



## Woking Borough Council Local Development Framework Newsletter July 2007



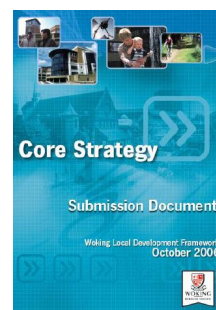
### Introduction

Welcome to the fifth in a series of newsletters designed to keep you up to date on the progress that Woking Borough Council has made on producing a new planning framework within which future development (including houses, offices and shops) will be guided. The technical name for this is the Local Development Framework (LDF) and this will replace the current Woking Borough Local Plan in 2007.

### The Core Strategy

The Core Strategy is the document which sets out the vision and strategy for meeting known and anticipated development requirements across Woking Borough. It will identify broad locations for development and policies against which planning applications will be tested.

As you may be aware, the Council submitted its Core Strategy to the Government in October 2006. A six week consultation period followed submission. During this consultation, local residents and organisations, including businesses and infrastructure providers, were asked to comment on the strategy. All representations were then sent to an independent Planning Inspector who was appointed to assess the soundness of the Core Strategy.



Following an exploratory meeting the Inspector wrote to the Council and set out his concerns in relation to the Core Strategy. Although the Inspector did not state that he considered the Core Strategy to be unsound he identified that it was likely to require significant amendments to make it sound. The Inspector warned that it may not be possible to make such amendments through the examination process.



The Council had the option of either proceeding with the examination of the Core Strategy or seeking to withdraw it. At the meeting of the Executive on 7 June 2007 it was decided that the best course of action would be to seek approval from the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government to withdraw the document. A formal request to do this was subsequently made to the Government Office for the South East.

On 2 July 2007 the Council received a formal direction from the Secretary of State, through the Government Office, to withdraw the Core Strategy.

The withdrawal of the Core Strategy has a number of advantages. It gives the Council the opportunity to take a step back, analyse the comments made on the Core Strategy and assess the work required before it is resubmitted.

In particular it allows the Council to address the requirements of the new national planning policy statement on housing (which was published after submission of the Core Strategy) rather than having to review the strategy immediately to incorporate them, as previously planned. It will also give the Council the ability to have regard to the requirements of the emerging South East Plan which sets the Governments development plan for the South East as a whole. The Panel report on the South East Plan is due to be published in September with adoption scheduled for early 2008.





## Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

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Before withdrawal of the Core Strategy, the Council started work on five new SPDs which were to amplify new Core Strategy policies. Early stage consultation on these SPDs ran for six weeks in April and May this year. The progress made and the next steps for each of these documents is summarised below.

### Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight

This document will provide updated guidance on the Council's requirements for outlook, amenity, privacy and daylight for new residential development and to ensure that these standards are maintained for existing residential areas. The SPD will amplify an existing Local Plan policy, and will be revised in due course to bring it in line with the new Core Strategy. It is intended that a draft SPD will be made available for public consultation in the autumn and that the document will be adopted in spring 2008.



### Woking Town Centre Streets and Spaces

This SPD will provide guidance on managing growth in the town centre. The SPD is being prepared by consultants and has been jointly funded by Woking Borough Council and the South East Region Economic Development Agency. The SPD will amplify an existing Local Plan policy, and will be revised in due course to bring it in line with the new Core Strategy. Early stage consultation on this SPD included two workshops which were attended by members of the public, local businesses and developers. It is intended that a draft SPD will be made available for public consultation in autumn 2007 and that the document will be adopted in the spring of 2008.

### Housing Implementation

The Housing Implementation SPD will provide detailed guidance on the requirements for affordable housing and how the Council will expect developers to mitigate the impact of residential development on Special Protection Areas. The SPD will also set out the Council's strategy for delivering housing in the Borough. The progress of this SPD is reliant on the findings of a Housing Market Assessment which is due to be completed in January 2008. Consultation on the draft SPD is therefore scheduled for spring 2008, and the SPD will be adopted in the summer of 2008.



### Planning Obligations

The Planning Obligations SPD will explain how the Council will seek to ensure speed, transparency and consistency in securing planning obligations. It will set out the likely infrastructure requirements of new developments and include advice on the level of financial contribution that the Council will expect from developers to meet the cost of providing additional infrastructure. It is intended that a draft SPD will be made available for wide public consultation in spring 2008 and that the document will be adopted in the summer of 2008.



### Climate Neutral Development

This SPD will provide guidance on how developers should incorporate climate neutral technologies into new developments (for example, solar panels and sustainable drainage systems). The Council does not have a Local Plan policy to attach this guidance to. This means that the SPD cannot be adopted until either a new Core Strategy is in place or the South East Plan is adopted in the summer of 2008.

## Project Timetable

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The Council is required to produce a timetable for producing the documents that make up the LDF. This is called the Local Development Scheme (LDS). Following the publication of new planning guidance from the Government, and the withdrawal of the Core Strategy, it is necessary to revise the documents we will produce and the timetable for production. The LDS must therefore be revised to reflect these changes. The revised LDS will be considered by the Council's Executive in November 2007.