30 October 2026

Mole Valley District Council
Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan 2020-2039

Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended)
Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) - Regulation 18

POST EXAMINATION DECISION STATEMENT

This document is the second Decision Statement, required to be prepared under Regulation 18(2) of the Neighbourhood Planning Regulations 2012 (as amended).

It sets out the Council's response to each of the recommendations contained in the:

- Report to Mole Valley District Council of the Independent Examination of the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan ("the Plan") by Independent Examiner Andrew Mead, which was received by the Council on 14 May 2026.
- Report to Mole Valley District Council of the Independent Examination of the Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan ("the Plan") by Independent Examiner Derek Stebbing, which was received by the Council on 30 October 2026.

1.0 SUMMARY

1.1 Under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended), Mole Valley District Council has a statutory duty to assist communities in the preparation of neighbourhood development plans and to take plans through examination and referendum.

1.2 The decision of the Council is that it will accept the following proposed and revised modifications made by the Independent Examiners in their report:

- PM1-PM5 and PM7-PM10 (set out in Schedule 1 of this Decision Statement)
- RM1 (set out in Schedule 2 of this Decision Statement)

2.0 BACKGROUND

2.1 The Westcott Neighbourhood Development Plan relates to the area that was designated by Mole Valley District Council as the Neighbourhood Plan Area on 17 June 2025 following a six-week consultation between 1 April and 16 May 2025.

2.2 The Plan has been prepared by the Westcott Village Forum and covers the period 2020–2039. The forum undertook pre-submission consultation on the draft plan in accordance with Regulation 14 between 13 October 2025 and 24 November 2025.

2.3 Following the submission of the plan to the Council on 4 December 2025, the Council publicised the draft plan for a six-week period and representations were invited in accordance with Regulation 16. The publicity period took place between 8 December 2025 and 2 February 2026.

3.0 INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION

3.1 The Council appointed Mr Andrew Mead, with the consent of the Westcott Village Forum, to undertake the examination of the plan by written representations and site visit and to prepare a report of the independent examination.

3.2 The Examiner's report was received on 14 May 2026. The report concludes that, subject to making the modifications recommended by the Examiner, the plan meets the basic conditions set out in the legislation and should proceed to a neighbourhood planning referendum.

3.3 The Examiner also recommended that the referendum area be based on the designated Neighbourhood Plan Area that was designated by the Council on 17th June 2025.

3.4 However, on receipt of additional information, the Council considered that the information was new, germane and material to one of the modifications suggested by Mr Mead and therefore met the conditions of Paragraph 13 of Schedule 4B of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act (as amended). Consequently, the Council undertook a focused consultation on whether the Riverbank Surgery, Westcott should be safeguarded as a community asset within the plan.

3.5 The Council appointed Mr Stebbing to consider the focused consultation responses and he held a half-day hearing on 23 September. He issued his report on 30 October and concluded that the Riverbank Surgery should be safeguarded as a community asset.

4.0 DECISION

4.1 The Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 requires the local planning authority to outline what action to take in response to the recommendations of an examiner made in a report under paragraph 10 of Schedule 4A to the 1990 Act (as applied by Section 38A of the 2004 Act) in relation to a neighbourhood development plan.

4.2 Having considered each of the recommendations made in both examiners' reports, Mole Valley District Council, with consent from Westcott Village Forum, has decided to accept the following proposed and revised modifications made by the Independent Examiners in their report:

- PM1-PM5 and PM7-PM10 (set out in Schedule 1 of this Decision Statement)

- RM1 (set out in Schedule 2 of this Decision Statement)

4.3 Schedule 1 below sets out the alterations made to the draft plan under paragraph 12(6) of Schedule 4B to the 1990 Act (as applied by Section 38A of 2004 Act) in response to each of the Examiner Mead's recommendations and the justification. Schedule 2 below sets out the alteration made to the draft plan by Examiner Stebbing.

4.4 The Westcott Neighbourhood Plan will now proceed to the referendum stage with the accepted modifications incorporated. Details of the referendum, which is limited to the plan area, will be published in due course.

4.5 Regulation 18(2) the Neighbourhood Planning (General) Regulations 2012 (as amended) refers to the need to publish this 'Decision Statement' on a local planning authority's website and in such other manner as is considered likely to bring the 'Decision Statement' to the attention of people who live, work or carry out business in the Neighbourhood Plan Area. The documents will be placed on Mole Valley District Council's and Westcott Village Forum's websites as well as physical copies located at: Mole Valley District Council offices, Dorking Library, Holy Trinity Church, Prince of Wales Pub, Riverbank Surgery, Westcott Village Hub.

Schedule 1: Examiner Mead's Modifications and Council Response

Proposed Modification (PM) number	**Policy/other reference**	**Modification**	**Council Response**
PM1	Page 4 Fig 1 Para 1.1.1 Para 1.1.1 Para 1.1.8 Para 2.3.3 Para 4.2.2 Para 6.2.1	Delete "… Ward and…". Amend first sentence to: **"In 2029, Westcott village and its surroundings will remain …"**. Amend second sentence to: **"… and the area will support a higher number …"**. Amend first sentence to: **"All development throughout the area …"**. Amend the first sentence to: **"… and business in the Neighbourhood Plan Area a Community Survey …"**. Amend first sentence to: **"… visitors to the area, parking will need …"**. Amend the first sentence to: **"… within the area housing market."**	Agree – factual modifications and/or typographical errors

	Para 6.3.3 Para 6.4.1 Page 51	Amend the first sentence to: **"The Westcott Neighbourhood Plan Area sits within …"**. Amend the first sentence to: **"… and that the Westcott area is a magnet for a wide range of activities …"**. Amend the first bullet point to: **"Westcott is a thriving village set in a National Landscape which is an area of outstanding natural beauty."** Amend the second bullet point to: **"Neighbourhood facilities and amenities can be enjoyed by all who live within the area."**	
PM2	Policy WNDP 1	Amend Clause ii to: **"Completions since 2020: 19 no. dwellings."** Amend Clause iii to: **"The implementation … as at September 2025: 18 no. dwellings."** Amend Clause iv to: **"The remainder will be met through "windfall" sites within the Settlement Boundary, …"**.	Agree – modify policy to update figures and clarify windfall wording.
PM3	Policy WNDP2	Amend the first phrase to: **"To deliver the housing growth anticipated in Policy WNDP (iv), …"**. Delete criterion iv. Amend the second sentence of criterion viii to: **"For the purposes of assessing Grey Belt developments, any land that is found to make a strong contribution to Green Belt purposes (a), (b) or (d) will not be accepted as Grey Belt land."**	Agree – delete duplication and amend criterion for clarity.

PM4	Policy WNDP3	Amend the second paragraph to: **"Where appropriate, depending on the size and shape of the plot and the number of dwellings, new housing developments should be built in small clusters of varying and sympathetic architectural styles."**	Agree – add wording 'where appropriate' to reflect scale of development.
PM5	Policy WNDP4	Amend the first sentence of the third paragraph to: **"Proposals for residential development which deliver additional parking above and beyond the needs of the specific proposed development (providing for visitor parking) will be particularly supported."**	Agree – amend wording to refer specifically to residential proposals.
PM6	Policy WNDP7	Delete "Riverbank Surgery" from the list of community assets.	DISAGREE – New information received, subject to a focused consultation and focused examination. See Schedule 2 below
PM7	Policy WNDP8	Amend the fourth paragraph to**:** **"New build development (other than householder extensions) should, where feasible, implement sustainable drainage systems …"**. Amend the second sentence of the seventh paragraph to: **"Refurbishments and other non-domestic development should, where feasible, meet BREEAM water-efficiency credits."**	Agree – replace 'will be required' with 'where feasible'.
PM8	Policy WNDP9	Amend the first paragraph to: **"Any harm to the significance of a designated heritage asset will require clear**	Agree – amend to distinguish designated and non-

		and convincing justification and will only be permitted where (i) the level of harm is weighed against the level of architectural, cultural and/or historic significance of the asset and where (ii) the public benefits of the scheme demonstrably outweigh the harm identified." Amend the fourth paragraph to: **"Development proposals affecting locally listed buildings and features, as identified on Figures 2 and 5 should be sensitively designed to conserve and, where possible, enhance the building and features and their settings. Any harm to, or loss, of the local listed building or structure will be considered in line with national policy and guidance."**	designated assets.
PM9	Policy WNDP10	Include a new bullet point at the beginning of the list in the policy: • **"Ensuring Areas that could Become of Importance for Biodiversity, as identified in the Surrey Local Nature Recovery Strategy, are not compromised in this aim by new development;"**.	Agree – add requirement relating to ACIBs.
PM10	Policy WNDP11	Amend the first paragraph to: "**Development proposals must conserve and enhance the Neighbourhood Area's natural environment and landscape character through maintaining the rural character of the village …"**. Amend the first sentence of the second paragraph to: **"Major development proposals that would harm the landscape and rural setting of the village, particularly those which would encroach into the countryside between**	Agree – amend wording to have regard to national guidance and meet the Basic Conditions and remove reference to openness in first paragraph.

		Westcott and Dorking, will be required to (i) demonstrate they meet the Grey Belt tests, (ii) ensure they do not harm the Surrey Hills National Landscape and Area of Great Landscape Value (AGLV) and (iii) consider the desirability of maintaining the openness between Westcott and Dorking."	

Schedule 2: Examiner Stebbing's Modification and Council Response

Revised Modification (RM) number	**Policy/other reference**	**Modification**	**Council Response**
RM1	Pages 34 and 36	**<u>Policy WNDP7 – Enhancement of Community Assets</u>** **Retain 'Riverside Surgery' in the list of community assets in Policy WNDP7 and retain its designation on Figure 4 (Westcott Community Assets).**	Agree – list of community assets remains unchanged