



SOUTH WOKING MATTERS

A newsletter for the residents of South Woking

February 2009

Welcome to 'South Woking Matters', a newsletter from Woking Borough Council specifically for residents who live in the South Woking area. This has been produced to ensure that local people have information about some of the key developments that the Council is involved with in this part of the Borough. We hope you will find it useful and informative.

On the following pages, you will find information about two key projects that are taking place over the next few years. The first project concerns the development of 470 homes at a site at **Moor Lane**. Using £44 million of government funding, Woking Borough Council is hoping to use this site to help meet the high level of housing need in the Borough. This leaflet includes an overview of the project, latest developments, a timetable for progress and an invitation for you to get involved in the process.

The newsletter also includes an update on plans to develop and significantly improve parts of the **Hoe Valley** in Westfield, with the aim of protecting a significant number of homes from future flooding events. The scheme, which involves a number of other organisations including the Environment Agency,

English Nature and Surrey County Council, would also bring about improvements to the highways, environment and provision of community facilities in this area.

Please see pages 6 and 7 for more information on this important scheme for the South Woking area.

Finally, on page 8, you will find an invitation to receive further information about these projects in the future. This is your opportunity to indicate whether you wish to receive information in a newsletter format or if you would prefer to access it in another way. Please get in touch to let us know how you would prefer to be kept informed. We would also be happy to receive any comments that you may have about this issue of South Woking Matters.





Moor Lane affordable housing project

The need for affordable housing

The provision of affordable housing is Woking Borough Council's highest priority and it is constantly seeking new ways to acquire and develop much-needed homes for local families.

In March 2008, the Council was successful in securing £44 million of government funding for its Priority Homes project.

This is a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) - a form of public/private partnership that is used for projects that require significant investment.

The Council intends to use this money to build 190 affordable rented homes on a mixed tenure development of 470 homes at Moor Lane. It will need to work in partnership with a private sector partner to build and maintain these homes.



Aerial view of the Moor Lane site



The Moor Lane site

The site for the new homes, Moor Lane in Westfield, was identified as a viable site following a thorough review of all the available options.

The site is located in Westfield, bordered to the south by Moor Lane, to the west by Westfield Way and Westfield Common, and to the north by Balfour Avenue, Quartermaine Avenue and Newlands Avenue.

Moor Lane has been reserved for future housing development for a long time. The boundary for the site was adopted in the 1993 Local Plan. (This document sets out the Council's policies for the development and use of land and includes the key

considerations for determining planning applications.) The site is currently owned by Surrey County Council, but ownership would be transferred to the developer or the appropriate housing association if the proposal goes ahead.

Recent developments

Last summer, the Council advertised for a private sector partner to help it build and then maintain the homes.

A special Bidders' Day was held in July 2008 at the H.G. Wells Conference and Events Centre in Woking and over 30 companies attended to find out more about the project, which will involve the Council and its chosen partner working together for a 25-year period.

Since this event, the eight bidders who submitted an interest have been through various selection processes and in December 2008, three bidders were shortlisted to proceed to the next stage.

These bidders now need to work up proposals for the scheme and the local infrastructure. As part of the process, they will be required to gain feedback and comments from local people and organisations, to involve them in the design and development of the area.





How you can get involved

Woking Borough Council believes that consultation with local people is an important part of the project's development and it is keen to encourage as many people as possible to get involved.

A public workshop is being held for you to meet the bidders and comment on their design proposals on **Saturday 21 March 2009** at Moorcroft Centre for the Community from 11am – 4pm.

Please come along and take the opportunity to view and comment on the proposals.

There will be a chance to see displays of the designs, ask questions and give your opinions.

All contributions and comments will be taken on board. Outcomes from the event will be fed back at a later date.

We would welcome your help in creating an area that Woking can be proud of and forming an ongoing, long-standing relationship between the selected bidder and the local area.

Project timetable

Subject to approval, the building of the homes on the site will commence in phases at the end of 2010, and it is anticipated that the affordable homes will be completed by 2013.

The key dates leading up to this are outlined in the table opposite.

Key milestones	Date
<p>Land surveys</p> <p>The potential bidders will carry out feasibility surveys at Moor Lane</p>	February - March 2009
<p>Consultation event</p> <p>Bidders will hold consultation events with local people prior to submitting their detailed proposals to the Council. This is your chance to get involved!</p>	March 2009
<p>Consideration of access solutions</p> <p>A planning application will be submitted to determine purely access to the site (not the site layout, which will come later)</p>	March 2009
<p>Preferred bidder selected</p> <p>The most suitable bidder will be chosen following the selection process.</p>	October - December 2009
<p>Detailed pre-application consultation</p> <p>A detailed consultation will take place before the planning application is made. This may include an exhibition or a drop-in event for local residents. Views gathered may shape the application.</p>	December 2009 - March 2010
<p>Detailed planning application submitted</p> <p>Residents will be given the opportunity to comment on the planning application.</p>	March 2010
<p>Building of the new homes begins</p> <p>Work will begin on the new development once planning consent is granted.</p>	September 2010
<p>New homes delivered in phases</p> <p>Completed homes will be delivered over a two-year period.</p>	2011 - 2013

Please note, the above timetable was correct at time of going to print but could still be subject to change.





The Hoe Valley Scheme

Background

Following the serious flooding around the Hoe Stream in 2000, Woking Borough Council, in partnership with the Environment Agency, commissioned a detailed study of the potential for flood defences around the worst affected areas of the Hoe Stream in Westfield. The Council had been looking to regenerate the area for a number of years, but this was the first detailed modelling of flood protection.

In April 2007, full planning permission was granted for a mixed development of residential properties, community facilities and flood protection work centred on the former Westfield Tip. While the planning permission set out the scope of potential development on this site, it did not provide details as to how it would be funded or the timescale for the development's completion.

Since full planning permission was granted, the Council has been looking at options to bring forward the scheme and, in July 2008, Woking Borough Council authorised the Hoe Valley Scheme to progress.



Recent progress with the scheme

The Council has been working closely with the Environment Agency on how best to achieve the required level of flood protection.

Detailed plans and locations of the flood protection (which is a mix of earth mounds, ponds and flood walls) have been set out to achieve the desired one in 100-year flood protection with an additional allowance for climate change. This joint working is seen as a model approach and has resulted in a funding agreement being signed in December 2008, which will see the Environment Agency provide £3.8 million towards the cost of the flood protection and maintain the defences for 10 years after construction.

The Council is currently discussing the location of these flood protection works with nearby affected property owners. Part of the flood work includes the remediation of significant volumes of land on the former Westfield Tip and this has involved significant work on the tax implications of landfill.

We have also been working closely with English Nature /Natural England on the 23.5 hectares of open space and natural habitat that the scheme will provide to ensure that local species are protected and encouraged, forming a green corridor for the Borough.

Ongoing discussions are also progressing on Elm Bridge, with Surrey County Council as the highways authority. The Hoe Valley Scheme includes the

replacement of Elm Bridge with a new single span bridge which will provide better flood protection and a wider carriageway to allow cycle and vehicle movement. Woking Borough Council is waiting for the outcome of a major infrastructure bid made by Surrey County Council to determine the amount of resources which can be committed to the new bridge.

The new bridge will require minor amendments to the road layout and Woking Borough Council will be consulting local residents on these as they will require movement of common land presently used as grass verges.

Woking Borough Council is also working with all of the community groups which are presently located on the former Westfield Tip site about relocating them off site, so the flood protection work can be completed and they can get better facilities. The highest priority is to move the Sea Cadets and the District Scouts as they will be moving to other parts of the Borough. The rest of the groups will move to Woking Park. It is hoped that all of these moves will happen during 2010.

Finally, the Council is also working with the Regional Procurement Hub, based out of Hampshire County Council, on the best way to procure the contractors to manage and build the scheme. When this work is completed, a clearer, detailed timescale for the completion of the scheme will be published.





Simon says...

Cllr Simon Bellord, Chairman of the Moor Lane project board, has this to say about the exciting projects that are planned for South Woking.

“The Moor Lane project is vital in helping the Council to meet the high level of housing need that is being experienced in the Borough. The houses built will cover a wide range of tenures, including renting through the Council’s Choice Based Lettings system, and they will help provide much-needed homes for local people.

Of course, there have been a number of important concerns raised to date about the Moor Lane development and these are being addressed as we progress. All the comments, however great or small, will be taken on board by the project team and this will continue.

Further information

Woking Borough Council is committed to keeping the residents of South Woking informed about these important projects but, at the same time, it is mindful that people prefer to access information in different ways.

We would therefore like to invite you to ‘opt-in’ if you wish to receive information in a hard copy format like this newsletter in the future. To tell us that this is how you want to receive the information, please call **Customer Services** at Woking Borough Council on 01483 755855, giving your name and full address details so that we can add you to the database.

Local people have a fantastic opportunity to have a say in the development of Moor Lane through the consultation day that is being held at Moorcroft Centre for the Community on **Saturday 21 March**. I would like to urge as many people as possible to attend, look at the proposals and comment upon them.

In 2008, the Hoe Valley Scheme was finally given the go ahead after much debate. As well as housing, this scheme will deliver essential flood alleviation measures and new and improved cycle ways and parkland to enhance our green spaces. It will also involve the clearing up of Westfield Tip at long last and provide greatly improved facilities for many important community groups.

I believe that, together, these projects provide us with an opportunity to really enhance the area in which we live. It is clear from the local response to date that many of you wish to be involved in shaping them.”

If, however, you are happy to receive information electronically, please send an email to **southwokingmatters@woking.gov.uk** and we will ensure that you receive updates as and when they are available.

If you do not contact us, we will assume that you do not wish to receive any further information directly from us.

We will continue to keep our website updated with latest news about both the Moor Lane and Hoe Valley projects. To keep abreast of both situations, please visit **www.woking.gov.uk** and use the **Search** box at the top of the page to find what you are looking for.

