

Yateley Town Council

Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meeting on Monday,
15 June 2026 at 10.00am held at Oak Room, Council Offices, Reading Road, Yateley

Present Councillors: (committee members)

Cllr Tony Spencer (Chairman for this meeting)
Cllr Greg Easterbrook
Cllr Mark Griffin
Cllr Julia Wedlock

Absent Councillors (committee members)

Cllr Bob Harward

In attendance - Non-Committee Members, Officers and Public

Julie Routley - Town Clerk

3442 Welcome & Apologies

In the Chairman's absence, the meeting was chaired by Vice-Chairman, Cllr Spencer.
Apologies had been received from Cllr Harward .

3444 Declarations of Interest

No interests were declared.

3445 Minutes of the Last Meeting

It was **RESOLVED** that the minutes of the meeting on 1 June 2026 were confirmed as an accurate record and were approved and signed by the Chairman.

3446 Public Participation

No members of the public were present.

3447 Planning Applications

It was **RESOLVED** that the following comments / observations be forwarded to Hart District Council.

Planning Ref.	Location	Proposal
26/00912/HOU	1 Yateley Court Tindal Close Yateley GU46 7HG	Erection of an orangery garden room.
Comment: NO OBJECTION		

3448 Licensing, Enforcement, Appeals & Phone Masts

Street Trading Licence

Members had no objections to the proposed amendments to the Street Trader - Flame Kebab operating times.

Enforcement

Access Across Council Land The Town Council has written to the resident concerned, confirming that this work is not permitted. The line of dragon's teeth posts has been extended to protect the common land.

Land Clearance A separate matter has been reported to enforcement officers concerning the clearance of a significant area of land, including the felling of trees. Hart District Council is currently investigating this issue.

3449 Schedule of Accounts

It was **RESOLVED** to approve:

The list of payments emailed to the Committee prior to the meeting:

Page 2091 – Correction to credit card invoices in March

Page 2092 – June invoices

Page 2093 – Gas and Electric invoices for May

Page 2094 – invoice approved for payment 8.6

Cash book

Deposit refund –

£100.00 - 11/06/26 – ZA

June salaries

Net pay - £14,008.00

HMRC - £4,658.39

Pension Fund - £3,949.88

3450 Hart Local Plan – Scoping Consultation

Members reviewed the Hart Local Plan Scoping consultation.

It was **RESOLVED** that the Council responds to the consultation as set out in Appendix A.

At 10.47am Cllr Griffin left the meeting.

3451 Information Items

The Anchor Public House

It was noted that this 'Asset of Community Value' is currently up for sale.

Obstruction of Right of Way – Welsh Drive

The County Councillor advised that agreement has been reached with the landowner on the routing of the right of way. The matter is currently awaiting legal resource to progress, and a further update has been requested.

Former Sims Metals Site, Vigo Lane

There was no further update.

Planning Matters

Members were advised of a potential development of approximately 80 dwellings at Marsh Lane, Eversley (a neighbouring parish). No planning application has been submitted at this stage. A developer presentation, shared by Eversley Parish Council, was noted.

Date of next meeting: 6 July 2026 at 10am in the Oak Room, Council Offices, GU46 7RP

Meeting closed at 11.43am.

APPENDIX A:

Hart Local Plan – Scoping Consultation

A key driver for the new plan is the need for more homes.

1. Do you have any views on how we should address this challenge, or where we should focus growth?

Development should be focused in sustainable, accessible locations, particularly close to main roads and motorway junctions, where the existing infrastructure is better able to accommodate increased demand. This approach would help reduce additional pressure on already constrained local minor roads and residential areas.

In contrast, rural or peripheral sites often present significant challenges, including limited access to utilities, insufficient public transport provision, and a greater reliance on private vehicles, making them less suitable for substantial growth.

Consideration should also be given to strengthening the local economy by supporting appropriate industrial, retail, and commercial development. Encouraging business growth and inward investment would help create local employment opportunities and reduce the need for commuting, contributing to a more balanced and sustainable pattern of development.

2. Which groups do you believe have specific housing needs in Hart? How should the plan address their housing needs?

In the UK there are fewer homes per head of population compared to Europe (around 442 homes per 1,000 people compared to over 500 per 1,000 in many European countries). At the same time, housing in the UK tends to be under-occupied, with an average of around 2.4 bedrooms per household compared to around 1.8 in Europe. This reflects changing demographics, particularly the rise in single-person households. As a result, there are pressures at both ends of the age spectrum. Younger people are struggling to access smaller, affordable starter homes, while older residents are often living in larger properties that may no longer suit their needs but have limited appropriate downsizing options available locally.

These groups often require similar things from housing: smaller, more manageable homes located close to local services, facilities, and public transport links. This is important to support independence and reduce reliance on private vehicles.

The plan should therefore focus on providing a better mix of housing types and sizes, particularly smaller homes in sustainable locations, to better meet the needs of both younger and older residents and make more effective use of the existing housing stock.

3. How should the plan support economic growth?

The plan should actively support economic growth by creating the right conditions for sustainable and locally beneficial development. This includes building on earlier considerations around commercial and industrial provision by ensuring that appropriate land and opportunities are available for business use, helping to strengthen the local economy.

Consideration should be given to supporting a diverse range of economic activities, including small businesses, retail, and light industrial uses, as well as encouraging the growth of higher-value sectors such as

technology and innovation-based industries. Promoting high-tech and knowledge-based businesses would help attract skilled employment and enhance the area’s long-term economic resilience.

The plan should also encourage inward investment by making the area attractive to new and expanding businesses. This could be supported through targeted economic incentives, such as reductions in business rates or other financial measures designed to encourage companies to establish themselves locally.

Supporting business growth in this way would help create local employment opportunities, reduce the need for out-commuting, and contribute to a more balanced and sustainable pattern of development. Overall, the plan should take a proactive approach to economic encouragement, aligning land use, infrastructure, and incentives to foster a thriving local economy.

4. How should the plan support our town and village centres?

The plan should support town and village centres by recognising and reinforcing the value of Hart’s smaller-scale settlements, rather than seeking to replicate large town centre models. The character of the area is defined by its network of small towns and villages, and this distinctive pattern should be protected and enhanced.

Development should focus on strengthening existing centres and encouraging well-designed, self-contained communities. Smaller village developments, such as Shapley Heath, should be supported where they are planned to include a mix of uses—local shops, services, and community facilities—so that residents can meet most of their day-to-day needs locally. This approach helps maintain vibrant local centres while reducing reliance on larger towns and unnecessary travel.

Elvetham Heath provides a strong example of how this can be successfully achieved. Its carefully planned layout, integration of services, and clear design principles have created a cohesive and attractive community. A key element of its success was the use of strict design criteria that all developers were required to follow, ensuring consistency in quality and character across the development.

The plan should therefore promote similar models by:

- Encouraging self-contained, mixed-use developments that support local centres
- Ensuring high-quality design through clear and enforceable design codes
- Supporting local shops, services, and community facilities as focal points for each settlement
- Reinforcing the distinct identity and scale of villages and small towns

By following this approach, the plan can help sustain thriving, well-designed centres that reflect the character of Hart while meeting the needs of local communities.

5. How can the plan deliver well-designed, healthy, sustainable places?

The plan can deliver well-designed, healthy, and sustainable places by ensuring that new development is supported by high-quality design, appropriate infrastructure, and a strong focus on community wellbeing.

Firstly, it is essential that homes are well designed, both in terms of appearance and functionality. This means creating attractive, durable buildings that fit well with their surroundings and contribute positively to the character of the area. Good design should also prioritise usability, energy efficiency, and long-term sustainability.

Equally important is the provision of infrastructure. New development must be supported by the necessary services and facilities from the outset, including transport links, schools, healthcare provision, green spaces, and utilities. Ensuring that infrastructure is in place alongside development is critical to creating sustainable communities and avoiding pressure on existing services.

The plan should also place a strong emphasis on creating opportunities for community and social interaction. This includes incorporating spaces such as parks, community centres, and local amenities that encourage people to come together, helping to support mental and physical wellbeing.

Finally, developments should foster a clear sense of place. This means creating distinctive, cohesive environments that people feel connected to, rather than generic or fragmented developments. A strong identity, shaped by thoughtful design and community focus, helps build pride in the area and supports long-term sustainability.

By combining good design, proper infrastructure, community-focused planning, and a strong sense of place, the plan can deliver healthy, balanced, and sustainable environments for current and future residents.

6. What infrastructure issues or challenges do we face and how can they be overcome?

The plan needs to address a number of infrastructure challenges, particularly those linked to the area's rural nature and its position close to county boundaries.

One key issue is the capacity and provision of utilities. Existing infrastructure in parts of Yateley and Hart has developed over time and may not be well suited to support significant new growth. The plan should ensure that utility networks—such as water, electricity, and broadband—are upgraded and expanded in step with development, rather than reacting after pressures arise.

There is also an opportunity to promote more sustainable energy solutions. Encouraging the use of technologies such as heat pumps in new and existing developments would help reduce reliance on traditional energy sources and support environmental objectives. Embedding these approaches early in the planning process will help future-proof infrastructure and contribute to long-term sustainability.

Another challenge arises from the area's location near the Surrey and Berkshire borders. Development and infrastructure planning are not always well coordinated across these boundaries, which can lead to fragmented provision of services, transport links, and utilities. The plan should therefore promote stronger cross-boundary working between neighbouring authorities to ensure that infrastructure planning is joined up and supports cohesive growth.

These challenges can be overcome by:

- Planning infrastructure provision alongside development from the outset
- Investing in and upgrading utility networks to meet future demand
- Encouraging sustainable technologies such as heat pumps
- Strengthening cooperation with neighbouring authorities to ensure coordinated, cross-boundary infrastructure planning

By taking a proactive and coordinated approach, the plan can ensure that infrastructure supports sustainable growth and meets the needs of both existing and future communities.

7. How should the local plan protect and enhance the natural and historic environment?

The local plan should protect and enhance the natural and historic environment by recognising both its value and the practical challenges involved in managing it sensitively.

Key local assets, such as Yateley Common, should be actively managed as well as protected. Measures such as reintroducing grazing could be encouraged where appropriate, as this can help maintain biodiversity, improve habitat quality, and preserve the landscape in a more natural and sustainable way. However, any such approach should carefully consider potential difficulties, including management, costs, and impacts on public access, to ensure a balanced outcome.

The plan should also acknowledge that protecting the natural and historic environment is not always straightforward. It requires a clear understanding of the competing pressures between conservation, public use, and development. Policies should therefore aim to strike a balance by safeguarding important landscapes and heritage assets while allowing for sensitive and well-planned change where necessary. This can be achieved by:

- Actively managing natural spaces like Yateley Common to enhance biodiversity
- Supporting appropriate conservation techniques, such as grazing, where beneficial
- Protecting designated landscapes and historic features from harmful development
- Ensuring that new development respects and complements the existing environment
- Recognising and addressing the practical challenges of maintaining these assets

By taking a thoughtful and balanced approach, the plan can both protect and positively enhance the area's natural and historic environment for future generations.

8. Are there any specific natural or historic assets in Hart that warrant a separate local plan policy, rather than being protected by national policies or legal protection? If so, why?

Yes, there are several specific natural and historic assets in Hart that would benefit from being addressed through dedicated local plan policies, rather than relying solely on national policies or statutory protections.

Key examples include the Basingstoke Canal, the network of footpaths, Yateley Common, Welsh Drive, and the area's Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). While many of these assets already have some level of protection, a local policy could provide more targeted and proactive management tailored to Hart's specific context.

The Basingstoke Canal, for instance, is both a heritage feature and an important recreational and ecological corridor. A specific policy could help ensure its ongoing maintenance, protect its setting, and enhance its use for leisure and biodiversity.

Similarly, the extensive network of footpaths across the district is a valuable asset that supports recreation, health, and sustainable transport. A local plan policy could prioritise their protection, connectivity, and improvement, ensuring they remain accessible and well-maintained as development takes place.

Yateley Common, Welsh Drive, and local SSSIs are particularly important for biodiversity and landscape character. Although SSSIs are nationally protected, locally specific policies could strengthen their management, encourage enhancement measures, and address issues unique to the area—such as appropriate maintenance regimes and public access pressures.

Overall, all natural assets should not only be protected but actively maintained and improved. A dedicated local plan policy would help ensure a consistent, coordinated approach, going beyond baseline national requirements to reflect local priorities and support long-term environmental quality across Hart.

9. How should we address climate change in the local plan?

The local plan should address climate change by taking a clear and proactive approach that aligns with national targets while also setting out a locally relevant pathway for Hart.

A key priority should be ensuring that new homes are designed to be as self-sufficient as possible. This includes incorporating high levels of energy efficiency, renewable energy generation, and sustainable construction methods, reducing reliance on external energy sources and lowering carbon emissions from the outset.

The plan should also reflect the national commitment for the UK to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2050, while establishing Hart's own timeline and milestones to support this goal. Setting clear local targets would help provide direction and accountability, as well as encourage residents and developers to work towards becoming carbon neutral within a defined timeframe.

The plan should raise awareness and encourage behavioural change by reinforcing the importance of meeting carbon reduction targets. This could include promoting low-carbon technologies, sustainable transport options, and greener lifestyles across the district.

Overall, climate change should be embedded throughout the local plan by:

- Requiring homes to be energy efficient and as self-sufficient as possible
- Supporting renewable energy and low-carbon technologies
- Aligning with the national net zero target of 2050, while setting a clear local timeline
- Encouraging residents and businesses to move towards carbon neutrality

By taking this approach, the plan can play a meaningful role in reducing emissions and ensuring a more sustainable future for Hart.

10. What aspects of Hart do you value and want to protect?

The aspects of Hart that should be protected are its small towns and villages, their distinct character, and the strong sense of community they foster.

Hart's identity is shaped by its network of smaller settlements, and it is important that these remain at an appropriate scale rather than expanding into larger, less distinctive urban areas. Retaining the size and character of these villages and towns helps preserve their charm and ensures that development does not erode what makes them special.

A particularly valuable feature is the strong sense of community across the area. Residents benefit from close-knit neighbourhoods, local involvement, and a shared sense of belonging. The local plan should aim to protect and strengthen this by supporting development that encourages interaction, local engagement, and accessible community facilities.

Maintaining and reinforcing local identity is essential. Each area within Hart has its own unique character, and this should be recognised and respected in future planning decisions. Encouraging pride in the local community—through good design, well-maintained spaces, and support for local initiatives—will help sustain these identities over time.

Overall, the plan should:

- Protect the small scale and character of villages and towns
- Preserve and strengthen the strong sense of community
- Recognise and reinforce local identities
- Encourage pride in the area through thoughtful planning and development

By doing so, Hart can retain the qualities that make it a desirable and distinctive place to live.

11. What aspirations do you have for the future of the area?

The aspiration for the future of the area should focus on improving infrastructure, accessibility, and providing housing that meets the needs of all residents at different stages of life. A key priority is the development and improvement of the A327, which is an important route through the area and would benefit from upgrades to reduce congestion and improve connectivity. Accessibility more broadly also needs to be addressed, particularly in ensuring that residents can easily reach essential services, including better access to NHS healthcare provision.

Housing is another important aspiration. There should be more starter homes and affordable housing to enable younger people and families to remain in Yateley, rather than being forced to move elsewhere due to cost. At the same time, the plan should support suitable housing options for older residents who wish to downsize, allowing them to stay within the community while freeing up larger homes for families. Overall, the aim should be to create a more accessible, inclusive, and sustainable area that supports residents throughout all stages of life.

12. What kind of development would you like to see more of?

The type of development that should be encouraged is housing that meets the needs of people at both ends of the age spectrum. In particular, there is a clear need for more affordable housing, including starter homes and smaller properties, to enable younger people and first-time buyers to remain in the area. At the same time, smaller and more manageable homes should be provided for older residents who wish to downsize while staying within their community.

There should also be greater support for improved provision of small, local shops, which are important for meeting everyday needs and helping to maintain vibrant, connected communities. Overall, development should focus on providing a balanced mix of housing and local amenities that support a sustainable and inclusive community.

13. What should the plan priorities include?

The plan's priorities should focus on improving accessibility, strengthening transport options, and supporting community wellbeing and opportunities for all ages. Better transport infrastructure is essential, including safer and more accessible cycle tracks, to encourage sustainable travel and improve connections across the area.

There should also be a strong emphasis on supporting young people, particularly through the promotion of apprenticeships and encouragement of trade-based careers. Providing clear pathways into employment will help retain younger residents and support the local economy.

Community life should be a central priority. This includes supporting youth activities and wider community initiatives, as well as recognising the important role of volunteers. Community centres and shared spaces are vital in bringing people together, and any new development should include well-planned centres or hubs where residents can meet, interact, and build a sense of belonging.

14. Are there any other matters that we should consider when preparing the new plan?

The plan should also consider opportunities to enhance the attractiveness and functionality of town centres, such as the potential pedestrianisation of parts of Fleet. Creating pedestrian-friendly areas could encourage more people into the town centre, improve the overall experience for visitors, and support local businesses, as seen in successful schemes such as Bracknell town centre.

Another important consideration is the role of local decision-making in funding and infrastructure. Greater emphasis could be placed on allowing local councils more control over financing and taxation, enabling them to respond more effectively to local needs. A balanced approach to taxation, incorporating both personal contributions (for services such as policing and roads) and property-based elements, could help ensure funding is fair and sustainable.

Finally, stronger links and coordination between neighbouring areas are essential. Given Hart's proximity to Berkshire and Surrey, improved cross-boundary working is needed to ensure that infrastructure, transport, and development planning are properly aligned. A more joined-up approach across Hampshire, Berkshire, and Surrey would help deliver more coherent and effective outcomes for residents and businesses.

15. Do you have any other views on what the new plan should contain?

The plan should also take account of wider structural and social issues that will influence how the area develops over time. This includes the potential impacts of local government reorganisation and any transfer of assets, ensuring that services, facilities, and responsibilities continue to be effectively managed and aligned with local needs.

Addressing homelessness should be a clear priority, alongside making better use of existing housing stock. With a significant number of vacant properties in Hart, there is an opportunity to bring these homes back into use, helping to meet housing demand without relying solely on new development.

The plan should also make appropriate provision for traveller and gypsy sites, with a focus on identifying suitable, well-located, and properly managed sites.

16. Are there other ways we should publicise the public consultations?

Public consultations could be better publicised by using a wider range of accessible and engaging methods to reach different parts of the community. Social media should be used more effectively to share information, updates, and opportunities to take part, as this can reach a broad audience quickly and efficiently.

There should also be a stronger presence at local fetes, events, and community gatherings, where people can be engaged face to face. This approach allows for direct conversations, helping to explain proposals clearly and encourage participation from those who may not respond to online or written consultations.

Providing an easily readable summary of consultation materials is essential. Clear, concise, and jargon-free information will make it easier for the general public to understand the issues and feel confident in contributing their views.

By combining digital engagement, in-person interaction, and accessible information, the plan can ensure consultations are more inclusive and widely understood.

17. What methods of engaging the public (such as drop-in exhibitions) should we use during public consultation?

The most effective methods of engaging the public during consultation are those that meet people where they already are. This means building on existing community activity by attending local events, fetes, and gatherings, rather than relying solely on people coming to dedicated sessions. Taking a “roadshow” or information stall to these events would help reach a wider audience and encourage more informal, face-to-face conversations.

Close engagement with Town and Parish Councils is also important, as they are well placed to identify upcoming local events and opportunities to connect with residents. Working collaboratively in this way can help ensure consultation efforts are well targeted and community-focused.

Traditional methods such as drop-in exhibitions should still be used, but they should be complemented by more proactive outreach.

18. Is there a group or community you are aware of that find it harder to participate? If so, what steps could we take to help those groups engage?

Some groups may find it harder to participate in public consultations, particularly the traveller community. Barriers can include a lack of access to online information, limited awareness of consultation processes, and a preference for more direct communication.

To help improve engagement, a more proactive and personal approach is needed. Face-to-face engagement is likely to be the most effective method, allowing for direct discussion, clearer explanation of proposals, and the opportunity to build trust. This could involve visiting sites or locations where the traveller community is based, rather than expecting participation through traditional channels.

19. How would you like to be engaged with during the preparation of the Local Plan?

Yateley Town Council would welcome engagement through clear and consistent communication channels that allow information to be shared effectively with the wider community. Registering for updates would be useful to ensure the Council receives timely information on the progress of the Local Plan.

It would also be important for feedback and updates to be provided directly to Yateley Town Council, so that these can be disseminated more widely to residents through established local networks.

Hart newsletters are also a helpful method of sharing information and ensuring that updates reach a broad audience.