

CHAPTER 14: RESOURCES AND IMPLEMENTATION

INTRODUCTION 3/4

- 14.1 The policies and proposals contained in the Plan are concerned mainly with influencing investment decisions and the allocation of resources through control over the development and use of land in the Borough. Land itself is an important resource. In drawing up the proposals in the Plan, the Council has had regard to the needs and aspirations of the local population where appropriate. These aspirations will continue to be taken into account when implementing, maintaining and reviewing the Plan. Although the policies and proposals are set within an overall policy framework of restraint, they are expected to be capable of implementation during the Plan period. Implementation will depend, however, on the rate of investment and availability of resources and these will be determined in part by economic factors which can be neither predicted nor controlled by the Council. Nevertheless, the Council can programme resources for the implementation of the proposals over which it has direct control and through the Plan it can stimulate private sector investment.
- 14.2 This chapter sets out the major funding mechanisms available, and summarises the programmes of utilities operators. It also contains policies on implementation through use of Compulsory Purchase powers and securing planning benefits.

THE PUBLIC SECTOR

INTRODUCTION TO LOCAL AUTHORITY FINANCE

- 14.3 Local government expenditure can be divided into Revenue and Capital. As a general rule, expenditure on fixed assets, land, buildings and plant is classified as capital. Revenue expenditure covers day to day running expenses, such as employee costs, supplies and services costs and premises costs. Capital expenditure is financed mainly from the sale of assets, from borrowing or direct from revenue. When capital expenditure has been financed by loan the relevant service revenue account is charged based on depreciation and the cost of capital.

CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

- 14.4 Capital expenditure of local authorities is controlled by the Local Government and Housing Act 1989 which gives the Secretary of State for the Environment, Transport and the Regions power to determine credit approvals for each authority on an annual basis, and to prescribe the relevant proportion of the proceeds of asset sales which can be used for capital spending. The credit approvals cover borrowing, leasing and other forms of capital project finance. Local authorities may also finance capital expenditure from revenue funds. This source of funding will however be determined by political pressure to limit Council Tax levels, under the present funding arrangements. In future years it is likely that the ability of authorities to generate income from asset sales will diminish, and therefore capital spending is likely to fall in real terms. The Business Plan process determines the priorities of the Council by considering all proposed projects and this forms the basis of the Council's Investment Programme.

REVENUE EXPENDITURE

- 14.5 Revenue expenditure is financed from fees and charges, central government grant, business rates, and Council Tax. Local authorities are generally free to determine their own level of fees and charges (e.g. admission charges to sports facilities, car parking) but on some services the Government prescribed financial regime can exert a strong influence (e.g. on housing rents) while on others prescribed charges must be made (e.g. planning applications). Woking Borough Council's estimate for 1999/2000 for gross revenue expenditure on all services is £47.8m.

THE COUNCIL TAX

- 14.6 The Council Tax is payable on domestic properties, dependant on the number of persons in residence. The normal charge is based on two or more residents in occupation, with reductions for those households with less than two occupants, and is collected by the Billing Authority (e.g. Woking Borough Council). The other tiers of local government in each charging area (e.g. Surrey County Council) precept on a collection fund, which is administered by the Billing Authority. All properties are valued within 8 bands set by the Valuation Office Agency (Inland Revenue), based on the estimated value of property in April 1991, and the Billing Authority maintain records of the persons responsible for payment and the numbers of residents within the property. The yearly charge for each band is set by the Billing Authority, within strict central government guidelines.

GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- 14.7 The majority of Government grant support for local services is provided by the Revenue Support Grant. In England and Wales the revenue support grant and the non-domestic rate income together account for 78% of the Government's assumption of total local authority spending and this gives the Government a

great deal of influence over the level of Council Tax which each charging authority has to set. The revenue support grant is distributed on the basis of the Government's view of how much each local authority would need to spend to provide a standard level of service. This level is called the Standard Spending Assessment. The Government's stated aim is to distribute grant so that the same level of Council Tax would be levied in each charging area across the country, whilst providing the same level of service. Where the total level of spending is more than the standard spending assessment the full impact of the extra spending is borne by the Council Tax for that area. In this way the Government seeks to ensure that local authorities are more accountable to their residents (Council Tax payers) for the policies which lead to the higher levels of spending. However the Government has the power to cap the total level of spending and hence the Council Tax where it considers the authority is too excessive in its spending plans.

ADDITIONAL PUBLIC FUNDING

- 14.8 Additional public sector funding, over and above revenue support grant, is available for specific projects, including development projects. Such funding is generally made available following a competitive bidding process, where certain specific criteria have to be met. Examples are:
- Single Regeneration Budget (SRB)
 - National Lottery
 - European Community (EC) Funding

SINGLE REGENERATION BUDGET

- 14.9 Single Regeneration Budget funding was made available by the Government to assist areas which had particular environmental, social and economic problems. The funding was made available through a competitive bidding process. In Woking, funding of £3.4 million was obtained by the Council and a range of other partners for a range of projects in the Sheerwater and Maybury area. The projects cover the whole range of community needs. The Housing and Environment projects are particularly relevant to the Local Plan.

NATIONAL LOTTERY

14.10 The National Lottery established under the National Lottery Act 1993 has been set up to provide funding towards the following good causes;

- § Millennium Projects
- § The Arts
- § Sport
- § Heritage
- § Charities
- § New Opportunities Fund

A particular board is responsible for the distribution of funding for each cause in England, with the exception of heritage and charity projects, which each have a single board for the whole United Kingdom.

14.11 Lottery funding is available to provide financial assistance towards clearly defined capital projects which support any of the good causes. Capital works means expenditure on the purchase, improvement, restoration, construction or creation of an asset. The running costs of projects and funding of training, research or marketing are not eligible.

14.12 All public sector organisations, charities and voluntary sector organisations are eligible to submit projects for funding by the appropriate National Lottery Board. Projects must demonstrate public good and the applicant must be able to provide substantial funding and meet all running costs. Surrey County Council has a lottery officer to help co-ordinate lottery bids.

EUROPEAN COMMUNITY (EC) FUNDING

14.13 Funding is available from the European Community for a range of projects, including planning and environmental ones. While some structural funding is only available in more deprived parts of the U.K, a number of funds are available throughout the country. Generally any monies require match funding from a U.K public body, and are obtained following a competitive bidding process. To date EC funding in Woking has been secured for training projects, but other opportunities may arise during the life of the Local Plan.

PRIVATE MONEY

- 14.14 Private sector finance is usually provided in association with a development proposal. The best way to harness private finance to help achieve objectives is by reference to the local authority's policies and proposals and the provision of a framework for development proposals is one of the principal reasons for a Local Plan.
- 14.15 In Surrey, private finance is generally available for housing, industrial, office and retail developments but only for certain types of leisure projects. Some desirable but not self-supporting projects may be achieved as part of mixed-use schemes. The Council will expect developers to contribute substantially to the cost of providing the necessary infrastructure, such as highways and utilities where these do not exist to permit the development of a site.

PARTNERSHIP

- 14.16 Consideration will need to be given to combining public and private resources, including development on Council owned land using outside finance, for example by selling land with covenants to secure appropriate development or building in partnership with developers. The Council has used joint schemes for industrial and housing developments and intends to continue this policy.

FINDING THE MONEY

- 14.17 Clearly, constraints on the availability of public sector finance are a major consideration in the assessment of the scale and range of projects that can be undertaken. It may be desirable in many cases to seek to ensure that the private sector makes good any shortfall which may occur in respect of a particular project on the part of the public sector. Indeed the change of emphasis towards the local authority as "enabler" implies that this should be the case.
- 14.18 The Council has an annual Corporate Business Plan which enables the Council to focus on its key targets for the delivery of service and to ensure that its expenditure is targeted towards its major priorities. The Plan incorporates those schemes and projects which will be financed by the Local Authority. The Business Plan is subject to an annual update procedure.
- 14.19 The Business Plan therefore provides the means for the detailed programming of projects. This is not the function of the Local Plan, the scope of which is limited to land use related projects: specific projects have only been included which the Council considers are likely to be implemented within the 10 year timescale.

PUBLIC UTILITIES

- 14.20 In general, the statutory undertakers appear able to service the overall extent of development planned for Woking, though some investment will be required and individual sites may have particular problems. In considering proposals for development the Council will take into account the capacity of water and sewerage systems and the impact of development proposals on them. Where necessary the Council will seek improvements to utility infrastructure related and appropriate to the development. Developers may be required to contribute to off-site and on-site works so that sites can be properly serviced.

ROAD IMPROVEMENTS

- 14.21 The Movement Chapter contains a series of highway proposals for the improvement of the A320 in Woking Town Centre and the construction of a new alignment of the A322 from Bisley Common to Brookwood cross roads. The town centre improvements are a fundamental requirement for the achievement of the proposals in Woking Town Centre. Many of the proposals are interrelated and their implementation must be co-ordinated.
- 14.22 The implementation of these schemes is dependent on the Woking Movement Study being completed, and the inclusion of the schemes in Surrey County Council's Local Transport Plan.

POLICIES

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IMP1 ȳ SITE ASSEMBLY

WHERE NECESSARY, IN ORDER TO ENABLE DEVELOPMENT TO PROCEED IN ACCORDANCE WITH THIS PLAN, THE COUNCIL MAY BE PREPARED TO ASSIST A DEVELOPER IN THE ASSEMBLY OF A SITE THROUGH THE USE OF ITS COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER POWERS.

JUSTIFICATION

- 14.23 The redevelopment of existing developed sites in the urban area is a vital component in achieving the development set out in this Plan. This is particularly the case in Woking Town Centre and the Village Centres.
- 14.24 However, sites with development potential may be held in multiple ownership, which can act as a deterrent to developers faced with complex problems of land assembly. In order to overcome this difficulty, enabling a developer to implement a sound development proposal, the Council may be prepared to assist with land acquisition through the use of its Compulsory Purchase Powers.

IMP2 ȳ LAND ACQUISITION TO MEET THE IDENTIFIED NEEDS OF THE COMMUNITY.

WHERE NECESSARY, THE COUNCIL WILL BE PREPARED TO MAKE USE OF ITS COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER POWERS TO ACQUIRE LAND FOR THE PROVISION OF SPECIFIC FACILITIES FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY THAT MEET AN IDENTIFIED NEED.

JUSTIFICATION

- 14.25 Where the Council can identify a specific need for the provision of facilities that would be of benefit to the community that can not be accommodated for physical or operational reasons on land already in the ownership of the council, then the Council may be prepared to use Compulsory Purchase Order powers in order to acquire a suitable site.

IMP3 PLANNING BENEFITS

THE COUNCIL WILL ENCOURAGE THE PROVISION OF PLANNING BENEFITS FROM ALL DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS WHERE APPROPRIATE. PLANNING OBLIGATIONS WILL ONLY BE SOUGHT WHERE THEY ARE

- (i) NECESSARY, AND
- (ii) RELEVANT TO PLANNING, AND
- (iii) DIRECTLY RELATED TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, AND
- (iv) FAIRLY AND REASONABLY RELATED IN SCALE AND KIND TO THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT, AND
- (v) NOT SOLELY TO RESOLVE EXISTING DEFICIENCIES

THE PROVISION OF PLANNING BENEFIT ALONE WILL NOT BE SUFFICIENT TO JUSTIFY A DEVELOPMENT. IT MUST NORMALLY COMPLY WITH ALL OTHER RELEVANT LOCAL PLAN POLICIES.

JUSTIFICATION

- 14.26 The purpose of this policy is to secure appropriate benefits from development to remedy planning problems which would otherwise occur as a result, or to improve the quality of the development. Provision of benefits provide a means of reconciling the aims and interests of developers with the need to safeguard the local environment and to meet costs to the community imposed as a result of development. Whilst provision of benefit will be encouraged these will only be sought where they are related to the development proposed and where they serve a proper planning purpose. In certain cases the Council will seek the actual provision of the planning benefit. In others a financial contribution towards the provision of a specific planning benefit may be sought.
- 14.27 A number of benefits which will be sought in appropriate circumstances are set out in this plan. These include:
- (i) conservation or enhancement of Sites of Nature Conservation or Landscape Importance (Policies NE1, NE2, NE5, NE6, NE9 and NE10)
 - (ii) conservation or renovation of Locally Listed Buildings of historic, architectural or townscape importance (Policies BE14, HSG4 and CUS3)
 - (iii) affordable housing (Policy HSG10)
 - (iv) small industrial or business units (Policy EMP8)
 - (v) open space in conjunction with new housing development (Policies REC1 and REC2)
 - (vi) improved recreational access to the countryside (Policies REC11 and REC13)
 - (vii) replacement community buildings (Policy CUS2)
 - (viii) community facilities in conjunction with major new developments (Policy CUS3)
 - (ix) waste recycling facilities (Policy CUS10)
 - (x) improvements to highways for all road users (Policy MV4)

- (xi) improvements to pedestrian and cycle access (Policies MV4, MV9, WTC21, WTC22 and VCN4)
- (xii) improvements to public transport facilities (Policies MV4, MV9, WTC21 and VCN4)
- (xiii) public art, murals, sculpture etc. (Policy WTC6)
- (xiv) priority uses within mixed use schemes in Woking Town Centre (Policy WTC9)
- (xv) improvements to the environment of Village Centres (Policy VCN3)

While these provide examples they will not preclude the Council negotiating benefits on an ad hoc basis.

14.28 In implementing this policy the Council may seek to negotiate amendments to planning applications, grant consent subject to conditions or enter into a planning obligation with a developer under S.106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. Conditions will only be imposed where these are necessary to the granting of permission, relevant to planning and to the development proposed. Planning obligations will only be sought where they meet the criteria set out in the policy. These are taken from Circular 1/97 - Planning Obligations.

14.29 The scale of benefits to be provided will normally be dependent upon the scale of the development proposed but for the avoidance of doubt it is stressed that the provision of planning benefits alone is not sufficient to justify approval of an otherwise unacceptable scheme. The policy will therefore be applied within the context of the general policy framework of the Local Plan.