation meeting The Forum held with residents in November 2015, all residents present (55 in total) voted in favour of the Vision Statement above.

3.2 Core Objectives

The objectives of The Plan are based on the views of local residents, businesses, community leaders and other stakeholders consulted during its preparation, and the issues raised in these consultations. These were gathered by a diverse range of means to ensure everyone felt able to contribute – including email and paper-based surveys, public meetings, library drop-in sessions, stalls at local events and one-to-one meetings carried out over a period of 18 months, from May 2014 to November 2015. Details of this consultation process are set out in the Consultation Statement (see www.wbnf.org). The key results of the nine surveys carried out are set out in Section 7, Appendix 1 of The Plan (Residents' Views).

The views gathered in the consultation process have informed the core objectives for each of the areas studied. These are as follows:

3.2.1 Core Objectives – Built Environment

- To contribute to the WBC Core Strategy target for the borough of 292 new homes per annum by supporting sympathetic and sustainable development.
- To ensure that homes provided for the growing community meet the needs of all ages in an environment that is safe, pleasant and desirable with sufficient facilities and amenities for the residents.
- To ensure that changes to the built environment in West Byfleet complement the strong green character and 'village feel' of The Area, sustain the distinctiveness of the different housing character zones (see Section 2.3.1) and conserve local heritage assets.
- To maintain, enhance and protect the distinctive and special character of West Byfleet by ensuring high quality design and construction in both residential and commercial development.
- To ensure adequate parking facilities are provided for all new developments.

3.2.2 Core Objectives – Commercial Environment

- To ensure development in the District Centre offers mixed use, increasing the overall retail space, providing some offices and introducing new residential units to improve overall social, cultural, employment and business activities.
- To discourage the loss of retail space.
- To ensure the design, configuration and scale of new buildings complement the character of the District Centre and are cohesive in order to encourage overall environmental and economic uplift.
- Development of the Sheer House Complex (“SHC”) to be designed, where practical, to preserve continuous trading and the vitality of the village during development, with developers working with local businesses and residents during the consultation and development periods to minimise disruption to commercial life in the village and to continue to provide essential services.
- To improve pedestrian areas in the District Centre, particularly those around Station Approach, Rosemount Parade and the current Sheer House site, to provide easy and safe movement and pleasant and welcoming public space.

3.2.3 Core Objectives - Infrastructure

- To ensure parking in the District Centre for shoppers, retailers and residents, is sufficient to prevent unsafe displacement on street.
- To encourage the provision of improvements to promote travel by foot and cycle.
- To ensure that investment plans of water and sewerage/wastewater companies align with development needs (in line with the NPPG) and that adequate water and wastewater infrastructure is provided to support sustainable development.

3.2.4 Core Objectives – Open Spaces

- To enhance and protect all existing green spaces, including roadside verges, within the neighbourhood to ensure that they remain for the benefit of the community.
- To protect and enhance wildlife corridors, plant habitats and SSSI’s within The Area.
- To encourage the protection and provision of access to open spaces via footpaths and cycle routes.

3.2.5 Core Objectives – Social and Community

- To enable the delivery of appropriate community facilities to ensure that The Area remains an attractive place in which to live and work and retains a sense of community.
- To ensure, by the creation of a Concept Plan where appropriate, that the recreation ground, school lands, sports fields and adjacent areas continue to benefit the community in terms of educational, recreational, sporting and social and community provision and a coherent approach is taken to their future development.
- To ensure the community element of CIL monies arising from future development in The Area is spent on projects that benefit the local community (see Section 5 – Community Projects).

4 Policies

While Section 3 of The Plan sets out the overall vision for The Area and the core objectives of The Plan, this section sets out the policies to support and deliver that vision and the core objectives, set out under the headings:

- 4.1 Built Environment (BE)
- 4.2 Commercial Environment (CE)
- 4.3 Infrastructure (I)
- 4.4 Open Spaces (OS)
- 4.5 Social & Community (S&C)

The draft policies were tested in a consultation with residents between November and December 2015 (see Section 7, Appendix 1, Survey 9 – Draft Policies Survey)¹. Support for each policy was overwhelmingly positive. Since then the policies have been further developed and refined.

4.1 Policies – Built Environment

BE1 Development Character

Commercial development should respect the existing character of The Area as a whole and complement that of its immediate surroundings. Residential development should complement the character of the Housing Character Zone in which it is located (see section 2.3.1). Any Major Development² should be designed to retain or enhance the village feel*.

*Note: ‘village feel’ in the context of West Byfleet’s local character is considered in Section 2.3.1 of The Plan.

BE2 New Housing Quality

Proposals for new residential development should demonstrate good design and should contribute positively to creating a sense of place. Garden and/or amenity space should be commensurate with the size and type of dwelling and in keeping with the character of the Housing Character Zone in which it is located. Where possible, proposals should preserve existing grass verges. The provision of new grass verges in keeping with local character will be supported.

BE3 District Centre Development Character

Development within the District Centre (as defined in Figure 14) should reflect local character and proposals should demonstrate how they will conserve and, where possible, enhance, local heritage assets, with particular regard to Conservation Areas and their settings.

¹ www.wbnf.org

² Defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

BE4 Sheer House Complex (“SHC”) Development

The redevelopment of the SHC³ will be supported, provided the redevelopment of the site will have a positive effect on the area’s townscape character and adjacent Conservation Areas. Development proposals should clearly demonstrate how the scheme will achieve high quality and inclusive design that creates a sense of place and a high quality public realm based on the principles set out in the Design SPD⁴, and in the local character assessment within the Neighbourhood Plan.

BE5 Older People Accommodation

The development of residential accommodation for older people will be supported, subject to it complementing local character and being in close proximity to, and easily accessible to/from, the West Byfleet District Centre.

BE6 Residential Parking Provision

Proposals for residential development must provide for a safe environment through the provision of off-road parking. Residential development should seek to meet the following minimum parking standards:

- 1 bedroom property: 1 car space,
- 2-3 bedroom property: 2 car spaces,
- 4+ bedroom property: 3 car spaces,

unless it can be clearly demonstrated that alternative requirements are necessary due to the nature and accessibility of residential development or the availability of public transport.

4.2 Policies – Commercial Environment

CE1 District Centre Development

Development within the District Centre which supports its vitality and viability will be supported.

CE2 Retail Space

Proposed development within the District Centre that results in the loss of retail (Class A1) space through the change of use of ground floor shops will only be supported where it is demonstrated the proposal will not have significant harmful effects on the primary shopping area or on the vitality and viability of the District Centre. Proposals that include a predominance of smaller retail units of up to 200 sq m will be supported.

³ The SHC site boundary is defined within Figure 14

⁴ Woking Design Supplementary Planning Document (SPD); WBC, February 2015

CE3 Sheer House Complex (SHC) Mixed Use Development

Any proposed redevelopment of the SHC should be a mixed use scheme to provide office accommodation (unless it can be demonstrated it would not be viable to do so) and no less retail space than existing, unless it can be demonstrated the loss of retail (Class A1) space through the change of use of ground floor shops will not have significant harmful effects on the primary shopping area or on the vitality and viability of the District Centre.

CE4 Business Continuity

To be supported, development proposals relating to the SHC must demonstrate that viable opportunities to avoid adverse effect on business continuity have been incorporated in the scheme.

CE5 Public Amenity Provision

To be supported, proposals for the redevelopment of the SHC must, subject to viability, provide opportunity for the continuing provision of the following: the public library; the Post Office; dispensing chemists; public toilets. The provision of new public pedestrian space ('public realm') will be supported.

CE6 SHC Parking Provision

The current level of public off-road car parking spaces available to shoppers and visitors in the SHC redevelopment (66) should not be reduced.

4.3 Policies – Infrastructure

I1 District Centre Parking Provision

Relevant proposals for development within the District Centre must include provision of parking spaces for shoppers, retailers and residents and must demonstrate that they will not result in on-street parking to the detriment of highway safety or adverse impact on the character of the area.

I2 Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities

Proposals for Major Development⁵ should be designed to improve facilities for pedestrians and cyclists and encourage travel by foot or cycle.

⁵ Defined in the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015

I3 Wastewater and Sewerage Infrastructure

Development proposals will be required to demonstrate that there is adequate waste water capacity and surface water drainage both on and off the site to serve the development and that it would not create issues for existing or new users within The Area or beyond, in line with National Planning Policy Guidance⁶ and with guidance on Sustainable Drainage Schemes (SuDS) developed by susdrain⁷ and adopted by Thames Water.

4.4 Policies – Open Spaces

OS1 Local Green Space

The Plan designates⁸:

- The area of land east of Sheerwater Bridge as a Local Green Space (see Figure 18)
- Birch Walk (known to residents as Birch Green), located north of West Byfleet Station, as a Local Green Space (see Figure 18)
- The Allotments, Leisure Lane, off Camphill Road, as a Local Green Space (see Figure 17)
- West Byfleet Bowls Club, Camphill Road, as a Local Green Space (see Figure 17)
- West Byfleet Recreation Ground, Camphill Road, as a Local Green Space (see Figure 17)
- West Byfleet Junior and Infants School playing fields, as a Local Green Space (see Figure 17)

The development of Local Green Space will not be permitted other than in very special circumstances; for example, it is essential to meet specific necessary utility infrastructure needs and no alternative feasible site is available.

OS2 Wildlife and Plant Habitats

The Plan area includes three locations of special interest for wildlife and plant habitats:

- Basingstoke Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located to the north of Sheerwater Bridge (see Figure 21).
- Old Wood Ancient Woodland located south of Parvis Road and west of the Wey Navigations Canal (see Figure 20).
- Wildlife Corridors (The River Wey and Godalming Navigations, Basingstoke Canal, railway embankment and Dodd's Lane (Figure 22).

The protection and/or enhancement of these assets will be supported. Development should not harm the SSSI or Ancient Woodland and should maintain and, where possible, improve the connectivity provided by wildlife corridors.

⁶ NPPG Paragraph 016 (Water supply, wastewater and water quality)

⁷ susdrain.org.uk

⁸ See Section 7, Appendix 6, for how these spaces meet the criteria for the designation of Local Green Space

OS3 Trees and Hedges

Development proposals should retain mature trees wherever possible and the proposed removal of any trees or hedges should be justified. Where a development proposal seeks to justify the removal of a tree or a hedge, it should demonstrate appropriate replacement with a similar variety within the development site to provide the best mitigation of impact on local character and the natural environment. This is a particularly important requirement where trees are removed and replacements need to be located to maintain the integrity of wildlife corridors.

OS4 Access

The protection and improvement of existing and provision of new footpaths and cycle routes will be supported, especially where these form part of a wider network.

4.5 Policies – Social & Community

S&C1 Village Hall

Proposals for the development of a new village hall will be supported.

S&C2 Built Facilities for Youth Groups

Proposals for the improvement of built facilities for Scouts, Guides and associated groups will be supported.

S&C3 Sporting and Recreational Facilities

Proposals for the provision of new sporting and recreational facilities and the enhancement of existing public recreation facilities will be supported.

S&C4 Library Facilities

Proposals for the enhancement of library facilities and the provision of additional community facilities will be supported.

S&C5 Community Facilities Parking Provision

New social and community facilities should demonstrate suitable and reasonable access to car parking provision.

S&C6 CIL Projects

Funds collected under the provisions of the community element of CIL will be targeted at the following schemes, which are listed in no order of priority:

- Development of the Byfleet Corner Concept Plan (see Section 2.5)
- Contributions towards a village hall
- Improvement of built facilities for Scouts and Guides and other associated groups
- Enhancement of existing public recreation facilities
- Contributions towards new sporting and recreational facilities
- Improvements to the pedestrian subway at West Byfleet railway station