



HASLEMERE TOWN COUNCIL

STRATEGIC PLAN 2023 - 2027

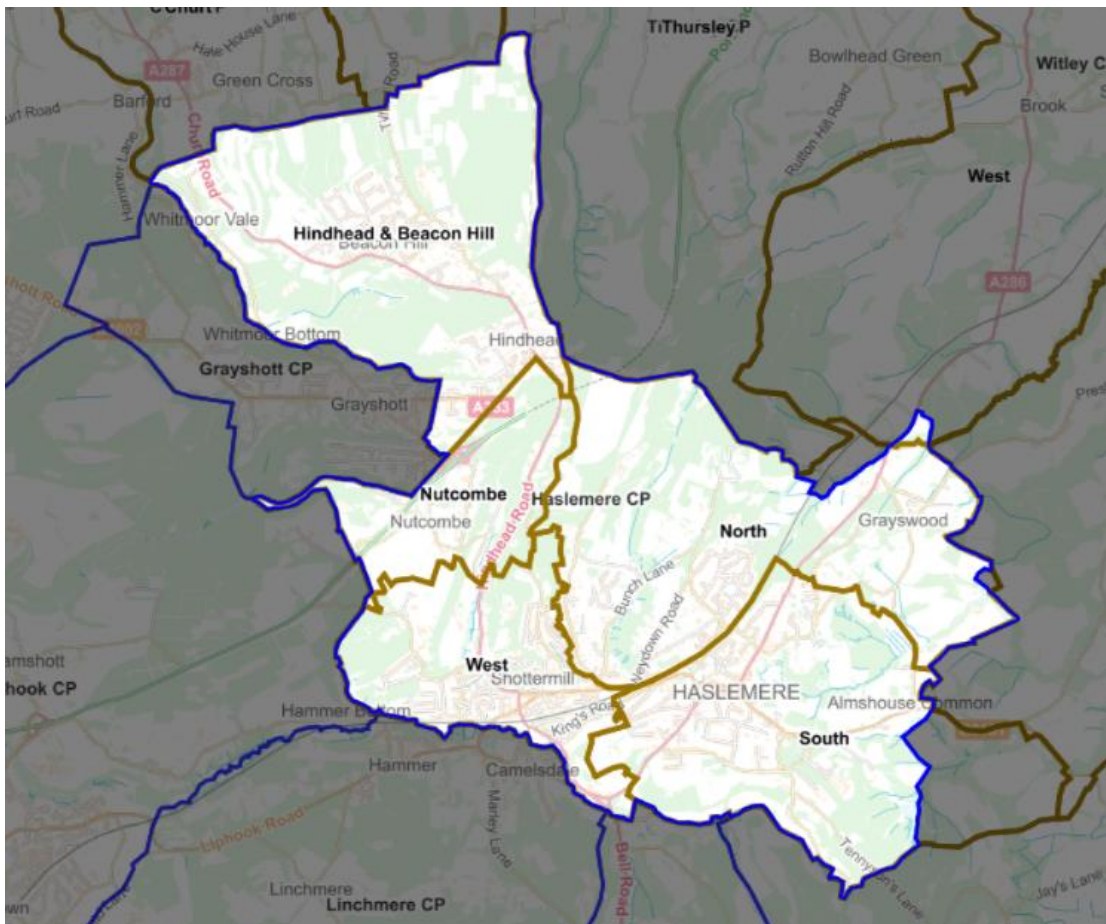
Introduction

Haslemere town council is served by 18 town councillors elected to represent the residents of 5 ward across Haslemere, Hindhead & Beacon Hill and Grayswood. For the purposes of this document, Haslemere residents refers to all residents of those five council wards.

This Strategic Plan is a statement of the council's vision and objectives for the council term 2023-2027.

This plan should complement existing plans for the town such as the Haslemere Design Statement and Neighbourhood Plan.

It is intended that this document is an organic document which may be amended according to council changing priorities. It will be monitored by council, at least twice yearly, so that progress against objectives can be monitored.



STRATEGIC GOALS

In the council term 2023-2027 council will work to achieve the following goals:

1. Partnership and community

The town council is part of a network of providers of services and stakeholders to Haslemere and its residents. This network includes major organisations such as Waverley Borough council and Surrey County council, as well as local organisations, businesses, health care providers, charities and individuals.

To provide a high level of service, the town council will work with partners, building on established links and creating new ones, to advocate for Haslemere and its residents. Where appropriate we will financially support local community organisations that enhance the quality of life for local residents, their well being and that of the local environment. Where appropriate we will support local initiatives, including those opportunities identified At Appendix 5 to the Haslemere Neighbourhood Plan.

Objectives:

- I. Reinststate the 'Town Team', a group of key local stakeholders (from diverse organisations such as community groups, churches, charities and councils) created to provide support for each other and the community by networking, information sharing and partnerships.
- II. Encourage local community groups to apply for HTC small grants and signpost local stakeholders to information regarding other grants and initiatives that may help their cause.
- III. Ensure two way communication with local groups and advocate for their needs as issues arise
- IV. Invite representatives from relevant local organisations to sit on working groups as appropriate to ensure best use of local knowledge is obtained.

2. Climate and Biodiversity

Haslemere town council reaffirms its commitment to the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency first declared in 2019, with the continuing need to meet our obligations, assess and adjust our current activities and commitment to lead by example.

In 2019, the town council committed to becoming a carbon-neutral organisation by 2030, with an earlier target of 2025 for all direct emissions and has made significant steps towards this goal. We will continue to update and report on the roadmap for achieving this aim, including an annual carbon audit, as well as seeking other methods to report on and demonstrate progress in this area.

The council will also encourage and enable reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and promote enhancements to biodiversity within Haslemere. We will also seek further ways to help residents improve local resilience to the changing climate and biodiversity loss and reduce Haslemere's contribution to it.

Objectives:

- I. Promote HTC's ring-fenced environmental grants fund (Green Grants).
- II. Develop a vision of what climate change and biodiversity erosion means in practice for Haslemere, and review this regularly.
- III. Collaborate and partner with other local groups and organisations who demonstrate knowledge and expertise in the fields of local climate change mitigation and biodiversity enhancement.

- IV. Enter into a Memorandum of Understanding with the Haslemere Biodiversity Group to support the council and residents in their desire to address the need for action on nature recovery

3. Housing and planning

Haslemere and the surrounding area is a wonderful place to live, and the members of the council feel privileged to do so. We are blessed with attractive natural surroundings, and a built environment with a distinctive historical character. Both need protection, but we also have a need, indeed a legal obligation, to make provision for new housing.

However, there are challenges and constraints. Since most of the land outside the existing settlement area is designated as an “Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty” (AONB), an “Area of Great Landscape Value” (ALGV) or Greenbelt, the land available for the much-needed housing is extremely limited.

A further difficulty is that because it is such an attractive place to live, housing prices are extremely high: one analysis found that the median house price is nineteen times the median income. The most pressing housing need is for genuinely affordable housing on the one hand, and for smaller dwellings suitable for young couples and downsizing older people.

Objectives:

- I. Be guided by Haslemere’s Neighbourhood Plan in all responses to planning applications, prioritising approval for infilling proposals and developments on brownfield sites.
- II. Co-operate with Waverley Borough council and other stakeholders in ensuring the provision of genuinely affordable housing.
- III. Consult, and work with Waverley and others to implement the housing plans at the old fairground site, and the current youth facilities site.

4. Equality, diversity, and inclusivity

Haslemere is a diverse town with residents of all ages, sexes, racial and ethnic backgrounds, sexuality, financial circumstances, and health conditions. The council recognises that residents have a wide and diverse range of needs.

Objectives:

- I. Always adhere to our legal obligations in respect of equality and ensure that our decision-making will take an intersectional approach and aim to foster equality, diversity, inclusion and belonging within the community.
- II. Review the council’s Equality and Diversity policy and make amendments as necessary.

5. Local environment and amenities

The council believes that good quality amenities enhance the quality of life for those living, working, and visiting Haslemere.

To that end, Haslemere town council currently administers a range of local amenities (primarily open spaces) and will continue to do so. We continue to identify opportunities to take over the management of additional green spaces or other community assets from Waverley Borough council where possible.

The council continues to operate the public toilets in the Waitrose car park, having taken these over from Waverley Borough council previously. Additionally, to support local businesses in Wey Hill, the council is in the process of installing a set of public toilets near Lions Green.

Objectives:

- I. Consider supporting or taking on other services which meet the needs of vulnerable and underserved groups where they would otherwise be withdrawn or unavailable.
- II. Apply to Waverley to take over the freehold of land in the town that is owned by WBC but would be better managed locally.
- III. Obtain a definitive answer on taking over the War memorial recreation ground and Beacon Hill recreation ground.
- IV. Look to improve provision of seating around the town and villages to support the wellbeing of residents.
- V. Consider how the provision of a community centre in Hindhead & Beacon Hill could be achieved.

6. Crime and Policing

Haslemere has historically been a low crime area, but instances of burglary and theft have risen over the last year, impacting residents' enjoyment, security, and livelihood. Residents complain of low police visibility and effectiveness in remediating issues.

Haslemere town council has installed CCTV in key areas, identified in partnership with local authorities, in a bid to reduce and aid the detection of crime.

Objectives:

- I. Build a better relationship with the Surrey Police Borough Commander and local Sergeant so that a meaningful two way dialogue can be established.
- II. Work with Surrey Police and interested local residents to identify what, if any, community driven solutions can be established.
- III. Work with Surrey Police to ensure our CCTV systems are sufficient to facilitate the police in their work.
- IV. Work with WBC on a management plan for the Beacon Hill free car park where vehicles are regularly dumped.

7. Efficient delivery of responsibilities

The provision of services is costly, and this cost inevitably falls upon the tax-paying residents of Haslemere. The council acknowledges its responsibility to use tax-payer's money in a fiscally prudent manner and will ensure that money is allocated and spent in accordance with principles of good governance.

Objectives:

- I. The precept will be raised only if it is considered appropriate and necessary to do so.
- II. The council will plan, allocate and spend funds in a prudent and transparent manner, being clear on impact on budgets and staff numbers so that we can be held to account.
- III. The council will hold others (e.g. borough and county council) to account for services they should provide and will provide services locally where it is efficient to do so.
- IV. We will make use of, and be clear in our support for, voluntary and private sector contributions. We will put in place the staff, governance and processes required to deliver what we promise.

8. Local business and transport

The council has an excellent working relationship with the Chamber of Commerce and will continue to work with and support them, and all local businesses, whether Chamber members or not, whenever possible. The council is especially keen to support local, sustainable initiatives.

The council will continue to promote Haslemere as an attractive place to visit, using social media to highlight key events in the town and promote the town as a gateway to the South Downs and National Trust sites.

Whilst the council has no authority over roads and transport it is keen to use its position to lobby and influence others in the provision of affordable, reliable and sustainable means of travel.

Objectives:

- I. Liaise with the bus and other transport providers to promote better use of public transport.
- II. To support implementation of the local cycling and walking infrastructure plan within Haslemere and the villages.
- III. Identify and promote connecting strategic footpaths and cycle routes.
- IV. Promote and assist in the implementation of a 20mph zone where appropriate, including Haslemere town centre and the Beacon Hill Rd / Clovelly Road rat run.
- V. Support and signpost to Sustainable Business Networks and/or initiatives, working in association with the Chamber of Commerce, Waverley Business Support and Zero Carbon and others.
- VI. Commit to continue to support Active Travel Haslemere and other appropriate initiatives to improve access to active travel opportunities in Haslemere and Hindhead.
- VII. Identify and fund a proposal from Haslemere's LCwip inventory of improvements for active travel, health and well being of local residents.
- VIII. Support initiatives to encourage the maintenance and revitalisation of Beacon Hill as an important local business hub.

9. Youth

HTC recognises the importance of the youth in our community. Young people, many of whom will have been adversely affected by the Covid pandemic need to have a voice in our community and opportunities for leisure and recreation. Haslemere currently has some facilities for young people such as playgrounds, youth club, sports clubs etc. but more could be done to find out what the young people themselves would like to see.

Objectives:

- I. Review the youth provision on HTC land and make improvements as necessary.
- II. Set up youth council or similar vehicle for obtaining young people's views on shaping the community.
- III. Engage with other local town councils to understand what they are doing and see if there are services HTC can share or replicate.
- IV. Make sure that local organisations supporting young people are aware of any funding opportunities through the council and work in partnerships as necessary.