



Core Strategy

Development Plan Document (DPD)

Preferred Option

Woking Local Development Framework
January 2006





**WOKING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
CORE STRATEGY DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT
PREFERRED OPTION**

January 2006

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Foreword

This document sets out Woking Borough Council's preferred option for how the Borough will develop over the next ten years or so.

Before reaching its decision, the Council looked thoroughly at four different options and consulted widely on them. The response from local residents, business people and other stakeholders has been a key element influencing the Council's choice.

The preferred option focuses development in the most sustainable locations and protects the green belt. It enables Woking to continue to develop to meet the needs and expectations of those who live, work in or visit the Borough, while at the same time protecting the quality of the environment which makes Woking special.

There is now a further period of public participation in the process. I hope you will take the opportunity to examine the preferred option, and the indicative planning policies, and give the Council your views.

The deadline for you to get your comments and views to the Council is Friday 10 March. As always, I look forward keenly to seeing what local people and others with an interest in Woking's future have to say.

Councillor Graham Cundy



Portfolio Holder for Planning Policy



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Section 1: Introduction



1.0 Introduction

1.1. This document presents the Council's "Preferred Option" for the Core Strategy of the Woking Local Development Framework. This provides a further opportunity for public participation in the process of producing the core strategy. There has already been extensive public consultation, including consideration of four different options for future development.

1.2. During the Issues and Options consultation the Council received over 1200 completed questionnaires, and more than 30 detailed responses on the four possible options from individuals, businesses and public organisations. This has provided a very good idea of how people want to see Woking Borough develop.

1.3. The Council has chosen a Preferred Option which focuses future development in the area in and around Woking Town Centre.

1.4. This area is the best location for sustainable development. It is central for everyone in the Borough, has the best public transport access, and has a lot of potential for new development to provide a high quality, higher density town centre. This strategy broadly conforms to Option 2, which was the most popular option.

1.5. Development would still take place in the rest of the Borough. This would be at broadly the same rate as has taken place in the last few years. There would be no change to the Green Belt boundary.

1.6. Important environmental areas such as flood plains, nature conservation areas and public open spaces will be protected from development. All new development will be expected to be designed to make use of sustainable and renewable energy.

1.7. This approach will meet the majority of forecast requirements for new homes, new offices and industrial units, new shops and related community facilities. In particular it will deliver the level of new housing for Woking proposed in the draft South East

Plan (produced by SEERA – the South East England Regional Assembly).

1.8. The options for higher development, options 3 and 4, have not been chosen. These would exceed the level of house building proposed in the draft South East Plan, and were not as popular with local people.

1.9. This means that the ideas of developing West Byfleet as a second centre for the Borough, of encouraging higher density development throughout the Borough, and of major intensification of business development on industrial estates, are not now included in the strategy.

1.10. However one element of options 3 and 4 has been included in the strategy. The two safeguarded long-term development sites will be considered for development, particularly to meet the need for affordable housing. These sites will only be released if insufficient land can be found in the built-up area. This recognises the priority in public opinion for providing affordable family housing, while requiring sites in the built-up area to be used first.

1.11. Option 1, the lowest rate of growth, was not popular in the replies to the consultation. This option would also fail to provide the level of housing proposed in the draft South East Plan. As a result this also has been rejected.

1.12. The preferred option is set out in detail in section 2. This is the main component on which the Council wants your feedback. This includes a spatial portrait of the Borough, the Overall Vision and Objectives, details of the strategy to address each objective, and a key diagram showing the main spatial components of the strategy. **For those with limited time it is recommended that you read this section only, which has been designed to be self contained.** To help you respond, a set of guide questions is included at the end of the introduction.

1.13. The Core Strategy sets out the strategic approach to development, and will also include a set of development control policies. When the Core Strategy is adopted these will replace the policies of the



Woking Borough Local Plan 1999. An indicative set of policies is set out at Section 3. These are indicative only, and are not a material consideration in determining planning applications at this stage. Comments on the indicative policies are welcomed.

1.14. It is important to note that the Core Strategy does not include site specific proposals. These will be the subject of a separate planning document covering "Site Allocations". Work on this will start later in 2006, and it will then follow a similar process of consultation to the Core Strategy.

1.15. Inside the back cover of the document is a copy of the revised proposals map on CD. This shows all the areas referred to in the indicative policies. At this stage it does not include the site specific proposals. The site specific proposals of the Woking Borough Local Plan 1999 will remain in force pending production of the Site Allocations document. Proposals in the Surrey Minerals and Waste Development Framework (MWDF) will also be shown on the Proposals Map in due course, when the MWDF is adopted. This Plan is being produced by Surrey County Council.

1.16. The Core Strategy will also be backed up by a range of Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) covering:

- Parking Standards
- Affordable Housing
- Outlook, Amenity, Privacy and Daylight
- Climate Neutral Development
- Planning Obligations
- Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area
- Woking Town Centre Streets and Spaces

1.17. The relationship of these documents to the policies themselves is set out under the relevant policies in section 3. More information on these documents can be found in the Woking Local Development Scheme.

1.18. The Council has chosen its preferred option taking into account a range of key influences. The principal ones are:

- Government and Regional Planning Policy
- The Council's own corporate priorities and strategies
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Research into the Borough's future needs and opportunities.
- The results of the Issues and Options consultation
- The results of consultation on the Spatial Vision

1.19. Section 4 of the document summarises these influences to enable readers to understand how they have influenced the outcome. It also directs the reader to where full documentation can be found, for those who wish to know more.

1.20. Public Participation on the Core Strategy Preferred Option is being carried out in accordance with the Council's Statement of Community Involvement. This provides for the following activities to be carried out:

- **Notification of individuals and stakeholders.** Over 1,400 individuals and organisations have been notified. These include all those who have previously expressed an interest in being kept informed about the LDF. All have been sent a summary leaflet, over 350 have been sent this document, and around 25 key stakeholders have been sent full documentation including a Report of Consultation and Sustainability Appraisal.
- **Questionnaire and Comment form:** To make it easy for people to respond a questionnaire is available within this document, as well as in the consultation leaflet and on the Woking Borough Council website. For those who wish to make more detailed comments a response form is also available. A copy of the form has been sent out with each preferred option document.
- **Public Displays:** A display will travel around the Borough, visiting 6 locations during the six week public



participation period. This will not normally be staffed.

- **Press releases and advertisements:** Press releases will be issues to the local press, giving key details about the public participation and how to find out more. In accordance with the Regulations a public notice will also be placed in the Woking News and Mail.

1.21. The public participation period lasts for six weeks and closes on Friday 10 March. Following this the Council will consider all responses and will then produce a final version of the Core Strategy. This will be submitted to the Government Office for the South East. Representations can be made on this "Submission Stage". The Government Office will appoint an Inspector who will hold a public examination into the Core Strategy, assess whether the plan is sound, and may make changes to it.

1.22. The timetable for these future stages can be found in the Woking Local Development Scheme.

1.23. Please return your comments to:

**Planning Policy,
Woking Borough Council,
Civic Offices,
Gloucester Square,
Woking,
Surrey GU21 6YL**

Or **email:** planningpolicy@woking.gov.uk
on or before 10 March 2005.

As well as this Core Strategy Preferred Option document the Council has also published:

- Sustainability Appraisal of the Preferred Option
- Report of Issues and Options Consultation

1.24. There is also a range of research reports, If you want more information or to obtain a copy of any of these documents please visit:

www.woking.gov.uk/council/planning.lfd or
ring the Planning Policy team on 01483
743871.



GUIDE QUESTIONS

You may find the following guide questions helpful in making your response. Alternatively please use the response form included with this document.

1. Do you agree with the preferred option for **Woking Town Centre as a growing hub for the area?**
If you disagree what are your reasons?
2. Do you agree with the preferred option for **Attractive local centres throughout the Borough?**
If you disagree what are your reasons?
3. Do you agree with the preferred option for **Homes to suit all needs and pockets.**
If you disagree what are your reasons?
4. Do you agree with the preferred option for **a green Borough where the countryside is never far away**
If you disagree what are your reasons?
5. Do you agree with the preferred option for **a busy buoyant economy**
If you disagree what are your reasons?
6. Do you agree with the preferred option for **High quality sustainable development which addresses climate change**
If you disagree what are your reasons?
7. Do you agree with the preferred option for **Buildings and public spaces of which we can be proud**
If you disagree what are your reasons?
8. Do you agree with the preferred option for **Key services which keep pace as the Borough's population grows**
If you disagree what are your reasons?
9. Do you agree with the preferred option for **Safe and reliable roads and public transport**
If you disagree what are your reasons?
10. Do you agree with the preferred option for **an entire community which shares general prosperity and quality of life**
If you disagree what are your reasons?



Section 2: The Preferred Option



2.0 A Spatial Portrait of Woking: Issues, Needs, Natural Resources and Constraints

Geography

2.1 The Borough of Woking is located in North West Surrey, about 25 miles (40 km) from London. It has a population of around 90,000 and is 6,400 ha in area. Woking is the main town. The vast majority of the population lives in the main built up part of the Borough which extends from Byfleet in the east, across the M25 to West Byfleet, Sheerwater, Woking itself, Horsell, Goldsworth Park, St. Johns and Knaphill in the west, and to Kingfield and Old Woking in the south. A few small villages, of which the largest are Brookwood and Mayford, lie just outside the main built up area.

2.2 Outside this main urban area the remaining 60% of the Borough is Green Belt. This area contains extensive Heathland, of which the most significant areas, Horsell Common, Sheets Heath and Brookwood Heath, are designated as part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area. Two other heaths, Smarts Heath and Prey Heath, and the Basingstoke Canal are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. Relatively little of the Green Belt land is in active agricultural use. The main uses of open land are public open space, both semi natural and playing pitches, golf courses, commercial nurseries and horse grazing, with some limited livestock and arable farming. There is also a significant amount of low density residential property, and some industrial premises, in the Green Belt



2.3 The Borough lies on the north bank of the river Wey, with water meadows

and flat relatively fertile land by the river, and gently undulating sandy ground to the north and west, rising to a height of about 55m. The water meadows and sandy escarpments are attractive local features. However the land alongside the Wey and Hoe Stream is liable to flood. The most recent serious flood event occurred in the year 2000. Currently over 3,500 properties in the Borough of Woking are located within areas liable to flood.

Historic Development

2.4 The development of Woking as a major town only started with the coming of the railway in 1838. Until that time the area now occupied by Woking Town Centre was open heathland. The Wey Navigation, completed in 1653, and the Basingstoke Canal, completed in 1794, both crossed the Borough, but had not brought any major new development. However, the history of human settlement in what is now Woking Borough goes back many centuries before that. Woking is mentioned in the Domesday Book. It was a village on the River Wey, some two miles to the south of the current town centre. In Tudor times it was the location for one of Henry VIII's royal palaces, remains of which can still be seen today. This village is now known as Old Woking. Elsewhere in this rural landscape there were also villages at Byfleet, Horsell and Pyrford.

2.5 The opening of the London to Southampton Railway in 1838 brought no immediate change, although a station was opened on the heath to act as a railhead for Guildford and Chertsey. Fourteen years later, in 1852, the majority of Woking Heath was bought by the London Necropolis and National Mausoleum Company. The prime purpose of the company was to develop a large cemetery to cater for London's dead. This was established at Brookwood. However, the great majority of the land acquired was not required for the cemetery, and the company sold much of it for construction of the town now known as Woking, centred on Woking railway station.

2.6 Over the following 150 years Woking has developed into the large



modern town we see today. Housing development, originally intended for wealthy London commuters, was built in areas such as The Hockering, Hook Heath, Pyrford and West Byfleet. This includes work by Sir Edwin Lutyens and other prominent architects. Woking Town Centre grew into a Victorian commercial centre, with public buildings, shops and workers' housing. Institutions developed on the poor sandy heathland soil including Inkermann Barracks and the Surrey County Asylum at Brookwood, later known as Brookwood Hospital. Large areas were used for horticulture to serve the London and local markets. Woking gained its status as a separate Urban District in 1894.



2.7 Throughout the 20th century more housing was built. In the 1950's Sheerwater was developed as a London County Council housing and industrial estate, and many families relocated there from London. In the 1970's and 80's Goldsworth Park was developed, as a major new community of around 5,000 homes. The population of Woking Borough has grown from under 5,000 in 1851 to 19,000 in 1901, 47,000 in 1951 and almost 90,000 today.

2.8 The Woking area is often thought of as part of "commuter-land", and certainly there are a significant number of people who work in the City and live in Woking. However, Woking has also had a significant economy in its own right for many years. Major industrial estates have existed in Byfleet and Sheerwater for more than 50 years, and over the last 40 years Woking Town Centre has become a major employment centre, with substantial office and retail development. Today Woking has

nearly as many people commuting into the Borough to work as those who commute out.

2.9 Redevelopment in Woking Town Centre over the last forty years has resulted in the demolition of much of the original Victorian town centre. Christ Church is the only listed building of historic interest. Elsewhere in the Borough the original villages still contain medieval churches and some historic buildings. The Shah Jehan Mosque, a listed building, was the first Mosque to be built in Britain. Sutton Place, in the south of the Borough, is one of the most important Tudor buildings in Surrey. There are also some high quality large houses from the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. However buildings in Woking date very largely from the 20th century, and increasingly the 21st.

2.10 One of the main legacies of Woking as a Heathland and Horticultural area is the extensive tree cover. This includes some important specimen trees as well as creating a generally sylvan appearance in many parts of the urban area.

Characteristics of the Population

2.11 The population of Woking in 2004 was 89,600. The 2001 Census showed Woking had a very slightly younger population than England as a whole, with 20.6% under 16, compared with 20.2% nationally, and 14.6% over 65 compared with 15.9% nationally. These are relatively small differences, and in general Woking is close to the national average. In common with the nation as a whole the forecast is for the proportion of older people to rise in the future. There is some spatial variation in the age profile. The youngest populations are found in the Goldsworth Park and Maybury & Sheerwater areas.





2.12 The proportion of residents from a black or minority ethnic background was 8.7%. This was the highest proportion in Surrey, but slightly below the average for England as a whole of 9.1%. This population, largely Asian and Asian British mainly lives in Maybury and Sheerwater, where over 30% of the population is from a bme group.

2.13 Woking has low levels of deprivation. It is within the top 10% of local authority areas in the country for low levels of deprivation, and no areas in the Borough are within the worst 25% of small areas nationally in terms of deprivation. However, there are small pockets of relative deprivation. Two areas are within the worst 40% of areas. These are Dartmouth Avenue (Sheerwater) and Lakeview (Goldsworth Park).

Housing

2.14 In 2001 around 80% of the housing stock in Woking consisted of houses, and only 20% were flats and maisonettes. The single largest component was detached houses, which made up almost 33% of homes. This was well above the average for England of 23%. The proportion of flats was around the average for England of 19%. However, more than half of all flats were in and around Woking Town Centre. In the remainder of the Borough almost 90% of accommodation was made up of houses.



2.15 In 2001 77% of homes were owner occupied, compared with 69% in England as a whole. All parts of the Borough are dominated by owner occupied housing. Even those areas where many homes were originally built as local authority housing now have a majority of owner occupied properties, reflecting the impact of Council house sales. The lowest proportion of owner occupied housing is in Maybury and Sheerwater at 57%.

2.16 The condition of housing is generally good. Only 2% of homes are estimated to be unfit for habitation, compared with the average for England of 7%. However, housing is very expensive. In 2004 the average house price in Woking was £250,000, which is more than seven times average earnings of £35,000.

2.17 The need for housing from those who cannot afford to obtain housing on the open market is considerable. Over 500 households a year need to be satisfactorily rehoused. The majority of the unmet need is for family housing.

The Economy

2.18 Woking's economy is generally buoyant, and made up predominantly of service sectors. Unemployment is 1%, compared to the average for the UK of 2.8%. Economic activity rates in 2001 were 73.2%, one of the highest levels in Surrey, and well above the figure for England as a whole of 66.9%.

2.19 There were around 43,000 jobs in Woking in 2002. The number of jobs in the Borough had been increasing steadily, but has levelled off since 1999, in common with much of the South East. The largest sector of Woking's economy is Financial and Business Services (32%). This is more than double the national average of 15%. This includes considerable representation from the IT and telecoms sectors as well as financial services.

2.20 The representation of other sectors tends to be at or below the national average. The manufacturing sector, and the public administration, education and



health sectors are particularly under-represented. In the case of manufacturing this reflects the position in much of the South East. As far as public administration, education and health is concerned this is due to the fact that Woking has no Higher Education facility or major hospital within the Borough.

2.21 The biggest concentration of jobs is in Woking Town Centre, principally in retail and office jobs. The other main employment centres are in the business parks and industrial estates in Sheerwater and Byfleet. Unlike some other parts of Surrey there are relatively few large modern out of town business parks, and Woking Town Centre remains the single most important employment location. Vacancy rates for employment floorspace in Woking in 2002/3 according to ODPM data are around 8% which is around the average for the south east.



2.22 Woking's major hotel, the Holiday Inn, is located in Woking Town Centre. There are also several smaller budget hotels. All these hotels cater mainly for business visitors. The main conference and meeting venue, HG Wells conference and events centre, is also in Woking Town Centre.

2.23 Woking's economy has strong representation of growth sectors. The Experian trend based employment forecast is for a potential increase of around 7,000 jobs to 2016.

Retailing

2.24 Retailing is dominated by Woking Town Centre. Woking has over 80,000 sq. m of retail floorspace, making it the second largest shopping centre in Surrey after Guildford. It has two covered shopping centres, The Peacocks and Wolsey Place, which provide the majority of the floorspace. The second largest shopping centre in the Borough, West Byfleet, has around 15,000 sq m of floorspace. Woking Town Centre provides for the majority of shopping needs in the Borough, although local residents do shop further afield, particularly in Guildford.

2.25 Out of town retail parks are relatively limited in Woking. There are small retail parks at Byfleet, and Oriental Road Woking, and a larger retail park just outside the Borough at Brooklands. Superstores at Goldsworth Park and Knaphill provide for local convenience shopping. Knaphill also has a range of other shops. The remaining local centres, including Byfleet, Horsell, Kingfield, St. Johns and Sheerwater, provide for basic local needs. Vacancy rates in all the centres are low.

2.26 Expenditure forecasts are that there will be scope for up to 40,000 sq m of additional retail floorspace in Woking over the next ten years.

Leisure and Community Facilities

2.27 Woking is generally well provided for open space. There is very good access to large areas of semi-natural green space from all parts of the Borough, with around 500 ha of heath, woodland and canal and river banks with public access. Nowhere in Woking is more than 2 km from a large accessible green space of over 20ha.



2.28 Provision of playing pitches and children's play areas are generally adequate, although there are some local shortages which need to be addressed. There are 11 golf courses, mostly members only, but also including pay and play courses. Golf courses are one of the main occupiers of land in Woking's Green Belt.

2.29 Woking Town Centre has one of the largest and most successful theatres in the south east region, the New Victoria Theatre. This is part of the Ambassadors complex which also hosts a smaller theatre and a multi-screen cinema. A new exhibition space, the Light Box, is currently under construction in the town centre. The evening economy in Woking Town Centre has grown in recent years, but still provides for a mainly local catchment.

2.30 Woking Leisure Centre and Pool in the Park are within walking distance from Woking Town Centre and provides for indoor sports and swimming. There is a range of public and community halls serving most local areas, and some joint use arrangements to enable public use of school sports facilities.

2.31 Generally public satisfaction with leisure and community facilities is high at around 80%, and there are no major gaps in public provision. However it is difficult for community and faith organisations to find sites for larger premises. Some local organisations have outgrown their existing facilities and are actively looking to relocate. The price of land in the urban area makes this difficult to achieve.

Transport

2.32 Woking has the second busiest railway station in Surrey, after Guildford, and has excellent connections to London Waterloo in particular. The proposed Airtrack rail link would provide Woking Town Centre with good rail access to Heathrow too. Other stations serve the local areas at Byfleet & New Haw, West Byfleet, Brookwood and Worplesdon. The bus network is focussed on Woking Town Centre, but, with the exception of route 91 (Knaphill to Woking) which provides a very

frequent service, buses tend to run at 30 minute intervals with limited evening and weekend services.

2.33 Public transport accessibility to Woking Town Centre based services is generally acceptable. This includes shops, a good range of employment opportunities, council offices, a major library and Woking Community Hospital. However, accessibility to key facilities such as St Peters Hospital and Further and Higher Education Colleges is less good, and some parts of the Borough are beyond the Government's guideline travel time by public transport to these facilities.



2.34 Road connections in Woking are not as good as might be expected. The M25 passes through the Borough but there is no junction. The nearest junctions (10 and 11) are both more than 4 miles from Woking Town Centre and more than 3 miles from the nearest major employment area at Byfleet. There is peak hour traffic congestion, particularly in Woking Town Centre and in the Monument Road area, although this is not as bad as in Guildford or in many parts of Surrey nearer to London.

2.35 Woking Town Centre is well served by car parks. There are around 9,000 non-residential parking spaces, around 5,000 of which are public pay car parks, the rest are private business spaces. Currently all day parking in Woking Town Centre costs £8.00, and short stay parking £1.30 for two hours. These rates are broadly comparable to other similar town centres in the area. Small car parks serve the local centres and employment areas. These are generally free of charge apart



from in West Byfleet where a modest charge is made.

2.36 Car ownership in Woking is very high. Only 15% of households do not have a car, compared with 27% nationally. Only one area of Woking had above the national average of households without a car, Maybury and Sheerwater, at 28%. In total there are 1.4 cars for every household in Woking, compared with 1.1 nationally. Not surprisingly the private car is the dominant means of transport in Woking. In 2001, almost 70% of people working in Woking drove to work. Forecasts from the Guildford and Woking Integrated Transport Study are

that morning peak hour traffic could increase by 15% over the next ten years if no investment in alternative modes of transport, or work on other measures such as travel plans, is carried out. This would worsen congestion in Woking Town Centre and Monument Road, but this would still not reach the current level of congestion in Guildford and many parts of Surrey closer to London.

2.37 For more information on all the topics set out above visit:

<http://www.woking.gov.uk/council/planning/ldf/ldfresearch>



3.0 Vision and Key Objectives

3.1 The vision and key objectives for the Core Strategy are set out below. These provide a spatial approach which takes account of the character and needs of Woking set out in the Spatial Portrait.

The vision is of Woking as a sustainable, prosperous, attractive and inclusive community in an economically buoyant, growing region. Woking will continue to grow, as a result of its popularity as a place to live and work. The growth is managed, improves quality of life locally, and uses resources sustainably.

The key objectives to achieve the vision are:

1. Woking Town Centre as a growing hub for the area. A vibrant, high density, high quality environment in which to live, work, access major shops and services and enjoy leisure time

2. Attractive local centres throughout the Borough providing convenient access to everyday shops and services, local community facilities, parks and open spaces

3. Homes to suit all needs and pockets. Enough new homes are built to meet Government targets, in a range of sizes and types to meet different needs. New developments are built at densities that make the best use of land in the urban area - but respect the context of Woking's leafy character. A significant proportion of new homes, for sale or rent, are priced to suit young families and those on lower incomes

4. A green Borough where the countryside is never far away. Open Green Belt land is not built on unless there is no other way to deliver key priorities. Green space and wooded areas are a feature of all parts of the Borough. Plenty of open space is

accessible to the public and rich in wildlife

5. A busy, buoyant economy with good quality offices, business parks and industrial areas, which meet the needs of modern business. These are mainly in major business and industrial areas, Woking Town Centre and local centres

6. A Borough which leads the way on high quality sustainable development and addresses climate change. The quality of the natural and historic environment is protected and enhanced. Much more use is made of renewable energy. New buildings are energy and water efficient. As a result the use of non-renewable energy is reduced. Waste is dealt with in a sustainable, environmentally friendly way

7. Buildings and public spaces of which we can be proud. Attractive buildings, in a range of styles, with public spaces where people feel safe and want to spend time

8. Provision of key services keeps pace as the Borough's population grows. This includes schools, healthcare, water supply, drainage and flood alleviation, leisure and community centres

9. A transport system that enables people to get to jobs, services and other places they wish to visit safely, in a reasonable and consistent journey time. Walking and cycling to the town centre, district and local centres, schools and other facilities are safe and convenient. Most people who live further away from Woking Town Centre can get to it by good frequent public transport. Onward journeys to major destinations can be made by train. Using a car is a choice not a necessity

10. A Borough where the whole community has the opportunity to share in the general prosperity and high quality of life.



4.0 Overall Spatial Approach

4.1 The preferred overall spatial approach of the Core Strategy 2006-2017 is to focus development on previously developed land in the urban area of the Borough, and in particular to focus higher density development in and around Woking Town Centre, which is the most sustainable location in the Borough.



4.2 This approach enables the best use to be made of urban land, maximises the potential for use of non-car modes of transport, meets key principles of sustainable development and is in general conformity with national and regional planning policy. It will also generally be capable of delivering the ten key objectives for the Strategy. This approach is generally in line with **Option 2** in the Issues and Options report.

4.3 This approach will generally achieve the overall vision for Woking set out above. It will also generally meet the key objectives of the Woking Community Strategy which have a spatial component. These cover affordable housing, transport and the environment. However, in order to make acceptable progress towards meeting economic and social needs, there are certain circumstances where there is a need for some flexibility in this spatial pattern of development. These are the provision of enough affordable family housing, and maintaining a buoyant local economy. As a result some elements of **Options 3 and 4** from the Issues and Options report, but not all, are allowed for in this strategy. The sustainability implications

of providing this flexibility have been assessed in the Sustainability Appraisal and found not to undermine the generally sustainable nature of the preferred option.

Overall pace of development.

4.4 It is not possible to set a clear target for the overall pace of development in the Borough. Most development will take place on previously developed land that at the time of preparing this Core Strategy is in beneficial use. The willingness of existing owners and occupiers to sell will be the key issue. While this will be influenced by the potential for more profitable development it will also be affected by the individual circumstances of individuals, business or other organisations which are not known.

4.5 However, the technical evidence shows that the preferred strategy should provide enough land to accommodate the housing requirements for Woking in the South East Plan, expected to be around 240 dwellings per year, and to accommodate an increase in the number of jobs and amount of retail floorspace in the Borough.

4.6 The strategy does not set out any plans for phasing of development over the plan period. The population increase from the planned level of provision is expected to be less than 5%, and the impact on infrastructure of development in the urban area above the planned level would not justify a phasing policy. This could mean that development will exceed the rate required for the first ten years of the South East Plan. The solution to this is to secure pooled contributions from all development towards future transport and infrastructure provision, using a tariff system. This will maximise the opportunity to bring forward new infrastructure when needed.

4.7 This overall approach is in line with the issues and options consultation,



which found a broad range of local views about the future rate of development. The preferred option for delivering each of the ten key objectives is set out below.

4.8 The key spatial implications are shown on a key diagram at the end of this section.

1: Woking Town Centre as a growing hub for the area.

4.9 The preferred option is:

- Delivery of major mixed-use development in Woking Town Centre, at high densities.
- Delivery of a high quality environment of streets and spaces as a result.
- A determined effort to increase the proportion of trips to the town centre made by non-car modes of transport.
- No extension to the current town centre boundary.
- Higher density residential development in three areas around the town centre.

4.10 This is essentially **Option 2** from the Issues and Options Report.

4.11 Woking Town Centre is the most sustainable location in the Borough for major development. It has reasonable public transport, and there is a critical mass of homes, shops and services from which to develop the “hub” referred to in the South East Plan. This strategy will result in major growth and change in Woking Town Centre over the period of the core strategy. The key components are summarised below. More information can be found under the relevant topic objectives.

4.12 Housing: Over the last five years, Woking Town Centre has developed rapidly as a place to live, with over 500 new homes having been built in the town centre itself, and many more in the

immediate surrounding area. The strategy is for this to continue, with the Woking Housing Potential Study identifying sites with potential for another 1000 new apartments in the town centre itself. It is likely that additional sites will come forward, not currently identified, provided the market for apartments proves robust. Many of the sites are expected to be developed as mixed-use schemes, also including offices, retail or community / infrastructure components. Such mixed-use schemes are positively encouraged, as they retain a balance of uses in the town centre. The housing will be a mixture of market and affordable housing.

4.13 Employment: Woking Town Centre is the most sustainable location for new office development in the Borough. Over the last five years the office market generally has not been strong, and only one major office development has been completed in the town centre over this period. However, employment forecasts for the plan period show considerable potential for further growth in service sector jobs in the Borough, and Woking Town Centre is the best place for them. The strategy will provide for this by requiring as a minimum that office floorspace is replaced like for like in any redevelopment schemes within the town centre.



4.14 If and when the market recovers, there is also potential for intensification. An increase in office floorspace of 10% in Woking Town Centre (25,000 sq. m) would provide for an additional 1500



jobs. This is the level of change which forms the basis for transport planning (see objective 9 transport for more details), although the actual level is subject to considerable uncertainty, given current market conditions.

4.15 Retail and Leisure: Woking Town Centre is one of the largest shopping centres in Surrey. The Retail and Commercial Leisure Study identified considerable potential for expansion to provide for forecast growth in the primary catchment area, which is largely the Borough of Woking itself. The study found potential for up to 40,000 sq. m. of new retail floorspace over the plan period. This would maintain Woking's retail role, and claw back some of the trade currently lost to other centres, particularly Guildford, from within the town's primary catchment.

4.16 This retail development is expected to be brought forward as one or two large mixed-use developments, in a way that complements and supports the existing retail offer in the town centre.

4.17 Institutional and Community Uses: Woking Town Centre is an ideal location for major institutional uses requiring public access, such as hospitals, colleges and public offices. Opportunities to locate these facilities in the town centre will be explored. The key issue is land availability and price.

4.18 In appropriate cases the Site Allocations DPD will identify sites for the above uses in the town centre.

4.19 High density high quality environment: Woking Town Centre has been successfully developed to provide a wide range of retail and leisure facilities and employment opportunities over the last 40 years or so. However, the quality of the built environment is very mixed, and the town centre lacks a unifying character. The degree of development planned for the town centre over the plan period provides the opportunity to create

a high quality environment of streets and spaces. This will be guided by a Town Centre Streets and Spaces Strategy, which will be adopted as SPD.

4.20 Woking Town Centre will be a high-density, vibrant place, and the Streets and Spaces strategy will support this, and enable new development to create a high quality environment with a unifying character, with both green spaces and routes, and those of a more urban character.

4.21 Getting into and around Woking Town Centre: Currently the majority of journeys to Woking Town Centre, even in the peak hour, are made by car. This results in traffic congestion on the major approach roads. However, this congestion is generally of short duration, and Surrey County Council's technical work shows that congestion in Woking Town Centre is not as severe as in Guildford Town Centre, or in some other centres in Surrey closer to London.



4.22 The Guildford and Woking Integrated Transport Study (GWITS) has forecast that the level of development proposed in this strategy would result in an increase in vehicle trips in the area of 15% if there is no change in the proportion of journeys made by car. This would make traffic congestion in the town centre worse, and the Core Strategy aims to reduce this increase as much as



possible. The Surrey Local Transport Plan (LTP) target is that it should not increase at all, but the LTP states that this is an ambitious target.

4.23 The core strategy has three components that aim to increase the proportion of journeys made to the town centre by non-car modes.

4.24 Firstly, the strategy will apply maximum parking standards significantly lower than the full standard for both residential and non-residential development. The existing Controlled Parking Zone backs this up, but if necessary this will be amended to prevent extra parking by both residents and visitors being displaced on to the street. The impact of these more restrictive standards on the development market is an area of uncertainty. Residential development with very limited parking has already been built in the town centre, but to date business and retail development has not. Business representatives are concerned about restrictive parking standards. The strategy is reliant on a common approach among local planning authorities to parking standards so that perverse incentives do not exist to locate in less sustainable locations. As a result the standard chosen will be within the range advocated by the South East Plan. This will be set in the Parking Standards SPD.



4.25 Secondly the strategy aims to provide a significantly improved interchange between all modes in the town centre. This is likely to be provided through a mixture of public and developer funding. It is referred to in the draft Surrey LTP 2006-11, and Surrey

County Council is seeking public funding for it. This will aim to make journeys by public transport in particular a more pleasant experience and therefore a more attractive option. Pooled contributions will be sought from developments in the town centre to assist with the funding of the interchange project. The interchange will be centred on the railway station, but may require land beyond the existing railway site. The site will be identified in the Site Allocations DPD.

4.26 Thirdly the strategy relies on substantial LTP funding being made available to implement the GWITS strategy. This strategy is still in preparation, but is expected to include increased highway capacity in the Victoria Arch / Guildford Road area, improvements to public transport services, and possibly the introduction of park and ride on major routes into the town centre. Pooled contributions will be sought from developers to assist with the funding of these schemes as part of an overall tariff system.

4.27 There is considerable uncertainty over the timing and extent of the transport improvements set out above. The Borough and County Councils will work hard to bring them forward as soon as possible. However the strategy does not seek to phase town-centre development or prevent it coming forward before the improvements are in place. This would be counter-productive, as developer contributions will be a key way of delivering the transport strategy.

4.28 The extent of the "Town Centre" will remain unchanged. The effect of this will be to limit large scale commercial development to the existing defined town centre. This is the area with the best public transport access, and the technical work shows that it can provide a significant level of new retail and office development. However by not extending the town centre commercial area outwards there will be a limit placed on



growth. This reflects infrastructure concerns, particularly regarding transport.

4.29 However a number of areas around the town centre, within walking distance of the railway station (broadly within 1250m) are identified as suitable for higher density housing, although not at the same density as in the town centre itself. These areas are broadly around Guildford Road, Goldsworth Road and Walton Road. These areas already have a mixed character with some high density development, both long-established and more recent, and are a sustainable location for more intensive development. Maximum parking standards here will be restricted in the same way as in the town centre itself. These areas are likely to change significantly over the plan period. However they are planned to remain in mainly residential use, rather than feel like part of the town centre commercial area.

4.30 Other areas within walking distance of the station, in Horsell, and the Ashwood Road area, are not of an urban form which can readily accommodate higher density development. Indeed some of these areas are designated Conservation Areas. The approach to new development in these areas will be the same as for residential areas in other parts of the Borough covered by Objective 3.

2. Attractive local centres throughout the Borough

4.31 The preferred option is:

- District and Local Centres to remain as small scale centres serving the local area.
- No retail development outside existing centres.

4.32 This is **Option 2** in the Issues and Options Report.

4.33 Apart from Woking Town Centre, the shopping centres in Woking are generally small. The biggest, West Byfleet, is an important District centre for the east of the Borough, and for parts of the Woodham and New Haw areas in Runnymede. Knaphill performs a similar role for the west of the Borough. The other centres have a purely local function. They provide a range of retail, food and drink, leisure and community facilities, and are served by small car parks, and some public transport services.

4.34 The core strategy does not envisage much change in the size or function of these centres, as the catchment population of the centres is unlikely to change significantly over the plan period. Changing lifestyles will result in a change to the range of facilities offered, but the evidence from recent trends is that there is sufficient demand to maintain a reasonable range of local facilities. Public authorities are generally committed to locality based services, and so it is expected that these facilities, such as Libraries, Community Centres and Health Centres will also remain in place to serve the areas.



4.35 The Woking Retail and Commercial Leisure Study identifies that West Byfleet may have potential for additional retail development of up to 3,000 sq. m gross. However the core



strategy does not plan for this to take place, as the focus for new retail development is on the most sustainable location, Woking Town Centre. As a result it is expected that only modest new retail development would take place in the local centres.

4.36 The strategy assumes that no significant retail development will take place outside existing centres, other than reasonable extensions to existing stores. The provisions of the sequential test set out in PPS6 will be applied should any planning applications of this kind be made.

3. Homes to suit all needs and pockets.



4.37 The preferred option is:

- New mainly non-family housing in Woking Town Centre at densities of at least 150 dwellings per hectare.
- New mainly non-family housing adjacent to the town centre around Guildford Road, Goldsworth Road and Walton Road areas at above 50 dwellings per hectare.
- New mainly family housing in the rest of the urban area on those employment / institutional sites which it is not essential to retain, generally at densities of 30-50 dwellings per hectare.
- New mainly family housing as infill in residential areas, at densities which integrate into the existing urban form, having regard to the

30-50 dwellings per hectare density guideline.

- New housing in District and Local centres, at densities which integrate into the existing urban form having regard to the 30-50 dwelling per hectare guideline.

4.38 This is all as per **Option 2** in the Issues and Options consultation.

- If the strategy above proves insufficient to meet South East Plan housing requirements, or meet the specific need for affordable housing in Woking identified through a Housing Needs Assessment, then part or all of the safeguarded long-term development sites at Brookwood Farm, Knaphill and Moor Lane, Westfield will be released for housing development.

4.39 This is a component of **Options 3 and 4** in the Issues and Options consultation. A clear safeguard has been included that this would only apply if sites in the urban area prove insufficient to meet the identified needs.

- An overall target of 40% of new homes to be “affordable housing”. The amount sought on different types of site to achieve this target will be set out in the Affordable Housing SPD.

4.40 This is a higher target than in the **Issues and Options consultation**, and is as a result of the responses received.

4.41 The draft South East Plan housing provision is expected to be around 240 new homes per annum in Woking from 2006 onwards. The Woking Housing Potential Study looks forward 10 years and shows that this strategy can provide the required level of new housing. Around 60% of all new homes would be built in and around the town



centre as apartments. These are likely to be built as 1 and 2 bedroom properties.

4.42 The most recent Government household projection show that almost 75% of additional households in Surrey will be one-person households. As a result a strategy which focuses on smaller apartment development fits with the projections. While not all small households will choose an apartment, current experience is that it is a popular choice for many.

4.43 Higher density housing would be concentrated in and around Woking Town Centre, which is the most sustainable location for it, close to a wide range of facilities, and relatively good public transport links. This is also an area where the existing urban form can accommodate higher densities successfully. An average of around 150 new homes per annum could be built in this area. Densities could range from 50 dwellings per hectare furthest from the town centre to in excess of 150 dwellings per hectare in the town centre itself. For more information on this see Objective 1 on Woking Town Centre.

4.44 Elsewhere in the urban area of the Borough, the existing urban form is much more suburban or village-like in character. In addition public transport links and accessibility to facilities are less good. However, most of the urban area meets basic accessibility standards of a bus stop or railway station with a half hourly day-time service within 400m, and a local centre within 1 km. As a result, in these areas new housing development will be at more modest densities, generally within the PPG3 range of 30-50 dwellings per hectare, with the flexibility to go above or below these limits where this integrates with the existing urban form.



4.45 This could mean, for example, that an infill site in a District Centre could be developed at a rather higher density, whereas one in an established low density residential area would require a rather lower density than the PPG3 range.

4.46 The overall rate of housebuilding in the rest of the urban area is likely to be quite modest, probably averaging less than 100 new homes per annum. Redevelopment of older employment or institutional sites will be limited because of the employment strategy, which is to retain all suitable sites to help meet economic growth forecasts. Additional housing development in residential areas will continue broadly as at present. The strategy does not require any development of housing on public open spaces.

4.47 The delivery of affordable housing, to meet a wide variety of needs, is a major priority for the Council. The strategy defines the range of housing needs which should be met widely, to include:

Social housing for rent, shared ownership, housing for key workers, specialist housing for elderly or disabled people, housing for Black and Minority ethnic groups and sites for gypsies and travellers.

4.48 The Woking Housing Needs Assessment shows a substantial level of need, well above what can be delivered through the planning system. A further study of housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers is in preparation. The Woking Housing Strategy has set ambitious



targets for provision of new affordable homes each year, through a combination of new build and acquisition. Currently this is 450 over the next three years, with the aim that this target would be increased if the Council's Private Finance Initiative (PFI) bid is successful. Many of these will need to be family homes.

4.49 To help to achieve this the core strategy seeks affordable housing in four different ways. Firstly, on most larger developments (at least 15 units) affordable housing should be provided on site, at the rate of 40%. However the Council acknowledges that there are cases where provision at this rate will not be economically viable. In such cases the amount of affordable housing will be the subject of negotiation. Secondly, in cases where this would better meet housing need, a financial contribution will be accepted in lieu of some or all of the on-site provision, to provide or acquire affordable housing elsewhere. This option recognises that there is a different mix of affordable housing needed, with much higher levels of family housing required compared with general market housing.

4.50 Thirdly, on sites below 15 units a tariff based contribution will be sought (subject to PPS3 permitting this), at a rate which reflects the economics of smaller site development, to assist with the provision of affordable housing elsewhere. Finally, there will be sites where levels of affordable housing above 40% will be provided, because the landowner or developer chooses to do this or is required by the Council.

4.51 If the overall level of housebuilding meets the South East Plan provision of 240 new homes per annum, this strategy would only deliver 96 affordable units per year, with a majority of these being apartments. Even if the overall level of housing development in the Borough exceeds the South East Plan provision, this is likely to be because of a higher rate of development

of high density apartments in and around the town centre (see Town Centre section for more details). The affordable component of these schemes will potentially deliver more affordable units, but not family homes.

4.52 The Council is examining all avenues to deliver more family affordable housing in the built-up area to overcome this. Measures include Woking Homes, a Council owned housing company, and the current PFI bid. However, even with these measures, it is highly likely that affordable housing need will not be met. As a result the strategy allows for the release of the safeguarded long-term development sites to provide for family affordable housing, if it can be demonstrated that affordable housing need cannot be met in the built-up area.

4.53 The safeguarded long-term development sites are on land excluded from the Green Belt, at Moor Lane, Westfield and Brookwood Farm, Knaphill to meet longer term development needs. They meet, or can be brought up to, basic accessibility standards and are free from overriding environmental constraints. Environmental mitigation and /or infrastructure improvements may be required. All or part of the sites will be brought forward if required, either through the Site Allocations DPD or via a planning application. Detailed policy on the mix of house types and the affordable / market housing split would be set at that time, but it is expected that the sites would provide at least 60% affordable housing. Any planning application is likely to need to be referred to the Secretary of State under the Green Field Sites Direction.





4.54 The strategy would also allow the safeguarded sites to be released if required to meet the overall South East Plan target of 240 homes per year. However, the Housing Potential Study indicates that this should not be necessary during the period covered by the core strategy. As a result it is the need for family affordable housing which is likely to bring these sites into consideration first.

4: Green Borough

4.55 The preferred option is:

- No change to the Green Belt boundary.
- No development on existing areas of public open space.
- Improvements to the accessibility and attractiveness of existing public open space.
- Providing new open space as part of new housing developments.

4.56 These were a feature of **all options** in the Issues and Options report.

- Strategic addition to open space provision in the Brookwood area.

4.57 This is from **Option 4** in the issues and options report, where it was linked to the release of the Brookwood Farm site for housing.

4.58 The strategy does not propose any change to the Green Belt boundary. The strategy can be delivered without needing to build on Green Belt land.



4.59 Access to green space, both within the urban area and in the surrounding Green Belt, is a key feature of Woking. The Open Space and Leisure Audit has found high levels of satisfaction with access to open space in the Borough. In addition the Audit found almost all public open space in the Borough to be of at least reasonable quality and value. Provision of large areas of semi-natural open space generally meets standards set out down by English Nature. Provision of playing pitches and children’s play areas, and smaller semi-natural space is generally good, but slightly below the standards of NPFA and English Nature.

4.60 As a result of this the strategy is generally to keep all existing public open space substantially open and free from development. It is a valued local amenity and a key part of the character of the Borough. The evidence base shows that doing this should not prevent the implementation of other aspects of this core strategy.

4.61 Existing levels of open space are generally adequate for the existing population. However the existing Local Plan proposal for the Brookwood Canalside Country Park, extending it to the west of the Bagshot Road, will be carried forward. This will both improve access to open space for the recently completed Brookwood Hospital development, and provide a buffer between the built up area of Knaphill and Sheets Heath Common. The provision of this open space could be linked to the release of the housing site at Brookwood Farm or could be brought forward before it.



4.62 Access to open space will need to be provided for residents of new housing development. This will be achieved through securing new open space on larger housing developments, and through contributions through the tariff system in other cases to fund improvements to the accessibility and quality of existing playing spaces and semi-natural green spaces. These measures will both meet the needs of new residents and mitigate against any extra recreational impact on the Heathland areas which are designated as part of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area.

5: A busy, buoyant economy

4.63 The preferred option is:

- Retention of all suitably located employment land for a broad range of employment generating uses.
- 10% increase in office floorspace in Woking Town Centre.

4.64 This is as per **Option 2** in the issues and options consultation. An additional site has been added to the list of suitably located employment land following technical work.

- Less significant intensification of floorspace in the other main industrial and commercial areas.

4.65 This is a component of **Option 3** in the issues and options consultation.

4.66 The Woking economy is buoyant and based largely in the service sector. Office based jobs, particularly in financial and business services, are the core of the local economic base. Retail, leisure, public services, warehousing and manufacturing jobs are all at or below the regional average in terms of importance.

The core strategy for employment development is informed by two pieces of technical work, an Employment Needs Assessment carried out in-house, and a Commentary on Employment Land, carried out by consultants Vail Williams.



4.67 Trend-based forecasts for the South East region prepared for SEEDA are that the number of jobs in the Borough could grow by over 7,000 by 2016, to around 50,000. However, there is significant uncertainty about whether the forecast growth will happen, and about how much additional employment floorspace would be required to meet it if it did.

4.68 Surrey County Council has questioned the forecasts on the basis that there are no plans to increase labour supply by the amount required. There is also significant uncertainty over the contribution that the better use of existing office and industrial buildings could make. The Council's survey work has suggested that vacancy rates for employment floorspace are around 20%, although Government figures are much lower. The Council's survey suggests very considerable scope to accommodate new jobs in existing floorspace or like-for-like replacement. There is also a major outstanding planning permission for a business park at Broadoaks, West Byfleet, which could accommodate around 1000 workers if it is built. There is also the key strategic issue that there is will be very few, if any, opportunities to identify new areas of employment development within the urban area.



4.69 As a result the strategy is relatively prudent in planning for new employment floorspace. All the employment areas identified by the Commentary on Employment Land as suitable for the needs of modern business will be retained. This accommodates 90% of the employment floorspace in the Borough, and includes Woking Town Centre, the primary employment areas of:

Byfleet, Goldsworth Park, Lansbury Estate Knaphill, Monument Road area, Old Woking and Sheerwater

4.70 A wide range of employment generating activities can be accommodated in these areas, including office, industrial, warehousing, hotel and some institutional and community uses. The main exception is retail development, which is limited to Woking Town Centre and the District and Local Centres, because of the very high level of trips it generates. The retention of existing buildings or like-for-like replacement of employment floorspace, to renew the stock, is a key component of the strategy.



4.71 Some intensification of development will be permitted. In Woking Town Centre major new office development will be permitted in the commercial core, ideally as part of a mixed use scheme with activity at ground floor level. These developments will have limited parking, because other means of access are readily available (see Woking Town Centre and transport section for more details).

4.72 In the primary employment areas more limited intensification of development will be permitted. This is because these areas generally have much more modest public transport accessibility. The degree of intensification will depend on the traffic impact, and the extent to which public transport accessibility can be improved. This will be assessed on each individual planning application, but major increases in floorspace, of over 2,500 sq. m will be looked at critically. The overall impact of further planning permissions is expected to be an increase of no more than 5% in the total employment floorspace in these areas. Smaller scale development may be suitable in the District and Local Centres.

4.73 The overall impact of new development could be that up to 3,000 new jobs are accommodated. This is only around 40% of the forecast growth. However, for the reasons set out above this is considered to be an appropriate strategy. Monitoring of demand for new floorspace and the take up of vacant floorspace at both local and sub-regional level will be key to determining whether this strategy remains appropriate in the long term.

6: A Borough which leads the way on high quality sustainable development and addresses climate change.

4.74 The preferred option is:

Climate Change

- A spatial strategy which minimises the need to travel, especially by car.
- Application of best practical option for delivering sustainable development through standards such as BREEAM and ECO Homes.
- Policy requirement to meet high standards in energy efficiency, use of renewables and climate neutral development.
- Target of 100% sustainable energy and 20% renewable energy in all new



development.

- Positive approach to development of renewable and sustainable energy plant.

Natural Environment

- No preferred locations for development within functional flood plains in areas at risk of flooding.
- No preferred locations for development within 400m of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA).
- Tariff system to include the provision of mitigation against the environmental impact of development on the SPA.
- Continued protection of designated Sites Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI).

Historic Environment

- Protection of the existing historic environment and Conservation Areas and with a commitment to a review the Woking Town Centre Conservation Area boundary to achieve the streets and spaces strategy.
- Protection and enhancement of the landscape and built environment of the whole Borough through applying generic Development Control policies.

4.75 This is compatible with **Options 2, 3 or 4** of the Issues and Options report.

4.76 The Core Strategy aims to protect the key features of Woking's environment, and ensure new development meets best practice in terms of sustainability and climate change.



4.77 Addressing climate change is a key priority for Woking Borough Council. The Council's Climate Change Strategy sets an overall target of reducing CO₂ equivalent emissions by 60% by 2050, compared with the 1990 level. The Core Strategy will make a major contribution to this goal by setting high standards for new development. These include its location and accessibility by non-car modes, which is part of the overall spatial strategy, and improving energy efficiency and use of renewable energy, which will be delivered through the generic DC policies.

4.78 The Core Strategy will also improve sustainable energy use in existing development by a permissive approach to development to provide new plant for sustainable and renewable energy generation, including wind, biomass and CHP.

4.79 Key components of the natural environment in Woking include areas at risk of flooding, as identified by the Environment Agency, and areas of heathland of international or national importance, designated as SSSI's and in three cases European Special Protection Areas. There are also over 30 SNCI's.

4.80 These areas will be protected from development. The two safeguarded sites for long term development are adjacent to areas identified as at risk of flooding. Very small parts of the sites are within the area at risk. The housing capacity of the sites would not be



significantly affected in the area liable to flood was left undeveloped. It is expected that this is the approach that will be followed. This will be addressed in detail in the Site Allocations DPD.

4.81 Most of the Borough is within 5 km of the Thames Basin Heaths SPA, and therefore within the area where English Nature considers that new development should provide mitigation for the additional recreational impact. The details of the mitigation to be required are being developed as part of a Delivery Plan covering the whole SPA which includes land in 11 Boroughs across three Counties. This is not yet finalised. Subject to the final form of the Delivery Plan the Council intends to provide mitigation through improving access to existing semi-natural green spaces outside the SPA, together with the provision of the Brookwood Canalside Country Park (see objective 4).

4.82 The approach to the historic environment will be to enhance the environment through the Borough. As a result the generic DC policies will require high standards of design, and the integration of development into the existing landscape and urban form. This means that the existing local designations of Escarpments and Rising Ground of Local Importance, Canal and River Corridors and Areas of Special Residential Character, which protect parts of the Borough only, are unnecessary and will not be included on the new LDF proposals map.

4.83 Conservation Areas will continue to be protected. However, given the focus of new development on Woking Town Centre the relationship to the existing Woking Town Centre conservation area needs to be carefully considered. As a result a review of this designation will be carried out as part of the Streets and Spaces strategy set out under objective 7.

7: Buildings and Public Spaces of which we can be proud.

4.84 The preferred option is:

- Inclusion of a suite of Generic Development Control policies to deliver a high standard of design, integration with existing built form, amenity and environmental protection.
- Production of a Streets and Spaces Strategy for Woking Town Centre.

4.85 Buildings and public spaces are a key end product of the planning system. The overall strategy for the scale of buildings in different parts of the Borough, and the uses to which they can be put are covered in other objectives. This objective is about the detail of buildings and public spaces. This will be controlled by generic DC policies, supported by the range of Supplementary Planning Documents set out in the Local Development Scheme. This will enable the LDF to deliver enhancement of the physical environment of the Borough through development.

4.86 The SPD's will generally apply throughout the Borough. However, in Woking Town Centre, the area of greatest change, a Streets and Spaces Strategy will be produced. This will be designed to ensure that the new development proposed in this core strategy makes the greatest possible contribution to producing a town centre environment which is of high quality and that local people are proud of.



8: Provision of key services

4.87 The preferred option is:

- A tariff system to ensure all new development makes a contribution to the provision of future infrastructure which reflects the additional demand the development will place on it.

4.88 The technical work has not identified any social and community infrastructure deficits which are so serious that they warrant limiting the rate of development below what is proposed in this strategy. However, new development may place demands on social and community infrastructure which will require some new investment. Under new government guidance (Circular 05/05), it is now much clearer that the Council is empowered to operate a tariff system to ensure that sufficient contributions are made by new developments to deliver this. The contributions will be pooled and used to fund new development or to pay providers back for improvements provided ahead of the development.

4.89 This will be part of a wider tariff system which also includes provision of open space, transport improvements and SPA mitigation. The overall level of the tariff will be set, through SPD, at a level which does not make otherwise beneficial development uneconomic, or in the case of housing development, unable to provide an appropriate level of affordable housing.

9: Transport system



4.90 The preferred option is:

- Minimising the increase in peak hour car trips in the Borough, particularly in Woking Town Centre, through a material improvement in the relative attractiveness of non-car modes of travel. This is likely to include:
 - Major improvement to the transport interchange in Woking Town Centre,
 - Improvements to public transport serving the town centre, main employment areas, and (if developed) the safeguarded long term development sites,
 - Consideration of park and ride provision for Woking Town Centre,
 - Improvements to safe cycle and walking routes,
 - Low maximum parking standards in and around Woking Town Centre,
 - A tariff of contributions sought from all development which generates extra trips, to be pooled for provision of future transport improvements.
- Spatial strategy to prevent major development occurring in areas less well served by public transport.

4.91 This is essentially **Option 2** from the issues and options report, with specific reference to the transport implications of the elements of **Options 3 and 4** included in the strategy.

4.92 Provision of an adequate transport network is key to the overall strategy of focussing the majority of new development in and around Woking Town Centre. It is also key to realising the concept of Woking Town Centre as a hub as set out in the South East Plan. While the town centre boasts the best public transport services in the Borough, it also has over 8,000 public and private non-residential car parking spaces, the majority of which are occupied by 9.30 am on each working day. The great majority of journeys in the Borough are made by car and there is peak hour traffic congestion on a number of major roads.



4.93 Responsibility for transport planning rests with Surrey County Council, but in practice the County and the Borough Council work closely at Member and officer level on this area. The Draft Surrey Local Transport Plan (LTP) has set a target of no increase in peak hour traffic in Woking and Guildford in the next five years. The LTP recognises that this is an ambitious target. The Guildford and Woking Integrated Transport Study (GWITS), funded by Surrey County Council is assessing how this can be achieved through a transport model. The study has forecast that the rate of development set out in this strategy will increase peak hour traffic by 15% to 2016. This will increase congestion in certain parts of the Borough in the morning peak, particularly the approaches to Woking Town Centre, Sheerwater and West Byfleet. Possible transport measures modelled to date have been found not to make much impact on this increase. As a result further testing is being carried out, and no specific proposals have yet been made.

4.94 It is not for this core strategy to set out the detailed proposals to deliver the LTP target. These will be set out in the LTP submission following the completion of the GWITS work.

4.95 However it is important for the Core Strategy to give a clear statement as to how important transport improvements are to the delivery of the spatial strategy. This is particularly important as traffic congestion and concerns about the quality of public transport are the top issues of concern to people locally. In considering this it is important to put Woking's transport problems in perspective. The technical evidence is that traffic congestion in Woking is not as bad as in Guildford or in many parts of Surrey inside the M25. The forecast 15% increase, although clearly undesirable, would not result in traffic congestion as bad as that already seen in those areas.



4.96 As a result it is the Council's conclusion that on balance it is not appropriate to reduce or phase the development set out in this Core Strategy pending transport network improvements being put in place. To do so would prevent development taking place to address important social and economic objectives, and would be out of proportion to the scale of the forecast problem that could occur. This decision has been taken in the knowledge that improvements to the transport network in Woking and the other two defined hub towns in Surrey are the top priority in the Surrey LTP in order to support future development. As a result the Council expects that transport network improvements will be forthcoming in Woking during the life of this core strategy which will work towards the objective. If this position changes in the future this core strategy will need to be reviewed.

4.97 Site specific transport improvements arising from the final LTP will be set out in the Site Allocations DPD. The specific proposal for an improvement to the Woking Town Centre interchange is already contained in the draft LTP. Again the site-specific implications of this will be addressed in the Site Allocations DPD.

4.98 There may be a case for the provision of additional parking at Woking railway station as part of the interchange proposal, and possibly at other railway stations in the Borough, to cater for additional rail travellers. This will be justified where it results in an overall shift away from car use.



4.99 The Core Strategy will focus the majority of development in the location with the best public transport and accessibility to facilities, i.e. in and around Woking Town centre and will limit additional parking provided with this development. This will support the transport objective.

4.100 Parking standards away from the high accessibility zone will be at or near the full standard recommended in the Surrey Parking Strategy. However high density development will not be permitted in these areas, as set out in objectives for housing, employment and local centres, and so the number of trips generated will be relatively low

4.101 In addition the core strategy will expect contributions on a tariff basis from all development which generates additional trips to support transport improvements. This will also support the LTP strategy.

10: A Borough where the whole community has the opportunity to share in the general prosperity and high quality of life.

4.102 The following elements of the preferred option will particularly support this objective.

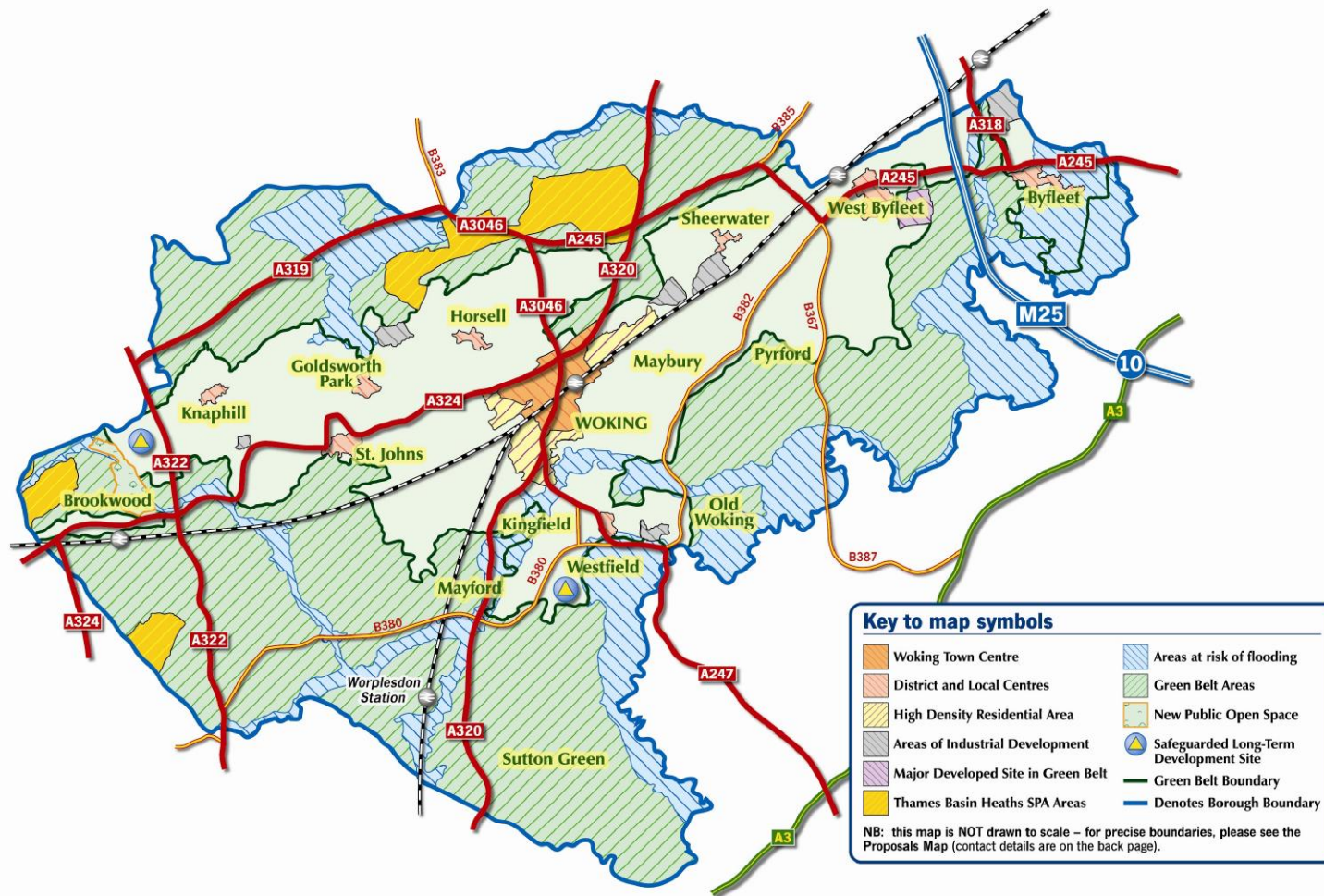
- Overall provision of 40% of new housing as affordable housing.
- Location of new retail, employment and community development in areas best served by public transport.
- Improvement to public transport services and interchanges.
 - Tariff system to ensure provision of new social and community infrastructure.

4.103 Woking is a generally prosperous Borough. However, those who do not share in this prosperity face a number of problems. Two in particular can be addressed by the core strategy. These

are access to good quality housing, and access to a range of jobs and facilities.

4.104 For those who cannot afford to meet their housing needs on the open market, the provision of affordable housing is essential, and this is a key component of the Core Strategy. For those who either cannot afford to run a car, or on grounds of age or a disability are unable to drive, access to facilities by public transport or other non-car mode is vital. The overall spatial strategy supports this through the location of facilities and the provision of public transport.





Section 3: Indicative Policies



5.0 Woking LDF Core Strategy – Draft Policies

5.1 This section includes an indicative set of generic development control policies and spatial policies which will be used to implement this core strategy. These policies will be refined in the light of responses and further testing prior to inclusion in the “Submission” Core Strategy. At that stage they will become a material consideration in determining planning applications. When the Core Strategy is finally adopted, following the public examination these policies will replace the policies of the Woking Borough Local Plan 1999.

5.2 The policies set out below involve a reduction in the number of policies from close to 200 to around 30.

5.3 This proposed reduction in the number of policies is a result of a changed emphasis in the new LDF based system. Guidance on preparation of Local Plans resulted in most plans being almost a complete “development control manual”. In particular Section 54A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 required planning decisions to be made in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicated otherwise. This resulted in very comprehensive Local Plans which sought to include all possible material considerations.

5.4 The emphasis in the new system is different. The Core Strategy should include a concise set of policies which define locations for different forms of development, and which identify key development control issues. Matters covered by the primary legislation, government planning policy statements (PPS’s / PPG’s) or regional spatial strategies need not be included. Instead the emphasis is on providing a local focus to national and regional policy.

5.5 This has benefits in providing the opportunity to set out a more concise plan

where the key spatial objectives are not lost in a wealth of detail. However, it does mean all material planning considerations may not be brought together in one document

5.6 As a result a checklist of all material planning considerations relevant to different kinds of development is set out at the end of this section in matrix form. This is intended to be of use to applicants, officers, Members and the general public alike. This will not form part of the LDF but will be a vital tool in ensuring clarity and consistency of decision making.

The Draft Policies

5.7 The draft policies are divided into two parts:

- *Generic Development Control Policies*
- *Location Specific Policies*

5.8 The Generic Development Control policies cover detailed matters relevant to many planning applications. In the current Local Plan development control criteria are included in a large number of policies. Instead the proposal for the LDF Core Strategy is that all these should be brought together in six policies. These cover:

- *Design of New Development*
- *Energy Efficiency*
- *Transport, Highway Safety and Vehicle Parking*
- *Environmental Pollution*
- *Planning Obligations*
- *Biodiversity*

5.9 These will be key policies for determining planning applications both at planning Committee and under Delegated Powers.

5.10 The location specific policies set out the spatial strategy of the preferred option in language suitable for development control purposes. They consist of 24 policies.



6.0 Generic Development Control Policies

GDC1 Design of new development

Planning permission for development will be granted provided that, where appropriate, the proposal meets all of the following criteria:

- a) The development is of a high quality design which enhances the existing or emerging unique characteristics and local distinctiveness of the area and explains how this is to be achieved.
- b) The development is of a scale, height, spacing, mass and form which is appropriate to the pattern of development in the surrounding area.
- c) The development is of architectural design, materials and landscape setting which respects and integrates appropriately with the local context.
- d) The development retains existing features and characteristics of local importance.
- e) The development would not have an adverse effect on the amenity of neighbouring properties in terms of building mass, light, privacy, disturbance and outlook.
- f) The development would not have an adverse impact on the landscape of the surrounding area.
- g) The development would not have a significant adverse impact on the quantity and quality of natural resources, including trees, hedgerows and water features either on or adjoining the site.
- h) The development and external spaces accommodate the impact of predicted changes in our climate.
- i) The scheme has incorporated a sustainable water management system.

- j) The proposed development meets the access needs of users, particularly disabled people and the elderly.
- k) The development incorporates appropriate crime prevention measures.
- l) The development makes suitable provision for servicing and access by all vehicles.
- m) In the case of new residential development, including change of use, provision will be made for the storage of refuse and recycling containers.

Reasoned justification:

6.1. All new development that results in new built form, spaces or the alteration to existing buildings and spaces has the potential to impact on the quality of the built and natural environment.

6.2. The Council will therefore require all such development to be of a high quality design. The design adopted will be dependant upon the proposed use of the development in addition to its location. To support this, the applicant will be required to submit a design statement which demonstrates how the proposal responds to the local context. In areas where the existing character and design features are of low quality the design statement will set out how the impact of new development would have a positive impact. In areas of existing high quality the design statement will need to demonstrate that the proposal would not have an adverse impact on the character of the area including features of heritage significance. In line with the advice in 'Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development' the Council recognises that the undertaking of discussions prior to the submission of a planning application can help to address these issues.

6.3. New development will need to respect the amenities of occupants of neighbouring properties, in particular



having regard to issues in relation to privacy and light.

6.4. New development will be expected to have regard to the potential impact on the landscape of the surrounding area.

6.5. Development will have regard to its impact on natural resources on or adjoining the site. In order to demonstrate that this issue has been addressed proposals should include a full assessment of these natural features in terms of how they will be protected and enhanced.

6.6. It will be expected that new development provides a high quality landscape having regard to existing landscape features adjoining the site. The design of development will need to have regard to the space required for vegetation, either existing or as part of a proposed landscape scheme, to mature.

6.7. Ensuring that new development can be accessed by those with mobility difficulties, including disabled people and the elderly, will help to break down unnecessary barriers and exclusions to the benefit of the whole community. Further guidance can be found in the publication "Planning and Access for Disabled People: A Good Practice Guide" (ODPM, March 2003).

6.8. Schemes for sustainable water management will be expected to incorporate methods for reducing water consumption in new development in addition to dealing with waste water in an efficient sustainable manner. It is predicted that an impact of climate change will be a reduction in rain fall, particularly in summer months, whilst demand for water increases. New development will therefore need to incorporate designs that reduce the need for water consumption. This can be assisted through the harvesting and re-use of rainwater and the re-use of greywater, which is water from baths, showers and hand basins that has been used previously. For example rainwater harvesting can provide water supply for a range of domestic uses such

as personal washing, laundry and toilet flushing. An example of the use of greywater is that it can be used to flush a toilet following basic disinfectant or microbiological treatment. Development will therefore be expected to incorporate sustainable drainage systems (also known as SUDS) so as to reduce the risk of flooding from water run off or pollution from ground water and water courses.

6.9. New development has the opportunity to incorporate design features that help to reduce the opportunity for crime to be committed, i.e. reducing the risk of burglary through incorporation of good surveillance, in addition to reducing the fear of crime. Where appropriate applicants will need to demonstrate how this issue has been addressed.

GDC2 Energy efficiency

Planning permission for development will be granted provided that, where appropriate, it can be demonstrated by the developer that:

- 1. At least 20% of the predicted energy consumption of the building will be from renewable sources, and**
- 2. The development has been designed to maximise energy efficiency and minimise CO₂ emissions.**

Reasoned justification:

6.10. The Government's 'Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering Sustainable Development' identifies that Development Plans should contribute to global sustainability by addressing the causes and potential impact of Climate Change. Climate Change is caused largely by the burning of fossil fuels that generate 'greenhouse gas'. Based on the current levels of greenhouse gas emissions it is expected that the climate in the South East will change dramatically in the next century resulting in severe weather



conditions including drought caused by a 30-40% reduction in rainfall, hotter heat waves and an increase in storms and floods. As a consequence new development that relies on power from traditional fossil fuel sources has the ability to significantly contribute to the problems that are caused by Climate Change.

6.11. To put this into context it is estimated that a new medium sized dwelling, powered by traditional fossil fuel sources, will generate approximately 11,300 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO₂) over the next 100 years.

6.12. To address this problem it is recognised that new development can help to combat the causes of climate change through design that is energy efficient and incorporates sustainable sources of energy including renewable energy. This will help to reduce reliance on energy sources that generate greenhouse gases that contribute towards climate change.

6.13. However, renewable energy sources may not provide all of the required energy for a development. Where a developer decides to provide the remaining energy requirement through non renewable energy sources, infrastructure, such as Combined Heat and Power (CHP) generators, can be used to generate energy that is highly efficient and has a low output of CO₂.

6.14. It will therefore be for the developer to demonstrate, through the application of a nationally recognised assessment, such as the Government's 'Standard Assessment Procedure' (SAP) rating system, that any non renewable energy provision is helping to minimise the contribution the development may have on climate change through energy efficiency and minimal CO₂ emissions.

6.15. The SAP rating system is the Government's approved procedure for calculating the energy rating of buildings. This is broken down into 2 ratings, energy costs and a carbon index which relates to CO₂ emissions. Where a developer

decides to use SAP to demonstrate energy efficiency and low CO₂ emissions, the proposal will be required to have a SAP rating of between 100 – 120.

6.16. Further guidance is set out in the Council's Climate Neutral Development Supplementary Planning Document. It is not considered that the design considerations raised by this issue will be addressed simply by meeting minimum requirements to satisfy Building Regulations.

GDC3 Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking

Development will only be permitted where:

- **It is acceptable in terms of its impact on highway safety.**
- **Traffic movements generated by the proposed development are compatible or can be made compatible with the local transport infrastructure.**
- **Appropriate vehicle and cycle parking is provided in accordance with the Council's adopted standards.**
- **Appropriate provision is made for pedestrians, private vehicles, cycle facilities and public transport related facilities.**
- **In the case of major development comprising employment, residential, education or social community facilities the proposal will be required to submit a Travel Plan.**

Reasoned justification:

6.17. Development will be required to meet the standards of Surrey County Council as the highway authority in terms of layout and access to ensure acceptability in terms of highway safety. Developments that do not meet the necessary standards will be refused.



6.18. New development that generates additional car journeys can place pressure on the existing highway network which may result in either highway safety or congestion problems. Where appropriate the developer may be required to enter into a planning obligation to ensure appropriate works are undertaken to address any highway safety issues or contribute towards highway improvements that arise from the proposed development.

6.19. The Borough Council will expect new development to provide vehicle parking in accordance with the Council's adopted Parking Standards Supplementary Planning Document, which applies a lower maximum standard for sites in the High Accessibility Zone in and around Woking Town Centre. Proposals that will result in a reduction of these standards will need to be justified by the applicant. Development will address the needs of pedestrians and cyclists and where appropriate the provision of public transport facilities, e.g. new bus shelters. In providing for pedestrians and cyclists the development may be required to provide for on site as well as off site facilities where there is an identified need. This may include ancillary facilities such as showers and changing rooms. All these elements will help to encourage a reduction in the use of cars by people who visit the site.

6.20. For the purpose of requiring submission of a Travel Plan the Council, as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement, has defined 'major development' as being employment, education or community facilities with a gross external floor area of 1000m² or more or 10 or more units for residential development. Mixed use developments that comprise individual elements below these thresholds may require a Travel Plan where it is considered that the cumulative impact of the proposal would have comparable transport implications to an individual development.

GDC4 Environmental pollution

Development proposals that cause pollution through smoke, fumes, gases, noise, liquids, dust, steam, heat, vibration, smell, light or other polluting emissions will only be permitted where it does not adversely affect any of the following:

- a) The amenity of residents and users of the site or surrounding area including water, land and air, and**
- b) The quality of the environment in the surrounding area, and Nature conservation interests.**
- c) Where the development proposed is on, close to or suspected to be on contaminated land permission will only be granted where it can be demonstrated that the site can be made suitable for the proposed use through remedial measures.**
- d) Any lighting subject to planning control should be designed to minimise glare to neighbours and the night sky.**
- e) Proposals for residential development located close to sources of noise will be determined having regard to guidance in the form of 'PPG24 Planning and Noise'.**

Reasoned justification:

6.21. It is recognised that certain types of development may have the potential to generate pollution to the detriment of the environment, local amenities and the health and safety of occupiers of neighbouring properties. Where it is considered that these impacts cannot be addressed, either through the design of the proposal or the application of appropriate planning condition, the application will be refused.

6.22. In addition, there are a number of sites within the Borough that are contaminated. It is important that any proposed development either on or near to a contaminated site, does not give rise to problems of pollution or health risks to occupiers of the development.



6.23. When considering the impact of lighting regard will be had to guidance from the Institute of Lighting Engineers.

GDC5 Planning obligations

Where proposals generate an identified need for additional or improved social and community infrastructure, in order to make the proposal acceptable in planning terms, appropriate mitigation will be sought through the use of either planning conditions or a legal agreement. Planning permission will be refused for development that fails to provide the necessary mitigation.

Where appropriate other community benefits related to the development will be sought.

Reasoned justification:

6.24. In some cases new development will generate a need for social and community infrastructure that is necessary to make the development acceptable. This may include the requirement to either improve existing infrastructure or provide for new infrastructure. Where this is the case the Council will expect mitigation to be provided, though the use of a planning condition or completion of a legal agreement that requires its provision as part of the development or through the payment of a financial contribution. Developments that fail to make this provision can place an unacceptable demand on existing infrastructure or social needs e.g. affordable housing. Where this is the case the Council will refuse such applications.

6.25. Development may also generate the need for other community benefits that relate to the proposed development.

6.26. Full details of the contributions that would be expected from a particular development are set out in the Council's Planning Obligations Supplementary

Planning Document. It should be noted that the content of this SPD is not exhaustive. Consequently, the Council will reserve the right to require planning obligations that have not been identified in the SPD as and when it is necessary.

6.27. Any planning obligations entered into will be required to meet the criteria set out in ODPM Circular 05/2005 Planning Obligations. Examples of planning benefits that may be sought with a new development include:

- I. Affordable housing
- II. New/improved highway infrastructure
- III. New/improvements to existing open space
- IV. Community facilities
- V. Improvements to pedestrian/cycling access
- VI. Works necessary to enable the development to receive renewable and sustainable energy.
- VII. Public art

GDC6 Biodiversity

Where appropriate, proposals will be required to incorporate measures to enhance biodiversity.

Reasoned justification:

6.28. New development can provide an important opportunity to enhance biodiversity through the creation of new habitats. Appropriate developments will therefore be expected to maximise the opportunity to enhance biodiversity. Examples of opportunities to enhance biodiversity can be found in Surrey County Council's Biodiversity Action Plan 'Wildlife on Your Doorstep 2002'.



7.0 Location Specific Policies

A) Natural Environment

ENV1 National and International Nature Conservation Designations

Development will not be permitted within or affecting the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area unless it meets the requirements of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994.

Proposals that are likely to have an adverse effect on a SSSI will not be granted planning permission unless it can be demonstrated that the tests set out in Planning Policy Statement 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation are satisfied.

The boundaries of sites, within Woking Borough, that make up the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area and Sites of Special Scientific Interest are shown on the proposals map.

Reasoned justification:

7.1. The Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area (SPA) is an internationally important nature conservation designation that is made up of 13 heathland 'Sites of Special Scientific Interest' (SSSI) across 11 local authority districts, covering 8,400ha. Three of the sites that make up the SPA are located, or part located, in Woking Borough. This includes part of Horsell Common, Sheets Heath, Brookwood and part of Brookwood Heath, Brookwood.

7.2. In assessing the possible impact of development on the SPA regard shall be had to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (also known as the

Habitats Regulations). Where it is considered development would have a significant effect on the SPA an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of the site's conservation objectives will be undertaken.

7.3. To conform to this policy, residential developments within 5km of any part of the SPA will have to meet the requirements of the Thames Basin Heaths Delivery Plan (and subsequent SPD). This may require developer contributions towards mitigation measures.

ENV2 Local and Regional Nature Conservation Designations

Development will not normally be permitted within or affecting Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) or Local Nature Reserves (LNR) unless it can be demonstrated that it would not directly or indirectly harm the nature conservation value of the site. The boundaries on LNRs and SNCIs are shown on the proposals map.

Exceptionally, where development which is key to achieving the aims of this core strategy is proposed close to a designated site, some impact may be unavoidable. In such cases the developer must demonstrate that any impact from the development will still leave the nature conservation value of the site substantially intact.

Reasoned justification:

7.4 Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) have been identified through surveys, because they have nature conservation value of regional importance. Local Nature Reserves are designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 because of their local nature conservation importance. Both SNCIs and LNRs are of substantive nature conservation value,



and are worthy of protection. However, they are of lower nature conservation value than the national and international designations.

7.5. The majority of the sites are in the Green Belt, and there will be no conflict between protecting them and implementing this core strategy. However, a small number of the sites are in, or immediately adjacent to, the urban area. Here, a balance has to be struck between protecting them and delivering this Core Strategy.

ENV3 Areas at risk of Flooding

In areas at risk from flooding as shown on the proposals map new development or the intensification of existing development including the formation of impervious surfaces will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development outweigh the risk of flood and appropriate flood protection and flood compensation schemes are secured.

Proposals which would result in an increased flood risk in areas elsewhere due to additional surface runoff will not be permitted unless adequate

compensation schemes are provided.

At sites suspected of being at risk of flooding but for which precise recent flood risk information is unavailable, the Council may require developers to carry out detailed technical investigations to demonstrate compliance with the provisions of the policy.

Reasoned justification:

7.6. The development strategy of the plan can be achieved without building on undeveloped sites in areas at risk of flooding.

7.7. Redevelopment of existing developed sites within areas at risk of flooding will be acceptable where suitable flood compensation can be provided. This is an appropriate response to the twin policy objectives of not increasing the risk of flooding while at the same time making the best use of urban land.



B) Design and Conservation

DC1 Conservation Areas

The Council will periodically review the boundaries of Conservation Areas and designate new Conservation Areas if appropriate. Where the continued designation of all or part of an existing Conservation Area is no longer considered relevant, that particular Conservation Area will be deleted or amended.

Reasoned justification:

7.8. Conservation Areas are designated for their special architectural or historic interest. Development in or visible from conservation areas must preserve or enhance their character as set out in the Listed Building and Conservation Area Act 1990.

7.9. It is unlikely that the Council will designate any further conservation areas within the district. A programme to prepare detailed character appraisals for each of its designated areas is already underway. As part of this process it will carefully examine the extent of each conservation area in accordance with its duty under section 69 to assess whether the current boundaries are appropriate to protect the area's special character. Where it is considered that the special

interest has been so eroded by subsequent changes or redevelopment, significant boundary revision or even cancellation of the designated areas may be warranted. In particular the Woking Town Centre conservation area will be critically examined to assess if it has retained sufficient special interest to be worthy of continued designation.

DC2 Strategic approach to design in Woking Town Centre

Woking Town Centre is an area of major change where new development will be expected to contribute to an improvement in the quality of streets and spaces.

Detailed requirements will be set out in a Supplementary Planning Document.

Reasoned justification:

7.10. The Council will produce as SPD a "Streets and Spaces Strategy" for Woking Town Centre, setting out how developments must address this policy.

7.11. SPD may be produced for individual sites.



C) Green Belt

GB1 Green Belt

The boundary of the Green Belt is shown on the proposals map. Within the Green Belt inappropriate development, whether new building, re-use of buildings or other development, will not be approved, except in very special circumstances.

Specific exceptions to this presumption against inappropriate development include certain developments within identified villages and Major Developed Sites.

The village of Mayford is identified as an infill only village in the Green Belt. Broadoaks, West Byfleet is identified as a Major Developed Site in the Green Belt. These designations are shown on the proposals map. Within these areas development will be permitted in the circumstances relevant to these designations set out in national planning policy.

Reasoned justification:

7.12. Inappropriate development in Green Belts is defined in PPG2. This is summarised below as a general guide, but the full wording of PPG2 should be referred to for the definitive position.

7.13. Generally new buildings are inappropriate in the Green Belt unless they are essential for agriculture, operation of cemeteries or outdoor recreation, or extensions to dwellings that would not result in disproportionate additions to the original building.

7.14. Re-use of existing buildings is generally not inappropriate provided the new use does not impact on openness. However associated extensions may be inappropriate.

7.15. Specific exceptions can be made for villages and major developed sites within the Green Belt. Within the defined areas infill and extensions may be permitted. Again PPG2 provides the definitive position.

GB2 Safeguarded long term development sites

The following safeguarded long term development sites shown on the proposals map will be released if required to make up for a shortfall in either overall housing provision to meet policy H1 or the need for affordable housing identified through policy H3:

**Brookwood Farm, Knaphill
Moor Lane, Westfield**

Until then, Green Belt policy will be applied to these sites.

Reasoned justification:

7.16. Delivery of housing overall and affordable housing will be monitored on an annual basis. Overall housing provision will be compared against the rate in the South East Plan.

7.17. Delivery of affordable housing will be monitored annually and compared with the level of need for different sizes and types of accommodation identified in the Housing Needs Assessment.

7.18. If provision falls materially short against either of these measures, the Council will consider releasing land on the safeguarded long term development sites to make up the shortfall.

7.19. In doing this the Council will need to meet the criteria and sequential tests set out by Government guidance, before releasing these green field sites.



D) Housing

H1 Housing Target

Provision will be made for approximately 240 new homes per annum in Woking Borough between 2006 and 2017.

Reasoned justification:

7.20. This is the level expected to be required by the draft South East Plan. Given the level of housing demand and affordable housing need in the area, over provision will not in itself constitute a reason for refusing permission for otherwise acceptable development.

H2 Strategic approach to location of new housing

New housing will be accommodated as follows:

Within Woking Town Centre at densities generally in excess of 150 dph, or pro-rata where part of a mixed use scheme,

Within the defined High Density Residential Areas around the town centre, at densities of generally in excess of 50 dph,

Within the rest of the urban area at densities generally between 30 and 50 dph.

Where development at these densities cannot be integrated into the existing urban form lower densities will be permitted.

Equally where a higher density than these guidelines can be justified in urban design terms this will be acceptable.

The boundaries of Woking Town Centre and the High Density Residential Areas are shown on the Proposals Map.

Reasoned justification:

7.21. New housing can be accommodated on a range of sites. In certain cases it will not be permitted on sites currently used for other purposes, such as industrial, office or community uses, or public open spaces, in order to protect these uses in the interest of the balanced development of the Borough.

7.22. The densities are indicative and will depend on detailed site considerations. They reflect the principle that higher densities can be achieved in areas which are better served by public transport, and where there is already a more high density urban form.

7.23. It is expected that up to 60% of all new housing (around 140 units per year) will be provided in Woking Town Centre and in suitable areas around it, including areas around Guildford Road, Goldsworth Road and Maybury Road / Walton Road. Within all these areas, relatively high densities will be permitted as set out in the policy. This is likely to provide mainly non-family housing. The remainder will be provided in the rest of the urban area, at the generally lower densities set out in the policy (around 100 units per year). This is likely to provide mainly family housing. Development is likely to take place in all these areas through the redevelopment of existing residential and non-residential land.

H3 Affordable Housing

All new residential development will be expected to contribute towards the provision of affordable housing. For proposals of 15 units or above the development will be required to provide at least 40% of the development as affordable housing in a form which meets an unmet need identified in the Housing Needs Assessment. Proposals for developments of less than 15 units



will make a contribution towards the provision of affordable housing which may be off site.

Full details of how this policy will be implemented are set out in the Affordable Housing SPD and the Planning Obligations SPD.

Reasoned justification:

7.24. The Council will aim to meet housing need as identified in the Woking Housing Needs Assessment. New development will play a major part in achieving this.

7.25. The level of unmet need is such that all residential development has to contribute towards the provision of affordable housing at an average 40% affordable. This can either be on site or through commuted payments. SPD provides more guidance on how this can be provided.

7.26. The SPD provides for market conditions to be taken into account.

7.27. Affordable housing is defined in 'Planning Policy Statement 3 – Housing' as non-market housing, provided to those whose needs are not met by the market for example homeless persons and key workers. This can include social-rented housing and intermediate housing.

7.28. There are a variety of housing needs. These include: social housing for rent, shared ownership, housing for key workers, specialist housing for elderly or disabled people, housing for Black and Minority ethnic groups and sites for gypsies and travellers. Each development proposal will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis to consider the extent to which affordable housing needs are being met.

7.29. The safeguarded long term development sites may potentially be released to meet an unmet need for

affordable housing as set out in Policy GB2. In this case it is expected that the sites will provide at least 60% affordable housing.

H4 Housing Mix

All large housing developments of at least 100 units outside Woking Town Centre should provide a variety of unit sizes.

Reasoned justification:

7.30. Mixed sizes of homes contribute both to inclusive communities and to better designed and more interesting development. The policy is not prescriptive about what unit sizes should be provided. However it is likely that smaller units will be prevalent around Woking town centre, whereas family housing is more likely to be provided in other parts of the Borough. Unless a market develops for family housing in apartments this broad distribution is unlikely to change.

7.31. Any development site outside Woking Town centre which is at least 2 hectares or comprises at least 100 units will be required to comply with this policy. In certain cases sites below this size threshold will also be expected to comply with the policy where this will make a valuable contribution to creating inclusive communities or well designed development.

H5 Proposals involving the loss of housing

Proposals for the change of use of residential land and buildings which can still reasonably be used for residential purposes will not be permitted.

Where redevelopment of existing housing is permitted the Council will



require a number of units at least equivalent to the number currently on the site.

Exceptionally, within Woking Town Centre and the District and Local Centres, the change of use of residential property to other uses will be permitted, where it meets policies on residential amenity.

Reasoned justification:

7.32. Demand for housing is such that existing residential property should not normally be lost.

7.33. Within Woking Town Centre and the District and Local Centres a more flexible approach is needed to support the dynamic nature of these centres, where a range of uses is appropriate.



E) Employment Generating Development

E1 Location of new employment generating development

The preferred locations for employment generating development will be as follows:

- **Within Woking Town Centre (generally high density office developments), including as part of mixed use schemes**
- **Within the defined primary employment areas shown on the proposals map, provided the development is compatible with the capacity of the transport infrastructure to accommodate the additional trips**

In other locations which are or can be made accessible by public transport, office, industrial and warehousing development may be permitted, where is at a scale compatible with the urban form, transport infrastructure, and where it complies with relevant development control policies.

Reasoned justification:

7.34. The core strategy provides for growth in the economy largely through the more intensive use of existing employment areas. This is a realistic approach given land values and lack of opportunity to allocate green-field sites.

7.35. It identifies those areas which are most attractive to business occupiers as the areas for more intensive development.

7.36. Woking Town Centre has the potential to accommodate significant additional office development, in a location accessible by public transport.

7.37. Primary employment areas are also capable of accommodating additional development. Here more journeys are likely to be by car, and this will limit the suitability of the site for high density development. Primary Employment Areas are those areas most attractive to business occupiers shown on the Proposals Map and are:

Byfleet, Goldsworth Park, Lansbury Estate, Knaphill, Monument Road area, Old Woking and Sheerwater.

7.38. These areas are generally suitable for a range of normal office, industrial and local distribution uses. All applications will have to conform to development control policies.

7.39. District and Local Centres are suitable for smaller scale office development, which reflects the fact that the urban form of these centres is generally lower density, and accessibility by public transport is generally not very good. West Byfleet Centre is already a significant office location.

7.40. Larger warehousing and distribution developments can generate a significant number of HGV movements. This will limit the range of locations where such development is compatible with the transport infrastructure and impact on amenity.

7.41. Industrial developments can have an impact on residential amenity and this will limit the extent to which they will be acceptable outside Primary Employment Areas.

7.42. Employment generating development includes offices, industrial units, warehousing and other associated uses.



E2 Proposals involving the loss of employment generating development

Primary Employment Areas will be reserved primarily for employment generating uses. Development for other uses in these areas will only be permitted where:

- **It is small scale; and**
- **It is compatible with existing or potential industrial and commercial activities; and**
- **It will not impact on the economic viability of the employment site.**

In Woking Town Centre and the District and Local Centres redevelopment of employment floor space in those parts of the centre of a commercial character should contain a significant proportion of replacement employment floor space.

The redevelopment of employment sites elsewhere for alternative uses will be permitted where the existing use of the site causes harm to amenity, or where there is insufficient demand for employment uses in that location.

Reasoned justification:

7.43 It is important to retain a significant base of employment floor space, and indeed to build on this. However, at the same time it is important to accommodate the dynamic nature of demand. This policy seeks to strike this balance.

7.44 Taken together the policies on new employment development and retention of existing employment uses should be

sufficient to accommodate forecast growth in the economy, together with the take up of a proportion of the floorspace which was vacant in 2005, and the implementation of extant planning permissions.

7.45 Where redevelopment is being justified on the basis of insufficient demand, it will be for the applicant to demonstrate that this is the case. Cheaper small units of accommodation in particular are vital to enable new and small business to grow, and should be retained where there is a demand.

E3 Hotels and Overnight accommodation

Hotels and overnight accommodation will be permitted in the urban area of the Borough. Preference will be given to locations where the transport system is compatible with the proposed use.

Reasoned justification:

7.46 Research has shown that there is the economic potential for further hotels and overnight accommodation in Woking, principally to support local business. Preferred locations for them are generally similar to employment uses. That is, high density hotel development is best located in Woking Town Centre, while other employment locations, and indeed other locations, may be acceptable for lower density hotel development, which generates fewer trips.



F) Retailing

RET1 Location of new retail development (A1-A5)

The preferred location for new retail development is within existing retail centres, in accordance with the following retail hierarchy, the boundaries of which are shown on the proposals map:

Woking Town Centre – which is suitable for major retail development

District Centres – Knaphill and West Byfleet, and

Local Centres – Byfleet, Goldsworth Park, Horsell, Kingfield, St Johns and Sheerwater, which are suitable for smaller scale retail development appropriate to the size and function of these centres.

Elsewhere only very small scale retail development will be permitted.

Only if it can be demonstrated that no suitable sites are available in these locations will other sites be considered. This will be carried out in accordance with the sequential test set out in PPS 6.

Reasoned justification:

7.47 Woking Town Centre is one of the largest shopping centres in Surrey and is the main shopping centre for most of Woking Borough, and some areas just beyond the Borough boundary. It is by far the location best served by public transport in the Borough. As such it is the most suitable location for major retail development.

7.48 The retail and commercial leisure study identifies potential for 30-40,000 m² of additional retail floorspace in Woking Town Centre. This level of new development would meet additional demand from within the primary

catchment area of Woking Town Centre, and as such would not take significant trade from other town centres.

7.49 The District and Local Centres vary in size. West Byfleet, and to a lesser extent Knaphill, provide a more substantial range of shops and services and perform the role of District Centres for the east and west of the Borough respectively. The remaining centres are principally Local Centres for their immediate area. The District and Local Centres will be retained and allowed to grow in a modest way if opportunities arise.

7.50 Suitable sites for the identified potential additional retail development will be identified in the Site Allocations DPD. The Council sees no need to permit significant retail development elsewhere. However, any applications made will be dealt with in accordance with PPS6.

7.51 This policy applies to all Class A uses, A1 to A5. Uses in Classes A4 (Drinking Establishments) and A5 (Hot Food Takeaways) can generate noise, disturbance and crime and disorder uses. These issues do not affect the strategic approach to their location but are covered under the generic development control policies.

RET2 Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages

The primary shopping frontages of Woking Town Centre will remain primarily in Class A1 (Shops) use. Other uses will only be permitted where this characteristic is retained.

Within Woking Town Centre secondary frontages, any use within Classes A1 to A5, or other use appropriate to a shopping area will be permitted.

Within the frontages in the District and



Local Centres, any use within Class A1-A5, or other use appropriate to a shopping area, will be permitted, provided an adequate range and choice of Class A1 shops remains.

Elsewhere class A1 shop units will only be permitted to change to other uses where a reasonable range of retail units would still remain in the local area. Changes of use from other Class A uses, or other uses appropriate to a shopping area will be permitted.

Reasoned justification:

7.52 Retailing is a very dynamic business, and demand for different types of uses is the lifeblood of many centres. Recently many centres have changed from providing mainly Class A1 shops to providing a mix of shops and services. This has resulted in new investment and generally low levels of vacancy, and can be judged a success in those terms.

7.53 This policy will allow this process of dynamic change to continue, while safeguarding essential local shopping functions, which are particularly important for the less mobile, and potentially socially excluded.

7.54 Within Woking Town Centre a policy of retaining a high proportion of shops in the Primary frontages will be pursued. These are principally the purpose built shopping centres, and this approach ensures that these areas remain a major shopping destination with a wide range of A1 choices in the Primary shopping frontages and A1 to A5 choices in the Secondary frontages.

7.55 The District and Local Centres are too small to define primary and secondary frontages. As a result the policy requires the retention of an adequate range and choice across the centre as a whole, when considering applications for change of use from Class A1.



G) Leisure Community and other developments

LC1 Location of new recreation, leisure and community facilities

New recreation, leisure and community facilities will be encouraged.

The preferred location for development attracting a large number of visitors is in or close to Woking Town Centre or the District and Local Centres, close and accessible to their intended population catchment areas.

Facilities for outdoor sport and recreation can be located in any part of the Borough.

Reasoned justification:

7.56. Leisure and community facilities include;

Adult education centres, community halls, day centres; schools, health centres, libraries, nursery schools, places of worship, playgroups, surgeries and other similar facilities. Leisure facilities include a variety of sport, recreation and cultural buildings and facilities in public and private ownership. The majority of these uses fall within Class D of the Use Classes Order.

7.57 More intensive leisure, sport, recreation and cultural uses attract large numbers of visitors, and are best located in Woking Town Centre, which is the most sustainable location in travel terms. PPS6 defines such uses as including: cinemas, restaurants, drive-through restaurants, bars and pubs, night-clubs, casinos, health and fitness centres, indoor bowling centres, bingo halls, theatres, museums, galleries and concert halls, hotels, and conference facilities. Alternatively these kinds of uses can be located in the District and Local Centres

where the proposal is of an appropriate scale.

7.58 Where a need for these facilities cannot be met in these locations the sequential test set out in PPS6 will be applied. Location policy for new hotel development (Policy E3) has addressed the need identified by the Council's research by applying this sequential test and identifying a wider range of suitable locations as a result.

7.59 Outdoor sport and recreation requires large areas of land, and generates a relatively small number of trips per unit area, particularly in peak hours. Also some types of recreation require specific locations (e.g. water based recreation). Such uses can be located in any part of the Borough, subject to their conforming to other policies in this DPD. Specific sites for new facilities will be identified in the Site Allocations DPD.

LC2 Loss of existing leisure and community facilities

Development involving the loss of leisure or community facilities will not be permitted unless:

- (i) There is no longer a demonstrable need for the facility, or**
- (ii) Suitable alternative provision is already located nearby, or**
- (iii) Alternative and equivalent provision is made available as part of the new development or nearby.**

It will be for the developer to demonstrate that facilities are not required for use by any alternative leisure or community use.

Reasoned justification:

7.60. The tests in criteria (i) and (ii) will require demonstration that there is adequate provision for all leisure and community activities which might be able



to use the facility, not just to relocate the particular users.

7.61. This is because of the difficulty in providing leisure and community facilities in Woking, where land values in the urban area tend to price out such facilities.

7.62. Examples of leisure and community facilities include:

Adult education centres, community halls, day centres; schools, health centres, libraries, nursery schools, places of worship, playgroups, surgeries and other similar facilities. Leisure facilities include a variety of sport, recreation and cultural buildings and facilities in public and private ownership. The majority of these uses fall within Class D of the Use Classes Order.

7.63. The definition does not include facilities in Classes A or C of the Use Classes Order, which are dealt with by other policies.

LC3 Location of new Public Open Space and Outdoor Sports Facilities

Additional public open space will be provided for informal and formal recreation.

A country park will be provided in the Brookwood area. The detailed boundary of the area will be shown in the Site Allocations DPD.

Additional outdoor sports facilities will be provided to meet demand. This can be met anywhere within the Borough.

Improved children's play provision will be made to serve local areas where there is an identified shortfall or to meet increased demands as a result of new development.

Reasoned justification:

7.64 Generally the Borough is well provided with public open space.

7.65 Additional informal open space in the Brookwood area will serve two purposes. It will increase access to open space in an area which has seen a lot of development in recent years, and will also provide the necessary level of mitigation to offset the impact of future development on the SPA as required by Policy ENV1.

7.66 Outdoor sports facilities for adults will be provided to meet identified demands and shortfall. Given the nature of use of these facilities, these can be provided anywhere within the Borough.

7.67 The Council's current priorities for addressing shortfalls in children's play provision are parts of Barnsbury, Brookwood, Byfleet, Goldsworth Park, Maybury and Pyrford.

LC4 Development involving the loss of public open space

Development involving the loss of public open space will not be permitted unless:

- (i) alternative and equivalent provision is made available in the vicinity, or**
- (ii) the development is directly related to the function of the open space.**

Development involving the loss of open space to which the general public do not have a right of access, such as school playing fields or allotments, will only be permitted if it passes the tests in PPG17.

Reasoned justification:

7.68. Open space includes the following categories:



i. parks and gardens - including urban parks, country parks and formal gardens;
ii. natural and semi-natural urban greenspaces - including woodlands, urban forestry, scrub, grasslands (e.g. downlands, commons and meadows) wetlands, open and running water, wastelands and derelict open land and rock areas (e.g. cliffs, quarries and pits);
iii. green corridors - including river and canal banks, cycleways, and rights of way;
iv. outdoor sports facilities (with natural or artificial surfaces and either publicly or privately owned) - including tennis courts, bowling greens, sports pitches, golf courses, athletics tracks, school and other institutional playing fields, and other outdoor sports areas;
v. amenity greenspace (most commonly, but not exclusively in housing areas) – including informal recreation spaces, greenspaces in and around housing, domestic gardens and village greens;
vi. provision for children and teenagers - including play areas, skateboard parks, outdoor basketball hoops, and other more informal areas (e.g. 'hanging out' areas, teenage shelters);

vii. allotments, community gardens, and city (urban) farms;
viii. cemeteries and churchyards;
ix. accessible countryside in urban fringe areas; and
x. civic spaces, including civic and market squares, and other hard surfaced areas designed for pedestrians (PPG17, Annex: definitions, paragraph 2)

7.69. The Council's Leisure and Open Spaces Audit has not identified a general shortfall in public open space. However, almost all open space in the Borough scored well in terms of its quality and value for recreation and /or amenity value, and is worthy of retention.

7.70. Open space to which the public do not have access, such as school playing fields or allotments, may become surplus to requirements in their current use. Given the findings of the Leisure and Open Spaces Audit these may well be suitable for alternative development. However, any proposals must go through the sequential test set out in PPG17 to ensure that alternative open space uses are investigated before any other uses are considered.



H) Renewable Energy

REN1 Sustainable and renewable energy.

Development that would enable the production of sustainable and renewable energy will be permitted, where it complies with the generic development control policies. Where a proposal does not accord with policies of the Development Plan the Council will attach significant weight to the economic and environmental benefits of the development proposed.

Reasoned justification:

7.71 The Council has not placed any specific locational controls on sustainable and renewable energy development. Applications for such development will be initially determined on the basis of normal development control criteria.

7.72 However, it is recognised that renewable energy projects can have wider environmental and economic benefits. Environmental benefits may include a reduction in the need to use energy sources that derive from fossil fuels and therefore contribute to climate change. Economic benefits may include local job creation or cheaper fuel bills. Where the proposal does conflict with the development plan the applicant will be expected to demonstrate the environmental impact and the

environmental and economic benefits of the development.

7.73 Sustainable and renewable energy development includes generating energy from wind, biomass, fuel cell and other renewable sources, and combined heat and power.

I) Transport

TRA1 Strategic approach to new transport development

This policy will set out in detail how the plan will deliver the transport element of the preferred option. This is dependent on the completion of the Guildford and Woking Integrated Transport Strategy.

This will be included in time for the submission of the draft Core Strategy to GOSE in July 2006.

The proposals will include a major new transport interchange for Woking Town centre.

Existing safeguarded road alignments are shown on the proposals map.

Reasoned justification:

7.74 To follow on completion of the Guildford and Woking Integrated Transport Strategy.



J: Implementation

IP1 Site assembly and land acquisition

Where necessary, in order to enable development to proceed in accordance with this plan and there is a compelling case in the public interest, the Council may be prepared to use its compulsory purchase order powers to assemble a site.

Proposals that would prejudice a future more comprehensive development of neighbouring land will be refused, unless it can be demonstrated that there is no reasonable likelihood of that land coming forward for development.

Reasoned justification:

7.75. The redevelopment of existing developed sites in the urban area is a vital component in achieving the development set out in this Core Strategy.

7.76. However, sites with development potential may be held in multiple ownership, which can act as a deterrent to developers faced with complex problems of land assembly. In order to overcome this difficulty, enabling a developer to implement a sound development proposal, the Council may be prepared to assist with land acquisition through the use of its Compulsory Purchase Powers.

7.77. It is also important to ensure that the opportunity for future development of neighbouring land is not prejudiced by a smaller development proposal. Where this is the case the developer will be expected to demonstrate that reasonable attempts have been made to undertake a more comprehensive development.



Matrix of Policies and Relationship to existing policies, national guidance and other legislation

Issue	1999 Local Plan Policy	LDF Policy	Other Material Planning Considerations
SSSI's & SPA's	NE1 – SSSI's & SPA's	ENV1 – National and International Nature Conservation Designations	PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation Circular 06/05 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994
Nature Reserves and SNCI's	NE2 – Nature Reserves and SNCI's	ENV2 – Local and Regional Nature Conservation Designations	
Features of ecological or landscape importance	NE3 – Protection of Undesignated Sites	GDC1 – Design of new development	
Creation of new areas of nature conservation value in new development	NE4 – New Areas of Nature Conservation Value	GDC6 Biodiversity	
Impact on protected species	NE5 – Species Protection	None.	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations 1994. Protection of Badgers Act 1992
Impact on the landscape quality, ecological value or water quality of river corridors	NE6 – Canals and River Corridors	GDC1 - Design of new development	
Impact on landscape character of escarpments	NE7 – Escarpments	GDC1 - Design of new development	
TPO's	NE8 – TPO's	None	The Town and Country Planning Act 1990
Trees within Development Proposals	NE9 – Trees within Development Proposals	GDC1 - Design of new development	
Impact on character of surrounding landscape and landscaping	NE10 - Landscape Design	GDC1 - Design of new development	
Development in areas liable to flooding	NE11 – Flood Plain	ENV3 - Areas Liable to Flood	PPG25 - Development and flood risk
Design of new Development	BE1 – Design of new Development	GDC1 - Design of new development	
Crime Prevention	BE2 – Crime Prevention	GDC1 - Design of new development	
Accessibility	BE3 – Access for Disabilities	GDC1 - Design of new development	



Issue	1999 Local Plan Policy	LDF Policy	Other Material Planning Considerations
Development likely to generate pollution	BE4 – Environmental Pollution	GDC4 - Environmental Pollution	
Development near sources of Noise	BE5 – Development near sources of Noise	GDC4 - Environmental Pollution	PPG24 - Planning and Noise
Energy Conservation	BE6 – Energy Conservation	GDC2 - Energy efficiency	
Protection of Open Space	BE7 – Protection of Urban Open Space	LC4 - Development involving the loss of public open space	
Conservation Area Designation	BE8 – Conservation Area Designation and Enhancement	DC1 - Conservation Areas	PPG15 - Planning and the historic environment
General Policy on Conservation Areas	BE9 – General Policy on Conservation Areas	DC1 - Conservation Areas	PPG15 - Planning and the historic environment
Demolition of Listed Buildings	BE10 – Demolition of Listed Buildings	None	PPG15 - Planning and the historic environment
Alterations and Additions to Listed Buildings	BE11 – Alterations and Additions to Listed Buildings	None.	PPG15 - Planning and the historic environment
The Setting of Listed Buildings	BE12 – The Setting of Listed Buildings	None	PPG15 - Planning and the historic environment
Change of Use of Listed Buildings	BE13 – Change of Use of Listed Buildings	None	PPG15 - Planning and the historic environment
Locally Listed Buildings	BE14 – Locally Listed Buildings	GDC1 - Design of new development	PPG15 - Planning and the historic environment (addresses locally listed buildings in Conservation Areas)
Scheduled Ancient Monuments	BE15 – Scheduled Ancient Monuments	None.	PPG15 - Planning and the historic environment Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Areas Act 1979
Areas of High Archaeological Potential	BE16 – Areas of High Archaeological Potential	None.	PPG16 - Archaeology and planning
Historic Parks, Gardens and Nurseries	BE17 – Historic Parks, Gardens and Nurseries	GDC1 - Design of new development	PPG15 - Planning and the historic environment
Advertisements	BE18 – Advertisements	None.	PPG19 - Outdoor advertisement control
Illuminated Signs	BE19 – Illuminated Signs	None.	PPG19 - Outdoor advertisement control
Illuminated Adverts	BE20 – Illuminated Adverts	None.	PPG19 - Outdoor advertisement control



Issue	1999 Local Plan Policy	LDF Policy	Other Material Planning Considerations
Adverts in Conservation Areas	BE21 – Adverts in Conservation Areas	None.	PPG19 - Outdoor advertisement control
New and replacement shop fronts	BE22 – Shop fronts	GDC1 - Design of new development	
Control of Development in the Green Belt	GRB1 – Control of Development in the Green Belt	GB1 - Green Belt	PPG2 - Green Belts
New Buildings within the Green Belt	GRB2 – New Buildings within the Green Belt	GB1 - Green Belt	PPG2 - Green Belts
The Re-Use of Buildings in the Green Belt	GRB3 – The Re-Use of Buildings in the Green Belt	GB1 - Green Belt	PPG2 - Green Belts
Infill Development in Mayford Village	GRB4 – Infill Development in Mayford Village	GB1 - Green Belt	PPG2 - Green Belts
Loss of Agricultural Land	GRB5 – Loss of Agricultural Land	None.	PPS7 - Sustainable development in rural areas
Development of Moor Lane and Brookwood Farm safeguarded sites	GRB6 – Safeguarded Sites, HSG5 - Moor Lane & HSG6 - Brookwood	GB2 - Safeguarded long term development sites Site specific issues to be addressed by Site Allocations DPD	
Development to meet housing target	HSG1 – Housing Target Allocation	H1 - Housing target	
Identified Sites	HSG2 & HSG3 – Identified Sites	To be addressed by the Site Allocations DPD	
Windfall Sites	HSG7 – Windfall Sites	None. No phasing policy needed.	
Loss of Residential Land and Buildings	HSG8 – Loss of Residential Land and Buildings	H5 - Proposals involving the loss of housing	
Mix of dwelling sizes	HSG9 – Small Dwellings	H4 - Housing mix	
Affordable Housing Through New Build	HSG10 – Affordable Housing Through New Build	H3 - Affordable housing	PPG3 - Housing Circular 6/98 - Planning and affordable housing
Development of flats above shops	HSG11 – Flats above shops	H2 - Strategic approach to location of new housing	
High density residential development	HSG12 – High Density Residential Area	H2 - Strategic approach to location of new housing	
Housing for People with Disabilities	HSG13 – Housing for People with Disabilities	GDC1 - Design of new development	



Issue	1999 Local Plan Policy	LDF Policy	Other Material Planning Considerations
Sheltered accommodation	HSG14 – Elderly Persons	None specific. Covered by: GDC1 - Design of new development, GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking & H2 - Strategic approach to location of development	
Houses in Multiple Occupation	HSG15 – Houses in Multiple Occupation	None specific. Covered by: GDC1 - Design of new development & GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking	
Conversions	HSG16 – Conversions	None specific. Covered by: GDC1 - Design of new development & GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking	
Gypsy Sites	HSG17 – Gypsy Sites	To be included in Site Allocations DPD.	
Residential Development in Urban Areas	HSG18 – Residential Development in Urban Areas	H2 - Strategic approach to location of new housing	
Density and Site Coverage	HSG19 – Density and Site Coverage	GDC1 - Design of new development & H2 - Strategic approach to location of new housing	PPG3 - Housing
Urban Areas of Special Residential Character	HSG20 – Urban Areas of Special Residential Character	None. It is not proposed to include Urban areas of Special Residential Character in the Core Strategy	
Outlook, Amenity Privacy and Daylight	HSG21 – Outlook, Amenity Privacy and Daylight	GDC1 - Design of new development	
Plot Subdivision – infilling and back land	HSG22 – Plot Subdivision – infilling and back land	GDC1 - Design of new development	
Extensions	HSG23 – Extensions	GDC1 - Design of new development	
Annexes to Dwellings	HSG24 – Annexes to Dwellings	None. Policy not needed	
General considerations for new employment generating development	EMP1 – General Considerations	None specific. Covered by: E1 - Location of new employment generating development	
New business development in district and local centres	EMP2 – New Business Development in District and Local Centres	E1 - Location of new employment generating development	
New business development in the urban	EMP3 – New Business Development	E1 - Location of new employment	



Issue	1999 Local Plan Policy	LDF Policy	Other Material Planning Considerations
area	in the Urban Area	generating development	
New industrial (Class B2) development	EMP4 – Industrial (Class B2) Development	E1 - Location of new employment generating development	
New warehousing and distribution (Class B8) development	EMP5 – Warehousing and Distribution (Class B8) Development	E1 - Location of new employment generating development	
Development at Broadoaks	EMP6 – Broadoaks	GB1 - Green Belt	
Loss of B1, B2, and B8 Uses	EMP7 – Loss of B1, B2, and B8 Uses	E2 - Proposals involving the loss of employment generating development	
Development to Provide for Small Firms and Mixed Development	EMP8 – Development to Provide for Small Firms and Mixed Development	None specific. Covered by: E1 - Location of new employment generating development	RPG9 policy RE10
Hotel and overnight accommodation development	EMP9 – Hotel Development	E3 - Hotels and Overnight accommodation	
Residential to overnight accommodation	EMP10 – Residential to overnight accommodation	E3 - Hotels and Overnight accommodation	
The Shopping Hierarchy	SHP1 – The Shopping Hierarchy	RET1 - Location of new retail development (A1-A5)	
Major new retail development	SHP2 – Major New Retail Development	RET1 - Location of new retail development (A1-A5)	
New retail in district centres	SHP3 – New Retail in District Centres	RET1 - Location of new retail development (A1-A5)	
Retail service areas of district centres	SHP4 – Retail Service Areas of District Centres	RET2 - Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages	
Change of use outside retail service areas of district centres	SHP5 – Change of Use outside Retail Service Areas of District Centres	RET2 - Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages	
New Development and Change of Use in Local Centres	SHP6 – New Development and Change of Use in Local Centres	RET1 - Location of new retail development (A1-A5) & RET2 - Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages	
Change of Use of Isolated Shops	SHP7 – Change of Use of Isolated Shops	RET2 - Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages	



Issue	1999 Local Plan Policy	LDF Policy	Other Material Planning Considerations
A3 uses	SHP8 – A3 uses	None specific. Covered by: RET1 - Location of new retail development (A1-A5) & RET2 - Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages	
Amusement Centres etc	SHP9 – Amusement Centres etc	None specific. Covered by: GDC1 - Design of new development	
Farm Shops	SHP10 – Farm Shops	None. Not needed.	
Formal Recreation Open Space Provision	REC1 – Formal Recreation Open Space Provision	LC3 - Location of new Public Open Space and Outdoor Sports Facilities	
Open Space in major housing developments	REC2 – Open Space in major housing developments	LC3 - Location of new Public Open Space and Outdoor Sports Facilities	
Loss of Land in Formal Recreation Use	REC3 – Loss of Land in Formal Recreation Use	LC4 - Development involving the loss of public open space	
Loss of Informal Recreational Open Space	REC4 – Loss of Informal Recreational Open Space	LC4 - Development involving the loss of public open space	
New Recreational/Arts Development	REC5 – New Recreational/Arts Development	None specific. Covered by: LC1 - Location of new recreation, leisure and community facilities	
Loss of Buildings in Recreational Use	REC6 – Loss of Buildings in Recreational Use	LC2 - Loss of existing leisure and community facilities	
Intensification of Use of Land in Formal Recreational Use	REC7 – Intensification of Use of Land in Formal Recreational Use	None.	
Horse keeping and riding facilities	REC8 – Horse keeping and riding facilities	None specific. Covered by: GB1 - Green Belt	PPG2 - Green Belts & PPS7 - Sustainable development in rural areas
Golf Development	REC9 – Golf Development	None specific. Covered by: GB1 - Green Belt	PPG2 - Green Belts & PPS7 - Sustainable development in rural areas
Noisy sports/adventure games	REC10 – Noisy and Disruptive Activities	None specific. Covered by: GDC4 - Environmental pollution & GB1 - Green Belt	
Improved Informal Recreational Provision	REC11 – Improved Informal Recreational Provision	None. Not required.	
Allotments	REC12 - Allotments	LC4 - Development involving the loss	PPG17 - Planning for open space,



Issue	1999 Local Plan Policy	LDF Policy	Other Material Planning Considerations
		of public open space	sport and recreation
New Public Rights of Way network	REC13 – Public Rights of Way	LC3 - Location of new Public Open Space and Outdoor Sports Facilities	PPG17 - Planning for open space, sport and recreation
Recreation and tourism potential of Basingstoke Canal	REC15 – Basingstoke Canal	None specific. Covered by: LC3 - Location of new Public Open Space and Outdoor Sports Facilities	PPG17 - Planning for open space, sport and recreation
Brookwood Canalside Country Park	REC16 – Brookwood Canalside Country Park	LC3 - Location of new Public Open Space and Outdoor Sports Facilities	PPG17 - Planning for open space, sport and recreation
Woking Palace Country Park	REC17 – Woking Palace Country Park	None specific. Covered by: LC3 - Location of new Public Open Space and Outdoor Sports Facilities	PPG17 - Planning for open space, sport and recreation
Location and Provision of Community Facilities	CUS1 – Location and Provision of Community Facilities	LC1 - Location of new recreation, leisure and community facilities	
Loss of Community Facilities	CUS2 – Loss of Community Facilities	LC2 - Loss of existing leisure and community facilities	
New library at Knaphill	CUS4 – Knaphill Library	No longer needed.	
New Health and Community Centre in Sheerwater	CUS5 – Sheerwater Health and Community Centre	No longer needed.	
Change of use from residential to community facilities	CUS6 – Change of Use of Residential to Community Facilities	None.	
Development of educational facilities	CUS7 – Schools	None specific. Covered by: GDC1 - Design of new development & GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking	
Renewable Energy	CUS8 – Renewable Energy	REN1 - Sustainable and renewable energy	PPS22 Renewable energy
Combined Heat and Power Stations	CUS9 – Combined Heat and Power Stations	REN1 - Sustainable and renewable energy	PPS22 Renewable energy
Recycling Collection Points	CUS10 – Recycling Collection Points	None specific. Covered by: GDC1 - Design of new development & GDC5 - Planning obligations	
Telecommunications development	CUS11 - Telecommunications	None.	PPG8 Telecommunications
Domestic Satellite Receiving Antennae	CUS12 – Domestic Satellite Receiving Antennae	GDC1 - Design of new development	



Issue	1999 Local Plan Policy	LDF Policy	Other Material Planning Considerations
Transport related proposals	MV1 – General Principles	TRA1 - Strategic approach to new transport development	PPG13 Transport
Transport Strategy	MV2 – Transport Strategy	TRA1 - Strategic approach to new transport development	PPG13 Transport
Movement implications of Development	MV3 – Movement implications of Development	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking & TRA1 - Strategic approach to new transport development	
Improvements to Transport Infrastructure	MV4 – Improvements to Transport Infrastructure	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking & GDC5 - Planning obligations	
Environmental Impact of Traffic	MV5 – Environmental Impact of Traffic	GDC4 - Environmental pollution	
Design of new Roads	MV6 – Design of new Roads	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking	
Access to A Class Roads	MV7 – Access to A Class Roads	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking	
Roadside Facilities	MV8 – Roadside Facilities	Not required.	
Off Street Parking	MV9 – Off Street Parking	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking	
Public Off Street Parking	MV10 – Public Off Street Parking	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking & TRA1 - Strategic approach to new transport development	
Horsell Village Car Park	MV11 – Horsell Village Car Park	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking & TRA1 - Strategic approach to new transport development Detail will be addressed by Site Allocations DPD.	
Cycle Parking Standards	MV12 – Cycle Parking Standards	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking & TRA1 - Strategic approach to new transport development	



Issue	1999 Local Plan Policy	LDF Policy	Other Material Planning Considerations
Park and Ride	MV13 – Park and Ride	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking & TRA1 - Strategic approach to new transport development	
Commuter Parking	MV14 – Commuter Parking	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking & TRA1 - Strategic approach to new transport development	
Rail Network and Interchange Facilities	MV15 – Rail Network and Interchange Facilities	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking & TRA1 - Strategic approach to new transport development	
Servicing	MV16 – Servicing	GDC1 - Design of new development	
Pedestrian Facilities	MV17 – Pedestrian Facilities	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking	
Cycle Facilities	MV18 – Cycle Facilities	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking	
Heavy Goods Vehicles	MV19 – Heavy Goods Vehicles	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking	
Bus Services	MV20 – Bus Services	Not needed. Local Transport Plan issue	
Bus Priority Measures	MV21 - Bus Priority Measures	Not needed. Local Transport Plan issue.	
MV22 – Motorway Widening	MV22 – Motorway Widening	Not required.	
Major Highway Improvements in the Town Centre	MV23 – Major Highway Improvements in the Town Centre	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking & TRA1 - Strategic approach to new transport development	
Chertsey Road/Monument Road Link	MV25 – Chertsey Road/Monument Road Link	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking & TRA1 - Strategic approach to new transport development	
Route Management Studies	MV26 - Route Management Studies	Not needed.	
Minor Highway and Transport Improvements	MV27 – Minor Highway and Transport Improvements	Not needed.	



Issue	1999 Local Plan Policy	LDF Policy	Other Material Planning Considerations
Design in Town Centre	WTC1 – Design in Town Centre	GDC1 - Design of new development & DC2 - Strategic approach to design in Woking Town Centre	
Height of Buildings	WTC2 – Height of Buildings	GDC1 - Design of new development & DC2 - Strategic approach to design in Woking Town Centre	
Space Between Buildings	WTC3 – Space Between Buildings	GDC1 - Design of new development	
Development Fronting Victoria Way	WTC4 – Development Fronting Victoria Way	GDC1 - Design of new development	
Design of Development Fronting Basingstoke Canal	WTC5 – Design of Dev Fronting Basingstoke Canal	GDC1 - Design of new development	
Public Art	WTC6 – Public Art	GDC5 - Planning obligations	
Residential Accommodation in Dev Schemes	WTC7 – Residential Accommodation in Dev Schemes	H2 - Strategic approach to location of new housing	
Residential Density	WTC8 – Residential Density	H2 - Strategic approach to location of new housing	
New Business Development in Woking Town Centre	WTC9 – New Business Development in Woking Town Centre	E1 - Location of new employment generating development	
Conversion of Outmoded Office Buildings	WTC10 – Conversion of Outmoded Office Buildings	E2 - Proposals involving the loss of employment generating development	
Development in Goldsworth Road Regeneration Area	WTC11 – Goldsworth Road Regeneration Area	None specific. Covered by: E1 - Location of new employment generating development	
Hotel Development	WTC12 – Hotel Development	E3 - Hotels and Overnight accommodation	
New Retail in Town Centre	WTC13 – New Retail in Town Centre	RET1 - Location of new retail development (A1-A5)	
Primary Shopping Area	WTC14 – Primary Shopping Area	RET2 - Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages	
Secondary Shopping Area	WTC15 – Secondary Shopping Area	RET2 - Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages	
Goldsworth Road	WTC16 – Goldsworth Road	RET2 - Primary and Secondary Shopping Frontages	
Basingstoke Canal Parkway	WTC17 – Basingstoke Canal Parkway	None specific. Covered by: DC2: Strategic Approach to Design in	



Issue	1999 Local Plan Policy	LDF Policy	Other Material Planning Considerations
		Woking Town Centre.	
Highway Proposals in the Town Centre	WTC18 – Highway Proposals in the Town Centre	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking	
Public transport Hub at Woking Station	WTC19 – Public transport Hub at Woking Station	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking & TRA1 - Strategic approach to new transport development	
Provision for Public Transport	WTC20 – Provision for Public Transport	TRA1 - Strategic approach to new transport development	
Car and Cycle Parking	WTC21 – Car and Cycle Parking	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking	
Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities	WTC22 – Pedestrian and Cycle Facilities	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking	
Additional Commuter Car Parking	WTC23 – Additional Commuter Car Parking	GDC3 - Transport, highway safety and vehicle parking & TRA1 - Strategic approach to new transport development	
Proposals Sites in the Town Centre	WTC24 – Proposals Sites in the Town Centre	To be set out in Site Allocations DPD. Also: DC2 - Strategic approach to design in Woking Town Centre	
Village Centres	VCN1 – Village Centres		
Scale of Development	VCN2 – Scale of Development	None specific. Covered by: GDC1 - Design of new development	
Community Benefits to enhance village centres	VCN3 – Community Benefit: Environmental Enhancement	GDC5 - Planning obligations	
Community Benefit to improve accessibility of village centres	VCN4 – Community Benefit: Improvements to Accessibility	GDC5 - Planning obligations	
Site Assembly	IMP1 – Site Assembly	IP1 - Site assembly and land acquisition	
Land Acquisition to meet the identified needs of the Community	IMP2 – Land Acquisition to meet the identified needs of the Community	IP1 - Site assembly and land acquisition	
Planning Benefits	IMP3 – Planning Benefits	GDC5 - Planning obligations	



Section 4: Key Influences on the Preferred Option



Key Influences on the selection of the Preferred Option

This section summarises the key influences on the selection of the preferred option. It covers the following areas:

- National and Regional Planning Policy
- Local Policy Context
- Sustainability Appraisal
- Habitats Directive 1992
- Issues Arising from Research
- Key Findings from early stage engagement with stakeholders and the public

Each influence is described in turn, and the key ways it has influenced the preferred option are set out.

National and Regional Planning Policy

The spatial strategy of the preferred option has been prepared in the context of the following components of national and regional planning policy:

- The need for general conformity with the emerging South East Plan housing and other policies
- The fact that the Green Belt boundary cannot be easily changed
- The need to make the best use of urban land
- The need to use brown-field sites before green-field sites
- Application of a sequential test with town centres as the first option
- Protection of important Environmental Areas.

The effect of these components on the preferred option is described below.

South East Plan housing and other policies

The South East Plan is to be the spatial strategy for the South East region for the period to 2026. It is being prepared by the South East England Regional Assembly. A significant purpose of the South East Plan is to set the level of new homes to be built in

each Borough. The Council expects that the Plan which SEERA submits to the government later in 2006 will set a requirement for Woking of around 240 new homes per year. The Borough level housing figures in the South East Plan have been developed since the Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation, and have been a significant influence on the choice of preferred option. The preferred option will enable this level of development to take place for the period to 2017.

The South East Plan identifies a hub centred on Woking Town Centre, where new higher density development and transport improvements should be focussed. Woking Town Centre is also identified as a strategic shopping centre. The preferred option for the Core Strategy focuses development on Woking Town Centre, and as a result the Council considers that it is in general conformity with the South East Plan.

The Green Belt Boundary

The boundary of the Green Belt in Woking was set by the Woking Borough Local Plan in 1994. Under government guidance Green Belt boundaries can only be changed in exceptional circumstances. Such circumstances should normally be set out in the first instance in a County or regional level plan. Neither the Surrey Structure Plan nor the emerging South East Plan identifies any strategic need to review the Green Belt boundary.

In addition the Council's technical research shows no need to release Green Belt land in order to accommodate the social and economic needs of the Borough over the next ten years. As a result the preferred option does not propose making any change to the Green Belt boundary in Woking.

Making the best use of Urban Land

Government guidance aims to make the best use of urban land by promoting minimum densities for housing and other forms of development. The Government's current guideline densities for housing are 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare, with higher densities in sustainable locations such as town



centres. The preferred option meets these requirements. Draft revisions to this guidance have recently been published in Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing. If confirmed these will need to be taken into account in the final "Submission" version of the Plan.

Using brown-field sites before green field sites

Government guidance sets out a clear sequence for identifying land for new development. This is that opportunities for using previously developed land (known as "brown-field" land) should be taken first. Green-field sites should only be used where the capacity of brown-field sites is insufficient.

The preferred option follows this principle. Development is focussed on brown field sites. Green-field sites are safeguarded as a reserve to be used to meet housing need if insufficient brown-field land in the built-up area can be found.

Sequential test with town centres as the first option

Government guidance is that town centres are the best location for new retail development and a range of other functions which generate significant travel demand. Only if there is insufficient potential in town centres should other locations be considered. In Woking this is backed up by the designation of Woking Town Centre in the South East Plan as a hub where new development should be located, backed up by public transport improvements.

The preferred option follows this principle. It maximises the contribution which Woking Town Centre can make to retail and office development. This is sufficient to address retail demand, but not sufficient to accommodate all forecast economic potential. As a result the preferred option provides for some modest economic growth in other locations within the urban area.

Protection of Important Environmental Areas

Government Guidance advises that key environmental designations such as Areas Liable to Flood and designated sites of nature conservation value should be protected in LDF's. The spatial strategy does this, and these areas are shown on the Proposals Map. However, Government Guidance also indicates that existing local landscape designations need to be critically examined to see if they are worthy of retention. This has been done and as a result those shown in the 1999 Woking Local Plan are not being carried forward into the LDF.

Local Policy Context

Woking Community Strategy

The preferred option has also been developed in the context of the aims of the Woking Community Strategy. Following significant community consultation and engagement, the Woking Community Strategy was published in July 2002 and sets out a number of aims under six key themes identified by the community:-

- A strong community spirit with a clear sense of belonging and responsibility
- A clean, healthy and safe environment
- An integrated and accessible transport system, recognising Woking's potential as a transport hub
- Access to housing that is decent and affordable for local people and key workers
- A community which values personal health and well-being
- Integrated and accessible local facilities and services.

These priorities have influenced the development of the preferred option significantly. In particular, the priority to provide access to affordable housing is one of the main drivers of the strategy. Priorities for transport, accessible facilities and a clean healthy and safe environment are also major drivers of the preferred option.



A review of the Woking Community Strategy is currently being carried out. Any changes to the aims will need to be taken into account in the “Submission” version of the Core Strategy.

A number of other Council strategies also have close links to the LDF. In particular these include the Woking Housing Strategy and Woking Cultural Strategy. The relationship of a wide range of strategies to the LDF can be found in the Sustainability Appraisal appendix 6.



Sustainability Appraisal

Local Development Frameworks are required by legislation to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment. The Council has published a Sustainability Appraisal of the Preferred Option, which is available under separate cover. Comments on the Sustainability Appraisal are welcomed.

The final Sustainability Appraisal Report has been produced by Tom Jones, an independent consultant. This has ensured objectivity and external challenge. The initial sustainability report and scoping reports were produced in-house.

The Sustainability Appraisal has:

- Identified 20 sustainability objectives for Woking which the Core Strategy can be assessed against
- Identified indicators to measure progress against the objectives
- Documented the baseline position on all indicators so that future progress can be measured
- Identified the requirements of a large number of strategies and plans which apply to Woking, and how these impact on the sustainability objectives
- Assessed the likely effects of the four options in the Issues and Options report on achieving the sustainability objectives
- Assessed the likely effects of the Preferred Option on achieving the Sustainability Objectives

Consultation has taken place with relevant stakeholders on both the Scoping report and the Initial Sustainability Report. A schedule of responses is included in an appendix to the report. There is now a further period of consultation on the final Sustainability Appraisal.

The Sustainability Appraisal does not score the options, but seeks ways to integrate sometimes complex objectives and achieve them together. It therefore provides a thorough audit trail of how sustainability

considerations have been taken into account in choosing the preferred option.

The Sustainability Appraisal has identified key effects, beneficial, uncertain and adverse, of the preferred option in achieving the sustainability objectives. These are as follows:

Beneficial Effects

The strategy aims to ensure that as much **affordable housing** as possible is provided. This is part of the solution to the problem of meeting housing need in an area of high house prices. The strategy for housing delivery should also provide the opportunity to improve the amount and quality of open space and to enhance biodiversity, to the benefit of the health of everyone

The strategy of high density development in Woking Town Centre makes the **best use of urban land**. This reduces, but does not eliminate, the likelihood of green field sites being required. It should also provide the opportunity to improve infrastructure and transport in the town centre.

Biodiversity and the green character of the Borough will be protected. Should green field sites be required for family homes, a full ecological assessment should be undertaken to ensure any harm to biodiversity is minimised and that any opportunity to improve habitats can be taken.

The strategy will protect **areas of historic interest**. However, high density development in Woking Town Centre and other existing centres provides a design challenge to ensure improvements are made to the built environment and to ensure accessibility to quality natural and open space.



Uncertain Effects

Focusing development in the town centre, it is hoped the Strategy will facilitate improved viability of public transport and **reduce the need to travel by private car** to work or for services. However, this is uncertain because it relies on public investment being forthcoming.

Adverse Effects

There is the potential for new development to increase surface water run-off and **the risk of flooding** for the 3,500 properties in the Borough at risk of flooding. Sustainable Urban Drainage and storm water storage will need to be provided within new development, particularly if green field sites are developed.

The Sustainability Appraisal also includes 24 policy recommendations. In some cases these have already been taken into account in drawing up the preferred option. In other cases the Council will consider them and make a response in preparing the "Submission" version of the Core Strategy. The recommendations are summarised below:

Housing

The Core Strategy should identify the achievement of an integrated mix of decent homes as an objective. This will be particularly important to any development of the safeguarded long-term development sites.

Accessibility and local service provision would be important should the safeguarded long term development sites be developed.

A full risk assessment and consideration of the impact on the water environment would be needed should the safeguarded long term development sites be developed.

The Council should consider whether there are any opportunities to improve the economic viability of investing in unfit homes

by improving their accessibility by public transport.

Economy

The Core Strategy should set as an objective maintaining or improving accessibility to employment from more deprived areas.

Retail

The Core Strategy should encourage mixed uses in Woking Town Centre.

The Core Strategy should identify as an objective accessibility to local affordable services from more deprived areas.

Geographical Extent of Woking Town Centre

Redevelopment to provide apartments around Woking Town Centre may result in the loss of family homes. Policy should be clear about the extent to which this is appropriate.

Public Open Space

The Core Strategy should recognise the relationship between delivering improved accessibility to open space while enabling SSSI's to remain in, or reach, "favourable" condition.

The Core Strategy should also recognise the potential impact of increased recreational pressure on the ecological value of sites not subject to national ecological designation, particularly those close to Woking Town Centre, where most growth is to take place.

Targets for access to open space in Woking should be identified and monitored.

Transport

The LDF, either in the Core Strategy or subsequent DPD's, should assist areas which are found by the Surrey CC accessibility study as having accessibility problems in addition to high levels of deprivation.



The Parking Standards SPD should balance the reduction of maximum parking standards in Woking Town Centre with maintaining accessibility and choice for all.

Built Environment

A range of detailed recommendations for inclusion in the Generic Development Control policies.

Natural Environment

Policy should set out the Council's expectations for the scope of EIA's and Appropriate Assessments under the Habitat Regulations

A range of detailed recommendations for inclusion in the Generic Development Control Policies.

Climate Change

The Core Strategy should include a more definitive statement about climate change.

Social and Community Infrastructure

Contributions towards District Heating (CHP) schemes should be sought as part of the proposed tariff based planning obligations.

The Core Strategy should identify any known requirement for additional water infrastructure.

Woking Borough Council should seek to achieve an excellent understanding of the balance required in seeking community benefits, other commitments and commercial viability

The LDF should seek to address any issues arising from Surrey CC's accessibility study.

Sustainable Construction and Design

Detailed recommendations for inclusion in the proposed Climate Neutral Development SPD.

General Design

The Core Strategy should identify the link between design and crime.

Indicators and Monitoring

Detailed recommendations for improved or amended sustainability indicators.

The Sustainability Appraisal will be monitored through an Annual Sustainability Monitoring report. This will monitor the key indicators to assess performance in achieving the sustainability objectives.

Requirements of Habitats Directive 1992

The European Court recently ruled that the Government had not fully implemented the Habitats Directive in relation to development plans. Defra, in partnership with ODPM are currently working on amendments to the regulations and on providing guidance on appropriate assessments.

The Council has been advised by the Government Office not to undertake any work on appropriate assessments until this advice has been received. The Council is, however, participating in English Nature's Thames Basin Heaths project which looks at the impact of new development on the Special Protection Area.



Issues Arising From Research

A range of technical reports has been produced to inform work on the LDF Core Strategy. This section summarises the findings of the technical reports. The full reports are available free of charge on the Council's website, or in paper copy for a modest charge.

The full list of relevant technical papers is shown below.

- Woking Borough Housing Potential Study
- Woking Borough Housing Needs Assessment Update 2004
- Woking Borough Employment Needs Assessment
- Commentary on Employment Land
- Surrey Hotel Futures
- Woking Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Audit
- Woking Retail and Commercial Leisure Study
- Woking Social and Community Infrastructure Requirements Study
- Woking Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) Report

Woking Borough Housing Potential Study

The study identifies potential housing sites and makes assumptions about the rate at which small sites will come forward. It shows enough potential to deliver the preferred option, based largely on the assumption that there will continue to be demand for significant high density town centre apartment developments, as part of mixed use schemes.

Certain areas of potential are not quantified at this stage. Specifically:

- Rear garden sites
- Redevelopment of secondary employment sites
- Safeguarded long-term development sites.

Woking Borough Housing Needs Assessment Update 2004

This study shows that over 500 households per annum require affordable accommodation. Not all of this has to be new build property. However, the study finds that current levels of provision leave a significant shortfall particularly for affordable family housing. A revision to the Housing Needs Assessment is currently in preparation.

Woking Borough Employment Needs Assessment

This study shows that there is potential for significant employment growth in Woking over the period of the Core Strategy, but that the forecasts are subject to considerable uncertainty. The assessment identifies the potential for employment growth of additional office and industrial development in:

- Woking Town Centre (mainly office)
- Primary Employment Areas (mainly industrial)

Floorspace increases of up to 10% in these areas were assessed, together with a reduction in employment floorspace in other locations due to redevelopment for housing. This approach is consistent with the assumptions made in the Housing Potential Study about retention of employment land and the promotion of mixed use development in Woking Town Centre. These increases would be insufficient to accommodate all forecast employment growth. However, the report concludes that as there is considerable uncertainty over whether the forecasts will be achieved this may not be necessary. As a result the Preferred Option does not seek to accommodate all the forecast employment growth.

Commentary on Employment Land

This study (produced for the Council by Vail Williams Research) identifies the market potential of existing employment areas in



the Borough in the medium term. It concludes that most employment areas have potential to play an ongoing economic role. A few are identified as potentially surplus to requirements. The preferred option safeguards those areas identified by the study as having continuing potential.

Surrey Hotel Futures

This study (carried out for Surrey local authorities by Tourism Solutions and ACK tourism) identifies potential for additional hotel development in Woking in both the budget and 3 to 4 star categories.

Woking Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Audit

The audit has found that the level of accessible public open space in the Borough is broadly appropriate to meet needs. There is some need for more playing pitches, and also for the implementation of the programme of improvements to children's play areas.

The provision of semi-natural areas is generous in terms of the local population, but these areas are of national and international importance for nature conservation, so serve a purpose beyond their local role.

As a result there is very limited scope to build on public open spaces. Leading from this the preferred option safeguards existing public open space, and identifies an opportunity to provide new open space to meet the needs arising from new development.

Woking Retail and Commercial Leisure Study

This study (produced for the Council by DTZ Peda) identifies a baseline capacity for new retail floorspace to serve the increase in trade within the existing catchment, and a higher capacity if some element of clawback of trade from other centres, principally Guildford, is sought.

The preferred option would achieve the potential identified in the report for some clawback of trade currently lost to other centres. This would all be in Woking Town Centre. The study also identifies modest potential for additional retailing in West Byfleet. However, because of the difficulty of implementing this, both in terms of likely developer interest and the urban form of the centre, the preferred option does not seek to achieve it.

Woking Social and Community Infrastructure Requirements Study

This study has not identified any major shortfalls in social and community infrastructure which would prejudice the implementation of the preferred option.

Woking Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) Report

This study (provided for the Council by Surrey Wildlife Trust) reviews the original schedule of SNCI's identified in 1993. This has resulted in an increase in the number of SNCI's from 39 to 41. These are shown on the Proposals Map.

To view the full documentation on any of the above research reports, visit www.woking.gov.uk/council/planning/ldf or contact the Planning Policy Team on 01483 743871.

Outstanding Research Areas

Two areas of research are currently outstanding.

Guildford and Woking Integrated Transport Study

This study, being led by Surrey County Council, is still in progress. This will be available to inform the production of the "Submission" plan.

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Study



This study, being carried out by English Nature, is still in progress. It will be complete to inform the submission plan. The purpose of the study is to identify and agree the extent of mitigation measures required from new development to ensure no harm is caused to the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, which includes land in 11 Boroughs across three Counties.

Work done to date by the Borough Council indicates that the level of development proposed in this preferred option can be accommodated, with satisfactory mitigation. However this needs to be verified by English Nature.



Selection of the Preferred Option – Key issues from the Issues and Options Consultation

The Core Strategy Issues and Options Report identified four possible options for the LDF Core Strategy. These formed the basis of the public engagement exercise.

The Options had an increasing rate of development, and can be very simply summarised as follows:

- Option 1 – reduced rate of development - 200 dwellings per year
- Option 2 – trend rate of development - focussing development in Woking Town Centre – 280 dwellings per year
- Option 3 – above trend rate of development – focussing development on Woking Town Centre, and also in primary employment areas, West Byfleet and Moor Lane Westfield – 340 dwellings per year
- Option 4 – as Option 3 with the addition of Brookwood Farm Knaphill – 370 dwellings per year

8.81 Simplistically the higher rates of development were better able to meet social and economic needs, in particular the need for affordable housing, but would require higher rates of intervention to manage environmental impacts and to address transport implications.

8.82. Feedback from the public engagement consisted of 1000+ responses to the public questionnaire and also feedback via a public workshop. In addition over 30 more detailed written responses were made, mainly from key stakeholders, such as public or representative bodies. The detailed findings from the public engagement and written responses are set out in the Report of Consultation on Core Strategy Issues and Options.

8.83. As far as the public engagement is concerned, the key finding was that there was no clear majority in favour of any one option. The responses were as follows:

Overall options	
Option 2	31%
Option 4	25%
Option 1	24%
Option 3	18%
No preference	3%

8.84. It is particularly interesting to note that reducing the rate of development in the Borough (Option 1) was not a popular option. Looking deeper at the specific preferences for the key spatial issues, which are the location of new housing, employment and retail development. The following preferences were found.

Housing spatial options	
Former industrial sites (Option 1)	85%
Apartments in and around Woking town centre (Option 2)	44%
Safeguarded long-term development sites (specifically for affordable housing) (Options 3 & 4)	41%
Redevelopment of existing houses and gardens (Option 1 / Option 3)	26%

Employment Spatial Options	
Existing industrial and business parks (Option 3)	85%
Woking Town Centre (Option 2)	38%
West Byfleet Centre (Option 3)	29%

Retail spatial options	
Woking Town Centre (Option 2)	66%
West Byfleet Centre (Option 3)	39%

8.85. This shows that generally speaking the spatial options from Option 2 proved reasonably popular, whereas the



components within options 3 and 4 were much more variable in their popularity, with ratings from 26% to 85%.

8.86. The detailed responses from public bodies reinforced these conclusions. Key points from these included:

- Concern about the possible infrastructure, transport and environmental implications of the higher rates of growth in options 3 and 4 (Surrey County Council, English Nature, Environment Agency)
- Concern that the regional employment forecasts are over optimistic and there is no need to plan for the level of employment growth in Options 3 and 4 (Surrey County Council)
- Specific concerns about the infrastructure and environment implications for West Byfleet from options 3 and 4 (Residents Association)
- General support for a strategy focussed on Woking Town Centre as the most sustainable location, as in option 2 (Surrey County Council, Network Rail)
- House-building interests were strongly supportive of the highest rate of house-building possible (Option 4). This was a minority view restricted to this group. (House Builders Federation, Landowner interests)
- Some concern that a strongly focussed town centre based strategy could lead to an over-supply of apartments, and not enough family homes. (LA21, Surrey County Council)
- Concern from local residents about the environmental and infrastructure impact of development at Moor Lane in Option 3 (local residents)
- Proposal that the target for affordable housing should be increased from 35% to 40% (Surrey County Council), although house-builders want flexibility in applying any proportion.

8.87. This indicates that an approach based on Option 2 would have most public

and stakeholder support, although there were some reservations, and some elements of Options 3 and 4 (but not all) had significant support as well. The key concerns about the higher growth options were about the impact on infrastructure and the environment. These concerns were of a general nature, rather than identifying firm limits to capacity.

8.88. The questionnaire also investigated people's preference on the approach to transport planning and to tackling climate change. These questions were not directly linked to a particular option. The key findings were as follows:

Transport Options	
Improved Public Transport Interchange	62%
Safe Walking Routes	61%
Park and Ride	59%
Safe cycle routes	53%
Increased road capacity	30%
Bus Lanes	28%

8.89. This finding is interesting in that measures to change the road network, through increasing capacity for cars or providing bus lanes were not popular. Park and ride, and measures for cycling, walking and improved interchange facilities were much more popular. This will be taken into account in developing a transport strategy. However, as set out in Section 2 – The Preferred Option, this work is still ongoing.

Climate Change Options	
Insist that all new developments use sustainable and renewable energy	76%
Advise developers about sustainable and renewable energy but not make it a requirement	22%

8.90. This finding demonstrated strong public support for the LDF to show leadership on the issue of sustainable and renewable energy by setting challenging targets for new developments.



Issues Arising from Public Engagement on the spatial vision

8.91 This section summarises the key findings of the public engagement on a Spatial Vision for Woking which was carried out in 2004, and how these impacted on the four options selected at issues and options stage. The figures in the report are taken from a questionnaire survey of the Woking Citizens Panel. The full report is available free of charge on the Council's website, or available in paper copy from the Council for a modest charge.

8.92 Feedback on each of the Core Strategy Key Objectives is set out below.

Woking Town Centre as a growing hub for the area.

This objective had an 83% approval rating. However when asked directly about how the town centre should grow people's attitude was mixed. 49% did not want the town centre to grow, whereas 51% supported some growth. This was made up of 23% who supported building up, 19% who supported building out, and 9% both. The area most frequently mentioned as having potential to extend outwards was east-west, along Goldsworth Road or Maybury Road / Walton Road.

The most popular improvements people wished to see to the town centre were to its environment, its shops and access to it (all mentioned by at least 30% of people). The potential changes which generated most opposition were more bars, offices, apartments, hotels and modern landmark buildings (all mentioned by 30% of respondents).

However more people who expressed an opinion considered that the new apartments in and around the town centre have made the appearance of the area better than those who consider it has made it worse.

All in all this is a mixed picture. People want a vibrant town centre, a small

majority support further growth of the town centre, and a majority like the impact of the new apartments that have been built. However, more bars, offices, hotels and apartments, particularly in a modern style, are not popular.

8.97 The research cannot show why these things are unpopular. It is possibly because local people do not see them as meeting any immediate need which they have.

8.98 The general message is that this is an issue which divides opinion, but a small majority do support continued growth of the town centre. Further growth, as envisaged in options 2-4, would need to be planned carefully to address issues of concern if this support is to continue. It would also need to address the need for improved transport access to it. Generally delivering growth through increased densities within the existing town centre appears more likely to have public support than extending the area of the town centre.

Attractive local communities throughout the Borough

8.99 This objective had an 89% approval rating. People generally had significant expectations of having access to a wide range of facilities within 1 mile of their home. Generally a clear majority (at least 65%) of people considered that the current level of facilities they had locally were adequate.

1.1 Planning related problems people experience in their local areas are principally traffic congestion and parking. Around 80% of people see these as a problem, with 40% seeing them as a big problem. A clear majority of people consider that recent development in their local area has made these problems worse.



1.2 The appearance of their local area is a more minor problem for people, with only 15% seeing it as a big problem. However, around 40% of people consider that recent development has made the appearance of their area worse, compared to only 20% who consider it has made it better.

7.99 The general impact of all the options on local communities is a broad continuation of existing policies. It is the continued perceived impact of these on traffic congestion and parking which is likely to generate most concerns. There is also a need to focus on how new development can improve the appearance of local areas rather than making it worse. This would be particularly the case for options 3 and 4 which envisage somewhat higher levels of development in the residential communities of the Borough.

7.99 Impact on access to facilities is a more minor issue, with a majority being satisfied about the current provision. However, there is always the potential for a particular local issue, such as the capacity of an individual school or doctor's surgery, to cause local concern when new development is proposed.

Homes to suit all needs and pockets

7.99 This objective had a 77% approval rating. Types of housing people considered were most needed were housing for those on low incomes (72%), family housing for sale (60%) and housing for elderly people (54%). Other types such as apartments (28%) and executive homes (10%) had less support.

7.99 People's aspirations would be most effectively met by option 4, and to a lesser extent option 3. These provide the maximum opportunity to deliver more family housing, including affordable housing. Option 2, which focuses largely on apartments in and around the town centre, would not address these priorities effectively.

A green Borough where the countryside is never far away

7.99 This objective had a 95% approval rating, the highest of all objectives. This is reflected in the very strong support for the proposition that the Green Belt should not be built on under any circumstances, supported by 78% of respondents.

7.99 None of the options require building in the Green Belt, and so are in line with this objective. However options 3 and 4 would require release of two green field safeguarded long-term development sites. It is unlikely that the public as a whole will currently understand the different status of these sites, which are not in the Green Belt.

7.99 A clear majority of people were happy with the amount of "greenery" in their area. However, 40% of people thought that new development had adversely affected the adequacy of greenery in their area, compared with 60% who thought it had made no difference. This shows that while people may not perceive that there is a shortage of greenery, a significant proportion are likely to oppose any development which appears to result in the loss of trees, grass or other green space. All options focus strongly on using previously developed land, which should address these concerns. However option 1 would be likely to raise least public disquiet, as it aims to reduce the rate of development below current trends.

7.99 An exception to the general satisfaction with the level of greenery was in the town centre, where "more greenery" was one of the top six improvements people supported.

A busy, buoyant economy

7.99 This objective had a 93% approval rating, one of the highest



recorded. However, people's actual perceptions of the benefits of new economic development were not very positive. New offices in the town centre were not popular, and around 25% of people thought new office and industrial development had made the area worse, compared with only around 10% who thought it had made it better. The majority, around 70% thought it had made no difference. This is not too surprising, as the last five years has seen relatively little new economic development in the Borough.

7.99 Of a list of twenty local facilities, having access to jobs close to home was the least important to people, with around 60% of those who work seeing it as important. The rest were presumably happy to commute elsewhere.

7.99 This is a mixed picture. There is very strong public support for the principle of a busy buoyant economy. However, for most local residents who expressed a view the negative impact of new economic development outweighs the benefits.

7.99 The business community takes a different view. Businesses particularly focussed on concerns about the loss of secondary employment sites to housing.

7.99 Option 2 and particularly options 3-4 address the forecast level of employment growth best and so would be most able to meet the objective. However, if these are to be chosen it appears that the impact of new development will have to be carefully managed to maintain public support.

A Borough which leads the way on high quality sustainable development and addresses climate change

8.115 This objective had an 83% approval rating. No specific questions about this objective were asked in the consultation. All options aim to deliver this objective in a broadly similar way. The higher growth options may require more of a focus on mitigation and management to ensure this objective is delivered.

Buildings and public spaces of which we can be proud

8.116 This objective had an 81% approval rating. However, the public feedback suggests that at present local people do not believe that the Council is delivering on this objective.

8.117 Around 40% of people thought new development had made their area worse, compared to only 20% who thought it had made it better. More attractive streets and walkways was one of the top improvements people wanted to see in Woking Town Centre. Landmark modern buildings were one of the least popular forms of future development for the town centre.

8.118 However an exception was the impact of new apartments in and around the town centre, where more people thought they had improved the appearance of the area than made it worse.

8.119 All the options aim to create buildings and public spaces of which people can be proud. What is important is that whatever option is chosen this element is seen as a major focus of policy, to maintain public support.

Provision of key services keeps pace as the Borough's population grows

8.120 This objective had an 86% approval rating. People were asked how well they thought current social and community infrastructure copes. A substantial majority considered that all social and community infrastructure was coping well or fairly well with current demand.

8.121 Generally utilities and primary schools were not seen as having a problem. However a significant minority (around 25-35% of those who expressed a view) saw secondary schools and health services as



struggling to cope with current demand. It is likely that if demand was thought likely to increase due to new development, this percentage would rise. In this respect options 3 and 4 in particular would be likely to cause more public concern, as they result in a greater rise in population, which will be seen as putting more pressure on these services.

A transport system that enables people to get to jobs, services and other places they wish to visit safely, in a reasonable and consistent journey time

8.122 This objective had an 83% approval rating. A clear majority of people wanted to use public transport and walk more, and 50% wished to cycle more.

8.123 However, it is clear that at present local residents do not think that public authorities are delivering on this objective. Transport problems generated the most concern of all issues covered by the consultation.

8.124 Traffic congestion and parking are seen as a problem by around 80% of people, and a big problem by 40%. Around

60% of people believe that new development has made this problem worse. Around 50% of people believe that roads and public transport do not cope with current demand. All these figures are very much higher than the level of concern over any other facilities or public infrastructure.

8.125 While there was a strong desire to use public transport, walk and cycle more, this was balanced by a range of reasons why people do not do this at present. These included the cost, reliability and safety of using public transport, and the safety of cycling and walking.

8.126 The perceived impact of new development on already stretched roads and public transport would be likely to be a major obstacle to public support for any level of growth above the minimum set out in option 1. A credible programme to address transport issues will be essential to meet public concerns in this area. If such a programme can be developed, there is strong evidence that measures to increase the use of public transport walking and cycling will be supported.

