

CHAPTER 2: STRATEGY AND OBJECTIVES

INTRODUCTION 3/4

- 2.1 This chapter sets out the strategic and local context for the Local Plan and sets out the Key Aim of the Plan and a series of Key Objectives.

DESCRIPTION OF THE BOROUGH AND RECENT TRENDS

- 2.2 The Borough of Woking covers 6,359 hectares. It mainly comprises a continuous urban area, centred on Woking Town Centre but stretching from Byfleet and West Byfleet in the east to Knaphill in the west, surrounded by open Green Belt countryside. Within the surrounding countryside there are small settlements, the largest of which are the villages of Brookwood and Mayford. The area protected by Green Belt comprises around 60% of the Borough.
- 2.3 The population of the Borough in 1997 was around 91,400. The population has been rising slowly but steadily over the last twenty five years with the construction of major new housing estates, particularly Goldsworth Park. Further expansion of the built up area is now constrained by Green Belt designation. Only in the Knaphill/Brookwood area, and to a lesser extent in Westfield is land available on the edge of the urban area for development. At present growth in the population of Woking continues to run at about 700 per year. This may seem modest, but it still represents one of the fastest rates of increase in Surrey. However, population forecasts show this growth ceasing altogether in the next few years, with the population in 2006 little different from today.
- 2.4 The Borough is a major employment centre. In 1991 there were over 38,300 people working in the Borough, compared with an economically active population of 45,500. The number of jobs in the Borough grew substantially between 1981 and 1991, and this growth was particularly concentrated in Woking Town Centre. Over the ten years the number of jobs in the town centre grew by over 50%, and in the Borough as a whole by 27%. This was the highest rate of increase in Surrey over the period and exceeded the increase in economically active population. Claimant unemployment in the Borough in May 1999 was 0.9%, which was among the lowest rates in the U.K. This had fallen from 7.0% in January 1993. Unemployment in the Sheerwater and Maybury area was higher than in the Borough as a whole, at over 2.0 %.
- 2.5 Woking Town Centre is now a substantial shopping, commercial and entertainment centre. The development of The Peacocks has significantly

improved shopping provision, and provided a modern theatre and cinema complex. Current developments will further enhance leisure facilities. These developments have enabled local residents to do more of their shopping and spend more of their leisure time within the Borough, rather than having to travel further afield.

- 2.6 A number of village centres in the Borough continue to perform a role in providing retail, commercial and community facilities for their immediate areas. However, the number of shops in the centres has been slowly declining as changes in shopping patterns have resulted in greater use of large free standing stores, particularly for food shopping.
- 2.7 The environment of Woking, both in the urban areas and the countryside, is generally of high quality. Nowhere in the Borough is more than 1.5 km from Green Belt land. The residential parts of the Borough have in many cases very large numbers of trees, and several areas are developed at a relatively low density. Some redevelopment and infill has taken place in these areas. The surrounding countryside includes large areas of common land, some of which are Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- 2.8 The level of growth in employment and housing in the Borough, coupled with the general rise in car traffic in line with national trends, has resulted in increased levels of traffic and congestion on the Borough's roads, particularly at peak times. However, the road proposals set out in the Woking Borough Local Plan 1993 have yet to be implemented.

NATIONAL/REGIONAL CONTEXT

- 2.9 The Government has set out broad guidance for planning in its "Regional Guidance for the South East" (RPG9). This recognises that Surrey, in common with the rest of the western sector of the region has experienced rapid growth in the recent past, and that a reducing rate of economic and housing development is now appropriate. This will enable the provision of infrastructure and services to catch up, and will also enable the best of the environment to be protected for future generations. This includes the Metropolitan Green Belt. These considerations are particularly relevant to Woking, which has experienced one of the most rapid rates of growth in Surrey over recent years.
- 2.10 This approach is consistent with the Government's intention to work towards ensuring that development and growth are sustainable. The implications of this are set out more fully from paragraph 2.21 below.
- 2.11 The Government also sets out national Guidance for land-use planning in a series of Planning Policy Guidance notes. There are 24 in all. The most relevant to the Plan Strategy are as follows:

PPG2 - Green Belts states that the fundamental aim of Green Belt policy involves keeping land permanently open. Existing Green Belt boundaries should not be changed unless alterations to the Structure Plan have been approved, or other exceptional circumstances exist, which necessitate such a revision.

PPG6 - Town Centres and Retail Developments emphasises the role of existing town and village centres in development patterns that minimise the need to travel and promote transport choices that help keep down CO₂ and polluting emissions.

PPG12 - Development Plans and Regional Planning Guidance provides guidance on the range of subjects which Plans should seek to cover in terms of both new development and protecting the environment.

PPG13 - Transport seeks to ensure that land-use policies and transport programmes help to reduce growth in the length and number of motorised journeys and encourage alternative means of travel which have less environmental impact, so as to reduce reliance on the private car.

- 2.12 Other PPG Guidance is discussed in the appropriate topic chapters of the plan.

COUNTY CONTEXT

- 2.13 The Surrey County Structure Plan 1994 sets out policies for the County as a whole. A key objective of the Plan is that the rate of development will be slowed down in order to conserve the environment, avoid adding to demands for infrastructure and services beyond their environmental and operational capacity, and to maintain the conditions which support the economy. In particular, further urbanisation of the County will be strongly resisted, and to help achieve this the Plan envisages that Green Belt boundaries around the urban areas should not be changed for the foreseeable future.
- 2.14 The plan requires provision to be made for 3,550 new homes in Woking between 1991 and 2006. This is a reduction of about 15% on the rate required over the previous Structure Plan period. The new homes will not result in a significant increase in population, because of the reduction in average household size. This is explained further in paragraph 2.46.
- 2.15 The Plan proposes that the maintenance and renewal of the County's economy will be met primarily by encouraging the re-use of land already in industrial and commercial use.
- 2.16 The Plan does not seek to meet the demand for travel by car in full, particularly in peak periods or in town centres, because to do so would breach environmental, physical and resource constraints. These proposals in the Structure Plan complement those in the Surrey Transport Plan.

WOKING LOCAL AGENDA 21

- 2.17 Agenda 21 was adopted by national Governments across the world at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), the “Earth Summit” held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. It is an initiative for the 21st century setting out an agenda of what nations should do to achieve sustainable development.
- 2.18 A further recommendation which arose from the earth summit was that local authorities should produce their own Local Agenda 21 in consultation with their communities. The Woking Local Agenda 21 initiative has created community based Special Working Groups on Built & Natural Environment, Pollution, Transport and Waste & Recycling. The “Statements of Principles” which have been drawn up by the Special Working Groups are recognised by the Council as relevant material when taking decisions. These principles are taken into account in the Key Aim, Key Objectives and Policies of the Local Plan.

THE COUNCIL’S APPROACH

- 2.19 The Borough Local Plan has to operate in the context set out above. The reducing level of growth intended for the Surrey area, the permanent nature of the Green Belt boundary and the need to work towards the principles of sustainable development are the key strategic context. At the same time local needs for housing, jobs and other facilities, and to protect the environment, are key factors.
- 2.20 In order to reflect these issues a key aim has been developed to set out the overall approach of this Local Plan. This key aim has then been further developed into a vision and a number of key objectives. The key aim and objectives are set out below.

KEY AIM 3/4

THE COUNCIL WILL PROVIDE FOR NEW DEVELOPMENT WHICH IS REQUIRED TO MEET THE NEEDS OF RESIDENTS, VISITORS AND THOSE WORKING IN THE BOROUGH UP TO THE YEAR 2006. IN ACHIEVING THIS THE COUNCIL WILL WORK TOWARDS THE PRINCIPLE THAT DEVELOPMENT SHOULD BE SUSTAINABLE.

- 2.21 Woking Borough Council is fully committed to working towards the principle that development should be sustainable. Sustainable development can be defined as:

“development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs”

- 2.22 The Council accepts the importance of working towards sustainability. However, it also recognises that current patterns of land use and energy consumption have evolved over a very long period and that putting sustainability into practice will involve not only the Council but also action by a wide range of bodies including the European Union and Central Government as well as the local community.
- 2.23 The key aim needs to be set within this context and seen as a long term guiding principle rather than as a short term goal. The Local Plan has an important role to play in affecting land use patterns and in encouraging a more sustainable pattern of development. However, if it is to have a significant impact it will need to be complemented by a wide range of other elements of Government intervention to encourage more sustainable patterns of activity.

Nevertheless, the Borough Local Plan can make an important contribution in three ways:

i) Maintaining Global Climatic and Atmospheric Stability

- 2.24 The stability of the climate is recognised to be under pressure from emissions into the atmosphere, in particular the emission of CO₂ from the burning of fossil fuels. Travel, particularly by private car, is the major generator of CO₂ which can be influenced by land use planning. The strategy can contribute to this by reducing the need to travel, especially by car. This can be done by concentrating development which attracts a large number of trips in locations accessible by public transport, preferably close to other facilities, and also by providing the opportunity to use alternatives to the private car. The current pattern of development has developed since the 1920's and 30's and reflects

the building of the railways and reliance on London as a centre for employment. However, increased car ownership and the building of the M25 motorway have tended to decentralise development and much greater reliance is now placed on the car particularly for work based journeys. For example over 63% of journeys to work were by car in 1991, an increase from 40% in 1971. The land use planning system has a key role in influencing the pattern of development. However only a very small proportion of the total stock of land and buildings is likely to be redeveloped each year, and so a significant change will only be achieved in the long term. Moreover, drastic change would be likely to cause severe disruption to the economy which would be undesirable.

ii) Husbanding land and other natural resources

- 2.25 Land and other natural resources such as air, water and bio-diversity are finite. Therefore it is important to reduce as far as possible the rate at which currently undeveloped land is used. The Plan can make a major contribution to this by protecting valuable open land, including the Green Belt, and protecting areas of nature conservation value, while at the same time making the most of existing urban land suitable for development. The Plan can also make a contribution to protecting natural resources such as air and water. By seeking to provide opportunities to reduce car, use harmful emissions of Nitrogen Oxides and other pollutants can be reduced. This in turn will contribute to a reduction in health related problems such as asthma. However economic instruments and regulations beyond the land use planning system are also of great importance in achieving improvements to air and water quality.

iii) Conserving Local Environmental Quality

- 2.26 The quality of life which future generations will be able to enjoy will be improved if we protect and enhance local environmental features of landscape, amenity and cultural value. The strategy can contribute to this by protecting key features of the natural and man-made environment.
- 2.27 The Council is working towards developing sustainability indicators, which can be measured over time to assess the effectiveness of the Local Plan in working towards sustainable development. Measuring these indicators against defined targets will be a key part of monitoring the Local Plan.
- 2.28 The Plan strategy aims to take these three issues into account while at the same time providing for development to meet the needs of people living and working in the Borough, and also visitors, over the plan period. Woking has experienced substantial growth over the recent past, but the priority now is to provide for a future population broadly the same as today. The Council's overall vision of the development of the Borough by 2006 involves the principles set out below:

THE DEVELOPMENT VISION - 2006

1. The proportion of the Borough occupied by the urban area will remain broadly unchanged,
 2. The Borough will accommodate a population broadly the same as at present, but these will be in a larger number of households, reflecting national trends,
 3. The economy of the Borough will be healthy and also more diverse. This may involve some limited increases in the overall level of employment in the Borough,
 4. Shopping and leisure facilities will be further enhanced so that people within Woking's catchment area can meet more of their needs locally,
 5. People will have greater opportunity to make journeys by means other than the private car.
- 2.29 The strategic aims of meeting local needs and working toward sustainable development can be expanded into a number of key objectives, which are set out below. These set out the principles of the Plan and provide a framework to guide the policies and proposals in the topic chapters which follow. They are also intended to enable a clear understanding of the key elements of the Plan to be gained.

KEY OBJECTIVES 3/4

OBJECTIVE 1 THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND NATURAL RESOURCES

The Council will protect and enhance the natural environment and natural resources. These include the countryside, urban open spaces and trees, areas of ecological value, good quality agricultural land, water resources and air quality.

- 2.30 The protection of important elements of the natural environment is a vital component of the legacy we will leave to future generations. They are also essential for the quality of life we enjoy today. A range of areas of value are designated and protected in the Plan. Ecological sites designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Sites of Nature Conservation Importance are protected. Escarpments are important landscape features in the Borough, and three are designated and protected. River valleys and Canal corridors are of landscape value, and the watercourses themselves are of ecological value and are an important water resource. These areas are also protected.
- 2.31 Open spaces in the urban area of significant amenity value are shown on the Proposals Map, and protected. Trees are of particular importance in Woking, as they make such a contribution to the character of the Borough. The plan seeks to protect valuable trees and areas of woodland.
- 2.32 The Plan includes policies which aim to help to protect the availability and quality of water, retain the best quality agricultural land, and limit the effects of noise and air pollutants to the extent that these resources can be protected by planning powers. For example the design and layout of buildings can help in reducing energy consumption, and so limit emission of harmful gases, while the particular aim of limiting pollution from cars can be addressed by seeking to provide opportunities to make journeys by other means. This is dealt with under other objectives, in particular Objectives 5 and 13. The reduction in growth of energy use which these measures seek to achieve will also help to limit consumption of non-renewable fossil fuels, and so help to work towards achieving sustainable development.

OBJECTIVE 2 Ľ THE BUILT HERITAGE

The Council will protect and enhance the built heritage of the Borough, particularly the character of residential areas, Conservation Areas and other valuable townscape features, and will seek to achieve a high standard of design in all new developments.

- 2.33 The protection of the built heritage is of vital importance in the same way as the natural environment. The plan protects areas of historic value, including Conservation Areas, Buildings of Architectural or Historic Interest and Scheduled Ancient Monuments. It also includes policies to protect and enhance residential areas by preventing development which would adversely affect their character. The objective of achieving a high standard of design is to be achieved through general policies and also through providing supplementary design guidelines for important areas such as Woking Town Centre.

OBJECTIVE 3 Ľ THE GREEN BELT

The Council will protect the Green Belt from inappropriate development.

- 2.34 The Green Belt around Woking is part of a wider Green Belt surrounding London, preventing further outward sprawl and the coalescence of existing towns. The continued protection of the Green Belt is of key importance to the Council's vision of the future of the Borough by preventing expansion of the urban area. Other than in the most exceptional circumstances only certain limited types of development are appropriate in the Green Belt. These include developments relating to agriculture or outdoor recreation, minor extensions to existing dwellings, and the re-use, or in some cases redevelopment of existing buildings.

OBJECTIVE 4 Ľ THE URBAN AREA

The Council will seek to concentrate development within the existing urban area.

- 2.35 Accommodating development on existing urban land meets two key objectives of working towards sustainable development. It avoids using more of the finite resources of land that are available, and it also means, in most cases, that development will be nearer to existing centres and the public transport network. In achieving this objective the Council has also to be mindful of the need to protect the existing built and natural heritage. Development in the urban area should not lead to the loss of important environmental features or lead to town cramming. Policies in the Plan set this out in more detail.

OBJECTIVE 5 Ľ DEVELOPMENT WHICH ATTRACTS A LARGE NUMBER OF PEOPLE

The Council will expect new development which attracts a significant number of people, be they employees or visitors, to be located so that it relates well to existing retail and commercial centres, particularly those readily served by public transport. It should not have unacceptable effects on the environment or available transport infrastructure.

- 2.36 In order to provide people with opportunities to make journeys other than by private car it is essential that wherever possible new developments which attract a large number of people are located where people can reach them without having to make an additional car journey. Examples of these types of developments include offices, shops and major leisure facilities. Achieving this involves three key elements.
- 2.37 Firstly, development should be located where there are, or can be, good public transport services. The Council has produced an accessibility map which shows that Woking Town Centre is by far the best location in this respect, although the centres of West Byfleet and Knaphill are also relatively well served. Other areas such as Sheerwater, Byfleet and St. John's have a reasonable level of public transport accessibility, and would be suitable for less intensive development.
- 2.38 Secondly, development can be located close to existing facilities, so that with one journey people can combine activities such as shopping for food and other items, visiting the bank, going to work, or enjoying leisure activities, for example. Again, Woking Town Centre is by far the best location to achieve this, although the larger village centres also have an important local role.
- 2.39 The third element is to ensure that day to day facilities are located near to people's homes, so they can walk to them or only undertake a short car journey. All the village centres have a very important role in this respect.
- 2.40 Policies in the Plan develop these principles for different centres and types of development.

OBJECTIVE 6 Ÿ WOKING TOWN CENTRE

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.

- 2.41 Woking Town Centre performs a strategic role and has a wide variety of functions, being a shopping centre, major employment area, civic centre, arts and entertainment centre. The town centre is also the most accessible location in the Borough by public transport, which means people have a very good opportunity to visit it without using a car. Considerable opportunities exist to further enhance the town centre by providing additional facilities, and these will both improve the opportunities for local people to meet their need for shopping and leisure facilities locally, and accord with the principles of sustainable development. However, excessive growth could increase traffic congestion and

undermine the objective of improving the townscape of the town centre. Policies in the Plan seek to provide for development in the Town Centre without breaching environmental and transport infrastructure constraints.

OBJECTIVE 7 ÿ VILLAGE CENTRES

The Council will seek to regenerate the Village Centres so that they may continue to serve their local neighbourhood but without fundamentally altering their individual character.

- 2.42 The village centres play a key role in the economic and community life of the Borough and have traditionally been largely retail based. However, long term trends indicate that there is a need to diversify their role by encouraging a more balanced mix of land uses, while protecting key local shopping facilities. The village centres are well placed to provide a range of employment opportunities to meet local needs although the scale of development needs to reflect the scale and character of individual centres. New business development can not only make better use of existing buildings but can also attract further trade and visitors to the centres.
- 2.43 This approach should enable Village Centres to function as centres serving their neighbourhood, and complement the strategic role of Woking Town Centre. The regeneration of village centres will contribute to working towards sustainable development, as many of the centres are well served by public transport, and the range of facilities in them will enable local people to combine a number of activities in one visit to the centre.
- 2.44 The Plan contains policies to achieve these goals. The Council's Village Centres Strategy, which includes land-use and non-land use proposals, complements the Local Plan in seeking to regenerate the centres.
- 2.45 The Borough's village centres generally act as the focus for a wide surrounding area. However there are also a number of other local centres, which provide a smaller number of local shops and services. These centres offer important facilities which the Council wishes to see retained to meet local needs. This issue is addressed further under the shopping objective.

OBJECTIVE 8 ÿ HOUSING

The Council will provide for housing development in accordance with Surrey Structure Plan requirements. Within this provision the Council will seek affordable housing to meet local needs.

- 2.46 The provision in the Surrey Structure Plan is for 3,550 new homes to be built in Woking between 1991 and 2006. Over 2150 of these had been built by 1 April 1999. The population will not rise significantly as a result of the new homes, but they are required to accommodate an increase in the number of small households. This is caused by people's increased tendency to live alone,

whether on first leaving home, through marital break-up, or in old age, particular as people live longer.

- 2.47 The plan identifies land to accommodate this requirement at Brookwood Hospital, and on other sites within the urban area. A reduced rate of development on unidentified small sites in the urban area is anticipated, because fewer sites remain on which development could take place without damaging the character of residential areas or taking land required for other reasons, such as retaining business and industrial sites. Only part of the land on the fringe of the urban area reserved in the 1993 Local Plan for possible long term needs is proposed for release up to 2006. This will help to prevent any significant increase in the size of the urban area over this period.
- 2.48 There are also specific requirements for homes for people who cannot afford housing on the open market, and provision for these is sought in accordance with the Council's Housing Needs Survey.

OBJECTIVE 9 – THE LOCAL ECONOMY

The Council will seek to secure a healthy and more diverse local economy, principally through making the best use of existing industrial and commercial land, and will not make provision for significant overall employment growth.

- 2.49 The economy of Woking grew rapidly during the 1980s. The number of jobs as a percentage of the economically active population grew from 76% to 84%. However the recession of the early 1990's demonstrated the over-reliance of the Borough on the office sector. The period to 2001 is forecast to see a small increase in economically active population, but this is then forecast to decline back to near the current level by 2006. Levels of unemployment are now very low and there is little justification for a large increase in employment. Significant growth in the number of jobs would add to problems of traffic congestion, and further large scale development could damage the character of sensitive parts of the Borough. Therefore the priority is not to secure a significant increase in the number of jobs in the Borough, but rather to maintain a healthy economy and take opportunities to make it more diverse. This approach reflects the findings of the Council's Economic Development Plan.
- 2.50 To maintain a healthy economy the plan provides for redevelopment and intensification of use on appropriate existing office and industrial sites, and identifies opportunities for some additional development particularly in Woking Town Centre. Some of the town centre sites will provide opportunities for diversification of the economy through strengthening the leisure sector. Strengthening the manufacturing sector is also an aspiration of the Council, but opportunities will be limited by available land and the level of demand, and also by the limitations on the Council's statutory powers to allocate and retain land specifically for manufacturing.

- 2.51 The Council's Economic Development Plan is an important element in delivering a healthy and diverse economy. This incorporates a range of measures beyond the scope of a land use plan but can also be a material consideration in determining planning applications. The particular problems of unemployment in the Sheerwater and Maybury areas are dealt with through the Sheerwater and Maybury Partnership, which involves a range of key agencies including the Borough Council.

OBJECTIVE 10 Ÿ SHOPPING

The Council will concentrate new retail development to meet local needs in existing centres wherever possible.

- 2.52 Woking Town Centre is the most important shopping centre in the Borough. The Plan identifies a site in the town centre for further retail development which will help to enhance the vitality and viability of the town centre in line with Objective 6. Policies are also included to limit the loss of shops in primary areas of the town centre.
- 2.53 Village centres and smaller local centres provide a key role as shopping centres for their neighbourhoods. The plan seeks to protect essential local shopping facilities, while recognising that the village centres need to develop a more balanced role in line with Objective 7. New retail development in the village centres would have to be of a scale reflecting their existing character.
- 2.54 The Plan seeks to concentrate new retail development in these centres. Development in other locations will only be permitted where no suitable sites exist in the centres, and then only in accordance with a sequential test.

OBJECTIVE 11 Ÿ LEISURE RECREATION AND THE ARTS

The Council will seek to provide for development for leisure, recreation and the arts to meet the needs of those who live and work in the Borough, and visitors.

- 2.55 A wide range of recreation and arts facilities are essential parts of the quality of life for Woking residents. Many facilities are also valuable for people who work in the Borough, and for visitors. There is a range of indoor and outdoor sports facilities and play areas, with major indoor provision in Woking Park. The Basingstoke Canal and Wey Navigation provide opportunities for boating, angling and walking. A network of commons, footpaths and bridleways, including the Hoe Valley River Park, provide for informal recreation in the countryside. Large scale arts provision is concentrated in the Peacocks Arts and Entertainment complex in Woking Town Centre. Opportunities to enhance this provision are identified in the Plan. In particular proposals are included to overcome identified shortfalls in playing fields and children's play space, to extend the Hoe Valley River Park and to provide a Country Park centred on Woking Palace. Proposals are also made to improve facilities along the Basingstoke Canal and to provide a Country Park by the Canal at Brookwood.

- 2.56 Woking Town Centre is the most appropriate place for additional major arts provision, and policies in the Plan enable such facilities to be provided.
- 2.57 The provision of good quality leisure and arts facilities will not only be of direct benefit to residents but will also be attractive to visitors to the Borough, and will contribute to the objective of achieving a more diverse economy set out in Objective 9.

OBJECTIVE 12 ¶ COMMUNITY AND UTILITY SERVICES

The Council will seek to make provision for land for community and utility services to meet the needs of local residents.

- 2.58 Community facilities such as health and education facilities, or day centres for the elderly are provided by a variety of agencies, of which the Borough Council is only one. Where the Council is aware of the need for a further facility then a site is identified in the Plan, for example for a new Sheerwater Community and Health Centre. General policies are included in the plan to resist the loss of and encourage the provision of such facilities.
- 2.59 Public utilities such as energy and telecommunications may also have land use planning implications, and policies are included where necessary to provide for these uses.

OBJECTIVE 13 ¶ MOVEMENT

The Council, in conjunction with the County Council and other agencies, will seek to provide a sustainable and balanced approach to transport strategy for the Borough, which will:-

- § **maintain, and where practicable enhance, the overall accessibility of the Borough;**
- § **reduce the need to travel by car particularly in peak periods;**
- § **encourage investment in, and greater use of, other modes of transport; and**
- § **integrate transport facilities more closely to land use proposals.**

- 2.60 The accessibility of the Borough and the mobility of its residents and visitors are highly influential factors in maintaining and enhancing the standard of living, the local economy and environmental quality of the area. The most significant trend in recent times has been the growth of car usage and an increase in people's dependence on the car to get to and from work, shops and other facilities.
- 2.61 This trend has a number of negative effects. Car travel is more harmful to the environment than other forms of transport due to CO₂ emissions, noise and air pollution. Also the growth in car usage results in increased traffic congestion. This can have a negative impact on the attractiveness of an area to visitors,

cause delays and undermine the economic performance of the area. The Council considers that the most appropriate way to overcome these problems is to adopt the sustainable and balanced approach devised above.

- 2.62 The County Council is the Highway Authority for the Borough and has varying degrees of control over highway works and public transport provision. Various other bodies such as Railtrack and the bus companies also have a strong influence over the way the transport system operates within the Borough. The Council aims to work in conjunction with these bodies to achieve the above objective.