



BRAMLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

What is a Neighbourhood Plan (NP)?

A NP is a detailed, formal document produced at parish level to define specific local planning policies that supplement the Planning Authority's Local Plan (in our case Waverley Borough Council). Waverley's Local Plan is more general, applying to the whole of Waverley Borough. Bramley's specific needs are not necessarily taken into account, as not all of Waverley's Local Plan applies to Bramley.

Sounds dull and technical. Why should I care?

The NP defines how many and what size of dwellings should be built over the 15 year period of the plan, and where they should be built. It defines how businesses should be supported and where. It addresses light pollution, parking, telecommunications masts and what green spaces should be protected. It defines when it should be allowed to split houses into multiple dwellings and what rules should apply to extensions. Almost anything relating to the "built environment" is covered...except unfortunately the A281. And, new developments are usually required to make a financial contribution to Waverley, known as Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL). Those parishes with a NP in place receive 25% of the CIL proceeds for local use, compared to only 15% where no plan is in place.

Why's it so long?

The plan defines policies that have legal weight in planning decisions. When businesses or people spend large sums on new houses, or developments, or starting businesses that are affected by the policies in the plan the latter must be backed up with extensive evidence, and defined in detail.

Why is there a referendum on it?

A referendum for any Neighbourhood plan is mandated to give it democratic legitimacy. Although your Parish Council has sponsored and agreed the plan, your council consists of only 9 Councillors who do their best to represent Bramley's interests. It's important that the NP is the subject of a separate and specific vote to determine if the Bramley electorate want to support it.

What area does the plan cover?

It covers Bramley Parish, including Bramley village itself where 90% of the parish's population live, as well as Thorncombe Street, Grafham, Palmer's Cross, Smithbrook, Birtley Green and Rushett Common.

What's the plan about then?

The plan seeks to address four principal issues:

- Housing, particularly the availability of homes that are affordable for younger people and families, and for older residents to downsize to.
- The local economy, particularly maintaining Bramley as a thriving local commercial centre and an attractive base for rural economy businesses.
- The environment, particularly the protection of green spaces, the rural character of the Parish and managing issues such as fostering sustainable development.
- Infrastructure, particularly for safely managing the flow of traffic and parking, and for encouraging sustainable transport.

BRAMLEY AREA

Evidence that drives policy in Bramley

The last census in 2021 recorded 3,559 people in Bramley Parish of whom 764 (21.7%) were children which is higher than the Waverley average at 19.8%, but Bramley has fewer young adults than Waverley. 6.8% of Bramley's residents live in communal establishments against 3.6% in Waverley reflecting the significant Bramley population in sheltered housing and schools.

Bramley had 1,397 dwellings at that census with only 20.1% being two bedroomed homes against Waverley's 23.2%. Bramley has more five-bedroom homes (or bigger) at 11.6% of the housing stock against Waverley's 9.8%. It's clear, from our consultations with residents also, that two-bedroom homes are the most significant housing need.

Bramley has 21.0% of its population aged 64 and over, with 8.8% of Bramley's population providing unpaid care to friends or relatives and 13.4% of Bramley's population having their day-to-day activities restricted by long-term illness or disability.

Bramley has a particularly large business and commercial sector for a rural parish. With the High Street employing about 100 people, Bramley Business Park a further 50, Birtley Courtyard 30. St Catherine's School and Birtley House Care Home are also significant employers. Even pre-Covid, 14% of Bramley's working age population worked from home.

The A281

Issues relating to traffic on the A281 are by far the most significant strategic planning issues for Bramley. All the NP can do is prevent development within the Parish that worsens traffic in the A281.

House Price Challenge

The average detached house in Bramley in 2017 sold for £1,011,416, with semi-detached houses averaging £581,134 and flats £221,833. The plan supports affordable, smaller homes rather than larger homes.

Bramley's Allocation of Houses

The Waverley Local Plan allocates 90 new homes to Bramley. These must be built as Bramley's contribution to Waverley's centrally dictated target. However, since Bramley was allocated that number 95 new homes have already been built or given planning permission, so the Parish has met its allocation.

POLICIES OF THE PLAN

Please refer to the main body of the document if your interest is piqued by the headlines in this summary.

General Policies

Bramley is almost entirely washed over by Green Belt and much is in the Surrey Hills AONB. There's very limited building potential. Bramley's Spatial Plan directs developments to within the Settlement Boundary (the core village) and brownfield sites (ie, sites previously built on). Business development is steered to four current business centres: Smithbrook Kilns, Bramley High Street, Bramley Business Centre and Birtley Courtyard.

Suitable sites will be deemed to be those which enable building smaller, two bedroom homes, and conversion of outbuildings, rural buildings, subdivision of larger homes, and conversion of commercial premises where possible, rather than new builds. Brownfield sites are preferred over breaking into previously unbuilt land. Any sites put forward by developers outside of the settlement boundary that are not in the plan and are not brownfield will stand very little chance of progressing.

The plan identifies strategic views and vistas that must be protected. Heritage assets are also defined for protection. Any new builds must maintain Bramley's character and not be too high or out of proportion. Native species must be used for planting in new developments. Materials used in building should be those commonly used in Bramley.

Housing Policies

Preference will be given to two-bedroom homes, with one and three bedroom homes on any larger developments. Such homes must be protected against future expansion to protect Bramley's housing mix.

The only allocated site in the Bramley Plan is the Destination Triumph site at the corner of Chestnut Way and Birtley Road, which is allocated for residential development.

Environmental Policies

Green spaces given additional protection in the plan include the old village green around Coronation Oak and Gosden Common. The Cranleigh Waters river and extant parts of the Wey and Arun Canal are designated wildlife corridors that must be protected (ie, nothing may be done that reduces their effectiveness as wildlife corridors).

Light pollution is considered and a policy in the plan prevents unnecessary light pollution with any after dark lighting only allowed for specific purposes such safety.

Community Policies

A list of shared spaces includes the Downs Link path, the play areas at Eastwood Road and Chestnut Way, Bramley and Womersley Station. These must be protected.

Sites of Community Importance include the two pubs, the three churches, the cricket pavilion, the library, the cricket pitches at Grafham and Gosden Common, the Village Hall and Grafham Room and the golf, tennis and bowls clubs. The plan acknowledges the important role these sites play in the community and offers them protection.

Bramley Parish has Bramley Infant and Nursery School, St Catherine's, Grafham Grange and Unsted Park. The plan offers these schools support to develop, refurbish and extend their educational offerings as they need, within their existing sites, subject to any adverse impact on traffic.

Infrastructure Policies

Any developments must not make traffic issues even more severe than they are already, and plans must ensure that cycling and walking are supported where possible.

Parking is noted as a particular issue in the village and any residential extensions, commercial or educational expansions or new developments must provide sufficient car parking according to the Waverley Parking Guidelines. Three or more bedroom homes must exceed the Waverley standard of 2.5 car parking spaces and have 3 spaces.

Journeys by foot and bicycle are supported and new developments must ensure there is sustainable access to the village for using public transport. Rights of way for pedestrians are protected.

Telecommunications coverage is poor in much of the parish, so applications to improve mobile connectivity will be looked on favourably as long as applicants have considered mast sharing, provide suitable landscaping and camouflaging and the location minimises visual impact.

Local Economy Policies

The plan supports Bramley Local Centre (ie the High Street area) for retail development while accepting conversion of upper floors to residential. Limited amounts of business development at Birtley Courtyard and Smithbrook Kilns is supported.

COMMUNITY ACTIONS

Where monies become available to Bramley, for example through the Community Infrastructure Levy on new developments, then the plan identifies a range of priorities for expenditure including footpaths, parking, the play areas.