



Core Strategy

Issues and Options Report

Woking Local Development Framework
June 2005



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**WOKING LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK
CORE STRATEGY ISSUES AND OPTIONS REPORT**

JUNE 2005

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Foreword

This document marks a key point in planning for the future of Woking. It also marks a real change in the way the Borough Council consults people on future plans.

The document sets out four different options for how the Borough could develop over the next ten years. These options propose different rates of development, which means they have different impacts on meeting social and economic needs, and on the extent to which the Borough's appearance and character will change.

The Council has not decided which option it prefers. It is this which makes this consultation different.

The Council will decide on its preferred option later this year. The views of stakeholders and the public on these options will be a very important consideration in making this decision.

I hope you will take the opportunity to examine the options and respond with your comments and preferences.

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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1. INTRODUCTION AND GUIDE QUESTIONS

1.1 This document presents the “Issues and Options” stage in the production of the Woking Local Development Framework Core Strategy. It outlines a set of four different options for the development of the Borough over the next ten years. The options set out different ways of meeting the Vision and Key Objectives for the Core Strategy, which have been approved by the Council following public consultation. They set out different levels of growth (increasing from Option 1 through to Option 4) and the spatial distribution of that growth around the Borough.

1.2 The options have been prepared with reference to the public engagement on a spatial vision for Woking which was carried out between September and December 2004, a range of research reports and a sustainability appraisal. The key elements of these are described in this document. For the full research you need to refer to the research documents themselves. The options have also been prepared with

reference to national and regional planning policy, the Woking Community Strategy and Council priorities and strategies.

1.3 The Council will decide which option it considers is best for Woking later this year. Before doing so the Council wants to know how a range of stakeholders feel about the options.



1.4 The Council is very interested to know your views. To help you in your response, there is a set of guide questions on the following pages which you may like to use.



Guide Questions

The following questions may help you respond to this consultation document. It may be that only some of these questions are relevant to you or your organisation. Please do not feel obliged to respond to them all. The list also contains references to background information where you can find out more about individual aspects of the options.

A. Individual Aspects of the Options

1. Proposals for Housing

The options include a range of different ways of delivering additional new homes, both open market homes and affordable homes. These include:

- A. New apartments at high density in and around Woking Town Centre
- B. Apartments and houses on former office / industrial sites and waste land
- C. Redevelopment of existing houses and their gardens to provide more houses / apartments
- D. Houses/apartments on the existing “safeguarded long-term development sites” specifically to provide affordable family housing.

What are your views on the potential of these different elements? What do you see as the key pros and cons of pursuing each of them?

Are there other opportunities for delivering additional housing which the Core Strategy should promote?

What contribution do you consider each of these elements can make to meeting affordable housing need?

For more information on the background to the options on Housing see:

- Woking Borough Housing Potential Study
- Woking Borough Housing Needs Assessment Update 2004

2. Proposals for the Economy

The options include a range of different ways of delivering future economic growth, These include:

- A. New offices in Woking Town Centre
- B. New offices and industrial premises in existing industrial and business parks
- C. New offices in West Byfleet centre.

What are your views on the potential of these different elements? What do you see as the key pros and cons of pursuing each of them?

Are there other opportunities for delivering economic growth which the Core Strategy should promote?



For more information on the background to the options on the economy see:

- Woking Employment Needs Assessment.

3. Proposals for Retailing

The options include two ways of delivering additional retailing, These are:

- A. New shopping development in Woking Town Centre
- B. New shopping development in West Byfleet

What are your views on the potential of these different elements? What do you see as the key pros and cons of pursuing each of them?

Are there other opportunities for delivering new retail which the Core Strategy should promote?

For more information on the background to the options for retailing see:

- Woking Retail and Commercial Leisure Study.

4. Proposals for Transport

The options include a range of different ways of delivering future transport improvements. These would need to be pursued jointly with Surrey County Council, which is the transportation authority for Woking. The possible elements include:

- A. Increases in road capacity for private cars on major roads in and around Woking Town Centre and major business areas
- B. Bus lanes on major roads in and around Woking Town Centre and major business areas
- C. Improved waiting areas and interchange facilities for bus and train users
- D. Additional safe cycle routes
- E. Additional safe walking routes
- F. Providing park and ride sites with public transport into Woking Town Centre

What are your views on the potential of these different elements? What do you see as the key pros and cons of pursuing each of them?

Are there other opportunities for delivering transport improvements which the Core Strategy should promote?

Background information on transport – the Guildford / Woking Integrated Transport Study - will be published by Surrey County Council later in 2005.

5. Proposals for public open space

All options require the retention of existing public open space. New open space would be sought as part of major new developments.



What is your view on this approach?

For more information on the background to the options on public open space see:

- Woking Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Audit.

6. Protecting and Enhancing the natural environment

All options include strong policies to protect the natural environment. The Council's working assumption is that all the options could be delivered without conflicting with such policies.

What is your view of this approach?

What aspects of the natural environment would you wish to see given specific reference in the Core Strategy.

Background information on the approach to protection of the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area, part of which is in Woking Borough, will be published by English Nature later in 2005.

7. Protecting and enhancing the Built Environment

All options seek to protect and enhance the built environment. The Council has identified the promotion of new development in Woking Town Centre as a particular opportunity to improve the built environment.

What is your view of this approach?

What aspects of the built environment would you wish to see given specific reference in the Core Strategy?

Are there other areas in the Borough where there are particular opportunities to improve the built environment?

8. Climate Change

All options seek to promote best practice in responding to climate change.

What is your view of this approach?

What aspects of the response to climate change would you wish to see given specific reference in the Core Strategy?

9. Social and Community Infrastructure

All options assume that social and community infrastructure (schools, health facilities etc.) is adequate to serve the level of new development, or can be made so.



What is your view of this approach?

Do you have any evidence which relates to this conclusion?

For more information on the background to the options on Social and Community infrastructure see:

- Woking Social and Community Infrastructure Requirements Study.

10. Social Inclusion

The Core Strategy includes a specific aim covering social inclusion. Key areas where the plan will contribute to this are:

- Provision of Affordable Housing
- Ensuring new development is accessible by public transport.

What is your view of these components?

Are there other ways in which the core strategy could promote social inclusion?

B. The Options overall

The options propose different overall levels of development.

Which Option do you want the Council to pursue and why?

Do you have particular reservations about any aspect of your chosen option?

For more information on the overall sustainability of the options see:

- Woking LDF Core Strategy Initial Sustainability Report.

For more information on the results of public engagement to date see:

- Report of Consultation on a Spatial Vision for Woking.

1.6 Please return your comments to:

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

Or e mail: planningpolicy@woking.gov.uk

On or before 29 July 2005.

1.7 If you want more information or to obtain a copy of any of the background reports either visit: www.woking.gov.uk/council/planning/ldf or ring the Planning Policy team on 01483 743871.



2. LDF CORE STRATEGY – VISION AND KEY OBJECTIVES

2.1. The Council has approved the following vision and key objectives for the Core Strategy. All but the last objective were the subject of public consultation in 2004 and each one received at least 75% public support. The final objective has been added to reflect the Council's newly adopted Social Inclusion and Community Cohesion Strategy.



Local Development Framework Core Strategy – Vision and Key Objectives

Woking: A Spatial Vision

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 elements of the vision are:

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.

Attractive local communities throughout the Borough with convenient access to everyday shops and services, local community facilities, parks and open spaces.

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.

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.

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.



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.

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.

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.

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 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.

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



3. POLICY CONTEXT

National and Regional Planning Policy

3.1 The four options on the following pages set out different ways of seeking to meet the vision and key objectives. The options have also been prepared in the context of the following components of national and regional planning policy:

- All options have to at least meet Surrey Structure Plan housing and other policies
- The Green Belt boundary cannot be easily changed
- Need to make the best use of urban land
- Use brown-field sites before green-field sites
- Sequential test with town centres as the first option
- Sustainability Appraisal.

3.2 The effect of these components on the options is described below.

Surrey Structure Plan Housing and other policies

3.3 The Surrey Structure Plan (adopted in 2004) sets out a strategic plan for Surrey for the period to 2016. It will eventually be superseded by the new South East Plan, being prepared by the South East England Regional Assembly. The single most significant component of the Surrey Structure Plan is to set the level of new homes to be built in each Borough. For Woking it sets a provision of 3,340 new homes between 2001 and 2016.

3.4 The Core Strategy options set out in this document aim to provide as a minimum this level of development. This is provided by Option 1. However, this level of development is well below current trends in Woking, and would be insufficient to meet the

need for housing (particularly affordable housing) identified by the



Council's research. As a result the other options put forward exceed the amount of housing set out in the Structure Plan.

3.5 In other respects the Council considers that all the options are in general conformity with the Surrey Structure Plan.

The Green Belt Boundary

3.6 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 very special 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 identify any strategic need to review the Green Belt boundary.

3.7 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 none of the options propose making any change to the Green Belt boundary in Woking.



Making the best use of Urban Land

3.8 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 guideline densities are 30 to 50 dwellings per hectare, with higher densities in sustainable locations such as town centres. All the options meet this minimum requirement. One of the key ways in which the higher options aim to deliver more housing is through delivering average densities above the minimum figure of 30, particularly in sustainable locations such as Woking Town Centre.



Using brown-field sites before green field sites

3.9 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.

3.10 The options follow this principle. Option 2 maximises the contribution which can be made from previously developed land. In order to deliver affordable housing to meet the level of identified need, the Council has concluded that it is necessary to develop the "safeguarded long term development sites" identified in the existing Woking Local Plan. One or more of these green field sites would be released under options 3 and 4.

5. Sequential test with town centres as the first option

3.11 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 England Regional Transport Strategy as a hub where new development should be located, backed up by public transport improvements.

3.12 The options follow this principle. Option 2 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 options 3 and 4 also provide for economic growth in other locations within the urban area.

Sustainability Appraisal

3.13 Local Development Frameworks are required by legislation to be subject to a Sustainability Appraisal, incorporating a Strategic Environmental Assessment. At this Issues and Options stage the Council has published an Initial Sustainability Report, which is available under separate cover. Comments on the Initial Sustainability report are welcomed.

3.14 The Initial Sustainability Report has appraised the options in terms of their economic, social and environmental sustainability. Generally option 1 performs least well, and options 3 and 4 best on all measures. This is because under the higher options the social and economic needs of the Borough are met, and generally in locations which are the most appropriate in terms of protecting the environment. However this better performance is dependent on the environmental objectives of the



Core Strategy being implemented effectively.

Local Policy Context

Woking Community Strategy

3.15 The options have 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.**



3.16 These priorities have influenced the development of the options significantly. In particular, the priority to provide access to affordable housing is one of the main drivers within the options. Options have been identified which exceed the rate of growth proposed in the Surrey Structure Plan very largely because this is required to enable the forecast need for affordable housing to be addressed.

3.17 Priorities for transport, accessible facilities and a clean healthy and safe environment are also major drivers of the chosen options.



4. THE FOUR DIFFERENT OPTIONS

4.1 To achieve the Vision and Key Objectives set out in Section 2, additional homes, offices, business premises and shops will need to be built. Transport will need to be improved. The challenge for the Council is to enable Woking to grow in order to achieve the aims that the majority of residents support, and, at the same time, look after the environment and green character of Woking which make the area special. The Council has produced four options for the future of the Borough which are set out in this section.

4.2 Each option suggests a different level of housing development in the Borough over the next ten years, ranging from 200 to around 370 new homes per year. To put this into perspective, through the 1990s around 280 new homes were built in the Borough each year. When Goldsworth Park was being built in the 1970s and 1980s more than 450 new homes were built in the Borough in an average year. None of the new options suggest a rate of development as high as that.

4.3 The amount of affordable housing, and the level of office, retail and industrial development also increase through the options.



4.4 The options aim to provide development in locations which minimise the need to travel. However, all the options will need to accommodate more demand for travel. This is partly because of changing travel habits, as partly the impact of new development. As a result some journeys would need to be made by public transport to prevent more traffic congestion.

4.5 All the options contain strong environmental safeguards; no changes will be made to the Green Belt boundary, and all options would include planning policies which protect public open space, wildlife areas, and the quality of air and water in the area.

4.6 This section sets out for each option:

- A summary box with key elements and statistics
- A description of the option
- A table of the policies which the core strategy would need to contain to deliver it
- A table of the way the option would address the Core Strategy objectives

4.7 At the end of this section there is a summary table of the key data on population, housing and economic change for each option, and a map showing the key development components. The start date for the options is 2006. This reflects the fact that the Council will choose its preferred option towards the end of 2005.



OPTION 1

- is based on the target for new homes in Woking set by Surrey County Council
- is likely to be exceeded unless the Council's planning policies are changed
- does not provide enough new homes to meet housing need
- does not enable the local economy to reach its full potential
- requires a shift from car use to public transport for some journeys.

Key statistics for 2006-2016:

+ 2,500 population (a 3% rise)	+ 5,000 jobs (a 12% rise)
+ 2,000 new homes	of which 600 are affordable homes

This option would not provide enough new homes to meet local needs, and it does not aim to provide enough new offices and business premises to meet the forecast growth in the local economy. It is based instead on providing the number of new homes required in Woking by the Surrey Structure Plan. This plan, produced by Surrey County Council in 2004 to meet Government targets, set a figure for Woking of 3,340 new homes to be built between 2001 and 2016. The Council estimates that over 1,300 will have been built by 2006. This option would provide the balance of 2,000 new homes which will still be outstanding by that date.

This figure of 3,340 new homes was thought at the time to be the maximum achievable, but it is now clear that more new homes can be built successfully in the urban area, because of the increased rate of development of new apartments.



This option would require more restrictive planning policies than at

present, to limit new building to below the current level. This would particularly reduce the rate of building in Woking Town Centre, where the largest developments are taking place. Away from the town centre, development would continue much as at present.

This option would still provide a substantial increase in the number of shops in Woking Town Centre, because research has shown that there is demand for this already, irrespective of what plans are made for the future. New office and business accommodation would be provided where planning permission already exists, or by refurbishing or replacing existing office or industrial buildings.

While it would neither meet housing need, nor provide for growth in the local economy, this option would generate less additional travel demand than other options. As a result it would place less pressure on roads and public transport than the other options. However, because of changes in people's travel habits, even at this rate of development there would need to be a shift of some journeys from private car to public transport, to prevent more traffic congestion. However, public and private investment to improve public transport would be difficult to secure as there would be relatively little new development for it to serve.



Key Core Strategy Planning Policies.

Policy Area	Approach
Boundaries	
Green Belt	No change to boundary.
Woking Town Centre	No change to boundary.
Housing	
Housing Provision	2,000 new units 2006-2016.
Housing Densities	
Woking Town Centre	100 dwellings per hectare average.
West Byfleet centre	55 dwellings per hectare average.
Rest of the urban area	30 dwellings per hectare average.
Safeguarded long-term development sites	Not developed before 2016.
Affordable Housing	35% of units on all developments to be affordable. Applied to sites of all sizes. Target is 600 new affordable homes.
Employment	
Primary Employment Areas	
Main Business Parks	Like for like replacement or small increases in business floorspace only.
Woking Town Centre	Like for like replacement or small increases in business floorspace only.
West Byfleet	Like for like replacement or small increases in business floorspace only. (nb assumes construction of Broadoaks Business Park – already permitted).
Secondary Employment Areas	Redevelopment for housing permitted.
Retail	
Woking Town Centre	Development to meet forecast growth in expenditure at current market share (Around 34,000m ² additional floorspace).
West Byfleet	Like for like replacement or small increases in retail floorspace only.
Out of centre retail	Not required. Sequential test applied.
Open Space	
Urban Green Space	Existing public open space is protected from development. Contributions towards new open space or improvements to existing are required from major new developments.
Transport	
Parking Standards	Parking standards across the Borough within range in Regional Planning Guidance. Reduced standards in Woking Town Centre compared with rest of Borough.
Other transport proposals	On-street parking controls. Limited improvement in: public transport, walking / cycling routes, use of road space.
Environment	



Policy Area	Approach
Natural Environment	Policies to protect and / or mitigate the effects of development on the natural environment.
Built Environment	General policies to secure good quality design.
Climate Change	Policies to secure best practice.
Infrastructure	
Education and Health Care	No additional provision required as a result of new development.

Impact on Key Objectives

- **“Woking Town Centre as a growing hub for the area”** – Woking Town Centre would be a growth point compared to other places in Surrey, but this would be at a modest level. New retail development would maintain Woking’s current role in the regional shopping hierarchy.
- **“Attractive Local Communities throughout the Borough”**. Local communities would experience a modest rate of change, with new development broadly in scale with existing.
- **“Homes to suit all needs and pockets”**. The rate of development from 2006-2016 will be lower than at present, at around 200 dwellings per annum. This would be achieved by an average density of new development of 30 dwellings per hectare in most of the Borough, with higher densities (around 100 dwellings per hectare), in and around Woking Town Centre. Around 35% of housing on all sites would be affordable housing. This would result in a level of affordable housing provision well short of the identified housing need.
- **“A green Borough”**. No green field sites would be developed. Some limited additional public open space may be provided, funded by new development.
- **“A busy and buoyant economy”**. New employment development would be limited to largely like for like replacement of existing, particularly on all the main industrial estates / business parks where public transport is less good. This would renew the economic fabric, but not allow the economy to grow very fast. Growth in employment floorspace would be offset by redevelopment of some secondary employment sites for housing.
- **“Sustainable development and climate change”**. Policies would be included to secure best practice.
- **“Buildings and public spaces of which we can be proud”** Opportunities to deliver a high quality environment through major redevelopment would be limited.
- **“Key services”** are unlikely to need to grow much if at all to meet this level of development.
- **“A transport system which enables people to get to places safely and in a reasonable and consistent journey time.”** Increases in travel demand arising from new development would be limited. Any transport improvements over the plan period which provide a better choice of modes could help to stabilise or even reduce peak hour congestion.



- **“Whole community shares in prosperity and quality of life”**. The limited provision of affordable housing would limit delivery of this objective. Development in locations well served by public transport would help delivery of this objective.



OPTION 2

- provides more housing than option 1, but not enough to meet local need
- provides more business space than option 1, but not enough to meet demand
- focuses major new development in and around Woking Town Centre
- is what will happen if the Council's planning policies remain the same
- requires a more significant shift from car use to public transport than option 1, particularly for journeys into Woking Town Centre.

Key statistics 2006-2016

+ 4,500 population (a 5% rise)	+ 7,000 jobs (a 16% rise)
+ 2,800 new homes	of which 850 are affordable homes

This option aims to meet more of the housing need and economic potential than option 1. It does this through encouraging more development in and around Woking Town Centre. This would result in a lot of change in the town centre, with more developments of the kind that are being built at the moment. It would provide the opportunity to create a new character for parts of the town centre. The boundary of the town centre could be extended into the surrounding residential area, to allow for expansion.



The Council would require developers to make a proportion of all the new homes they build available for rent or shared ownership – providing more affordable housing. However this option would provide a lot of apartments in Woking Town Centre, but little affordable family housing. To address this the Council could negotiate what are known as “commuted payments”. Developers would be permitted in some cases to build all the apartments for sale, a

more profitable option for them, and in return make a substantial cash payment to the Council. The Council would use this money to buy and then rent out existing family homes elsewhere in the Borough. This process would help redress the balance, but would still not meet all the demand for affordable family housing.

New offices, shops and apartments in the town centre would reduce the need to travel, by providing opportunities to live, work and shop in the same place. However, many people would choose to live elsewhere, particular families, so this option would still generate some additional travel demand. While some minor improvements to the capacity of existing roads could be made, Government funds for major new roads or substantial road widening are not likely to be available. So this option would require more people to use public transport, walk or cycle, more of the time.



Woking Borough Council would work with Surrey County Council to try to secure Government funding for major improvements to public transport. This could include a new station and bus / train interchange, better bus services and travel information, and a network



of safe cycle routes. Woking is identified by the Government as a “Regional Transport Hub” where public investment should take place, and some finance would be forthcoming from developers of major town centre schemes. However, neither public nor private funding is secured yet, so this option carries the risk that public transport improvements would not take place.

There would be very little increase in the amount of car parking in the town

centre, so over time some people would have to find alternative ways to get to it. This could include provision of park and ride, as in Guildford.

Elsewhere, there would be some new housing on older industrial sites, some houses being demolished and replaced with town houses or small apartment blocks, and some new offices and industrial units built in existing business parks, as in option 1.

Key Core Strategy Planning Policies.

Policy Area	Approach
Boundaries	
Green Belt	No change to boundary.
Woking Town Centre	Possible extension to town centre boundary by around 10% into one or more of: Goldsworth Road / Walton Road / Guildford Road to accommodate more high density development.
Housing	
Housing Provision	2,800 new homes 2006-2016.
Housing Densities	
Woking Town Centre	100 – 300 dwellings per hectare.
West Byfleet centre	55 dwellings per hectare average.
Rest of the urban area	30 dwellings per hectare average.
Safeguarded long-term development sites	Not developed before 2016.
Affordable Housing	35% of units on all developments to be affordable. Applied to sites of all sizes. Target of 850 new homes.
Employment	
Primary Employment Areas	
Main Business Parks	Like for like replacement or small increases in business floorspace only.
Woking Town Centre	Major additional office development permitted.
West Byfleet	Like for like replacement or small increases in business floorspace only (nb assumes construction of Broadoaks Business Park – already permitted).
Secondary Employment Areas	Redevelopment for housing permitted.
Retail	
Woking Town Centre	Development to meet forecast growth in expenditure and increase market share (Around 40,000m ² additional floorspace).



Policy Area	Approach
West Byfleet	Like for like replacement or small increases in retail floorspace only.
Out of centre retail	Not required. Sequential test applied.
Open Space	
Urban Green Space	Existing public open space is protected from development. Contributions towards new open space or improvements to existing are required from major new developments.
Transport	
Parking Standards	Parking standards across the Borough within range in Regional Planning Guidance. Significantly reduced standards in Woking Town Centre compared with rest of Borough.
Other transport proposals	On-street parking controls. Improvement in: public transport, walking / cycling routes, use of road space. Major scheme to improve transport interchange in Woking Town Centre – linked to ongoing public transport improvements. Consideration of park and ride for Woking Town Centre.
Environment	
Natural Environment	Policies to protect and / or mitigate the effects of development on the natural environment.
Built Environment	Specific focus on improved streets and spaces in Woking Town Centre through high quality, high density new development. General policies to secure good quality design elsewhere.
Climate Change	Policies to secure best practice.
Infrastructure	
Education and Health Care	No additional provision required as a result of new development.

Impact on Key Objectives

- **“Woking Town Centre as a growing hub for the area”** – Woking Town Centre would be a major growth point. New retail, housing and employment would be promoted at high densities. Major improvements to streets and spaces could be achieved through major redevelopment. New retail would claw back some trade currently lost to other centres. The area of the town centre could be extended to accommodate this.
- **“Attractive Local Communities throughout the Borough”**. Local communities would experience a modest rate of change, with new development broadly in scale with existing.



- **“Homes to suit all needs and pockets”** – The rate of completions 2001-2005 would be continued – around 280 dwellings per annum. This would be achieved by promoting further higher density development in and around the town centre. Around 35% of housing on all sites would be affordable housing, which, together with proactive use of borrowing powers and other actions will contribute significantly towards meeting housing need. However, the focus on higher density development around the town centre means a lot of new housing would be in the form of apartments, meaning either that family housing would be sought as apartments, or that acquisition of existing family homes through “commuted payments” would become the norm.
- **“A green Borough”**. No green field sites would be developed. Some additional public open space could be provided, funded by new development, to meet population increases.
- **“Busy and buoyant economy”**. New employment development would be encouraged at high densities in Woking Town Centre, but with limited on site parking. On the main industrial estates / business parks only modest intensification would be permitted linked to travel plans and public transport improvements. Some secondary employment sites would be redeveloped for housing. Overall, employment growth would continue as in recent years. This would not be sufficient to accommodate the forecast increase in jobs in the local area.
- **“Sustainable development and climate change”**. Policies would be included to secure best practice.
- **“Buildings and public spaces of which we can be proud”**. Major improvements to the streets and spaces in the Woking Town Centre would be achieved through major redevelopment.
- **“Key services”** would still not likely to need to grow much to meet this level of development.
- **“A transport system which enables people to get to places safely and in a reasonable and consistent journey time.”** Significant numbers of peak hour journeys would need to be switched to non-car modes. This switch would mean that higher levels of development could be accommodated in Woking Town Centre without worsening peak hour congestion. This would need to be achieved by a high level of investment in public transport, safe walking and cycling routes, travel plans for schools and major employers, and possibly park and ride. Public investment in these transport improvements is not yet in place. This approach would be backed up by restrictive parking standards for new development in sustainable locations.
- **“Whole community shares in prosperity and quality of life”**. Provision of affordable housing would help delivery of this objective, but little of it would be family housing. Development in locations well served by public transport would help the delivery of this objective.



OPTION 3

- provides major development in and around Woking Town Centre as option 2
- provides affordable family housing on the “safeguarded long-term development site” at Moor Lane, Westfield
- provides some additional housing and business space at other locations across the Borough
- requires a significant switch from car to public transport for journeys into Woking Town Centre, as option 2
- generates more travel demand across the Borough than options 1 and 2.

Key statistics 2006-2016

+ 7,000 population (a 7.5% rise)
+ 3,450 new homes

+ 7,500 jobs (an 18% rise)
of which 1,200 are affordable homes

Options 3 and 4 would use opportunities to build new homes in both Woking Town Centre and other parts of the Borough as well, but without building in the Green Belt or breaching environmental policies. It would enable the Council to meet far more of the forecast need for affordable family homes. However it would still fall short of need.



The main way this would be achieved is by building on a “safeguarded long-term development site”. More than 10 years ago the Woking Borough Local Plan safeguarded two sites on the edge of the urban area to be built on when the need arose. The Council released part of one of these, Brookwood Farm, Knaphill, in the late 1990’s, for what is now Coresbrook Way. Option 3 would release one of these sites, at Moor Lane Westfield, to provide affordable family housing. It would be mainly for rent, although some family housing for sale would also be built.

Other ways to accommodate more housing and to enable the Borough to reach its full economic potential are also included in option 3. As well as new shops and offices in Woking Town Centre, office and industrial development could take place on the main business parks at places like Sheerwater and Byfleet. There could be a slight increase in the number of homes built elsewhere in the urban area, through redevelopment of existing homes or building on outdated industrial sites, at slightly higher densities than in options 1 and 2, for example. There could also be some new shopping and apartment development at West Byfleet.



Option 3 would promote development in parts of the urban area where public transport is not as good as in Woking Town Centre. Using a car would be likely to remain the principal way people get to and from these areas. As a result, this option would be likely to increase the amount of traffic more than options 1 and 2.



Key Core Strategy Planning Policies.

Policy Area	Approach
Boundaries	
Green Belt	No change to boundary.
Woking Town Centre	Possible extension to town centre boundary by around 10% into one or more of: Goldsworth Road / Walton Road / Guildford Road to accommodate more high density development.
Housing	
Housing Provision	3,450 new homes 2006-2016.
Housing Densities	
Woking Town Centre	100 – 300 dwellings per hectare.
West Byfleet centre	Up to 100 dwellings per hectare.
Rest of the urban area	40 dwellings per hectare average.
Safeguarded long term development sites	Site at Moor Lane, Westfield released for mainly affordable family housing. Site at Brookwood Farm, Knaphill not developed before 2016.
Affordable Housing	35% of units on all developments to be affordable. Applied to sites of all sizes. Target of 1200 new affordable homes.
Employment	
Primary Employment Areas	
Main Business Parks	Intensification permitted on Business Parks in areas like Sheerwater, Byfleet, Goldsworth Park and Old Woking with a target of 10% additional floorspace.
Woking Town Centre	Major additional office development permitted with a target of 10% additional floorspace.
West Byfleet	Like for like replacement or small increases in business floorspace only (nb assumes construction of Broadoaks Business Park – already permitted).
Secondary Employment Areas	Redevelopment for housing permitted.
Retail	
Woking Town Centre	Development to meet forecast growth in expenditure and increase market share (Around 40,000m ² additional floorspace).
West Byfleet	Development to meet forecast growth in expenditure and retain market share (Around 3,000 m ² additional floorspace).
Out of centre retail	Not required. Sequential test applied.
Open Space	
Urban Green Space	Existing public open space is protected from development. Contributions towards new open space or improvements to existing are required from major new developments.



Policy Area	Approach
	New public open space provided in conjunction with the development of the safeguarded long-term development site at Moor Lane, Westfield.
Transport	
Parking Standards	Parking standards across the Borough within range in Regional Planning Guidance. Significantly reduced standards in Woking Town Centre compared with rest of Borough.
Other transport proposals	On-street parking controls. Improvement in: public transport, walking / cycling routes, use of road space. Major scheme to improve transport interchange in Woking Town Centre, linked to ongoing public transport improvements. Consideration of park and ride to support commercial growth in Woking Town Centre. Use of travel plans in conjunction with intensification of commercial development on Business Parks.
Environment	
Natural Environment	Policies to protect and / or mitigate the effects of development on the natural environment.
Built Environment	Specific focus on improved streets and spaces in Woking Town Centre, and potentially in West Byfleet centre, through high quality, high density new development. General policies to secure good quality design elsewhere.
Climate Change	Policies to secure best practice.
Infrastructure	
Education and Health Care	No additional strategic provision required as a result of new development. Some local improvements may be needed.

Impact on Key Objectives

- **“Woking Town Centre as a growing hub for the area”**. Woking Town Centre would be a major growth point. New retail, housing and employment would be promoted at high densities. Major improvements to streets and spaces could be achieved through major redevelopment. New retail would claw back some trade currently lost to other centres. The area of the town centre could be extended to accommodate this.
- **“Attractive Local Communities”**. Local communities would experience a slightly greater rate of change than option 1, with some new housing development at slightly higher densities than at present. Some new development could take place in West Byfleet centre, supporting its role as the “second centre” in the Borough, with reasonable public transport.



- **“Homes to suit all needs and pockets”** – The expected rate of house building in the urban area would be 305 new homes per annum, slightly above the rate in 2001-2005 of 280 per annum. This would be achieved by higher density development in and around Woking Town Centre, as option 2, and some development elsewhere in the Borough at slightly higher densities than in options 1 and 2, including in West Byfleet centre. Around 35% of housing on all sites would be affordable housing. One of the safeguarded long-term development sites would be released for mainly affordable family housing to be built. This would increase the annual rate of new house-building to 345 per annum. These measures, together with proactive use of borrowing powers and other actions would get close to meeting the identified housing need, but still fall slightly short.
- **“A green Borough”**. A safeguarded long-term development site would be developed. This would be justified as the only way to deliver a key priority. Additional public open space would be provided as part of this development. Some further public open space may be provided, funded by other new developments, to meet population increases.
- **“Busy and buoyant economy”**. New employment development would be encouraged at high densities in Woking Town Centre, but with limited on site parking. On the main industrial estates / business parks intensification would be permitted linked to travel plans and public transport improvements. Some secondary employment sites would be redeveloped for housing. Overall, employment growth would continue at or above the rate of recent years. Sufficient business premises should be available to accommodate forecast growth in jobs to 2016.
- **“Sustainable development and climate change”**. Policies would be included to secure best practice.
- **“Buildings and public spaces of which we can be proud”** Major improvements to streets and spaces in Woking Town Centre and potentially in West Byfleet centre would be achieved through major redevelopment.
- **“Key services”** would still not be likely to need to grow much to meet this level of development. Some additional local needs might have to be met.
- **“A transport system which enables people to get to places safely and in a reasonable and consistent journey time.”** Significant numbers of peak hour journeys would need to be switched to non-car modes. This switch would mean that higher levels of development could be accommodated in Woking Town Centre without worsening peak hour congestion. This would need to be achieved by a high level of investment in public transport, safe walking and cycling routes, travel plans for schools and major employers, and possibly park and ride. Public investment in these transport improvements is not yet in place. This approach would be backed up by restrictive parking standards for new development in sustainable locations. Some development would take place in areas less well served by public transport. Here travel plans and/or public transport improvements would be required.
- **“Whole community shares in prosperity and quality of life”**. Provision of affordable family housing would help delivery of this objective. Development in locations well served by public transport would help delivery of this objective.



OPTION 4

- Is the same as option 3, but with the addition of development of the “Safeguarded long term development site” at Brookwood Farm, Knaphill for affordable family housing.

Key statistics 2006-2016

+ 7,500 population (an 8.5% rise)
+ 3,700 new homes

+ 7,500 jobs (an 18% rise)
of which 1,350 are affordable homes

Option 4 would use opportunities to build new homes in both Woking Town Centre and other parts of the Borough as well, but without building in the Green Belt or breaching environmental policies. It should enable the Council to meet the whole of the forecast need for affordable homes, both for family and non-family accommodation.



The main way this would be achieved is by building on the “safeguarded long-term development sites”. More than 10 years ago the Woking Borough Local Plan safeguarded two sites on the edge of the urban area to be built on when the need arose. The Council released part of one of these, Brookwood Farm, Knaphill, in the late 1990’s, for what is now Coresbrook Way. Option 4 would release the rest of this site, and the site at Moor Lane, Westfield, to provide affordable family housing. It would be mainly for rent,

although some family housing for sale would also be built.

Other ways to accommodate more housing and to enable the Borough to reach its full economic potential are also included in option 4. As well as new shops and offices in Woking Town Centre, office and industrial development could take place on the main business parks at places like Sheerwater and Byfleet. There could be a slight increase in the number of homes built elsewhere in the urban area, through redevelopment of existing homes or building on outdated industrial sites, at slightly higher densities than in options 1 and 2, for example. There could also be some new shopping and apartment development at West Byfleet.

Option 4 would promote development in parts of the urban area where public transport is not as good as in Woking Town Centre. Using a car would be likely to remain the principal way people get to and from these areas. As a result, this option would be likely to increase the amount of traffic more than options 1 and 2.

Key Core Strategy Planning Policies.

Policy Area	Approach
Boundaries	
Green Belt	No change to boundary.



Policy Area	Approach
Woking Town Centre	Possible extension to town centre boundary by around 10% into one or more of: Goldsworth Road / Walton Road / Guildford Road to accommodate more high density development.
Housing	
Housing Provision	3,700 new homes 2006-2016.
Housing Densities	
Woking Town Centre	100 – 300 dwellings per hectare.
West Byfleet centre	Up to 100 dwellings per hectare.
Rest of the urban area	40 dwellings per hectare average.
Safeguarded long term development sites	Site at Moor Lane, Westfield and Brookwood Farm, Knaphill released for mainly affordable family housing.
Affordable Housing	35% of units on all developments to be affordable. Applied to sites of all sizes. Target of 1350 new affordable homes.
Employment	
Primary Employment Areas	
Main Business Parks	Intensification permitted on Business Parks in areas like Sheerwater, Byfleet, Goldsworth Park and Old Woking with a target of 10% additional floorspace.
Woking Town Centre	Major additional office development permitted with a target of 10% additional floorspace.
West Byfleet	Like for like replacement or small increases in business floorspace only (nb assumes construction of Broadoaks Business Park – already permitted).
Secondary Employment Areas	
Redevelopment for housing permitted.	
Retail	
Woking Town Centre	Development to meet forecast growth in expenditure and increase market share (Around 40,000m ² additional floorspace).
West Byfleet	Development to meet forecast growth in expenditure and retain market share (Around 3,000 m ² additional floorspace).
Out of centre retail	Not required. Sequential test applied.
Open Space	
Urban Green Space	Existing public open space is protected from development. Contributions towards new open space or improvements to existing is required from major new developments. New public open space provided in conjunction with the development of the safeguarded long term development site at Moor Lane, Westfield and Brookwood Farm, Knaphill.
Transport	



Policy Area	Approach
Parking Standards	Parking standards across the Borough within range in Regional Planning Guidance. Significantly reduced standards in Woking Town Centre compared with rest of Borough.
Other transport proposals	On-street parking controls. Improvement in: public transport, walking / cycling routes, use of road space. Major scheme to improve transport interchange in Woking Town Centre, linked to ongoing public transport improvements. Consideration of park and ride to support commercial growth in Woking town centre. Use of travel plans in conjunction with intensification of commercial development on Business Parks.
Environment	
Natural Environment	Policies to protect and / or mitigate the effects of development on the natural environment.
Built Environment	Specific focus on improved streets and spaces in Woking Town Centre, and potentially in West Byfleet centre, through high quality, high density new development. General policies to secure good quality design elsewhere.
Climate Change	Policies to secure best practice.
Infrastructure	
Education and Health Care	No additional strategic provision required as a result of new development. Some local improvements may be needed

Impact on Key Objectives

- **“Woking Town Centre as a growing hub for the area”** – Woking Town Centre would be a major growth point. New retail, housing and employment would be promoted at high densities. Major improvements to streets and spaces could be achieved through major redevelopment. New retail would claw back some trade currently lost to other centres. The area of the town centre could be extended to accommodate this.
- **“Attractive Local Communities”**. Local communities would experience a slightly greater rate of change than option 1, with some new housing development at slightly higher densities than at present. Some new development could take place in West Byfleet centre, supporting its role as the “second centre” in the Borough, with reasonable public transport.



- **“Homes to suit all needs and pockets”** – The expected rate of house building in the urban area would be 305 new homes per annum, slightly above the rate in 2001-2005 of 280 per annum. This would be achieved by higher density development in and around Woking Town Centre, as in option 2, and some development elsewhere in the Borough at slightly higher densities than in options 1 and 2, including in West Byfleet centre. Around 35% of housing on all sites would be affordable housing. Two safeguarded long-term development sites would be released for development of mainly affordable family housing. This would increase the annual rate of new house-building to 370 per annum. These measures, together with proactive use of borrowing powers and other actions should meet the identified affordable housing need in the Borough.
- **“A green Borough”**. A safeguarded long-term development site would be developed. This would be justified as the only way to deliver a key priority. Additional public open space would be provided as part of this development. Some further public open space may be provided, funded by other new developments, to meet population increases.
- **“Busy and buoyant economy”**. New employment development would be encouraged at high densities in Woking Town Centre, but with limited on site parking. On the main industrial estates / business parks intensification would be permitted linked to travel plans and public transport improvements. Some secondary employment sites would be redeveloped for housing. Overall, employment growth would continue at or above the rate of recent years. Sufficient business premises should be available to accommodate forecast growth in jobs to 2016.
- **“Sustainable development and climate change”**. Policies would be included to secure best practice.
- **“Buildings and public spaces of which we can be proud”** Major improvements to streets and spaces in Woking Town Centre and potentially in West Byfleet centre would be achieved through major redevelopment.
- **“Key services”** would still not be likely to need to grow much to meet this level of development. Some additional local needs might have to be met.
- **“A transport system which enables people to get to places safely and in a reasonable and consistent journey time.”** Significant numbers of peak hour journeys would need to be switched to non-car modes over the next ten years. This switch would mean that higher levels of development could be accommodated in Woking Town Centre without worsening peak hour congestion. This would need to be achieved by a high level of investment in public transport, safe walking and cycling routes, travel plans for schools and major employers, and possibly park and ride. Public investment in these transport improvements is not yet in place. This approach would be backed up by restrictive parking standards for new development in sustainable locations. Some development would take place in areas less well served by public transport. Here travel plans and/or public transport improvements would be required.
- **“Whole community shares in prosperity and quality of life”**. Provision of affordable family housing would significantly help delivery of this objective. Development in locations well served by public transport would help delivery of this objective.



Key Statistics for each Option

	<u>Current</u>	Option 1 – Low growth	Option 2 – Town Centre Based growth	Option 3 –Town centre & other locations (lower)	Option 4 – Town centre & other locations (higher)
House-building rate per annum 2005-16 ¹	280	200	280	340	370
Population in 2016 ²	89,700	92,400	94,300	96,500	97,300
Economically Active population ²	47,500	50,500	51,400	52,600	53,000
Jobs ³	43,000	48,200	49,800	50,600	50,600
Affordable Housing per annum 06-16 ⁴	50	60	85	120	135
% journey to work by car ⁵	68%	Reduction	Reduction	Reduction	Reduction
% housing on brownfield land ¹	96%	99%	99%	91%	87%
Additional Homes 2005-2016⁶		2,200	3,050	3,740	4,020
Woking Town Centre and around		950	1,800	1,800	1,800
West Byfleet		100	100	150	150
Rest of the Urban Area		1,050	1,050	1,250	1,250
Reserve Sites		0	0	440	720
Green Belt		100	100	100	100
Additional Jobs 2002-2016⁷		5,200	6,800	7,600	7,600
Woking Town centre and around		2,200	3,800	3,800	3,800
West Byfleet*		1,650	1,650	1,650	1,650
Primary Employment Areas		800	800	1,600	1,600
Rest of the Urban Area		550	550	550	550
Additional retail floorspace 2005-2016⁸		34,000 m²	40,000 m²	43,000 m²	43,000 m²
Woking Town Centre		34,000 m ²	40,000 m ²	40,000 m ²	40,000 m ²
West Byfleet		0	0	3,000 m ²	3,000 m ²
Rest of the urban area		0	0	0	0



Sources

1. Woking Housing Potential Study
 2. Surrey County Council population forecasts (dwelling constrained and trend)
 3. Experian forecasts for Surrey County Council
 4. Assumes 35% affordable on all urban housing sites and 60% on reserve sites. Assumes no site size threshold.
 5. 2001 Census / Guildford and Woking Integrated Transport Strategy (detailed figures expected August 2005)
 6. Indicative figures derived from Woking Housing Potential Study
 7. Indicative figures derived from Woking Employment Needs Assessment
 8. Indicative figures derived from Woking Retail and Commercial Leisure Study
- * Assumes the implementation of the existing planning permission for the Broadoaks Business Park.



Core Strategy – Key Development Components

Additional Business Space:
Byfleet,
Sheerwater,
Goldsworth Park, Old Woking

Options 3,4

Additional development in West Byfleet centre

Options 3,4

Woking Town Centre –
Additional offices and homes

Options 2,3,4
Additional shops

Additional housing on sites in the urban area

Options 1,2,3,4

Housing on site at Brookwood Farm, Knaphill

Options 4

No change to Green Belt boundary

Options 1,2,3,4

Housing on site at Moor Lane, Westfield.

Options 3,4

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5. ISSUES ARISING FROM RESEARCH

Introduction

5.1 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 and how they relate to the four options. The full reports are available free of charge on the Council's website, or in paper copy for a modest charge.

5.2. 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
- Woking Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Audit
- Woking Retail and Commercial Leisure Study
- Woking Social and Community Infrastructure Requirements Study
- Woking LDF Core Strategy Issues and Options Initial Sustainability Report



5.3. In general the research findings show that:

Option 4 is required to meet forecast housing need. **Options 3 and 4** are required to meet forecast employment growth. These options can be delivered through a combination of

developing in the urban area and the existing safeguarded long-term development sites, generally at or slightly above the kinds of densities currently being achieved.

If current policies continue unchanged **Option 2** will almost certainly be the minimum level of development which takes place.. More restrictive policies than at present would be required to limit development to **Option 1**.

Community facilities and open space provision should generally cope with all options. The assessment of transport implications is not yet available. It will be available to inform consideration of the preferred option later in 2005.

Options 3 and 4 score best in the Initial Sustainability Appraisal, as they meet the Borough's economic and social needs, in a way which best protects the environment. However this better performance is dependent on the environmental objectives of the Core Strategy being implemented effectively.

Detailed Findings

5.4. The detailed implications of the research findings are as follows.

Woking Borough Housing Potential Study

5.5. 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 Option 2, 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.





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

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

5.7. Inclusion of these would enable Options 3 and 4 to be delivered.

5.8. Option 1 would require very significant reductions in the densities of new housing development permitted in Woking Town Centre in the future if it is to be achieved.

5.9. The Study suggests that unless policies are changed Woking will overshoot the Surrey Structure Plan housing figure by over 800 in the 2001-16 period.

Woking Borough Housing Needs Assessment Update 2004

5.10. This study shows that Option 4 is required if the assessed level of need for affordable housing, particularly for affordable family housing, is to be met.

Woking Borough Employment Needs Assessment

5.11. This paper shows that in order to accommodate forecast employment growth there needs to be additional office and industrial development in:

- Woking Town Centre (mainly office)

- Primary Employment Areas (mainly industrial)



5.12. Floorspace increases of up to 10% in these locations could be required, which is considered realistic. This, together with the retention of the majority of other employment sites, implementation of current planning consents, and a reduction of the current vacancy rate down to the trend average would be likely to be needed. This would require the implementation of option 3 or option 4. These findings are 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. There would also be an increase in retail employment, consistent with the findings of the Retail and Commercial Leisure Study.

5.13 The study does not currently look in detail at need for different kinds of business units.

Woking Open Space, Sport and Recreation Facilities Audit

5.14 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 implementation of the programme of improvements to children's play areas.

5.15 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.





5.16 As a result there is very limited scope to build on public open spaces. None of the options require this, so it is not a constraint on the options. The main impact is that higher levels of development will require more investment to provide new areas of open space or opportunities for more effective use of existing open space.

Woking Retail and Commercial Leisure Study

5.17 This study (produced by DTZ Pidea) 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.

5.18 Option 1 would deliver the baseline capacity increase. Option 2 and above 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. Options 3 /4 could also provide for the modest potential for additional retailing in West Byfleet identified in the study.

Woking Social and Community Infrastructure Requirements Study

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



Initial Sustainability Report – Options Appraisal

5.20 The Initial Sustainability Report has appraised the options in terms of their economic, social and environmental sustainability. Generally Option 1 performs least well, and options 3 and 4 best on all measures. This is because under the higher options the social and economic needs of the Borough are met, and generally in locations which are the most appropriate in terms of protecting the environment. However this better performance is dependent on the environmental objectives of the Core Strategy being implemented effectively. Consultation on this report is being carried out at the same time as this core strategy.

5.21 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

5.22 Two areas of research remain outstanding. Progress on these is set out below.

Guildford and Woking Integrated Transport Study

5.23 This study, being led by Surrey County Council, is still in progress. This will be available to inform the selection of the preferred option.



Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Study

5.24 This study, being carried out by English Nature, is still in progress. It will be complete to inform consideration of the preferred option. 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.

5.25 At present the assessment of the options does not allow for any impacts arising from the need for mitigation measures. This will require review when the final study is available.



6. ISSUES ARISING FROM PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT

6.1 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 impact on the options selected. 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.

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

Woking Town Centre as a growing hub for the area.

6.3 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.



6.4 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).



6.5 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.

6.6 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.

6.7 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.

6.8 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

6.9 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.



6.10 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.

6.11 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.

6.12 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 is particularly the case for **options 3 and 4** which envisage somewhat higher levels of development in the residential communities of the Borough.

6.13 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 doctors surgery, to cause local concern when new development is proposed.

Homes to suit all needs and pockets

6.14 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.



6.15 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

6.16 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.



6.17 **None of the options** require building in the Green Belt, and so are in line with this objective. However **options 3 and 4** do 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.

6.18 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** is likely to raise least public disquiet, as it aims to reduce the rate of development below current trends.

6.19 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

6.20 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.

6.21 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.

6.22 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.

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



6.24 **Option 2** and particularly **options 3-4** address the forecast level of employment growth best and so are 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

6.25 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

6.26 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.

6.27 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.



6.28 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.

6.29 **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

6.30 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.

6.31 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 are 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

6.32 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.



6.33 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.

6.34 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.

6.35 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.

6.36 The perceived impact of new development on already stretched roads and public transport is 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.



