



Woking Borough

Woking's location twenty five miles to the South West of London has played an integral part in the Borough's history and continues to play a significant role in its development.

With its combination of an attractive environment, its excellent transport links by rail, air and road 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.

Originally an agricultural and market gardening centre, the modern town of Woking grew rapidly after the development of the railway link in the nineteenth century.

The last ten years in particular have seen an acceleration in the pace of the borough's development. The population has increased by nearly 9% in the last 15 years and the town centre now accommodates some of the major companies in the South of England.

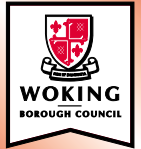


The majority of the Borough's residents live in a well-defined urban area, which is surrounded entirely by green belt land and some attractive areas of countryside, including large areas of heathland and commonland.

Today, it is home to many leading national and international companies such as:

Formula 1 manufacturers Tag McLaren Group; computer services and software company Cap Gemini Ernst and Young; Telewest; Royal Blue; Phillips Petroleum and The Ambassadors Theatre Group. A myriad of diverse smaller businesses are also located within the Borough. The Borough boasts firms which are the source of precision manufacturing and medical equipment with a full complement of software and IT solutions through to financial services and even diamond drilling equipment and mini demolition robots.

The past few years have seen much built development - particularly of retail, entertainment and recreational facilities - which together with the strong enterprise



culture that exists in the Borough, makes Woking a good location for business and leisure.

There are excellent rail links to the South West and London Waterloo just 25 minutes away. For air connections, London Heathrow and London Gatwick are within 15 and 20 miles respectively. The M25 runs through the Borough with the M3 and A3 in easy reach.



The Borough is, 6,359 hectares (15,713 acres) in size. Sixty percent of the Borough is green belt and wooded with over 473 hectares (1170 Acres) of Common Land. There is a high quality mixed residential housing stock, of 35,732 households (1999 figures) with an estimated population of 93,500, 61% aged between 20 and 64. The local unemployment rate in January 2,000 was 0.9%. This compares with a UK unemployment rate of 4.3% and demonstrates the relative prosperity of the area.



Census information from 1991 showed that nearly half of the Borough's resident workers were employed in Banking, Finance and other Service Industries. There were also significant numbers of residents employed in Distribution and Catering (23.7%) and Manufacturing (14%). About 50% of these resident workers are employed in the Borough. The rest commute to other business centres in Surrey and the home counties and London. The data also indicated a wide range of high skill levels within the local workforce, with 42% of employed residents in professional and managerial occupations and only 3% in unskilled occupations.

In addition to Woking town centre there are 14 separate residential communities within the borough, ranging from the rural Sutton Green in the south west, which borders with Guildford, to growth areas such as Knaphill in the northwest with over 600 new houses built in the past 2 years, and West Byfleet and Byfleet to the east of the borough, established communities close to the M25 with a thriving mix of residential and business development. There are also extensive areas of low density housing and modern planned housing areas such as Goldsworth Park, built in the late 1970's and the 1980's.