

# About Woking and the Borough Council

## A great location

Situated in the heart of Surrey, Woking is a modern borough with excellent rail links to London and the South West and easy access to both Heathrow and Gatwick airports. Despite its proximity to the capital, 60% of the Borough is green belt and wooded with over 473 hectares of common land.

With its combination of an attractive environment, excellent transport links and the locally high standards of education, workforce skills and business support, the Borough is regarded as a quality location in which to live and work. This is further enhanced by its reputation as the most energy efficient local authority in the UK.

## A busy council

Woking Borough Council provides services for over 93,000 residents and businesses, from local firms to leading international companies. To help use its resources in the most effective way, the Council focuses on three key priorities for the future – decent and affordable housing, the environment, health and well-being.

Thirty-six councillors representing 17 wards agree overall policies for the Borough whilst day-to-day decisions are made by an Executive which comprises a leader and six councillors.

The Council's key achievements include:

- Beacon Council for Sustainable Energy 2005 – 2006
- Beacon Authority for Promoting Sustainable Communities through the Planning Process 2007 – 2008



## A leader in tackling climate change

In line with its comprehensive Climate Change Strategy, the Council has introduced a number of ground-breaking measures to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> equivalent emissions, adapt to climate change and promote sustainable development.

Through its companies, Thamesway Limited and Thamesway Energy Limited, the Council has successfully developed renewable and sustainable energy projects including a town centre energy station, a large-scale canopy of photovoltaic panels, a fuel cell and a series of street lights powered by sunlight and wind.

Woking Borough Council was awarded the title of Beacon Council for Sustainable Energy in 2005-2006 and the story doesn't end there. The Council acknowledges that there is still a significant amount of work to do to tackle climate change at a local level and encourage other authorities to do the same.

## A forward-thinking authority that is planning for the future

The majority of Woking Borough's residents live in a well-defined urban area, which is surrounded entirely by green belt land and some attractive areas of countryside, including large areas of heathland and commonland. Although living environments are of a high quality, a lack of land for development and high property prices contribute to a shortage of affordable housing. This poses major challenges for the future development of the Borough.



In March 2007, Woking Borough Council was awarded Beacon status under the 'Promoting Sustainable Communities through the Planning Process' theme in the Beacon award scheme.

To win this award, Woking Borough Council had to demonstrate that people have a say in how their community is run. They also had to show that:

- there is improved access to affordable housing, jobs and local amenities and new developments are building more mixed communities
- quality of life is improving in a way that safeguards the environment for future generations and has regard to wider regional impacts
- there are good transport links to help people get to their jobs
- the Council has successfully negotiated appropriate contributions from and amendments to schemes to reflect community needs and concerns
- development is facilitated by planning and takes place with reviewed plan policies.

## Further information

For further information about Woking Borough Council, please visit the website [www.woking.gov.uk](http://www.woking.gov.uk) or phone **01483 755855**. Information about Woking's community can be found on the highly successful community website, Window on Woking, which can be visited at [www.windowonwoking.org.uk](http://www.windowonwoking.org.uk)

