UPDATED WESTCOTT NEIGHBOURHOOD DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2020-2039

SHAPING THE FUTURE OF WESTCOTT

DecemOctober 2025 – Reg14 ConsultationSubmission VersionDraft

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R&I 14 Consultation Draft

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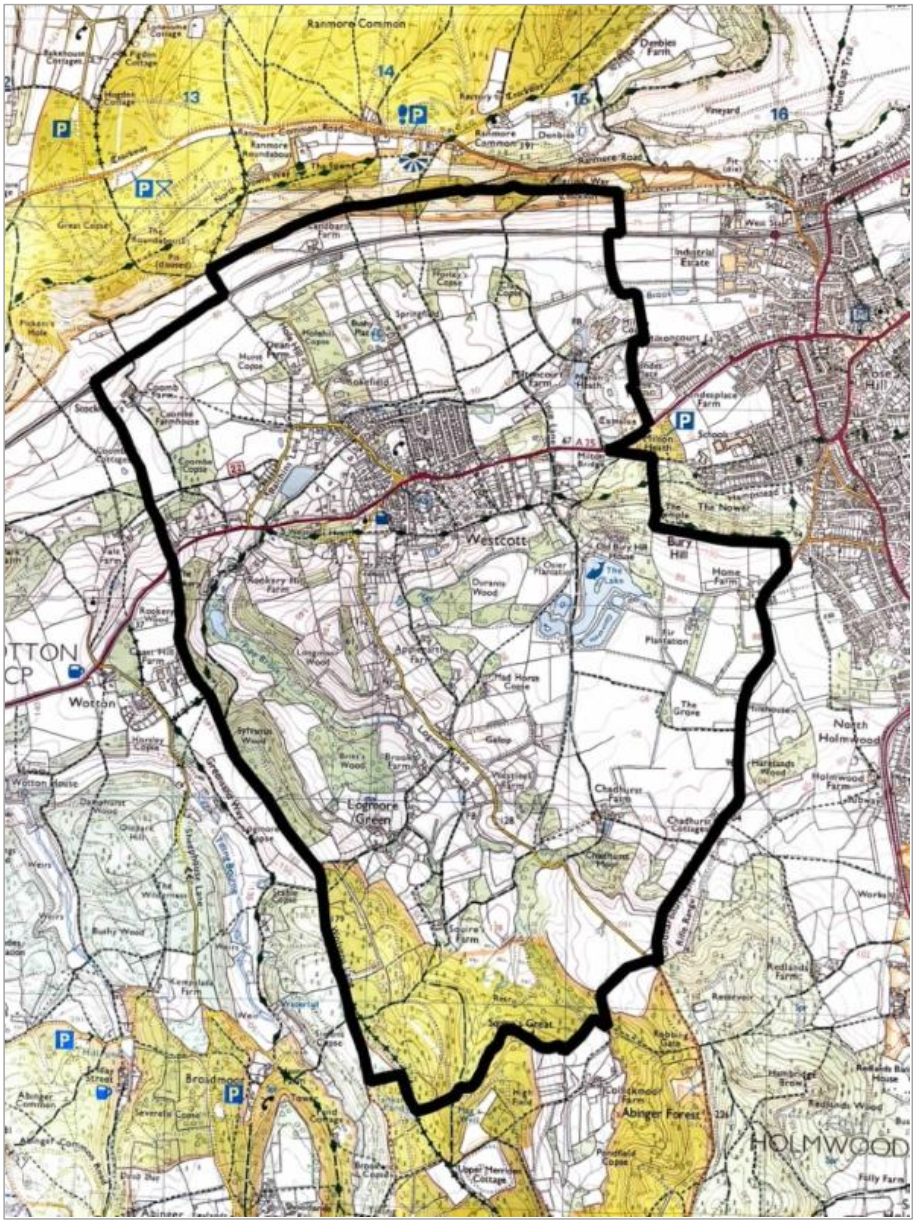


Fig 1- Westcott Ward and Neighbourhood Plan Area

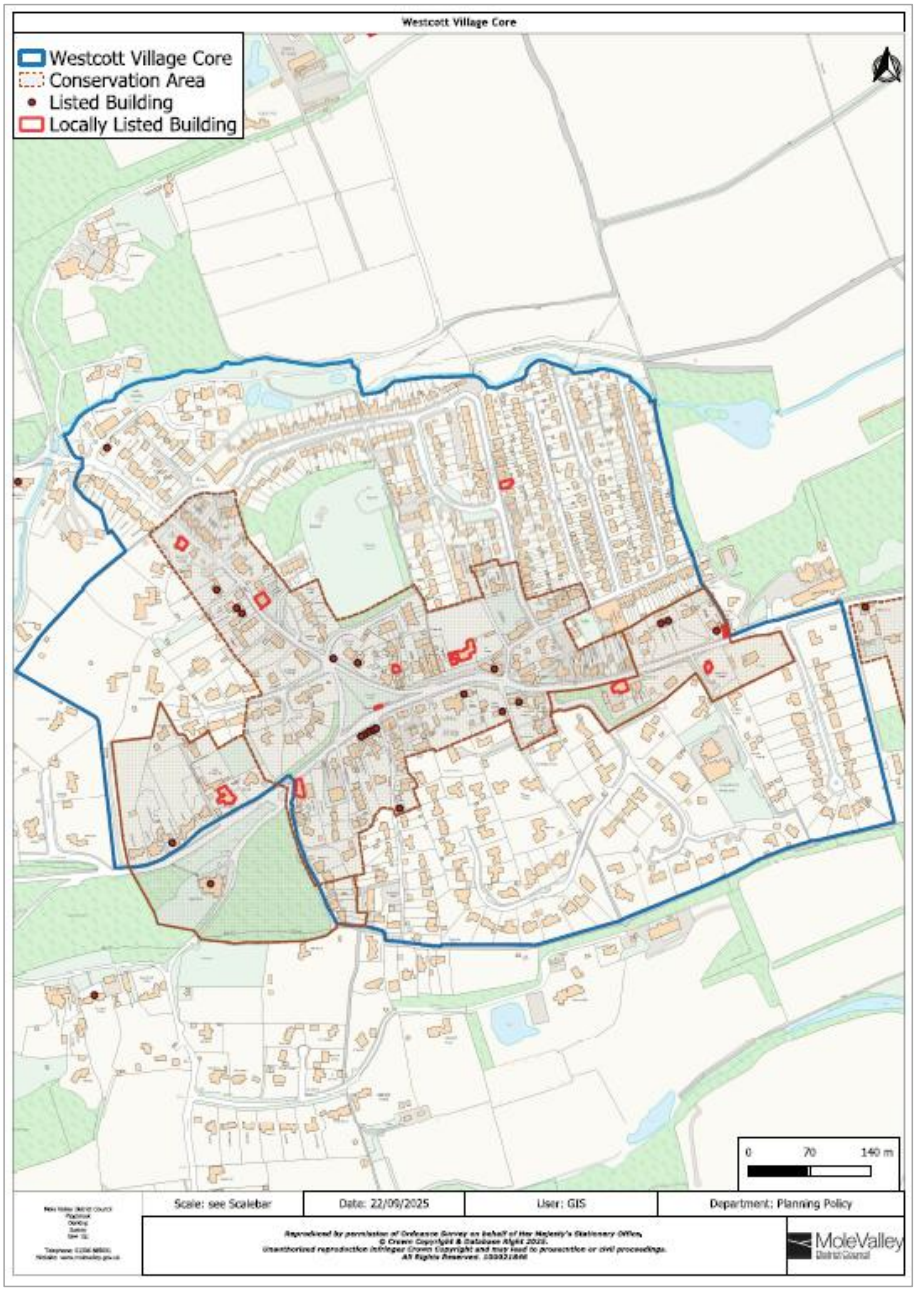


Fig 2 - Westcott Village Core (Settlement Boundary), outside which is Metropolitan Green Belt and Surrey Hills National Landscape

1 OUR VISION

In 2039 the Ward of Westcott will remain an attractive feature of the Surrey Hills National Landscape, protecting and enhancing the two conservation areas and listed buildings 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 and National Landscape 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.

View towards Ranmore with Guildford Road in foreground

The development needs of the village will be met by small-scale developments, primarily restricted to within the village core (the Settlement Boundary) of Westcott. 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 updated Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) have been designed following needs assessment from a variety of sources.

These include a comprehensive Community Survey of village residents and businesses and a Housing Needs Survey undertaken by Surrey Community Action.

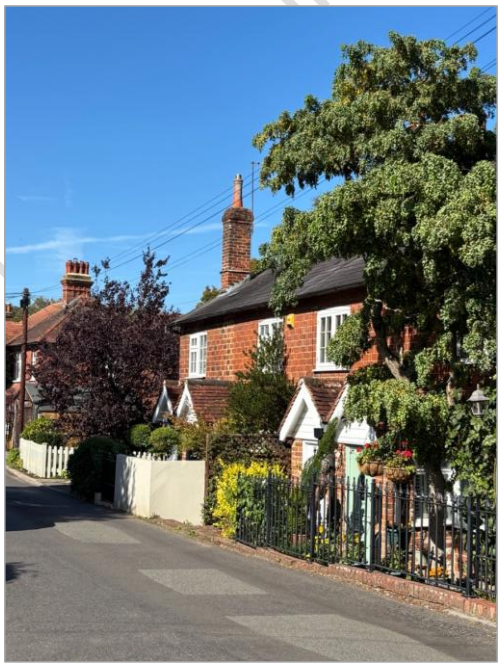
Reflecting this evidence, the aims of the WNDP include:

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

At the time of preparing the updated WNDP, the Local Development Plan in Mole Valley in relation to Westcott is the Mole Valley Local Plan 2020 to 2039.

The 2017-2026 Westcott Neighbourhood plan has been 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, landscape and sustainable development principles.



Westcott Street

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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 the updated WNDP will become part of the Statutory Planning Policy Framework and will have the same legal status as the Mole Valley Development Plan. The WNDP was adopted on 23 November 2017. The planning policy context has moved on since with the Mole Valley District Local Plan adopted on 15 October 2024. It is important to review the WNDP to ensure that it remains up to date.

2.1.2 The Westcott Village Forum was re-established in 2025 for the purpose of updating the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP), by gathering evidence, canvassing the views of the villagers and incorporating these into the Plan.

NB

Modification Statement

The Westcott Village Forum proposes that the updated Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan (WNDP) will cover a new plan period 2020 to 2039. Various amendments have been made to the policies of the adopted WNDP and new policies have been added. It is therefore regarded as a 'modification proposal' and this Statement is made in line with Regulation 15(1)(f) of the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended). The updates to the existing policies have been made to reflect updated evidence or policy or to add further detail to improve the policies. A new policy is included setting out how housing will be delivered over the plan period. Other new policies cover sustainability, biodiversity, landscape and heritage assets.

Policy WNDP2 has been amended to provide further detail and to influence windfall development. These are considered material modifications which do change the nature of the plan, requiring an examination and referendum.

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2.2 Preamble

The plan period is from 2020 to 2039. The Policies of the WNDP 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.

These updated WNDP 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.

The updated WNDP policies are focused on helping to provide appropriate housing within the village and premises for appropriate business needs and community requirements.

The policies also give much greater weight to the views of Westcott Village through the results of the Community Survey, in which 28% of households participated. Through the updated WNDP 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.

Other policies are also included in the updated WNDP. 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.

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2.3 Process

2.3.1 The process towards updating the WNDP began with re-establishing a Village Forum, formally designated by Mole Valley District Council, in June 2025. 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 emails and flyers, public consultation events, village magazine articles and publication of a summary of the Community Survey.

2.3.2 Westcott Village Forum has commissioned a Green Belt review to provide an evidence base for the updated WNDP, in particular to support the windfall development and landscape policies. This review ~~was~~ will be published and approved by the Village Forum.

2.3.3 In 2025 the Village Forum designed, produced, and distributed to every dwelling and business in the ward a Community Survey, containing questions around housing, the Green Belt, shops and services, business development, facilities and amenities, community issues, roads, health, well-being and social issues, parking, travel, sustainability and climate change. A housing needs survey, prepared by Surrey Community Action, was distributed at the same time.

28% of households completed the Community Survey which was then analysed, and the results published in a Summary of Survey Results (Appendix 2) which was made available on the village website and sent by email newsletter.

The policies contained in the updated WNDP refer directly to the answers given by the villagers to the Community Survey.

~~When the updated WNDP is submitted to Mole Valley District Council, it will be accompanied by 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.~~

The draft updated WNDP was approved by the Village Forum and ~~has now been~~was published for consultation with residents of the village, landowners, statutory consultees and other stakeholders (Reg.14) in October 2025. Feedback from this consultation process has been analysed and the plan amended as required.

~~This version of the plan (Reg.14) has been drafted for the purposes of consultation with statutory authorities, significant local landowners, and the village community at large.~~

Following this consultation, the feedback received ~~will be~~was reviewed and incorporated into th~~is~~ final Plan that will now be submitted to Mole Valley District Council who will publish the draft Plan, invite representations and appoint on our behalf an Independent Examiner to ~~appraise~~ assess the ~~Development~~ Neighbourhood Plan.

~~When the updated~~The updated WNDP ~~is submitted to Mole Valley District Council, it will be~~is accompanied by 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. The Plan is also supported by a Consultation Statement that explains the process of engagement with local residents and other stakeholders and how their comments have informed the final plan.

~~There will be another examination of the Plan and~~Following the examination, a Village Referendum is expected to take place in May 2026.

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Westcott village from Ranmore

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3 VILLAGE PROFILE

3.1 Overview

3.1.1 Westcott is a village with a population of 2,271 dwelling in 938 households (2021 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 Village Hall are clustered near the Green. Holy Trinity Parish Church is located on the Western edge of the village, and St John's Chapel and the village hub 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.

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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 shops and bus stops 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 National Landscape (formerly 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 Priory and Powell Corderoy schools on the very edge of Dorking and the village sports ground near the junction of the A25 and Milton Street.

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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 Local Plan policy EN9 Natural Assets.

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

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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 Community Survey also identified retirement living as a requirement.

4.1.2 The 2021 Census shows the breakdown of households within the ward:

Accommodation Type - Households	Westcott Ward	Proportion of All
Unshared Dwelling; Whole House or Bungalow; Detached	335	35.7%
Unshared Dwelling; Whole House or Bungalow; Semi-Detached	330	35.1%
Unshared Dwelling; Whole House or Bungalow; Terraced (Including End-Terrace)	125	13.3%
Unshared Dwelling; Whole House or Bungalow; Total	**790**	**84.1%**
Unshared Dwelling; Flat, Maisonette or Apartment; Purpose-Built Block of Flats or Tenement	107	11.4%
Part of another converted building, for example, former school, church or warehouse	11	1.2%
Unshared Dwelling; Flat, Maisonette or Apartment; Part of a Converted or Shared House (Including Bed-Sits)	24	2.6%
Unshared Dwelling; Flat, Maisonette or Apartment; In Commercial Building	6	0.6%
Unshared Dwelling; Flat, Maisonette or Apartment; Total	**148**	**15.8**
Unshared Dwelling; Caravan or Other Mobile or Temporary Structure	**1**	**0.1%**
Unshared Dwelling; Total	**939**	**100%**
Shared Dwelling	**0**	**0**
All Households	**939**	**100%**

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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 2011 and 2021 Census periods:

Car or Van Availability	Census 2021	2021 Proportion	Census 2011	2011 Proportion
Cars: All categories: Car or van availability; measures: Value	939	100%	918	100%
Cars: No cars or vans in household; measures: Value	99	10.5%	90	9.8%
Cars: 1 car or van in household; measures: Value	354	37.7%	345	37.6%
Cars: 2 cars or vans in household; measures: Value	339	36.1%	359	39.1%
Cars: 3 cars or vans in household; measures: Value	147	15.7%	96	10.4%
Cars: 4 or more cars or vans in household; measures: Value			28	3.1%

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 Shops and commercial 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.

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5 PLAN CONTEXT

The Summary of the Community Survey results is in 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 104 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.

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5.2.3 Appendix 3 provides a Basic Conditions Statement which provides a general sustainability assessment which analyses how the eleven policies of the WNDP would perform. 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 updated WNDP has been prepared with due regard to the policies in the Mole Valley Local Plan 2020 to 2039.

5.4.2 The WNDP should be read as a whole, in conjunction with the Mole Valley Local Plan, and in conjunction with the Larger Rural Village Character Appraisal Supplementary Policy Document and the 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 updated 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, Meadow Close and a number of more recent infill developments. In total, 26 new homes have been created in the village since 2020 or are currently on site in the list below. Census data also confirms an additional 20 homes in the period 2011 to 2021.

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- The Crown 6
- The Old House 3
- Masters House 3
- Logmore Lane 2
- The Vicarage 4
- Barrington House 2
- Old Bury Hill Fisheries 2
- Various 4

5.4.5 These new dwellings have been created either outside of the Metropolitan Green Belt or through redevelopment of the existing developed environment. Reflecting the findings of the Community survey, the updated WNDP envisages that this focus of "windfall" and infill development will continue for the period of this plan.

5.4.6 It is hoped that the updated 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.

5.4.7 The Neighbourhood 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 updated WNDP. This directive of the updated WDNP both underpins and supports the Development Plan.

5.5 Monitoring and Review

5.5.1 Future Planning applications will be considered against the policies of the updated WNDP, the Mole Valley Development Plan and any relevant subsequent Spatial Development Strategy and unitary authority plan following anticipated Local Government reorganisation. This will be monitored by the Westcott Village Association or its successor.

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 the area.

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View of locally listed thatched bus stop and dovecot on village green with Garden Hill development behind

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6 OBJECTIVES AND POLICIES

6.1 Objective 1 - Meeting Local Housing Needs

6.1.1 Policy WNDP1 sets out important guidance for the development of any new housing developments that may come forward in the Plan period. It reflects the approach adopted in Policy H1 of the Mole Valley Local Plan which specifically states that 123 net new dwellings will need to be delivered in the Neighbourhood Area of Westcott in the Plan Period (2020-2039). It goes on to say that these housing requirements will be delivered through the allocated development sites in the Mole Valley Local Plan and through infill sites (often known as windfall development).

6.1.2 Policy WNDP 1: Meeting local housing needs

WNDP1: This Plan provides for at least 123 net additional dwellings to be developed in the Neighbourhood Plan area between 2020 - 2039. This growth will be met through:

i. The allocation for Westcott set out in the Mole Valley Local Plan (2024): 15 no. dwellings
ii. Completions since 2020: 16 no. dwellings.
iii. The implementation of existing commitments (planning permissions granted since 2020 that are not completed as at September 2025: 21 no. dwellings
iv. The remainder will be met through small “windfall” sites (of 7 dwellings or fewer) within the Settlement Boundary, as identified on the Policies Map, that comply with Policy WNDP2 and other policies in this Plan.

6.1.3 **Justification**: The Westcott Neighbourhood Area sits within the Surrey Hills National Landscape (formerly AONB) and the Metropolitan Green Belt. The village of Westcott is constrained by these designations which abut the Settlement Boundary. On top of this there are two separate Conservation Areas, which include listed buildings and buildings of historical value and this means that the opportunities for housing delivery in the Neighbourhood Area are heavily constrained. There is just one site allocation in Westcott in the Mole Valley Local Plan for 15 dwellings (apartments).

6.1.4 The Neighbourhood Plan does not intend to allocate housing sites. This is supported by the findings of the Community Survey which indicated that 80% of residents agreed/ strongly agreed with the statement regarding housing policy for the Westcott Neighbourhood Plan: *"In order to meet the housing target, it is proposed that the village forum should seek to influence and encourage rebuilding on existing properties and infill sites, (often called Windfall) rather than looking to identify new housing sites".*

6.1.5 Policy WNDP1 therefore directs that the remainder of the village housing target will be met through windfall development within the village settlement boundary. This approach is based on principles within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that encourage making effective use of previously developed land and resisting inappropriate development within the Green Belt and Surrey Hills National Landscape. Taking into account the Local Plan allocation, completed developments since 2020 and commitments not yet built out, it is anticipated that around 6-7 windfall units would need to come forward each year over the plan period. This is considered achievable given more recent windfall delivery stands at around 5 new dwellings per year.

6.1.6 Policy WNDP1 is fully compliant with Local Plan Policy H1 referenced above.

6.2 Objective 2 – Infill Development (often known as Windfall Development)

6.2.1 This policy is to recognise the restrictions which exist in potential plot sizes and to give preference to development that meets local needs and 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 downsize and remain 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 development (often known as Windfall development)

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WNDP2: To deliver the housing growth anticipated in Policy WNDP1 (iii), windfall developments that satisfy all of the following criteria, and otherwise comply with the development plan policies in general will be supported:

i. The site is within the Settlement Boundary, as identified on the Policies Map, and represents infill, the redevelopment of large existing gardens, previously developed land or the conversion of vacant retail or commercial units (where not safeguarded through Policy WNDP6);
ii. The development does not exceed a net gain of 7 dwellings, unless it can be robustly demonstrated that a higher number of dwelling~~home~~s is compatible with the site's immediate context
iii. The development comprises a mix of 1-3 bedrooms dwellings;
iv. The development is built in small clusters of dwellings of varying and sympathetic architectural styles;
v. The development respects the scale, density, layout and design of the site and surrounding context, in line with Policy WNDP3;
vi. Safe vehicular and pedestrian access can be achieved to the highway;
vii. The development will not result in the loss of valuable trees, hedges or other natural features.
viii. Residential development outside of the Settlement Boundary will not be permitted unless it satisfies national Green Belt policy. For the purposes of assessing Grey Belt developments, any land that is found to make a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes (a), (b) and (d), with consideration given to the Green Belt Review*, will not be accepted as Grey Belt land.

** A Green Belt Review has been commissioned and will be published shortly*

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 The updated Policy WNDP2 follows the approach set in the original Neighbourhood Plan which supported small-scale infill developments and redevelopments of large existing gardens. The scope of the policy has been widened to give greater flexibility. It provides more detail on the type of windfall development that is encouraged in the village to ensure that the right type and scale of development comes forward.

Regard Consultants

6.2.5 For the purposes of Policy WNDP2, windfall development is defined as small developments within the village settlement boundary providing a net gain of no more than 7 dwellings. Smaller developments (of 7 units or less) are considered appropriate given the need to provide a development density that is in keeping with the scale and character of the village and its historic and built environment constraints. Furthermore, the village survey identified a strong preference for the village's housing target to be met through small infill developments (particularly of 2 – 4 dwellings) rather than larger developments (of 10 dwellings or more). Some flexibility will be applied to this definition but only where robustly justified that the development is compatible with the site's immediate context.

6.2.6 Policy WNDP2 actively prioritises the development of 1 to 3-bedroom dwelling~~house~~s. The village's housing stock predominantly comprises larger housing stock with over 74% being 3+ bedroom dwellings. The village housing survey identified a need for dwellings of 2 – 3 bedrooms. Properties of this size have the ability to accommodate the identified needs of younger families to set up home or older persons to remain/downsize within the village. Proposals that seek to address these specific needs will be welcomed by the community.

6.2.7 According to the residents' survey, over 65% of residents have lived in the community for more than 10 years and, although 80% of respondents have said they are happy with their housing, a number ~~33%~~ want to move to more appropriate accommodation within the village; and 28% are now over retirement age with a trend for this to increase significantly over the next 15 years.

6.2.8 For the purposes of this policy, 'valuable trees, hedges and other natural features' are defined as being of ecological, arboricultural or amenity value. Planning applications that affect trees, hedgerows or other natural features must be supported by an arboricultural report that identifies the value, health and longevity of all trees, hedges and features on the site.

6.2.9 The countryside surrounding the village is highly valued by the Westcott residents. The village survey identified a strong preference to retain the Green Belt around the village. To inform Policy WNDP2, a Green Belt Review has been produced by an independent consultancy to ~~assesses~~assess the value of the Green Belt around the village and its contribution to the Green Belt purposes. All planning applications within the Green Belt around the village must have regard to this report.

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6.3 Objective 3 – Size, Architectural Style and Character of Housing Development

6.3.1 Policy WNDP3 sets out important guidance for the development of any new housing developments that may come forward in the Plan period. It reflects the broader approach adopted in Local Plan Policy H9 (Housing Mix) The policy links this strategic matter to the housing needs survey carried out in the Plan area. It also requires that any new development should reflect the character of the area in which it is located (Local Plan Policies EN3 (Rural Villages), EN4 (Character and Design) and EN8 (Landscape Character).

6.3.2 Policy **WNDP3**: Size, Architectural Style and Character of Housing Development

WNDP3: New housing developments should reflect the character of the surrounding area without precluding high quality and sensitive contemporary developments. Where necessary developments should be designed to respect the amenities of surrounding properties in general, and to avoid unacceptable levels of overlooking adjacent properties in particular.

Depending on the size of the plot, new housing developments should be built in small clusters of dwellings of varying and sympathetic architectural styles.

Developments of 1-3 bedroomed dwellings that reflect the housing demand in the village will be supported.

6.3.3 **Justification**: The Westcott Ward sits within the Surrey Hills National Landscape (formerly 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. Westcott is one of six Larger Rural Villages to which the Development Plan directs the development of 123 new dwellings in the plan period (Local Plan Policy H1).

6.3.4 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.

6.3.5 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.

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6.3.6 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 75% of survey respondents.

6.3.7 Policy WNDP3 reflects Local Plan Policy H9 (Housing Mix) which supports "a mix of dwellings sizes" but prioritises 1 and 2 bedroom dwellings and the Community and Housing Needs Surveys which identify the greatest need in Westcott is for 2-3 bedroom dwellings.

6.3.8 Policy WNDP3 also reflects Local Plan Policies EN3 (Rural Villages), EN4 (Character and Design) and EN8 (Landscape Character). Policy EN3 supports development that is of a "scale and design which reflects the existing character of the Settlement". Policy EN4 of the Local Plan encourages development that makes a positive contribution to local character" and Policy EN8 supports development that is sensitive to its landscape context, particularly the Surrey Hills National Landscape. Policy WNDP3 aligns with these policies.

6.3.9 Policy WNDP3 supports development that avoids overlooking to neighbouring properties which is reflected in Local Plan Policy EN4.

6.4 Objective 4 – Parking Provision

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 village survey identified that easing parking problems is seen as the third most important priority by villagers after protection of the Green Belt and separation from Dorking. Policy WNDP4 provides a context against which proposals for new residential developments will be assessed. It sets out minimum car parking standards. It also requires a premium for visitor car parking for any larger developments that may come forward within the Plan period. The policy has been designed to ensure that new development does not add to the current levels of on-street car parking. Residential schemes that provide parking spaces above the minimum standards will be particularly supported where they maintain appropriate standards of layout and design for the wider development so that car parking sits comfortably within the attractive setting of the village. The policy addresses this matter. Unsympathetic car parking arrangements or solutions, such as multi-storey car parks or parking areas with intrusive lighting, will not be supported.

6.4.2 Policy WNDP4: Parking Provision

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WNDP4: Off-street car parking for new residential developments should be provided to the following minimum standards:

- 1 bedroom properties — 1 car parking space
- 2 and 3 bedroom properties — 2 car parking spaces
- 4 bedroom properties (and larger) — 3 car parking spaces

For windfall development that comes forward in line with Policy WNDP 2, allocated visitor car parking should be provided on site to an additional 20% of the figure calculated for the development based on the minimum car parking standards.

Development proposals that deliver additional parking above and beyond the needs of the specific proposed development (providing for visitor parking) will be particularly supported. Any such parking should be designed in an environmentally acceptable way with extensive landscaping appropriate to the character of the village.

Within the Village Core (Settlement Boundary) of Westcott, as identified on the Policies Map, where planning permission is required, the loss of off-street parking will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there is adequate parking capacity on surrounding roads (through a parking survey) or an equivalent or improved capacity is provided elsewhere.

Disabled parking and electric vehicle charging infrastructure should be provided for all development in line with the ~~Mole Valley Local Plan~~Surrey County Council standards.

6.4.3 **Justification**: According to the residents' survey, over 45% of Westcott households which responded have 2 or more vehicles. A significant proportion 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 such as walking and cycling. The provision of more 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 Policy WNDP4 sets parking standards for new development. The standards ~~a~~align with Mole Valley Local Plan and, broadly, with Surrey County Council standards. Similar to the Mole Valley Local Plan standards, they are to be applied as minimum standards, similar to the standards, which ~~are~~ is considered ~~reasonable~~ necessary and justified for Westcott given the parking pressure in the village referred to above.

6.4.5 The 2021 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 (26.2%) than the Mole Valley average (28.1%) because viable public transport alternatives are not available for the morning or evening commute. This indicates that adequate space should be created for car parking as well as encouraging alternate means of transport through the delivery of improvements to cycling and walking infrastructure.

Ashley Road street parking,

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6.5 Objective 5 – Connectivity within the village and into the countryside

6.5.1 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. Where new routes are provided as part of wider development schemes the overall proposals should conform to the MVDC Supplementary Planning Document 'Designing Out Crime' (December 2011).

6.5.2 Policy WNDP 5: Connectivity within the village and into the countryside.

WNDP5: Existing pedestrian, bridleway and cycle routes should be protected, and new accessible routes for pedestrians, horse riders and cyclists to access the countryside around Westcott should be provided wherever possible in any new development.

Development proposals of 5 dwellings or more should be supported by a transport statement, including an active travel assessment of the local pedestrian and cycle network and an assessment of the impact of the development on the network. Where justified and feasible, highway works and/or contributions towards active travel measures in the surrounding area to mitigate the development, as identified in the justification below will be secured through a legal agreement.

6.5.3 **Justification**: According to the community survey for the 2017 – 2026 WNDP, 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.

6.5.4 The 2021 Census demonstrates that less people who live in Westcott cycle to work (1.6%) than the Mole Valley average (1.9%). Use of National cycle path (NCR22) linking Westcott to Dorking – a safer alternative to the A25 - has steadily increased in recent years but it has not been well maintained. Developments should make provision for cycle access and storage for residents.

6.5.5 The village survey identified that Westcott residents have concerns over the quality of pavements/paths, particularly along the A25 and in and around the village. Having safe and accessible pavements and paths is an important factor in encouraging residents to swap private transportation for sustainable forms of transport. Policy WNDP5 includes a requirement for developments of 5 or more units to consider the impact on the local highway network and provide financial contributions towards active travel measures, where justified and feasible.

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6.5.6 The Mole Valley Strategic Infrastructure Plan identifies a project to improve the surface of the cycle route (NCR 22) between Westcott and Dorking, including an aspiration to direct it towards the schools and stations via Curtis Road.

6.5.7 The Community Survey identified the following additional priorities for Westcott:

- 56% of respondents want an improved bus frequency and 26% want services running later into the evening.

- 34% of respondents want a ~~better quality~~better-quality cycle path to Dorking and 39% want better maintained paths and pavements, noting that 49.4% said the paths along the A25 were poor or unacceptable. Supporting comments highlight that the A25 pavement widths are insufficiently wide for safe use by mobility scooters, prams or people with young children. It is also worth noting that 30% of the roll at Surrey Hills All Saints Primary school, which has pedestrian access off the A25 are pupils from Dorking, a percentage which is likely to increase.

- The recent planning consent for new housing on the former Hut site will introduce a new section of pedestrian footpath along its Furlong Road frontage. The extension of this footpath to link with the existing footpath which resumes on the corner opposite Chapel Lane would be positively encouraged as a part of any related future development.

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6.6 Objective 6 - Shops and Commercial Premises

6.6.1 This policy is to prevent further conversion of retail and commercial premises to domestic dwellings. The policy is designed to encourage greater diversity of retail offerings within the village, and in particular to assist in the re-occupation of vacant units with new businesses in general, and to secure the re-opening of the village Post Office. Policy WNDP6 identifies two blocks of retail and various other premises in the Plan area and sets out the basis against which proposals for non-retail and commercial uses will be assessed. It also offers support to associated proposals that are intended to support these important retail areas. These could include improved access arrangements, car and cycle parking.

6.6.2 Policy WNDP6: Shops and Commercial Premises.

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WNDP6: The following shops and commercial premises, as shown on the Policies Map (Fig 3 below) are safeguarded for their existing use:

- Westcott Food and Wine and former Balchin's Stores, Guildford Road (between Westcott Street and Furlong Road)
- Masters House, Guildford Road (Nisa Local and Corefit Physio)
- Westcott Garage
- Prince of Wales public house
- Chapel Lane Works
- ~~Riverbank Surgery~~
- Westcott House Nursing Home

Within the Settlement Boundary and on the safeguarded premises, changes of use to other uses will not be supported unless:

i. The property has been marketed for a minimum period of twelve months on reasonable market terms with a recognised agent for its existing use without success; and

ii. The commercial use has been relocated to alternative premises within the village or it can be clearly demonstrated that a retail or commercial use, as applicable, is no longer financially viable and there is no reasonable prospect of the site remaining in its current use.

Proposals within the safeguarded area are designed to assist in the retention or the establishment of new retail units or otherwise to improve the general operation of the retail areas and will be supported where they respect the character of the areas concerned and otherwise comply with development plan policies.

6.6.3 **Justification**: The survey indicated that the village shops and businesses such as Westcott Garage, the village hub and two general stores were highly or very highly valued by a majority of respondents. 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. ~~76% of survey respondents believe it is very important to have a GP surgery in Westcott (88% important or very important).~~

6.6.4 WNDP6 is underpinned by Local Plan Policies EC1 (Supporting the Economy) and EC4 (Rural Economy) which support the safeguarding of local facilities and employment sites, particularly in rural areas. Similar to the Local Plan, the policy is flexible and allows a change of use of retail and commercial premises, where justified by robust evidence.

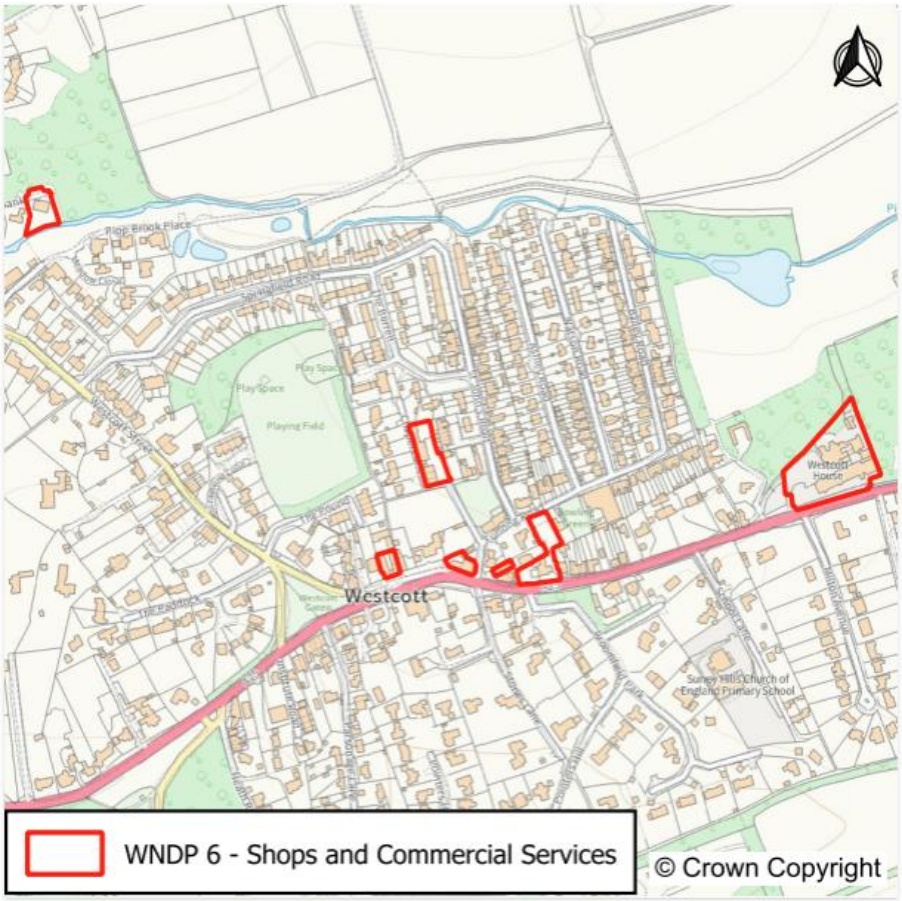

Fig 3 - Westcott Shops and Commercial Premises

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Nisa Local and Corefit Physio

Westcott Food and Wine, Guildford Road

6.7 Objective 7 – Enhancement of Community Assets

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. The implementation of the policy will help to create a more cohesive and supportive village environment by creating financially viable and sustainable facilities for local residents.

6.7.2 Policy WNDP7: Enhancement of Community Assets.

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WNDP7: The following community assets, as shown on the Policies Map (Fig 4 below), are safeguarded for their existing use:

- Holy Trinity Church
- The Village Hall
- Cradhurst Recreation Ground
- The Village Green
- Riverbank Surgery
- St John's Chapel and The Westcott Village Hub
- The Sports Club
- Surrey Hills All Saints School
- Faurefold

Proposals for the provision and maintenance of flexible, accessible, energy efficient and modern community assets will be supported, where they would help to maintain and extend the vibrant social, sporting, recreational, and educational activities in the Plan area and where they comply with national and local Green Belt policy.

The change of use of existing community assets to other uses will not be supported unless:

- Any partial loss of the site/floorspace will not undermine the viability of the asset;
- The asset is surplus to requirements or there is no reasonable prospect of the existing use continuing;
- An alternative asset of equivalent or better quality or scale is available nearby or will be re-provided nearby or the use will be provided in a different way serving the same community; and
- The property has been marketed for a minimum period of twelve months on reasonable market terms with a recognised agent for alternative community uses without success.

6.7.3 **Justification**: Westcott is a village of around 2,300 residents with 8 principal community facilities which cater individually for a very wide range of activities in premises of varying age and quality. The survey indicated that at least 60% of respondents saw each of the following facilities as being important or very important to have in the village: Surrey Hills All Saints Primary School, Holy Trinity Church, St Johns chapel, The Village Hub, Community Fridge, Westcott Cricket Ground, Sports club, Village Hall, Cradhurst Recreation Ground, The Village Green.

6.7.4 Policy WNDP7 provides a strong framework to retain the area's valued community assets which aligns with Local Plan Policy INF4 (Community Facilities). Similar to the Local Plan, Policy WNDP7 is flexible and allows a change of use of community assets, where justified by robust evidence.

6.7.5 Over the next 10-15 years some of these facilities will require significant financial investment in order to remain usable. Policy WNDP7 therefore also supports the provision of new community facilities which aligns with Local Plan Policy INF4 (Community Facilities). 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 22% of people living in the Neighbourhood Area are under 18. A need for nursery provision within the Neighbourhood Area was identified in the Community Survey. The survey also identifies there is a significant demand for clubs, societies and activities for people of all ages but particularly for the young, and for those who have retired.

6.7.7 76% of survey respondents believe it is very important to have a GP surgery in Westcott (88% important or very important).

~~6.7.6~~ Various proposals to improve facilities at Cradhurst Recreation Ground were suggested including a running track, outdoor gym and footpath.

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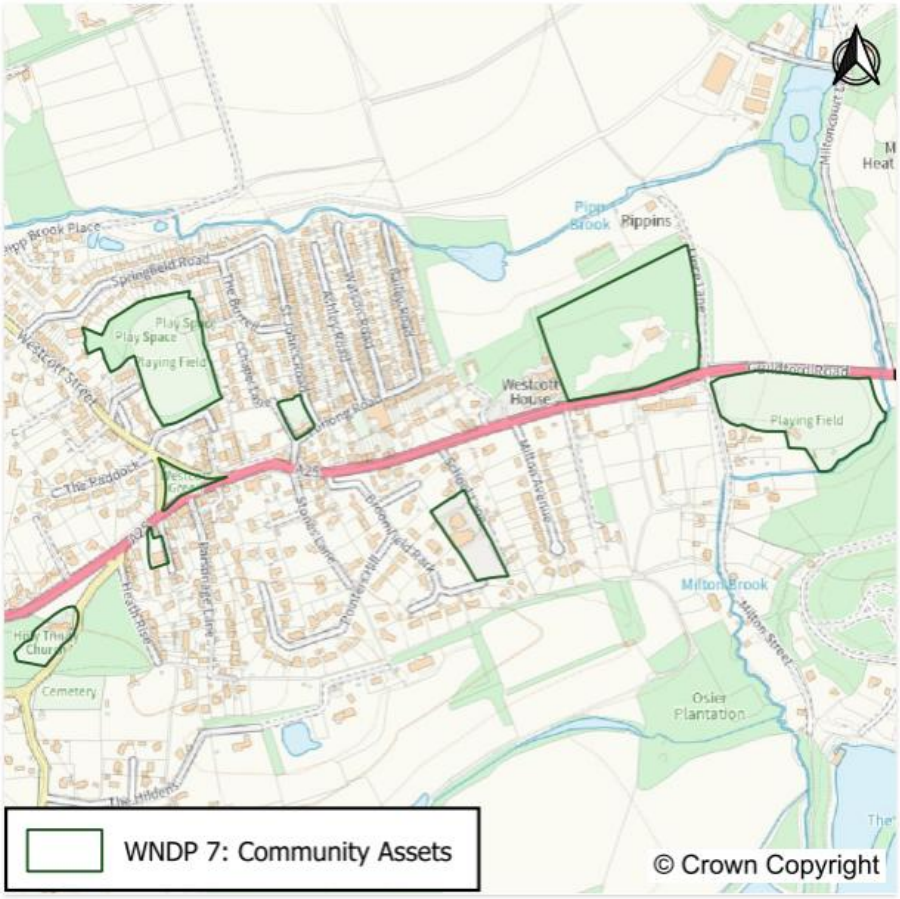

Fig 4 - Westcott Community Assets

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Holy Trinity Church

Surrey Hills All Saints Primary School

Westcott Village Hub

Cradhurst Recreation Ground Playground

6.8 Objective 8 – Sustainability and Climate Change

WNDP8: The design and standard of any new build ~~residential~~ development (other than householder extensions and non-residential developments of less than 100 sqm) should aim to meet a high level of sustainable design and construction and be optimised for energy and water efficiency, targeting zero carbon emissions through the following measures:

- Optimising passive solar gain through the siting and orientation of buildings;
- Incorporating measures to mitigate and adapt to climate change, including avoiding overheating through building orientation and landscaping;
- The use of high quality, thermally efficient building materials;
- Incorporating energy efficiency measures such as loft and wall insulation, double glazing, heat recovery systems and other measures that achieve very high levels of energy efficiency compared to building regulations minimum standards;
- Maximising on-site energy generation from renewable sources such as heat pumps, solar panels subject to the scale, siting and design avoiding harm to the character and appearance of the area and/or heritage assets;
- ~~Resisting the loss of soft landscaping, trees and other habitats;~~
- ~~Incorporating sustainable drainage systems such as green roofs, grey water capture and permeable paving;~~
- The sensitive retrofit of listed buildings will be supported providing it safeguards the special characteristic and significance of the heritage asset;

~~All new residential~~Planning applications for new ~~development~~build development (other than householder extensions and non-residential developments of less than 100 sqm) and change of use (~~,~~ including the conversion of existing buildings~~) where feasible,~~ must, ~~where feasible,~~ demonstrate that ~~it~~ they achieve~~s~~ zero carbon emission standards through an Energy Assessment prepared by a suitably qualified consultant, in line with best practice guidance.

~~Where planning permission is required, development proposals that result in the net loss of soft landscaping (including forecourt parking) and the removal of trees will not be supported, unless robustly justified.~~

6.8.1 This policy is to encourage a positive and proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change which is recognised as a significant threat to society. It is important that local communities take a lead in tackling climate change. The Neighbourhood Plan can introduce requirements for new and existing developments to address and mitigate the impact of climate change and support the transition to a low carbon economy. This policy also covers flood risk and water infrastructure matters.

6.8.2 Policy WNDP8: Sustainability and climate change.

Flood risk

New development should be directed towards areas of lowest flood risk. New development within flood zones 2 and 3 will only be allowed where demonstrated through a Flood Risk Assessment that the sequential test and exception test (where applicable) set out in national planning policy have been satisfied and that all sources of flood risk can be satisfactorily managed and that the development will be safe for the lifetime of the development, without increasing flood risk off-site.

New build development (other than householder extensions) will be required to implement sustainable drainage systems such as green roofs, grey water capture and permeable paving. Surface water drainage system discharge rates should be restricted to the equivalent Greenfield Qbar runoff rate or as close as practically possible, but never greater than 2 litres per second per hectare (2l/s/Ha).

Where planning permission is required, development proposals (including forecourt parking) that result in the net loss of soft landscaping, trees and other habitats ~~(including forecourt parking) and the removal of trees~~ will not be supported, unless robustly justified.

Water infrastructure

Where appropriate, planning permission for developments which result in the need for off-site upgrades, will be subject to conditions to ensure the occupation is aligned with the delivery of necessary infrastructure upgrades.

Development must be designed to be water efficient and reduce water consumption. Refurbishments and other non-domestic development will be expected to meet BREEAM water-efficiency credits. Residential development must not exceed a maximum water use of 105 litres per head per day (excluding the allowance of up to 5 litres for external water consumption)

6.8.3 **Justification**: The threat of climate change is a significant concern for many Westcott residents with over 55% of those who responded to the village survey being 'seriously' or 'extremely' concerned about the impact of climate change. Local residents were most concerned about the impact climate change can have on biodiversity (81.7%), drought (59.9%) and overheating (50.8%). Most residents were in favour of renewable energy measures such as solar panels and sustainability and energy efficiency measures to new buildings. These are all matters that can be addressed through a Neighbourhood Plan.

6.8.4 The overall target set through Policy WNDP8 is for new developments to have net zero carbon emissions. The policy sets a range of requirements for new development to ensure that mitigating and adapting to climate change is at the forefront of the design of new developments, rather than simply being an add on to meet sustainability targets at the end of the process. In preparing Energy Assessments, applicants should have regard to the latest best practice guidance, including LETI Climate Emergency Design Guide 'How New Buildings Can Meet UK Climate Change Targets' (LETI) (2020). Policy WNDP8 also places a strong emphasis on preserving trees and habitats which are important in mitigating climate change through absorbing carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, slowing rainwater runoff and providing shade.

6.8.5 Incorporating sustainability measures into historic buildings poses a greater challenge and must be done sensitively in a manner that conserves the significance of the heritage asset.

6.8.6 This policy is in line with the NPPF and Policy S2 of the Mole Valley Local Plan which seek to bring about sustainable development that combats climate change.

Parts of the Neighbourhood Area are subject to flood risk which is becoming a more regular and prominent issue as our climate becomes more unpredictable. Residents are concerned about this issue.

It is also important that new development is supported by adequate water infrastructure. New developments should be designed to reduce water consumption. To inform Policy WNDP8, developers should consider the 'Fittings Approach' in Table 2.2 of Part G of Building Regulations. Planning conditions will be applied to new residential development to ensure that the water efficiency standards are met.

Thames Water often requires developments to provide water infrastructure upgrades to ensure there is adequate water and wastewater infrastructure to serve new developments. Thames Water encourage developers to contact the water/waste water company as early as possible to discuss their development proposals and intended delivery programme to assist with identifying any potential water and wastewater network reinforcement requirements. Where there is a capacity constraint phasing conditions may be applied, where necessary, to ensure that any necessary infrastructure upgrades are delivered ahead of the occupation of the development.

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~~6.8.6~~ Environment Agency??

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6.9 Objective 9 – Heritage Assets

6.9.1 This policy is to ensure that there is a strong framework in place to protect the unique historic character of Westcott which contains two conservation areas, ~~and~~ a number of listed and locally listed buildings and archeological areas. This applies directly to heritage assets as well as non-historic buildings that affect heritage assets.

6.9.2 Policy WNDP9: Heritage Assets.

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WNDP9: Any harm to the significance of a heritage asset will require clear and convincing justification and will only be permitted where the public benefits of the scheme demonstrably outweigh the harm identified.

Development proposals affecting a listed building must be sensitively designed to conserve and where possible enhance the heritage asset and its setting. The sympathetic repair and restoration of listed buildings such as the removal of unsympathetic non-original features and the reinstatement of historically appropriate features and proposals which bring back buildings into viable use, will be supported.

Development proposals within the Westcott or Milton Street Conservation Areas (or their setting) should be of a high design quality and should preserve and enhance the local character and appearance of the Conservation Area and its setting, including retaining important buildings and features which make a significant contribution to its character and appearance. Proposals that improve or replace buildings that are identified as detracting from the Conservation Area, through a Heritage Statement, will be supported.

~~Any harm to the significance of a heritage asset will require clear and convincing justification and will only be permitted where the public benefits of the scheme demonstrably outweigh the harm identified.~~

Development proposals affecting locally listed buildings, as identified on Figures 2 and 5 should be sensitively designed to conserve and where possible enhance the building and its setting. Any harm to, or loss of the building's heritage significance will be considered in line with national policy and guidance.

Development proposals that affect archaeological assets, including County Sites of Archaeological Importance and Areas of High Archaeological Potential, must demonstrate that these assets will be conserved in line with the Mole Valley Local Plan.

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6.9.3 **Justification**: There are two conservation areas in Westcott. The Westcott Conservation Area covers the historic core of the village. The Milton Street Conservation Area lies to the east of the village. There are 50 listed buildings many of which are located within the conservation areas. There are 19 locally listed buildings which are recognised as non-designated heritage assets. Westcott's Heritage Assets can be seen on Figures 2 and 5. There are also County Sites of Archaeological Importance and Areas of High Archaeological Potential to the north east of the village which will protected in line with the Mole Valley Local Plan.

6.9.4 Westcott's historic character and identity is highly valued by residents. Of those that responded to the village survey, 18% see it as 'important' and over 64% see it as 'very important' that new development reflects the historic character and identity of the village.

6.9.5 This policy aims to ensure that new development is sympathetic, and avoids harm, to heritage assets. It also seeks to place a greater emphasis on protecting non-designated heritage assets. The policy is consistent with Policy EN6 of the Mole Valley Local Plan and Paragraph 207 of the NPPF.

Thatched bus stop and dovecote in 2025

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Historic photo of bus stop and dovecote courtesy of Neil Cheeseman

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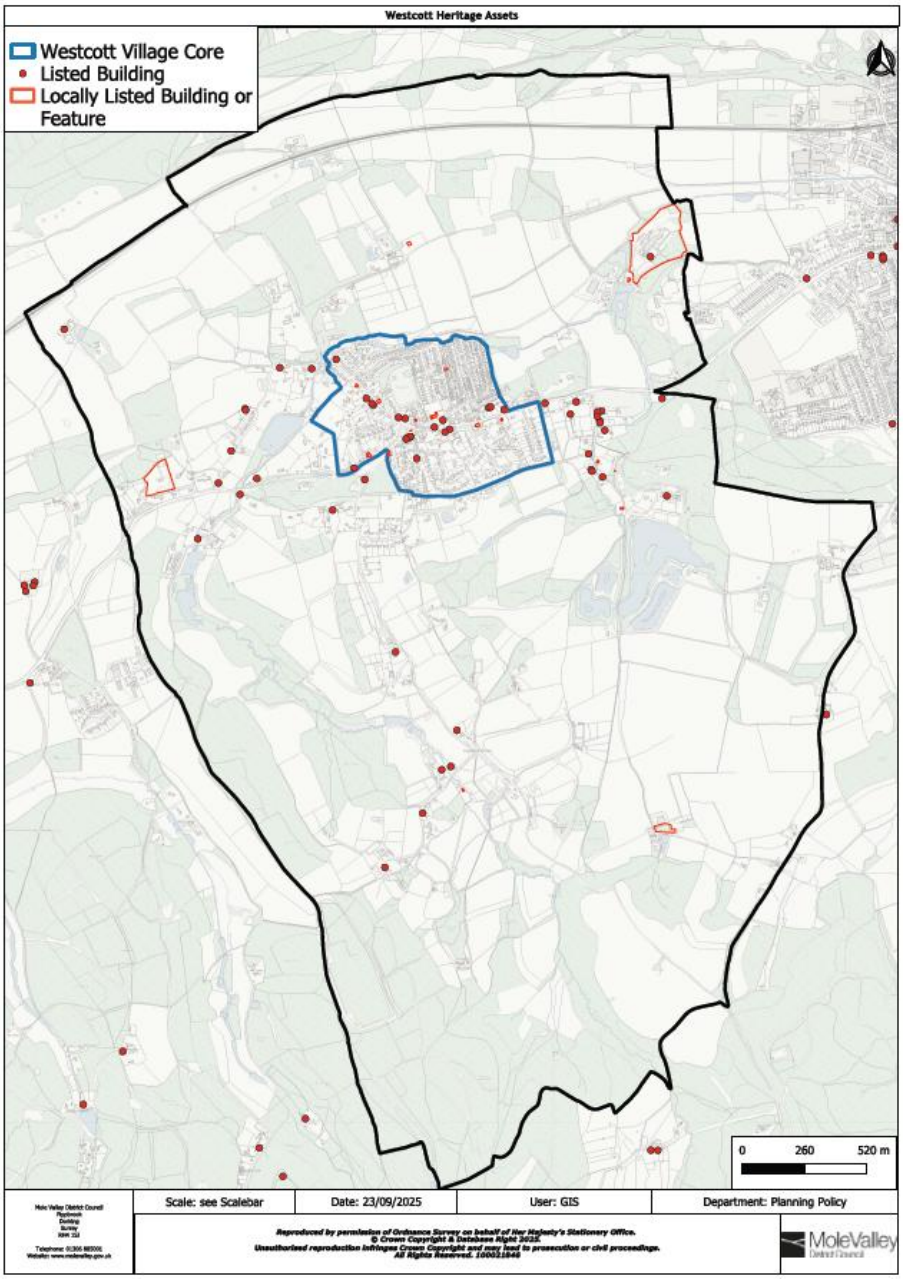

Fig 5 - Westcott Heritage Assets

6.10 Objective 10 – Biodiversity

6.10.1 This policy is to ensure that new development preserves and enhances Westcott's biodiversity. This is particularly important as biodiversity and wildlife in the UK are under increasing pressure with many habitats and ecosystems in decline. The Environment Act (2021) and the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan set the ambition of embedding nature recovery and 'environmental net gain' principles within the planning system. This policy aims to implement this at the local level.

6.10.2 Policy WNDP10: Biodiversity.

WNDP10: New development must preserve and enhance the Neighbourhood Area's biodiversity through the following measures:

- Protecting and enhancing nationally and locally designated sites, including priority habitats, ancient woodland and protected species;
- Retaining and enhancing existing wildlife features, including wildlife corridors, watercourses (and buffer zones), valuable trees, hedgerows and other natural features', ~~hedgerows, wildlife corridors and mature trees~~. Where it is robustly demonstrated that trees of ecological, arboricultural and amenity value cannot be retained, they should be replaced on-site at a ratio of at least 2:1;
- Incorporating new native planting and landscaping and other wildlife features, including bird and bat boxes and insect habitats;
- Unless 'exempt' development, achieve a biodiversity net gain of at least 20% measured by the statutory biodiversity metric against the pre-development biodiversity value of the site.

6.10.3 Justification: The Westcott Neighbourhood Area is home to many biodiversity assets. There are a number of Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) around the village, including Britts Wood and Durrants Wood to the south of the village and Holehill Copse to the north. The River Mole, that runs to the north of the village, is a Biodiversity Opportunity Area (BOA). The North Downs Scarp and Dip BOA also extends into the northern part of the area. The Leith Hill, Wotton, Abinger and Holmwood Greensand Ridge BOA occupies a large extent of the southern part of the Neighbourhood Area. There are also various biodiversity sites within close proximity to the Neighbourhood Area, notably Ranmore Common Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Hackhurst and White Downs SSSI to the north of the village. The Neighbourhood Area has large extents of Ancient Woodland and Priority Habitat. These biodiversity assets can be seen in Figure 6.

6.10.4 Policy WNDP10 seeks to ensure that new development does not adversely affect these biodiversity assets.

6.10.5 It is important that new development does not come at the expense of wildlife and habitats which should be preserved and enhanced as part of development proposals, particularly hedgerows, trees and other important natural features. For the purposes of this policy, trees of arboricultural, amenity and biodiversity value are defined as trees that are prominent in the local landscape and/or Category A or Category B trees, as identified in an up-to-date arboricultural report prepared by a suitably qualified person. All planning applications that affect trees should be supported by an arboricultural report that identifies the value, health and longevity of all trees, hedges and features on the site. It is also important that new development incorporates wildlife features, including native planting, bird and bat boxes and mammal holes in new fencing.

6.10.6 Trees make a valuable contribution to the rural character of Westcott. It is important that development proposals adequately compensate for any loss of trees. Given it can take many years for trees to fully establish, with no guarantees that new trees will provide the same landscape, amenity or arboricultural value as the existing tree, a replacement tree ratio of 2:1 is considered reasonable.

6.10.7 For the purposes of this ~~policy, '~~policy, valuable trees, hedgerows and other natural features' are defined as being of ecological, arboricultural or amenity value. Planning applications that affect trees, hedgerows or other natural features must be supported by an arboricultural report that identifies the value, health and longevity of all trees, hedges and features on the site.

6.10.8 The Mole Valley Local Plan requires new development to achieve 20% Biodiversity Net Gain. This exceeds the mandatory requirement of 10% set in law. The Westcott Village Forum strongly supports this approach.

~~6.10.8~~ For the purposes of Biodiversity Net Gain, "Exempt development" is ~~a definition from~~defined in ~~the National Planning Policy Framework~~national planning guidance (~~https://~~www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain-exempt-developments)

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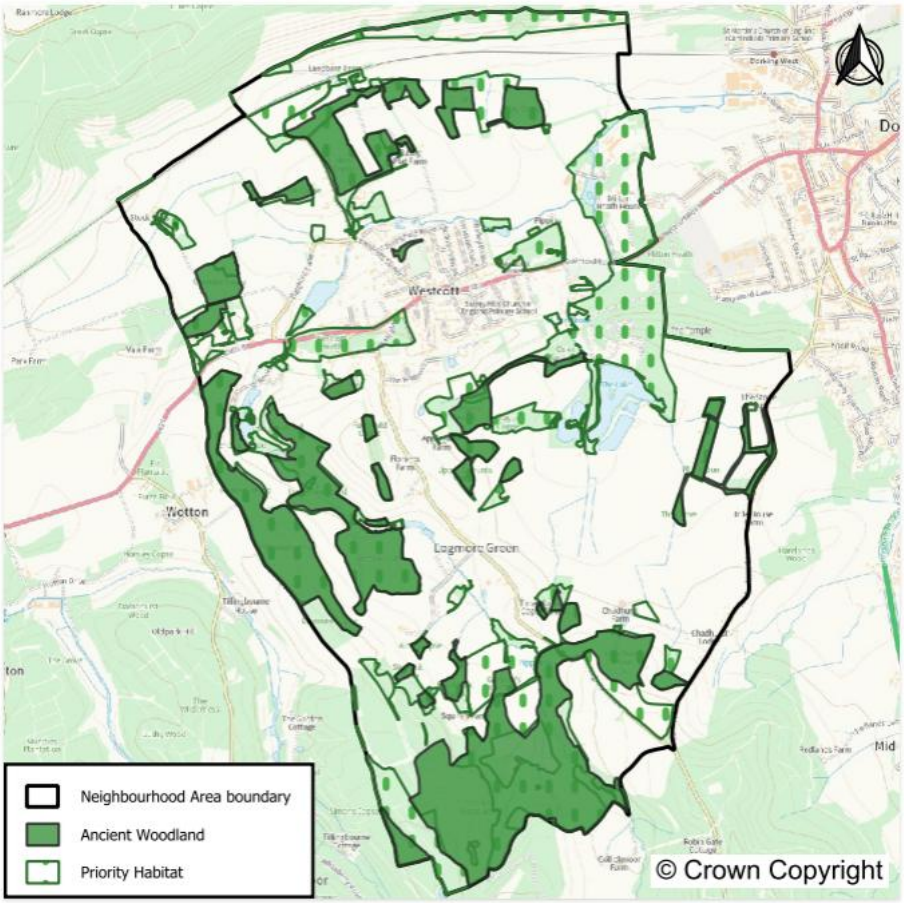

Fig 6 - Westcott Biodiversity Assets

6.11 Objective 11 - Landscape

6.11.1 This policy is to ensure that Westcott's valued natural environment is conserved and enhanced, particularly the natural beauty and landscape qualities of the Surrey Hills National Landscape.

6.11.2 Policy WNDP11: Landscape.

WNDP11: Development proposals must conserve and enhance the Neighbourhood Area's natural environment and landscape character through maintaining the openness and rural character of the village and conserving the surrounding open countryside, with particular regard to the natural beauty and landscape qualities of the Surrey Hills National Landscape and Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV).

Major development proposals that harm the landscape and rural setting of the village, particularly those that encroach into the countryside between Westcott and Dorking, will be refused. Minor development proposals will be considered on the basis of harm identified to the Surrey Hills National Landscape, in line with the Policy EN8 of the MVDC Local Plan and the Surrey Hills Management Plan

Access to the countryside will be encouraged through improvements to the area's network of public rights of way, bridleways and cycle routes.

6.11.3 **Justification**: The area of Westcott outside of the village settlement boundary is entirely within the Surrey Hills National Landscape. The Surrey Hills National Landscape is defined by its variety of landscape, including rolling downland, grasslands, heaths, woodlands and river valleys. The primary purpose of the designation is to preserve and enhance the natural beauty of the area. National landscapes have strong protection through planning policy. The NPPF recognises that "great weight should be given to conserving landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to landscape and scenic beauty". Public bodies have a 'Duty of Regard' to the Surrey Hills Management Plan (2014-2019) which consists of a number of land use policies which relate to the area. These policies are considered a material consideration in determining planning applications within the area and its setting.

6.11.4 The countryside surrounding the village is also designated as an Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) which is protected for its scenic value. It primarily serves as a buffer for the Surrey Hills National Landscape although does have its own inherent landscape quality. The AGLV holds less weight in planning policy terms than the Surrey Hills National Landscape.

6.11.5 The Surrey Hills consists of 13 Landscape Character Areas as defined in the Surrey Hills Landscape Character Assessment (2015). Westcott falls within the following Landscape Character Areas:

- Leith Hill to Bury Hill Wooded Greensand Hills
- Tillingbourne and Pipp Brook Greensand Valley
- Albury to Ranmore Chalk Ridge

Pre Submission

- Shamley Green to Holmwood Wooded Low Weald

6.11.6 Westcott's natural environment is highly valued by local residents. 83% of those that responded to the village survey found the need to conserve and enhance the Surrey Hills National Landscape as 'very important'. The need to preserve the Green Belt and landscape around the village was the most important action identified by local residents through the survey.

6.11.7 One of the core principles in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) is that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. The Mole Valley Local Plan similarly protects the district's landscape character through Policy EN8. Policy WNDP11 is consistent with this strategic policy.

Westcott viewed from Ranmore

Regulation 14 Draft

7 SUMMARY

In 2039 this Neighbourhood Development Plan seeks to ensure that:

- 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.
- Westcott will retain its village identity and will not be absorbed into a suburb of Dorking.

Vision for Westcott – as described by respondents to the Community Survey

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