

# CHAPTER 12: WOKING TOWN CENTRE

## INTRODUCTION 3/4

- 12.1 This chapter sets out the Plan's policies and proposals in respect of Woking Town Centre.

### DESCRIPTION OF THE BOROUGH AND RECENT TRENDS

- 12.2 Woking Town Centre is the focal point of the Borough. It remains central to the Borough's economic health providing as it does the main retail focus, employment opportunities and more latterly major cultural and entertainment facilities.
- 12.3 The Town Centre has grown rapidly since the 1960's and it has been transformed from its early Victorian railway town origins into a thriving sub-regional commercial centre. During the 1970's and early 80's the town experienced significant growth of employment opportunities mainly as the office sector grew. Indeed the centre remains the Borough's most important location for employment.
- 12.4 The growth as an employment location was matched in the late 1980's by the centre's growth as a shopping destination. The Town Centre now boasts two modern covered shopping malls and is the second largest shopping centre within the County. Its compact and level nature and convenient easy parking draws customers from a wide area of north west Surrey.
- 12.5 The centre has also grown in importance as a cultural and entertainment destination. The New Victoria Theatre and the H.G. Wells Planets development now attract visitors from a wide area, complementing the large County Library, the County History Centre and the planned Museum and Arts & Crafts Centre.
- 12.6 These new developments have also brought about an enhancement in the Town Centre's environment and appearance. In particular the Town Square has provided the Town with a focal point and an area for meeting and events. Altogether the developments of the last 10 years have significantly improved the Town's image to that nowadays of a vibrant modern Town Centre playing a full and active role within the economy of the County.
- 12.7 However, in common with other similar towns the effects of the recession of the early 1990's were felt as the levels of vacant office accommodation rose and employment in the Town Centre fell. The Town has emerged from this

period and the market for newer more modern floorspace is again flourishing. A significant sector of older less attractive accommodation is being left for which new uses or redevelopment needs to be promoted. A number of outstanding planning permissions for office development remain, several of which were under construction in 1999, and additional scope exists within the commercial core of the Centre for further development. However, the further outward growth of the Town Centre is constrained by the existence of the railway to the south and canal to the north.

- 12.8 The opening of the Peacocks has given rise to a shift in the retail focus of the Town Centre away from its historic focus on Chertsey Road. The effects of the recession coupled with this realignment of the shopping centre also led to a rise in levels of vacant shops. This is also now falling, as new uses are to be found for the older, now more secondary shopping areas, such as Chertsey Road. Developments such as the Planets and Wetherspools are helping to achieve this.
- 12.9 One of the main attractions of the Town Centre remains its excellent rail communications with fast, direct routes to London and now Europe. Opportunities exist to provide for enhanced public transport links to airports and other locations with the Town Centre at their hub. In comparison London's road access to the Town is relatively poor although the Town possesses ample attractive parking.

#### NATIONAL/REGIONAL CONTEXT

- 12.10 The main national advice on Town Centres is contained in PPG1 "General Policy and Principles", PPG6 "Town Centres and Retail Developments" and PPG13 "Transport". All emphasise the need to ensure the continued vitality and viability of Town Centres. As Town Centres are generally the most accessible locations in terms of sustainability, they are seen as the most appropriate locations to encourage activities which attract many visitors and workers.

*PPG1 - General Policies and Principles* stresses the importance placed on mixed use development, particularly in Town Centres, as a way to help create vitality and viability and reduce the need to travel. Local Plans can designate areas where developments on suitable sites should incorporate a mix of uses, and should include proposals for major mixed-use developments. PPG6 indicates that the Government wishes to:-

- § encourage the development of town centre strategies
- § enable town centre development through developing plans and by facilitating site assembly
- § attract investment into upgrading existing buildings and high quality new development

- § encourage investment in retail, employment, leisure and other key town centre uses
- § encourage mixed use development in town centres
- § encourage an increase in housing in town centres
- § promote town centre management, including maintenance of public areas
- § improve access and traffic management
- § make more effective use of town centre car parking and
- § encourage high quality design of both urban spaces and buildings.

This Council already has a Town Centre Strategy and a Town Centre Manager.

12.11 PPG13 in particular indicates that Town Centres are appropriate locations for:-

- § housing, particularly higher density developments, so as to be accessible to facilities and transport provision;
- § travel intensive employment development such as offices;
- § shopping provision to underpin the vitality and viability of the Centres; and
- § leisure, tourism and recreational facilities particularly those giving vitality in the evenings.

#### COUNTY PLANNING CONTEXT

12.12 The Surrey Structure Plan 1994 provides strategic guidance on Town Centres in policies DP17, DP18, DP19, DP20 and DP21. These policies:-

- § promote the role of Town Centres as the primary location for a wide range of functions;
- § provide for the maintenance and enhancement of the character of Town Centres, including the encouragement of residential provision;
- § improve the quality, efficiency and convenience of retail provision in Town Centres; and
- § allow for appropriate provision of business uses in Woking Town Centre, accompanied by additional residential provision and appropriate planning benefits.

#### OTHER COUNCIL POLICIES

##### *Woking Town Centre Strategy*

12.13 In July 1995 the Council adopted the Woking Town Centre Strategy to guide the development and management of the Town Centre over the following 5-10 years. The strategy has at its heart the need to enhance the Centre's vitality and viability so as to secure its long term future. The strategy develops this aim

through a number of key aspects, the land use aspects of which underpin this Local Plan chapter. The Strategy's seven key objectives are to:

- § maintain a strong retail centre to underpin the town
- § accommodate the right amount and type of employment opportunities
- § attract in a range and variety of other uses which will draw in people to the town centre
- § make the town centre attractive physically and a pleasing place
- § pursue the right sort of promotional campaign
- § create the opportunities for investment decisions to enable the market to deliver the required developments
- § have a town centre that is widely accessible to all, by car, foot, bicycle and public transport.

#### OBJECTIVES FOR THE TOWN CENTRE

- 12.14 The Council's Town Centre Strategy combined with Government and strategic guidance stress the importance of maintaining a strong and healthy Town Centre. This is recognised in the following key objective:

**“The Council will seek to enhance the vitality and viability of Woking Town Centre as the principal centre in the Borough for retail, commercial, leisure, cultural and community facilities”.**

- 12.15 This key objective can be developed into the following aims which the plan addresses:-

1. to maintain a strong retail centre to underpin the Town;
 

the plan identifies a strong primary shopping area together with secondary shopping areas. A site where a significant enhancement of the Town Centre's offer could be achieved is identified within the primary shopping area.
2. to accommodate the right amount and type of employment opportunities;
 

the plan allows for the renewal and modernisation of the existing office stock in the Town Centre whilst recognising that large increases in office floorspace could not be justified on employment grounds alone. It also promotes the diversification of the Town's economy through the development of leisure, recreation and cultural uses. The plan allows for some new office development where this will bring forward uses identified as priority ones to be sought or other significant benefit. This is balanced by the plans acceptance that some older office blocks may need to be converted to accommodate other desirable uses.
3. to attract a range and variety of uses which will draw in people to the Centre;

the plan adopts a zonal approach in respect of the type and nature of developments considered appropriate, as follows;

- § the commercial core within Victoria Way and immediately south of the station where shops, offices, entertainment and hotel development would be appropriate.
- § the transitional zone to the north of Victoria Way along the Canal corridor where housing, hotel, community facilities, recreation and open space uses would act as a transition between the commercial core and the residential and open areas beyond.
- § the transitional zones to the west of Victoria Way and to the south of Oriental Road/Station Approach/Guildford Road where a mix of commercial and residential uses would be appropriate.
- § the regeneration area of Goldsworth Road where small scale office redevelopments may be appropriate where these would bring about an upgrading of the urban fabric.

4. to create an attractive environment for visitors;

the plan provides specific townscape guidance to ensure new development is of a high standard and enhances the physical character of the Town Centre; and

5. to ensure that the Town Centre is widely accessible to all, by car, foot, bicycle and public transport;

the Plan provides for the development of a public transport hub based on Woking railway station together with improvements to the pedestrian and cycle movement. In addition, provision is made for increased off-street car parking.

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## POLICIES

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12.16 Policies for the Town Centre are set out in this section. The policies appear under the headings of the preceding topic chapters in the order in which they appear. Reference is made to the general thrust of the Borough-wide policies as they affect the Town Centre. However it should be noted that this chapter has to be read in conjunction with the remainder of the plan.

### NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

12.17 The Basingstoke Canal corridor is major feature in Woking. The policies of the plan recognise the importance of the Canal as it passes through the Town Centre in terms of nature conservation, recreational value and landscape importance - Policies NE3, NE6. The Canal forms:-

- a focal point for leisure and open space activities
- a wildlife corridor
- a setting for a number of important development sites.

More detailed policies in respect of the treatment of the Town Centre Canal corridor are found in the Leisure and Recreation section of this chapter, see Policy WTC17.

### BUILT ENVIRONMENT

12.18 Policies in the Built Environment Chapter set out general design and development principles, policies in respect of the heritage and townscape and general policies in respect of advertisements and shop fronts for the Borough as a whole, including the Town Centre. As the focus of commercial activity in the Borough, the form and appearance of the Town Centre is an important factor in assisting its economic prosperity and also in providing a suitable setting to enhance its leisure, cultural and civic activities. As the character and townscape of the Centre varies widely detailed design policies have been prepared to provide a range of design criteria for individual circumstances which are set out below.

**WTC1 Y DESIGN OF TOWN CENTRE DEVELOPMENT**

THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT ALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS IN THE TOWN CENTRE TO:-

- (i) COMPLY WITH THE SPECIFIC DESIGN POLICIES FOR THE TOWN CENTRE IN ADDITION TO THE OVERALL DESIGN CRITERIA SET OUT IN POLICY BE1; AND
- (ii) BE OF A HIGH STANDARD OF BUILDING DESIGN AND QUALITY OF MATERIAL FINISH TO REFLECT THE IMPORTANCE OF A TOWN CENTRE LOCATION; AND
- (iii) REINFORCE THE CHARACTER OF THE PARTICULAR TOWN CENTRE LOCATION BY RESPECTING THE ARCHITECTURAL CHARACTERISTICS OF DISTINCTIVE BUILDINGS IN THE SITE VICINITY; AND
- (iv) PROVIDE SITE LAYOUTS WHICH RESULT IN A PREDOMINANCE OF CONTINUOUS BUILDING ELEVATIONS ALONG MAIN SITE FRONTAGES WHICH CONTRIBUTE TO THE TOWNSCAPE QUALITY OF THE CENTRE, AND
- (v) INCLUDE SUFFICIENT AND APPROPRIATE BUILDING DETAIL AT STREET LEVEL TO CREATE VISUAL INTEREST AND TO STIMULATE THE VITALITY OF THE TOWN CENTRE. WITHIN SHOPPING STREETS ELEVATIONAL DETAIL SHOULD INCLUDE DISPLAY WINDOWS. ELSEWHERE BUILDING DETAIL SHOULD REINFORCE PEDESTRIAN SCALE. PRIVATE AREAS OF OPEN PARKING SHOULD NOT BE LOCATED ALONG FRONTAGES TO COMMERCIAL DEVELOPMENTS; AND
- (vi) INCORPORATE A PITCHED ROOF OR OTHER WELL MODELLED ROOF FORM TO CREATE AN INTERESTING ROOFSCAPE AND ATTRACTIVE SKYLINE. ALL PLANT, LIFT MACHINERY AND OTHER ANCILLARY EQUIPMENT SHOULD BE INCORPORATED WITHIN THE ROOF STRUCTURE OR ADEQUATELY CONCEALED WITH ATTRACTIVE SCREENING; AND
- (vii) BE DESIGNED WITH SUFFICIENT FLEXIBILITY TO ALLOW THE BUILDING STRUCTURE TO BE CONVERTED TO AN ALTERNATIVE USE IN THE FUTURE SHOULD THIS BE REQUIRED.

**JUSTIFICATION**

- 12.19 Woking is predominantly a modern town centre with a diverse range of retail, business, cultural and leisure uses. Given the physical constraints represented by the Canal and the railway the Centre has developed with a compact urban form which is reflected in the rapid change in building scale towards its Centre. The Council will continue to encourage buildings of a high standard of contemporary design and material finish to enhance the character and

appearance of the Centre. In appropriate locations exciting and innovative designs will be welcomed to help stimulate the image and vitality of the urban environment and to promote economic activity in the Town Centre. The Council is preparing an Urban Design Strategy to provide supplementary guidance for development in the Town Centre.

- 12.20 The Town Centre has developed rapidly through periods of different architectural styles and changes in the popularity of facing materials, and several areas of the centre have quite different characteristics. Although new developments have sometimes resulted in interesting building relationships some areas of the Town Centre contain buildings with disparate architectural styles. Whilst the Council wishes to encourage variety it is equally important that some common themes are expressed in new developments to strengthen the character of different Town Centre locations by reflecting the design characteristics of distinctive buildings in a particular area. This might be accomplished through choice of facing material, use of colour or architectural references in the building design. Site layout should also relate to the context and in most parts of the centre a conventional street block arrangement is preferred.
- 12.21 The predominant view of the buildings for pedestrians and motorists is that experienced at street level. It is therefore important that great importance is given to the detailed design of ground floor elevations. The careful use of decoration and good quality materials can achieve an attractive and stimulating frontage giving a building a distinctive identity. Elevational treatment at ground floor should use elements which reinforce human scale and clearly define building features such as main entrances. Features such as colonnades and arcades can provide richness as well as functional qualities for weather protection. Where appropriate, proposals should incorporate hard and soft landscaping as an integral element of the scheme design as set out in Policy WTC3. The siting of open parking can greatly detract from the visual appearance of a building frontage by introducing clutter in the street scene and will be expected to be located out of public view in all commercial developments.
- 12.22 Building designs should take account of the functional needs of accommodation at the outset. The addition of bulky plant and other machinery can greatly upset the appearance of a development and may not be readily agreed after the development has been granted planning permission.
- 12.23 Changing technology can greatly alter the working practices and accommodation needs of many business organisations. Whilst it is impossible to predict the future accommodation needs of a town centre it may be beneficial from a resource and investment view point to design buildings that have the flexibility to adapt to a variety of uses and changes in technology, particularly on sites where a mixture of uses is encouraged.

- 12.24 To enable the Council to fully assess the visual impact of a development in the Town Centre it is important that a sufficient level of pictorial information is provided to support detailed planning applications. In particular building elevations and sketches must show the relationship of the proposed development with that of the general street scene to put the proposal within its urban design context.

### WTC2 Y HEIGHT OF BUILDINGS

- (i) THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT THE HEIGHT OF NEW DEVELOPMENTS TO HAVE REGARD TO ADJOINING DEVELOPMENTS AND THE PREDOMINANT HEIGHT OF BUILDINGS IN THE LOCALITY AND THE TOPOGRAPHY OF THE TOWN CENTRE.
- (ii) TALLER BUILDINGS OR INDIVIDUAL BUILDING ELEMENTS WITH A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN HEIGHT MAY BE PERMITTED IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS WHERE THEY WILL HELP TO ACHIEVE ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING URBAN DESIGN OBJECTIVES;

§ THEY HELP TO DEFINE GATEWAYS INTO THE TOWN CENTRE ALONG PRINCIPAL TRAFFIC ROUTES.

§ THEY FORM FOCAL POINTS TO STRENGTHEN THE ARCHITECTURAL DESIGN OF CORNER SITES AT THE INTERSECTION OF IMPORTANT PEDESTRIAN AND TRAFFIC ROUTES.

§ THEY CREATE VISTAS BY PROVIDING A FOCAL POINT TO TERMINATE DISTANT VIEWS ALONG IMPORTANT ROUTES.

§ THEY PROVIDE LANDMARKS TO IDENTIFY IMPORTANT SITE LOCATIONS IN THE TOWN CENTRE OR ASSIST IN PEDESTRIAN ORIENTATION TOWARDS IMPORTANT DESTINATIONS.

THE SITING OF ANY TALL BUILDING SHOULD HAVE REGARD TO THE EFFECTS OF OVERSHADOWING, CHANGES IN GROUND WIND SPEED AND LANDSCAPE IMPACT ON MORE DISTANT VIEWS.

### JUSTIFICATION

- 12.25 The characteristic height of commercial buildings in the Town Centre is four storeys. In most cases it should be possible to redevelop all sites within the commercial area at four storeys although local circumstances may permit higher buildings in some cases. However, in the western section of the Centre particularly the commercial area following Goldsworth Road, the scale of buildings is much reduced.

- 12.26 There are a number of existing tall office developments in the Town Centre which are part of the character of Woking. Although the architectural design of some of these buildings is very dated and their distribution is not particularly well planned they help to give the Town Centre a strong urban focus. A small number of additional, well designed tall buildings would help to complement the existing taller buildings of the Centre and strengthen the composition of its overall urban form. However, the opportunities to site tall buildings are very restricted and would only be permitted where they would achieve well defined urban design objectives, particularly in assisting orientation, providing focal points and providing variety to create a sense of place.

### WTC3 SPACE BETWEEN BUILDINGS

WHEN CONSIDERING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT THE PROVISION OF SUITABLY DESIGNED AREAS OF HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPING BOTH BETWEEN AND AROUND BUILDINGS IN APPROPRIATE LOCATIONS. IN PARTICULAR THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK OPPORTUNITIES TO ENLARGE EXISTING AND IDENTIFY NEW AREAS OF OPEN SPACE WITH ADDITIONAL AREAS OF SOFT LANDSCAPE TO SUPPLEMENT THE EXISTING SHORTFALL IN GREEN SPACES IN THE TOWN CENTRE.

#### JUSTIFICATION

- 12.27 As the Town Centre has a compact urban form, the opportunities to provide soft areas of amenity are very restricted. Although the Council has recently achieved an enlarged Town Square, there is a perceived lack of soft landscaped amenity space in the Town Centre. However, Woking also contains a number of smaller, predominantly hard surfaced, public spaces distributed throughout the Town Centre which could be enlarged through the redevelopment of adjoining sites. Where opportunities allow many of these spaces could be redesigned with a greater emphasis on planting to provide a significant level of soft amenities in the Town Centre to make up the existing shortfall.
- 12.28 Within main shopping streets the shopping and associated uses provide considerable visual stimulus and hard landscaping is accepted as the appropriate finish. However, even in these areas free-standing planting boxes, pavement cafés and similar external features can add considerable vitality to the street scene.
- 12.29 Outside the main shopping areas where office and other uses predominate there is far greater opportunity to provide areas of soft landscape. Within any commercial redevelopment of these areas the Council will expect the provision of a significant landscape frontage to the building and in the case of major

development, buildings should be so articulated to define an area of soft landscaped space.

#### WTC4 Y DEVELOPMENTS FRONTING VICTORIA WAY

WHEN CONSIDERING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS FRONTING VICTORIA WAY ALL DEVELOPMENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO:

- (i) PROVIDE A SITE LAYOUT WITH A SIGNIFICANT BUILDING FRONTAGE FACING DIRECTLY ONTO VICTORIA WAY. BUILDING DESIGNS SHOULD INCORPORATE ARCHITECTURAL THEMES AND MATERIAL FINISHES WHICH HELP TO PROVIDE A COHESIVE APPEARANCE TO THE CORRIDOR.
- (ii) PROVIDE A CO-ORDINATED LANDSCAPING SCHEME THROUGHOUT THE CORRIDOR. IN PARTICULAR, STREET TREES SHOULD BE PLANTED ALONG SITE MARGINS TO VICTORIA WAY USING COMPATIBLE SPECIES AT REGULAR INTERVALS TO CREATE A BOULEVARD EFFECT THROUGHOUT THE LENGTH OF THE CORRIDOR.
- (iii) MAXIMISE THE OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE PEDESTRIAN ACCESS BETWEEN SITES ON THE OUTER SIDE OF VICTORIA WAY AND THE TOWN CENTRE EITHER INDIVIDUALLY OR IN CONJUNCTION WITH ADJOINING SITES.

#### JUSTIFICATION

12.30 Victoria Way holds great significance in terms of appearance and perception of the Town Centre in two important aspects; it is the main route along which visitors arrive in or drive through the Town, and it borders some of the most important sites for development in the Town Centre over the plan period. Therefore, development on these sites will have a significant impact on the character and image of the Town Centre. To attract further business investment the design of buildings must be suitable in helping to attract shoppers and other visitors into the Centre. Particular care needs to be taken on site layouts to ensure that buildings present interesting and well designed frontages with main fenestrated elevations facing directly onto the road to help achieve a sense of place. In many instances buildings are likely to have their main entrances facing away from Victoria Way which may necessitate buildings having 'double frontages' so that they avoid presenting a rear elevation onto Victoria Way.

12.31 As the northern boundary of Victoria Way defines the perceived limit to the commercial part of the Town Centre it is important that the design of buildings on the adjoining sites are of sufficient presence to define a visual edge between the urban and suburban context. Also, particular attention needs to be paid in

providing a suitable overall architectural composition to balance existing developments in the corridor. Architectural form is important together with the incorporation of substantial soft landscaping along the frontage incorporating tree planting. Where development sites also have a boundary with the Basingstoke Canal Conservation Area additional care is required to ensure that developments provide a frontage to the Canal which is in scale and character to the location.

- 12.32 Victoria Way is a busy traffic route and creates a substantial barrier to pedestrian movement especially for sites on the outer side of the road. Appropriate consideration to enhancing pedestrian movement will need to be thoroughly investigated as part of site proposals to ensure that developments situated on the outer side of Victoria Way are not cut off from the heart of the Town and function independently. To achieve satisfactory permeability of pedestrian movement throughout the Town Centre such routes must be safe, convenient, well lit and designed to attract public use.

#### WTC5    ÿ    DESIGN OF DEVELOPMENTS FRONTING THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL

WHEN CONSIDERING DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHICH ADJOIN THE BASINGSTOKE CANAL ALL DEVELOPMENTS WILL BE EXPECTED TO:-

- (i) PROVIDE A SIGNIFICANT BUILDING FRONTAGE WHICH FACES DIRECTLY ONTO THE CANAL SIDE.
- (ii) BE OF A SUITABLE DESIGN FOR A WATERSIDE LOCATION.
- (iii) NOT EXCEED THREE STOREYS IN HEIGHT ADJACENT TO THE CANALSIDE MARGIN.
- (iv) WHERE APPROPRIATE PROVIDE SUITABLE HARD AND SOFT LANDSCAPE.

#### JUSTIFICATION

- 12.33 The Basingstoke Canal is a significant water feature which runs through the northern half of the Borough including the Town Centre. The Canal is a Conservation Area and provides an area of considerable amenity value for the Town Centre.
- 12.34 Whilst recognising that the Canal is within an urban context in the Town Centre and should be treated as such it is important that this asset is utilised to full effect. Accordingly all new developments in close proximity to and clearly visible from the Canal must provide a positive relationship with the Canalside to enhance its setting. To reinforce this relationship it is essential that buildings sited adjacent to the Canal have fenestrated elevations which face directly

towards the Canalside. In some instances this may necessitate buildings being designed with dual frontages to ensure that a rear elevation is not presented towards the Canal.

- 12.35 The form and elevational design of buildings facing the Canal should positively reflect its waterside setting. Building design should introduce suitable architectural themes such as those based on traditional canalside warehousing or other nautical themes. Architectural cues such as the use of gable ends, balconies, staging and colonnades at the ground floor would be appropriate.
- 12.36 Where appropriate, buildings should be closely sited to the waterside, possibly in a quayside arrangement to reinforce their relationship to the Canal. Such an arrangement may require suitable edging works to the Canalside and appropriate landscaping treatment. As the Canal is a fairly narrow water feature it is important that the height of buildings closely sited to the Canal are restrained to ensure the scale of the Canal is not diminished by overbearing buildings.

#### WTC6 Y PUBLIC ART

THE COUNCIL WILL IN APPROPRIATE CASES ENCOURAGE THE PROVISION OF WORKS OF ART AS PART OF A SITE DEVELOPMENT AND IN DETERMINING AN APPLICATION FOR PLANNING PERMISSION WILL HAVE REGARD TO THE CONTRIBUTION MADE BY ANY SUCH WORKS TO THE AMENITY OF THE AREA.

#### JUSTIFICATION

- 12.37 “Per cent for Art” schemes aim to improve the environment and enhance public spaces for public enjoyment. The Council will encourage at least 1% of the costs of development over £1 million to be made available for the provision of works of art as an integral part of major site developments. As Woking is a fairly modern Centre it does not have a heritage of work of arts such as statues and fountains which are enjoyed by many historic towns. Recently, the Council has achieved the commissioning of some works of art through major developments such as the ‘Town Gate’ in Town Square. Works of art can provide richness and focal points of interest in the environment and can greatly complement good architecture. A wide range of work would be considered acceptable in fulfilling this requirement including decorative panels on buildings or purpose designed street furniture, although figurative works of art, or similar elements which can be integrated into a landscape design, are encouraged.

#### GREEN BELT

- 12.38 This plan proposes no change to the Green Belt boundary. Within the Town Centre, Boundary Common (west of A320) as shown on the Town Centre Inset Map will remain as part of the Metropolitan Green Belt and policies in the Green Belt chapter will apply. The site is located at an important entrance to the Town Centre and adjacent to the Canal. The site will need to be fully integrated into the Canal Park and proposals will be brought forward to improve and enhance its use by the public for informal recreation. (See also WTC17).

## HOUSING

- 12.39 This plan makes provision for the Borough to meet the housing requirements of the Surrey Structure Plan 1994. PPG and Structure Plan guidance makes it clear that the Town Centre is expected to play its full part in meeting this requirement. Indeed, given the very tight situation within the Borough in respect of housing land provision the Town Centre's contribution is of particular significance. Accordingly sites at Vale Farm Road and Victoria Hospital are identified to provide at least 40 and 75 units (respectively) in the period 1996 to 2001 (Policy HSG2). The plan also relies on a significant number of windfall sites coming forward over the plan period and specific policies are set out below to guide the contribution the Town Centre is expected to make in this respect. Housing will be welcomed as part of mixed use schemes in accordance with Policy WTC7 and through the conversion of older office blocks in accordance with Policy WTC10.
- 12.40 The plans general policies would also resist any loss of existing residential accommodation in terms of numbers of units (Policy HSG8). In terms of the type of dwellings to be provided the plan seeks to maximise the numbers of small dwellings provided (Policy HSG9) and specific policies follow in this respect. The Town Centre is also expected to provide its share of the Borough's affordable housing requirement both through the identified sites (HSG10), provision on unidentified sites that come forward and through the provision of flats above shops etc. (HSG11). Other sections of the plan would allow the conversion of larger houses into flats, HMO's etc.

### WTC7 Ľ RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION IN DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES

THE COUNCIL WILL PERMIT THE PROVISION OF RESIDENTIAL ACCOMMODATION IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TOWN CENTRE PROVIDED THE DEVELOPMENT IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH OTHER POLICIES AND SITE SPECIFIC PROPOSALS OF THE PLAN.

**WTC8 Y RESIDENTIAL DENSITY IN THE TOWN CENTRE**

THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT RESIDENTIAL ELEMENTS OF DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRE TO ACHIEVE THE MAXIMUM DENSITY APPROPRIATE TO THE SITE AND COMMENSURATE WITH THE REQUIREMENTS OF POLICIES HSG18 AND HSG19.

**JUSTIFICATION**

- 12.41 The provision of residential accommodation will add to the range and variety of uses in the Town Centre. It will help to increase the numbers of people particularly in the evenings and weekends and thereby add greatly to the Centre's vitality. Historically Town Centres have always been places where people live. Residential accommodation was identified as a priority use for the Town Centre within the Local Plan Review Issues Report.
- 12.42 In terms of sustainability the thrust of much Government guidance is that accessible Town Centres are the correct locations for residential development, particularly of a higher density. Residents in the Town Centre will have easy access to a wide range of facilities such as shops, work opportunities and entertainment etc., as well as being accessible to a range of transport provision. In appropriate cases the council will be flexible in implementing its parking standards. Developments in locations that are very accessible by public transport will not necessarily be expected to provide for maximum car parking provision.
- 12.43 The most appropriate form of residential accommodation within the central commercial areas of the Town Centre will be non family housing which can be built at relatively high density (i.e. in excess of 200 habitable rooms per hectare/90 habitable rooms per acre) and can form an appropriate element of a mixed use scheme. In the transitional areas of the Town Centre the inclusion of family housing may be considered.
- 12.44 The Plan will permit the inclusion of residential accommodation in the majority of new development schemes in the Town Centre. However, it does recognise that in certain circumstances this may not be appropriate. In some instances site or location considerations may mitigate against its inclusion. In other schemes developments may seek to achieve other priority uses for the Town Centre or secure other objectives of the plan or of this chapter.

**EMPLOYMENT AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT**

- 12.45 The Plan's policies aim to secure a healthy and more diverse local economy. The Town Centre provides the greatest number of jobs within the Borough, mainly in the office and retail sectors, but also within industrial concerns in the Poole Road industrial areas and increasingly within the leisure and entertainment sectors. However the plan recognises that the maintenance of a healthy and vibrant office sector is essential to the economic well being of the Borough. In this respect, as the Town Centre is the most accessible location within the Borough it is the most appropriate place for office development. At the same time a large increase in office floorspace cannot be justified on employment grounds alone. Therefore, major office development is only sustainable where this will bring with it other substantial benefits. Specific sites are therefore allocated for new development. The plan also recognises that the Town Centre has a significant role to play in respect of achieving the aim of diversification through the development of non office employment such as leisure and retail jobs. The Plan permits additional hotel development within the Town Centre (Policy EMP9).
- 12.46 A number of old or out worn office blocks exist at important gateways to the Town Centre where redevelopment would secure benefits both in economic terms and also in respect of the appearance of the Town Centre. The Policies that follow also make specific provision for office development on identified sites particularly where such development would secure the provision of priority uses in the Town Centre. There also exists a number of sites on which outstanding permissions exist amounting to some 23,400 sq. m. (gross).

#### WTC9 Ÿ NEW BUSINESS (CLASS B1) DEVELOPMENT WITHIN WOKING TOWN CENTRE

WITHIN WOKING TOWN CENTRE BOUNDARY DEVELOPMENT TO PROVIDE BUSINESS (CLASS B1) FLOORSPACE WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED.

- (i) THE PROPOSAL RELATES TO A SITE WHICH IS IDENTIFIED FOR SUCH PURPOSES ON THE PROPOSALS MAP AND REFERRED TO IN THE SCHEDULE OF PROPOSALS SITES (INCLUDING THE GOLDSWORTH ROAD POLICY AREA); OR
- (ii) THE PROPOSAL RELATES TO A SITE ALREADY IN BUSINESS (CLASS B1) USE AND ANY INCREASE IN FLOORSPACE IS SMALL SCALE.

IN ADDITION CONSIDERATION MAY BE GIVEN TO MODEST INCREASES IN OFFICE FLOORSPACE WHERE THIS IS REQUIRED AS PART OF A MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT TO SECURE THE PROVISION OF ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING PRIORITY USES THE NEED FOR WHICH HAS NOT BEEN MET:-

- § LEISURE AND ENTERTAINMENT USES.
- § HOTELS.
- § CONFERENCE FACILITIES.

§ COMMUNITY AND CIVIC USES.  
 § RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT.  
 § RETAIL DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE DEFINED SHOPPING AREA LIKELY TO ENHANCE THE RETAILING ROLE OF THE TOWN CENTRE.  
 § CANAL RELATED ENHANCEMENTS.  
 § PUBLIC TRANSPORT FACILITIES, PARTICULARLY THE ACHIEVEMENT OF AN INTEGRATED PUBLIC TRANSPORT HUB AS SET OUT IN POLICIES WTC19 AND WTC20.

WHERE APPROPRIATE THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK THE PROVISION OF PLANNING BENEFITS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY IMP3. THE BENEFITS WILL BE DIRECTLY RELATED AND NECESSARY TO THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED.

DEVELOPMENTS RESULTING IN A LOSS OF RESIDENTIAL, RETAIL OR OTHER DESIRABLE LAND USES WILL ONLY BE PERMITTED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE POLICIES OF THIS PLAN.

#### JUSTIFICATION

- 12.47 This policy aims to direct new B1 development, particularly offices, to Woking Town Centre. The Plan seeks the provision of new B1 redevelopment in sites that are well served by public transport and the Town Centre has the best facilities within the Borough. A number of office premises exist within the Town Centre and the businesses within the area contribute significantly to the local economy. For these reasons the Town Centre is seen as being a preferred location for new B1 development. This policy seeks the renewal and maintenance of the economy and office stock. On most of the sites identified for development it is considered possible to provide a mixed-use scheme, which includes, in addition to new B1 premises, development required to meet other objectives of the Plan (for example leisure or public transport facilities). More details on what will constitute acceptable development on these sites is provided within the Schedule at the end of this Chapter. Offices on these sites will be strictly limited to the minimum necessary to secure appropriate mixed uses and other benefits.
- 12.48 Notwithstanding the suitability of the Town Centre as a location for business floorspace, it is recognised that careful control is required over the amount of new B1 development that is allowed. Activities falling within the B1 Use Class tend to be labour intensive. As such, large growth within this sector is likely to lead to increased pressure on the transport infrastructure through inward commuting. Given that the local labour supply is unlikely to grow significantly, large scale growth could result in an imbalance between demand and supply for local housing. As such no major intensification of B1 use will be allowed apart from on those sites that have been specifically identified. On other sites, no large scale increase in B1 floor space will be allowed and any increase of over

300 sq. m. will be critically examined to ensure it does not conflict with these objectives.

- 12.49 There are a significant number of existing large office buildings in the Town Centre which would benefit from refurbishment or redevelopment. The policy allows for the replacement of this floorspace together with a modest increase in floorspace to encourage this modernisation. It is also recognised that the Town Centre contains a small number of larger, long established companies who contribute significantly to the economic well being of the Town. Notwithstanding the Plan's general objection to large scale increases in office floorspace, where the retention of such firms is considered to be important, the Council may be prepared to consider making an exception to its general policy of restraint.
- 12.50 Any further additional floorspace over and above this, can only be justified where this would contribute to the wider strategy of this Plan and provide for the uses which have been identified as priority uses. These are uses which will contribute to the wider functioning of the Town Centre and add to its vitality. The priority uses seek to ensure that the Town Centre continues to develop and offers a broad range of facilities and services so as to act as a focus for the Borough's residential and business communities.
- 12.51 Any such schemes will be critically examined to ensure that the office content is kept to the minimum, and the provision of such benefits will not necessarily alone justify inclusion of an office element. Office accommodation will not be appropriate on either Brewery Road car park or the former Victoria Hospital site. The provision of priority uses will be monitored and once the need for such provision is met the further provision of such facilities will not be a justification for permitting further office floorspace.

#### WTC10 CONVERSION OF OUTMODED OFFICE BUILDINGS

THE CHANGE OF USE OF OLDER OFFICE ACCOMMODATION MAY BE PERMITTED WHERE:-

- (i) THE PROPOSED USE COMPRISES ONE OR MORE OF THE FOLLOWING USES:- RESIDENTIAL; HOTEL; LEISURE; ENTERTAINMENT OR EDUCATIONAL FACILITIES; AND
- (ii) THE SITE AND LOCATION ARE ACCEPTABLE IN ENVIRONMENTAL TERMS FOR THE IMPROVED USE; AND
- (iii) THE PROPOSED USE WOULD NOT MATERIALLY WORSEN TRAFFIC, PARKING OR ENVIRONMENTAL PROBLEMS BY COMPARISON WITH THE RE-USE OF THE ACCOMMODATION AS OFFICES; AND
- (iv) A GROUND FLOOR RETAIL OR RELATED USE IS PROVIDED WITHIN THE RETAIL AREA

IN CONSIDERING SUCH APPLICATIONS THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE THE REFURBISHMENT OF ANY REMAINING OFFICE FLOORSPACE IN THE BUILDING TO WHICH THE APPLICATION RELATES.

REFURBISHMENTS OF EXISTING OFFICE BUILDINGS WILL BE ENCOURAGED.

#### JUSTIFICATION

- 12.52 The Local Plan generally resists the loss of land or buildings in employment use. However, the Town Centre accommodates a limited number of older office blocks that are becoming increasingly outdated, are unattractive in appearance, hard to let and generally unsuitable for modern office occupiers. These blocks are either vacant or severely under-used and are not at present contributing either to the economic health of the Borough or to the vitality of the Town Centre.
- 12.53 The plan's policies allow for the redevelopment of such sites (See WTC9), but as an alternative this policy allows for consideration to be given to their conversion to another use. Uses such as hotels, leisure and entertainment uses will themselves have employment consequences, and would help to achieve the aim of diversification. The full or partial conversion of such premises to residential use would entail a loss of employment accommodation. However, as an exception a contribution towards meeting the Borough's housing allocation is seen as an appropriate goal and would encourage the development of mixed uses within the Centre in line with Government guidance. In addition, if the opportunities for such conversions prove to be relatively limited any loss of floorspace would be likely to be more than compensated for by increases achieved on proposal sites elsewhere in the Town Centre. The Council will monitor the effects of these processes with the intention of achieving the objectives of Policy WTC9. Where applications for conversions are received, proposals will be critically examined to ensure that offices that can still make a positive contribution to the Town's economy are not lost.

#### WTC11 Ÿ GOLDSWORTH ROAD REGENERATION AREA

WITHIN THE GOLDSWORTH ROAD REGENERATION AREA, AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP (INSET), REDEVELOPMENT INCORPORATING AN INCREASE IN OFFICE FLOORSPACE WILL BE PERMITTED PROVIDED:

- (i) THE PROPOSALS COMPLY WITH POLICY WTC1 (DESIGN);  
AND

- (ii) THE PROPOSALS WOULD PROVIDE FOR A SIGNIFICANT ENHANCEMENT OF THE STREET SCENE.
- (iii) ANY EXISTING RESIDENTIAL FLOORSPACE OR OTHER DESIRABLE LAND USES ARE REPLACED WITHIN THE REDEVELOPMENT; AND
- (iv) THE DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES FOR A RANGE OF SMALL OFFICE SUITES OR SECURES THE PROVISION OF ONE OR MORE PRIORITY USES AS PART OF A MIXED USE DEVELOPMENT AS SET OUT IN WTC9, AND
- (v) THE DEVELOPMENT PROVIDES FOR A RANGE OF GROUND FLOOR USES AS PERMITTED BY POLICY WTC16.

WHERE APPROPRIATE THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK THE PROVISION OF PLANNING BENEFITS IN ACCORDANCE WITH POLICY IMP3. THE BENEFITS SOUGHT WILL BE DIRECTLY RELATED AND NECESSARY TO THE DEVELOPMENT PROPOSED.

#### JUSTIFICATION

- 12.54 The Goldsworth Road Regeneration Area includes areas of older built fabric where redevelopment provides an opportunity to create a more attractive street scene. Proposals here will be critically examined to ensure that the resulting development will be of a high standard thereby enhancing this important approach to the Town Centre. To the west of Oaks Road and Poole Road it is unlikely that development exceeding three storeys will be acceptable. The Council's car parking standards will be strictly applied and front forecourt parking will not be permitted. Similarly, in order to achieve an appropriate frontage the number of individual access points may need to be limited.
- 12.55 The area offers the opportunity for the provision of a range of modern smaller office suites, (i.e. between 100-300 sq. m.). Such accommodation that is available in the Town Centre currently tends to be in older properties and is therefore not so attractive. In addition, the area offers the opportunity to accommodate some smaller HQ buildings which the Council is keen to attract to the Town, as decision makers who would be more likely to become involved in Town Centre partnerships.
- 12.56 The retention of some non office uses at ground floor will serve to ensure a degree of vitality at ground floor in the area. In addition, the incorporation of these elements will also ensure that the design of new developments at ground floor incorporate an element of a human scale. The achievement of sensitively designed developments is particularly important in this transitional area, where large soulless office buildings would be alien and out of character. Where it is not possible to provide for such ground floor uses the Council may consider a relaxation but it will be essential that the ground floor human scale interest is provided within the design of the scheme (Policy WTC1).

**WTC12 ÿ HOTEL DEVELOPMENTS**

THE SITE OF Nos. 197-217 CHURCH STREET EAST IS IDENTIFIED FOR MAJOR HOTEL DEVELOPMENT. ELSEWHERE IN THE TOWN CENTRE HOTELS MAY BE PERMITTED PROVIDED:-

- (i) THE SITE IS READILY ACCESSIBLE TO PUBLIC TRANSPORT FACILITIES; AND
- (ii) THE DEVELOPMENT WOULD NOT FRUSTRATE THE REALISATION OF OTHER KEY OBJECTIVES OF THE PLAN OR DISPLACE OR DISCOURAGE OTHER LAND USES WHICH ARE CONSIDERED TO BE DESIRABLE TO THE ECONOMY OF THE TOWN CENTRE; AND
- (iii) THE PROPOSALS COMPLY WITH POLICIES WTC1-WTC4 (DESIGN)

**JUSTIFICATION**

- 12.57 The site of 197-217 Church Street East offers an opportunity to secure a large hotel in the Town Centre. Such a facility has been the long held objective of the Council and business community in general. The site is located adjacent to the new H.G. Wells Planets development which incorporates a major conference facility. It is also within easy walking distance of the station and has direct access to Victoria Way.
- 12.58 It is recognised that particularly if the Rail Hub proposals are realised, pressure for additional hotel development may be experienced. Sites within the Town Centre which are readily accessible to public transport would be the preferred location for such developments.

**SHOPPING**

- 12.59 The plan seeks to maintain the Town Centre as the main shopping centre in the Borough and a sub-regional centre within the County. Major retail development outside the town centre will only be considered where the requirements of the sequential test set out in Policy SHP2 are met.

**WTC13 ÿ NEW RETAIL DEVELOPMENT IN WOKING TOWN CENTRE**

THE COUNCIL WILL SEEK TO MAINTAIN AND ENHANCE THE RETAIL ROLE OF WOKING TOWN CENTRE BY PERMITTING THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL RETAIL FLOORSPACE WITHIN THE DEFINED SHOPPING CENTRE.

THE SITE OF PREMIER HOUSE AND ADJOINING LAND IS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP FOR A DEVELOPMENT TO INCLUDE RETAIL PROVISION.

#### JUSTIFICATION

- 12.60 Major additional retailing should be located primarily in Woking town centre, where it can contribute to the character and role of the town centre and is accessible and convenient. In order to ensure that new retail development meets these aims the preferred location for additional retail floorspace in excess of 1000 sq. m. will be within the designated shopping centre. Development elsewhere in the town centre would not relate effectively to the existing retail area, and would be less effective in underpinning its vitality and viability.
- 12.61 The Premier House site, as identified on the Proposals Map, is considered to be the main site in Woking Town Centre capable of accommodating major retail development and the Council considers there is scope on this site to accommodate an expansion of retailing provision. Elsewhere in the defined shopping centre the scope for expansion is limited by the lack of suitable development sites.

#### WTC14 Ȳ CHANGES OF USE WITHIN THE PRIMARY SHOPPING AREA OF WOKING TOWN CENTRE

WITHIN THE PRIMARY SHOPPING AREA OF WOKING TOWN CENTRE, AS DEFINED ON THE TOWN CENTRE INSET MAP, THE COUNCIL WILL PERMIT A LIMITED NUMBER OF CHANGES OF USE OF GROUND FLOOR AND MALL UNITS FROM CLASS A1 TO A2 AND A3 ONLY, PROVIDED THE FOLLOWING CRITERIA ARE MET:

- (i) THE PROPOSED USE CONTRIBUTES TO THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF THE SHOPPING AREA BY ATTRACTING A LARGE NUMBER OF VISITORS DURING NORMAL SHOPPING HOURS;
- (ii) THE A1 UNIT DOES NOT COMPRISE A LARGE "ANCHOR" UNIT;
- (iii) THE PROPOSAL WOULD NOT RESULT IN AN OVER CONCENTRATION OF NON A1 USES, AND
- (iv) THE CRITERIA IN POLICY SHP8 (RESTAURANTS, TAKE AWAYS AND WINE BARS) ARE MET.

**JUSTIFICATION**

- 12.62 The primary shopping area of Woking Town Centre comprises the modern shopping precincts of the Peacocks Centre and Wolsey Place, together with a small number of adjacent units along Commercial Way. It is appropriate that this area remains very largely in retail use. However, a limited number of facilities such as major banks or family restaurants which attract visitors in similar numbers to retail uses would complement the Primary Shopping Area. Only a limited number of non-retail uses would be appropriate. The Council will examine carefully any application for the change of use of a retail unit over 350 sq. m. net sales area or with a frontage in excess of 10 m to determine whether the unit is an anchor unit which should be retained. Also, in order to prevent an over concentration of non-retail uses it is unlikely that more than one unit in any ten consecutive units would be permitted a change of use. Change of use to A3 uses are also subject to Policy SHP8 which seeks to ensure that possible amenity problems related to such uses are addressed.

**WTC15    Ÿ    CHANGES OF USE WITHIN THE SECONDARY SHOPPING AREA OF WOKING TOWN CENTRE**

WITHIN THE SECONDARY SHOPPING AREA OF WOKING TOWN CENTRE, THE COUNCIL WILL PERMIT THE CHANGE OF USE OF GROUND FLOOR PREMISES FROM AN A CLASS USE TO A2, A3 OR ANY OTHER USE APPROPRIATE TO A SHOPPING AREA, PROVIDED THEY CONTRIBUTE TO THE VITALITY AND VIABILITY OF THE SHOPPING AREA.

**JUSTIFICATION**

- 12.63 The secondary shopping area covers the streets between the Primary Shopping Area and the railway station, including Commercial Way (south side), Chertsey Road, High Street and Broadway. It is the appropriate place for both retail uses and other uses which make a contribution to the vitality and viability of the town centre. These other uses include Financial and Professional Services (Class A2), and Food and Drink (Class A3). In addition some other uses, including certain types of leisure and community use will be appropriate, where they would attract a significant number of visitors. Business uses (Class B1), including offices, are not appropriate, as they will not attract many visitors, and will make very little contribution to the vitality and viability of the streets concerned.

**WTC16    Ÿ    CHANGES OF USE IN GOLDSWORTH ROAD**

IN THE GOLDSWORTH ROAD POLICY AREA, AS DEFINED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, THE COUNCIL WILL PERMIT CHANGES OF USE OF GROUND FLOOR PREMISES. FROM AN A CLASS USE TO A2, A3 OR OTHER USES APPROPRIATE TO A SHOPPING AREA OR SMALL SELF CONTAINED BUSINESS (B1) USES.

#### JUSTIFICATION

- 12.64 Goldsworth Road was in the past a shopping street but following the completion of the major developments east of Victoria Way it now occupies a peripheral retailing location. This policy will permit the re-use of the shop premises for a wide range of uses providing local services, and for small offices or other business uses. However, the existing character of Goldsworth Road as a shopping street with frontage development provides an interesting mix of ground floor uses at a human scale. This should be kept by ensuring that changes of use or redevelopment schemes retain this appearance, (See Policy WTC11).

#### LEISURE AND RECREATION

- 12.65 The Plan allows for the development of arts, leisure and entertainment facilities within the Town Centre. Indeed such uses are identified as priority uses to be achieved in the Town. Policy REC5 indicates that large scale facilities should be located in areas of good accessibility. Accordingly the plan recognises that the Town Centre is the appropriate location for major facilities such as the H.G. Wells, Planets developments, the New Victoria Theatre, etc. The existence of the Basingstoke Canal running through the Town Centre offers tremendous potential to capitalise upon its recreational, tourism and economic benefits and relevant policies follow. The general policies of the Plan identify the Canal as an Area of Urban Open Space to be protected from development (Policy BE7).

#### WTC17 Ÿ BASINGSTOKE CANAL PARKWAY

THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT NEW DEVELOPMENT ON SITES ADJOINING THE CANAL TO CONTRIBUTE TO THE PROVISION OF A CANAL PARKWAY BY PROVIDING WHERE APPROPRIATE:-

- (i) APPROPRIATE LEISURE OR ENTERTAINMENT USES COMMENSURATE WITH THE AREAS CANAL SIDE CHARACTER;
- (ii) AREAS FOR INFORMAL RECREATION;

- (iii) IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN ACCESS TO THE CANAL SIDE AND ALONG THE CORRIDOR;
- (iv) IMPROVED LANDSCAPING, BANK SIDE AND TOWPATH TREATMENTS;
- (v) ENHANCEMENTS TO STREET FURNITURE, LIGHTING INCLUDING DECORATIVE LIGHTING AND THE EXISTING BRIDGES;
- (vi) PROVISION OF PUBLIC ART AND CANAL INFORMATION AND INTERPRETATION FACILITIES; AND
- (vii) MOORING AND BOAT HIRE FACILITIES.

DEVELOPMENTS WILL NEED TO COMPLY WITH THE DESIGN CRITERIA SET OUT IN POLICY WTC5.

#### JUSTIFICATION

- 12.66 The creation of a canal parkway would achieve a number of important objectives: it would allow development to capitalise upon the recreational and leisure advantages of the areas adjoining the Canal. Developments would need to reflect the transitional nature of the area and the objective of the Plan for the Town Centre. In particular the location offers opportunities to develop uses such as pubs and restaurants etc. which can incorporate a canal side location. It would also allow for the creation of informal open areas, be they green landscaped areas or areas for sitting which can provide Town Centre users with a feeling of space. A priority use within the Town Centre is the creation of a green open space, and whilst the development sites immediately adjoining the canal could not provide for a substantial facilities, by creating a chain of such areas they can contribute to this aim. The enhancement in the use of Boundary Common (west of A320) and Brewery Road for informal recreation would contribute significantly to this.
- 12.67 The Canal parkway with enhanced pedestrian facilities will also help to address the difficulties of the bar to pedestrian access presented by Victoria Way. Safe and easy access along the canal corridor with convenient access points through developments could help to guide walkers to and from the heart of the Town Centre and through these transitional areas. The provision of cycle facilities as part of these developments would also be desirable.
- 12.68 The Canal parkway would also help to create a sense of place to people approaching and travelling through the Town Centre. This would be created by well designed urban development coupled with co-ordinated street furniture, lighting, enhanced appearances for the bridges etc. The Council's urban design policies for this area are set out in Policy WTC5.

#### COMMUNITY FACILITIES

- 12.69 The plan provides for the location of community facilities attracting large numbers of visitors in the Town Centre (Policy CUS1). Again community and civic uses are identified as priority uses in the Town Centre (Policy WTC9). In particular large scale uses likely to attract large numbers of visitors will be most appropriately located in the Town Centre.

## MOVEMENT

- 12.70 Given the importance of the Town Centre to the health of the Borough's economy and indeed to many other aspects of Borough life, it is important that the Centre remains accessible to as wide a range of people as possible. Policies follow which seek a balance of seeking to enhance the use of bus and rail services and cycle and pedestrian facilities whilst also ensuring that the Town Centre remains accessible and convenient for those who need to travel to it by car.

### WTC18 Y HIGHWAY PROPOSALS IN THE TOWN CENTRE

THE COUNCIL, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COUNTY COUNCIL, WILL CONTINUE TO SAFEGUARD LAND FOR THE FOLLOWING MAJOR HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES IN AND ADJACENT TO WOKING TOWN CENTRE AS SHOWN ON THE PROPOSALS MAP.

- (i) GUILDFORD ROAD WILL BE WIDENED FROM HILL VIEW ROAD TO VICTORIA ARCH. ADDITIONAL ROAD SPACE IS REQUIRED TO ACCOMMODATE TRAFFIC MOVEMENTS AT THE FOLLOWING JUNCTIONS:

§ MOUNT HERMON ROAD AND HILL VIEW ROAD;  
 § STATION APPROACH AND HEATHSIDE ROAD; AND  
 § VICTORIA ROAD

- (ii) VICTORIA ROAD WILL BE WIDENED AND RE-ALIGNED;  
 (iii) VICTORIA WAY WILL BE IMPROVED THROUGH VICTORIA ARCH AND PROVISION MADE FOR PEDESTRIANS BY THE CONSTRUCTION OF AN ADDITIONAL TUNNEL ON EACH SIDE;  
 (iv) THE CHOBHAM ROAD / VICTORIA WAY JUNCTION WILL BE WIDENED TO PROVIDE ADDITIONAL LANES;  
 (v) THE BROOK HOUSE JUNCTION AT THE EASTERN END OF VICTORIA WAY WILL BE IMPROVED.

## JUSTIFICATION

- 12.71 Guildford Road and Victoria Way form part of the A320 which links Woking to the primary road network. In addition they form the main means of access to and across the Town Centre. The 1993 Local Plan included proposals for major changes to the system and it is still the intention of the County Council to implement these proposals and land is to be safeguarded for this purpose.
- 12.72 The schemes are intended to allow for these needs to fulfil these functions adequately and meet additional traffic generated by plans for proposals.
- 12.73 The proposals contained in this policy will considerably benefit traffic flow in the Town Centre; it is estimated that only 20% of traffic using Guildford Road and Victoria Way is through traffic not stopping in the Town Centre. Consequently, in addition to those schemes to be funded by Surrey County Council (the Highway Authority), Woking borough Council will allocate finance in its Capital Programme for some improvements while others will be expected to be provided by the private sector in redevelopment schemes. The implementation of these highway improvements will be phased throughout and beyond the Plan period and they will be co-ordinated with redevelopment schemes in a programme to be agreed with the County Council.

### WTC19 ÿ PUBLIC TRANSPORT HUB AT WOKING STATION

THE COUNCIL, IN CONJUNCTION WITH THE COUNTY COUNCIL, RAILTRACK, TRAIN, AIRPORT AND AIRLINE OPERATORS WILL SEEK THE DEVELOPMENT OF WOKING STATION AS A PUBLIC TRANSPORT HUB.

## JUSTIFICATION

- 12.74 Studies undertaken by both the South and West London Transport Conference (SWELTRAC - a consortium of Local Authorities and Public Transport Operators) and the Western Connection (sponsored by the British Airports Authority, Costain, British Airways and National Express with Railtrack and London Underground as associate members) propose additional rail infrastructure primarily intended to improve rail access to Heathrow Airport. Both sets of proposals would provide a direct rail service from Woking to Heathrow with Woking station acting as a major interchange to the main railway network south and west of London.

These proposals were one of four schemes short-listed by the London Airports Access Study (LASAS) an interdepartmental study set up by the Secretary of State for Transport, which reported in October 1996.

- 12.75 The Council is committed to developing the role of Woking station as a major public transport hub for direct links to both Heathrow and Gatwick Airports. In the first instance the links will be by Railair coach, enhancing the existing coach service to Heathrow and establishing a similar service to Gatwick. The ultimate objective is to replace both Railair coach services by quality rail links to both airports. Additionally it is hoped to see continuing improvements in passenger care and information facilities at the Woking Railair lounge and eventually a redeveloped station complex designed to facilitate the hub functions, particularly in relation to train to train interchange, Railair coach facilities in the medium term and adequate taxi rank and kiss and ride arrangements.
- 12.76 It is not intended that this initiative will attract significant numbers of vehicles to the Town Centre. The aim will be to encourage greater use of the existing public transport network, in particular the existing SW Trains lines to the south and south west, with rail to rail interchange at Woking for onward travel to the airports and perhaps beyond, this will directly relieve traffic on the M25 adjacent to both Heathrow and Gatwick.

#### WTC20    ÿ    PROVISION FOR PUBLIC TRANSPORT

THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT AS PART OF ANY DEVELOPMENT SCHEMES ON THE STATION SITE, AS DESIGNATED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP, PROVISION FOR ENHANCED FACILITIES FOR BUS PASSENGERS, INCLUDING WAITING FACILITIES, REAL TIME INFORMATION

#### JUSTIFICATION

- 12.77 Following discussion with the bus operators the station site is identified in the schedule for such provision where passengers can interchange with rail. The need for further sites and precise requirements will be kept under review with the bus operators.

#### WTC21    ÿ    CAR AND CYCLE PARKING IN NEW DEVELOPMENTS

THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT NEW DEVELOPMENTS WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRE TO COMPLY WITH ITS ADOPTED CAR AND CYCLE PARKING STANDARDS. THE COUNCIL WILL WORK TOWARDS THE PROGRESSIVE REDUCTION OF THE MAXIMUM LEVELS OF CAR PARKING PERMITTED UNDER THE STANDARDS. IN INSTANCES

WHERE IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO ACHIEVE THE FULL STANDARD ON SITE, OR A LOWER ON SITE PROVISION IS PROPOSED, THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT THE PROVISION OF FUNDS IN RESPECT OF THE OUTSTANDING REQUIREMENT TOWARDS ALTERNATIVE TRANSPORTATION INITIATIVES.

#### JUSTIFICATION

- 12.78 When considering applications for new development or redevelopment, the Borough Council will expect developers to provide an appropriate level of off-street car and cycle parking facilities, either on the site or nearby, to meet the needs generated by the activities to be carried out on the site. These should be in accordance with the Council's adopted standards which should be considered as the maximum level of provision. In some circumstances funds for alternative transportation initiatives may be accepted in place of provision on site. Facilities that may be required include enhanced cycle facilities, such as secured and covered cycle parking stands and associated washing/showering/ changing rooms, or contributions towards specific public transport facilities.
- 12.79 The provision of reduced levels of off-street parking within new developments in the town centre is supported by the existence of the town centre Controlled Parking Zone, which prevents the parking demand being displaced on to surrounding streets, and by the generally better levels of public transport provision serving the town centre, which provide the opportunity to reach it by means other than the private car.

#### WTC 22 PEDESTRIAN AND CYCLE FACILITIES IN THE TOWN CENTRE

THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT NEW DEVELOPMENT TO MAKE PROVISION WHERE APPROPRIATE FOR:-

- (i) IMPROVED PEDESTRIAN LINKS THROUGHOUT THE TOWN CENTRE; AND
- (ii) FACILITIES TO MEET THE NEEDS OF CYCLISTS.

#### JUSTIFICATION

- 12.80 Encouraging alternative means of travel is a very important part of achieving a balanced transport system. Walking and cycling are much more sustainable forms of travel than motorised journeys. However to be attractive to users, routes need to be safe, convenient and attractive and facilities need to be provided where they are needed. This policy complements policies MV17 and MV18 which seek to enhance pedestrian and cycle movement Borough-wide.

The details of the proposed cycle network are set out in the Woking Cycle Study.

### WTC23 Y ADDITIONAL COMMUTER CAR PARKING

THE COUNCIL MAY PERMIT THE PROVISION OF ADDITIONAL COMMUTER CAR PARKING ON THE STATION SITE WHERE IT CAN BE DEMONSTRATED THAT THIS WOULD NOT LEAD TO AN INCREASE IN CAR JOURNEYS FROM OUTSIDE THE BOROUGH.

#### JUSTIFICATION

- 12.81 The provision of additional commuter parking would be encouraged where this will assist in achieving modal shifts between car and rail journeys. However, in assessing any proposals the Council will need to be convinced that such provision would not give rise to increased 'rail heading' i.e. attracting longer distance journeys into the Borough by passing other stations on route.

## SCHEDULE OF PROPOSALS

### WTC24 Y PROPOSAL SITES WITHIN THE TOWN CENTRE

THE COUNCIL WILL EXPECT DEVELOPMENTS ON SITES IDENTIFIED ON THE PROPOSALS MAP (INSET) TO PROVIDE FOR THE MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS AS SET OUT IN THE FOLLOWING SCHEDULE. ONCE THESE REQUIREMENTS HAVE BEEN SATISFIED, THE COUNCIL WILL CONSIDER ADDITIONAL DEVELOPMENT IF IT WOULD RESULT IN THE PROVISION OF A PRIORITY USE AS SET OUT FOR THE TOWN CENTRE, AND IT COMPLIES WITH OTHER POLICIES OF THIS PLAN. OFFICES WILL BE STRICTLY LIMITED TO THAT NECESSARY TO SUPPORT ANY MIXED USE SCHEME.